

Public Document Pack

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER, 2024

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

Please find attached supplementary papers relating to the above meeting, as follows:

Agenda No **Item**

7. **NOTICE OF MOTIONS (Pages 3 - 6)**

To consider any motions, due notice of which have been given in accordance with Standing Orders 4.8.12 and 4.8.15.

Included within this pack are the proposed amendments received to the motions submitted, with amendments included as tracked changes, including:

Motion C – Amendment to ‘A1(M) Junction 6 (Welwyn) to Junction 8 (Hitchin and Stevenage) Upgrade’ proposed by Cllr Paul Ward, seconded by Cllr Matt Barnes.

Motion D – Amendment to ‘Impact of Family Farm Tax on Rural Communities in North Hertfordshire’ proposed by Cllr Ruth Brown, seconded by Cllr Matt Barnes.

11. **CONSTITUTIONAL & GOVERNANCE REVIEW (Pages 7 - 8)**

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR: LEGAL & COMMUNITY & MONITORING OFFICER

Included within this pack are the proposed amendments received to recommendation 2.5.2 of the report.

This page is intentionally left blank

**COUNCIL
28 NOVEMBER 2024**

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 4.8.12

The following amendment to a motion has been submitted.

A1(M) Junction 6 (Welwyn) to 8 (Hitchin and Stevenage) Upgrade

In December 2014, the **coalition** Government announced the A1(M) between Junction 6 (Welwyn) to Junction 8 (Hitchin and Stevenage) would be upgraded to increase capacity by 50% as part of the £1.5 billion Road Improvement Strategy. Unfortunately, the scheme was delayed and subsequently cancelled **by the Conservative government** in April 2023.

The A1(M) between Junctions 6 and 8 is already one of the busiest sections of the A1 between London and Leeds, and with the adoption of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan in November 2022, resulting in more than 12,000 new homes being built in close proximity to the motorway over the next decade, the pressure on this key artery is only set to increase.

Even now, before new homes are built, the existing lack of capacity on the A1(M) creates additional burden on surrounding local North / South roads used by the district's residents such as the B197 in Knebworth and B656 in Codicote. As soon as the A1(M) has any capacity reduction on this section, such as the sink holes in March and September 2024 requiring lane closures, it brings chaos to the lives of our local communities. These corridors were never intended to be the extra capacity for the A1(M). The county's Local Transport Plan 2018-2031 specifically cites the delivery of the A1(M) smart motorway scheme as enabling traffic reductions on parallel routes to support active travel modes.

Upgrading this section of the A1(M) would not only reduce congestion and delays making journey times quicker for drivers who use the motorway, but would also help to reduce pressure on local roads in North Hertfordshire such as the A602, **B197 and B656**.

Therefore, Council resolves that the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Transport calling on the Government to reinstate plans to upgrade the A1(M) between Junction 6 (Welwyn) to Junction 8 (Hitchin and Stevenage) that were cancelled by the prior Conservative government.

Council further resolves that the Leader of the Council writes to the Member of Parliament for Hitchin, the Member of Parliament for North East Hertfordshire and the Member of Parliament for Stevenage, urging them to call on the Secretary of State for Transport to reinstate plans to upgrade the A1(M) between Junction 6 (Welwyn) to Junction 8 (Hitchin and Stevenage) and mitigate the impact of needed housing growth for North Hertfordshire residents living near the A602, B197 and B656.

Proposed by Councillor Paul Ward

Seconded by Councillor Matt Barnes

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL

28 NOVEMBER 2024

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 4.8.12

The following amendment to a motion has been submitted.

Impact of Family Farm Tax on Rural Communities in North Hertfordshire

In the Autumn Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced reforms to Agricultural Property Relief (APR) and Business Property Relief (BPR) from inheritance tax.

Currently, APR and BPR are available at a rate of 100% or 50% (based on eligibility criteria) with no cap to the total amount of relief. However, from April 2026 as a result of the Labour Government's policy, inheritance tax relief for business and for agricultural assets will be capped at £1 million, with a tax rate of 20% being charged above that.

HM Treasury has said that 73% of APR claims are below £1 million and so would be unaffected by this policy however, the National Farmers Union have highlighted figures from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs indicating that the true percentage of commercial family farms affected by the APR changes will be 66% – may be up to 75%. The NFU's analysis suggests that the "majority of estates protected by the £1m threshold are too small to be viable commercial family farms", and that the resulting payments would be "unmanageably large relative to the economic returns they earn."¹

North Hertfordshire is a rural district with 76% of land classed as agricultural, and with farming providing jobs for more than 2,500 people in Hertfordshire and contributing more than £160m to the economy of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, this policy will undoubtedly have a significant negative impact on the economy of rural communities across the district – communities already impacted by a 20% drop in farm subsidies since 2015², a botched Brexit deal which has imposed new barriers to agricultural exports to the EU making it harder to do business³, and a flawed trade agreement with Australia which even the Conservative DEFRA Secretary later admitted "gave away far too much".⁴

Faced with the disastrous economic inheritance left by the previous Government, Labour rightly wants wealthy landowners to pay their fair share – particularly those who are abusing the system. But they must also champion farmers as allies – vital partners in delivering food security, tackling climate change, and enhancing animal welfare and nature recovery.

¹ <https://www.nfuonline.com/updates-and-information/an-impact-analysis-of-apr-reforms-on-commercial-family-farms/>

² https://www.farminguk.com/news/farmers-hit-by-20-real-terms-cut-to-subsidies-figures-show_65660.html

³ <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/explainers/veterinary-agreements/>

⁴ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-63627801>

Moreover, the Government must deliver on its promise of a new veterinary agreement with the EU, removing unnecessary barriers to trade.⁵

By setting the threshold for this tax below the value of an average farm in our district, the Government risks damaging this vital partnership with farmers, and puts the future viability of many local farms at risk.

~~Not only does this policy present an existential threat to the families who have farmed the land in our communities for generations, and who had hoped to pass on their farm to the next generation, but with about 54% of food on the plates of people in North Hertfordshire being produced in the UK, this decision will significantly increase the cost of producing food, leading to higher food prices, as well as reduce British Food Security.~~

Therefore, Council resolves:

1. That the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to outline the Council's dismay at the situation facing local farmers after years of Conservative neglect, whilst calling this decision and calls on the Government to stop the Family Farm Tax and bring forward further measures to support our local farming communities.
2. That the Leader of the Council writes to the Member of Parliament for Hitchin, the Member of Parliament for North East Hertfordshire and the Member of Parliament for Stevenage, recognising the challenges faced by urging them support farmers and rural communities in North Hertfordshire by calling on and urging them to call on the Government to reverse the Family Farm Tax and bring forward further measures to support these communities.
3. That the Executive Member for Community and Partnerships engages with local farmers and representatives from rural communities on what Council can do to support them.
4. To instruct Officers who are writing the North Hertfordshire Economic Development Strategy to work to identify potential opportunities to strengthen and grow the economies of rural communities in North Hertfordshire.

Proposed by Cllr Ruth Brown

Seconded by Cllr Matt Barnes

⁵ <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Change-Labour-Party-Manifesto-2024-large-print.pdf>

**COUNCIL
28 NOVEMBER 2024**

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: CONSTITUTIONAL & GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The following proposed amendment to recommendations has been submitted

Recommendation 2.5 to be amended to **two** motions per political group, to read:

“2.5.2. CPR 4.8.12 (a) Motions on Notice – to be amended to **two Motions per Political Group, to be accepted in the order that they are received.”**

Proposer: Cllr Sean Prendergast

Seconder: Cllr Matt Barnes

This page is intentionally left blank