

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



8 November 2019

Our Ref Council
Your Ref.
Contact. Committee Services
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To: The Chairman and Members of North Hertfordshire District Council

You are invited to attend a

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

to be held in the

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES,
GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY**

on

THURSDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2019

at

7.30 PM

****MEMBERS PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU DOWNLOAD ALL
AGENDAS AND REPORTS VIA THE MOD.GOV APPLICATION
ON YOUR TABLET BEFORE ATTENDING THE MEETING****

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Thompson', written over a thin horizontal line.

Jeanette Thompson
Service Director – Legal and Community

Agenda **Part I**

Item	Page
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2. MINUTES - 12 SEPTEMBER 2019 To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on the 12 September 2019.	5 - 20
3. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS Members should notify the Council of other business which they wish to be discussed by the Cabinet at the end of either Part I or Part II business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances which they consider justify the business being considered as a matter of urgency. The Chairman will decide whether any item(s) raised will be considered.	
4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, wishing to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then must leave the room before the debate and vote.	
5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION To receive petitions, presentations and questions from members of the public.	
6. ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES Any Items referred from other committees will be circulated as soon as they are available.	21 - 50
7. COUNCIL PLAN 2020-2025 AND COUNCIL OBJECTIVES 2020-2025 REPORT OF THE POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER A report for Council to review, approve and adopt the Council Plan for 2020-2025; the Council Objectives for 2020-2025; including the proposed actions and achievements of the Council for 2018/19.	51 - 72
8. NOTICE OF MOTIONS To consider any motions, due notice of which have been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12.	
9. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS To consider any questions submitted by Members of the Council, in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.11 (b).	

Agenda Item 2

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices,
Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City
on Thursday, 12th September, 2019 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Jean Green (Chairman), Terry Tyler (Vice-Chairman), Ian Albert, Daniel Allen, Kate Aspinwall, Clare Billing, Judi Billing, Ruth Brown, Val Bryant, Paul Clark, Sam Collins, George Davies, Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Morgan Derbyshire, Gary Grindal, Terry Hone, Keith Hoskins, Mike Hughson, Tony Hunter, Steve Jarvis, David Levett, Ian Mantle, Jim McNally, Ian Moody, Gerald Morris, Michael Muir, Sue Ngwala, Sam North, Helen Oliver, Sean Prendergast, Mike Rice, Adem Ruggiero-Cakir, Deepak Sangha, Val Shanley, Carol Stanier, Martin Stears-Handscomb, Claire Strong, Kay Tart, Richard Thake, Tom Tyson and Michael Weeks

IN ATTENDANCE: David Scholes (Chief Executive), Anthony Roche (Deputy Chief Executive), Jeanette Thompson (Service Director - Legal and Community), Ian Couper (Service Director - Resources) and Hilary Dineen (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager)

ALSO PRESENT: At the commencement of the meeting approximately 10 members of the public, including registered speakers.

33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 46 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Barnard, John Bishop, Bill Davidson, Steve Deakin-Davies, Simon Harwood, Ben Lewis and Lisa Nash.

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg had offered apologies that she would arrive late for the meeting.

34 MINUTES - 11 JULY 2019

Audio Recording – 1 minute 19 seconds

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb, seconded by Councillor Paul Clark and:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 11 July 2019 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

35 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 1 minute 44 seconds

There was no other business notified.

36 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 1 minute 48 seconds

(1) **Audio Recording**

The Chairman advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded.

(2) **Declarations of Interest**

Members were reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and were required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, wishing to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then must leave the room before the debate and vote.

(3) **Refreshments**

The Chairman invited all Member to refreshments after the meeting in Committee Rooms 2/3.

She advised that, unfortunately there was no buffet this evening.

(4) **Comfort Break**

The Chairman advised that, if the meeting were to go on beyond 9pm, she would call a 5 minute comfort break.

Members were reminded to remain in the room prior to any break to ensure that they could vote.

(5) **Councillor Jim McNally**

The Chairman offered congratulations to Councillor Jim McNally who won a gold medal in Seoul for 3m diving. Also Jim and his new wife Barbara won a silver medal in synchronised diving.

(6) **Music Event**

The Chairman announced that she would be holding a music night on Friday 1 November at 7pm in the Old Bull, Royston.

There would be bands to suit all tastes from a male voice choir to a rock band.

Tickets were just £15 per head and could be purchased through Committee Services or at the door.

All monies raised would support her chosen charity, Parkinsons UK (Royston).

(7) Order of Business

The Chairman advised that Item 8 – Questions by the Public would be taken as part of Item 5 – Public Participation.

37 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 4 minutes 58 seconds

There were no presentations by members of the public.

38 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

Audio recording – 5 minutes 5 seconds

In accordance with Standing Order 4.8.10(c), Mr Philip Devonald had presented a question for Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb (Leader of the Council) as follows:

"What progress has the Council made in addressing the climate emergency declared at the Annual Meeting in May?"

The Leader of the Council provided the following response:

"Thank you for your question. Our administration sees addressing the climate emergency as a very high priority.

Since May the council has taken a number of steps towards addressing this:

We have set up a cabinet panel to gather the views of interested and informed local people and groups to help the council identify the steps it should take in the areas of cutting its own emissions, and enabling and encouraging others to do so. This panel met for the first time last evening and, having listened, this will inform how we progress the work we have already started, including updating the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

This includes first assessing the Council's current carbon footprint. Although this in itself will not reduce our carbon output, it is important to identify the scope for savings and where the biggest rewards can be obtained quickest.

Early progress has included beginning the process of switching the Council's own gas and electricity supplies to renewable sources, investigating the installation of solar panels on as many Council buildings as feasible and looking at ways of reducing energy use in swimming pools and leisure centres.

Of course, the Council's footprint only represents a small proportion of the carbon footprint of the district. In addition to reducing its own carbon emissions to a net zero by 2030, the Council has an important role to play in enabling residents and businesses to cut their own emissions, where the council can influence these directly.

It must also encourage residents and businesses to do this more widely, which is where the biggest dividends will result.

Responding to the emergency has implications for all Council areas and so, for example, we have begun the process of looking at planning policies relating to the energy performance of new homes and other buildings, examining what we can do to require performance in excess of that required by the building regulations and the extent to which we can require renewable energy technology to be incorporated.

We plan more electric vehicle charging points, both on street and in Council car parks and wherever possible new Council owned vehicles will be ultra low emission.

And we are engaging with the Woodland Trust to look at ways in which we can encourage both public and private sector land owners to plant more trees.

Another initiative has been to provide an incentive to taxi operators to use hybrid vehicles by offering reduced cost licences for these vehicles.

These are just some examples of action we are taking.

I note that you will also be asking a question at the next Cabinet meeting and that will be an opportunity for my colleague Steve Jarvis to go into more detail.

We are conscious that other Councils have been making progress on these matters for some years, I could mention Oxford and Plymouth as outstanding examples. We will also be drawing on their experience through the network of Co-operative Councils to build on best practice.

We very much value the work of groups like Transition Town Letchworth, Friends of the Earth and now Extinction Rebellion in campaigning for real change. This administration sees you as partners, each of us with a positive role to play in addressing the climate emergency and ensuring that not just the Council, but all our residents and businesses take the necessary action.”

Mr Devonald thanked Councillor Stears-Handscomb for his response and the officers for working hard on this issue and asked the following supplementary question:

“An emergency is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as something serious or dangerous that requires fast action in order to avoid harmful results. There was no greater emergency than the climate emergency as a fundamental existential threat. In the view of the North Herts Climate Action Group, the Council needs to fundamentally transform that that it operates, this cannot be tackled at the margins for example you need to tell taxi drivers that, within a number of years, only hybrid or electric vehicles will be acceptable.

You cannot add the onerous tasks relating to climate change to the existing work of officers. A fundamental review of everything is needed, therefore where are the resources coming from to achieve that?”

Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb responded:

“This was an important issue and this emergency goes across all of the Council’s services.

We are just beginning our budget process and are producing a Council Plan in consultation with all Members of the Council. During that process one of the key priorities will be looking at Environmental issues and the emergency.

There are some things that we can’t do. There are limits to what we can do in respect of the example given regarding taxi, but we will do what we can do.

During the process described we will ensure that this subject is right at the top, bearing in mind there are some things that we have to do. The climate emergency has to be done within the resources we have available.”

39 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Audio recording – Start of Item – 12 minutes 52 seconds

(A) Item Referred from Cabinet – 30 July 2019 - Risk Management Update

The Executive Member for Finance and IT presented the referral from Cabinet regarding the Risk Management Update including the following documents:

- Referral from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee considered by Cabinet 30.07.19
- Report considered by Cabinet 30.07.19;
- Appendix A - New Risk Anti Social Behaviour;
- Appendix B - Annual Report on Risk Management.

Cabinet recommended to Council: That the Annual Report on Risk and Opportunities be considered and noted.

The Executive Member for Finance and IT drew attention to:

- Section 3 – Changes to Risk;
- Section 6 – Business Continuity.

He thanked officers for the work undertaken during 2018/19 and advised Members of the challenges for the upcoming year.

It was proposed by Councillor Ian Albert, seconded by Councillor Kate Aspinwall and:

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report on Risk and Opportunities be considered and noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable Council to consider the Annual Report on Risk Management.

(B) Item Referred from Cabinet – 30 July 2019 – Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020 - 2025

The Executive Member for Finance and IT presented the referral from Cabinet regarding the Medium Term Financial Strategy including the following documents:

- Referral from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee considered by Cabinet on 30.07.19;
- Report considered by Cabinet 30.07.19;
- Appendix A - Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-25 (As amended).

Cabinet recommended to Council: That the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-25 as attached at Appendix A be adopted.

The Executive Member for Finance and IT drew attention to:

- The Strategy had been reviewed by Finance, Audit and Risk before being considered by Cabinet;
- The Council was required to set a balanced budget;
- Paragraphs 2.5 to 2.17 set out the assumptions made;
- Since the report was written some further information had been received;
- The spending review had clarified some of the uncertainty for next year, although now pushed that uncertainty to the following year;
- Funding would not be reduced due to the negative support grant;
- For one year the Council would have more funding than had been estimated;
- The limit on Council Tax increases would likely be 2 percent rather than the current 3 percent;
- Homelessness funding was welcome, but not a significant amount;
- The Council needed to consider how to manage the one off benefit;
- Officers still needed to identify savings;
- It may be necessary to build in impacts regarding Brexit;

The Executive Member for Finance and IT thanked officers for their help.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Richard Thake.

It was proposed by Councillor Ian Albert, seconded by Councillor Sam North and:

RESOLVED: That the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020 – 2025 be adopted.

REASON FOR DECISION: Adoption of a MTFs and communication of its contents would assist in the process of forward planning the use of Council resources and in budget setting for 2020/2021 to 2024/2025, culminating in the setting of the Council Tax precept for 2020/21 in February 2020.

40 MINOR AMENDMENT STANDARDS COMMITTEE CO-OPTEE NUMBERS AND APPOINTMENT OF PARISH/ TOWN REPRESENTATIVES TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Audio recording – 29 Minutes 57 seconds

The Service Director – Legal and Community/Monitoring Officer presented the report entitled Minor Amendment Standards Committee Co-Optee Numbers and Appointment of Parish/Town Representatives to Standards Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Judi Billing, seconded by Councillor Ruth Brown and:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Paragraph 7.2.2 of the Constitution be amended, to a maximum of four Parish Council co-optees as non-voting members of the Standards Committee;
- (2) That Councillor Dr Julie Magill MBE (Barkway Parish Council) and Councillor Amy Bourke-Waite (Royston Town Council) be appointed as non-voting co-optee members to the Standards Committee.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: The increase in co-optee numbers will widen the engagement and further promote the ethical standards message in the District. This also ensures that there is Parish/Town or Community Council in-put into the Standards Committee and Sub-Committees (as may be required).

41 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

Audio recording – 33 minutes 12 seconds

In accordance with Standing Order 4.8.11(b), three questions had been submitted by Members by the deadline date for questions set out in the Council’s Constitution as follows:

(A) Garden Waste Re-Subscription

Councillor David Levett to Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg (Executive Member for Recycling and Waste Management):

“Following the extension to the previous charging period for Garden Waste and the introduction of stickers to identify those residents who have paid for collection of garden waste could the Executive Member say how many households have re-subscribed to the service and what percentage uptake this represents?”

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg (Executive Member for Recycling and Waste Management) provided the following response:

“There is a question more answerable and probably the one intended. The question how many households have re-subscribed was difficult to get the data for, as it would be onerous on officers to pull together the data regarding all those who subscribed last year but didn’t this year and it would exclude all of the people who did not subscribe last year, but have subscribed this year.

I think Councillor Levett may be asking how many households had signed up to the service this year and what percentage that amounts to.

As of 3pm today, 25,475 households have signed up to the Garden Waste Service which is 47.8 percent of the households in the District (June, July, August and 1-12 September 2019)

During the first 3 months of the 2018/19 subscription period, noting that these were different months due to the extension, 21,354 households who had paid for one or more garden waste bins to be collected.

Some residents have paid for more than one bin, the total number of bins that have been paid for in June, July and August this year is 25,366, last year the total number of bins paid for was 21,732. In the comparable period of the first 3 months more people had subscribed this year.

Based on anecdotal evidence there are some people who have chosen to drop out of the scheme, but equally there are new households who have opted in and once the autumn leaf fall period is past perhaps we can do some analysis and if you really want to know which households have chosen not to re-subscribe and try to think about the reasons customers might chose not to, then that is a piece of work we could do later in the year.

I feel that, at the moment, bearing in mind the pressures on the department, its possibly not the right time to be doing that work,”

Councillor David Levett asked the following supplementary question:

“That was part of the answer, but it was also to find out why people had not re-subscribed, but this data can be looked at later.

Bearing in mind that answer, the new Administration, prior to the election made a number of commitments regarding the charging for garden waste and brown bins ie:

- Bin the brown bin tax now;
- Liberal Democrat Councillors voted against this measure and continue to do so;
- If elected, I will do all I can to stop this stealth tax
- Labour will scrap the £40 bin tax for garden waste.

With this in mind can the Executive Member confirm that it is still the intention to scrap the bin tax and if so, when this will happen?”

The Executive Member for Recycling and Waste Management gave the following response:

“I will refer to the Labour manifesto for 2019 which is the relevant year.

In 2019 the Labour group ran on the basis that the Conservatives had introduced this charge. It is going to be far too onerous in terms of budgeting restrictions for us to unwind what has already been done, given that it would require us to either pay Urbaser £375,000 per year to provide the service for free and this is better option than lumping the food waste back in with the garden waste when you consider environmental issues. The food waste has to be separate if we are going to achieve our climate objectives. So it is not financially viable.

What we did say in our manifesto this year, which is the relevant set of promises which the administration is putting in place, is that we would look into and implement as quickly as possible concessionary rates. This is going to have to be next year and officers have been tasked with researching how we can build the infrastructure and what level to set the concessionary rate at. So that Labour manifesto promise is happening.

I can't speak to what Liberal Democrat colleagues put in their election literature, they ran their own campaign and at that time were a separate entity however, this administration has joint priorities and joint promises and just like any joint administration we have all made compromises and all made sacrifices of things we had in our wish list and we are working together to deliver the best possible service that we can to the residents of this District."

Councillor Sam North noted that the Executive Member had answered the question on behalf of the Labour Group and asked how the Liberal Democrat Group would be able to respond.

The Chairman advised that she would allow a Liberal Democrat representative to respond. There was no response before the Chairman moved to the next question.

(A) Community Infrastructure Levy

Councillor Richard Thake to Councillor Paul Clark (Executive Member for Planning and Transport):

"The Executive Member for Planning and Transport will be aware of the recent Planning Advisory Service (PAS) report that concluded that a combination of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 (S106) is the most effective way of capturing land value uplift to support essential infrastructure.

Would he agree that many developers in North Herts are not making a proper contribution to strategic infrastructure and in many cases making no contribution at all to the same, because NHDC has not implemented a CIL tariff?"

Councillor Paul Clark, Executive Member for Planning and Transport, gave the following response:

"Yes I do agree. It is disappointing that the previous Conservative administration did not implement it or look at it."

Councillor Richard Thake asked the following supplementary question:

“Councillor Clark is fully aware that, sadly, because of archaine Government rules, unless you have a Local Plan in place you can’t put CIL in place.

Will he now undertake to instruct officers to do the preparatory work to introducing CIL and bring to this Chamber a set of options so that, when and if the Local Plan is finally ratified and adopted, there is no further delay in trying to extract the maximum for the benefit of our greater community in North Hertfordshire from the development industry?”

The Executive Member for Planning and Transport responded:

“There is a report coming to Cabinet in December as part of the SPD to review CIL to go out as part of the Local Plan for consultation. So we will be able to try to redress the balance at that stage.”

Councillor Clark raised a point of order in that he believed that Members were only allowed to submit one question and asked that this be looked into. He stated that despite this, he was happy to answer the second question from Councillor Thake.

(B) Educational Provision in the Local Plan

Councillor Richard Thake declared that he was an elected Member of Hertfordshire County Council and in asking this question, which clearly has implications for the provision of education, for which the County Council is the statutory provider, wished to make it clear that he did not consider that there was any interests that would be improper. He was asking the question as a concerned parent, grandparent and resident of North Hertfordshire because of his concerns about the future of education.

Councillor Richard Thake to Councillor Paul Clark (Executive Member for Planning and Transport):

“In his recent letter to this Authority, the Local Plan inspector, Mr Simon Berkeley, raised further concerns and queries around the alarming disparity between this Councils proposal for education provision contained within the emerging Local Plan and the County Council’s representations regarding future educational provision in the secondary sector.

Can the Executive Member for Planning and Transport confirm that he will be pursuing modifications to the local plan to fully implement the recommendations from the County Council, acting as it does as the statutory authority for the provision of sufficient school places in a viable structure, and in doing so, recognise the current local plan educational provisions are deficient and as such puts at risk future educational standards in North Herts?”

Councillor Paul Clark, Executive Member for Planning and Transport, gave the following response:

“Following receipt of the Inspectors letter, in which he asked this Council to try to understand the County Council’s view, we are working with the County Council to try to resolve the issue amicably.”

Councillor Thake asked the following supplementary question:

“I am aware that conversations are going on between officers here and the other place, for which I am grateful.

Will the Executive Member please assure this Chamber that he will be bringing back regular reports on the progress of this Authority’s projected responses to all of the questions in both letters that the Inspector raised, so that Members can have full cognisance of what is going on and not just be landed with them at some later point in the future when it is too late to make any input?”

The Executive Member for Planning and Transport responded:

“I can assure the Member that that is my intention, so that we have all Members of this Council know what is going on. The officer has been on holiday and has recently returned. The Project Board has met a couple of times to plan the way forward. I believe the Inspector has been written to and we hope to have some of the information to him by the end of November.”

The Service Director – Legal and Community addressed Councillor Clark’s earlier point of order and advised that when the Constitution was recently changed, in regard to questions it now stated three questions per political group.

42 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Audio recording – 48 minutes 40 seconds

The following motions had been submitted, due notice of which had been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12:

A. Governance Review

It was moved by Councillor Martin Stears-Handscorn and seconded by Councillor Carol Stanier that:

“In order to meet the Administration’s commitment to a more inclusive and open approach to decision making, Council agrees to ask officers, in consultation with an all party working group, to review its governance arrangements and constitution and report back to Council in due course.”

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor David Levett.

Upon the vote it was:

RESOLVED: That, in order to meet the Administration's commitment to a more inclusive and open approach to decision making, Council agrees to ask officers, in consultation with an all party working group, to review its governance arrangements and constitution and report back to Council in due course.

B. Pets as Prizes

It was moved by Councillor Carol Stanier and seconded by Councillor Ruth Brown that:

"This Council:

- Is concerned about the number of cases reported to the RSPCA each year, regarding pets given as prizes via fairgrounds, social media and other channels;
- Is further concerned for the welfare of those animals being given as prizes;
- Recognises that many cases of pets being given as prizes may go unreported each year; and
- Supports a move to ban the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on North Herts District Council Land.

The Council agrees to:

- Ban outright the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on North Herts District Council Land; and
- Write to the UK Government, urging an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land in England."

Councillor David Levett proposed and Councillor Strong seconded an amendment to the motion as follows:

That an additional line be added to read:

"That officers be requested to prepare an NHDC Land Licences Policy to ensure that Council owned land is only used for proper and fit purposes."

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Michael Weeks;
- Councillor Steve Jarvis.

Councillor Carol Stanier accepted the proposed amendment to the motion

Upon the vote it was

RESOLVED:

This Council:

- Is concerned about the number of cases reported to the RSPCA each year, regarding pets given as prizes via fairgrounds, social media and other channels;
- Is further concerned for the welfare of those animals being given as prizes;

- Recognises that many cases of pets being given as prizes may go unreported each year; and
- Supports a move to ban the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on North Herts District Council Land.

The Council agrees to:

- Ban outright the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on North Herts District Council Land; and
- Write to the UK Government, urging an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land in England;
- That officers be requested to prepare an NHDC Land Licences Policy to ensure that Council owned land is only used for proper and fit purposes.

C. NO DEAL BREXIT AND PROROGATION OF PARLIAMENT

Council agreed to the request by Councillor Kay Tart to present and amended motion, which had been circulated to all Members.

It was moved by Councillor Kay Tart and seconded by Councillor Adem Ruggiero-Cakir that:

“This council:

1. In following Government instructions to prepare for a No Deal Brexit is aware of the risk that this could result in impossible demands being placed on this and other Hertfordshire Councils and all other work grinding to a halt.
2. Is dismayed that the Prime Minister has announced his intention to prorogue Parliament in the midst of a constitutional crisis, with the increasing threat of a catastrophic No Deal Brexit.
3. Condemns the suspension of Parliament by the Prime Minister and the silencing of elected representatives at a time of such national importance as undemocratic.
4. Is conscious of the highly damaging effects of a No Deal Brexit on all residents of the District.
5. Recognises and understands the concerns of its residents who are EU nationals and the threat a No Deal Brexit presents to their stability and wellbeing.

This council resolves to:

1. Make urgent representations to the Prime Minister urging him to abandon his plan to prorogue Parliament and to ensure that Parliament is fully involved in the decision making process regarding Brexit and any future Withdrawal Agreement.
2. Communicate to residents the possible outcomes of a No Deal Brexit and advise them of how to prepare for this eventuality, publicising the link to Council website on preparing for Brexit.
3. Take positive steps to alert residents who are EU nationals to inform them of the importance of applying for Settled Status, providing information about this process and signposting them to the website link and other appropriate support.
4. Make information available at surgeries and other local events and centres for EU nationals who need support in securing Settled Status.”

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Martin Stears-Handscorn;
- Councillor Michael Weeks;
- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Keith Hoskins;
- Councillor Sam Collins;
- Councillor Jim McNally;
- Councillor Daniel Allen;
- Councillor Kate Aspinwall;
- Councillor Gerald Morris;
- Councillor Ian Albert;
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg;
- Councillor Terry Hone;
- Councillor Steve Jarvis;
- Councillor Richard Thake;
- Councillor Judi Billing;
- Councillor Kay Tart.

The Chairman advise that she would take separate votes on each of the resolutions in the motion;

Following these votes it was:

RESOLVED:

That this council:

1. In following Government instructions to prepare for a No Deal Brexit is aware of the risk that this could result in impossible demands being placed on this and other Hertfordshire Councils and all other work grinding to a halt.
2. Is dismayed that the Prime Minister has announced his intention to prorogue Parliament in the midst of a constitutional crisis, with the increasing threat of a catastrophic No Deal Brexit.
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This council resolves to:

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2. Communicate to residents the possible outcomes of a No Deal Brexit and advise them of how to prepare for this eventuality, publicising the link to Council website on preparing for Brexit.

Thursday, 12th September, 2019

3. Take positive steps to alert residents who are EU nationals to inform them of the importance of applying for Settled Status, providing information about this process and signposting them to the website link and other appropriate support.
4. Make information available at surgeries and other local events and centres for EU nationals who need support in securing Settled Status.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm

Chairman

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Agenda Item 6

Referrals from Other Committees

6a Memorandum of Understanding - Hertfordshire Growth Board

Note: Item refers to Recommendation 2.4, paragraphs 8.7.10 to 8.7.13 (and associated implications) and Appendix D of the attached report.

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**CABINET
31 OCTOBER 2019**

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: STRATEGIC PLANNING MATTERS

REPORT OF: *SERVICE DIRECTOR - REGULATORY*

EXECUTIVE MEMBER : *EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING & TRANSPORT*

COUNCIL PRIORITY : ATTRACTIVE AND THRIVING / PROSPER AND PROTECT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report identifies the latest position on key planning issues affecting the District

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the report on strategic planning matters be noted.

2.2 That the submissions in Appendices A, B and C be noted and endorsed by Cabinet.

2.3 That Cabinet endorse the use of Conservation Area Character Statements for Charlton, Gosmore, Great Offley, Preston and St Ippolyts as listed in paragraph 8.4.3 of this report as material considerations in decision making for planning applications and in the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.

2.4 That Cabinet considers and supports the proposed Memorandum of Understanding relating to the Hertfordshire Growth Board, attached as Appendix D, and determines whether it wishes to recommend to Council the signing of the agreement.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To keep Cabinet informed of recent development on strategic planning matters and progress on the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1 The Executive Member for Planning and Transport and deputy have been briefed on the matters set out above. The Local Plan Project Board is regularly consulted and updated upon matters affecting the Examination.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 Members will be aware of, and familiar with, many of the issues surrounding the strategic planning matters referred to in paragraph 1.1 above. This report is intended to provide Members with the current positions on these matters. As with previous reports, only those matters where there has been substantive new information or change are reported upon.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Other Plans and Examinations

- 8.1.1 **Central Bedfordshire** – The Council have advised that, following the Examination in Public hearing sessions in the Summer, they have received a letter from the Planning Inspectorate in relation to the Plan. Central Bedfordshire state on their website that the correspondence:

gives us confidence that the Inspectors are content with a number of critical points of policy. However, the letter also raises a number of questions, some of which relate to correspondence which this Authority has not seen. In this context, we are seeking urgent clarification from the Inspectors about information they seem to be drawing on and why this has not been shared. Until we have received clarification on these important points, our legal advice is that the Inspectors' letter should not be published

- 8.1.2 At this stage, it is not possible to say whether the Inspectorate's letter makes reference to any of the issues raised by NHDC in relation to Central Bedfordshire's plan or to other matters which might impact upon the examination of our own plan (such as how unmet housing needs from Luton are addressed). An update will be reported verbally at the Cabinet meeting if any further information is made available.

- 8.1.3 **South Cambridgeshire** – Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are working together to prepare a joint Local Plan for the Greater Cambridge area. One of the first stages of the new joint Local Plan is an Issues and Options consultation. This is due to begin on 25 November and run through until the New Year.

- 8.1.4 It is presently anticipated that this Plan will cover a period to (at least) the late 2030s. This will take it well beyond the proposed time horizon for our own emerging Plan of 2031. It will therefore be necessary for this Council to begin considering how it might wish to begin engaging with South Cambridgeshire under the statutory Duty to Co-operate on planning issues for the period after 2031. This potentially includes East-West rail, the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, the Cambridge Local Transport Plan and any potential for new settlements in either authority.
- 8.1.5 Further information is available on South Cambridgeshire's website. An update on the content of the consultation will be included in December's Strategic Planning Matters report.
- 8.1.6 **Welwyn Hatfield** – A short technical consultation has begun on a number of documents submitted to the Examination. This includes analysis of important 'Green Gaps' between settlements. This includes consideration of how Woolmer Green and Welwyn interact with Knebworth and Codicote respectively. This consultation runs until 4th November.
- 8.1.7 North Hertfordshire's last response to Welwyn Hatfield set out the view that this Council would reserve judgement until such time as any revised development strategy for the Borough was put forward for consideration. This is still considered the most appropriate course of action and it is not proposed that this Council formally responds.

8.2 North Hertfordshire Local Plan

- 8.2.1 As verbally reported at the last Cabinet meeting, the Council responded to the Inspector's letters at the end of September. This sets out the Council's intention to respond to all of his queries by Friday 29 November at the latest. A copy of that letter is attached at Appendix A. Officers, in consultation with the Local Plan Project Board, continue to work on proposed responses to the various requests that have been made.

8.3 Neighbourhood Plans

- 8.3.1 The Wymondley Neighbourhood Development Plan was made on 26 September 2019. It now forms part of the statutory Development Plan for North Hertfordshire and will be used in determining relevant planning applications within the Parish.

8.4 Conservation Area Character Statements

- 8.4.1 Local planning authorities have a statutory requirement to review their Conservation Areas from time to time. At the beginning of 2019, North Hertfordshire District Council commissioned consultants to prepare Character Statements for the 33 out of 44 existing Conservation Areas that do not have them. Due to the number of Conservation Area Character Statements required, each of the 33 is a 'high-level' statement, focusing on the key elements of the character and appearance of the area. These are essentially statements of fact which will assist the Development Management and Planning Policy teams in their statutory duty to preserve or enhance the special architectural or historic interest of Conservation Areas and provide valuable information for householders and applicants. They will also contribute towards the evidence base for neighbourhood plans.

- 8.4.2 A separate summary report will be produced by the consultants at the end of the commission setting out any recommendations for particular Conservation Areas that the Council should consider with regard to more detailed work.
- 8.4.3 Work on the 33 Conservation Area Character Statements is being carried out in 8 phases. This report relates to the first phase, and Cabinet is therefore asked to note that the Conservation Area Character Statements for Charlton, Gosmore, Great Offley, Preston and St Ippolyts have been completed and to endorse their use as material considerations in decision making and neighbourhood planning. These statements are available to view on the Council's website at: <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/planning/conservation-and-heritage/conservation-areas/conservation-areas-villages>
- 8.4.5 As other phases are completed these will be reported to future Cabinet meetings.

8.5 Government Announcements

- 8.5.1 The Government updated its Planning Practice Guidance on design on 1 October. This includes reference to a new National Design Guide. It also introduces the concept of Local design guides which may be produced by local planning authorities and neighbourhood planning groups. This guidance principally relates to matters of layout and appearance. Existing guidance is clear that non-statutory planning documents cannot be used to introduce new policy requirements on new developments.
- 8.5.2 The Government has also announced its intention to pursue further relaxation of planning rules by expanding permitted development rights to include upwards extensions of residential properties and the demolition of commercial buildings to make way for new homes. Officers continue to monitor relevant announcements and will also consider whether the proposed Article 4 directions for the District's employment areas, agreed in principle by the Cabinet earlier in 2019, should be amended.
- 8.5.3 An update to the Government's Indices of Deprivation was published on 26 September 2019. These provide statistics on relative deprivation for small areas of the District. The last statistics were released in 2015. Officers are reviewing this new information and any relevant update will be included in the next report in December.
- 8.5.4 Finally, consultation has been launched on a proposed Future Homes Standards. This principally relates to the delivery of energy efficiency measures through Building Regulations. However it does ask whether, as part of this, local authorities should be restricted from setting higher energy efficiency standards for new homes through their planning policies. This consultation is open until January 2020. Officers will review in consultation with the Cabinet Member and Deputy to determine whether a response should be produced.

8.6 London Luton Airport

8.6.1 Statutory consultation is expected to commence on 16 October 2019 for eight weeks ahead of formal submission of a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the proposed expansion of the airport to the Planning Inspectorate in 2020. Any update will be reported verbally at Cabinet.

8.6.2 London Luton Airport Limited has written to a number of residents and other stakeholders seeking to identify all those with a legal interest in:

- Property or land that may be required for a proposed development; or
- Property or land which is not required for the development itself, but is in an area which may be affected by the proposed development.

The purpose of this exercise, known as 'Land Referencing', is to identify those parties who will be statutory consultees, and those who LLAL will write to as part of their statutory consultation.

8.7 Other transport, planning and infrastructure matters

8.7.1 **A505 Transport Corridor Joint Study** – As previously reported, officers from North Hertfordshire together with Luton, Central Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire County Council have agreed to proceed with Stage 2 of the study. This stage comprises the evidence analysis to better understand transport related challenges in the current and future situation in the context of growth impacting on the A505 corridor, and will identify gaps in the modelling evidence to be addressed in later stages of the study. The next stage of the study will be to use the evidence analysis to agree the overarching strategy and priorities for the corridor, and to develop prioritised packages of interventions, bringing together work undertaken on other transport strategies and studies across the four authorities, as well as new thinking. The draft Stage 2 is currently being considered by officers.

8.7.2 **Hertfordshire Intalink Enhanced Partnership and Bus Strategy Consultation** – The County Council and the majority of Bus Operators in Hertfordshire have been members of a voluntary quality partnership, Intalink, for a number of years. Following new powers introduced by the 2000 Act (as amended by the 2017 Act), the County Council considers the extension of the partnership into an Enhanced Partnership could offer benefits to the travelling public and wider community which could not be achieved with a voluntary arrangement. The principal objectives will be those contained in the County Council's draft Intalink Bus Strategy, in support of its Local Transport Plan 4 which includes:

- Prioritising bus and coach services in traffic
- Improving the image of bus travel
- Upgrading bus infrastructure
- Closer integration of the bus network
- Smarter use of data and information.

- 8.7.3 The Intalink Enhanced Partnership will supersede the existing voluntary partnership and acquire substantially greater legal status. Benefits include the enhancement of quality standards and access to funding for investment in public transport-related projects and activities which might not otherwise be available.
- 8.7.4 HCC are currently consulting on the draft Intalink Bus Strategy and the Intalink Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme from 16 September to 10 November 2019. These documents can be viewed on the HCC website at:
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/consultations/transport-and-highways/intalink-enhanced-partnership-public-consultation.aspx>
- 8.7.5 Officers are in the process of preparing a response in consultation with the Executive Member and Deputy for Planning and Transport . A copy of our response will be appended to a future Cabinet report.
- 8.7.6 **Hertfordshire Local Industrial Strategy** - The Hertfordshire LEP have produced a draft Local Industrial Strategy in accordance with the government's Industrial white Paper published in November 2017. The overarching aims of the White Paper are to: improve the UK's overall productivity performance; and ensure that future economic growth is more inclusive. The draft Hertfordshire Local industrial Strategy brings together a well-informed evidence base about the Hertfordshire economy and seeks to outline a long-term set of priorities that capitalises on existing opportunities and addresses weaknesses across the county. The draft Strategy has been the subject of public consultation over the last month and can be viewed on the Hertfordshire LEP website at: <https://www.hertfordshirelep.com/news-events/news/lep-publishes-local-industrial-strategy-for-consultation/>
- 8.7.7 A response has been prepared in consultation with the Executive Member for Enterprise and Co-operative Development and is attached at Appendix B.
- 8.7.8 **Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Draft Developer Contributions Guide** – The County Council held a consultation on their planning obligations 'toolkit' between 29 July and 20 September 2019. This sets out how HCC will seek and negotiate contributions from new developments towards the infrastructure they are responsible for such as schools and sustainable transport measures. This followed an informal consultation with officers from the district councils earlier in the year.
- 8.7.9 A response was prepared and submitted in consultation with the Executive Member and Deputy for Planning and Transport. This is attached at Appendix C. Concerns have been raised over the relationship between the 'toolkit' and the requests for infrastructure made by HCC through the Local Plan examination process. Further, detailed technical comments were submitted in a joint officer response submitted by seven of the district authorities. HCC are currently considering responses to the consultation. An update on the next steps is expected towards the end of the year.

- 8.7.10 In previous Strategic Planning Reports reference has been made to the formation and development of the Hertfordshire Growth Board and the work that it has been undertaking in looking at the future development and infrastructure needs of the County with a focus on the period after the current round of Local Plans. Much of that work has focussed on the development of a place narrative for Hertfordshire and the range of issues which Hertfordshire wishes to raise with Central Government as the basis for a Hertfordshire Growth deal.
- 8.7.11 In early conversations with Government officials it has become clear that, as a grouping of Local Authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnership, there needs to be some form of more formal working arrangement documented to demonstrate our commitment to work together in formulating and delivering a growth deal for Hertfordshire. It is proposed that the working arrangements are encapsulated in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that all of the Councils and the LEP sign up to.
- 8.7.12 The draft MOU was most recently discussed and agreed as a working draft at the Growth Board on the 15th October for each Authority to consider and hopefully sign up to. The draft MOU is attached as Appendix D to this report. The key points in the MOU are that:
- The 12 partners agree to work together in pursuing a growth deal for Hertfordshire;
 - The MOU does not alter any Local Authority's power or responsibility;
 - Decisions of the Growth Board are reached by consensus;
 - Any partner can decide that they wish to leave the partnership.
- 8.7.13 In essence the MOU sets out in one document how the Growth Board arrangements have been working over the recent year in order that this can be demonstrated to outside bodies and Central Government.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Under the Terms of Reference for Cabinet, the Constitution states that it may exercise the Council's functions as Local Planning Authority and receive reports on strategic planning matters, applications for, approval/designation, consultation/referendums revocations (or recommend revocation) of neighbourhood plans and orders, (except to the extent that those functions are by law the responsibility of the Council or delegated to the Service Director: Regulatory).
- 9.2 The preparation of statutory plans is guided by a range of acts and associated regulations including the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the Localism Act 2011. All local planning authorities are bound by a statutory Duty to Co-operate on cross-border planner matters.
- 9.3 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation) Act 1990 sets out statutory requirements for the designation and review of Conservation Areas.
- 9.4 Agreeing the proposed MOU relating to the Hertfordshire Growth Board falls within the scope of Cabinet's Terms of Reference as set out at 9.1 above. However, any future agreement to prepare one or more joint development plan documents would, as per

Regulation 4(4C) of the 2000/2853 Regulations, be a function that is not to be sole responsibility of the Cabinet and could be referred to Council for agreement. Cabinet are requested to consider whether this issue should be referred on to Full Council to apprise it of matters potentially informing a decision it may be asked to make in the future.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no new financial implications arising from this report. The costs of preparing the Local Plan and running the examination are reviewed on a regular basis, and are reported through the quarterly revenue monitoring reports to Cabinet.
- 10.2 The general costs of preparing Supplementary Planning Documents, responding to consultations on neighbouring authorities' Plans, neighbourhood plans and Government consultations and the other activities identified in this report are met through existing revenue budgets or benefit from external funding or other arrangements to recover costs.
- 10.3 The Government has confirmed for 2019/20 that funding is available for local planning authorities (LPAs) in respect of neighbourhood planning. LPAs can claim £20,000 once a date has been set for a referendum following a successful examination. Area designation funding has not been available for the last years to the Council as it has already designated more than 5 areas.
- 10.4 The financial risks associated with planning were reviewed and updated as part of the budget-setting cycle for 2019/20. Risks are identified in relation to potential additional costs associated with progressing the Plan or any future challenge to it.
- 10.5 The Conservation Area work identified in Section 8.4 above is funded through an existing, approved revenue budget. Any bids to support future work, including any consequential Conservation Area Reviews (or similar) recommended by the appointed consultant, will be considered through the budget-setting process for 2020/21 (and beyond). Any formal Conservation Area reviews would be subject to public consultation.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Sustainable Development of the District and the Local Plan are both Cabinet Top Risks. The Sustainable Development of the District has a sub-risk that covers the risks arising from the duty to co-operate with neighbouring authorities.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.2 There are not considered to be any direct equality issues arising from this report. Future individual schemes or considerations may well be subject to appropriate review to ensure they comply with latest equality legislative need. Any risks and opportunities identified will also be subject to assessment for impact on those that share a protected characteristic.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to this report.

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are no new human resource implications arising from the contents of this report. Workload and vacancies are monitored on an on-going basis. Following recruitment of a graduate planning policy officer there is currently one vacancy within the Strategic Planning team and one officer on maternity leave

15. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Letter from NHDC to Local Plan Inspector

Appendix B – Consultation response to Hertfordshire Local Industrial Strategy

Appendix C – Consultation response to HCC Draft Developer Contributions Guide

Appendix D – Hertfordshire Growth Board MoU

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None



24 September 2019

Mr Simon Berkeley

c/o Ms. Louise St John Howe
By email only

Contact Officer: Nigel Smith
Direct Line: 01462 474847
E-mail: nigel.smith@north-herts.gov.uk

Dear Mr Berkeley,

Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031

Thank you for your letter dated 9 August 2019. This outlined a number of further questions and queries in addition to the five issues raised in your previous letter of 9 July 2019.

As requested, I am writing to advise of the Council's timetable to address these questions. The Council presently intends to respond in full to all of the queries raised across both of your letters by **Friday 29 November 2019** at the latest.

The Council acknowledges that this is some time from the date of your original letter. You will equally appreciate that your two letters ask for the Council's views on a wide range of issues that have necessitated a significant amount of additional work.

This includes a request for an 'appropriate and robust' review of Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) in light of the 2016-based population projections. This work has been commissioned from external consultants and is currently ongoing.

Work on the remaining issues and queries is generally well progressed. This involves on-going liaison with other parties as required including, but not necessarily limited to, Hertfordshire County Council in their role as education authority.

We anticipate having provisional answers to each of the individual queries during October. However, it will then be necessary to review these holistically to inform the Council's position in the round. This will include taking advice from Counsel to the extent considered appropriate.

Political control of the Council changed in May 2019 and we have a new joint administration between the Labour & Co-operative and Liberal Democratic parties. This followed a long-period of Conservative control of the Council throughout the Local Plan examination / process to that point.

We remain in something of a transitional period where it has been necessary to bring Members who did not have direct or in-depth involvement in earlier stages of the Plan rapidly 'up to speed'. They are determined to gain a full understanding of the issues and timetables associated with key projects they have inherited from the previous administration and to ensure they address the priorities they have identified as best they can.

It is therefore necessary to allow sufficient time for appropriate briefing on and consideration of the provisional answers identified above. In turn this will assist with obtaining the political clearance that is required for any response to be submitted for your consideration.

Finally we have allowed for a small margin of flexibility. In particular this allows for the fact that wider (political) events may impact upon the availability of the Council's senior leadership and / or key officers to consider these matters during October and November 2019.

In the context above we have sought to identify a realistic but pragmatic deadline for responding. We are acutely aware that to provide you with a target date and then miss it could adversely impact your programming of this and other examinations in which you are involved.

I would like to assure you that this work is viewed corporately as a high priority. If the Council is in a position to submit its full response ahead of the date above it will make every effort to do so.

Equally, the outcomes of this additional work remain unknown at this stage. We will update you at the earliest opportunity if:

- i. the work necessitated by your various requests raises any issues that require further consideration prior to submitting a response; and / or
- ii. there are any other currently unforeseen circumstances or delays that would substantively affect the timetable above.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Paul Clark
Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Planning & Transport
North Hertfordshire District Council



4th October 2019

Hertfordshire LEP
One Garden City
Broadway
Letchworth Garden City
SG6 3BF

Our Ref: Herts LIS Response
Your Ref:

Contact Officer : Andrew Figgis
Direct Line : 01462 474477
E-mail : andrew.figgis@north-herts.gov.uk

By email

Dear Sirs,

Hertfordshire Local Industrial Strategy: Draft for consultation: September 2019

Thank you for providing North Hertfordshire District Council the opportunity to comment on the Draft Hertfordshire Local Industrial Strategy. We note that you have requested comments via your on-line survey to specific questions. Given that we also have a number of general comments on the draft strategy, we also wish to submit our response as set out in this letter.

General comments

North Hertfordshire District Council welcomes the new Local Industrial strategy and is broadly in agreement with its themes and priorities. There are some areas, however, where we feel a different emphasis or clarification is required.

In general, the Strategy pre and post 2031 refers to incremental growth focused on existing settlements. To date, we have seen little activity from the LEP in North Hertfordshire and feel that considerable scope exists in our area to develop up to and beyond 2031, taking advantage of North Hertfordshire's strategic position in relation to London, Cambridge, the Oxford Cambridge Arc and the A1/A505 corridors, both incrementally and in development of new carefully selected areas.

In relation to skills, the strategy contains great aspirations for upskilling those at the higher end of the academic ladder, but little reference is made to those lower skilled and less able-to-be-skilled people who require still jobs. Although North Hertfordshire 'imports' lower skilled workers, many are resident in our community. Finding a solution to the second major challenge identified in the Strategy is key to reducing the inequalities in our communities. We are not convinced that the Strategy goes far enough in this respect.

Outlined below are our specific comments in relation to the consultation questions.

Question1 – Productivity & Inclusive Growth:

We agree that productivity (or more precisely the lack of commercial investment) in Hertfordshire is a serious challenge to economic growth and wellbeing. It felt that the sustainability of our towns in Hertfordshire as commercial, cultural and social centres are of equal importance for consideration.

We also agree that that disparity in the prosperity of different communities is a serious and worsening problem and that this also needs to be addressed.

North Hertfordshire District Council, Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire, SG6 3JF

Question 2 – Challenges & Growth Scenarios:

Much of Hertfordshire is bounded by the London Green Belt. This limits the areas for commercial or residential expansion to the existing town areas or non-green belt areas largely in the north and north-east of the county.

To date residential requirements have been favoured over commercial use in towns, not least by the use of PDRs by the private sector. This undermines the economic fabric of the towns which in turn endangers their social fabric as falling footfall and out commuting render the town centres redundant in terms of retail commerce.

The most desirable scenario is undoubtedly the first. The challenges of scenario 1 are firstly to locate and develop sites in strategic areas of Hertfordshire which are going to meet the needs of larger companies and more importantly growing local companies, and secondly to retain those areas of commercial land within towns and to encourage through sympathetic planning, the development of sustainable employment areas. This will allow local services to grow locally, encourage footfall in the town centres allowing the town centre businesses to adapt to the needs of the 21st century. This will allow each town centre to retain and adapt an identity of its own in the post retail world.

The challenge of the second scenario is to provide the infrastructure to cope with the out commuting and inflow of services and is in effect the mirror image of the first. That said the development of strategic sites must be undertaken with an eye for sustainable transport of both people and goods and liaison with national bodies to ensure that the correct transport provisions are in place to accompany the developments.

The Strategy makes little reference to the location of some of the key knowledge based industries such as Johnson Matthey and Sartorius in North Hertfordshire and opportunities that northern Hertfordshire can play in terms of its location in relation to the Oxford- Cambridge Arc, and links with the Luton enterprise zone.

Question 3 – Strategic Themes:

We feel that the strategic themes are the right ones to consider, going forward, in particular Theme 5 relating to the development and redevelopment of commercial space and Theme 2, the revitalisation of our towns. Letchworth Garden City suffers the worst disparities in community wellbeing of any of the Hertfordshire towns. Reference should also be given to the potential opportunity of planning for further new settlements within Hertfordshire, as there is a limit to how much further the existing towns can continue to grow incrementally.

In terms of Theme 3 We feel that the development of sustainable clusters should be encourage with reference to the **rail** system (rather than just A1 corridor), to encourage sustainable commuting and transport.

We welcome the reference to the east- west growth corridors in Theme 4, and the opportunity to improve such connectivity. However we express concern about the lack of reference to a northern corridor along the A505 and the opportunity this link provides in terms of working with neighbouring authorities in linking with the London Luton Airport Enterprise Zone to west and Stanstead Airport to the east and northwards towards Bedford and Cambridge.

Question 4 – Ideas Foundation:

The key priority for Hertfordshire is to create the environment to encourage a critical mass of businesses involved in R & D to locate in the County. The key commodity of these companies is the expertise of their staff. The environment needs to be attractive to their employees not only

in terms of ease of access (perhaps from London, Cambridge or further afield), but also the working environment and environs with a suitably academic campus atmosphere to attract the top talent.

Whilst the A1 corridor may look to 'major' in aerospace and bioscience, the A505 corridor and railway line towards Cambridge is already emerging as the location for high technology engineering and bioscience, with Johnson Matthey, Sartorius and Mettler Toledo in Royston and the Melbourn Science Park home to TTP and Astra Zeneca etc. al. We feel that the strategy should show aspirations towards supporting the area from Hitchin to Royston as a key part of the local and regional economy.

Question 5 - People:

The linkage between Higher Education, universities, industry and schools is paramount in upskilling the population and almost as importantly, instilling the ambition in people to follow a career path to higher skilled, high productivity jobs. The key to inclusive growth, one of the main challenges of this paper, is access for all to the means of raising skills levels. This strategy should not only address the high end top research area, but even more importantly address the relative skills deficit of some of the lower earning parts of the community.

Therefore, for example the 'university outposts' themes could be extended to Anglia Ruskin University in the East to provide facilities in the south and east of the county as well as with the local colleges.

Outreach from beacons such as the Stevenage Biotech, the Rothamstead research establishment, Public Health England, Stansted and Luton Airports, MMC facilities in Hemel Hempstead and Gilston and the aerospace engineering industry in Stevenage should be made to schools to instil the ambition in young people to follow a high value career path.

Employment and Skills Programmes attached to major construction projects should be coordinated to provide a continuous learning experience for apprentices. Likewise, the promotion of apprenticeships addressed particularly at those who do not wish to go to university should be encouraged as a part of an overall programme to raise the skills levels of the less well-off and address the issue of inclusive growth which is one of the two main challenges of this strategy.

Question 6 – Infrastructure:

We recognise the value of the specific projects mentioned in the strategy and all have merit. However, there needs to be some recognition of how these will contribute to the long term goals of reduced emissions, increased long term growth and improvement in the quality of life. Reference should also be made to the strategic aims and objectives of the Hertfordshire LTP4.

Given the amount of house building proposed in Hertfordshire in the period to 2032 and beyond, the answer is not necessarily to build more roads, but to change behaviours and modes of transport. Indeed, the sustainability of some developments is predicated on the use of sustainable transport and investment should be focused towards making provision for such infrastructure to encourage modal shift.

The themes of digital connectivity and local power supply must be explored and the advancement of 5G should be extended as far as practically feasible to all domestic and commercial areas of Hertfordshire.

Effort should also be focused on raising Hertfordshire's profile with the National Grid and other key infrastructure providers to ensure that new developments include advanced local power generation and battery storage facilities. Efforts should also be made to provide funding to

'pump-prime' the National Grid's upgrading of local power substations to enable domestic vehicle charging facilities for new and existing premises to be viable.

Question 7- Business Environment:

As local authorities, the requirement most persistently cited as a problem by business is lack of suitable business premises for either for establishment or expansion. Hertfordshire including North Herts has suffered chronic underinvestment in its commercial stock. The advent of the new MEES regulations in 2024 will render many places unrentable, although owners are happy to landbank premises in the hope of eventual residential development. Much of the commercial space in Hertfordshire is also sited where it is for historic reasons and this is not necessarily ideal for modern uses, an example being Wilbury Way in Hitchin, where accessibility problems have become a major constraint on growth and investment.

Local authorities need to work with the LEP and other bodies to identify land suitable for redevelopment and development as modern commercial space, both for expanding and incoming companies. Without these high growth companies, the second and third tier suppliers who are often the commercial lifeblood of the local economy will suffer and could turn into decline. We therefore consider the first priority in this section to be the most important.

Question 8 - Place:

Much of the strategy is geared towards revitalisation of the New Towns of Hertfordshire and we strongly support the third priority that Letchworth needs to develop a new focus, in partnership with the Heritage Foundation.

However, there is also a key priority for Hertfordshire's older towns to retain their positions and functions as the economic, social and cultural hubs of our communities. Each has its own unique character and local residents and businesses should be enabled to develop funded strategies to re-orientate and re-energise their town post retail dominance and prepare for the future. We therefore consider that the sixth priority, re-energising the high streets with the help of town councils, BIDs and other local stakeholders, is the most important priority.

Question 9 – Next Steps:

Although we understand that no resource is as yet available to Hertfordshire, we would hope that in the fullness of time some central funding may become available. North Hertfordshire will consider the synergies with the LEP Industrial Strategy when preparing our own strategies and setting our budgets, will and work with public and private sector investors to maximise leveraged funding possibilities. We will also consider committing staff time to specific projects and working positively with the LEP and other partners and stakeholders to maximise benefits.

North Hertfordshire look forward to a constructive and proactive working relationship with the LEP as it progresses the Local Industrial Strategy.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Keith Hoskins

Executive Member for Enterprise and Co-operative Development
North Hertfordshire District Council



20 September 2019

Sarah McLaughlin
Head of Growth & Infrastructure Unit
Hertfordshire County Council

Contact Officer: Nigel Smith
Direct Line: 01462 474847
E-mail: nigel.smith@north-herts.gov.uk

By email only

Dear Sarah,

Re: Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Planning Obligations Toolkit

Thank-you for providing the opportunity to comment on the proposed update to your planning obligations toolkit. This guidance is welcomed and supported in principle.

Officers were informally consulted upon the emerging toolkit earlier this year. Although some changes have been made to the documents in the meantime, our substantive concerns remain. Our earlier comments are appended to this letter and we ask again that they be taken into consideration as appropriate. In doing so, we recognise that the anticipated adoption of our Local Plan has since slipped and that there have been some revisions to the proposed charges in the latest iteration of the toolkit.

We are also considering a joint response with the other Hertfordshire local planning authorities which identifies a number of detailed, technical concerns. This will be provided separately if and when agreed.

In addition to and building upon the above, we make a small number of further comments.

Paragraph 2.2.1, which recognises that infrastructure requirements should be properly tested through the local plan process is welcomed. We similarly support the statements at paragraph 1.2.2 that the responsibility of attributing weight to the toolkit and the requests for contributions arising from it rests with the local planning authorities.

We anticipate that the County Council will approach negotiations to individual applications in a way which reflects these words. This should include a genuine willingness to compromise and agree solutions where this will facilitate sustainable growth. We aim to produce a draft of our Developer Contributions SPD by the end of the year. This will provide further guidance on the District Council's proposed approach.

Our recently published Housing Delivery Test Action Plan recognises that the process of completing legal agreements is a key constraint to determining planning applications and delivering homes. We trust that the County Council has or will put in place appropriate resources to ensure that contributions arising from the toolkit can be efficiently identified, negotiated and agreed and then translated into completed legal agreements.

As previously, we remain committed to an effective working relationship between our authorities that delivers genuinely sustainable development in the District. We welcome the opportunity for an ongoing dialogue on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Paul Clark
Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Planning and Transport
North Hertfordshire District Council



3 April 2019

Sarah McLaughlin
Head of Growth & Infrastructure Unit
Hertfordshire County Council

Contact Officer: Nigel Smith
Direct Line: 01462 474847
E-mail: nigel.smith@north-herts.gov.uk

By email only

Dear Sarah,

Re: Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Planning Obligations Toolkit

Thank-you for providing the opportunity to informally comment on the proposed toolkit documents at this early stage in their development. We will provide any detailed comments on their content at the formal consultation stage. At this point, we would like to raise our significant concerns as officers over the County Council's overall approach to this matter.

We are particularly concerned by the scale of the proposed charges in the toolkit. We have examined an indicative scheme of 100 homes. This suggests the new toolkit will result in requested contributions more than quadrupling compared to the original 2008 toolkit. This appears to be borne out in recent HCC responses to current planning applications. The proposed revised charges are also significantly in excess of the rates examined through the viability study for our emerging Local Plan.

Our own Local Plan policies must be produced within the framework established by relevant legislation and guidance. They are subject to extensive scrutiny through the examination process before being adopted. Once adopted, and whilst they remain up-to-date, our Development Management team should approve applications that accord with the plan without delay (as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraph 11).

The NPPF further requires that plans should set out the contributions expected from development (paragraph 34) while planning applications that comply with up-to-date policies should be assumed to be viable (paragraph 56).

This advice is reinforced by the technical Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which is clear that documents other than the Plan should not be used to set rates or charges which have not been established through development plan policy.

Our new plan for the period to 2031 is being examined. Specific hearing sessions have been held on housing, infrastructure and viability matters. At the point of writing, there has been no HCC objection to our proposed affordable housing targets or the assumptions underpinning our viability evidence. Similarly, there has been no request by HCC for any alternate schedule or scale of (potential) charges on new development to be examined.

Given the above context, we cannot support the imposition of the proposed new charges as *de facto* planning policy by HCC outside of this ongoing process; either as a general matter

of principle or, in particular, where they have the potential to adversely impact upon proposals and concepts which have been fairly and transparently examined and upon which applicants have a reasonable expectation that we will base our s106 requests.

District Councils are subject to various Government performance measures. These relate to the determination of planning applications as well as measures of housing delivery. We are required to identify measures to speed-up housing delivery and will be adversely judged if these are not effective. Potential sanctions include being placed in special measures, or having to apply a more liberal approach to the determination of planning applications.

The negotiation of s106 legal agreements involving HCC (and other parties) is already a significant cause of delay in the system. We are taking steps to address this in consultation with your officers and we anticipate that a number of relevant measures will be reflected in our forthcoming Housing Delivery Test Action Plan.

We consider that, if implemented, the new charging schedule will have a significant adverse impact upon our efforts to speed housing delivery. We anticipate a substantial increase in site-specific viability appraisals and developer challenges to s106 requests if the toolkit has not been subject to appropriate viability testing or independent, public scrutiny. These delays will be compounded if HCC adopts an intractable negotiating position seeking toolkit requirements in full and / or insists upon affording weight or status to the toolkit that does not reflect the factors outlined above.

We hope to progress our new Plan to adoption during 2019. In accordance with the statutory framework for determining planning applications and Government guidance, we will have to give precedence to properly tested requirements in future negotiations.

Our viability study indicates there may be 'headroom' to realise developer contributions over and above the baseline assumptions referred to above, particularly on greenfield sites. However, we will not compromise the provision of affordable housing, or undermine the properly tested principles upon which the Council has proposed removing land from the Green Belt, where untested HCC requests for contributions adversely impact upon the viability or deliverability of schemes.

Your toolkit and responses to individual planning applications will remain a material consideration in their determination and afforded appropriate weight but we can give no guarantee that this Council will insist upon your demands being met in full. In this context we welcome, from the recent PAS workshops, the recognition of the importance of affordable housing and the potential to utilise alternate funding sources to deliver infrastructure.

We remain committed to an effective working relationship between our authorities that delivers genuinely sustainable development in the District. We welcome the opportunity for an ongoing dialogue on this matter. In particular we wish to better understand the additional or alternate sources of infrastructure funding that are available to HCC to fill any future shortfalls, and to determine how we may assist you in accessing these.

Yours sincerely,

Nigel Smith
Strategic Planning Manager

Simon Ellis
Development & Conservation Manager

HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD

Memorandum of Understanding

October 2019



Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Broxbourne Borough Council
Dacorum Borough Council
East Herts District Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Hertsmere Borough Council
North Hertfordshire District Council
St Albans City and District Council
Stevenage Borough Council
Three Rivers District Council
Watford Borough Council
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

The local authorities listed above comprising of county council, district councils and borough councils are together referred to as “Local Authorities”. The Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership is referred to as the “LEP”. The Local Authorities and the LEP are collectively referred to in this Memorandum of Understanding as the “Partners”. A list of the Partners and their principal addresses are listed at Schedule 1 “the Partners”.

1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is for the Partners to:

- Raise awareness of their joint working intent to Hertfordshire residents, partners, businesses and central government;
- commit to continued collaborative place-based working across Hertfordshire;
- set out the joint working intention between the Partners; and
- demonstrate how they will work together as equal stakeholders with different roles to manage future growth in Hertfordshire.

2. Background

2.1. Since September 2018, the Partners have been working collaboratively through the Hertfordshire Growth Board – an alliance consisting of the Leaders of all of the Local Authorities and the Chair of the LEP. Together, the Partners are responding to the place leadership and growth challenges that face Hertfordshire now and in the future and are committed to ensuring that the Partners work in a proactive, positive and inclusive way.

2.2. To date, the Partners have identified the following growth challenges:

- demand for residential homes of a variety of types and tenures;
- need for infrastructure and local services serving both new and existing residents;
- securing jobs and inward business investment within Hertfordshire;
- responding to growth pressures from outside Hertfordshire in a considered and appropriate way;

- pressure on green belt and providing a sustainable and high-quality environment, and
- the threat climate change poses to the county and its residents.

Through the exploration of the joint place-based ambitions that the Partners have been developing, working together to achieve this challenge will result in positive benefits for Hertfordshire, now and in the future.

2.3. The Partners are keen to ensure that growth delivers for both current and future Hertfordshire residents and supports a thriving county. The three pillars of the Hertfordshire Growth Board will be people, place and prosperity. People means enabling happy, healthy, diverse communities who feel they belong in Hertfordshire and can benefit from its successes. Place means making places contribute to people's health, happiness, and wellbeing without compromising the future or our environment. Prosperity means delivering Hertfordshire's contribution to the UK and national economy while maintaining and further developing a sustainable local economy that creates value for Hertfordshire residents.

2.4. Hertfordshire is a net contributor to the UK economy, and good growth is key to ensuring that the Partners continue to build on that while locally providing good quality jobs, skills, and opportunities for all Hertfordshire residents. Hertfordshire's location between London and the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and its unique 'offer' make the Partners perfectly placed to work with government and co-create ideas and solutions to meet the challenges and maintain the momentum and growth of UK plc that benefits all of Hertfordshire. However, in parts of Hertfordshire our productivity is falling behind the national average, and without change, we risk not being able to deliver on local and national economic objectives.

2.5. This Memorandum of Understanding builds on a history of successful partnership working in Hertfordshire on issues like property, infrastructure and planning as well as the two emerging joint strategic spatial planning partnerships in North East Central Herts and South West Herts.

2.6. This Memorandum of Understanding sets out:

- the core objectives and aims of the Hertfordshire Growth Board; and
 - the principles of collaboration for Hertfordshire
- subject to the terms and conditions set out within this Memorandum of Understanding.

3. Core Objectives and Aims

3.1. The core objective of the Hertfordshire Growth Board is to respond to the key growth challenges facing Hertfordshire. The Partners have agreed a set of place-based ambitions and agreed to work together on delivering those ambitions through the future work programme:

- Strategic planning and positioning – the need to raise Hertfordshire's profile and secure central government support for scaled and accelerated delivery, helping to overcome the challenges faced by the local plan system, and growing strategic employment and housing corridors within Hertfordshire;

- Homes – the need to overcome market failure to deliver the housing Hertfordshire needs. This includes more social and affordable housing; good and inclusive growth that delivers sustainable communities, housing, and places into the future; and accommodating housing and economic growth with sustainable construction and excellent design that does not compromise the attractiveness of our existing places;
- Infrastructure – the need to access sufficient forward funding to put ‘infrastructure in first’ ahead of development delivery, reduce our carbon footprint, and plan for active and sustainable travel; and
- Economy – the need to further unlock the potential of our key sectors, stimulate new sectors, and create quality local jobs growth, in alignment with the emerging Local Industrial Strategy.

3.2. The Hertfordshire Growth Board will support the Partners to lead on, facilitate and support each other to collectively fulfil this core objective.

3.3. The Hertfordshire Growth Board, through its future work programme commitments aims to:

- Set out the shared vision for place and growth in Hertfordshire and the strategic priorities that will guide how the Partners collectively respond to demographic, economic and social challenges and work together for the continued success of a thriving Hertfordshire;
- Identify investment opportunities and potential sources of funding, including from central government, from private sources and locally, and where appropriate agree investment locally for the benefit of Hertfordshire;
- Speak with one voice to central government, academia, delivery partners, business and Hertfordshire residents, taking advantage of its place narrative and the scale of twelve Partners coming together;
- Agree and deliver on Partners’ shared priorities for infrastructure investment and development now and in the future;
- Lead on developing and securing the emerging agreement with central government to support infrastructure and housing, engaging with central government to secure buy-in, and acting as the accountable body for governance and delivery;
- Support the North East Central Herts and South West Herts planning partnerships and help facilitate strategic alignment of the joint planning work undertaken with each other and adjacent Local Planning Authorities.

4. Principles of Partnership

4.1. The Partners recognise the following benefits of stronger partnership working on place-based working in Hertfordshire:

- Building on the strengths of the two-tier system of local government, delivering at a local level while solving problems at a larger scale;
- Identifying and delivering local needs in collaboration with other strategic partners such as NHS, Police Constabulary and local businesses;

- Responding to challenges that extend beyond local authority boundaries such as strategic infrastructure delivery, traffic congestion, air quality, carbon reduction and affordable housing;
- Providing leadership of place at a county wide scale, helping to deliver joined up strategic and spatial planning appropriate for Hertfordshire's villages, towns, and cathedral city;
- Delivering at scale, with greater impact (the sum of what the Partners deliver together being greater than the sum of each individual authority's part) and with a single voice and message that commands the attention of government, investors and residents.

4.2. The Partners agree to the following principles to achieve the core objectives and aims set out in paragraph 3 above:

- The shared growth agenda – the Partners will individually work towards the Partners' shared growth challenges and ambitions, and in alignment with a collective coherent growth programme. The Partners may take advantage of their collective scale to maximise impact and shall endeavour to work across departments, authorities and boundaries;
- Strategic alignment – the Partners will seek strategic alignment with the emerging Hertfordshire Local Industrial Strategy, the emerging North East Central Herts and South West Herts Joint Strategic Spatial Plans, other groups and forums within Hertfordshire, regional bodies and neighbouring areas;
- Governance – the Partners will collectively secure the right governance, scrutiny, and transparency arrangements for the Hertfordshire Growth Board and underlying programmes, mindful of our local political environment and two-tier system of government. Local identity is one of Hertfordshire's strengths and the Partners will ensure that local identities and voices are not lost, and that pragmatic and flexible policies reflect local need;
- Designed around places – the Partners will support the development of Joint Strategic Spatial Plans and adopt a place-based delivery approach that addresses our shared challenges – connectivity, affordable homes, inclusive economic growth, protecting the environment, tackling climate change, and building healthy, safe communities;
- Collaboration – the Partners will ensure that they use and support existing successful examples of joint working across Hertfordshire where appropriate and will share and build on the substantial best practice and expertise that has been developed by each individual Partner. Each Partner will work effectively with its stakeholders, including residents, the private sector and academia; and
- Programme governance approach – the Partners will adopt robust project and programme management disciplines to bring pace, momentum and manage progress in achieving growth outcomes; and
- Resourcing – Partners will work together and with Government to put the resources that are necessary in place to deliver the core ambitions of the programme.

5. Scope of Memorandum of Understanding

- 5.1. The Partners intend to work together to enable good growth in Hertfordshire, subject to each individual Partner making decisions in accordance with its own decision-making process and the right to exercise its powers accordingly. Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding shall affect the sovereignty of any individual Partner.
- 5.2. Each individual Partner agrees that the following shall remain in the domain of each individual Partner:
 - decisions regarding housing and employment numbers, targets, and sites shall remain the responsibility of each Local Authority;
 - development management shall remain the responsibility of each Local Authority; and
 - discharging any function currently the responsibility of any Partner will remain the responsibility of that partner exercising that function.
- 5.3. The Growth Board will operate in accordance with its agreed Terms of Reference.

6. Term and Termination

- 6.1. This Memorandum of Understanding shall commence on the date of the final signature of the Partners;
- 6.2. This Memorandum of Understanding shall wholly terminate if the Hertfordshire Growth Board is dissolved by a majority vote.
- 6.3. Any individual Partner may withdraw from this Memorandum of Understanding by giving 30 days written notice to the Hertfordshire Growth Board. The future of any projects and work streams that the individual Partner is involved in at the date of withdrawal shall be agreed by the Hertfordshire Growth Board and any individual Partner agrees that involvement may continue (financial or otherwise) until the end of the project or work stream unless agreed otherwise.

7. Variation

- 7.1. This Memorandum of Understanding may be varied by written agreement of all of the Partners.
- 7.2. The Partners shall review this Memorandum of Understanding on an annual basis.

8. Charges and Liabilities

- 8.1. Unless expressly agreed by the Hertfordshire Growth Board, each Partner shall bear their own costs and expenses incurred in complying with their obligations under this Memorandum of Understanding.

9. Status

- 9.1. This Memorandum of Understanding is not intended to be legally binding and no legal obligations or legal rights shall arise between the parties from this Memorandum of Understanding.
- 9.2. This Memorandum of Understanding cannot override the statutory duties and powers of the Partners.

- 9.3. Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding shall constitute a partnership or joint venture between any of the Partners.
- 9.4. Notwithstanding paragraph 9.1 above, each Partner covenants with the other Partners that they shall act in good faith towards the others and agrees to work together in accordance with this Memorandum of Understanding.

Signed by:

Local Authority	Leader	Chief Executive	Date
Broxbourne Borough Council			
Dacorum Borough Council			
East Herts District Council			
Hertfordshire County Council			
Hertsmere Borough Council			
North Hertfordshire District Council			
St Albans District Council			
Stevenage Borough Council			
Three Rivers District Council			
Watford Borough Council			
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council			
Local Enterprise Partnership	Chair	Chief Executive	Date
Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership			

Schedule 1 – The Partners

BROXBOURNE BOROUGH COUNCIL whose principal address is: Bishops College, Churchgate, Cheshunt EN8 9XG

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL whose principal address is: The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead HP1 1HH

EAST HERTS DISTRICT COUNCIL whose principal address is: Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8EQ

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL whose principal address is at County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8DE

HERTSMERE BOROUGH COUNCIL whose principal address is: Civic Offices, Elstree Way, Borehamwood WD6 1WN

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL whose principal address is: Council Offices, Gernon Rd, Letchworth Garden City SG6 3JF

ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL whose principal address is: Civic Centre, St Peter's St, St Albans AL1 3JE

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL whose principal address is: Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage SG1 1HN

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL whose principal address is: Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth WD3 1RL

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL whose principal address is: Town Hall, Watford WD17 3EX

WELYWN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL whose principal address is: The Campus, Welwyn Garden City AL8 6AE

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP whose principal address is: One Garden City, Broadway, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3BF

**COUNCIL
21 NOVEMBER 2019**

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: COUNCIL PLAN 2020 - 2025 AND COUNCIL OBJECTIVES FOR 2020-2025

REPORT OF THE: POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

COUNCIL PRIORITY: ATTRACTIVE AND THRIVING / PROSPER AND PROTECT / RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report proposes a refreshed Council Plan for adoption.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Full Council reviews and approves the draft complete Council Plan; which provides a summary of objectives and of activity to support the progression of the following Council Objectives:

- Be a more welcoming and inclusive **council**,
- Build thriving and resilient **communities**,
- Respond to challenges to the **environment**,
- Enable an enterprising and co-operative **economy**,
- Support the delivery of good quality and affordable **homes**.

2.2 That Full Council adopts the following document-

- Appendix A - Council Plan 2020-2025, including Proposed Actions and Achievements of the Council in 2018/19.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Council plan is a key element of the corporate business planning process, as a high level strategic document it sets out the Council's priorities for the next year. As an overarching policy framework document it guides and influences the use of Council resources; providing a focus for activities, plans and services the Council provide.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1 No external consultation has been undertaken in the preparation of this report. The new administration has considered and proposed some draft Objectives, which have been reviewed and approved by Cabinet with further amendment. This follows Overview and Scrutiny Committee consideration of 16 July 2019. Executive Members have now considered the proposed priorities with the Senior Leadership team. A Member workshop took place on 18 September 2019 to consult and agree on the proposed actions for each of the objective priority areas. The final draft of the Council Plan is recommended to Full Council for adoption.

6. FORWARD PLAN

6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 27 June 2019.

7. BACKGROUND

7.1 The Corporate Business planning process dictates the Council's high level objectives are determined alongside consideration of budget position (Medium Term Financial Strategy) of the authority. At the meeting of the 30 July 2019, Cabinet agreed to amend the Council's objectives.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 The Council Plan attached as Appendix A provides a basic overview of objectives. The finalised draft of the Plan will need to identify the actions the Council will carry out to ensure the Council Plan is being delivered. Budgets must then be allocated to enable their achievement; this is known as 'policy led' budgeting and enables the authority to best reflect not only services it must deliver by statute, but those over which it has a degree of discretion.

8.2 The Council Plan therefore needs to reflect any recent changes in:

- Legislation, which may require changes to existing services, or delivery of new services.
- Capacity, since the authority has reduced headcount over recent years whilst statutory requirements placed on the authority have continued to rise.
- Financial constraints – work on the future funding of Local Authorities through a Fair Funding Formula and 75% retention of Business rates has not progressed in line with the original timetable. Alongside the delay to Central Government carrying out a 4 year Spending Review, this means that there is significant uncertainty over funding over the medium term. This is covered in more detail in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, but means that the Council has to prudently plan what it can

afford to deliver until there is greater certainty. The emphasis for Council spend remains the day to day service delivery. Firstly of those which the Council has a statutory duty to provide and secondly those that are determined as a Council priority to be funded.

- Population – the need to plan for an ageing population which requires health, social care and Council service providers to consider how necessary support can be provided together.
- Patterns and location of deprivation have changed in the past five years (evidenced by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation) so we should ensure that our services, and how they may be delivered, respond accordingly to these; in times of increased financial constraint it is all the more important that limited resources, both those of the Council and its partner agencies working in the local community, are directed to areas of greater need.

The Council Plan will therefore need to highlight key issues and aims of the district. The Plans will need to set out the context in which the local authority operates, its ambitions and the links to the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The format of the Plan has been reviewed to provide an easy summary of Objectives. The priorities once finalised shall provide the key information. The Council Plan will inform the subsequent agreement of the Service Plan prepared by Senior Management Team and subsequent Directorate Action Plans.

8.3 Having liaised with the administration prior to finalising the report the following Council Objectives for 2020-2025 are proposed:

- Be a more welcoming and inclusive **council**,
- Build a thriving and resilient **communities**,
- Respond to challenges to the **environment**,
- Enable an enterprising and co-operative **economy**,
- Support the delivery of good quality and affordable **homes**.

8.4 Subject to Cabinet’s consideration, the Council Plan and proposed actions was further developed at the member workshop, and will be referred to Council for adoption on 21 November 2019. All projects included in the Council Plan should be subject to the provision of sound business cases with specific targets established as they are introduced. The Council’s performance against these will be monitored and reported on a regular basis.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Cabinet’s terms of reference include at 5.6.35 the power, by recommendation “to advise the Council in the formulation of those policies within the Council’s terms of reference”.

9.2 Full Council’s terms of reference provide “approving or adopting the policy framework which at 4.2.1 (f) include “Priorities/ Objectives for the District.” The Council Plan 2020-2025 at Appendix A represents the objectives and priority areas of work.

9.3 The council objectives agreed for 2020-2025 onward will provide high level reference points that will assist the Council making clear and effective decisions.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 A number of the proposed actions detailed in Appendix B will require additional resource and costs to achieve. As part of the budget planning process it will be necessary to determine the ways that the actions can be achieved and the costs involved, There is likely to be a need to prioritise the actions, in terms of the extent to which they can be delivered and the timing of delivery, to ensure that the overall programme is affordable within the resources that the Council has available. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set a target for the delivery of net savings of £300k for 2020/21 (and a cumulative £900k per year by 2023/24), As this is a net target, this does allow for additional costs relating to new priorities but does require that these will increase the gross savings (efficiencies, income generation or service changes) that need to be delivered. As negative Revenue Support Grant will not be applied in 2020/21 this increases the funding available in that year. However it is still assumed that there will be a similar reduction in funding in the years thereafter. The forecast position in later years has been made worse by greater clarity over the expected withdrawal of New Homes Bonus funding.
- 10.2 The Council will continue to face difficult spending decisions in view of the current economic climate and the expected continuing reduction in government support in future years. The availability of funding will impact on the services that can be delivered. Individual projects will be costed to enable decisions to be made on the overall programme of activity that the Council can deliver.
- 10.3 The Council received significant capital funding from the housing stock transfer to settle (formerly North Herts Homes) (set-aside receipts). It has supplemented this with the receipts from the sale of surplus land and buildings (capital receipts). The strategy adopted by the Council has been to concentrate capital funding on those schemes that reduce revenue costs or generate income. Over the next five years it is forecast that the set-aside receipts will all be used, and therefore capital funding will have to come from capital receipts or borrowing. The availability of assets that can be sold to generate capital receipts is also reducing. It is therefore important that any agreed capital projects reflect corporate priorities, to ensure effective use of diminishing capital resources particularly in view of the fact that capital spend is also required to maintain existing service provision.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The adoption of the Council Plan and within it the Council's Objectives for 2020 - 2025 is a significant part of the Council's Business Planning processes for the next financial year. A robust Corporate Business Planning process that links the Council Plan with the Medium Term Financing Plan is key to managing the Council's identified Corporate Risk of "Managing the Council's Finances".

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2 In setting its Council Plan Objectives, the council is seeking to address equality implications in the services it provides and through the remainder of the Corporate Business Planning Process will carry out Equalities Impact Assessments for those Efficiency or Investment options that are taken forward.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to this report.

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are no additional human resource requirements arising from this report other than the capacity issue raised at paragraph 8.4. The resources needed to deliver services are considered and addressed through the Corporate Business Planning process. Once these objectives are agreed for retention, then these will be cascaded to staff with several reminders via Insight, the SCF and the intranet.

15. APPENDICES

Appendix A draft Council Plan 2020-2025, including Proposed actions and achievements of the Council in 2018/19.

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

Reuben Ayavoo, Policy and Community Engagement Manager
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Contributors:

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

17.1 None.



2020-25

COUNCIL PLAN

Working with our communities, *it's your Council*



FOREWORD BY THE LEADER



In May 2019 a new administration was formed bringing together Labour and Co-operative councillors and Liberal Democrat councillors. In this plan we are demonstrating how we are keeping the promises we made to you, our residents in the recent election.

In putting the plan together we have sought to use the skills and insights of all 49 councillors working with the professional advice of our officers. We trust you will find the plan readable and find in it a clear understanding of our vision and priorities as we ensure your Council provides the best services we can within the constraints of continuing government cuts to our resources.

Martin Stears-Handscomb
Leader of the Council

INTRODUCTION BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Council Plan and the Objectives are the cornerstone for how we organise and undertake our business. The Plan provides the policy context for our budget setting, shapes the services that we provide and how those services are delivered. Our Service Delivery Plan is the next layer of detail and gives specific details about what we are going to achieve and these feed through to detailed actions for the teams working to deliver services for our local community. The Plan is ambitious and at the same time needs to be realistic so that we can deliver what we promise.

David Scholes
Chief Executive, NHDC





Build thriving and resilient communities

Support the delivery of good quality and affordable homes

A MORE WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE COUNCIL

Respond to challenges to the environment

Enable an enterprising and co-operative economy

OUR VALUES

We will operate in line with the principles of a co-operative council. The Council will be one that builds the co-operative values of mutual support, accountability, fairness and responsibility into everything it does.

New organisational values have recently been adopted. These are expected to be demonstrated by staff and these values are embedded in our appraisal system to ensure our plan is delivered in a co-operative manner. The values (“We are”) are matched with corresponding behaviours for staff (“I am”). The values and behaviours are:-



PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Council plan sets out the priorities that the Council will address over the next five years.

The plan also lays out how North Hertfordshire District Council will achieve its aims for the district. Appendix A sets out the administration’s proposed actions and these will be supported by the more detailed Service Delivery Plan and supporting Action Plans on how these Objectives and actions will be delivered by the individual service areas. Appendix B also sets out the achievements of the Council in 2018/19.

OUR VISION

To make North Hertfordshire a district in which everyone who lives, works or visits is able to flourish.



OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Be a more welcoming and inclusive council;
- ✓ Build thriving and resilient communities;
- ✓ Respond to challenges to the environment;
- ✓ Enable an enterprising and co-operative economy;
- ✓ Support the delivery of good quality and affordable homes.

Be a more welcoming and inclusive council

This means:

We will engage with and welcome the contributions of residents, community groups and businesses; working collaboratively with local people.



Build thriving and resilient communities

This means:

We will work on frequent and regular opportunities to improve the partnership and relationship that the Council has with local citizens. Some of this will be achieved by change in culture, tone and communications but more will be done through direct measurable activity, intervention and consultation.

We will develop a range of innovative ways in which local communities, from small groups to whole towns and communities of interest can be encouraged to become more involved in supporting, planning, improving and maintaining local environments.

This work stream will focus particularly on engaging with young residents and those who are disadvantaged or in any way socially excluded, to ensure such innovations are fit for the future and imaginative in concept and delivery.



Respond to challenges to the environment

This means:

We will seek to provide a clean and safe environment, in consultation and partnership with local people. We will engage local people and organisations as we progress towards our target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030, whilst taking action to enable and encourage residents to minimise their own carbon impact. We will protect the natural and built environment through our planning policies and an effective green spaces strategy. We will take action against environmental crime and ensure that our approach to waste and recycling promotes the hierarchy of reduce, re-use, recycle. We will complete the elimination of single use plastics from the council and support reductions in their use across the district. We will work to improve the monitoring and management of air quality across the district, prioritising those areas where air quality is most in need of improvement



Enable an enterprising and co-operative economy

This means:

We will aim to become an increasingly innovative and inclusive Council, committed to generating community wealth, by seeking commercial and investment opportunities and through proactive engagement with a wider range of small and medium sized businesses to build a sustainable local economy. We will continue to engage with residents, staff and Councillors to continue to embrace modern working practices through the use of IT and a commitment to working towards a paperless Council whilst increasing the efficiency of services and access to them by residents.



Support the delivery of good quality and affordable housing

This means:

We will enable and support the delivery of good quality and affordable housing in the district, ensuring both new and existing housing is fit for purpose, including a commitment to consultation and ensuring communities have the infrastructure they need. We will build more effective relationships with local housing associations and recognise our role in the fight against homelessness. We will continue to support Parishes with Neighbourhood plans.



Appendix A: Proposed actions

Objective One - Be a more welcoming and inclusive council

- Ensure that individuals and community groups presenting petitions, grant applications, opinions or objections to Committees, Cabinet and Council are treated as welcome guests at all times and that Chairs are encouraged to take a flexible and enabling approach to their participation.
- Creating a programme of regular engagement and survey activities which will enable us to measure progress in how the Council's work with residents and community groups is perceived, and how it encourages new ideas for improvement.
- Keep the Council's Complaints Policy under review to ensure its fitness for purpose as a useable and accessible tool, including its website version and the publishing of results and statistics.
- The expansion of use and promotion of Town Talks and Councillors' Surgeries with particular focus on developing links with groups that have not traditionally engaged with these activities.
- Implement a "customer account" for customers to access specific information relating to them and to enable them to transact with the Council from a single log-on. To speed up processes for customers with the use of Artificial Intelligence.
- Ensure that the Council's website encourages public use and engagement, particularly in relation to the planning portal and other areas.

Objective Two - Build thriving and resilient communities

- Create a programme of regular engagement and survey activities which will enable us to measure progress in how the Council's work with residents and community groups is perceived, and how it encourages new ideas for improvement.
- To re-establish a programme of work with schools and local youth groups – especially for Local Democracy Week - to establish productive and active engagement with young people across the District.
- To work with the Licensing team, the Police and the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) to explore and resolve some of the issues of extreme caution relating to Community events.
- The Community Safety team to assist Councillors in re-establishing regular communications with police and other community safety partners.

Objective Three - Respond to challenges to the environment

- Exploring a range of ways in which local communities, including streets and neighbourhoods, can be encouraged to take some responsibility in supporting, improving and maintaining their local environment.
- Return to a 'business as usual' waste collection regime
- Increase recycling tonnages – target 60% for 2019/2020.
- Carry out waste composition analysis to understand waste streams better and enable a realistic food waste collection target for 2020/2021.
- Work with Urbaser to deliver service improvements to residents.
- Be a listening and engaging Waste and Recycling service.
- Identify the Council's current carbon foot print.
- Consult with the public and with interest groups on strategies for achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030.
- Identify the district's carbon foot print and in consultation with the public identify means by which the council can assist the residents and businesses of North Herts achieve the target of net zero emissions across the district by 2030.
- Work with cycling groups to produce a Cycling Plan to promote cycling, including the use of electric bicycles, as a means of transport and identify simple to remove barriers.
- Purchase of energy from renewable sources.
- It will consider Ultra Low Emission Vehicles for all future operational vehicles leased or purchased by the council and encourage contractors to adopt similar measures.
- Explore the opportunities for tree planting on the Council's land and to encourage private landowners to do so.
- Installing additional electric vehicle charging points in council car parks to ensure that every car park has charging points in at least 5% of spaces, with a minimum of two spaces per car park.
- Installation of on street electric vehicle charging points in on street parking bays in town centres (in agreement with the County Council).
- Install PV panels on council buildings where this is practical and economically viable.
- Maintain the provision of indoor leisure facilities as both a community service and a source of income to the council at present or better levels.
- End the program of removal of equipment from play areas with the exception of any locations where there is local support for removal.
- Investigate the potential for installing informal play items (beams, logs, etc.) in larger play areas where equipment has already been removed.

- Ensure that the local plan or supplementary planning guidance leads to the provision of sustainable and suitable play provision as part of all larger housing developments in the district.
- Explore opportunities to enhance the community use of the Fearnhill Sports Centre.
- Produce a plan identifying the specific indoor and outdoor leisure facility needs resulting from the projected developments in the local plan, including preparing proposals to a point where they can be used to secure appropriate developer funding when planning applications are submitted.
- Identify solutions to existing issues of capacity at Royston Leisure Centre and parking/access at Hitchin Swimming Centre.
- Agree a plan with Stevenage Leisure Limited (SLL) to eliminate single use plastics from Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools.
- Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Events 2-3 events per year.
- Discounts on garden waste charge for vulnerable residents.
- Greater utilisation of Herts Waste Partnership (HWP).
- Review our current approach to air pollution and how we might be able to take steps to improve air quality, including taking action to stop car/bus/taxi idling (particularly at schools).
- Council led environmental health action days (including dog fouling, fly tipping, dumping of waste).

Objective Four - Enable an enterprising and co-operative economy

- Ensure that the Council's income generating activities should never look to disadvantage non-profit or charitable community groups out of principle.
- We will encourage the development of co-operative businesses and enterprises within the District by providing or signposting advice services.
- Community Interest Companies (CIC), Social Enterprise and Cooperative opportunities will be considered alongside the conventional limited company structure, where appropriate.
- Support development of CIC, Social Enterprise and Cooperative opportunities in the community.
- Value will be attached to the benefits to the local community when investigating a commercial opportunity.

Objective Five - Support the delivery of good quality and affordable housing

- Identify opportunities for requiring better than building regulation thermal performance from new building in the district, including the potential for zero carbon houses.
- Support in every possible way the achievement of the climate change targets, particularly carbon reduction targets. This includes above all designing new developments to discourage car use and to encourage alternatives such as walking, cycling and using public transport.
- We will look at existing infrastructure to make it more ecologically friendly.
- Ensure that the local plan or supplementary planning guidance leads to the provision of sustainable and suitable play provision as part of all larger housing developments in the district.
- Seek local partnership with all Registered Social Landlords (RSL) to build more social homes.
- Support delivery of the homeless accommodation scheme in Letchworth.
- Prevention of homelessness through early intervention and engagement with local RSL's.
- Support development John Barker Place.
- Ensure new developments be designed to integrate them into existing communities, in particular ensuring that their infrastructure is appropriate.
- Developments must provide a full range of housing, private, self-build, and social rented, for families and single people, for young and old.
- Review of the Planning Code of Good Conduct.

Appendix B: Achievements of the Council in 2018/19

OBJECTIVE 1. Attractive and Thriving

To work with our partners to provide an attractive and safe environment for our residents where diversity is welcomed and disadvantaged people are supported.

- ✓ ATTRACTIVE ENVIRONMENT
- ✓ A SAFE ENVIRONMENT
- ✓ WELCOMING DIVERSITY
- ✓ SUPPORTING DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE



- Refurbished the Bancroft Gardens play area. The £75k project resulted in the installation of a new adventure climbing structure with a slide and a pendulum swing. In addition, a standing stone circle and boulders have been added to encourage more imaginative play.
- Opened a new skate park at Norton Common. The £140k project has resulted in the installation of a completely revamped skate park. It offers riders of all ages a range of ramps, ledges and banks, together with an exciting new bowl section.
- Completed the redevelopment of North Herts Leisure Centre to provide a new café, learner pool, wet changing areas and fitness studio.



OBJECTIVE 2: Prosper and Protect

To promote sustainable growth both within and where it affects our district to ensure economic and social opportunities exist for our communities whilst remaining mindful of our cultural and physical heritage.

- ✓ SUSTAINABLE GROWTH
- ✓ ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OPPORTUNITES
- ✓ CULTURAL AND PHYSICAL HERITAGE



- Submitted a Local Plan to the Planning Inspector for the period 2011-2031 that identifies areas in the District suitable for future sustainable development.

Improvements to internal waste management system:

- ✓ We redesigned our recycling bins and revised the labelling to reduce the amount of contamination in recycling bins
- ✓ We removed single use plastic water cups from our water fountains, replacing them with glasses and ceramic mugs, and encouraged staff to use their own water bottles and travel mugs where possible.
- ✓ Made food recycling available in our offices

- Two Council motions were passed in July 2018 – on working towards eliminating single-use plastics and on supporting Plastic Free Letchworth.

PLASTIC FREE NORTH HERTS CAMPAIGN

Refill...

- We have installed several new drinking fountains at:

- ✓ Avenue Park, Baldock
- ✓ Priory Memorial Gardens, Royston
- ✓ Bancroft Park, Hitchin
- ✓ Hitchin Outdoor Swimming Pool
- ✓ Letchworth Outdoor Swimming Pool



- Declared a Climate Change Emergency; Instituted a Cabinet Panel on Climate Change, the Panel’s Terms of Reference are to consider a range of climate and environmental issues, and to consult with the public and with interest groups on strategies for achieving zero net carbon emissions by 2030.
- Improved the energy efficiency of the District Council Offices and Hitchin Town Hall
- Electrical Vehicle Charging Points - £15k has been added to the budget to allow the Council to consider options for expanding the electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the district. A key part of this work will be looking at options for providing on-street charging points.

- North Hertfordshire Transport Users Forum – a sum of £50k was approved to enable a forum for public transport users to be set up, following the extensive problems experienced by train users last year. This would help to better co-ordinate the approach to public transport (including buses) and allow our communities to better engage with providers.
- Increase Biodiversity in the district
- The continued upkeep of district green spaces in the district seeks to maintain the biodiversity within the area
- Our green spaces are maintained to a high standard. This is reflected by the announcement of the Green Flag award to a number of areas including Ivel Springs, Baldock, which has received this for the fifth year running.

OBJECTIVE 3: Responsive and Efficient

To ensure that the Council delivers cost effective and necessary services to our residents that are responsive to developing need and financial constraints.

- ✓ **RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT**
- ✓ **A RESPONSIVE COUNCIL**
- ✓ **COMMERICALISATION**



- Launched a new service to keep people independent when they're out and about. Complementary to the Council's Careline service for inside the home, Herts Bernie is a portable pendant and GPS locator that can summon help from wherever you are
- Achieved 100% satisfaction for its Herts Careline service in a customer survey
- Retendered the Waste and Street Cleansing Contract in partnership with East Herts District Council, securing £1.9 million of savings, with the appointment of new contractor, Urbaser
- Made improvements to our online benefit claims and payments process to better serve those most in need
- Greater use of Social Media to engage with community
- Creation of a 'Special' Town Talk to engage residents and businesses on a specific issue

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