

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**



6 March 2020

Our Ref O&S Committee 17.03.20  
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To: Members of the Committee: David Levett (Chair), Kate Aspinwall (Vice-Chair), Val Bryant, Sam Collins, George Davies, Terry Hone, Tony Hunter, Jim McNally, Gerald Morris, Lisa Nash, Sue Ngwala, Helen Oliver, Adem Ruggiero-Cakir, Carol Stanier, Claire Strong and Tom Tyson

Substitutes: Councillors Ruth Brown, Bill Davidson, Morgan Derbyshire, Simon Harwood, Ian Mantle, Sam North and Kay Tart

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A**

**MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

to be held in the

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

On

**TUESDAY, 17TH MARCH, 2020 AT 7.30 PM**

Yours sincerely,

Jeanette Thompson  
Service Director – Legal and Community

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

## **Agenda**

### **Part I**

<b>Item</b>		<b>Page</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>MINUTES - 21 JANUARY 2020</b> To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 21 January 2020.	(Pages 5 - 18)
<b>3.</b>	<b>NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS</b> Members should notify the Chair of other business which they wish to be discussed 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 Chair will decide whether any item(s) raised will be considered.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b> 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 Chair 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.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b> To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>URGENT AND GENERAL EXCEPTION ITEMS</b> The Chair to report on any urgent or general exception items which required their agreement. At the time of printing the agenda, the Chair had not agreed any urgent or general exception items.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>CALLED-IN ITEMS</b> To consider any matters referred to the Committee for a decision in relation to a call-in of decision. At the time of printing the agenda, no items of business had been called-in.	
<b>8.</b>	<b>RESOLUTIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b> <b>REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND SCRUTINY MANAGER</b>  To consider the outcome of Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolutions.	(Pages 19 - 24)

- 9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND SCRUTINY MANAGER 25 - 36)

To consider the issues that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee plans to review at future meetings and the activities of its sub-groups.
- 10. DISTRICT WIDE SURVEY 2019 - KEY FINDINGS** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER 37 - 52)

To advise Cabinet of the key findings and action points arising from the 2019 District Wide Survey.
- 11. APPROVAL OF A NEW DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT FOR THE JOHN BARKER PLACE AREA OF HITCHIN** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGULATORY SERVICES 53 - 72)

To receive a report on a new Development Agreement for the John Barker Place area of Hitchin which seeks approval.
- 12. GREENSPACE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021-2026** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - SPACE 73 - 88)

For the Committee to consider the Scoping Document as attached at Appendix A.
- 13. NEW YEAR PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO BE MONITORED 2021** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - RESOURCES 89 - 96)

Proposals for performance indicators to be monitored for the New year 2021.
- 14. NEW YEAR PROJECTS SUPPORTING THE COUNCIL PLAN 2020-25** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - RESOURCES 97 - 104)

Projects to be monitored for the New Year.
- 15. Q3 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE CONTROLS, RISK AND PERFORMANCE MANGER 105 - 114)

An update on performance indicators.
- 16. Q3 UPDATE ON PROJECTS SUPPORTING THE CORPORATE PLAN** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE CONTROLS, RISK AND PERFORMANCE MANGER 115 - 140)

To be provided with a Projects update.
- 17. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

To receive and respond to any questions from Members either set out in the agenda or tabled at the meeting.

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## NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, GERNON ROAD,  
LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY  
ON TUESDAY, 21ST JANUARY, 2020 AT 7.30 PM

#### MINUTES

**Present:** *Councillors: David Levett (Chair), Councillor Kate Aspinwall (Vice-Chair), Val Bryant, Sam Collins, George Davies, Terry Hone, Tony Hunter, Jim McNally, Gerald Morris, Lisa Nash, Helen Oliver, Adem Ruggiero-Cakir, Carol Stanier, Claire Strong and Tom Tyson*

**In Attendance:** *Howard Crompton (Service Director - Customers), Steve Crowley (Service Director - Commercial), Ian Fullstone (Service Director - Regulatory), Jeanette Thompson (Service Director - Legal and Community), Rebecca Coates (Community Protection Manager), Rachel Cooper (Controls, Risk and Performance Manager), Sam Dicocco (Planning Officer), Hilary Dineen (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager), Jo Dufficy (Customer Services Manager), Jamie Sells (Service Manager - Waste and Recycling), Geraldine Goodwin (Revenues Manager), Christopher Robson (Senior Estates Surveyor), Martin Lawrence (Strategic Housing Manager), Nigel Smith (Strategic Planning Manager), Chloe Gray (Commercial Manager) and Matthew Hepburn (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)*

**Also Present:** *At the commencement of the meeting Councillors Ian Albert, Judi Billing, Paul Clark, Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Keith Hoskins, Sam North and Martin Stears-Handscomb and approximately 7 members of the public.*

#### 53 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

*Audio Recording – Session 1 - 10 Seconds*

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sue Ngwala.

#### 54 MINUTES - 17 SEPTEMBER 2019

*Audio Recording – Session 1 – 30 Seconds*

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 17 September 2019 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

#### 55 MINUTES - 23 OCTOBER 2019

*Audio Recording – Session 1- 52 Seconds*

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 23 October 2019 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

**56 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

*Audio Recording – Session 1 – 1 Minute 4 Seconds*

There was no other business notified.

**57 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Audio Recording – Session 1 – 1 Minute 5 Seconds*

- (1) The Chair welcomed those present at the meeting;
- (2) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (3) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question;
- (4) The Chair advised that if the meeting were to go on beyond 9pm, he would call a 5 minute comfort break.

**58 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*Audio Recording – Session 1 – 3 Minutes 5 Seconds*

There was no public participation.

**59 URGENT AND GENERAL EXCEPTION ITEMS**

*Audio Recording – Session 1- 3 Minutes 9 Seconds*

No urgent or general exception items were received.

**60 CALLED-IN ITEMS**

*Audio Recording – Session 1- 3 Minutes 14 Seconds*

Since the last meeting, no decisions had been called-in by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**61 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

*Audio Recording – Session 1 – 3 Minute 18 Seconds*

No questions had been submitted.

## 62 CRIME AND DISORDER MATTERS

### *Audio Recording – Session 1 – 3 Minutes 26 Seconds*

Members received a verbal presentation from Chief Inspector Sally Phillips, Hertfordshire Constabulary the North Herts Chief Inspector and the Community Protection Manager on matters relating to Crime and Disorder within North Hertfordshire.

The key information contained in the North Herts Chief Inspector's update was as follows:

- There was a decrease in crime by 2.8%;
- There was a 23% decrease in burglaries;
- There was a 4% increase in robberies;
- There was a 60% increase in the offence of possessing a weapon;
- There was an 8% increase in Anti-Social Behaviour;
- There was a growing threat of County Lines and Gangs;
- Work was being carried out to engage with youths in order to stop criminal behaviour;
- Officers were continuing to work to reduce the level of serious and organised crime using the 4 'P's framework: Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare;
- The Fearless Campaign provided advice and support to people affected by County Lines;
- Gangs and County Lines were coming into North Hertfordshire from London and Bedfordshire; and
- There were 20 additional Scorpion Officers in North Herts.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Gerald Morris;
- Councillor Kate Aspinwall;
- Councillor Tony Hunter; and
- Councillor Claire Strong.

In response to questions raised by Members, Chief Inspector Phillips responded as follows:

- That she was happy with the current number of Officers;
- Scorpion Officers would be working on the front line;
- The waiting time to answer the 101 non-emergency number was sometimes longer than liked. However, members of the public could use the 101 webchat as an alternative;
- There was a strong focus on tackling Domestic Violence;
- There was a lot of training taking place to ensure Officers knew how to respond to Domestic Violence incidences;
- There was an increase in the amount of Domestic Violence being reported. However, that also highlighted that members of the community had the confidence to report it to the Police;
- There was a Children's and Young People team at Farnham House who worked with young people to prevent them from joining a gang; and
- The date of the Rural Community Forum would be provided to Members.

The Chair thanked Chief Inspector Phillips for her presentation.

**63 FAIR COLLECTION POLICY AND PRESENTATION BY PENHAM EXCEL LTD**

*Audio Recording – Session 1 – 27 Minutes*

The Service Director – Customers presented the report entitled Fair Collection Policy and presentation from Penham Excel Ltd.

Mr Alan Wood and Mr Philip Hammonds, Penham Excel, gave a verbal presentation, with the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation, to Members of the Committee in relation their work and role as a civil enforcement agency.

In response to a series of questions raised by Members, the Service Director – Customers and the Revenues Manager along with Mr Wood, Mr Hammonds and Ms Lecia Fraser, North Hertfordshire Citizens Advice, provided the following responses:

- It was felt that the Fair Collection Policy struck the right balance between protecting vulnerable customers as well as ensuring finances were collected;
- Consultation had been carried out with Citizens Advice and the Money Advice Trust;
- Budgeting work was carried out with clients to ensure they were able to keep to the repayment agreement;
- There was a note on all Benefits correspondences that reminded customers to inform the Council if their circumstances were to change;
- The collection of arrears had improved;
- Letters were sent out in advance to customers to inform them that Council Tax arrears would be collected via an Attachment of Earnings; and
- Some customers contact the Council once they have noticed an Attachment of Earnings.

**RESOLVED:** That the presentation by Penham Excel Ltd be noted.

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:** That the Draft Fair Collection Policy be adopted.

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

- (1) To better inform the Committee of the role of Collection Agents in North Hertfordshire; and
- (2) To allow the Committee to comment on the Draft Fair Collection Policy before it is considered by Cabinet.

**64 RESOLUTIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

*Audio Recording – Session 1 – 59 Minutes 57 Seconds*

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager presented the report entitled Resolutions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee who referred to the table on pages 103-109 within the report.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager advised the following:

Waste and Recycling

- She had emailed Group Leaders asking for Members for the two proposed Task and Finish Groups on Waste and Recycling. She had asked for non - retiring Members, as the work of these groups would likely take some time;



- She was working on a scope for each of the Task and Finish Groups that would be agreed by the Chair of the relevant Task and Finish Group and Overview and Scrutiny Chair
- She suggested that this wait for the outcome of the Peer Review to see if there were any recommendations that would impact on this.

#### Homelessness

- The Strategic Housing Manager would be updating the Committee regarding target setting for Reg 1 & 2 during the report on Performance indicators.

#### Safeguarding

- 15 Members had completed the safeguarding e-learning;
- Could all Members please encourage their colleagues to complete this. It Was available on Members' tablets under Growzone and would take no more than 10 mins to complete; and
- It was recommended that all Members undertake Level 1 Safeguarding Training. Details had been published in Members Information service on 17 January 2020 alternatively Members could contact Gemma Mitchell.

**RESOLVED:** That the report entitled Resolutions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review and comment on actions and feedback received regarding resolutions previously made.

## 65 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2019-2020

### *Audio Recording – Session 1 - 1 Hour 6 Minutes 50 Seconds*

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager presented the report entitled Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2019-2020 and drew attention to the following:

#### Paragraph 8.1 (Appendix A)

- She would bring a draft of the Annual Report to the next meeting for consideration;

#### Review of Hitchin Town Hall

- The report of the Overview and Scrutiny Review of Hitchin Town Hall and North Hertfordshire Museum project and the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding that report were considered by Cabinet on 17 December 2019 and all the recommendations had been accepted

#### Task and Finish Protocol

- The review of the Hitchin Town Hall had drawn attention to some anomalies regarding the current protocol for Task and Finish Groups and recommended that the Protocol be reviewed at a future meeting.

### Forward Plan

- The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager advised that the following items had already been selected from the Forward Plan to be considered at the March meeting:
  - Development Agreement for John Barker Place;
  - District Wide Survey; and
  - Greenspace Strategy 2021 - 2026 Scoping Document.

The Chair recommended that the following items be considered at the next meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- Revised Animal Licensing Policy;
- NHDC Draft Electric Vehicle Strategy; and
- Environmental Crime Vehicles.

In response to the Chair's question regarding the draft design SPD, the Service Director – Regulatory informed Members that:

- It was still the intention to bring the draft design SPD to Overview and Scrutiny; and
- There was a Government consultation underway for the Future Homes Standard which had been extended until February 2020, this may impact upon the timing of the SPD.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager provided a word of caution regarding the number of items placed on the Agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and recommended that fewer items be scheduled for the next meeting on 17 March 2020.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the proposed topics for inclusion in the work programme and where appropriate, the high-level form and time of scrutiny input, be determined and prioritised;
- (2) That the following items be considered at its meeting on 17 March 2020:
  - Revised Animal Licensing Policy;
  - NHDC Draft Electric Vehicle Strategy; and
  - Environmental Crime Vehicles.

and;

- (3) That the Task and Finish Group Protocol be reviewed at the meeting due to be held on 17 March 2020.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To allow the Committee to set a work programme which provides focussed Member oversight, encourages open debate and seeks to achieve service improvement through effective policy development and meaningful policy and service change.

**66 PRIORITIES FOR THE DISTRICT - KEY PROJECTS HALF YEAR MONITORING**

*Audio Recording – Session 1 - 1 Hour 13 Minutes 35 Seconds*

The Controls, Risk and Performance Manager presented the report entitled Priorities for the District – Key Projects Half Year Monitoring and referred to Appendix A and drew attention to the following:

- The renovation of the play areas at Great Ashby and the Bancroft MUGA had been completed and therefore been removed from monitoring reports;
- The completion of the fit out and opening of the North Hertfordshire Museum was not marked as completed because they were waiting for the closure report to be brought to the next meeting of Overview and Scrutiny;
- The development of a Crematorium in North Hertfordshire was coded as amber as officers were still waiting for confirmation of the date of the Planning appeal; and
- The submission of the Local Plan was coded as amber as additional hearing dates were yet to be announced by the inspector.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Claire Strong; and
- Councillor Sam Collins.

In response to questions raised, the Controls, Risk and Performance Manager responded as follows:

- The hearing appeal date for the crematorium was due to take place in April or May 2020; and
- With regard to the crematorium, once the outline planning application was refused, a report went back to Cabinet to request funding to proceed with the appeal.

In response to questions raised by Members, the Service Director – Commercial advised that:

- Some of the issues raised would be addressed in Part 2 as this information was exempt from disclosure; the Closure Report for the North Hertfordshire Museum would be sent to the Controls, Risk and Performance Manager in order for it to be presented at Overview and Scrutiny in March 2020.

NB: There was a comfort break at 20:52

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That delivery against the key projects for 19/20 be noted;
- (2) That the Service Director- Commercial be requested to present the closure report regarding the Hitchin Town Hall and District Museum to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable achievements against the key projects for 2019/20 to be considered.

**67 2ND QUARTER UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE AGAINST PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

*Audio Recording – Session 2 – 37 Seconds*

The Controls, Risk and Performance Manager presented the report entitled 2nd Quarter Update on Performance against Performance Indicators.

The Controls, Risk and Performance Manager drew attention to the following:

- There were 19 corporate performance indicators being monitored;
- 4 performance indicators were coded amber;
- The number of visits to leisure facilities was 783,268;
- In 2019/20, Letchworth Outdoor Pool reported 33,263 visits compared to 48,165 in 2018/19. The decrease in usage was the result of poor weather experienced over the outdoor pool season compared to last year;
- The overall tonnage of food waste collected was 2,397 which was coded as amber; and
- The overall tonnage of garden waste collected was 6,059 which was coded as amber.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Claire Strong; and
- Councillor Jim McNally.

In response to questions raised by Members, the Controls, Risk and Performance Manager responded as follows:

- The figures of the reported visits to Letchworth Outdoor Pool were up to the end of September 2019. Thus, they did not include figures from the visits to the ice rink at Letchworth Outdoor Pool at Christmas.

The Committee received a presentation from the Strategic Housing Manager on Housing Performance Indicators for 2020/21. His presentation included the following key points:

- There had been 1450 approaches for housing assistance;
- There were three housing performance indicators:
  - Reg 1 – rate of homelessness prevention;
  - Reg 2 – rate of homelessness relief; and
  - LI035a – total number of households in temporary accommodation.
- The current challenges were as follows:
  - Housing those with complex needs;
  - Welfare reform
  - The private rented sector being difficult to access; and
  - Some landlords did not want to accept tenants in receipt of benefits.
- North Hertfordshire District Council had a 49% success rate for Reg 1, 23% success rate for Reg 2 and 85 households in temporary accommodation; and
- Owing to the challenges and despite the efforts of front-line staff, the outcomes are often out of the Council's control. Targets could remain unmet creating a poor perception of the service and potentially de-motivating staff.

It was therefore proposed that Reg1, Reg2 and LI035a do not have targets set for 2020/21 and they remain as "data only". Benchmarking statistics from Hertfordshire authorities will be provided alongside the quarterly returns so performance can still be monitored and scrutinised.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Gerald Morris; and
- Councillor Claire Strong.

In response to questions raised by Members, the Strategic Housing Manager provided the following responses:

- All data was sent to Central Government;
- Local Authorities now had more responsibility to try and assist those in housing crisis, however there were still limited housing options;
- Some households lose touch and therefore the outcome was not always positive; and
- The data did not include those rough sleeping.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the 2nd Quarter Update on Performance against Performance Indicators be noted.
- (2) That the Housing Performance Indicators Reg 1, Reg 2 and LI035a remain as “data only” for 2020/21 (benchmarking statistics for Hertfordshire authorities will be provided alongside the quarterly returns so performance can still be monitored and scrutinised).

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

- (1) To update the Committee on the performance indicators as well as other indicators that officers have updated and activated on Pentana Risk.
- (2) To ensure there are appropriate monitoring arrangements in place for the Housing Performance Indicators for 2020/21.

**68 COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS - HALF YEAR UPDATE**

*Audio Recording – Session 2 - 21 Minutes 37 Seconds*

The Customer Service Manager presented the report entitled Comments, Compliments and Complaints – Half Year Update and drew Members’ attention to the performance summary 1 April 2019 – 30 September 2019. The key points from her presentation were as follows:

- There had been a decrease in the number of 3Cs received compared to previous years;
- There were 12 stage 2 complaints received, 9 of which related to waste complaints;
- Waste complaints related to problems contacting Urbaser and missed bin collections; and
- The Local Government Ombudsman received three complaints during the period of 1 April 2019 – 30 September 2019.

The Customer Service Manager advised that there was an error with the figures contained in the table headed Waste and Recycling Data (Combined) on page 153.

The correct figures were as follows:

- Comments – 136 instead of 16
- Compliments – 22 instead of 6
- Complaints – 242 instead of 118

The Customer Service Manager stated that the Local Government Ombudsman upheld one complaint relating to Private Sector Housing and the Complainant received £200 in compensation. Furthermore, the Local Government Ombudsman would be invited to the next Senior Management Group meeting in March in order to discuss if there had been a change in their complaints process as it appeared that more complaints were being upheld by the Ombudsman.

The Service Director – Regulatory added that the one complaint upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman had previously been upheld internally by the Council and the Complainant had been informed of that decision. However, a complainant was still able to elevate their complaint to the Ombudsman even though it may have already been by upheld by the Council.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Claire Strong;
- Councillor Gerald Morris; and
- Councillor George Davies.

In response to questions raised by Members, the Customer Service Manager responded as follows:

- The complaint regarding private sector housing was in relation to poor living conditions and a delay by the council in responding. The reason for that delay would be investigated;
- Compliments were received in the same way as complaints – via a letter, email or submitted online;
- Contractor complaints included the Leisure Centre, John O'Connor and Urbaser; and

**RESOLVED:** That the Half Year Update on Comments, Compliments and Complaints be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To provide an update on the first six months performance of 2019/2020 in regards to Comments, Compliments and Complaints for the Council and the contractors that provide services on the Council's behalf.

## 69 GARDEN WASTE SERVICE

*Audio Recording – Session 2 - 34 Minutes 50 Seconds*

Prior to the commencement of the item, Councillor Carol Stanier declared a Declarable Interest in that being the Deputy Executive Member for Recycling and Waste Management, she had taken part in the development of the proposals contained in the report. She advised that would leave the room for the duration of the item and take no part in the debate or vote.

The Committee considered a report entitled Garden Waste Service on the implementation of concessionary rates and to reconsider implementation of direct debits for future garden waste charges commencing 2020/21.

The Shared Waste Services Manager Informed Members of the following:

- That the Council had approximately 55,000 households of which 90% were eligible for the garden waste service;
- In 2018/19 approximately 29,000 households had signed up to the service at a cost of £40;
- At the time of writing the report, 26,666 households had signed up to the service in 2019/20;
- There was a proposed concessionary rate of 50% reduction in the standard charge; and
- Concessions would only apply to households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction.

Members discussed at length their concerns with the proposals and the implementation of direct debits for future garden waste charges.

The following Members asked questions and took part in the debate:

- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Sam Collins;
- Councillor Claire Strong;
- Councillor Terry Hone;
- Councillor Terry Hone; and
- Councillor Helen Oliver.

In response to these concerns, the Shared Waste Services Manager and Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Executive Member for Recycling and Waste Management, responded as follows:

- Testing was being carried out to ensure the payment page was reliable in order to prevent any disruption to service users;
- The ability to pay by Direct Debit for future garden waste charges would only be available to households not in receipt of Council Tax reduction;
- The current contract allowed for Direct Debit payments;
- Consultation had not taken place with those in receipt of Council Tax Reduction regarding the proposed concessionary rate; and
- 60% of those in receipt of Council Tax reduction would be willing to pay the reduced rate.

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:**

- (1) That the concessionary rates principles as proposed in para 8.2 be agreed;
- (2) That the decision as to whether the implementation of Direct Debits is practicable for August 2020 be delegated to the Service Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Recycling and Waste Management.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To deliver objectives set out in the Councils plan and to implement the recommendations in 2020/21.

## 70 DRAFT DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS SPD

*Audio Recording – 1 Hour 6 Minutes 20 Seconds*

The Strategic Planning Manager presented the report entitled Draft Developer Contributions SPD and Members were provided with the following information:

- Through the planning system, contributions could be secured from developers;
- There were two strands to the report; the first being the proposed draft Developer Contributions SPD and the second being conducting a review to consider introducing a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);
- Supplementary Planning Documents added further detail to the policies in the development plan;
- The Developer Contributions SPD was the first of the proposed SPDs supporting the emerging Local Plan;
- Developer contributions were presently collected through legal agreements with developers which were specific to each development;
- CIL had not been pursued by the Council in the past.
- Section 106 agreements would continue to be used;
- The new Local Plan included clusters of sites, particularly in villages, that needed to contribute towards a specific project such as a school expansion; Section 106 was the preferred way of collecting that contribution; and
- Sites of 10 homes or fewer were normally exempt from making contributions through a Section 106 legal agreement. Officers now considered that there was merit in assessing whether smaller sites might be asked to contribute towards infrastructure requirements through CIL

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Sam Collins;
- Councillor Gerald Morris;
- Councillor Terry Hone; and
- Councillor David Levett.

In response to a series of questions, the Strategic Planning Manager responded as follows:

- A Sustainability Appraisal was not always required for SPDs as the parent policy was already appraised;
- The Standard Formula for health contributions was provided by the NHS;
- The Draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document primarily focused on what would be in a legal agreement.
- Biodiversity would be set out in planning policy; and
- In relation to Recommendation 2.2, the scope of the review to consider the feasibility of introducing a Community Infrastructure Levy could be made wider.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the draft Developer Contributions SPD, attached as Appendix A to this report, be endorsed and approved for a six-week public consultation;
- (2) That Officers be instructed to conduct a review to consider the feasibility of introducing a Community Infrastructure Levy for residential sites of 10 units or less.



**REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

- (1) To allow the Developer Contributions SPD to be progressed so that it may be (i) adopted at the same time as, or shortly after, any future decision to adopt the new Local Plan and (ii) taken into account in relevant planning decisions;
- (2) To determine whether there is scope to introduce a levy for small sites which are not normally subject to requests for contributions but which, collectively, result in additional burdens upon local infrastructure.

**71 UPDATE ON COMMERCIAL WORK PROGRAMME**

*Audio Recording – Session 2 – 1 Hour 19 Minutes 40 Seconds*

The Service Director – Commercial and the Commercial Manager presented the report entitled Update on Commercial Work Programme and drew attention to the following:

- Employees would be able to purchase annual leave; and
- The District Council was proposing to refurbish the former Careline offices at Harkness Court in Hitchin.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Gerald Morris.

In response, the Service Director – Commercial detailed the Officers that were under his directorate.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** The report is following the request of the Committee for a more detailed update on the work programme of the Commercial team and is for information only.

**72 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

*Audio Recording – Session 2 – 1 Hour 24 Minutes*

**RESOLVED:** That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

**73 UPDATE ON COMMERCIAL WORK PROGRAMME**

*Audio Recording – Session 3 – 10 Seconds*

The Service Director – Commercial and the Commercial Manager presented the Part 2 report entitled Update on Commercial Work Programme.

Following an in-depth discussion, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the report entitled Update on Commercial Work Programme be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To keep the Overview and Scrutiny Committee updated on the work undertaken by the Commercial Team.

The meeting closed at 11.00 pm

Chair

## RESOLUTIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: AS AT 4 MARCH 2020

### COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS

REF	RESOLUTION	RESPONSE/OUTCOME	STATUS
	<b>Recycling and Waste</b>		
Jul 18 Min 28 (3)	That the Waste Contract Scope be finalised and agreed by the scoping group in consultation with the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	The Task and Finish Group will commence in the near future – It is suggested that this resolution is removed from the monitoring list	<b>To be removed</b>
Sept 18 Min 37 (4)	<p>(1) That a Task and Finish type review of the waste contract be undertaken shortly following the publication of the SIAS review of the service;</p> <p>(2) That the following issues be referred to the Task and Finish review mentioned in (1) above:</p> <p>(i) Why a decision was made to mobilise the contract in an unreasonable timescale;</p> <p>(ii) Why, when there was such a short mobilisation period, was a decision made to make major changes to the service in what were already challenging circumstances, rather than delay the implementation of changes to the service for one year;</p> <p>(iii) Why sufficient staff resources were not made available prior to implementation of the contract;</p> <p>(iv) What happened when high volumes of calls were received in terms of systems and staff;</p> <p>(v) Consider the differences between area where the service worked well and those where the service was poor.</p>	<p>(1) The Task and Finish Group will commence in the near future – It is suggested that this resolution is removed from the monitoring list</p> <p>(2) To be included within the Task &amp; Finish Scope, see Jul 18 Min 28 (3).</p>	<p><b>To be removed</b></p> <p>In progress</p>
Mar 19 Min 11 (2)	That the Scrutiny Officer be requested to ask Group Leaders for nomination to a Task and Finish Group review of the Waste Contract.	The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer has contacted Group Leaders asking for Panels Members and Chairs for the 2 proposed T&F Groups.	In progress

REF	RESOLUTION	RESPONSE/OUTCOME	STATUS
Mar 19 Min 13 (2)	That the Scrutiny Officer be requested to schedule a review of the Waste Contract Implementation and draw up a draft scope upon completion of the SIAS audit.	The SIAS Report was circulated to Members on 6 September 2019, Draft scopes for the Task and Finish Groups on the Waste Contract will be drawn up and sent to the Chairs of the Task and Finish Groups and the Chair of this Committee for approval.	In progress
Mar 19 Min 13 (3)	That the Service Manager- Waste be requested to send details of the waste collection routes to all Members of the Committee.	The Service Manager Waste has advised that: Currently he can supply a list of roads with rounds and collection days – He has requested that Urbaser begin to look at producing maps of routes however, there are over 80 of these which cross various wards and areas so these cannot be produced quickly.  He asked whether the list of road, rounds and collection days was sufficient at this point.	In progress.
Mar 19 Min 12	That the Service Director – Place be requested to supply Ward Councillors with details of changes to waste collection routes by email;	The Service Manager Waste has advised that: Currently he can supply a list of roads with rounds and collection days – He has requested that Urbaser begin to look at producing maps of routes however, there are over 80 of these which cross various wards and areas so these cannot be produced quickly.  He asked whether the list of road, rounds and collection days was sufficient at this point.	In progress
July 19 Min 16 (2 & 3)	(2) That the Service Director – Place be urgently requested to provide maps for the waste collection routes, or a suitable link that enables access to them and that this be circulated to all Members within the next 4 weeks; (3) That, if resolution (1) above is not able to be actioned, the Service Director – Place be requested to explain why	The Service Manager Waste has advised that: Currently he can supply a list of roads with rounds and collection days – He has requested that Urbaser begin to look at producing maps of routes however, there are over 80 of these which cross various wards and areas so these cannot be produced quickly.  He asked whether the list of road, rounds and collection days was sufficient at this point.	In Progress

REF	RESOLUTION	RESPONSE/OUTCOME	STATUS
July 19 Min 17 (2)	That the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager be asked to liaise with the Chairman to schedule in the Task and Finish Group on Waste to start as soon as the current Task and Finish Group is concluded;	The first of two Task and Finish Groups will commence as soon as the Panel and Chair have been appointed and the scope agreed. The second will commence once the final report of the first is written, the Panel and Chair have been appointed and the scope agreed	In progress
Sept 19 Min 38 (3)	That the Task and Finish Group for the Waste Contract be divided into two separate groups: (i) Tender and Contract; (ii) Community Engagement		In progress
Sept 19 Min 38 (4)	That for the balance of political proportionality, 5 Members would sit in each of the two Task and Finish Groups for the Waste Contract.	The Group Leaders have been contacted and asked to supply nominations for panel Members and Chairs for both Task and Finish Groups	<b>Complete To be removed</b>
Sept 19 Min 39 (4)	That the Scope for the Task and Finish Group on the Waste Contract be approved by the Chairman of that Task and Finish Group, (yet to be appointed) and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny.	The scopes for both Task and Finish Groups will be drawn up and presented to the Chair of the relevant Task and Finish Group and the Chair of the O&S Committee for agreement.	
	<b>HOMELESSNESS</b>		
Jun 19 Min 10 (3)	That the Controls, Risk and Performance Manager be requested to identify a date when data will be available for REG 1 and 2;	The Committee received a verbal presentation from the Strategic Housing Manager on 21 January 2020	<b>Complete To be removed</b>
Jun 19 Min 10 (4)	That a target must be set regarding REG 1 and 2, based on the data available and the direction of travel at the next target setting review	The Committee received a verbal presentation from the Strategic Housing Manager on 21 January 2020	<b>Complete To be removed</b>
	<b>STAFF</b>		
Jun 19 Min 10 (5)	That the Chairman be requested to discuss sickness data with the Head of Paid Service with the aim of identifying what breakdown of figures would be available to the Committee and to identify any problem areas and the reasons for those issues	Update pending.	In progress

REF	RESOLUTION	RESPONSE/OUTCOME	STATUS
Jun 19 Min 12 (4)	That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee expresses concern regarding resources available to the Committee and other areas of the Council seem stretched. Therefore the Leader of the Council is requested to speak to the Chief Executive regarding these concerns.	Additional resources for the Committee and Policy departments were agreed through the budget process.	<b>Complete</b> <b>To be removed</b>
	<b>COMMERCIALISM</b>		
Jun 19 Min 11 (3)	That the Service Director – Commercial be requested to present a report to this Committee regarding the proposed new trading company	The Service Director – Commercial gave a verbal presentation on 17 September and a written report was considered at the meeting on 21 January 2020	<b>Complete</b> <b>To be removed</b>
Jun 19 Min 13 (2)	That the Service Director – Commercial be requested to make regular presentations to this Committee regarding commercial activities.	The Service Director – Commercial gave a verbal presentation on 17 September and a written report was considered at the meeting on 21 January 2020.	<b>Complete</b> <b>To be removed</b>
July 19 Min 16 (4)	That the Service Director – Commercial be requested to attend the next meeting of this Committee to provide a presentation and answer questions.	The Service Director – Commercial gave a verbal presentation on 17 September and a written report was considered at the meeting on 21 January 2020	<b>Complete</b> <b>To be removed</b>
July 19 Min 17 (3)	That the Service Director – Commercial be made aware of the requirements of this Committee as detailed above.	The Service Director – Commercial gave a verbal presentation on 17 September and a written report was considered at the meeting on 21 January 2020	<b>Complete</b> <b>To be removed</b>
Sept 19 Min 42	That the Service Director – Commercial present a written report to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which should provide the following information: (1) The work of the Commercial Team; (2) The essential provision of future forecasting; (3) Potential uses of “The Company”.	The Service Director – Commercial gave a verbal presentation on 17 September and a written report was considered at the meeting on 21 January 2020	<b>Complete</b> <b>To be removed</b>
	<b>SAFEGUARDING</b>		
Sept 19 Min 41 (4)	Expressed their disappointment with the apparent disproportionately small number of elected Members who had undertaken safeguarding training and requested that Members were investigated into who had received safeguarding training from other sources. All Members are made aware, once again, of the ability to complete e-learning training and that all relevant group leaders, port folio holders and shadow port-folio holders raise the issue	The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager has undertaken a review of the skills audit of Members, which included a question about Safeguarding training. Unfortunately this received a very low response. She is liaising with the Learning and Development Champions promote Safeguarding Training for Members. This work continues, however there is no further	<b>Complete</b> <b>To be removed</b>

REF	RESOLUTION	RESPONSE/OUTCOME	STATUS
	of training requirement at their group meetings.	role for this Committee at present.	
	<b>PERFORMANCE MONITORING</b>		
Sept 19 Min 44 (2)	That whilst it had been reported to the Committee that the Local Plan had been marked as complete, following consideration by the Inspector, there was still further work to be prepared. The Controls, Risk and Performance Manager was requested to continue to report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Local Plan.		In progress
	<b>OTHER RESOLUTIONS</b>		
Sept 19 Min 39 (3)	In respect of Crime and Disorder Issues an alternative presentation format in order to discuss County Lines and Knife Crime with the support of the Community Protection Manager take place at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2020	Inspector Sally Philips and the Community Safety Manager presented to the meeting on 21 January 2020.	<b>Complete To be removed</b>
Jan 20 Min 65 Page 23	<p>(2) That the following items be considered at its meeting on 17 March 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised Animal Licensing Policy;</li> <li>• NHDC Draft Electric Vehicle Strategy; and</li> <li>• Environmental Crime Vehicles.</li> </ul> <p>(3) That the Task and Finish Group Protocol be reviewed at the meeting due to be held on 17 March 2020.</p>	<p>The Revised Animal Licensing Policy will be considered by the Licensing and Appeals Committee and the NHDC Electric Vehicle Strategy has been removed from the Forward Plan</p> <p>This will be considered as part of the Work Programme report</p>	
Jan 20 Min 66	(2) That the Service Director- Commercial be requested to present the closure report regarding the Hitchin Town Hall and District Museum to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.	The Service Director- Commercial will present this to the meeting in June 2020	

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<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b> <b>17 MARCH 2020</b>
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<b>*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT</b>
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**TITLE OF REPORT: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME  
FOR 2019/20 AND 2020/21**

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND SCRUTINY MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: NOT APPLICABLE

CURRENT COUNCIL PRIORITY: RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT

NEW COUNCIL PRIORITY: BE A MORE WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE COUNCIL /  
RESPOND TO CHALLENGES TO THE ENVIRONMENT / ENABLE AN ENTERPRISING AND  
CO-OPERATIVE ECONOMY

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report highlights items scheduled in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work programme for 2019/20 and items that may be considered in 2020/21. It includes details of those items that have yet to be assigned to a specific meeting.
- 1.2 The work programme includes both items previously agreed by the Committee and those that the Committee is required by the Constitution to consider.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Committee prioritises proposed topics for inclusion in the work programme attached as Appendix A and, where appropriate, determines the high level form and timing of scrutiny input.
- 2.2 That the Committee, having considered the Forward Plans attached as Appendices B and C, suggests a list of items to be considered at its meeting on 2 June 2020.
- 2.3 That the Committee consider and agree the Task and Finish Group Protocol attached as Appendix E

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To allow the Committee to set a work programme which provides focussed Member oversight, encourages open debate and seeks to achieve service improvement through effective policy development and meaningful policy and service change.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The Committee has varied its approach to overview and scrutiny activity over recent years. Currently it seeks to enter the process of policy development at an early stage and consequently may consider items associated with service action plans.
- 4.2 The need to observe Constitutional requirements and monitor the Forward Plan for appropriate items to scrutinise remains a key aspect of work programming.

#### **5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- 5.1 Each Committee meeting includes the opportunity for Members to comment on and input to the Committee's work programme.

#### **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.
- 6.2 The Committee is asked to review the Forward Plan at each regular meeting to identify potential issues for inclusion in the work programme. Identification of a focus for the Committee's future activity should be identified at this stage wherever possible.

#### **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 Executive Members no longer deliver regular general presentations on a rotational basis. Rather they are invited to either speak on an issue of specific interest or present a report being considered for constitutional reasons.
- 7.2 The Committee now considers a wide range of issues, where appropriate, commencing its reviews early in the policy development process. By doing this it seeks to ensure assumptions are challenged at an early stage, mistakes are avoided and eventual outcomes provide optimal benefit to the community.
- 7.3 The Committee seeks to ensure that consideration of agenda items minimises additional burdens on staff resources. Wherever possible, requests are made for the presentation of documents already in existence rather than the production of new documents specifically for the Committee.

#### **8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

##### Work Programme

- 8.1 The Committee's work programme for the year requires reviewing at each meeting and direction is sought from the Committee on the items they wish adding. Appendix A contains the work programme for 2020/2021.

### Forward Plan

- 8.2 The Forward Plan for 24 February 2020 is attached at Appendix B for consideration. A new Forward Plan will be published on 9 March 2020 and will be provided, as Appendix C to the Committee at that time.

### Other Topics for Consideration

- 8.3 Potential topics for consideration and inclusion in the Committee's work programme will be considered as part of this meeting. When considering additional topics, their risk assessment and prioritisation will ensure that the most appropriate items are taken forward to the work programme.

### Review of Hitchin Town Hall and District Museum Project

- 8.4 The Panel's report and the additional comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were considered by Cabinet on 17 December 2019. All recommendations were accepted by Cabinet.

### Task and Finish Group on the Waste Contract

- 8.5 The Committee resolved at its meeting on 17 September 2019 that:

*That the Task and Finish Group for the Waste Contract be divided into two separate groups:*

*(i) Tender and Contract*

*(ii) Community Engagement; and*

*That for the balance of political proportionality, 5 Members would sit in each of the two Task and Finish Groups for the Waste Contract.*

- 8.6 The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager is in the process of drawing up a draft scope for each of the Task and Finish Groups, taking into account the SIAS report findings and will present then to the Chair of the relevant Task and Finish Group and the Chair of this Committee for approval.
- 8.7 Chairing of Task and Finish Groups circulate round the political parties. Based on this the Labour and Cooperative Group will provide the Chair of the first Task and Finish Group and the Liberal Democrat Group will provide the Chair of the second.
- 8.8 The first Task and Finish Group will commence once the Chair and Panel has been selected and the scope has been agreed. The second Task and Finish Group will commence as soon as the first has completed its investigations and the scope has been agreed.
- 8.9 In view of the time that these Task and Finish Groups may take to complete their work, non retiring Members are being selected for both panels.

- 8.10 The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager has contacted Group Leaders to ask for Panel Member and Chair nominations for both Task and Finish Groups. In accordance with the Committee's wishes the panels will be as politically proportional as possible as follows:

Task and Finish Group on the Waste Tender and Contract

- Councillor Mike Hughson (Chair)
- Councillor Kate Aspinwall
- Councillor Terry Tyler
- Conservative nomination
- Conservative nomination

Task and Finish Group on Community Engagement regarding the implementation of the Waste Contract and onwards

- Councillor Sam North (Chair)
- Councillor Daniel Allen
- Councillor Clare Billing
- Conservative nomination
- Conservative nomination

Protocol for Task and Finish Group Reports

- 8.11 It was envisaged that a proposed protocol for Task and Finish Groups would be considered at this meeting.
- 8.12 The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer has undertaken some research regarding protocols of other Local Authorities.
- 8.13 A Peer Challenge Review has been undertaken, part of which focussed on effective Scrutiny.
- 8.14 It seems sensible to await the results of the Peer Challenge Review as this may have an impact on how the Committee would wish future Task and Finish Groups are undertaken.
- 8.15 As soon as the Peer Challenge Review outcomes are published the Committee Member and Scrutiny Officer will prepare a proposed protocol, taking into account the research and any suggestions from the Peer Group.

**9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Under Section 6.2.5 of the Constitution, the Committee is responsible for setting its own work programme. However, it must ensure it retains sufficient capacity within the programme to meet its statutory obligations.
- 9.2 Section 6.2.7 (u) of the Constitution allows the Committee "to appoint time limited task and finish Topic Groups to undertake detailed scrutiny work and report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations to the Cabinet."

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Dependent on how they are applied in practice, the scope of the options presented in Sections 7 and 8 have the potential to be wide reaching. As detailed Section 14, Human Resource Implications, the wider the reach, the more significant the impact on officer time in terms of report writing, data analysis and committee meeting attendance. Given recent funding pressures and the consequent reduction in officer numbers, significant requests to support scrutiny work will limit officer time available to spend on activities such as identifying and delivering cost reductions, income generation and project management.
- 10.2 Although not significant, a committee attendance allowance of £25.17 per officer per evening meeting is payable to officers in attendance. This is in addition to providing time off in lieu, or overtime as an alternative.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Effective overview and scrutiny of policy, administrative, service delivery and expenditure decisions helps reduce the risk of an inappropriate decision being made. The scope and time frame for scrutiny interventions should be considered in the light of the potential impact of inappropriate scrutiny leading to decisions not being made, inappropriately made or not made at the right time.

## **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 no direct equality implications arising from the report. Effective scrutiny is an essential part of ensuring that local government remains transparent, accountable and open which ensures that the delivery of public services benefits all aspects of the community, where practical.

## **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 The widening of the reach of scrutiny reviews has the potential to significantly impact on officer time in terms of the reprioritisation of already agreed projects, their scope or timetabling and resources. There is also the potential for additional resource requirements in relation to report writing, information collection and analysis and committee attendance. Delivery of service plans to achieve the Council's agreed Corporate Plan objectives might, therefore, be potentially negatively impacted.

## **15. APPENDICES**

- 15.1 Appendix A – Work Programme for future Committee meetings

- 15.2 Appendix B – Forward Plan for 24 February 2020
- 15.3 Appendix C – Forward Plan for 9 March 2020 – To be published on 9 March 2020

## **16. CONTACT OFFICERS**

- 16.1 Hilary Dineen  
Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager  
01462 474353  
[ScrutinyOfficer@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:ScrutinyOfficer@north-herts.gov.uk)
- 16.2 Reuben Ayavoo  
Policy and Community Engagement Manager  
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- 16.4 Human Resources  
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- 16.5 Ian Couper  
Service Director- Resources  
01462 474243  
[ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk)
- 16.6 Tim Everitt  
Performance Improvement Officer  
01462 474646  
[Tim.everitt@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Tim.everitt@north-herts.gov.uk)

## **17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 17.1. Previous reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and forward plans.

**PROGRAMME FOR FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2020-21**

June 2020	Presentation by the Leader of the Council Resolutions Report Work Programme Performance Monitoring for 2019/20 – Year End Key Projects for the District 2019/20 - Year End
July 2020	Resolutions Report Work Programme 3Cs End Of Year report Council Plan and Objectives 2020/23
September 2020	Resolutions Report Work Programme 1st Quarter Performance against PIs 1st Quarter Key Projects
December 2020	Resolutions Report Work Programme Annual review of Safeguarding Priorities for the District – Key Projects Half Year Monitoring 2nd Quarter Performance against PIs 3Cs Half Year Report
January 2021	Crime and Disorder Matters Resolutions Report Work Programme Priorities for the District – Key Projects Half Year Monitoring
March 2021	Resolutions Report Work Programme Annual Report New PIs for 2020/21 Priorities For The District – Key Projects 2020/21 3rd Quarter PIs 3rd Quarter Key projects
	<b>To be Scheduled.</b>

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**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

# Forward Plan of Key Decisions - 24 February 2020

The Forward Plan contains brief details of Key Decisions that the Council is likely to take over the next four month period and beyond. You will also find details of contacts who can provide further information and hear your views. **Please note that the dates of some of the decisions may change from month to month, please check with Committee, Member and Scrutiny Services on (01462) 474655 before deciding to attend a meeting.**

Decision required	Overview and Scrutiny	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Documents to be submitted to Decision Maker	Contact Officer from whom documents can be requested	Confirmation that other documents may be submitted to the Decision Maker	Procedure for requesting details of other documents
DRAFT DESIGN SPD (15.08.19)		Cabinet	24 Mar 2020		Helen Leitch, Principal Landscape and Urban Designer hilarly.dineen@north-herts.gov	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
REVISED ANIMAL LICENSING POLICY (01.11.19)		Cabinet	24 Mar 2020		Steve Cobb, Licensing Manager steven.cobb@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
DISTRICT WIDE SURVEY 2019 (01.11.19)		Cabinet	24 Mar 2020		Sarah Kingsley, Communications Manager sarah.kingsley@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
THIRD QUARTER REVENUE MONITORING 2019/20 (06.12.19)		Cabinet	24 Mar 2020		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6

Decision required	Overview and Scrutiny	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Documents to be submitted to Decision Maker	Contact Officer from whom documents can be requested	Confirmation that other documents may be submitted to the Decision Maker	Procedure for requesting details of other documents
INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY ) THIRD QUARTER REVIEW 2019/20 <b>(06.12.19)</b>		Cabinet	24 Mar 2020		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
PARKING OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES <b>(06.12.19)</b>		Cabinet	24 Mar 2020		Louise Symes, Strategic Infrastructure and Projects Manager louise.symes@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
PROPOSED PARKING TARIFF INCREASES <b>(06.12.19)</b>		Cabinet	24 Mar 2020		Louise Symes, Strategic Infrastructure and Projects Manager louise.symes@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
APPROVAL OF A NEW DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT FOR THE JOHN BARKER PLACE AREA OF HITCHIN <b>(01.07.19)</b>		Cabinet	24 Mar 2020		Martin Lawrence, Strategic Housing Manager martin.lawrence@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
GREENSPACE STRATEGY 2021 - 2026 SCOPING DOCUMENT <b>(11.12.19)</b>		Cabinet	24 Mar 2020		Andrew Mills, Service Manager - Greenspace andrew.mills@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6

<b>Decision required</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny</b>	<b>Decision Maker</b>	<b>Date of Decision</b>	<b>Documents to be submitted to Decision Maker</b>	<b>Contact Officer from whom documents can be requested</b>	<b>Confirmation that other documents may be submitted to the Decision Maker</b>	<b>Procedure for requesting details of other documents</b>
ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME VEHICLES (11.12.19)		Cabinet	24 Mar 2020		Rebecca Coates, Community Protection Manager rebecca.coates@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
RISK AND OPPORTUNITIES MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY REVIEW (07.02.20)		Cabinet	24 Mar 2020		Rachel Cooper, Controls, Risk and Performance Manager rachel.cooper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY 2020-2025 (07.02.20)		Cabinet	24 Mar 2020		Howard Crompton, Service Director - Customers howard.crompton@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
LAND AT MEADOW WAY, THERFIELD (24.02.20)		Cabinet	24 Mar 2020		Peter Lapham, Interim Property Consultant peter.lapham@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
LAND ADJACENT TO 1 NORTH END, KELSHALL (24.02.20)		Cabinet	24 Mar 2020		Peter Lapham, Interim Property Consultant peter.lapham@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
LAND ADJACENT TO 9 NORTH END, KELSHALL (24.02.20)		Cabinet	24 Mar 2020		Peter Lapham, Interim Property Consultant peter.lapham@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6

Decision required	Overview and Scrutiny	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Documents to be submitted to Decision Maker	Contact Officer from whom documents can be requested	Confirmation that other documents may be submitted to the Decision Maker	Procedure for requesting details of other documents
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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
17 MARCH 2020**

**PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF REPORT: DISTRICT WIDE SURVEY 2019 – KEY FINDINGS**

REPORT OF: THE COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

CURRENT COUNCIL PRIORITY: RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT

NEW COUNCIL PRIORITY: BE A MORE WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE COUNCIL

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

To advise Cabinet of the key findings and action points arising from the 2019 District Wide Survey.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Cabinet comment on and note the key findings and observations from the District Wide Survey.
- 2.2 That Cabinet note that the results will be considered by Senior Management Team in conjunction with Executive Members, to inform the service planning process and future consultation activity.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To ensure that Cabinet is aware of the results and any trends from previous surveys and how the results will be used to inform future service delivery.

**4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 None

**5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- 5.1. The biennial District Wide Survey is one of the Council's key mechanisms for seeking the views and opinions of North Hertfordshire residents on a range of services and issues. The Leader of the Council with responsibility for consultation and the Senior

Management Team, have been briefed on the key findings from the report. The results will also be shared at a staff briefing.

## **6. FORWARD PLAN**

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on 1 November 2019.

## **7. BACKGROUND**

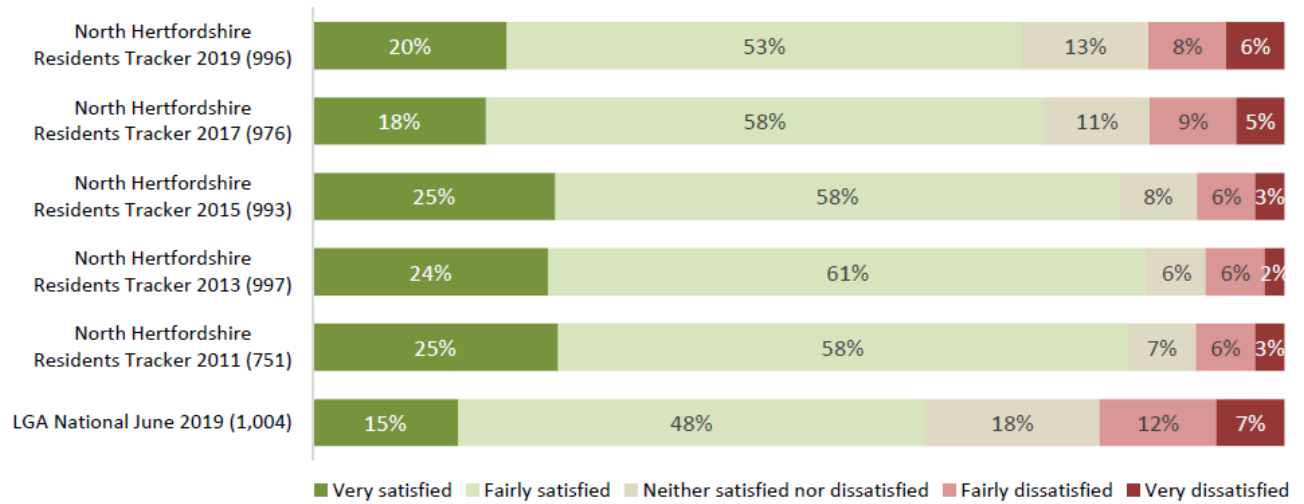
- 7.1 The 2019 District Wide Survey was carried out in line with the Council's agreed Consultation Strategy 2015-2020. The survey is carried out every two years in order to capture residents' views and perceptions of services and facilities provided by the Council.
- 7.2 Opinion Research Services, an independent research agency, were commissioned by the Council to carry out the research on our behalf. They conducted 1000 telephone interviews of North Hertfordshire residents between 7 October 2019 and 19 January 2020. Quota controls were used to ensure a representative sample. The returned sample was subsequently weighted by tenure, working status, ethnic group, age and gender to achieve results which are broadly representative of the North Hertfordshire population.
- 7.3 The question set remains largely consistent from one survey exercise to the next (with some minor variations) to allow benchmarking from year to year. Comparisons with previous results are made at appropriate points in the survey. Prior to 2011 the survey was carried out face to face rather than on the telephone and therefore those results are not directly comparable. Comparisons with national figures are, in the main taken from the Local Government Association national survey, which is carried out three times a year with around 1,000 British adults by telephone.
- 7.4 The results of the survey will be considered by the Senior Management Team in conjunction with Executive Members to help inform the Council's service delivery plan and service action plans and to plan potential future consultation activity.
- 7.5 The figures and tables in the report are extracted directly from the full research report prepared by Opinion Research Services. As only a selection of the figures and tables appear in this report, the numbering is not always in sequential order.

## **8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

### **8.1 About your Local Area / Overall Satisfaction**

- 8.1.1 The vast majority of residents (92%) are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. This compares favourably to the latest LGA benchmark from June 2019, where satisfaction was 80%, 12 percentage points lower than in North Hertfordshire.
- 8.1.2 Overall satisfaction with the way the Council runs things has decreased from 76% in 2017 to 73% in 2019. However, satisfaction is still well above the LGA national benchmark from 2019, where satisfaction was 63%. See Figure 2 for comparisons since 2011.

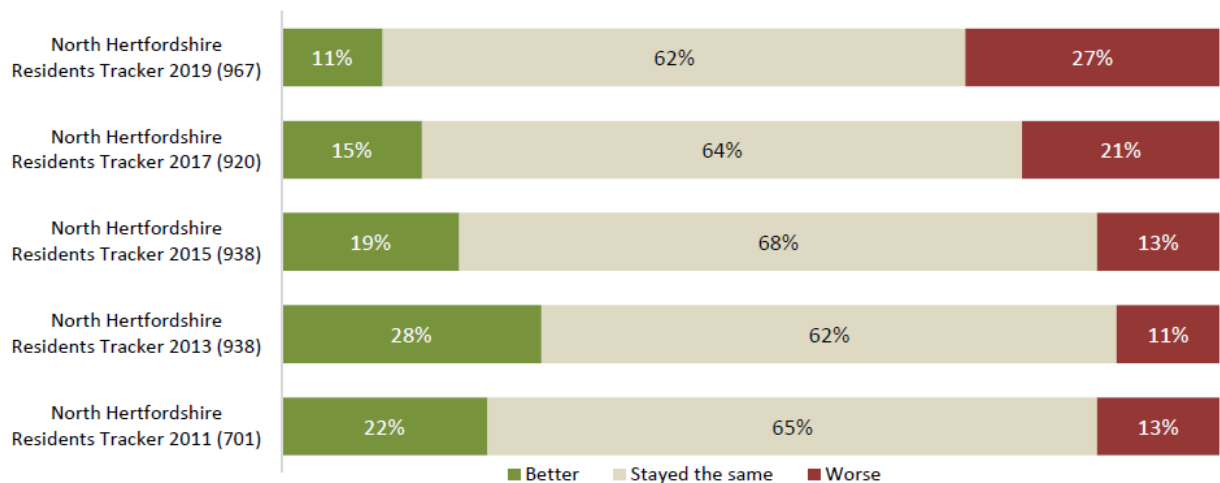
**Figure 2: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way North Hertfordshire District Council runs things?**



**Base: All Residents (Number of residents shown in brackets)**

8.1.3 11% of residents think that the way NHDC runs things has got better over the last two years, a significant decrease since 2017 (15%). Figure six shows comparisons since 2011.

**Figure 6: Thinking about the way North Hertfordshire District Council runs things, do you think it has got better, stayed the same or got worse over the last two years?**



8.1.4 Those residents who expressed dissatisfaction with the way the Council runs things, were invited to comment on how they feel the Council could improve the running of North Hertfordshire. These comments are coded into themes. The top themes are that dissatisfied residents feel the Council should:

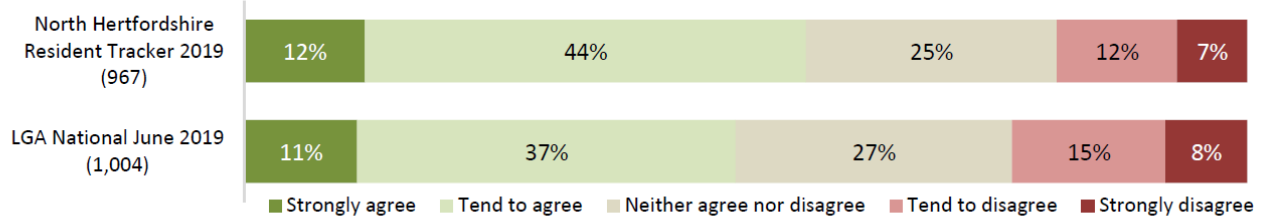
- Improve refuse / recycling collections (37%)
- Make improvements to the area / community (33%)

- Stop wasting money (25%)
- Listen / consult more (23%)
- Improve communication (19%)
- Improve the planning process (17%)

A further top theme was road / pavement maintenance e.g. potholes, cited by 19%, however this is not an NHDC function. It should be noted that only 175 residents answered the supplementary question about how the Council could improve the running of North Hertfordshire.

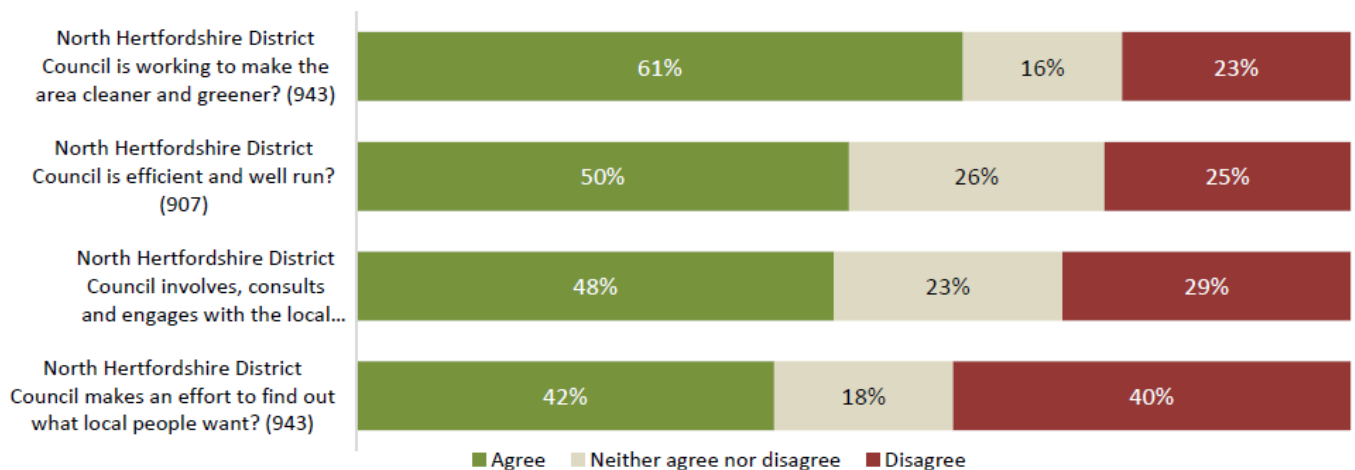
8.1.5 Figure 4 shows that over half (56%) of residents agree that the Council provides value for money, while 19% disagree. Overall agreement that the Council provides value for money is higher than the national LGA figure of 48%.

Figure 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that North Hertfordshire District Council provides value for money?



8.1.6 Residents were asked about a number of statements regarding the Council and their agreement levels with those statements recorded. 61% of residents agree that NHDC is working to make the area cleaner and greener, while just under one quarter (23%) disagree. Half of residents (50%) agree that NHDC is efficient and well run, while one quarter (25%) disagree. Half of residents (50%) agree that NHDC is efficient and well run, while one quarter (25%) disagree. See figure 8.

Figure 8: Do you agree, disagree or neither agree nor disagree with the following...?





- 8.1.7 There has been a significant increase in the number of residents agreeing with the four statements since 2017 as can be seen in table 7.

Table 7: Do you agree, disagree or neither agree nor disagree with the following...North Hertfordshire District Council...?

Statements	Agreed % 2008	Agreed % 2011	Agreed % 2013	Agreed % 2015	Agreed % 2017	Agreed % 2019	% change 2017 to 2019
Involves, consults and engages with the local community (932)	n/a	55%	56%	53%	46%	48%	+2%
Makes an effort to find out what local people want (943)	n/a	49%	48%	48%	35%	42%	+7%*
Working to make the area cleaner and greener (943)	70%	69%	72%	67%	55%	61%	+6%*
Efficient and well run (907)	58%	52%	53%	51%	41%	50%	+9%*

Base: (Number of residents in 2019 is shown in brackets)

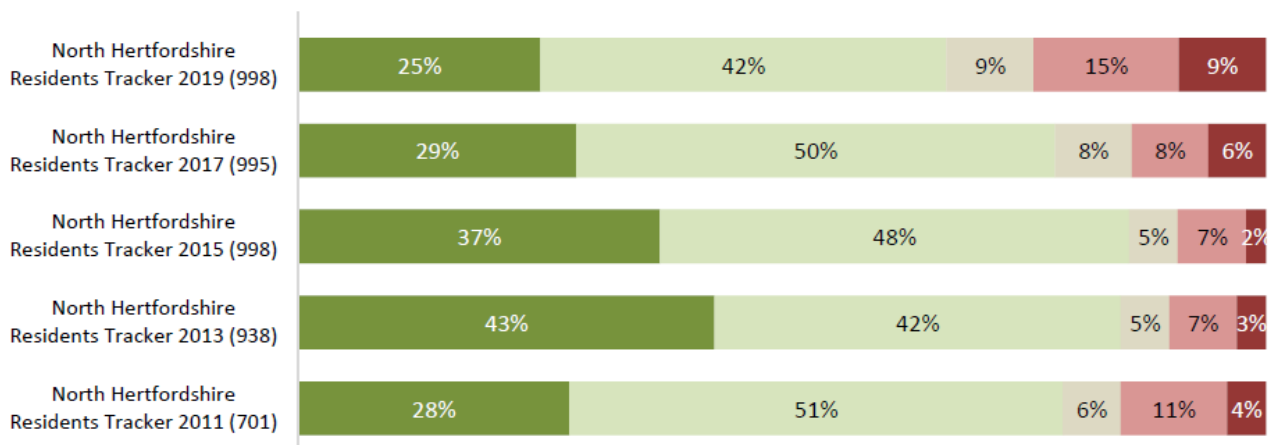
- 8.1.8 **Observations on Overall Satisfaction:** Overall satisfaction with North Hertfordshire as a place to live remains very high and well above the national LGA Benchmark. However, residents' satisfaction with the way the Council runs things has dropped by 3 percentage points and a significant increase in those who think things have got worse over the last 2 years, in terms of how the Council runs things. Issues with the Council's waste and recycling contract in 2018 and the knock on reputational impact are likely to have contributed to the drop in satisfaction, as well as on-going year on year budget savings having to be made. Despite this, satisfaction with the Council is 10 percentage points higher than the national average figure of 73%.
- 8.1.9 Table 7 shows that there has been an increase in agreement level in people who think NHDC makes an effort to find out what local people want and involves, consults and engages with the local community. This increase could be related to the joint administration's new objective of being a more welcoming and inclusive council. Table 7 also shows an increase in agreement that the Council is working to make the area cleaner and greener, in line with the joint administration's objective to respond to challenges to the environment.

## 8.2 Council Services

- 8.2.1 Over two-thirds (67%) of residents are satisfied with general waste and recycling collection, dropping from 79% in 2017, while around one quarter (24%) are dissatisfied. Satisfaction is below the national figure of 74%, although the LGA data is for waste collections (not recycling) only. Figure 12 shows satisfaction levels since 2011. Satisfaction peaked in 2013 at 85%. This was at a time when the Council introduced recycling of plastics at the kerbside, increasing residents' opportunity to recycle.

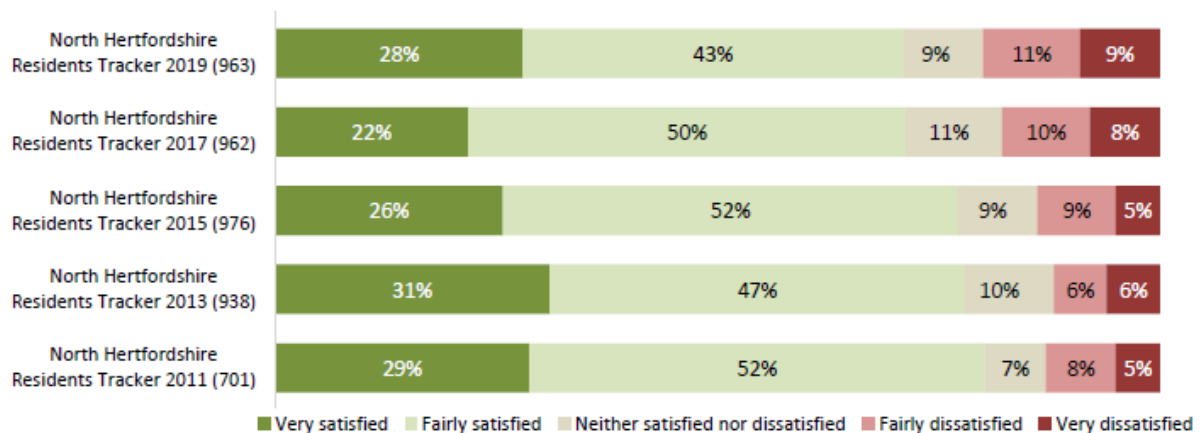
Figure 12: Are you satisfied or dissatisfied or neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the following...?

### General waste and recycling collection



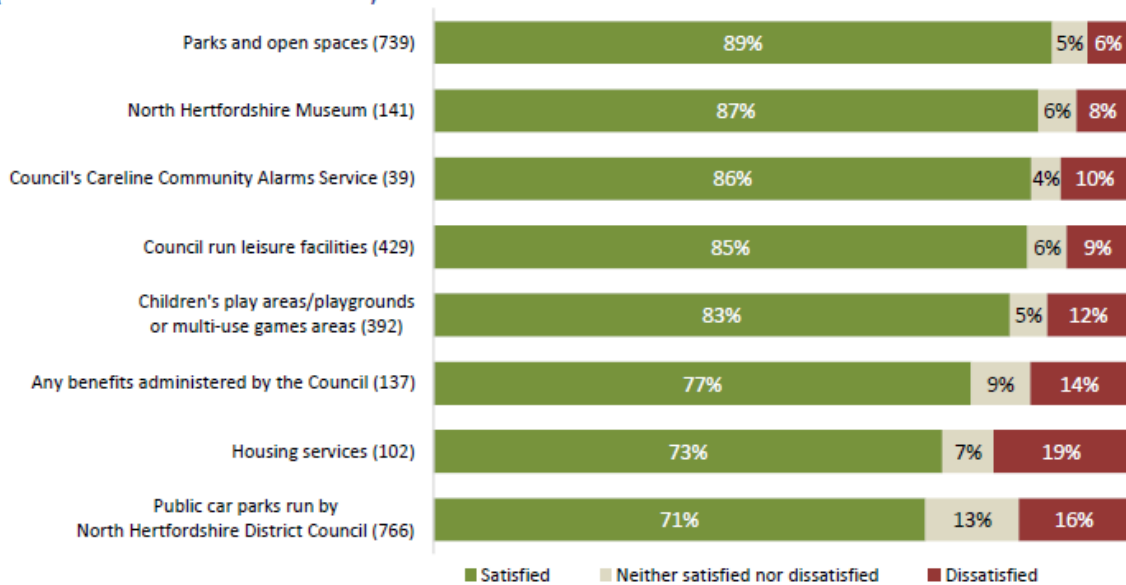
- 8.2.2 71% of residents are satisfied with the Council's street cleaning, which is in line with the national average of 70%, while one fifth (20%) are dissatisfied. Overall satisfaction with street cleaning has remained level since 2017, although it has seen a general decline since 2011. See figure 12 below:

### Street cleaning



- 8.2.3 Residents were asked if they had used a number of Council services in the last year. Figure 13 shows that 78% of residents have used public car parks run by NHDC in the last year, while 75% have used parks and open spaces. 44% had used council run leisure facilities, while 40% have used children's play areas / playgrounds, multi-use games areas.
- 8.2.4 The proportion of residents who have used housing services run by NHDC in the last year, has risen significantly from 7% in 2017 to 11% in 2019.
- 8.2.5 Residents who had used council services were subsequently asked about their satisfaction with those services. Satisfaction levels can be seen in Figure 14 below.

**Figure 14: Are you satisfied or dissatisfied or neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the following:**  
Base: (Number of residents shown in brackets)



- 8.2.6 While satisfaction with services such as parks and open spaces (89%), North Hertfordshire Museum (87%), Careline (86%), leisure facilities (85%) remains high, there has been a significant decrease in levels of satisfaction for all areas, as show in table 11.

Table 11: Are you satisfied or dissatisfied or neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the following:  
(satisfaction of services 2011 – 2019)

Service/facility	Satisfied % 2011	Satisfied % 2013	Satisfied % 2015	Satisfied % 2017	Satisfied % 2019	Percentage % Change 2017 to 2019
Parks and open spaces (739)	89%	93%	93%	92%	89%	-3%
Children's play areas / multi-use games areas (392)	87%	90%	90%	88%	83%	-5%
Council's Careline Community Alarms Service (39)	-	100%	100%	92%	86%	-6%
Council run leisure facilities (429)	92%	90%	91%	91%	85%	-6%
Public car parks run by North Hertfordshire District Council (766)	75%	76%	77%	77%	71%	-6%
Housing Services (102)	79%	76%	77%	79%	73%	-6%

Base: (Number of residents in 2019 is shown in brackets)

8.2.7 Waste and recycling collection was selected by 52% of residents as the most important service the Council provides, followed by housing services (19%) and parks and open spaces (10%). These were also the three services cited (in the same order of importance) in 2017, 2015 and 2013.

### Observations on Council Services

8.2.8 Due to issues at the start of the new waste contract in 2018 and also the introduction of a charge for garden waste collections, the decrease in satisfaction with waste and recycling collection was to a large extent to be anticipated. Given that performance levels are now at a business as usual level and that we are into the second year of charging for garden waste, it is hoped that satisfaction levels will improve when the survey is repeated in 2021. However, the reputational impact of previous performance issues may last longer than the actual issues themselves.

8.2.9 Although Table 11 shows a drop in satisfaction of six percentage points for Council run leisure facilities, the figure remains high and our own data shows excellent performance. Stevenage Leisure Ltd (SLL) undertake national quality schemes with the NBS and Quest and recent results show an increase in satisfaction at both Hitchin and Letchworth facilities. At Hitchin, the scores for overall customer satisfaction out of five with visit (4.82) and swimming experience (4.72) are well above the wet site averages (4.29 and 4.26 respectively). At North Herts Leisure Centre, the scores for overall customer satisfaction with visit (4.87) and swimming experience (4.53) are both above the mixed site averages (4.35 and 4.29 respectively). In February 2020, North Herts Leisure Centre also won the NBS Award for 'Overall High Score' and 'Customer Satisfaction'.

8.2.10 Table 11 shows satisfaction with Careline's Community Alarm's service has dropped from 92% in 2017 to 86% in 2019. However, the sample size is very small. Also Careline's own customer satisfaction data showed that 99.8% of customers would recommend Herts Careline to a friend or relative and 99.5% of customers say the help they receive from Herts Careline Control Room Operators is 'excellent' or 'good.'

8.2.11 Table 11 shows a decrease in satisfaction of five percentage points for children's play areas / multi use play areas from 88% in 2017 to 83% in 2019. One possible reason for this drop in satisfaction could be due to the Council's adopted Green Space Strategy (2018), where following consultation, the decision was made to rationalise the number of playgrounds which the Council maintains, opting to only maintain those which had higher use.

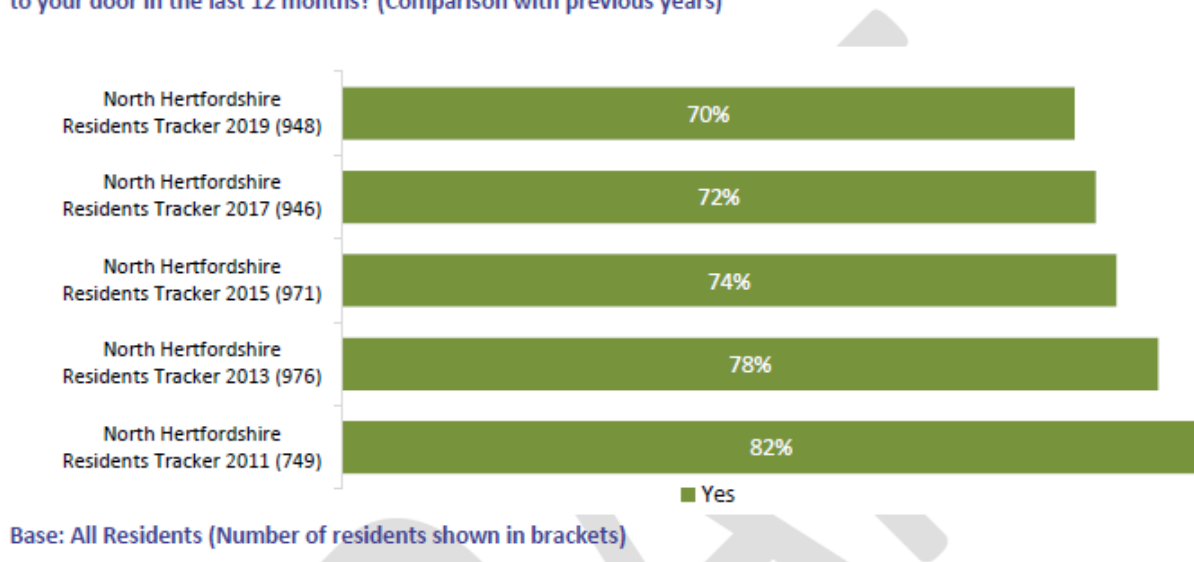
8.2.12 Paragraph 8.2.4 shows an increase in residents who had used the Council's housing services in the last year from 7% in 2017 to 11% in 2019. This increase could potentially be in large part because of the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, which came into force in April 2018 and which compels all local authorities to offer its housing service to everyone, not just those where an accommodation duty exists.

### 8.3 Information and Communication

8.3.1 Residents were asked where they normally obtain information about the Council. 74% of residents said the Council's website, followed by 16% who said local newspapers, leaflets etc, 15% said contact with Council staff, 12% said Outlook magazine and 9% said social media.

8.3.2 70% of residents had seen or had a copy of the Council's Outlook magazine in the last 12 months, this has decreased by 2% since 2017 and by 10 percentage points since 2011 (82%). See Figure 17.

Figure 17: Have you seen, or had a copy of 'Outlook', North Hertfordshire District Council's community news magazine to your door in the last 12 months? (Comparison with previous years)



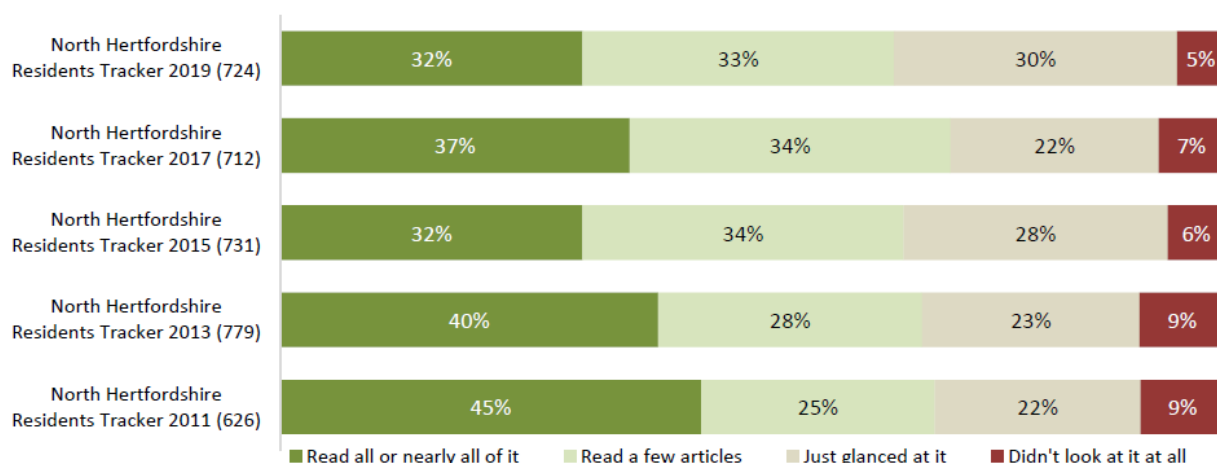
- 8.3.3 Table 13 shows that residents in Hitchin (78%) are significantly more likely to have seen or had a copy of Outlook magazine delivered to their door in the last 12 months, whereas Royston residents (58%) are significantly less likely to have seen or had a copy of Outlook.

Table 13: Residents who have seen, or had a copy of 'Outlook' by Ward area in the past 12 months:

	Total	Baldock and District	Hitchin	Southern Rural	Letchworth	Royston
Yes	70%	74%	78%	65%	71%	58%
Base	948	135	265	155	247	146

- 8.3.4 Figure 19 shows that the proportion of residents who have read all or nearly all of Outlook (32%) has decreased significantly since 2017 (37%).

Figure 19: Would you say you have...?



- 8.3.4 83% of residents like the way Outlook looks and is presented, 77% like the way it is written and 67% find Outlook interesting.
- 8.3.5 Since the last survey in 2017, we have introduced an email bulletin service @NorthHerts. 10% of residents said they were signed up to the e-bulletin service. Of those residents, 79% like the way the e-bulletins are written, and 81% find the information in them is useful to them. 74% agreed that the topics were of interest to them.
- 8.3.6 **Observations on Outlook magazine:** Although the proportion of residents who can recall seeing Outlook has declined, under the current Outlook distribution contract, the distributors all wear GPS trackers which show the roads which they have walked down, allowing the contractor to identify any gaps and rectify any missed delivery reports. We can therefore be confident that a much higher proportion of the district has been covered by distribution of Outlook than the results indicate. It also needs to be taken into account that it is industry best practice to check distribution recall within a couple

of days of delivery, whereas some residents, depending on when they answered the survey will not have seen an issue of Outlook for several months. The Communications Manager is not aware of any specific issues related to Outlook delivery in Royston, however the contractor has been made aware of the results and copies of the trails for Royston will be requested.

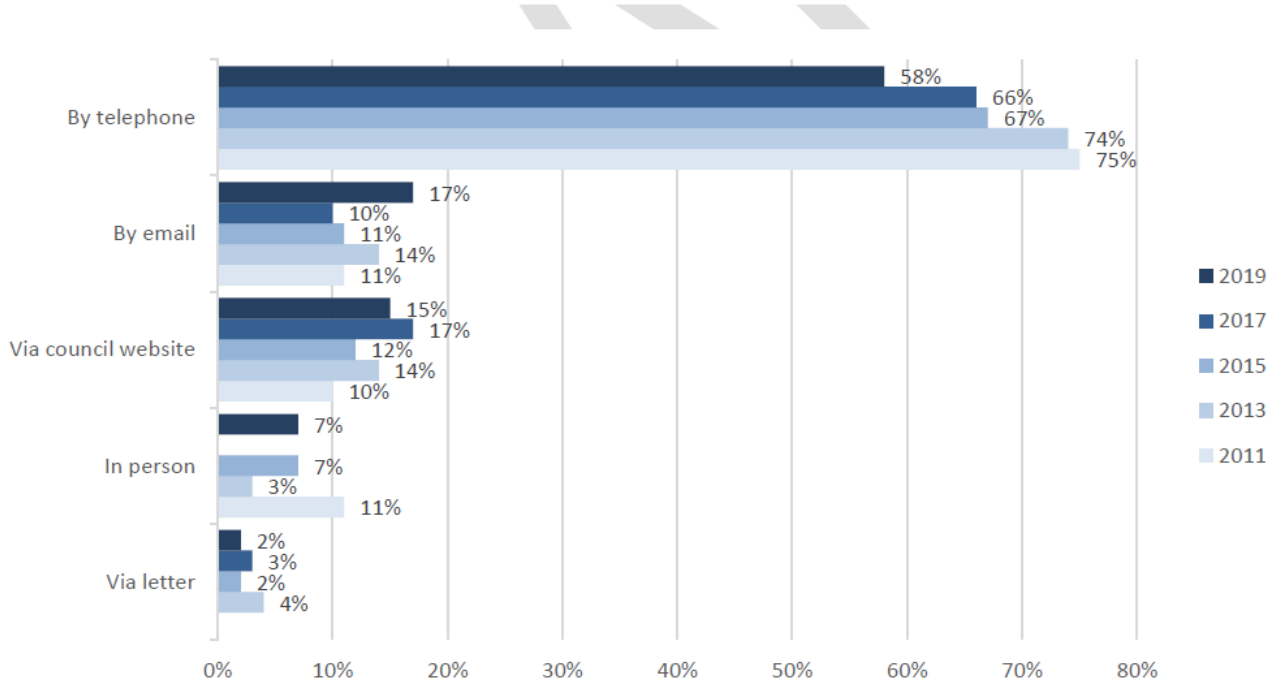
## 8.4 Contact with the Council

8.4.1 Over half of residents (52%) said they have contacted the Council in the last year. Of those, the main reasons for contact were:

- 34% to report an issue or problem
- 17% to ask for advice / information
- 13% to make a payment
- 12% to make a complaint
- 12% to apply to use a service

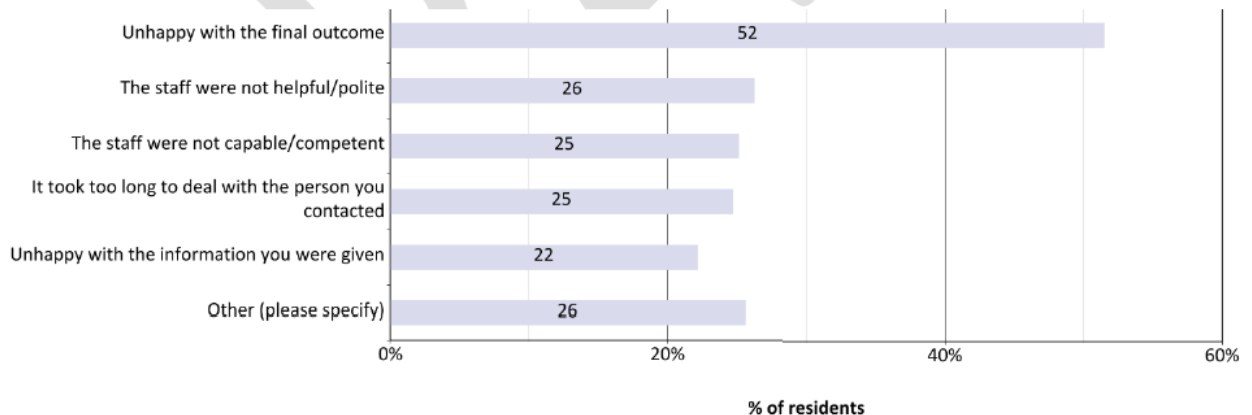
8.4.2 The most popular way to contact the Council was by telephone (58%), with email the second most popular method at 17% and 15% through the Council website. Figure 26 shows the changes in means of contact since 2011.

Figure 26: How did you contact the Council? (Comparison with previous years)



8.4.3 70% of residents said they were satisfied with the service they received last time they contacted the Council, with 38% saying they were very satisfied. 24% of residents were dissatisfied. Of the residents who were dissatisfied, more than half (52%) said they were unhappy with the final outcome. Figure 28 shows reasons for dissatisfaction.

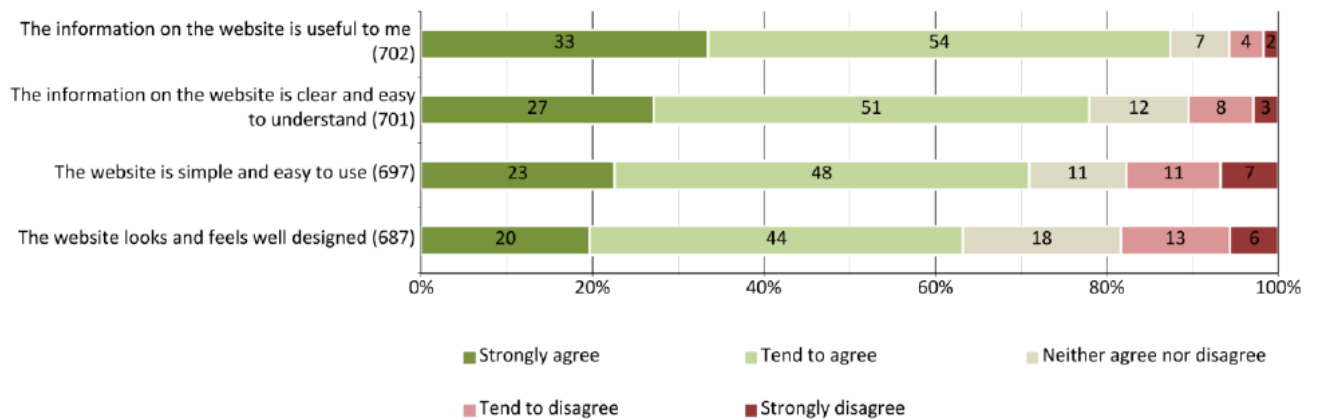
**Figure 28: Why were you dissatisfied with the service you received the last time you were in contact with the council?**



**Base: All Residents who have contacted the council and were dissatisfied with the contact they received (133)**

**8.4.5** 71% of residents said they had visited the Council's website within the last year. When asked about the website, 87% of residents think that the information on the website is useful to them, 78% think the information on the website is clear and easy to understand, while 71% think the website is simple and easy to use. 63% of residents think that the website looks and feels well designed. Figure 32 shows agreement levels with statements about the Council's website.

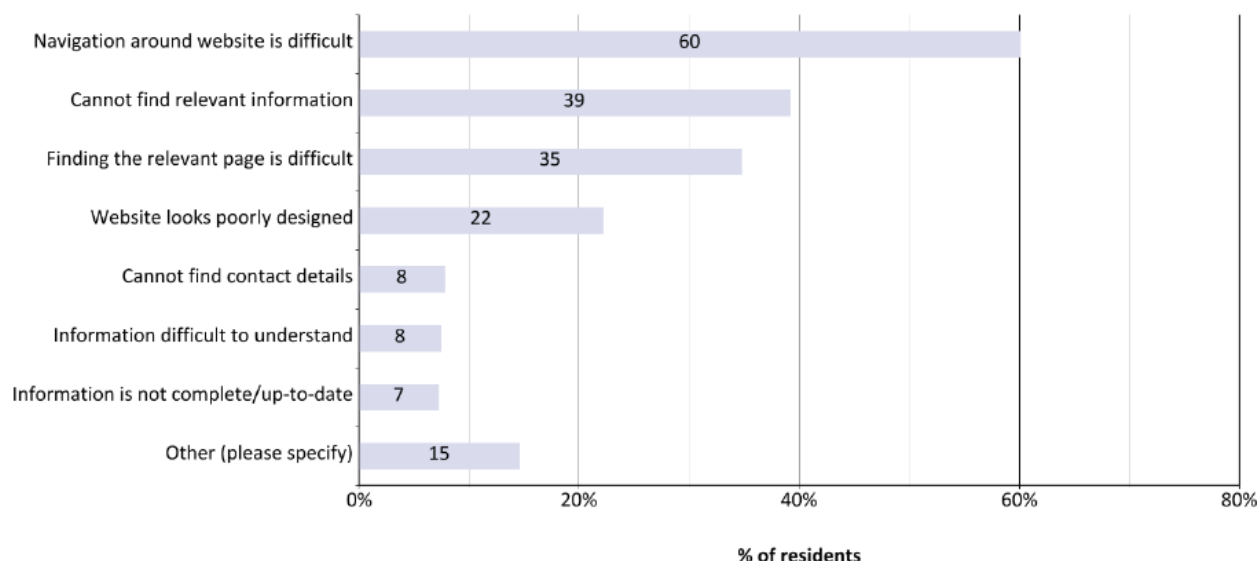
**Figure 32: Thinking about the council's website, do you agree, disagree, or neither agree nor disagree with the following?**



**8.4.6** Residents who disagreed with any of the statements in Figure 32, were subsequently asked if there were any specific issues which they had experienced with the website. The key issues were on navigating the site and finding the information they wanted. Figure 33 shows specific issues with the site.



**Figure 33: What specific issues did you have with the Council's website?**



**Base: All residents who have had issues with North Hertfordshire District Council's website (166)**

**8.4.7 Observations on Contact with the Council:** Paragraph 8.4.1 shows that of those residents who had contacted the Council in the last 12 months, 12% contacted us to make a complaint. However the number of complaints we received in 2018/19 only equates to 1% of the total contacts into the Customer Service Centre. The complaints figure includes complaints made directly to our contractors.

**8.4.8 Observations on Council website:** Overall opinions on the website are positive, however views on navigation and design will be taken into account during 2020/21 when a project to review the existing website, including design and content will be undertaken.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**9.1** The Cabinet has under 5.6.1 of its terms of reference, the function to prepare and agree to implement policies and strategies other than those reserved to Council.

**9.2** The Cabinet under 5.6.15 of its terms of reference oversees the provision of all the Council's services other than those functions reserved to the Council, therefore can consider the outcome of the District Wide Service report.

**9.3** There are no legal implications arising from this report. If any actions are identified as a result of the findings of the District Wide Survey 2019, the legal implications of those will be considered at the time.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**10.1** There are no direct financial implications from this report. The cost of the research undertaken was funded from the existing budget provision for corporate consultation.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Conducting the District Wide Survey is an important tool for shaping the Council's Objectives. If the results of the survey are not acted upon, there is a risk that public satisfaction with the Council will reduce, leading to a negative impact on the Council's reputation. In order to mitigate this risk, Service Directors and Corporate Managers use the results as part of the Service Planning process, enabling the Council to address any areas of concern.

## **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. The report highlights areas where satisfaction levels could be improved. Broadly though, the services that NHDC provides to residents are well received as noted at 8.1.7. Any mitigating actions may be incorporated into the formulation of the relevant Service Plans to improve service provision, where appropriate. These will be proportionate and reflect the authority's duty under the public Sector Duty. Any identified service improvements may require an analysis of equality impact prior to implementation.

## **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1. As the recommendations in the report relate to a contract below £50,000 the "go local" policy has not been applied due to the specialist nature of the contract and no suitable local providers being able to undertake the work.

## **14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 Where actions are agreed to be followed up, those will form part of the relevant department's service action plan and any employee resources and training will be considered as part of that planning.

## **15. APPENDICES**

- 15.1. None

## **16. CONTACT OFFICERS**

- 16.1. Sarah Kingsley, Communications Manager [sarah.kingsley@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.kingsley@north-herts.gov.uk); Ext 4552
- 16.2. Rachel Cooper, Controls, Performance and Risk Manager [rachel.cooper@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.cooper@north-herts.gov.uk) Ext 4606
- 16.3. Kerry Shorrocks, Corporate Human Resources Manager [Kerry.shorrocks@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Kerry.shorrocks@north-herts.gov.uk) Ext 4224

- 16.4. Reuben Ayavoo, Policy and Community Engagement Manager [reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk) Ext 4212
- 16.5. Yvette Roberts, Legal Officer [Yvette.roberts@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Yvette.roberts@north-herts.gov.uk) Ext 4310
- 16.6. Shah Mohammed, Group Accountant [shah.mohammed@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:shah.mohammed@north-herts.gov.uk) Ext 4240

**17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 17.1. The full research report from Opinion Research Services can be found at [www.north-herts.gov.uk/districtwidesurvey](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/districtwidesurvey)

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
24 MARCH 2020**

**PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF REPORT: APPROVAL OF A NEW DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT FOR THE  
JOHN BARKER PLACE AREA OF HITCHIN**

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF REGULATORY SERVICES

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COUNCILLOR GARY GRINDAL

CURRENT COUNCIL PRIORITY: RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT

NEW COUNCIL PRIORITIES: BUILD THRIVING AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES /  
SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF GOOD QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE HOMES

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Westmill area of Hitchin, in which John Barker Place is located, is the third most deprived in the district.
- 1.2 North Hertfordshire Homes, (or 'settle Group' as they are now known) and the Council committed to a Development Agreement in 2013, with the aim of regenerating John Barker Place.
- 1.3 Against a backdrop of progressive austerity measures and reduced access to capital funding for registered providers, delivery of the affordable homes and new shops stalled.
- 1.4 settle has recently gained planning consent for a new regeneration scheme at John Barker Place that includes 129 homes, two new shops and a new play area. settle will project manage the scheme on a day-to-day basis.
- 1.5 The regeneration scheme features as a priority in the Council Plan 2020-2025 and this report recommends the Council enters in to a new Development Agreement with settle to support their delivery of the new scheme.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. That notice is served on settle to terminate the Development Agreement that was signed in 2013, with immediate effect.
- 2.2. That the newly proposed Development Agreement, at Appendix B, be approved.

- 2.3. That authority is delegated to the Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health, in conjunction with the Director of Regulatory Services, to agree minor changes to the new Development Agreement.
- 2.4. That a lease on the identified Council owned land at Swinburne Avenue, Hitchin, is granted to settle on the lease heads of terms attached to this report (please see Appendix C).

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The newly proposed Development Agreement (DA) includes a package of measures that support settle's regeneration scheme for John Barker Place (JBP), which is situated in one of the most deprived areas of the district.
- 3.2 The existing DA is not considered to be fit for purpose as it relates to historic planning approvals and former Council priorities. This view is supported by settle.

### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The Council could decide against agreeing the new DA, or not participating at all in any JBP regeneration scheme with settle. Either of these actions would lead to a risk of the project stalling further. This action would also be inconsistent with the Council's commitment to support the JBP regeneration scheme, as set out in the recently published Council Plan 2020-2025.

### **5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- 5.1 Cllr Gary Grindal, the Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health, has been consulted and is supportive of the recommendations contained in this report.
- 5.2 As a local housing partner and party to the proposed DA, settle are supportive of the recommendations contained in this report.

### **6. FORWARD PLAN**

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a Key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 1 July 2019.

### **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 The recently published 2019 English Indices of Deprivation (the official measure of relative deprivation in England) indicate the Westmill area, in which JBP is located, is the third most deprived in the district. In a county context, it is amongst the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods in Hertfordshire.

- 7.2 The Council agreed to support settle's JBP regeneration project in both January 2013 and July 2013 (please see Appendix A for the resolutions from both Cabinet meetings).
- 7.3 A DA for the regeneration project was produced to protect and support the interests of both parties; since this was agreed in 2013, settle has delivered its commitments for a new Westmill Community Centre and a relocated Multi-Use Games Area. Against a backdrop of progressive austerity measures and reduced access to capital funding for regeneration, delivery of the affordable homes and new shops stalled.
- 7.4 settle has now come forward with plans and capacity to deliver a new regeneration scheme at JBP and the DA signed in 2013 is no longer fit for purpose. The Cabinet recommended on 30 July 2019:
- That officers be authorised to assess the suitability of the existing DA and review if an alternative agreement is required for settle's new scheme.*
- Should a new DA be required, officers should negotiate its terms with settle and return to the Cabinet for it to be considered and decided.*
- 7.5 settle's newly proposed development now consists of 129 homes, to be delivered over three phases; the first comprising 37 units, the second phase totalling 46 units and the third also 46 units. Alongside the homes and replacement shops, a new fully equipped play area is being brought forward in phase three.
- 7.6 The first two phases include 49 units of retirement living accommodation to enable existing tenants from the adjacent existing Westmill Lawns Scheme to relocate, as there are longer-term remedial works required that could not be undertaken whilst the building is occupied. This also applies to 12 of the tenants in general needs flats in Freemans Close, who will also be relocated under phase two of the project.
- 7.7 settle submitted a full planning application that detailed the delivery of phases one and two, whilst outlining phase three (planning reference: 19/01416/HYA). A second application was also submitted by settle for an additional play area, located on Council owned land in Swinburne Avenue, Westmill to ensure continuity of provision throughout the duration of the works (planning reference: 19/01748/FP). The Council's Planning Control Committee subsequently approved both applications on 23 January 2020.
- 7.8 Within North Hertfordshire, the Common Housing Register demonstrates a high demand for affordable housing, including retirement living accommodation. With an ageing population across the district, there is an identified need for retirement accommodation in new housing supply, alongside affordable homes.
- 7.9 The project features specifically as a priority in the Council Plan 2020-2025, under the objective "Support the delivery of good quality and affordable homes". The regeneration scheme has also been included in a partnership plan between settle and the Council that identifies how both parties may work together to meet housing local needs.

## 8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1. Following extensive negotiations with settle, the following provisions are proposed in the newly drafted DA:

**a) settle to deliver a new play area on Swinburne Avenue before the existing provision on JBP is decommissioned**

This will ensure continuity of provision (which the planning permission cannot do) for the local community throughout the duration of the building works. Phase three of the project includes a further play area on-site, so there will be two equipped play areas on completion. The up-front and ongoing costs of both play areas will be funded by settle, in line with the arrangements for the existing play area.

**b) settle will use their best endeavours to deliver a regeneration scheme that comprises 100% affordable housing, totalling 129 units across the three phases of development**

The new homes will provide modern, fit for purpose retirement accommodation for rent. They will also replace existing bedsit provision with self contained apartments and enable a wider range of housing choice in the neighbourhood, with additional rented and shared ownership homes. The existing 49 units at Westmill Lawns will still be retained (although not necessarily in use) pending the review described in (g) below.

The existing 12 units at Freemans Close will be demolished to allow the phase three building to take place. The first two phases deliver 83 units; although 22 of these have been designated as open market housing in settle's planning application, they have confirmed they are planning to convert these to affordable housing, most likely shared ownership.

In addition, settle has confirmed their intention to deliver a further 46 affordable units in phase three, making up the total of 129 units.

**c) Should less than one hundred and twenty nine affordable housing units be delivered within 10 years of the date of the lease, as set out by, and in accordance with, the lease, settle (or successors in title) agree to pay the Council the base premium of £133.2k (index linked) for the lease on the Swinburne Avenue land (further detail in lease).**

It is proposed for the lease to have a contractual term of 20 years at a peppercorn rent on the delivery of 129 new and improved affordable housing units. This is due to the positive impact the affordable housing will have in helping the Council meet local housing need.

**d) settle agree to discharge a previous planning condition from the redevelopment of the St Andrews House, Hitchin site on the JBP scheme**

This is a separate condition that formed part of the previous DA and it concerns delivery of 4 x two-bedroom houses as part of the scheme.



**e) settle have agreed an ‘open book’ approach to the regeneration project and have shared relevant financial information with the Council and commit to doing so on an ongoing basis**

settle has confirmed that as a mixed-use scheme with extensive communal spaces, the development carries high costs. With many of the homes being delivered at genuinely affordable social rents, long term revenue receipts are low. settle plan to part fund the project through limited Homes England grants and private sector borrowing. Accounting for this, settle have demonstrated that the project would not meet usual investment criteria. In agreeing to the DA, they have committed to sustaining the regeneration costs over the long term through the charitable housing association’s surpluses, recognising the strong local need and wider community benefits identified in the original project objectives. settle have agreed to continue to regularly share financial information in confidence with the Council as the development goes forward.

Funding by the Council would be capped at the amount detailed below (in section (f)), and settle would take on all the risk associated with any cost increases. The provision of this open book information would provide indications on how phase three could be delivered (e.g. the percentage of affordable units). Given the significant regeneration involved and the associated costs, it is difficult to envisage any scenario where settle would not be able to justify that they needed the contribution from the Council.

**f) The Council will pay settle a capital contribution of £1.096m upon completion of phases one and two of the project.**

The Council originally agreed this capital contribution to bridge a known funding gap in 2013, on the basis of bringing forward the regeneration scheme, including community facilities and affordable housing, which may not have occurred otherwise.

It has been held in the Council’s budget since, including that for 2020/21. Whilst the regeneration scheme’s funding gap has grown significantly, negotiations with settle have continued with the same sum. To further incentivise performance from settle, the payment would only be made when the homes detailed in phases one and two are completed and handed over.

The units in Phase 2B are designated market sale under the planning permission, however it is settle’s intention to deliver these 22 units as shared ownership which is a form of affordable housing. This means that 83 affordable housing units would be delivered in the first two phases, a significant increase on the 39 agreed in 2013.

The Council receives commuted sum payments from developers for affordable housing in the event these units cannot be provided on site. The capital budget for 2020/21 assumes that £270k of the £1.096m will be funded from commuted sums. Indications are that this could be higher, potentially around £480k. This would reduce the amount the Council would need to fund from its own capital reserves.

**g) The vacated Westmill Lawns site will be jointly reviewed in order to assess the viability of any shared commercial and/or accommodation opportunities**

Westmill Lawns, the existing retirement scheme, will be vacated upon completion of the new homes without the need to otherwise relocate the residents. This is due to major works which cannot be achieved with residents in situ. settle have agreed to review immediate options for the vacant site and buildings with the Council, including possible joint future commercial opportunities that would enable wider housing choice in Westmill, or even another form of affordable housing.

**h) With reference to both settle and the Council's ambitions regarding climate change, settle agree to incorporate carbon reduction and efficiency measures into the detailed design for the regeneration project**

settle is committed to incorporate measures including EV charging points, energy efficient heating and fabric systems, along with tree planting for broader ecological and aesthetic benefit.

- 8.2 The DA has a proposed duration of ten years. This provides focus for delivery of the project within a reasonable timeframe. This also allows for the sequencing of certain aspects of the project in order to allow tenants to stay in their existing homes while construction work is completed on the new homes and to support the existing shops to remain open to serve the neighbourhood
- 8.3 The DA has been prepared with settle colleagues and they are progressing to approval, subject to the Council's confirmation of its decision, simultaneously with this report.

**9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Cabinet's terms of reference include (at paragraph 5.6.15 of the Council's Constitution) "To oversee the provision of all the Council's services other than those functions reserved to the Council". The recommendations contained in this report are Executive functions and are therefore not matters reserved to Council.
- 9.2 The DA that was agreed in 2013 can be terminated by either party giving at least three months notice. settle have confirmed they are amenable to the waiving of this notice period in order for the new DA to take effect as soon as possible.
- 9.3 The Council entered in to a Deed of Covenant with North Hertfordshire Homes Limited (as settle were then) in 2003. This determined that the Council would be entitled to a 'clawback' where North Hertfordshire Homes sold any land or housing that was part of the stock transfer. This allowed clawback to be suspended where that funding was to be used for the future provision of social housing or community benefit. The detailed provisions of this were further clarified in a protocol that followed the creation of Rowan Homes in 2011. There is no restriction on how much funding can be applied to each unit as long as more than the amount applied is spent.
- 9.4 Since the land at Swinburne Avenue, Hitchin is held as public open space, the Council has advertised the proposed lease of part of its land at Swinburne Avenue, Hitchin in the local newspaper in accordance with section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 9.5 “Paragraph 14.6.7 of the Council Constitution grants the Service Director: Commercial delegated authority in relation to granting, negotiating and settling terms of leases where the premium does not exceed £500,000 provided that in respect of any matter where the premium exceeds £50,000 the decision shall be made in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and IT.
- 9.6 The lease proposed by the heads of terms shown in Appendix C contains a proposal to charge a premium of £133,200 (subject to indexing) to the tenant. The lease terms could therefore be approved in accordance with paragraph 14.6.7 of the Constitution rather than by Cabinet. However, this report recommends Cabinet approves the lease heads of terms instead. The rationale is that the lease forms a component of the wider regeneration scheme and programme of JBP. It is considered sensible and prudent for the lease to be considered for approval by Cabinet alongside the wider regeneration scheme in order to provide better understanding of the lease’s context, rather than being considered in isolation and separate from the wider scheme

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The Council’s potential capital contribution of £1.096m is available in the approved budget for 2020/21. The budget assumes that £270k of this is funded via commuted sums, but this could be higher at around £480k. The Council’s Investment Strategy determines that it will seek to make use of third-party funding (including commuted sums) before using its own capital reserves. As the funding has been in the capital programme for some time, it will be funded from capital receipts. However, that still means that other capital spend will need to be funded from borrowing. Therefore, the notional revenue cost (i.e. the interest and minimum revenue provision that will be incurred on other schemes) is around £50k per year (based on £270k funded from commuted sums).
- 10.2 The current balance of suspended clawback that can be applied to this scheme is £2.21m. Whilst there is notionally an element of re-provision within the scheme, the Westmill Lawns site will remain at the end of phase three (pending a subsequent review). It is therefore considered that the additional units at that point would justify the use of suspended clawback in line with the deed of covenant and protocol.
- 10.3 The Council can choose to use its capital reserves to fund capital spend on assets owned by another party. The Council should consider the value for money that it gets from the funding it provides. The majority of the spend on phases one and two potentially relates to an element of the re-provision of existing housing and improvements to the general environment. This has benefits to the residents directly affected as well as more widely, but it is impossible to evaluate. Upon settle delivering phases one and two as 100% affordable housing, that would equate to 22 additional units (6 one-bedroom and 16 two-bed). A contribution of £1.096m would equate to an average of £50k per additional unit. If settle delivered all three phases as affordable, that would equate to £16k per additional unit. Any ongoing provision or redevelopment on the Westmill Lawns site would be in addition to this and add further to the value for money.

- 10.4 settle will pay the Council £133.2k (index linked as set out in the lease heads of terms) for the lease on the Swinburne Avenue land in the event the scheme does not deliver 129 units of affordable housing within 10 years of the date of the signing of the lease.
- 10.5 The base premium figure outlined in paragraph 10.4 of this report represents a figure agreed between the Council and settle in relation to the specific context of the JBP regeneration scheme. The base premium figure does not therefore have universal or market-wide application and does not necessarily represent the market value of the Council's land off Swinburne Avenue, Hitchin which is proposed to be leased
- 10.6 settle will provide two play areas as part of the regeneration scheme and will also take responsibility for the associated maintenance. This will meet a known need (as per current Green Space Management Strategy) that the Council is currently unable to meet without external funding.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 As the 2013 DA is still in place, it technically commits both parties to a scheme that is no longer viable. This is misleading and could result in reputational damage for the Council.
- 11.2 If the existing DA is not reviewed or replaced, it may lead to a risk of the project stalling further, losing the additional affordable housing and the improvements to the neighbourhood.
- 11.3 There is a risk the regeneration project does not progress to completion, or does not deliver 100% affordable housing. These risks are mitigated by:
- the conditional payment of the capital contribution of £1.096m to settle upon completion of phases one and two
  - The lease incorporates a condition obliging Settle (as tenant) to pay a premium to the Council (as landlord) for the lease of the land off Swinburne Avenue if Settle does not deliver 129 units of affordable housing within 10 years of the date of the lease.
  - The Stock Transfer Agreement from 2003, with particular reference to disposals.
- 11.4 settle has confirmed the potential £1.096m capital contribution from the Council is a vital component in the funding package for the whole regeneration scheme. There is a risk the scheme may not be delivered as proposed, or in its entirety, if this funding is not provided.

## **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. The proposed regeneration of the JBP area of Westmill, including the delivery of 129 affordable housing units, has the potential to advance the equality of opportunity of all current and prospective residents. Paragraph 7.8 notes a specific need to support the growing needs of residents, including older people.

## **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.2. There are no anticipated staffing implications arising as a result of the recommendations contained in this report.

## **15. APPENDICES**

- 15.1. Appendix A – JBP Cabinet resolutions from 2013
- 15.2. Appendix B – Proposed Development Agreement for John Barker Place
- 15.3. Appendix C – Lease heads of terms for land at Swinburne Avenue, Hitchin

## **16. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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**17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 17.1. English Indices of Deprivation: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>
- 17.2. Decisions from 23 Jan 2020 Planning Control Committee (items 87 and 88):  
<https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=151&MId=2247&Ver=4>

## **Appendix A – JBP Cabinet resolutions from 2013**

### **29 January, 2013: RESOLVED:**

- (1) That officers be authorised to enter into negotiations to produce a Development Agreement for the regeneration of John Barker Place, Westmill, Hitchin;
- (2) That the commitment of £1.096m be agreed for this scheme from the Council's budget for affordable housing, subject to the availability of capital funds;
- (3) That the proposal to use £865k from the Community Benefit Fund to finance a new Community Centre be supported; and
- (4) That it be agreed in principle that, subject to other regulatory approvals, the Community Centre can be rebuilt adjacent to its present location and the current building be subsequently demolished.

### **30 July, 2013: RESOLVED:**

- (1) That officers be authorised to enter into the Development Agreement for the regeneration of John Barker Place, Westmill, Hitchin, as attached at Appendix B to the report;
- (2) That the proposal to use the new amount of £1.327M, from the Community Benefit Fund, to finance a new Community Centre and development of the surrounding area, be supported;
- (3) That the Council acquires ownership of the remaining area surrounding the Community Centre from North Hertfordshire Homes (NHH) for the sum of £1;
- (4) That the transfer of the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) from its current location, on NHH owned land, to Council owned land on the site of the existing Community Centre, be agreed;
- (5) That a waiver of the Council's Contract Procurement Rules, in relation to the appointment of a contractor for the regeneration project, be approved; and
- (6) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to agree minor changes concerning any aspect of the regeneration scheme, providing they do not materially alter the agreed scheme.

**Appendix B – Proposed Development Agreement for John Barker Place**

Dated

**Development Agreement**

between

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

and

**settle Group**



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### ANNEX

ANNEX A .....	THE PROJECT
ANNEX B .....	DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT COMMITMENTS

THIS AGREEMENT is dated

The parties to this Development Agreement are:

- (1) **NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** of Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3JF (**The Council**).
- (2) **SETTLE GROUP** companies house registration number 04417896 of Blackhorse Road, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 1HA (**Settle**).

## **BACKGROUND**

1.1 The Council and Settle have agreed to work together on the regeneration project detailed in Annex A to this Agreement (the Project).

1.2 The parties wish to record the basis on which they will collaborate with each other on the Project. This Agreement sets out:

- (a) the key objectives of the Project;
- (b) the principles of collaboration; ·
- (c) the governance structures the parties will put in place; and
- (d) the respective roles and responsibilities the parties will have during the Project.

## **2. KEY OBJECTIVES FOR THE PROJECT**

2.1 The parties shall work together in order to deliver the Project to achieve the key objectives set out in Annex A to this Agreement (Key Objectives).

## **3. PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION**

The parties agree to adopt the following principles when carrying out the Project (**Principles**):

- (a) Collaborate and co-operate. Establish and adhere to the governance structure set out in this DA to ensure that activities are delivered and actions taken as required;

- (b) Be accountable. Take on, manage and account to each other for performance of the respective roles and responsibilities set out in this Agreement;
- (c) Be open. Communicate openly about major concerns, issues or opportunities relating to the Project;
- (d) Learn, develop and seek to achieve full potential. Share information, experience, materials and skills to learn from each other and develop effective working practices, work collaboratively to identify solutions, eliminate duplication of effort, mitigate risk and reduce cost;
- (e) Adopt a positive outlook. Behave in a positive, proactive manner;
- (f) Adhere to statutory requirements and best practice. Comply with applicable laws and standards including EU procurement rules, data protection and freedom of information legislation;
- (g) Act in a timely manner. Recognise the time-critical nature of the Project and respond accordingly to requests for support;
- (h) Manage stakeholders effectively;
- (i) Deploy appropriate resources. Ensure sufficient and appropriately qualified resources are available and authorised to fulfil the responsibilities set out in this Agreement; and
- (j) Act in good faith to support achievement of the Key Objectives set out in Annex A and comply with these Principles.

#### **4. COMMITMENTS**

The individual Agreement commitments highlighted in Annex B shall be delivered by the identified party, with the conditions being met in each case

#### **5. ESCALATION**

5.1 If either party has any issues, concerns or complaints about the Project which is set out in Annex A, or any matter in this Agreement, that party shall notify the other party and the parties shall then seek to resolve the issue by a process of consultation. If the issue cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of time, the matter shall be escalated to the Head of Delivery (settle) and the Strategic Housing Manager (Council), which shall decide on the appropriate course of action to take. If the matter cannot be resolved within 30 days, the matter may be escalated to the Development Director (settle) and Director of Regulatory Services (Council) for resolution.

5.2 If either party receives any formal inquiry, complaint, claim or threat of action from a third party (including, but not limited to, claims made by a supplier or requests for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000) in relation to the Project, the matter shall be promptly referred to the Head of Delivery (settle) and the Strategic Housing Manager (Council). No action shall be taken in response to any such inquiry, complaint, claim or action,

to the extent that such response would adversely affect the Project, without the prior approval of the Development Director (settle) and Director of Regulatory Services (Council).

## **6. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

6.1 The parties intend that notwithstanding any secondment any intellectual property rights created in the course of the Project shall vest in the party whose employee or agent created them (or in the case of 'ally intellectual property rights created jointly by employees or agent of both parties in the party that is lead party noted in clause 5 above (for the part of the project that the intellectual property right relates to).

6.2 Where any intellectual property right vests in either party in accordance with the intention set out in clause 6. 1 above, that party shall grant an irrevocable licence to the other party to use that intellectual property for the purposes of the Project.

## **7. TERM AND TERMINATION**

7.1 This Agreement shall commence on the date of signature by both parties and shall expire on completion of the Project or after 10 years from the date of signature, whichever is sooner.

7.2 Either party may terminate this Agreement by giving at least six months' notice in writing to the other party at any time.

## **8. VARIATION**

8.1 This Agreement, including the Annexes, may only be varied by written agreement by both parties.

## **9. STATUS AND ARBITRATION**

9.1 This Agreement is intended to be legally binding. The parties enter into the Agreement intending to honour all their obligations.

9.2 Any contradiction or inconsistency in terminology or phrasing between this Agreement and the lease mentioned in Annex B to this Agreement shall be read and interpreted in accordance with the lease rather than this Agreement.

9.2 Except as otherwise provided in paragraph 5.1, any dispute arising out of or in connection with this Agreement, including any question regarding its existence, validity or termination, or the legal relationships established by this Agreement, shall be referred to and finally resolved by arbitration under the Rules of the London Court of International Arbitration, which Rules are deemed to be incorporated by reference into this clause.

9.3 This clause shall be without prejudice to the rights of any party to seek any injunctive or similar relief from the courts to protect its Intellectual Property, confidentiality obligations or other rights of any description.

9.4 Each party acknowledges that in entering into this Agreement it does not rely on, and shall have no remedies in respect of, any representation or warranty (whether made innocently or negligently) that is not set out in this Agreement.

9.5 Each party agrees that its only liability in respect of those representations and warranties that are set out in this Agreement (whether made innocently or negligently) shall be for breach of contract.

9.6 Nothing in this clause shall limit or exclude any liability for fraud.

## **10. CONFIDENTIALITY**

10.1 Each party undertakes that they shall not at any time use, divulge or communicate to any person, except to its professional representatives or advisers or as may be required by law or any legal or regulatory authority, any confidential information concerning the Business or affairs covered by this Agreement which may have or may in future come to its knowledge and shall use his reasonable endeavours to prevent the publication or disclosure of any confidential information concerning such matters.

## **11. GOVERNING LAW AND JURISDICTION**

This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with English law and, without affecting the escalation procedure set out in clause 5, each party agrees to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.

Signed for and on behalf of

**North Hertfordshire District Council**

Signature: .....

Name: .....

Position: .....

Date: .....

Signed for and on behalf

**Settle Group**

Signature: .....

Name: .....

Position: .....

Date: .....

## **Annex A - The Project**

### **Project overview**

The Regeneration of John Barker Place, including the construction of new housing units and shops.

The following Key Objectives shall be subject to minor variations that may arise as a result of the requirements of the Local Planning Authority.

### **The Key Objectives**

- Planning decision - construction of:

**Phase 1 – 37 x 1 Bedroom Retirement Flats**

**Phase 2A – 12 Retirement Flats**

**Phase 2A – 12 Affordable Apartments**

**Phase 2B – 22 Open Market Apartments**

**Phase 3 – 46 homes, outline in planning application**

- The construction of two new shops (a supermarket and take-away) that will replace the existing units and be built at the corner of John Barker Place and Mattocke Road.
- The objective that the scheme is 100% affordable.

## **Annex B – Development Agreement commitments**

- a) settle to deliver a new play area on Swinburne Avenue before the existing provision on JBP is decommissioned
- b) settle will use their best endeavours to deliver a regeneration scheme with 100% affordable housing, totalling 129 units across three phases of development
- c) Should less than one hundred and twenty nine affordable housing units be delivered within 10 years of the date of the lease, as set out by, and in accordance with, the lease, settle (or successors in title) agree to pay the Council the base premium of £133.2k (index linked) for the lease on the Swinburne Avenue land (further detail in lease)
- d) settle agree to discharge a previous condition for redevelopment of the St Andrews House, Hitchin site on the JBP development
- e) settle have agreed an 'open book' approach to the regeneration project and have shared relevant financial information with the Council and commit to doing so on an ongoing basis
- f) The Council will pay settle a capital contribution of £1.096m upon completion of phases 1 and 2 of the project
- g) The vacated Westmill Lawns site will be jointly reviewed in order to assess the viability of any shared commercial and/or accommodation opportunities
- h) With reference to both settle and the Council's ambitions regarding climate change, settle agree to incorporate carbon reduction and efficiency measures in to the detailed design for the project

## **Appendix C – Lease heads of terms for land at Swinburne Avenue, Hitchin**

Standard format – to follow, on the terms outlined in this report



**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
17 MARCH 2020**

**PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: GREENSPACE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021 – 2026 SCOPING

REPORT OF: THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - PLACE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

COUNCIL PRIORITY: RESPOND TO CHALLENGES TO THE ENVIRONMENT

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Green Space Management Strategy (GSMS) is intended to give focus and direction towards the future management of development and maintenance of the Parks and Public Open Spaces owned by North Herts District Council.
- 1.2 The GSMS will provide support and direction to Members of the Council, Officers, External Organisations and residents regarding the future direction of the Authorities Greenspace both in the short and medium terms.
- 1.3 It Aims:-
- To identify sustainable and affordable principals for the short and medium term
  - To identify current influences upon Greenspace and make proposals to manage them
  - To identify previous achievements and propose new projects and aspirations
  - To contribute and provide input into solutions in response to the pressures of development as identified within the Council's Local Plan. To enable the Council to have clear policies on adoption of any new residential developments
  - To suggest alternatives that could have a beneficial environmental impact
  - To encourage positive use of our Parks and Open Spaces by everyone
- 1.4 To report to Cabinet in December 2020 with the final draft GSMS for consideration and adoption

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Cabinet notes that Officers are commencing a process of review, to develop the next Greenspace Management Strategy from 2021 to 2026
- 2.2 To consider and approve the scoping document as attached at Appendix A

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The existing GSMS is due to expire in March 2021 and the replacement document will provide the future strategic direction for the Greenspaces of North Herts.

### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The only alternative option is not to develop a future GSMS. However, this would have a negative impact upon Greenspace in the Medium to Long Term as there would be no agreed strategic direction or financial commitment which in turn would have consequences to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

### **5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- 5.1 The Executive Member for Environment and Leisure and PLB have been consulted on this proposed process.
- 5.2 A process of consultation is highlighted within the scoping document which includes the use of the Citizens Panel, results from the District Wide Survey and Member Workshops

### **6. FORWARD PLAN**

- 6.1 This report was included within the Forward Plan on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019

### **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 The existing GSMS is due to expire on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and the Scoping Document sets out the context under which the subsequent GSMS will be delivered.
- 7.2 The scoping document has been produced to guide the process and to support the production of the Greenspace Management Strategy (GSMS) for the District of North Herts District Council (NHDC). The plan will cover a period of 2021 to 2031 with regards principals and future vision. However the action plan associated with the GSMS will cover a period of 2021 – 2026 so as to enable an opportunity of review pending future economic circumstances.
- 7.3 The GSMS is intended to give focus and direction towards the future management of development and maintenance of the Parks and Public Open Spaces owned by North Herts District Council. Initially the GSMS will provide clear logical processes for the future management of our Parks and Open Spaces while identifying longer term principals that will underpin NHDC's future approach to this service area.
- 7.4 It is intended to undertake a structured engagement process with stakeholders to ensure that they are fully aware of this process. Engagement will be encouraged and there will be opportunities to feed into the new GSMS in a constructive and timely manner. Therefore this document is intended to initiate this process.

## **8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 The GSMS will need to consider the following broader issues –
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
  - Local Plan – impact of proposed developments
  - Environmental issues (wilding of verges, tree planting, use of pesticides, local nature reserves etc.)
  - Future provision of services within our Greenspaces. (Play areas, pavilions etc.)
- 8.2 To ensure a clear and logical process is undertaken for the review of the GSMS as shown in Appendix A and the following timeline:-

Activity	End date
Presentation at PLB	January 2020
Cabinet Approval for commencement of GSMS project	March 2020
Development of draft GSMS in accordance with MTFS and Root and branches financial review	June/July 2020
Public and Member engagement/consultation	August/September 2020
Revision following consultation and production of final draft	November 2020
Presentation to Cabinet for adoption	December 2020

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Within Cabinet's terms of reference are "to prepare and agree to implement policies and strategies other than those reserved to Council" and "to approve those major service developments or reductions which also constitute Key Decisions." The Green Space Management Strategy falls within Cabinet's remit and this project has been noted on the Council's Forward Plan as a key decision.
- 9.2 The Council provide parks, recreation grounds and open spaces under its discretionary powers.
- 9.3 However elements such as Burials and Allotments are statutory functions.
- 9.4 Discretionary services are subject to binding contracts with third party providers and in some cases other public bodies. Changes to service specifications or early termination of contracts may incur costs. Such costs must form part of any business case that falls within the scope of the fundamental review as referred to in paragraph 10.1 below.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There is forecast to be a need for the Council to generate income or reduce its costs by around £1.1m per year by the end of 2023/24. It is planned that this will be achieved primarily via a fundamental review of discretionary services and services delivered in excess of the statutory requirement. The total revenue spend on green space is budgeted to be £2.1m in 2020/21, and the vast majority of this is on discretionary services (the exceptions are listed in 9.3 above). This demonstrates the need for the Green Space Management Strategy to be mindful of the extent to which existing provision and the inherent costs therein are considered a priority when compared with other services.

10.2 As part of the development of the capital budget for 2020/21 and beyond, an estimate was made of the capital spend required to maintain and develop green space provision over a 10 year period, which totals £1,615,000.00. For a number of years the Council has had capital receipts which it can spend on replacing and developing its assets, which significantly reduces the cost of capital investment compared with the need to fund it by borrowing. Based on current forecasts it is expected that the core capital programme over 10 years can be funded from existing capital reserves and new capital receipts. However there is an opportunity cost whereby that capital funding could have been used to generate income which would help to address the revenue funding shortfall detailed above.

10.3 In relation to new developments, the strategy will need to consider the revenue and capital costs of taking on new green space over the short, medium and long-term. This will need to be balanced against the value to the community and District that they provide.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The risks associated with Greenspace sustainability are regularly reviewed and updated on the Council's Performance and Risk Management Software.

11.2 The following are some of the risks that need to be addressed:-

- Financial Risks (Capital and Revenue)
- Customer expectations
- Reputation
- Environmental impact

## **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 An impact assessment of the GSMS 2021 – 2026 will be undertaken as part of the review process. Any alterations to service provision will be identified within the assessment alongside any mitigating actions.

## **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 It is proposed that The GSMS review is undertaken within existing resources, however it will have significant resource implications for the existing team and should the demands become unmanageable, and the employment of consultants cannot be ruled out.

## **15. APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Greenspace Management Strategy Scoping Document

## **16. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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## **17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 17.1 Existing Greenspace Management Strategy 2017 - 2021

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## **Greenspace Strategy 2021 – 2026**

# **Scoping Document**

## **Contents**

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Background
- 3 Review of Progress
- 4 Strategy Outline
- 5 Project Timeline



## **1. Introduction**

This document has been produced to guide the process and to support the production of the Greenspace Management Strategy (GSMS) for the District of North Herts District Council (NHDC). The plan will cover a period of 2021 to 2031 with regards principals and future vision. However the action plan associated with this GSMS will cover a period of 2021 – 2026 so as to enable an opportunity of review pending future economic circumstances.

The GSMS is intended to give focus and direction towards the future management of development and maintenance of the Parks and Public Open Spaces owned by North Herts District Council. Initially the GSMS will provide clear logical processes for the future management of our Parks and Open Spaces while identifying longer term principals that will underpin NHDC's future approach to this service area.

It is intended to undertake a structured engagement process with stakeholders to ensure that they are fully aware of this process. Engagement will be encouraged and there will be opportunities to feed into the new GSMS in a constructive and timely manner. Therefore this document is intended to initiate this process.

This document has been broken down into numbered sections. Sections 2, 3 provide background information, context and a review of current issues. Section 4 outlines the aims and objectives of the final GSMS and how it is intended that this document will be used. Section 5 is a summary of the project timeline.

Consideration will be given to recognising the key influences upon the existing service. This will include the impact and implications of the following documents

- The Local Plan
- Greenspace Infrastructure Plan
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Playing Pitch Strategy
- Tree Strategy
- Site specific Greenspace Action Plans

## 2. Background

The Greenspace associated with the GSMS for North Herts District Council is located primarily within the four urban areas of Royston, Letchworth, Baldock and Hitchin.

Key partners we provide a service to, as part of the Greenspace provision, are Settle and Herts Highways.

The service is delivered under a single contract with John O'Conner Grounds Maintenance Ltd

The contract with John O'Conner Grounds Maintenance Ltd was renewed in 2017 for a term of 10 years with the option of a mutual break clause at year five in 2022 if either party wishes at that time to invoke the option

The contract covers an area of 2,950,000 square metres, which is maintained under the terms of the existing contract.

Development and projects are supported via partnerships with Countryside Management Services at Herts County Council for the rural and environmental areas and Groundwork for assistance in the urban locations. Both are critical partners without whom, significant elements of the service area, we would be unable to provide.

### Functions of the Greenspace Service

<b>Statutory Services:</b> Burials and Burial Grounds Litter Collection Allotment management Management of Land Licenses Rivers – management of ordinary water courses, ditches and culverts	
<b>As well as these non statutory services:</b> Planning and development of the Greenspace Management Strategy (GSMS) Floral Displays Seating and Benches Management of splash pads Maintenance of formal equipped playgrounds Outdoor sports provision Delivery of the SLA with Settle Delivery of the agency agreement with Herts Highways Tree Maintenance (NHDC & HCC)	Maintenance of Closed Churchyards Maintenance of Parks and Open Spaces Development and maintenance of Woodlands Development and maintenance of Local Nature Reserves Multi Use games areas

Key tasks are –

- Grass cutting
- Shrub border maintenance
- Maintenance of litter bins
- Hard Surfaces
- Cemeteries including burials
- Hedges
- Paddling Pools and Splash Pads
- Play Grounds
- Rivers and Culverts
- Outdoor sports provision – football, rugby, cricket, tennis, bowls
- Allotments
- Maintenance of Trees & woodlands
- Management of local nature reserves

### **3. Review of Progress**

#### **Customer Satisfaction**

Over the past 10 years the customer satisfaction of the Greenspace has decreased from 93% in 2013 to 92% in 2017.

Our resident's expectations regarding the quality of service are high. The GSMS need to deliver the Greenspace needs within the financial constraints of the Council.

#### **Finance**

The previous GSMS provided £755,000.00 of capital investment to maintain and improve our Greenspace infrastructure. The proposed future capital program has identified a further £1,615,000.00 over the next 10 years and this strategy will reaffirm our approach for the future.

In addition the GSMS has supported numerous developments and secured significant levels of S106 contributions for specific projects such as the Muga at Bancroft Recreation Ground, the skate park at Norton Common and play ground improvements at Priory Memorial Gardens in Royston. The future GSMS intends to meet this purpose in future and therefore supports the Local Plan accordingly.

#### **4. Greenspace Strategy 2021 – 2026 Outline Approach**

##### **Objective**

The objective of the GSMS will be to provide support and direction to Members of the Council, Officers, External Organisations and residents regarding the future direction of the Greenspace both in the short and medium terms.

It Aims:-

- 1 To identify sustainable and affordable principals for the short and medium term
- 2 To identify current influences upon Greenspace and make proposals to manage them
- 3 To identify previous achievements and propose new projects and aspirations
- 4 To contribute and provide input into solutions in response to the pressures of development as identified within the Council's Local Plan. To enable the Council to have clear policies on adoption of any new residential developments
- 5 To suggest alternatives that could have a beneficial environmental impact
- 6 To encourage positive use of our Parks and Open Spaces by everyone

Therefore the GSMS will be contained within the following framework of headings and sub headings:-

- What is the Vision and Aim of the Greenspace Management Strategy from 2021 – 2026
- What does the GSMS include and exclude
- What is the current situation? (Where have we come from?)
- What are the key principals that are adopted currently?
- What are the current key influences within our Greenspaces?
  - Public Satisfaction – District Wide Survey – Citizens Panel
  - Awards for quality - Greenflag
  - Collaboration – CMS & Groundwork
  - Events – Fairs and Circuses, Land Licences
  - Health, fitness and well being – Outdoor sports, football, exercise equipment, outdoor gym
  - Supporting Nature – Environment – LNR's, grazing, mowing regimes
  - Community Involvement - Volunteers
  - Skills Development – Apprentice opportunities, Princess Trust
  - Sustainability – LNR's, affordability, public perception
  - Strategic Planning – Local Plan, Luton Airport Expansion, S106 opportunities, maintaining provision to meet changing demands

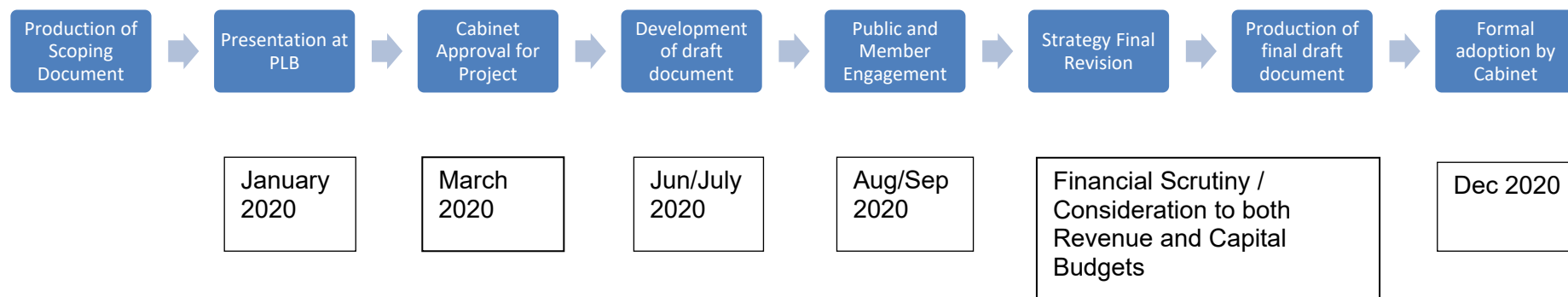
What new key principals do we want to adopt for the future? (Where are we going, what is our direction of travel?) The key elements for consideration are:-

- Local Plan - Planning – S106 – Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs) land managed by third parties, housing associations and potential income generation
- Play Ground provision
- Wet play provision – ongoing maintenance costs (Splash pads/Paddling pools)
- Allotments – Letchworth site leases have expired

- Cemeteries – future of District Wide provision
- Rivers and Culverts – Pixbrook, Norton Common, St Mary's Balancing Tanks
- Trees – Replacement of lost trees, new locations
- Drinking Fountains – review of success of existing including costs, do we want/need more
- Environmental Sustainability – LNR's – future Greenspace Action Plans, mowing regimes

Conclusions and outcomes including action plan

## 5. Greenspace Management Strategy Project Timeline



### Stakeholders

Members	Police
Colleagues	Heritage Foundation
Residents	Town Centre Managers
Contractors - John O'Conner's	Royston Town Council
Herts Highways	Parish and Community Councils
Settle	Friends of Groups
Groundwork and Countryside Management Services	

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<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b> <b>17 MARCH 2020</b>
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<b>*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT</b>
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**TITLE OF REPORT: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR 20/21**

REPORT OF: REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - RESOURCES

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

NEW COUNCIL PRIORITY: 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

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

To present the performance indicators (PIs) and associated targets for 2020/21 which were agreed by Executive Members in conjunction with the relevant Service Directors.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. That Cabinet considers and formally approves the PIs and any associated targets that will be monitored throughout 2020/2021 by Overview & Scrutiny

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1. An approved range of indicators provides the Cabinet with assurance that service delivery in a number of key services will be monitored throughout 2020/21.

**4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1. None Considered.

**5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- 5.1. All Service Directors were sent PI setting templates for 2020/21, to complete in association with the Executive Members. This is the process agreed by Cabinet on 26 July 2016 following a task and finish group on the performance monitoring process.

## **6. FORWARD PLAN**

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

## **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has received quarterly reports on the Councils performance against a range of performance indicators. It is also able to request presentations from Executive Members on their service area, where performance of the service can be monitored and challenged in detail.
- 7.2. As part of the Corporate Business Planning Process, the performance measures to be collected and any associated targets are reviewed prior to the start of the next financial year. Service Directors and Corporate Managers undertake the review in conjunction with Executive Members.

## **8. AMENDED PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

- 8.1. The indicators listed in Table 1 are proposed as new indicators for 2020/21.

**Table 1 – New Performance Indicators proposed for 19/20**

	<b>Description</b>	<b>2019//20 Target</b>	<b>2020/21 Target</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	Electricity and Gas energy consumption		2,589,000.0	Electricity and Gas energy consumption (kWh) where the Council pays directly for the energy usage (e.g. excludes Leisure Centres). Target is based on latest complete year of data. Profiled quarterly to try and reflect impact of outside temperatures on energy use for heating and cooling.

- 8.2 The indicators listed in Table 2 are proposed changes to performance indicators for 2020/21

**Table 2 – Amended Indicators for 20/21**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>2019/2020 Target</b>	<b>2020/21 Target</b>	<b>Comments</b>
BV9	Percentage of council tax collected in year	98%	97%	Although Council Tax collection only fell behind the profiled target from December, it has been below the rate for the previous year, all through this financial year. This is partly due to the “softer” approach we are taking towards collection in line with the Fair Collection Policy and partly the effects that Universal Credit roll out may be having. The major problem continues to be the waiting time between claiming and being paid the first amount of Universal Credit meaning that customers are building up debt in the meantime. There is no evidence that ultimate collection rates are suffering, just, that it is taking a bit longer for us to collect the money. As we move forward with our adopted approach to collection and the roll out of Universal Credit, we have to accept that this situation will not improve and indeed is likely to continue to deteriorate. Therefore, proposal is that we reduce the target for Council Tax in-year collection by 1.00% and reduce the profiled targets for each month by the same amount.
MI P&R001	Percentage of raised sales invoices due for payment that have been paid	93%	97%	Current target being achieved and more actions in place to achieve
FW1	Overall tonnage of food waste collected	5,000	N/A – Data Only	Change to reporting both indicators as data only. These will provide complementary data to the main indicators, NI 191 and NI 192 and will still enable the tracking of relevant trends over time. The previous targets were set using limited data and it is sensible not to set further targets at this time, pending the results of the forthcoming waste composition analysis exercise. The indicators are better suited as data only, as although they show higher numbers as being good, a reduction in tonnages, (due to residents producing less actual waste, home composting etc) could evidence a position direction of travel if this is not to the detriment of residual waste tonnages. In addition, it is felt that it is not appropriate to set a target
GW1	Overall tonnage of garden waste collected	10,000	N/A – Data Only	

				relating to a paid for service i.e. garden waste.
MI LI015	Number of visits to leisure facilities	1,488,000	1,530,000	The proposal is to demonstrate continuous improvement and increase current performance by 1%. The proposed target is based on current year actual performance (April to December 2019) and estimates for the remaining three months of the year. The final target set for 2020/21 will be based on the actual year-end figure achieved in 2019/20 and so it could be subject to minor change.
NI191	Kg residual waste per household	355	335	Decrease the target from 355kg to 335kg. Based on the currently available half-year data, the estimated 2019/20 year-end figure is 341kg. The proposed target provides the expected step improvement, aligned with the improvement in recycling performance. NHDC continues to perform strongly when compared with all English district local authorities and the proposed target would continue to rank NHDC in the top 15 authorities (ranking based on 2018/19 full-year data).
NI192	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	56.50%	57.50%	Increase the target from 56.50% to 57.50%. Based on the current expectation of achieving the 2019/20 target of 56.50%, using currently available half-year data. The proposed target provides a step improvement towards achieving the stated objective of 60% in the coming years. NHDC continues to perform strongly when compared with all English district local authorities and the proposed target would continue to rank NHDC in the top 20 authorities (ranking based on 2018/19 full-year data).

## 9. UNALTERED PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- 9.1. The following performance measures have not been changed from those reported in 2019/20.

**Table 3 – Unaltered performance measures**

Code	Description	2019/20 Target	2020/21 Target	Reason
BV10	Percentage of NNDR collected in year	97%	97%	The target continues to be challenging

				and is not considered to need changing.
BV12a	Working days lost due to short-term sickness absence per FTE employee	3.50	3.50	Still a challenging target that is a good performance level.
BV12b	Working days lost due to long-term sickness absence per FTE employee	N/A – Data Only	N/A – Data Only	
DC001a	Number of planning applications taken to appeal due to ‘non-determination’ within the statutory time period, which were allowed	N/A – Data Only	N/A – Data Only	
DC002	Number of planning applications where the fee has been refunded due to the application not being determined within 26 weeks	0	0	The target relating to returned fees is to remain at the optimum level of zero.
LI032a	Number of allowed planning appeal decisions	N/A – Data Only	N/A – Data Only	
LI035a	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	N/A – Data Only	N/A – Data Only	Discussed at O&S on 21/01/2020. Agreed to report with no target. To be reported as data only with additional documentary.
REG1	Rate of homelessness prevention	N/A – Data Only	N/A – Data Only	Discussed at O&S on 21/01/2020. Agreed to report with no target. To be reported as data only with additional documentary.

REG2	Rate of homelessness relief	N/A – Data Only	N/A – Data Only	Discussed at O&S on 21/01/2020. Agreed to report with no target. To be reported as data only with additional documentary.
REG3	Percentage of Environmental Health programmed inspections completed	95.0%	95.0%	Given the recruitment and retention issues within the service, no change is proposed.

## 10. DELETED INDICATORS

10.1. It is proposed that the following indicators be deleted.

**Table 4 – Deleted performance indicators.**

Code	Description	2019/20 Target	2020/21 Target	Comments
BV8	Percentage of invoices paid on time	99.60%		Target is regularly achieved and is business as usual. Does not directly support any Plan objective.
BV12	Working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE employee	N/A – Data Only		Not Required- Just duplicates BV12a and BV12b.

## 11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The Cabinet has remit (other than those functions specifically reserved to Full Council) under its Terms of Reference to:

- Prepare and agree to implement policies and strategies, and
- Oversee the provision of all the Councils services.

This report seeks to confirm the provision and targets for such service matters to be agreed by Cabinet.

## **12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Where efficiencies or investments may make a difference to service levels these are indicated in the budget proposals so they can be taken into consideration when considering the budget for the forthcoming year.

## **13. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 There are no direct risk implications arising from this report. Risks to service delivery, and hence to performance levels, are reviewed and captured on Pentana, the Council's performance and risk management software.

## **14. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 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.
- 14.2 Performance reporting provides a means to monitor whether the Council is meeting the stated outcomes of the district priorities, its targets or delivering accessible and appropriated services to the Community to meet different people's needs.

## **15. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

- 15.1 The Social Value Act and "go local" requirements do not apply to this report.

## **16. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 16.1 There are no additional human resource implications

## **17. APPENDICES**

None

## **18. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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**19. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None



<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b> <b>17 MARCH 2020</b>
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<b>*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT</b>
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**TITLE OF REPORT: KEY PROJECTS FOR 2020/21**

REPORT OF: SERVICE DIRECTOR - RESOURCES

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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

NEW COUNCIL PRIORITY: 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

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

To present to the Committee the key projects to be delivered to support the Council Plan 2020 - 25

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. For the Committee to note the key projects, subject to capacity, that will be the key focus for the Council 2020 / 2021.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Corporate Business Planning Timetable requires the key projects to be considered by this Committee. In addition, this Committee has a role in monitoring the delivery of these projects.

**4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1. There are no alternative options for this report.

**5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- 5.1. Consultation has been undertaken by the relevant Lead Officer and Executive Member for these key projects. In addition, a number of the projects are included within the Capital Programme for 2020/21 that was considered by Council on 6 February 2020.

## **6. FORWARD PLAN**

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

## **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1. This Committee reviewed the Corporate Business Planning Timetable in June 2014 and noted that it would remain for subsequent years. The final item on this timetable is for this Committee to “establish programme management arrangements and reporting times for the new plan”.
- 7.2. This report refers to the specific projects that support the delivery of the Council’s agreed Council Plan.

## **8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1. The Council Plan 2020-25 identifies a number of key objectives for the District. Many of the projects listed, constitute “Business as Usual” and are achieved as part of normal service delivery. This includes work undertaken against a wide range of areas such as ongoing repair and maintenance to pavilions and footpaths, in accordance with allocated funding in the Capital programme for the Green Space Strategy. Other Business as Usual examples include the growth of the Careline service, which is monitored via Performance Management or Capital monitoring
- 8.2. The key projects to be reported against for 2020/21 are included in Appendix A. Some of these projects are a continuation of those identified in the Corporate Plan 2019-24, generally the larger projects which span more than one financial year. There are some additional projects which have been identified and agreed through the Capital programme for 2020/21.
- 8.3. Appendix A includes the current plans and where available, key milestones for reporting progress. Where the projects span more than one year, the milestones will reflect only the actions which are to be achieved in the 2020/21 year. These will be subject to further review depending on the Council’s capacity. In addition to these indicative reporting details, and where no specific mention is made, updates will be provided to Executive Members and may be provided, where relevant, through the Members information Service (MIS). A summary update on all the projects will be included in the quarterly report to this Committee. Progress against some will be monitored through the Capital monitoring reports to the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and to Cabinet.
- 8.4. Detailed milestones to deliver the projects will be included in Service Plans and agreed with individuals through the Regular Performance Review process. Key milestones will be recorded on Pentana Performance and progress against delivery of these is monitored through the Senior Management Team.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. No direct legal implications arise from this report. Legal implications for the projects listed in Appendix A are considered as part of those projects and will include (but are not limited to ) governance, property, planning and contractual issues. Under the Local Government Act 2000 there is a legal requirement for Councils operating Executive arrangements to appoint an overview and scrutiny committee with remit to review decisions and other actions.
- 9.2. Overview and Scrutiny's terms of reference include at paragraph 6.2.7(s) of the Constitution "to review performance against the Council's agreed priorities and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or service areas". This report gives the Committee an opportunity to comment on progress made against the projects that have been identified for delivery against the Council's

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. There are no direct financial implications from this report. A number of these projects are included within the Council's agreed Capital and Revenue programme for 2020/21.
- 10.2. The Council continues to face difficult spending decisions in view of the reductions in Government support in future years and the availability of funding continues to impact on the projects that can be undertaken.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1. The Lead Officer for each project is responsible for identifying any risks to the successful delivery of the Project
- 11.2. Some of these major projects have been identified as Corporate Risks for the Council and these are monitored by Risk Management Group and the Finance Audit and Risk Committee. These include:
- Local Plan
  - Brexit
  - Improve Use of Council Assets
  - Waste Depot / Transfer Station and Household Recycling Centre.

## **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. By considering the key projects for 2020/21 this provides a means to monitor whether the council are meeting the stated outcomes of the district priorities, its targets or delivering accessible and appropriate services to the community to meet different

people's needs. This assists the Council to fulfil a number of its obligations arising from the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1. There are no additional human resource implications arising from this monitoring report. The resources needed to deliver projects should be considered through the Corporate Business Planning process

### **15. APPENDICES**

- 15.1. Appendix A – Key Projects to be monitored for 20/21.

### **16. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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### **17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 17.1. None.

## Projects supporting the Council Plan 2020/2025

	Portfolio	Directorate	Milestones for Completion in 2021 Year	Due Date Where available
<b>Build Thriving and Resilient Communities</b>				
Work with HCC & EHDC on a joint Business case for a purpose-built depot, transfer facility and household waste recycling centre; Dependant on approval of Local Plan. Project will span more than one financial year  (service delivery plan)	Waste, Recycling and Environment	Place	Report to Joint Partnership Board to confirm if EH wish to be involved  Detailed business case to be written	June 2020  March 21
NHLC Refurbishment of Gym Members Changing Rooms  (capital programme)	Environment & Leisure	Place	Complete Refurbishment	30/09/20
Renovate play area Howard Park, Letchworth  (capital programme)	Environment & Leisure	Place	Complete renovation	31/03/2021
Churchgate	Leader	Chief Executive	Explore Options	
Brexit		Legal and Community		
Develop long term museum storage solution  To equip the museum service with a sustainable storage solution suitable for the	Enterprise and Co-operative	Commercial	Milestones to follow	

effective management of the collection for the foreseeable future.  (capital programme)				
Examination and Adoption of the Local Plan 2011 - 2031 b/f form previous year	Planning and Transport	Regulatory	Milestones and dates will depend on the Planning Inspectorate	
<b>A More Welcoming and Inclusive Council</b>				
Development of a Crematorium in North Hertfordshire  (b/f from previous year)	Environment & Leisure	Place	<p>Appeal Hearing</p> <p>Obtain outline planning permission from Central Beds</p> <p>Review Options for obtaining detailed planning permission.</p>	<p>13/05/20</p> <p>Further dates once outcome of hearing is known</p>
Refurbishment of lifts at Lairage Car Park  (capital programme)	Finance and IT	Resources	<p>Determine requirements</p> <p>Procurement of Contractor</p> <p>Works will commence late 2020 but are unlikely to complete in 20/21</p>	<p>Summer 2020</p>
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.  (council plan)	Leader	Customers	Implement Customer and Member Portals	Dec 2020

<b>Respond to Challenges to the Environment</b>				
Designating air quality management areas in Hitchin to address the improvement of the air quality – Stevenage Road and Paynes Park. (5 Year Plan commenced 2018)	Housing & Env Health	Regulatory	<p>Work with businesses to reduce emissions from freight deliveries and buses/coaches"</p> <p>Negotiate with developers through the planning process to implement charging points in new homes.</p> <p>Anti-idling campaign to encourage drivers to switch off when stationary, including investigation of enforcement options</p> <p>Review of on-street parking in air quality management areas</p> <p>Participate in National Clean Air Day</p>	Annual
<p>Delivery of the Climate Change Strategy</p> <p>(council plan)</p> <p>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.</p>	Housing & Env Health	Regulatory	<p>Draft Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy in consultation with the Executive Members and their deputies.</p> <p>Other milestones to follow once strategy adopted.</p>	
<b>Enable an Enterprising and Co-operative Economy</b>				
Disposal of surplus assets	Enterprise and Co-operative	Commercial	Land adjacent to Hill View, Rushden	30/04/20
(Remove maintenance			29 Gernon Road, Secondary Centre &	31/05/20

obligation and generate capital receipts)  (capital programme)			Document Centre, and surrender of Town Lodge lease  Land at Clare Crescent, Baldock  Land adjacent 1 North End, Kelshall;  Land adjacent 9 North End, Kelshall;  Land at The Green, Ashwell Road, Newnham;  Land at Hawthorn Close, Hitchin; and  Land at Passingham Avenue, Hitchin.	31/03/21
Acquisition of Property investments  (capital programme)	Enterprise and Co-operative	Commercial	Continue to explore opportunities to improve the financial viability of property letting company and seek to explore other opportunities for trading companies.  The commercial team will explore acquisition opportunities, if they meet the acquisition criteria each one will require a business case to seek approval for the Council to proceed.	31/03/21  31/03/21
Property conversion at Harkness Court, Hitchin to provide Housing at market rents  (service delivery plan)	Enterprise and Co-operative	Commercial	Commence works  Completion of works	July 20  Nov 20





## 2019/20 Quarter 3 PI Data

For 2019/20, NHDC will report 19 corporate performance indicators. This report presents the 19 performance indicators and displays the latest period that officers have updated and activated on Pentana Risk.

Performance indicator data is cumulative and represents performance between 1 April 2019 and the end of the latest reporting period. The report will indicate if any data relates to a different reporting period. Where available, the commentary for an indicator will include national benchmarking data. When targets are set, any national minimum requirements are considered.







### Key for the Report





Status	
	Data value has met or exceeded the target figure
	Data value has not achieved the target figure, but it is within the agreed tolerance range
	Data value has not achieved the target figure and it is outside the agreed tolerance range
	Data value is for information only and a traffic light status is not applicable





Direction of Travel	
	Data value has improved compared with the same time last year
	Data value has deteriorated compared with the same time last year
	Data value has not changed compared with the same time last year
N/A	A direction of travel is not applicable, as the performance indicator was introduced in 2019/20



### Summaries



Status Summary Q3		Direction of Travel Summary	
	6 (Q2 – 8)		10 (Q2 – 8)
	6 (Q2 – 4)		5 (Q2 – 7)
	0 (Q2 – 0)		3 (Q2 – 3)
	7 (Q2 – 7)	N/A	1 (Q2 – 1)










Row No.	PI Code	Title	Last Update	Data Value	Target	Status	Direction of Travel	Commentary
<b>Executive Member for Finance and IT</b>								
1	BV 8	Percentage of invoices paid on time	December 2019	100%	99.6%		 Dec 18 99.64%	From 1 April 2019 to 31 December 2019, 3,912 invoices out of a total of 3,912, were paid on time.
2	MI P&R 001	Percentage of raised sales invoices due for payment that have been paid	December 2019	93.01%	93%		 Dec 18 98.58%	As at 31 December 2019: Total value of invoices raised by NHDC - £7,977,383 Total value of invoices raised by NHDC that were not due for payment yet - £427,171 Total value of payments received for invoices raised by NHDC - £7,022,745
3	BV 9	Percentage of council tax collected in year	December 2019	83.46%	84.5%		 Dec 18 85.01%	£74,939,855.07/£89,790,469.68 Although Council Tax collection only fell behind the profiled target from December, it has been consistently below the corresponding rate for the previous year, throughout this financial year. This is partly due to the “softer” approach we are taking towards collection in line with the Fair Collection Policy and partly the effects that Universal Credit roll out may be having. The major problem continues to be the waiting time between claiming and being paid the first amount of Universal Credit meaning that customers are building up debt in the meantime. There is no evidence that ultimate collection rates are suffering, just, that it is taking a bit longer to collect the money. As we move forward with our adopted approach to collection and the roll out of Universal Credit, we have to accept that this situation will not improve and indeed is likely to continue to deteriorate.





Row No.	PI Code	Title	Last Update	Data Value	Target	Status	Direction of Travel	Commentary						
4	BV 10	Percentage of NNDR collected in year	December 2019	80.27%	82.5%		 Dec 18 82.76%	£31,764,496.33/£39,570,127.47 Although the December 2019 figure was below the profiled target, the January 2020 figure of 90.90% has returned the indicator to a green status, compared with the profiled target of 90.5%.						
<b><u>Leader of the Council</u></b>														
5	BV 12	Working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE employee (both short-term and long-term)	December 2019	2.95	Not Applicable		 Dec 18 4.98	870.41 FTE sickness days 295.535 average FTEs <b>National Benchmarking</b> Source: LGA Workforce Survey Latest Quarter - Three-Month Period Sample - Participating English district local authorities <table><tr><td><b><u>Period</u></b></td><td><b><u>NHDC</u></b></td><td><b><u>Top Quartile</u></b></td></tr><tr><td>Q2 2019/20</td><td>0.9 days</td><td>0.5 to 1.5 days</td></tr></table> NHDC ranked 3rd out of 48 (Top Quartile)	<b><u>Period</u></b>	<b><u>NHDC</u></b>	<b><u>Top Quartile</u></b>	Q2 2019/20	0.9 days	0.5 to 1.5 days
<b><u>Period</u></b>	<b><u>NHDC</u></b>	<b><u>Top Quartile</u></b>												
Q2 2019/20	0.9 days	0.5 to 1.5 days												

Row No.	PI Code	Title	Last Update	Data Value	Target	Status	Direction of Travel	Commentary						
6	BV 12a	Working days lost due to short-term sickness absence per FTE employee	December 2019	2.54	2.40		 Dec 18 2.65	749.33 FTE short-term sickness days 295.535 average FTEs Rates are similar to those in 2018/19. At this time in 2018/19, the rate was 2.65 days lost per FTE, which has improved to 2.54 in 2019/20. The Service Director areas with the highest short-term absence levels are working to reduce the rates. BV12a increased by a further 1.45 days during January to March 2019 and if the figure increases by a similar rate this year, we would finish at 3.99 days. This would be 0.49 over target. However, long-term absence is extremely low with just 0.41 days lost between April and December 2019. <b>National Benchmarking</b> Source: LGA Workforce Survey Latest Quarter - Three-Month Period Sample - Participating English district local authorities <table><tr><th>Period</th><th>NHDC</th><th>Top Quartile</th></tr><tr><td>Q2 2019/20</td><td>0.8 days</td><td>0.2 to 0.6 days</td></tr></table> NHDC ranked joint 21st out of 46 (2nd Quartile)	Period	NHDC	Top Quartile	Q2 2019/20	0.8 days	0.2 to 0.6 days
Period	NHDC	Top Quartile												
Q2 2019/20	0.8 days	0.2 to 0.6 days												
7	BV 12b	Working days lost due to long-term sickness absence per FTE employee	December 2019	0.41	Not Applicable		 Dec 18 2.33	121.08 FTE long-term sickness days 295.535 average FTEs <b>National Benchmarking</b> Source: LGA Workforce Survey Latest Quarter - Three-Month Period Sample - Participating English district local authorities <table><tr><th>Period</th><th>NHDC</th><th>Top Quartile</th></tr><tr><td>Q2 2019/20</td><td>0.1 days</td><td>0 to 0.8 days</td></tr></table>	Period	NHDC	Top Quartile	Q2 2019/20	0.1 days	0 to 0.8 days
Period	NHDC	Top Quartile												
Q2 2019/20	0.1 days	0 to 0.8 days												

Row No.	PI Code	Title	Last Update	Data Value	Target	Status	Direction of Travel	Commentary
								NHDC ranked 2nd out of 46 (Top Quartile)
<b>Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health</b>								
8	REG 1	Rate of homelessness prevention	Q3 2019/20	59.39%	Not Applicable		 Q3 18/19 53.91%	117 cases out of 197 ended with a positive outcome. i.e. where homelessness was prevented. Where homelessness was not prevented, a Relief Duty would have been triggered in most cases.

Row No.	PI Code	Title	Last Update	Data Value	Target	Status	Direction of Travel	Commentary
9	REG 2	Rate of homelessness relief	Q3 2019/20	22.16%	Not Applicable		 Q3 18/19 37.36%	<p>41 out of 185 cases ended with a positive outcome.i.e. where the Relief Duty ended because households were successfully rehoused. A further 42 cases were subsequently owed a main housing duty, under which the Council must provide suitable long-term accommodation.</p> <p><b>Full breakdown of the 144 relief cases that ended in a non-accommodation outcome by reason:</b>            56 days elapsed – 104 households            Contact lost – 19            Application withdrawn – 10            Intentionally homeless from accommodation provided - 2            Refused offer of accommodation – 2            No longer eligible – 5            Local connection referral accepted by other authority - 2</p> <p><b>Final outcomes for the 104 cases where the relief duty ended because the 56 days elapsed:</b>            Main housing duty owed (under which the Council must provide suitable long-term accommodation) – 42 households            Not in priority need – 46            Intentionally homeless – 10            Not homeless – 3            Lost contact prior to assessment – 3</p>

Row No.	PI Code	Title	Last Update	Data Value	Target	Status	Direction of Travel	Commentary
10	LI 035a	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	Q3 2019/20	78	Not Applicable		 Q3 18/19 79	78 households were in temporary accommodation as at 31 December 2019, of which, three were in bed and breakfast accommodation. This was the total number of households accommodated under the relevant legislation by the Council, although placement was with a third party.
11	REG 3	Percentage of Environmental Health programmed inspections completed	Q3 2019/20	75.6%	72%		Not Applicable	309 out of 309 scheduled inspections were completed during the first three quarters of 2019/20. There are now 409 inspections scheduled for the year, as one industrial installation and two private water supplies inspections are no longer required and have been removed from the original schedule.
<b>Executive Member for Planning and Transport</b>								
12	DC 001a	Number of planning applications taken to appeal due to 'non-determination' within the statutory time period, which were allowed	Q3 2019/20	0	Not Applicable		 Q3 18/19 0	During April 2019 to December 2019, no appeal decisions (allowed or dismissed) related to appeals that were submitted due to non-determination within the statutory time period. It is unusual for NHDC to receive an appeal against non-determination, as officers negotiate appropriate time extensions on applications, when required.
13	DC 002	Number of planning applications where the fee has been refunded due to the application not being determined within 26 weeks	Q3 2019/20	0	0		 Q3 18/19 0	No fees have been refunded.
14	LI 032a	Number of allowed planning appeal decisions	Q3 2019/20	2	Not Applicable		 Q3 18/19	2 out of 19 planning appeals were allowed during the first three quarters of 2019/20 (10.53%).

Row No.	PI Code	Title	Last Update	Data Value	Target	Status	Direction of Travel	Commentary																								
							2																									
Executive Member for Environment and Leisure																																
15	MI LI 015	Number of visits to leisure facilities	December 2019	1,142,529	1,125,500		 Dec 18 1,125,504	<table><tr><td>Facility</td><td>2019/20</td><td>2018/19</td></tr><tr><td>North Herts LC</td><td>439,236</td><td>421,247</td></tr><tr><td>Fearnhill</td><td>10,574</td><td>9,977</td></tr><tr><td>Letchworth OP</td><td>33,263</td><td>48,165</td></tr><tr><td>Hitchin SC</td><td>246,629</td><td>237,784</td></tr><tr><td>Archers</td><td>107,590</td><td>104,235</td></tr><tr><td>Royston LC</td><td>305,237</td><td>304,096</td></tr><tr><td></td><td><b>1,142,529</b></td><td><b>1,125,504</b></td></tr></table> <p>The only decrease in usage relates to Letchworth Outdoor Pool and this was due to the poor weather experienced over the outdoor pool season compared with last year. All other facilities have increased usage compared with the same time last year. In addition, SLL confirmed that 15,636 people used the ice rink at Letchworth Outdoor Pool over the six-week season. This usage has not been included in the reported figures, as provision of the rink was in addition to formal contract requirements and it is not guaranteed for future years.</p>	Facility	2019/20	2018/19	North Herts LC	439,236	421,247	Fearnhill	10,574	9,977	Letchworth OP	33,263	48,165	Hitchin SC	246,629	237,784	Archers	107,590	104,235	Royston LC	305,237	304,096		<b>1,142,529</b>	<b>1,125,504</b>
Facility	2019/20	2018/19																														
North Herts LC	439,236	421,247																														
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Royston LC	305,237	304,096																														
	<b>1,142,529</b>	<b>1,125,504</b>																														
Executive Member for Recycling and Waste Management																																
16	NI 191	Kg residual waste per household	Q3 2019/20	256kg	268kg		 Q3 18/19 265kg	<p><b>National Benchmarking</b> Source: LG Inform Latest Quarter - Three-Month Period Sample - Participating English district local authorities</p> <table><tr><td><b>Period</b></td><td><b>NHDC</b></td><td><b>Top Quartile</b></td></tr><tr><td>Q2 2019/20</td><td>82.04kg</td><td>76.80kg to 96.60kg</td></tr></table> <p>NHDC ranked 2nd out of 36 (Top Quartile)</p>	<b>Period</b>	<b>NHDC</b>	<b>Top Quartile</b>	Q2 2019/20	82.04kg	76.80kg to 96.60kg																		
<b>Period</b>	<b>NHDC</b>	<b>Top Quartile</b>																														
Q2 2019/20	82.04kg	76.80kg to 96.60kg																														



**O&S (17.03.20)**

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<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b> <b>17 MARCH 2020</b>
----------------------------------------------------------------

<b>*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT</b>
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**TITLE OF REPORT: 3<sup>rd</sup> QUARTER MONITORING REPORT ON KEY PROJECTS FOR 2019-20**

REPORT OF: THE CONTROLS, RISK AND PERFORMANCE MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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

NEW COUNCIL PRIORITY: 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

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This monitoring report provides a 3rd quarter update on the delivery of the key projects for 19/20, first identified to the Committee in March 2019.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. That delivery against the key projects for 19/20 be noted and commented on by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1. To enable achievements against the key projects for 2019/20 to be considered

**4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1. There are no alternative options as this is a monitoring report.

**5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**





- 5.1. No external consultation has been undertaken in the preparation of this report as it is a monitoring report. Members will, however, be aware that a report setting out the key projects was brought to this Committee on 19 March 2019.

## **6. FORWARD PLAN**

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

## **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1. This report provides details on the status of the key projects for 19/20. It does not include any projects initiated after the document was agreed and is not a full report on all the projects that the Council is undertaking
- 7.2. This report summarises the status of each of the key projects. The following symbols have been used to summarise progress.

<b>Status key</b>	
	Project Halted / funding not available/ Extremely Late
	Project behind original due date/ unlikely to hit original due date.
	Project not due for completion in 2018/19 or has not reached due date
-	Project Pending
	Project Completed.

## **8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1. The 3rd Quarter monitoring report against key projects for 2019/20 is included in Appendix A.
- 8.2. Appendix A includes the original milestones which were reported to this Committee in March 2019 and progress made against those actions. In addition, updates may have been provided to Executive Members and where relevant through the Members Information Service. Progress against some, will also have been monitored through the Capital monitoring reports to the Finance Audit and Risk Committee and to Cabinet.
- 8.3. At the September 2018 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny meeting it was requested that the Service Manager- Waste be requested to publish details of the statistics regarding reports of missed bins and calls made regarding this and communicate the details publicly. In order to fulfil this request, a more detailed update on the Waste Project has been provided at each meeting.
- 8.4. Following the return of the Waste Manager and handover process, it has not been possible to produce the data for this quarter. However regular updates will resume in

MIS going forwards. In addition, a Management indicator will be monitored from April 2020 giving the number of missed bins per 1,000 and it is proposed that this information is brought before this Committee, from April 2020 onwards, replacing the current Waste update.

- 8.5. Updates on Brexit have now been incorporated into the regular monitoring reports for 2019/20. Whilst not a traditionally defined project for the Council, it was decided that this would provide the best mechanism to monitor key issues and risk and report back on any actions undertaken
- 8.6. The North Hertfordshire Community Facility and Town Hall project has been signed off by Project Board. The Lessons learned and Closure Report are included in Appendix B

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. No direct legal implications arise from this report. Legal implications for the projects listed in Appendix A are considered as part of those projects and will include (but are not limited to) governance, property, planning and contractual issues. Under the Local Government Act 2000 there is a legal requirement for Councils operating Executive arrangements to appoint an overview and scrutiny committee with remit to review decisions and other actions.
- 9.2. Overview and Scrutiny's terms of reference include at paragraph 6.2.7(s) of the Constitution "to review performance against the Council's agreed priorities and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or service areas". This report gives the Committee an opportunity to comment on progress made against the projects that have been identified for delivery against the Council's objectives.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. There are no specific revenue implications.
- 10.2. The actions identified were resourced through the corporate business planning process cycle for 2019/20 that was undertaken in 2018/19. A number of these projects formed part of the Council's capital programme for 2019/20.
- 10.2. The Council continues to face difficult spending decisions in view of the reduction in government support in future years and the availability of funding continues to impact on the projects that can be undertaken.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1. The Lead Officer for each project is responsible for identifying any risks to the successful delivery of the Project

11.2. Some of these major projects have been identified as Corporate Risks for the Council and these are monitored by Risk Management Group and the Finance Audit and Risk Committee. These include:

- Local Plan
- Hitchin Town Hall
- Improve Use of Council Assets
- Brexit

## **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. By reporting delivery against the key projects for 2019/20 this provides a means to monitor whether the council are meeting the stated outcomes of the district priorities, its targets or delivering accessible and appropriate services to the community to meet different people's needs. This assists the Council to fulfil a number of its obligations arising from the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

13.1. The Social Value Act and "go local" requirements do not apply to this report.

## **14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

14.1. There are no additional human resource implications arising from this monitoring report. The resources needed to deliver projects should be considered through the Corporate Business Planning process.

## **15. APPENDICES**

15.1. Appendix A – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Monitoring against Key Projects for 2019/2020  
Appendix B – North Hertfordshire Museum and Town Hall Project Lessons Learned and Closure Report.

## **16. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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Jeanette Thompson, Service Director, Legal & Community. Tel 474370

## **17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

17.1. None.

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## Appendix A – 2019/2020 reporting against Projects identified in the Corporate Plan – as at 20/02/2020



For **Q3 2019/2020** North Hertfordshire District Council is reporting against 7 Projects identified in the Corporate Plan 2019 - 24

### Key for the Report


Status key	
	Project Halted / Funding not available / Extremely Late
	Project behind original due date/ unlikely to hit original due date.
	Project not due for completion in year or has not reached due date
--	Project Pending
	Project Completed.

Status	Q3	Q2	Q1	Summary of Movement this Qtr.
	0	1	1	
	3	3	2	
	2	2	3	
--	1	1	1	
	1	0	2	North Hertfordshire Museum and Community Facility complete
Total	7	7	9	

- Where projects are carried over from previous years, their status is retained until they are complete – to ensure transparency

Description in Corporate Plan	Corporate Objective	Portfolio	Milestones – current year and beyond	Due Date	Overall Status	Comments
<b>Status – RED - 0</b>						
<b>Status – AMBER - 3</b>						
Development of a Crematorium in North Hertfordshire - subject to approval by Cabinet March 2017  <b>NOT Prince II</b>	Prosper & Protect	Waste, Recycling & Env	<p>Obtain outline planning permission from Central Beds.</p> <p>Agree the Heads of Terms and Options Agreements with our nominated partner.</p> <p>Prospective tenant exercises the option and enters into an agreement for lease (the prospective tenant will be responsible for applying for detailed planning permission).</p> <p>The prospective tenant enters into a lease, in accordance with the Heads of Terms, following the grant of detailed planning permission</p>	<p>July 2018</p> <p>July 2018 </p> <p>31 Dec 2018</p> <p>31 Mar 2019</p>		<p>Central Bedfordshire refused the outline planning application in March 2019. Cabinet approved funding for an appeal on 26 March 2019</p> <p>The appeal was submitted in September 2019. The Hearing date has been set for 13/05/2020.</p> <p>If planning permission is granted, Officers will assess any planning conditions and the options for progressing development.</p>

			Practical Completion of Crematorium	December 2020		
<p>Investigating a range of options to <b>improve use of Council assets</b></p> <p><b>NOT Prince II</b> <b>Project spans more than one year.</b></p>	Responsive & Efficient	Various	<p>Report to Cabinet Shareholder Sub-Committee on potential options</p> <p>Obtain Cabinet approval to establish a Property Company</p> <p>Set up Property Company</p>	<p>15 March 2018 </p> <p>31 Mar 2018</p> <p>Mid 2018</p>		<p>Our aim is to set up a company with subsidiary companies, the first being a Property Letting Company. Currently the potential profits that the Property Letting Company would make are marginal. This is because we only have a couple of sites, the conversion of Harkness Court and the Town Lodge project. If we had more sites, this is likely to improve the financial position. We have been investigating other assets that the Council own, refurbishing these and selling them to the company. Unfortunately, there are no other sites that would be viable for conversion into residential, therefore, the financial position remains the same. All of the sites that the Council own, which are suitable for conversion, are better being converted to non-residential. Therefore, it makes more business sense to keep these assets under the Council and not the company. Based on this assessment, the proposed company directors recently</p>

						agreed that it does not make business sense to register the Property Letting Company at this time, as the financial modelling does not achieve a return on investment. Officers continue to investigate other ways to improve the financial viability of the Property Letting Company, which could include acquisitions, developments and refurbishments. Officers will report their findings when this work has been concluded in approximately six months' time.
Submission of a Local Plan for North Herts  Project spans more than one year.	Prosper & Protect	Planning & Enterprise	<p>Consultation on major modifications (timescale dependant upon Planning Inspectorate)</p> <p>Response to the Inspectors questions with regard the modifications</p> <p>Additional Hearing dates to discuss modifications</p> <p>Publication of Inspectors Report (timescale dependant upon Planning Inspectorate)</p> <p>Adoption of the new local plan report to Full</p>	<p>Jan - April 2019</p> <p>Dec 2019</p> <p>TBC</p> <p>TBC</p> <p>TBC</p>		<p>The Council responded to the Inspector's letters at the end of September 2019. This set out the Council's intention to respond to his queries by Friday 29 November 2019. Officers, in consultation with the Local Plan Project Board, have submitted the Council's responses and these have been published on the website.</p> <p>Additional Hearing dates have now been announced as weeks beginning 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> March. The Inspector will then carry out a final focussed consultation prior to issuing the final report. No dates have been set for</p>

			Council (timescale dependant upon Planning Inspectorate)			these steps. All the information has been added to the Councils website at the link below. <a href="http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/localplan">www.north-herts.gov.uk/localplan</a>
<b>Status – GREEN -2</b>						
Brexit (Preparation for Brexit - deal or no deal) and implementation / management of those impacts, challenges and risks).	Prosper & Protect	Leader of Council	<p>Working with regional lead and Local resilience forums to prepare for Brexit (deal or no deal).</p> <p>Work with strategically important contractors to understand the risks they will potentially face and to ensure plans are being taken to mitigate those risks if possible.</p> <p>Contribute to countywide preparations for managing potential emergency incidents associated with Brexit, e.g. local food resilience/ strategic co-ordination group and local resilience forums</p> <p>Work with LLG and MHCLG on process mapping for governance/secondary</p>		▶	<p><b><i>NB Rating relates to the Council's actions, rather than the national issue of Brexit.</i></b></p> <p>The European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act Bill received Royal Assent on Thursday 23 January and we left the EU on the 31 January. There will be a transition period scheduled to end on 31 December 2020, while the UK and EU negotiate new arrangements.</p> <p><b>What we've done so far?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At a senior level we have had regular co-ordination meetings, initially through SMT, to assess the critical risks for relevant service areas.</li> <li>Brexit was added as a</li> </ul>



Not Prince II			<p>legislation process mapping. Constitution/delegation and warrant checks being undertaken. Relevant managers to check policies for compliance and enforcement post Brexit issues.</p> <p>Draft contract clause to cover data transfer – use of change of law provision to impose</p> <p>Exceptions and tension monitoring reports to be sent and received.</p> <p>Elections Board preparation for snap election/further referendum considerations (September 2019).</p>			<p>corporate risk with our preparations and risk assessments reported through to the Finance Audit and Risk Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have a designated Brexit page on our website with signposting to relevant information and sites: <a href="https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/council-and-democracy/get-ready-brexit">https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/council-and-democracy/get-ready-brexit</a></li> <li>• A Brexit Project Board was set up in July 2019 with the Leader as the Lead Executive Member. This is a cross party / officer Board which includes representatives from areas (Regulatory Services, Emergency Planning, Community Protection, Policy and Communications) that are likely to be affected and they have provided input into the preparations. The Board</li> </ul>
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						<p>will continue to meet and consider issues for the foreseeable future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members passed a motion at Full Council in September 2019 to take positive steps to communicate with residents/ publicise links and alert EU nationals about the importance of applying for Settled Status and make this information available at Member surgeries. Since the December election, posters / information has been sent to Libraries and relevant local groups in our area to highlight the settlement scheme and the application process. Our Customer Services is one of the few to have registered with We Are Digital to assist residents by providing Settled Status application support.</li> <li>Officers have and continue to liaise with</li> </ul>
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						<p>other Brexit, Food, Emergency Planning, Economic Development Officers across the County, regionally, and where appropriate have been liaising with and making representations to central government departments. We have been trying to work with relevant partner organisations on business support and encourage businesses to access information and readiness events. Information for businesses can also be found on <u>the Herts Growth Hub</u>, <u>@BbfaHerts</u> and <u>@HertsGrowthHub</u></p> <p><b>What we are doing next?</b></p> <p>Our aim is to continue to support residents and businesses as much as we are able during the short term of the transitional period and longer one beyond that under the new arrangements with the EU.</p>
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						<p>So, we need to keep providing assistance to those that need information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• applying for Settled Status: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families">https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families</a></li> <li>• businesses preparing to leave: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/business-uk-leaving-eu">https://www.gov.uk/business-uk-leaving-eu</a></li> </ul>
<p>Designating air quality management areas in Hitchin to address the improvement of the air quality – Stevenage Road and Paynes Park. (5 Year Plan commenced 2018)</p> <p><b>Not Prince II</b></p>	Attractive & Thriving	Housing & Env Health	<p>•Development of ECO stars scheme for business to reduce emissions from freight deliveries</p> <p>•Investigate options for extending and improving electric vehicle recharging facilities in the district</p>	<p>To be confirmed</p> <p>On-going</p>	▶	<p>The Council were unsuccessful with a bid to DEFRA for a grant to progress this scheme. Officers are reviewing alternative funding options and have created a new milestone, "Work with businesses to reduce emissions from freight deliveries and buses/coaches" for 2019/20.</p> <p>Officers are negotiating with developers through the planning process to implement charging points within new homes. Officers are currently drafting an Electric Vehicle Charging</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Anti-idling campaign to encourage drivers to switch off when stationary, including investigation of enforcement options</li> </ul>	<p>Spring/Summer 2019</p> 		<p>Strategy in consultation with the Executive Members and their deputies.</p> <p>An initial survey of Hitchin town centre was completed in February 2019. Due to resource issues and conflicting priorities, it is now anticipated that this action will be completed in 2020/21. However, Legal are currently looking at the enforcement options relating to vehicle idling, the outcome of which will help to inform any associated campaign.</p> <p>Will be co-ordinated with next general review of parking in Hitchin and adoption of the Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy - date to be confirmed</p> <p>Due to other work priorities, it was not possible to undertake</p>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Review of on-street parking in air quality management areas</li> </ul>	<p>TBC subject to Parking strategy Action Plan</p>		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Participate in National Clean Air Day</li> </ul>	<p>Annual</p> 		

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Contribute development of Air Alert texting scheme with HCC and other partners</li> </ul>	2019 		<p>any activity around National Clean Air Day in June 2019</p> <p>Air Alert texting scheme launched 1 March 2019.</p>
<b>Status – PENDING - 1</b>						
<p>Churchgate</p> <p>Project will span more than one financial year</p> <p><b>Once actual project commences will be</b></p> <p><b>Prince II</b></p> <p><b>Date of Last Project Board</b></p> <p><b>n/a</b></p>	Attractive & Thriving	Commercial	Further work to be undertaken to explore potential options prior to reporting back to Full Council at a future date	Tbc	--	<p>Full Council on 7 February 2019 approved the principle of purchasing the Churchgate Shopping Centre, subject to the economic case. It also confirmed that any regeneration must be a viable investment that maintains a return to the Council.</p> <p>Full Council on 20 March 2019 voted to put Hitchin forward for a “Future High Streets Fund” bid. MHCLG have announced the 100 bids to be taken forward. Hitchin was not successful.</p> <p>Officers continue to explore the options around Churchgate with a report back to Full Council in</p>

						due course.
<b>Status – COMPLETE -1</b>						
Complete the fit out and open the North Hertfordshire Museum and Community Facility  <b>Prince II</b>	Prosper & Protect		Continue to negotiate on possible acquisition of 14/15 Brand Street.  Report to Cabinet on proposed way forward.  Complete fit out of Museum.	Original due date 30 September 2015   31/07/2018   September 2018   		The project board have now signed off the Project as complete and the closure report and lessons learned report have been compiled.

**CONFIDENTIAL**



**NORTH HERTS MUSEUM AND TOWN HALL**

**END PROJECT REPORT**

**AUTHOR'S NAME: STEVE CROWLEY**  
**FEBRUARY 2020**

## END PROJECT REPORT

### BACKGROUND

The Project Initiation Document sets out the background to this project, which commenced following a Best Value Review of the Museums Service in 2005. Following the review, the Council considered a number of different options for how to improve the way the Council operated museums. It was agreed that the Council would work with a local group (Hitchin Town Hall Ltd) and the Mountford Hall would be refurbished, and a new District Wide Museum would be constructed adjoining the Mountford Hall by reconfiguring the Workman's' Hall. The Town Hall and District Wide Museum project commenced late 2012.

### OVERVIEW OF PROJECT

This project has been well documented and therefore the detail of its delivery will not be repeated in this end of project report. The following links provide access to all Project Board documents and all key decisions: -

<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/museums/museum-and-town-hall-project/project-board>

<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/museums/museum-and-town-hall-project/hitchin-town-hall-museum-proposals>

An Overview and Scrutiny review also took place, which was chaired by an independent person and looked at how the Council worked with its partners during this project, to identify lessons learnt for future partner working relationships that the Council may undertake.

As part of the evidence gathering process for the review, the Council sought written witness statement submissions from individuals or organisations to address the following key areas:

- 1) What were the issues that arose with partners during the Project?
- 2) How did the Council and partners seek to resolve those issues?
- 3) How effective were those approaches?
- 4) What lessons can be learnt to improve future working relationships with partners?

The link below provides an overview of the review and the panels findings

<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/museums/museum-and-town-hall-project/overview-and-scrutiny-review-hitchin-town-hall-and>

### PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The Project Objectives were: -

- 1) To meet the needs of the existing customers
- 2) To offer better quality facilities to attract new users
- 3) To enable better display, storage and use of the collections
- 4) The improvements should increase the number of users of Hitchin Town Hall and the museum service and maintain and enhance their experience. This will be monitored through the Council's Customer Satisfaction Scheme
- 5) Invest to save project with an agreed target reduction of £125,000 per annum, on revenue expenditure

## END PROJECT REPORT

### **Were the objectives achieved?**

- 1) The facility has been fully open since July 2019 and based on the initial feedback it is believed that it does meet the needs of the existing customers who used to visit the Letchworth and Hitchin Museum. This is based on feedback from current users.
- 2) Data obtained from visitors demonstrate that the majority of users feel the quality of facility is significantly better than the Council's previous museums in Letchworth and Hitchin. Additionally, the new facility is attracting new users, which again can be evidenced from the data that is collected.
- 3) The new facility provides better ways of displaying the Council artefacts; however, the anticipated improvements for storage were not fully achieved. The rooms that are on site are better than the previous storage, but due to damp issues in the basement it was not possible to make improvement to this area. The cost of undertaking this work was in excess of £60k and there was no guarantee that by doing this the basement would meet the standard of environmental conditions to store museum artefacts. The other concern was by fully damp proofing the basement it could push water to other areas of the building which might be more difficult to manage. Therefore, it was agreed not to undertake this work and the issue of long-term storage requirements for the museum are being considered as a separate potential project.
- 4) Since the Museum has been fully opened (6 July 2019 to the end of November 2019, five months) a total of 16,846 people have visited the museum. To put this in comparison a total of 26,113 people visited Hitchin and Letchworth Museum in its last year of opening. This average as 2,176 visits per month. The new facility is currently averaging 3,370 visits a month. Although there is not a full year, the current usage indicates visitor numbers have increased.
- 5) The Town Hall usage has also increased; this is demonstrated by the significant increase in income that the facility now takes. The average income that was taken in the last three years of operation was £50k before it was refurbish (2010/11 - 2012/13). Last year (2018/19) the Town Hall took £112,814 and is estimated to take £133,000 this year (2019/20).
- 6) The initial aim was to reduce the revenue expenditure for museum services by £125,000 per annum. This year (2019/20) the anticipated reduction will be £150,360. Therefore, generating an additional £25k savings per annum.

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

A lessons learned document has been completed and is provided in appendix A. To ensure the Council learns from this project this document will be presented to Contract and Procurement Group and discussed. The Council is also considering and discussing how the Council can learn from this project and incorporate early warning of potential issues into the Council's project management process. This will be reported to the March meeting of the Political Liaison Board.

## END PROJECT REPORT

### MEASUREMENT OF A PROJECT

The three key components for measuring any project are time, price and quality.

Time – the project took significantly longer than originally estimated. There were many factors that contributed to this and exception reports were produced to explain the reason for these. The main reason for the project delays were due to the Council and Hitchin Town Hall Ltd disagreeing, which meant the project could not progress as planned. The longest delay was due to the land dispute of 14 & 15 Brand Street, this meant the project and the opening of the entire facility was held up by over a year.

Price – at the point the Community Scheme, which involved retaining the Mountford Hall as a community venue and developing the gymnasium and an adjacent shop (14 Brand Street) for the Museum, was adopted by Council in October 2012, the required investment from NHDC was estimated to be £4.2million. When the final scheme, expanded to also include 15 Brand Street, was approved by the Council in October 2013, the cost of this project to NHDC was estimated to be £4.3m.

By the time the Museum and Town Hall facility opened fully in July 2019, the total Council investment was £6.0m. This total included the purchase of 14 & 15 Brand Street by NHDC for £567,000, £490,000 to pay for the capital contribution that Hitchin Town Hall Limited were due to pay and other costs incurred by the Council as it met the liabilities of Hitchin Town Hall Limited under the Development Agreement.

These additional costs were not originally budgeted for in the project, therefore, although costs have increased the starting budget and the actual spend was not like for like. Also, the Council now has the operational responsibility of the Town Hall, which was originally Hitchin Town Hall Limited

Quality – following the opening of the North Hertfordshire Museum and Hitchin Town Hall the Council has received many positive comments from customers about the quality of the building and the museum exhibition.



# **LESSONS LEARNED LOG**

## **NORTH HERTS MUSEUM AND TOWN HALL**

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**AUTHOR'S NAME: STEVE CROWLEY**

January 2020

Number	Type	Description Consideration for future Projects	Consideration for future Projects
1	Contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time it took to award the 'Lightbrigade JCT' contract.</li> <li>There were issues with the consultant and their understanding of what was required.</li> <li>As a result of the above, NHDC had to complete the contract. This delayed the award of the contract by four weeks.</li> </ul>	To ensure the contractor has a good, clear understanding of the type of contract that will be issued.
2	IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broadband contract was identified late in the project. This did not impact on the service as it was installed on time.</li> <li>In the event of an installation delay, this could have affected the service.</li> </ul>	To ensure telephony and broadband requirements are identified earlier and built into the project plan.
3	Contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of Light brigade's tender, they clearly set out how they were going to complete the work, however, they did not state their direct experience in museum fit outs. When they started on site it became apparent that there were some areas that they did not have direct experience of.</li> <li>This was particularly in relation to sourcing museum quality mannequins, as well as completing the galleries and showcases prior to objects being placed in the cases.</li> <li>Lightbrigade did set out in their tender the experience that their sub contractors had, which was of a high standard. Therefore, although the lead contractor lacked experience their sub contractors were very experienced.</li> <li>This meant the Council's project team had to work closer with the sub contractors than would normally be expected on a project.</li> </ul>	To ensure the lead contractor has relevant experience and are not reliant on subcontractors. This needs to be made clear in the contract specification.

4	Contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lightbrigade went into administration.</li> <li>• As a result of this £150,000 was not paid to the subcontractor for the Museum cases; following careful legal consideration of the options the Council concluded that the best option was that it had to pay for this twice.</li> <li>• The Council requested proof that Lightbrigade had paid the subcontractors, which was provided.</li> <li>• However, although they provided invoices to suggest they had paid, they had not passed the money on.</li> </ul>	<p>The Council has already reacted to this and strengthened the financial criteria for selecting contractors in the Council's Contract and Procurement Rules.</p> <p>Even with this in place there is still a risk that contractors will go into administration. Therefore, this risk cannot be fully mitigated.</p>
5	Contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prolonged negotiations over the Development Agreement.</li> <li>• This was due to the dependencies with Hitchin Town Hall Ltd funding and meant the design process had to continue at the Council's risk.</li> </ul>	<p>To ensure that any legal agreements are drafted, agreed and signed well in advanced.</p>
6	Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HTH Finance Ltd secured the land known as '14 &amp; 15 Brand Street' (now the new museum reception) from Future Builders.</li> <li>• Therefore, the Council had to negotiate with HTH Finance Ltd to purchase this land.</li> </ul>	<p>Try to ensure any land that could impact on a project is under the Council ownership prior to project commencement (note this was not possible due to Hitchin Town Hall Limited's position during negotiations).</p>
7	Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protracted negotiation with Hitchin Town Hall Finance Ltd.</li> </ul>	<p>This significantly impacted on the full opening of the entire facility.</p> <p>No direct lessons learnt as this was an exceptional project, however, consideration should be taken when working with partners and the Council should try to avoid the potential for this situation arising by addressing lesson 6 above.</p>
8	Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of service to the public, forbearance of external funders and adverse effect on staff morale, including working conditions.</li> </ul>	<p>Try to better identify how external factors can impact on the entire project and how this could impact on what can or can not be provided. Once factors identified seek to better mitigate those factors and/or</p>

			their impact.
9	Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partial opening of Hitchin Town Hall with Museum activities from May 2016 [noting also that NHDC took on additional capital and other costs 'stepping in to Hitchin Town Hall Ltd.'s shoes'].</li> </ul>	Try to better identify how external factors can impact on the entire project and how to better mitigate. Also be clearer that if partners walk away from a project the Council could have to take on additional responsibilities.
10	Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership approach, refer to findings from O&amp;S review.</li> </ul>	