

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



2 July 2021

Our Ref O&S/13.07.2021
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To: Members of the Committee: David Levett (Chair), Daniel Allen (Vice-Chair), Kate Aspinwall, Tony Hunter, Nigel Mason, Jim McNally, Ian Moody, Lisa Nash, Sue Ngwala, Carol Stanier, Claire Strong and Terry Tyler

Substitutes: Councillors Clare Billing, Ruth Brown, Morgan Derbyshire, Terry Hone, Gerald Morris, 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, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERON
ROAD, LETCHWORTH**

On

TUESDAY, 13TH JULY, 2021 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**

Item	Page
1. WELCOME	
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Members are required to notify any substitutions by midday on the day of the meeting. Late substitutions will not be accepted and Members attending as a substitute without having given the due notice will not be able to take part in the meeting.	
3. MINUTES - 9 MARCH 2021 To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 09 March 2021.	(Pages 5 - 16)
4. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS 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.	
5. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the 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.	
6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public.	
7. URGENT AND GENERAL EXCEPTION ITEMS 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.	

- 8. CALLED-IN ITEMS**
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.
- 9. RESOLUTIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** (Pages
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND SCRUTINY MANAGER 17 - 18)

To consider the outcome of Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolutions.
- 10. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND SCRUTINY MANAGER 19 - 34)

To consider the issues that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee plans to review at future meetings and the activities of its sub-groups.
- 11. ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT 20/2021** (Pages
REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING TEAM LEADER 35 - 50)

To receive and comment on the annual report of progress made against the Council's fulfilment of the statutory duty to maintain an effective safeguarding function with regard to children and adults at risk.
- 12. COMMUNITY GRANTS POLICY REVIEW, NHDC FUNDING CRITERIA** (Pages
HEALTH PROTECTION BOARD COMMUNITY USE, & REVIEW OF 51 - 72)
CABINET PANELS' TERM OF REFERENCE
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - LEGAL AND COMMUNITY, AND
THE POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

To consider revisions to the Grant Policy criteria, to seek approval of the Protocol for the NHDC / Health Protection Board Funding and the amendments to the District Wide Community Facilities Capital and Revenue Grants Panel, and to seek approval of the amendments to the Cabinet Panels' Terms of Reference.
- 13. FULL YEAR UPDATE ON COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND** (Pages
COMPLAINTS (3CS) 2020-2021 73 - 86)
INFORMATION NOTE OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER

To update Members of the Committee on the end of year position in regard to the Comments, Compliments and Complaints (3Cs) for the Council and the Contractors that provide services on the Council's behalf.
- 14. 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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Agenda Item 3

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING
ON TUESDAY, 9TH MARCH, 2021 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: David Levett (Chair), Kate Aspinwall (Vice-Chair), Clare Billing (In place of Adem Ruggiero-Cakir), Val Bryant, Sam Collins, Morgan Derbyshire (In place of Claire Strong), Terry Hone, Tony Hunter, Jim McNally, Lisa Nash, Sue Ngwala and Tom Tyson*

In Attendance: *Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb (Leader of the Council), Councillor Paul Clark (Deputy Leader of the Council), Councillor Ian Albert (Executive Member for Finance and IT), Councillor Keith Hoskins (Executive Member for Enterprise and Cooperative Development), Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg (Executive Member for Recycling and Waste Management), Anthony Roche (Managing Director), Steve Crowley (Service Director - Commercial), Rachel Cooper (Controls, Risk and Performance Manager), Nigel Smith (Strategic Planning Manager), Christopher Robson (Senior Estates Surveyor), Helen Flage (Principal Strategic Planning Officer), Chloe Gray (Commercial Officer) and Hilary Dineen (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager)*

81 WELCOME AND REMOTE/PARTLY REMOTE MEETINGS PROTOCOL SUMMARY

Audio recording – 20 seconds

The Chair welcomed everyone to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting that was being conducted with Members and Officers at various locations, communicating via audio/video and online. There was also the opportunity for the public and press to listen to and view proceedings.

The Chair invited the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager to explain how proceedings would work and to confirm that Members and Officers were in attendance.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager undertook a roll call to ensure that all Members, Officers and registered speakers could hear and be heard and gave advice regarding the following:

Extracts from the Remote/Partly Remote Meetings Protocol were included with the agenda and the full version was available on the Council's website which included information regarding:

- Live Streaming;
- Noise Interference;
- Rules of Debate;
- Voting; and
- Part 2 Items.

Members were requested to ensure that they were familiar with the Protocol.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor David Levett started the meeting proper.

82 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 3 minutes 56 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adem Ruggiero-Cakir and Claire Strong.

Having given due notice Councillor Clare Billing advised that she would be substituting for Councillor Ruggiero-Cakir and Councillor Morgan Derbyshire advised that he would be substituting for Councillor Strong.

83 MINUTES - 19 JANUARY 2021

Audio Recording – 4 minutes 12 seconds

Councillor David Levett proposed, Councillor Kate Aspinwall seconded and it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 19 January 2021 be approved as a true record of the proceedings;
- (2) That, with the authorisation of the Chair, his electronic signature and initials be attached to the Minutes approved in (1) above.

84 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 5 minutes 20 seconds

There was no other business notified.

85 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 5 minutes 24 seconds

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council policy this meeting was being audio recorded as well as filmed. The audio recordings would be available on Mod.gov and the film recording via the NHDC YouTube channel.
- (2) Members were reminded to make declarations of interest before an item, the detailed reminder about this and speaking rights was set out under Chair's Announcements on the agenda.
- (3) The Chair advised that he would be taking Item 21 – Commercial Update Part 2 report immediately prior to Item 18 – the Part 1 report of the same name.

86 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 6 minutes 17 seconds

There were no presentations by members of the public.

87 URGENT AND GENERAL EXCEPTION ITEMS

Audio recording – 6 minutes 21 seconds

The Chair advised that he, as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, had agreed for a Part 2 item regarding Contract Procurement Waiver Referral, not previously notified, to be considered by Cabinet at the meeting due to be held on 16 March 2021.

88 CALLED-IN ITEMS

Audio recording – 6 minutes 43 seconds

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

89 RESOLUTIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Audio recording – 6 minutes 47 seconds

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager presented the report entitled Resolutions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and drew attention to the following:

- The Draft Design SPD had been included in the report entitled Local Plan Implementation, which was being considered later in this meeting.
- A report including consideration of outdoor pool opening times was due to be considered by Cabinet on 16 March 2021.
- The figures for attendance in 2019/20 at physical meetings and in 2020/21 at virtual meetings, plus figures of those viewing the recording after the meetings had taken place were included in the Performance Indicator report for information.

Councillor David Levett proposed, Councillor Jim McNally seconded and it was:

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.

90 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Audio recording – 9 minutes 2 seconds

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager presented the report entitled Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme together with the following appendices:

- Appendix A - Work Programme;
- Appendix B - Forward Plan - 5 February 2021;
- Appendix C - Corporate Peer Challenge Extracts from Action Plan.

She drew attention to the following:

- The first meeting of next Civic Year included a presentation by the Leader of the Council;
- No suggestions had been received from Members regarding the focus for settle and LEP;
- settle would be invited to attend the June or July meeting;
- The LEP would be invited to a meeting later in the next Civic Year;
- An update on the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan would be considered later in this meeting.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Sam Collins;
- Councillor David Levett.

In response to questions Councillor David Levett advised that the planned Task and Finish Group on the Waste Contract would take place, however officers were and had been working to support the community through the pandemic and therefore would be delayed further.

Councillor David Levett proposed, Councillor Kate Aspinwall seconded and it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report entitled Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme be noted;
- (2) That Members be requested to inform the Chair and the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager of any items to be considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 15 June 2021 and beyond;
- (3) That an invitation be sent to settle to attend the June or July meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (4) That the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager be requested to invite settle to attend the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make a presentation that includes their approach to the supply of rented social housing.

REASON FOR DECISION: 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.

91 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2020/2021

Audio recording – 13 minutes 11 seconds

Prior to the item being discussed, the Chair, noting that this was the last meeting of the Committee of the 2020/21 Civic Year, thanked all who had taken part in and supported the Overview and Scrutiny meetings and process including The Members of the Committee, Executive Members who had attended and presented to the Committee, the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager, the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer and all of the officers and support staff.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager presented the report entitled Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2020/2021 together with the following appendix:

- Appendix A - Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2020/2021.

She drew attention to the following:

- This was a draft of the Annual Report that would be presented to Annual Council;
- The statistics had not been completed as this meeting would form part of the year being reported;
- There was a correction to Paragraph 7 – Safeguarding, which should say that the annual update was received in December 2020;
- If Members wished a section could be included regarding the attendance and viewing figures.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor David Levett

Councillor David Levett proposed and it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report entitled Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2020/21 be noted;
- (2) That, subject to the following amendments, the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2020/21 be presented to Annual Council:
 - (i) That a section be added to the Annual report regarding attendance and viewing figures
- (3) That the thanks of the Chair to all participants at and those supporting the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings be formally recorded.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider and comment on the report of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the work of the Committee in the 2020/2021 Civic Year prior to consideration by Council.

92 UPDATE ON CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN

Audio recording – 16 minutes 59 seconds

The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report entitled Update on Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan together with the following appendix:

- Appendix A – Updated Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan.

The Leader of the Council advised that:

- The Corporate Peer Challenge had taken place in January 2020;
- At that time and as a new administration the advice was welcomed.

The Deputy Leader of the Council advised that:

- A lot had changed since the Peer Challenge had happened, but the recommendations within that report remained valid for the Council and the Community;
- There were huge demands on staff, which meant that some recommendations had not yet been progressed;
- It was now possible to add realistic timescales to those recommendations;
- Good progress had been made regarding some of the recommendations;
- 17 of the 60 recommendations were marked as complete
- Two of the recommendations regarding the timing and length of meetings would not be taken forward.

The Managing Director advised that the recommendations regarding Overview and Scrutiny would be updated on the main action plan.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor David Levett.

Councillor David Levett proposed and it was:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That the progress made on the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan as set out at Appendix A be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to comment on the report entitled Update on Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan prior to consideration by Cabinet.

93 LOCAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Audio recording – 23 minutes 15 seconds

The Executive Member for Planning and Transport introduced the revised report entitled Local Plan Implementation together with the following appendix:

- Appendix A - North Hertfordshire Masterplanning Principles.

The Strategic Planning Manager drew attention to the following:

- This was a wide ranging report that set out a programme of work to support the Local Plan;
- Modifications had not yet been received by the Inspector;
- There had been a lot of changes both Nationally and locally;
- Section 7 of the report set out the policies;
- Section 8 set out a way to move forward;
- There was a significant risk in moving forward with CIL at the current time, as the Government were planning to undertake a review of CIL.

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

- Councillor Sam Collins;
- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Tom Tyson.

The Strategic Planning Manager and Principal Strategic Planning Officer responded to questions including:

- That the revised Design SPD could be considered by the Committee alternatively a Member workshop could be organised for this purpose;
- The Master Planning guidance was guidance on the process, whereas the Design and Sustainability SPDs were the detail;
- The Government was being quite prescriptive regarding what could be included in design SPDs and work was needed to ensure that our guidance complied;
- This report would be considered by Cabinet on 16 March 2021 and it was hoped that it would be able to be considered by full Council at the end of the year;
- That there was an very important community led aspect, which included Neighbourhood Plans.

The Executive Member for Planning and Transport advised:

- Acknowledged the work previously undertaken by Councillors Collins and Levett regarding the draft Design SPD and noted that as the Local Plan had been delayed, it had been necessary to change elements;
- Consideration of CIL was not appropriate at this time, but it would be considered at a later date.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

- (1) That the North Hertfordshire Masterplanning Guidance, attached as Appendix A, be approved and recognised as a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications with the following amendment;
 - (i) That Paragraph 3.2 be amended to include references to Neighbourhood Planning Groups and the Design SPD.
- (2) That officers be authorised to commence work on a revised and updated programme of Supplementary Planning Documents and supporting evidence as set out in this report;
- (3) That to support recommendation 2.2, Cabinet:
 - a. Resolve not to pursue the preparation of a Community Infrastructure Levy for the District at this time; and
 - b. Authorise the reprofiling of existing, approved revenue budgets for Community Infrastructure Levy (£87,000) and the potential Single Issue Review of the Local Plan (£80,000) to deliver this work;
- (4) That a Member working group be arranged to discuss the Design and Sustainability SPDs prior to consideration of these by Cabinet.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure that resources are used most effectively to support the implementation of the new Local Plan for North Hertfordshire and to improve delivery upon corporate priorities relating to place leadership and the declared climate change emergency.

94 QUARTER 3 2020/21 PERFORMANCE AGAINST PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Audio recording – 53 minutes 08 seconds

The Controls, Risk and Performance Manager presented the report entitled Quarter 3 2020/21 Performance Against Performance Indicators together with the following appendix:

- Virtual and Physical Meeting Attendance by members of the public 2019 to 2021

She drew attention to the following:

Status Summary

- There were some amber and red indicators;
- 11 'direction of travel' indicators were going down.

MI P&R 001 and BV10

- Collection rates continued to be below target due to the pandemic;
- Sales ledger and NNDR were showing as red indicators.

BV9

- The Council Tax collection rate had now moved to an amber indicator as Council Tax payers were able to pay in instalments.

REG 1 and REG 2

- Rates of homelessness prevention and relief were doing well, reflecting the hard work of the team, although the Government's policy of 'Everyone In' meant that there was an increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation.

REG 3

- At the time of writing the report the data had not been available for the number of environmental health inspections completed;
- As previously reported the team were working on supporting the pandemic so were not carrying out many inspections; businesses were also closed due to lockdown;
- The percentage was currently at 13.6%.

MI LI 015

- The number of visits to leisure facilities was now being measured against the recovery plan approved by Cabinet and this was on track;
- A report was going to Cabinet on 16 March 2021 regarding keeping the outdoor pools open for longer in 2021/22 which would hopefully help to support the levels of visits.

Appendix

- A document showing attendance by members of the public at virtual and physical meetings between 2019 and 2021 had been produced, as requested at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 19 January 2021.
- For 2019/20 the numbers of attendees physically present at meetings was shown and for 2020/21 the number of live and recorded YouTube views were shown. These would be provided as part of the quarterly monitoring reports for information.
- Although the figures could not be directly compared, they did show that a wider audience was being reached albeit via recordings of Council meetings.

Councillor David Levett thanked officers for providing the figures for virtual and physical meetings which were interesting to note.

RESOLVED: That the 3rd Quarter Update on Performance against Performance Indicators be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To update the Committee on the performance indicators as well as other indicators that officers have updated and activated on Pentana Risk.

95 **NEW YEAR PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO BE MONITORED IN 2021/22**

Audio recording - 58 minutes 40 seconds

The Leader of the Council introduced the report entitled New Year Performance Indicators to be Monitored in 2021/22.

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

- There were no new or deleted performance indicators proposed for 2021/22;
- Council Tax and NNDR collection rates had been temporarily adjusted down for the new year due to customers and businesses being given extended instalments for the 20/21 payment;
- The Electricity, Gas and Energy target had been revised to 95% of the 20/21 target to take into account energy saving measures which had both been taken and were proposed;
- The number of visits to leisure centres had been adjusted in line with the recovery plan. Figures were based on April 2021 re-opening dates in line with current Government guidance;
- All other PIs and targets remained unchanged.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That Cabinet considers and formally approves the PIs and any associated targets that will be monitored throughout 2021/2022 by Overview & Scrutiny.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to comment on the report entitled New Year Performance Indicators to be Monitored in 2021/22 prior to consideration by Cabinet.

96 **3RD QUARTER MONITORING REPORT ON KEY PROJECTS FOR 2020/21**

Audio recording – 1 hour 1 minute 48 seconds

The Controls, Risk and Performance Manager presented the report entitled 3rd Quarter Monitoring Report on Key Projects for 2020-21 together with the following appendix:

- Appendix A - 3rd Quarter Monitoring against Key Projects for 2020/21.

She drew attention to the following:

- Of the 13 projects currently being monitored, 6 were showing as green status, 5 were amber, 1 was completed and 1 was pending;
- The implementation of the Customer and Member Portals had moved from green to amber. The customer portal had gone live with a soft launch but the Member portal did not meet the target date of December due to a technical issue which had now been rectified and should be going live shortly;
- The renovation of Howard Park Play Area had moved to amber due to a delay in the delivery of playground equipment – it was estimated that the project would overrun by 4 weeks as a result;
- Preparation for Brexit had been marked as complete however officers would continue to monitor and record relevant issues within the service areas via the corporate risk entry which was still being updated;
- The Crematorium hearing took place on 22 February 2021 and a decision was expected week commencing 15 March 2021.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett.

The Controls, Risk and Performance Manager confirmed that:

- The Brexit Project Board had signed off the Brexit preparation project. Further risks were being monitored by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and the Risk Management Group.

RESOLVED: That delivery against the key projects for 2020/21 be noted.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To enable achievements against the key projects for 2020/21 to be considered.

97 NEW YEAR REPORT ON PROJECTS TO BE MONITORED FOR 2021/22

Audio recording – 1 hour 5 minutes 38 seconds

The Leader of the Council introduced the report entitled New Year Report on Projects to be Monitored for 2021/22 and advised of a correction to the report that the New Council Priority was in fact the current Council Priority.

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

- There were 15 projects to be monitored;
- Milestones for each project would be included on monitoring reports.

The Managing Director advised that Churchgate now sat with the Service Director – Commercial.

RESOLVED: That the key projects, subject to capacity, that will be the key focus for the Council 2021 / 2022 be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: 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.

98 UPDATE OF THE COMMERCIAL DIRECTORATE'S PROGRESS AND FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME - PART I

Audio recording – 1 hour 38 minutes 4 seconds

The Committee Member and Scrutiny Manager undertook a roll call to ensure all present could hear and be heard.

NB This Item was considered following the Part 2 Item of the same name (Minute101 refers)

Prior to the item being considered Councillor David Levett declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of Garden Square Shopping Centre that he held 2 licensed tenancies within the Centre. He asked that any discussion regarding the shopping centre be held at the end of the debate at which time he would leave the meeting.

NB: There was no further discussion regarding the Garden Square Shopping Centre.

RESOLVED: That the report entitled Update of the Commercial Directorate's Progress and Future Work Programme be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: The report is following the request of the committee for an update on the progress of the Commercial Directorate work programme and is for information only.

99 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Audio recording – 1 hour 41 minutes 37 seconds

No questions had been submitted.

100 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Audio recording – 1 hour 8 minutes 16 seconds

Councillor David Levett proposed, Councillor Kate Aspinwall seconded and it was:

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).

101 UPDATE OF THE COMMERCIAL DIRECTORATE'S PROGRESS AND FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME - PART II

NB: This Part 2 Item was not audio recorded or filmed.

The Committee Member and Scrutiny Manager undertook a roll call to ensure all present could hear and be heard.

NB This Item was considered prior to the Part 1 Item of the same name (Minute 98 refers).

Prior to the item being considered Councillor David Levett declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of Garden Square Shopping Centre that he held 2 licenced tenancies within the Centre. He asked that any discussion regarding the shopping centre be held at the end of the debate at which time he would leave the Part 2 meeting.

The Executive Member for Enterprise and Cooperative Development presented the Part 2 report entitled Update on the Commercial Directorate's Progress and Future Work Programme.

The following Member asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett.

The Service Director – Commercial, Commercial Manager and Senior Estates Surveyor responded to the questions.

NB Councillor David Levett left the Part 2 meeting and Councillor Kate Aspinwall took the chair.

The Executive Member for Enterprise and Cooperative Development presented the remainder of the report relating to Garden Square Shopping Centre.

Tuesday, 9th March, 2021

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

- Councillor Sam Collins;
- Councillor Kate Aspinwall;
- Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb.

The Service Director – Commercial and Managing Director responded to questions.

RESOLVED: That the report entitled Update on the Commercial Directorate's Progress and Future Work Programme be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: The report is following the request of the committee for an update on the progress of the Commercial Directorate work programme and is for information only.

The meeting closed at 9.12 pm

Chair

RESOLUTIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS

REF	RESOLUTION	RESPONSE/OUTCOME	STATUS
	Task and Finish Group on Community Engagement		
June 20 Min 9 (3)	That the scope of the proposed Task and Finish Group on communication in relation to the Waste Contract be widened to encompass Communication and Engagement generally.	This Task and Finish Group will take place once social distancing and other pressures in regard to the Covid Pandemic have eased	In progress
	LOCAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION		
Mar 21 Min 93 (4)	Recommended to Cabinet: That a Member working group be arranged to discuss the Design and Sustainability SPDs prior to consideration of these by Cabinet	This recommendation was agreed by Cabinet The Strategic Planning Team will organise this when appropriate to do so	In Progress
	COMMUNITY LOTTERY – NEW POLICIES		
Jun 21 Min 14 Page 17	Recommended to Cabinet (1) That the age limit for playing the North Hertfordshire Community Lottery should be raised from 16 to 18, should legislation allow; (2) That consideration be given to putting a policy in place which would limit any one person to buying no more than £10 worth of tickets per week; (3) That the concerns and issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as detailed in the minutes of the Committee held on 22 June 2021, be taken into account when making its final decision on adopting these policies and the lottery.	Cabinet considered the recommendations from Cabinet and decided to defer the decision in order to allow more time for Members to consider the options. The Committee will be advised of the decision when it is taken by Cabinet	Pending

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
13 JULY 2021

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2021/22

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND SCRUTINY MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: NOT APPLICABLE

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 and items that may be considered in 2021/22. 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 Plan attached as Appendix B, suggests a list of items to be considered at its meeting on 14 September 2021 and beyond.
- 2.3 That the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan Extract as attached as Appendix C be considered.

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 In line with the recommendation of the Corporate Peer Challenge 2020 Executive Members are invited to present reports that fall under their remit and to make presentations on specific issues that the Committee wish to consider.
- 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 2021/22
- 8.2 When considering additional topics, their risk assessment and prioritisation will ensure that the most appropriate items are taken forward to the work programme.

Forward Plan

- 8.3 The Forward Plan for 22 June 2021 is attached at Appendix B for consideration.

Corporate Peer Challenge

- 8.4 The Committee agreed at the meeting held on 14 July 2020 that the actions regarding the Overview and Scrutiny Committee included in the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan be appended to all future reports in order to:

- Act as an aide memoire when considering the work programme;
- Consider any actions that need further work;
- Asses the effectiveness of changes made.

- 8.5 The Committee is asked to consider the Action Plan and any updates provided at Appendix C.

- 8.6 In respect of line 56 regarding formal training for Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee training options are being explored for provision in the new Civic Year.

- 8.7 Members are asked to contact the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager if they have any particular suggestions regarding this proposed training.

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 5 February 2021
- 15.3 Appendix C – Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan in regard to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

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17. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

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PROGRAMME FOR FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2021-22

13 July 2021	<p>Presentation by Settle (To be confirmed)</p> <p>Resolutions Report</p> <p>Work Programme</p> <p>3Cs End of Year report</p> <p>Council Plan and Objectives 2021/23</p> <p>Housing Delivery Test Action Plan</p> <p>Developer Contributions SDP</p> <p>Community Revenue Grants Criteria Review</p>
14 September 2021	<p>Resolutions Report</p> <p>Work Programme</p> <p>1st Quarter Performance against PIs</p> <p>1st Quarter Key Projects</p> <p>Discussion on the recovery of the Town Centres following the pandemic</p> <p>Customer Service Strategy</p>
14 December 2021	<p>Resolutions Report</p> <p>Work Programme</p> <p>Annual review of Safeguarding</p> <p>Commercial Update</p> <p>3Cs Half Year Report</p>
18 January 2022	<p>Crime and Disorder Matters</p> <p>Resolutions Report</p> <p>Work Programme</p> <p>Priorities for the District – Key Projects Half Year Monitoring</p> <p>2nd Quarter Performance against PIs</p>
15 March 2022	<p>Resolutions Report</p> <p>Work Programme</p> <p>Annual Report</p> <p>Commercial Update</p> <p>New PIs for 2021/22</p> <p>Priorities For The District – Key Projects 2021/22</p> <p>3rd Quarter PIs</p> <p>3rd Quarter Key projects</p>
	<p>To be Scheduled.</p> <p>Invitation to: LEP</p> <p>Devolution & Recovery White Paper Update (Once White Paper is published)</p>

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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Forward Plan of Key Decisions - 22 June 2021

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
ANNUAL REPORT ON RISK MANAGEMENT (05.02.21)		Cabinet	29 Jun 2021		Rachel Cooper, Controls, Risk and Performance Manager rachel.cooper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE (05.02.21)		Cabinet	29 Jun 2021		Rachel Cooper, Controls, Risk and Performance Manager rachel.cooper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY) END OF YEAR REVIEW 2020/21 (05.02.21)		Cabinet	29 Jun 2021		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN 2020/21 (05.02.21)		Cabinet	29 Jun 2021		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
BALDOCK, BYGRAVE AND CLOTHALL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (24.05.21)		Cabinet	29 Jun 2021		Clare Skeels, Senior Planning Officer clare.skeels@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
COMMUNITY LOTTERY - NEW POLICIES (24.05.21)		Cabinet	29 Jun 2021		Chloe Gray, Commercial Officer chloe.gray@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
REVIEW OF GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT (05.02.21)		Cabinet	29 Jun 2021		Andrew Mills, Service Manager - Greenspace andrew.mills@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
DE-COMMISSION OF LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP (LSP) (30.04.21)		Cabinet	20 Jul 2021		Reuben Ayavoo, Policy and Community Engagement Manager reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
HOUSING DELIVERY TEST ACTION PLAN (30.04.21)		Cabinet	20 Jul 2021		Nigel Smith, Strategic Planning Manager nigel.smith@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS SPD (22.06.21)		Cabinet	20 Jul 2021		Nigel Smith, Strategic Planning Manager nigel.smith@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
COMMUNITY FACILITIES CAPITAL GRANTS PROJECTS FUNDS AND REVENUE CRITERIA REVIEW (24.05.21)		Cabinet	20 Jul 2021		Reuben Ayavoo, Policy and Community Engagement Manager reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
FREEHOLD LAND SOUTH OF CLARE CRESCENT, BALDOCK, SG7 6JR (22.06.21)		Cabinet	20 Jul 2021		Christopher Robson, Senior Estates Surveyor christopher.robson@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
QUARTERLY RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE (30.04.21)		Cabinet	21 Sep 2021		Rachel Cooper, Controls, Risk and Performance Manager rachel.cooper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY (30.04.21)		Cabinet	21 Sep 2021		Chris Jeffery, Interim Customer Service Manager chris.jeffery@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
FIRST QUARTER REVENUE MONITORING 2021/22 (22.06.21)		Cabinet	21 Sep 2021		Antonio Ciampa, Accountancy Manager antonio.ciampa@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
FIRST QUARTER INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY) REVIEW 2021/22 (22.06.21)		Cabinet	21 Sep 2021		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6

EXTRACT OF ITEMS ON THE CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN THAT RELATE TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

		Recommendation	Action	Led by	Timescale	Update
ONGOING ACTIONS						
28	Organisational Leadership and Governance	Peers understand that the full performance report is sent to councillors one month before O&S to provide the opportunity for requesting the appropriate lead executive member and officer to attend O&S to be accountable for questioning. This opportunity has never been requested and should be used in order to strengthen the debate and challenge at O&S.	Agreed. Chair of Overview and Scrutiny to remind committee members of this opportunity	Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee Controls, Risk and Performance Manager	Ongoing	Members receive the Performance Indicator report one month before the meeting. Members are reminded to contact the Controls, Risk and Performance Manager at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting date if they wish a particular indicator to be considered in more detail
54	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Future meetings would benefit from taking a longer-term view of the key issues for the district (not just focussing on the next immediate meeting), fewer, more targeted agenda items, and be focused on key areas informed by performance reports and a forward work plan. Fewer agenda items will support more allocated time for meaningful scrutiny and related debate.	Agreed. To be taken forward as part of the training for the committee members	Chair and vice chair of O+S Scrutiny support	Ongoing	The Committee to bear this in mind when considering the work programme

56	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	It is recommended that all O&S members undertake formal training to ensure a robust base of skills and expertise can be deployed in the O&S environment.	Formal scrutiny training has previously been provided to the Committee, but given changes to committee membership agree it makes sense to put in place further training and ensure that any new members receive training in the future	Chair and Vice Chair of O+S Scrutiny support Member training champions	Pending	Various training options are being explored for provision in the new Civic Year.
57	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Use the task and finish programme to support early engagement and involvement with policy making.	Agreed. To be taken forward by the Leader (on behalf of Cabinet) and Chair and vice chair of Overview and Scrutiny, to discuss work programme	Leader Chair and Vice Chair of O+S Scrutiny support	Ongoing	The Chair and Vice-Chair have met with the Leader. The Chair to provide an update
58	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	It is recommended that finish times should be agreed in the constitution and meetings end promptly at those times. There was a concern around individual personal effectiveness, accessibility, external public perception and health & safety / personal welfare of both members and officers from such excessively long and late meetings.	Moving meeting times is not supported politically at the current time due to concerns it may dissuade people with caring responsibilities from standing to be Councillors. Alternative of allowing officers to attend meetings virtually from home to be explored A 'guillotine' provision on committee meetings is not supported politically at the current time due to concerns it might stifle debate. It is proposed that this is considered once the other recommendations have been	Service Director Legal and Community Member training champions	Pending	

			<p>implemented regarding work programme, training and chairing of meetings to establish whether it remains an issue or has been resolved by other action.</p> <p>Training is provided to Chairs and Vice Chairs, but this could be reviewed to ensure that Chairs and Vice Chairs are able to confidently manage meetings to ensure they proceed in a timely manner</p>			
59	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Peers recommend clarification of the governance arrangements between O&S and cabinet panels.	Proposal to Full Council to clarify relationship	Group Leaders Monitoring Officer	Annual Council (May/June 2020)	
60	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Ensure the O&S forward work plan includes scrutiny of external partners and contractors as a contribution to the leadership of 'place'.	Agreed as recommendation	Chair and Vice Chair of O+S Scrutiny support	Immediate & Ongoing	The Committee have identified two partner organisations. Further work is needed to consider the format and timing.
COMPLETED ACTIONS						
27	Organisational Leadership and Governance	The peer team were surprised that only low / negative PI's were debated at O&S and those reports were shared publicly. Publishing positive performance alongside	Agreed. Reports will reflect this going forwards	Chair and Vice Chair Overview and Scrutiny Committee Controls, Risk and Performance Manager		The Controls, Risk and Performance Manager is now presenting the complete report to the Committee.

		amber and red performance would provide the public with a rounded summary of performance, allowing NHDC to outwardly celebrate what is being delivered to agreed performance levels.				This can now be marked as complete
53	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Executive members should lead at O&S and be visibly accountable for decisions and performance.	Agreed as recommendation	Executive Members	Immediate	Executive Members are now presenting reports under their remit This can now be marked as complete
55	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	The current membership of O&S was considered to be too large and would benefit from reducing from 15 members to 11 or 9.	Proposal to Full Council to reduce Committee size to 12	Group Leaders Monitoring Officer	Annual Council (May/June 2020)	The Committee membership was reduced from 16 to 12 at Annual Council on 4 June 2020 This can now be marked as complete

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
13th JULY 2021

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: ANNUAL REVIEW OF SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING CHILDREN AND ADULTS (2020-21)

REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING TEAM LEADER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL PRIORITY: BUILD THRIVING AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council has robust procedures in place that govern how staff and members deal with concerns about children and adults at risk of abuse and harm in order to maintain our statutory duty to safeguard their welfare. Work is ongoing to ensure that these procedures are understood and followed throughout the organisation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee be recommended to:

- 2.1 Receive and comment on the annual report of progress made against the Council's fulfilment of the statutory duty to maintain an effective safeguarding function with regard to children.
- 2.2 Receive and comment on the annual report of progress made against the Council's fulfilment of the statutory duty to maintain an effective safeguarding function with regard to adults at risk and the Authority's duties in relation to specific areas such as Prevent and counter terrorism, modern slavery and human trafficking and domestic abuse.
- 2.3 Agree that sufficient and robust processes are in place at NHDC for application and review of safeguarding processes, and that an annual review and presentation to this committee should continue.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The recommendation(s) contained within paragraphs 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 are made due to this being the best course of action that can be accommodated within the approved budget and officer resources, that will fulfil our statutory and lawful obligations but also ensure that a regular, corporate review exists.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. None applicable.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1 The Executive and Deputy Member for Community Engagement have been consulted and have endorsed the content of the report. The Leadership Team have also been consulted and support the contents of the report.
- 5.2 Note that an update on the Modern Slavery Charter and Action Plan was presented to Cabinet (together with an external SHIVA review undertaken in June 2020) on 21 July 2020, who resolved that further updates would be provided as part of the Annual Safeguarding Report to Overview & Scrutiny¹.

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 Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on all statutory agencies working with children and young people to 'safeguard and promote their welfare' and includes responsibility to monitor sufficient arrangements in services they contract out to others.
- 7.2 The Care Act 2014 places a duty on Districts Councils and other local organisations to cooperate fully with their local Safeguarding Adults Board by referring concerns and providing information when requested to assist with investigations.
- 7.3 The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to participate in Domestic Homicide Reviews whilst the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires local authorities to provide safe accommodation, homelessness assistance and additional support services for victims.
- 7.4 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires local authorities refer child and adult victims to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).
- 7.5 Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on local authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
- 7.6 District Council representation is maintained at the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board, Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and Hertfordshire District and Borough Councils Safeguarding Group.

¹ [Cabinet 21 July 2020](#) click here

- 7.7 Our primary statutory function remains that of referring concerns to the relevant agency for necessary action. When making a formal referral, the Council should receive notification as to whether the referral has met the threshold for further enquiry or not. An officer who has significant dealings with the victim could be asked to contribute to further proceedings and/or provide further information. Concerns that do not meet the threshold for a statutory investigation will be passed back to the organisation. Officers have a duty to offer those individuals / families information and support including contact details for organisations who can provide further advice and guidance. Concerns that do not meet the threshold for statutory investigation are logged on a central database enabling officers to see if the ongoing reporting of additional concerns should trigger a future referral.
- 7.8 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive an annual report detailing safeguarding activity undertaken by the Council over the previous year and significant actions that will be undertaken in the coming year.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 NHDC safeguarding referral rates in 2020/21:

The rates of referrals made by NHDC staff during 2020/21 has doubled since 2019/20, predominantly due to a significant increase in domestic abuse referrals.

<u>Reason for referral BY NHDC</u>	<u>No. of referrals in 19/20</u>	<u>No. of referrals in 20/21</u>
CHILD		
Child at risk of significant harm	31	30
Child present & parent deemed intentionally homeless	12	4
Child in household where domestic abuse is present*	65	198
Modern Slavery (children)	0	0
Prevent – radicalisation (children)	0	0
Concerns about a child below threshold for a referral (other help offered)	3	2
ADULT		
Adult with care & support needs at risk of significant harm	58	23
Adult with unmet mental health need (mental health crisis)	15	33
Prevent - radicalisation (adult)	0	2
Modern Slavery (adult)	0	0 (2 concerns)
Domestic abuse (adult)** * & ** - adult domestic abuse victims will sometimes have more than one child present in the household, hence numbers of child victims are higher than adult.	34	173 (+409%)
Concerns about an adult below threshold for a referral (other help offered)	34	31
Total	252	498 (+98%)

Table 1: NHDC safeguarding referral rates 2019/20 and 2020/21

- 8.1.1 The changes in referral rates between 2019/20 and 2020/21 are consistent with national trends – significant increases in referrals into domestic abuse services and lower referrals for safeguarding concerns due to reduced contact, particularly face to face, between officers and the public.
- 8.1.2 As shown in figure 1. (below) NHDC has seen a significant increase in reported concerns and referrals since 2014 when centralised records began. Across the same period, pre-pandemic referral rates into external statutory agencies have remained relatively static, tending to fluctuate up and down between quarters with no substantial changes from one year to the next. Developments at the Council such as the introduction of a central database of referrals, mandatory corporate safeguarding training and numerous awareness raising campaigns since April 2017 have resulted in both an increased awareness and confidence amongst staff as well as improved corporate oversight about the safeguarding actions undertaken across the organisation. The result is an increase in our recorded referral rates.
- 8.1.3 The increase in referrals being made has significant implications for resources across the organisation. Making external referrals involves a substantial time investment for the officer(s) involved, particularly as the range of issues we are required to refer increases. Each have separate external referral pathways and ongoing engagement with the statutory agency we refer into often needs to be maintained.
- 8.1.4 Now that we are maintaining these practices, reporting rates within the Council remained fairly static until the start of lockdown 1.0 in March 2020.

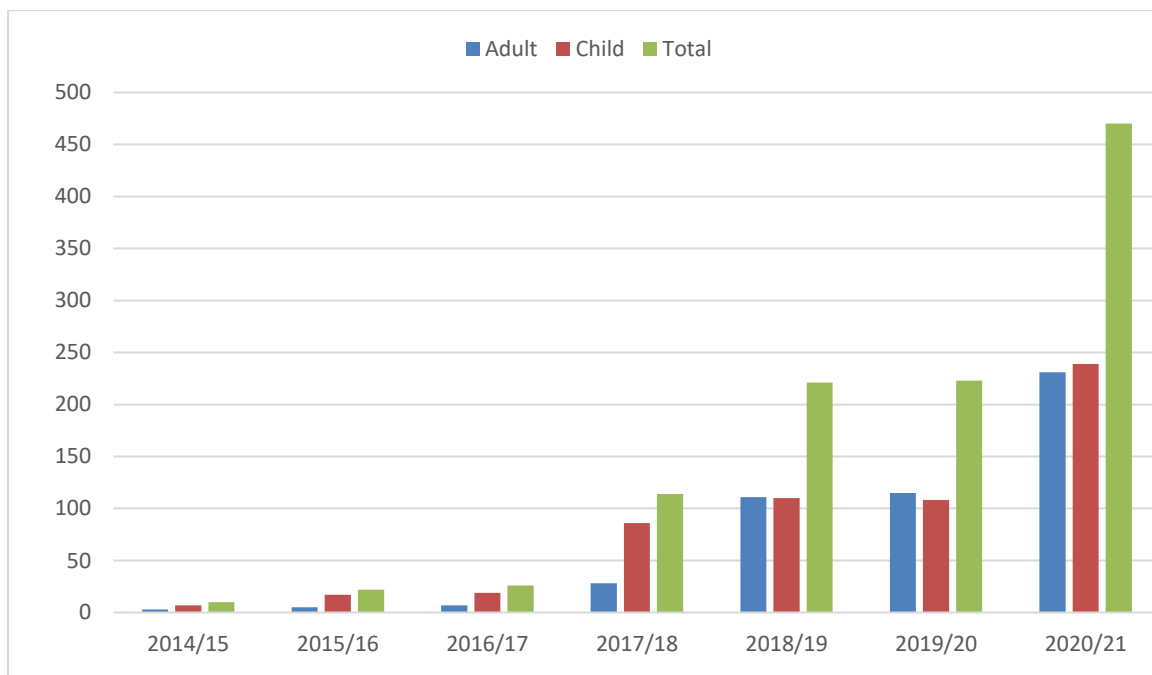


Figure 1: NHDC referral rates 2014-21

8.2 Actions completed April 2020 to March 2021:

- 8.2.1 Introductory, basic and advanced safeguarding training has been delivered to all officers (new or refresher) and introductory e-learning is now mandatory as a minimum level of training for all staff.
- 8.2.2 Members were offered bespoke safeguarding child and safeguarding adult training sessions covering core safeguarding issues and additional topics including modern slavery and extremism. Thirteen and 18 members attended respectively.
- 8.2.3 Representation has been maintained at the Hertfordshire District and Borough Council Safeguarding Group which brings together all ten districts and the Adults Board and Children's Partnership.
- 8.2.4 The Corporate Safeguarding Group which brings together all NHDC Designated Safeguarding Officers with the Named Safeguarding Officer (Service Director - Legal and Community) continue to meet twice a year.
- 8.2.5 Ongoing representation at Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Panels involving North Hertfordshire residents.
- 8.2.6 Continued delivery of the corporate safeguarding learning and development programme to ensure all new starters receive a first day information sheet and undertake a learning needs analysis, corporate induction safeguarding briefing and the relevant level of training.
- 8.2.7 Continued maintenance of the corporate safeguarding database, including responses to Section 17 and 47 enquiries for children and Section 42 information sharing requests for adults as well as subject access and freedom of information requests.
- 8.2.8 Completion of the 2020-2021 Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking action plan (appendix 16.1).
- 8.2.9 Safeguarding guidance for members, canvassers and poll station staff was produced and the contract managers for our waste services and abandoned dog contracts were supported to ensure those organisations had robust procedures in place for their own staff to report concerns directly.
- 8.2.10 The corporate safeguarding e-learning programme was expanded to include information on modern slavery and county lines.
- 8.2.11 Organisational awareness of the Council's Prevent duty to protect and support individuals at risk of radicalisation has been raised through articles in Insight and MIS, new internet and intranet pages, and an external presentation to the Corporate Safeguarding Group.
- 8.2.12 In January 2021 140 staff completed a safeguarding learning and development survey. Overall staff were generally confident to respond to general safeguarding concerns and the team are working to address the knowledge gaps identified in this.

- 8.3 Work planned for April 2021 to March 2022:
- 8.3.1 Continue to promote local and national campaigns including National Stalking Awareness Week April 21, County Lines Intensification Week May 21, World Elder Abuse Day, Labour Exploitation Week Sept 21, Anti-Slavery Day October 2021.
 - 8.3.2 Continuation of all ongoing day to day safeguarding functions: training for new staff and refresher training for existing staff; maintenance of database and information sharing requests; representation on relevant networks and partnership groups; coordination of Corporate Safeguarding Group with twice yearly meetings; data retention compliance.
 - 8.3.3 To ensure effective compliance regarding the Authority's duties in relation to specific areas such as Prevent and counter terrorism, modern slavery and human trafficking and Domestic Homicide Reviews. Including;
 - To support the work of the Hertfordshire Prevent Board and respond to the Home Office consultation on the Protect duty
 - Completion of the second half of the countywide Modern Slavery third party reporting pilot and assisting in the provision of further support services to potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking (e.g. temporary accommodation and provision of welfare packs when a potential victim leaves the place where they were enslaved)
 - Supporting the completion of all Domestic Homicide Reviews
 - 8.3.4 Annual bespoke training available for staff supporting individuals experiencing a mental health crisis delivered by external experts, Harmless.
 - 8.3.5 Staff to be trained as hate crime responders to support NHDC's duty to provide a third-party reporting centre.
 - 8.3.6 Extension of the advice and support service for people experiencing domestic abuse for a further three years, over 2021/22 to 2023/24, provided by Survivors Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) as well as looking to increase Safe Space Provision out of hours support. Domestic abuse training is also being organised for all relevant staff.
 - 8.3.7 To continue to support the North Herts Community Safety Partnership's 'Protecting Vulnerable People' strategic priority which incorporates domestic abuse and violence. As a priority this encourages all partners to lead and support where appropriate campaigns through social media, exhibition stands and events to highlight issues relating to this. NHDC will continue to promote all national and local support domestic abuse services available.
 - 8.3.8 From a procurement perspective, for the appointment of new suppliers, to utilise the Government Standard Supplier Selection Questionnaire in all appropriate procurements and requests confirmation that suppliers meet Modern Slavery Act 2015 requirements. Additionally, where appropriate, Contract Managers will complete the Modern Slavery

Identifiers checklist, which has appropriate actions based on a risk score. Contract Managers will be invited to complete the Government Modern Slavery Risk Assessment tool for high risk contracts;

- 8.3.9 The Council will utilise the Government Modern Slavery Statement Registry which is a central system where suppliers can publish their Modern Slavery Statements. This will allow the Council to easily assess information in relation to suppliers' compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Government has stated that it intends to pass legislation as soon as possible making it mandatory for organisations to publish a statement on their registration system if they are caught by the Modern Slavery Act 2015. We will make use of the registration system within our processes and have referenced and incorporated it into our Modern Slavery Transparency Statement for 2021-2022 which is in the process of being approved.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Section 6 of the Council's Constitution at paragraph 6.2.7(y) (p 59) states that the terms of reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee includes to "Consider reports relating to the authority's safeguarding responsibilities".
- 9.2 The relevant legislation includes the Children Act 2004, the key points of which are:-
- Section 11 places a statutory duty on key people and bodies – including district councils to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging their functions they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
 - Section 10 outlines the duty to promote inter-agency cooperation between named agencies (including district councils).
- 9.3 Legislation to reform multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for children formed part of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which sets out new safeguarding duties. Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCB's) have been abolished and new requirements have been placed on top tier local authorities, the police and health to make arrangements for safeguarding children in their local area. In Hertfordshire, the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (HSCP) has been established, led by the local authority, police and health with partnership engagement from other organisations including the District and Borough Councils.
- 9.4 The Care Act 2014 came into effect on 1st April 2015 and places a statutory duty on local authorities to provide services to meet the needs of adults who require care and support. A duty to establish a Safeguarding Adults Board in every local authority area was introduced and a duty has been placed on District Councils alongside other local organisations to cooperate fully with the board.
- 9.5 The key responsibility for safeguarding in Hertfordshire lies with the County Council and it is important to remember that it is not the responsibility of any District Council member, employee, volunteer or contracted service provider to determine whether abuse is being experienced, or has taken place, or indeed the nature of any abuse.

- 9.6 The role of the member, employee, volunteer or contracted service provider is to inform and report concerns, not to investigate or judge. A District Council is not responsible for investigating any safeguarding incidents or allegations, involving children, young people or adults at risk, but provides the local 'eyes and ears' to enable a route to report any concerns.
- 9.7 Statutory guidance that was issued under 9 (3) of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to participate in Domestic Homicide Reviews. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 also place a duty on local authorities in relation to safe accommodation, homelessness assistance and additional support services for victims of domestic abuse.
- 9.8 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 places specific duties on local authorities under sections 43 and 52 of the Act, to refer child victims or consenting adult victims through to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), or to make a duty to notify referral (DtN) to the Home Office for a Single Competent Authority (SCA) assessment. Modern Slavery will be treated as falling under the over-arching area of safeguarding and reported through to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee as part of the annual report accordingly.
- 9.9 Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on local authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. As per 9.7 this area also falls within the over-arching area of safeguarding and will be reported through to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee as part of the annual report accordingly.
- 9.10 It anticipated that there will be further safeguarding duties placed on the Council going forwards. For example, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill is currently in Committee Stage in the House of Commons. Part 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill seeks to place a duty on specified authorities for a local government area to collaborate with the other specified authorities for that same area to prevent and reduce serious violence. The bill also outlines the proposal to introduce statutory duties regarding Offensive Weapons Homicide Reviews.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Currently, the corporate training budget provides revenue funding for all levels of safeguarding training. It should be noted that when there are increased training needs for both staff and members in response to the national agenda e.g. Child Sexual Exploitation, Prevent, domestic abuse, this will place additional pressure on learning and development budgets. In addition, we continue to source training opportunities that are provided free of charge by partners where possible.
- 10.2 There are no capital implications.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 NHDC's safeguarding policies and procedures outline the various steps taken by the Council to reduce the risk to employees, children and adults at risk of abuse and harm accessing our services, including procedures for safe recruitment, learning and development for employees and reporting procedures for employees with concerns.
- 11.2 These policies and procedures are now established throughout the organisation, with processes in place to monitor, review and report ongoing implementation as a business-as-usual activity.

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 Due to their age, development and dependency on adults including in the delivery of services, children are vulnerable and therefore often more open to abuse. They have a legal right to be protected and for organisations to take appropriate action to prevent and report suspected abusive behaviour. The Equality Act supports the Children Act 2004 to provide this protection to vulnerable children.
- 12.3 Equally, adults who are more vulnerable, either through decreased mental capacity/age related dementia, learning difficulties, or their personal domestic situation i.e. changing from one residential care home to another, have a legal right to be protected and for organisations to take appropriate action to prevent and report suspected abusive behaviour.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

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

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 As indicated in the main body of this report, the corporate human resourcing to fulfil the Authorities statutory duties and responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding agenda is increasing and it is likely that this will continue.
In regard to the Human Resources service role in safeguarding it is, in the main, responsible for the corporate management, process and administration of the Recruitment and Selection Policy and the Disclosure Barring Service Employment Checks Policy. The Human Resource Service also assist with learning and development training required for safeguarding.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1 Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking (MSHT) Action Plan (Apr 2020-Mar 2021)

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS
None

16.1 Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking (MSHT) Action Plan (Apr 2020-Mar 2021)		
ACTION & EXPECTED OUTCOME	TIME FRAME	LEAD
<p>1. MONITORING AND REPORTING <i>To have an effective corporate monitoring and reporting process</i></p>		
<p>1.1 Ensure that our work contributes to and supports the strategic priorities of the Hertfordshire Modern Slavery Partnership:</p> <p>Priority one: To raise awareness of modern slavery and it's effects Priority two: To increase reporting of suspected modern slavery Priority three: To ensure right knowledge, skills and process Priority four: To identify, protect, support and empower victims Priority five: To pursue and catch criminals Priority six: To have effective governance, monitoring and evaluation</p>	Ongoing	Corporate Safeguarding Group/Community Protection Manager/Safeguarding Support team /Service Director: Legal & Community
<p>1.2 Corporate Safeguarding Group (CSG) to oversee and monitor compliance with modern day slavery and human trafficking duties (MDS&HT) requirements and report / make recommendations to Community Protection Manager/ Service Director: Legal & Community on proposed changes. (Priority six)</p> <p>1.3 Actions completed and planned relating to MDS&HT are included within the Annual Safeguarding report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee (O&S). (Priority six)</p>	<p>1.2 This work will always be ongoing. CSG continue to meet twice a year.</p> <p>1.3 Annual report taken to O&S Dec 2020.</p>	Corporate Safeguarding Group/Community Protection Manager/ Safeguarding Support team /Service Director: Legal & Community
<p>1.4 Corporate Procurement Group to establish key performance indicators for implementation of the Modern Slavery Transparency Statement / Charter. Incorporated into Annual Safeguarding Report for 2019/20 review. (Priority six)</p>	<p>1.4 Reported to Cabinet July 2020 and Overview & Scrutiny annually from April 2021 onwards.</p>	Legal Commercial Team Manager / Procurement Officer / Safeguarding Support team

2. POLICY AND PROCESS <i>To ensure that legal duties are met and where relevant reflected/ embedded in other corporate policies/ procedures and guidance. Support of victims.</i>		
<p>2.1 Incorporate modern slavery requirements in new separate policies for 'Safeguarding Children' and 'Safeguarding Adults at Risk'. (Priority three)</p> <p>2.2 National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and Duty to Notify (DTN) are now one online form for both children and adults. Links to and guidance on these are available on the Modern Day Slavery page on the intranet and in the guidance documents available on the page. (Priority three)</p>	<p>2.1 Policies adopted October 2019.</p> <p>2.2 Modern Slavery referral process is published on intranet.</p>	<p>Community Protection Manager/ Safeguarding Support team / Policy & Community Engagement Manager</p>
<p>2.3 A centralised log of all MDS&HT referrals is maintained and monitored – as yet none have been made. One incident has been recorded but upon seeking advice from the Modern Slavery helpline the concern did not warrant a referral. (Priority three & four)</p>	<p>2.3 Modern Slavery page on intranet contains all requirements.</p>	<p>Safeguarding Support team / Safeguarding Support Officer</p>
<p>2.4 Update procurement and contract procedure rules to ensure, where possible, MDS applicable and compliant (to obtain assurance for MDA compliance for relevant contracts). (Priority three & four)</p>	<p>2.4 Suppliers are required to declare their compliance with modern slavery requirements during tender process.</p>	<p>Contract Procurement Group/ Contract and Procurement Lawyer and Procurement Officer</p>
<p>2.5 The Housing Options and Housing Advice Teams provide potential victims of MDS with advice on their housing options (including homelessness services) and signpost to other specialist support agencies as appropriate. (Priority four)</p> <p>2.6 The Housing Options and Housing Advice Teams support the police and partners in Operation Tropic activities through the provision of an on-site housing options service (including homelessness advice), as required. (Priority four)</p>	<p>2.5 & 2.6 This work will always be ongoing for the team.</p>	<p>Strategic Housing Manager</p>

3. COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING <i>To ensure that employees, Members and the local community have sufficient knowledge to report MDS & HT</i>		
3.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Senior Management Group attended training session; - Councillors briefed through MIS and invited to senior managers training sessions; - Senior Management Team endorsement of Action Plan - All staff invited to attend one hour staff briefings; (Priority one, two, three & four) 	3.1 August to October 2018	Community Protection Manager/ Safeguarding Support team
3.2 Social Media and Insight awareness raising on Anti-Slavery awareness day every October to promote event to both staff and the local community (Priority one, two, three & four)	3.2 Anti slavery day 18 th Oct annually	Communications team
3.3 Update NHDC website Modern Slavery pages in line with recommendations from Shiva Foundation. (Priority one, two, three & four)	3.3 New page launched June 2020	Safeguarding Support team / Learning & Employee Engagement Manager
3.4 MDS&HT is discussed at each Corporate Safeguarding Group meeting. (Priority one, two, three & four)	3.4 CSG meets twice a year.	Safeguarding Support team
3.5 Ongoing training provided to new starters through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First day welcome safeguarding handout - Corporate induction safeguarding presentation - Safeguarding introductory e-learning on Growzone (includes MSHT) - Safeguarding basic and advanced training includes MSHT (Priority one, two, three & four)	3.5 Ongoing	Safeguarding Support team

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safeguarding training handout being developed for all Members with information on signs and symptoms of abuse (including MSHT), how to refer and sources of advice and guidance. - Members encouraged to complete NHDC safeguarding e-learning which includes MSHT. As of 08.06.20 20/49 Members have completed this. - Face to face training session being developed for Members. - Ensure all new members receive safeguarding handout and training options. <p style="color: red;">(Priority one, two, three & four)</p>	<p>Completed Sept 2020.</p> <p>Ongoing – last reminder in MIS Apr 2020</p> <p>Completed & delivered Nov 20 and Mar 21.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Safeguarding Support team</p> <p>Safeguarding Support team</p> <p>Safeguarding Support team</p> <p>Democratic services</p>
<p>3.6 Procurement Officer to undertake appropriate procurement and supply modern day slavery training.</p> <p style="color: red;">(Priority one, two, three & four)</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>Procurement Officer</p>
<p>3.7 Raise awareness through social media of the impact of MSHT during COVID19 – specifically promote anti slavery day on 18th October and the Labour Exploitation Campaign 14th-18th September 2020.</p> <p style="color: red;">(Priority one, two, three & four)</p>	<p>Ongoing – comms team have promoted modern slavery campaigns on social media & will continue to do so.</p>	<p>Communications team</p>
<p>3.8 Raising safeguarding awareness amongst political party canvassers to encourage accurate reporting of concerns</p> <p style="color: red;">(Priority one, two, three & four)</p>	<p>Completed – handout completed and distributed Sept 2020.</p>	<p>Safeguarding Support team</p>

4. PARTNERS <i>To ensure links between partner organisations</i>		
4.1 To work with Hertfordshire Modern Slavery Partnership <i>(All priorities)</i> 4.2 To work with the North Herts Community Safety Partnership <i>(Priority five)</i> 4.3 To work with the Shiva Foundation <i>(All priorities)</i>	4.1, 4.2, 4.3 Ongoing	Community Protection Manager/ Service Director: Legal and Community / Managing Director
5. EXTERNAL ENDORSEMENT <i>To ensure regular monitoring and evaluation of NHDC's compliance with the Modern Slavery Charter and the Council's Transparency Statement</i>		
5.1 To provide a report to Cabinet to evidence compliance with the Modern Slavery Charter and the Council's Transparency Statement <i>(Priority six)</i>	Report to Cabinet taken July 2020. MSHT updates to be included in Annual Safeguarding Report going forward.	Service Director: Legal & Community

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CABINET

20 JULY 2021

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: COMMUNITY GRANTS POLICY REVIEW, NHDC FUNDING CRITERIA HEALTH PROTECTION BOARD COMMUNITY USE, AND REVIEW OF CABINET PANELS' TERM OF REFERENCE

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - LEGAL AND COMMUNITY, AND THE POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL PRIORITY: WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE AND EFFICIENT COUNCIL

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides:

- 1.1. An overview for the Grants awarded in the previous civic year following the revision of the Community Grants policy and criteria and suggested amendments;
- 1.2. Suggested Protocol for application and award of the recent Health Protection Board Funding of £100K;
- 1.3. Suggested updated Terms of Reference for all 4 Cabinet Panels.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Cabinet consider the following revisions of the Grant Policy criteria as set out below under section Two for eligibility of organisation (Appendix A) for approval:

Paragraph F – 'be able to demonstrate financial need and that other sources and options for funding have been considered and exhausted before application to the district council'.

Paragraph G – 'be able to demonstrate the award of the grant provides 'Additionality' to the service provision of the organisation (i.e. is innovative in nature and beyond the normal scope of organisation's current activities).

- 2.3 That Cabinet approves the Protocol for the NHDC / Health Protection Board Funding (Appendix B) and approve the amendments to the District Wide Community Facilities Capital & Revenue Grants Panel (Appendix C); and
- 2.4 That Cabinet reviews the Cabinet Panel terms of reference and approves these amendments (Appendices D, E & F) or such other amendments as are deemed appropriate.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Reviewing the new Protocol or revised criteria that have been put in place on a regular basis, provides the Council with assurances that the grant process achieves its stated aim, that the revised criteria has made the funding more accessible to a wider range of organisations who are working to support the community work in North Hertfordshire. with vulnerable people or people of protected characteristics.
- 3.2 The NHDC/ Health Protection Board ('HPB') Funding detailed, has been secured and must be used by the end of March 2022. It is proposed that this is to be considered by the District Wide Community Facilities Capital & Revenue Grants Panel, whose terms of reference therefore should be updated to reflect remit.
- 3.3 The Administration has requested a review of the three other Cabinet Panels to align to the Council's renewed priorities.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There are no alternative options to be considered.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with relevant officers in Legal, Finance, Policy and Community Engagement.
- 5.2 Consultation has taken place with Policy & Community Engagement team, the Executive Members and Deputy Executive Members for Community Engagement, and need to update the District Wide Community Facilities Capital & Revenue Grants Panel .
- 5.3 The Leader and Deputy Leader have requested a review of the three remaining Cabinet Panels and all other Executive and Deputies were made aware of this by the Leader.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation (2.1-2.3) on a key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 14 November 2020. The review of the remaining Cabinet Panel's terms of reference relates to name change, portfolios alignments and minor clarifications, and is not a key Executive decision (and not therefore required to be specifically addressed in the Forward Plan).

7. BACKGROUND

Grants Policy

- 7.1. Before the introduction of the amended Policy in January 2020, the Grant Policy was last reviewed in late 2015 / agreed by Cabinet in June 2016. A review has been undertaken to see how the new Policy has been operating. As a result, the amendments to the Policy have been proposed.

NHDC /HPB Funding Protocol

- 7.2. In May 2021 a joint application was successfully made to the HPB by Dacorum, Hertsmere, East Herts, NHDC, Stevenage, Broxbourne, Welwyn Hatfield, Watford and Three Rivers for community group funding. NHDC secured £100K. The funding needs to be committed/ spent by March 2022.

District Wide Community Facilities Capital & Revenue Grants Panel terms of reference

- 7.3. It is proposed that this Panel will consider the NHDC/ HPB funding applications and make recommendations to the Executive Member for Community Engagement. The terms of reference for that Panel therefore need to be updated.

Cabinet Panels: (Environment; Community Engagement, Enterprise and Co-operative Development; Housing, Strategic Planning and Transport)

- 7.4. Three Cabinet Panels were established in 2019/20; in 2019 Environment and the other two in 2020 as part of the Constitutional review. Some amendments were made to the terms of reference by Cabinet in June 2020.
- 7.5. Post-election in May 2021, the Administration has expressed a desire to revisit the terms of reference.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

Grants Policy

- 8.1 The revised criteria has allowed for a wider range of organisations to apply for a community grant in the last year. It is anticipated that when the impact of the pandemic has subsided that other groups will apply for funding in future years.
- 8.2 It is proposed that the two amendments are made to the current criteria. The amendments are to clarify the conditions under which the Council consider Area Committee funding. Currently Section 2 Eligibility Criteria states at paragraph F, that organisations should “*be able to demonstrate financial need and that other sources and options for funding have been considered*”. It is proposed that this is amended to the following – “***be able to demonstrate financial need and that other sources and options for funding have been considered and exhausted before application to the District Council***”. Some organisations are able to raise funds through precepts, levies or other fund-raising activities.
- 8.3 Paragraph G. states – “*be able to demonstrate the award of the grant provides additionality to the service provision of the organisation*”. It is proposed that this paragraph be amended to read – “***be able to demonstrate the award of the grant provides additionality to the service provision of the organisation (i.e. is innovative in nature and beyond the normal scope of organisation’s current activities)***”. This provides further clarity as when referring to ‘additionality’ to service provision.

NHDC/ HPB funding Protocol and amendment to the District wide Panel’s terms of reference:

- 8.4 As per Appendix B, the funding was provided to NHDC to distribute to community groups for specific HPB criteria (detailed as 6 & 7). The funding is to support organisations which were directly involved in service delivery to /prevention of the impact of Covid-19 on North Hertfordshire residents, but are now facing financial difficulties. The funding is to provide notional *retrospective* funding to support these organisations. The fund for these organisations will seek to ensure that they remain viable and sustainable as they deliver on-going support to residents affected by the pandemic. The HPB funding is therefore restricted, in that it will relate to the organisations rather than the projects that they provide. It is proposed that the Panel will consider these applications, which as detailed in the Protocol (to reflect the HPB requirements) will be applications that include e.g., a contribution to running costs such as rent, rates, insurance, PPE and other Covid-

19 compliant infrastructure. Specific amounts and costings must be provided for all of the above.

- 8.5 The amendments to the terms of reference for this Panel are set out as tracked changes in Appendix C.

Cabinet Panels:

- 8.6 The amendments to the terms of reference relate to the changing of name for two of the Panels, aligning Chair and Vice Chair to the revised portfolios and making it clear that stakeholders, or Members not on a Panel may be invited to present. These are set out in Appendices D,E & F, with the proposed names of 'Environment', 'Community' and 'Place'. All Members appointed to those previously named Panels would continue as Members of the newly named Panels as before.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Area Committees' have delegated Executive Grants functions under section 9E (2)(iv) but these may also be discharged by the Senior Executive Member as per (2)(a) and (ii) the Executive Member.

- 9.2 Section 9.1 of the constitution states that 'Area Committees must operate within Council policy and decisions must be consistent with the Budget and Policy framework and service specific policies.'

In order to promote close working with our communities there are five Area Committees which cover different geographical areas of the district. The Area Committees are given substantial powers and responsibilities, within the parameters of the policies set by the Council and Cabinet and as set out in the terms of reference, including the ability to consider and report to Cabinet and Council on any matter affecting their area. Area Committees must operate within Council policy and decisions must be consistent with the Budget and Policy framework and service specific policies.

- 9.3 Section 9.3 of the Constitution sets the delegations as the following – 'The Council and Cabinet will include details of the delegations to Area Committees. The delegations to Area Committees will include budgets for the purpose of providing grants and discretionary budgets that may be used within the area of the Committee for economic, social and environmental well-being.

Section 9.8 sets the Terms of Reference for the Area Committees as:

9.8.1 Policy - exercise of decisions by resolution - (in relation to the budgets)

- (a) To allocate discretionary budgets within the terms determined by the Council.
- (b) To allocate devolved budgets and activities within the terms determined by the Council.

- 9.4 9.8.2 and 14.6.8 (b) (iii) of the Constitution provide delegations to: 'The Executive Member for Community Engagement, having consulted the Chair or Vice Chair of the relevant Area Committee, or where no Chair or Vice Chair – the Members of the Area Committee by majority or those responding, or confirming via virtual means, and Service Director: Legal and Community; of on recommendation of Grants Panel'.

- 9.5 The Cabinet has Panels that are advisory to is and has remit to update their terms of reference.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the amendments to the grant criteria, and the Area Committee grants budget will remain at £42k in 2021/22. The amendments seek to make best use of council revenue by funding appropriate district voluntary and community sector organisations projects which increase local impact. In 2020/21 there was an additional £10k District-wide budget, which has now concluded.
- 10.2 During 2020/21, additional funding was made available from the Special Reserve to provide funding to community groups that were providing support in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Securing the additional £100k revenue funding from the Health Protection Board will replace the Special Reserve fund going forward. This additional pot of funding will seek to provide additional support whilst the impact of the pandemic is still being felt.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. There are no direct risk implications arising from the changes highlighted in the report. The recommendations seek to improve governance arrangements relating to grant funding and to maximise the opportunities for relevant grant processes to achieve their stated objectives.

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 For organisations to be compliant with both the current grant criteria they must demonstrate an open-door membership policy and provide services that are accessible to all. This does not preclude single-gender organisations from applying as long as they can demonstrate that they comply with the Equality Act 2010.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

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

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 There are no direct human resource implications relating to this report.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1 Appendix A – Grants Policy amended
- 16.2 Appendix B – NHDC/ HPB Funding Protocol
- 16.3 Appendix C - District Wide Community Facilities Capital & Revenue Grants Panel terms of reference amended.

- 16.4 Appendix D – Cabinet Panel Environment Panel terms of reference amended.
- 16.5 Appendix E - Community Engagement, Enterprise and Co-operative Development, as described 'Community' terms of reference as amended;
- 16.6 Appendix F - Housing, Strategic Planning and Transport, as described 'Place' terms of reference as amended.

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 17.1 None other than those indicated and linked in the documents and Appendices detailed.



Community Grants Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 North Hertfordshire District Council is committed to providing support to community groups and organisations working in the district to deliver services, build capacity and sustainability, and contribute positively to the achievement of the Council's priorities for the District.

The Council recognises the significant contribution made by the voluntary and community sector to deliver services and contribute positively to the achievement of the Council's priorities for the District.

The Council's Area Committees will seek to establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations operating specifically within their area including, where appropriate, the provision of grant aid / financial support etc.

1.2 Any provision of grant funding will seek to support activities that are 'open to all' and do not exclude any specific group of people.

1.3 North Hertfordshire District Council will not authorise the award of a grant which goes against the Council's policies or seeks to reverse a previous decision.

1.4 This document sets out the terms and conditions under which funding applications to the council should be made, the criteria for the award, and the context in which applications will be considered.

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

2.1. **Applications will be accepted from organisations that are:**

A. Volunteer led or operated on a not-for-profit basis, such as, but not limited to:

- Registered Charities (*that have a charity number*)
- Un-registered Charities (with income under £5000), Constituted Groups or Clubs (*e.g. including children, youth and the elderly, etc*) -
- Community Interest Companies (CIC) or Community Interest Organisations (CIO)
- Schools / Academies (*providing the activity is beyond their statutory responsibilities*)
- Social Enterprises
- Sports Clubs
- Resident Groups / Clubs
- Faith based organisations (*where they are including the wider community*)
- Business Groups and Organisations, including Business Improvement Districts (*on condition that the funding is for something that provides Additionality*)
- Parish, Town and Community Councils (*on condition that the funding is for something that provides Additionality*)

- B. Be for the benefit of residents of North Hertfordshire.
- C. Be able to demonstrate financial viability by providing details of income and expenditure and, where relevant, demonstrate compliance with previous grant conditions.
- D. Have an open-door membership policy and provide services that are accessible to all. This does not preclude single gender organisations from applying as long as they can demonstrate that they comply with the Equality Act 2010.
- E. Either be formally constituted or demonstrate a good governance structure, including a Management Committee or Board of Trustees that are not all immediately related.
- F. Be able to demonstrate financial need and that other sources and options for funding have been considered and exhausted before application to the district council.¹
- G. Be able to demonstrate the award of the grant provides Additionality to the service provision of the organisation (i.e. is innovative in nature and beyond the normal scope of organisation's current activities).²

2.2 **In the case of projects that involve work on a building or outdoor space, the group or organisation must:**

- *Own the freehold of the land or building, or have a lease which cannot be brought to an end by the landlord for at least five years after the work has been completed.*
- *Have the relevant permissions/ licences in place (e.g. planning consent).*

2.3 **In the case of projects that involve working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, the group or organisation must:**

- *Have a safeguarding policy.*
- *Have completed DBS checks as appropriate.*
- *Have undertaken safeguarding training as necessary.*

¹ Amended Cabinet July 2021.

² Amended Cabinet July 2021.

3. **FUNDING INFORMATION**

3.1. The Council may support and provide financial assistance as outlined below:

ELIGIBLE for funding	NOT ELIGIBLE for funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activities• Events• Equipment• Publicity and Publications• Repairs and Maintenance• Site and Building works• Training/Workshops• Travel and Transport (not overseas)• Venue Hire• Refreshments (not alcohol)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retrospective funding e.g. for items already purchased or events that have already happened.• Goods and Services already received or paid for• Purchase of Alcohol• A service that the state is obligated to provide.• Charitable donations.• Contingency cost, loans, endowments or interest.• Land or building where ownership (freehold or eligible lease) is not yet established.• Political or religious activities.• Purchase of items on behalf of another• Recoverable VAT

4. **APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCESS**

- 4.1. All requests for funding must be submitted on the council's Community Grant application form along with all the required supporting documentation.
- 4.2. The form is available as a Microsoft Word file downloadable from the Council's website. *(Wherever possible this should be completed and returned electronically in Microsoft Word.)*
- 4.3. Community Grant applications are considered at the relevant Committee/Panel and a listing of application deadlines is published on the Council's website.
- 4.4. District wide Community Grant applications may be considered by a District- wide panel. The panel will meet at least twice a year, and once in July of each civic year, after Cabinet have approved any revenue carry-forwards from the Area Committees and another date to be agreed. *
- 4.5. You can find the Community Grant application forms at <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/community/grants/area-committee-grants>

5. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- 5.1. All applications for grant funding will be carefully assessed to ensure that funding is allocated to projects or activities and areas that will have the most beneficial impact on the residents of North Hertfordshire
- 5.2. The assessment process will use three main criteria:

A. Feasibility Assessment	B. Priority Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will the funding benefit residents of North Hertfordshire?• Will it be spent within 12 months from receiving the funding)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the project fulfil a need for the local community?
	C. Economic Assessment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does it provide good value for the money?• Is the applicant financially viable?

- 5.3. **Other areas for consideration, which may strengthen an application:**
- Partnership with other groups involved in this type of work.
 - Efforts to seek additional joint funding from other sources
 - If the organisation has not applied to NHDC in the past or for a long period of time

6. TERMS OF THE AWARD

- 6.1. Grant monies awarded must only be spent on activities as described in the application, within one year of the decision.
- 6.2. The Council will require details of how the grant was spent, and the provision of receipts, within one year of the decision.
- 6.3. Grant recipients may be requested to report back to the relevant committee / panel either by presentation or writing.
- 6.4. Any unspent funds must be returned to the Council.
- 6.5. Details later proved to be incorrect may prejudice a subsequent application and could result in a requirement to repay any funding awarded.

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NHDC / Health Protection Board Funding Protocol

Background

North Hertfordshire District Council put in a bid for Health Protection Board ('HPB') funding (allocated via Hertfordshire County Council) as part of a joint bid for community group funding and were successful in securing £100,000 to be used by March 2022 under the following two of the HPB criteria:

- Targeted interventions for specific sections of the local community and workplaces
- Harnessing capacity within local sectors (e.g. voluntary, academic, commercial)

The £100,000 has been provided to NHDC to provide a fund for local Community and Voluntary organisations to ensure they remain viable and sustainable whilst delivering support to residents who have been and continue to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Community organisations have offered key services such as food deliveries, befriending services, and mental health support through the pandemic, as demand for these services arose. This increase in demand has led to higher running costs, while organisations are also unable to carry out their usual fundraising activities. Such organisations are therefore facing financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic.

Evidence from existing Community Grants Scheme, Herts Community Foundation, and key partners shows that many VCS organisations are at threat of closure as they are unable to cover rents and property costs, while other organisations are reporting concerns that they will be unable to open again and deliver services as they cannot afford the infrastructure to make their services or venues COVID-19 compliant. With a reduced VCS service, statutory organisations will become overwhelmed with requests for support, and residents will suffer as a result.

This grant fund will therefore aid the continued operation of such groups, helping prevent redundancies or total closure, and subsequently will enable residents' physical and mental health to continue to be supported. The groups will potentially be able to access the funding, as per the HPB bid as per the examples detailed below.

Criteria and Award

Funding must be used under the following criteria

6. Targeted interventions for specific sections of the local community and workplaces; and/ or
7. Harnessing capacity within local sectors (e.g. voluntary, academic, commercial).

Examples of what organisations can apply for funding for include rent, property costs, insurance, PPE and other COVID-19 compliant infrastructure required to continue to provide their services. For example, this may cover 3/6 months' rent up until March 2022.

Applicants should be able to provide evidence that their service or operation benefits residents of North Hertfordshire, and must have either charitable, voluntary, or not-for-profit status.

Applicants will be considered under the Council's existing Community Grants criteria, available here under 2.1: [CLICK HERE Community Grants Policy](#)

The District Wide Community Facilities Capital & Revenue Grants Panel ('the Panel') will be convened to ensure a robust and impartial assessment of each application and evidence of how the applicant has been supporting the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

(Central Government set out in the 'Coronavirus: Action Plan'¹ four stages of the plan to respond to Covid 19. These are 1. Contain, 2. Delay, 3. Research and 4. Mitigate). The funding is to support organisations which have been and continue to be directly involved in supporting residents who have been impacted by Covid-19 pandemic, but which are now facing financial difficulties.

The Panel will, following these deliberations make recommendations on any awards to the Executive Member for Community Engagement, who will consider such recommendations under relevant delegations in consultation with the Service Director: Legal and Community.

Background documents (relevant to the Protocol)

Community Grants Policy (specifically sections 2.1 Applicants and 4 process).

Grant Funding Agreement

Application form

District Wide Community Facilities Capital & Revenue Grants Panel Terms of Reference

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan/coronavirus-action-plan-a-guide-to-what-you-can-expect-across-the-uk>

THE DISTRICT WIDE COMMUNITY FACILITIES CAPITAL & REVENUE GRANTS PANEL

MEMBERSHIP

1. The Panel shall comprise ten Members.
2. The Panel shall be politically balanced:
3. Two members will be drawn from each of the five areas.
4. The quorum shall be three.
5. Appointments will be made by the Council at its Annual Meeting or at other times, under delegated responsibility, by the Democratic Services Manager in consultation with Group Leaders.
6. The Panel will appoint its own Chairman.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To comment on and act as an advisory panel to the Executive Member for Community Engagement, in approving grants in consultation with the Service Director Legal and Community made under the Community Facilities Capital Grant Funding Scheme and district wide community revenue grants.
- ~~2. To comment on grant applications in accordance with the criteria for the Community Facilities Capital Grant Funding Scheme and District Wide grants in accordance with the community grant policy.~~
3. To comment on and act as an advisory Panel to the Executive Member for Community Engagement, in approving grants in consultation with the Service Director Legal and Community made under the NHDC/ Health Protection Board Funding Protocol.

ADMINISTRATION

1. Meetings will be called as necessary by the Policy & Community Engagement Manager.
4. Administrative support will be provided by the Communities Engagement Team Leader.

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MEMBERSHIP

1. The Panel shall comprise of nine (9) Members.
2. The Panel shall be politically balanced.
3. The quorum shall be three (3).
4. Appointment by Full Council at its Annual Meeting or at other times, under delegated responsibility, by the Democratic Services Manager in consultation with Group Leaders.
5. Substitutes to be allowed, as per the Council's Procedure Rules.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Panel's Terms of Reference are to consider a range of climate, and environmental issues and in particular to:

1. Engage with individuals and the community, act as a sounding board on community ideas and projects and seek evidence and views as appropriate;
2. Consider a range of views on issues relating to climate change (both mitigation of and adaption to) and environmental matters;
3. Help and where appropriate maintain any links with relevant external (public, research and industrial) bodies;
4. Consider any relevant government or agency consultations and advise Cabinet or the relevant Executive Member and Service Director of a proposed response;
5. Contribute towards the review of the Climate Change Strategy;
6. Act as an advisory Panel to Cabinet in relation to the above.

The Leader and Deputy Leader, together with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and relevant officers will agree a work programme for the Panels to ensure that there is not duplication with the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or its Task and Finish Groups, ensuring the Panels and the Committee use their time to positively benefit the Council and our communities.

PROCEDURE & ADMINISTRATION

1. The Panel is advisory and has no decision making powers. It is therefore the intention that the Panel meetings, style and tone are informal and that the community and any person or body are welcomed and enabled to participate.
2. The Panel shall be Chaired by the Executive Member for Environment, Leisure & Green Spaces, and Recycling and Waste alternatively, or in the event of the absence of the other, by the attending Executive Member (or by such Chair(s) as appointed at the Annual Council in the event of portfolio change).
3. The Panels may invite relevant stakeholders to present and support their work, which includes other Executive Members or Deputies.
4. The Panel shall aim to meet approximately 6 times per year, once before each Cabinet cycle.
5. Any recommendation of the Panel shall, in so far as possible, be by consensus. Where voting is necessary, then the normal Council voting procedures will apply.
6. Administrative support will be organised by the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Team.

7. Officer support shall be provided by the Policy officer(s) from Policy and Community Engagement and where relevant other Directorate officers, as requested by the Panel.

CABINET PANEL ON COMMUNITY

MEMBERSHIP

1. The Panel shall comprise of nine (9) Members.
2. The Panel shall be politically balanced.
3. The quorum shall be three (3).
4. Appointment by Full Council at its Annual Meeting or at other times, under delegated responsibility, by the Democratic Services Manager in consultation with Group Leaders.
5. Substitutes to be allowed, as per the Council's Procedure Rules.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Panel's Terms of Reference are to consider a range of community engagement, arts and leisure issues and in particular to:

1. Engage with individuals and the community, act as a sounding board on community ideas and projects and seek evidence and views as appropriate;
2. Consider a range of views on issues relating to community engagement, arts and leisure matters;
3. Help and where appropriate maintain any links with relevant external (public, research, professional/trade, commercial and industrial) bodies;
4. Act as an advisory Panel to Cabinet in relation to the above.

The Leader and Deputy Leader, together with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and relevant officers will agree a work programme for the Panels to ensure that there is not duplication with the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or its Task and Finish Groups, ensuring the Panels and the Committee use their time to positively benefit the Council and our communities.

PROCEDURE & ADMINISTRATION

1. The Panel is advisory and has no decision making powers. It is therefore the intention that the Panel meetings, style and tone are informal and that the community and any person or body are welcomed and enabled to participate.
2. The Panel shall be Chaired by the Executive Member for Enterprise, the Arts and Transport, or Community Engagement on a meeting by meeting basis (or by such Chair(s) as appointed at the Annual Council in the event of portfolio change).
3. The Panels may invite relevant stakeholders to present and support their work, which includes other Executive Members or Deputies.
4. The Panel shall aim to meet approximately 6 times per year, once before each Cabinet cycle.
5. Any recommendation of the Panel shall, in so far as possible, be by consensus. Where voting is necessary, then the normal Council voting procedures will apply.
6. Administrative support will be organised by the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Team.
7. Officer support shall be provided by the most relevant Directorate for the subject of the meeting and where relevant other Directorate officers, as requested by the Panel.

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CABINET PANEL ON PLACE

MEMBERSHIP

1. The Panel shall comprise of nine (9) Members.
2. The Panel shall be politically balanced.
3. The quorum shall be three (3).
4. Appointment by Full Council at its Annual Meeting or at other times, under delegated responsibility, by the Democratic Services Manager in consultation with Group Leaders.
5. Substitutes to be allowed, as per the Council's Procedure Rules.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Panel's Terms of Reference are to consider a range of Housing, Strategic Planning, Transport, and economic development issues and in particular to:

1. Engage with individuals and the community, act as a sounding board on community ideas and projects and seek evidence and views as appropriate;
2. Consider a range of views on issues relating to new Housing, Strategic Planning, Transport and economic development matters²;
3. Help and where appropriate maintain any links with relevant external (public, research and industrial) bodies;
4. Act as an advisory Panel to Cabinet in relation to the above.

The Leader and Deputy Leader, together with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and relevant officers will agree a work programme for the Panels to ensure that there is no duplication with the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or its Task and Finish Groups, ensuring the Panels and the Committee use their time to positively benefit the Council and our communities.

PROCEDURE & ADMINISTRATION

1. The Panel is advisory and has no decision making powers. It is therefore the intention that the Panel meetings, style and tone are informal and that the community and any person or body are welcomed and enabled to participate.
2. The Panel shall be Chaired by the Executive Member for Enterprise, The Arts, and Transport, or Housing and Environmental Health on a meeting by meeting basis (or by such Chair(s) as appointed at the Annual Council in the event of portfolio change).
3. The Panels may invite relevant stakeholders to present and support their work, which includes other Executive Members or Deputies.
4. The Panel shall aim to meet approximately 6 times per year, once before each Cabinet cycle.
5. Any recommendation of the Panel shall, in so far as possible, be by consensus. Where voting is necessary, then the normal Council voting procedures will apply.
6. Administrative support will be organised by the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Team.
7. Officer support shall be provided by the Regulatory Directorate and where relevant other Directorate officers, as requested by the Panel.

² The Panel will not substitute or duplicate the ongoing Local Plan process or consider planning/ development control matters.

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
13 JULY 2021

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: Full Year Update on Comments, Compliments and Complaints (3C's)

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COUNCILLOR ELIZABETH DENNIS-HARBURG

PRIORITY: RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This information note is to provide an update on the full year (2020/21) performance regarding the Comments, Compliments and Complaints (3C's) for the Council and the Contractors that provide services on the Council's behalf. This briefing note accompanies the 3C's dashboard at Appendix A, the breakdown of 3C's by service and type at Appendix B, and the Social Media report at Appendix C.

2. STEPS TO DATE

2.1 The Council has a well embedded policy and procedures for handling customer feedback; the Comments, Compliments and Complaints (3C's) Policy. We welcome feedback from our customers about our services so that we can continue to learn about how we can make improvements and what we do well.

2.2 The 3C's policy sets out clearly the definition of a comment, compliment and complaint as well as how to escalate a complaint either to stage 2 of the process or the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). Customers can give feedback in a number of ways and can do this directly to the Council or to the contractors who provide key services on our behalf.

3. INFORMATION TO NOTE

3.1 The areas that generally receive the highest amount of feedback are, those where there is the highest level of contact or interactions from residents such as the waste and recycling service and the leisure facilities.

3.2 During 2020/21 the number of 3C's received, specifically comments and complaints, decreased compared to the previous year, whilst compliments increased.

3.3 The number of complaints received decreased from 764 in 2019/20 to 527 in 2020/21. This includes complaints received directly at NHDC and by our contractors. Of the total 527 complaints, 302 (57%) relate to services delivered by our key contractors, including waste and recycling (266) and the leisure centres (33). It is also worth noting that out of the 452 compliments received, 216 (48%) relate to the same contractors – waste and recycling (143) and the leisure centres (73).

- 3.4 During the pandemic, the Council has been able to run services as normal with minimal disruption. The Customer Service Centre (CSC) has been closed, but all staff were set up to work from home in March 20. An intercom was implemented at the front door of the DCO. The intercom has a sim card which routes through to the CSC so officers could continue to speak to customers who arrived at the DCO. As a result, there have been no complaints about being closed, as customers have found alternative ways to access the services they require.
- 3.5 The percentage of complaints resolved within 10 days has improved again and hit the target of 80%, compared to the same period last year.
- 3.6 The summary dashboard at Appendix A shows annual comparisons of both 3C's received directly at NHDC and 3C's received by our contractors. The dashboard also details the percentage of interactions resulting in a formal complaint.
- 3.7 Appendix B provides a breakdown of all 3C's received by service and type. The areas of highest complaints reported directly were Waste Management (105) and Planning Control & Conservation (48).

Specific areas of waste complaints were:

- customers who had paid for the garden waste service but the crew had conflicting information and therefore bins not emptied (9)
- bins not being returned to their collection point (9)
- customers saying they had not been advised of the garden waste renewal date (8).

Some specific areas of Planning Control complaints were:

- customers who were unhappy with a planning decision (18)
- customers who were dissatisfied with the handling of their application (10)

- 3.8 It is worth noting that although Waste Management received the highest number of complaints, this has decreased by 36% compared to the previous year. (163 in 19/20, compared to 105 in 20/21).
- 3.9 Whilst Waste Management did receive the highest amount of complaints, they also received the second highest number of compliments (35). Some specific compliments were thanking crew for their service throughout the pandemic and for their efficient service.
- 3.10 Urbaser recorded a high number of comments (410). A number of these comments – defined as feedback or a suggestion which is general in nature - could be defined as 'service requests'. Discussions will be held with Waste Management to explore whether these comments should be recorded in this way.
- 3.11 There was a large reduction of 3C's received by the leisure centres, because of their closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic. They were closed between April-June 2020 and January-March 2021. The touch screen feedback machines were also turned off due to the restrictions.
- 3.12 Some specific complaints in respect of the leisure centres were:
- regarding a combat class being interrupted by a badminton player complaining the class was too loud; the combat class users then complained about this and that the person was not socially distancing (6)
 - customers unable to use the app to book swim sessions (3)

- too many people in the female changing rooms (2)

Some comments were regarding customers asking for more evening yoga classes, more fitness classes, and advising the spin bikes may need a service.

- 3.13 The Careline service received an increase of compliments (97) compared to the previous period (72); these are generally submitted by a client’s family following an incident where the Careline staff had provided an emergency response service.
- 3.14 There were 26 stage 2 complaints during 2020/21.
- 3.15 If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the complaint outcome after completing our process, they may escalate their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). Complaints escalated to the LGO will usually have exhausted our internal complaints process.
- 3.16 The LGO resolved eight complaints during this period across a range of service areas.

In March 2020, the LGO paused their investigations of existing complaints and the receiving of new ones, recognising that Councils were diverting resources in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The LGO began to receive new complaints again from the 29th June.

The table below summarises the LGO decisions on those eight complaints:

Service (as classified by the LGO)	LGO Decision
Planning & Development	Upheld: Maladministration and injustice – no further action
Corporate & Other Services	Closed after initial enquiries – out of jurisdiction
Planning & Development	Closed after initial enquiries – out of jurisdiction
Planning & Development	Not investigating – recommended to be put to Stage 2 complaint
Planning & Development	Closed after initial enquiries – no further action
Housing	Not upheld – no maladministration
Environmental Services & Public Protection Regulation	Closed after initial enquiries – no further action
Planning & Development	Not upheld – no maladministration

- 3.17 The Planning & Development complaint which was upheld was in relation to a delay in issuing notification letters, which meant that residents only had four days to comment on the application. The Council accepted this error as this was four days after the 56-day statutory determination period was due to expire. The LGO said the Council had already accepted there was fault in the way the application was considered. It set a deadline for representations that was beyond the statutory deadline for determination. This meant the Council was not able to fully consult the local highway authority on the proposals. It also meant that whilst the Council received the objections from the resident, it was unable to use them to consider whether the application should be refused or whether any conditions should be set, as the development had to be allowed without conditions. The council said it would have nonetheless approved the application with conditions. The Council apologised and the LGO was satisfied this was a sufficient and proportionate remedy.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 3C's performance will continue to be monitored and reported to this Committee on a six-monthly basis.
- 4.2 The Customer Service Manager will continue to keep up to date with guidance and case studies from the LGO, sharing any key learning.

5. APPENDICES

- 5.1 Appendix A – Dashboard
- 5.2 Appendix B - Breakdown by service area
- 5.3 Appendix C – Social Media report

6. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 6.1 Chris Jeffery
Interim Customer Service Manager
Chris.Jeffery@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474505
- 6.2 Jo Dufficy
Service Director - Customers
Johanne.Dufficy@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474555
- 6.3 Sarah Kingsley
Communications Manager
Sarah.kingsley@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474552

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

3C's Performance Summary - 01 April 2020 – 31 March 2021

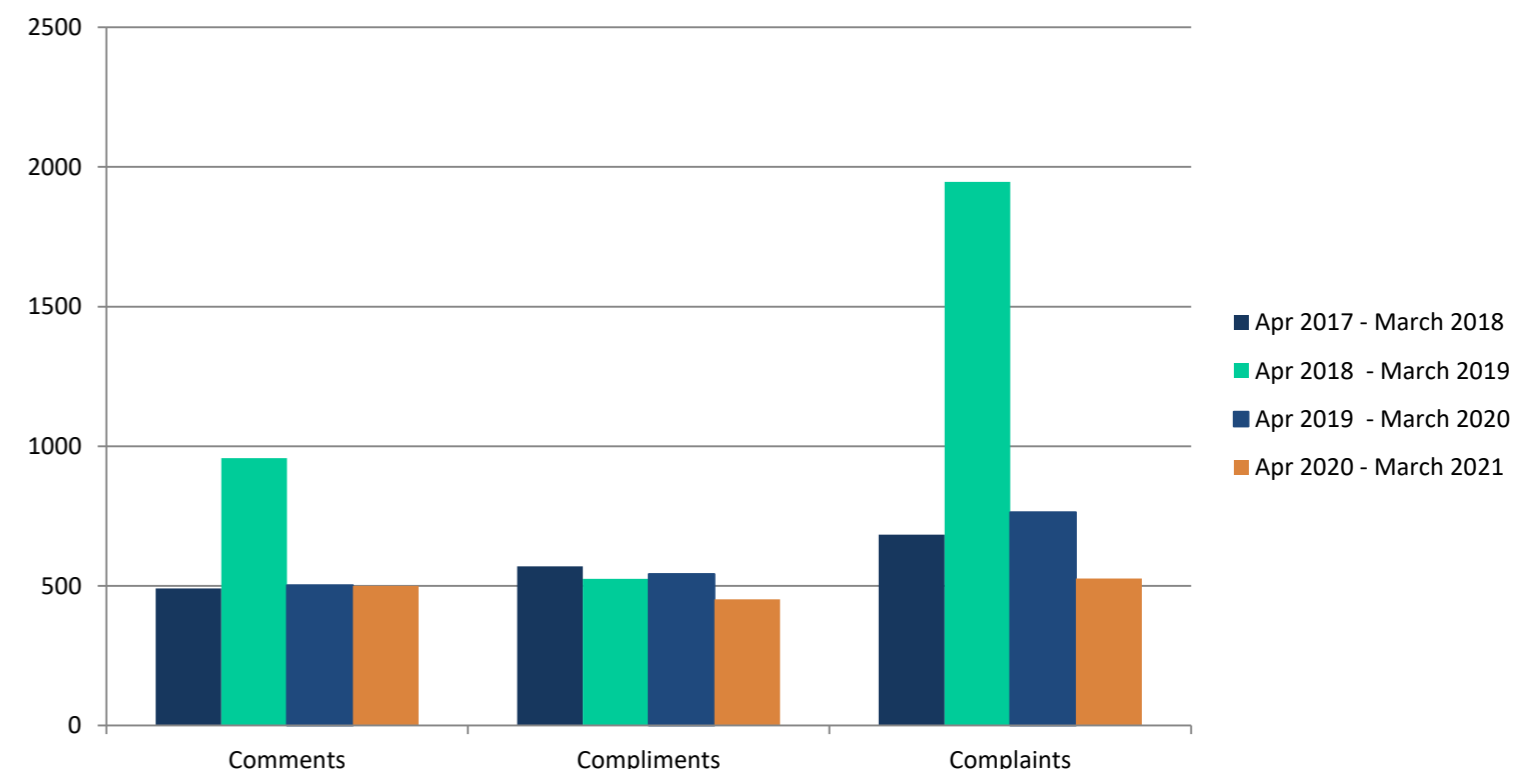


3C'S RECEIVED DIRECTLY AT NHDC – ANNUAL COMPARISONS

	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
Number of Comments received	229	198	43	19
Number of compliments received	150	168	168	236
Number of complaints received	169	941	304	225
% resolved within 10 working days	56%	48%	74%	80%
% of complaints justified	36%	62%	55%	46%
Complaints received by the LGO	9	10	11	8

Page 77

3C's annual comparisons - Combined totals NHDC & Contractors



3C's RECEIVED BY OUR CONTRACTORS – ANNUAL COMPARISONS

	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
	Complaints				Compliments			
John O'Conner	13	15	10	3	0	1	0	0
Urbaser	265	748	177	266	52	21	45	143
North Herts Leisure Centre	157	98	120	13	198	167	144	22
Hitchin Swim Centre & Archers	48	101	115	10	106	110	115	33
Royston Leisure Centre	34	44	38	10	65	58	71	18

Percentage of interactions resulting in a formal complaint

	Number of interactions / collections / visitors	% of interactions/collections/visitors resulting in complaint
NHDC	162,119 interactions	0.325%
Urbaser	7.1m collections	0.374%
North Herts Leisure Centre	81,110 visitors	0.160%
Hitchin Swim Centre & Archers	54,980 visitors	0.181%
Royston Leisure Centre	59,962 visitors	0.166%

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Breakdown of 3C's by service area – 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

Managing Director	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
Communications	1	0	2
Resource	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
Property Services	0	1	0
Regulatory	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
Environmental Health – Protection	0	5	6
Environmental Health - Commercial	0	2	2
Housing Needs	0	10	11
Private Sector Housing	0	4	3
Parking Services	0	3	6
Planning Control & Conservation	0	9	48
Planning Policy	1	1	1
Building Control	0	0	1
Place	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
Leisure	0	2	1
Parks & Open Spaces / Green Space	2	24	6
Waste Management	12	35	105
Customers	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
Benefits	0	6	10
Careline	0	97	6
Customer Service Centre	1	10	2
MSU Post & Administration	0	7	1
IT	0	1	1
Revenues Billing and Recovery	0	7	10
Revenues Technical	1	0	0
Legal & Community	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
Community Engagement	0	1	0
Community Safety	0	1	1
Enforcement / Enviro Crime	0	8	0
Licensing	0	1	0
Commercial	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
Town Hall & Hitchin Museum	1	0	1
Markets	0	1	1
Totals	19	236	225
Contractor Data	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
Waste (Urbaser)	410	143	266
Grounds (John O'Connor)	0	0	3
North Herts Leisure Centre	11	22	13
Hitchin Swim Centre	30	33	10
Royston Leisure	30	18	10
Contractor Totals	481	216	302
Combined Totals	500	452	527

Social media key points - Report by Sarah Kingsley (Communications Manager) & Rosy Vega (Digital Media & Engagement Officer)

April 2020 – March 2021 vs April 2019 – March 2020


- This year, our Facebook fans have **increased by 1.6k** (45%), bringing our total number of fans to 5.1k. Our Twitter followers have **increased by 617** bringing our total followers to 12k.
- This year, we had the most engagement and organic reach through our Facebook posts. Our most popular post with the highest organic reach was in May about food and garden waste collections resuming. The post reached 58,560 people. In total, **our Facebook posts have reached 2.6 million people** this year which is **up by 786k** from last year.
- Engagement on Twitter increased this year by 934 with a **total of 5.4k engagements**. Our most popular tweet which gained the most likes and retweets was in May about food and garden waste collections resuming. The post had over **50 likes and 27 retweets**.
- Compared to the previous year, our direct messages on both Twitter and Facebook have **decreased**. This could be as a result of the pandemic and more people staying home or it could suggest we have received less complaints via direct messages.
- On both Twitter and Facebook the most popular inbound message topics this year (all Facebook comments, Twitter mentions and direct messages) are **coronavirus, waste & HCC**.
- This year we shared broadly the same number of posts on Twitter (1.4K) but a larger number on Facebook compared to last year - 1.3k in 2020-21 versus 1.1k in 2019-20. Our overall **engagement is higher** suggesting our messages were successfully reaching more residents. Having a larger network of fans and followers helps increase our reach, which should also increase engagement.
- Our Instagram channel is becoming more popular – this year, our followers **increased by 453 (37%)**. We are posting regular content on our Instagram feed and utilising the ‘stories’ feature to share key information. Our most popular post on Instagram this year with the highest number of likes was an image of Letchworth Outdoor pool announcing that it will be reopening with **133 likes**.
- Other Facebook posts that performed well over the last year and therefore helped deliver key messages to our residents included a coronavirus video about how to help slow the spread of the virus which gained **over 213 shares** and a post about leisure centres, playgrounds and splash parks reopening with **108 shares**.


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Social Media Report

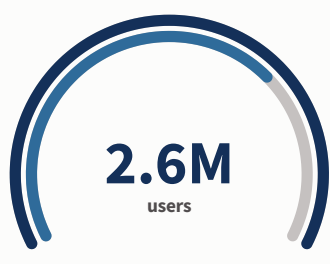
Comparison between **Apr 01, 2020 - Mar 31, 2021** and **Apr 01, 2019 - Mar 31, 2020**

 @NorthHertsDC

 northhertsdc

 North Hertfordshire District Council



<p>Received PMs</p> <p>858 PMs</p> <p>↘ 204 from 1.1K</p>	<p>Received DMs</p> <p>591 DMs</p> <p>↘ 24 from 615</p>	<p>Inbound Messages</p> <p>3.1K messages</p> <p>↘ 349 from 3.4K</p>																
<p>Post Organic Reach</p>  <p>2.6M users</p> <p>↗ 786K from 1.8M</p>	<p>Mentions</p> <p>2.5K mentions</p> <p>↘ 325 from 2.8K</p>	<p>Inbound Messages > Topics</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Council 21.14%</td> <td>bins 10.46%</td> <td>open 9.26%</td> <td>collected 8.65%</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Hertfordshire 8.11%</td> <td>garden 7.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>waste 10.13%</td> <td>North 7.83%</td> <td>Letchworth 5.91%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>park 11.01%</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Council 21.14%	bins 10.46%	open 9.26%	collected 8.65%			Hertfordshire 8.11%	garden 7.5%		waste 10.13%	North 7.83%	Letchworth 5.91%	park 11.01%			
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