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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



21 January 2022 Our Ref Cabinet Panel on Community/31 Jan 2022

Contact. Committee Services Direct Dial. (01462) 474655

Email. committee.services@north-herts.gov.uk

To: Members of the Committee: Councillors Judi Billing (Co-Chair), Sam Collins (Co-Chair), Ian Albert, Daniel Allen, Ruth Brown, Sarah Dingley, Jean Green, Tony Hunter and Mandi Tandi

Substitutes: Councillors Juan Cowell, Mike Hughson, Michael Muir, Lisa Nash and Terry Tyler

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

MEETING OF THE CABINET PANEL ON COMMUNITY

to be held as a

VIRTUAL MEETING

On

MONDAY, 31ST JANUARY, 2022 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 <u>Part I</u>

Item Page

1. 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 due notice will not be able to take part in the meeting.

2. MINUTES - 30 SEPTEMBER 2021, 8 NOVEMBER 2021

(Pages 5 - 16)

To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on the 30 September 2021 and 8 November 2021.

3. 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.

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. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive any petitions, comments and questions from the public including:

- Jim McNally, Baldock Big Lunch Committee
- Claire Murphy, Baldock Big Lunch Committee
- Tom Hardy, Hitchin BID Manager

6. INFORMATION NOTE AND GROUP DISCUSSION

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - COMMERCIAL

(Pages 17 - 18)

To consider the Information Note entitled 'Community Events Throughout 2022'.

7. MEMBERS' DISCUSSION

The Chair to lead a Members' discussion on potential actions arising from the Group Discussion.

8. ACTIONS ARISING AND WORK PROGRAMME

To record any actions arising from the Group Discussion for inclusion in the Panel's Work Programme for 2021/22.



Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET PANEL ON COMMUNITY

MEETING HELD IN THE VIRTUAL MEETING ON THURSDAY, 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2021 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: Councillors: Judi Billing, Sam Collins, Ruth Brown, Sarah Dingley,

Jean Green, Tony Hunter and Mandi Tandi

In Attendance: Steve Crowley (Service Director - Commercial), Claire Morgan

(Community Engagement Team Leader), Danny Pearson (Assistant Community Engagement Officer), Anna Gouveia (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer) and James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and

Scrutiny Officer)

Also Present: At the commencement of the meeting approximately 9 members of the

public, including registered speakers.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 4 minutes 7 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Daniel Allen, Kay Tart and Ian Albert.

2 MINUTES - 19 JULY 2021

Audio Recording – 4 minutes 24 seconds

Councillor Sam Collins proposed, Councillor Judi Billing seconded, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet Panel held on 19 July 2021 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording - 5 minutes 21 seconds

- (1) The Chair welcomed those present at the meeting, especially those who had attended to give a presentation and the young people in attendance. He explained that the focus of the meeting would be how North Herts Council might better engage with young people.
- (2) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded as well as filmed. The audio recording would be available on the Council's website and the film recording via the Council's YouTube channel;
- (3) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.

4 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 6 minutes 16 seconds

There was no other business notified.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - HERTFORDSHIRE SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Audio recording – 6 minutes 20 seconds

Ms Laura Butcher, Youth Work Practice Manager, Hertfordshire Services for Young People, gave a PowerPoint presentation on services and support for young people in North Herts.

She drew attention to the following:

- Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) provided information, advice and careers guidance to young people;
- Resources were prioritised towards targeted prevention and early intervention work to support young people into a successful transition to adulthood;
- There were 10 access points in the County, one of which was in Letchworth:
- The Council had trained youth workers, personal advisors and employment training advisors working in the community, schools and colleges across the County;
- Projects and initiatives included the Youth Council, Wellbeing Project, Street Based Project, LGBT+ Group and Young Parents Group;
- Several other programmes were also delivered, some targeted at young people at risk of sexual and criminal exploitation, others to help young people into work and others supporting mental health;
- Youth engagement was done on a voluntary basis with an emphasis on listening to the young person's wishes and feelings;
- Projects were co-produced with young people and surveys and engagement activities were regularly undertaken;
- Youth Strategy Partnership Group meetings were held quarterly with key stakeholders to look at emerging needs and trends of issues affecting young people who were also invited to participate;
- North Herts Youth Council met once a week to discuss local issues and concerns and engage with the Youth Strategy Partnership Group;
- Current focus was on increasing Youth Council engagement with more diverse groups, increasing engagement on the Youth Strategy Partnership Action Plan, and looking at issues of body image and the impact of Covid-19 on young people's wellbeing.

Charlie, North Herts Youth Council Chair and Lucy, North Herts Youth Council Secretary, gave a presentation about what the Youth Council had been doing recently in regard to body image. They drew attention to the following:

- Their research in schools had found that Covid 19 had impacted young people's body image in a negative way, social media was another factor;
- Some young people felt that there was not enough support in schools for people who were struggling with body image;
- The Youth Council was compiling a report on their findings which would be shared with the Youth Strategy Partnership Group and other relevant bodies to seek further support;
- It would also write to schools about what support they already had in place for students needing help;
- It would make recommendations on how young people could be supported and look at practical changes which could be made in the local community, e.g. publicising local services, identifying gaps and promoting positive body image through a social media campaign.

The Community Engagement Team Leader congratulated the Youth Council on their work around body image which she agreed was a key issue and looked forward to reading the report.

The following Councillors commented and asked questions:

- Councillor Judi Billing;
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg;
- Councillor Sam Collins;
- Councillor Sarah Dingley;
- Councillor Tony Hunter;
- Councillor Mandi Tandi;

Comments included:

- In the past it had been difficult for the Council to engage with young people in a fun way;
- Councillors were keen to support young people in the community;
- Some time could be made on the Council agendas to hear from the Youth Council;
- It was useful to engage with primary schools, to engage children at the earliest opportunity. Youth democracy events had also been fun in the past, and it would be good to re-start all these initiatives post-pandemic.

In response to questions, Ms Butcher advised that:

- The prevention and early intervention work recognised that all young people could be vulnerable at any stage so work was focused on addressing issues before they escalated in areas such as mental health, exploitation or gangs;
- HCC looked to deliver projects which were engaging, fun and not too formal;
- Ways for the Council and Youth Council to work together could be explored;
- The CBT programme was designed to be interactive and engaging.

Young people in attendance made the following comments and suggestions:

- Regular contact with the Council would be useful as the Youth Council felt a bit detached;
- North Herts Council could use Instagram and Snapchat more as opposed to Twitter and Facebook;
- It would be good to hear why Councillors had chosen to go into local government;
- Regular reporting from the Youth Council to the Council would be of benefit, to let Councillors know what the Youth Council was discussing and get some feedback;
- There were about 5 members of the Youth Council currently and they would like to expand their membership;
- The Youth Council would go away and look into the parents' role in regard to body image:
- A buddy system or mentorship programme would be appreciated.

The Chair thanked Ms Butcher, Charlie and Lucy for their presentation.

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - IMAJICA THEATRE COMPANY

Audio recording - 35 minutes 6 seconds

Ms Sam Hough and Ms Kim Black, Imajica Theatre Company, gave a presentation on their organisation and its activities.

They drew attention to the following:

- Imajica was a community-based children's theatre company which also worked with young people and adults;
- They had a new digital project called 'My Voice Will You Listen?', which would support
 young people aged 11-17 to create music videos using parodies of pop songs or making
 their own, using online methods to engage;
- The aim was to give young people a voice on the issues which affected them and support their wellbeing, connecting them with support in the community such as Councillors;
- It would be a four-month pilot project initially;
- Imajica also ran an 'Empowering Women' community project focusing on professional arts training and wellbeing, bringing women together. Covid had meant that the whole project had to be produced digitally. The project had been a success and was now being run for a second time 'in person'.

The Chair thanked Ms Hough and Ms Black for their presentation.

7 INFORMATION NOTE AND GROUP DISCUSSION

Audio recording – 43 minutes 10 seconds

The Chair led a discussion on how the Council might improve its engagement with young people.

The following Councillors asked questions and took part in debate:

- Councillor Sam Collins;
- Councillor Ruth Brown:
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg;
- Councillor Judi Billing.

Comments made included:

- The Council would like to help the Youth Council with recruiting more members, in particular boys who were currently under-represented on the Youth Council;
- Councillor Brown offered to meet with youth groups to talk about topics related to mental health and also re-start a mentoring scheme;
- It was suggested that the Executive Member for Community Development or the Leader
 of the Council could have a place on the Youth Strategy Partnership Group, or if this
 was not possible, could receive regular reports from them to keep communication lines
 open and facilitate working together;
- HCC could look at how to remove the stigma around attending youth groups being associated with needing support;
- Members of the Youth Council were welcome to speak to North Herts Council about how both groups could widen inclusivity and representation;
- Councillors would be going out into schools in October to engage with young people and talk about Local Democracy Week which had been taking place annually before the pandemic;
- Young people were invited to contact any of the Councillors present at the meeting on any matters contact details were on the website in the 'Councillors' section.

Young people in attendance made the following points:

 Support networks and groups such as the Youth Council could be better promoted in schools and around community groups to reach a wider audience;

- There was a stereotype of young people going to youth groups needing help. Online meeting groups could be an alternative;
- Informal youth groups and spaces to use for these would be helpful;
- It would be great to have some boys in the Youth Council to get their perspectives;
- Boy's mental health was highlighted as an extremely important issue;
- School visits from the Council were important, and also showing young people that Council could be fun (not just sitting around talking);
- Word of mouth, newsletters, advertisements, social media and communicating to parents were also good ways of getting the message out to young people;
- A Youth Council Instagram page might be more enticing than using the existing North Herts Council one which was more for adults;
- Youth Democracy events could be better advertised to reach more young people.

In response to questions, Ms Butcher advised:

- Young people could be referred or self-referred into HCC's youth projects;
- HCC was open to ideas on how to better promote its services and projects such as the Youth Council;
- HCC engaged with other youth groups across the County and was keen to link up with more such as School Councils.

8 MEMBERS' DISCUSSION

Audio recording – 1 hour 10 minutes 41 seconds

Members had no further comments to make regarding how Council could improve its engagement with young people.

9 ACTIONS ARISING AND WORK PROGRAMME

Audio recording – 1 hour 11 minutes 4 seconds

The Community Engagement Team Leader commented that:

- a number of really useful comments and suggestions had been made and would be taken forward:
- a key point from the discussion was that the Council needed to improve its communication with schools and parents, to get information out to young people North Herts could work with HCC on this.

RESOLVED: That the Community Engagement Team Leader be requested to update the Work Programme with the following action points arising from the evening's discussion:

- To consider ways that the North Herts Youth Council could be included in the Council's work e.g by inviting the members of the North Herts Youth Council to attend Full Council twice a year, and extending an invitation to attend Area Committee meetings should they wish;
- To request the Community Engagement Team to continue to look into developing contacts in schools to improve communication between North Herts Council and interested young people;
- To request the Community Engagement Team to look into promoting events such as the Youth Democracy event amongst a wider audience through, for example, school newsletters;
- To request the relevant Executive Member to work with the Communications Team to review the Council's current use of social media channels to ensure they are used to best effect.

• To request the Community Engagement Team to look into whether North Herts Council could provide meeting spaces for informal youth groups.

Audio Recording of Meeting

The meeting closed at 8.46 pm

Chair

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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET PANEL ON COMMUNITY

MEETING HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING ON MONDAY, 8TH NOVEMBER, 2021 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: Councillors: Judi Billing (Chair), Daniel Allen, Ruth Brown,

Sarah Dingley, Jean Green, Tony Hunter and Mandi Tandi

In Attendance: Steve Crowley (Service Director - Commercial), Chloe Gray (Commercial

Officer) and James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)

Also Present: At the commencement of the meeting Councillors Ian Albert and Claire

Strong, and approximately 5 members of the public, including registered

speakers.

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sam Collins and Kay Tart.

11 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1. The Chair welcomed those present at the meeting, especially those who had attended to give a presentation and join in the discussion. The focus of the meeting would be on how the Council might support towns and villages in the district with their recovery from Covid.
- 2. The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded as well as filmed. The audio recording would be available on the NHDC website and the film recording via the NHDC YouTube channel.
- 3. The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question

12 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business notified.

13 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair welcomed Paul Ward and Claire Graham from Knebworth Parish Council to give a presentation on the response to and impact of Covid in the parish, which included:

- Had been a garden village for around 130 years and much of the development over the years had centred around the station.
- The pavements in the village were already wide and social distancing requirements caused further issues with space on High Street and was having a negative impact on footfall in town.
- The Parish Council lobbied to have the imposed barriers removed from the High Street, as car parking was required to encourage people into the businesses.
- There had been changes in commuting patterns by residents in the village and this had a subsequent impact on the requirements for hospitality and personal services in the village.
- The Parish Council had worked to ensure the pub in Knebworth was saved and protected throughout the pandemic.

- Businesses altered their models and practices, which included embracing social media/online communications.
- Concerns that any reduction in parking and increase of change of use of sites could have a negative impact on village centre.
- A Neighbourhood Plan had been developed alongside NHDC to focus on how the village can cope and maximise the potential of development and expansion.
- Attempt to understand what the future changes will mean to Knebworth and its infrastructure.
- Possibilities of investments which develop and complement the existing village.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Mandi Tandi

In response to questions, Paul Ward advised:

- There was a good diversity of businesses in the village, ranging from small industrial to family owned shops.
- Businesses reported that additional broadband capacity would be helpful.
- Knebworth, with 2500 houses and population of over 4000, was becoming an oversized village and understanding the challenges of these developments was challenging. However, there was not a desire to see this develop into a town.
- The sites highlighted in the presentation for development were likely to go ahead and therefore it would be expected that some sensible decisions and investments would be made into the village from these.
- Where people can see positive outputs of developments, from Section 106 funds, they will be more accepting of these changes.

The Chair welcomed Graham Lee from Ashwell Parish Council to give a presentation on the response to and impact of Covid in the Parish, which included:

- Ashwell had a higher than regional average proportion of elderly residents, but there was a significant proportion of families with school aged children and working parents.
- Pre-Covid working aged residents generally commuted by train or car to work.
- There were 4 retailers, 3 pubs and several other services in the village and these saw only 25% of their turnover came from local households.
- During the pandemic there were issues with accessing NHS services, with face-to-face appointments suspended, and communication between the surgery and residents was poor.
- The pharmacy was able to offer flu jabs but could not offer the Covid vaccine due to stricter criteria.
- Working parents were having to juggle working from home and childcare the reopening of schools for key workers helped with this.
- Elderly people in the village were left isolated and while some attempt at Zoom events was made, it was not suitable for all residents.
- All pubs in the village suffered, but they were supported by furlough scheme and lockdown grants and were now opening and back to seemingly normal levels.
- Sports activities for children and adults were cancelled, which had an impact on both the user and the provider, with loss in rental income.
- Local shops did benefit at the initial outbreak of the pandemic, with local residents remaining local and developing their offer and opening times to reflect this. However, as retail opened more widely there was a return to bigger national chains.
- The pharmacy worked tirelessly throughout pandemic, offering advice and medical deliveries for vulnerable residents.

- Footpaths and byways in the village were used significantly during lockdown, which did see some negatives (e.g. litter).
- There was a return to the 'new normal', with more residents working from home and retailers going back to usual opening hours.
- The community had generally been accepting of behavioural changes from Covid, e.g. mask wearing, social distancing, etc.
- There was little evidence of sustained changes in business models.
- A full time Post Office in the village would be beneficial, as the existing one was currently part time.
- Broadband improvements would be helpful.

14 INFORMATION NOTE AND GROUP DISCUSSION

The Chair invited BID representatives to comment on their experiences in recovery in the Town Centres from the impact of Covid.

Tom Hardy, Hitchin BID Manager, advised:

- Ongoing discussions regarding the discretionary funding from government and how Hitchin could use these funds, but which would also have a positive impact on surrounding villages.
- Looking at which short- and long-term projects could be developed.
- Alongside NHDC, working on a tourism strategy within Hitchin, but this could be developed wider across North Herts with focus on villages such as Knebworth and Ashwell.
- North Herts has a good offer across the towns and parishes and footfall should not be a competition between each, but rather work together to develop offer across the board.

Alice Johnson, Letchworth BID Manager, advised:

- Looking at long term strategies to maintain existing visitors, as well as developing offers for new visitors.
- There was a need to continue to work with other town BIDs and develop the relationship between these.
- A booklet highlighting the tourist attractions and activities in the district would be beneficial and could be a key project to develop working alongside other BIDs.

Cath Boughton, Royston First Manager, advised:

- They had been engaging with businesses in the town.
- Work on positive communications to encourage people back into town and this has helped to see footfall begin to increase.
- Small, low-key events had been developed to help encourage people back to town.

15 MEMBERS' DISCUSSION

The Chair led a discussion on ways in which the Council could help to support villages and towns in the district with their recovery from the impact of Covid.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Daniel Allen
- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Ian Albert

Points raised included:

- There was a need to work together more across towns, specifically with sharing experiences and knowledge.
- Café culture in Letchworth had increased and this had been replicated across Hitchin and Royston, with businesses embracing the outdoor seating and takeaway service.
- Walkers and cyclists had increased in southern North Herts during the lockdown periods, which helped to support the local pubs and cafes in this area.
- Communities came together throughout the pandemic to support local businesses.
- Discussions had been held around holding a survey of local businesses and what support NHDC could give them, this could be done with the support of parish councils and BIDs.

16 ACTIONS ARISING AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Commercial Manager summarised the discussions which took place during the meeting and outlined:

- It would be useful to have a networking group of local leaders from towns and villages across the district.
- This group would share knowledge and experience, but also work on projects outside of town/parish boundaries.
- Can promote the positive activities being down in the towns and villages across the district.
- Would look to develop this group and collate ideas on how this could function going forward.

Councillor Judi Billing requested that the group be more practical in focus and noted that similar schemes had been set up during the pandemic looking at food and arts provision.

Tom Hardy suggested that there were issues with finding time to look for grant schemes and apply for these. These funds would be required to fund the projects discussed at any networking group and support with accessing these would be helpful.

The Service Director – Commercial requested that Members make suggestions for the Cabinet Panel meeting in January.

Councillor Sarah Dingley suggested that events could be a possible topic at future meetings. As 2022 was a jubilee year, there would be events taking place across the towns and villages. With not having held events in nearly two years, it may be a good time for those present to share ideas.

Councillor Judi Billing agreed and requested that the next meeting look at Community Events. There had been a request made to Community Engagement Team that a calendar of events should be put together, highlighting everything going across the district.

Councillor Ruth Brown highlighted that Royston First had discussions surrounding what should be done about larger Christmas events, with increase in Covid cases, and a networking group discussing these events would help to understand what others were doing.

Cath Boughton agreed that knowing what others were doing would give BIDs confidence to run events.

RESOLVED: That the Service Director – Commercial be requested to update the Work Programme with the following action points arising from the meetings discussions:

• To consider ways of collaborating with the BID and Parish representatives that could have positive impacts on recovery efforts.

• To consider a clear theme and direction for the next meeting due to be held on 31 January 2022.

The meeting closed at 8.41 pm

Chair

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CABINET PANEL ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT 31/01/2022

*PART 1 - PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: Community Events Throughout 2022

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR COMMERCIAL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENTERPRISE

PRIORITY: BE A MORE WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE COUNCIL AND ENABLE AN ENTERPRISING AND CO-OPERATIVE ECONOMY

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This note highlights proposed items scheduled in the work programme for the Cabinet Panel on Community Engagement and Co-operative Development for 2021/22 following the initial meeting. As at Appendix A, the Work Programme/Action Tracker allow the scene to be set for evaluation and the agreement of topics for 2021/22. This allows the Cabinet Panel to set a work programme which enables open discussion that may lead to recommendations to Cabinet /the relevant Executive Members or Service Director, regarding actions that they believe that the Council should be taking to address community engagement and Co-operative Development.

2. STEPS TO DATE

2.1. There are no steps to date.

3. INFORMATION TO NOTE

- 3.1 This Cabinet Panel aims to highlight the events taking place throughout the year within the District, with a particular focus on the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Speakers will be attending from Hitchin BID and the Baldock Big Lunch Committee to share their current plans for the Jubilee celebration. The presenters will share ideas and expertise on how these events are run, and how other towns/ villages can partake or run their own in parallel. The Council will also be providing details on how to run a successful event and to signpost attendees to information packs/ toolkits on how to run events in the local area.
- 3.2 The panel will be receiving presentations from:

The Baldock Big Lunch Committee

Ton Hardy (Hitchin BID Manager)

- 3.3 Attendance from external bodies and members of the public is actively encouraged.
- 3.4 This is a non-decision-making advisory body and therefore this or any notes/reports to the Panel do not include a recommendation on a key Executive decision and have not been referred to in the Forward Plan. However, recommendations for action from the Panel for consideration by Cabinet may do so. This will therefore need to be borne in mind for any recommendations of the Panel.

4. NEXT STEPS

4.1 Other topics for consideration and inclusion in the Panel's work programme will be considered at each meeting. When considering additional topics, their risk assessment and prioritisation will ensure that the most appropriate items are taken forward to the work programme

5. APPENDICES

None

6. CONTACT OFFICERS

Author: Chloe Gray - Commercial Manager

chloe.gray@north-herts.gov.uk

01462 474223

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None