

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



25 November 2022

Our Ref Overview and Scrutiny Committee/6
December 2022
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To: Members of the Committee: Councillors David Levett (Chair), Val Bryant (Vice-Chair), Adam Compton, Alistair Willoughby, Carol Stanier, Claire Strong, Ian Moody, Nigel Mason, Phil Weeder, Raj Bhakar, Tamsin Thomas and Tony Hunter

Substitutes: Councillors Kay Tart, Lisa Nash, Morgan Derbyshire, Sean Nolan, Simon Bloxham, Terry Hone and Terry Tyler

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

to be held in the

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERNON
ROAD, LETCHWORTH**

On

TUESDAY, 6TH DECEMBER, 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

Part I

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 the due notice will not be able to take part in the meeting.	
2. MINUTES - 6 SEPTEMBER 2022, 28 SEPTEMBER 2022	To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 6 September and 28 September 2022.	(Pages 5 - 32)
3. 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.	
4. 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.	
5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public.	
6. 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.	
7. 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.

8. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

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

9. RESOLUTIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Pages
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND SCRUTINY MANAGER 33 - 34)

To consider the outcome of Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolutions.

10. CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2022-2027 (Pages
REPORT OF THE POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER 35 - 64)

This report proposes a refreshed version of the Climate Change Strategy that was originally adopted in 2020, and amended in 2021. This refreshed version is The Climate Change Strategy 2022-2027.

11. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2022-2027 (Pages
REPORT OF THE POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER 65 - 96)

This report proposes a refreshed Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and revised Equality objectives to comply with the specific duty to publish one or more as set out by the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010.

12. 3CS HALF YEAR UPDATE (APRIL - SEPTEMBER 22) (Pages
INFORMATION NOTE OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER 97 - 104)

To provide a half year update on the comments, compliments and complaints.

13. NORTH HERTS MUSEUM STRATEGY 2022-2026 (Pages
REPORT OF THE CULTURE AND FACILITIES MANAGER 105 -
122)

This report requests approval and adoption of the new North Herts Museum Strategy 2022 – 2026.

14. QUARTERLY UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN (Pages
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES 123 -
148)

An update on progress against the Council Delivery Plan.

15. UPDATE OF THE ENTERPRISE DIRECTORATE WORK PROGRAMME - (Pages
PART 1 149 -
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – ENTERPRISE 154)

To provide the committee with an update on the progress of the Enterprise Directorate as set out in the departments work programme.

16. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider passing the following motion:

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the following report

will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

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| 17. | UPDATE OF THE ENTERPRISE DIRECTORATE WORK PROGRAMME - PART 2
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – ENTERPRISE | 155 -
160 |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|

To provide the committee with an update on the progress of the Enterprise Directorate as set out in the departments work programme.

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| 18. | OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND SCRUTINY MANAGER | (Pages
161 -
176) |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|

To consider the issues that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee plans to review at future meetings and the activities of its sub-groups.

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERNOH
ROAD, LETCHWORTH

ON TUESDAY, 6TH SEPTEMBER, 2022 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Councillor David Levett (Chair), Councillor Val Bryant (Vice-Chair), Adam Compton, Alistair Willoughby, Carol Stanier, Claire Strong, Nigel Mason, Phil Weeder, Tamsin Thomas and Tony Hunter*

In Attendance: *Rachel Cooper (Controls, Risk and Performance Manager), Sarah Kingsley (Service Director - Place), Ian Fullstone (Service Director - Regulatory), Steve Crowley (Service Director - Commercial), James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Christine Crofts (Communications Manager), Chloe Gray (Commercial Manager), Chris Jeffery (Customer Service Manager), Christopher Robson (Senior Estates Surveyor) and Reuben Ayavoo (Policy and Community Engagement Manager)*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting there were no members of the public present and 1 registered speaker joining remotely.*

123 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 2 minutes 25 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ian Moody, who was substituted by Councillor Terry Hone.

Councillor Raj Bhakar was absent.

The Chair advised Members that Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg was unable to attend to present her items due to illness.

124 MINUTES - 12 JULY 2022

Audio Recording – 2 minutes 57 seconds

Councillor David Levett, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Val Bryant seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 12 July 2022 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

125 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 42 seconds

There was no other business notified.

126 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 45 seconds

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (2) 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.
- (3) The Chair highlighted a change to the agenda order and advised that Agenda Items 18 and 19 would be taken ahead of Item 17. Following the conclusion of Item 19, the Committee would return to Part 1 and take Items 17, 20 and 21.
- (4) The Chair placed on record his thanks to William Edwards, who was soon leaving the post of Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager.

127 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 4 minutes 54 seconds

There was no public participation.

128 URGENT AND GENERAL EXCEPTION ITEMS

Audio recording – 4 minutes 56 seconds

There had been no urgent or general exception items.

129 CALLED-IN ITEMS

Audio recording – 5 minutes 03 seconds

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

130 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Audio recording – 5 minutes 06 seconds

There were no questions submitted by Members.

131 PRESENTATION FROM THE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP)

Audio recording – 5 minutes 13 seconds

Ms Lucy Gravatt, Director of Partnerships and Communications at Hertfordshire LEP, thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the Committee and provided Members with a presentation which included the following:

- The LEP was business led, with a Board responsible for setting the overall vision and strategy for the County's economic development, which includes advocacy, economic partnership and resourcing.
- The Programme Management Committee was to support the priority areas and the Assessment Panel has authority to make decisions on funding of up to £250k for projects. Anything over this amount has to be approved at Board level.

- On the Board of the LEP was space for members from Local Authorities, space for a not-for-profit member, representative from further education colleges and representatives from small and medium businesses.
- There has been a recent, significant restructure to pivot the way the LEP operates and have ensured relevant skills are available in the organisation to support the work within the key growth sectors in Herts, which includes film and TV.
- The Herts LEP exists as one of 38 LEPs in the country, tasked by Government to target business growth and investment in the local area.
- The key priorities of the Herts LEP included 'Transforming our places', 'Supporting our people' and 'Growing our businesses' and offered details of some examples of these projects.
- The restructure of the organisation has allowed for more focus on the key strategies and outcomes.
- Some of the Herts LEP flagship programmes included; the Herts Growth Hub, Careers & Enterprise Company, Visit Herts, Herts Innovation Quarter and HOP.
- Last year marked a decade of the Herts LEP and over this time over £325m had been invested in the County thanks to the work of the LEP.
- The Core Capabilities of the LEP include driving forward a narrative for Herts which is based on intelligence, the communication of economic issues and promoting support, and funding schemes.
- Some of the Strategic Programmes of the LEP include business growth through advocacy and signposting, developing skills and leadership and growing key sectors identified.
- There will be a move away from the delivery of projects and going forward the LEP will have a focus on the Levelling Up Agenda.
- There was also a long term approach taken, which would look at future growth opportunities and the AGM later this year will start the conversations around these plans.
- There was a desire to reduce carbon footprint across all LEP projects and schemes.
- Herts productivity levels were above national average, but Letchworth and Hitchin were lower.
- Start-Up businesses in Herts were above national average, but lower in North Herts.
- The working age population was declining across Herts as a whole.
- Commercial floorspace had gradually been declining over the last decade.
- There were some key issues existing in Herts which still needed to be addressed, such as the cost of doing business in Herts, the cost of living in Herts and ensuring long term funding for projects in the absence of EU support..
- Without finding funding for projects, there was a risk that there could be a roll back of progress made by the LEP and this would impact the ability to support local areas, conduct rural outreach and develop low carbon alternatives.
- North Herts was not yet involved in Visit Herts or the Screen Office scheme.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Nigel Mason
- Councillor Adam Compton
- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor David Levett

In response to questions, Ms Gravatt advised:

- She was unsure of what organisations existed and what was done with the funding, prior to the LEPs.
- The LEP were doing all they could to support start-ups and they would signpost these to national and local support available.
- There was a survey underway to see how best to support SMEs in the area.
- Using economic intelligence to ensure actions taken by the LEP are relevant to Herts business.

- A lot of the LEP policy is based on government policy, but there is an ability of the LEP to be more agile and maximise opportunities coming from government. It is also a two way relationship, which allows the LEP to feed back to government representatives on policy.
- Generally the film and TV industry was in the south of the county, but there was a desire to find further locations and this could benefit the North Herts area.
- There was a desire to take a holistic approach to the economy and looking a developing relationships with a wider range of stakeholders, who are willing to challenge existing policy, to ensure it remains relevant and inclusive going forward.
- The Clean Growth Strategy had been developed with clear deliverables set out in the action plan and further presentations could be provided on this for Members.
- There was a formula for measuring productivity and these details could be provided to Members.
- The productivity data was used to understand why Hertfordshire was generally slower than elsewhere and what interventions could be made to improve productivity.
- The start up provision does not require start ups to be in the key sectors highlighted. The key sector support is run as a focus group where experts will be invited along to offer advice on relevant topics.
- Business support is standard, with additional opportunities to develop larger programmes where appropriate.
- A small business is considered as one that has fewer than 50 employees.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Service Director – Regulatory noted that he assumed the LEP would be one source for data included in the Annual Data Monitoring Report, alongside other sources and internal data.

The Chair thanked Ms Gravatt for her presentation this evening and for taking the time to answer questions from Members.

Councillor Strong suggested that the slides be shared via MIS so that the information is available to all Members and the Chair agreed to this.

132 RESOLUTIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Audio recording – 39 minutes 28 seconds

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

- The Task and Finish Group would be addressed in a later agenda item.
- The Comms Team had not had a chance to review the draft Task and Finish Group scoping document and therefore could not be expected to provide detailed responses to these questions at this meeting.

In response to a question from Councillor Tony Hunter, the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer advised that the Royston and District Area Committee was in the process of being moved to Wednesday 12 October, and this would be confirmed with relevant Members following the end of the Group Leader consultation.

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

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

133 Q1 COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN UPDATE

Audio recording – 42 minutes 26 seconds

Councillor Ian Albert, as Executive Member for Finance and IT, presented the report entitled 'Council Delivery Plan 2022-23 (Quarter 1 Update)' and noted for Members that this was the first presentation of the new Council Delivery Plan reports.

The Controls, Risk and Performance Manager advised Members of the following:

- This report brought together the projects, risks and performance indicators into one document to be presented to Members.
- The report is intended to be a live tracker, therefore projects can be added and removed throughout the year, where appropriate.
- Risks associated with projects will change as projects progress and the narrative included in the report will reflect on these changes.
- This is a high level report, and should Members of O&S wish to have any further detail on projects included, they can request this ahead of future meetings.
- Provided details and comment on some of the projects within the report, such as Town Centre Recovery, Royston Town Hall annexe and the Customer Portal.
- Status key is shown as a symbol, alongside the project process displayed as a percentage. The percentage is based on milestones attached to the project and therefore it was possible for a project to have a green status, but 0% progress made.
- Current and target risk scores are included for projects in the report.
- Where Performance Indicators are available, these will be shared in the blue section of the report.
- More details on these projects can be found on Pentana and further detail can be provided at the Committee meeting, if this is advised by Members beforehand.

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

- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Adam Compton
- Councillor Claire Strong

Points raised in the discussions included:

- Members would like to see the milestone against which projects are measured, so that this can be taken into account when looking at percentages within the report.
- This would help to prevent Members asking unnecessary questions to Officers presenting these reports.
- The document was very busy, with lots of information included, but was very useful to bring it all together into one place. Members always appreciate too much information than too little.
- The 0% status against some of the projects was concerning, but hoped that the inclusion of the milestones would give a narrative to the figure.

In response to questions, the Controls, Risk and Performance Manager advised:

- Pentana was the system used to monitor all of the information included within the report. Members were able to access the system and see "live" information regarding each of the projects.
- Further training could be arranged for Members in how to use this system and would be discussed outside of the meeting.

Councillor Adam Compton proposed and Councillor Alistair Willoughby seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented on the Council Delivery Plan Quarter 1 monitoring report, including the recommendations made to Cabinet i.e.:
 - That Cabinet notes the progress against Council projects as set out in the Council Delivery Plan (Appendix A) including changes to milestone dates and risks.
 - That Cabinet confirms the completion of one of the Council projects.
 - That Cabinet confirms the addition of two new Council projects, which are the Shared Propensity Fund and Churchgate.
- (2) That Overview and Scrutiny Committee determine any project that they want to receive more detail on as part of the next monitoring report.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: The Council Delivery Plan (CDP) monitoring reports provide Cabinet with an opportunity to monitor progress against the key Council projects, and understand any new issues, risks or opportunities.

134 COUNCIL PLAN AND PRIORITIES 2022-27

Audio recording – 56 minutes 06 seconds

The Policy and Community Manager presented the report entitled 'Council Plan and Priorities 2022-27' and outlined for Members that there was close alignment between this report and the Council Delivery Plan.

Councillor Alistair Willoughby proposed and Councillor Phil Weeder seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted that the Council Plan and Priorities remain as stated in the 2022-27 Plan, except the details of projects on pages 8-10 which will now be covered within the Council Delivery Plan.

REASON FOR DECISION: The Council Plan is a key element of the corporate business planning process. As a high-level strategic document it sets out the Council's Priorities. As an overarching policy framework document, it guides and influences the use of Council resources, providing a focus for activities, plans and services the Council provide. There is a need to monitor progress against the priorities laid out in the Plan and the Committee has requested that this is presented to this Committee meeting

135 FULL YEAR UPDATE ON COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS (3Cs) 2021-2022

Audio recording – 58 minutes 05 seconds

The Customer Service Manager presented the Information Note entitled 'Full Year Update on Compliments, Comments and Complaints (3Cs) 2021-22' and provided Members with the following updates:

- The Information Note provided a full year report on the 3Cs, including the Council itself and Council contractors.
- This report is usually presented in July, but this year has been aligned with the 3Cs Policy Update to be heard in the next item.
- The number of 3Cs received had decreased on volume from last year, complaints dealt with within 10 days had dropped below the 80% target to 77%.

- It remains less than 1% of Council customers, residents and visitors who make complaints.
- The Waste service continues to account for the most complaints, but the volume of these has decreased from last year.
- Following previous comments, Urbaser were asked to ensure they were recording “comments” accurately and this change is demonstrated by the data.
- There were 185 compliments made directly to the Council.
- The LGO received 10 complaints and 2 of these were upheld, with the details included within the Information Note.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Claire Strong

In response to questions, the Customer Service Manager advised that usually all complaints are resolved, whether within the 10 days or not, and usually this is provided to the customer in writing. This covered all stages of the procedure.

In response to questions, the Service Director – Regulatory, advised that a response to a complaint will be made within 10 days, but it may be that further investigation is required to come to a conclusion on that issue. This depends on the complexity of the complaint and the outcome sought by the complainant. Where it is not possible to resolve a complaint in 10 days, the complainant will be kept informed.

Councillor Claire Strong noted that where complaints are not dealt with efficiently through the Council processes, it is causing persistent issues for Members when speaking to residents.

Councillor Terry Hone highlighted that Careline had received nearly four times as many compliments as complaints, and that this was good to see. There were always likely to be complaints about services, but this Note provided lots of positive comments and compliments.

136 3Cs POLICY UPDATE

Audio recording – 66 minutes 10 seconds

The Customer Service Manager presented the report entitled ‘3Cs Policy Update’ and appendices and advised Members of the following:

- This policy was due for review in September 2022 and will be presented to Cabinet next week.
- The policy itself and Appendix C have been review and updated following matters happening for the first time in the last year.
- Some of these matters include whether an Officer complained about can respond to the complaint, alignment with the People First approach and is aligned with the Customer Service Strategy as updated in 2021.
- An update to the policy included the ability for third parties to log a 3C with the consent of the customer.
- The policy itself has been updated to make it clearer, with wording improved and updated to be as customer friendly as possible in line with the People First priority.
- No major changes, other than that outlined in 8.1 in report.
- The policy has been aligned with other customer facing strategy documents we have, including the Council Plan and Customer Service Strategy.
- The policy had been audited by SIAS and they offered assurance that effective control are in place and it has been benchmarked against other Council’s policies.

Councillor Terry Hone noted that the Unreasonable Complainants (& Contact) Policy was helpful to ensure that Officer time was not taken by unreasonable, continuous or vexatious complaints.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Adam Compton

In response to questions, the Customer Service Manager advised:

- The flow chart should allow 14 days for Customers to request a complaint be escalated.
- With the Unreasonable Complaints (& Contact) Policy, the case would be assessed initially by the Customer Service Manager to establish what has happened, and where this is determined to be vexatious the case would be made to the Service Director – Customers to decide an appropriate outcome.
- Outcomes of this decision can include limiting further contact, or one of the other possible actions outlined in the Policy.
- A ‘barred’ customer could still log a further complaint on an issue and this could be looked into by the Customer Service team.
- Complaints would still be triaged, but there would be a flag on the CRM system to ensure all are aware of previous vexatious complaints.

Councillor Claire Strong proposed and Councillor Adam Compton seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the report and appendices.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (1) The recommendations are being made to ensure the 3C’s policy stays current and reflects learning since the last review date. The policy continues to remain in line with Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) best practice.
- (2) Some of the specific updates and amendments address matters that have arisen for the first time and therefore adding them now helps to ensure the policy is clear for all going forward.
- (3) The updates ensure the Council has a robust policy to refer to when required, and customers are clear on how the policy works

137 2022 - 27 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Audio recording – 77 minutes 50 seconds

The Communications Manager presented the report entitled ‘2022-27 Community Consultation Strategy’ and advised Members of the following updates:

- Our 2022 District Wide Survey results from this year highlighted that residents views on their involvement and engagement by the Council has gone down since 2019, but this was understandable as much consultation work during this time had been focused on the pandemic response.
- This proposal is for a resident facing, community based consultation strategy and will involve explaining the consultation process to residents.

- There was a need to consult residents more regularly and increase the level of digital consultation happening. The pandemic had demonstrated that the local community was capable and willing to use digital means to be consulted.
- It was being explored whether a twice per annum District Wide survey could be launched, to give of the moment attitudes of residents.
- Sharing results and being transparent with these was important and these would be displayed on dedicated webpage.

Councillor Terry Hone noted that it was important to take into account, as this proposal has done, those people who do not have the ability or facilities to use digital technology. It was good to see this included as a consideration.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Adam Compton
- Councillor David Levett

In response to questions, the Service Director – Place advised:

- Funding of £8,000 had been allocated to the Engage Zencity platform, which was a discounted rate for the first two years. This came from the strategic priorities funding initially as a trial, and the effectiveness of this platform would be assessed ahead of a full budget bid.

In response to questions, the Communications Manager advised:

- Although the new Facebook algorithm does have an impact on how many people see posts, it was important to remember that Facebook is just one of the channels the Council uses to promote consultations. The others include the NHDC website, e-newsletters, our Citizens Panel, Local Partner Pool and other social media channels (Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn). In addition, messages are always promoted more than once across the channels we use.
- There was the possibility to use a banner across the top of the Council's website. This space is currently promoting our 'East the Squeeze' cost of living campaign but will change when launching a consultation.
- The plan was for dedicated page for consultations, promoting live consultations and displaying results of closed consultations.

Councillor Alistair Willoughby proposed and Councillor Claire Strong seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That Cabinet approve the Community Consultation Strategy for the period 2022-27.

REASONS FOR REFERRAL:

- (1) Consultation is critical to demonstrate that the council is committed to engaging with its community, to help shape the direction of future policies, to inform necessary improvement or refinements to services and to ascertain if current approaches to service delivery are meeting the needs of residents.
- (2) Our most recent District Wide Survey (DWS) highlights a decline in resident views since 2019 on how we consult with them. We need to proactively show that we are a council that listens and wants to engage with our residents by successfully implementing our community-facing strategy.

- (3) Increased forms of digital consultation will enable us to reach a wider audience more frequently

N.B. At this stage in the meeting, the Chair allowed a short 5 minute break.

138 2022 DISTRICT WIDE SURVEY

Audio recording – 95 minutes 35 seconds

The Communications Manager presented the report entitled '2022 District Wide Survey' and provided Members with the following updates:

- 800 residents had been surveyed by phone earlier this year and results are largely in line with national trends and similar to previous survey results.
- In terms of areas of strength, satisfaction with North Herts as a place to live is very high and contrary to national trends, satisfaction with the Council is above national trends and has stabilised from the downward trend between 2013-2019, agreement that the Council offers value for money is above national levels and satisfaction with Waste and Recycling has seen a significant increase on the last survey results.
- Areas of focus include monitoring resident views of the running of the council, as the percentage that think it is getting worse is larger than the percentage who think it is getting better. The top three themes from residents feedback were: a) improving the look of a local area, b) improving street cleaning and c) improvement in communications that are clear and transparent.
- Satisfaction with street cleaning, benefits and housing services have all recorded their lowest levels in this survey.
- For those residents who have recently made contact with the Council, satisfaction with the service received was at its lowest on record and dissatisfaction to the highest.
- In terms of areas to explore further, satisfaction scores on whether the Council 'consults and engages the community' are to be addressed through the Community Consultation Strategy 2022-27.
- Royston residents provided the lowest score with regard to the Council offering value for money and similarly scored lower than the rest of the district when it came to the Council involving, consulting and engaging residents, so worth monitoring this.
- Potential new forms of customer contact, including a 'live chat' option on the Council website', are another area for the Council's Customer Service team to explore.

In response to a question from Councillor Claire Strong, the Communications Manager advised that the latest District Wide Survey results would be displayed for residents on a dedicated page on the Council's website, which would aim to bring together all consultation responses ongoing in one place. There would also be an article in the next Outlook publication regarding the outcomes of the District Wide Survey.

Councillor Claire Strong proposed and Councillor Val Bryant seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented on and note the key findings and observations from the District Wide Survey.
- (2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted that the results will be considered by the Leadership Team in conjunction with Executive Members and an action plan produced.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is aware of the results and any trends from previous surveys and how the results will be used to inform future service delivery.

139 UPDATE OF THE ENTERPRISE DIRECTORATE WORK PROGRAMME - PART 1

Audio recording – 130 minutes 58 seconds

Following the return to Part 1, the Chair advised that questions had been covered in the Part 2 section of this report therefore there were no further questions from Members.

The Chair noted that there had been a suggestion to add to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme to add a review of the Harkness Court project following completion of the letting agreement.

Councillor Claire Strong proposed and Councillor Adam Compton seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the report.

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.

140 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Audio recording – 103 minutes 23 seconds

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the following report will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

141 UPDATE OF THE ENTERPRISE DIRECTORATE WORK PROGRAMME - PART 2

Audio recording – 104 minutes 10 seconds

Details of decisions taken on this item are restricted due to the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of Section 200A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

142 TASK AND FINISH GROUP - COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

Audio recording – 132 minutes 20 seconds

The Chair presented the draft Scoping Document for the Task and Finish Group on Communication and Engagement and advised Members:

- The report in front of Members tonight was to agree to the core principles of the Task and Finish Group Scoping Document.
- The Group would consist of 5 Members, politically balanced, including the Chair.
- It would be beneficial if the people nominated by Group Leaders for the Chair position could have specific knowledge or experience of communications and communication strategy.

Councillor Alistair Willoughby proposed and Councillor Nigel Mason and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Committee noted the Task and Finish Group Protocol 2020 as attached at Appendix A.

- (2) That the Committee reviewed and commented on the draft scoping document as attached at Appendix B.
- (3) That the Committee endorsed the principles of the review and approved consultation with Group Leaders to appoint members and a Chair for the Task and Finish Group.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) To ensure Members are informed of the agreed protocol for the establishment of Task and Finish Groups and understand the stages of the process including the role of relevant officers.
- (2) To ensure that final scoping document takes into account suggestions from Members and relevant officers.
- (3) To allow Members to be appointed to the Task and Finish Group.

143 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Audio recording – 134 minutes 44 seconds

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer presented the report entitled Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and drew attention to the following:

- September programme had been completed following this meeting.
- There was an Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for the 28 September to look at the Waste Partnership agreement.
- Members would need to propose dates for the Call To Account proceedings, which would take place following a determination on the planning application, which was expected to take place this month.
- The proposed dates for the Call To Account needed to take into account the relevant statutory notice required for Members and Officers.
- Crime and Disorder topics suggested at the last meeting had been passed onto the Herts Police representative, but they had asked for further specific suggestions.

The Chair advised Members that if they had more specific topics for the Crime and Disorder item, that they email Committee Services following the meeting.

Councillor Adam Compton notified Members that a Member briefing was taking place on the 14 September, regarding the Waste Partnership and that it was important for as many Members to attend as possible.

The Chair advised Members that the Task and Finish Group meetings would likely take place during the day time.

In response to a question from Councillor Claire Strong, the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer advised that he would speak with the Service Director – Place and, if agreed, would record the Member briefing and upload this to GrowZone, for Members unable to attend on the day.

Councillor Alistair Willoughby proposed and Councillor Phil Weeder seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (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) That the Committee, having considered the most recent iteration of the Forward Plan suggests a list of items to be considered at its meetings in the coming civic year.
- (3) That the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan Extract as attached as Appendix B be considered.
- (4) That, upon completion of the letting agreement, the Committee should examine the financials behind the Harkness Court project.

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.

The meeting closed at 9.52 pm

Chair

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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES,
LETCHEWORTH

ON WEDNESDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER, 2022 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Councillor David Levett (Chair), Councillor Val Bryant (Vice-Chair), Adam Compton, Alistair Willoughby, Carol Stanier, Claire Strong, Ian Moody, Phil Weeder, Raj Bhakar, Tamsin Thomas, Sean Nolan and George Davies*

In Attendance: *Anthony Roche (Managing Director), Sarah Kingsley (Service Director - Place), William Edwards (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager), Louis Mutter (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Martin Lawrence (Strategic Housing Manager) and Chloe Hipwood (Shared Service Manager – Waste & Recycling)*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 10 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

143 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 1 minutes 36 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tony Hunter who was substituted by Councillor George Davies and Councillor Nigel Mason who was substituted by Councillor Sean Nolan.

N.B. Councillor Ian Moody entered the meeting at 19.31 and Councillor Carol Stanier entered the meeting at 19.32.

144 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 1 minute 55 seconds

There was no other business notified.

145 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 1 minute 59 seconds

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (2) 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.
- (3) The Chair advised Members had been provided with a briefing note ahead of the Call to Account item.

- (4) The Chair advised that there was a change to the agenda order and Items 8, 9 and 10 would be taken ahead of Item 7.
- (5) The Chair advised that a short break would take place following the conclusion of the Call to Account items.

146 CALLED-IN ITEMS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 35 seconds

There were no Called In Items.

147 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 3 minutes 38 seconds

N.B. At the start of this item, Councillor Val Bryant advised that as she was Chair of the Planning Control Committee at which the Lord Lister planning application was considered, she would be recusing herself for Items 8 and 10.

The Chair invited Ms Deborah Pollard to provide the Committee with a verbal presentation regarding the Lord Lister Call to Account.

Ms Pollard thanked the Chair and provided Members with a verbal presentation, including:

- This presentation intended to offer clarity on the Lord Lister hotel, which had been of concern to residents.
- It was disappointing that only one pack of documents had been made publicly available.
- The issues surrounding anti-social behaviour were not planning considerations as detailed at the Planning Control Committee, and therefore should form part of the questioning to take place.
- There needed to be a tipping point at which anti-social behaviour experienced by local residents outweighed the benefit of the scheme.
- The documentation suggested that public consultation could not take place due to this being a time critical process.
- Transparency was fundamental to democracy.
- Should special urgency powers have been used to agree a 10 year contract?
- It was noted that housing and planning should be separate, but the Strategic Housing Manager had advised Keystage on ways to deal with potential issues.
- There was not enough due diligence carried out, with no comparison to national schemes considered.
- Why was funding provided to Keystage and why was the contract awarded if Keystage could not fund the scheme?
- Engagement with stakeholder networks progressed following the residents complaints.

There were no points of clarification raised by Members for Ms Pollard and the Chair thanked her for her contribution.

N.B. Following the conclusion of Ms Pollard's presentation, Councillor Alistair Willoughby advised that, as he was now the Deputy Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health with oversight of this area, he would not be taking part in the debate or votes on Items 8 and 10.

148 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Audio recording – 10 minutes 34 seconds

There were no questions submitted by Members.

149 FUTURE SERVICE DESIGN OF WASTE, RECYCLING AND STREET CLEANSING SERVICES

Audio recording – 128 minutes 15 seconds

N.B. Councillor Val Bryant returned to the meeting following the conclusion of Agenda Item 10. Councillor Alistair Willoughby noted that, as he was part of the waste arrangement workshops, he would be recusing himself from this item.

Councillor Amy Allen, as Executive Member for Recycling and Waste, presented the report entitled 'Future Service Design of Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Services' and advised of the following:

- The report seeks authority to proceed with a dialogue to agree a new waste service arrangement from 2025.
- The report is based on outcomes from the joint working group between East and North Herts Council, and the details of changes to both services are included.
- The key drivers for the changes are the impending national Resources and Waste Strategy and the financial pressures on Councils.
- The proposed changes are to make the service more financially and environmentally sustainable.
- The particular changes Members are asked to endorse are the reduction of residual waste, supported by weekly food waste collection and two weekly recycling. The textiles and battery collection service will be stopped.
- These changes will be supported by communications and funding for additional staff.

The Shared Waste Service Manager noted that in the report, point 8.31 should read 122 tonnes, not 122k tonnes as written.

Councillor Adam Compton noted that Members at the workshops did come up with consensus on proposals but this was based on the options provided.

N.B. Following his comment, Councillor Adam Compton advised that he had also taken part in the waste workshop and would recuse himself from this item.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Carol Stanier
- Councillor George Davies
- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Raj Bhakar

In response to questions, the Shared Waste Service Manager advised:

- In terms of items like pet litter and faeces it is accepted that the smell is not pleasant, but it is in a bin with a lid and there are alternative options available for this.
- In terms of nappy waste provision for this will be made and full details of this policy will be provided in spring 2023 to allow for conversations with providers.
- Confusion over the new cycle will rely on the digital side of the services, with options for communication regarding this to be explored.

- The Council is unable to charge for items other than garden waste, and therefore animal bedding cannot be included in the current garden waste bin.
- Previously Parishes had been offered the chance to buy litter picking kits at cost and would look to do this again.
- When North Herts introduced the 180 litre residual bin, there was a reduction in general waste, as habits changed to adapt to the new provisions. It was expected that a similar response would happen with these proposed changes.
- The new Officer role was expected to be in place 6 months before the change, dependent on budgets.
- Despite current comms, it was apparent from survey responses that residents did not fully understand what can be recycled, and more comms would be required around this, which would be supported by the new Officer role.
- It was hoped that people would not be increasing their residual waste by 50% each cycle, but would change their habits and behaviour. It was proposed that soft plastics would be recycled, which would reduce residual waste.
- Participation in the food waste scheme, whilst on par with national trends, could be better.
- Continuation of the current scheme was a proposal put to Members at the joint workshops. However one of the priorities was to address the financial and environmental sustainability of the scheme and this would not be achieved with the status quo.
- It was felt that bin side waste collection would be taken advantage of by those not wanting to change their behaviour. A full review of the Extra Waste Capacity Policy would take place and be presented to this Committee in spring 2023 for consideration.
- Most Councils running a three week cycle did have a 240 litre bin, but Stratford and Warwick have entered into a shared service with alignment on 180 litre bins. This scheme is in action and is performing well.
- The report did identify fortnightly collections for those with large amount of residual waste, for example nappies, and a full report on this would be provided in spring.
- Consultant support for this was funded through existing waste service budget.

In response to questions, the Service Director – Place advised:

- Due to the death of The Queen and the period of mourning, the Council had been unable to be proactive in communicating on these proposals.
- The consultation did take place over the school summer holidays, but it did run for a 6 week period and families are not usually away for this entire period. Adequate time was given and publicity was given to the survey throughout.
- Some residents may be surprised and unhappy by these changes, but this was the case when garden charges were introduced. These proposals are based on the results of the consultation, as well as agreed principles with East Herts Councils, and Cabinet will decide whether to proceed.
- There was no time to return to formal consultation and the 2000 responses received initially was a good sample.

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Recycling and Waste advised:

- There was capacity in residual waste bins at the moment and with the changes some of the current residual waste will be recycled.
- There are also expected to be government changes to packaging, which will further reduce residual waste.
- 43% of residual waste checked at the depot could have been recycled.

In response to questions, the Deputy Executive Member for Recycling and Waste, Councillor Tom Tyson, noted that nearly a quarter of residual waste is currently food waste which can be dealt with separately. More communication was needed over this to ensure that this does not continue to end up in residual waste.

Councillor Val Bryant noted that she, and her neighbours, were proud of recycling and it was important to develop this change in ethos towards waste minimalisation and more recycling.

The Chair confirmed that the only recommendation being voted on was 2.2 in the report.

Following the conclusion of questions, the Chair summarised that the following points should be noted and presented to Cabinet:

- Concerns over the capacity of 180 litre residual waste bins to move to three week collections.
- Concerns regarding those with a large amount of waste, for example families with nappies.
- Whether enough public consultation had taken place and a need to ensure residents were aware of changes through communication.

Councillor David Levett proposed and Councillor Sean Nolan seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the comments from Overview and Scrutiny, as outlined in detail in the minutes of the meeting, be added to Appendix 12 of the Cabinet report, to be noted and considered by Cabinet before making the substantive decision.

150 CALL TO ACCOUNT OF DELEGATED DECISION TAKEN ON 13 AUGUST 2021 IN ACCORDANCE WITH 'SPECIAL URGENCY' PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

Audio recording – 10 minutes 42 seconds

The Chair introduced the Call to Account item and noted that some of the documents provided were within Part 2 and therefore should not be discussed in Part 1 and that the Planning application could not be considered.

The Chair outlined the four subject areas to cover in questioning, these were; reason for urgency, grant allocation, choice of Keystage and performance monitoring. These were detailed in the briefing papers provided for Members and some questions under these topics had been suggested.

The Chair welcomed Anthony Roche, Managing Director, Martin Lawrence, Strategic Housing Manager and Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Leader of the Council, who were in attendance to provide their account, alongside the accompanying report entitled 'Call to account of delegated decision taken on 13 August 2021 in accordance with 'Special Urgency' provisions contained in the Council's Constitution'.

Martin Lawrence, the Strategic Housing Manager, provided an update for Members, which included:

- It was over 20 years since North Herts Council had its own housing stock, but it remained the local housing authority and so had a duty to carry out government policy regarding homelessness.
- There were huge demands on housing across the district, and the country, which was having an impact on the affordability of housing available.
- Homelessness remained stable across the district, but was prevalent and more and more issues were raised every day.
- There was huge demand for accommodation pre-pandemic and during the pandemic there was a directive to provide people with accommodation if they were homeless, which included people staying with friends, sofa surfing, etc.
- In 2021/22 there were around 150 people picked up as part of this, mostly individuals, who had to be found accommodation which was usually in hotels.

- In May 2021 there were 67 hotel placements by the authority, some within the district but others in neighbouring districts.
- When accommodation was provided, there was a chance to engage with other factors that may be affecting people, and it became apparent a lot of homeless people had further complex needs which required specific support.
- There had been previous attempts to develop a specific site to deal with complex needs faced by homeless people, but these have often been proposed and then never been further developed.
- Planning permission was granted in February 2021 by Haven First for a 40-bed hostel in Letchworth, but was met with local concern and objections and nothing has been able to move forward on this.
- Due to social distancing requirements, the only available location in North Herts had only 5 beds available, with further 19-rooms provided temporarily at the former Templars Hotel in Baldock.
- Funding had been made available, but providers could not use the money as there were no suitable locations.
- The aim is to create a pathway from being homeless through to independent resettlement, with support provided along the way, which is where a supported housing scheme can be valuable.
- There was a need to build up options available to deal with homelessness, with 133,000 residents in the district, but only 33 bedspaces available for this group.
- North Herts Officers made contact with Keystage in 2021, as a lot of existing providers were struggling with the effects of Covid and impact on staffing levels.
- These initial discussions were held to discuss whether there was viability of Keystage providing services in North Herts.
- Keystage had provided services in Luton since 2019 and are one of the best providers in the area and had a trauma led approach.
- This was then discussed with the then Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health, Councillor Gary Grindal, in June 2021. Following this, the proposal was provided by Keystage.
- At the submission of the proposal the hotel had been identified and the owner had been spoken to. At this stage there was no commitment, but there were no other viable options available for consideration.
- The proposal was discussed at the Covid Recovery Board in July 2021, with the two ward Councillors in attendance.
- The discussions were ongoing with Keystage throughout this, but it became apparent throughout this that there was a time limit on action required by the Council.

In response to a question from Councillor Claire Strong, the Strategic Housing Manager advised that he was unsure whether the Lord Lister was housing homeless people at the start of the pandemic response, but did not believe it was.

Anthony Roche, Managing Director, provided an update for Members, which included:

- The proposal was brought to him in late July 2021 as a potential solution to government requirements, which was the point at which he became involved.
- Throughout July and August 2021 there were discussions around the pros and cons of the scheme and drafting a draft Delegated Decision, which was ultimately signed on 13 August 2021.
- The Delegated Decision was passed onto the Managing Director due to a potential conflict of interest with the Service Director – Regulatory who oversaw both housing and planning at the authority, with the latter to consider any subsequent planning applications.
- There were several considerations taken when the decision was brought to him, including whether he was happy with the report, whether any further information was required, if any reassurance should be sought on any of the proposal, that it was in line with the Council's Constitution and that it was in line with urgency proceedings.

- In this case constitutional advice was provided by the legal team that Special Urgency proceedings were appropriate.
- The Cabinet meeting was scheduled for mid- to late September 2021 and it was advised that this would be too late and the opportunity would be lost.
- At the time at which the decision was being made, the three Group Leaders, two of the ward Members and the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny had been consulted and no substantive issues were raised to object to this decision. On this basis, the Managing Director was content to make this decision.
- There was a need to learn lessons from this experience and some of these were detailed in the report.
- In the instance of Haven First proposal, the planning application was submitted first, with plans developed following this decision. In the case of the Lord Lister hotel, this was not possible.
- Given the context outlined with regard to homelessness in the district, combined with lack of clarity over government funding, a decision was required and this was felt appropriate to meet Council needs.

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Leader of the Council, provided an update for Members, which included:

- Officers at Local Authorities advise and provide Members with opinions. It is best practice to consult the Executive Members to explain why decisions are going to be taken and to ask for sign off. It is also best practice to consult the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny in cases of urgency.
- A weekly briefing takes place between the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and the Managing Director to discuss strategies, projects and some local issues.
- The meeting on the 29 July 2021 was the first time that internal examination of the proposals was considered and it was at this stage that the Lord Lister hotel was named. As well as the Leader of the Council, this meeting was attended by then Deputy Leader Paul Clark, Councillor Sam Collins, Councillor Morgan Derbyshire and Councillor Claire Strong.
- From the context provided at the meeting it seemed that this was an appropriate scheme to deal with the homelessness issues.
- A longer conversation was held with the Leader, the then Deputy Leader and Managing Director to discuss the details of the proposal. There was one matter of concern raised regarding a previous HMO in Highbury ward, but assurances were given that this scheme would be managed completely differently. At this stage Members were provided with verbal assurance that references had been received.
- There was awareness that neighbours would probably oppose the scheme, and as part of this questions were asked and consideration given to how and who should consult the local community and residents, to ensure the provider would be a good neighbour.
- On balance it was decided that this was the right thing to do and this would provide the Council the opportunity to support people within the district.
- Due to accessibility Council meetings did not take place over the school summer holidays and it was advised that waiting until the Cabinet meeting in September would be too late and the proposals would be lost.
- There was a consideration towards the upcoming winter months, with no other options on the table, and there was a need to deal with homeless people ahead of this.
- Based on the evidence provided at the time this seemed to be a suitable proposal, however following additional concerns which have come to light since the decision it seemed that further information could have been provided.
- The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny thought he had been provided adequate information and gave his approval to the Urgent Delegated Decision.

The Chair thanked all three for their verbal update for the Committee. He noted that the role of the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny was to satisfy themselves that the matter matched the

requirements of the urgency proceedings, not the content of the item. Following the email detailed in Appendix 2, there was no suitable Cabinet meeting scheduled at which the item could be considered, and therefore it fell within the remit of urgent decisions.

Councillor Claire Strong noted that, as Leader of the Conservative Group, she had not been consulted on the decision taken and did not remember the urgency requirement being discussed at the meeting on 29 July 2021. She confirmed that she had not seen the project report before its publication as part of the agenda pack for this meeting.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Tamsin Thomas
- Councillor George Davies
- Councillor Carol Stanier
- Councillor Sean Nolan
- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Adam Compton

The following questions were asked by Members:

- When did people become aware that this was not an urgent matter and that the purchase would take place at a later stage?
- When did Keystage outline the deadline?
- Could Members be provided clarity on whether cross-party consultation took place?
- If the proposals were drawn up in June 2021, why could these not be presented to Cabinet on 20 July 2021?
- Why was this proposal not mentioned at the Cabinet catch up meetings that took place?
- If the proposal was made in June 2021, could an in principle decision have been brought to Cabinet in July 2021?
- While the Constitution details the special urgency proceedings, is there a detailed process that has to be followed for this?
- If the proposal document attached in the report was not final, was there an updated version provided by Keystage? If so, what difference was there between the proposals included and the final agreement?
- Given the Homelessness Prevention Grant funding deadline was in April for this year and a requirement of this was for a specific scheme to have been identified, was there a scheme in mind for the £200k grant funds?
- Have all the requirements outlined in the proposal been adhered to?
- Why has the charge of the land not been updated to North Herts Council? And when was the application made to change this?
- In reference to the other options considered, how many proposals were on the table at the stage Keystage made their proposal?
- Had Officers had any previous contact with Keystage?
- Did the Council have any other contracts with Keystage outside of this proposal?
- What actions were taken to ensure the grant application and planning application were kept separate?
- Would it be better in the future to ensure responsibility for housing and planning are kept separate?
- How was the £200k grant funding agreed? And were Keystage aware this funding was available?
- Was there a feeling of pressure to accept?
- What due diligence took place?
- Was there any consideration given to the suitability of the location?

- What was the experience like for the 67 homeless people in hotel accommodation during the pandemic?
- Over what period was the £200k grant funding negotiated?
- What would the cost to the Council have been if the 67 homeless people had to remain in hotel accommodation?

In response to questions, the Strategic Housing Manager advised:

- The deadline was outlined just before the request was made to the Leader and Managing Director. This deadline had never changed.
- There were a number of assurances the Council needed to ensure this was a viable scheme, for example a number of safeguards needed to be confirmed, and it was not possible to fit within the timescale for the Cabinet meeting in July.
- In June 2021 an outline proposal had been made and there were still conditions that had to be negotiated with Keystage alongside the proposal, as detailed in 9.5 of the report.
- It was not felt that there was enough comfort that this was a practical scheme to bring to Members in July.
- The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government were consulted to ensure they were content with the use of funds.
- The proposals included in the report at Appendix 6 was the final document.
- The £200k allocated to this scheme came from the Homeless Prevention Grant that was received by the Council annually, and amounted to around £340k.
- There were other grant schemes available for homeless prevention during the pandemic, some of which were through applications.
- All the agreements within the proposal had been kept to by Keystage.
- The project in Hatfield that did not go ahead was discounted reasonably quickly as it was felt inappropriate to send people out of the district.
- There were no other proposals at the time of the Lord Lister submission, they come up regularly but rarely overlap. The Hatfield proposal was roughly a few months before the Keystage proposal.
- The first contact with Keystage was in February 2021.
- There were now further contracts with Keystage, as detailed in 3.2.9 of the report, which was for an ex-offenders scheme, where they were moving on from temporary housing. This was outside of the Lord Lister.
- These schemes were considered at the same time, but it was decided that there were suitably separate.
- The community aspect of the location was important and schemes like this are run across the country. In order to reintegrate service users there was a requirement for access to services and transport offered in a town.
- The £200k amount was agreed mutually through discussions over 10 years.
- The Housing Team had been fantastic during the pandemic, despite some challenging times, with the team raising the most safeguarding concerns at the Council and dealing with three potential suicides.
- There was a need to engage with other specialists at this time, with Haven brought in to support. There was a block booking of 15 hotel rooms in Stevenage, but this was not suitable long term.
- The agreed £200k came after discussions between the initial contact in February 2021 and June 2021, following the identification of the Lord Lister hotel, but could not provide an exact date.
- The cost of hotel accommodation was around £400k net over two years, but over a long period this would have been higher.
- As recovery happened the numbers in hotel accommodation reduced, but costs do not add up to accommodate homeless people in hotels.

In response to questions, the Managing Director advised:

- As detailed in the report, the Delegated Decision taken by the Council gave Keystage confidence to proceed, it was the legal agreements that then took longer to confirm.
- He did not recall having a separate discussion with Councillor Strong regarding this proposal before the Project Board on 29 July 2021 and it was unlikely they had a meeting between this date and the Delegated Decision being taken.
- There was no requirement to consult the Leader of the Opposition group and with the Delegated Decisions there was not always time to consult with all people and in some instances only the statutory consultees needed to agreed.
- There is a huge amount going on at the Council at all times and unless it becomes apparent that a scheme will progress, it is unlikely to reach the Managing Director. The schemes are explored by the Strategic Housing Manager and their team to assess viability.
- The scheme was still not sufficiently certain to bring this to the Political Liaison Board or the Cabinet catch up meetings.
- The urgency became apparent around the 5 August 2021 and things progressed quickly between this date and the Delegated Decision being taken.
- There was no further guidance on the process for urgency proceedings, but there is content guidance included with the Delegated Decision template. There is also a process as to who needs to be consulted on these, and these people are relied on to comment and make suggestions.
- Ultimately the decision maker has to satisfy themselves that they are comfortable taking the decision, and that it is being taken appropriately, given the information provided.
- The funds were allocated to the Council annually, this was not a funding bid.
- The Council was aware the title of the land in favour of the Council had not yet been updated, but this was due delays at the Land Registry and was being monitored by the legal team.
- He was unaware of when the application was submitted to the Land Registry.
- The reason he was the decision taker was to ensure the Service Director – Regulatory was kept separate, this was to ensure Planning and Housing could have taken separate decision.
- The Scrutiny Committee cannot scrutinise planning procedures and there are clear functions and processes to hold these decisions to account.
- Whoever had taken the housing decision, there would not have been an influence over the planning aspect.
- The Council had pushed back against the proposals with regard to the original 5 July 2021 date and due diligence checks were carried out in this time until the decision was taken.
- During the discussions of the grant amount it was all still discussed in principle and nothing was agreed until the Council was content with the proposals.

In response to questions, the Leader of the Council advised:

- The Cabinet catch up meetings were informal and held fortnightly to discuss strategic issues within the portfolio areas. If the Executive Member for Housing did not feel it needed to be discussed then it would not be raised.
- It was important to note that the former Deputy Leader of the Council was not afraid to highlight when he disagreed with something and the only concerns raised were with regard to the previous HMO scheme in Hitchin.
- If concerns were raised, these would not be ignored, and there were no direct concerns raised by Ward Member Councillor Sam Collins.

151 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Audio recording – 90 minutes 35 seconds

Councillor David Levett, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Claire Strong seconded and, following a vote, 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).

152 CALL TO ACCOUNT OF DELEGATED DECISION TAKEN ON 13 AUGUST 2021 IN ACCORDANCE WITH 'SPECIAL URGENCY' PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

Details of decisions taken on this item are restricted due to the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of Section 200A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

N.B Following the conclusion of the Part 2 item, the Chair returned to Part 1 to conclude the proceedings.

The Chair noted that the contract and anti-social behaviour had been discussed in Part 2 and the next stage would be to produce a report based on the Call to Account and this would then be presented to Council.

The project was ongoing and there were undertakings and commitments made that had to be adhered and taking this into account, there would be a further report to Overview and Scrutiny on a date to be agreed.

The Strategic Housing Manager advised that Keystage had been given 3 months for the enhancements requested at Planning Control to be carried out. It would be unlikely that full capacity would be reached before 2023 and suggested that March 2023 to provide further details on the scheme.

The Chair noted that this would be too long, but acknowledged that 3 months would be too early, this would be agreed with the Scrutiny Officer outside of the meeting and added to the Work Programme.

The Chair advised that there were no recommendations on this, the report would be written, which would return to Overview and Scrutiny for comment before being referred to Full Council.

The meeting closed at 10.14 pm

Chair

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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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.	A draft scoping document has been put together and was presented to Members at the September meeting and approved. Following approval from the Committee for the core principles of the review, Group Leaders will be consulted to appoint members to the Task & Finish Group and finalise the scoping document.	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
	SHARED WASTE SERVICE GOVERNANCE		
Mar 22 Min 91 (5)	RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: (1) To agree to the new overarching aim of the shared services and principles outlined in 8.10 and 8.12. (2) To endorse the formation of a joint cross party working group. The terms of reference for which are outlined in Appendix A and the outline work programme described in 8.19. (3) To agree to explore the future options for governance of the Shared Waste Service, including consideration of a joint committee consisting of representation by both East Herts Council and North Herts District Council. (4) To establish the Joint Cross Party Working Group prior to the start of the new contract negotiations. (5) To ensure that relevant Governance and scrutiny processes	Cabinet agreed to the recommendations with an amendment to (3) as follows: "That the Cabinet agreed to explore all options for the future governance of the Shared Waste Service, with a further report to Cabinet in due course to consider any proposals." The Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with group leaders, has made appointments to the Joint Cross Party Working Group. At an Extraordinary Cabinet meeting on 25 October 2022 the Future Service Design of Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Services was agreed.	Completed

REF	RESOLUTION	RESPONSE/OUTCOME	STATUS
	are in place prior to the start of the new contract negotiations.		

CABINET
13 December 2022

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: Climate Change Strategy 2022-2027

REPORT OF: POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Executive Member for the Environment and Leisure

COUNCIL PRIORITY: SUSTAINABILITY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report proposes a refreshed version of the Climate Change Strategy that was originally adopted in 2020, and amended in 2021. This refreshed version is The Climate Change Strategy 2022-2027.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet adopt the following documents, taking into consideration the additional actions proposed under each priority area:

- Appendix 1 Climate Change Strategy 2022-2027
- Appendix A Proposed Actions
- Appendix B Achievements

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 In 2019, the Council passed a motion to declare a Climate Emergency. In this motion the Council pledged their commitment to do everything within their power to become carbon neutral by 2030. This iteration of the Strategy has been revised to reflect the latest legislation, research, and best practice; and includes additional proposed actions under each priority area to respond to gaps we have identified. Appendix B Achievements lays out progress against each action.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 There are no alternative options to be considered.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1 The additional proposed actions have been consulted on with the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure, the Officer Lead for Climate Change, and, where relevant, other Executive Members and Service Directors.

5.2 More broadly, the discussions at the Cabinet Panel for the Environment have been taken into consideration in the renewal of the Strategy.

5.3 The original version of this Strategy (including completed and proposed actions) was agreed by the Leadership Team comprising of Managing Director and Service

Directors), Executive members and Public Liaison Board, as part of the approval process.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 6th September 2022.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 The Council has considered climate action to be one of its long-term priority areas for a number of years. Currently this is expressed through the priority of Sustainability in the Council Plan. Following the passing of the Climate Change Emergency Motion in 2019, a new Climate Change Strategy was adopted in 2020.
- 7.2 This version of the Strategy will be the third iteration, with the 2021 version amending the priorities, reiterating the target for the Council's operations to be net zero by 2030, and bringing forward the target for North Herts to be a net zero district from 2050 to 2040.
- 7.3 The first priority of the Strategy (*Taking Action*) is designed to further progress towards the 2030 target, while the second and third priorities (*Enabling Savings*, and *Inspiring the Community*, respectively) are designed to work towards the 2040 target for the wider district.
- 7.4 The Climate Change Strategy relates largely to the reduction of carbon emissions but some actions around adaptation, biodiversity, and broader sustainability initiatives (such as plastic reduction) are also included to enable the Council to address the full range of environmental issues. With this mind, the Strategy will act as the foundation upon which actions arising from other service areas across the Council are built.
- 7.5 The Council has the ability to influence emissions which occur as a direct result of its own operations, and can utilise its role as a Local Planning Authority (LPA) to improve environmental standards of development within the district. The Council can enhance nature through the decisions it makes on management of its own greenspaces, and also has a role to play in encouraging and making it easier for our residents and businesses to live and operate in a more environmentally-friendly way. As such, the Climate Change Strategy encompasses a wide range of areas for action.
- 7.6 In the interests of accountability, transparency, and effective monitoring, the new Appendix B Achievements highlights progress against each of the proposed actions listed in Appendix A. This is a clarified way of reporting on our progress and will allow us to identify areas for greater focus.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The Strategy outlines the international frameworks and agreements that informed the global response to Climate Change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s 2018 special report on Global Warming highlighted that we should aim to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels to avoid the most catastrophic impacts of climate change, but noted that efforts to do this (as agreed at the Paris Accord) would require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society. In tandem, the UK Committee on Climate Change (CCC) similarly asserted in 2019, that Climate Change requires more ambitious reductions and radical actions by national government, local authorities, businesses, communities and individuals. The CCC concluded that if radical steps are taken the UK can end its contribution to global warming within 30 years.

- 8.2 In line with this research, The Climate Change Act 2008 was amended in 2019 to introduce a target for a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK by 2050. The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 came into effect on June 2019. Additionally, in December 2020, the UK Prime Minister announced a new target to reduce the UK's emissions by at least 68% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. In April 2021, ahead of hosting COP26 (United Nations Climate Change Conference) the government built on these commitments by setting into law the target to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels.
- 8.3 The government have also published The Climate Change Strategy 2021-24 which outlines how the government will meet its climate commitments via five strategic pillars, and the Net Zero Strategy 2021 sets how the UK will deliver on its commitment to reach net zero by 2050.
- 8.4 The most recent IPCC report (2022) finds that, globally, greenhouse gas emissions are continuing to rise and that current plans to address climate change are not ambitious enough to limit warming to 1.5°C. The latest UN report (2022) found that globally, existing carbon-cutting policies are likely to lead to 2.8°C warming. If stated pledges are delivered upon, warming is likely to reach 2.6°C, meaning that further pledges are necessary in order to limit warming to 1.5°C.
- 8.5 In light of this research, the revised Strategy proposes additional actions under each priority area, and has a renewed focus on adaptation to climate change.
- 8.6 Appendix A proposes an additional action under the Taking Action priority which states:

All council owned or leased cars and light goods vehicles acquired from 2025 onwards to be zero emission wherever feasible. All heavy goods vehicles acquired from 2025 will have the lowest practical emissions at the time of acquisition. The council will ensure that it has a strategy for dealing with the emissions of any such vehicles by 2030 (if they are expected to be still in use at that time) as part of its organisation wide offsetting plans.

With regards to this, the July 2019 Full Council motion on the transition to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) should be noted. This was resolved:

*“(1) The Council undertakes to only lease or purchase Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (including Electric Vehicles and Plug in Hybrids PHEVs) when the replacement of any council owned or leased vehicle is due. This also includes any company cars used by officers;
(2) The Council also undertakes to encourage all of its contractors to adopt similar measures;
(3) That the implementation of these undertakings shall be subject to agreement by the Cabinet.”*

<https://srvmodgov01.north-herts.gov.uk/documents/b7091/Notice%20of%20Motion%20-%20Ultra%20Low%20Emission%20Vehicles%2011th-Jul-2019%2019.30%20Council.pdf?T=9>

The new proposed action seeks to further progress the work which the 2019 motion initiated, with recognition that there may be instances in which it is not possible for certain vehicles to be replaced with zero emission models within the indicated timeframe.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Cabinet's Terms of Reference include at 5.6.1 the power 'to prepare and agree to implement policies and strategies other than those reserved to Council'. The proposed actions at Appendix A detail how the Council plans to meet its target of being carbon neutral in its own operations by 2030, and furthers the priority of Sustainability, as laid out in the Council Plan 2022-2027. The Council Plan's strategic priorities for 2022-2027 provide high level reference points to assist the Council making clear and effective decisions to reduce environmental impact.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 A number of the proposed actions detailed in Appendix A will require additional resource and costs to achieve. This is likely to include both revenue and capital costs. Some of those actions could then deliver future reductions in costs (e.g. where they then reduce energy usage), but the pay-back of these projects is generally quite long. As part of the annual budget planning process each year it will be necessary to prioritise determine the actions that can be achieved in the coming year(s), and the costs involved (including whether they are capital or revenue). There will be a need to prioritise the actions, in terms of the extent to which they can be delivered and the timing of delivery, to ensure that the overall programme is affordable within the resources that the Council has available. The Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2023-28 sets a target for the delivery of net savings of £2.6m per year by the end of 2027/28. As this is a net target, this does allow for additional costs relating to new priorities but does require that these will increase the gross savings (efficiencies, income generation or service changes) that need to be delivered. Some of the proposed actions will involve capital expenditure. Whilst this will come from capital funding sources (including borrowing), this will also have revenue budget implications/ opportunity costs. A business case will be required to assess the financial and environmental case. Where available the Council will look to access funding from other sources.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Failure to adopt a refreshed Strategy and action plan could lead to a lack of focus and an uncoordinated approach to delivering the Climate Change related activities that will help the Council achieve its priorities. If the Council fails to plan and respond to the potential negative impacts of Climate Change, there is a risk that services are not able to adapt or respond to changes linked to Climate Change. This could lead to services becoming less resilient and becoming ineffective in responding to changing needs.

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 negative impacts attached to this Strategy. However further equality impact assessments may be undertaken for individual proposed projects.

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 Each of the Proposed Actions will have an individual Environmental impact assessment completed as the projects come to fruition.

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 A number of the proposed actions detailed in Appendix A will require additional staffing resource to achieve. They will have impacts across a number of teams including planning, estates, property services, leisure, waste, green space, parking and policy. Some of the work may be able to be incorporated in to existing and developing work plans, but it will mean that other activities will be deprioritised.

15. APPENDICES

- 15.1. Appendix 1 – Climate Change Strategy 2022-27
15.2. Appendix A – Proposed Actions
15.3. Appendix B - Achievements

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 17.1 [Previous Climate Change Strategy 2021-2026](#)

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Introduction

The issues caused by climate change will have a profound effect on the lives of everyone for many years and decades. That is why in May 2019 North Herts Council declared a climate emergency and committed to take action to address the causes of climate change across the district. We undertook to engage with the community to identify ways in which the Council could work towards the goal of achieving a district with net zero carbon emissions. We recognise that the influence of the Council is wider than the services that it delivers. This revised Climate Change Strategy updates our plans and commitments to build on the results of the work with the community and with other councils across Hertfordshire. It firstly sets out what the Council will do to reduce its own carbon emissions to achieve a carbon neutral position by 2030. It then sets out what we will do to help achieve a net zero carbon district by 2040, both by creating policies which enable other to reduce their emissions, and by encouraging residents and businesses to reduce their own carbon emissions.

Achieving the goals set out in this strategy will not be easy but is essential if we are to avoid an even greater impact on the lives of people across North Hertfordshire.

What is Climate Change

Climate change refers to a large-scale identifiable change in the planet's weather patterns that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer.

The current period of warming is occurring more rapidly than in the past. Scientific evidence indicates that the natural fluctuation of temperature has been overtaken by a human-induced warming. This warming has come as a result of the changes that have occurred since the onset of the industrial revolution. These changes have serious implications for the future stability of the planet.

Mandate for Climate Action

At the twenty first meeting of the United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris, member states, including the British government reached a historic agreement to strengthen the global response to Climate Change. This agreement included a landmark commitment to *“holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels”*.

Following the Paris Climate Agreement, in 2018 the United Kingdom became the first major developed economy to assess how it will meet the terms of the agreement. After an original target to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 80% on 1990 levels and transition to a low-carbon economy by 2050, in June 2019 parliament passed legislation requiring the government to reduce the UK's net emissions of greenhouse gases by 100% relative to 1990 levels by 2050. In other words, the UK should emit net zero greenhouse gases by 2050. This target was adjusted on the recommendation of the UK Committee on Climate Change (CCC), following both the Paris Agreement and a report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicating that global warming should be limited to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels rather than 2°C, in order to avoid the most catastrophic impacts of climate change. The IPCC have highlighted that achieving this will require rapid, far-

fetching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society, and that we will need to remove some of the carbon that is already in the atmosphere as well as reduce the amount we continue to emit. Similarly, the CCC report found that more ambitious reductions and radical actions by national government, local authorities, businesses, communities, and individuals would be required. They note that the target is achievable with current technologies and improvements in people's lives, and that given more challenging and well-designed policies, the UK can end its contribution to global warming within 30 years.

In December 2020, the UK communicated its new [Nationally Determined Contribution \(NDC\)](#) under the Paris Agreement, which commits to reducing economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions by at least 68% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. In April 2021, ahead of hosting COP26 (United Nations Climate Change Conference) the Government [announced](#) that it would build on their commitments by setting into law the target to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels.

The most recent IPCC report (2022) finds that, globally, greenhouse gas emissions are continuing to rise and that current plans to address climate change are not ambitious enough to limit warming to 1.5°C. Moreover, the world's wealthiest countries remain responsible for disproportionately more emissions than the poorest countries (as has historically been the case), but the poorest countries are experiencing more severe climate impacts. Even so, climate change is affecting and will continue to affect all regions of the world. Already, the increase in temperature is having severe impacts in North Hertfordshire and across the UK. Over the last ten years the UK has experienced a variety of climate-related extremes, including record wet winters, major floods, heatwaves, and wildfires, with the ten hottest years on record all having occurred within the last twenty years¹. In 2018 the UK Met office scientists published their climate projections for the next century based on different rates of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. The high emission scenario demonstrated that:

- Summer temperatures could be up to 5.4C hotter by 2070; Winters could be up to 4.2C warmer
- The chance of a summer as hot as 2018 is around 50% by 2050
- Sea levels in London could rise by up to 1.15 metres by 2100
- Average summer rainfall could decrease by up to 47 per cent by 2070, while there could be up to 35 per cent more precipitation in winter.
- The Committee for Climate Change stated in its 2018 report – *Managing the coast in a changing climate*, that coastal communities, infrastructure and landscapes in England were already under significant pressure from flooding and erosion.

Current National Policy Environment

The Climate Change Act 2008 is the UK's long-term framework for tackling Climate Change. The Act aims to facilitate the UK's transition to a low-carbon economy by 2050. Since the Climate Change Act 2008, a number of national initiatives have been introduced to help meet targets.

¹ [Met Office, Top Ten UK's Hottest Years on Records All Since 2002](#)

- **The Carbon Plan 2011** identifies the emission reductions needed in five key areas of the economy; buildings; transport; industry; electricity; and agriculture to meet targets.
- **The Clean Growth Strategy 2017** outlines the plan to grow the national income while cutting greenhouse emissions.
- **The 25 Year Environment Plan** published in 2018, sets comprehensive goals and targets to improve the UK's air and water quality and protect threatened plants, trees and wildlife species.
- **The Resource and Waste Strategy 2018** outlines the actions the UK will take to minimise waste, promote resource efficiency and move towards a circular economy.
- **The Clean Air Strategy 2019** demonstrates how the national government will tackle all sources of air pollution and boost the economy.
- **Climate Emergency Motion** affirmed Parliament's commitment to addressing Climate Change. While there is no single definition of a Climate Emergency, the general consensus is to work toward becoming carbon-neutral by 2030.
- **The Climate Change Strategy 2021-24** outlines how the government will meet its climate commitments via five strategic pillars.
- **Net Zero Strategy 2021** sets how the UK will deliver on its commitment to reach net zero by 2050.

North Herts Council's Approach

The Council has had a long-term focus on climate action and 'Sustainability' is one of our three key priorities outlined in our [Council Plan](#) (2022-2027). The warming of the earth brings milder and wetter winters, hotter and drier summers, more intense downpours and more frequent and intense flooding for North Hertfordshire. These changes pose great risk to the Council's service delivery. We want to continue to provide a clean and safe environment for our residents and to deliver our services to a high standard, all in an environmentally sustainable way. This requires us to do what we can to protect the natural and built-up environments, and address the causes and impacts of the climate emergency across all areas, including planning, waste and recycling, greenspace and leisure, environmental crime, and the management of air quality areas.

Over the last two decades we have worked to reduce our carbon (CO₂) emissions and improve energy efficiency across the district.

In 2007 we signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change and in 2009 we published our original Climate Change Strategy. Since then, the Council has passed several motions with the aim of becoming more environmentally sustainable; encouraging residents, businesses and Council staff to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle plastics. Most notably, in 2019, the Council passed a motion to declare a Climate Emergency, in this motion the Council pledged their commitment to do everything within its power to make North Hertfordshire Carbon Zero by 2030. This declaration asserted the Council's commitment toward Climate Action beyond current government targets and international agreements.

Following this declaration, the Council established a Cabinet Panel on the Environment. The Panel is an advisory panel chaired by the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure, and Recycling and Waste alternately. The panel meets approximately six times per year,

and the community and any person or body are welcomed and enabled to participate at meetings. The Panel is a valuable forum for sharing learnings, ideas, and best practice, as well as for consulting residents on the Council's climate and environment work and providing a level of accountability. Terms of Reference for the group can be found on the [website](#).

As part of the declaration, when Council policies are reviewed, specific consideration is given to how the policies and related decisions and actions affect our contribution to climate change, and where necessary, update these policies to reduce our impact where possible. The inclusion of an Environmental implications section within the report and delegated decision template will ensure that impacts and mitigation measures and risks are identified at an early stage.

The Council has formed a Climate Change Implementation Group (CCIG) comprised of Members, senior management, and key officers for the purposes of monitoring and progressing the aims and actions of the Climate Change Strategy. Each meeting of the group focuses on 'spotlighting' a few specific actions from the strategy to induce a discussion about how the action can be progressed.

The Council has also formed a Climate Change Officer Group (CCOG) which looks to draw together work relating to climate and environment from across the different Council departments and identify opportunities for joint working. Both groups meet regularly and the CCOG provides feedback to the CCIG on discussions and ideas arising from the group and the Environment Panel, as well as on any identified gaps in our approach to climate change. The annual review of the Climate Change Strategy, as conducted by the policy team, also allows us to identify gaps for further action.

Mitigation

The Climate Change Strategy relates primarily to the reduction of carbon emissions but in conjunction with the Environment Panel, the Climate Change Implementation Group, the Climate Change Officer Group, and our involvement in the HCCSP and Herts Waste Partnership, the Council is enabled to address the full range of issues relating to climate and environment. This includes matters such as biodiversity and waste; and both mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

As such, this Strategy contains certain actions related to waste and biodiversity in so far as they relate to carbon and greenhouse gas reduction.

For instance, different forms of waste management and waste handling practices can impact levels of greenhouse gases emitted. Innovative technologies also provide potential opportunities to produce renewable energy through certain organic waste management processes. High biodiversity levels can improve ecosystem reliability and increase the effectiveness of their functions, one of which is carbon capture. Recent research, for example, has shown that high levels of plant diversity can enhance storage of soil organic carbon.

Trees are probably those most often noted for their carbon sequestration abilities, but hedgerows, grasslands, and wildflower areas also have the capacity to absorb significant amounts of carbon, storing it in woody growth, in leaves, in roots and in the soil.

Efforts to increase biodiversity can therefore be an important means of reducing the amount of carbon dioxide currently in the atmosphere and of off-setting future carbon emissions.

Whilst we recognise that some level of offsetting will likely be necessary to meet our climate targets, reducing our emissions will remain our priority as we play our part to keep warming under 1.5C.

Adaptation

The IPCC note that even if global warming does not exceed 1.5°C in the near-term, there will still be some unavoidable impacts which will create hazards for humans and ecosystems. Some of the unavoidable hazards may include extreme weather, floods, droughts, fires, and reduced crop yields affecting global and local food systems.

If warming exceeds 1.5°C over the coming decades, then hazards will become more severe and difficult to manage. In other words, as well as cutting emissions, we need to ensure our communities are resilient to the impacts of climate change. This is known as climate adaptation and involves adjusting infrastructure or the ways we do things to reduce hazards or our vulnerability and exposure to them. For example, an area which is vulnerable to flooding might need flood defence barriers or planting of trees and hedges to aid water absorption.

The HCCSP has recently established an Adaptation subgroup which is attended by officers from North Herts. This group aims to create a Strategic Action Plan on Adaptation which can be implemented across Hertfordshire. Officers have attended adaptation training as part of this and the group is currently working to create climate risk assessments for each district within the county.

Working in Partnership

The Council remains committed to playing a leadership role in local efforts to address the climate emergency. Working in partnership with residents, local businesses, voluntary and community groups, and neighbouring Councils allows a cohesive and joined-up response across the district and county so that we can collaborate on wide-scale projects and share best practice across organisations. Partnership working also allows us to address the limited policy tools and resources available, as well as to explore further opportunities for funding, investment, and sponsorship.

Our climate and sustainability work with other authorities, including Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), and our fellow district and borough councils in Hertfordshire will principally be facilitated by the Hertfordshire Climate Change Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP). This is comprised of HCC, all ten district and borough councils in Hertfordshire, and the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership which itself looks to bring together the private sector, local authorities, and academic and voluntary organisations.

The HCCSP's aim is to tackle climate, environmental, and sustainability issues across Hertfordshire and there are currently six priority areas identified. These are: Water; Biodiversity; Carbon Reduction; Transport; Behaviour Change; and Climate Adaptation. The Partnership has formed subgroups to develop Strategic Action Plans for each priority area and North Herts Council has led the creation of the Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan. Each

of these Strategic Action Plans are intended as live documents which will undergo regular review in order to respond to changing policy, circumstances, and resources. Each plan's actions are intended to be filtered down into the service delivery plans within each individual council.

The work of the HCCSP and our contribution to it is therefore a major and vital element of our response to the climate and ecological crises. The HCCSP Strategic Action Plans can be accessed [here](#).

We will also continue to make use of more informal networks both within Hertfordshire and beyond it, as well as our Cabinet Panel on the Environment, to share learnings, ideas, and best practice, and to ensure we are approaching climate action in an inclusive, and effective manner.

Decision Making and Strategies

We will embed the objectives and priorities of this Strategy into other relevant strategies and plans, including our [Greenspace Management Strategy](#), Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), [Transport Strategy](#) when it is updated, and other service plan actions around Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure, and decarbonisation of homes. The Strategy will act as the foundation upon which actions arising from other service areas across the Council are built.

We are committed to making consideration of climate change central to our decision-making and actions. Councillors are reminded of the climate emergency we declared and our net zero target at the beginning of all Cabinet and Full Council meetings; and officers are required to consider environmental implications for all decisions taken by Council, Cabinet, Committees, and delegated decisions. Officers are required to conduct a fuller Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) if the initial analysis finds that there could be notable impacts. The creation of an Executive Portfolio for Environment and Leisure as well as the appointment of a Climate Change Lead from amongst our Service Directorate also allows us to ensure that climate change and our work around it is lead and considered at the highest levels within the Council.

Objectives

- Achieve Carbon Neutralityⁱ for the Council's own operations by 2030 (at least Scope 1 and Scope 2)ⁱⁱ.
- Ensure all operations and services are resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- Achieve a Net Zero Carbon district by 2040.
- Become a district that is resilient to unavoidable impacts of climate change.

With clear objectives which relate to the Council's own operations and services, as well as to the wider district, this Strategy aims to set priorities and proposed actions to respond to both these elements. Below, *Strategic Priority 1. Taking Action* sets out how the Council intends to reach the target of carbon neutrality for our own operations by 2030; while *Strategic Priority 2. Enabling Carbon Savings* and *Strategic Priority 3. Inspiring the Community* set out our approach to achieving a net zero carbon district by 2040.

Strategic Priorities

1. Taking Action – taking direct action to reduce the Council's carbon emissions.
2. Enabling Carbon Savings – ensuring that our policies enable citizens and businesses to reduce their emissions.
3. Inspiring the Community – encouraging citizens and businesses to take action to go further and faster in cutting carbon emissions.

1. Taking Action – taking direct action to reduce the Council's carbon emissions

Overview

The UK Committee on Climate Change has identified reducing emissions from local authority owned buildings, estates and operations as a key responsibility for local authorities. NHC has made significant efforts to reduce emissions from its estate and operations over the past eighteen years and will continue to plan our work with a view to reducing our energy usage from our own estate. The **three** key areas of focus, below contribute most to the Council's carbon footprint and are areas where the Council has the most scope to influence emissions:

- A. Reducing emissions from the District Council's estate and operations.
- B. Reducing the need to travel and improving use of sustainable transport in our operations.
- C. Reducing our consumption of resources, increasing recycling and reducing waste.

2. Enabling Carbon Savings – ensuring that our policies enable citizens and businesses to reduce their emissions

Overview

The UK Committee on Climate Change emphasises the leadership role local authorities have in supporting residents and businesses to reduce their emissions. The Council will continue seeking to ensure that its policies open up opportunities which enable and make it easier for citizens and businesses to reduce their own emissions.

This will include seeking to provide leadership and support for both businesses and residents to switch to renewable energy, and to adapt to the impacts of planning projects. The Council can play an important role as local planning authority, in reducing carbon emissions and providing further supplementary planning guidance to encourage more sustainable development and work towards carbon neutrality. This is especially important given the strategic amount of growth planned in the district, and the need for the Council to secure sustainable communities through a masterplan-led process and through place leadership.

Alongside this, the Council's overall transport vision for North Hertfordshire remains one based on sustainable transport. We recognise the many benefits of sustainable transport, both to individuals, places, and the environment more widely, and want to seek to reduce car use overall across the district in favour of public transport and active travel. Encouraging people to move towards ultra-low emission vehicles and other forms of sustainable transport is critical to help us achieve our climate change and air quality ambitions.

The Council will thus seek to progress policies in support of the transition to low and zero emission vehicles in line with national targets, ensuring that residents can take advantage of technological changes and that North Hertfordshire remains accessible and attractive for all. Due to limited resources, and acknowledging the advancement of technology through significant private sector investment, this will entail broad partnership working and exploring other means of appropriate funding in order to maximise carbon savings across the district.

3. Inspiring the Community – encouraging citizens and businesses to take action to go further and faster in cutting carbon emissions

Overview

The Climate Emergency is a wide-spread cross-cutting issue, and requires a concerted and coordinated effort. We recognise the value of community-led responses to the climate crisis and know that action from residents, community groups, and businesses, is needed to decarbonise the district and make North Herts net zero by 2040. Local authorities can play a key role in supporting community-led action, and in inspiring and encouraging behaviour change to help people reduce their impact on the environment. We will continue to work in partnership with those in our community to consult, inform, and inspire action which will ensure we mitigate and adapt to the Climate Emergency. We will make use of existing channels and forums such as our Cabinet Panel on the Environment, as well as our new digital engagement platform.

Measuring, Monitoring and Evaluating Impact

This Strategy is accompanied by an Action Plan (appendix A), and a List of Achievements (appendix B). Impact and delivery of the strategy will be measured and monitored annually, and a fuller evaluation will be undertaken in 2025. In addition to this, the Strategy will undergo an annual review which will consider whether it needs to be amended or added to, based on developments in national policy, new research, changed circumstances, available funding opportunities, or our own gap analysis (see NHC's Approach).

ⁱ *Carbon Neutrality* is defined by Oxford Languages, as 'making or resulting in no net release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, especially as a result of carbon offsetting'. *Net Zero Carbon* is typically held to indicate the same concept, often being described as the balancing of carbon emissions with removal (i.e. you offset or sequester the same amount of carbon emissions that you emit). Though, as The Carbon Trust noted in November 2019, 'Net Zero' does in fact lack an official or commonly agreed definition.

In contrast, *Zero Carbon* is typically considered to mean that there is no emission of Carbon Dioxide at all from a product or service, and therefore no use of offsetting.

It should be further noted, however, that all of the above terms have frequently been used interchangeably and without precision in public discourse.

ⁱⁱ According to the Carbon Trust, Scope 1 covers direct emissions from owned or controlled sources. Scope 2 covers indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, steam, heating and cooling consumed by the reporting company. Scope 3 includes all other indirect emissions that occur in a company's value chain
<https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/briefing-what-are-scope-3-emissions>

North Hertfordshire Council

Climate Change Strategy

Proposed Actions

2022- 2027

Taking Action

Taking direct action to reduce the Council's carbon emissions

Enabling Carbon Savings

Ensuring that our policies enable citizens and businesses to reduce their emissions

Inspiring the Community

Encouraging citizens and businesses to take action to go further and faster in cutting carbon emissions

TAKING ACTION

Objectives

- *Achieve Carbon Neutralityⁱ for the Council's own operations by 2030 (at least Scope 1 and Scope 2)ⁱⁱ.*
- *Ensure all operations and services are resilient to the impacts of climate change.*

Reducing the Council's own carbon emissions by targeting:

Council Buildings and Property

- Ensure that new system installations are renewable electricity rather than gas-fired, where this is deemed the best option after thorough consideration
- Consider replacing gas with electricity from renewable sources where appropriate
- Ensure no new buildings use gas-fired systems
- Explore use of heat pumps (ground source or air source) to provide heating as the technology develops
- Continue to identify ways to improve building energy management systems to reduce waste
- Improve building insulation and conduct lighting surveys to reduce energy outputs

- Increase incorporation of green clauses in leases and licenses for NHC's property estate (e.g encouraging tenants to consider whole life carbon assessments when selecting construction methods or materials in their leased property)
- Build on the environmental, economic, and social sustainability principles presented in NHC's Property Acquisition & Development Strategy when appraising prospective property acquisitions, to ensure pre-acquisition due diligence is comprehensive and not solely focused on financial drivers
- Explore and progress on-site generation of electricity from solar or wind
- Explore opportunities for the sustainable heating of swimming pools

Transport

- In accordance with the Council's 2019 resolution, continue replacing all future operational vehicles leased or purchased by the Council with Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) or zero emission vehicles until the last non-ULEV vehicle leases expire; and encourage contractors to adopt similar measures
- All council-owned or leased cars and light goods vehicles acquired from 2025 onwards to be zero emission wherever feasible. All heavy goods vehicles acquired from 2025 will have the lowest practical emissions at the time of acquisition. The council will ensure that it has a strategy for dealing with the emissions of any such vehicles by 2030 (if they are expected to be still in use at that time) as part of its organisation wide offsetting plans
- Reduce staff and Councillor business travel through use of Zoom and similar technologies as much as possible
- Reduce staff commuting unnecessarily through home working as much as practical
- Explore opportunities around low-emission refuse freighters

Offsetting

- Quantify the contribution that tree planting and soil sequestration within North Herts could make to offsetting the Council's carbon emissions.
- Seek to retain and preserve scrub and woodland edges to protect trees and maintain natural boundaries to woodlands
- Where appropriate, change grass verge cutting regimes to allow more plant species to grow
- Create more wildflower areas across the district
- Seek to strengthen hedgerows and have them connect fragmented habitats

Explore options for the preparation of an evaluation, updated each year showing:

- Carbon savings that have been achieved since the 2019/20 baseline
- The savings identified to make progress towards the carbon neutral by 2030 target
- The savings still to be identified

Continue to consult with the public and with interest groups on strategies for achieving zero carbon emissions for the Council by 2030, and the District by 2040.

TAKING ACTION: 2022 ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

- Provide climate change training for staff and councillors
- Implement relevant actions from the HCCSP strategic action plans on [Water](#), [Biodiversity](#), [Carbon](#), and [Transport](#)
- Ensure all other Council strategies reflect the climate emergency and our net zero targets (e.g Air Quality Strategy; Biodiversity Strategy; Green Infrastructure Strategy)
- Investigate low carbon solutions for the next waste contract which will commence in 2025
- Ensure our waste depot has the appropriate infrastructure to support low carbon solutions and our climate targets
- Utilise the Climate Change and Sustainability Officers Group to assign actions to officers and teams, setting measurable outcomes and time frames to develop an internal action plan
- Put in place a process to enable us to identify and collate risks to Council services from climate change, and a framework for how to respond and mitigate
- Explore the potential for offsetting the balance of the Council's irreducible carbon emissions using renewable energy generation
- Establish a way of allocating the cost of offsetting measures to understand the true cost of emission-generating decisions

Having explored options for the preparation of an annual evaluation, we will:

- Publish the findings of our carbon baseline report
- Produce an annual estimate of the Council's carbon emissions that is comparable to the 2019/20 baseline
- Publish forecast progress to achieving our 2030 net zero target
- Establish a process for ascertaining and reporting the carbon impact of proposed projects and decisions

ENABLING CARBON SAVINGS

Objectives

- *Achieve a Net Zero Carbon district by 2040.*
- *Become a district that is resilient to unavoidable impacts of climate change.*
- Work to develop and support policies that encourage electric vehicle use and other 'cleaner air' initiatives across the district, including:
 - Providing more electric car charging facilities in our car parks
 - Exploring the possibility of making it cheaper for zero emission vehicles to use Council car parks compared to petrol and diesel vehicles
 - Working with the County Council to improve the provision of on-street Electric Vehicle (EV) charging
 - Exploring the opportunities for a holistic approach to a town-wide Electric Vehicle strategy which will include all users and operators, both public and private
 - Working with other public and private entities/partners to improve provision of EV charging
 - Progressing the implementation of a better cycle network in North Herts, linking the district and beyond
 - Working with the relevant portfolio holders to prepare an annual Electric Vehicle Action Plan
- Further to the requirement for all new and replaced taxi vehicles to be ultra-low emissions from 2028, explore how we can support transitions to low emission vehicles before this date and to zero emission vehicles when the necessary infrastructure is in place
- Ensure that masterplans and planning applications for new development are designed around streets and routes for active travel (rather than cars) and create walkable neighbourhoods
- Explore how a Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) could encourage and provide guidance on how new development can use resources more efficiently, reduce carbon emissions, incorporate carbon sequestration measures, and adapt to climate change
- Introduce a standard within a Sustainability SPD to support more energy efficiency buildings to the equivalent of Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes
- Set out comprehensive planning guidance within a Sustainability SPD on reducing carbon emissions, adapting and mitigating climate change

- Require Passivhaus, BREEAM, or similar standards for all developments on land sold by the Council
- Explore how a Biodiversity SPD could help to provide a clear ecological network plan, further enhance and create new habitat (e.g. woodlands, grasslands, and hedgerows) within new development and on Council owned land as part of an offsetting strategy to deliver biodiversity net gain
- Update the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy to identify where new green spaces and corridors should be provided as part of new development to support further carbon sequestration, biodiversity, and flood and surface water management
- Signpost residents to funding for retrofitting of insulation, heating and energy reduction features to improve the energy efficiency of existing homes
- Lobby government to introduce more funding for retrofitting of insulation, heating and energy reduction features, for both privately-owned and social housing
- Work with the Herts Waste Partnership (HWP) to investigate how we could secure the use of anaerobic digestion to deal with food waste from 2024
- Ensure recycling and waste collection arrangements promote reduction and reuse
- Encourage and support community tree planting initiatives
- Evaluate the success of the Solar Together Scheme, and explore further renewable energy opportunities for residents, businesses, and community groups – such as the Solar for Business Scheme run by West Suffolk Council.

ENABLING CARBON SAVINGS: 2022 ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

- Work with the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) and our Risk Management group to identify and collate climate risks from across the district and county, and establish how mitigative action could be taken.
- Review opportunities for guidance or policy on renewable energy generation within Supplementary Planning Documents and the Local Plan Review process

INSPIRING THE COMMUNITY

Objectives

- *Achieve a Net Zero Carbon district by 2040.*
- *Become a district that is resilient to unavoidable impacts of climate change.*
- Enable residents to assess their carbon emissions, comparing them with the district and best practice

- Encourage residents to make behaviour changes by highlighting positive actions that can be taken, and informing them of more environmentally friendly options
- Encourage alternative models of working and transportation to reduce emissions and impact across the district.
- Work with the HCCSP to promote low carbon construction (timber buildings, offsetting of carbon, etc.)
- Run food waste awareness programmes
- Run waste reduction awareness programmes and continue to support community plastic free initiatives
- Explore opportunities for certification/awards for Green/Sustainable businesses
- Explore the possibility of tree planting awards
- Consult with the public to identify further means by which the Council can assist the residents and businesses of North Herts to achieve the target of zero emissions across the district by 2050
- Develop communications to raise awareness of the benefits of retrofitting of insulation, heating and energy reduction features, and the long-term cost-saving potential

INSPIRING THE COMMUNITY: 2022 ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

- To create and execute a Climate Comms plan which promotes the Council's climate initiatives and encourages residents to engage and take action.
- Use our new community engagement platform to encourage resident participation on climate change issues. This will be used to target residents that may not have previously engaged with the climate change agenda.
- Recruit a shared Waste Awareness Officer with East Herts Council prior to the new waste contract commencing in 2025, to encourage waste minimisation and recycling habits.

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<https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/briefing-what-are-scope-3-emissions>

**North Herts Council
Climate Change Strategy
Proposed Actions 2021 - 2026
Progress - Updated August 2022**

TAKING ACTION

ACTION	PROGRESS TO DATE
Council Buildings and Property	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider thoroughly, and ensure that new system installations are renewable electricity rather than gas-fired, where this is deemed the best option 	<p><i>This will arise as and when new system installations occur.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider replacing gas with electricity from renewable sources where appropriate 	<p><i>Pending</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure no new buildings use gas-fired systems 	<p>This will arise as and when new buildings are built</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore use of heat pumps (ground source or air source) to provide heating as the technology develops 	<p>The policy team has been researching the viability of different types of heat pumps at leisure centres and discussions are ongoing regarding obtaining necessary funding to implement this.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to identify ways to improve building energy management systems to reduce waste 	<p>LED lights have been installed in multi storey car parks and in some open space areas.</p> <p>A number of schedule settings have been set up on the heating and air conditioning system within district council offices</p> <p>Building Energy Management system settings have been reviewed.</p> <p>The Display Energy Certificates, which can be viewed on our website, indicate the Council building's improved energy efficiency since 2019.</p> <p>Energy efficiency measures have been implemented at Leisure Centres in the districts including installing pool covers at North Herts Leisure Centre and replacing pool covers at Hitchin Swimming Centre, and updating and installing LED lighting throughout the facilities run by Stevenage Leisure Ltd.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve building insulation and conduct lighting surveys to reduce energy outputs 	<p>Pool covers installed at North Herts Leisure Centre and pool covers replaced at Hitchin Swimming Centre in 2021</p> <p>Update and install LED lighting throughout SLL facilities in 2021</p> <p>Leisure facilities have had a mechanical and electrical (M&E) survey completed. This will give more detail on energy renewal possibilities</p> <p>An M&E survey of Hitchin Town Hall and North Herts Museum has been completed</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase incorporation of green clauses in leases and licenses for NHC's property estate (e.g. encouraging tenants to consider whole life carbon assessments when selecting construction methods or materials in their leased property) 	<p>Estates & Asset Management has placed increased emphasis on introducing green clauses in leases and other property agreements. The aim has been to promote consideration by tenants of the operational energy efficiency of their leased properties and the implications of embodied carbon when selecting materials or methods planned for use in building alterations.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the environmental, economic, and social sustainability principles presented in NHC's Property Acquisition & Development Strategy when appraising prospective property acquisitions, to ensure pre-acquisition due diligence is comprehensive and not solely focused on financial drivers 	<p>Due diligence enquiries made to property vendor on energy efficiency credentials of prospective property purchase. To promote robust decision-making on buying commercial property by extending the appraisal beyond pure financial criteria.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and progress on-site generation of electricity from solar or wind 	<p>Solar PV panels have been installed on the roof of the District Council Offices (Nov 2021).</p> <p>We have commissioned a net zero roadmap to be produced and are investigating relevant options for other council sites, including leisure centres.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities for the sustainable heating of swimming pools 	<p>The policy team has been researching the viability of different types of heat pumps at leisure centres and discussions are ongoing regarding obtaining necessary funding to implement this.</p> <p>Report from OnGen (Provided through Energy Hub) completed looking at renewable energy proposals including solar PV options on 5 sites.</p> <p>A project to install solar thermal panels to heat Royston Leisure Centre's pools has been approved. This is due to take place in 2022/23.</p>
<p>Offsetting</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantify how much land we would need to plant trees on to offset 5% of the Council's 2019/20 carbon emissions, and work towards this goal as is feasible, both as area planting and single specimen planting 	<p><i>Pending</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to retain and preserve scrub and woodland edges to protect trees and maintain natural boundaries to woodlands 	<p><i>Pending</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where appropriate, change grass verge cutting regimes to allow more plant species to grow 	<p>The contract with John O'Connor (grounds maintenance service) was renegotiated in 2021 to include more environmentally friendly practices such as cutting highway verges less frequently.</p> <p>Budget confirmed and £25k allocated for implementation of additional wilding schemes from those set out in the Wilding Audit prepared for the council by Countryside Management (Feb 2022)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more wildflower areas across the district 	<p>Areas of grass that were previously mown have been allowed to grow wild during the Summer months in 2021 and 2022. Sites that have areas designated for wild meadows include areas designated as Local Nature Reserves as well as the sites below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avenue Park, Baldock • Clothall Common, Baldock • Baldock Road Recreation Ground, Letchworth Garden City • Letchworth Gate, Letchworth Garden City • Jackmans Central Playing Field, Letchworth Garden City • Cadwell Lane Playing Field, Hitchin • Butts Close, Hitchin • Walsworth Common, Hitchin • Wilbury Road Recreation Ground, Letchworth Garden City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to strengthen hedgerows and have them connect fragmented habitats 	<p><i>Pending</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In accordance with the Council's 2019 resolution, continue replacing all future operational vehicles leased or purchased by the Council with Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) or zero emission vehicles until the last non-ULEV vehicle leases expire (2022); and encourage contractors to adopt similar measures 	<p>Vehicles are being reviewed as they come up for renewal. The Council's fleet is made up of 15 vehicles, with one new electric vehicle received in 2022, and three others currently on order.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin transitioning to zero emission vehicles as leases come up for expiry from 2025 	<p>Four electric vehicle charging points have been installed at the District Council Offices to charge council fleet electric vehicles.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce staff and Councillor business travel through use of Zoom and similar technologies as much as possible 	<p>Throughout 2021 and 2022, meetings have continued to be held virtually and as hybrid meetings.</p> <p>Laptop rollout completed in 2021, for staff and Councillors, to enable video conferencing and hybrid working between home and office</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce staff commuting through home working as much as practical 	<p>Policies have been put in place to encourage staff to work from home more, post-pandemic, and reduce travel to meetings to lower emissions.</p> <p>This includes the changes in the flexible working policy which allows staff to request flexible working arrangements from day one of employment, and the laptop rollout to enable hybrid working between home and office.</p> <p>Every month in 2021, articles have been published in the staff newsletter, encouraging staff to take action to reduce their environmental impact and personal emissions including reducing gas, electricity water use as well as</p>

	encouraging other environmentally positive behaviour changes
• Explore opportunities around low-emission refuse freighters	Vehicle demonstration day held on 15th October 2021. Further work is ongoing to assess the viability of specific vehicle types and associated infrastructure in advance of vehicle replacement in 2025.
• Explore the creation of a 5-Year Plan to reduce emissions from the waste fleet	RCVs have all been fitted with additional technology to monitor driver telematics. We are in the data collection phase and it is hoped that providing information and training to drivers will help reduce carbon emissions as part of the service Carbon Management Plan.
Explore Options for the preparation of an evaluation, updated each year showing: • Carbon savings that have been achieved since the 2019/20 baseline • The savings identified to make progress towards the carbon neutral by 2030 target • The savings still to be identified	The Corporate Policy Team is producing a carbon emission estimate for the Council's emissions from 2021. This will be comparable to the baseline estimate (2019/20). A consultant has been commissioned to produce a road map to net zero to identify a timeline and actions that can be taken to achieve our net zero targets. This work is ongoing.
Continue to consult with the public and with interest groups on strategies for achieving zero carbon emissions by 2030	The Cabinet Panel on the Environment continues to engage with individuals and the community, act as a sounding board on community ideas and projects and seek evidence and views as appropriate.
Additional Action <i>This action has been achieved in addition to our commitments outlined in the climate change strategy.</i>	Last planting season (2020-2021) 159 trees were planted, from standards to extra heavy standards. This year's planting season (2021-2022) includes 103 standards to extra heavy standards and 250 mixed whips
Additional Action <i>This action has been achieved in addition to our commitments outlined in the climate change strategy.</i>	A carbon emissions assessment was completed of our most high-energy using sites, vehicle fleet, mileage reimbursement system, staff commuting, council waste and council water usage. This includes data from 2019/20 to be used as a baseline.
Additional Action <i>This action has been achieved in addition to our commitments outlined in the climate change strategy.</i>	Work has continued within the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) to lead on the development of a Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan for the county. Actions plans have now been published for water, biodiversity, carbon and transport and can be found on the HCCSP web page .
Additional Action <i>This action has been achieved in addition to our commitments outlined in the climate change strategy.</i>	At Hitchin Town Hall, investment is being made in glassware and related commercial cleaning equipment, whilst at events for which glassware is inappropriate (such as busy, lively concerts etc) plastic vessels have already been replaced with compostable alternatives. The North Herts Museum café meanwhile continues to maximise the use of recycled and recyclable materials and minimising any use of plastics.

Additional Action <i>This action has been achieved in addition to our commitments outlined in the climate change strategy.</i>	The hydraulic lifts, which were at the end of their life were replaced with a modern electric traction lift in 2021. An estimated 40% energy saving is expected in the operating costs of the lifts.
Additional Action <i>This action has been achieved in addition to our commitments outlined in the climate change strategy.</i>	The Council is working to produce a wilding audit on Council owned land using the DEFRA metric, and is seeking advice on what further habitat creation could be provided on Council owned sites

Enabling Carbon Savings

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the 'Sustainable North Hertfordshire' programme, work to develop and support policies that encourage electric vehicle use and other 'cleaner air' initiatives across the district, including: 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing more electric car charging facilities in our car parks 	<p>Capital bid for EV chargers for 22/23 - bid was prepared for government funding to cover 75% of costs of installing additional charging points in our car parks (plus, proposed to seek remaining 25% from private sector)</p> <p>The Council is working towards having EV charging points in each of the Council car parks. This is intended for resident's off-street car parking.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring the possibility of making it cheaper for zero emission vehicles to use Council car parks 	<i>Pending</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the County Council to improve the provision of on-street Electric Vehicle (EV) charging 	County-wide EV Charging Strategy – Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) has provided North Herts Council with access to the EV Ready Toolkit. This mapping application is helping officers identify where EV charge points will be needed to serve households that do not have off-street parking, and hence will be unable to charge an EV at home. HCC is consulting with Local Authorities on guidance and conditions on providing on-street charge points. This aligns with HCC's central policy of preferring destination (workplaces, supermarkets, leisure centres, etc) and hub (car parks, fuel stations and dedicated charging stations) locations to on-street.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring the opportunities for a holistic approach to a town-wide Electric Vehicle strategy which will include all users and operators, both public and private 	<i>Pending</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with other public and private entities/partners to improve provision of EV charging 	The Council has applied for central government funding to install Electric Vehicle charging points.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Progressing the implementation of a better cycle network in North Herts, linking the district and beyond 	<p>The Council is working with Hertfordshire County Council to produce a cycling infrastructure plan.</p> <p>The draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan is being finalised to for public consultation, following detailed review by Herts County Council and North Herts Council officers. It is expected that the consultation will start in early July and run for six weeks. In combination with the Growth and Transport Plan, North Herts will have a large array of schemes to develop and deliver as and when funding becomes available – from central government and Section 106 agreements with developers.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Working with the relevant portfolio holders to prepare an annual Electric Vehicle Action Plan 	<p><i>Pending</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further to the requirement for all new and replaced taxi vehicles to be ultra-low emissions from 2028, explore how we can support transitions to low emission vehicles before this date and to zero emission vehicles when the necessary infrastructure is in place 	<p><i>Pending</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that masterplans and planning applications for new development are designed around streets and routes for active travel (rather than cars) and create walkable neighbourhoods 	<p>To be determined following the adoption of the Local Plan</p> <p>Work is underway to produce SPDs including for biodiversity and sustainability</p> <p>Sustainability principles have been taken to Cabinet in advance of SPDS (June 2022)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how a Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) could encourage and provide guidance on how new development can use resources more efficiently, reduce carbon emissions, incorporate carbon sequestration measures, and adapt to climate change 	<p>To be determined following the adoption of the Local Plan</p> <p>Work is underway to produce SPDs including for biodiversity and sustainability</p> <p>Sustainability principles have been taken to Cabinet in advance of SPDS (June 2022)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a standard within a Sustainability SPD to support more energy efficiency buildings to the equivalent of Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes 	<p>To be determined following the adoption of the Local Plan</p> <p>Work is underway to produce SPDs including for biodiversity and sustainability</p> <p>Sustainability principles have been taken to Cabinet in advance of SPDS (June 2022)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set out comprehensive planning guidance within a Sustainability SPD on reducing carbon emissions, adapting, and mitigating climate change 	<p>To be determined following the adoption of the Local Plan</p> <p>Work is underway to produce SPDs including for biodiversity and sustainability</p> <p>Sustainability principles have been taken to Cabinet in advance of SPDS (June 2022)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require Passivhaus, BREEAM, or similar standards for all developments on land sold by the Council 	<p>During 2021, negotiations were underway regarding the sale of North Hertfordshire's freehold interest in land south of Clare Crescent, Baldock. This has acted as a test case of requiring higher environmental standards and has resulted</p>

	<p>in some passivhaus compliant elements being included. More information can be found on our website: 9. Record of decision made under delegated authority - NHDC Estates 31st January 2022 - PART 1.pdf (north-herts.gov.uk)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore how a Biodiversity SPD could help to provide a clear ecological network plan, further enhance, and create new habitat (e.g. woodlands, grasslands, and hedgerows) within new development and on Council owned land as part of an offsetting strategy to deliver biodiversity net gain 	<p>To be determined following the adoption of the Local Plan</p> <p>Work is underway to produce SPDs including for biodiversity and sustainability</p> <p>Sustainability principles have been taken to Cabinet in advance of SPDS (June 2022)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy to identify where new green spaces and corridors should be provided as part of new development to support further carbon sequestration, biodiversity, and flood and surface water management 	<p><i>Pending</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signpost residents to funding for retrofitting of insulation, heating, and energy reduction features to improve the energy efficiency of existing homes 	<p>Warmworks (government funded scheme for retrofitting and increasing energy efficiency) and Energy Efficient Home Scheme (includes funding retrofitting cavity wall and loft insulation) have been promoted to residents on Outlook spring edition 2022 as well as other publications.</p> <p>Schemes for various businesses are being promoted. There are currently (June 2022) two main schemes for environmental improvements, one providing grants up to £5k and a larger one providing grants up to £25k</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobby government to introduce more funding for retrofitting of insulation, heating, and energy reduction features, for both privately-owned and social housing 	<p><i>Pending</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Herts Waste Partnership (HWP) to investigate how we could secure the use of anaerobic digestion to deal with food waste from 2024 	<p><i>Pending</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure recycling and waste collection arrangements promote reduction and reuse 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support community tree planting initiatives 	<p>Completed a 10,000 free tree giveaway to North Herts residents (Autumn 2021 - Spring 2022)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities for Solar schemes for residents, businesses, and community groups – such as those run by West Suffolk Council and South Cambridgeshire Council 	<p>A Solar Together Project (group buying scheme for residents) has been arranged to go live in Autumn 2022.</p>
<p>Additional Action</p> <p><i>This action has been achieved in addition to our commitments outlined in the climate change strategy.</i></p>	<p>Sustainable Travel Towns (STT) – The Officer Working Groups (OWGs) for the Letchworth and Royston STTs are preparing a draft governance framework for each STT. Once adopted, the OWGs will develop an implementation plan based on the Outline Plans.</p>
<p>Additional Action</p>	<p>Working with Hertfordshire County Council on bus service improvement plan to encourage and enable sustainable travel</p>

This action has been achieved in addition to our commitments outlined in the climate change strategy.

Inspiring the Community

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable residents to assess their carbon emissions, comparing them with the district and best practice 	<p>Carbon calculators have been considered by the policy team and this has been raised within the cabinet panel on the environment (November 2021). The Council has shared and publicised the WWF carbon calculator to residents and staff in 2022 and has promoted this at local green festivals and events, encouraging individuals to assess their own carbon emissions and receive personalised suggestions to reduce their carbon footprint.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage residents to make behaviour changes by highlighting positive actions that can be taken, and informing them of more environmentally friendly options 	<p>Throughout 2021, a monthly article was produced on eco-friendly actions published to staff and residents with individual suggestions also being shared as social media posts.</p> <p>The council prepares a quarterly communications plan highlighting relevant environmental dates to inform residents of what environmental action the Council is taking as well as highlighting what individuals can do to contribute (2022)</p> <p>The council is working with HCC on Sustainable Travel Towns to encourage behavioural change for sustainable travel uptake</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote zero carbon construction (timber buildings, offsetting of carbon, etc.) 	<p><i>Pending</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run food waste awareness programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of waste awareness officer who was in post during 2021. • Ongoing waste minimisation communications, including food waste pledge • Creation of waste warriors Facebook page to encourage residents to reduce waste
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run waste reduction awareness programmes and continue to support community plastic free initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of waste awareness officer who was in post during 2021. • Ongoing waste minimisation communications • Creation of waste warriors Facebook page to encourage residents to reduce waste
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities for certification/awards for Green/Sustainable businesses 	<p>The Council has been liaising with local BIDs to understand what support would be helpful for local businesses to address the climate crisis, including the possibility of certification / awards for green/ sustainable businesses.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the possibility of tree planting awards 	<p><i>Pending</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with the public to identify further means by which the Council can assist the residents and businesses of North Herts to achieve the target of zero emissions across the district by 2050 	<p>The Cabinet Panel on the Environment continues to engage with individuals and the community, act as a sounding board on community ideas and projects and seek evidence and views as appropriate. Cabinet Panel on the Environment North Herts Council (north-herts.gov.uk)</p>

- Develop communications to raise awareness of the benefits of retrofitting of insulation, heating and energy reduction features, and the long-term cost-saving potential

The council is working in partnership with Warmworks and has promoted the Green Homes Grant scheme to residents. This is a government grant scheme that funds a range of energy efficiency measures including. This information has most recently been included on the council's [Easing the squeeze: help with the cost of living](#) web page (Published April 2022).

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CABINET 13th December 2022

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: North Herts Council's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2027

REPORT OF: *Policy and Communities Manager*

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: *Executive Member of Community Engagement*

COUNCIL PRIORITY: PEOPLE FIRST; A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report proposes a refreshed Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and revised Equality objectives to comply with the specific duty to publish one or more as set out by the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the Cabinet be recommended to:
- 2.2. Approve the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2027 as attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.3. Approve the Equality objectives as set out below:
1. Work with young people through youth engagement to make it easier for them to have their voices heard in local decision-making and democracy.
 2. Improve our engagement with marginalised, seldom heard, and new communities to make it easier for them to participate in local decision-making and democracy, and to have their views and experiences heard by the council.
 3. Improve our understanding of broader EDI issues and their impacts, such as neurodiversity and economic disadvantage; as well as the intersections between inequalities, using our Inclusion Group as a channel.
 4. Achieve consistency in measuring the likely equality impacts of our emerging policies and services.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The previous Corporate Equality Strategy (2017) was revised to ensure consistency with the latest public sector equality legislation and obligations. The refresh of the Strategy reflects the Council's ongoing commitment to fulfil our legal obligations as set out in the Equality Act and to set out the new equality objectives.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 That the Strategy remains as it is. The Strategy would not align with the current relevant Council priorities with the Council plan (People First and A Brighter Future Together). Additionally, since 2017 the environment in which councils operate has substantially altered - i.e., the ongoing impact of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1 No external consultation has been undertaken in preparation of this report. The Executive Member for Community Engagement (Cllr Judi Billing), The Leader of the Council, Corporate Policy team, and Service Director for Legal and Community were consulted on the revisions of the Strategy.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 14th February 2022.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. The original Corporate Equality Strategy was agreed in 2009. The Strategy was further amended in 2017 to include any references to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the obligations that it placed on public bodies when shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to employees. The previous iterations did not also reflect the demographic changes of the community since they were published. Specifically, the Census data of 2011 and latest Office for National Statistics data.
- 7.2. Following the sad passing of Cllr Judi Billing MBE, the foreword for this Strategy stands as a tribute to her work as the Executive Member for Community Engagement, and a reminder of her passion for equality and the communities she served. This passion is captured in the Strategy and its objectives, which stand as only a small part of Judi's legacy.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty was created by the Equality Act 2010, and replaces the race, disability and gender equality duties. It is supported by the specific duties contained in The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, which have replaced the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011.
- 8.2 The Strategy and objectives commit the Council to deliver good practice on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as a community leader, service provider and employer. As a statutory document it sets out the scope, legal responsibilities (both general and specific), commitment and equality objectives.
- 8.3 The Strategy proposes the following Equality objectives:
- Work with young people through youth engagement to make it easier for them to have their voices heard in local decision-making and democracy.

- Improve our engagement with marginalised, seldom heard, and new communities to make it easier for them to participate in local decision-making and democracy, and to have their views and experiences heard by the council.

These groups may include but are not limited to:

Black and minority ethnic groups; refugees and asylum seekers; disabled people.

- Improve our understanding of broader EDI issues and their impacts, such as neurodiversity and economic disadvantage; as well as the intersections between inequalities, using our Inclusion Group as a channel.
- Achieve consistency in measuring the likely equality impacts of our emerging policies and services.

8.4 In direct reference to these objectives the Strategy also proposes the following measures:

Objective	Measures
1. Work with young people through youth engagement to make it easier for them to have their voices heard in local decision-making and democracy.	Engage with 20 youth organisations per year. Schools' visits with Councillors on a termly basis.
2. Improve our engagement with marginalised, seldom heard, and new communities to make it easier for them to participate in local decision-making and democracy, and to have their views and experiences heard by the Council.	Engage with 40 organisations representing marginalised/new/seldom heard groups per year. Support events which provide a platform for the experiences of marginalised, new, and/or seldom heard communities.
3. Improve our understanding of broader EDI issues and their impacts, such as neurodiversity and economic disadvantage; as well as the intersections between inequalities, using our Inclusion Group as a channel.	Inclusion Group meeting focused on neurodiversity during 2023/24. Inclusion Group review of topics for consideration during 2023/24.
4. Achieve consistency in measuring the likely equality impacts of our emerging policies and services.	Development of a Council-wide approach to Equality Impact Assessments during 2023/24.

8.5 Our commitment is underpinned by the current People First priority and the Brighter Future Together priority, laid out in the Council Plan¹. These priorities states that we value all our residents, businesses, staff, contractors, councillors, and other partners, and place them at the heart of everything; and that we plan for the long-term so that the district continues to thrive.

¹ [Council Plan page](#)

- 8.6 The formation of the officer lead Inclusion Group seeks to drive the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda forward within the organisation. The Group is open to all officers and aims to gain a greater understanding of the perspective of all employees. This includes the experiences of those who share a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010. The group is also able to feedback and propose actions to the Leadership Team.
- 8.7 Further information also accompanies this report to assist Members, in the form of Appendix B – Progress to Date, Appendix C – EDI Strategy glossary and Appendix D – Equality profile of North Hertfordshire (the last being partly based on the new 2021 census data, as the ONS is yet to publish some of the data sets).

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Cabinet's terms of reference include at 5.6.1 the exercise of the following function "to prepare and agree to implement policies and strategies other than those reserved to Council".
- 9.2 Listed authorities are required to prepare and publish one or more objectives which they consider they should achieve the aims as set out in paragraph (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of s.149 of the Act (i.e., to eliminate discrimination, harassment victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act, advance opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those that do not.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. There are no direct revenue, capital or financial implications arising from this report.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 NHDC strives to offer equality of opportunity in its service provision. Public authorities are legally obliged to promote this equality of provision and not to merely avoid discrimination. There is a risk if this provision is not offered then non-compliance with legislation could lead to the EHRC taking steps to encourage compliance before moving to enforcement, as outlined above. This is also the potential unequal treatment of staff and the wider North Hertfordshire community. As such, the Council would not be able to achieve its commitment of achieving equality of opportunity as an employer, a provider of services and as a community leader.
- 11.2 As long as the Council has a robust strategy and processes in place to demonstrate that due regard is being shown, then the risk of non-compliance is well managed.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2 The Equality Strategy directly demonstrates the Council's obligation to show due regard to equality legislation in its decision-making process and service provision. As part of this

ongoing function, Equality Impact assessments (EqIA) will be conducted throughout the civic year.

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 The Corporate Policy team have responsibility for the maintenance of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy and other specific corporate actions. The other Council actions identified in the Strategy are / will become a part of the services provided to the community. The formation of the officer lead Inclusion group seeks to drive the equality, diversity, and inclusion agenda forward within the organisation. This is supported by existing officer resource.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1 Appendix A – North Herts Council Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy
Appendix B – Progress to Date
Appendix C – EDI Strategy glossary
Appendix D – Equality profile of North Hertfordshire

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1 Council plan 2022 -2027– [Council Plan | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/council-plan)

Corporate Equality Strategy 2017- 2022 - [Equality and diversity | North Herts Council
\(north-herts.gov.uk\)](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity)

Public Sector Equality Act 2010 - [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/154)

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy

Foreword

Despite progress made on various equalities issues over recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic, closely followed by the Cost of Living crisis, has both highlighted and exacerbated serious health and economic inequalities within our communities, and these are likely to deepen during the next months and years. As well as this, other forms of disadvantage, discrimination and inequality continue to exist, and manifest themselves in many different ways and in a range of contexts every single day.

The Council has a key role to play in advancing equality, fostering good relations between different groups within our community, and helping those who are disadvantaged to feel heard, represented and given practical help and support in our systems of local democracy and the decisions that are made here.

Beyond equality and the duties placed on us by The Equality Act, working to improve diversity and inclusion can make a significant difference to the experiences of our residents, staff and councillors, helping them feel welcome and valued for their differences.

Over the last year, I have been particularly proud of North Herts' response to welcoming and supporting refugees from Ukraine, and of all the other work we have undertaken to engage with a wide range of communities. We want everyone to have the ability to actively participate in local democracy and civic life, and to feel that the Council both represents and supports them. This is vital as a large contributor towards our Council objective of putting People First.

I am therefore pleased to introduce the Council's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy for 2022-2027. The Strategy sets out our objectives within the district, as a promoter of electoral democracy, and as an employer.

Cllr Judi Billing MBE

(Executive Member for Community Engagement May 2019 – November 2022)

1. Introduction

This Strategy sets out North Herts Council's approach to equality, diversity and Inclusion and builds on our previous Corporate Equality Strategy (2017), demonstrating our continued commitment towards fulfilling our legal obligations as set out in the Equality Act 2010, as well as striving to go beyond our legal duties in advancing equality, celebrating diversity, and promoting inclusion across our services and workforce.

We recognise that disadvantage and discrimination are still experienced across the district and that people may experience more than one form of discrimination at some stage in their lives. North Herts Council are resolute that disadvantage and discrimination have no place in our district, and we will work within our powers to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups, to work towards a brighter future together.

As an employer, the Council is committed to equality of opportunity and recognises the benefits of a diverse workforce and inclusive culture. This can help all staff feel valued, and allows for a wide-range of skills, ideas, and perspectives, and a better knowledge and understanding of the different communities that make up North Herts.

This strategy sets out our vision for furthering equality, diversity, and inclusion at the council and within the district.

2. Understanding equality, diversity and inclusion

- **Equality** means that all individuals are treated fairly and have access to the same opportunities, resources, and services as others. Equal opportunities require equitable provisions.
- **Equity** means providing various levels of support and assistance depending on specific needs and abilities. This requires eliminating barriers which may prevent individuals from accessing equal opportunities, as well as providing appropriate support to ensure that equal outcomes are accessible to everyone. Individual needs may therefore need to be met in different ways.
- **Diversity** is the difference of characteristics between individuals. Diversity within the Council is employing, serving and engaging with people who have a range of different backgrounds, experiences, and ideas. We recognise, respect, and celebrate the added value that differences bring.
- **Inclusion** is actively providing equal access to opportunities and resources; ensuring that nobody is excluded or marginalised due to their identity, personal characteristics, or background. An inclusive environment is one where everyone feels welcomed, valued, able to contribute, and able to succeed.

3. Scope: Who does the strategy apply to?

This Policy applies to all those who live, work in, and visit North Hertfordshire.

This includes:

- Elected Members / Councillors
- Council Employees, volunteers, agency workers, consultants
- Suppliers, sub-contractors and partners in supply chain
- Residents of North Hertfordshire / North Herts Council's service-users

We all have a right to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect. We are also each responsible for ensuring that our own actions and behaviours are fair and that we respect the dignity of others.

4. Our Legal responsibilities

North Herts Council will continue to fulfil all legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act'). This key piece of legislation protects people from discrimination based on nine protected characteristics:

• Age • Disability • Gender Reassignment • Race • Religion or Belief (including lack of belief) • Sex • Sexual Orientation • Pregnancy and Maternity • Marriage and Civil Partnership

The Act legally protects people from direct and indirect discrimination, both in the workplace, and in wider society. The Act sets out that it is unlawful to treat someone in a way that discriminates, harasses, or victimises because of a protected characteristic. The Act also sets out duties and provisions to ensure the promotion of equality in public services.

SIDE NOTE: 'Public authorities also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership'

status. This means that the first aim of the duty applies to this characteristic but that the other aims (advancing equality and fostering good relations) do not apply.’)

4.1 Public Sector Equality Duty

The General Equality Duty under the Act requires public authorities to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work. This includes policymaking, service delivery, and in relation to employees.

The General Equality Duty requires the majority of public bodies, including councils, to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

This means:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life, or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

- **Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not**

This means: Tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

Having ‘due regard’ means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. To make this consideration fairly and transparently, we conduct equality analyses on all decisions taken by Council, Cabinet, Committee, or delegated decision. This means that for each decision we examine the potential outcomes, impacts, and unintended consequences for the various groups and individuals who may be affected, and whether it will be fully effective. Doing this helps us understand how a decision should be revised and improved to mitigate or avoid possible negative effects. As well as complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, this works towards our Council objectives of putting ‘People First’ and ‘A Brighter Future Together’, and implementing decisions which have a positive impact on our residents.

To help us understand residents’ views, the Council regularly holds consultations on various issues and proposals. Where relevant those participating in consultation will be asked to provide information on their personal characteristics. This is done voluntarily, with no obligation to provide the information. Where information is provided it will enable us to understand the extent to which our services are accessible to different groups of residents and support us in conducting these equality analyses.

The Council will use any data provided sensitively and in accordance with the Data Protection Act and with our Data Protection Policy. Information given will never be used to identify an individual.

We also conduct and publish an annual Corporate Cumulative Equality Impact Assessment of all decisions which identify equality implications, which allows us to monitor trends and

comply with the General Equality Duty. We will provide updates on our equality objectives as part of this review.

4.2 Specific Duties

The Council, as well as other public bodies, is also subject to The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017. The specific duties require the Council to:

- Publish gender pay gap information
- Publish information to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty
- Set equality objectives, at least every four years.

North Herts Council will continue to fulfil our general obligations under the Act. This includes:

- Adherence to the statutory codes drafted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission
- The duty to make reasonable adjustments
- The provisions relating to enforcement
- The provisions relating to positive action
- The general and specific public sector equality duties

5. Who is responsible for equalities?

Equality is the responsibility of every Councillor, employee of North Herts Council, and any other person or organisation employed by the Council to work or to deliver services on its behalf.

The Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agenda is designed to be embedded at the core of service delivery and our organisational culture. Each service area and every staff member therefore have a role to play in taking responsibility to advance equality and challenge discrimination.

- Elected Members will promote our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in their day-to-day work.
- The Council has a responsibility towards its elected Members, including supporting policies which enable and encourage diversity amongst those standing for election, and considering adaptations that can be made to local democracy systems to support participation of our members (e.g Councillor Parental Leave Policy).
- The Leadership Team and the Inclusion Group¹ will be responsible for overall management and direction of EDI commitments.
- The Corporate Policy Team will oversee this policy, monitor progress against our objectives, and provide an annual cumulative equality assessment.
- Managers will ensure that EDI is core to service delivery and employee management.
- Contractors, suppliers and potential suppliers will be expected to adhere to our EDI commitments and the statutory duties relating to this.

¹ The officer-lead Inclusion Group seeks to drive the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda forward within the organisation. The Group is open to all officers and aims to gain an understanding of the perspective of all employees and what can be done to make the Council more inclusive. This includes the experiences of those who share a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010. The group is also able to feedback and propose actions to the Leadership Team.

- Staff will be aware of the Council values, and duties under the Act, and will work to uphold the principles of reducing discrimination and harassment, and fostering good relations between different groups of people.
- Our service users also have a responsibility to treat our staff with dignity and respect, and to let us know if they require assistance or adjustments to enable them to better access our services.

Promoting diversity, preventing inequality, and tackling discrimination is not solely the responsibility of the Council. We will also work with wider partnerships and organisations to promote an equal and inclusive approach across the whole of the District.

6. Our Commitment

Beyond our legal obligations, and as part of delivering our council priorities, we are committed to embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion into all areas of our work. This commitment includes ensuring that we are welcoming and accessible to all our residents; that we promote equality, diversity, and inclusion amongst our staff and elected Members; that we consider how to best engage with seldom heard groups and recognise that some EDI issues relate to characteristics not covered by the Act (e.g socio-economic status); and that we remain open to ideas and feedback from Members, employees, and residents as to how we can further progress EDI.

Our commitment is underpinned by the current People First priority, laid out in the Council Plan². This priority states that we value all our residents, businesses, staff, contractors, councillors, and other partners, and place them at the heart of everything we do. By fulfilling this commitment, we strive towards our Council priority of A Brighter Future Together.

7. Our Objectives

Following feedback from our recent engagement work, we propose objectives around two key groups within the community, each of whom share a protected characteristic as defined by the Act; as well as objectives around the council as an employer and the way we measure the impacts of our work:

1. Work with young people through youth engagement to make it easier for them to have their voices heard in local decision-making and democracy.
2. Improve our engagement with marginalised, seldom heard, and new communities to make it easier for them to participate in local decision-making and democracy, and to have their views and experiences heard by the council.

These groups may include but are not limited to:

Black and minority ethnic groups; refugees and asylum seekers; disabled people.

3. Improve our understanding of broader EDI issues and their impacts, such as neurodiversity and economic disadvantage; as well as the intersections between inequalities, using our Inclusion Group as a channel.
4. Achieve consistency in measuring the likely equality impacts of our emerging policies and services.

We recognise the need for leadership, commitment, and engagement from elected Members and staff at various levels to drive forward our objectives, as well as the need to find new ways of engaging with our communities to meet our first two objectives.

² [Council Plan page](#)

8. Measures

Objective	Measures
1. Work with young people through youth engagement to make it easier for them to have their voices heard in local decision-making and democracy.	Engage with 20 youth organisations per year. Schools visits with Councillors on a termly basis.
2. Improve our engagement with marginalised, seldom heard, and new communities to make it easier for them to participate in local decision-making and democracy, and to have their views and experiences heard by the Council.	Engage with 40 organisations representing marginalised/new/seldom heard groups per year. Support events which provide a platform for the experiences of marginalised, new, and/or seldom heard communities.
3. Improve our understanding of broader EDI issues and their impacts, such as neurodiversity and economic disadvantage; as well as the intersections between inequalities, using our Inclusion Group as a channel.	Inclusion Group meeting focused on neurodiversity during 2023/24. Inclusion Group review of topics for consideration during 2023/24.
4. Achieve consistency in measuring the likely equality impacts of our emerging policies and services.	Development of a Council-wide approach to Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) during 2023/24.

9. Conclusion

The council is committed to continuing the advancement of equality, diversity, and inclusion across our services and workforce. We will continue to reflect upon our past actions and decisions and seek feedback from our residents, service users, and employees to enable us to think further about how we can drive forward this agenda over the coming years. This Strategy will be reviewed as relevant legislation and developments arise.

APPENDICES:

A: Progress To Date

B: EDI Policy Glossary

C: Equality Profile of North Herts (Protected characteristics)

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Progress To Date

- Adoption of an anonymised recruitment process. This means that applicants' names and other key characteristics such as gender, ethnic background (where this information has been given), school and university are removed from the job application before it is considered. This is done with the aim of limiting the potential for bias relating to these characteristics to affect the decision of the hiring manager.
- Use of an online tool to check that the language of job descriptions is as neutral as possible and not likely to dissuade certain groups of people from applying.
- In line with the Employment Service Two Ticks Scheme, all applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria for a job vacancy are invited to interview.
- Included Equality and Diversity Training in our corporate induction training for staff, and courses on The Equality Act; Equality in the Workplace; and Unconscious Bias on our e-learning platform. The training informs staff about the duties of local authorities with regards to equality, treating people with respect and dignity in the workplace, how to respond to situations which may arise in the workplace, and how to support neurodiverse employees, amongst other topics.
- Included information on equalities in the employee handbook, the Equality and Diversity Intranet page, and in the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- Publish an Annual Gender Pay Gap Report and an Equalities Report which indicates the profile of the workforce, including the breakdown of staff's protected characteristics and the protected characteristics of those who apply to our job vacancies. [Workforce profile | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/workforce-profile).
- Regular Equal Pay Audits which help us ensure that our pay is fair, by reviewing areas where inequalities are likely to exist and analysing the protected characteristics against pay grades.
- Equalities questions asked of prospective suppliers of goods/services above a certain threshold during the procurement process, via the Selection Questionnaire.
- Consider equality implications for all decisions taken by Council, Cabinet Committees, and delegated decisions. Officers are required to conduct a fuller Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) if implications are identified in the initial consideration.
- Conduct an Annual Cumulative Equality Impact Assessment, which involves reviewing Council and Cabinet key decisions and other relevant reports which conducted a full Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), to gain a broader view of the overall impacts of council decisions and identify any potential issues.
- The Shaping our Future initiative which has set in motion work to develop the organisation, including securing a diverse, inclusive, and resilient workforce who can meet the needs of our communities. This work has included embedding revised organisational values, and reviewing recruitment processes.

- The creation of The Inclusion Group which looks to understand the experiences of staff, particularly in relation to the protected characteristics or other vectors of disadvantage; and to explore how inclusion could be improved across the council. The group also seek to gauge levels of awareness of equality issues amongst staff and identify training needs.
- Compiled a list of Inclusion contacts who staff can contact to raise questions and concerns, and share experiences in confidence. Contacts can signpost staff to further advice and support where needed.
- Joined Employers for Carers, a forum which is part of Carers UK. Membership gives the council access to resources for employees and managers who have carers in their teams.
- Staff access to Mental Health First Aiders, the Employee Advice Service, (including counselling), and to hold Mental Health mornings to support staff health and wellbeing.
- Creation of a Councillor Parental Leave Policy to support those members who need to take time off for maternity, paternity, shared parental leave, or adoption leave.
- Identified tackling Violence Against Women and Girls as one of our Strategic Priorities for 2022-23 in our Community Safety Action Plan.
- Distribution of Community Grants to not-for-profit organisations working for the benefit of North Herts communities, including support for mental health, those in food poverty, children, older people, and minority groups. (Also including the Covid-19 Community Support Fund).
- Working with organisations like North Herts Centre for Voluntary Services (CVS) and Herts Welcomes Refugees to create links between groups and assist events to support refugees.
- North Herts Museum holds a range of diverse exhibitions and events to increase representation and awareness of groups such as the LGBTQ+ community and British South Asians.
- Leading the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network's policy lab on arts and culture, and the role this can play in improving community cohesion and fostering good relations between different groups.
- Designated Safeguarding Officers to help those with safeguarding concerns to make a referral; and all staff required to undertake safeguarding training at a level relevant to their role.
- Training on Modern Day Slavery made mandatory for all staff, and the inclusion of modern slavery and human trafficking in safeguarding training.
- Third Party Reporting Centre for hate crimes, allowing residents an option to report a hate crime without having to go directly to the police. Hate Crime Champions are able to assist recording and referring details of the crime on to police.

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Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy - Glossary

A

Accessibility: Where information, activities, and physical or digital environments are made as easy as possible to use, access, and understand for as many people as possible.

Age and Ageism: Age is one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, meaning that it is generally unlawful to discriminate against someone because of their age.

Ageism can be defined as attitudes, actions, and institutional structures, which discriminate against or treat someone less favourably due to their age.

Anti-Semitism: The council has adopted The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRC) definition of Anti-Semitism - Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

B

Belief: see Religion and belief

Bisexual or Bi: refers to a man or a woman who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of both sexes.

Bi-cultural: Bicultural identity refers to a where a person regards themselves as having two cultures. For example, British Indian.

Bias: Inclination or prejudice (sometimes unconscious) for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair.

Black: A broad term for all people with ethnic origins in the African continent.

Black Lives Matter: A social movement originating among African Americans, emphasizing basic human rights and racial equality for Black people and campaigning against various forms of racism. Abbreviations: BLM, B.L.M.

BME or BAME: An acronym that stands for Black [and Asian] & Minority Ethnic.

Though accepted by many, as with people of colour (see below), others consider these terms to be overly broad or simplistic and feel that they fail to take into account the ways in which the experiences of various minority ethnic groups differ from one another.

C

Civil Partnership: Legal recognition of a couple's relationship. Along with Marriage, Civil Partnership is one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, meaning that it is generally unlawful to discriminate against a person based on them being part of a Civil Partnership.

D

Direct discrimination: This refers to less favourable treatment because of a person's protected characteristic.

Disability: A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day

activities. Disability is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, so it is generally unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of disability.

Diversity: Diversity is recognising and valuing that individuals are unique, with each having their own values, beliefs, attitude, culture, racial background, sexuality, skills and life experience.

E

Engagement: The range of ways in which we (or another public authority) interact with our residents, other service users, and employees.

Equality: Equality refers to a situation where everyone is treated fairly and has the same opportunities, resources, and services as others. Equal opportunities require equitable provisions. (See: Equity)

Equality analysis/Equality Impact Assessment: Equality analysis involves looking at policies, strategies, actions, and decisions to consider how they may impact positively or negatively on equality or on those who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. It may also refer to looking at information related to service use, service users, or employees in order to analyse an organisation's engagement with certain groups of people. At North Herts, an Equality Impact Assessment refers to a fuller analysis which must be undertaken if the initial equality analysis highlights potentially significant impacts.

Equality information: The information that an organisation has (or will collect) about people with protected characteristics in order to help show compliance with the equality duty. This will include the findings of engagement with protected groups and others, and the effect of policies on protected groups. It may include both qualitative and quantitative information, as well as evidence of analysis that has been undertaken.

Equality objectives: A requirement to prepare, set and publish objectives is one of the specific duties set out under the equality duty. An authority's objectives should aim to further one or more aims of the equality duty.

Equality outcome: The results that individuals or groups actually achieve and are able to benefit from. For example, equal pay between men and women.

Equity: Equity refers to a situation where varying levels of support and assistance are provided, depending on specific needs and abilities. Equity requires eliminating barriers which may prevent individuals accessing equal opportunities, and as such individual needs may therefore be met in different ways.

For example: North Herts' Assisted Bin Collection Service is an additional service offered to those who, due to physical disability or mobility issues, cannot physically move or lift their bin containers to the kerbside. Whilst this additional service is not equally available to all residents, it creates **equity** by ensuring that an equal *outcome* is available to all residents. In this example the equal outcome is that everyone can have their rubbish collected on their designated bin collection day.

F

Fostering good relations: The Equality Act 2010 states that having due regard to the need to foster good relations involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

G

Gender identity: Someone's personal sense of their own gender. While sex is typically defined by someone's biological and physiological attributes, gender is considered by some to be a social construction around roles, behaviours, expressions, and identities. Many people consider their sex and gender identity to be the same or in alignment with each other, while others find that their sense of their own gender is incongruent with the sex they were considered to be at the point of their birth. People with this experience may consider themselves to be transgender and may go through a process of gender reassignment.

Some individuals identify as non-binary, meaning they consider their gender identity to fall somewhere outside of the woman/man binary. Some consider gender to exist on a spectrum, meaning there could be many different gender identities with which a person could identify. Others do not identify as having a gender at all – these people may be described as agender.

Gender reassignment: The process (typically involving a combination of surgical procedures and hormone treatment) undertaken by a transgender person in order to alter their physical sexual characteristics to match their gender identity

See also trans, transgender.

General Equality Duty: The Equality Act (2010) places a general duty on all public sector organisations to have due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

H

Harassment: Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It may also involve unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or be related to gender reassignment or sex.

I

Inclusion: Inclusion is the practice of providing access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized. As well as improving accessibility, it is about creating a welcoming and supportive environment where you value and involve everyone.

Indirect discrimination: This is when a provision, criterion, or practice is applied in a way that creates disproportionate disadvantage for a person with a protected characteristic as compared to those who do not share that characteristic, and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

For example: If staff at a workplace have to climb a flight of stairs to reach the toilet, and there are no lift facilities, this would indirectly discriminate against staff members who are unable to climb the stairs due to a physical disability or other mobility issues.

L

LGBTQ+: This is an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning. These terms are used to describe a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

M

Marriage: a formal union, and social and legal contract between two individuals that unites their lives legally, economically, and emotionally. Like Civil Partnership, it is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, meaning it is generally unlawful to discriminate against someone based on them being married.

Maternity: The period after giving birth. It is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, including as a result of breastfeeding.

Mitigation: This refers to measures which are put in place to reduce the negative impacts of a policy or decision. For example, a decision to move a council service (e.g paying for your garden waste collection) online may have negative effects on anyone who does not have a computer or internet. As such, mitigation may be to retain a method of using or purchasing the service via telephone or post.

N

Neurodiverse or Neurodivergent: Where someone's brain processes, learns, and/or behaves differently from what is considered 'typical'. Examples include autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD, and tourettes.

P

Pregnancy: The condition of being pregnant. Alongside Maternity, it is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, meaning that it is generally unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of them being pregnant.

Protected characteristics: The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine characteristics as 'protected characteristics'. These are the characteristics where evidence shows there is still significant discrimination in employment, provision of goods and services, and access to services such as education and health. Under the Equality Act, the protected characteristics are personal characteristics which are protected by discrimination law. The protected characteristics are: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or Belief; Sex; and Sexual Orientation.

Protected groups: see Protected characteristics above

Public authority: This generally refers to anyone performing a public function e.g local government. The General Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010 applies to public authorities. For this purpose, a public authority is a body that is named (listed) or described in Schedule 19 of the Equality Act. It also applies to other organisations who exercise public functions. This includes private bodies or voluntary organisations which are carrying out public functions on behalf of a public authority.

Public functions: The Equality Act 2010 defines a public function as a function that is of a public nature for the purposes of the Human Rights Act 1998.

R

Race: This refers to a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins. It is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, meaning it is generally unlawful to discriminate against someone based on their race.

Reasonable adjustment: Adjustments that public authorities make to the way they work or carry out functions to ensure that those with disabilities (which could include physical or mental conditions, as well as neurodivergence) are not disadvantaged. The adjustment could be made with regards to policies, practices, premises, or provision of equipment – for example, providing a special keyboard to someone with arthritis, or installing a ramp for someone who uses a wheelchair. Employers must make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act.

Religion or Belief: This refers to any religion, while belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (for example, Atheism). For a belief to be included, it should be genuinely held, apply to an important aspect of life, and must not affect other people's fundamental rights. Generally, a belief of such nature would affect your life choices or the way you live. Religion or Belief is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, meaning it is generally unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of their religion, beliefs, or lack thereof.

Seldom Heard: The term 'seldom-heard groups' refers to under-represented people who use or might potentially use services and who are less likely to be heard by these service professionals and decision-makers. These groups used to be described as hard to reach – suggesting that there is something that prevents their engagement with services. Seldom heard emphasises the responsibility of agencies to reach out to excluded people, ensuring that they have access to services and that their voices can be heard, and is the preferred term for those reasons.

Examples of seldom heard groups could include:

- Particular ethnic minority groups
- Carers
- People with disabilities
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer people
- Refugees/asylum seekers
- People who are homeless
- Younger people
- Older people
- People with language barriers

These people may have particular needs when it comes to participating.

Sex: Sex refers to the physical differences between people who are male, female, or intersex. It is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, meaning it is generally unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of their sex, though there are some exceptions made to allow for the provision of single-sex services.

Sexual orientation: Sexuality orientation or sexuality is about the sex or gender that a person tends to feel attracted to emotionally, romantically, and/or sexually. A person may be

attracted only to people of the opposite sex, only to people of the same sex, or to people of all sexes or genders. Equally, a person may experience their sexual orientation as fluid, while others may experience little or no sexual attraction at all – this is known as asexuality. Asexual people may, however, experience emotional and romantic attraction.

Specific duties: Certain public authorities named or described (listed) in Schedule 1 of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) Regulations 2011 are required to comply with certain specific duties. These duties are intended to assist authorities in complying with the General Equality Duty.

Stakeholders: People or groups who have an interest in a subject or an issue, or who are likely to be affected by any decision relating to it, and/or have responsibilities relating to it.

T

Transgender or Trans: Transgender people or trans people have a gender identity or expression that differs from the sex that they were considered to be at the point of their birth. Transgender people may change their name and identity, and may or may not seek to undergo gender reassignment (including hormone treatment and/or surgery) in order to bring their physical appearance into closer alignment with their gender identity. Some people who undergo such reassignment may consider themselves to be transsexual. Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, meaning it is generally unlawful to discriminate against someone on this basis. Under the Act, gender reassignment is a personal process rather than a medical one and it does not require someone to undergo medical treatment in order to be protected.

V

Victimisation: If someone is treated badly because they complain about discrimination or help someone who has been discriminated against, this is called victimisation. Victimisation is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

Equality Profile of North Herts

by the nine protected characteristics

- Age • Disability • Gender Reassignment
- Race • Religion or Belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex • Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy and Maternity • Marriage and Civil Partnership

Population

The latest 2021 Census estimated usual resident population of North Hertfordshire is 133,200. By mid-2043, the total population of North Hertfordshire is projected to be 140,326 (ONS, 2018-based projection). At the point of finalising this Profile, various elements of the Census 2021 data have not been published. The data on health, disability, unpaid care, ethnicity, and religion is expected to be published in 2023. This profile will be updated to reflect this in future reviews following data publication.

Age

The below table shows the usual population of North Hertfordshire at March 2021, by age group.

Age Group	Number of North Hertfordshire Residents	Percentage of North Hertfordshire Residents
0 - 4	7,500	5.6%
5 - 9	8,200	6.2%
10 - 14	8,300	6.2%
15 - 19	6,700	5.0%
20 - 24	5,900	4.4%
25 - 29	7,600	5.7%
30 - 34	8,700	6.5%
35 - 39	9,000	6.8%
40 - 44	9,400	7.1%
45 - 49	9,500	7.1%
50 - 54	9,500	7.1%
55 - 59	9,400	7.1%
60 - 64	7,800	5.9%
65 - 69	6,500	4.9%
70 - 74	6,700	5.0%
75 - 79	5,000	3.8%
80 - 84	3,700	2.8%
85-89	2,500	1.9%
90 +	1,400	1.1%

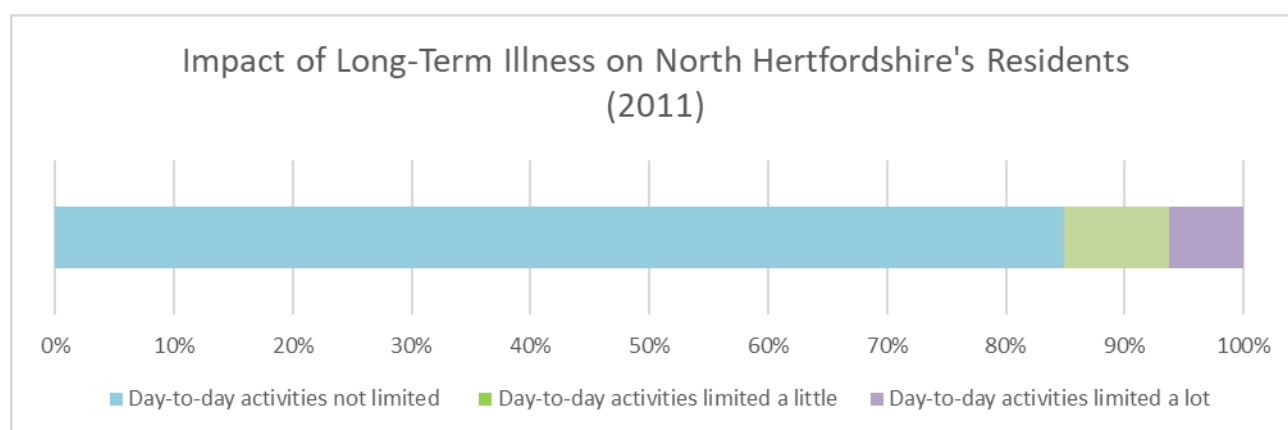
Source: ONS, Census 2021

In 2021 (ONS Census), out of the total population of North Hertfordshire, 24,000 (18%) were children aged under 15; 83,500 (62.7%) were adults aged between 15-64, and 25,800 (19.4%) were aged 65 and over. 3900 (2.9%) of the resident population were aged 85 and over.

Over the last ten years in North Hertfordshire there has been an increase of 18.8% in people aged 65 years and over. This is lower than the 20.1% increase in this age group seen across England. North Hertfordshire has seen an increase of 1.5% in people aged 15 to 64 years (significantly less than the 4% increase of this age bracket across England), and an increase of 3.9% in children aged under 15 years.

Disability

The 2011 census recorded that out of the 127,114 usual residents of North Hertfordshire, 8,017 people had a disability that limited their day-to-day activities a lot (6.3%) and 11,165 people had a disability that limited their day-to-day activities a little (8.8%). This totals 15.1% of North Hertfordshire residents experiencing some level of limitation on their day-to-day activities as a result of a disability



Source: ONS Census, 2011 Table KS301UK¹

Of those whose day-to-day activities were limited a lot by long term illness, 34.3% were aged between 16-64 and 44.7% of those whose day-to-day activities were limited a little by long term illness were aged between 16-64.

Gender Reassignment

At present, there is not enough robust data to accurately estimate the UK transgender population locally or nationally. Although there has been work on estimating the number of transgender people within the UK population, there is no publicly available statistical data on which to make reliable estimates.

In 2018, the Government Equalities Office tentatively estimated that there were between 200,000 – 500,000 transgender people living in the UK. This would make up between 0.3%-0.8% of the UK population.

The 2021 census has given a new and voluntary option regarding gender, allowing individuals to state if the gender they identify with is the same as sex registered at

birth, with an option to state gender identity beneath. It is hoped that this change will lead to stronger data on those that are transgender and non-binary within the UK.

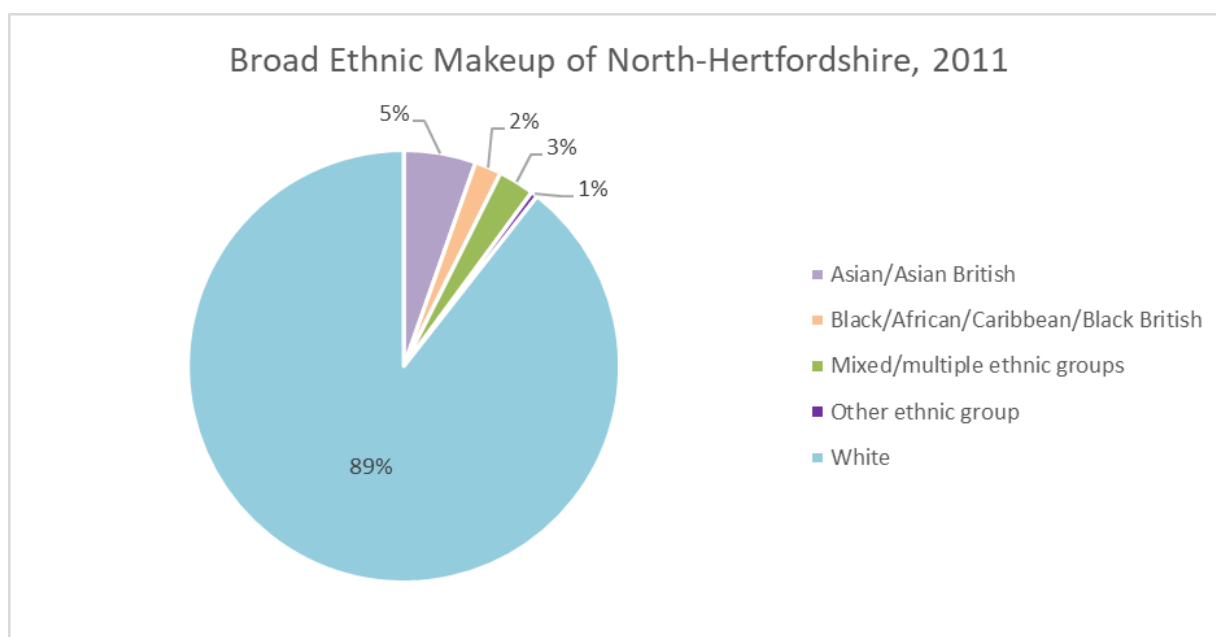
Race

The main source of detailed ethnic group population data is the 2011 National Census. Further data from the 2021 census is due to be published in the near future. In the 2011 Census, 15.1% of the North Hertfordshire population were from an ethnic minority background (defined as non-white-British), compared to 10.65% in 2001.

Ethnic Makeup of North Hertfordshire

Ethnicity	Number	%
White – British	107,889	84.9
White – Irish	1,398	1.1
Gypsy	33	0
Other White	4,435	3.5
White and Black Caribbean	1,481	1.2
White and Black African	309	0.2
White and Asian	912	0.7
Other Mixed	674	0.5
Indian	3,464	2.7
Pakistani	424	0.3
Bangladeshi	495	0.4
Chinese	808	0.6
Other Asian	1,630	1.3
Black African	859	0.7
Black Caribbean	1,344	1.1
Other Black	288	0.2
Arab	146	0.1
Any other ethnic groups	525	0.4

Source: ONS Census 2011: Table KS201EW



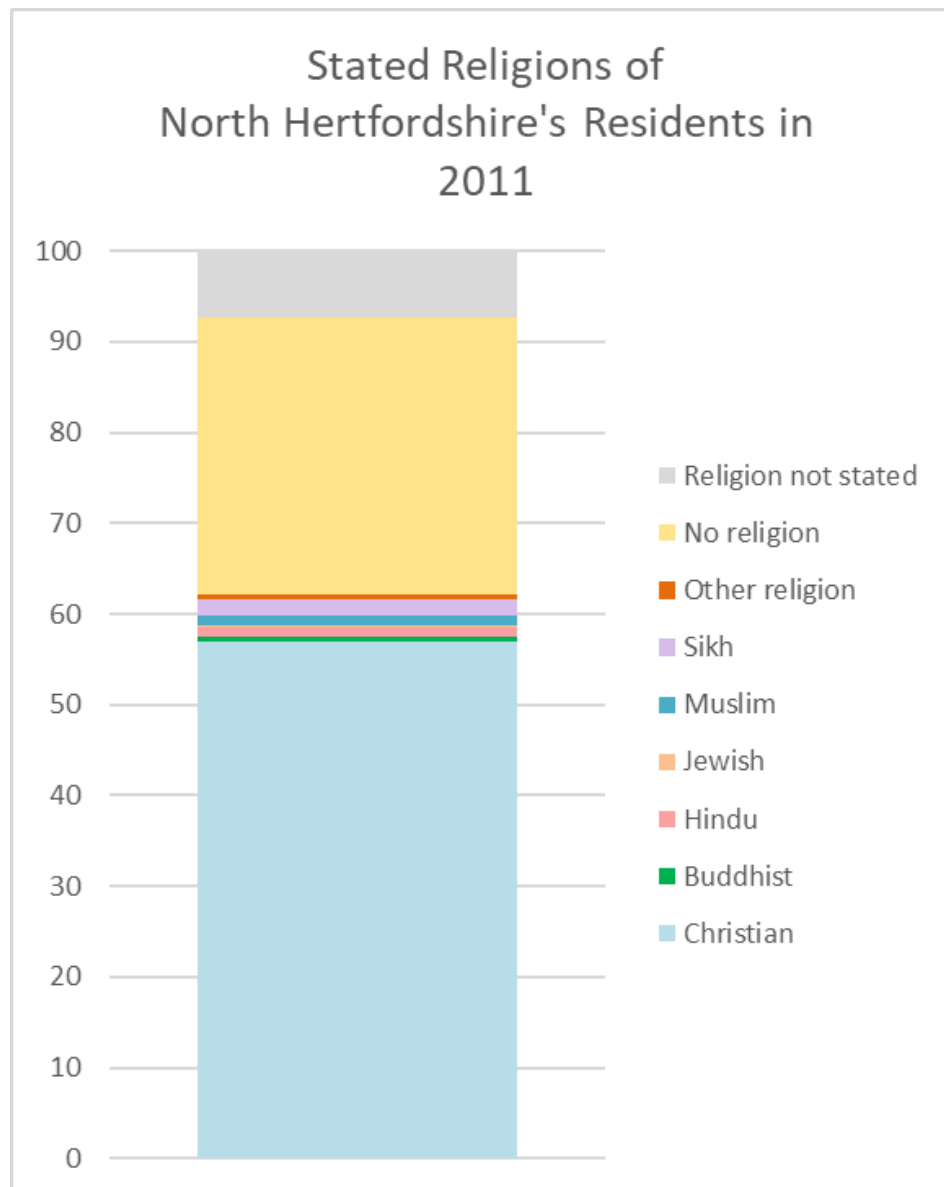
Source: ONS Census 2011: Table KS201EW

In the Herts Residents' Survey (2018), 83% of North Hertfordshire residents agreed (strongly or tend to) that people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together in the local area. This is higher than the 80.3% of residents throughout Hertfordshire that agreed with the statement.

Religion or Belief (including lack of belief)

The main source of detailed religion or belief population data is the 2011 National Census. Further data from the 2021 census is due to be published in the near future.

In the 2011 census, 57% of North Hertfordshire residents identified themselves as Christian. 30% stated themselves to have no religion and over 7% did not state a religious stance, with the next most prominent belief being Sikhism, with 1.9% of residents identifying themselves as Sikh.

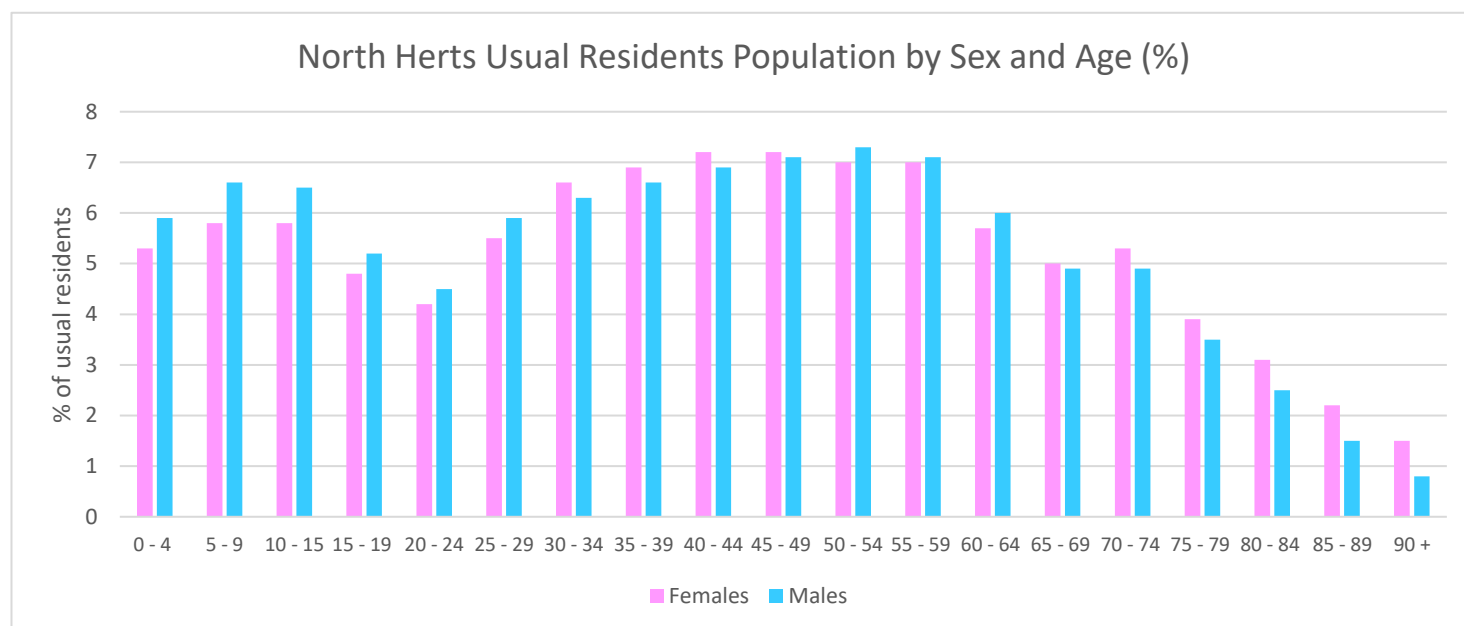


Source: ONS Census 2011, Table KS209EW

Sex

In 2021 (ONS Census), of the 133,200 people in North Herts, 68,500 (51.4%) were women and 64,800 (48.6%) were men.

The below table shows a break down of North Hertfordshire's usual population by age and sex.



Source: ONS, Census 2021

Sexual Orientation

At present, there is no localised data on sexual orientation, and this is only available at a regional level. For the first time, the 2021 census included questions on sexual identity. This has the potential to enable a better understanding of the LGBTQ+ community within North Hertfordshire when the results are published in 2022.

The table below presents sexual identity data recorded at national and regional level in 2020. It is worth noting that these figures vary between areas. Therefore, without more localised data, it cannot be presumed the regional data will directly reflect the population of North Hertfordshire.

Sexual Orientation	England	East of England
Heterosexual or straight	93.3%	95.5%
Gay or lesbian	1.8%	1.3%
Bisexual	1.3%	1.0%
Other	0.6%	0.4%
Don't know or refuse to answer	2.9%	1.8%

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey, 2020

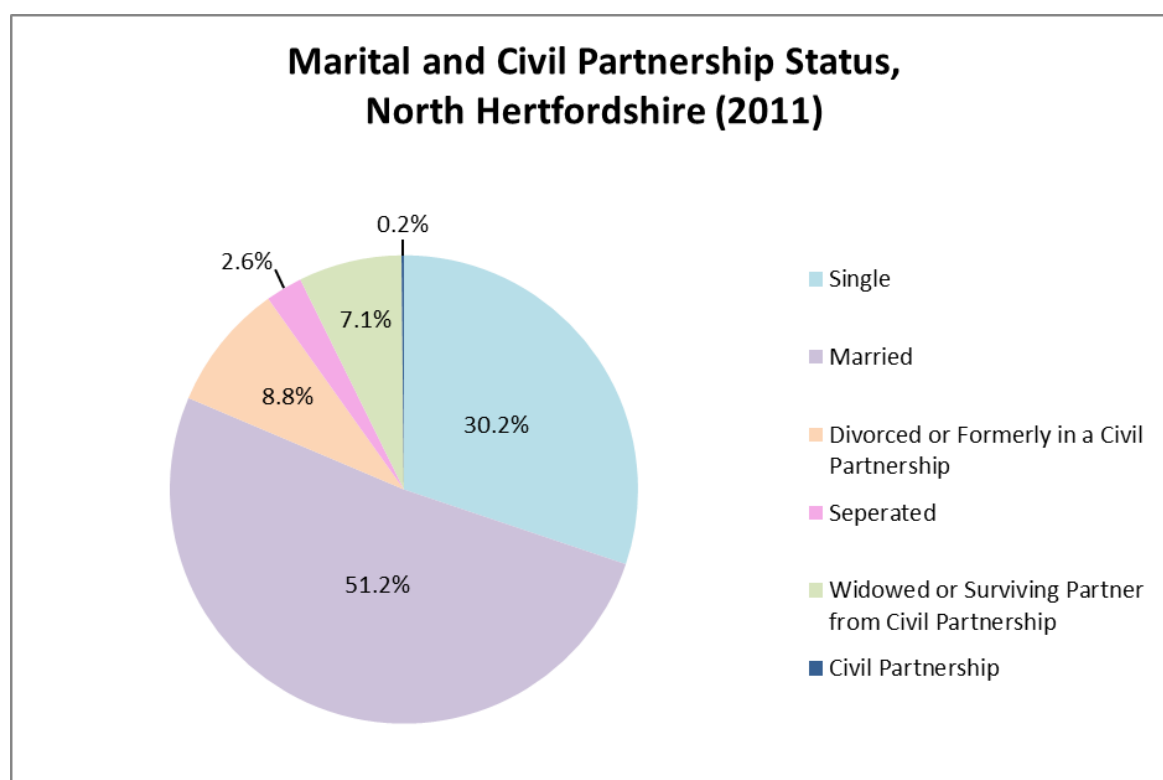
According to the [ONS](#), across the UK, the proportion of people, aged 16 years and over, openly identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) has been increasing, recording an increase from 1.6% in 2014 to 3.1% in 2020. Young people aged between 16-24 years continue to be the most likely to identify as LGB in 2020 (8.0%) and this reflects an increasing trend for this age group since 2014.

Pregnancy and Maternity

In 2020, there was a total of 730 live births in North Hertfordshire (ONS, Live Births).

Marriage and Civil Partnership

The below chart indicates the marital and civil partnership status of residents in North Hertfordshire aged 16 and over in 2011. It is worth noting that in 2011, marriage was not yet legalised for same-sex couples and civil partnerships were not yet legalised for mixed-sex couples. Within the district, 51.2% of the population was married and 0.2% were in civil partnerships, which compared to the national average of 46.6% and 0.2% respectively.



Source: ONS Census 2011, Table KS103EW

Among those identifying as LGB in 2020, 72.5% had never been married or in a civil partnership, whilst 23.7% were married or in a civil partnership; this may reflect that the legislation for same-sex civil partnerships and marriage is relatively recent as well as higher proportions of the LGB population in younger age brackets.

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 6 DECEMBER 2022

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

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

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COUNCILLOR ELIZABETH DENNIS-HARBURG

PRIORITY: PEOPLE FIRST

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This information note is to provide an update on the first six months performance of 22/23 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 and the breakdown of 3C's by service and type at Appendix B.

2. STEPS TO DATE

- 2.1 The Council has a well embedded policy and procedures for handling customer feedback; the 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.
- 2.3 In early 2022, the 3C's policy was updated and refreshed and was adopted by Cabinet in September. The updated policy ensures the Council and communities we serve know how to access help, and that a safe and compassionate system to deal with complaints is in place.

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.
- 3.2 Between April and September 2022, the number of 3C's received by the Council and contractors, specifically compliments, increased compared to the same period in the previous year, whilst comments and complaints decreased.

- 3.3 The number of complaints received decreased by 15% from 240 in 2021, to 203 in 2022. This includes complaints received directly at North Herts Council and by our contractors. Of the total 203 complaints, 98 (48%) relate to services delivered by our contractors, including Urbaser (37) and the leisure centres (58). It is also worth noting that out of the 229 compliments received, 162 (71%) relate to those same contractors, including Urbaser (31) and the leisure centres (131).
- 3.4 The garden waste sign-up period falls within this reporting period each year. Since 2018, Urbaser have seen a steady decline of complaints logged within this period; with 37 logged this year between April and September compared to 45 in 2021 and 103 in 2020.
- 3.5 The number of compliments and complaints received by our contractors has increased by 108% & 38%, respectively. Whereas comments have decreased by 75%.
- 3.6 The decrease in comments received by Urbaser has been noted in the last two information notes and is a result of Urbaser now only logging genuine comments as opposed to logging service requests as comments, thus providing an accurate reflection.
- 3.7 The number of complaints received directly to the Council has decreased by 38%. Appendix B provides a breakdown of all 3C's received by service and type, which shows the highest number of complaints reported directly were Planning Control & Conservation (22), and Environmental Health (Protection) (17).

Some specific areas of Planning complaints were regarding:

- S73 application – 22/00518 (3)
- The Templars, Baldock (2)
- The Cabinet, High Street, Reed (1)

Some specific areas of Environmental Health complaints were regarding:

- On-going noise complaints (3)
- Neighbour issues (2)

- 3.8 There were 67 compliments received directly to the Council. The Careline service received the highest number, with 38. These are generally submitted by a client's family following an incident where the Careline staff had provided an emergency response service. The Green Space team received the second highest with 7; a few of these excellent compliments are shown below:

- "My thanks and appreciation of the work John O'Conner completed in Great Ashby, play area, beech hedging and roadside shrub growth. It looks nicely tidied up and carefully completed."
- (RE Letchworth roundabout) "If you can I would be grateful if your team would register my appreciation as a compliment to NHC greenspaces/contractors. Personally, I think it is extremely well planted, and with a location close to the public swimming pool/business area, I would think it must be appreciated by many people, being very uplifting! As roundabout planting goes, it is one of the best I have seen on my travels."

- 3.9 The number of 3C's received by the leisure centres has increased this year, as all sites are now fully open post-Covid. Visitor numbers across all three sites has risen from 373,683 (Apr-Sept 21) to 671,016 (Apr-Sept 22). North Herts Leisure Centre saw a large increase of compliments from 12 logged in 2021 to 56 in 2022, with some fantastic feedback provided regarding the pool, the staff, and the facilities.

- 3.10 The percentage of complaints resolved within 10 days has decreased by 3% compared to the same period last year, to 74%.
- 3.11 June (53%) and September (50%) were the months where the least number of complaints were resolved within 10 days. These can be attributed to Environmental Health, which is explained below at 3.12.
- 3.12 Environmental Health (Protection) had the highest number not resolved within 10 days (12). One of the main reasons for this has been due to staff absences, added to the regular need to advertise and seek to employ new staff. This is followed by the subsequent need to train new staff, combined with high workloads. There is also the general complexity of Environmental Health complaints, and in some cases, the actions or otherwise of other services or outside agencies which have significantly contributed to the complaints being made.
- 3.13 There were 18 stage 2 complaints, 7 of which were for Planning Control and the rest for various service areas. Of the 18 stage 2 complaints, only 4 were deemed to be justified.
- 3.14 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.
- 3.15 The LGO received 8 complaints during this period. It's prudent to note there may be some cases that do not reach the Council, as they are premature and will be referred to go through the 3C's procedure (for example). These cases are then shown in the Annual Review Letter received from the LGO in July.

Service (as classified by the LGO)	LGO Decision
Corporate and Other Services	Closed after initial enquiries – No further action
Corporate and Other Services	Closed after initial enquiries – No further action
Planning and Development	Closed after initial enquiries – Out of jurisdiction
Planning and Development	Upheld – No further action, organisation already remedied
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	LGO proposing to investigate
Planning and Development	LGO has passed this complaint to the investigation team for further consideration
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Closed after initial enquiries – No further action
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	LGO has passed this complaint to the investigation team for further consideration

- 3.16 The LGO upheld the Planning and Development complaint regarding the Council accepting comments on planning applications without an address being provided to verify the submissions. The Council accepted the policy was not followed in relation to the planning applications the complainant referred to. The Council apologised for the error and said it will ensure that names and addresses are provided in the future. The LGO advised that they would not investigate the complaint because it was unlikely they could add anything to the Council's response. The LGO also advised that they could not say the complainant had been caused any significant personal injustice by the matter.

- 3.17 Although not within the half year reporting period, it's useful to note that on 02 November, an article was published in The Comet and the Royston Crow online newspapers showing that North Herts Council is the least complained about Council – on district and borough level – in Hertfordshire. The data was provided by the LGO and analysed by claims.co.uk. The article can be found here: [North Herts and Stevenage among councils with fewest complaints | The Comet](#)

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

6. CONTACT OFFICERS

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01462 474555

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

3C's Performance Summary – April – Sept 2022

3C'S RECEIVED DIRECTLY AT NHC – 6 MONTHLY COMPARISONS

	2020 Apr - Sept	2021 Apr - Sept	2022 Apr - Sept
Number of Comments received	9	12	14
Number of compliments received	111	87	67
Number of complaints received	99	169	105
% resolved within 10 working days	79%	77%	74%
Complaints received by the LGO	5	4	8

Contractor Complaints Data (all contractors)

	2020 Apr - Sept	2021 Apr - Sept	2022 Apr - Sept
Number of Comments received	259	374	92
Number of Compliments received	127	78	162
Number of Complaints received	134	71	98

Combined Totals

	2020 Apr - Sept	2021 Apr - Sept	2022 Apr - Sept
Number of Comments received	268	386	106
Number of Compliments received	238	165	229
Number of Complaints received	233	240	203

Half Year Annual 3Cs comparisons NHC & Contractors Combined 01 Apr- 30 Sept 2022



Local Government Ombudsman Complaint Decisions

Service Area (LGO Classification)	LGO Decision
Corporate and Other Services	Closed after initial enquiries – No further action
Corporate and Other Services	Closed after initial enquiries – No further action
Planning and Development	Closed after initial enquiries – Out of jurisdiction
Planning and Development	Upheld – No further action, organisation already remedied
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	LGO proposing to investigate
Planning and Development	LGO has passed to the investigation team for further consideration
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Closed after initial enquiries – No further action
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	LGO has passed to the investigation team for further consideration

Waste and Recycling Data (combined)

	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
April – September 22	10	32	53

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APPENDIX B – BREAKDOWN OF 3C'S BY SERVICE – Apr-Sept 2022

	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
Property Services	0	0	1
Environmental Health - Commercial	0	3	0
Environmental Health - Protection	0	0	17
Housing Needs	1	1	9
Parking Services	0	1	2
Planning Control & Conservation	0	1	22
Planning Policy	0	0	2
Active Communities	0	2	0
Leisure	0	0	1
Parks and Open Spaces/Green Space	1	7	8
Waste Management	3	1	16
Benefits	0	2	3
Careline	0	38	7
Customer Service Centre	5	6	2
Revenues Billing & Recovery	3	2	9
Revenue Technical	1	0	2
Community Development/Engagement	0	1	1
Electoral Services	0	0	1
Licensing	0	1	1
Enforcement / Environmental Crime	0	1	0
Markets	0	0	1
NHDC Totals	14	67	105
Contractor Data			
Waste (Urbaser)	7	31	37
Grounds (John O'Connor)	0	0	3
North Herts Leisure Centre	19	56	25
Hitchin Swim Centre	46	47	16
Royston Leisure Centre	20	28	17
Contractor Totals	92	162	98
Grand Totals (combined)	106	229	203

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CABINET
Tuesday 13th December 2022

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

Any queries must be directed to the Democratic Services Manager

TITLE OF REPORT: Adoption of the Museum Strategy 2022 - 2026

REPORT OF: Culture and Facilities Service Manager

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Keith Hoskins, Executive Member for Enterprise and Arts

COUNCIL PRIORITY: PEOPLE FIRST / SUSTAINABILITY / A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report requests approval and adoption of the new North Herts Museum Strategy 2022 – 2026. North Hertfordshire Museum Service has produced a draft North Hertfordshire Museum Strategy, 2022 to 2026. The strategy describes the museum service's four main aims, which relate to: Audience, Finance, Collections, Organisation. Each aim is then explained in more detail. The document is illustrated throughout with recent images from the museum.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the current draft of the Museum Strategy 2022 - 2026 be approved.
- 2.2. That the Council / Committee adopt the strategy for the years 2022 – 2026.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. The previous Arts, Museums and Heritage Strategy expired some years ago and a new strategy will guide the ambitions of the museum service in the years ahead.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. The alternative option would be to continue without a strategy guiding the work of the museum service in the years ahead. This would lead to a lack of strategic direction for the service and potentially risk the work of this service area becoming un-coordinated and lacking an ultimate goal or ambition.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. The Executive Member and Deputy Executive Member have been consulted on the strategy document and the strategy has also been taken to Political Liaison Board and Leadership Team.

In June 2022 the draft strategy was sent out with the regular online museum newsletter, asking for comments. This newsletter goes to over 9000 email addresses; a mix of visitors who have completed forms in the museum, and people who ticked an interested in museums/heritage option when signing up for North Herts Council's email newsletters. It was also sent to key members of local societies who have always expressed an interest in the museum, such as the Letchworth Garden City Society, the Hitchin Historical Society, the North Herts Archaeology Society, and the Letchworth Naturalists. 3262 people who received the newsletter opened it (a good response rate – much higher than the average email open rate of 21.5%), and of these, 52 actually clicked on the link to open the strategy. Ten then emailed in with comments. These were overwhelmingly positive about the new museum, but they included some helpful suggestions, particularly about things that had mistakenly been omitted – such as mention of our important natural history collection. One correspondent noticed that the strategy didn't actually mention the fact that the museum was wheelchair accessible, while another suggested we mention our talks to U3A. The current draft strategy now includes alterations made as a result of these comments.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on 4th November 2022.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. This report has been written as a recommendation for approving and adopting a new strategy for the museum service was due, given the previous strategy document has now expired. Following a 2004/5 Best Value Review of the Museum Service, North Herts Council proposed the closure of the former Hitchin and Letchworth Museums, and the opening of one new North Herts Museum on a town centre site. In order to apply for almost £1million Heritage Lottery grant-aid towards the internal fit-out of the proposed new museum, the grant application required a published strategy. This was to ensure that Lottery funding went towards projects that were already in the public domain, with clear aims, and strong support from the parent organisation, in our case, North Herts Council.

Following a huge amount of consultation, with regular meetings across the district, in 2007 North Hertfordshire Museum Service published the Arts, Museums & Heritage Strategy 2007-12. The AMH Strategy clearly stated that one of the Council's main aims was to replace its two museums in Letchworth and Hitchin with one town centre museum and gallery facility. The strategy was very much of its time, when the Council, the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, and County all had more resources and more staff than is the case now. North Herts Council had run a couple of Book Festivals, and there was more funding for cultural partnership projects of this type. The strategy had an ambitious Action Plan, covering music, dance, and drama, as well as museums and heritage. It referenced North Herts Council's earlier Leisure & Cultural Strategy, 2001-2005, and also mentioned its Play Strategy 2006-2009, and was a wider-ranging document than the new strategy.. The AMH Strategy was successful in its unwritten aim

of helping gain grant aid, as in 2011 the museum service gained Phase 1 Lottery funding to develop plans for the new museum, and in 2014, a major Phase 2 grant for the museum fit-out was agreed. Although the Museum Service intended to update the AMH Strategy, this was never a priority once the new museum began to take shape.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. Since full opening of the new North Herts Museum in 2019, staff realised that it was becoming increasingly important to produce a current strategy, to show to potential grant-giving organisations such as the Arts Council and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Staff wanted a document that would demonstrate that North Herts Museum is a professional modern museum which works to deliver our vision of creating 'a welcoming museum that plays an active role in the life of the district.' When we looked at the old *AHM Strategy*, it became clear that this could not be updated, as so much has changed since it was written. We would need to start again, this time concentrating on the museum service rather than a wider cultural strategy. A draft strategy was produced by the museum team, based on strategies produced by other high-performing museums. The layout was then designed by Diane Town using a wide range of recent images of the museum and its activities.

The new strategy is half as long as the previous one, at 12 rather than 24 pages, yet it contains far more detail about what the museum aims to do. These aims fall into four areas - Audience, Finance, Collections, Organisation, and each area is then broken down further, into bullet points, each with an informative paragraph. The bullet points for each aim are as follows:

1. Audience aims

- Give the people of North Herts and beyond the opportunity to access high quality heritage, art and culture
- Involve a wider range of people in the heritage and culture of North Herts.
- Exceed visitor expectations

2. Finance aims

- Ensure that the museum is financially sustainable
- Maximise opportunities to generate income
- Engage with grant-giving organisations where appropriate
- The museum plays a part in boosting the local economy

3. Collections aims

- Improve museum storage to ensure best care of our collections
- Continue digitisation of collections
- Organise inspiring programme of exhibitions, talks and workshops, in person and online
- Use collections to become a learning and a teaching organisation for all ages
- Continue to develop the collections further, continuously improving interpretation of the district's past

4. Organisation aims

- Work towards the council's climate change agenda
- Become more resilient, enabling long-term sustainability
- Through the museum, help deliver the council's aims of putting people first and delivering sustainable services, to enable a brighter future together
- Cultivate community partnerships
- Attract and retain a wide range of volunteers
- Retain Museums Accreditation
- Give people opportunities to develop new skills and become more creative

Each bullet point is accompanied by a paragraph giving more detail.

The committee is asked to review the content of the strategy document and if satisfied, to adopt the strategy as a guiding document for the service areas work in the years ahead.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Cabinet's Terms of Reference include at 5.6.1 the power 'to prepare and agree to implement policies and strategies other than those reserved to Council'.
- 9.2. The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 confirms the Council's statutory power to operate a Museum. S111 of the Local Government Act 1972 confirms that a local authority has power to do anything (including in relation to finance and property) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. There are no direct financial implications as a result of approval and adoption of the strategy document, however the strategy makes reference to other ambitions and projects, such as the creation of a new museum collection storage facility, which the committee will need to be satisfied adhere to current and future financial plans.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. Failure to agree a Museum Strategy could lead to a lack of direction and an un-coordinated approach to Museum activities This could negatively impact on the Public's experience of the facility.
- 11.2. Not having a Strategy in place could affect our ability to submit successful funding applications to organisations such as the Arts Council and National Lottery Heritage Fund.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

- 12.2. The museum strategy aims to ensure the museum service reaches as wide and diverse an audience as possible. With regards to the Public Sector Equality Duty, this strategy document will help to align the development of the service with our responsibilities under the duty but will also guide how we hope to deliver services to all residents and visitors of North Herts over the coming years.

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 direct Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to the actions recommended in this report. However, the report does make reference to other projects such as the development of a new store for the museum collection, which will have environmental implications. These projects however are not the subject of this report and will be subject to their own approval process in isolation, including consideration of environmental implications, separate to the strategy document. The committee should however satisfy themselves that the ambitions and projects covered in the strategy document conform and align with the Councils environmental commitments for the years ahead.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 There will be no impact on staff as a result of this strategy document, other than to guide their work in their service area over the coming years.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1 Appendix 1 is the Museum Strategy 2022 – 2026 and is the subject of this report.

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1 There are no background papers provided with this report.

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North Hertfordshire Museum

MUSEUM STRATEGY

2022 - 2026

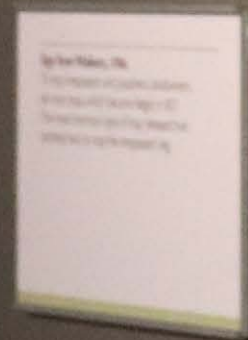


OUR VISION

Our vision is to provide a welcoming museum that plays an active role in the life of the district

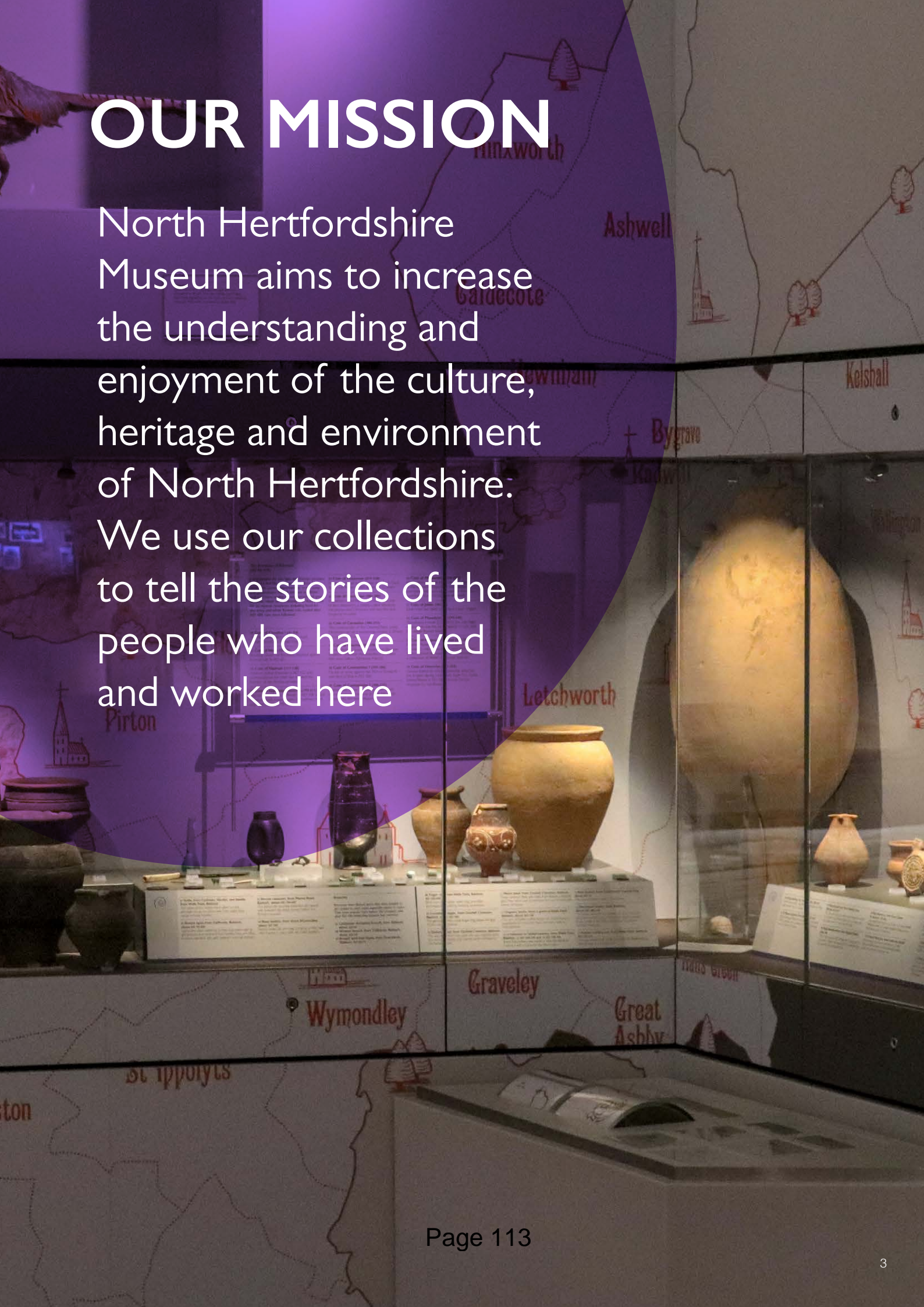
LIVING IN
NORTH
HERTFORDSHIRE

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OUR MISSION

North Hertfordshire
Museum aims to increase
the understanding and
enjoyment of the culture,
heritage and environment
of North Hertfordshire.
We use our collections
to tell the stories of the
people who have lived
and worked here



OUR AIMS

**These fall into four areas;
Audience, Finance, Collections,
and Organisation**

These are highlighted here
and explored in more detail
later in the strategy

1. Audience aims

Give the people of North Herts and beyond the opportunity to access high quality heritage, art and culture, with national quality temporary exhibitions

Involve a wider range of people in the heritage and culture of North Herts

Exceed visitor expectations

2. Financial aims

Ensure that the museum is financially sustainable

Maximise opportunities to generate income

Engage with grant-giving organisations where appropriate

The museum plays a part in boosting the local economy

3. Collections aims

Improve museum storage to ensure best care of our collections

Continue digitisation of collections

Organise inspiring programme of exhibitions, talks and workshops; in person and online

Use collections to become a learning and a teaching organisation for all ages

Continue to develop the collection further, continuously improving interpretation of the district's past

4. Organisation aims

Work towards the council's climate change agenda

Become more resilient, enabling long-term sustainability

Through the museum, help deliver the council's aims of putting people first and delivering sustainable services, to enable a brighter future together

Cultivate community partnerships

Attract and retain a wide range of volunteers

Retain Museums Accreditation

Give people opportunities to develop new skills and become more creative

I. Audience aims

Give the people of North Herts and beyond the opportunity to access high quality heritage, art and culture

We will programme a wide range of temporary exhibitions, from local artists and groups in the Arches Gallery, to touring exhibitions of national and international quality in the main exhibition gallery, such as *Matisse, Drawing with Scissors* (2017) and *Rembrandt in Print* (2020). Some exhibitions will be hired in, others generated in-house from the museum collections. We will ensure that some exhibitions appeal to families and children (such as the 2021 *The Tiger who came to Tea*, the British Library's *Paddington* exhibition in 2022 or the 2023 *Drawings for the BFG* while others, such as the *Back to the Drawing Board* art exhibition in 2022 are aimed more at adults. We will engage high quality artists and speakers to run talks and creative and heritage-based workshops linked to temporary exhibitions, displays, or national events.

Involve a wider range of people in the heritage and culture of North Herts

We will improve our market research to ensure that we have a greater understanding of our current audience. We can then use our social media and print to better target those people who may not know about the museum or feel that it is for them. We will continue to engage with national events like Black History Month, S. Asian Heritage Month and Pride events so that these audiences want to visit the museum. We will also advertise our major exhibitions further afield, working with other local attractions to promote the museum and district as a tourist destination. We will run an active programme of displays, talks, art and creative activities for all ages and abilities to build a core audience of loyal supporters. By ensuring that there is something new to see on every visit, whilst remaining loyal to the focus of displaying the core heritage of the district, we aim to attract new visitors, and convert them to becoming repeat visitors.

We aim to ensure that the museum is accessible to as many as possible, with wheelchair access to all floors, accessible toilets on ground and first floors, and Braille labels available at reception. We aim to provide a first-class service for adults and children with diverse needs, including opening the museum at quiet times when it is normally closed, such as Mondays. We aim to increase the number of schools using our Education Service in the museum, and externally, in schools and digitally.

Exceed visitor expectations

The museum staff pride themselves on their professionalism while being open and welcoming. Our visitor service standards are high, and we aim to aim to exceed visitor expectations in the quality of the collections, the displays, the ambitious exhibition programme, the shop and café. The front-of-house team gain well deserved praise from the visitors, and we intend this to continue. Praise for the range and quality of our social media shows that this is much appreciated, and we aim to increase online engagement.



2. Financial aims



Ensure that the museum is financially sustainable

North Herts Museum will continue to charge for many of its talks (both in the museum and as outreach) and workshops. Workshop prices will vary in price depending on the activity (to include cost of materials, and freelance tutor if appropriate) and the targeted audience. The income gained this way has been increasing steadily, and we expect this to continue. A few activities for children (such as storytelling or museum quizzes) will be free or at a nominal cost to ensure we are providing an engaging service to everyone, including families on low incomes.

The Museum Education Service will also continue to operate a subscription scheme, which includes teaching sessions and school loans.

The museum will generate income from its gift shop with attractive ranges of products; from locally sourced giftware and souvenirs, to special ranges relating to temporary exhibitions or events which the museum will be running.

The museum café is crucial in helping maintain commercial sustainability. Its offer will change with the seasons, and where possible will offer meals and snacks relating to museum exhibitions or events. It is building a reputation for somewhere with

® locally-sourced and Fairtrade products, with a range of vegan and vegetarian options, and this is a selling point we aim to advertise more widely. The kitchen has been fully equipped to cater for large scale events in the Mountford Hall next door, enabling a variety of events catering.



Maximise opportunities to generate income

The museum now has a contactless card donation point to supplement the existing cash donation box, which is already generating a useful regular income.

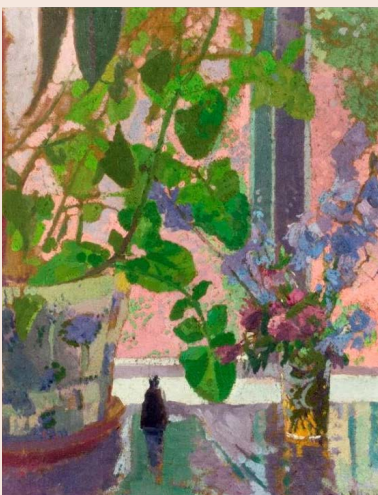
We intend to offer tours for small groups led by our knowledgeable front-of-house staff, which will raise income through suggested donations.

The museum plans to resurrect previous income-generating activities, such as the popular Escape Rooms, and explore new income streams such as Nights at the Museum.

We also aim to create a charitable arm through a membership scheme, such as a Friends or Supporters group. In return for an annual fee, the members will receive benefits including discounts in the gift shop and café, discounted venue hire at the museum, and possible priority access to booking events and invitations to preview evenings. This group could also act as an additional consultation forum for the museum.

The museum will investigate possible sponsorship of exhibitions, leaflets and any new museum vehicles as a way of generating additional funds. Advertisements in museum leaflets or on the website could create further revenue streams. The museum will explore publicising bequests as a tax-efficient way of giving for legacy donors.





Apply for grant-aid to achieve our aims where possible

North Hertfordshire Museum has been particularly successful in applying for grant aid; gaining almost £35,000 in 2020-21 from V & A/Arts Council England, Hertfordshire Heritage Fund, Royal Opera House Bridge, Hertfordshire Association of Museums, and the Institute of Conservation. Additional funds were gained in partnership with Stevenage Museum from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The grants helped the museum produce digital learning resources for families and for schools, conserve local archaeology, acquire a William Ratcliffe painting, purchase digital storage, and employ freelance artists for a digital project, and a lockdown project for people with dementia. North Hertfordshire Museum is hugely grateful to these funders, as this work would not have gone ahead without the grants. The museum will continue to engage with grant funding organisations as appropriate, by ourselves or in partnership with other museums.

Aim for the museum to play a part in boosting the local economy

The museum aims to develop closer partnership working with local organisations such as the local BIDS and Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation as a way of maximising the tourism offer of the District. We will explore shared advertising, and discounted tickets to multiple attractions, restaurants or accommodation, so that all the stakeholders can share the benefits of a vibrant visitor economy.

The sourcing of local contractors, goods and materials from local sources is encouraged and supported by the authority's *Go Local* policy.

3. Collections aims

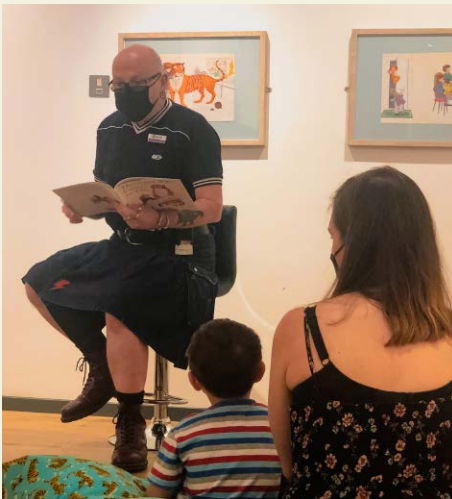
Improve museum storage to ensure best care of our heritage

The museum service store at Burymead Road is reaching the end of its life. It was never built as a museum store, and is overcrowded, inaccessible for the general public and does not meet modern storage standards. Although there is some onsite storage at North Hertfordshire Museum, most of our storage is offsite at Burymead. By 2025, North Hertfordshire Museum aims to have demolished the current store and built a completely new modern museum store with high-quality security and environmental controls. The new store will be accessible for staff, volunteers and the public, including school groups, as well as having a dedicated research room. This will ensure that the heritage of North Hertfordshire can be preserved more effectively for the future.

Continue digitisation of collections

During the unexpected lockdown in 2020-21, the museum's digitisation programme suddenly became the only way of reaching our audiences. We received an Emergency Coronavirus grant from Arts Council England to improve our online offer, and we now have a You Tube channel, and post on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter almost daily. Digitisation is now an embedded part of what the museum does. Almost four and a half thousand from the museum's collections are available to view online on our website, through the eHive collection management system, and this is added to weekly.





Organise inspiring programme of exhibitions, talks and workshops; in person and online

North Hertfordshire Museum is fortunate to have a purpose-built exhibition gallery with the high-quality security and environmental conditions necessary to gain a Government Indemnity (or insurance), enabling us to borrow artworks from national collections. Following the success of the *Rembrandt in Print* exhibition in 2020, the museum aims to continue to hire in or borrow works by well-known artists, which would not otherwise be seen in the district. Our visitors' book was full of comments such as 'More like this please'; clear evidence of local demand for high-quality art. Where possible we will make links with works in our own collections, such as the Griggs exhibition from the Ashmolean, where we displayed prints and ephemera relating to this Hitchin-born artist. We will also put on exhibitions of art or objects from our own excellent collections, including archaeology, natural sciences, local and social history, and programme some specifically for children and families. The museum aims to run a busy programme of talks for the general public on all aspects of the museum collections and will ensure that where appropriate all temporary exhibitions have a programme of related talks and workshops. Curators also offer talks to local societies and U3A groups either in the museum or externally.

Use collections to become a learning and a teaching organisation for all ages

North Hertfordshire Museum has a long history of working with schools, both through teaching in the museum and in schools, and through the extensive School Loans Collection, one of the most comprehensive in the Eastern region. We aim for this important work to continue, and with the involvement of local schools are also exploring how we can offer digitised educational resources. We work with children and young people with a range of needs and can offer some teaching in BSL. The museum is also keen to offer historical and creative sessions for adults as well as children, and to increase usage of our reminiscence boxes.

Continue to develop the collection further, continuously improving interpretation of the district's past

North Hertfordshire Museum will continue to develop its collection in line with its Collections Development Policy and will evaluate the prospect of accessioning new objects into the collection through a range of means. This may include anything from public donations and archaeological finds through to auctions of artworks. Wherever our curators consider the acquisition of an object to enhance our current ability to tell the stories of North Herts, serious consideration will be given as to whether it should become an accessioned object in line with our policies.

4. Organisation aims



Work towards the council's Climate Change agenda

In May 2019 North Herts Council declared a climate emergency. The Museum Service aims to use the Climate Change Strategy throughout its activity, ensuring that our actions and purchases support the council policies, in particular with regard to carbon reduction. The café has already phased out all single-use plastics possible, and the museum aims to use renewable and recycled materials wherever possible, and ensure that all future developments, such as a new museum store, are built with the council's climate change agenda in mind.

Become more resilient

By increasing the income streams to the museum, through our commercial activities such as the shop and café, through charging for some museum activities, such talks, workshops and *Behind the Scenes* tours of our stores, through hiring out the Terrace Gallery, through increased donations and through grant-aid, we aim to increase our financial resilience. We also aim to make more of our links with the adjoining Hitchin Town Hall and the events there, as working together increases the resilience of both parts of our organisation. We are aware of the importance of succession planning to the organisation, and aim to ensure that we have realistic and focused succession and business continuity plans. We also aim to embed ourselves in the community, ensuring that the museum plays an active part in the life of the district.

Through the museum, help deliver the council's aims of putting people first and delivering sustainable services, to enable a brighter future together

We aim to do this in many ways; through our displays and exhibitions, our curatorial and educational work in the museum and out in the community. Our goal is for the museum, with its shop and café, to become the top tourist attraction in the district, for local people and visitors regionally

and nationally. It is also somewhere people want to work, and somewhere that creates employment and volunteer opportunities in the district.

Cultivate community partnerships

Partnerships are crucial to the success of the museum and will continue to be so. Much of our grant-aid has been acquired for projects where we are working with other local museums, such as the British Schools Museum and Stevenage Museums (with the Museum Champions young people projects) and Stevenage Museum, Knebworth House and the Garden City Collection, for our Suffrage project. We have partnered with Stevenage Museum for the Doorstep Discoveries dementia project, and also for a lockdown digital education project. We have worked in partnership with many local groups, and aim to extend this work, particularly with groups representing audiences which are under-represented in our museum visitors, such as ethnic and other minority groups, and adults and children with particular needs. We aim to work more closely with Hitchin Library, particularly in terms of their special displays reflecting our exhibitions. We will continue to work with specific groups for children including Cubs and Brownies, and those with disabilities such as Angels, for children with attention deficit and autism spectrum disorders, and will seek to engage with other local groups of this kind. Museum staff have long supported other museums such as Ashwell Museum and Royston Museum and local history societies in this area, through museum mentoring, staff mentoring, as Trustees or committee members, and intend this to continue.

North Herts Museum will aim to work more closely with Hitchin and other local BIDs to become a more established part of the local business community and discover ways in which we can collaborate and assist each other, particularly in joint advertising and marketing ventures.

Attract and retain a wide range of volunteers

North Hertfordshire Museum is fortunate to have a range of volunteers of all ages, doing extremely useful tasks, including cataloguing, scanning, creating databases and helping visitors, for which the museum is extremely grateful. Volunteers have so much to offer the museum, and we know that the museum service is equally important for our volunteers in terms of improved mental health, work experience, and opportunities to learn new skills. Some of our volunteers just want to give something back to the community and support a local service they value. The museum aims to continue to provide a diverse range of areas for volunteering. Some volunteers stay for years, some just want to help for a couple of days, but we welcome all volunteers, and aim to give as many people as possible a chance to support the museum in this way.

Retain Museums Accreditation

Museums Accreditation is the industry standard for museums in the UK. Managed by Arts Council England on behalf of the UK Accreditation partners, it provides nationally agreed standards on how museums are run, how they manage their collections, and how they engage with their users. North Hertfordshire Museum is an Accredited Museum and aims to re-apply for successful Accreditation every few years, as necessary. Without it, the museum would not be able to apply for many of the available grants, or to borrow works from other Accredited museums, all of which increase our standing locally and regionally, at the same time as improving the services we offer.

Give people opportunities to develop new skills and become more creative

North Hertfordshire Museum aims to provide staff, volunteers and visitors of all ages and abilities with a range of ways in which they can develop new skills and become more creative. These range from creative art and craft workshops to poetry, creative writing and dance projects. We will continue to think of ways in which the museum can stimulate creativity in our community, and digitally, even further afield. We also aim to give people a chance to learn behind-the-scenes museum skills, such as how to digitise museum collections, how to pack and store paintings and costume or family photographs, and how to research family history. The museum and Hitchin Town Hall already employ one local apprentice to learn digital marketing skills, such as social media, and the museum is about to employ an apprentice to assist with and learn about the museum Education Service. We currently host a disabled curatorial trainee on a national grant-aided scheme, 'Curating for Change', and would be delighted to do more in this way.



A draft copy of this Strategy was emailed to over 9000 individuals and groups for their comments. North Hertfordshire Museum thanks everyone who took the time to read it and send in suggestions for additions or alterations. We have tried to include as many as possible in this final document, which will be reviewed every four years by the council.



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01462 474554
www.northhertsmuseum.org

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 6 DECEMBER 2022

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-23 (QUARTER 2 UPDATE)

REPORT OF: REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - RESOURCES

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: FIANANCE AND IT

COUNCIL PRIORITY: PEOPLE FIRST, SUSTAINABILITY, A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents progress on delivering the Council Delivery Plan for 22-23 at the end of Quarter 2, which includes:

- Progress against the completion of Council projects and milestones
- Requests to change milestone dates
- Commentary on progress made and any new issues, risks, or opportunities

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Overview and Scrutiny Committee comment on the Council Delivery Plan Quarter 2 monitoring report, including the recommendations made to Cabinet i.e.:
- That Cabinet notes the progress against Council projects as set out in the Council Delivery Plan (Appendix A) including changes to milestone dates and risks.
 - That Cabinet notes the completion of the Local Plan milestones for this year.
- 2.2 That Overview and Scrutiny Committee determine any project that they want to receive more detail on as part of the next monitoring report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. The Council Delivery Plan (CDP) monitoring reports provide Cabinet with an opportunity to monitor progress against the key Council projects, and understand any new issues, risks or opportunities.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. In developing the CDP it was agreed that Cabinet would receive quarterly updates. The updates are also provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committee so that they can provide additional oversight and support to Cabinet.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. Service Directors and Service Managers have provided updates on progress and will have made Executive Members (and Deputies) aware of progress made.
- 5.2. A draft of the Quarter 2 update was provided to Risk Management Group (RMG) in November. The Group has a standing invite to the Executive Member for Finance and IT (has responsibility for performance monitoring), the Deputy Executive Member for Finance and IT, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) and the Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (FAR). Other members of O&S and FAR are also encouraged to attend when they are able to. RMG were asked to comment on the content and format of the CDP Q1 update.
- 5.3. The CDP is reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee and they are asked to provide comments and recommendations to Cabinet.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key Executive decision first notified on the Forward Plan on the 7 June 2022.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. The CDP brings together projects, risks and performance indicators together in one document. It was adopted by Cabinet in March 2022, which included the projects to be included within the CDP.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Appendix A provides an update on the progress made in delivering the Council Delivery Plan. Whilst it is labelled as a Quarter 2 update, it generally reflects the latest position at the time that the report was written (mid-November).
- 8.2 Cabinet are asked to approve the following:
 - The proposed change to current milestone dates for Town Centre Recovery, Resident/ Public EV charging in our car parks, Cycling Networks, Town Centre Strategies, Finalise Pay on Exit Parking Review, and Replacement of Royston Town Hall Annexe with reasons detailed in Appendix A.
 - The progress made to date against each project and resulting impacts on future milestones, as detailed in the commentary against each project in Appendix A. Future updates will provide monitoring against any revised milestones.

- 8.3 The intention is that the CDP reports provide an overview, as providing all the details on project milestones would lead to a report that was too long. Requests can be made (especially by O&S) to look at individual projects in more detail. Any such request would be incorporated in to the next monitoring report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The constitution determines the role of Cabinet as including: “To take decisions on resources and priorities, together with other stakeholders and partners in the local community, to deliver and implement the budget and policies decided by the Full Council. To monitor performance and risk in respect of the delivery of those policies and priorities” (paragraph 5.6.3) .
- 9.2 The constitution determines the role of Overview and Scrutiny as including: “To review performance against the Council’s agreed objectives/ priorities and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/ or service area. To consider risks to the achievement of those objectives/ priorities. To make recommendations to Cabinet” (paragraph 6.2.7 (s)).
- 9.3 There are no specific legal implications arising from the CDP as a whole. However, there may be individual legal implications for some of the projects outlined. Any commissioning of work on new and existing projects will follow the standard legal requirements and those required by the Council’s internal standing orders, contained within the Constitution.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Where projects are linked to efficiencies or investments then these are included in the budget proposals, and monitored through the quarterly finance reports.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The Council Delivery Plan aims to support the risk management process by directly linking the risks to projects being undertaken. The aim of these proposals is to strengthen the link between performance and risk and make risks more current. This should provide an improved perspective of the risks that the Council faces.

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

- 12.3 As projects progress, Equality Implications will be considered and Equality Impact Assessments conducted where relevant.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

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

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There will continue to be a need to align Council and Service objectives with available people resources to be able to achieve them. The Council Delivery Plan will help to make that link clearer.

15. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report. However, a number of the projects to be monitored throughout the year are related to key environmental issues.
- 15.2 As projects progress, Environmental Implications will be considered and Environmental Impact Assessments conducted where relevant.

16. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Council Delivery Plan 22-23 Q2 monitoring report


















17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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- 17.5 Isabelle Alajooz, Legal Commercial Team Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer,
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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

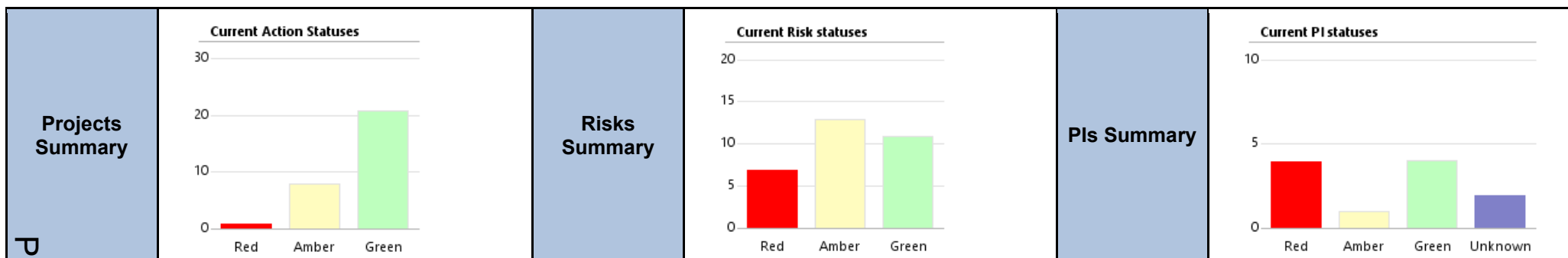
None

Council Delivery Plan – Status Key






Status	Description
Projects	
	The project (and all recorded milestones) has been completed.
	All ongoing milestones have not reached their due dates (or do not have due dates).
	There is at least one ongoing milestone that has not been completed by the due date, but the overall project due date has not passed. Proposals to change milestone due dates will be made, which may also lead to a proposed change to the overall project due date.
	Overall project due date has passed and there is at least one milestone that has not been completed. Proposals to change project due date and milestone due dates will be made.
	The progress bar is based on the number of completed milestones compared with the total number of milestones e.g., two completed out of a total of six would be 33%. Therefore, 0% reflects that no milestones have been completed yet, rather than there has been no progress at all.
Risks	
	Assessed as a low risk.
	Assessed as a medium risk.
	Assessed as a high risk.
	
PIs	
	Data value has met or exceeded the target figure.
	Data value has not achieved the target figure, but it is within the agreed tolerance range.
	Data value has not achieved the target figure and it is outside the agreed tolerance range.
	Pentana cannot calculate a status, as officers have not entered a target figure for the period on to the system.
	Data value has improved compared with the same time last year.
	Data value has deteriorated compared with the same time last year.
	Data value has not changed compared with the same time last year.
	Pentana cannot calculate a direction of travel, as previous data is not available for comparison.

Council Delivery Plan 2022/23



Generated on: 16 November 2022




Project Summary	Museum/HTH Recovery			Progress	66%	Due Date	31-Mar-2023
	To rebuild museum visitor numbers, Town Hall usage and income.						
	Latest Update The North Herts Museum has made a strong recovery in terms of visitor numbers compared with pre pandemic. Current projections are that the museum will attract somewhere close to 30k visitors compared to a pre pandemic average of around 35k visitors. Meanwhile, Hitchin Town Hall has had a particularly strong autumn period, with further positive levels of bookings and profitable events lined up for the Christmas period. Income levels are expected to recover lost ground on targets through this period and a strong recovery from the pandemic continues to be evident. The café is the only exception to this, where slightly lower visitor figures, coupled with a staffing shortage due to a transition to a new staffing structure is hampering the ability to maximise returns. However, overall the two service areas continue to show a strong recovery from the pandemic towards pre-pandemic levels of visitors, usage and income						
Milestone				Due Date	Complete	Note	
To rebuild visitor numbers at the museum to pre-pandemic levels.				01-Jul-2022	Yes	Complete	
To rebuild interest in hiring Hitchin Town Hall back to pre- pandemic levels.				01-Aug-2022	Yes	Complete	
To rebuild overall income levels at the facility to pre-pandemic levels.				31-Mar-2023	No		



Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. All related milestones carry the risk of new emerging variants or a worsening Covid picture; separately, the booking of Hitchin Town Hall and income levels may be impacted by the rising cost of living and the reduced levels of disposable income. 2. Lack of interest in the facilities following extended period of closure and restrictions. 3. Inability to generate income as well as hoped and to the levels targeted.		5	3	1	Museum visitor numbers			7,440	9,375
					Hitchin Town Hall booking enquiries				


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	Tourism Strategy				Progress	<div>0%</div>	Due Date	31-Mar-2023				
Project Summary	To develop a draft strategy by March 2023											
Latest Update	18-Aug-2022 We will now appoint consultants by the end of January 2023 and still expect to have a Strategy in place by end of next year.											
Milestone					Due Date	Complete	Note					
Appoint consultants.					31-Oct-2022	No	The Enterprise team has established the project schedule for developing and approving the Strategy and proposing to change milestone date to 31 January 2023					
Review and approve draft strategy.					31-Mar-2023	No						
Risks			Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators		Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Risk of delay in procuring consultants and subsequent delay to production of strategy.				1	1	1						


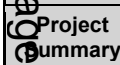


	Business Recovery: Grants	Progress	<input type="text" value="50%"/>	Due Date	31-Mar-2023
Project Summary	Promotion of business grants and payment. Completion of required Government reconciliations.				
Latest Update	12-Oct-2022 Grants ceased 31 March 2022. All processed and paid within stipulated timeframes. Received Grants Administration audit report in August 2022, which provided reasonable assurance and made no recommendations. Finalising required reconciliations with Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, which should be completed by mid-November 2022. There are no associated risks remaining.				
Milestone		Due Date	Complete	Note	

Continued promotion of available business support grants and business rate reliefs.			30-Apr-2022	Yes	complete				
Complete all Government returns for reconciliation processes.			31-Mar-2023	No	Expect to complete mid-November 2022.				
Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Lack of resources available to deliver grant schemes.		1	1	1					


	Town Centre Recovery				Progress	<div>0%</div>	Due Date	31-Mar-2023			
Project Summary	Completion of economic recovery strategies for four towns. Development of permit scheme for experimental Traffic Regulation Orders.										
Latest Update	15-Nov-2022 Draft economic recovery plans received and now sharing these with Members. Expect plans to be finalised by the end of January 2023 following engagement with key stakeholders. These link to the review of town centre strategies and will depend on available resources. The Hitchin and Royston ETRO trial periods run to July 2023, and Project Boards have been set up to monitor and review both schemes. Working with Hitchin BID to finalise the draft permit scheme agreement and expect this to happen by March 2023.										
Milestone				Due Date	Complete	Note					
Completion of Welcome Back Fund town centre recovery plans for the four towns.				31-Dec-2022	No	Draft recovery plans received from consultant. Now expect plans to be finalised by the end of January 2023 following engagement with key stakeholders. Due date to be amended accordingly.					
Development of permit scheme for experimental traffic orders, sub-delegate to appropriate body, enforcement to be with NHC.				31-Mar-2023	No	Relates to Hitchin only.					
Liaise with HCC and other key stakeholders with regard the experimental traffic orders for town centres.				31-Mar-2023	No	Milestone relates to ETROs in Hitchin and Royston only.					
Risks		Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators		Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Resourcing the project – limited budget available. 2. Town Strategy not yet in place.			3	3	1						


	Health Inequalities	Progress	<div><div></div></div> 20%	Due Date	31-Mar-2023
Project Summary	To secure funding for projects (targeting HCC Public Health) to address health inequalities. Then develop actions based on funding available and terms attached.				
Latest Update	17/11/22 - Unable to obtain external funding, new revenue proposal to be put forward for Full Council consideration in February 2023, role re-titled Housing improvement Officer. Risk level remains high.				
Milestone		Due Date	Complete	Note	
Secure Tranche 1 funding (Health and Wellbeing led projects).		31-May-	Yes	complete	


		2022								
Secure Tranche 2 funding from HCC (Public Health) for Environmental Health led projects.		31-Dec-2022	No			Milestone to be deleted as funding not available				
Deliver Tranche 1 projects (as planned for 2022/23).		31-Mar-2023	No			Details may be added following the development of the action plan. Milestone only includes projects to be delivered in 2022/23.				
Depending on funding being achieved and the development of a related action plan, deliver Tranche 2 projects (as planned for 2022/23).		31-Mar-2023	No			No date specified in the CDP. Other detailed milestones dependent on funding being achieved and the development of an action plan. For the 2022/23 CDP, will only include projects to be delivered in 2022/23.				
Develop an action plan for Tranche 1 (based on Public Health Strategy, Health Inequalities Framework and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment).			No			Due date to be confirmed.				
Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target	
1. Inability to achieve funding. 2. Delays in achieving funding affects delivery of outcomes. 3. Terms of any funding affects what can be delivered. 4. Staff shortages/competing priorities limit progress.		7	7	3						





<div>Page 131</div>	<div><div></div><div>Economic Development Strategy</div></div>	Progress			<div><div>33%</div></div>	Due Date	31-Oct-2022				
	<div><div></div><div>Project Summary</div></div>	Develop Economic Development Strategy based on resources available.									
	<div><div></div><div>Latest Update</div></div>	Work to develop an Economic Development Strategy continues. The preparation of the Strategy and the development of related budgets is now expected to be completed by the end of March 2023 and will relate to the overarching Enterprise/ Tourism strategy.. The Strategy and related actions will then be subject to Cabinet approval. The risk level remains the same as currently, there is continued uncertainty regarding related focus, priorities, and available resources.									
Milestone				Due Date	Complete	Note					
Complete ongoing recovery work funded by High Street Recovery Fund.				01-Apr-2022	Yes	complete					
Develop budget bid to deliver proposed Economic Development Strategy.				31-Oct-2022	No	Propose to change due date to 31 March 2023. Development of the budget will run alongside the development/preparation of the Strategy.					
Utilise feedback from recovery work to develop an Economic Development Strategy for the four towns. Consult and develop an Economic Development Strategy for the rural community.				31-Oct-2022	No	Propose to change due date to 31 March 2023. This milestone relates to the development/preparation of the Strategy, which will then be subject to Cabinet approval.					
Risks			Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Uncertainty over focus of the strategy. 2. Determination of level of priority and the funding to be allocated from 2023/24.				5	5	3					




	Resident/Public EV Charging in our Car Parks	Progress	<input type="text" value="0%"/>	Due Date	31-Mar-2023
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Project Summary	Submit grant application to Office for Zero Emission Vehicles for funding. Further actions dependent on funding awarded.										
Latest Update	21-Oct-2022 After confirmed interest from the market, undertaking a framework agreement mini competition to appoint a private sector partner. Expect to appoint in January 2023. We will then work with our partner to establish detailed costings and submit our grant application in February 2023. Risk level remains medium, in view of uncertainty regarding our ability to procure a private sector partner and obtain grant funding.										
Milestone			Due Date	Complete	Note						
Identify private sector partner to assist with grant application and to provide 40% (originally 25%) of funding not met by grant as well as being responsible for ongoing maintenance and future proofing.			31-Oct-2022	No	Propose to change due date to 31 January 2023 to reflect the timeframe of the framework agreement mini competition.						
Establish detailed costings for grant application.			31-Dec-2022	No	Propose to change due date to 28 February 2023. Once we have secured a private sector partner, the establishment of detailed costings will commence.						
Submit grant application to OZEV for 60% (originally 75%) of cost, with private partner providing the remaining 40% (originally 25%).			31-Dec-2022	No	Propose to change due date to 28 February 2023. In view of the timeframe of the framework agreement mini competition, we now expect to submit the grant application by the end of February.						
Any remaining milestones will be dependent on grant funding awarded.			31-Mar-2023	No	Noted in CDP. Further milestones to be considered at this time if grant funding awarded. Due date not specified in approved CDP.						
page	Risks		Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
	1. Not successful in obtaining grant funding. 2. Unable to identify/procure a private sector partner.			5	5	1					



	Cycling Network				Progress	<div><div>33%</div></div>	Due Date	31-Mar-2023				
Project Summary	Working with HCC as they develop a Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Use to inform a North Herts cycle strategy.											
Latest Update	15-Nov-2022 HCC consultation on draft LCWIP between 26 September and 14 November 2022. LCWIP now expected to be adopted at the May 2023 HCC Highways Transport Panel meeting. LCWIP to then inform work on the NHC Cycle Strategy, which should commence in June 2023. The risk level remains low.											
Milestone				Due Date	Complete	Note						
Working with HCC on the production of a draft Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) - for formal consultation.				26-Sep-2022	Yes	complete						
Following adoption of LCWIP by Highways Transport Panel will then inform work on NHC cycle strategy.				31-Jan-2023	No	LCWIP now expected to be adopted at the May 2023 HCC Highways Transport Panel meeting. Proposal to change due date accordingly.						
Other milestones dependent on LCWIP.				31-Mar-2023	No	Noted in CDP. Further milestones to be considered at this time following adoption of the LCWIP. Work on the NHC Cycle Strategy should commence in June 2023. Proposal to change due date to reflect revised timescales.						
Risks			Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators		Status	Trend	Value	Target


1. Resourcing for NHC and HCC. 2. Timing and adoption of LCWIP by HCC transport panel. 3. Limits to what can be achieved in this financial year.		3	3	1					
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	EV Charging for Council Vehicles				Progress	<div><div>100%</div></div>	Due Date	31-May-2022			
Project Summary	Install two charging points in DCO rear car park (charging for four vehicles).										
Latest Update	18-Aug-2022 The EV charging points were installed on 17 August 2022. PI showing as red because target is based on full year of usage and we have not yet procured full fleet of electric vehicles.										
Milestone				Due Date	Complete	Note					
Install two charging points in DCO rear car park (charging for four vehicles).				31-May-2022	Yes						
Risks			Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Lead-in time from supplier could cause delays. 2. Number of options available makes it difficult to determine optimal option. (No longer a risk - option selected and contract awarded.)				5	1	1	Miles driven by NHC full electric vehicles			6,240	17,500

<div><div>1</div><div></div></div>	Royston Leisure Centre Solar Thermal				Progress	<div><div></div><div>25%</div></div>	Due Date	31-Mar-2023					
<div><div>3</div><div></div></div>	Installation of Solar Thermal technology at Royston Leisure Centre.												
<div><div>4</div><div></div></div>	18/11/22 Cabinet approved increased budget. 4-week tender period to start week commencing 17th October. Expect to appoint contractor mid December. Procurement and lead in time for solar panels between 4-16 weeks, with installation between 2-4 weeks. Therefore, still expect project to complete by end of March 2023. Risk level remains medium, although likely to be reduced following appointment of contractor and scheduling of works.												
Milestone				Due Date	Complete	Note							
Design specification.				31-May-2022	Yes	complete							
Complete procurement and appoint contractor.				18-Nov-2022	No	Cabinet had to approve an increased capital budget in September 2022, Now expected to be appointed mid December.							
Meet with contractor to programme schedule of works.				02-Dec-2022	No	Milestone will slip slightly due to delay in appointing contractor							
Installation of Solar Thermal.				31-Mar-2023	No	Due date dependent on lead in time for solar panels and project plan from contractor.							
Risks				Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators		Status	Trend	Value	Target


1. Tender returns over budget. 2. Delays to project plan.		5	5	5					
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	Town Centre Strategies				Progress	<div><div>33%</div></div>	Due Date	31-Jan-2023			
Project Summary	Complete High Level Town Centre Recovery Action Plans for each town. Develop project plan for detailed Plans based on high level report.										
Latest Update	15-Nov-2022 Now expect to finalise WBF town centre recovery plans by the end of January 2023. Cabinet report setting out our plan to progress Town Centre Strategies subsequently delayed until March 2023. Following approval, expect to commence work on Letchworth Town Centre Strategy in April 2023. The risk level remains medium, as there are still resource issues regarding producing (and subsequently delivering) identified strategies. We are currently recruiting to a new Project Officer post to help alleviate the issue and reduce the risk.										
Milestone				Due Date	Complete	Note					
Consultants appointed to prepare High Level Town Centre Recovery Action Plans for each town centre.				30-Apr-2022	Yes	complete					
Once completed a scoping report will be prepared to agree overall project and governance arrangements for progression of Town Centre Strategies.				31-Dec-2022	No	Propose to change due date to 31 March 2023. We now anticipate presenting a report to Cabinet in March 2023.					
Commencement of work on Letchworth Town Centre Strategy, details to be confirmed following outcome of other milestones.				31-Jan-2023	No	Propose to change due date to 30 April 2023. Based on now presenting a report to Cabinet in March 2023, work on the Letchworth Town Centre Strategy should commence in April 2023.					
Risks			Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Lack of available resource to produce and deliver identified strategies.				5	5	1					



	Finalise Pay on Exit Parking Review	Progress	<div><div>50%</div></div>	Due Date	31-Dec-2022
Project Summary	Complete feasibility study and report to Cabinet on options.				
Latest Update	15-Nov-2022 Draft Feasibility Study produced and discussed with Executive Member. PLB considered this on 1 November 2022 and agreed that officers should proceed with the necessary work in progressing a pay on exit trial in two of the Council's car parks and report to Cabinet within this financial year. Expect to report to Cabinet in March 2023. Risk level remains low, although will be re-assessed in light of the Feasibility Study findings and resource implications of any selected scheme.				


Milestone			Due Date	Complete	Note				
Consultants appointed to produce Feasibility Study to be reported to Exec Member & Deputy.			31-Jul-2022	Yes	complete				
Report to PLB to get a steer on proceeding to a pay on exit trial.			01-Nov-2022	Yes	complete				
Recommendations to be reported to Cabinet to agree Next Steps.			31-Dec-2022	No	Propose to change due date to 14 March 2023, as further work may be required following finalisation of the Feasibility Study and a "meet the supplier" event to establish more detailed costings				
The Cabinet report determines further milestones.			31-Dec-2022	No	Propose to change due date to 14 March 2023. Further milestones to be considered following the report to Cabinet. Due date not specified in approved CDP, but for Pentana purposes, due date aligned with the "Recommendations to be reported to Cabinet to agree Next Steps" milestone.				
Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Budget implications of selected scheme.		1	1	1					










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	Replacement of Royston Town Hall Annexe	Progress	<div>0%</div>	Due Date	31-May-2023
Project Summary	In this year, to market the site on a non-committal basis to assess options. To then report to Cabinet for a decision. Project will span more than one year.				
Latest Update	14-Nov-2022 Following receipt of Energy Performance Certificate rating, exploring options to pursue solid interest in the site from an unsolicited approach. Following discussions with interested party on 11 November 2022, negotiations and discussions on draft lease heads of terms are now underway. Depending on the outcome, original milestones may need amending or may no longer be required. If we proceed with original milestones, expect to complete these six months later than originally planned. Risk level still assessed as medium.				
Milestone		Due Date	Complete	Note	
Ascertain, acquire, and address rights and restrictions on the site.		30-Nov-2022	No	Propose to change due date to 31 May 2023. No access rights to serve NHC's site are documented. Currently awaiting confirmation of the appropriate HCC Officer with whom to negotiate acquisition of rights over their land from public highway. No restrictions on title apparent from investigation. Property included in the project is not Listed, although it is in a Conservation Area. This needs to be factored into the design of any scheme to repurpose the site. Ongoing discussion with other stakeholders in the project will be important, such as RTC and Citizens Advice.	
Exploring options following unsolicited solid interest in site.		31-Mar-2023	No	New milestone. Discussed options for formalising use of NHC's land with interested party on 11 November 2022. Negotiations and discussions on draft lease heads of terms recently sent by interested party underway.	
Market test site for leasing and sale on non-committal basis. Undertake options appraisal. Seek Cabinet decision.		31-May-2023	No	Propose to change due date to 30 November 2023. This milestone may be resurrected if current negotiations with interested party are aborted.	


Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Cost and time in acquiring rights or addressing restrictions are prohibitive. 2. Planning permission refused or subject to unviable conditions. 3. Desire to retain partial community use impinges on viability. 4. Build cost inflation impinges on viability.		5	5	2					


	Customer Portal				Progress	<div><div>75%</div></div>	Due Date	31-Mar-2023			
Project Summary	Research options for My Account, transformation programme to consider options for development, implement recommended options.										
Latest Update	05-Oct-2022 Implementation of Waste into MyAccount dependent on decisions relating to new waste contract. If required, further work now likely to take place in 2023/24. Development of MyAccount not reliant on wider transformation programme, which is prioritising process automation. Risk level remains medium, as pending decisions on the wider contract, it is uncertain that the Waste project proceeds and we realise the benefits of bringing this large service area into MyAccount.										
Milestone				Due Date	Complete	Note					
Researching options for development of MyAccount.				31-Mar-2022	Yes	complete					
Transformation programme considers options for development.				31-May-2022	Yes	complete					
Pre-scoping meeting with Waste and MyAccount provider.				15-Sep-2022	Yes	complete					
Further development work for Waste implementation.				31-Mar-2023	No	Progress dependent on decisions relating to the new waste contract. (Original milestone, "Implementation of agreed options.")					
Risks		Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators		Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Additional modules are not forthcoming.			5	5	5						


	Help Residents Make Payments at Convenient Locations	Progress	<div><div>80%</div></div>	Due Date	30-Nov-2022
Project Summary	Technology in place to allow payments to be made in different ways, including by cash at local shops.				
Latest Update	12-Oct-2022 Project implemented and now live. Sales invoices and website updated to reflect the new ways to pay, but wider communication is still required to promote the new arrangements. Risk level reduced to low in view of the progress made, although there remains a risk that residents fail to make use of the new services provided. PI indicator performance dropped slightly in the quarter mainly due to one customer with late payments. The date has now been cleared. It is likely that it will take us a while to meet the e-payment target as all the payment methods become embedded.				


Milestone			Due Date	Complete	Note				
Complete procurement and appoint supplier.			31-Mar-2022	Yes	complete				
Obtain IIN number and update documentation.			31-Aug-2022	Yes	complete				
Send test file and payment.			01-Sep-2022	Yes	complete				
Go live - implementation completed.			19-Sep-2022	Yes	complete				
Communication to residents on new ways to pay and Allpay app.			30-Nov-2022	No	Communication Plan in place. Sales invoices and relevant web pages updated. Initial communication to residents, including via social media, will be completed by the end of November 2022. Communication to subsequently continue on an ongoing basis, including at Annual Billing.				
Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Resourcing issues delay progress. 2. Unexpected costs affect viability of business case. 3. Residents fail to use the service provided.		5	3	3	Percentage of NNDR collected in year			64%	60.5%
					Percentage of council tax collected in year			64.89%	63%
					Percentage of raised sales invoices due for payment that have been paid			92.61%	97%
					% of payments received that were paid by electronic methods			99%	99.3%



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	Supplier Self-Service	Progress	<input type="text" value="0%"/>	Due Date	31-May-2023
Project Summary	Technology in place that allows suppliers to update their details, submit invoices and view payments electronically.				
Latest Update	12-Oct-2022 Exploring options to progress this project ongoing. Expect to complete this exercise and decide how to proceed by the end of 2022. Risk level remains medium, as there is uncertainty regarding the availability of viable solutions and the cost/benefit of alternative options.				




Milestone			Due Date	Complete	Note				
Explore available options in the market and determine cost/viability.			31-Dec-2022	No					
Procure system and set up project team.			28-Feb-2023	No					
Portal set up and testing.			30-Apr-2023	No					
Go live and communication.			31-May-2023	No					
Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Failure to find viable solution. 2. Resource issues delay progress. 3. Suppliers do not submit invoices via the portal, fail to achieve efficiencies. 4. Data security issues.		5	5	3					


	Empty Homes Strategy			Progress	<input type="text" value="0%"/>	Due Date	01-Apr-2023
Project Summary	Develop and implement a strategy to reduce numbers of Empty Homes.						
Latest Update	03-Nov-2022 Funding bids for additional resource to be part of the 2023/24 budget process (linked to general improvement of housing). Strategy considered by Executive Member and Deputy in September 2022, with outcomes and delivery linked directly to the resources available. Audit of current empty homes being undertaken by Revenues, initially online until the end of September 2022. Possible changes to milestone due dates still to be confirmed. Due to current uncertainty regarding resources, risk level still assessed as medium.						
Milestone			Due Date	Complete	Note		
Development of Strategy and resources.			31-Dec-2022	No			
Adoption of Strategy.			31-Mar-2023	No			
Implementation of Strategy.			01-Apr-2023	No	Implementation of the Strategy will follow its adoption by Cabinet. The scope of the Strategy (and the further milestones relating to its implementation) will depend on the availability of funding.		


Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Resourcing further actions following adoption of the Strategy. 2. Availability of empty homes that we can take forward under the Strategy. 3. Cost to Council of maintaining empty properties. 4. Potential reputational risk. 5. Staff shortages/competing priorities limit progress with developing Strategy.		4	4	3					


	New Ways of Delivering Housing on Council Land				Progress	<div><div></div></div> 0%	Due Date	01-Dec-2023					
Project Summary	Alternative ways to deliver housing on surplus Council land (other than sale to a developer) to provide a greater financial return to the Council.												
Latest Update	Establishing a way forward through a framework contractor was unsuccessful and the team is now working with Legal and Procurement to identify the best way to deliver this programme of work as a potential joint venture. The timescale for the project initially presented in the Council Delivery Plan needs to be extended, with the construction phase now estimated to commence by December 2023. The related risks remain relevant and overall, the risk level is still assessed as medium.												
Milestone PS Op 13	Milestone				Due Date	Complete	Note						
	Determine a way forward/partnership agreement with current provider and start to consider other options for delivery.				31-Mar-2023	No	Establishing a way forward with the current provider was unsuccessful and the Enterprise team will continue to work with Legal and Procurement to identify the best way to deliver this programme of work.						
	If unsuccessful, prepare a tender exercise based on the four plots of land already determined.				01-Jul-2023	No	The Enterprise team will work with Legal and Procurement on finalising the specification. A tender exercise will then follow.						
	Select supplier and move forward into the planning and delivery phase. Obtain relevant approval.				01-Sep-2023	No							
	Move to construction phase.				01-Dec-2023	No							
Risks				Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators		Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Being able to develop a viable project. 2. Housing development subject to planning. 3. Working with the right supplier for the Council. 4. Demand to provide more homes across the District.					5	5	5						


	Work with Stakeholders to Increase Accommodation for Single Homeless People	Progress	<div><div></div></div> 25%	Due Date	31-Mar-2023
Project	Working with Haven First to secure development of accommodation in Letchworth. Work with partners to deliver general and specialist accommodation.				



Summary									
Latest Update	<p>21-Oct-2022 - Haven First are merging with One YMCA. Early indications are they will still proceed with the development of a new hostel for single homeless people in Letchworth that secured planning permission in February 2021.</p> <p>- Current provision at the former Lord Lister Hotel, Hitchin (provided by Keystage Housing) has received planning consent, and the Haven First scheme at 20 High Street, Baldock is due to be considered by the Planning Control Committee by November.</p> <p>- We are also exploring the opportunity to adapt a small current scheme in Letchworth (provided by Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing) into a female-only scheme that will provide 24/7 support, utilising HCC funding.</p> <p>- A report is due to be presented to Cabinet on 13 December (included on the Forward Plan) regarding proposals for allocating government homelessness funding, including supported housing schemes. This project aims to help mitigate the risks associated with single homeless people with complex needs, but the threat of homelessness not only relates to individuals and couples, but to families too and we continue to assist all of those affected where required (the risk level of increased homelessness remains high due to many different factors e.g., the high support needs of homeless adults experiencing multiple disadvantage, the cost of living crisis, limited access to the private rented sector, availability of affordable housing, various asylum/refugee schemes).</p>								
Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note						
Work with Haven First to secure development of hostel accommodation in Letchworth.	31-Oct-2022	Yes	complete.						
Application and utilisation of grant funding to secure specialist provision.	13-Dec-2022	No	Report due to be presented to Cabinet on 13 December 2022 (included on the Forward Plan) regarding proposals for allocating government homelessness funding, including supported housing schemes.						
Work with partners to secure accommodation for those with specific support needs.	31-Mar-2023	No	The possible delivery of a new hostel in Letchworth contributes to this milestone. This is an ongoing activity, and we continue to explore options for increasing accommodation solutions for people with specific support needs.						
Work with partners to secure general accommodation for homeless people.	31-Mar-2023	No	This is an ongoing activity, and we continue to explore options for increasing accommodation solutions for all homeless families/people.						
Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. An excessive demand from the public for housing services. 2. A lack of alternative housing options. 3. An increase in the levels of homelessness. 4. An increased use of hotel accommodation for homeless households. 5. Major difficulties for some members of the public to access the private rented sector. 6. High levels of support are required for some clients/families.		8	8	5	Number of households living in temporary accommodation			96	

	Local Plan Implementation	Progress	<div><div>100%</div></div>	Due Date	31-Mar-2023
Project Summary	Adoption of Local Plan by Council.				
Latest Update	16-Nov-2022 The Local Plan was adopted at the Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 8 November 2022. Therefore, all milestones relating to this year have been completed. Activities to implement the Local Plan will now commence and if required, key milestones will be included in the 2023/24 Council Delivery Plan. The risk score will remain at its current level until the 6 week window for JR challenge closes. (commenced 09/11/22)				
Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note		



Receipt of Inspector's letter.			30-Sep-2022	Yes	Completed.				
Adoption of Plan by Full Council.			30-Nov-2022	Yes	Completed.				
Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Delay in inspectors report on the new Local Plan, resulting in a longer period without appropriate guidance. 2. Increased uncertainty of planning policy base. 3. Delay or failure to adoption/implementation of the new Local Plan. 4. Legal challenge to Local Plan. 5. Intervention by the Secretary of State i.e., issuing a holding direction. 6. 'Hostile' applications in areas not designated within the Local Plan.		9	9	5					


	Master Planning	Progress	<div>0%</div>	Due Date	31-Mar-2023
Project Summary	Secure funding for Master Plans. Develop Master Plans and seek adoption.				
Latest Update	16-Nov-2022 Timelines will vary by site and to the developer/applicants requirements. The risk level is still assessed as medium, until the 6 week challenge period for the Local Plan has expired, as well as the longer-term risks relating to the availability of funding to resource the process and the implications for pre-application and planning application income.				
Milestone		Due Date	Complete	Note	
1. Liaise with developers and identify the Council's expectations with regard master planning.		31-Mar-2023	No	"Due date to be confirmed" in the approved CDP. Timescales will be different for each strategic site identified in the Local Plan.	
2. Secure funding for master planning through the development of Planning Performance Agreements to seek to cover NHC and HCC costs as far as is practicable.		31-Mar-2023	No	"Due date to be confirmed" in the approved CDP. Timescales will be different for each strategic site identified in the Local Plan.	
3. Present master plans to Project Board for comment and support to forward onto Full Council or Planning Committee as appropriate for approval.		31-Mar-2023	No	"Due date to be confirmed" in the approved CDP. Timescales will be different for each strategic site identified in the Local Plan.	






Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Failure to secure funding to resource the process. 2. Inspector's report modifies master planning policy. 3. Non-adoption of the Local Plan. 4. Reduction in pre-application income and delay to income from planning applications.		5	5	3					


	Financial Sustainability/Balancing our Budget				Progress	<div>0%</div>	Due Date	30-Sep-2023			
Project Summary	To deliver a medium term balanced budget for the Council that reflects Council priorities.										
Latest Update	Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by Council. Detailed budget setting process for 2023/24 has commenced, with proposals presented to budget workshops. December and January Cabinet reports will consider the proposals to be taken forward and the impact of the Government Autumn Budget Review and Local Government Finance settlement										
<div>142</div> <div>Milestones</div>	Milestone			Due Date	Complete	Note					
	Medium Term Financial Strategy (aligned to Council Plan) approved by Council.			22-Sep-2022	No						
	Budget for 2023/24 approved by Council.			28-Feb-2023	No						
	Respond to expected consultation on funding reform.			30-Sep-2023	No						
Risks		Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators		Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Funding reductions as a result of new funding formula. 2. Loss of sales, fees, and charges income due to continuing impact of COVID-19. 3. Not able to make the required decisions to deliver budget savings required. 4. Increases in costs (reductions in income) when contracts are renewed and as a result of inflationary increases.			9	9	5						


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	Full Review of Council Tax Reduction Scheme				Progress	<div><div>50%</div></div>	Due Date	31-Mar-2023			
Project Summary	Implement a new scheme that is affordable, easy to administer and understand and fair to recipients.										
Latest Update	02-Nov-2022 Project progressing on time. Reports to Cabinet (December 2022) and Full Council (January 2023) allow required changes to be made in time for annual billing (February 2023) and commencement of revised scheme on 1 April 2023. Assessed as low risk.										
Milestone				Due Date	Complete	Note					
Engage consultant to support the project.				31-Mar-2022	Yes	complete					
Options appraisals conducted and consultation carried out with public and major preceptors.				30-Oct-2022	Yes	complete					
Reports to Committees - September, December, and January.				31-Jan-2023	No	Update reported to Cabinet on 13 September 2022. Further update presented to PLB on 1 November 2022. Details of proposed new scheme to be reported to Cabinet (December 2022) and Full Council (January 2023).					
Scheme implemented.				31-Mar-2023	No						
Risks			Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Lack of resources and specific skills to deliver. 2. Impact on the project of consultation outcomes.				5	3	3					



	Response to Government Resources and Waste Strategy				Progress	<div><div>40%</div></div>	Due Date	31-Mar-2023			
Project Summary	For this year, to engage with Councillors on a service design for the forthcoming new contract process. Actions in relation to new contract and finalising service design will follow in 2023/24 onwards.										
Latest Update	17-Nov-2022 The Government has still not published outcomes from consultations on the strategy regarding consistency agenda and deposit return schemes. Expect outcomes at the end of 2022 but recent leadership changes may delay further. Cabinet considered and agreed new service design proposals (for implementation in 2025 for the start of the new contract) in October 2022. This is based on our understanding of anticipated requirements and consultants will be supporting the procurement. Project Board to oversee the procurement and consider consultation outcomes/implications when published. Due to the continued uncertainty, still assessed as a high-risk area. PI Amber - Significant dry periods have impacted on the amount of garden waste collected. It is therefore unlikely that we will meet our target by year end unless there is a significant increase in recycling (inc. food waste) at Christmas and an early spring and start to the growing season.										



Milestone				Due Date	Complete	Note					
Initial member consultation and service design.				25-Aug-2022	Yes	complete					
Report presented to O&S.				28-Sep-2022	Yes	complete					
Pre-engagement.				18-Oct-2022	Yes	Pre-engagement work is complete. Further updates to the procurement strategy at Project Board due on 30 November 2022.					
Report presented to Cabinet.				25-Oct-2022	Yes	Presented to the Extraordinary Cabinet meeting scheduled for 25 October 2022.					
Publication of Selection Questionnaire (SQ).				05-Dec-2022	No						
Risks			Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
Page 144 1. Delays in confirmation of government strategy or legislation. 2. Protracted decision making. 3. Lack of interest from suppliers. 4. Increased cost uncertainty. 5. Reduced income from chargeable services. 6. Protracted contract negotiations. 7. Confusion by residents over new services. 8. Reduction in resident satisfaction due to requirements to recycle more etc. 9. Impact on Council reputation due to difficult service change mobilisation. 10. Failure by Government to honour 'New Burdens' doctrine.				9	9	5	Kg residual waste per household			170kg	178kg
							Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting			57.04%	59%


	Green Space Management Strategy	Progress	<div><div>50%</div></div>	Due Date	31-Mar-2023
Project Summary	For this year, installation of interactive play, wilding projects and other projects (as determined).				
Latest Update	05-Oct-2022 All four interactive play equipment projects completed/opened - Bancroft, Hitchin (April 2022), Serby Avenue, Royston (July 2022), Holroyd Crescent, Baldock (August 2022) and Jackmans Central, Letchworth (September 2022). Wilding projects are being delivered, over seeding etc has been undertaken at several new locations which also included over seeding of those areas seeded last year which suffered due to the hot summer. Trees and hedge stock have been ordered for planting over the winter. There is no change in the risk levels.				


Milestone			Due Date	Complete	Note					
Installation of interactive play.			16-Sep-2022	Yes	complete					
Wilding project.			31-Mar-2023	No	Funding secured and associated works managed by CMS.					
Risks		Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Tenders received are not within budget.			1	1	1					



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	Charnwood House				Progress	<div><div>60%</div></div>	Due Date	30-Apr-2023			
Project Summary	Leasing the property as a Community Hub.										
Latest Update	14-Nov-2022 Asbestos removal and air testing complete. Building is now fit to re-enter. Meeting with interested parties on 29 July 2022 galvanised interest. Charnwood Community Management Association currently updating a previously commissioned survey. Updated survey and costings for refurbishment expected end of November 2022. Separate options appraisal by NHC in liaison with local marketing agent should now be completed in December 2022. Expect to report to Cabinet in March 2023, if required. Although demand for a community hub has been proven, risk level still assessed as medium, as there remains uncertainty relating to many aspects of the project.										
Milestone		Due Date	Complete	Note							
Exploration of options.		31-Mar-2022	Yes	complete							
Market site (informally) for leasing as community hub, on non-committal basis.		29-Jul-2022	Yes	complete							
Asbestos removed and air testing completed.		12-Oct-2022	Yes	complete							
Undertake options appraisal. Seek Cabinet decision.		31-Oct-2022	No	Options appraisal delayed. Now expected by 9 December 2022. Meeting with Service Director: Resources to discuss way forward will follow. Report to Cabinet in March 2023 if required.							
Negotiate terms with selected tenant. Seek Cabinet decision. Complete lease.		30-Apr-2023	No	Milestone completion in 2023/24. Due date to be confirmed. Further milestones will follow for completion in 2023/24.							
Risks		Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators		Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Covenant restriction on use. 2. Statute restriction on use. 3. Viability of Listed Building consent conditions. 4. Demand for community hub. 5. Delays due to Asset of Community Value (ACV) listing.			5	5	1						

	Museum Storage				Progress	<div>0%</div>	Due Date	31-Mar-2024			
Project Summary	Overall to construct a fit-for-purpose museum storage facility. In this year to complete work to enable construction to commence from 2023/24.										
Latest Update	The recruitment of a procurement officer in summer 2022 has added much valued input to this project and officers have been encouraged to revisit a framework approach upon this expert advice. Having reviewed the options available, officers now plan to pursue a framework approach to the procurement of a principal contractor under the SCAPE framework in early 2023. This will lead to construction work starting in summer 2023 rather than the previously targeted Spring 2023. However officers are now very confident of the direction of travel on this project and are satisfied that risks should have been minimised and value for money maximised by the decisions and research undertaken to date. The risk level remains medium, as we are still in the early stages of the project and details still need to be determined for many aspects.										
Milestone				Due Date	Complete	Note					
Finalise Business Case and specification, and seek approvals.				01-Sep-2022	No						
Agree the design and submit planning application along with seeking other required permissions.				31-Jan-2023	No						
Existing Bury Mead site to be cleared prior to works commencing (although the previous Hitchin Museum building is no longer an option to help with this).				30-Jun-2023	No	Although the project is in the early stages, it is currently anticipated that the clearance of the existing site will take place between February and June 2023, prior to construction works commencing.					
Move to construction phase will commence in 2023/24.				31-Mar-2024	No	Start and finish of construction phase (estimated 12 months) to follow completion of the previous milestones. Related milestones and due dates to be confirmed.					
Risks			Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Funding the project. 2. Unforeseen issues with the development. 3. Lower utilisation of the commercial storage opportunity than expected. 4. Until the project is completed, risk of damage to items stored at the current facility (mainly reputational, but potentially financial).				5	5	3					


	Local Government Boundary Review	Progress	<div><div>66%</div></div>	Due Date	10-Jan-2023
Project Summary	To support and consult on the Boundary Review.				
Latest Update	20-Oct-2022 LGBCE consultation on draft recommendations between 1 November 2022 and 10 January 2023. Project Board meetings set up. Council meeting on 19 December 2022 to consider and agree NHC's submission. LGBCE will then publish its final recommendation on 28 March 2023, and we currently anticipate that a subsequent order will be laid in Parliament in Autumn 2023. The risk level remains low, as plans are in place to ensure that NHC submits its second consultation submission on time.				
Milestone		Due Date	Complete	Note	
Provision of any additional information to LGBCE on warding patterns.		31-May-2022	Yes	complete	



Consultation on warding patterns by LGBCE with Council, Political Groups and General Public.				18-Oct-2022	Yes	complete				
Consultation on draft recommendations with Council, Political Groups and General Public.				10-Jan-2023	No	The due date relates to the closing date of the second consultation exercise, which is due to commence on 1 November 2022.				
Risks		Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Failure to meet set deadlines. 2. Failure to agree NHC consultation submission.			3	3	1					

	Shared Prosperity Fund				Progress	<div>20%</div>	Due Date	31-Mar-2023				
Project Summary	Deliver projects to support the aims of the Shared Prosperity Fund, as agreed with Government.											
Latest Update	17/11/22 We have submitted an Investment Plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, in order to access the allocation awarded to North Herts Council. We are still waiting for full Government approval of the Plan. Due to the need to spend the 2022-23 allocation by 31 st March, the work on some projects has commenced, on the assumption that our plan will be approved.											
Page 14/17	Milestone				Due Date	Complete	Note					
	Submit Investment Plan.				28-Jul-2022	Yes	Complete					
	Work with Government on approval of Investment Plan.				30-Oct-2022	No	Due to the delay in response, it is proposed that this date be changed to 31/12/2023					
	Deliver projects: Continue community wealth fund.				31-Mar-2023	No						
	Deliver projects: Recruit sports development officer. Deliver outdoor fitness classes and first set of new outdoor exercise equipment.				31-Mar-2023	No						
	Deliver projects: Town Centre regeneration plans and initial activities.				31-Mar-2023	No						
Risks			Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators		Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Lack of general resources to deliver these projects as they are on top of those in service plans. 2. Failure to spend the money in the correct year, especially if there are delays in Government approval. 3. Lack of expertise in providing the required returns to Government on use of the grant. 4. Long lead times for capital elements means that items are unavailable until beyond the end of the funding period.				5	5	3						

	Churchgate				Progress	<div>0%</div>	Due Date	31-Mar-2023			
Project Summary	Identifying, consulting on, and delivering long-term regeneration of the shopping centre and surrounding areas.										
Latest Update	Working on getting a project board set up. Will then develop a project and communications/consultation plan. Will report back to Council in January 2023.										
Milestone				Due Date	Complete	Note					
Set up project board.				30-Sep-2022	Yes	Complete					
Produce project plan, including communications plan.				31-Oct-2022	Yes	Draft project plan in place and in line with NHC's Project Management Framework. An update will be provided to January 2023 Full Council.					
Report back to Council setting out short, medium and long-term approach with draft project plan.				10-Nov-2022	No	Propose to change milestone date to 01 April 2023					
Risks			Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. The regeneration will not meet expectations of stakeholders. 2. Regeneration of the Centre and surrounding area is not cost effective/not affordable. Including impacts of high inflation and likely recession.				9	9	6					

Pis and Risks Not Linked to Specific Projects

Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score
Vital additional actions require resources (e.g., staff and financial) to be redirected to enable them to be provided, which affects the delivery of other projects within the Council Delivery Plan. In the short-term, this is likely to include supporting the Homes for Ukraine scheme and providing financial hardship support. Also now includes bidding for Shared Prosperity Fund.		8	8	2

Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
Electricity and gas energy consumption (kWh) - 100% of reported energy consumption is from green energy sources			745,157	958,091

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 6 DECEMBER 2022

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: An update of the Enterprise Directorate's work programme.

REPORT OF: Service Director – Enterprise

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Executive Members for Enterprise and Arts.

COUNCIL PRIORITY: PEOPLE FIRST, SUSTAINABILITY AND A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide the committee with an update on the progress of the Enterprise Directorate as set out in the departments work programme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. For the Committee to note the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. The report is following the request of the committee for an update on the progress of the Enterprise Directorate work programme and is for information only.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1. None.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1. The Executive Member and Deputy Executive Member for Enterprise and the Arts have been kept regularly updated on the work of the Enterprise Directorate and have been fully briefed on the contents of this report.

6. FORWARD PLAN

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

7. BACKGROUND

7.1. The Service Director – Enterprise has been asked to provide regularly update to this committee.

8. ENTERPRISE UPDATE

- 8.1. Appendix A provides the current Enterprise work programme that the team is working to. The final column provides the current position on all tasks and uses a traffic light colour code to demonstrate if the tasks are on target or not.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. There are various legislative provisions that give local authorities the power to trade commercially, in order to improve the range of services they can offer, such as S1 of the Local Authority (Goods and Services) Act 1970 (which allows local authorities to provide goods and services to other local authorities); S95 of the Local Government Act 2003 (which allows local authorities to engage in entrepreneurial commercial trading with private bodies and persons); S1 of the Localism Act 2011 ('the general power of competence', which allows local authorities to do anything individuals can do unless prohibited by law and subject to public law principles) and S19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (which allows local authorities to provide facilities associated with recreational facilities). As part of the assessment of any proposed trading activity pursuant to the Commercial Strategy, the Council will need to ascertain the most appropriate power and comply with any associated requirements and consider the limitations imposed by the legislation.
- 9.2. Section 4(2) of the Localism Act 2011 provides that where, in exercise of the general power of competence, a local authority does things for a commercial purpose a local authority must do them through a company.
- 9.3. Section 120 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides a local authority with the power to acquire land for the purposes of its functions or for the benefit, improvement or development of its area. In its capacity as local authority, the Council cannot borrow to acquire land purely in order to profit from the investment of the sums borrowed. However, this does not necessarily preclude the Council generating a surplus from land acquired or developed pursuant to the Strategy.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. Financial implications are covered in appendix A.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. There are no risk implications relating directly to this report, as it is solely providing an update on the progress of relevant projects. There is a Service Risk (previously reported as a Corporate Risk) relating to the overarching opportunities/risks of the Council adopting a more commercial approach to service delivery. Risks are assessed for each individual project and where appropriate, these are recorded on the Risk Register.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

- 12.2. The strategy states that all proposed ideas will be of an ethical nature and will be considered to have a positive impact on the community as a basis for consideration. In line with the Council's commitment to demonstrate due regard the Equality Duty, it will conduct equality impact assessments where required (i.e. any key decisions, major budget implications and any revisions to major service provisions).

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 directly to this report. The Council will conduct environmental impact assessments where required (i.e. any key decisions, major budget implications and any revisions to major service provisions).

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 There are no human resources implications for this report.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1 Appendix 1 – Enterprise Work Programme

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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- 17.4 Jess Wallis, Enterprise Team Leader
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- 17.5 Douglas Traill-Stevenson, Property solicitor
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- 17.6 Tim Everitt, Performance Improvement Officer
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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1 None.

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Appendix A - Service Action Plan					
Enterprise					<i>Please note - updates are shown in italics.</i>
Action	Corporate Objective	Target/Aim/Outcome	Planned Start Date	Due Date	Current Progress
2022/23					
Museum and Town Hall					
Covid Recovery Hitchin Town Hall	Brighter future together	For the level of hires of Hitchin Town Hall, and the level of income to have recovered to the point of parity with pre pandemic levels (assumes the current pandemic situation continues to improve).	Ongoing		<i>In the two financial years prior to the pandemic, the town hall generated £54k in 2018/19 and £69k in 2019/20 in hall and room lettings. HTH remains on course to exceed these income levels by the end of 2021/22, which would signify an extremely strong recovery from the pandemic and further evidence of the business growing. Fitness class income continues to perform strongly, also ahead of 2018/19 and 2020/21. Bar takings have recovered ground on the income target as the year has progressed and looking at the events to come, this income stream is expected to finish the year strongly with a particularly healthy Christmas period. Cafe and catering income, linked to lower visitor figures, and staffing shortages linked with the transition to incorporate the Bancroft site, continues to lag behind target. Overall, income remains approximately 15% behind target, however we know there are a number of highly profitable events which have occurred very recently which are yet to filter through into the accounts. Officers continue to witness a stronger than expected recovery at the venue from the Covid pandemic, which is encouraging.</i>
Covid Recovery North Herts Museum	Brighter future together	For the level of visitors to North Herts Museum to have recovered to a point of parity with pre pandemic levels. (Assumes the current pandemic situation continues to improve).	Ongoing	01/03/23	<i>Prior to the pandemic, the museum was on course to attract over 35,000 visitors in its first full year of operation. This equates to roughly 3000 visitors per month which fluctuates with seasonal variation and which exhibitions are on. By the mid way point of 2022, the museum had welcomed 15461 general visitors, excluding schools and out of hours groups. This signifies a continuing trend towards matching pre pandemic visitor numbers. Gift Shop performance and margins continue to track alongside targets and the current exhibition has resulted in a number of favourable commission based sales of artwork, all of which is welcomed against slightly lower visitor numbers for the year to date. Officers feel the recovery continues to be stronger than expected from the pandemic, though there is still ground to recover.</i>
Burymead Redevelopment	Brighter future together	Procurement of the necessary developers and consultants to be undertaken and completed. North Herts Museum collection to have been successfully temporarily relocated and for construction work to be underway at the Burymead site on the new museum storage facility.	01/09/22	01/03/2023 Revised to 01/06/2023	<i>The Council have appointed a new Procurement Officer in the summer, who has been able to add valuable input to this project. Based on advice received, officers were strongly encouraged to revisit the framework approach and are now finalising details for the adoption of the SCAPE framework to guide the project and source a principal contractor. We envisage now moving forward with awarding this contract in early 2023. Whilst the beginning of construction is now thought to be more likely in Summer 2023 rather than Spring 2023, officers now have much more confidence in the direction of travel with this project and that risks have been minimised and value for money maximised through the current approach. As mentioned in a previous update, the museum collection will need to be relocated by this point and we have had initial discussions and outline quotations for transportation and storage options during the construction period.</i>
Bancroft Kiosk	Brighter future together	To renovate the existing wing of the Bancroft pavilion into a compliant food service area with all relevant license conditions and regulations adhered to, till systems and commercial kitchen equipment installed. To have fully established a food premises servicing Bancroft green space.	01/04/22	01/08/2022 Revised to 01/04/2022	<i>Planning permission has been granted for the conversion of the vacant wing of the building into a cafe kiosk. A new structure has been presented which does not impact any existing permanent roles and the new roles contained within this structure have been evaluated and graded. Officers plan to recruit the lead Head Chef position for the structure in early 2023, so that they may be involved with the wider recruitment of the adopted structure as we now target a launch date of early April 2023. Contractors are being procured for the installation of a service hatch in accordance with planning permission and the fit out of the kitchen area within.</i>
Estates					
Block letting of 55 Harkness Court, Hitchin	Brighter future together	Letting entire building to North Herts Council's trading company with aim of generating rental income for Council and providing four new homes.	01/04/22	14/10/22 Revised to 16/12/22	<i>Energy Performance Certificates ("EPC") for each flat obtained: all "C" Ratings. Mechanical & Electrical ("M & E") system snagging completed. Other snagging works nearing completion. Cookers, cooker hoods & flooring installed. Building Control approval awaited on three aspects: (i) firefighter travel distance; (ii) M & E system; and (iii) acoustic-testing of party wall. Legal Services has opened file to draft block lease based on instruction and lease heads of terms sent by Estates. Due Date revised to 16/12/22, although estimated not confirmed date.</i>
Disposal of Land off Castlefield, Preston.	Brighter future together	Remove maintenance obligation and generate capital receipt in line with capital projections.	Complete	Complete	<i>Sale completed on 12/08/22. Capital money received. Developer now able to implement Planning permission to build 21 homes, 7 of which affordable. (Part 2 contains further information).</i>
Disposal of Land at Ivel Court, Letchworth.	Brighter future together	Remove maintenance obligation and generate capital receipt in line with capital projections.	Ongoing	09/12/22	<i>Section 106 agreement completed. Decision notice issued on Planning permission for 24 homes, 8 of which affordable. Now working towards completion of disposal. (Part 2 contains further information).</i>
Disposal of Land rear of Clare Crescent, Baldock.	Brighter future together	Remove maintenance obligation and generate capital receipt in line with capital projections.	Ongoing	18/11/22 Revised to 06/01/23	<i>Section 106 agreement completed. Planning permission for 24 homes across both sites (8 on North Herts Council's land & 16 on adjoining landowner's land). Due Date revised to 06/01/23. (Part 2 contains further information).</i>
Rectification of structural and fabric issues at Thomas Bellamy House.	Brighter future together	Arrest structural & fabric issues and make presentable to maximise marketability for letting out or selling.	01/04/22	31/01/23	<i>As part of programme of remedial works to building structure & fabric, Property Services department has written specification and tender documents for structural, brickwork & window repairs. These are posted on In-Tend. Department estimates site works will follow in approximately mid-December 2022 but precise date will largely depend upon scheduling by the preferred contractor. Estates is maintaining frequent dialogue with Property Services.</i>
Marketing & disposal of Land adjacent 9 North End, Kelshall.	Brighter future together	Remove maintenance obligation and generate capital receipt in line with capital projections.	01/04/22	31/03/23	<i>Contracts to sell land exchanged 01/11/22. Progressing towards completion of disposal. Buyer will then be able to pursue full Planning permission based on outline Planning permission for 1 house granted September 2021. (Part 2 contains further information).</i>
Marketing & disposal of Land at The Snipe, Weston.	Brighter future together	Generate rental income and/or capital receipt.	01/04/22	31/03/2023 Revised to 30/06/23	<i>Opportunity for joint disposal with another landowner resurrected. In early negotiation with the landowner to undertake joint disposal to help ensure optimum development, increase market appeal and capture marriage value. Both landowners aiming to jointly market both sites in Spring 2023. Due Date revised to 30/06/23. (Part 2 contains further information).</i>
Marketing & disposal of Land at Yeomanry Drive, Baldock.	Brighter future together	Generate rental income and/or capital receipt.	01/04/22	31/03/23	<i>Disposal on hold whilst research options for developing land for homes with external party, with a view to retaining all or portion of homes to generate rental income stream and/or a capital receipt from part disposal.</i>

Marketing & disposal of Land at Meadow Way, Thetford.	Brighter future together	Generate rental income and/or capital receipt.	01/04/22	31/03/23	Disposal on hold whilst research options for developing land for homes with external party, with a view to retaining all or portion of homes to generate rental income stream and/or a capital receipt from part disposal.
Investigation of options for repurposing of Royston Town Hall Annexe.	Brighter future together	Remove maintenance obligations, improve building energy & environmental performance, generate new long-dated rental income stream and partially provide new community space.	01/04/22	31/03/23	Negotiations taking place with a prospective tenant of site with a view to repurposing property, subject to Planning permission. Liaison with various stakeholders either underway or to be resumed to ensure all rights of access are in place and each stakeholder's aims are considered for the future use of site.
Riverside Walk, Hitchin.	Sustainability	Take ownership and improve riverside walkway from Jill Grey Place to Bridge Street.	Ongoing	31/03/23	In communication with Shanly Homes Limited to arrange transfer of footpath land to North Herts Council on eastern bank of River Hiz in accordance with Agreement dated 10/04/97 and Deed of Variation dated 15/09/99. Following transfer, and subject to securing requested budget, North Herts Council intends to commission contractor to improve footpath condition.
Property acquisitions & developments.	Brighter future together	Integrate property acquisitions into estate portfolio and asset manage to explore and initiate opportunities with view to maximising income and capital appreciation.	01/06/22	31/03/23	Estates to provide advice on relevant acquisitions as and when North Herts Council requires. Estates working with Brown & Lee Chartered Surveyors on operational property management of Churchgate Shopping Centre following acquisition of head leasehold on 01/08/22.
Asset valuations.	People First	Produce timely asset valuations that factor in material changes in property portfolio, for financial statements.	01/09/22	31/03/23	Audit of 2021-22 asset valuations in progress by external auditor. Preparation by Estates underway for 2022-23 asset valuations.
Carry out rent reviews (mostly commercial ground rents).	Brighter future together	Effect efficient triggering of commercial lease rent reviews to ensure maximum rental income uplifts are secured.	Ongoing	31/03/23	Several rent reviews of North Herts Council investment properties in progress, some of which are incorporated with lease restructure/releasing exercises. 88% annual rental uplift concluded on investment site in Hitchin in October 2022.
Investigating options for future use of Charnwood House.	People First	To accommodate community hub use with aim of bringing a town centre asset into beneficial occupation for wider community & reduce holding costs.	Ongoing	31/03/23	Asbestos removal and air quality safety testing completed on 12/10/22. Next step is to focus on bringing about community hub proposal in conjunction with local community based on community engagement exercises in 2022 and 2021. (Part 2 contains further information).
Commercial					
Strategic Review and update to the Commercial Strategy	Brighter future together	Present findings of the Strategic Review to SLT and Leader. Update and rewrite elements of the current Commercial Strategy to align with the review, Council priorities and commercial environment	Underway	31/03/23	Strategic Review completed and presented to Senior Leadership Team and Political Liaison Board. It has been agreed (by Officers and Executive Members) that an overarching Enterprise Strategy will be created. This will feature separate Commercial, Economic Development and Tourism elements, that will cover key priorities of each department across the next 3 years. The team will call upon existing resources to include within the strategy, but will also work with a consultant to ensure this is relevant, clear and sets out how we will deliver against the strategy.
Manage the Property Letting Company	Brighter future together	Aim to ensure the company is fully functional and in line with the Property and Development Strategy. Continue to create a portfolio of assets to move into the company that will create a financial return for NHDC.	Underway	16/12/22	Directors in post and legal documentation complete. Company remains "dormant" until the Council officially sign over the property ready for operation/ trade. Update to the due date in line with the completion of works at the property.
Improve commercial awareness throughout the organisation	People First	Aim to educate all employees and Councillors about the role of commercial at North Herts, based on the outcome of the Commercial Strategy survey.	Underway	31/03/23	This was paused whilst the Strategic Review took place. This will be delivered alongside the department rebrand. Updated due date in line with the Enterprise Strategy.
Manage the Hitchin Market contract with Hitchin Markets Limited	Brighter future together	Continue to monitor and manage the contract. Attend Board meetings and plan for the future of the market as well as provide social media support. Conduct a yearly financial review to assess the position of HML.	Underway	31/03/23	CDG continues to monitor the contract with Hitchin Markets Limited by attending monthly Board meetings and engaging on a weekly basis with the Hitchin Markets team. The contract is reviewed on a yearly basis, with a focus on the financial status of the market. HML are being updated regarding Project Churchgate.
Manage and plan the future redevelopment of Churchgate, Hitchin	Brighter future together	Manage the existing premises alongside the Estates team. Manage the redevelopment process regarding the future of the property and its surroundings.	27/05/22	31/03/23	Project Board and Project Team established and underway. Required documentation complete for Steps 1 and 2 under the NHC Project Management Framework and presented/ approved to Project Board. The team are now working on Step 3 and pending approval early January 2023.
North Herts Community Lottery	People First	Continue to manage Gatherwell and the lottery process. Aim to increase ticket sales and good cause sign ups as much as possible in a bid to exceed existing forecasts.	Underway	31/03/23	The Lottery is exceeding original forecasts in regard to ticket sales. Tickets sold since March 2022 694, which equates to £9,022 gross revenue so far, with £902 into the central NHC pot and £5,012 going directly to good causes. Total spend for the Lottery is £4,511 and therefore it has made a loss of £1,640 (please note, we are only in month 9 of operation and these numbers are based on the Q1 performance so far). Our next reporting period for the Lottery is 17/12/2022.
Burymead Redevelopment, Hitchin	Brighter future together	Approvals completed for the commercial/new museum storage project and entering into early stages of construction work on site.	01/09/22	01/03/23	Please refer to the detail set out in cell H8. The team are investigating ways to ensure the commercial element of this project are viable, before going ahead with any construction. A viability exercise will be conducted by the team and Finance to determine if a commercial storage unit is best placed on the Burymead site as part of the redevelopment. We are currently working with our Procurement team to overcome challenges regarding contractors used.
Develop new ways of delivering housing on North Herts Council land	Brighter future together	Determine a way forward/ partnership agreement with current provider and start to consider other options for delivery	Underway	31/03/23	The team are working with Legal and Procurement to identify the best way to deliver this programme of work as a potential joint venture.
Manage the process of opening Biggin Lane car park, Hitchin	Brighter future together	Work alongside a consultant to update the TRO in conjunction with Riverside Walk project (mentioned above)	03/05/22	31/03/23	CDG is preparing to appoint a Traffic Regulation Order consultant. After obtaining various quotes for this piece of work, we are currently in discussion with HCC regarding a wider TRO that will save the Council money. This work is likely to be complete by April 2023.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 6 DECEMBER 2022

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2022/23

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND SCRUTINY MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: NOT APPLICABLE

COUNCIL PRIORITY: PEOPLE FIRST / SUSTAINABILITY / A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report highlights items scheduled in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work programme and items that have been considered in 2022/23. 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 most recent iteration of the Forward Plan, as attached as Appendix B, suggests a list of items to be considered at its meetings in the coming civic year.
- 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 2022/23.
- 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 March will be circulated as a supplementary agenda. Members can view currently published forward plans here: [Browse plans - Cabinet, 2022 - North Hertfordshire District Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](http://north-herts.gov.uk/Browse_plans_-_Cabinet_2022_-_North_Hertfordshire_District_Council)
- 8.5 Members are reminded that the Forward Plan acts as public notification of key executive decisions due in the next three months and beyond but that it is a working document subject to regular amendments.

Corporate Peer Challenge

- 8.6 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.
- 8.7 The Committee is asked to consider the Action Plan and any updates provided at Appendix B.

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 – 4 November 2022
- 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 2022-23

6 December 2022	Resolutions Report Work Programme 3Cs Half Year Report Corporate Equality Strategy Climate Change Strategy Museum Strategy Enterprise Update
24 January 2023	Crime and Disorder Matters Resolutions Report Work Programme Priorities for the District – Key Projects Half Year Monitoring 2nd Quarter Performance against PIs Enterprise Update Lord Lister Call to Account Chair's Report
9 March 2023	Resolutions Report Work Programme Annual Report Enterprise Update New PIs for 2021/22 Priorities For The District – Key Projects 2022/23 3rd Quarter PIs 3rd Quarter Key projects
	To be Scheduled Recovery Plan Lord Lister Update from Strategic Housing Manager

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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Forward Plan of Key Decisions - 4 November 2022

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
Award of Building Compliance Contract			9 Dec 2022		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Permit Review		Cabinet	Not before 13th Dec 2022		Louise Symes, Strategic Infrastructure and Projects Manager louise.symes@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Draft Revenue Budget (Rate pooling)		Cabinet	13 Dec 2022		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
The Allocations of DLUHC Homelessness Grants		Cabinet	13 Dec 2022		Martin Lawrence, Strategic Housing Manager martin.lawrence@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Compliance Contract-change to services provided to Community Centres		Cabinet	13 Dec 2022		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
CCTV camera location		Cabinet	13 Dec 2022		Ian Couper, Service	Yes	Via the Contact

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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
review- including removal/ relocation of some cameras					Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk		Officer named in Column 6
Climate Change Strategy Update		Cabinet	13 Dec 2022		Reuben Ayavoo, Policy and Community Engagement Manager reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Half Yearly Report on Risk Management Governance		Cabinet	13 Dec 2022		Rachel Cooper, Controls, Risk and Performance Manager rachel.cooper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Corporate Equality Strategy		Cabinet	13 Dec 2022		Reuben Ayavoo, Policy and Community Engagement Manager reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY) MID-YEAR REVIEW 2022/23		Cabinet	13 Dec 2022		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Council Delivery Plan Q2		Cabinet	13 Dec 2022		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
SECOND QUARTER REVENUE		Cabinet	13 Dec 2022		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in

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
MONITORING 2022/23					ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk		Column 6
CARELINE IN HOUSE PROVISION FOR COMPLEX INSTALLATIONS AND MAINTENANCE		Cabinet	13 Dec 2022		Jo Dufficy, Service Director - Customers johanne.dufficy@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Museum Strategy 2022 to 2026		Cabinet	13 Dec 2022		Robert Orchard robert.orchard@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24		Cabinet	31 Jan 2023		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Developer Contributions SPD		Cabinet	31 Jan 2023		Laura Allen, Senior Planning Officer laura.allen@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Award of Insurance Contracts			17 Feb 2023		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6

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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	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

		and a forward work plan. Fewer agenda items will support more allocated time for meaningful scrutiny and related debate.				
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	Ongoing/Complete	Training provided by a CfGS partner has been arranged to take place on 14/06/22
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	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	Service Director Legal and Community Member training champions	Pending	

		health & safety / personal welfare of both members and officers from such excessively long and late meetings.	<p>meetings virtually from home to be explored</p> <p>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 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	Proposal to Full Council to clarify relationship	Group Leaders Monitoring Officer	Annual Council (May/June 2020)	

		O&S and cabinet panels.				
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.