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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

9 June 2023

Our Ref Overview and Scrutiny Committee 20 June 2023
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To: Members of the Committee: Councillors Adam Compton (Chair), Val Bryant (Vice Chair), Matt Barnes, Clare Billing, Mick Debenham, Dominic Griffiths, David Levett, Nigel Mason, Ian Moody, Ralph Muncer and Daniel Wright-Mason

Substitutes: Councillors Daniel Allen, David Barnard, Raj Bhakar, Sam Collins, James Denselow, Lisa Nash, Sean Nolan and Mandi Tandi

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, SG6 3JF.

On

TUESDAY, 20TH JUNE, 2023 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 - 9 MARCH 2023** To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 9 March 2023.	(Pages 5 - 14)
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 15 - 16)

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND SCRUTINY MANAGER

To consider the outcome of Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolutions.

10. ANNUAL REPORT OF OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY 2022/2023 (Pages 17 - 26)

REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2022-2023

To consider and comment on the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2022-2023, prior to consideration by Council.

11. 3C'S FULL YEAR UPDATE 22-23 (Pages 27 - 36)

REPORT OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER

To provide an update on the full year (22-23) performance of Comments, Compliments and Complaints.

12. NORTH HERTS PLACE NARRATIVE (Pages 37 - 62)

REPORT OF THE COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

An update on the North Herts Place Narrative.

13. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE REPORT & ACTION PLAN (Pages 63 - 88)

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – LEGAL & COMMUNITY

In 2020 the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) undertook a review, the review report and Action Plan were agreed through Cabinet on 24 March 2020 and 23 June 2020, respectively.

A follow up review was undertaken by (different) LGA CPC Peers during 2022 and a further LGA Peer Committee Support report was issued in January 2023 (Appendix A). This concentrated on the Overview & Scrutiny and Finance, Audit and Risk Committees and a number of further recommendations have been made. These have been separated out into the Action Plan (Appendix B) with response and proposed actions for the Committees consideration and recommendations to Cabinet.

14. Q4 UPDATE ON PROGRESS AGAINST THE COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 22-23 (Pages 89 - 122)

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR- RESOURCES

An update on the projects, risks and performance indicators linked to delivery of the Council Plan for 22-23

15. WASTE SHARED SERVICE: CLIENT TEAM AND CORPORATE SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS (Pages 123 - 166)

REPORT OF THE SHARED SERVICE MANAGER

A report on the Waste Shared Service - Client team and Corporate Support Arrangements.

16. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider passing the following resolution:

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).
B

17. AN UPDATE OF THE ENTERPRISE DIRECTORATE'S WORK PROGRAMME 167 - 170

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - ENTERPRISE

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

18. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 171 - 178)

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND SCRUTINY MANAGER

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

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH ON THURSDAY, 9TH MARCH, 2023 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: David Levett (Chair), Val Bryant (Vice-Chair), Alistair Willoughby, Claire Strong, Nigel Mason, Tamsin Thomas and Morgan Derbyshire*

In Attendance:

Rachel Cooper (Controls, Risk and Performance Manager), Steve Crowley (Service Director - Enterprise), Sarah Kingsley (Service Director - Place), James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager), Chloe Gray (Commercial Manager), Nurainatta Katevu (Legal Regulatory Team Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer), Robert Orchard (Operations and Facilities Manager), Eleanor Hopcraft (Committee, Member & Scrutiny Officer), Louise Randall (Leisure Manager), Christopher Robson (Senior Estates Surveyor) and Sjanel Wickenden (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)

Also Present:

There were no members of the public present.

Councillors Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg and Keith Hoskins were also in attendance.

186 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 2 minutes 54 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tony Hunter, Carol Stanier, Adam Compton and Ian Moody.

Having given due notice Tony Hunter was substituted by Morgan Derbyshire.

Councillors Raj Bhakar, and Phil Weeder were absent.

187 MINUTES - 24 JANUARY 2023

Audio Recording – 3 minutes 33 seconds

Councillor David Levett, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Alistair Willoughby seconded and following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 24 January 2023 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

188 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 4 minutes 23 seconds

There was no other business notified.

189 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 4 minutes 25 seconds

(1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council policy this 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 that for the purposes of clarification Clause 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution does not apply to this meeting.

(4) The Chair welcomed the new Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer Sjanel Wickenden.

(5) The Chair advised of a change to the order of the published agenda with Agenda Item 14 'Sustainability SPD' ahead of Agenda Item 9 'Overview and Scrutiny Committee Resolutions'.

(6) The Chair led a silence in memory of former Councillor John Bishop.

190 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 7 minutes 30 seconds

There was no public participation at this meeting.

191 URGENT AND GENERAL EXCEPTION ITEMS

Audio recording – 7 minutes 35 seconds

No urgent or general exception items were received.

192 CALLED-IN ITEMS

Audio recording – 7 minutes 42 seconds

There have been no items called-in by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

193 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Audio recording – 7 minutes 46 seconds

No questions had been submitted.

194 SUSTAINABILITY SPD

Audio Recording: 7 minutes 50 seconds

The Chair advised that due to illness there was no Officer in attendance to present the report. However, the Chair noted that, as this was an outline report to Cabinet, Members could contact the relevant Officer outside of the meeting should they have any questions or comments.

Councillor David Levett as Chair, proposed and Councillor Claire Strong seconded, and following a vote, it was:

RECCOMMENDED TO CABINET:

(1) That the proposed structure and breadth of the draft Sustainability SPD be approved.

(2) That the issues and points raised by the Cabinet Panel on the Environment be noted.

(3) That, for the purposes of developing the draft SPD, Cabinet endorse the principles of:

- A tiered approach to assessing the sustainability of new buildings in terms of both built fabric and operational efficiency.
- Investigation of the application of parking standards, both residential and non-residential, with a view to reducing or offsetting them where appropriate.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION: To allow the Sustainability SPD to be progressed so that it may be publicly consulted upon with a view to being adopted in due course following its presentation and approval by Cabinet.

195 OVERVIEW AND AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS

Audio Recording: 10 minutes 22 seconds

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager presented the report entitled 'Resolutions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee' and advised that:

- The Task and Finish group was still outstanding and will be moved to the Work Programme for 2023-2024.
- Sustainability SPD will remain on the report.
- The Peer Review Report was no longer included with the work Programme report and the updated Peer Review would be presented as an item to the Committee when available.
- The Referral on a Women's Safety Charter was made to Council in February, and carried, and therefore can be removed.

In response to a question from Councillor Claire Strong, the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager advised that nominations to the Task and Finish Group were not only outstanding from the Conservative Group. The Chair encouraged Group Leaders to appoint people to the Group, so that the work could begin.

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

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.

196 ANNUAL REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Audio Recording: 12 minutes and 48 seconds

The Chair presented the report entitled 'Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2022/23'and advised that:

- The report presented was an outline of the report with more details to be added, including a requirement in the Constitution to review and suggest changes to the functions of the Committee.
- The updated Peer Review was outstanding.
- He had made requests throughout the year to look at the formality of the way the meetings the Committee are run.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager provided an overview of the report for new Members, including that statistics were included and would be updates and finalised following this meeting. The final report would then be presented to Full Council at the meeting following Annual Council.

The Chair noted that he wanted the finalised report to be brought back to the Committee before being presented to Full Council.

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

RESOLVED:

1) That the Committee considered and commented on the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2022/2023 as attached at Appendix A prior to consideration by Council.

2) That, having considered and commented on the Draft Annual Report, the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager make the requested changes to the draft report, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair prior to the report being presented to Full Council.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider and comment on the report of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the work of the Committee in the 2022/2023 Civic Year prior to consideration by Council.

197 UPDATE ON LORD LISTER HOTEL - INFORMATION NOTE

Audio Recording 15 minute and 50 seconds

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis–Harburg presented the information note ‘Update on Lord Lister Hotel’ and advised that:

- This Note provided an update on the work being done at the Lord Lister Hotel to support homeless people.
- Five clients had been resettled since September 2022, and these places had since been allocated to new residents.
- Plans were in place to scale up the numbers of placements in a phased and controlled manner with appropriate checks, balances and support.
- The site was currently under-utilised due to teething issues, but there was nothing in the planning conditions to prevent increasing occupancy.
- Keystage had engaged the local community to enhance trust and confidence with the residents.
- The plan was to increase from 10 to 12 occupied and, should that be successful to expand further to 14 occupied rooms.
- The Council has a duty support homeless people and the most vulnerable in society.
- The site at 20 High Street, Baldock had been well supported and was starting to present benefits, including a working relationship with OneYMCA .

In response to a question from the Chair, Councillor Dennis-Harburg advised that she would need to provide an update outside of the meeting on the progress at the allocated Letchworth site.

In response to a point raised by Councillor Claire Strong regarding an email correspondence from a resident sent to a variety of present and former Councillors on 4 March, the Chair advised that it was not for this Committee to discuss planning enforcement issues. The Chair requested advice from the Legal Regulatory Team Manager in attendance, who advised that neither the content of the email nor the planning decision were able to be discussed at this Committee. She advised that if the Planning Team had been included on the email that they would be aware of it and would respond appropriately, following investigation of points raised.

Other Members present noted that they had not received this email and in response to this the Chair advised that this could be discussed outside of the meeting and that Officers would ensure the resident received a response.

198 LEISURE CONTRACT PROCUREMENT

Audio Recording – 27 minutes 33 seconds

Sarah Kingsley, Service Director – Place, presented the report entitled 'Leisure Management Contract Procurement', including that:

- The current Leisure Management contracts expire on the 31 March 2024.
- It is proposed that the contracts for the Royston, Letchworth and Hitchin sites be combined based on the Sports England template.
- It is standard for Leisure procurements to have a 10 year contract with an option to extend for a further 5 years.
- The Council would continue to share risk, with regards to maintenance and utilities.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Claire Strong

In response to the Member's question, the Service Director – Place advised that there was another workshop scheduled which would have officers in attendance. It was expected that the matter would return to this committee in June with strategic strategies and guidelines for procurement going forward, before being presented to Cabinet.

In response to the Member's questions, Louise Randall, Leisure Manager, advised that she believed the current contracts were for 10 years.

Councillor David Levett as Chair, proposed and Councillor Nigel Mason seconded and following a vote, it was:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

(1) To approve a Competitive Procedure with Negotiation (CPN) procedure for the procurement of the Leisure Management contract.

(2) To approve the delegation of powers to the Director of Place in consultation with project board, in relation to decisions associated with the development of the procurement strategy.

(3) To approve letting a 10-year contract with an option to extend by up to 5 years.

(4) To approve combining the existing three contracts into a single contract, using the nationally recognised Sport England contract format, in order to secure economies of scale and to attract the most interest from the operator market.

(5) To continue with the principle of the existing contractual shared risk approach to utilities and maintenance.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

The leisure management contracts, expire on 31 March 2024. These recommendations ensure the procurement will be managed effectively to ensure the successful ongoing provision of leisure services in North Herts. The procurement offers an opportunity to review the existing specification and provide a clear policy position on its approach to the future delivery of sport, leisure, physical activity and wellbeing services across the district.

199 RIPA UPDATE

Audio Recording – 34 minutes 44 seconds

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg presented the report entitled 'Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act ('RIPA') Annual' review, including that the report highlighted a potential change required to the Policy, in relation to communications data as set out in recommendation 2.2 and section 8 of the report.

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

RESOLVED: That the content of the report be noted by Committee.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That the RIPA Policy be amended in light of the Police, Crime Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, as set out in section 8.5.

REASON FOR DECISION: To comply with best practice guidance and the Committee's terms of reference***.***

200 QUARTERLY UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN

Audio Recording – 36 minutes 56 seconds

Rachel Cooper, Controls Risk & Performance Manager, presented the report entitled 'Council Delivery Plan 2022-23 (Quarter 3 update)', including that:

- The report detailed project risks and performance indicators, as well as a high level overview of progress made on projects in the Council Delivery Plan.
- Members can request more details of specific projects to be reported to the Committee and are able to log into view projects on Pentana.
- There were three completed projects this quarter; the Business Recovery Grant, the EV charging for Council vehicles and to help residents make payment at convenient locations.
- Any proposed change to milestones were now required to be approved by Cabinet.
- In the third quarter, changes to milestones had been requested for;Town Centre Recovery, Cycling Networks, Empty Home Strategy and Museum Storage as detailed in Appendix A.
- The Museum and Hitchin Town Hall recovery still had a red PI, but overall the two areas were showing a strong recovery from the pandemic.
- The EV charging project completed in quarter 3, however it was still marked with a red PI indicator, as the target was based on a usage for a full year.

- The Royston Leisure Solar-Thermal project was unable to get a supplier and it was likely to be absorbed into in the Solar-PV project, which was expected to be more attractive to bidders, as the procurement would be higher.
- Help residents make payments project remained with a red and yellow PI.
- It was unlikely the Supplier Self Service project would be moved forward in 2022/23, but was more likely to be incorporated into a wider project in 2023/24.
- Following the completion of the Judicial Review period on the Local Plan, the risk score had been reduced.

Councillors Alistair Willoughby and Claire Strong requested that further detail be provided on the Tourism Strategy and Town Centre Recovery at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Chair requested that concerns of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding resourcing at the Council be noted and that an update be provided at the next meeting of the Committee.

Councillor David Levett, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Alistair Willoughby seconded and following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

(1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented on the Council Delivery Plan Quarter 3 monitoring report.

(2) That Overview and Scrutiny Committee determined any project that they want to receive more detail on as part of the next monitoring report, to include Town Centre Recovery and Tourism Strategy.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

(1) 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.

(2) That Cabinet note the completion of the Business Recovery Grants, the EV Charging for Council Vehicles, and the Help Residents Make Payment at Convenient Location milestones for this year.

(3) That Cabinet notes the reduction in the Local Plan risk score from a 9 to a risk score of 6 following the end of the Judicial review period.

REASONS FOR DECISION: 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.

201 COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024

Audio recording – 46 minutes 12 seconds

Rachel Cooper, Controls Risk & Performance Manager presented the report entitled ‘Council Delivery Plan 2023-2024’, including that the report set out the key Council projects for 2023-2024, identified the risks relating to delivery of these projects and set Performance Indicators (PIs) to measure progress.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett

- Councillor Claire Strong

In response to questions, Councillor Keith Hoskins clarified that some projects had been amalgamated into one overarching strategy and these would be started in the next financial year. He also commented that there may be a resourcing issue.

Councillor Alistair Willoughby proposed and Councillor Val Bryant seconded, and following a vote, it was:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That the Cabinet considers and formally approves the Council Delivery Plan to be monitored throughout 2023/2024 by Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS: An approved Council Delivery Plan, provides the Cabinet with assurance that progress against achievement of the Council Plan objectives, will be monitored throughout 2023/24***.***

202 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Audio Recording – 53 minutes 19 seconds

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

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).

203 ENTERPRISE DIRECTORATE UPDATE - PART 2

N.B. This item was considered in restricted session and therefore no recording is available.

Councillor Keith Hoskins, as Executive Member for Enterprise and the Arts, presented the report entitled ‘Enterprise Directorate Update’.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor David Levett

In response to questions, the Service Director – Enterprise, advised that:

- There were several options available to resolve issues at Harkness Court, including moving the parking space closer, fitting sprinkler systems inside the first floor flats or on both the ground floor and first floor.
- There are outstanding snagging works which needs to be completed. The aim is to complete this work over the next 3-4 weeks.
- The £10k stated for the project in the 2023-24 budget was not additional, but was the carried forward amount from 2022-23.

The Chair suggested that the Committee needed to explore the Harkness Court project in further detail and suggested that this takes place either as a Call In or as a Call to Account at the first meeting in the next Civic Year.

Councillor David Levett, as Chair proposed and Councillor Val Bryant 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 Enterprise Directorate work programme and is for information only.

204 PART 2 MINUTES - 24 JANUARY 2023

N.B. This item was considered in restricted session and therefore no recording is available.

Councillor David Levett, as Chair proposed and Councillor Alistair Willoughby seconded, and following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Part 2 Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on the 24 January 2023 were approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

205 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Audio recording – 1 hour 8 minutes 0 seconds

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

- The items outstanding were the Recovery Plan and Chair's Report on the 'Call to Account'.
- An update of the wider Strategic Housing Policy would be provided in autumn.
- The January meeting of the Committee would remain for Crime and Disorder Matters and requested Members notify of any possible topics.
- The Harkness Court requests had been noted and would be included in the Work Programme for the next Civic Year.

In response to questions, Councillor David Levett, Chair responded that the Peer Review report is of interest to this committee and needed to be reviewed before the Annual report is finalised.

Councillor David Levett, as Chair proposed and Councillor Alistair Willoughby seconded and following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- 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.

- 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 next civic year.

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 Chair thanked the Members and Officers for attending.

The meeting closed at 8.42 pm

Chair

RESOLUTIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS

REF	RESOLUTION	RESPONSE/OUTCOME	STATUS
	TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT		
June 20 Min 9 (3)	That the scope of the proposed Task and Finish Group on communication in relation to the Waste Contract be widened to encompass Communication and Engagement generally.	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 have been consulted to appoint members to the Task & Finish Group and arrange suitable dates for the Group to meet.	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
	WORK PROGRAMME		
Dec 22 Min 170	The Chair suggested that the recommendation 2.3 of the report, relating to the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan, be removed from the report and the updated version included.	The Peer Challenge Action Plan has been removed from the recommendations on the Work Programme report for the Committee.	Completed

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
20 JUNE 2023

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2022/2023

REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2022/2023

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: NOT APPLICABLE

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

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To consider the Annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the 2022/2023 Civic Year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Committee consider and comment on the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2022/2023 as attached at Appendix A prior to consideration by Council.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To enable Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider and comment on the report of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the work of the Committee in the 2022/2023 Civic Year prior to consideration by Council.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1. None.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have had the opportunity to consider and comment on the report prior to this meeting.

5.2. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had the opportunity to consider and comment on the draft report prior to consideration by Council, at the meeting of the Committee on 9 March 2023 and the revised version at its meeting in June.

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 Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports each year to Annual Council giving a brief overview of the work undertaken by that Committee in the previous Civic Year.

7.2 The draft report was previously presented to the Committee in March 2023, when it was requested details be added and presented back to the Committee prior to consideration at Full Council.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 The report at Appendix A sets out the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the Civic Year 2022/2023.

8.2 Members are asked to comment on the further draft Annual Report prior to consideration by Council.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Although it is not specifically referred to in the Constitution and is not a legal requirement, Full Council has routinely received an Annual Report from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no capital or revenue implications arising from the content of this report.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no direct risk implications arising from this report.

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 equalities implications arising from this report.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

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

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are no direct Human Resource Implications arising from this report.

14.2 The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Team supports the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

14.3 The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager undertakes the role of Scrutiny Officer.

15. APPENDICES

15.1 Appendix A – Draft Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2022/2023.

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

16.1 James Lovegrove
Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager
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01462 474208

16.2 Jeanette Thompson
Service Director – Legal and Communities
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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

17.1 Reports to and Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the Civic Year 2022/2023.

Browse meetings - Overview and Scrutiny Committee | North Herts Council (north-herts.gov.uk)

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North Herts Council

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair's Foreword

To be provided by Councillor David Levett ahead of consideration at Full Council

1. Overview and Scrutiny at North Hertfordshire Council

1.1 The depth and breadth of the Council's work means that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee must use its resources efficiently and effectively in order to scrutinise topics in the time available. It does so by:

- Considering a number of issues during Committee meetings and making recommendations to Cabinet;
- Appointing dedicated task and finish groups which can examine issues in depth and make recommendations to improve services;

2. Methods of Scrutiny

2.1 The Committee can scrutinise issues in a number of ways:

- By considering reports from, and questioning officers and Executive Members about different aspects of the Council's business;
- By submitting written questions which require a written answer, and which members can follow up by asking supplementary questions in Committee;
- By interviewing and questioning Executive Members about their respective portfolios;
- By calling in decisions which are of great concern to members or to the public;
- By inviting representatives from outside bodies to talk about topics of interest to the public in North Hertfordshire.

3. Meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3.1 There were six scheduled meetings this year and all proceeded as planned, in person in the Council Chamber, making effective use of the facility for officer presentations to be delivered remotely.

3.2 There was one extraordinary meeting of the Committee this year.

3.3 The Committee has considered a range of topics including scrutinising key decisions going to Cabinet, checking whether the Council has met its performance indicators and reviewing other issues which the Committee has decided would benefit from closer scrutiny.

4. Call-In

4.1 The call-in process allows the Chair of the Committee, or five members of the Council, to call in a decision which is the responsibility of the Executive, which has been made but not implemented. The Committee can ask the Executive to reconsider the decision or can refer it to Council.

4.2 There have been no called in items this year.

5. Presentations by Executive Members

5.1 The Committee has in general continued with its decision not to invite Executive Members to speak on their portfolios on a rolling basis and to instead invite them only to address specific issues or to present reports that were of interest to the Committee. The exception to this has been the Executive Member for Enterprise and Arts, who has attended on a rolling basis to provide an Enterprise Update since June 2022.

5.2 Executive Members are also welcomed when attending meetings and encouraged to take part in the meeting when appropriate.

5.3 The Committee are grateful to the Executive Members for making presentations and attending meetings this year.

6. Crime & Disorder Scrutiny

6.1 The Committee is also the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee for North Hertfordshire which is required to meet at least once a year.

6.2 The Committee chose this year to invite Hertfordshire Constabulary and North Herts Citizens Advice to discuss:

- Anti-social behaviour in town centres.
- The reporting and monitoring process behind anti-social behaviour issues.
- Safe walking for women and girls.
- Scams, with a focus on telephone scamming.

7. Safeguarding

7.1 The Committee continued to take a close interest in safeguarding matters and received its annual update on the Council's safeguarding performance in July 2022.

8. Statistics

8.1 In total, the Committee has considered 54 items at its scheduled meetings this year.

8.2 It has made 23 recommendations on 9 topics to Cabinet and 1 recommendation to Full Council. At every meeting the Committee also considered the resolutions previously made and the work programme.

8.3 No written questions were submitted this year.

9. Task and Finish Groups

9.1 Ongoing resource implications because of staffing changes to the Committee Services Team had meant it was not possible to allocate the officer time required to undertake successful Task and Finish Group on Communication.

9.2 An email was sent to Group Leaders in December 2022 to request nominations for Members of the Task and Finish Group. As of March 2023, no nominations to the group have been received. Therefore, this will be retained on the Work Programme of the Committee and will be approached again in the 2023/24 Civic Year.

10. Public Participation

10.1 The scrutiny process is open to involvement by local people and the Committee encourages public participation.

10.2 Six members of the public attended the Committee's meetings to make presentations this year.

10.3 Although physical attendance at the actual meetings was extremely low, recordings of the meetings on YouTube have received a total of 392 views, with a mean average of 22 viewers watching live or on the day of the meeting. The average view duration of a recording was 11 minutes 53 seconds.

10.4 Some of the ways for the public to get involved include suggesting a topic for investigation as a task and finish group; providing evidence to or at a meeting; and being co-opted on to a topic group. The Committee is keen to see more public participation both in its task and finish groups and in its committee meetings.

11. Peer Review 2022

11.1 Until the new year the Committee had reviewed the recommendations made in the previous 2020 Peer Review at each meeting, to consider which had been completed and what actions could be taken in order to work towards those recommendations not yet complete. As the 2020 Peer Review had been completed since, this consideration had been removed from the agenda at the request of the Chair. The subsequent report from the Peers will be reviewed together with the action plan and considered and monitored by the Committee during 2023-24.

11.2 The updated Peer Review has not been presented to the Committee in the Civic Year 2022/23 and shall be brought for consideration and comments to the meeting in June 2023.

12. Further Information and Membership

12.1 Further information about the work of scrutiny and contact details can be found here: Overview and Scrutiny | North Herts Council (north-herts.gov.uk)

12.2 Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2022/2023:

Members of the Committee:

Councillor David Levett (Chair)
Councillor Val Bryant (Vice Chair)
Councillor Adam Compton
Councillor Alistair Willoughby
Councillor Carol Stanier
Councillor Claire Strong
Councillor Ian Moody
Councillor Nigel Mason
Councillor Phil Weeder
Councillor Raj Bhakar
Councillor Tamsin Thomas
Councillor Tony Hunter

Substitutes:

Councillor Lisa Nash
Councillor Morgan Derbyshire
Councillor Terry Hone
Councillor Simon Bloxham
Councillor Sean Nolan
Councillor Terry Tyler
Councillor Kay Tart

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
20 JUNE 2023

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: Full Year Update on Comments, Compliments and Complaints (3C's) 22/23

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COUNCILLOR ELIZABETH DENNIS

PRIORITY: PEOPLE FIRST

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This information note is to provide an update on the full year (22/23) performance regarding the Comments, Compliments and Complaints (3C's) for the Council and the contractors that provide services on the Council's behalf. This briefing note accompanies the 3C's dashboard at Appendix A, 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 The 3C's policy was updated and refreshed and was adopted by Cabinet in September 2022. 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 During 22/23 the number of compliments and complaints received directly by North Herts Council both decreased in volume compared to the previous year, whilst the number of comments received remained the same.

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

3.3 The number of complaints received by both the Council and our contractors decreased from 423 in 21/22 to 417 in 22/23. Of the total 417 complaints, 232 (56%) relate to services delivered by our key contractors, including waste and recycling (105) and the leisure centres (124). It is also worth noting that out of the 477 compliments received, 305 (64%) relate to the same contractors – waste and recycling (63) and the leisure centres (242).

3.4 The percentage of complaints resolved within 10 days has remained at 77%, 3% below the target of 80%. 6 out of 12 months were, however, above the 80% target. October saw the second lowest number of complaints logged (10), but only 40% resolved within 10/20 days.

3.5 As part of the 3C's policy refresh at the end of 2022, the deadline for responding to stage 2 complaints was increased from 10 days to 20 days. This was to allow sufficient time for officers to investigate and consider complaints which are usually complex in nature.

3.6 Environmental Health had the highest number of complaints not resolved within 10/20 days (21); however, this was due to the general complexity of Environmental Health issues, combined with high workloads, staff absences and recruitment challenges. Complainants were kept updated regarding changing timeframes.

3.7 The summary dashboard at Appendix A shows annual comparisons of both 3C's received directly at North Herts Council and 3C's received by our contractors. The dashboard also details the percentage of interactions resulting in a formal complaint. It is worth noting that the percentage of interactions/collections/visitors resulting in a complaint remains at less than 1%.

3.8 Appendix B provides a breakdown of all 3C's received by service and type. The areas of highest complaints reported directly were Planning Control & Conservation (34) and Waste Management (30).

Specific areas of planning complaints were regarding:

- General handling of planning applications
- The Templars, Baldock (2)
- The Cabinet, High Street, Reed (1)

Some specific areas of waste complaints were regarding:

- Crew behaviour
- Damage to property
- Collect and return issues

3.9 It is worth noting that although Planning Control & Conservation received the highest number of complaints, this has decreased by 48% compared to the previous year (65 in 21/22, compared to 34 in 22/23).

3.10 As seen on the 3C's dashboard at Appendix A, the volume of 3C's received by the leisure centres has naturally increased over the last two years following an increase of visitors since covid restrictions were eased.

3.11 Some specific complaints in respect of the leisure centres included:

- Cleanliness in changing rooms - NHLC
- Car park too full/busy - Hitchin
- Gym equipment needs updating - NHLC

3.12 Some specific compliments in respect of the leisure centres included:

- “Pool area was sparkling today” - NHLC
- “Swimming lessons always fantastic” – NHLC
- “The pool parties are amazing” - Hitchin

3.13 Urbaser have seen a 98% increase in complaints logged; with 52 logged in 21/22 compared to 105 in 22/23. This may be because per the 3C’s policy, our Customer Service Team have encouraged customers to log their complaint with the contractor in the first instance to allow them the chance to rectify the issue and avoid double counting.

3.14 Urbaser also received several compliments (63). Some specific compliments included:

- “I want to say a big thank you for ordering us bins. I am so grateful for your help. You made our day, helping us, and answering so quickly at our need”
- “Many thanks. I must say that I have always found customer service from Urbaser to be very quick and helpful – thank you”

3.15 There were 172 compliments received directly to the Council. The Careline service received the highest number, with 102. 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 15, including compliments such as:

- RE Letchworth roundabout – “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!”
- The main Ride and McFadyen look really so much better. A fine example of what the Friends of Norton Common, the Contractors and the owners of Norton Common can achieve by working together. Excellent stuff!”

3.16 The Customer Service Centre also received 10 compliments, which included:

- “I must say that you are one of the most helpful customer service people I have spoken to at any establishment”
- “Wow.. another superhuman being”
- Thank you for your patience and help when I phoned. You are definitely a ‘people’s person’, such a lovely quality”

3.17 There were 27 stage 2 complaints over the course of the year; 10 of which were for Planning Control (however 6 complaints were not justified, and 3 did not meet the criteria) and the rest for various service areas. Of the 27 stage 2 complaints, only 4 were deemed to be justified and 4 did not meet the criteria to be escalated.

3.18 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.

3.19 The LGO received 13 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.

The table below summarises the LGO decisions on those 13 complaints:

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
Planning and Development	Upheld – Fault, no injustice
Planning and Development	Not upheld – no fault
Planning and Development	Status – still open
Planning and Development	Closed after initial enquiries – no further action
Environmental Services and Public Protection	Upheld – fault and injustice. No further action, organisation already remedied
Environmental Services and Public Protection	Closed after initial enquiries – no further action
Environmental Services and Public Protection	Upheld – fault and injustice (remedy complete and satisfied)
Environmental Services and Public Protection	Upheld – fault and injustice
Environmental Services and Public Protection	Closed after initial enquiries – no further action

3.20 5 complaints were upheld by the LGO, however 2 of the 5 had already been remedied by the Council.

3.21 One of the Environmental Health cases was a complaint that the Council failed to properly investigate reports of a statutory noise nuisance caused by a neighbour. The LGO found evidence of fault by the Council and upheld the complaint. The Council agreed to the recommended actions, including looking to resolve the noise issue and payment of £300 for time and trouble, and £900 for distress.

3.22 In November 2022, the service manager for Waste was forwarded an LGO report relating to Waste, specifically collect and returns.

3.23 In January 2023, the Monitoring Officer was forwarded an LGO report outlining the need for Council's to ensure standards investigations into the actions of councillors are conducted fairly and properly.

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 (CSM) will continue to keep up to date with guidance and case studies from the LGO, sharing any key learning. The CSM will also provide regular updates to the Leadership Team.

5. APPENDICES

5.1 Appendix A – Dashboard

5.2 Appendix B - Breakdown by service area

6. CONTACT OFFICERS

6.1 Chris Jeffery
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6.2 Jo Dufficy
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7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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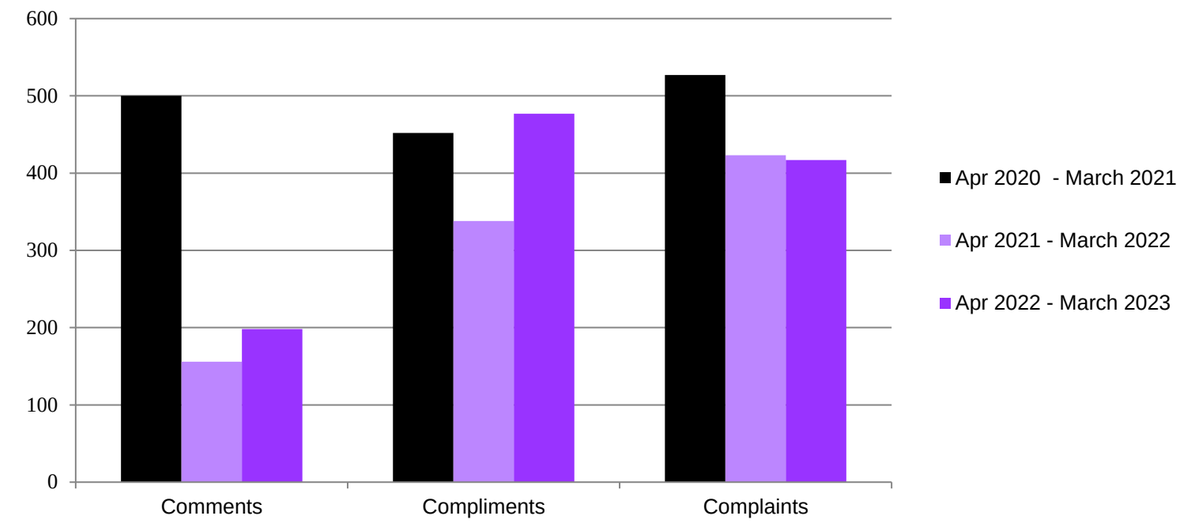
3C'S RECEIVED DIRECTLY AT NHDC – ANNUAL COMPARISONS

	20/21	21/22	22/23
Number of Comments received	19	28	28
Number of compliments received	236	185	172
Number of complaints received	225	275	185
% resolved within 10 working days	80%	77%	77%
% of complaints justified	46%	38%	30%
Complaints received by the LGO	8	8	13

3C's Performance Summary 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023

3C's Annual Comparisons - Combined totals NHDC & Contractors



3C's RECEIVED BY OUR CONTRACTORS – ANNUAL COMPARISONS

	Complaints			Compliments		
	20/21	21/22	22/23	20/21	21/22	22/23
John O'Conner	3	2	3	0	0	0
Urbaser	266	52	105	143	66	63
North Herts Leisure Centre	13	37	55	22	21	96
Hitchin Swim Centre & Archers	10	35	41	33	26	97
Royston Leisure Centre	10	22	28	18	40	49

Percentage of interactions resulting in a formal complaint

	Number of interactions / collections / visitors	% of interactions/collections/visitors resulting in complaint
NHDC	160,080 interactions	0.115%
Urbaser	7.77m collections	0.001%
North Herts Leisure Centre	590,241 visitors	0.009%
Hitchin Swim Centre & Archers	458,808 visitors	0.008%
Royston Leisure Centre	344,149 visitors	0.008%

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Appendix B

Breakdown of 3C's by service area – 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

Resource	**Comments**	**Compliments**	**Complaints**
Property Services	0	0	1
Communications	0	0	1
Accountancy Services	0	0	2
Regulatory	**Comments**	**Compliments**	**Complaints**
Environmental Health – Protection	0	4	20
Environmental Health - Commercial	0	5	0
Housing Needs	1	1	23
Parking Services	2	3	7
Planning Control & Conservation	0	2	34
Planning Policy	0	0	3
Place	**Comments**	**Compliments**	**Complaints**
Leisure	0	0	1
Active Communities	0	3	0
Parks & Open Spaces / Green Space	2	15	8
Waste Management	8	10	30
Customers	**Comments**	**Compliments**	**Complaints**
Benefits	0	3	4
Careline	2	102	21
Customer Service Centre	7	10	4
MSU Post & Administration	0	5	0
Revenues Billing and Recovery	5	4	20
Revenues Technical	1	0	2
Legal & Community	**Comments**	**Compliments**	**Complaints**
Community Engagement	0	1	1
Enforcement / Environmental Crime	0	2	0
Licensing	0	2	1
Electoral Services	0	0	1
Commercial	**Comments**	**Compliments**	**Complaints**
Markets	0	0	1
Totals	**28**	**172**	**185**
Contractor Data	**Comments**	**Compliments**	**Complaints**
Waste (Urbaser)	29	63	105
Grounds (John O'Connor)	0	0	3
North Herts Leisure Centre	27	96	55
Hitchin Swim Centre	75	97	41
Royston Leisure	39	49	28
Contractor Totals	170	305	232
Combined Totals	**198**	**477**	**417**

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
20 June 2023

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: North Herts Place Narrative

REPORT OF: Service Director, Place

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Leader of the Council, Elizabeth Dennis

COUNCIL PRIORITY: PEOPLE FIRST and A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To outline the Council's proposed Place Narrative for North Herts.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. That Cabinet approves the North Herts Place Narrative.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. Despite being a district since 1974, North Hertfordshire has no clear identity and needs a point of differentiation within the county. This will help North Herts stand out as the place to invest, live, visit and work in Hertfordshire.

3.2. Currently, the Council and its partners are all telling different stories about North Herts which leads to fragmented communications. A joined up and coherent approach in the future will have greater impact, generate greater engagement and raise the profile of North Herts the place.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1. As the development of a Place Narrative for North Herts was recommended by the Local Government Association and is an initiative other Councils have benefitted from, the alternative of not developing a Place Narrative was not considered.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1. The Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's Political Liaison Board and the Opposition Leader have been consulted on this proposal.

5.2 Consultation has also been carried out with key district partners: Letchworth Heritage Foundation, Letchworth BID, Hitchin BID, North Herts Citizens Advice Bureau, North Herts CVS; North Herts residents, North Herts College students, Settle, local businesses and North Herts Council Councillors and Officers.

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 26 May 2023.

7. BACKGROUND

7.1 The need for a North Herts Place Narrative was first recommended in the 2020 Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge as a way of broadening the Council's future focus to include ambitions for North Herts the place.

7.2 The North Herts Place Narrative proposal therefore focuses on the place that is North Herts (and the places within it), rather than North Herts Council.

7.3 Through the LGA, and at no cost to the Council, eight in-person focus groups were run in 2022 by the Hackney Consultation Team (from Hackney Council). They successfully changed perceptions of the district of Hackney ahead of the London 2012 Olympics and have supported many Local Authorities with their Place Narratives since as a result.

7.4 The focus groups included key district partners: Letchworth Heritage Foundation, Letchworth BID, Hitchin BID, North Herts Citizens Advice Bureau, North Herts CVS; North Herts residents from our Citizens Panel, North Herts College students, settle residents, local businesses and North Herts Council Leaders, Councillors and Officers.

7.5 Additional desk research was also carried out into existing Hertfordshire Place Narratives and how other local authorities have approached their Place Narrative work.

7.6 There has been no cost to date for the North Herts Place Narrative work. The LGA funded the Hackney Consultation Team to carry out the initial research work for North Herts Council and the branding, straplines and copy have all been developed in-house by the North Herts Council Communications team.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Research findings from the Hackney Consultation Team (Appendix A for full report)

8.1.1 North Herts is a is a mix of towns, villages and countryside that are distinctly individual, with their own sense of community, culture and local pride, which come together to make a sum greater than its parts.

8.1.2 United by their:

- Liveability
- Connectivity
- Creativity
- Challenges as well as opportunities

8.1.3 Four key themes arose in every session:

- Culture
- Community
- Connectivity
- Countryside

8.1.4 The challenges faced by the district were also discussed namely: Pockets of deprivation; a shortage of affordable housing and a lack of amenities for teenagers. It was made clear in the research that we must recognise those challenges within our North Herts Place Narrative.

8.2 Proposed North Herts Place Narrative branding

8.2.1 Using the research findings and partner feedback, a 'bringing together' strapline has been chosen from a choice of straplines by our district Partners, Leaders and Officers. This is due to its focus on people, the link to our council priorities 'People First' and 'Brighter Future Together'; its positivity and differentiation to the other Hertfordshire County Place Narratives (Appendix B).

8.2.2 The branding itself (Appendix C) was developed alongside our key district partners and uses strong bold colours with a heart to communicate love for a place, its people and its cultures and is informal/hand-drawn, giving a nod to the free-flow of ideas in North Herts over the years.

8.2.3 Partner feedback has led to the recommendation of launching with a Master North Herts Place Narrative brand 'Bringing Communities Together' and sub-brand - 'Bringing Businesses Together' with a view to potentially developing and rolling out other sub-brands in the future e. g., 'Bringing Culture Together'.

8.2.4 Our proposed Place Narrative story (Appendix D) has included input from The Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's Political Liaison Board and the Opposition Leader.

8.3 Embedding the North Herts Place Narrative in the future

8.3.1 Implementing and embedding the North Herts Place Narrative will be key to future usage, buy-in and success. Appendix E includes three levels of embedding the North Herts Place Narrative, based on levels of officer time and financial cost.

8.3.2 The North Herts Place Narrative branding will not be seen alongside our North Herts Council Corporate branding as each brand performs a different purpose. The North Herts Place Narrative branding will sit alongside partner brands, such as 'Brand Letchworth' that the Letchworth Heritage Foundation are developing. Both will have low brand recognition and low reach to start with but aspire to higher recognition and reach as the North Herts Place Narrative branding is used more widely by North Herts Council and our partners.

8.3.3 It will be the responsibility of North Herts Council's Communications team to lead the way with embedding the North Herts Place Narrative in both North Herts Council and Partner communications.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no known Legal impacts or requirements that apply to the North Herts Place Narrative.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 To date, there has been no cost for the North Herts Place Narrative work. The LGA funded the Hackney Consultation Team to carry out the initial research work for us and the branding, straplines and copy have all been developed in-house by The Council's Communications team.

10.2 Should any of the mid options for embedding the North Herts Place Narrative be considered, branding will only be added to items that require re-printing anyway. There would therefore not be any significant costs associated with these and could be met from existing budgets.

10.3 Should any of the advanced options for embedding the North Herts Place Narrative be considered, they will be subject to budget/funding bids and/or partner support. The usual budget cycle would mean that (if funded by the Council) budget would not be available until April 2024. The Council's Medium-Term financial projections are that there is likely to be a need to make substantial savings, which makes it difficult to justify new additional discretionary spend.

10.4 If the intended results are achieved, then they would lead to economic growth within the district. Under the current funding system, the Council does get to retain some of the growth in Business Rates in the District, although it is a small proportion.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There is a risk that the communication of the North Herts Place Narrative will not have the desired impact of raising the profile of North Herts. The aim that North Herts will stand as the place to invest, live, visit and work in Hertfordshire, is deliberately aspirational and even if this campaign is successful, may not be fully achieved. As most of the actions are low/zero cost/effort, it is considered that it is worthwhile to proceed.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The North Herts Place Narrative is a shared vision of how communities across the district have and will continue to shape our future.

12.2 Our shared place vision is the result of discussions with residents, businesses, housing associations, charities, community groups, students, senior leaders and politicians from across North Herts.

12.3 Our Place Narrative is a way of helping North Herts unite as a place around a sense of shared pride and a set of common goals. To recognise not just our strengths, but our challenges too, and to bring people and partners together to celebrate our strengths and meet those challenges.

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 the North Herts Place Narrative.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no known human resource implications that apply to the North Herts Place Narrative as the work to communicate it will form part of the North Herts Council Communications team’s everyday work.

16. APPENDICES

16.1 Appendix A, Hackney Consultation Team Insight Report

16.2 Appendix B, Hertfordshire Council Place Narratives

16.3 Appendix C, North Herts Place Narrative branding and straplines

16.4 Appendix D, North Herts Place Narrative story

16.5 Appendix E, Embedding the North Herts Place Narrative

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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North Herts Place Narrative Appendices

Appendix A	Hackney Consultation Team Insight report
Appendix B	Hertfordshire County Place Narratives
Appendix C	North Herts Place Narrative branding
Appendix D	North Herts Place Narrative story
Appendix E	Embedding the North Herts Place Narrative

Consultation Report

Appendix A Hackney Consultation Team Insight report

North Herts Council Place Narrative

Insight Report

Report Date: June 2022

Report authors:
Polly Cziok
Strategic Director Engagement, Culture and Organisational Development

David Besbrode
Research & Insight Analyst

Paul Fowler
Housing Regeneration Comms Manager

Contact

Hackney Consultation Team
on 020 8356 3343 or
consultation@Hackney.gov.uk

have your say

Hackney

Background

North Hertfordshire District

Since being brought together as North Hertfordshire District in 1974, the towns of Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock and Royston have each kept their distinct individuality, maintaining their own sense of community, culture and local pride.

Today, this variety is their strength. In North Hertfordshire they are not dominated by a single place, but are a mix of towns, villages and countryside that come together to make what we are greater than the sum of our parts.

While North Hertfordshire residents might identify with their own town or village before their district, they are all united by the common themes that define them: their **liveability**, their **connectivity**, and their **creativity.** They're a best-of-both location, strongly connected to London and Cambridge but with a life and soul of their own, whichever part of North Hertfordshire you call home.

Connectivity

North Hertfordshire's position is its immediate selling point – we're privileged to have attractive green space and accessible open countryside all around us, yet easy links to London and across the south east.

All four North Hertfordshire towns have fast, frequent and direct train links into London, with Hitchin 33 minutes from London St Pancras, while Royston is less than 15 minutes by train to Cambridge. Next to the M1 and A1, and less than 10 miles to the M25, the district also has strong road links north and south.

This gives North Hertfordshire residents easy access to jobs and activities not just in London, but the academic, science and tech sectors in and around Cambridge and one of the UK's biggest growth areas in Milton Keynes.

Liveability

But location and access to jobs is only part of the reason that people in North Hertfordshire choose not just to come, but to stay.

Our high-quality schools, good leisure facilities and strong public services and access mean everyone in North Hertfordshire can enjoy a high standard of living in what is genuinely a place for everyone – from young families to older retirees.

And liveable places are about more than services. North Hertfordshire has community and civic pride, with grass-roots events and activities taking place across our towns, and a strong desire

from local people to shape where they live, hold their elected authorities to account, and make their towns and villages the best they can be.

Creativity

North Hertfordshire is a commuter belt but without the dormitory towns, benefitting from but not overshadowed by its proximity to London.

As the pioneer of the garden city movement, Letchworth has a unique history, and the utopian spirit that created it is still clear in its architectural heritage, the arts and crafts influences and the independent mindset of the community today.

Each of North Hertfordshire's towns have this sense of individuality: Hitchin is a destination in its own right, with a thriving night time economy alongside boutiques and cafes; Baldock a close-knit community with a village feel and lots of pubs, and Royston a classic English market town with a close community of independent businesses.

Challenges and opportunities

There are also challenges. The flip side of their desirable location is high and increasing house prices, exacerbated by the pandemic and emphasising the inequality and deprivation that aren't always immediately visible.

Keeping the area affordable for those on the lowest incomes, those brought up there, and growing families will be difficult, and so will balancing the changes needed with the need to respect local character and ensure community support. There is also a lack of provisions for young people in the area, especially for teenagers.

Meanwhile, the long-term impact of the pandemic gives them the chance to build on some of their advantages, to use the changes in working patterns to grow the local economy even more, help the town centres to continue to thrive, and foster an even greater sense of local pride.

The Four C's

Based on an overall view from all the work that has been carried out, there were four main themes which will be called "The Four C's":

- **Culture** - North Hertfordshire's towns and villages are brought to life by a year-round local cultural programme of festivals, theatre, outdoor events, and the arts. There is a huge cafe culture in the towns, which helps to bring the community together. With a heritage steeped in the radicalism of the garden city and suffragette movements, the area has attracted writers, artists, and thinkers for more than a century. North Herts also

has an outstanding leisure offer with outdoor and indoor swimming and gyms run by the Council's social enterprise contractor for the benefit of local people,

- **Community** - North Hertfordshire is a place where community matters; bound together by an ethos of citizenship and care for both place and people. It is a place where volunteering thrives, where there are active faith networks
- **Connectivity** - North Hertfordshire is accessible to London Kings Cross in 40 mins, as well connections to Cambridge and also a train from Letchworth to Brighton
- **Countryside** - A love for the natural environment brings many people to North Hertfordshire. With its network of chalk streams supporting unique biodiversity, the area has been described as 'England's rainforest'. The outstanding beauty of the district's countryside…

Methodology

We carried out various focus groups with a range of people in the North Herts district. This included senior leadership such as the Chief Executive and Politicians, businesses and residents, plus Settle and North Herts College.

Sessions were done via virtual online meetings and face to face meetings in Hitchin and Letchworth, as well as some online feedback.

We asked slightly different questions in the focus groups with the Chief Executive and Senior Leaders, as opposed to the focus groups with residents and businesses.

Residents and businesses

Tell us what's great about North Herts?

- Each individual town has a lot of history and are unique in their own way
- A great place to bring up a family, with good schools and education
- Vast amount of countryside and landscape
- Excellent connection links to London, Cambridge, Brighton
- Sense of community in each town
- Very diverse district
- Events that go on throughout the year
- Airport connections - Drive to Luton and Stansted, crossrail to Heathrow

How has the impact of COVID affected North Herts?

- More people moving to the district, especially to Letchworth
- Some people don't feel that much has changed since before and after the pandemic
- Loss of jobs on the high street
    - Hitchin lost 28 businesses since March 2020, but has gained 48 new businesses in that time
    - Letchworth lost a lot of comparison stores and smaller businesses, but saw a growth in independent stores
    - Lots of unemployment, but slowly getting back to normal
    - 25% down on footfall pre-pandemic
- Lots of community groups have lost emphasis
- House prices have increased - Baldock has the highest price increase in the whole of the UK
- Older generations are more cautious about going out and mixing
- Loss of community events
- Towns are busier in the evenings and weekends and quieter in the daytime
    - Markets are busier on weekdays

What are the challenges the area faces?

- Disconnection between the towns
    - Residents tend to stay in their own towns and don't visit others very often
    - Royston more so as it is very disconnected from the other three
    - Lots of competition between towns
- Quite a wealthy district, although it has pockets of deprivation, but prices can be a challenge for many to afford to move there
    - Deprived areas are quite separate from the rest of the town
    - Letchworth has 3 main pockets of deprivation
    - Hitch has 2 main pockets of deprivation
    - Letchworth has 10% private rentals and 32% social housing rentals
    - Not enough social housing
    - Need for more affordable housing

- Employment
    - Big skills shortage, e.g. catering, construction
    - Hospitality industry is suffering due to lack of staff
- Lack of opportunities
    - Some feel that those who live on an estate have less opportunities
- Infrastructure
    - Very car dependent to get around North Herts
    - No easy way to get to each town by train
- Teenagers
    - No youth clubs anymore
    - Not a lot for young people to do
    - No 6th Form in Royston
- Decline of the high street
    - Many shops have gone and a massive surge of cafes have been put in their place

<u>What makes North Herts unique?</u>

- Each town has its own identity
- Excellent connections to London, Milton Keynes, Brighton
- When people move to North Herts they tend to stay for a long time
    - Quoted as “A great place to live
- Lots of countryside
- Places to visit:
    - Henry Moore Studios and Garden - Perry Green
    - John W Mills Sculpture - Baldock
    - Royston Caves
    - Hitchin Lavender Farm
    - Baldock Charter Market
    - Knebworth House
    - North Herts Museum
    - The British Schools Museum - Hitchin
- Heritage:
    - First people to bring Rembrandt to Hertfordshire
    - Letchworth - Sir Ebenezer Howard - Founder of first garden city in the world in 1903
    - Letchworth - First roundabout in the UK in 1909

<u>If you could change one thing....</u>

- Better integration of Royston into Hertfordshire
- More affordable housing
    - Reasonable housing for startups
    - Housing opportunities
    - Affordable housing
- Young persons

    - Support and activities for younger people
    - More play areas in Letchworth
- Economic development - Inclusive growth - ways to improve employment opportunities
- Bus and cycle routes - Better routes and more of them
- Diversity of shops and local economy
- To keep evolving and changing
- Strategic planning
- Working together between areas
- Less car dependence
- Strictness of regulations – planning/licensing
- Deprivation – “bridge the gap”
- Openness to outsiders
- Better retail – an anchor store
- Pedestrianisation in town centres
- Royston - bigger event space
- Public transport within the district
- More government funding
- Broadway Gardens - Could be developed. Very little around it and would benefit from cafes etc. Remove shrubbery around the station.
- Cost of travel
- More accessible events

Chief Executive and Senior Leaders

North Herts - describe the place to us

- 4 market towns that are all unique
- Lots of villages and farmland
- Lots of commuters - People live here but don't work here
- Lack of skills for high tech jobs
- No one identifies themselves as coming from North Herts
    - Lack of common identity
- Royston has its own town Council

What are its strengths, opportunities, and key challenges?

- 4 core towns that do different things
    - No central population centre
- Jobs and skills
    - Falling behind in terms of industry and economics
- Residents
    - Lots of people live here in the area, but do not work here or spend much time here.
    - Many commute to work in London and spend time outside North Herts.
- Growing need for skills
    - High tech jobs - IT and Science
- Residents would not associate with North Herts
    - They would state that they live in a certain area or may say Cambridge for example
- Issue with a common identity
    - What is it that unites North Herts?
- Young person, young adult, working age person gap

What do you want it to do for you? The place narrative

- To be more than just a Council
    - Increase the identity
    - Make North Herts stand out
    - Focus on the wider district rather than certain areas
- Regeneration
    - High streets
    - Tourism strategy
- Market the industry
    - To compare against others
- Increase economic and skill based growth

- Poor relations - Need to do more:
    - Work together
    - Collaboration
    - Promote each other
    - Sharing of good stories
    - Learn from each other
    - Share resources
- Less parochialism
    - Too much attention on certain areas
    - Lack of identity in the wider district

Tell us about the economy of North Herts? What are the growth opportunities here? Who are your key business stakeholders?

- Largest employer
    - Johnson Matthey - Chemicals company
- Letchworth
    - Emerging Biotech industry
- Hitchin
    - Lots of retail
        - No large companies
        - Small independent shops
    - Fancy coffee shops
    - Liverpool Victoria (LV) call centre
    - Dog medicine company
        - Outskirts of Hitchin
    - Creative industry
        - Expanding
        - Manifesto and strategy being built to enhance the creative industry
- Automotive industry
- North Herts college - 16+
    - Good local partner
- Housing
    - Market reacts in the same way as London.
    - Overwhelming demand for properties
- Growing rural economy
    - Small businesses
    - Conservation projects
- Astrazeneca - Cambridge University

What about the people who live here? How do they feel about the place? How would they describe it?

- Deprivation

    - Hertfordshire ranked 135 of 151 of the upper tier local authorities with the most deprivation
    - Wealth overlooks deprivation
- No Council housing
    - All managed by Housing Associations
    - Approximately 3000 people on the social housing waiting list
- Large elderly population
    - Residing in old arms housing, retirement properties
    - Good community set of programmes at centres and charitable services that reach out
- High skills sectors
    - People feel like they can't get into the industry, or they don't want to work in that area so the options are not available for them other than retail on the high streets
- Letchworth
    - In the top 20 most deprived areas in England
    - In the top 6 most deprived areas in Hertfordshire
- Royston
    - Fairly affluent town
    - Has pockets of deprivation
    - Approx. 18,000 population
    - Residents would say
        - Nothing affordable to buy
        - Difficult to buy locally
        - Being rehoused in different parts of the district
        - No social housing
- Ethnicity
    - More diverse than years ago
        - Royston
            - 13 years ago was 99% white or white British.
        - Hitchin
            - Always been more diverse
    - Turkish, Polish, Black and other ethnic minority groups increasing in North Herts

<u>Thinking about the people who live in North Herts, how strong is the connection? Pride of place, identity</u>

- Hitchin and Letchworth
    - Strong sense of identity
        - Either being from or living in - Proud of the place they live
    - Lots of history
    - *"Location defines the person rather than the person defining the place"*
- Residents
    - More likely to say they live in Hertfordshire than North Herts
- Royston

    - More likely to say Cambridgeshire than Royston
    - 2 groups of people
        - Those who have lived there for a long time
            - More likely to moan about the changes to the area
            - Don't want to see the changes
        - Those who are newer to the area
            - Do not know what it was like before
            - More attraction to the area as it is now
    - People moving from London as it is more affordable to buy a home in Royston
    - Fantastic place to raise a family
        - Attracts young families
    - Good primary schools

<u>What are your ambitions for the place?</u>

- Finding a way to perceive the issue around deprivation, jobs, skills.
- Everybody to have access to skills and break down the barriers
    - Creating the access to the skills
        - biggest is the college, but needs more options
    - Apprenticeships
    - Creative skills
    - All good having skills, but they need jobs to feed into simultaneously.
- We want to sell something to the outside world -
    - This is who we are and be part of the success story.
- Connection between opportunities and people
- Community cohesion
    - Everyone feels that they belong, no matter how long they have been here it is still their place - background, language, it doesn't matter
    - Are there opportunities for younger people to stay in the district?
- Finding what we are gonna do for the next 50 years
    - Used to be a rural economic district, but for the last 20-30 years it has been a commuter belt - has its positives and negatives
    - *"If we are just where people live, you don't work here, socialise here, spend your weekends here, it becomes a bit of a soulless place."*
    - Trying to work out what we need to be to see us through this next period
    - Pandemic
        - Has changed things, created opportunities, but found that sense of purpose. Without it, we will just be housing with everyone commuting out, which is not sustainable.
    - Sustainable future - need more opportunities locally
- Council role is to facilitate
    - Don't have much budget
    - Community leadership
    - Putting strategies in place for others to lead on it

- No big assets - trying to buy in the town centre

<u>If you were advertising a job in your senior team, how would you sell yourselves as a place and an organisation?</u>

- Place
    - Attractive
        - visually attractive across the whole district, pretty villages, the hills
    - Ambitious
        - changed in the last few years in the way we weren't before
    - More outward looking
        - too much focus on ourselves
    - Communities come together
    - Growing cultural centre
    - Access to London and Cambridge - great commuting route to two big cities, good train system.
- 340 employees in the Council
- Future is looking quite positive
- People first
    - Internal and External communications
    - Wanting everyone to feel at the same level
    - Selling the local place
- Lots of crossover between the 4 market towns
    - Almost like one conservation. But they have their unique identities.

<u>Visitor and tourist offer - What am I coming for?</u>

- Hitchin
    - Theatre offerings
- Letchworth
    - First world's garden city
    - Broadway Cinema
    - Greenway
- Knebworth
    - Big music events, summer programme (outdoor and drive in cinema)
- Royston
    - Independent cinema
    - In need of a skatepark, to keep kids local as well
    - Royston caves - very unique
- Lots of outdoor stuff
    - Draw in our local residents
- Sharing resources and good practice to try and attract people to the district.
- Good quality facilities so able to get in good national tourings

Settle and North Herts College

Where in North Hertfordshire do you live?

- Hitchin - 2 participants
- Letchworth - 2 participants
- Letchworth (Jackmans estate) - 1 participant
- Little Wymondley - 1 participant
- Hitchin (Westmill) - 2 participants
- Baldock - 1 participant

What are the 3 words that best describe the area to you?

- Born
- Busy
- Clean
- Community
- Friendly
- Green
- Letchworth
- Lost
- Mess
- Nice
- Paradise
- Peaceful
- Pleasant
- Quiet
- Rural
- Safe
- Safe
- Shabby
- Social
- Ugly

What do you like about the area?

- Walkable distance to Walsworth Common. Soon a new gym again which will be walkable. Pubs/restaurants
- I like its lovely towns and villages.
- Not much at the moment
- I love the quietness of living in a village, we have a very strong sense of community spirit and the area is unspoilt with plenty of green spaces.
- close to town and the countryside
- Space, Upkeep of green spaces
- Friendly and green spaces
- Hitchin is a really nice place to live
- I like the fact it is quiet and peaceful

What do you dislike?

- Dangerous, uneven footpaths which I have tripped up and fallen a couple of times. No proper cycle paths like Stevenage. Constant traffic 24/7 where I live. Maintenance and up keeping of flats where I live. Going downhill and looking grubby/dirty.
- I don't like that it seems to be becoming part of the London suburbs.
- Rubbish everywhere. Drugs everywhere. Kids on Motor bikes riding around the park. Unhealthy living conditions.
- I dislike that a proposed plan is in effect to build 300 houses on our green belt. This will not only take away our green belt but also increase the risk of flooding, increase traffic and overrun an already oversubscribed school!
- the lack of respect people have for their homes and surroundings. Ruining it for others. Gardens are a mess. Also too many cats. There should be a limit. You can't have pets if you rent privately so why can't there be a limit for social housing? And fines for those who do not keep gardens in good condition.
- I am starting to dislike the unkempt Social housing garden , containing household appliances dumped in the gardens, unkempt hedges and fence , and lack of community. Rubbish in the streets, unkempt green spaces by railway. And rudeness of the local children and attitudes by their parents
- Nothing (Very Happy where I live)
- Nothing - I like living in Hitchin
- Nothing I can think of

Do you think North Hertfordshire is a good place to grow up/be young?

- To an extent - I like where I live but there are no activities for young people
- Yes

Appendix B – Existing Hertfordshire Place Narratives

Herts County Council:	County of opportunity
Stevenage:	St**even**age **better**
Watford:	Built on heritage. Focused on fairness
East Herts:	A place to grow
Welwyn Hatfield:	Where history keeps on being made

Appendix C North Herts Place Narrative branding

Super brand

NORTH HERTS

Bringing Communities Together

Sub-brands

NORTH HERTS

Bringing Businesses Together

Appendix D North Herts Place Narrative master brand copy

Located less than 40 miles north of central London, North Herts is a place where people come first and where community matters.

From families whose generations have always lived in North Herts, to those who move into the area for access to open countryside, to businesses building on our history of creativity, a whole range of communities are drawn to North Herts for the quality of life we offer, our stunning natural landscape, outstanding schools, and unrivalled connectivity to London and Cambridge.

A mix of distinctly individual vibrant market towns, beautiful villages and accessible, open countryside, that come together to make a sum greater that its parts, North Herts was home to Paleolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age settlements and the place where the Garden city movement was pioneered. It remains home to three of the World's incredibly rare chalk streams and Therfield Heath, a site of Special Scientific Interest nestled on the chalk escarpment just north of Therfield village.

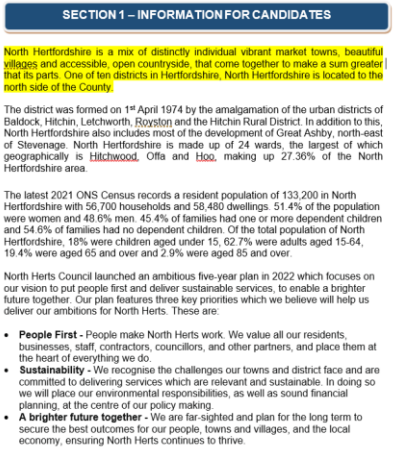
North Herts is the place where everyone can be active in their own way. From our two, treasured, outdoor pools, to our lively leisure centres, parks, playgrounds and sports pitches, there really is something for everyone. Miles of walking and cycling routes connect our places with our unique landscape, which current and future generations will continue to value the mental and physical benefits of living in such a place of incredible natural beauty.

With a heritage steeped in the radicalism of the Garden city and Suffragette movements, our pioneering spirit continues in global leaders such as Johnson Matthey in Royston; leading financial services mutual Liverpool Victoria in Hitchin; and the emerging biotech industry in Letchworth. The arts, culture and hospitality industries flourish in North Herts. From museums to coffee shops and heritage centres to award-winning pubs and restaurants, the business leaders of North Herts continue to lead the way in attracting and retaining the best of talent to the area.

There are challenges in North Herts, as there are everywhere, and we will continue to be open about these. Desirable locations have driven house prices up, we need to provide more for teenagers to do, and there is inequality that isn't always visible. However, the communities of North Herts, as they have always done, will continue to come together, face these challenges head on and thrive.

North Herts is also the place where communities come together through a strong and diverse voluntary sector, faith communities and a vibrant programme of community events. Bound together by an ethos of citizenship and care for both people and place, North Herts is proud to be a place of inclusivity.

Appendix E - Embedding the North Herts Place Narrative

Basic (no financial cost, just officer time)	**Mid** (some cost but only for Point of sale items and only when reprints required anyway)	**Advanced** (funding would be required for these options)
• NHC website – homepage and individual page • North Herts Museum and Hitchin Town Hall websites • Partner websites • Email footers • Letterhead – ours and partners • Incorporate what makes North Herts special into our everyday comms e.g. chalk streams 'did you know?' • Use straplines as social media hashtags	• To inform relevant strategy (i.e. Tourism) and contract procurement docs (see Leisure eg below)  **SECTION 1 – INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES** North Hertfordshire is a mix of distinctly individual vibrant market towns, beautiful villages and accessible, open countryside, that come together to make a sum greater that its parts. One of ten districts in Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire is located to the north side of the County. The district was formed on 1st April 1974 by the amalgamation of the urban districts of Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth, Royston and the Hitchin Rural District. In addition to this, North Hertfordshire also includes most of the development of Great Ashby, north-east of Stevenage. North Hertfordshire is made up of 24 wards, the largest of which geographically is Hitchwood, Offa and Hoo, making up 27.36% of the North Hertfordshire area. The latest 2021 ONS Census records a resident population of 133,200 in North Hertfordshire with 56,700 households and 58,480 dwellings. 51.4% of the population were women and 48.6% men. 45.4% of families had one or more dependent children and 54.6% of families had no dependent children. Of the total population of North Hertfordshire, 18% were children aged under 15, 62.7% were adults aged 15-64, 19.4% were aged 65 and over and 2.9% were aged 85 and over. North Herts Council launched an ambitious five-year plan in 2022 which focuses on our vision to put people first and deliver sustainable services, to enable a brighter future together. Our plan features three key priorities which we believe will help us deliver our ambitions for North Herts. These are: • **People First -** People make North Herts work. We value all our residents, businesses, staff, contractors, councillors, and other partners, and place them at the heart of everything we do. • **Sustainability -** We recognise the challenges our towns and district face and are committed to delivering services which are relevant and sustainable. In doing so we will place our environmental responsibilities, as well as sound financial planning, at the centre of our policy making. • **A brighter future together -** We are far-sighted and plan for the long term to secure the best outcomes for our people, towns and villages, and the local economy, ensuring North Herts continues to thrive. • Museum use when applying for grants/bidding for an exhibition etc • Partners use in funding bids • Outlook magazine • Include in external event Point of Sale over time when re-prints required (ie surgeries, local festivals, events) • Campaigns i.e. 'I love North Herts'; 'Bench conversations'; 'Share your North Herts stories' etc • Use to enter and standout in free 'Best Place to live' awards/surveys	• Welcome to North Herts video (to attract people to live/visit/invest/work in North Herts). Could be created with other partners (ie North Herts College/BIDs) and used on our website, partner websites and housing developer sites etc. • Welcome to North Herts website (micro site on existing website?) • A digital welcome pack for new businesses (signposting them to support) • Sponsor an existing North Herts event and raise our profile – think the Cala Homes Snowman trail that made it to The Guardian 'festive things to do' guide. • Encourage a North Herts cultural programme e.g. joint exhibitions across our museums

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Overview & Scrutiny Committee
20 June 2023

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE REPORT & ACTION PLAN

REPORT OF: SERVICE DIRECTOR LEGAL & COMMUNITY
EXECUTIVE MEMBER: LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
COUNCIL PRIORITY: BE A MORE WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE COUNCIL

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020 the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) undertook a review, the review report and Action Plan were agreed through Cabinet on 24 March 2020 and 23 June 2020, respectively.

A follow up review was undertaken by (different) LGA CPC Peers during 2022 and a further LGA Peer Committee Support report was issued in January 2023 (Appendix A). This concentrated on the Overview & Scrutiny and Finance, Audit and Risk Committees and a number of further recommendations have been made. These have been separated out into the Action Plan (Appendix B) with response and proposed actions for the Committees consideration and recommendations to Cabinet.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. That the content of the CPC report be noted.

2.2. That the draft Action Plan at Appendix A be considered, and proposed action be recommended to Cabinet for approval (as per Appendix A or as amended, with relevant Overview & Scrutiny recommendation timescales).

2.3. That, *in the absence of timescales*, that it be recommended to Cabinet, that these be set by the Leader, Deputy Leader and Managing Director (in consultation with relevant Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs).

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To ensure that the Council responds to the matters identified within the CPC report, ensuring that the benefits of the CPC process are realised.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1. The ‘do nothing’ option of not creating an Action Plan to follow up on the report has been discounted, as the Council committed to undertake the further CPC and should therefore seek to gain benefit from that process.

4.2. There is no prescribed format for the Action Plan, so it has been developed in a simple format, with reference to the recommendations.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1. Staff and Members identified by the Peers were interviewed and a report issued in January 2023. Copies were circulated to the Leader, Deputy Leader for initial consideration and this and the proposed response to the recommendations discussed in consultation with the Political Liaison Board (latterly on 16 May 2023).

5.2. This was also circulated following that to the then former Chair of Overview & Scrutiny and subsequently to the Chair and Vice Chair on 2 June 2023 (and to the Chair and Vice Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk). The Chair and Vice Chair of Overview & Scrutiny requested that this report and Action Plan came to the Committees in advance of Cabinet for consideration / recommendation.

6. FORWARD PLAN

6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a Key Executive decision.

7. BACKGROUND

7.1. The background to the first CPC report can be found in the Cabinet report of 24 March 2020 [CLICK HERE for then Chief Executive's report and CLICK HERE for the CPC report]. This was considered and the proposed actions by Overview and Scrutiny on 16 June 2020 and an Action Plan incorporating recommendations was approved by Cabinet 23 June 2020 [CLICK HERE for relevant Cabinet and report meeting page].

7.2. The LGA CPC was invited back to further review the effectiveness of the Overview & Scrutiny, and Finance, Audit and Risk Committee in December 2021. There were delays due to change of Peers, and covid and the review was undertaken during 2022. The final report was issued in January 2023 as per Appendix A.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1. The Action Plan at Appendix B seeks to embrace the recommendations from the Peer Challenge and look for ways to implement improvements in the way we work. There are 31 recommendations. *Those specifically relating to Overview & Scrutiny Committee are detailed at 1-21, albeit the Committee will note that recommendations 24, 25 & 26 suggests splitting and adding financial scrutiny to Overview & Scrutiny with consequential recommendations.* For the reasons outlined next to these recommendations, the Action Plan response does not embrace those suggestions *at this time*, although it will be a matter for consideration post-election in 2024 as part of the overall constitutional review.

8.2. Members will note that much of the timescale column is currently blank. Recommendations 1, 6, 7,11,12,13,16, 17 and 20 being a matter for this Committee/ Chair etc (as to be approved by Cabinet or under delegation as suggested).

8.3. The Committee should note that in respect to *recommendation 4*, that following recent Legal & Community restructures a part time Scrutiny Officer post has been created (for 17 hours), which is currently being recruited to – closing date 19 June. It is hoped that this will be successful, given the Action Plan also refers to the role of a Scrutiny Officer.

8.4. The Committee should also note that in respect to recommendations 2, 3, 9, 10, 14 (and duplicate 15), that Scrutiny training was also offered post-election in 2023 to all Councillors as part of the *compulsory training* for all the membership. This was provided by an external trainer from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, 9 Members were noted as attending. This was recorded and is available via Growzone, and 2 further Members are understood to have since undertaken this training. Any Member who was unable to attend / has not undertaken this via Growzone, should log in and undertake this training (*deadline date to be suggested by the Committee to Cabinet*).

8.5. Chairing skills training has also been offered as part of the induction programme (albeit general skills)..

8.6. In the absence of any suggested timelines to Cabinet (and none being finalised by Cabinet), it is proposed that the Leader, Deputy Leader, and Managing Director agree these dates as soon as possible after the Cabinet in June, in consultation with relevant Chairs and Vice Chairs of the two Committees, as per the suggested delegation.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1. Overview & Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference include at 6.2.7 "c) To make reports or recommendations to the authority or the Executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive;"

9.2 Cabinet's terms of reference include at paragraph 5.7.13 "To consider the reports of external review bodies on key aspects of overall service delivery".

9.2. The CPC is a voluntary process and therefore there is no legal obligation to either host a CPC or act upon the recommendations. However, it is best practice to undertake a CPC and having done so, to act upon the issues identified.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1. The recommendation relating to a Scrutiny Officer does have a financial implication. However, this has currently been covered as part of the overall reorganisations undertaken in Legal & Community by the Service Director during 2022-23. As a final decision, a part time role has been created for 17 hours per week (as the budget allowed, without seeking additional resource during the budgetary process). This approach had the support of the relevant Executive Member (then Leader covering Community Engagement), and Deputy Leader. The Leader of the opposition was also appraised of the reorganisation processes and suggested role during monthly briefings. This will need to be reviewed if the Service Director and Committee, Member & Scrutiny Manager are unable to recruit to this role during June.

10.2. The Peer Review, alongside many other services and support, is included within the Council's annual subscription to the Local Government Association.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

11 The CPC process offers a way to suggest and drive improvements and efficiency. Failure to consider and act on external recommendations would therefore be a waste of such a resource and a consequential risk to the Council that its arrangements were not operating as effectively as they could.

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 known equalities implications that apply to this report. Individual actions on the plan may require equalities impact assessments in due course as solutions are developed.

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 suggested Action Plan does involve additional resource – covered by a new Scrutiny Officer role. Such a role would still require support for meeting arrangements, and this will be covered by the existing Committee team.

16. APPENDICES

16.1 Appendix A – LGA Peer Committee Support.

16.2 Appendix B- Draft Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

17.1 Jeanette Thompson, Service Director: Legal and Community
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17.3 Ian Couper, Service Director Resources
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17.3 Reuben Ayavoo, Policy and Communities Manager
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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1 None other than those already identified.

LGA Peer Committee Support

North Herts Council

January 2023

Overview & Scrutiny
Finance, Audit and Risk

Background

Following a remote meeting on 13 December 2021 between Anthony Roche and James Mehmed, North Herts Council commissioned the LGA to review the current Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S) and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (FAR) with the objective of improving both committees' overall impact and effectiveness to ensure they provide good governance and impactful decision making.

Three member peers, representing the political groups of the joint administration and inclusive of the opposition were used to undertake the review together as one team. Member peers were selected by the council for their experience and knowledge with both committees.

The review was requested to commence after the budget planning cycle had concluded circa February - March 2022. Work commenced in April following a scoping meeting to agree the approach to the review and the method of engagement.

Methodology

The methodology for conducting the review was agreed jointly between the council and member peers.

- Agree general approach in an initial scoping meeting (22 April).
- Conduct a desktop review of agreed documents, information and observing video recordings of previous committee meetings (April / May).
- Discuss the initial outcomes of the desktop review with the council as initial feedback and to clarify outstanding questions to inform the review (23 May).
- Member peers to engage in an agreed phase of virtual engagement comprising of one to ones, small groups and focus groups (9 meetings). (June – October).
- For both committees, peers to document observations, insight and make improvement recommendations and send to council for consideration. (Circa Oct / Nov 2022)
- Throughout this review we have been mindful of the four principles of effective overview and scrutiny. Provide constructive 'critical friend challenge', amplify the voices and concerns of the public, be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role and drive improvement in public services.

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- The report details feedback and summary points captured during the stakeholder engagement sessions by peers. These points have not been cross-checked for accuracy or factual correctness.

Peer Team

- Cllr Sioned Mair-Richards, Sheffield City Council
- Cllr Michael Headley, Bedford Borough Council
- Cllr Lesley Clarke OBE, Buckinghamshire Council

LGA

- James Mehmed, Senior Regional Advisor

Key Reflections & Observations

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Strengths:

- Members and officers both share a desire and willingness to see the overview and scrutiny function (O&S) operate more effectively and stated they are prepared to both consider and where agreed implement recommendations from this peer support.

- Strong community engagement through area committees, town talks and citizen panels.

- Outside partnership working was seen to be good.

- O&S committee meetings well attended by officers and portfolio holder when requested to participate.

- Chairing of O&S is conducted in a way that is politically neutral.

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Areas for Development:

Engagement

- There are many ways in which the council engages with its communities, e.g. citizens panels. It is unclear how the panels work in conjunction with the O&S process.

- Area committees - there appears to be no information shared with O&S. It was unclear to peers if the information collected from these meetings was used by O&S to assist with their deliberations on the same topics.

- Does the good partnership working assist the O&S committee with their deliberations, are the outcomes / information shared with O&S? When peers asked members if there was any interaction with O&S – the response concluded there is none.

- The community groups and panels are in place to gauge the local community's / interested group/s view/s on various issues or "schematic areas" to assist with "functionality" within the council area/s.

- There appeared to be no understanding by the scrutiny committee concerning benefits groups and panels brought to the council. Thoughts were that it was to communicate with the public and these communications were primarily in place to measure responses to ongoing council policies or issues.

- Cabinet panels to be better linked into the scrutiny process, such as scrutiny having a role in considering the outcomes.

- There was agreement during a peer meeting confirming the cabinet panels did overlap with the function of O&S.

- Consideration is needed to explore whether all the various outside groups and panels are necessary to avoid duplication.

- Consideration should be given to how you ensure all parts of the community can engage with council meetings.

- Is the TOM for scrutiny being effectively used by Overview & Scrutiny and if so, what benefits does it bring? Are there other benefits to the council by using this?

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Do members and officers really understand O&S and what it can achieve and deliver for the council if used properly?

It is important that the members who attend the O&S committee are well informed on the papers they have in front of them and there is appropriate robust questioning, if required, it appears that this is often left to the chair.

- A suggestion to improve this would be to have a series of questions drawn up between the chair and vice chair along with the lead scrutiny officer in advance of the meeting.

- An alternative approach could involve the chair of the O&S committee to have a pre-meeting, with all members of O&S, to agree who is to ask the questions. This gives the opportunity for the O&S member, themselves, to probe further into matters that then may arise from the various answers received.

- During observed scrutiny committees, questioning techniques were not well developed and can be superficial or aggressive.

- Roles are not clear enough. That is roles for scrutiny members / cabinet members / officers. Sometimes it seems more like a general discussion, rather than accountability for cabinet members. Officers should advise and not therefore be held to account for decisions owned by cabinet members.

- It was not clear who actually determines the agenda items for O&S.

- The cabinet felt that O&S were not considering the cabinet's forward plan and co-ordinating and planning agenda items to review subsequent decisions.

- It would appear that O&S are often given items on their agenda that have yet to be debated or determined by cabinet itself.

- Scrutiny is to both review pre-cabinet decisions and recommend any changes. They need to be cautious not for them to be an integral part of the decision making but to be able to make suggested changes prior to a cabinet decision.

- O&S function is also to scrutinise the decisions made by the cabinet. The O&S request those decisions to come to O&S for scrutiny are reasonable and yet there are examples where they are told that they cannot do this.

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- Some members spoken to by peers felt they were perceived by officers as a nuisance; something officers have to put up with. Although this wasn't a universal view.

- Some O&S committee members report that they find it difficult to obtain background information, this point was also a concern and highlighted by a previous corporate peer challenge and appears to continue to be an unresolved issue which could be resolved by a dedicated scrutiny officer.

- A request was made that the O&S meetings should be better spaced across the municipal year, perhaps every 6 weeks rather than the current meeting pattern that is in place.

- Cabinet members in attendance with peers agreed that not all council members fully understand the role of scrutiny and what benefits it can bring to the council as a whole.

- Training for O&S members has recently been delivered. Further consideration should be given to the approach taken supporting members with development and training to ensure a targeted approach enables greater knowledge transfer and ongoing development. It was felt that O&S was not as effective or efficient as it could be and the cabinet agreed that a dedicated officer for scrutiny should be sought.

- Finance scrutiny has been left to FAR and is therefore not as effectively scrutinised as other areas.

Recommendations:

- Define what you want your scrutiny panels to achieve.

- Put into place scrutiny training for the whole council (members and officers) and experiment with how training could be more effective for the 2024 new intake. Ensure all members understand the benefits and role of scrutiny.

- Consider how the provision of all committee development & training can be improved to increase knowledge transfer and support members with ongoing training needs e.g. use of one-to-one coaching, the provision of feedback from live meetings, further training to fill any gaps in knowledge and skills.

- Urgently fund and recruit a dedicated scrutiny officer.

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- Members to actively review the forward plan and invitation of cabinet members to attend O&S This could be overcome with a dedicated scrutiny officer in place.

- Proper and effective reporting onwards to council and cabinet by O&S is required.

- Establish clear meeting protocols and associated processes for questioning cabinet members.

- Officers to always facilitate the bringing forward of future agenda items requested by O&S in a timely manner.

- Training in scrutiny questioning skills (KLOE).

- Specific O&S training for the opposition too to encourage effective opposition role. There is specific scrutiny training for groups in opposition to assist with scrutiny work and assists them in being more effective throughout the council.

- Scrutiny needs to actively seek to implement the use of task & finish groups.

- It was observed by some members that the preparation for the special scrutiny meeting on the 'call to account' was beneficial and lessons learnt on how this preparation helped scrutiny should be considered in taking forward scrutiny in the future.

Cabinet

- Cabinet members should consistently and without exception be expected to attend O&S committee meetings where decisions from their area of responsibilities are being scrutinised.

- It should not be for the lead officer to attend in their place, as this shows an indifference to what O&S delivers.

- The scrutiny chair or their representative should attend all cabinet meetings to present scrutiny findings, particularly to enable the thinking and debate around the recommendations to be clearly communicated with the cabinet to maximise the impact scrutiny can have on decisions.

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- Whilst it is understood that any recommendations from O&S do not have to be agreed by the cabinet, reasons for rejections should be given.

- Sometimes it is necessary to take urgent decisions and are made by the leader / cabinet members in consultation with the managing director / senior officers. Members of the committee should be reminded that existing procedures permits challenge through the 'call in' process.

- The leader arranges cabinet panels for members to review items coming to cabinet for decision and make recommendations. These panels will include cabinet members and members from across the council, including scrutiny and finance, audit and risk – there is concern that these panels duplicate work that is already within the committee structure for both O&S and FAR.

- There appears to be some confusion with members over who scrutinises finance and the budget process. There is a wide held view that it is FAR, but FAR is not constitutionally an O&S committee.

- Cabinet agreed to a suggestion that it would be more effective to split finance scrutiny from the finance, audit and risk committee, therefore leaving the audit and risk committee with a clearer role accountable to full council.

- There were mixed views on the purpose and role of the political liaison board.

- There was uncertainty why Best Value Reviews been abandoned, yet requests are made for these to happen, particularly high-profile contracts – e.g. Leisure Services, Waste. The cabinet were perplexed that this had not been put into place by O&S as they see it as a useful tool to "deep dive" on issues. However, O&S members felt they did not have the opportunity to use best value reviews.

Lead Officer and Agenda Setting

- The role of scrutiny officer is shared throughout committee services which raises the question concerning where the knowledge of the O&S committee's working comes from. It appears there is no consistency within the committee services element of the administration of the committee.

- A dedicated officer could lead to positive agenda setting / work planning with the chair and vice chair of O&S and ensure that there was cabinet member involvement.

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- The process of considering an O&S agenda item is not well defined and can become a general debate, rather than an accountability mechanism. A clear process could be written to ensure there is a sequence of involvement, respecting roles. e.g. 1) Portfolio holder (PH) presents. 2) PH is questioned. 3) Officer is questioned. 4) Decision / report is debated by scrutiny members. 5) Recommendation is made by scrutiny members.

- Need more proactive agenda setting, for example through an annual workshop to set an initial proactive workplan for the year.

- Scrutiny appears to often come too late in the process to have an effective impact on pre-scrutiny decisions (same report as cabinet) and too early in the process (feeds into cabinet) to be effective at post decision scrutiny holding cabinet to account.

- It has been stated that the agendas for O&S are sent to O&S members without any recourse to the chair – if this is the case then there is likely to be an issue with democratic services understanding the chair's role, as the chair is the person who ensures members views determine items for debate.

- The officers within democratic services are new to the authority, which may be leading to an imbalance of agenda setting, which should be led by members.

- It is understood that some officers perceive O&S as a means to "catch officers out".

- There was a concern raised that there was at least one occasion where an officer felt they had been "attacked" at O&S – it is important that meetings are organised and chaired in a way that promotes appropriate behaviour, robust but not discourteous.

Training

- The council was asked to provide details regarding the numbers of members who have attended the original O&S training and detail concerning any follow up of those that did not attend. To date no detail or information has been made available to peers.

- Training for new members is both vital and essential so that the new members do make a positive stance and take part in the scrutiny process.

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Recommendations:

- Establish proactive annual programme of work and agenda setting.
- Provide O&S training in chairing skills.
- Training in scrutiny questioning skills (KLOE).
- Ensure the scrutiny committee actively follow up on all recommendations.
- Consideration should be given by the cabinet and portfolio holders on how they can carry out their role in a way that supports scrutiny being able to act as effectively as possible.
- Ensure minutes reflect the decisions of the meeting – e.g. requests for agenda items to be recorded in the minutes and added to the forward plan.
- Cabinet members should consistently and without exception be expected to attend O&S committee meetings where decisions from their area of responsibilities are being scrutinised.
- The scrutiny chair or their representative should attend all cabinet meetings to present scrutiny findings, particularly to enable the thinking and debate around the recommendations to be clearly communicated with the cabinet to maximise the impact scrutiny can have on decisions.
- Where cabinet do not accept an O&S recommendation, reasons should be given.

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Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR)

Strengths:

- Financial risks are considered, but only the financial aspects of any other risk.
- FAR is involved in the budget setting process.
- Provides focus for finance trained councillors to specialise.

Areas for Development:

Membership of committees

- Training is given to the FAR membership. Members should have some interest in the committee itself and have a rudimentary understanding of local government finance.

  Members should read and understand the papers sent to them in good time ahead of the scrutiny meeting to actively inform their question and scrutiny preparation.
- The finance and IT cabinet member attends the meeting as an observer and is only called upon to respond to any questions that are not fully answered by the lead finance officer.
- All other officers attend meetings virtually, which can cause problems with IT failures. Consideration should be given to attending in person.
- FAR members should actively engage in all skills audits to support the identification of any ongoing training and development requirements, to support members in being effective in their committee role.

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Recommendations:

- Ensure a skills audit for all members is conducted at the beginning of the council term as part of the induction process to support groups in making the best appointments to committees.

Meeting Structure

- Consideration should be given for the audit and risk element of this committee to be a committee in its own right.

Risk

At an appropriate point, review the new process for monitoring corporate risks.

- All FAR committee members have access to the council's risk register. It would be timely to remind all members how to access the risk register, whilst reminding them officers are happy to assist as appropriate.

- Clarity is required over who chooses the risks for review that go to FAR and what criteria is used to ensure this process is transparent, clearly understood and objective. The committee should be reminded of the existing processes.

- If the risk management champion is a cabinet member how does FAR committee ensure they are being kept properly informed and updated on the risks they review?

- Risk Implications in the Annual Governance Statement – states: "The risk and opportunities management strategy require the finance audit and risk committee to consider regular report on the council's corporate risk. Failure to provide the committee with regular updates would conflict with the agreed strategy and would mean that the committee could not provide assurance to cabinet that the council's identified corporate risks are being managed.

- In para 7.2 it states that FAR recommended the changes and they were referred on to cabinet and approved – yet they were not mentioned in this agenda item, are the recommendations referred to in the minutes of the meeting of September 2021. Formal reference back should be made.

- All members should be reminded they can access the risk register by contacting democratic services.

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Additional Observations

- It was suggested that those prospective FAR committee members should be given a realistic understanding of the workload and role on the committee.

- Finance scrutiny is not being undertaken in a scrutiny committee; this means that some of the holding to account functions are not being carried out in regard to the finance portfolio holder.

- FAR is experiencing a high turnover of members and is not therefore seeing the benefit of being a "specialist" committee.

Recommendations:

- Put into place training for the whole council and experiment with how training could be more effective for the 2024 new intake. Including an introduction to local government finance.

- Consider how the provision of all committee development & training can be improved to increase knowledge transfer and support members with ongoing training needs e.g. use of one-to-one coaching, the provision of feedback from live meetings, further training to fill any gaps in knowledge and skills.

- Split finance scrutiny from audit and risk. The scrutiny of finance should sit with a scrutiny committee rather than in the audit and risk committee.

- After the audit and risk function had been split from the finance (scrutiny) role, the new audit committee should focus on understanding their audit role and undertake a self-assessment of the role of an effective audit committee.

- Enhance the status of a new audit & risk committee.

- Consider an easier way for members to view the risk register.

- Support members with better understanding of the council's risks.

- Minutes to reflect the decisions of the meeting – i.e. requests for agenda items to be in the minutes and added to the forward plan.

- Conduct a skills audit of all members at induction training to support groups in making appropriate appointments to committees.

- Ensure that every member of the community can easily access information about council meetings.

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Next Steps

- Following the review of this document, at your request, peers can be assembled to discuss any aspect of their work to further explain or provide feedback relating to one or both committees as requested.
- The LGA can also advise on further support and training relating to the recommendations made by peers.

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Action Plan in response to recommendations from Peer Support to O&S and FAR Committees 2023

	Recommendation	Response	Ownership	Target Date (where applicable)	Status
	Overview and Scrutiny Committee				
1	Define what you want your scrutiny panels to achieve.	To be discussed with the scrutiny committee, but approach based on the 4 principles of good scrutiny would make sense:- • provides critical friend challenge to policymakers and decision makers • enables the voice and concerns of the public • is carried out by independent-minded people who lead and own the scrutiny role • drives improvement in public services	Scrutiny Committee		
2	Put into place scrutiny training for the whole council (members and officers) and experiment with how training could be more effective for the 2024 new intake. Ensure all members understand the benefits and role of scrutiny.	Will be incorporated within the member training programme being developed. Group leaders need to reinforce the importance of attending training with their groups	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development		
3	Consider how the provision of all committee development & training can be improved to increase knowledge transfer and support members with ongoing training needs e.g., use of one-to-one coaching, the provision of feedback from live meetings, further training to fill any gaps in knowledge and skills.	Will be incorporated within the member training programme being developed.	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development		
4	Urgently fund and recruit a dedicated scrutiny officer.	Budget has been identified for a part time scrutiny officer, subject to successful recruitment	Democratic Services Manager/ Committee,		

Action Plan in response to recommendations from Peer Support to O&S and FAR Committees 2023

	Recommendation	Response	Ownership	Target Date (where applicable)	Status
			Member & Scrutiny Manager		
5	Members to actively review the forward plan and invitation of cabinet members to attend O&S. This could be overcome with a dedicated scrutiny officer in place.	This is already on every agenda and is done at every meeting. It will be for Members to take forward with the Scrutiny Officer.	Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny officer		
6	Proper and effective reporting onwards to council and cabinet by O&S is required.	Chair and scrutiny officer will need to take this forward and consider the best way to report O+S discussion to Cabinet and Council. This can be done verbally. A report from a Task & Finish Group would be a written report.	Chair of Scrutiny Scrutiny officer		
7	Establish clear meeting protocols and associated processes for questioning cabinet members.	For scrutiny officer to work through with the Chair.	Chair of Scrutiny Scrutiny officer		
8	Officers to always facilitate the bringing forward of future agenda items requested by O&S in a timely manner.	This is accepted but felt to have been a one-off example. It would be for the scrutiny officer to ensure this happens.	Scrutiny officer		
9	Training in scrutiny questioning skills (KLOE).	Has been and will continue to be incorporated within the member training programme being developed.	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development		
10	Specific O&S training for the opposition too to encourage effective opposition role. There is specific scrutiny training for groups in opposition to assist with scrutiny work and assists them in being more effective throughout the council.	Will be incorporated within the member training programme being developed.	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development		
11	Scrutiny needs to actively seek to implement the use of task & finish groups.	This is for the Chair and Committee to consider, with the	Chair of Scrutiny Scrutiny Committee		

Action Plan in response to recommendations from Peer Support to O&S and FAR Committees 2023

	Recommendation	Response	Ownership	Target Date (where applicable)	Status
		support of the Scrutiny Officer.	Scrutiny officer		
12	It was observed by some members that the preparation for the special scrutiny meeting on the 'call to account' was beneficial and lessons learnt on how this preparation helped scrutiny should be considered in taking forward scrutiny in the future.	For scrutiny officer to work through with the Chair.	Chair of Scrutiny Scrutiny officer		
13	Establish proactive annual programme of work and agenda setting.	This is for the Chair and Committee to consider, with the support of the Scrutiny Officer.	Chair of Scrutiny Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny officer		
14	Provide O&S training in chairing skills.	Will be incorporated within the member training programme being developed.	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development		
15	Training in scrutiny questioning skills (KLOE).	Duplicate. See entry 9 above			
16	Ensure the scrutiny committee actively follow up on all recommendations.	This is already on every agenda. For scrutiny officer to work with the Chair and committee to ensure it is actively look at it.	Chair of Scrutiny Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny officer		
17	Consideration should be given by the cabinet and portfolio holders on how they can carry out their role in a way that supports scrutiny being able to act as effectively as possible.	This links to the vision for scrutiny in recommendation one. It should be a two-way critical friend relationship. To be included as part of training and potentially part of work planning. Cabinet to consider how to better engage with scrutiny.	Cabinet Scrutiny Committee Chair of Scrutiny		
18	Ensure minutes reflect the decisions of the meeting – e.g., requests for agenda items	Committee services and the scrutiny officer will make sure	Committee Services		

Action Plan in response to recommendations from Peer Support to O&S and FAR Committees 2023

	Recommendation	Response	Ownership	Target Date (where applicable)	Status
	to be recorded in the minutes and added to the forward plan.	everything is accurately captured.	Scrutiny officer		
19	Cabinet members should consistently and without exception be expected to attend O&S committee meetings where decisions from their area of responsibilities are being scrutinised.	Agreed. This is the current approach unless there is an emergency. Cabinet to consider as part of how to better engage with scrutiny.	Cabinet		
20	The scrutiny chair or their representative should attend all cabinet meetings to present scrutiny findings, particularly to enable the thinking and debate around the recommendations to be clearly communicated with the cabinet to maximise the impact scrutiny can have on decisions.	Agreed.	Chair of Scrutiny		
21	Where cabinet do not accept an O&S recommendation, reasons should be given.	Agreed. Cabinet to consider as part of how to better engage with scrutiny.	Cabinet		
	Finance Audit and Risk Committee	**Response**			
22	Put into place training for the whole council and experiment with how training could be more effective for the 2024 new intake. Including an introduction to local government finance.	Will be incorporated within the member training programme being developed.	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development		
23	Consider how the provision of all committee development & training can be improved to increase knowledge transfer and support members with ongoing training needs e.g. use of one-to-one coaching, the provision of feedback from live meetings, further training to fill any gaps in knowledge and skills.	Will be incorporated within the member training programme being developed. Message to go out that it is ok to ask IC for help with development applicable to all cttees, not just FAR.	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development		

Action Plan in response to recommendations from Peer Support to O&S and FAR Committees 2023

	Recommendation	Response	Ownership	Target Date (where applicable)	Status
24	Split finance scrutiny from audit and risk. The scrutiny of finance should sit with a scrutiny committee rather than in the audit and risk committee.	The reasons behind the recommendation are understood, but considered premature. Given the various recommendations that need to be implemented in respect of Overview and Scrutiny Committee it is perhaps not the best time to be giving the committee additional work. Equally the introduction of an independent member and the various recommendations that need to be implemented in respect of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, should improve, and enhance that Committee. This recommendation will therefore be revisited in 18 months as part of a wider review of structures post 2024 election.	Leader Deputy Leader Managing Director SD Legal and Community SD Resources		
25	After the audit and risk function had been split from the finance (scrutiny) role, the new audit committee should focus on understanding their audit role and undertake a self-assessment of the role of an effective audit committee.	To be considered as part of the wider review of structures post 2024 election.	As above		
26	Enhance the status of a new audit & risk committee.	Though there will not be an additional Audit and Risk Committee at this time, we do	Group Leaders SD Resources		

Action Plan in response to recommendations from Peer Support to O&S and FAR Committees 2023

	Recommendation	Response	Ownership	Target Date (where applicable)	Status
		need to enhance the status of the current committee. Group Leaders asked to explain importance of the role to the appointments they make to FAR. SD Resources to draft a form of words for the Chair to read out at the first meeting of FAR in the new civic year to explain its purpose and importance. Description of the committee on the website to be reviewed as currently under sells the committee.			
27	Consider an easier way for members to view the risk register.	The risk register is accessible with a user name and password, however will consider different access options and re-promote to make clear it is available to all Members, not just those on the committee.	SD Resources		
28	Support members with better understanding of the council's risks.	Agreed. Training on risk will take place after the May 2023 election and in advance of the first committee meetings, particularly where the issues are cross cutting. Thereafter will be incorporated within the member training programme being developed.	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development SD Resources		
29	Minutes to reflect the decisions of the meeting – i.e., requests for agenda items	Committee services will make sure everything is accurately captured.	Committee Services		

Action Plan in response to recommendations from Peer Support to O&S and FAR Committees 2023

	Recommendation	Response	Ownership	Target Date (where applicable)	Status
	to be in the minutes and added to the forward plan.				
30	Conduct a skills audit of all members at induction training to support groups in making appropriate appointments to committees.	Agreed. For Group leaders to take forward with their groups. Will also be used to inform the member training programme being developed.	Group leaders		
31	Ensure that every member of the community can easily access information about council meetings.	Agreed, albeit there are currently a number of ways to access information and it is not solely digitally/online. Reminder to be placed in Outlook about how to access information. Committee services to consider the issue more broadly to ensure we are not accidentally disenfranchising parts of the community.	Committee Services		

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
20 JUNE 2023

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-23 (QUARTER 4 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 4, which includes:

- Progress against the completion of Council projects and milestones
- Requests to change milestone dates
- New milestones
- 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 4 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 new milestones, deleted milestones, and changes to milestone dates and risks.
- That Cabinet notes the deletion of projects outlined in 8.6, to be replaced by new projects in 2023-24.
- That Cabinet note the completion in Q4 of the Museum and HTH recovery, Customer Portal, Full review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, and Green Space Management Strategy Projects.
- That Cabinet notes the reduction in the Town Centre Recovery risk score from a 3 to a risk score of 2.

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 Overview and Scrutiny, and 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 4 update was provided to Performance and Risk Management Group (PRMG) in May. 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 can. PRMG were asked to comment on the content and format of the CDP Q4 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 21 April 2023.

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.

7.2. At the last 2 meetings of Overview and Scrutiny the following projects were recorded as milestones completed for the 22-23 year. These projects will be removed from future monitoring reports.

- Local Plan (Dec)
- EV Charging for Council Vehicles (Mar)
- Business Recovery, Grants (Mar)
- Help Residents make payment at convenient locations (Mar)

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Appendix A provides an update on the progress made in delivering the Council Plan 2022-23. Whilst it is labelled as a Quarter 4 update, it generally reflects the latest position at the time that the report was written.

8.2 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 into the next monitoring report. The progress made to date against each project and resulting impacts on future milestones, is detailed in the commentary against each project in Appendix A. Future updates will provide monitoring against any revised milestones.

8.3 **New Project milestones within the CDP**

The Council Delivery Plan is now a live document with changes to milestones recorded and approved by Cabinet. For projects which are to continue through to the 23-24 Council Delivery Plan, new milestones with due dates in 23-24 have been added to the latest monitoring report in Appendix A for information. These new milestones have been highlighted in grey.

8.4 **Proposed changes/ deletions to milestones this quarter**

As projects progress, it is sometimes necessary to amend the milestone due dates, or delete any milestones which have been superseded by new ones. Any changes must be approved by Cabinet. For Q4, there are proposals to make changes/ deletions to the following projects, with reasons detailed in Appendix A. These proposed changes have been highlighted in yellow.

- Town Centre Recovery
- Resident / Public EV Charging in our Car parks
- Royston Leisure Centre Solar Thermal
- Town Centre Strategies
- Royston Town Hall Annexe
- Masterplanning
- Charnwood House
- Museum Storage
- Local Government Boundary Review, and
- Churchgate

8.5 **Completed projects this quarter.**

For Q4, the following projects, all the relevant milestones have been completed and the projects will no longer appear on the quarterly monitoring reports.

- North Herts Museum and Hitchin Town Hall Recovery
- Customer Portal
- Full review of Council Tax reduction scheme.

- Green Space Management Strategy

8.6 **Projects to be deleted and replaced with new projects in 23-24**

As we complete the project monitoring for the 22-23 year and move into the monitoring of the 23-24 Council Delivery Plan, some projects will no longer be reported on in their current form.

- Local Plan – replaced by "Local Plan Delivery/ Review"
- Economic Development Strategy and Tourism Strategy – to be combined into a new project for an Enterprise Strategy
- Work with Stakeholders to Increase Accommodation for Single Homeless People – new action for 23-24 to work with stakeholders to help all homeless people.
- Response to Government Resources and Waste Strategy – to be replaced in 23-24 by new projects "Waste and Street Cleansing Procurement" and "Waste Depot."

8.7 Performance Indicators

For Q4, there are 6 Green performance indicators, 2 Red and 1 showing as amber. One further indicator is for information only, with no target set against it. Explanations for performance are detailed in Appendix A.

8.8 **Risks**

For Q4, the Town Centre Recovery Risk, was reduced from a 3 to a 2, following a reassessment of the original risk score. The change reflects that to reach the target score, the mitigations aim to reduce the likelihood rather than the impact.
15 risk scores remain unchanged ,and 15 projects have already reached their target risk scores, through implementation of mitigating actions.

8.9 At the March 2023 meeting of Overview and Scrutiny, a request was made to provide further detail on the following projects

- Town Centre Recovery
- Tourism Strategy

This detail has been provided in Appendix B.

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. 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 Q4 monitoring report
Appendix B – Detailed updates requested at March 2023 meeting.

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

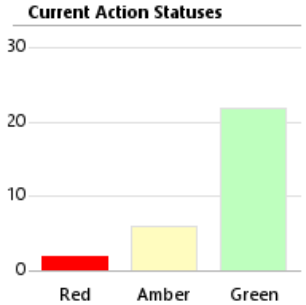
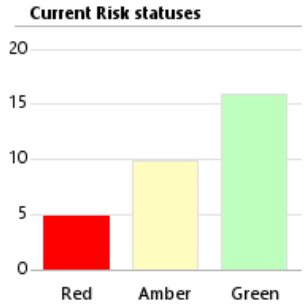
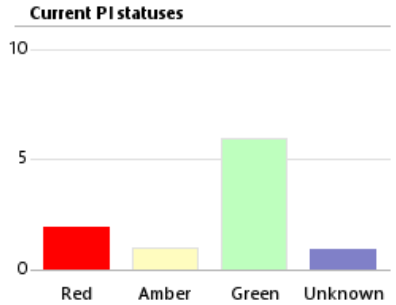
Council Delivery Plan – Status Key

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.
33%	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.

4	7	9
2	5	8
1	3	6

Council Delivery Plan 2022/23

Generated on: 09 May 2023

Projects Summary	Risks Summary	PIs Summary
		

	Museum/HTH Recovery	**Progress**	100%	**Due Date**	31-Mar-2023
Project Summary	To rebuild museum visitor numbers, Town Hall usage and income.				
Latest Update	25-Apr-2023 Throughout 2022/23, North Herts Museum made a strong recovery in terms of visitor numbers, with usage now comparable to pre-pandemic levels. This success story is mirrored by Hitchin Town Hall performance, with income levels exceeding full year pre-pandemic levels. Staffing issues at the cafe and with operating bars will continue to be addressed and managed. In view of performance levels achieved, all milestones for the year have been successfully completed. Ongoing operation of the facilities doesn't meet the definition of a project and is a business-as-usual activity. Therefore, further milestones are not considered appropriate for subsequent years. Performance will continue to be reported via related performance indicators, which will be included in future monitoring reports. Associated risk level still assessed as low, although the ongoing 'cost of living' crisis could reduce the level of demand for events to be held at HTH.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
To rebuild visitor numbers at the museum to pre-pandemic levels.	01-Jul-2022	Yes	Completed - Initial milestone due date related to the completion of activities in the first quarter of 2022/23 to provide impetus to the visitor numbers recovery process.
To rebuild interest in hiring Hitchin Town Hall back to pre- pandemic levels.	01-Aug-2022	Yes	Completed - Initial milestone due date related to the completion of activities in the first part of 2022/23 to provide impetus to the rebuilding of hiring interest.
To rebuild overall income levels at the facility to pre-pandemic levels.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	Completed.

Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Booking of Hitchin Town Hall and income levels may be impacted by the rising cost of living and the reduced levels of disposable		5	3	3	Museum visitor numbers			30,012	37,500

income. 2. Lack of interest in the facilities following the extended period of closure and restrictions linked to the Covid pandemic. 3. Inability to generate income as well as hoped and to the levels targeted.									

	Tourism Strategy	**Progress**	0%	**Due Date**	31-Mar-2023
Project Summary	To develop a draft strategy by March 2023.				
Latest Update	03-May-2023 Project superseded. Development of a Tourism 'work stream' is now being progressed via an overarching Enterprise Strategy, incorporating Commercial, Economic Development and Tourism. Progress towards developing and adopting this Enterprise Strategy will be monitored via a new Council Delivery Plan project for 2023/24. Currently expect the new Strategy to be adopted by Cabinet in September 2023.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Delete previously recorded milestone - Appoint consultants.	31-Jan-2023	No	Superseded by the new 'Enterprise Strategy' Council Delivery Plan project for 2023/24.
Delete previously recorded milestone - Review and approve draft strategy.	31-Mar-2023	No	Superseded by the new 'Enterprise Strategy' Council Delivery Plan project for 2023/24.

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**	100%	**Due Date**	31-Mar-2023
Project Summary	Promotion of business grants and payment. Completion of required Government reconciliations.				
Latest Update	11-Jan-2023 NHC has completed all returns requested by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy relating to the reconciliation processes. Therefore, all NHC actions completed, although BEIS will be in contact should they require anything further from us as they assess the evidence provided.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Continued promotion of available business support grants and business rate reliefs.	30-Apr-2022	Yes	Grants ceased 31 March 2022. All processed and paid within stipulated timeframes.
Complete all Government returns for reconciliation processes.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	Completed.

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	33%	Due Date	31-Jul-2023
Project Summary	Completion of economic recovery strategies for four towns. Development of permit scheme for experimental Traffic Regulation Orders.				
Latest Update	26-Apr-2023 Recovery plans for the four towns now agreed by the Executive Members for Enterprise and Planning. New milestones to be introduced for 2023/24 to reflect key activities we are taking to enable stakeholders to progress delivery of the plans. The studies will inform preparation of an overarching Town Centre Strategy and associated masterplans for each town. Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETRO) for Hitchin and Royston are still both expected to be made permanent by the end of the trial periods (July 2023), with Project Boards providing oversight. Both related milestones are therefore aligned with this timeframe. Risk level remains low, although this is dependent on successfully taking forward plans and delivering identified improvements to our town centres.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Completion of Welcome Back Fund town centre recovery plans for the four towns.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	Plans finalised and signed-off by the Executive Members for Enterprise and Planning.
Development of permit scheme for experimental traffic orders, sub-delegate to appropriate body, enforcement to be with NHC.	31-Mar-2023	No	Propose to change milestone due date to 31 July 2023 to align with the other ETRO milestone. This milestone relates to Hitchin only.
Liaise with HCC and other key stakeholders with regard the experimental traffic orders for town centres.	31-Jul-2023	No	Aligns with the trial period end date. 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. Reputational damage if initiatives are not progressed or delayed.		3	2	1					

	Health Inequalities	Progress	42%	Due Date	31-Mar-2024
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	21-Apr-2023 The three projects included in the approved intervention plan commenced by the end of March 2023. These projects, funded by HCC funding, are Royston Men's Club, Royston Emotional Wellbeing and Letchworth Horticultural Therapy. The projects will be delivered throughout 2023/24 as per the milestones below. In addition, projects funded from other sources will also commence and be delivered, including Letchworth Men's Club (Active Local funding) and Seated Exercise Letchworth (Live Longer Better funding). North Herts Healthy Hub continues to provide support services to residents and the Wellbeing Partnership for the district continues to be a vehicle for determining local wellbeing priorities and needs alongside our partners. The risk level associated with delivering projects throughout 2023/24 is low as the required infrastructure/funding is in place. However, for subsequent years, there is a risk that the provision of support to residents will reduce if sufficient further funding is not obtained or sufficient budget is not allocated to maintain current provision.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Secure Tranche 1 funding (Health and Wellbeing led projects).	31-May-2022	Yes	Completed.

Develop an action plan for Tranche 1 (based on Public Health Strategy, Health Inequalities Framework and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment).	31-Dec-2022	Yes	Health inequalities identified and agreed. Developed associated intervention plan. HCC approved plan on 14 December 2022.
Deliver Tranche 1 projects (as planned for 2022/23).	31-Mar-2023	Yes	The three projects included in the intervention plan all commenced by 31 March 2023, meeting funding requirements. Delivery to continue throughout 2023/24.
New milestone - Royston Men's Club - June 2023 course.	30-Jun-2023	No	
New milestone - Royston Men's Club - September 2023 course.	30-Sep-2023	No	
New milestone - Letchworth Horticultural Therapy.	31-Mar-2024	No	Budget of £5K to deliver individual placements of 12/24 weeks during 2023/24.
New milestone - Royston Emotional Wellbeing project.	31-Mar-2024	No	Two groups meeting every week throughout 2023/24.

Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
Risks - Inability to achieve funding for future years. - Delays in achieving funding. - Restrictive funding terms. - Staff shortages/competing priorities. Leading to: - Cessation of current projects/services. - Delays in achieving outcomes. - Limited scope of projects. - Limited progress with pursuing funding opportunities/delivering projects.		7	3	3					

	Economic Development Strategy	**Progress**	33%	**Due Date**	31-Mar-2023
Project Summary	Develop Economic Development Strategy based on resources available.				
Latest Update	03-May-2023 Project superseded. Development of an Economic Development 'work stream' is now being progressed via an overarching Enterprise Strategy, incorporating Commercial, Economic Development and Tourism. Progress towards developing and adopting this Enterprise Strategy will be monitored via a new Council Delivery Plan project for 2023/24. Currently expect the new Strategy to be adopted by Cabinet in September 2023.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Complete ongoing recovery work funded by High Street Recovery Fund.	01-Apr-2022	Yes	Completed.
Delete previously recorded milestone - Develop budget bid to deliver proposed Economic Development Strategy.	31-Mar-2023	No	Superseded by the new 'Enterprise Strategy' Council Delivery Plan project for 2023/24.
Delete previously recorded milestone - Utilise feedback from recovery work to develop an	31-Mar-	No	Superseded by the new 'Enterprise Strategy' Council Delivery Plan project for 2023/24.

Economic Development Strategy for the four towns. Consult and develop an Economic Development Strategy for the rural community.			2023						
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	2	1					

	Resident/Public EV Charging in our Car Parks	**Progress**	28%	**Due Date**	31-Mar-2024
Project Summary	Submit grant application to Office for Zero Emission Vehicles for funding. Further actions dependent on funding awarded.				
Latest Update	05-May-2023 Following completion of detailed costings, grant application submitted to OZEV by 31 March 2023. Now expect contract with private sector partner to be formalised by the end of May 2023. Decision on our application expected in May 2023, after which we will finalise the leases with the contractor and commence promotion of the project. Contractor to deliver project and install new EV charging points by end of March 2024, in line with funding requirements. As we have not yet received a decision on our grant application and are still to finalise key items with our partner, risk level still assessed as medium.				

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.	27-Mar-2023	No	Private sector partner identified, and grant application submitted. Formal contract to deliver the project still to be signed. Expect this to happen by 31 May 2023. Propose to amend milestone due date accordingly.
Establish detailed costings for grant application.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	Detailed costings finalised and application submitted to OZEV by 31 March 2023.
Submit grant application to OZEV for 60% (originally 75%) of cost, with private partner providing the remaining 40% (originally 25%).	31-Mar-2023	Yes	Submitted to OZEV by 31 March 2023.
Decision on grant application received.	30-Apr-2023	No	Due date to change to 31 May 2023. We now expect to hear in May 2023 whether our grant application has been successful. Delivery of future project milestones will be dependent on grant funding being awarded.
New milestone - Complete relevant leases with contractor for the length of the contract.	31-Jul-2023	No	
New milestone - Contractor to commence works and NHC to start promoting project.	01-Aug-2023	No	
New milestone - Installation of all new EV charging points completed.	31-Mar-2024	No	

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. 3. Unable to agree relevant lease arrangements with contractor.		5	5	1					

	Cycling Network	Progress	20%	Due Date	30-Nov-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	05-May-2023 We continue to review LCWIP consultation findings with HCC. Expect this to be concluded in June 2023. Will then present report to Cabinet for comment and recommendations, prior to the LCWIP going to HCC for a decision on adoption. The adopted LCWIP will inform work on the NHC Cycle Strategy, but in the meantime, the draft version can still be used to seek contributions to planning applications. Risk level assessed as low, as the project continues to progress in line with anticipated timeframes.				

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	Completed.
New milestone - HCC/NHC finalise review of consultation findings.	09-Jun-2023	No	
New milestone - Report to NHC Cabinet for comment and recommendations on the LCWIP.	30-Jun-2023	No	
Adoption of LCWIP by HCC Highways Transport Panel/Cabinet.	31-Oct-2023	No	
Further milestones dependent on adoption of LCWIP.	30-Nov-2023	No	Further milestones relating to the development of a NHC Cycle Strategy to be considered/commenced at this time.

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/Cabinet. 3. Limits to what can be achieved in the short-term.		3	2	1					

	EV Charging for Council Vehicles	Progress	100%	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.				

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			35,903	35,000

	Royston Leisure Centre Solar Thermal	**Progress**	28%	**Due Date**	31-Mar-2024
Project Summary	Installation of Solar Thermal technology at Royston Leisure Centre (RLC).				
Latest Update	27-Apr-2023 Following the unsuccessful procurement processes undertaken for this project, a consultant is currently investigating options for incorporating installation of solar thermal technology at RLC into the wider project of installing solar PV at the three main leisure facilities. Depending on the viability of installing both technologies at the same site, this has the potential to make the solar thermal element more attractive to bidders. The feasibility report was received at the end of May 2023, and is being reviewed to determine if and how this project will proceed. If it does proceed, installation is expected to be completed by the end of March 2024. Risk level assessed as medium, in view of the uncertainty still attached to the project pending receipt of the feasibility report.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Design specification.	31-May-2022	Yes	
Complete procurement and appoint contractor.	16-Dec-2022	Yes	Second procurement exercise closed on 31 January 2023. This was unsuccessful.
New Milestone - Feasibility report received from consultant.	31-May-2023	No	
New Milestone - Review report findings and decision on project viability.	30-Jun-2023	No	
New Milestone - If project proceeds, further milestones to be developed or incorporated into the 2023/24 Council Delivery Plan project "Solar PV on Leisure Centres".	31-Jul-2023	No	
Delete previously recorded milestone - Installation of Solar Thermal.		No	No longer applicable in view of unsuccessful procurement processes. Replaced with new milestones relating to decision on project viability.
Delete previously recorded milestone - Meet with contractor to programme schedule of works.		No	No longer applicable in view of unsuccessful procurement processes. Replaced with new milestones relating to decision on project viability.

Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Solar Thermal not viable alongside installation of Solar PV. 2. Tender returns over budget. 3. Delays to procurement/project delivery.		5	5	5					

	Town Centre Strategies	**Progress**	20%	**Due Date**	31-Mar-2024
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	26-Apr-2023 Resource issues have delayed progress. Currently undertaking a further recruitment exercise to appoint to new Project Officer role. Plan to appoint consultant to prepare evidence base for overarching Town Centre Strategy by 31 July 2023. Work on evidence base and preparation of draft Strategy expected to be completed by January 2024. Once completed, scoping report to be presented to Cabinet to agree overall approach and governance arrangements for progressing individual Town Centre masterplans. Concurrently, we have already commenced work with stakeholders to progress options for the Letchworth masterplan. Risk level still assessed as medium, as without approved strategy/masterplans, speculative development could undermine the function of our town centres.

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Consultants appointed to prepare High Level Town Centre Recovery Action Plans for each town centre.	30-Apr-2022	Yes	Consultants appointed and draft plans have now been received.
Cabinet report presenting draft Strategy and scoping report to agree overall project and governance arrangements for progressing individual Town Centre masterplans.	31-Jul-2023	No	Now anticipate presenting a report to Cabinet in March 2024. Propose to amend milestone due date accordingly.
New milestone - Appoint consultant to prepare evidence base for overarching Town Centre Strategy.	31-Jul-2023	No	
Progress work on Letchworth Town Centre masterplan, confirming/commencing detailed work following presentation of the Cabinet report.	31-Aug-2023	No	Propose to amend milestone due date to align with Cabinet report milestone (31 March 2024).
New milestone - Undertake work to complete evidence base and prepare draft Strategy.	31-Jan-2024	No	

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. 2. Lack of strategic direction leads to speculative development that undermines function of town centres.		5	5	1					

	Finalise Pay on Exit Parking Review	**Progress**	37%	**Due Date**	31-Mar-2024
Project Summary	Complete feasibility study and report to Cabinet on options.				
Latest Update	05-May-2023 Following the report to PLB in February 2023 and agreement to bring forward related Capital budget to 2023/24 and 2024/25, we are now progressing a project to replace all existing parking machines. This will include undertaking procurement exercises to appoint suppliers to replace the current machines and the tariff boards, which are both expected to be concluded by November 2023. A report will be presented to Cabinet in September to agree revised tariffs and post-payment options. Works are then expected to commence in January 2024 on undertaking trials and rolling out the phased two-year programme. Risk level assessed as low, with uncertainty surrounding completion of successful tenders, and public reaction to the changes and any associated disruption.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Consultants appointed to produce Feasibility Study to be reported to Exec Member & Deputy.	31-Jul-2022	Yes	Consultants appointed and draft report produced. This has been discussed with the Executive Member and will be finalised shortly.
Report to PLB to get a steer on proceeding to a pay on exit trial.	01-Nov-2022	Yes	PLB agreed that officers should proceed with the necessary work in progressing a trial in two of the Council's car parks and report back within this financial year.
The Cabinet report determines further milestones.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	Report to Cabinet not required. Following PLB decision in February 2023 to progress revised project and agreement to bring forward related Capital budget to 2023/24, project to replace all existing parking machines is now underway.

New milestone - Report presented to Cabinet to agree revised tariffs and post-payment options.	30-Sep-2023	No
New milestone - Procure supplier to replace existing parking machines.	30-Nov-2023	No
New milestone - Procure supplier to replace tariff boards.	30-Nov-2023	No
New milestone - Update TROs.	31-Dec-2023	No
New milestone - Contractor to commence works (phased two-year programme).	31-Jan-2024	No

Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Budget implications of selected scheme. 2. Inability to procure suppliers within approved budget. 3. Negative public reaction to changes and disruption during works. 4. Loss of income during associated works.		1	1	1					

	Pursue commercial leasing opportunity for Royston Town Hall Annexe	**Progress**	33%	**Due Date**	31-Mar-2024
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-Apr-2023 Despite numerous attempts to engage with HCC regarding the acquisition of rights over their land from the public highway, they have so far not responded to our requests. Without acquiring these vehicular access rights, the project cannot move forward in any meaningful way. The current expectation is that it could take a further 12 months to commence negotiations and if successful, to formalise arrangements. We continue to liaise with the interested party, although there is a risk that they may withdraw their interest if resolution of the rights issue is continually delayed. Risk level still assessed as medium, as progress is not completely in our control and there remains a possibility that the current project does not proceed.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Exploring options following unsolicited solid interest in site.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	Initial discussions held with interested party regarding formalising use of NHC's land. This included the drafting of lease heads of terms. Not able to proceed in any meaningful way without acquiring vehicular access rights to our site.
Ascertain, acquire, and address rights and restrictions on the site.	31-May-2023	Yes	No access rights to serve NHC's site are documented. So far, HCC have been unwilling to engage with us regarding acquiring rights. The proposal is to now monitor this via two new milestones. 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 but for now, there is no further action to take.
New Milestone - Commencement of negotiations with HCC regarding the acquisition of vehicular access rights over their land from the public highway.	30-Sep-2023	No	Previously included under a combined milestone of "Ascertain, acquire, and address rights and restrictions on the site." with a due date of 31 May 2023.
Market test site for leasing and sale on non-committal basis. Undertake options appraisal. Seek Cabinet decision.	30-Nov-2023	No	Proposal to delete this milestone for now. If the access rights issue is resolved and the project moves forward, further milestones will be recorded at this time.

New Milestone - Completion of negotiations with HCC regarding the acquisition of vehicular access rights over their land and arrangements formalised.	31-Mar-2024	No	Previously included under a combined milestone of "Ascertain, acquire, and address rights and restrictions on the site." with a due date of 31 May 2023.
New Milestone - Maintain ongoing dialogue with interested party whilst seeking to acquire access rights from HCC.	31-Mar-2024	No	

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

	Customer Portal	**Progress**	100%	**Due Date**	31-Mar-2023
Project Summary	Research options for My Account, transformation programme to consider options for development, implement recommended options.				
Latest Update	18-Apr-2023 Consideration and investigation of improvements we can make to the customer experience and self-service options is now an ongoing business-as-usual activity. Cabinet agreed that this project and the associated risk entry would not be included in the 2023/24 Council Delivery Plan. Investigation of options for Waste is linked to the re-tendering of both the waste contract and the CRM contract, and it is unlikely to be taken forward until a new CRM contract has been awarded.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Researching options for development of MyAccount.	31-Mar-2022	Yes	Milestone complete. We discussed options with relevant service areas, including Benefits, Housing and Licensing. We are potentially moving forward with a project to implement Waste into MyAccount, which would be beneficial due to the size of the service area.
Transformation programme considers options for development.	31-May-2022	Yes	Milestone complete. The development of MyAccount is not reliant on the wider transformation programme, which is currently prioritising process automation.
Pre-scoping meeting with Waste and MyAccount provider.	15-Sep-2022	Yes	Meeting held.
Further development work for Waste implementation.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	Investigation of options for Waste is linked to the re-tendering of the waste contract and is unlikely to be taken forward until the existing CRM contract has been re-tendered.

Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Additional modules are not forthcoming.		5	2	2					

	Help Residents Make Payments at Convenient Locations	**Progress**	100%	**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	25-Apr-2023 Project completed in November 2022, with ongoing communication now a business-as-usual activity. There remains a residual risk that residents will not use the options introduced, but numbers are starting to increase, and this is currently assessed as low risk. This risk will continue to be managed at service level. The related performance indicators will continue to be included in future monitoring reports to help identify related post-project trends.

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Complete procurement and appoint supplier.	31-Mar-2022	Yes	Completed.
Obtain IIN number and update documentation.	31-Aug-2022	Yes	Completed.
Send test file and payment.	01-Sep-2022	Yes	Completed.
Go live - implementation completed.	19-Sep-2022	Yes	Completed.
Communication to residents on new ways to pay and Allpay app.	30-Nov-2022	Yes	Initial communication completed. To 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	1	1	Percentage of NNDR collected in year			97.71%	93%
					Percentage of council tax collected in year			97.56%	95%
					Percentage of raised sales invoices due for payment that have been paid			98.23%	97%
					% of payments received that were paid by electronic methods			99.08%	99.3%

	Supplier Self-Service	**Progress**	100%	**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	26-Apr-2023 The originally envisaged project has now ceased, and the previously recorded milestones are no longer relevant and have been removed. A new supplier portal will now be incorporated into the procurement of a joint cash management and financial system and will be taken forward as part of this project. The current timeframe is for the new contract to be awarded in July 2023 with system implementation by August 2024. Risk level assessed as low, as prior to a new supplier portal being available, the continuation of current supplier arrangements means there will be no significant adverse effects. Management of any associated risks will now be via the Project Risk Log.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note

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	1	1					

	Empty Homes Strategy	Progress	33%	Due Date	01-Aug-2023
Project Summary	Develop and implement a strategy to reduce numbers of Empty Homes.				
Latest Update	22-Mar-2023 Staff resource to enable delivery of the final Strategy as part of a new Housing Improvement Officer role approved by Full Council on 23 February 2023. We anticipate adoption of the Strategy by Cabinet in summer/ autumn 2023, although we are still to determine if this will be at the 27 June or 26 September 2023 meetings. Current focus of the CDP action/risk is on the development and approval of a strategic approach to bringing empty properties back into use. Once an adopted Strategy is in place, if required, these will be reviewed and updated to reflect key implementation stages and risks to the successful achievement of stated objectives. Risks relating to Strategy adoption are assessed as low, with the implementation risk level being dependent on the preferred approach.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Development of Strategy and staff resources.	23-Feb-2023	Yes	Draft Strategy produced, but this still needs to be approved. Staff resource to enable delivery of the final Strategy approved by Full Council on 23 February 2023 (as part of a new Housing Improvement Officer role).
Adoption of Strategy by Cabinet.	31-Jul-2023	No	Now anticipate adoption by Cabinet by summer/autumn 2023 (still to determine if this will be 27 June or 26 September 2023 meeting). Due date will be amended to reflect the meeting selected.
Commence implementation of adopted Strategy, including securing the budget required to deliver the preferred approach.	01-Aug-2023	No	

Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
Development of Strategy Risks: - Staff shortages/competing priorities limit progress with developing Strategy. - Potential political/reputational risk associated with not having an agreed strategic approach in place. - Resource implications/limitations relating to the different options available. Implementation of Adopted Strategy Risks (dependent on the agreed approach): - Securing the resources required to deliver the Strategy and achieve objectives. - Limited number of empty homes that we can actually take forward		4	2	1					

under the Strategy. - Cost to Council of maintaining empty properties that we acquire. - Political/reputational risk associated with a perceived lack of progress and/or cost/benefit analysis of our approach.									

	New Ways of Delivering Housing on Council Land	**Progress**	40%	**Due Date**	31-Mar-2024
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	14-Apr-2023 External Chartered Surveyor completed the market research exercise with a cross-section of the development market regarding options for joint ventures. The draft report has been received, with the final report still expected to be received in June 2023. A review of the final report findings/recommendations is expected to take one month, at which time we will be in a position to report on the preferred options. Once there is some clarity regarding the options available, further milestones will be added to the Council Delivery Plan monitoring report. Risk level still assessed as medium, although this will be re-assessed once we have considered the final report.				

Milestone	**Due Date**	**Complete**	**Note**
Determine a way forward/partnership agreement with current provider.	31-Mar-2022	Yes	Establishing a way forward with the current provider was unsuccessful.
Start to consider other options for delivery.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	Following advice from Procurement, external Chartered Surveyor undertook a market research exercise with a cross-section of the development market regarding options for joint ventures. Draft report received.
New Milestone - Final market research report received from Chartered Surveyor.	31-May-2023	No	
New Milestone - Review report findings/recommendations.	30-Jun-2023	No	
New Milestone - Dependent on market research findings, develop milestones/timings to report and make a formal decision on the preferred way forward.	31-Jul-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. Ensuring Contract Procurement Rules are adhered to. 3. Housing development subject to planning. 4. Working with the right supplier(s) for the Council. 5. Lack of demand and absorption rate for tenure and build type.		5	5	5					

	Work with Stakeholders to Increase Accommodation Options for Single Homeless People	**Progress**	100%	**Due Date**	31-Mar-2023
Project Summary	Working with One YMCA/Haven First to secure development of purpose-built accommodation in Letchworth. Work with partners to deliver general and specialist accommodation.				

Latest Update	05-May-2023 All milestones for 2022/23 have been completed. As previously reported, this support aims to help mitigate the risk of homelessness associated with single homeless people with complex needs. However, the threat of homelessness not only relates to individuals and couples, but to families too. As such, for 2023/24, Council Delivery Plan monitoring (via a new action and milestones) will focus on activities to enhance our work with partners to prevent and relieve homelessness for all of those affected. This aligns better with the currently reported risk of increased levels of homelessness, which 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 and demands of refugee schemes.

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Work with Haven First to secure development of hostel accommodation in Letchworth.	31-Oct-2022	Yes	Haven First are merging with One YMCA and early indications are they will still look to proceed with the development of a new hostel for single homeless people in Letchworth that secured planning permission in February 2021. The Council's limited role is complete, and it is now for Haven First/One YMCA to progress and to confirm project details/timings.
Application and utilisation of grant funding to secure specialist provision.	13-Dec-2022	Yes	On 13 December 2022, Cabinet approved the 2022/23 allocation of Homelessness Prevention Grant funding and the allocation of Rough Sleeping Initiative funding for the financial years 2022/23 to 2024/25.
Work with partners to secure accommodation for those with specific support needs.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	This is an ongoing activity and throughout 2022/23, we continued to explore options for increasing accommodation solutions for people with specific support needs. As such, for the purpose of this Council Delivery Plan item, the milestone is considered complete.
Work with partners to secure general accommodation for homeless people.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	This is an ongoing activity and throughout 2022/23, we continued to explore options for increasing accommodation solutions for all homeless families/people. As such, for the purpose of this Council Delivery Plan item, the milestone is considered complete.

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			98	

	Local Plan Implementation	**Progress**	100%	**Due Date**	31-Mar-2023
Project Summary	Adoption of Local Plan by Council.				
Latest Update	04-May-2023 Adoption of Local Plan completed. The 2023/24 Council Delivery Plan will monitor the development of policies to aid delivery and the preparations for a Local Plan review. The 2023/24 CDP will also continue to monitor the progress of Master Plans for the six strategic sites included in the Plan.				

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 (risk removed). 2. Increased uncertainty of planning policy base (risk removed). 3. Delay or failure to adoption/implementation of the new Local Plan (risk removed). 4. Legal challenge to Local Plan (minor residual risk remains). 5. Intervention by the Secretary of State i.e., issuing a holding direction (risk removed). 6. 'Hostile' applications in areas not designated within the Local Plan.		9	6	6					

	Master Planning	**Progress**	25%	**Due Date**	31-Mar-2024
Project Summary	Secure funding for Master Plans. Develop Master Plans and seek adoption. Focus is on 6 Strategic sites (approximately 8,500 homes in total) that account for the majority of homes, although there are 12 other sites (approximately 2,500 additional homes) presently captured by masterplan policy requirements.				
Latest Update	05-May-2023 The Council has set out its expectations and secured funding through Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) and / or planning fees for the six sites that form the focus of this Council Delivery Plan project. Work is ongoing to produce and present the site-specific masterplans. The draft masterplan for Highover Farm was presented to Project Board in 2022 but will be formally determined as part of an outline planning application. No pre-application masterplans were formally presented or approved during 2022/23. Going forward, site-specific milestones have now been introduced in place of the previously recorded milestone relating to the presentation of masterplans to Project Board. These new milestones, relating to five of the six Strategic Sites in the adopted Local Plan, will allow more accurate, ongoing monitoring over the course of the year ahead. Approval arrangements for the sixth site (East of Luton, Local Plan Policy SP19) have yet to be agreed between the Council and the landowner team.				

Milestone	**Due Date**	**Complete**	**Note**
1. Liaise with developers and identify the Council's expectations with regard master planning.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	Masterplan briefs have been issued for five of the six sites. For the sixth site (Highover Farm), a masterplan has been prepared as part of an existing outline planning application lodged with the Council which has been informed by Council officer feedback.
2. Secure funding for master planning through the development of Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) to seek to cover NHC and HCC costs as far as is practicable.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	PPAs have been agreed for five of the six sites that are preparing masterplans. For the sixth site (Highover Farm), a masterplan has been prepared as part of an existing outline application lodged with the Council.
Delete previously recorded milestone - 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	To be replaced with new project-specific milestones relating to five of the six Strategic Sites in the adopted Local Plan to allow more accurate, ongoing monitoring over the course of the year ahead.
New milestone - Consideration of Highover Farm masterplan by Planning Committee (18/01154/OP, Local Plan Policy SP17).	30-Jun-2023	No	
New milestone - Approval of pre-application Strategic Masterplan for GA2 North-east of Great Ashby (Local Plan Policy SP18).	31-Dec-2023	No	
New milestone - Approval of pre-application Strategic Masterplan for NS1 North of Stevenage	31-Dec-	No	

(Local Plan Policy SP16).	2023		
New milestone - Approval of pre-application Strategic Masterplan for Baldock sites (Local Plan Policies SP14, BA2, BA3 & BA10).	31-Mar-2024	No	
New milestone - Approval of pre-application Strategic Masterplan for LG1 North of Letchworth (Local Plan Policy SP15).	31-Mar-2024	No	

Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Risk of poor scheme outcomes that do not appropriately respond to local character and context. 2. Risk that strategic sites do not maximise contribution to corporate objectives and priorities of climate change, environment, economy and place. 3. Risk of delay to delivery of strategic sites if masterplan process is delayed or stalled or provides insufficient information to guide subsequent planning applications. 4. Failure to secure funding to resource the process. 5. Reduction in pre-application income and delay to income from planning applications. 6. Failure to recruit sufficiently experienced officers. 7. Risk of adverse appeal findings on other/non-Local Plan sites if delivery is delayed or stalled.		5	5	3					

	Financial Sustainability/Balancing our Budget	**Progress**	40%	**Due Date**	29-Feb-2024
Project Summary	To deliver a medium term balanced budget for the Council that reflects Council priorities.				
Latest Update	04-May-2023 2023/24 Budget approved by Council in February.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Medium Term Financial Strategy (aligned to Council Plan) approved by Council.	22-Sep-2022	Yes	Completed.
Budget for 2023/24 approved by Council.	23-Feb-2023	Yes	Completed.
Respond to expected consultation on funding reform.	30-Sep-2023	No	Not now expected to have consultation until summer 2023.
New milestone - Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by Council.	23-Nov-2023	No	
New milestone - Budget for 2024/25 approved by Council.	29-Feb-2024	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. Sales, fees, and charges income continues at a lower level due to changes in behaviour from Covid-19 and impact of 'cost of living'. 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					

	Full Review of Council Tax Reduction Scheme	Progress	100%	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	06-Apr-2023 New scheme implemented from 1 April 2023. Generally, the new scheme has been well received.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Engage consultant to support the project.	31-Mar-2022	Yes	Completed.
Options appraisals conducted and consultation carried out with public and major preceptors.	30-Oct-2022	Yes	Options appraisals completed 23 June 2022. Consultation period ended 30 October 2022.
Reports to Committees - September, December, and January.	31-Jan-2023	Yes	Update reported to Cabinet on 13 September 2022. Further update presented to PLB on 1 November 2022. Details of proposed new scheme reported to Cabinet (13 December 2022) and Full Council (19 January 2023).
Scheme implemented.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	New scheme implemented from 1 April 2023.

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	100%	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	23-Mar-2023 With the publication of the Selection Questionnaire on 10 March 2023, all milestones for 2022/23 have now been completed. For CDP purposes, this action will be closed down at the end of				

Update	2022/23, with two new actions (and associated risks) being introduced for 2023/24 that lead on from the progress made so far. These new actions are "Waste and Street Cleansing Contract Procurement" and "Waste Depot".

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Initial member consultation and service design.	25-Aug-2022	Yes	Member consultation completed. Consisted of joint cross-party workshops over two months. Additional member briefings also undertaken to outline the proposed service design.
Report presented to O&S.	28-Sep-2022	Yes	Completed.
Pre-engagement.	18-Oct-2022	Yes	Pre-engagement work is complete.
Report presented to Cabinet.	25-Oct-2022	Yes	Report presented to the Extraordinary Cabinet meeting held on 25 October 2022.
Project Board established.	30-Nov-2022	Yes	Completed.
Publication of Selection Questionnaire (SQ).	28-Feb-2023	Yes	Completed - The SQ publication date was 10 March 2023.

Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
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			350kg	350kg
					Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting			54.92%	56.5%

	Green Space Management Strategy	Progress	100%	Due Date	31-Mar-2023
Project Summary	For this year, installation of interactive play, wilding projects and other projects (as determined).				
Latest Update	17-Apr-2023 The four completed interactive play equipment projects continue to be well used. Wilding initiatives are now established ongoing activities and we continue to work with CMS, local groups and residents to manage/expand these. There are no significant residual risks associated with this completed CDP project.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note

Installation of interactive play.	16-Sep-2022	Yes	Four projects completed/opened.
Wilding project.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	Associated works managed by CMS during 2022/23 and wilding initiatives now established ongoing activities.

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					

	Charnwood House	**Progress**	63%	**Due Date**	31-Mar-2024
Project Summary	Leasing the property as a Community Hub.				
Latest Update	14-Apr-2023 Council approved a budget to address the works required on site. We have engaged with a number of external agents regarding undertaking a light marketing exercise. We now expect this to commence by the end of June 2023 and it will last between 6 weeks-4 months. Depending on the range and number of responses, evaluation of the options is expected to take a further 4 months. A report on the preferred options will then be presented to Cabinet by the end of March 2024, prior to finalising arrangements i.e., negotiate Heads of Terms with selected tenant, seek further Cabinet decision, complete lease. Risk level still assessed as medium, although this could decrease, depending on the results of the marketing exercise and the tenant selected.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Exploration of options.	31-Mar-2022	Yes	Milestone specified in the approved Council Delivery Plan entered in error. Therefore, milestone completed and retained for audit purposes.
Market site (informally) for leasing as community hub, on non-committal basis.	29-Jul-2022	Yes	Meeting with interested parties held on 29 July 2022 to galvanise interest.
Asbestos removed and air testing completed.	12-Oct-2022	Yes	Completed.
Updated survey and costings for refurbishment works received.	08-Dec-2022	Yes	Completed.
Options report received.	11-Jan-2023	Yes	Completed.
Appraise options report and the remedial works/costings highlighted in the updated survey.	23-Feb-2023	Yes	Completed.
Council decision on project budget.	23-Feb-2023	Yes	Completed.
Undertake light marketing exercise.	30-Jun-2023	No	Propose to amend due date to 31 October 2023. Now expected to commence by the end of June 2023 and it will last between 6 weeks-4 months.
New Milestone - Following marketing exercise, evaluate options.	29-Feb-2024	No	
New Milestone - Present report to Cabinet on the preferred options.	31-Mar-2024	No	

When Cabinet report presented, finalise arrangements i.e., negotiate Heads of Terms with selected tenant, seek further Cabinet decision, complete lease.			31-Mar-2024	No	Due dates still to be confirmed, although likely to be in 2024/25. Will be split into individual milestones at the appropriate time.				
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	3					

	Museum Storage	**Progress**	20%	**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	25-Apr-2023 Following the provision of expert procurement advice, we appointed a contractor via the SCAPE framework to conduct an initial feasibility report on the project. This report was received in mid-April 2023. We are now awaiting a report relating to the options for including a commercial storage facility as part of the re-development, and this is expected by mid-May 2023. Therefore, we anticipate reviewing the findings of the feasibility and commercial reports, and reviewing the options with Accounts, by the end of June 2023. The results from these investigations will then be reported to Leadership Team, PLB and Cabinet to seek a decision on the preferred way forward and developing a detailed Business Case. As there remain many unknowns relating to if and how the project will proceed, the previously recorded milestones will be replaced with ones reflecting the steps to the first key decision point, with further milestones being added once there is more certainty regarding the actual project to be delivered. At this early stage, there remains uncertainty regarding viability and costs, and so the risk level is still assessed as medium.				

Milestone	**Due Date**	**Complete**	**Note**
New milestone - Appoint contractor to conduct an initial feasibility report on the project.	28-Feb-2023	Yes	
Delete previously recorded milestone - Finalise Business Case and specification, and seek approvals.	31-Mar-2023	No	To be replaced with new milestones for 2023 reflecting the steps to the first key decision point, in view of there being many unknowns relating to if and how the project will proceed.
New milestone - Receive initial feasibility report.	18-Apr-2023	Yes	
New milestone - Receive report on options for including a commercial storage facility as part of the re-development.	19-May-2023	No	
Delete previously recorded milestone - Agree the design and submit planning application along with seeking other required permissions.	30-Jun-2023	No	To be replaced with new milestones for 2023 reflecting the steps to the first key decision point, in view of there being many unknowns relating to if and how the project will proceed.
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 still currently anticipated that the clearance of the existing site will take place by the end of June 2023.
New milestone - Review findings of feasibility/commercial reports, including assessing finance options with Accounts.	30-Jun-2023	No	
New milestone - Report presented to Leadership Team, PLB and Cabinet seeking a decision on the preferred way forward.	31-Aug-2023	No	
New milestone - Develop further milestones to reflect Cabinet decision e.g., appoint Project	30-Sep-	No	

Manager/Quantity Surveyor, finalise Business Case and detailed specifications.			2023						
Delete previously recorded milestone - Move to construction phase will commence in 2023/24.			31-Oct-2023	No	To be replaced with new milestones for 2023 reflecting the steps to the first key decision point, in view of there being many unknowns relating to if and how the project will proceed.				
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**	75%	**Due Date**	31-May-2023
Project Summary	To support and consult on the Boundary Review.				
Latest Update	26-Apr-2023 LGBCE have delayed publication of their final recommendations, as these are contingent on them receiving legal advice, which they have not yet received. We are hopeful that the recommendations will now be published sometime in May 2023 (as indicated by the Commission), at which time, we will assess the associated implications and risks. Until this time, there are no further actions to take and all key milestones to achieve the submission to the Commission were met.				

Milestone	**Due Date**	**Complete**	**Note**
Provision of any additional information to LGBCE on warding patterns.	31-May-2022	Yes	
Consultation on warding patterns by LGBCE with Council, Political Groups and General Public.	18-Oct-2022	Yes	Consultation closed on 10 August 2022. NHC submission submitted on 21 July 2022. LGBCE met on 18 October 2022.
Consultation on draft recommendations with Council, Political Groups and General Public.	10-Jan-2023	Yes	NHC submitted its response to the LGBCE consultation on warding arrangements by the relevant closing date.
LGBCE publishes its final recommendation.	28-Mar-2023	No	Propose to change due date to 31 May 2023 to reflect LGBCE's revised timeframe for publishing the recommendations.

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. Review outcomes could lead to further challenge/review.		3	3	3					

	Shared Prosperity Fund	**Progress**	41%	**Due Date**	31-Mar-2024
Project	Deliver projects to support the aims of the Shared Prosperity Fund, as agreed with Government.				

Summary	
Latest Update	09-May-2023 Some spend in 2022/23 with plans in place to spend the remainder in 2023/24.

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Submit Investment Plan.	28-Jul-2022	Yes	Completed.
Work with Government on approval of Investment Plan.	31-Dec-2022	Yes	Completed.
Deliver projects: Continue community wealth fund.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	Partly completed in 2022/23. Some elements rolled forward to 2023/24 and milestone now replaced with new milestones for 2023/24.
Deliver projects: Recruit sports development officer. Deliver outdoor fitness classes and first set of new outdoor exercise equipment.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	Partly completed in 2022/23. Some elements rolled forward to 2023/24 and milestone now replaced with new milestones for 2023/24.
Deliver projects: Town Centre regeneration plans and initial activities.	31-Mar-2023	Yes	Partly completed in 2022/23. Some elements rolled forward to 2023/24 and milestone now replaced with new milestones for 2023/24.
New milestone - Approve BIDs (and other town centre stakeholder groups) plans for use of town centre improvement funding.	30-Jun-2023	No	
New milestone - Recruit fitness project manager, and commence fitness classes based on GP referrals.	30-Jun-2023	No	
New milestone - Installation of outdoor fitness equipment in Baldock.	31-Mar-2024	No	Milestone and related due date to be confirmed.
New milestone - Installation of outdoor fitness equipment in Hitchin.	31-Mar-2024	No	Milestone and related due date to be confirmed.
New milestone - Installation of outdoor fitness equipment in Letchworth.	31-Mar-2024	No	Milestone and related due date to be confirmed.
New milestone - Installation of outdoor fitness equipment in Royston.	31-Mar-2024	No	Milestone and related due date to be confirmed.
New milestone - Provide 2023/24 (and 2022/23 rolled forward) allocation of funding for town centre improvements.	31-Mar-2024	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 core Council activities. 2. Failure to spend the money by the end of the grant period. 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	44%	Due Date	31-Mar-2024
Project Summary	Identifying, consulting on, and delivering long-term regeneration of the shopping centre and surrounding areas.				
Latest Update	03-May-2023 Phase 1 public consultation completed in February 2023 and data analysed. Next key stage is procurement and appointment of consultant to develop a viable regeneration project aligned with the Council's vision and the findings of initial/further consultation exercises. Now plan to provide an overview of Phase 1 consultation findings once the consultant has been appointed and further work has been undertaken to identify key themes and develop our vision. Still intend to provide an in-person hub to provide the local community with an opportunity to engage with the Council throughout the project. However, this has been subject to delay due to issues securing the use of the previously identified location, and it is now expected to open in summer 2023. Further milestones to be added once the consultant has been appointed, and these will reflect the agreed work programme to drive the project forward. Risk level still assessed as high due to the level of uncertainty present at this early stage of the project.				

Milestone	Due Date	Complete	Note
Set up project board.	30-Sep-2022	Yes	Completed.
Produce project plan, including communications plan.	31-Oct-2022	Yes	Project plan in place and in line with NHC's Project Management Framework.
Report back to Council setting out short, medium and long-term approach with draft project plan.	31-Jan-2023	Yes	Completed.
Conduct public consultation (Phase 1).	28-Feb-2023	Yes	Phase 1 survey closed 5 February 2023 and data analysed with Zencity.
Open in-person project hub.	17-Mar-2023	No	In-person hub, providing the local community with an opportunity to engage with the Council throughout the project, now expected to open by 31 July 2023.
Sharing results, by releasing top level information to the community via Comms.	17-Mar-2023	No	Now plan to provide an overview of Phase 1 consultation findings once the consultant has been appointed and further work has been undertaken to identify key themes and develop our vision. Various communication channels to be used, as defined in the Comms Plan.Proposal to change due date to align with the opening of the in-person hub (31 July 2023).
New milestone - Project Board approve specification for consultant appointment.	31-May-2023	No	
New milestone - Procure and appoint consultant to develop viable regeneration project.	30-Jun-2023	No	
New milestone - Digital hub goes live.	31-Jul-2023	No	

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. The cost-of-living crisis is leading to Government providing targeted support to individuals/households, some of which requires our support to administer. The shortage of staff and other resources may affect our ability to respond, even if money is available. Significant difficulties in being able to recruit to roles in some key areas.		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			2,001,588	2,543,620

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Town Centre Recovery

Latest update

The Council is using the Shared Prosperity Fund to help the 4 towns develop and implement their recovery/improvement programmes on the back of the studies and evidence base of need developed under the Welcome Back Fund (completed and now approved by the Council). People and Places, who conducted the studies, are continuing work with Letchworth , Baldock and Royston stakeholders to develop strategy and implement the programmes and all towns' stakeholder groups are putting forward project proposals for funding over the next 3 years. Proposed projects range from improved visitor websites to new planters and pigeon deterrent measure to event equipment and training.

We are also using a Herts Growth Board Towns programme to commission a study in Baldock on the feasibility and set up of a Trade Association of town Centre Businesses both to pull together a group to speak for business, be in a position to receive funding and to work with others on integrating the new Baldock residential developments into the Town.

History of the project

27 Jun 2022
The completion of an Economic Recovery Study for the four towns is still ongoing by the consultants. The report is now expected to be received by the end of July 2022. Any actions being taken forward will be subject to Cabinet approval and will be linked to the review of town centre strategies. There remains uncertainty regarding the resources that will be available to implement actions and we continue to investigate various funding options e.g., Shared Prosperity Fund. The Royston Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) has been completed and the trial period runs to July 2023. Work continues on the development of the Hitchin ETRO and the related permit scheme administration/implementation.

27 Jul 2022
Economic Recovery strategies ongoing and now expected by end of July 2022. To link to review of Town Centre strategies and will depend on available resources. Royston ETRO has been completed and the trial period runs to July 2023. Work continues on the development of the Hitchin ETRO and the related permit scheme administration/implementation.

21 Sep 2022
There has been a further delay in completing the draft recovery plans, which are now expected by end of December 2022. Extra promotion was required for the community and business engagement questionnaires, which delayed analysing the surveys and subsequent preparation of the draft recovery plans. The consultant also contributed to the preparation of our business plan for the Shared Prosperity Fund.

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.

13 Feb 2023
Key stakeholders are reviewing the draft recovery plans. No formal responses received so far. Now expect plans to be finalised by the end of March 2023. Work with Hitchin BID to finalise the draft permit scheme agreement is on track and still expected to happen by March 2023. HCC are continuing discussions regarding the Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders for Hitchin and Royston, and both are expected to be made permanent by the end of the trial periods (July 2023). Project Boards continue to monitor and review both schemes.

26 Apr 2023
Recovery plans for the four towns now agreed by the Executive Members for Enterprise and Planning. New milestones to be introduced for 2023/24 to reflect key activities we are taking to enable stakeholders to progress delivery of the plans. The studies will inform preparation of an overarching

Town Centre Strategy and associated masterplans for each town. Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders for Hitchin and Royston are still both expected to be made permanent by the end of the trial periods (July 2023), with Project Boards providing oversight. Both related milestones are therefore aligned with this timeframe. Risk level remains low, although this is dependent on successfully taking forward plans and delivering identified improvements to our town centres.

Tourism Strategy

Latest Update

The Tourism Strategy project will no longer be progressed in its current form and will be absorbed into an overarching Enterprise Strategy to include Commerical, Economic Development and Tourism, due to the inter-related aims of each. This will ensure the best use of available resources within the Enterprise Team. The project will be monitored within the 23-24 Council Delivery Plan.

History of the Project

03 Feb 2023
Project has slipped due to resources available within the Enterprise team. Development of a Tourism 'work stream' will now be progressed under an overarching Enterprise Strategy, incorporating Commercial, Economic Development and Tourism. This will be completed in 2023, with details of milestones/timings included as a new project in the 2023/24 Council Delivery Plan.

18 Aug 2022
We will now appoint consultants by the end of October 2022 and still expect to have a Strategy in place by end of year.

05 Jul 2022
Following approval by PLB in June 2022, the Commercial team is now in a position to progress the development of a Tourism Strategy. Although approval of the Strategy is still expected to be achieved by the end of March 2023, the timing of the required steps leading up to this (including appointing consultants) is still to be determined. Although we are in the early stages, the risk level remains low, as we still expect to have an approved Strategy in place by the end of 2022/23.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
20th June 2023

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: Waste Shared Service: Client team and Corporate Support Arrangements

REPORT OF: *Shared Service Manager – Chloe Hipwood*

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: *Cllr Amy Allen – Executive Member for Recycling and Waste Management*

COUNCIL PRIORITY: PEOPLE FIRST / A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report is based on outcomes from the Member lead joint working group between East Herts Council (EHC) and North Herts Council (NHDC) and workshops held for senior managers. It identifies the approach considered necessary to corporate support arrangements affecting the waste contract administration and management. The key drivers for the changes are to enhance the customer experience in line with transformation programmes by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of processes to support this. The report follows on from previous reports provided to overview and scrutiny and the Executive regarding the future management of waste.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. To recommend to Cabinet that each Council leads on their own customer service provision with one set of processes for customer interactions being developed and agreed with a focus on resolution at the first point of contact.

2.2. To note the draft timeline for the transition for customer service provision outlined in 8.7

2.3. To recommend to Cabinet to agree to the proposed updates and changes to financial management and governance arrangements and subsequent necessary changes to the Inter Authority Agreement outlined in Section 8.

2.4. To recommend to Cabinet to agree the updated waste service policy statements contained in Appendix 2 to come into force from May 2025.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the shared waste service.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1. For customer services a joint customer service centre for waste was considered with one of the two authorities administering this on behalf of the other. This was discounted due to complications with income management and to ensure that residents in EHC can experience a seamless customer journey through the Granicus CRM system. Details of the advantages and disadvantages of differing approaches are identified in Appendix 4.

4.2. For digital services a lead authority approach was considered but this was discounted due to the recommendation to keep customer services separate and as a consequence integration with both councils' CRM systems will be required.

4.3. For financial management the management of both income and expenditure by NHDC was considered but this was discounted due to additional auditing requirements for VAT.

4.4. For legal services procuring external support on an ongoing basis was consider but this was discounted as cost prohibitive.

4.5. A joint waste committee was considered however was discounted as unnecessary at this stage as service alignment has already been agreed.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1 A joint cross-party working group was established to consider the future service design. The terms of reference for the working group can be found in Appendix 1. Elected Members attended a series of workshops over two months looking at all aspects of the service design and consideration of corporate support arrangements.

5.2 With the recommendations contained in this report being internally focused (and not public facing) to ensure an effective management solution for the shared waste service; it is not anticipated that residents will be negatively affected and therefore a public consultation is not considered necessary.

5.3 A report outlining the options appraisals which had been completed when considering solutions for the future was presented to the Waste Partnership Board on 26 April 2023 where the recommendations were considered.

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 26 May 2023.

7. BACKGROUND

7.1 East Herts Council (EHC) and North Herts Council (NHDC) entered into a Shared Service arrangement in 2017 and a joint contract was let beginning in May 2018.

7.2 A Councillor led Joint Partnership Board for waste meets twice per year and monitors the performance of the contract.

7.3 The service comprises a ‘client’ management structure located at the Buntingford Depot and two operational hubs comprising separate management teams and separate workforces for East and North Herts Councils.

7.4 The current contract covers the requirements for the collection of waste and recycling from approximately 124,000 households and over 1920 commercial customers as well as street cleansing services across East and North Hertfordshire.

7.5 In 2014 the Councils agreed to progress from a Strategic Outline Case to an Outline Business Case for the shared service specifically exploring potential additional savings in joint contracts, savings in client overheads including depot costs, governance and management proposals and jointly agreed policies to form the basis of a joint specification.

7.6 The shared service has been in operation since 2018 and has successfully rolled out service changes for both authorities. The client team have worked to align processes and systems to ensure that the customer experience is broadly similar regardless of in which district a resident lives. The new contract which will mobilise for May 2025 will ensure further consistency between the authorities.

7.7 The shared service client team and corporate support arrangements operate under an Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) which sets out the partnership arrangements which exist for and between the two authorities. In addition for the current contract procurement a Collaboration Agreement has been put in place to provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities in relation to the procurement and demonstrate the commitment to the procurement partnership.

7.8 At the respective East Herts Executive and North Herts Cabinet meetings on 19th April 2022 and 22nd March 2022 a new aim and principles for the shared service were agreed focusing on efficient services which are environmentally and financially sustainable. The aim and principles are attached in Appendix 1.

7.9 A report to the respective Executive/Cabinet meetings on 25th October 2022 also identified a need to provide additional detail regarding corporate support arrangements in a supplementary report.

7.10 To improve the services opportunity for operational efficiencies a number of options have been considered. If the service is aligned across both authorities the client team administration and management of the contract is more efficient providing capacity to improve the customer experience and engagement.

7.11 It has been necessary to review the working practice of the client team and support services to ensure the shared service can operate as efficiently as possible and meet the principles agreed by Executive and Cabinet.

<u>Resources and Waste Strategy</u>

7.12 In December 2018 the government released its Resources and Waste Strategy. There have subsequently been a number of government consultations linked to this strategy. The industry is currently waiting for guidance to support the outcomes of these consultations and the full details of subsequent policy and legislative updates.

7.13 The Resources and Waste Strategy is expected to significantly change the way council's waste collection services are managed and funded. The final strategy launch has been delayed following the pandemic and specific details and timescales for some elements of the implementation are yet to be determined. However it is expected that additional administrative burdens will be placed on councils to demonstrate 'efficient and effective; services in order to receive funding.

7.14 The drafted policy documents in Appendix 2 aim to support the principles of waste reduction and provide clarity to residents using the services. Should the outcomes and finalised guidance differ from our service design it may be necessary to further refine the policy statements.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

Customer Services

8.1. Customer service at each council is currently delivered under different models, with differing administrative responsibilities, processes and key performance indicators (KPIs). EHC manage contacts related to waste and street cleansing services in-house as part of a corporate customer service team. At NHDC contacts are managed by the current collection contractor with a small proportion of contacts also being handled by the corporate team.

8.2. At the joint cross party member workshops, members explored options regarding the provision of customer services. Advantages and disadvantages were identified for both a council led customer service solution and an out-sourced customer service solution. In addition, indicative costs were provided for these. The preference from the working group was for a joint council led customer service solution as it was felt this fits better with aspirations around an improved customer journey. At Cabinet on 25th October 2022 it was agreed to have customer services delivered in house.

8.3. The customer services and call handling functions have consequently not been included in the specification of the next waste contract and it is therefore necessary to develop the structure for this support service from 2025.

8.4. Subsequent work has been undertaken with senior managers at both authorities to consider the viability of a joint customer service provision and this has resulted in a recommendation to Cabinet to keep the customer service functions separate, but delivered in-house by both councils.

8.5. Some potential benefits of separate customer service provision are identified below:-

a. Knowledge of all council related processes and can therefore advise on other queries as a single point of contact
b. Greater resilience from a larger staff pool for each council.
c. Monthly quality monitoring in line with other in-house customer service provision at each council.
d. Training in line and consistent with each councils core values and objectives

e. Increased transparency for each authority over contact types and complaint logging
f. Increased transparency for each council on reasons for call handling performance e.g. staff resources, large contact volumes from other services.
g. Direct control for each council over phone lines, Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and email auto replies.
h. Direct control and monitoring of online self-serve contacts (see section 8.8)
i. Able to make effective use of council Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems.
j. Service efficiencies (cost savings) can be realised more easily from individual council transformation programmes.
k. Direct control over payments to the councils and therefore no additional VAT auditing implications.

8.6. The waste client team will lead on a review of all processes to ensure consistency of services between each authority and to its residents, these processes will be aligned to support the application of the policy statements attached in Appendix 2.

8.7. It is proposed to transition the North Herts customer service function in advance of the contract change in order for staff to be trained and settled into the customer service prior to contract and service changes in 2025. An indicative timeline is below.

Negotiations begin with incumbent contractor	– Spring 2024
Consultation begins with staff	- Summer 2024
Consultation outcomes and finalisation of proposals	- Autumn 2024
TUPE transfer of staff	- Early 2025

<u>Digital Services</u>

8.8. The council has aspirations to deliver more automation with online reporting functionality and therefore this report should be considered in conjunction with the wider corporate aims and objectives around digital transformation.

8.9. A number of services are already available online with full integration with back office systems including:

- Reporting missed bin collections (approximately 55% recorded online)
- Subscribing to garden waste services (over 80% online)
- New and replacement bin requests
- Collection day look up

This means that there is almost no human intervention necessary from either customer service agents nor the client team in order for the service to be delivered.

8.10. There are a number of other services which can be reported online, however these webforms result in an email being sent either to customer service teams or the client

team and therefore are not currently fully integrated, requiring additional administration to enter into back office systems and no immediate feedback is available to residents.

8.11. All current fully integrated online services are provided as part of the current waste contract. These online facilities will cease to function at the end of April 2025 and a new alternative solution is required to provide a seamless transition for residents.

8.12. Work has been undertaken to scope the requirements for digital service integration prior to the contract start in May 2025 and details can be found in Appendix 3. The majority of this work will take place in 2024 and early 2025 to ensure sufficient time to test systems prior to contract start.

8.13. Until a preferred bidder is chosen, which, based on the current timeline will be in early 2024 it is not possible to fully estimate the time and staff resource required to undertake the necessary integration.

8.14. Colleagues from IT departments and customer services will be involved in the dialogue with bidders to gage the extent of the work required.

8.15. Once processes have been fully mapped time and resource estimates will be developed to determine the extent of any digital transformation work required in order to provide automated self-serve options for residents for all high contact waste and street cleansing services.

8.16. It is expected that estimated costs will be available for budget workshops in October 2023.

Financial Management

8.17. Financial management is delivered separately for and by each authority creating a level of duplication, differing burdens and requirements for the client team. There is also a level of inconsistency in functionality i.e. NHDC can provide direct debits whilst currently EHC cannot, NHDC debtors processes are automated, while the EHC process is not.

8.18. Much of the financial management for the shared service is unaffected by the contractual provisions, however the incumbent contractor currently take payment on behalf of both East Herts and North Herts for garden waste subscriptions and bulky waste collections on behalf of North Herts. This financial management service will not be provided in the next contract as it is directly linked to the decision to provide customer services in house and therefore alternative provision needs to be made for direct debits, online payments and telephone payments in advance of 2025.

8.19. Each Council will independently manage income from chargeable services and although this does not reduce the duplication of work by the shared client team in this area it does provide a reduced auditing burden for each authority.

8.20. For NHDC this functionality broadly already exists, but it is not yet possible to transition these services due to the council procuring a new payment system and financial management system (FMS) and needing to align with this timeline. New setups and testing would still be necessary, as well as online integration for self-serve by residents. It is anticipated that this can begin after April 2024.

8.21. Subject to successful procurements it is anticipated that NHDC will transition garden waste direct debits (circa 21000) and payments (circa 8000) during 2024 in advance of the next subscription year in April 2025.

8.22. For EHC the delivery of direct debits and automated debt management processes are anticipated to be delivered by November 2023 and with necessary user testing it is anticipated that direct debits for garden waste (circa 25,000 for EHC) could be migrated to in-house systems by February 2024 in time for the next subscription year.

8.23. The move to in-house income management for garden waste is also dependent on successful integration with the existing garden waste portals and any subsequent re-procurement of these systems for each authority.

8.24. It is expected that a new contract will mean that both Councils will have the same contract costs for the servicing of garden waste collections. During the joint cross-party Member working groups options for aligning the garden waste service were explored. Members recommended that we should seek to therefore have an aligned price for garden waste as we currently do for bulky waste and commercial waste collections which have the same contract costs.

8.25. At the Executive/Cabinet on 25th October 2022 the principle of aligning the charge for the two authorities was therefore approved.

8.26. NHDC has recently agreed to bring the NHDC charge for garden waste to £49 to match EHC and align the start date of the service to 1st April. The price increase will cover an extended subscription year for residents which will provide a cost saving to them in the first year. Each Council wishes to retain income receipts and therefore at this stage the use of one portal for both authorities is not proposed, but will be explored as an option when the portal provision is reprocured.

8.27. As a consequence of this alignment it is proposed that a mechanism for agreeing the garden waste charges be written into the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA). This will be based on the principle of cost recovery which is aligned to the agreed shared service principle of financial sustainability for the services.

8.28. As NHDC are the current lead authority for the shared service it is proposed that this arrangement continues to prevent the need for staff to TUPE. It is therefore also proposed that NHDC lead on the financial management of expenditure for the shared service as this would reduce the client teams need to duplicate financial management work and detail will be written into the IAA to identify auditing and governance of financial

management. This will ensure some reduced administration and duplication of work for the shared service yet still provide EHC with all necessary information for audit purposes.

8.29. In addition, NHDC will commit to providing a summary of contract spend, on behalf of both authorities, to the Partnership Board.

Communications and Marketing

8.30. Communications and marketing is delivered separately by each authority creating some inconsistencies in relation to corporate prioritisation of waste messages. The NHDC corporate service in terms of officer resource, is larger than EHC, therefore there is potential benefit in aligning some aspects of comms.

8.31. The service changes will require a significant focus on comms with a need for additional resource to deliver more targeted campaign work. A new dedicated Waste Communications Officer post was identified and agreed at Executive and Cabinet on 25th October 2022 and this role will focus on non-corporate communications, such as targeted communications in relation to specific campaigns, targeted local communications in relation to low performing areas and the capture of certain materials in the recycling streams. This will also include working with local schools and community groups for face-to-face communications.

8.32. It is proposed to keep customer facing generic service related comms separate but NHDC to lead on design in consultation with EHC. There will be a continued regular liaison between the two communications teams to ensure messages are aligned and a protocol will be developed with regards press releases and media enquiries and cemented in the IAA.

Legal Services

8.33. Both authorities have ongoing recruitment challenges in relation to contract and procurement lawyers. The current procurement is therefore being delivered via an external provider. As a temporary solution this has been beneficial, but it is not sustainable in the long term due to the significant financial costs of external legal support. A decision is needed on how to proceed with legal advice moving forward in relation to the client relationship with the contractor. Each Council would continue to be expected to seek their own advice on any matters relating to the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) or working relationship between the two authorities.

8.34. At this stage it is not possible to determine if either council will be able to recruit a permanent contract lawyer to support the services. It is therefore proposed that support for the shared service and waste contract will be considered at the point of need by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services /Service Director Legal and Community, who will agree a lead authority for each project based on available resource. Where no resource is available at either authority, external support shall be sought and procured by legal services on behalf of both authorities.

8.35. In relation to property matters each council will lead on their own properties in relation to the drafting and execution of any lease. It is however expected that property services/ estates teams will align the leases for Buntingford and Letchworth Depot (subject to the successful assignment for the current lease from Urbaser) as far as is reasonably practicable.

8.36. Work is ongoing to complete the heads of terms for the leases but it is anticipated that more facilities management responsibilities will pass to the waste contractor. This is to ensure that the responsibilities for health and safety on site (which sit with the waste contractor) can be controlled more effectively and consistently across both depot sites. It is proposed that any remaining depot facilities management functions will be provided by EHC on behalf of both authorities.

Governance

8.37. Historically, some decisions have been taken independently by each authority such as the implementation of a chargeable garden waste service. Given the commitment from both authorities to align services and create effective and efficient administrative processes as a result, it is necessary to review the governance arrangements. The options for governance are:

- Retain model of partnership board and update the IAA
- Delete the partnership board and introduce a formal Joint waste committee
- Amendments to constitution and delegated decision making for officers to facilitate partnership arrangements with oversight by Partnership Board

8.38. It is proposed to retain the partnership board in its current format with some minor changes to the IAA to ensure decision making between the two authorities are aligned. The IAA will be strengthened to provide clarity on decision making processes and the consequences of unaligned decision making which has a financial burden on either authority.

8.39. The key aims and principles of the IAA will include:

a) working in harmony to ensure decisions are aligned for effective and efficient running of the service to residents and customers
b) achieving consensus between both authorities on recommendations for the Executive/Cabinet/Council or other delegated authority to officers
c) sharing of information in a way that supports effective collaboration between the two authorities
d) resolving any difficulties openly, quickly and honestly, before any such issues have a negative impact on the operation of the service or collaborative working
e) providing information to each other that will (or could) impact each authority negatively

8.40. An invitation will be extended to attend partnership board (as and when required) to the Executive/Cabinet members for finance in each authority when there is a recommendation relating to financial implications.

8.41. Ensure there is a dispute resolution process in place with both Heads of Paid services should consensus or agreement not be achieved.

Policy Statements

8.42. Policy statements for the current waste and street cleansing services were agreed by both Councils at the meetings of Cabinet and Executive on 25th October 2022 and are considered fit for purpose. However minor updates will be required to support the transition to extended frequency residual waste collections by supporting increased recycling. The new proposed policy statements are included in Appendix 2.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1. *TBC*

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 In general, it is expected that the ongoing costs of these proposals will be in line with existing costs, although there will be costs that are currently paid for within the waste contract (e.g. customer service costs and transaction processing costs) that move to being directly funded by the Council. There are likely to be some transition costs, which are difficult to estimate at this stage. It may be possible for these to be funded from the waste reserve, although that will depend on other calls on that funding source. The situation in relation to Digital Services is more uncertain, as a review of current and proposed processes will need to be carried out to determine the extent to which process automation can be achieved. Process automation may result in a change from staffing costs to IT costs.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There is a risk that each Council may progress with digital online self-serve at different speeds and that full integration may not be ready by 2025. This is being mitigated by early communication between all stakeholders.

11.2 There is a risk that integrated online self-serve will be cost prohibitive which would put additional pressure on the customer service teams.

11.3 There is a risk that the councils will have insufficient resources in corporate support services such as IT and finance to support the changes necessary for 2025. This is being mitigated by early communication between all stakeholders. Additional consultancy support is being consider for IT.

11.4 There is a risk that the two garden waste portals will not be integrated into the financial management systems at each authority in time for the next subscription year and that income will not come direct to the councils. This risk is mitigated by the option to use a direct debit bureau in a similar way to how Urbaser do currently.

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 With an increased push towards digital services there is a risk of digital exclusion for some residents. However, one of the primary focuses of the digitisation project is to ensure that phone lines are available for customers who are not able or confident enough to use online services.

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 Additional pressure will be put on existing staff to develop new processes and systems. No additional resource is proposed and this is linked to the risk identified in 11.3.

16. APPENDICES

16.1 Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference for Joint Working Group and Aims and Principles of the Shared Waste Service
Appendix 2 – Proposed Waste Policy Documents for 2025
Appendix 3 – Scoping work for Digital IT integration work
Appendix 4 – Details of options appraisals presented to Partnership Board

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

17.1 *Chloe Hipwood, Shared Service Manager – Waste Management chloe.hipwood@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4304*

18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1 Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 22nd March, 2022, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council (north-herts.gov.uk)

Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 25th October, 2022, 6.00 pm | North Herts Council (north-herts.gov.uk)

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Terms of Reference – Waste Cross Party Joint Working Group

1. Identify the core aims and priorities in terms of service performance, identifying our current performance levels and how these are benchmarked, considering the long-term objectives of both Councils.
2. Consider the impending changes to legislation, including environmental and financial pressures. Reviewing the current service design in relation to these factors.
3. Identify best practice and where opportunities may exist to transition towards best practice where this is both financially and environmentally sustainable.
4. Seek to achieve consensus and greater consistency of services endeavouring to benefit from greater stability and efficiencies from a common contract.
5. Identify opportunities for financial efficiencies and cost reduction in service design and delivery.
6. Consider and identify the optimal long term service design options for the Councils and how these will deliver the Councils objectives and aims and principles of the shared service.
7. Specifically, the working group will focus on:
    a. Customer Services
    b. Street Cleansing Non-Core Services
    c. Street Cleansing Core Services
    d. Waste & Recycling Non-Core Services e.g. textiles collections
    e. Waste and Recycling Core Services
    f. Chargeable Garden Waste Collections
    g. Chargeable Waste & Recycling Services

East Herts Council Priorities

- **Sustainability at the heart of everything we do**
    - We will make changes to how the council manages its own premises, people and services
    - We will use our regulatory powers to promote action by others
    - We will influence and encourage others to be more environmentally sustainable
- **Enabling our communities**
    - We will invest in our places
    - We will ensure all voices in the community are heard
    - We will support our vulnerable residents
- **Encouraging economic growth**
    - We will develop new sources of income
    - We will support business growth
    - We will create viable places
- **Digital by Design**
    - We will improve the customer experience for those who use council services
    - We will work with partners to ensure our communities are digitally enabled

North Herts Council Priorities

- **People First** - People make North Herts work. We value all our residents, businesses, staff, contractors, councillors, and other partners, and place them at the heart of everything we do.
- **Sustainability** - We recognise the challenges our towns and district face and are committed to delivering services which are relevant and sustainable. In doing so we will place our environmental responsibilities, as well as sound financial planning, at the centre of our policy making.
- **A brighter future together** - We are far-sighted and plan for the long term to secure the best outcomes for our people, towns and villages, and the local economy, ensuring North Herts continues to thrive.

Waste Shared Service Aim

Delivering high quality and well performing services which are both financially and environmentally sustainable.

Waste Shared Service Principles

a. Maintain and/or improve service standards through efficient working.
b. Achieve service improvements, greater resilience, efficiencies, cost reductions or better performance through service alignment
c. Deliver service changes aligned with the government's Resources and Waste Strategy which demonstrate a net environmental benefit
d. Work in partnership with contractors to develop and evolve a carbon management plan identifying how operations can deliver year on year carbon savings and move towards services with net zero carbon emissions.
e. Improve efficiencies and enhance the offering for chargeable waste and recycling services and explore commercial opportunities
f. Work in partnership with contractors to explore new opportunities to reduce costs and ensure the delivery of financially sustainable services
g. Providing residents and customers with improved and enhanced online self-serve opportunities delivering any service changes with this in mind
h. Work in partnership with contractors to improve and modernise working practices and make our services an attractive place to work
i. Work with the Herts Waste Partnership and other partners to share knowledge, best practice, reduce waste and embed circular economy principles in service delivery.

WASTE & RECYCLING COLLECTION & STREET CLEANSING POLICY STATEMENTS

POLICY DESCRIPTION **PAGE**

Domestic Waste Collection Service Policy Statements

1. Standard service for individual houses
2. Variations from the standard service
3. Multi-occupancy properties (flats blocks etc.)
4. Mixed Domestic / Commercial properties (Mixed hereditament properties)
5. Number of sacks provided
6. Extra bin capacity
7. Items prohibited from domestic wheeled bins / sacks
8. Excess waste/ side waste
9. Bin lids
10. Rejected/ contaminated wheeled bins and sacks
11. Collection day and time
12. Collection point for wheeled bins/ sacks
13. Return of bins
14. Missed collections
15. Assisted collections
16. Frozen compostable waste bins
17. Overweight wheeled bins and sacks
18. Ownership of wheeled bins/sacks
19. Provision of new / replacement wheeled bins
20. Lost or stolen wheeled bins
21. Damaged wheeled bins
22. Sharing wheeled bins
23. Severe weather
24. Access issues
25. Healthcare and Clinical waste
26. Bulky waste collections

Trade Waste Collection Service Policy Statements

27. Trade refuse and recycling collection material streams
28. Trade refuse and recycling collection bin sizes

Street Cleansing Policy Statements

29. Standard of Service
30. Response times
31. Leaf clearance
32. High speed roads
33. Street Cleansing Town centres
34. Litter Bins
35. Winter snow clearance

36. Events and street parties
37. Graffiti and fly-poster removal

DOMESTIC WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE POLICY STATEMENTS

Policy 1 - Standard service for individual houses

The standard service for the collection of residual domestic waste is a three weekly service. Mixed dry recycling and paper will be collected fortnightly, in separate containers. Food waste is collected separately, weekly. Each property on the standard service will receive only one bin of each type.

Residents also have the option of paying for a fortnightly collection of garden waste. This collection will occur during the same week as the recycling is collected. Each household can pay a subscription charge for a maximum of two additional bins for garden waste.

Each Council has historical bin colours; the list below represents the standard service for new houses and the colour of any replacement bins.

The bins provided are as follows:

Container	Material	Frequency
180L purple lidded with grey body bin (replacements purple lidded)	Residual waste (waste which cannot be recycled)	Three Weekly
240L blue lidded with grey body bin	Mixed dry recycling*	Fortnightly
55 L blue box	Paper	Fortnightly
23L brown caddy	Food waste *	Weekly
240L brown lidded bin (chargeable opt in service)	Garden waste*	Fortnightly

*As defined by our current acceptance criteria stated on our website

The correct bin must be used for the different types of waste. Exemptions to the standard service may be made subject to certain criteria (see Policy 2). Where a property is provided with the standard service, only waste presented in wheeled bins provided by the Council will be collected with the exceptions under Policy 8.

Policy 2 – Variations from the standard service

To qualify for an exemption from the standard service you must meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. There is no reasonable rear or side access to the property and the useable off street frontage is too small to accommodate the bins (see Policy 5)
2. The property is accessed via steep inclines or steps, so making it impractical to use wheeled bins (see Policy 5)
3. The property is a flat (see Policy 3)
4. The household is a House in Multiple Occupation or has a large number of residents eg. Student house. (see Policy 6)

5. The household/s are disabled or elderly and cannot manoeuvre wheeled bins. (see Policy 15)
6. The household produces clinical waste (see Policy 25)
7. The household produces large quantities of hygiene waste, e.g. nappies or incontinence pads (see Policy 6 and Policy 25)
8. Any other exceptional circumstance as agreed by the council

Policy 3 - Multi-occupancy properties (Communal/ flat blocks etc.)

Properties such as flats or accommodation blocks will normally be collected using communal wheeled bins wherever possible. The number of bins provided will depend on the size and number of properties.

Where bins cannot be provided, for example flats above shops, sacks for residual waste will be provided for use and boxes will be provided for dry recycling. Residents will be provided with the quantities of sacks as detailed in Policy 5.

Bins will be collected from the bin storage or other area as agreed by the Council and returned to the collection location. The standard collection cycle is fortnightly, however weekly collections for residual waste will be facilitated for some existing flat blocks where bin storage space is insufficient.

Only waste which is presented in the correct containers with the correct items in will be collected. For multi-occupancy properties, where the bin is found to contain incorrect items, it will be rejected and not emptied.

It will be the responsibility of the residents / managing agents to arrange for the incorrect materials to be removed before the bin will be emptied on the next scheduled collection day. The Council may offer to empty the bins at it's discretion alongside the scheduled residual waste collection. Repeated incidents will result in charging for the emptying of contaminated bins. Only items detailed as acceptable items on our website will be collected.

No loose rubbish or sacks around the bins will be collected nor any other items; and it is the responsibility of the residents / managing agents to remove or clear any such items.

Where access to a bin is blocked with loose rubbish / sacks / flytipping it will not be emptied until this has been removed. The bin will then be collected on the next scheduled collection day.

Policy 4 – Mixed Domestic / Commercial Properties (Mixed hereditament properties)

Mixed hereditament properties are generally business properties with living accommodation attached e.g. a flat above a shop. Such properties will be provided with the standard service (Policy 1) unless an exemption/variation applies. The bins provided must not be used to dispose of business waste. Household bins containing commercial shall not be emptied.

Policy 5 - Number of sacks provided

If the property meets either Criteria 1 or 2 from Policy 2 the property will be provided with sacks for the collection of residual waste and a box for the collection of mixed dry recycling, a box for the collection of paper and a 23l caddy for food wasteNHDC.

Sacks are delivered annually. Sacks are predominantly collected fortnightly and a maximum of 4 sacks will be collected unless an exemption within Policy 6 applies.

In some circumstances flats will receive weekly residual waste collections. Properties must demonstrate they are adequately using recycling services to be considered for weekly residual waste collections.

Policy 6 – Extra bin capacity

All households will be provided with bins in accordance with the standard service. Residents can apply for additional capacity for residual waste under the following circumstances.

1. There are six or more permanent residents in the household
2. There are two or more children in nappies
3. A household where a large quantity of non-clinical healthcare (hygiene) waste is being produced

All households that request additional capacity will need to meet one or more of the set criteria. If the application is under Criterion 1 or 2 above, a five-week diary shall be completed by the household, to ensure items are correctly being separated for recycling and a waste audit may then be carried out to determine whether additional capacity is necessary. This is to ensure that households are recycling all that they can.

Capacity requirements are reviewed periodically (usually annually) and additional bins are provided on a conditional basis. Households will revert back to the standard service when the criteria no longer applies.

If additional capacity is authorised due to Criteria 2 above then there must be two or more children in nappies under the age of 36 months

Under Criteria 1: If a household is placing out a significant amount of extra recycling each collection, they may be considered for a larger recycling bin or second recycling bin at the Councils discretion.

Extra capacity provision under Criteria 3 is subject to a referral from a healthcare provider.

Policy 7 - Items prohibited from domestic wheeled bins / sacks

The following items are prohibited from all bins, this list is not exhaustive:-

- Any hazardous waste or chemicals
- Any clinical waste
- Paint/ Pesticides or chemicals
- DIY waste
- Plasterboard
- Electrical and electronic equipment
- Commercial waste
- Industrial waste
- Large or bulky waste which does not normally fit into a bin.(see Policy 26)
- Hot ashes
- Car parts
- Rubble / soil

- Corrosive materials and liquids
- Oil
- Fluorescent tubes / low energy light bulbs

An A-Z of recycling is provided on our website for information on what can be recycled at the kerbside and items which can be recycled at Household Waste Recycling Centres.

Policy 8 – Excess waste / Side waste

Excess residual waste beside or piled on top of the residual domestic wheeled bin will not be taken. Where possible excess waste will be placed back inside the bin after it has been emptied, a sticker informing the resident may also be left. Persistent excess residual waste may result in a letter being sent or an officer visit to advise on the management of waste. Excess waste can be taken to the nearest Household Waste Recycling Centre alternatively the resident can pay for a bulky waste collection see Policy 26.
Where bins have been forcibly compacted or are frozen and the contents is stuck in the bin, residents are required to loosen the contents. The bin will then be collected on the next scheduled collection day. No return will be made under Policy 14.

Excess waste will not be collected with brown bins with the exception of real Christmas trees, which should be left next to the brown bin in January following the Christmas service suspension. This is for residents who have signed up to the chargeable garden waste service only.

Additional dry recycling materials for the mixed dry recycling bin will be collected as long as these are contained in a paper bag, cardboard box or reusable plastic box. Non-recyclable containers will be left after collection. Large item such as cardboard from large electrical goods must be broken down to facilitate collection. Excess recyclable material will not be collected if presented in a black or other type of plastic sack.

Excess paper can be placed next to the box in a paper bag or reusable plastic box.

Policy 9 – Bin Lids

Wheeled bins will only be collected if the bin lid is closed otherwise it will not be emptied. This is due to Health and Safety considerations and to limit the potential for waste to fall or blow out of the bin. See Policy 8 for the management of additional waste.

Policy 10 - Rejected / contaminated wheeled bins, boxes and sacks

Where wheeled bins are found to be contaminated, residents may be notified by means of a sticker or hanger placed on the relevant bin requiring them to remove the incorrect material and dispose of it in a responsible manner. Boxes and sacks will have a sticker placed on them if possible. Once the incorrect material has been removed from the bin or box they will be collected on the next scheduled collection date for that material. We will not return to empty the bin, box or collect the sack before the next scheduled collection date.

For communal properties it is the responsibility of managing agents to resolve issues of contamination in bins. The Council may, at its discretion, offer a chargeable service for this.

Policy 11 - Collection day & time

The bins/sacks/boxes must be available at the collection point by 6.30am on the day of collection for all residents.

During periods of high temperatures in the summer months, collections may begin at 6am following notification via social media.

Policy 12 - Collection point for wheeled bins / sacks

Receptacles should be presented at the kerbside. Where this is not possible due to wheeled bins blocking footpaths they should be presented at the edge of the property, where the property meets the public highway. If properties are located down a private driveway/road then the bins must be presented where the private access road / driveway meets the public highway.

In a small number of cases e.g farms, due to the access or location of a property it may not be possible for residents to place bins near the public highway for collection. Each case will be looked at on an individual basis to agree a suitable collection point as close as possible to a vehicle access point on the highway.

Where the collection vehicle has to travel over a private / road drive we will not be liable for any damage due to wear and tear to the road surface from normal collection operations as the roadway is unlikely to have been built to sufficient highway standards.

Policy 13 - Return of bins

Bins will be returned to the collection point where possible or another safe place within a reasonable distance to the property and should be removed by the householder as soon as reasonably/practicable after the collection has been made. Bins should not be left obstructing driveways or the public footpath.

Where a bin store has been provided the bins will be returned to the bin store.

Policy 14 - Missed collections

We will only return for a reported missed collection in the following circumstances

- The bin, box or sack was placed out before 6.30am
- The correct collection point was used, and;
- It has not been reported as contaminated or containing prohibited waste by collection crew;
- A crew report has not been received regarding the bin e.g. heavy, excessive waste
- In the case of assisted collections (see Policy 15) there were no access issues e.g. gate unlocked

A missed collection must be reported within 48 hours of your normal scheduled day of collection. Any missed collections reported after this time will not be collected until the next scheduled collection day.

In –cab crew reports will be used to determine whether a return will be made and vehicle CCTV may be used where reports are of a recurring nature.

Policy 15 - Assisted collections

Assisted collections are available to anyone with a mobility problem where no-one in the household is able to take the bins to the normal collection point (see Policy 12).

The collection team will collect the waste or recycling from its agreed 'normal storage point', empty the container and return it back to the householder's storage point.

Where bins/boxes/sacks are placed out for collection at a location not designated as the agreed 'normal storage point' receptacles may be returned to the location that they were found.

The bins/boxes/sacks must be easily accessible for the crews, and collection vehicle. Gates must be left unlocked where necessary and the crew should be easily able to manoeuvre the bins from the property. Please ensure there are no overhanging branches or shrubs as we may be collecting in the dark. Wherever possible the bins should be stored at the front of the property to enable easy collection and collection should avoid steps and gravel drives.

Where a property on an assisted collection is located a long way from the public highway on a private driveway / road the vehicle may need to access the property where it is not suitable for our crews to walk to collect the waste. In these circumstances we will not be responsible for damage cause to road surfaces through normal collection operations.

Checks may be carried out by the Council from time to time on resident's suitability for the collection and evidence requested from the householder. Any change in circumstance must be notified to the council as soon as possible.

Policy 16 – Frozen waste bins

During winter months organic waste can become frozen in the bin, if the waste does not empty when lifted by the vehicle mechanism; the bin will be left with the contents still in it. A sticker or hanger may be left to indicate the reason for non-collection. The resident should ensure that the waste is loosened within the bin when presenting it for collection on their next scheduled collection day. We will not return to empty frozen bins before the next scheduled collection.

Policy 17 - Overweight wheeled bins and sacks

Where a crew member cannot safely manoeuvre and position a wheeled bin, sack or box onto the vehicle, or where the vehicle cannot lift the bin due to its weight, then it will be left un-emptied and reported by the collection crew. By law all the vehicle bin lifts have a safe working weight limit which crews cannot override. Bins containing the correct items (see website and Policy 7) will rarely be overweight.

Sacks should be liftable with one hand. When collecting sacks the employee will assess the weight of the bag. If this is too heavy to carry safely to the vehicle, the bag is likely to split or if the employee cannot safely lift it into the vehicle it will not be collected.

Where any bin, box or sack is found to be too heavy the householder will be required to remove sufficient material from the bin/sack and dispose of it in a responsible manner. Once sufficient weight has been removed, the bin or sack should be presented on the next scheduled collection date. We will not return to empty the bin or collect the sack before the next scheduled collection date.

Policy 18 - Ownership of wheeled bins / sacks

All wheeled bins and sacks provided remain the property of the Council and should be left at the property when moving out, with the exception of additional purchased garden

waste bins where the subscription is being moved to another property in East or North Hertfordshire.

For households with a larger bin (see Policy 6) for residual domestic waste it is necessary to notify the waste department at the Council when the property is vacated.

Wheeled bins and sacks provided must only be used for the collection of waste and recycling.

The householder is responsible for keeping the bins / sacks safe whilst they are on their property and to protect them from misuse. The Council will not clean or wash bins.

Policy 19 - Provision of new/replacement wheeled bins

Bins will not usually be put on our delivery schedule until the property is occupied and registered with Council Tax.

At a property where the previous occupier has not left the bins, the Council must be contacted to arrange delivery of a set of bins. There is a charge for residual waste (purple lidded) and garden waste (brown lidded) bins.

The delivery of bins will usually be within two weeks but can take up to six weeks.

Policy 20 – Lost and stolen wheeled bins

If you suspect your bin has been lost please check the surrounding area before requesting a new bin. You must contact us to request a replacement bin. Waste not contained within the specified receptacles will not be collected.
For residual waste bins and garden waste bins there is a charge for replacements. Therefore if the bin has been stolen a crime reference number should be provided.

Policy 21 - Damaged wheeled bins

If the bin has been damaged or ‘eaten’ by the collection vehicle the collection crew will report it on their in-cab reporting system and a new bin will automatically be delivered, and a notification will be left.

In some instances damage through general wear and tear such as broken lids or wheels can be repaired and the Council endeavours to reduce waste by repairing rather than replacing bins where possible. Replacement bins may be provided when they are damaged, any damage should be reported to the Council and details provided to facilitate a repair or replacement bin. Replacement mixed dry recycling bins are provided free of charge. Replacement garden waste bins and residual waste bins are provided at a charge to cover the cost of delivery. Replacement bins or boxes can be ordered online.

A replacement may be a refurbished bin.

Policy 22 - Sharing wheeled bins

If residents request to do so, then they may share bins with their neighbour if both are in agreement. One resident must claim overall responsibility for the bin as a bin can only be allocated to one address; this is usually the property where the bins are stored. It is the responsibility of the householder if a bin is contaminated, misused or needs replacing.

Policy 23 - Severe weather

During severe weather we will

- Continue to undertake the regular scheduled collection of waste wherever it is deemed safe to do so. The decision on whether it is safe for a refuse collection vehicle to access a specific location/street has to be determined locally by the driver of that vehicle. Among key factors that apply are: road conditions, weather conditions, access past parked cars, risks to the safety of public and the crew, risks of damage to parked cars or property.
- Services may be either delayed, suspended or cancelled depending on the severity of the disruption.
- We will attempt to return and collect bins as soon as possible after the scheduled collection date. If this is not possible due to continuing bad weather conditions or compacted ice and snow it may be necessary to cancel services for that collection.
- Collections during or following weather disruption often take more time leading to further delays and therefore some services may be prioritised over others, for example high volume waste streams like recycling or putrescible waste streams like food waste.

All service disruption details and any alternative arrangements will be communicated via our website and on social media, this may change and be updated daily.

No council tax refunds or refunds for garden waste services will be issued as a result of adverse weather disruption to services.

Policy 24 - Access Issues

If access to a road is blocked by parked cars or road works collections will be attempted on two consecutive days following the scheduled day of collection.

Parked cars blocking access will have a letter, card or sticker attached to the windscreen.

Where access has, on a number of occasions, been attempted to collect waste but vehicles were unable to do so for reasons such as parked cars. We may notify the Police. Collections will resume on the next scheduled day.

If we are notified of road works in advance alternative arrangements may be arranged and communicated to residents.

Policy 25 – Healthcare and clinical waste

Offensive / hygiene waste

The Council does not offer a separate collection for low grade non-clinical healthcare (offensive / hygiene) waste such as incontinence pads, nappies, feminine hygiene products etc, from a person with a non-infectious condition. This waste should ideally be double wrapped and placed in the non-recyclable (residual waste) wheeled bin. Where a large quantity is being produced then the household may be eligible for a larger residual waste wheeled bin under Policy 6.

Clinical waste - Infectious or hazardous waste including Sharps

Sharps such as needles must never be placed in wheeled bins or sacks but disposed of in special sharps boxes and can be returned to the doctors surgery/ hospital or

residents can have a special collection. Clinical waste collections of sharps are made in yellow sharps boxes on a call and collect basis.

Clinical waste collections for infectious waste in most cases are considered temporary and are periodically reviewed.

Patients producing infectious or hazardous waste must have a referral form from their healthcare provider.

Which of the services above are provided will be based on the information provided by the resident and their healthcare professional.

Policy 26 – Bulky waste collections

Where a household has bulky household waste e.g. a sofa or large Waste Electronic or Electrical Equipment e.g. a fridge for disposal these can be taken to the nearest Household Waste Recycling Centre.

It is advised that for bulky household waste in good condition charities or reuse organisations should be contacted initially.

Bulky household waste collections made by the Council are charged and will be collected only upon receipt of the relevant payment. These collections will be made at a different time to normal waste collections and the items should be placed outside for collection on the notified day.

The Council is required to collect soft furnishings separately from other bulky waste items and therefore where residents require a collection of mixed items two separate collections will need to be booked and paid for.

Items should be stored in a clean and dry location prior to collection, and placed at the kerbside by 7am, as the Council may reuse or recycle the items where possible.

We do not make collections from inside the property.

TRADE WASTE POLICIES

Policy 27 – Trade refuse and recycling collection material streams

The Council can provide chargeable collections upon request for residual trade waste, mixed dry recycling, separate paper, garden waste and/or food waste. Waste must be contained within the receptacles provided and payment must be made in advance.

Bins which are contaminated or contain prohibited items will not be collected.

Contaminated bins can be emptied as residual waste for an additional charge.

Policy 28 – Trade refuse and recycling collection bin sizes

Collections can be arranged for the following bin sizes provided they are in stock.

- 140L
- 240L
- 360L^
- 660L**^
- 1100L**^

**Not suitable for paper only collections.
^Not suitable for food waste collections.

All bins and sacks remain the property of the Council and will be collected at the end of a contract or on non payment of outstanding invoices.

Terms and conditions and further service information is available on our website.

STREET CLEANSING POLICIES

Policy 29 – Standard of Service

The majority of street cleansing operations are undertaken on a needs basis and in accordance with zoning outlined in the Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse. Some cleansing occurs on a regular cleansing cycle and where standards of cleanliness have been identified to have fallen to a Grade C between the scheduled cleanse or litter pick, they will be returned to Grade A in accordance with the response times outlined on our website or in accordance with Policy 30.

Policy 30 – Response times

Any highway cleansing schedules have been devised on needs-based cleansing frequencies according to their intensity of use and using guidelines in the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse. Further details are available on our website.

Fly-tipping will be removed within 2 working days of the report and following any investigation by enforcement teams. Where hazardous waste is identified in the fly tip a specialist contractor is required to remove waste and therefore removal may be up to 10 working days.

Heavily littered and 'hotspot' areas which are categorised as Grade C or D will be cleaned of litter on receipt of reports or as a result of inspections by Council staff in accordance with the response times.

In town centres which are cleansed in accordance with Policy 33, response times are usually within 3 working hours.

In other areas with very high footfall this is usually withing 1 working day.

For the majority of other urban areas this is usually within 3 working days.

For rural area this is between 3 and 14 days.

Overflowing litterbins will be responded to within 24 hours.

Reported needles will be collected the same working day.

Policy 31 – Leaf clearance

In some areas, separate leaf clearance work will be undertaken as required in high leaf fall streets across the districts to maintain the safe use of highway footpaths. All other leaf clearance will be undertaken alongside the scheduled cleanse, typically a minimum of every six weeks.

Leaf clearance work will only be prioritised when there is a potential problem for drainage in roads identified as liable to flooding.

Policy 32 – High speed roads

High speed roads requiring traffic management and road or lane closures to cleanse and litter pick safely will be mechanically swept at least once a year. The majority of litter picking is done during the spring and summer months alongside grass cutting as this collaborative working reduces the costs to the tax payer.

Laybys and safely accessible areas will be litter picked as required, this is often done at the same time as litter bin emptying. Any requests for additional cleansing where standards have fallen to a grade C in safely accessible areas will usually be rectified within 7 working days.

Policy 33 – Street cleansing Town centres

Town centres will receive a daily litter pick service. The areas of the town centres experiencing the highest intensity of traffic will be maintained to a Grade A standard between 8am and 6pm Monday to Saturday and 8am and 12noon on Sundays, with the exception of Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Policy 34 - Litter / on street recycling bins

Litter bins are to be used for small items of rubbish derived from passers by only.

Bagged dog faeces can be placed into street litter bins. Household and commercial waste should not be placed into on street bins. Waste should be placed inside the bin, not next to or on top of it.

If a stub plate is present, the extinguished cigarette should then be disposed in the bin.

Where recycling bins are present, only the correct materials as stated on the bins should be placed within them.

Where litter bins are not present or are full; litter should be taken home.

Policy 35 – Winter snow clearance

Winter snow clearance and gritting frozen or icy roads or footpaths is the responsibility of the landowner. For roads and footpaths which form part of the highway this is the responsibility of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).

Gritting will be undertaken when necessary on Council owned land such as car parks.

Policy 36 – Events and street parties

Additional cleansing support can be provided where necessary for events and street parties. It is the responsibility of the event organisers to liaise with the cleansing team about these requirements and the cost of additional services will be recovered from the organisers.

Policy 37 – Graffiti and fly-poster removal

Response times for the removal of reported offensive graffiti and reported offensive fly-posting, on Council property, will be in accordance with the recommendations in the Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse.
In addition officers will work with private property owners to encourage the removal of graffiti.
Further details are provided on our website

Scope for IT integration Project Work

Aim

To allow residents to log all standard service requests online, automating processes, with full integration with the back-office waste management IT system, wherever possible.

Overview

The waste collection and street cleansing contract is being reprocured and a new contract will go live at the beginning of May 2025. As part of this procurement the successful contractor will be required to provide a waste management IT system capable of managing the day-to-day logistics of services with open APIs to allow for integration with Council CRM systems. Although we do not yet know which waste management IT system will be in use from 2025, each operate in a similar way and all will be able to manage the simple day to day processes utilising key information captured at point of contact.

This project is essentially two projects, one on behalf of East Herts Council and one on behalf of North Herts Council. It will be necessary for the set up for each Council to be the same in terms of information captured and fed into the waste management IT system. Where processes are currently different it is expected that the most efficient, best practice process will be taken forwards.

Each of the projects should operate in phases these phases will be based on the highest contacts ad existing online functionality.

At this stage it is proposed that the bespoke garden waste portals are out of scope of this project, due to the quantity of work necessary prior to the contract start. This is subject to the successful novation of the existing contracts. Separate projects exist to integrate the payment portal with the Councils financial management and payment systems to ensure that income generated from garden waste can come directly to the Councils rather than via Urbaser (or any future contractor). However, this will be kept under review and subject to comment by IT teams.

Client Team Timeline

It is necessary for integrated online reporting to be functioning for the waste contract start in May 2025. This is to prevent unnecessary impacts and delays managing resident contacts during mobilisation, should the services experience disruption during mobilisation.

It is anticipated that we will know which waste management IT system will be used as part of the contract in early in 2024.

We do not yet know when we will have access to API data, but this is unlikely to be earlier than 3 months prior to contract start.

It will be necessary to undertake user testing in April 2024.

It is necessary to determine whether IT teams and transformation teams will have sufficient resource at the critical time to fully develop the necessary integrations.

Risks

Failure to complete this project on time will have significant resource impacts on the customer service teams and waste shared service client team. No additional resources are planned to manage contacts which have not been adequately integrated with the waste management IT system.

Data

The shared client team have access to analytical information on contacts by type and requirements around SLAs this can be provided on request.

As a guide: -

During the first 3 months of the current contract the service logged 26,200 contacts, with many additional reports going unlogged as people could not get through on phones and reports of multiple contacts where emails were sent, and residents were unsure if action was being taken. It is vital that we ensure we are better able to manage contacts for the 2025 contract change and well established and robust online reporting tools is the primary means of doing this. Additional staff resource may also be necessary but will never be able to manage the volume of contacts that online reporting could. The waste client team is keen to reduce the burden of emails coming into customer services as this lengthens the response time to contacts.

The average number of contacts logged each month in 2022/23 was 5200, excluding garden waste subscriptions.

The month with the highest contacts is April.

The top 10 contacts in 22/23 (excluding garden waste subscriptions) are: _

1. Replacement bin/box – 19,677
2. Adhoc clinical sharps collection – 5,151
3. Missed - NORTH - Recycling Collection – 2,722
4. Missed - EAST – Recycling Collection – 2,555
5. Missed - EAST - Refuse Collection – 2,428
6. EAST – Standard Property Bin Delivery – 1,973
7. EAST - Bulky Waste Collection – 1,796
8. NORTH – Bulky Waste Collection – 1,569
9. Missed - NORTH –Food Waste Collection – 1,497
10. Missed – North - Refuse Collection – 1,416

One off payment integration is required for the following: -

1. Bulky waste collections
2. Request a new or replacement bin – (residual waste bins only)
3. Request commercial sacks

<u>Proposed Online Form Development</u>

Phase 1 of each project should consist of integrating the following; which are existing: -

1. Bin collection day look up
2. Report missed collection
3. Request a new or replacement bin/sacks

Phase 2 of each project should consist of integrating the following: -

1. Report overflowing litter bin
2. Report need for street cleansing (lots of categories here)
3. Report fly tipping
4. Request bulky waste collection

5. Apply for assisted bin collection
6. Apply for additional capacity
7. Report graffiti
8. Register community litter picking event
9. Request clearance of community litter picked waste
10. Request clinical waste collections
11. Request adhoc collection of sharps
12. Report abandoned bin
13. Report staff behaviour
14. Report damage to litter bin

Phase 3 of each project should consist of integrating the following (commercial waste elements are dependent on IT solution and it may be possible to develop alongside similar household services): -

1. Commercial waste missed collections
2. Commercial waste bin replacements
3. Commercial waste contract amendments
4. Request adhoc or event commercial collection
5. Request review of collection arrangements
6. Request commercial sacks
7. Report damage to property
8. Litter bin request

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Customer Services

Contacts for waste and street cleansing services makes up a significant proportion of contacts via customer service teams for each local authority (either directly or indirectly), with around 36,000 contacts being handled by the call centres and approximately a further 19,000 contacts being managed by self-service online forms which directly integrate into the waste management IT system. The sheer volume of work completed (14.4 million bin collections annually) means that even in high performing services, service requests regarding service problems like missed collections are inevitable. Contacts can range from general basic interactions and questions (not recorded in the waste management IT system), service requests such as requests for new bins, through to complex complaints. The current provision for the service is split with NHDC waste customer service handled by the contractor and EHC handled by the corporate customer service centre (CSC). Following member workshops, the Executive/Cabinet agreed to keep services in-house for EHC and bring services in house from NHDC. The decision now needs to be whether this is:

1. Two separate CSCs one for each authority
2. NHDC leading on CSC on behalf of EHC
3. EHC leading on CSC on behalf of NHDC

Customer Services Options Appraisal

Option	1 (separate)	2 (NHDC)	3 (EHC)
Reputational	☑Retain control of messaging to residents ☑ Consistency with corporate CSC 'look and feel' ☒ That standards and performance is different for each authority.	☒Potential loss of control over messaging to staff and residents ☑Consistency of messaging across shared service ☒Residents unable to understand the relationship with other council and deferring to own council.	☒Potential loss of control over messaging to staff and residents ☑Consistency of messaging across shared service ☒Residents unable to understand the relationship with other council and deferring to own council.
Financial	☑ No additional financial pressure for EHC ☒Potential financial pressure for NHDC with contractor staff being TUPE'd over, they would be entitled to LGPS	☒Potential additional pressure following TUPE of staff from contractor ☑ Potentially reduced staff costs over 1 due to economies of scale.	☒Additional cost burden to EHC albeit a recharge to NHDC ☑ Potentially reduced staff costs over 1 due to economies of scale.

	☒IT system integration and set up likely more costly than 2 or 3 due to being required twice. ☑ Allows each authority to invest and progress with their transformation programmes as scheduled	☒ No reduction in overheads ☒ EHC transformation project becomes less financially viable. ☒Potential VAT issues when taking payments if using one FMS ☒ Additional costs for IT integration for existing and new online services ☒ Access to two payments systems needed as income is to be managed by separate authorities.	☒ Unlikely reduction in overheads ☒Potential VAT issues when taking payments if using one FMS ☒ Additional costs for IT integration for existing and new online services ☒ Access to two payments systems needed as income is to be managed by separate authorities.
Legal	☑ No additional GDPR arrangements required	TUPE Would require changes to the Data sharing agreement ☒Potential licencing issues for software	TUPE Would require changes to the Data sharing agreement ☒Potential licencing issues for software
Operational	☑ opportunity to align processes between two CSCs under council control whilst retaining sovereignty ☒potential for Inconsistencies in online offering due to commitments of transformation programme of resources	☑Customer service staff for contractor will be TUPE'd over from contractor, detail operational knowledge passing from contractor ☒Training required for rest of CSC staff	☑ CSC contractor staff transferring already trained.

On balance the recommendation would be to retain ownership of customer contact handling and customer services, to ensure the delivery of this element of the service is in line with each Authorities priorities. In East Herts, there is also an additional driver due to the investment in a new customer management relationship (CRM) system, the council would achieve a greater return by retaining waste transactions. This allows the benefits of the council's transformation programme to be realised.

As each authority has also identified that it is preferable to manage their own income (see Section 5); it would also present additional challenges for customer services to be provided by one authority, as two payment systems would need to be accessible to a joint customer service team. This also has further additional implications for digital services.

The waste client team and transformation teams will facilitate a cross council business process mapping exercise to align processes.

Digital Services

A number of services are already available online with full integration with back office systems including:

- Reporting missed bin collections (approximately 50% recorded online)
- Subscribing to garden waste services (over 80% online)
- New and replacement bin requests
- Collection day look up

There are a number of other services which can be reported online, however these webforms result in an email being sent either to customer service teams or the client team and therefore are not currently fully integrated.

All current fully integrated online services are provided as part of the waste contract. These online facilities will cease to function at the end of April 2025 and a new alternative solution is required to provide a seamless transition for residents. Subject to the recommendation for customer services being agreed, the following options will be considered:

- Online digital services delivered by each authority
- NHDC lead
- EHC lead
- Hybrid (option only available if both Councils utilise same CRM systems)

The hybrid approach being one where one authority leads on the development of all online integrations necessary (to reduce development costs) but each Councils sets up web forms in their own CRM system.

Options Appraisal Digital Services

Option	1 (separate)	2 (NHDC)	3 (EHC)
Reputational	☒ potential inconsistencies in the delivery timeframes for each authority. ☑ Delivery in line with corporate priorities ☑ Look and feel consistent with individual Council websites.	☒no current corporate steer for full integration of web forms	☒Some delay in implementing new online options already experienced due to IT resource levels
Financial	☑ Cost of integration development would be covered by each authority providing flexibility to do more or less if needed	☑Cost of development integration could be reduced	☑Cost of development integration could be reduced

	☒Duplicated costs for the provision of garden waste portal ☒Integration expensive, particularly if consultants are engaged	☒Viability of EHC transformation programme reduced ☒Integration expensive, particularly if consultants are engaged	☒Integration expensive, particularly if consultants are engaged
Legal		☒Potential software licencing issues	☒Potential software licencing issues
Operational	☑ability to prioritise resources and expertise ☒ existing services not being delivered in new contract ☒ Twice the impact on the client team in terms of business process mapping and testing than option 2 or 3 ☒ Delivery timelines for each authority may differ, agreement would need to be sought to align timelines	☒ existing services not being delivered in new contract ☒ lack of available technical expertise to implement.	☒Currently not being delivered ☒ existing services not being delivered in new contract ☒ lack of available technical expertise to implement.

Neither authority has undertaken back-office integration with a CRM system and there is no permanent staff resource dedicated to this work at either authority. However, NHDC does now have an application development team who may be able to consider undertaking work on integration, subject to more detailed understanding of the work involved and timeframes.

Whilst it is still unknown whether both Councils will be utilising the same CRM systems it is not possible to consider the hybrid solution but this will be considered again should the Councils digital solutions be aligned.

There will be costs associated with the development for both authorities, which may be significant, should it be necessary to employ consultants to undertake the works. It is expected that estimated costs will be available for budget workshops in October.

Financial Management

Financial management is delivered separately for and by each authority creating a level of duplication, differing burdens and requirements for the client team. There is also a level of inconsistency in functionality i.e. NHDC can provide direct debits whilst currently EHC cannot, NHDC debtors processes are automated, while the EHC process is not.

The delivery of direct debits and automated debt management processes are anticipated to be delivered by November 2023 in EHC and with necessary real-world testing it is anticipated that direct debits for garden waste (circa 25,000) could be migrated to in-house systems by February 2024 in time for the next subscription year.

Secure card payment systems are being reprocured by EHC and the preferred supplier will be appointed via the Crown Commercial Services Framework in May and the system is anticipated to be delivered by November 2023. This would enable circa 8000 customers to be managed securely in-house in accordance with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard and allow an end-to-end card payment integration on the web site.

NHDC are in the process of reprocuring and/or upgrading both the financial management system and payment system. Transition to in-house management of garden waste income is therefore not possible until this work is complete. For direct debits (circa 21000 customers) this is currently being investigated for an implementation for the next subscription year, however implementation by 2025 is necessary. For card payments (circa 8000 customers this is due by April 2024.

The move to in-house income management for garden waste is also dependent on successful integration with the existing garden waste portals and any subsequent re-procurement of these systems for each authority.

The options moving forward are:

1. Continue to deliver via current method, two separate authorities
2. NHDC lead
3. EHC lead

Options Appraisal Financial Management

Option	1 (separate)	2 (NHDC)	3 (EHC)
Reputational	☑ Clear to residents and businesses who they are transacting with ☒potential administration impacts during aligned garden waste subscription year	☒systems currently being reprocured	☒debt recovery not automated creating issues of businesses receiving services that aren't paid for and delays in management of debt ☒ currently no direct debit functionality for

			commercial waste nor garden waste
Financial	☑ ability to change GW charge annually without being charged by contractor, therefore reducing cost ☒Inconsistency in debt management	☒Additional cost burden to NHDC albeit a recharge to EHC, therefore increasing cost to EHC ☑ reduced staff costs over 1 due to economies of scale e.g. GW financial admin. ☒Additional income reconciliation necessary between authorities	☒Additional cost burden to EHC albeit a recharge to NHDC, therefore increasing cost to NHDC ☑ reduced staff costs over 1 due to economies of scale. ☒Debt recovery process currently inefficient and resulting in greater debt levels. ☒ No user tested DD system presents risks to GW service delivery. ☒Additional income reconciliation necessary between authorities
Legal		☒Potential VAT implications when operating as an agent on behalf of EHC	☒Potential VAT implications when operating as an agent on behalf of NHDC
Operational	☒Duplication of work and separate processes ☒Pinch point of additional admin in two systems in Jan/Feb/Mar for GW and trade waste administration.	☑ reduced administrative burdens ☒Higher levels of auditing from VAT.	☒Currently not in a position to deliver DD ☒Higher levels of auditing from VAT.

Both Councils have identified and acknowledge the additional administrative burden of some of the existing financial management processes. However, there are significant risks of one council operating on behalf of one another, including an additional auditing pressure related to VAT, as well significant income reconciliation impacts.

Spend on the contract will be presented to partnership board annually.

Communications and Marketing

Communications and marketing is delivered separately by each authority creating some inconsistencies in relation to corporate priorities of waste messages. The NHDC corporate service in terms of officer resource, is over twice the size of EHC, therefore there is potential benefit in aligning some aspects of comms.

The service changes will require a significant focus on comms with a need for additional resource to deliver more targeted campaign work. A new dedicated Waste Communications Officer post was identified and this role will focus on non-corporate communications, such are targeted communications in relation to specific campaigns, targeted local communications in relation to low performing areas and the capture of certain materials in the recycling streams. This will also include working with local schools and community groups for face-to-face communications.

The options moving forward are:

1. Continue to deliver via current method, two separate authorities
2. NHDC lead
3. EHC lead

Options Appraisal Communications and Marketing

Option	**1 (separate)**	**2 (NHDC)**	**3 (EHC)**
Reputational	☒Inconsistent messaging and design for the shared service ☒differing priorities from each council. ☑ Able to provide local focus for comms ☑Able to maintain corporate look and feel	☒branding and style may not be consistent with corporate style of other authority	☒branding and style may not be consistent with corporate style of other authority
Financial	☒Slightly increased costs where design work is duplicated and reduced economy of scale when printing. ☒Differences in budget impacts on time spent and value placed on comms		
Legal			Potential TUPE

Operational	☑ Comms more easily managed by CSC teams in line with corporate priorities ☑Local knowledge	☑dedicated corporate designer, more capacity within team	☒Reduced functionality following savings exercises

Legal Services

Both authorities have over the last year struggled to recruit contract and procurement lawyers. The current procurement is being delivered via an external provider at significant cost to each authority. Though as a temporary solution this has been beneficial it is not sustainable in the long term. A decision is needed on how to proceed with legal advice moving forward in relation to client relationship with the contractor. Each Council would be expected to seek their own advice on any matters relating to the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) or working relationship between the two authorities. The options as per other items are:

1. Retain external advice
2. NHDC lead
3. EHC lead

Options Appraisal Legal Services

Option	**1 (external)**	**2 (NHDC)**	**3 (EHC)**
Financial	☒Expensive outside of long term contractual arrangements	At cost recharges to other authority.	At cost recharges to other authority.
Legal	☒Reliance on external advice with minimal internal expertise to challenge	Each authority would need reassurance that the other authority's interests are well represented	Each authority would need reassurance that the other authority's interests are well represented
Operational	Consistent high quality advice provided in a timely manner	☒Ongoing recruitment and retention issues	☒Ongoing recruitment and retention issues

Governance

Historically, some decisions have been taken independently by each authority such as the implementation of a chargeable garden waste service. Given the commitment from both authorities to align services and create effective and efficient administrative processes as a result, it is necessary to review the governance arrangements. The options for governance are:

1. Retain model of partnership board and update the IAA
2. Delete the partnership board and introduce a formal Joint waste committee
3. Amendments to constitution and delegated decision making for officers to facilitate partnership arrangements with oversight by Partnership Board

Options Appraisal Governance

Option	**1 (current model)**	**2 Joint waste committee**	**3 Constitutional amendments**
Reputational	☑Political priorities maintained for each Council	☑Unified approach despite any political differences. ☑Leading the way in Herts ☒Potential for reduced political influence	☑Decision making consistent between authorities
Financial	☑ No financial changes or pressures	☒Potentially additional costs associated with administration of additional committees.	☑ No financial changes or pressures
Legal	☒ Potential for contractual and procurement complications if differing decisions made ☒ Only route for dispute management is utilising the collaboration agreement if differing decisions are made	☒Complex delegations required ☒Potential complexities around scrutiny	☒constitution changes required ☒Potential complexities around scrutiny
Operational	☒Currently no formal joint decision making	☑ no risk of differing decisions being made by either authority	☑ no risk of differing decisions being made by either authority

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
20 June 2023

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2023/24

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 2023/24. 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.

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 2023/24.

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: Forward plan - FORWARD PLAN - 26 MAY 2023 | North Herts Council (north-herts.gov.uk)

8.4 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

8.5 As agreed by the Committee the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan had been removed as a review had been undertaken by the LGA Peer Committee, the findings of which are being presented under agenda item 13.

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 to follow.

15.2 Appendix B – Forward Plan – 25 May 2023

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

16.1 James Lovegrove
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16.2 Sjanel Wickenden
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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Forward Plan of Key Decisions - 26 May 2023

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
The allocation of DLUHC's Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Funding awards for 2023/24 and 2024/25		Cabinet	27 Jun 2023		Martin Lawrence, Strategic Housing Manager martin.lawrence@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY) END OF YEAR REVIEW 2022/23		Cabinet	27 Jun 2023		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN 2022/23		Cabinet	27 Jun 2023		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Active North Herts Strategy		Cabinet	Not before 27th Jun 2023		Louise Randall, Leisure Manager louise.randall@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Annual Report on Risk Management		Cabinet	27 Jun 2023		Rachel Cooper, Controls, Risk and	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
					Performance Manager rachel.cooper@north-herts.gov.uk		Column 6
Q4 Update on the Council Delivery Plan		Cabinet	27 Jun 2023		Rachel Cooper, Controls, Risk and Performance Manager rachel.cooper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Refugee resettlement and Home Office funding update		Cabinet	27 Jun 2023		Martin Lawrence, Strategic Housing Manager martin.lawrence@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
North Herts Place Narrative		Cabinet	27 Jun 2023		Christine Crofts, Communications Manager christine.crofts@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
The allocation of DLUHC's Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Funding awards for 2023/24 and 2024/25		Cabinet	27 Jun 2023		Martin Lawrence, Strategic Housing Manager martin.lawrence@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
WASTE SHARED SERVICE: CLIENT TEAM AND CORPORATE SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS		Cabinet	27 Jun 2023		Chloe Hipwood, Service Manager chloe.hipwood@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6

Decision required	Overview and Scrutiny	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Documents to be submitted to Decision Maker	Contact Officer from whom documents can be requested	Confirmation that other documents may be submitted to the Decision Maker	Procedure for requesting details of other documents
Financial System Procurement			Before 31 Jul 2023		Rachel Cooper, Controls, Risk and Performance Manager rachel.cooper@north-herts.gov.uk, 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 19th Sep 2023		Louise Symes, Strategic Planning and Projects Manager louise.symes@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Proposed Increase in Car Parking Tariffs 2023-24		Cabinet	19 Sep 2023		Louise Symes, Strategic Planning and Projects Manager louise.symes@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Statement of Community Involvement		Cabinet	19 Sep 2023		Clare Skeels, Senior Planning Officer clare.skeels@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
BID Reballot November 2023 - Letchworth		Cabinet	19 Sep 2023		Chloe Gray, Enterprise Manager chloe.gray@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Draft Sustainability SPD		Cabinet	19 Sep 2023		Deborah Coates, Principle Strategic Planning Officer deborah.coates@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6

Decision required	Overview and Scrutiny	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Documents to be submitted to Decision Maker	Contact Officer from whom documents can be requested	Confirmation that other documents may be submitted to the Decision Maker	Procedure for requesting details of other documents
Q1 update on the Council Delivery Plan 2023-24		Cabinet	19 Sep 2023		Rachel Cooper, Controls, Risk and Performance Manager rachel.cooper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
HITCHIN AND ROYSTON BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (BIDs) RENEWAL		Cabinet	19 Sep 2023		Andrew Figgis, Economic Development Officer andrew.figgis@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6