

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices, Gernon Road,
Letchworth
on Thursday, 29th February, 2024 at 7.30 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chris Hinchliff, Daniel Wright-Mason, Juan Cowell, Sean Nolan, Terry Tyler, Raj Bharkar, Faye Frost and Michael Weeks.

2 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business notified.

3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded.
- (2) Members were reminded that this Council had declared both a Climate Emergency and an Ecological Emergency. These were serious decisions and meant that, as these were emergencies, all of us, officers and Members had that in mind as we carried out our various roles and tasks for the benefit of our District.
- (3) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.
- (4) The Chair advised that the normal procedure rules in respect of debate and times to speak will apply.
- (5) The Chair advised that 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution did not apply to this meeting. A comfort break would be held at an appropriate time, should proceedings continue at length.
- (6) It was noted that Voter ID flyers and posters had been provided for Members to display in any community buildings or notice boards that they had access to, in order to assist with promoting the need for photographic ID when voting in polling stations at the forthcoming elections.
- (7) Members were reminded of the dates and times for the Briefings for prospective Candidates and Agents being held virtually on Wednesday 6 March and Monday 11 March both at 7pm. The Briefings would provide essential information including changes imposed through the Elections Act.
- (8) Members were reminded to submit any travel and subsistence claims for the 3 month period of January – March are submitted and approved by the end of April.
- (9) The Chair reminded the Committee about the upcoming Chair's Civic Event and Awards, being held on Friday 1 March 2024.
- (10) The Chair advised of a change in the order of the agenda. Agenda Item 9 would be considered after Agenda Item 7.

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public participants.

5 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

There were no questions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.11.

6 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

There was one motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12 as altered under 4.8.14(h) and further accepted amendments.

A) 4 Day Working Week

RESOLVED: That Council resolved:

- (1) Would not implement, trial, experiment, or pilot (or equivalent) a four-day organisational working week during the 2024/25 civic year, and that it will continue to fulfil its statutory obligations, whilst ensuring the provision of cost-effective and efficient delivery of services to residents in North Hertfordshire (acknowledging that employees have the legal right to request flexible or part time working).
- (2) Fully supported the right of local authorities to continue to determine their own working arrangements.

7 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

The Chair advised that items 7A, 7C and 7D, referred from Cabinet, would be taken with their respective items on the agenda. Item 7B would be considered as a standalone item.

7B) Call to Account – Lord Lister Hotel

RESOLVED: That Council noted the referred report, attached as Appendix A, together with the copy of the lessons learnt and the appropriate section of the minutes of the meeting of 28 September 2022 were noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: The recommendations were being made following the Call to Account on 28 September 2022.

8 REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Noted the position on the Collection Fund and how it will be funded.
- (2) Noted the position relating to the General Fund balance and that due to the risks identified a minimum balance of £2.46 million is recommended.
- (3) Noted the net revenue savings that are likely to be required in future years, combined with the Chief Finance Officer's section 25 report (Appendix D) which provides a commentary on the risks and reliability of estimates contained in the budget.
- (4) Approved the revenue savings and investments as detailed in Appendix B with the additional investments in 24/25 only of £25k for Area Forum grants and £10k for additional bee corridors.

- (5) Approved a net expenditure budget of £19.933m, as detailed in Appendix C adjusted to reflect the additional investments in 24/25 totalling £35k.
- (6) Approved a Council Tax increase of 2.99%, which is in line with the provisions in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure that all relevant factors are considered in arriving at a budget and Council Tax level for 2024/25. To ensure that the budget is aligned to Council priorities for 2024/25 as set out in the Council Plan.

9 COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS FOR EMPTY AND SECOND HOMES

RESOLVED:

- (1) That in accordance with Section 11B and 11C of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by Section 2 of the Rating (Properties in Common Occupation) & Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, Council agreed to increasing the council tax premiums on empty homes and introducing a new premium on second homes in a phased approach as follows:
 - (1.1) That from 1 April 2025 the Council adopts the following full Premium levy rates:
 - Properties empty for one year but less than five will receive a 100% Premium.
 - Properties empty for five years but less than ten years a 200% Premium.
 - Properties empty for more than ten years a 300% Premium.
 - (1.2) That from 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2025 the following interim premiums are introduced:
 - Properties empty for one year but less than two will not receive a Premium
 - Properties empty for more than two years, but less than five years will receive a 100% Premium.
 - Properties empty for five years but less than ten years a 150% Premium.
 - Properties empty for more than ten years a 200% Premium.
- (2) That from 1 April 2025 a 10 % discount would be removed and a 100% Premium would be levied on all properties that are determined as a second home, subject to any exceptions once these have been confirmed by Regulations and that the Service Director – Customers in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and IT is delegated authority to make any amendments following further confirmation of the Regulations.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) To support the principle of bringing unoccupied properties back into occupation in line with the proposed empty homes strategy. At the time of writing there are 43 properties that have been unoccupied for over five years.
- (2) The introduction of a phased approach of increasing the premiums enables us to advertise the changes. As the introduction of premiums for properties unoccupied for between one and two years is new there will be no expectation on the owners of these properties of an additional premium and therefore it is recommended that this aspect is deferred until 2025 to allow time to advertise the change.
- (3) In respect of a premium on Second Homes the Council is required to give one year's notice as this is the Council's first determination in this regard and therefore a resolution must be made before the end of the 2023/24 financial year in order to bring in the premium from 01 April 2025.

- (4) The Council does have the ability to revoke the decision in relation to Second Homes premium, during the year should any consultation that is carried out provide evidence that this would not be effective.

10 INVESTMENT STRATEGY (INTEGRATED CAPITAL AND TREASURY)

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Approved the adoption of the Investment Strategy (as attached at Appendix A), including the capital programme and prudential indicators.
- (2) Approved the adoption of the four clauses in relation to the Code of Practice on Treasury Management (as detailed in paragraphs 8.10 to 8.16).
- (3) Agreed to bring forward the £30k capital allocation for the refurbishment of the Howard Park Kiosk in to 2023/24.
- (4) Agreed to bring forward £10k capital allocation for the Public Sector Decarbonisation scheme in to 2023/24.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) To ensure that the capital programme meets the Council’s objectives and officers can plan the implementation of the approved schemes.
- (2) To ensure the Council’s compliance with CIPFA’s code of practice on Treasury Management, the Local Government Act 2003, statutory guidance from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and the CIPFA Prudential Code. As well as determining and managing the Councils risk appetite in respect of investments.

11 COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION 2024/25

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Noted that at its meeting on 29 January 2024 the Council Tax Setting Committee confirmed the amount 50,562.60 as its Council Tax base for the year 2024/2025 in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations).
 - a) 50,562.60 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Regulations, as its Council Tax base for the year.

b)

Parish/Town	Council Tax Base	Parish/Town	Council Tax Base
Ashwell	911.30	Knebworth	2,018.80
Barkway	421.20	Lilley	175.00
Barley	330.30	Offley	612.40
Bygrave	133.00	Pirton	699.20
Caldecote and Newnham	54.90	Preston	226.90
Clothall	82.20	Radwell	57.90
Codicote	1,663.10	Reed	165.80
Graveley	173.40	Royston	6,823.60
Great Ashby	2,017.40	Rushden and Wallington	207.40
Hinxworth	162.50	St Ippolyts	936.00
Holwell	158.20	St Pauls Walden	582.80
Ickleford	905.60	Sandon	242.90

Kelshall	79.10	Therfield	266.00
Kimpton	1,059.20	Weston	438.20
Kings Walden	425.00	Wymondley	427.60

Being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

- c) That it be noted that at this meeting on the 29 February 2024 the Council has calculated the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding Parish precepts) as £13,146,782. As detailed in 2.2 (e) below the sum of special items is £1,476,117 and hence the total Council Tax requirement (including Parish precepts) is £14,622,899.
- (2) That the following amounts were calculated by the Council for 2024/2025 in accordance with Sections 31A, 31B and 34 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 (the Act):-
- a) £79,013,921 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2)(a) to (f) of the Act.
- b) £64,391,022 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) (a) to (d) of the Act.
- c) £14,622,899 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year.
- d) £289.20 being the amount at (c) above divided by the amount at 2.1(a) above calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B(1) as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
- e) £1,476,117 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- f) £260.01 being the amount at (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (e) above by the amount at 2.1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.
- g)

Parish/Town	Basic	Parish	Total
	£	Precept £	£
Ashwell	260.01	121.43	381.44
Barkway	260.01	98.28	358.29
Barley	260.01	96.88	356.89
Bygrave	260.01	60.87	320.88
Caldecote and Newnham	260.01	45.54	305.55
Clothall	260.01	22.85	282.86
Codicote	260.01	65.50	325.51

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Graveley	260.01	58.34	318.35
Great Ashby	260.01	22.80	282.81
Hinxworth	260.01	67.05	327.06
Holwell	260.01	74.95	334.96
Ickleford	260.01	63.49	323.50
Kelshall	260.01	36.25	296.26
Kimpton	260.01	81.71	341.72
Kings Walden	260.01	84.42	344.43
Knebworth	260.01	95.28	355.29
Lilley	260.01	95.40	355.41
Offley	260.01	66.51	326.52
Pirton	260.01	88.89	348.90
Preston	260.01	68.71	328.72
Radwell	260.01	24.18	284.19
Reed	260.01	49.87	309.88
Royston	260.01	59.22	319.23
Rushden and Wallington	260.01	23.00	283.01
St Ippolyts	260.01	36.08	296.09
St Pauls Walden	260.01	82.56	342.57
Sandon	260.01	37.05	297.06
Therfield	260.01	25.19	285.20
Weston	260.01	50.21	310.22
Wymondley	260.01	101.38	361.39

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 2.2(f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 2.1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

h)

Parish/Town	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Ashwell	254.30	296.68	339.05	381.44	466.20	550.97	635.74	762.88
Baldock	173.34	202.23	231.12	260.01	317.79	375.57	433.35	520.02
Barkway	238.87	278.67	318.48	358.29	437.91	517.53	597.16	716.58
Barley	237.93	277.58	317.23	356.89	436.20	515.51	594.82	713.78
Bygrave	213.93	249.57	285.22	320.88	392.19	463.49	534.81	641.76
Caldecote and Newnham	203.71	237.65	271.60	305.55	373.45	441.35	509.26	611.10
Clothall	188.58	220.00	251.43	282.86	345.72	408.57	471.44	565.72
Codicote	217.01	253.18	289.34	325.51	397.84	470.18	542.52	651.02
Graveley	212.24	247.61	282.97	318.35	389.09	459.84	530.59	636.70
Great Ashby	188.55	219.96	251.38	282.81	345.66	408.50	471.36	565.62
Hexton	173.34	202.23	231.12	260.01	317.79	375.57	433.35	520.02
Hinxworth	218.05	254.38	290.72	327.06	399.74	472.42	545.11	654.12
Hitchin	173.34	202.23	231.12	260.01	317.79	375.57	433.35	520.02
Holwell	223.31	260.53	297.74	334.96	409.39	483.83	558.27	669.92
Ickleford	215.67	251.61	287.55	323.50	395.39	467.28	539.17	647.00
Kelshall	197.51	230.43	263.34	296.26	362.09	427.93	493.77	592.52
Kimpton	227.82	265.78	303.75	341.72	417.66	493.59	569.54	683.44
Kings Walden	229.63	267.89	306.16	344.43	420.97	497.51	574.06	688.86
Knebworth	236.87	276.34	315.81	355.29	434.24	513.19	592.16	710.58
Langley	173.34	202.23	231.12	260.01	317.79	375.57	433.35	520.02
Letchworth	173.34	202.23	231.12	260.01	317.79	375.57	433.35	520.02
Lilley	236.95	276.43	315.92	355.41	434.39	513.37	592.36	710.82
Nuthampstead	173.34	202.23	231.12	260.01	317.79	375.57	433.35	520.02
Offley	217.69	253.96	290.24	326.52	399.08	471.64	544.21	653.04
Pirton	232.61	271.37	310.13	348.90	426.43	503.96	581.51	697.80
Preston	219.15	255.67	292.19	328.72	401.77	474.82	547.87	657.44
Radwell	189.47	221.04	252.61	284.19	347.34	410.49	473.66	568.38

Reed	206.59	241.02	275.44	309.88	378.74	447.60	516.47	619.76
Royston	212.83	248.29	283.76	319.23	390.17	461.11	532.06	638.46
Rushden and Wallington	188.68	220.12	251.56	283.01	345.90	408.79	471.69	566.02
St Ippolyts	197.40	230.29	263.19	296.09	361.89	427.68	493.49	592.18
St Pauls Walden	228.39	266.44	304.50	342.57	418.70	494.82	570.96	685.14
Sandon	198.05	231.05	264.05	297.06	363.07	429.08	495.11	594.12
Therfield	190.14	221.82	253.51	285.20	348.58	411.95	475.34	570.40
Weston	206.82	241.28	275.75	310.22	379.16	448.09	517.04	620.44
Wymondley	240.93	281.08	321.23	361.39	441.70	522.01	602.32	722.78

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 2.2(f) and 2.2(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(l) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (3) Noted that for 2024/2025 Hertfordshire County Council and the Hertfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Precepting Authority	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Hertfordshire County Council								
COUNTY PRECEPT	961.58	1,121.84	1,282.11	1,442.37	1,762.90	2,083.42	2,403.95	2,884.74
SOCIAL CARE PRECEPT	162.25	189.30	216.34	243.38	297.46	351.55	405.63	486.76
Total Hertfordshire County Council	1,123.83	1,311.14	1,498.45	1,685.75	2,060.36	2,434.97	2,809.58	3,371.50
Hertfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner	167.33	195.22	223.11	251.00	306.78	362.56	418.33	502.00

- (4) Having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 2.2(h) and 2.3 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby set out the following provisional amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for 2024/2025 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

List of parishes and tax at different bands (County, Care, Police, District and Parish)

Parish/Town	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Ashwell	1,545.46	1,803.04	2,060.61	2,318.19	2,833.34	3,348.50	3,863.65	4,636.38
Baldock	1,464.50	1,708.59	1,952.68	2,196.76	2,684.93	3,173.10	3,661.26	4,393.52
Barkway	1,530.03	1,785.03	2,040.04	2,295.04	2,805.05	3,315.06	3,825.07	4,590.08
Barley	1,529.09	1,783.94	2,038.79	2,293.64	2,803.34	3,313.04	3,822.73	4,587.28
Bygrave	1,505.09	1,755.93	2,006.78	2,257.63	2,759.33	3,261.02	3,762.72	4,515.26
Caldecote and Newnham	1,494.87	1,744.01	1,993.16	2,242.30	2,740.59	3,238.88	3,737.17	4,484.60
Clothall	1,479.74	1,726.36	1,972.99	2,219.61	2,712.86	3,206.10	3,699.35	4,439.22
Codicote	1,508.17	1,759.54	2,010.90	2,262.26	2,764.98	3,267.71	3,770.43	4,524.52
Graveley	1,503.40	1,753.97	2,004.53	2,255.10	2,756.23	3,257.37	3,758.50	4,510.20
Great Ashby	1,479.71	1,726.32	1,972.94	2,219.56	2,712.80	3,206.03	3,699.27	4,439.12
Hexton	1,464.50	1,708.59	1,952.68	2,196.76	2,684.93	3,173.10	3,661.26	4,393.52
Hinxworth	1,509.21	1,760.74	2,012.28	2,263.81	2,766.88	3,269.95	3,773.02	4,527.62
Hitchin	1,464.50	1,708.59	1,952.68	2,196.76	2,684.93	3,173.10	3,661.26	4,393.52
Holwell	1,514.47	1,766.89	2,019.30	2,271.71	2,776.53	3,281.36	3,786.18	4,543.42
Ickleford	1,506.83	1,757.97	2,009.11	2,260.25	2,762.53	3,264.81	3,767.08	4,520.50
Kelshall	1,488.67	1,736.79	1,984.90	2,233.01	2,729.23	3,225.46	3,721.68	4,466.02
Kimpton	1,518.98	1,772.14	2,025.31	2,278.47	2,784.80	3,291.12	3,797.45	4,556.94
Kings Walden	1,520.79	1,774.25	2,027.72	2,281.18	2,788.11	3,295.04	3,801.97	4,562.36
Knebworth	1,528.03	1,782.70	2,037.37	2,292.04	2,801.38	3,310.72	3,820.07	4,584.08

Langley	1,464.50	1,708.59	1,952.68	2,196.76	2,684.93	3,173.10	3,661.26	4,393.52
Letchworth	1,464.50	1,708.59	1,952.68	2,196.76	2,684.93	3,173.10	3,661.26	4,393.52
Lilley	1,528.11	1,782.79	2,037.48	2,292.16	2,801.53	3,310.90	3,820.27	4,584.32
Nuthampstead	1,464.50	1,708.59	1,952.68	2,196.76	2,684.93	3,173.10	3,661.26	4,393.52
Offley	1,508.85	1,760.32	2,011.80	2,263.27	2,766.22	3,269.17	3,772.12	4,526.54
Pirton	1,523.77	1,777.73	2,031.69	2,285.65	2,793.57	3,301.49	3,809.42	4,571.30
Preston	1,510.31	1,762.03	2,013.75	2,265.47	2,768.91	3,272.35	3,775.78	4,530.94
Radwell	1,480.63	1,727.40	1,974.17	2,220.94	2,714.48	3,208.02	3,701.57	4,441.88
Reed	1,497.75	1,747.38	1,997.00	2,246.63	2,745.88	3,245.13	3,744.38	4,493.26
Royston	1,503.99	1,754.65	2,005.32	2,255.98	2,757.31	3,258.64	3,759.97	4,511.96
Rushden and Wallington	1,479.84	1,726.48	1,973.12	2,219.76	2,713.04	3,206.32	3,699.60	4,439.52
St Ippolyts	1,488.56	1,736.65	1,984.75	2,232.84	2,729.03	3,225.21	3,721.40	4,465.68
St Pauls Walden	1,519.55	1,772.80	2,026.06	2,279.32	2,785.84	3,292.35	3,798.87	4,558.64
Sandon	1,489.21	1,737.41	1,985.61	2,233.81	2,730.21	3,226.61	3,723.02	4,467.62
Therfield	1,481.30	1,728.18	1,975.07	2,221.95	2,715.72	3,209.48	3,703.25	4,443.90
Weston	1,497.98	1,747.64	1,997.31	2,246.97	2,746.30	3,245.62	3,744.95	4,493.94
Wymondley	1,532.09	1,787.44	2,042.79	2,298.14	2,808.84	3,319.54	3,830.23	4,596.28

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) The Council is required to set the Council Tax and to set the overall level of Council Tax for the following financial year, taking into account the precepts of all major and local precepting authorities.
- (2) The level of Council Tax Requirement has been considered necessary to meet the budgeting needs of the Council for 2024/25.

12 PAY POLICY STATEMENT

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Council approved the 2024/25 Pay Policy Statement attached at Appendix 1.
- (2) That Council delegated authority for revisions made in year to the Pay Policy Statement, to the Service Director - Resources, in consultation with the Leader of the Council. Revisions which might arise in the year include changes in structure, changes to employment benefits, subsequent pay awards agreed nationally and new legislative requirements.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To comply with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011, Statutory Guidance issued under s40 and the Local Government Transparency Code 2015