

6 January 2025

Our Ref    Cabinet Tuesday, 14 January 2025  
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To: Members of the Cabinet:

Executive Members Councillors: Daniel Allen (Chair) Val Bryant (Vice Chair) Ian Albert,  
Amy Allen, Mick Debenham, Tamsin Thomas and Dave Winstanley.

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A**

**MEETING OF THE CABINET**

to be held in the

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERNON  
ROAD, LETCHWORTH, HERTS, SG6 3JF**

on

**TUESDAY, 14TH JANUARY, 2025 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**

<b>Item</b>		<b>Page</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>MINUTES - 19 NOVEMBER AND 26 NOVEMBER 2024</b> To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 19 November and 26 November 2024.	(Pages 7 - 24)
<b>3.</b>	<b>NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS</b> 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.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b> <u>Climate Emergency</u> The Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to achieving a target of zero carbon emissions by 2030 and helping local people and businesses to reduce their own carbon emissions.  A Cabinet Panel on the Environment has been established to engage with local people on matters relating to the climate emergency and advise the council on how to achieve these climate change objectives. A Climate Change Implementation group of councillors and council officers meets regularly to produce plans and monitor progress. Actions taken or currently underway include switching to green energy, incentives for low emission taxis, expanding tree planting and working to cut food waste.  In addition the council is a member of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership, working with other councils across Hertfordshire to reduce the county's carbon emissions and climate impact.  The Council's dedicated webpage on Climate Change includes details of the council's climate change strategy, the work of the Cabinet Panel on the Environment and a monthly briefing on progress.  <u>Ecological Emergency</u>  The Council has declared an ecological emergency and is committed to addressing the ecological emergency and nature recovery by identifying appropriate areas for habitat restoration and biodiversity net gain whilst ensuring that development limits impact on existing habitats in its process.	

The Council has set out to do that by a) setting measurable targets and standards for biodiversity increase, in both species and quantities, seeking to increase community engagement, b) to work with our partners to establish a Local Nature Partnership for Hertfordshire and to develop Nature Recovery Networks and Nature Recovery Strategy for Hertfordshire and c) to investigate new approaches to nature recovery such as habitat banking that deliver biodiversity objectives and provide new investment opportunities.

#### Declarations of Interest

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. ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

Any Items referred from other committees will be circulated as soon as they are available.

#### **7. 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).

#### **8. LEISURE AND ACTIVE COMMUNITIES AGENCY MODEL - PART 2 REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – PLACE**

25 - 88

To consider the benefits and risks of the Council changing its current contractual arrangements into an Agency Agreement with SLM (Everyone Active) for the operation of our leisure facilities.

#### **9. LEISURE AND ACTIVE COMMUNITIES AGENCY MODEL - PART 1 REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – PLACE**

(Pages  
89 - 92)

To consider the benefits and risks of the Council changing its current contractual arrangements into an Agency Agreement with SLM (Everyone Active) for the operation of our leisure facilities.

- 10. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE REPORT** (Pages 93 - 134)  
**REPORT OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR**
- The Council recently undertook a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) between 4 and 7 November 2024, where we were visited by a peer team supported by the Local Government Association. The peer team met with a large number of staff and councillors, as well as external stakeholders such as contractual partners, neighbouring authorities and members of our community. The peer team has produced a feedback report, which is attached at Appendix A.
- 11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT** (Pages 135 - 152)  
**OF FAILINGS IN THE INVESTIGATION OF STATUTORY NOISE NUISANCE BY NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL (REF NO: 23 014 065)**  
**REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**
- The purpose of this cover report is to draw Cabinet's attention to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman –'LGO's finding(s), following an investigation into a complaint about the Council (referenced above) and the conclusion of fault and recommended action (report at Appendix A).
- 12. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME** (Pages 153 - 194)  
**REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL STRATEGIC PLANNING OFFICER**
- This report provides an update on progress following Cabinet's resolution to proceed with a full review and update of the North Herts Local Plan (NHLP) in January 2024. It seeks the approval of an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS).
- 13. STRATEGIC PLANNING MATTERS** (Pages 195 - 246)  
**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – REGULATORY**
- This report identifies the latest position on key planning and transport issues affecting the District.
- 14. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2025/2026** (Pages 247 - 258)  
**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMERS**
- To consider and recommend to Council the continuation of the banded scheme for working age applicants which remains largely unchanged for 2025/2026.
- 15. REPORT ON RISK MANAGEMENT GOVERNANCE (MID-YEAR UPDATE)** (Pages 259 - 296)  
**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES**
- To provide the Committee with an update on the effectiveness of the Risk Management Governance arrangements at the Council. The review is referred on to Cabinet and the Committee can make recommendations on how we can improve our risk management arrangements.

- 16. SECOND QUARTER REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2024/25** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES 297 -  
310)
- The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the summary position on revenue income and expenditure forecasts for the financial year 2024/25, as at the end of the second quarter.
- 17. SECOND QUARTER INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY) REVIEW 2024/25** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES 311 -  
344)
- To update Cabinet on progress with delivering the capital and treasury strategy for 2024/25, as at the end of September 2024.
- 18. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS FOR 2025/26 ONWARDS** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES 345 -  
364)
- The Council’s budget setting process starts with proposals that are developed by Officers and Executive Members. These proposals are considered by the Political Liaison Board, in the context of the Council’s forecast overall financial position. The selected proposals are then taken to the two budget workshops (administration group and opposition groups). Feedback from those workshops is considered by Cabinet in this report to determine those proposals that should be taken forward to set the 2025/26 budget.
- 19. COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2024-25 (QUARTER 2 UPDATE)** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES 365 -  
394)
- This report presents progress on delivering the Council Delivery Plan for 2024-25. This is a Quarter 2 update, but generally reflects progress up to the point that this report was prepared (early December).
- 20. GARDEN WASTE CHARGE** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – PLACE 395 -  
400)
- For Cabinet to agree the level of garden waste charge for the subscription period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. The charge can be considered in relation to charges by other Local Authorities, increases in the cost of providing the service and encouraging home composting.
- 21. DECARBONISATION OF LEISURE CENTRES UPDATE** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – PLACE 401 -  
416)
- To provide an update on the project to decarbonise the Council’s leisure centres, including predicted growth in ongoing revenue costs, due to revised modelling of the impact of installing air source heat pumps at the facilities.