

7 June 2024

Our Ref Overview and Scrutiny Committee 18 June  
2024  
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To: Members of the Committee: Councillors Matt Barnes (Chair), Tom Tyson (Vice-Chair),  
Tina Bhartwas, Jon Clayden, Elizabeth Dennis, Ralph Muncer, Louise Peace,  
Martin Prescott, Laura Williams, Claire Winchester, Donna Wright and Daniel Wright-Mason

Substitutes: Councillors David Barnard, Clare Billing, David Chalmers, Emma Fernandes,  
Keith Hoskins, Vijaiya Poopalasingham, Sean Prendergast and Claire Strong

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A**

**MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

to be held in the

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERONON  
ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, SG6 3JF**

On

**TUESDAY, 18TH JUNE, 2024 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. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	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.	
<b>2. MINUTES -12 MARCH 2024</b>	To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 12 March 2024.	(Pages 5 - 12)
<b>3. 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. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>	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.	
<b>5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b>	To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public.	
<b>6. URGENT AND GENERAL EXCEPTION ITEMS</b>	The Chair to report on any urgent or general exception items which required their agreement. At the time of printing the agenda, the Chair had not agreed any urgent or general exception items.	

- 7. CALLED-IN ITEMS**  
To consider any matters referred to the Committee for a decision in relation to a call-in of decision. At the time of printing the agenda, no items of business had been called-in.
- 8. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**  
To receive and respond to any questions from Members either set out in the agenda or tabled at the meeting.
- 9. RESOLUTIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND SCRUTINY MANAGER 13 - 14)  
  
To consider the outcome of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolutions.
- 10. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND SCRUTINY MANAGER 15 - 32)  
  
To consider the issues that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee plans to review at future meetings and the activities of its sub-groups.
- 11. INFORMATION NOTE - FULL YEAR UPDATE ON 3CS 23/24** (Pages  
To provide an update on the Councils comments, compliments, and 33 - 42)  
complaints statistics for 2023 / 2024.
- 12. REPORT FOLLOWING CALL TO ACCOUNT - HARKNESS COURT** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE VICE-CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 43 - 48)  
COMMITTEE (for civic year 2023-24)  
  
To consider the Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2023-24 report into the Call to Account on the Harkness Court Refurbishment.
- 13. Q4 COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN UPDATE** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES 49 - 80)  
  
This report presents progress on delivering the Council Delivery Plan for 23-24 at the end of year.
- 14. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2024/25** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES 81 - 88)  
  
To consider and provide comments on the adoption of Council key performance indicators for 2024/25.
- 15. 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).
- 16. PART 2 MINUTES - 7 NOVEMBER, 5 DECEMBER 2023** 89 - 94  
To take as read and approve as a true record the Part 2 minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 7 November and 5 December 2023.

- 17. LEISURE INVESTMENT OPTIONS - PART 2** 95 - 98  
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – PLACE

To consider and comment on the Leisure Investment Options available to the Council.

- 18. LEISURE INVESTMENT OPTIONS - PART 1** (Pages  
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – PLACE 99 - 112)

To consider and comment on the Leisure Investment Options available to the Council.

# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

## 130NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERONON ROAD, LETCHWORTH, SG6 3JF  
ON TUESDAY, 12TH MARCH, 2024 AT 7.30 PM

#### MINUTES

**Present:** *Councillors: Val Bryant (Chair), Matt Barnes, Mick Debenham, Dominic Griffiths, David Levett, Nigel Mason, Ian Moody, Ralph Muncer and Daniel Wright-Mason.*

**In Attendance:** *Rachel Cooper (Controls, Risk and Performance Manager), Susan Le Dain (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Callum Reeve (Democratic Services Apprentice) and Melanie Stimpson (Democratic Services Manager).*

**Also Present:** *There were no members of the public present.*

#### 291 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

*Audio recording – 1 minute 45 seconds*

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Clare Billing.

#### 292 MINUTES - 9 JANUARY 2024 AND 29 JANUARY 2024

*Audio Recording – 2 minutes 9 seconds*

Councillor Val Bryant, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Ralph Muncer seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 9 January 2024 and 29 January 2024 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

#### 293 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

*Audio recording – 3 minutes 4 seconds*

There was no other business notified.

#### 294 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Audio recording – 3 minutes 9 seconds*

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be 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.

**295 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*Audio recording – 3 minutes 58 seconds*

There was no public participation at this meeting.

**296 URGENT AND GENERAL EXCEPTION ITEMS**

*Audio recording – 4 minutes 3 seconds*

No urgent or general exception items were received.

**297 CALLED-IN ITEMS**

*Audio recording – 4 minutes 10 seconds*

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

**298 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

*Audio recording – 4 minutes 15 seconds*

No questions had been submitted.

**299 RESOLUTIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

*Audio recording – 4 minutes 22 seconds*

The Democratic Services Manager presented the report entitled 'Resolutions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee' and highlighted:

- The 'Empty Homes Strategy' and 'Council Tax Premiums for Empty and Second Homes' reports were both approved at the meeting of Cabinet on 6 February 2024 following on from the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 29 January 2024.
- It had been agreed at the meeting of Full Council on 29 February 2024 to increase Council Tax for 2024/25 and to also increase the council tax premium on empty and second homes.

Councillor Matt Barnes proposed and Councillor Nigel Mason 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.

**300 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 2023-2024**

*Audio recording – 6 minutes 0 seconds*

Councillor Val Bryant, as Chair, presented the report 'Draft Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny 2023-24' and advised that:

- This report was still in draft form and was therefore missing the meeting statistics from the meeting this evening.
- The Call to Account – Harkness Court - Chair's Report was missing from the report and that all Call to Accounts should be referenced in future Annual Reports of the Committee.

The following Members took part in a debate:

- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Val Bryant

Points raised in the debate included:

- Call to Accounts played an important part in the way that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee gave advice to the Council.
- The Peer Review of the Local Government Area (LGA) advised the Committee to continue to hold the Council to account and to develop policies which were beneficial to the residents of North Hertfordshire.
- New Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee need to be made aware of the differences between Task and Finish Groups and Call to Accounts and which one was best suited to be used in a particular set of circumstances.

Councillor David Levett proposed and Councillor Ralph Muncer seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee considered and commented on the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2023/2024 as attached at Appendix A prior to consideration by Council.

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS:** That the Committee considered and commented on the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2023/24 as attached at Appendix A prior to consideration by Council, noting that the Call to Accounts should be referenced within the Annual Report.

*NB. Councillor Dominic Griffiths entered the Chamber at 19:38*

**301 COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN Q3 UPDATE AND PROJECTS FOR 2024/25**

*Audio recording – 11 minutes 40 seconds*

The Controls Risk & Performance Manager presented the report entitled 'Council Delivery Plan Q3 Update and Projects for 2024/25' and advised that:

- This report was the Q3 update on the Council Delivery Plan and it also included a list of projects for 2024/25, which once approved, would be reported on a quarterly basis.
- 15 projects had proposed changes to milestone dates and these changes were highlighted in yellow in Appendix A.
- The new prioritisation tool had been used to identify projects to be included in the Council Delivery Plan for 2024/25.

- As part of the moderation process, it had been determined that the Council Delivery Plan would focus on projects where there was a defined plan of how projects would be delivered which as highlighted in Table 1.
- A project met the criteria to be included in the Council Delivery Plan if it achieved 2 or more green scores against the following key criteria:
  - Impact of non-delivery
  - Council Plan alignment
  - External benefits
  - Contribution towards financial sustainability
- Projects with green lines would be included in the Council Delivery Plan, projects with orange lines might be included and all others would not be included.
- The moderation process had allowed the reduction in the number of projects from 27 to between 11 and 14 based on the current list being reported on, which would ensure quarterly updates were more focused.
- The Council Delivery Plan was a live document and projects could be added back on at any time if they met the required criteria.
- There were currently two over-arching risks for cyber security and resourcing and a new risk relating to the availability of financial resources would be added to that list.
- A quarterly update on the projects highlighting the 14 projects that had green status and 13 with amber status could be found in Appendix A.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Matt Barnes

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

- Matters of health inequalities working documents were not publicly available, but there were currently 3 projects being worked on between North Herts Council and Hertfordshire County Council.
- The size of the Waste contract meant that the risk remained high, but this project would be subject to a high level of project management and would be overseen by a project board.
- The experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) for Hitchin and Royston became permanent on 18 August 2023. No further works were required regarding the TRO's in Hitchin but works in the High Street, Royston were due to take place in June 2024.
- The Enterprise Strategy had been removed from the Council Delivery Plan, but Officers would still be working on this project.
- It was hoped to be able to provide risk training for Members through video guides on SharePoint.
- The reduction in the number of projects on the Council Delivery Plan would enable Members to receive a more detailed overview of each of the remaining projects.
- Projects removed from the Council Delivery Plan would not be reported to the Committee, but investigations would still be continued into those projects.
- Other lower priority projects within service areas would not be reported through the Council Delivery Plan, but work would continue on them. They would only be ceased if resources were scarce and a decision had been made to remove it.
- The Committee had the right to call in a Member and to bring an item to Overview and Scrutiny where there was a concern.
- Recruitment and retention of staff was an ongoing concern and an update from Human Resources would be included in the next report.
- Performance indicators only started once a project was up and running.



In response to questions, the Democratic Services Manager agreed to look into providing training on Pentana and Ideagen for new and current Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to enable Members to gain more in depth understanding of the Council Delivery Plan. The Committee agreed that any training sessions should be carried out prior to the start of an evening Committee meeting.

The following Members took part in a debate:

- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Ralph Muncer

Points raised in the debate included:

- The new Waste contract commenced in May 2025 and this would need to be significantly prioritised for correct monitoring.
- The Committee should have oversight of all projects of the Council, rather than just those being reported in the Council Delivery Plan.

Councillor Matt Barnes proposed and Councillor Dominic Griffiths seconded and following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Committee noted the progress against Council projects as set out in the Council Delivery Plan (Appendix A) including changes to milestones, performance indicators and risks, and makes any recommendations or comments to Cabinet.
- (2) That the Committee identified any project(s) for which they would like to receive a more detailed update.
- (3) That the Committee recommended to Cabinet the scope of the 24-25 Council Delivery Plan as detailed in paragraphs 8.8-8.10.

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

- (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.
- (2) Making a recommendation on the 24-25 CDP means that the Q1 report will provide the information that the Committee wants. It also helps set the priorities for the Council, as those projects that form part of the CDP will be prioritised.

**302 SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION NOTE**

*Video recording – 50 minutes 48 seconds*

Councillor Val Bryant, as Chair, advised the Committee that this item was for noting.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Dominic Griffiths
- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Val Bryant

In response to questions, the Democratic Services Manager advised that she would seek advice from the Safeguarding Department and report back to Members regarding their queries about safeguarding training undertaken through outsider providers and GrowZone.

Councillor Nigel Mason proposed and Councillor Mick Debenham seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the Safeguarding Information provided was noted.

### 303 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

*Audio recording – 55 minutes 0 seconds*

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

- The most recent version of the Forward Plan uploaded on 16 February 2024 was still the most recent version ahead of Cabinet meeting in March.
- Members should advise the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager, or email the Scrutiny inbox details of any items for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The Strategic Housing Policy had been removed from the Work Programme following agreement with the Vice Chair, as this information had already been provided to Members in a briefing held in December 2023 and the slides from this had been circulated to Members.
- After this meeting all items on the Work Programme had now been considered apart from the Call to Account – Harkness Court – Chairs Report.
- The new Scrutiny Officer would start work on Tuesday 26 March 2024 and would be working on a Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.
- Training run by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny would be held on 5 June 2024 and this was available to all Members of the Council.
- Members had discussed and requested a new item be included on the Work Programme which was regarding recruitment and retention of staff at the Council.
- Bitesize training for Members before meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be looked at for introduction in the autumn.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Ralph Muncer

In response to questions, the Democratic Services Manager, advised that a recommendation from the LGA has been that evening committee meetings generally started too late and this meant that decisions were sometimes made very late in the evening.

Councillor Daniel Wright Mason proposed and Councillor Matt Barnes seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Committee prioritised topics for inclusion in the work programme attached as Appendix A and, where appropriate, determined the high-level form and timing of scrutiny input.
- (2) That the Committee, having considered the most recent iteration of the Forward Plan, as attached at Appendix B, suggested a list of items to be considered at its meetings in the coming civic year.

- (3) That the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan as attached at Appendix C was considered.

***REASONS FOR DECISIONS:***

- (1) To allow the Committee to set a work programme which provides focused Member oversight, encourages open debate and seeks to achieve service improvement through effective policy development and meaningful policy and service change.
- (2) The need to observe Constitutional requirements and monitor the Forward Plan for appropriate items to scrutinise remains a key aspect of work programming.

The meeting closed at 8.36 pm

Chair

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**RESOLUTIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**
**COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS**

REFERENCE	RESOLUTION	RESPONSE/OUTCOME	STATUS
	<b>LOCAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION</b>		
MARCH 21  <a href="#">Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 9th March 2021</a>	Recommended to Cabinet:  That a Member working group be arranged to discuss the Design and Sustainability SPDs prior to consideration of these by Cabinet.	The Draft Sustainability SPD item was considered at the meeting of O&S on 5 December 2023 and referred onto Cabinet for approval.  The Draft Sustainability SPD item was approved at Cabinet on 5 December 2023.	Complete – to be removed
	<b>IDEAGEN (FORMELY PENTANA) TRAINING</b>		
SEPT 23  <a href="#">Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 12th September 2023</a>	Following discussion on the Council Delivery Plan Report, the Vice-Chair requested training on the risk monitoring software, Ideagen (formerly Pentana).	A video guide has been produced and is available for Members on The Hub (formerly Intranet) and also on GrowZone (the Council's learning management system).  Following this, this resolution can be removed from the list.	Complete – to be removed

**PREVIOUS REFERRALS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

REFERENCE	RESOLUTION	RESPONSE/OUTCOME	
<p>MARCH 2024</p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 12th March, 2024, 7.30 pm   North Herts Council (north-herts.gov.uk)</a></p>	<p>One referral was made to Cabinet from the Committee on 12 March 2024:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council Delivery Plan: Update for 2023/24 and Projects for 2024/25</li> </ol>	<p>Referrals were considered at Cabinet on 19 March 2024.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair, Cllr Val Bryant, was in attendance to present the referral to Cabinet and outlined the main discussion points raised by Members at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.</p> <p>Comments from the Committee on this item were considered by Cabinet and approved as recommended.</p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 19th March, 2024, 7.30 pm   North Herts Council (north-herts.gov.uk)</a></p>	

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
18 JUNE 2024**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF REPORT: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME  
2024-25**

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND SCRUTINY MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: NOT APPLICABLE

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

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report highlights items scheduled in the work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2024-25 civic year. It also includes items that have not yet been assigned to a specific meeting of the Committee.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. That the Committee prioritises 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 at Appendix B, suggests a list of items to be considered at its meetings in the coming civic year.
- 2.3. That the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan as attached at Appendix C be considered.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1. To allow the Committee to set a work programme which provides focused Member oversight, encourages open debate and seeks to achieve service improvement through effective policy development and meaningful policy and service change.
- 3.2. The need to observe Constitutional requirements and monitor the Forward Plan for appropriate items to scrutinise remains a key aspect of work programming.

**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.

## **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 Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.
- 6.2. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee are sent the latest Forward Plan upon publication.
- 6.3. 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. The LGA Peer Committee Support was undertaken in 2022 and finalised in January 2023, which focused on the Overview and Scrutiny and Finance, Audit and Risk Committees. Recommendations for Overview & Scrutiny were made and are set out in the Action Plan at Appendix C.
- 7.2. In line with the recommendation of the Corporate Peer Challenge 2023 Executive Members were invited to present reports that fall under their remit and to make presentations on specific issues that the Committee wish to consider.
- 7.3. 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.
- 7.4. The Committee seeks to ensure that consideration of agenda items minimises the 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 items they wish adding. Appendix A contains the work programme for 2024-25.
- 8.2. When considering additional topics their risk assessment and prioritisation will ensure that the most appropriate items taking forward to the work programme.



### Forward Plan

- 8.3. The Forward Plan for May at Appendix B. Members can view currently published forward plans here: [Browse plans - Cabinet, 2024 | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/cabinet/2024/forward-plans)
- 8.4. Members are reminded that the Forward Plan acts as public notification of key executive decisions during the next four months and beyond that it is a working document subject to regular amendments.

### Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

- 8.5. The Committee agreed at the meeting held on 20 June 2023 that the actions regarding the Overview and Scrutiny Committee included in the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan be appended to all future reports in order to:
  - Act as an aide memoire when considering the work programme.
  - Consider any actions that need further work.
  - Assess the effectiveness of changes made.
- 8.6. The Committee is asked to consider the Action Plan and any update updates provided at Appendix C.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. Under section 6.2.5 the Constitution, the Committee is responsible for setting its own work programme however it must ensure it retains sufficient capacity within the programme to meets 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.”
- 9.3. In accordance with the Council’s Constitution, the approval of the future scrutiny work programme falls within the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. Depending 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 in 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 for 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 timeframe for scrutiny interventions should be considered in 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 this report. Effective scrutiny is an essential part of ensuring the 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. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1. There are no known environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

## **15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 15.1 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 or 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.

## **16. APPENDICES**

- 16.1. Appendix A – Work Programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2024-2025
- 16.2. Appendix B – Forward Plan – 28 May 2024
- 16.3. Appendix C – Corporate Peer Committee Support Action Plan in regard to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## **17. CONTACT OFFICERS**

- 17.1. James Lovegrove, Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager, [James.Lovegrove@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:James.Lovegrove@north-herts.gov.uk) , ext 4204

- 17.2. Isabelle Alajooz, Legal Commercial Team Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer, [Isabelle.Alajooz@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Isabelle.Alajooz@north-herts.gov.uk) , ext 4346
- 17.3. Tim Everitt, Performance and Risk Officer, [Tim.Everitt@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Tim.Everitt@north-herts.gov.uk) , ext 4646
- 17.4. Maggie Williams, Senior HR and Contracts Manager, [Maggie.Williams@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Maggie.Williams@north-herts.gov.uk) , ext. 4506

**18. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 18.1. Previous Reports to the [Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) and [Forward Plans](#).

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**PROGRAMME FOR FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2024-25**

<b>MEETING DATE</b>	<b>ITEMS AT MEETING</b>	<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER</b>
18 June 2024	Resolutions Report Work Programme Call to Account – Vice-Chair’s Report – Harkness Court Project (Nov 23) Q4 Council Delivery Plan 23-24 Update Work Programme	James Lovegrove James Lovegrove Cllr Val Bryant  Rachel Cooper	Ian Albert
3 September 2024	Resolutions Report Work Programme Safeguarding Report	Jeevan Mann Jeevan Mann Lisa McDonald	Val Bryant
12 November 2024	Resolutions Report Work Programme	Jeevan Mann Jeevan Mann	
7 January 2024	Resolutions Report Work Programme Crime and Disorder Matters	Jeevan Mann Jeevan Mann N/A	Val Bryant
4 February 2024	Resolutions Report Work Programme	Jeevan Mann Jeevan Mann	
11 March 2024	Resolutions Report Work Programme Draft Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny 2024-25	Jeevan Mann Jeevan Mann Chair of Overview and Scrutiny	N/A
	<b>To be scheduled:</b> Greenspaces Enterprise Service Area Updates Implementation of the Leisure Contract	Andrew Mills Enterprise Team Louise Randall	

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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

# Forward Plan of Key Decisions - 28 May 2024

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
2023-24 Year End Report on Risk Management Governance		Cabinet	25 Jun 2024		Rachel Cooper, Controls, Risk and Performance Manager rachel.cooper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
2024 Update on the Council Delivery Plan		Cabinet	25 Jun 2024		Rachel Cooper, Controls, Risk and Performance Manager rachel.cooper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY) END OF YEAR REVIEW 2023/24		Cabinet	25 Jun 2024		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN 2023/24		Cabinet	25 Jun 2024		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6

Page 23

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
LEISURE INVESTMENT OPTIONS		Cabinet	25 Jun 2024		Louise Randall, Leisure and Active Communities Manager louise.randall@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Sustainability SPD		Cabinet	9 Jul 2024		Deborah Coates, Principal Strategic Planning Officer deborah.coates@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Productivity Plan		Cabinet	9 Jul 2024		Anthony Roche, Managing Director anthony.roche@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Adoption of a Temporary Accommodation placement policy		Cabinet	9 Jul 2024		Martin Lawrence, Strategic Housing Manager martin.lawrence@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Adoption of a new Tenancy Strategy (2024-2029)		Cabinet	9 Jul 2024		Martin Lawrence, Strategic Housing Manager martin.lawrence@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Award of the Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract		Cabinet	9 Jul 2024		Chloe Hipwood, Service Manager chloe.hipwood@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6



<b>Decision required</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny</b>	<b>Decision Maker</b>	<b>Date of Decision</b>	<b>Documents to be submitted to Decision Maker</b>	<b>Contact Officer from whom documents can be requested</b>	<b>Confirmation that other documents may be submitted to the Decision Maker</b>	<b>Procedure for requesting details of other documents</b>
Permit Review		Cabinet	Before 31 Jul 2024		Louise Symes, Strategic Planning and Projects Manager louise.symes@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
The Continuation of the Air Quality Management Intervention		Cabinet	Before 31 Jul 2024		Frank Harrison, Environmental Health Manager frank.harrison@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
The Council Plan 2024-2028		Cabinet	10 Sep 2024		Georgina Chapman, Policy & Strategy Team Leader georgina.chapman@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Baldock Strategic Masterplan		Cabinet	Before 27 Sep 2024		Nigel Smith, Strategic Planning Manager nigel.smith@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6

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**EXTRACT OF ITEMS FROM THE CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN THAT RELATE TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Led By</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Update</b>
1	Define what you want your scrutiny panels to achieve.	<p>To be discussed with the scrutiny committee but approach based on the 4 principles of good scrutiny would make sense: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides critical friend challenge to policymakers and decision makers</li> <li>• Enables the voice and concerns to the public</li> <li>• Is carried out by independent-minded people who lead and own the scrutiny role</li> <li>• Drives improvement in public services</li> </ul>	Scrutiny Committee	May 2024	To be agreed with members of O&S outside of formal meeting in consultation with Chair, Vice Chair and Scrutiny Officer
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.	<p>Will be incorporated within the Member training programme being developed.</p> <p>Group Leaders need to reinforce the importance of attending training with their groups.</p>	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development	May 2024	Training provided on 4 June 2024 and recording will be uploaded to GrowZone.

3	Consider how the provision of training can be improved to increase knowledge transfer and support members with ongoing training needs e.g., use of one-to-one coaching the provisional 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	May 2024	Training provided on 4 June 2024 and recording will be uploaded to GrowZone.
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, Member and Scrutiny Manager	In progress	SO appointed 26 March 2024.
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 every meeting it will be for members to take forward with the Scrutiny Officer.	Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny Officer	Ongoing action	Forward Plan included in every Work programme report and Executive have been made aware of meeting dates.
6	Proper and effective reporting onwards to council and cabinet by O&S as 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	Ongoing action	Chair and Vice Chair have been sent meeting dates for Cabinet and advised of need to attend where referrals have been made

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	Not started	Scrutiny Officer to discuss with Chair and Vice-Chair
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	Ongoing action	Scrutiny Officer actively follows up on item requests at meetings.
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	TBC	May be provided by the Scrutiny Officer as a worksheet
10	Specific O&S training for the opposition to encourage effective opposition role. There is specific scrutiny training for groups in opposition to assist with scrutiny work and assist them in being more effective throughout the council.	Will be incorporated within the Member training programme being developed.	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development	May 2024	Training provided on 4 June 2024 and recording will be uploaded to GrowZone.

11	Scrutiny needs to actively seek to implement the use of Task and Finish Groups.	This is for the Chair and Committee to consider with the support of the Scrutiny Officer.	Chair of Scrutiny Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny Officer	Not started	No requests for Task and Finish Groups have been made by the Committee, previous requests cancelled due to lack of interest from Members
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	Complete	Briefings will become standard before 'call to account' to best prepare Members for the item.
13	Establish proactive annual programme of work and agenda setting.	This is for the Chair and Committee to consider, with the support of Scrutiny Officer.	Chair of Scrutiny Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny Officer	May 2024	Ensure meetings take place with Chair and Vice Chair to set a provisional work programme for the Civic Year (subject to change)
14	Provide O&S training in Chairing Skills.	Will be incorporated within the Member training programme being developed.	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development	TBC	

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 looked at.	Chair of Scrutiny Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny Officer	Ongoing action	Referrals will be included in the Committee's Resolutions report so the Committee can follow up on recommendations.
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 this 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	Ongoing action	Exec Members expected to present their relevant reports to O&S and have been advised of the dates of the committee
18	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.	Committee Services and the Scrutiny Officer will make sure everything is accurately captured.	Scrutiny Officer	Complete	Resolutions report captures specific requests, supported by minutes produced and access to the YouTube recording of the meeting
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	Ongoing action	Scrutiny Officer has advised the Executive of Committee dates for 2023-24 and will provide notice when required to attend meetings.

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	Ongoing action	Will ensure both Chair and Vice-Chair are included to attend so at least one is able to present referrals
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	Complete	Reasons for a recommendation not being accepted by Cabinet will be included in the Committee's Resolutions report.



**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**18 JUNE 2024**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: Full Year Update on Comments, Compliments and Complaints (3C's) 23/24**

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COUNCILLOR VAL BRYANT

PRIORITY: PEOPLE FIRST

**1. SUMMARY**

1.1 This information note is to provide an update on the full year (23/24) 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.

2.4 The Council implemented a new customer relationship management (CRM) system in February 2024 moving from Achieve to Connect\_CRM. This report covers all 3C's from the previous system in addition to those logged on the new CRM.

**3. INFORMATION TO NOTE**

3.1 During 23/24 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 rose slightly.

- 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 417 in 22/23 to 384 in 23/24 (an 8% decrease). Of the total 384 complaints, 205 (53.4%) relate to services delivered by our key contractors, including our waste and recycling contractors (77) and the leisure centres (128).
- 3.4 The percentage of stage 1 complaints resolved within the SLA of 10 days has risen from 77% in 22/23 to 86% in 23/24, which is 6% above the target of 80%. April saw the lowest number of complaints logged with (8), with June coming in second lowest with only (9) logged.
- 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 (x10 – down from 21 in 22/23); however, this is 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 has dropped even further, to below 0.5%.
- 3.8 Appendix B provides a breakdown of all 3C's received by service and type. The areas of highest complaints reported directly were Housing Needs (34) and Revenues Billing and Recovery (30).

Specific areas of Housing Needs complaints were regarding:

- NHC not having a duty to house
- Incorrect procedure being followed
- Unsuitable housing

Some specific areas of Revenues Billing and Recovery complaints were regarding:

- Summons being issued
- Customers being ineligible for Discounts/Reductions
- Customer not in receipt of bills

- 3.9 It is worth noting that although Housing Needs received the highest number of complaints (34 in 23/24), the total amount of complaints has decreased from 185 in 22/23, to 179 in 23/24.
- 3.10 The volume of 3C's received by the leisure centres has increased very slightly from 124 in 22/23 to 128 in 23/24.
- 3.11 Some specific complaints in respect of the leisure centres included:

- "Members male changing rooms litter on floor drains & floors dirty" - NHLC

- “Car park too full/busy” - NHLC
- “Flooring in the gym changing rooms need replacing” - Hitchin

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

- “Team member gone over and above helping my daughter who is hard of hearing, with her swimming lessons” - NHLC
- “Your soft play is definitely the best for value around here, my daughter loves it.” – NHLC
- “Excellent combat class + balance with ‘instructor’, her classes are fabulous” - Hitchin

3.13 Urbaser have seen a 27% decrease in complaints logged; with 105 in 22/23 compared to 77 in 23/24.

3.14 Urbaser also received a large number of compliments (74). Some specific compliments included:

- Extreme efficiency of delivery of food caddy ordered end of December
- Resident has complimented litter picking worker who has worked extremely hard and did an excellent job. “He worked on Saturday morning in the area of West View in Letchworth near the water fountain. He cleared the leaves, shrubs and all sorts of rubbish and showed great pride in his job. Well done!”

3.15 There were 142 compliments received directly to the Council. The Careline service received the highest number, with 48. These are generally submitted by a client’s family following an incident where the Careline staff had provided an emergency response service, these included:

- Customer reported that Careline Engineer was very helpful, explained the alarm in great detail and provided an efficient service.
- Customer reports that the Careline Engineer was highly professional and very helpful. She said he was an excellent asset to the Careline Team.
- Customer had problems with her alarm this week. She would like to pass her thanks to the Engineer, who attended and sorted her problem. She stated he was knowledgeable, and kind and she thought he did a wonderful job.

3.16 There were 29 stage 2 complaints over the course of the year; 8 of which were for Planning Control (however 7 of these complaints were not justified). Of the 29 stage 2 complaints only 4 were deemed to be justified.

3.17 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.

3.18 The LGO received 6 complaints during this period which is a 54% decrease from 22/23 (where there were 13 LGO complaints). 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 3 of the 6 received in 23/24 met this criteria as detailed below). 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 6 complaints:

Service (as classified by the LGO)	LGO Decision	Further information
Planning and Development	Closed after initial enquiries – out of jurisdiction	<u>22 016 648 - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman</u>
Planning and Development	Closed after initial enquiries - complaint is premature	
Planning and Development	Closed after initial enquiries - complaint is premature	
Corporate & Other Services	Closed after initial enquiries – out of jurisdiction	<u>23 013 725 - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman</u>
Environmental Health	<i>Status – still open</i>	
Planning and Development	Closed after initial enquiries - complaint is premature	

3.19 0 complaints were upheld by the LGO, however 1 of the 6 is currently still open with LGO for investigation.

3.20 Following an audit conducted by the Shared Internal Audit Service earlier this year, we received a reasonable overall assurance that there are effective controls in operation for the LGO processes. One of the low priority recommendations was to highlight details of the above complaints to the Overview and Scrutiny committee, including what the remedy was and what service improvements have been made. As none of the above complaints were upheld, this detail will be provided within future reports if and when complaints are upheld.

#### 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 on a quarterly basis.

#### 5. APPENDICES

5.1 Appendix A – Dashboard

5.2 Appendix B - Breakdown by service area

#### 6. CONTACT OFFICERS

6.1 Chris Jeffery  
Customer Services Manager  
[Chris.Jeffery@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.Jeffery@north-herts.gov.uk)  
01462 474505

6.2 Jo Dufficy

Service Director - Customers  
[Johanne.Dufficy@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Johanne.Dufficy@north-herts.gov.uk)  
01462 474555

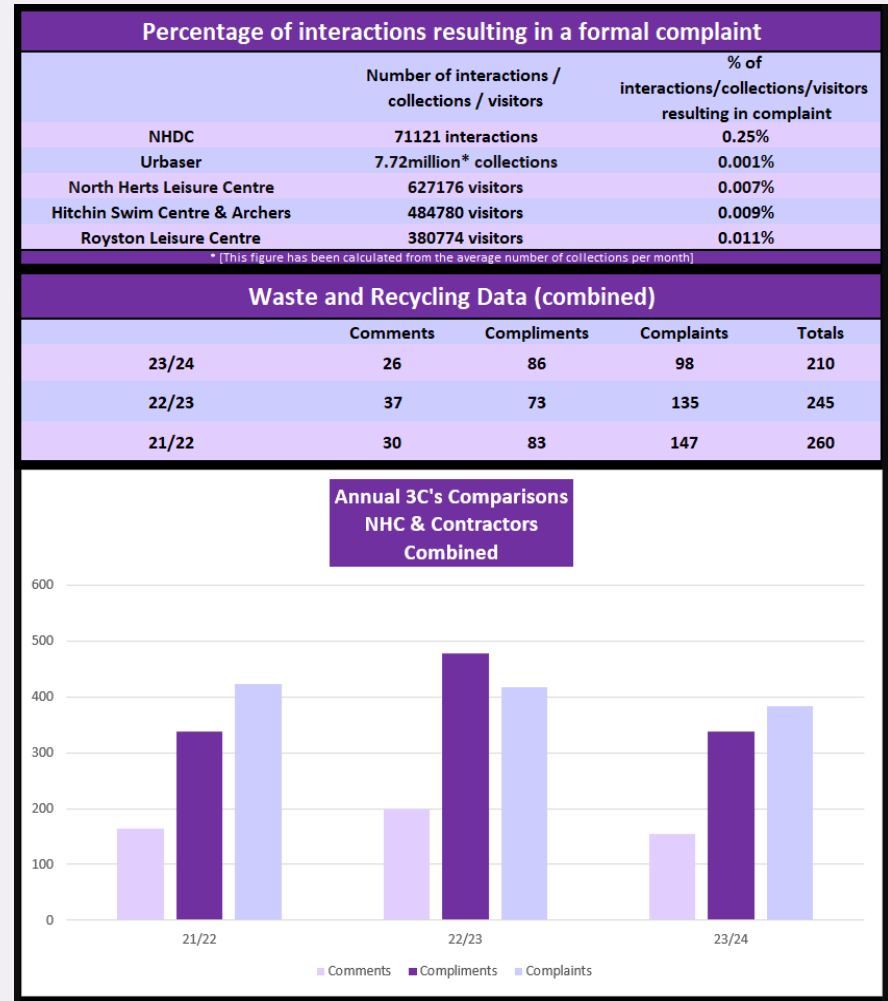
**7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

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# 3C's Performance Summary: 2023/2024

3C's Received directly at NHC - Annual Comparisons			
	21/22	22/23	23/24
Number of Comments received	28	28	35
Number of Compliments received	185	172	142
Number of Complaints received	275	185	179
<b>Total received</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>356</b>
% complaints resolved within 10 working days	77%	77%	86%
% of complaints justified	38%	30%	31%
Complaints received by the LGO	8	13	6
[only 1/6 complaints received by LGO have been investigated by them & remains open]			
Contractor Complaints Data (all contractors)			
	21/22	22/23	23/24
Number of Comments received	136	170	120
Number of Compliments received	153	305	195
Number of Complaints received	148	232	205
<b>Total received</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>520</b>
Combined Totals			
	21/22	22/23	23/24
Number of Comments received	164	198	155
Number of Compliments received	338	477	337
Number of Complaints received	423	417	384
<b>Total received</b>	<b>925</b>	<b>1092</b>	<b>876</b>



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**Breakdown of 3C's by service area – 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

<b>Chief Executive</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Compliments</b>	<b>Complaints</b>
Managing Director	0	0	1
<b>Regulatory</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Compliments</b>	<b>Complaints</b>
Environmental Health - Commercial	0	2	2
Environmental Health - Protection	1	3	13
Housing Needs	1	13	34
Parking Services	1	0	4
Planning Control & Conservation	1	8	27
<b>Place</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Compliments</b>	<b>Complaints</b>
Active Communities	0	3	0
Leisure	1	0	1
Parks & Open Spaces / Green Space	1	22	10
Waste Management	9	12	21
<b>Customer</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Compliments</b>	<b>Complaints</b>
Benefits	0	4	5
Careline	3	48	21
Customer Service Centre	11	9	4
MSU Post & Administration	1	7	2
Revenues Billing and Recovery	4	2	30
Revenue Technical	0	0	1
<b>Legal &amp; Community</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Compliments</b>	<b>Complaints</b>
Communities & Community Safety	0	5	0
Committee Services	1	0	0
Electoral Services	0	0	1
Licensing	0	3	1
Enforcement / Enviro Crime	0	1	0
<b>Commercial/Enterprise</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Compliments</b>	<b>Complaints</b>
Markets	0	0	1
<b>NHDC totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>Contractor Data</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Compliments</b>	<b>Complaints</b>
Waste (Urbaser)	35	74	77
NHLC	21	21	41
Hitchin Swim Centre	30	65	44
Royston Leisure	34	35	43
<b>Contractor totals</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>Combined totals</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>384</b>

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
18 JUNE 2024**

**PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF REPORT:**

REPORT OF: Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2023-2024

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: N/A

COUNCIL PRIORITY: N/A

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

A Call to Account to investigate the Harkness Court Refurbishment was requested by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 March 2023, which then took place with the Service Director – Enterprise and the Building Surveyor on 7 November 2023.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Committee:

- 2.1. Note the content of the Vice Chair's report, attached as Appendix A, and endorse the finding included within.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1. To ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitor and approve recommendations following Call to Account procedures.

**4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1. No other options were considered.

**5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- 5.1. This is a report required following a Call to Account taking place. No further consultation has taken place with Members.

**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 request was made for a Call to Account to take place at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on [9 March 2023](#), following which Officers were consulted and requested to attend and produce a report to provide their account.
- 7.2. The Call to Account then took place on the [7 November 2023](#), with the Service Director – Enterprise and Building Surveyor in attendance to provide their account.

## **8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1. That the Vice Chair’s report on the Harkness Court Refurbishment be reviewed and the contents noted by the Committee, following the Call to Account which took place on 7 November 2024.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. Section 6.3.4(b)-(c) within the Council Constitution states that:
  - (a) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may ask people to attend to give evidence or answer questions about any items on their agenda. Meetings should be conducted in accordance with the following principles:
    - i. That the business be conducted fairly and all members of the Committee be given the opportunity to ask questions of attendees, and to contribute and speak;
    - ii. That those assisting the Committee by giving evidence be treated with respect and courtesy;
    - iii. That any investigation be conducted so as to maximise the efficiency of the investigation and analysis; and
    - iv. That the business be conducted as efficiently as possible.
  - (b) Following any investigation or review, the Committee shall prepare a report, for submission to the Cabinet and/or Council as appropriate and shall make its report and findings public.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. There are no known financial implications that apply to this report.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1. Good Risk Management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.

## **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.

## **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 There are no known Human Resources implications that apply to this report.

## **16. APPENDICES**

- 16.1 Appendix A – Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny 2023-2024 – Call to Account Report on the Harkness Court Refurbishment

## **17. CONTACT OFFICERS**

- 17.1 James Lovegrove, Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager  
[James.Lovegrove@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:James.Lovegrove@north-herts.gov.uk)

## **18. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 18.1 [Request for the Call to Account at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 9 March 2023 – Minute 203 refers](#)
- 18.2 [Call to Account document provided for the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 7 November 2024](#)

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## **CALL TO ACCOUNT ON THE HARKNESS COURT REFURBISHMENT - 7 November 2023**

### **REPORT OF THE VICE CHAIR 2023-24**

I thank Steve Crowley, Service Director – Enterprise and Nafees Parker, Building Surveyor, who were in attendance to provide their account, and Members of the Overview and Scrutiny committee who asked incisive questions.

The Service Director – Enterprise presented their report entitled 'Call to account on the Harkness Court Refurbishment', and advised that:

- The aim was to revert Harkness Court back into residential use, as four flats, from its current use as offices.
- The start date for refurbishment was delayed from 2018 to August 2020, the building work had been completed, however, there were a number of additional items that needed to be undertaken to enable it to be rented out. This work was scheduled to complete by the start of February 2024.
- The lack of a formal project or project manager in place, plus changes in personnel at Stevenage Borough Council and North Herts Council combined with the impact of Covid, had caused delays in starting this project.
- Another delay was complying with the requirement to ensure that the furthest point a fire engine can park from the building was no more than 45 metres. This was part of the previously mentioned work that needed to be undertaken.
- On completion Harkness Court would be leased out to rent by Broadwater Hundred Property Management Ltd, a trading company wholly owned by the Council which would provide a revenue income of £16,000 per year.

This project was in Councillor Levett's portfolio as part of the Conservative administration at the beginning of the project in 2018 then progressed under the Joint Administration until completion in 2024. It is clear that the project was started without clear project management and that it continued to be viewed as a small project that didn't need reviewing.

The main findings of the Call to Account concerned the requirement for each project to have:

- a named project manager at the beginning of each new project.
- clear identification of each project's scope.
- a detailed risk assessment.
- on-going agile project management using project software.
- understanding of Building Control requirements.
- a capital budget set at an independent project level to aid financial transparency.
- trained and experienced project managers at the Council to manage any contract.
- consistent staffing throughout its course.

There has been a positive response to the 'Lessons learned' document from the Service Director – Enterprise who has recently updated me on progress with meeting these concerns.

**Cllr Val Bryant**

Vice-Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee, May 2024

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
18 JUNE 2024**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF REPORT: COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-24 (END OF YEAR)**

REPORT OF: REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - RESOURCES

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: FINANCE 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 23-24 at the end of Quarter 4, which includes:

- Progress against the completion of Council projects and milestones
- Requests to change milestone dates
- New milestones

**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 and changes to milestone dates.
- That Cabinet note the completion in Q4 of the projects detailed in paragraph 8.5.

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 aware of progress made.

- 5.2 A draft of the Quarter 4 update was provided to Risk and Performance Management Group (RPMG) in May. The Group has a standing invite to the Executive Member for Finance and IT (has responsibility for performance monitoring), 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. RPMG were asked to comment on the content and format of the CDP Q4 update. Unfortunately due to the timing of the meeting, no Councillors were able to attend.

- 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 28 March 2024.

## **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 The CDP brings together projects, risks, and performance indicators together in one document. The content for the 2023/24 Delivery Plan was set by Cabinet in March 2023, with the intention that it is updated throughout the year.

- 7.2 In March 2024, Cabinet agreed a revised set of projects for the 2024/25 Delivery Plan. This means that some of the projects contained within this update will not feature on the 2024/25 Delivery Plan, but will be monitored as part of Service Plans. This is reflected in some of the comments against the milestones.

## **8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 Appendix A provides an update on the progress made in delivering the Council Plan 2023-24. Whilst it is labelled as a Quarter 4 update, it generally reflects the latest position at the time that the report was written. Milestones completed before January 2024, and reported in previous updates, have been removed.

- 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.

### **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. As a number of the projects will not feature in the 2024-25 Delivery Plan, there has not been a full update for new milestones to be added as part of this report. One milestone has been added for the Oughtonhead Weir project (highlighted in blue in Appendix A), as this is one of the projects that will form part of the 2024-25 Delivery Plan. Further milestones will be added/ updated as part of the Quarter 1 report (in September). This will also provide an opportunity to review the number and presentation of milestones. Having fewer projects on the Delivery Plan gives scope to provide more detail against each project.

### **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:

- Charnwood House
- Empty Homes Strategy
- Pay on Exit Parking Review
- Local Authority Housing Fund
- Local Plan Delivery and Review
- Museum Storage
- Delivering Housing on Council Land
- Oughtonhead Common Weir
- Resident/Public EV Charging in our Car Parks
- Waste and Street Cleansing contract procurement
- Waste Depots
- Work with relevant partners to prevent and relieve homelessness
- Master Planning
- Town Centre Strategies

### **8.5 Completed projects this quarter.**

For the following projects, all relevant milestones have been completed in Q4 and they are now shown as complete for Delivery Plan purposes:

- Cycling Network
- Health Inequalities
- Options for Solar PV on Leisure Centres
- Leisure contract procurement
- Playground Renovation Programme
- Shared Prosperity Fund

## 8.6 **Projects for 2024-25**

As set out in the report to O&S and Cabinet in March, the projects in the Delivery Plan will be rationalised for 2024-25. The projects that are due to form the Delivery Plan are:

- Churchgate
- Waste and Street Cleansing Contract
- Leisure Centre Decarbonisation
- Review of Local Plan
- Digital Transformation
- Pay on Exit Parking
- Engaging the community on our finances and how we spend our money
- Oughtonhead Common Weir
- Town Centre Strategies
- Residential/ Public EV Charging

## 8.7 **Performance Indicators**

For Q4, there are 11 Green performance indicators. Three further indicators are for information only, with no target set against them. Explanations for performance are detailed in Appendix A. The intention is to change the performance indicators that will be monitored during 2024-25 to give a more strategic view. This is covered by a separate report on this agenda.

## 8.8 **Ideagen (previously known as Pentana)**

All the detail behind the projects, risks and performance indicators is available to view in Ideagen, the Council's performance and risk software. A guest login is provided on the intranet for any member to use, along with a procedure note and short video on how to view the data.

[Ideagen Risk Management \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

## 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 Good Risk Management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.

11.2 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 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 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.

**16. APPENDICES**

16.1 Appendix A – Council Delivery Plan 23-24 Q4 Monitoring Report

**17. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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**18. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

18.1 None

**Council Delivery Plan – Status Key**

Status	Description									
<b>Projects</b>										
	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.									
	Originally envisaged project cancelled.									
	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.									
<b>Risks</b>										
	Assessed as a low risk.									
	Assessed as a medium risk.									
	Assessed as a high risk.									
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4	7	9								
2	5	8								
1	3	6								
<b>PIs</b>										
	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.									
	IdeaGen 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.									
	IdeaGen cannot calculate a direction of travel, as previous data is not available for comparison.									

## 2023/24 Council Delivery Plan

Generated on: 31 May 2024

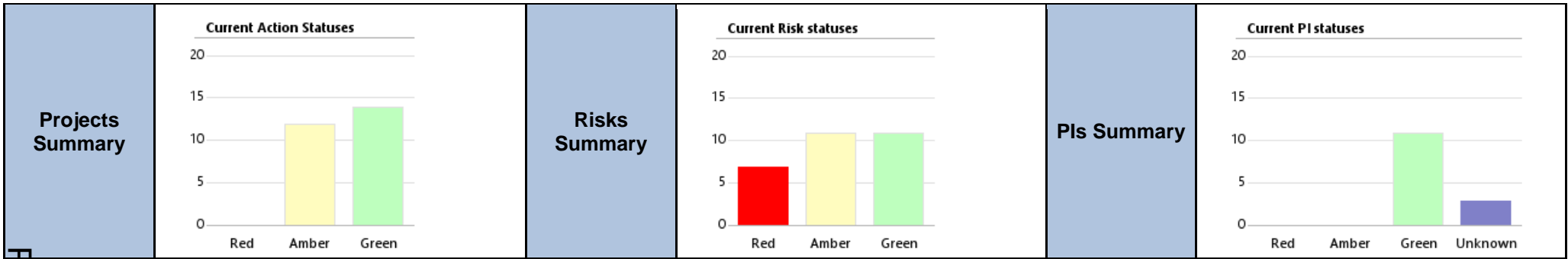


Project	Status
Royston Leisure Centre Solar Thermal	
Charnwood House	
Empty Homes Strategy	
Finalise Pay on Exit Parking Review	
Local Authority Housing Fund	
Local Plan Delivery and Review	
Museum Storage	
New Ways of Delivering Housing on Council Land	
Oughtonhead Common Weir	
Resident/Public EV Charging in our Car Parks	
Waste and Street Cleansing Contract Procurement	
Waste Depots	
Work with relevant partners to prevent and relieve homelessness whenever possible	
Churchgate	
Digital Transformation	
Enterprise Strategy	
Financial Sustainability/Balancing our Budget	
Master Planning	
Pursue commercial leasing opportunity for Royston Town Hall Annexe	
Town Centre Recovery	
Town Centre Strategies	
Cycling Network	
Health Inequalities	
Investigate Options for Solar PV on Leisure Centres	
Leisure Contract Procurement	
Playground Renovation Programme	
Shared Prosperity Fund	



# Status Summaries

Generated on: 31 May 2024




Page 57



# 2023/24 Council Delivery Plan

Generated on: 31 May 2024







	<b>Royston Leisure Centre Solar Thermal</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	31-Mar-2024	<b>Progress</b>	83%	<b>Original Date</b>	31-Mar-2023
<b>Project Summary</b>	Installation of Solar Thermal technology at Royston Leisure Centre.						
<b>Latest Update</b>	17-Apr-2024 Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding has been secured, along with additional Capital funding, to install a variety of energy efficiency measures at our leisure facilities to improve their carbon footprint. When looking at the optimum solutions for the leisure centres, it was agreed that air source heat pumps would be installed, but solar thermal will not be included at Royston leisure centre. As such, this action has been cancelled and the currently recorded Council Delivery Plan item will be archived following presentation of the 2023/24 year-end monitoring report to the relevant committees. The Council Delivery Plan for 2024/25 will include details of key milestones and risks associated with the wider decarbonisation project.						
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>				
Decision on project viability.	31-Mar-2024	Yes	When looking at the optimum solutions for the leisure centres, it was agreed that air source heat pumps would be installed, but solar thermal will not be included at Royston.				
Decision received on our Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant application.	31-Mar-2024	Yes	Funding secured in February 2024.				


If project proceeds, further milestones to be developed and incorporated into the Council Delivery Plan.			31-Mar-2024	No	No longer applicable, as we are not continuing with this project.				
Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
As project not proceeding, the risks detailed below are no longer relevant: 1. Solar Thermal not viable alongside installation of Solar PV. 2. Tender returns over budget. 3. Delays to procurement/project delivery.		5	1	5					

	<b>Charnwood House</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	31-Oct-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<div style="width: 80%;"><div style="background-color: #4f81bd; height: 10px;"></div></div> 80%	<b>Original Date</b>	30-Apr-2023		
<b>Project Summary</b>	Leasing the property as a Community Hub.								
<b>Latest Update</b>	14-May-2024 Following discussions with Hitchin Bid, a basis for them taking on a new lease is emerging. This will involve the Council carrying out further works to put the property into a basic office specification. In order to progress the Hitchin Bid interest, further consultancy work will be necessary to develop a specification of works, ahead of an Agreement for Lease, whereupon the Council would mobilise the works. It will also be necessary to ensure that all stakeholders are satisfied that due care and process has been followed, to establish that all community users who could reasonably have an interest in taking the building on have had ample opportunity to do so. In view of the considerable amount of work needing to be completed, we now anticipate presenting a further report to Cabinet by the end of October 2024.								
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>						
Undertake formal marketing exercise.	31-Jan-2024	Yes	After extensions to the marketing period, exercise concluded on 26 January 2024. Although we anticipated that potentially two parties would present proposals, none were forthcoming, and this leaves us with no formal interest.						
Following marketing exercise, evaluate options.	31-Mar-2024	Yes	Following conclusion of marketing exercise, meeting held with Procurement to prepare for early discussions with Hitchin Bid/Creative/Initiative to discuss future plans. A basis for Hitchin Bid taking on a new lease is emerging, although further work is necessary to progress their interest.						
Present report to Cabinet on the preferred options.	30-Apr-2024	No	Due date to change to 31 October 2024. Now anticipate presenting a further report to Cabinet by the end of October 2024. Project to be removed from the Council Delivery Plan for 2024/25, although could be re-introduced once there is a viable plan in place.						
When Cabinet report presented, finalise arrangements i.e., negotiate Heads of Terms with selected tenant, seek further Cabinet decision, complete lease.	30-Apr-2024	No	Future actions and dates still to be confirmed, as dependent on how we take things forward. Work will continue throughout 2024/25. Project to be removed from the Council Delivery Plan for 2024/25, although could be re-introduced once there is a viable plan in place. If so, future milestones will be confirmed at this 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.		5	5	3					

3. Viability of Listed Building consent conditions.									
4. Demand for community hub.									
5. Delays due to Asset of Community Value (ACV) listing.									


	<b>Empty Homes Strategy</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	30-Sep-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">75%</div>	<b>Original Date</b>	01-Sep-2022		
<b>Project Summary</b>	Develop and start to implement a strategy to reduce numbers of empty homes.								
<b>Latest Update</b>	08-Apr-2024 Cabinet adopted the Empty Homes Strategy 2024-29 on 6 February 2024 to help reduce the number of long-term empty homes in the district. Although the number of long-term empty homes in North Herts is small, the Strategy aims to increase the opportunity for this unused resource to help meet the Council's housing needs. Funding has been agreed for a part-time officer to implement the Strategy and the adoption of the Strategy now allows the recruitment of that officer to commence. Although the recruitment of the officer is a priority, competing urgent demands on the Environmental Health service, the known lack of suitable competent officers available to employ and the general difficulties NHC has recruiting competent professional staff means that this is unlikely to happen until September 2024. With a Strategy now in place, there is a reputational risk associated with a perceived lack of progress returning empty homes to occupation. However, as this is a long-term approach and we are in the early stages, this is assessed as low risk.								
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>						
Present to Cabinet for adoption of the Strategy.	16-Jan-2024	Yes	Strategy adopted by Cabinet in February 2024.						
Commence implementation of Strategy post adoption, including advertising and appointing officer to post.	17-Jan-2024	Yes	Milestone for Ideagen purposes, with the completion date of 7 February 2024 simply reflecting that implementation of the Strategy could commence following its adoption by Cabinet.						
Attempt to recruit to new Housing Improvement Officer role, created to help deliver approved Strategy.	31-Mar-2024	No	<b>Proposed change to due date</b> - Recruitment could not commence until the Strategy had been adopted. Due to a number of issues, including competing urgent demands on the Environmental Health service, we now anticipate being able to appoint to the post by the end of September 2024.						
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Original Score</b>	<b>Current Score</b>	<b>Target Score</b>	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Trend</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Target</b>
<u>Implementation</u> - Securing resources required to deliver the Strategy and achieve objectives. - Limited number of empty homes that we can actually take forward under the Strategy. - Cost to Council of maintaining any empty properties that we acquire. - Political/reputational risk associated with a perceived lack of progress and/or cost/benefit analysis of our approach.		4	1	1					


	<b>Finalise Pay on Exit Parking Review</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	31-Jul-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<div style="width: 75%;"><div style="background-color: #4F81BD; height: 10px;"></div></div> 75%	<b>Original Date</b>	30-Sep-2022			
<b>Project Summary</b>	Procure suppliers and start replacing all existing parking machines in early 2024.									
<b>Latest Update</b>	02-May-2024 We have procured a supplier by framework mini competition to replace existing parking machines/associated back-office software, with the contract scheduled to commence on 29 April 2024. An inception meeting has already been held and initial preliminary works have commenced. The majority of installation works will be undertaken during 2024/25, although we are unable to confirm precise timings until the implementation plan has been agreed. Due to the delay in awarding the contract and the forthcoming local elections, now expect procurement of contractor to replace tariff boards and updated TROs to be completed and advertised by the end of July 2024. When we have an agreed phased implementation plan in place, further milestones will be reported via the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan. A key risk is negative public reaction to changes and disruption during works, and we aim to manage this in partnership with the contractor via a comprehensive communications plan.									
<b>Milestone</b>		<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>						
Procure supplier by framework mini competition to replace existing parking machines.		31-Jan-2024	Yes	Contract commenced on 29 April 2024.						
Contractor to commence preliminary works (with the majority of works being undertaken during 2024/25).		31-Mar-2024	Yes	Inception meeting held prior to contract start date (29 April 2024) and initial preliminary works commenced. Majority of installation works to be undertaken during 2024/25.						
Update TROs.		30-Apr-2024	No	Due date to change to 30 August 2024. Ongoing, but now expected to be completed and advertised by the end of August 2024 to accommodate new payment methods.						
Procure supplier to replace tariff boards.		31-May-2024	No	Due date to change to 31 July 2024. Revised target date due to resources being focussed on the initial parking machines procurement.						
<b>Page 60</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Original Score</b>	<b>Current Score</b>	<b>Target Score</b>	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Trend</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Target</b>
	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					


	<b>Local Authority Housing Fund</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	31-May-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<div style="width: 85%;"><div style="background-color: #4F81BD; height: 10px;"></div></div> 85%	<b>Original Date</b>	31-Mar-2024
<b>Project Summary</b>	Delivery of additional housing through Registered Providers.						
<b>Latest Update</b>	07-May-2024 Four units due to be delivered by settle via Round Two allocated funding. Awaiting delivery of the final unit, which is due imminently.						
<b>Milestone</b>		<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>			
Delivery of housing by Registered Provider(s) via Round Two allocated funding.		31-Mar-2024	No	Due date to change to 31 May 2024. Awaiting delivery of the final unit, which is due imminently.			



Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
<p>Risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reputational risk of not being able to use funding made available by Government, as it is not enough to make delivery viable.</li> <li>- Terms of the funding are not flexible enough to allow the partial delivery against our allocation.</li> <li>- Uncertainty relating to grant conditions leads to an inability to recover all expected costs.</li> <li>- Low risk associated with signing expression of interest or subsequent Memorandum of Understanding, as the grant allows withdrawal at any time.</li> </ul>		8	1	1	Local Authority Housing Fund - Number of main element (smaller) homes delivered via Round One allocation			2	2
					Local Authority Housing Fund - Number of bridging element (larger) homes delivered via Round One allocation			1	1



	Local Plan Delivery and Review	Due Date	30-Sep-2024	Progress	<input type="text" value="33%"/>	Original Date	31-Mar-2024
<b>Project Summary</b>	To undertake and complete various projects relating to the implementation of the Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted November 2022) and to progress work associated with the early review required by Policy IMR2 of the Plan.						
<b>Page 61</b>	<b>Latest Update</b>	05-Jun-2024 The anticipated Cabinet reporting date for the Sustainability SPD has been rescheduled to September 2024 following appointment of a new Executive Member for Planning & Transport and the calling of the General Election for 4 July 2024.					
		30-Apr-2024 The programme for supporting documents has been further reviewed in light of new legislation. A Biodiversity SPD will not presently be proceeded with. This follows the introduction of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, and the issuing of accompanying Government guidance which covers many of the issues a SPD might have sought to address. The Levelling Up & Regeneration Act (November 2023) will make it a mandatory requirement for Councils to prepare an authority-wide Design Code for their area and include it as part of their Local Plan. The Design Code SPD will now be prepared with this requirement in mind. It will still be developed as an SPD in support of relevant policies in the adopted Local Plan but now with the additional aim of subsequently incorporating any work into the approved review of the Local Plan. The Council has successfully recruited to both a professional ecologist and principal urban design post to provide additional capacity on these matters. Consultation on the draft Sustainability SPD closed on 16 February 2024. Responses raised issues around practical implementation, and these have been further reviewed. Presentation of the final SPD for adoption is on the Forward Plan for Cabinet in June 2024. A revised project will be included in the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan focussing on the review of the Local Plan.					
Milestone		Due Date	Complete	Note			
Adoption of Sustainability SPD.		31-Mar-2024	No	Due date to change to September 2024. Consultation on the draft SPD ran from 4 January to 16 February 2024. Consultation responses raised issues around practical implementation. These have been further reviewed and presentation of the final SPD for adoption is scheduled for September 2024.			
Approval of draft Biodiversity SPD for consultation.		31-Mar-2024	No	Milestone to be deleted. The Strategic Planning Matters report to Cabinet in March 2024 identified that a large quantity of standardised, national-level guidance and regulations had been released to support the statutory implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain. Consequently, it is not presently felt that there is a need for a North Herts-specific SPD on this matter. This position will be kept under review.			
Adoption of Biodiversity SPD.		30-Sep-2024	No	Milestone to be deleted. As above.			


Approval of draft Design Guide SPD for consultation.			30-Sep-2024	No	Strategic Planning Matters report to Cabinet (March 2024) identified work on this project will be progressed further in 2024/25 following the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act and successful recruitment.				
Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
Risks: - Inadequate guidance leads to scheme outcomes that do not appropriately respond to, or contribute towards, corporate objectives and priorities of climate change, environment, economy and place. - Poor scheme outcomes that do not appropriately respond to local character and context. - Failure to retain/recruit sufficiently experienced officers to implement required programme of work. - Failure to secure funding to resource the process. - Adverse appeal findings on other/non-Local Plan sites if progress on the Local Plan Review is delayed or stalled. - Government intervention if inadequate progress is made upon Local Plan Review.		5	5	3					

Page 62		<b>Museum Storage</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	30-Sep-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<input type="text" value="57%"/>	<b>Original Date</b>	31-Mar-2024
	<b>Project Summary</b>	Assess feasibility of constructing a new fit-for-purpose museum storage facility and including a commercial storage facility as part of the project. Decide the preferred way forward and if required, proceed to the next project phase.						
	<b>Latest Update</b>	03-May-2024 As previously reported, the current administration has indicated they would like a full options appraisal on this venture presented post-election. Officers are developing a full options appraisal report, which is expected to be completed by September 2024. There will remain uncertainty regarding the direction and progress of this project until the outcome of the election is known, and the full options appraisal report has been considered. In the meantime, we continue to manage the risks associated with the current storage facilities to the best of our ability within available resources. This item will not be included in the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan but will be re-introduced once a defined project has been approved and a deliverable plan is in place.						
<b>Milestone</b>			<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>			
Consider the best way to deal with currently stored items should the project progress.			31-Mar-2024	No	Due date to change to 30 September 2024 for administrative purposes only. Officers are developing a full options appraisal report, which is expected to be completed by September 2024. Existing site not cleared and the need to do this will depend on the Cabinet decision on the preferred option. How to deal with currently stored items will need to have been considered by the decision date to avoid unnecessary delays should the project proceed.			
Develop further milestones to reflect Cabinet decision e.g., appoint Project Manager/Quantity Surveyor, finalise Business Case and detailed specifications. (On Hold)			31-Mar-2024	No	Due date to change to 30 September 2024 for administrative purposes only. Completion of this milestone is only possible following a decision on the preferred option (timing of this still to be confirmed). This project will not be included in the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan but will be re-introduced (with further milestones etc.) once a defined project has been approved and a deliverable plan is in place.			
Report presented to Leadership Team, PLB and Cabinet seeking a decision on the preferred way forward. (On Hold)			31-Mar-2024	No	Due date to change to 30 September 2024 for administrative purposes only. Officers are developing a full options appraisal report, which is expected to be completed by September 2024. Timing of report seeking a decision yet to be confirmed.			


Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Funding the project and ongoing/future budgetary pressures. 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					


	New Ways of Delivering Housing on Council Land	Due Date	30-Nov-2024	Progress	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">83%</div>	Original Date	01-Dec-2022		
<b>Project Summary</b>	Alternative ways to deliver housing on surplus Council land (other than sale to a developer) to provide a greater financial return to the Council.								
<b>Latest Update</b>	15-May-2024 Following receipt of external consultant's focussed report on sites, the intention is to treat each of the four opportunities individually on their own merits. Estates are currently consulting with Planning on a variety of issues to inform the best approach for each one. Once this work is concluded, we should then be in a position to seek marketing advice whilst reporting is completed to establish that sites are surplus to Council requirements. Currently anticipate marketing advice and subsequent reporting to be completed by the end of November 2024. Project will not be included in the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan, as standard disposal may be the most viable approach (although this is still to be determined), which is a business-as-usual activity for Estates. However, individual sites could be re-introduced should we decide to develop ourselves. Risk level still assessed as medium, as there remains uncertainty regarding the best approach for each site. Ultimately, the risk level will depend on whether we pursue a standard disposal route or choose to develop sites ourselves.								
<b>Milestone</b>		<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>					
	Further work to clarify report findings and to focus on the detail of specific options, leading to a report/further advice on the preferred options.	31-Jan-2024	Yes	Following receipt of the external consultant's focussed report on sites, the intention is to treat each opportunity individually, on its own merits.					
	If required, and dependent on market research findings, develop milestones/timings to report and make a formal decision on the preferred way forward.	31-Mar-2024	No	Due date to change to 30 November 2024. Currently anticipate marketing advice and subsequent reporting to be completed by the end of November 2024. Project will not be included in the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan, as standard disposal may be the most viable approach (although this is still to be determined), which is a business-as-usual activity for Estates. Therefore, further milestones for Council Delivery Plan monitoring purposes will not be required.					
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					


	<b>Oughtonhead Common Weir</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	30-Sep-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<input type="text" value="66%"/>	<b>Original Date</b>	30-Sep-2024		
<b>Project Summary</b>	Replace the collapsed weir.								
<b>Latest Update</b>	17-Apr-2024 Consultants in the process of submitting designs to Planning and applying to the Environment Agency for required permits. Delays caused by the Environment Agency not providing the data required for modelling purposes. We will be instructing CMS shortly to start preparing tender documentation, so that we are ready to go once we have received the necessary consent. Due to Planning timeframes, we now expect permission to be granted (including any further required design modifications) and contractors to be appointed by the end of September 2024. Works on site may then commence Autumn 2024, although this will be dependent on the weather. If we do not commence works at this time, replacement of the weir is likely to happen in Spring/Summer 2025. Pending replacement, any further deterioration of the partially collapsed weir is unlikely to result in a significant environmental impact.								
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>						
Design documentation and consent submissions completed.	31-Jan-2024	No	Proposed change to due date - Consultants now in the process of submitting designs to Planning and applying to the Environment Agency for required permits. Revised due date of 30 September 2024 reflects when we now expect planning permission to be granted and any required further design modifications to be agreed.						
Introduce further milestones following completion of design/planning stage and procurement process for delivery of the preferred option.	29-Feb-2024	No	Proposed change to due date - Revised due date of 30 September 2024 reflects that further milestones for the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan will be introduced following completion of the design/planning stage and the procurement process for delivery of the preferred option.						
New milestone - Appoint contractor(s) to undertake required works.	30-Sep-2024	No	Instructing CMS shortly to start preparing tender documentation.						
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Original Score</b>	<b>Current Score</b>	<b>Target Score</b>	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Trend</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Target</b>
Risks: - External funding from HCC, EA and residents is not available. - Existing situation deteriorates quickly prior to any works being undertaken. - Issues with contractor resources delay design stage, procurement process or completion of works on site. Leading to: - Full allocated Capital budget being used. - Planned timeline for delivery not being achieved. - Further urgent temporary solutions being required to manage an immediate changing situation.		4	2	1					


	<b>Resident/Public EV Charging in our Car Parks</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	31-Dec-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<input type="text" value="50%"/>	<b>Original Date</b>	31-Mar-2023
<b>Project Summary</b>	Submit grant application to Office for Zero Emission Vehicles for funding. Finalise contract/leases with private sector partner and commence installation of EV charging points.						
<b>Latest Update</b>	02-May-2024 Contract discussions are ongoing with the chosen supplier, and we now expect the contract to be finalised by end of June 2024. This delay is with the supplier. Timing of subsequent milestones to be confirmed as part of approving an agreed delivery and implementation plan with our partner. These will be reported via the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan. Still expect installation of						





	charging points in our outdoor car parks to be in line with OZEV funding requirements. Still assessed as medium risk, as we have yet to agree the contract, lease arrangements and implementation programme.										
Milestone			Due Date	Complete	Note						
Contract finalised with private sector partner.			19-Apr-2024	No	Due date to change to 30 June 2024. Delay is with the private sector partner.						
Complete relevant leases with contractor for the length of the contract.			30-Apr-2024	No	Due date to change to 30 June 2024. Timings still to be confirmed by contractor, as dependent on contract documentation and agreed implementation programme.						
Contractor to commence works and NHC to start promoting project.			30-Jun-2024	No	Due date to change to 31 July 2024 given delay in finalising the contract. Precise timings dependent on the implementation programme agreed with our partner. Still expect project to be delivered in accordance with OZEV grant requirements.						
Installation of all new EV charging points completed.			31-Oct-2024	No	Due date to change to 31 December 2024 due to delay in finalising contract. Implementation programme still to be agreed with our partner. Still expect project to be delivered in accordance with OZEV grant requirements.						
Risks			Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. Not successful in obtaining grant funding (no longer a risk). 2. Unable to identify/procure a private sector partner (no longer a risk). 3. Unable to agree contract conditions/relevant lease arrangements with contractor. 4. Unable to deliver project in accordance with OZEV requirements. 5. Unable to schedule required DNO upgrades in line with implementation programme.				5	5	1					




	<b>Waste and Street Cleansing Contract Procurement</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	01-Aug-2024	<b>Progress</b>	28%	<b>Original Date</b>	01-Apr-2024
<b>Project Summary</b>	Procurement of the Waste and Street Cleansing contract.						
<b>Latest Update</b>	12-Mar-2024 The risk level is likely to remain high throughout the procurement for a number of reasons. In particular, the availability of a suitable depot has not been secured yet and therefore, work has not begun to ensure it is fit for purpose for the start of the contract e.g., electric vehicle infrastructure. Availability of key staff will remain a risk due to the small client team operating on behalf of two authorities. The client team is expecting a vacancy later this year, and vacancies, even if only temporary, will pose a risk if not filled with suitable staff. There are also significant pieces of work needed by corporate teams linked to customer services and online reporting functionality and the provision of a garden waste web portal, which cannot be fully assessed and planned until the award of the contract. Statutory guidance on 'simpler recycling' has not yet been published and therefore the contract is likely to be let with some unknowns that could impact the contract in the future. The costs of the contract are still likely to be over existing budgets despite work to mitigate these, and mobilisation of the contact has been delayed increasing the risks of a successful contract start. This project is subject to a high level of project management and is overseen by a project board. Work to mitigate risks is ongoing, but the size of this contract and its impact mean that risk levels remain high.						
Milestone			Due Date	Complete	Note		
Invitation to submit final tenders and receipt of ISFT responses.			25-Mar-2024	Yes	Final tenders went out on 28 February 2024 and the deadline for responses is now 25 March 2024.		



Evaluation of final tenders and production of Evaluation Report.			01-May-2024	No	Due date to change to 14 June 2024 to reflect the need to clarify some details in the tender responses. Other dates stay the same,				
Project Board sign off of Evaluation Report and award recommendation.			01-Jul-2024	No					
Executive and Cabinet approval.			19-Jul-2024	No					
Contract award.			01-Aug-2024	No					
Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
Risks: - Unable to secure interested bidders (although this risk is unlikely to materialise). - Capacity of key staff. - Depots not fit for purpose/available. - Governments Resources & Waste Strategy differs from specification (outcomes of new Strategy currently in consultation). - Costs are over budget. - Delays to mobilisation lead to insufficient preparation and planning time, leading to mobilisation challenges and inability to secure new fleet for Day 1.		9	9	6					



	<b>Waste Depots</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	01-May-2025	<b>Progress</b>	0%	<b>Original Date</b>	01-May-2025
<b>Project Summary</b>	Securing fit for purpose depot solutions for the future of waste and street cleansing services.						
<b>Latest Update</b>	12-Mar-2024 Draft leases for the Works Road depot site for the waste and recycling contract from May 2025 have been issued to bidders. Negotiations are progressing on the assignment of the existing lease to the Council. It is anticipated that this will be assigned by the end of March 2024. It is unlikely that we can get a new contract signed without securing use of the depot. Once secured, the site will require upgrades to ensure it is fit for purpose and can deliver, in particular the needs of the contractor in relation to charging infrastructure for electric fleet. We continue to consider options and assess when there is an absolute need for a new waste depot, and the proposal for 2024/25 is to remove this element from the Council Delivery Plan until we have a viable plan in place. Risk level still assessed as high, due to the availability of a suitable depot for the new contract not being secured yet and the associated delay in beginning work to ensure it is fit for purpose for the start of the contract.						
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>				
Review of new depot project costs.	01-Mar-2024	No	Consultant to be procured. Proposal is to remove the new waste depot element from the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan until we have a viable plan in place.				
Assignment of Letchworth depot lease.	31-Mar-2024	No	Draft leases issued to bidders. Negotiations progressing on the assignment of the existing lease to the Council. Unlikely that we can get a contract signed without securing use of the depot. Target date changed to mid July.				
Procurement of EV charging infrastructure.	01-Nov-2024	No	Have used tender submissions to start to determine likely charging requirements				

Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
Risks: - Existing depot not fit for purpose. - Unable to secure existing depots in short/medium-term. - Funding not available for EV charging. - Fuel tank not fit for purpose/available for HVO. - Planning permission refused for Buntingford depot, shared space impacts leading to depot not being fit for purpose. - EA change permitting requirements making Buntingford not fit for purpose. - Capital works money not available. - Business case and planning permission not approved for new depot. - Staff capacity not available to deliver related projects.		9	9	5					

	<b>Work with relevant partners to prevent and relieve homelessness whenever possible</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	30-Jun-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<div style="width: 83%; background-color: #4f81bd; color: white; padding: 2px;">83%</div>	<b>Original Date</b>	31-Mar-2024
<b>Project Summary</b>	Work with relevant partners to prevent homelessness at the earliest stage and develop additional accommodation options that help to relieve homelessness whenever possible.						
<b>Latest Update</b>	07-May-2024 All milestones for 2023/24 have been completed (including the adoption of a new Housing Strategy), apart from the development of a temporary accommodation forecasting model. This is due to be undertaken shortly, as part of a review of temporary accommodation needs over the mid/long term. Although we have implemented a number of initiatives to help us manage the risks associated with increasing levels of homelessness, the overall risk level continues to be assessed as high. This project will not be included in the Council Delivery Plan for 2024/25, as working with relevant partners to prevent and relieve homelessness whenever possible is an ongoing, business-as-usual activity. However, the risk entry will be retained on the Risk Register, as there remains uncertainty regarding demand for housing services and options available to accommodate/support these needs.						
<b>Milestone</b>		<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>			
Develop and adopt new five-year Housing Strategy.		31-Mar-2024	Yes	Housing Strategy was adopted by the Cabinet in March 2024 and includes Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, as well as the Tenancy Strategy.			
Develop Single Homeless Pathway Plan.		31-Mar-2024	Yes	Actions underway as part of Strategy action plan for Year 1, including SHAP, a supported housing project for women and existing services provided by One YMCA and Keystage Housing.			
Develop temporary accommodation forecasting model.		31-Mar-2024	No	Due date to change to 30 June 2024. This will be undertaken shortly, as part of a review of temporary accommodation needs over the mid/long term.			
Update Common Housing Allocation Scheme.		31-Mar-2024	Yes	The updated CHAS has been approved by Cabinet with implementation over the coming months.			


Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
1. An unmanageable 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			109	N/A Data Only


	<b>Churchgate</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	31-May-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #4a86e8; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; display: inline-block;">81%</div>	<b>Original Date</b>	31-Mar-2023		
<b>Project Summary</b>	Actions in 2023/24 to progress the long-term regeneration of the shopping centre and surrounding areas.								
<b>Page 68</b> Latest Update	08-May-2024 David Leonard Designs have been appointed to assist the project team in preparing the Investment Prospectus for the UKREiiF event being held between 21-23 May 2024. This event will bring together the public sector, Government, investors, funders, developers and more, and will enable us to highlight opportunities relating to the project and to potentially facilitate new relationships to drive the regeneration forward. We will be publicising further information on the regeneration prior to the UKREiiF event to inform the public and stakeholders of the latest position and we are currently finalising the related engagement plan with our consultant and communications team. Following the UKREiiF event, we will also be consulting with the public and stakeholders. As previously reported, a permanent in-person hub remains on hold until further notice and is now likely to be established later in the project when specific options have been developed. In the meantime, ongoing communication is via the digital hub. Risk level still assessed as high, as we are still in the initial stages and have yet to determine the best way to regenerate the area and achieve objectives. Progress and areas of concern continue to be monitored via regular Project Board meetings. Following the UKREiiF event, further milestones will be developed for the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan.								
<b>Milestone</b>		<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>					
Appointment of specialist support for the masterplan process.		16-Feb-2024	Yes	David Leonard Designs were appointed by LSH to assist the project team in preparing the Investment Prospectus.					
Investment prospectus presented at UKREiiF event.		23-May-2024	Yes						
Open in-person project hub. (On Hold)		31-May-2024	No	The permanent in-person hub is on hold until further notice and we are not able to propose a revised due date at this time. We are now discussing the best ways to engage with stakeholders with our consultant, including the need for and timing of pop-up hubs in the early stages of the project. We now expect the permanent in-person hub to be established later into the project when we have completed further work to develop specific options. In the meantime, ongoing communication will be via the digital hub.					
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	8	6					


	<b>Digital Transformation</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	31-Dec-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<input type="text" value="33%"/>	<b>Original Date</b>	31-Dec-2024		
<b>Project Summary</b>	To invest in and develop a low code digital platform that can be used to transform our services and applications. The programme will span a number of years, but this Council Delivery Plan project only focuses on key activities during the next 12 months.								
<b>Latest Update</b>	01-May-2024 Cabinet adopted the new Digital Strategy on 6 February 2024. We launched our new CRM system, Connect_CRM, on 19 February 2024. We completed initial scoping for replacing the current in-house burials access database and are now awaiting a Strategic Oversight Group decision in mid-May 2024. If we decide to provide a solution using the new digital platform, key milestones and dates will be confirmed in the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan. We are on track to deliver a replacement booking system for Hitchin Town Hall by September 2024. We are due to start work on waste services processes in June 2024, although the precise timing of activities relating to the integration with the new contractors' software can only be confirmed once the new waste contract has been awarded. Risks relating to available resources have reduced with the introduction of a Digital Services team, although these resources have only currently been secured in the short-term.								
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>						
Development of a new Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) and customer portal.	04-Mar-2024	Yes	CRM build was mostly completed in December 2023, with a few minor tasks carried into January 2024. January and February 2024 used for final user testing and training.						
Develop a Digital Strategy.	31-Mar-2024	Yes	The new Digital Strategy (2024-2027) was adopted by Cabinet on 6 February 2024.						
Scope and investigate replacement of Burials system.	30-Jun-2024	No	Initial scoping for the replacement of the current in-house database completed. Currently awaiting a decision by the Strategic Oversight Group on whether this should be provided using the new digital platform. Decision expected mid-May 2024.						
Hitchin Town Hall booking system developed.	30-Sep-2024	No	On track to deliver a replacement booking system by September 2024.						
Integrate Netcall into Microsoft Azure for wider integration capabilities.	30-Sep-2024	No	Needed for wider integration.						
Commence development of waste services processes and preparations for integration with new contractors' software.	01-Oct-2024	No	Due to start work on waste services processes in June 2024. Although initial preparations for integrating with the new contractors' software will commence soon after, there will remain uncertainty on precise timings until the new contract has been awarded.						
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Original Score</b>	<b>Current Score</b>	<b>Target Score</b>	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Trend</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Target</b>
1. Resources within key teams available to deliver. 2. Unexpected limitations within new digital platform. 3. Unexpected delays or limitations relating to the new waste contract/contractor.		6	6	1					

	<b>Enterprise Strategy</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	30-Sep-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<div style="width: 25%;"><div style="background-color: #4f81bd; height: 10px; width: 100%;"></div></div> 25%	<b>Original Date</b>	16-Jan-2024			
<b>Project Summary</b>	Development and approval of an Enterprise Strategy, incorporating Commercial, Economic Development and Tourism.									
<b>Latest Update</b>	03-May-2024 On track to present the draft Strategy to Leadership Team and PLB by the end of May 2024. The Local Enterprise Partnership continue to assist us with the preparation of the Economic Development and Tourism elements, while the Enterprise Team are finalising the Commercial element. Due to the likely scheduling of committee meetings and associated reporting deadlines, still anticipate that the Strategy will go to Cabinet for adoption in September 2024. Officers continue to provide regular updates to the Executive Member. Due to the progress being made, the project continues to be assessed as low risk. This item will not be included in the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan, although significant actions in the approved Strategy could be considered for inclusion at a later date.									
<b>Milestone</b>		<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>						
First draft prepared for comment – Leadership Team/Exec Members.		31-May-2024	No	Target date reflects the timetable agreed with the LEP and the revised timetable for presenting the draft Strategy to Leadership Team and PLB, prior to Cabinet adoption.						
Present Strategy to Leadership Team/PLB.		31-May-2024	No	Draft Strategy to be reviewed/amended in line with feedback from Leadership Team and Executive Members. See above milestone.						
Present Strategy to Cabinet for adoption.		30-Sep-2024	No	As the draft Strategy will now be finalised after the May 2024 local elections, it is unlikely that Cabinet will have opportunity to adopt the Strategy until September 2024 due to the likely scheduling of committee meetings in 2024/25 and the associated reporting deadlines.						
<b>Risks</b>		<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Original Score</b>	<b>Current Score</b>	<b>Target Score</b>	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Trend</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Target</b>
Risks: - Delay in procuring consultants, if required. - Shortage of resource and staff capacity within the Enterprise team. Leading to: - A delay in developing/approving the Strategy and associated resourcing.			2	1	1					


	<b>Financial Sustainability/Balancing our Budget</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	30-Sep-2025	<b>Progress</b>	<div style="width: 83%;"><div style="background-color: #4f81bd; height: 10px; width: 100%;"></div></div> 83%	<b>Original Date</b>	28-Feb-2023	
<b>Project Summary</b>	To deliver a medium term balanced budget for the Council that reflects Council priorities.							
<b>Latest Update</b>	30-Apr-2024 Council approved the 2024/25 budget at the end of February 2024. Budget Hub was launched at the end of March 2024. The Budget Hub will be used to raise awareness of how the Council sets its budgets and get views on priorities for funding. For the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan, this project will be replaced by one focused on budget consultation. Financial sustainability will remain as a significant corporate risk.							
<b>Milestone</b>		<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>				
Budget for 2024/25 approved by Council.		29-Feb-2024	Yes					
Communications on how the Council sets its 2024/25 budget.		29-Feb-2024	Yes	Developed a communications plan to align with the budget agreed by Council at the end of February 2024. This has now been extended into a longer-term plan through the budget cycle to set the 2025/26 budget.				

Respond to expected consultation on funding reform.			30-Sep-2025	No	Not now expected to have consultation until at least summer 2025, as will be after the General Election.				
Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
<p>1. Funding reductions as a result of new funding formula.</p> <p>2. Sales, fees, and charges income shortfalls, either due to rates not tracking inflation and/or reductions in demand.</p> <p>3. Not able to make the required decisions to deliver budget savings required.</p> <p>4. Increases in costs (reductions in income) when contracts are renewed and as a result of inflationary increases.</p> <p>5. Uncertainty over levels of pay inflation required.</p>		9	9	5					


	<b>Master Planning</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	30-Nov-2024	<b>Progress</b>	44%	<b>Original Date</b>	31-Mar-2023
<b>PA06 71</b>	<b>Project Summary</b>	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.					
	<b>Latest Update</b>	<p>05-Jun-2024 The Strategic Masterplans for LG1 North of Letchworth (Local Plan Policy SP15) and NS1 North of Stevenage (Local Plan Policy SP16) are scheduled to be presented to Full Council on 11 July 2024 subject to a positive recommendation by the internal Planning Project Board in June 2024 and referral by Cabinet on 9 July 2024. Remaining dates have been profiled based on committee schedule and project progress and following the appointment of a new Executive Member for Planning &amp; Transport and the calling of the General Election for 4 July 2024.</p> <p>30-Apr-2024 As with the last update, progress remains ongoing with these projects but without further milestones identified in this action being reached. In addition to the sites referenced in the previous update (North of Stevenage, Baldock, Letchworth and East of Luton), the draft masterplan for the GA2 site at Great Ashby is due to be consulted upon in the second half of May 2024. It is expected that formal decisions will be presented to councillors in Summer/Autumn 2024. A senior professional post has now been filled on a fixed-term basis for an initial 18 months, which has provided additional capacity on these projects. This item will not be included in the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan, as progress is dependent on third parties and NHC activities are considered business-as-usual. Strategic oversight will continue via the Project Board and Strategic Planning Matters reports to Cabinet.</p>					
<b>Milestone</b>		<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>			
Approval of pre-application Strategic Masterplan for Baldock sites (Local Plan Policies SP14, BA2, BA3 & BA10).		30-Jun-2024	No	Revised due date estimated as 30 November 2024 based upon current project progress and committee schedule. Pre-application masterplan being prepared under PPA. Public consultation carried out on the proposed draft masterplan in November/December 2023. Work is ongoing to finalise the masterplan for presentation later in the year.			
Approval of pre-application Strategic Masterplan for GA2 North-east of Great Ashby (Local Plan Policy SP18).		30-Jun-2024	No	Revised due date estimated as 30 September 2024 based upon current project progress and committee schedule. See update dated 30 April 2024.			
Approval of pre-application Strategic Masterplan for LG1 North of Letchworth (Local Plan Policy SP15).		30-Jun-2024	No	Due date to change to 11 July 2024. Pre-application masterplan being prepared under PPA. Public consultation on emerging proposals held November/December 2023 with further public consultation on the draft masterplan undertaken in March 2024. Due to be presented to Full Council in July 2024.			



Approval of pre-application Strategic Masterplan for NS1 North of Stevenage (Local Plan Policy SP16).			30-Jun-2024	No	Due date to change to 11 July 2024. An outline planning application was submitted in December 2023. Work to finalise the masterplan, which will be considered separately to the application, is ongoing and due to be presented to Full Council in July 2024.				
Approval of Strategic Masterplan for EL123 East of Luton (Local Plan Policy SP19).			30-Jun-2024	No	Revised due date estimated as 30 September 2024 based upon current project progress and committee schedule. Allocation-wide masterplan being prepared under PPA. Public consultation took place in January and February 2024.				
Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
<p>1. Risk of poor scheme outcomes that do not appropriately respond to local character and context.</p> <p>2. Risk that strategic sites do not maximise contribution to corporate objectives and priorities of climate change, environment, economy and place.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>4. Failure to secure funding to resource the process.</p> <p>5. Reduction in pre-application income and delay to income from planning applications.</p> <p>6. Failure to retain/recruit sufficiently experienced officers.</p> <p>7. Risk of adverse appeal findings on other/non-Local Plan sites if delivery is delayed or stalled.</p>		5	5	3					

PAGE 72

	<b>Pursue commercial leasing opportunity for Royston Town Hall Annexe</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	30-Jun-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 15px; background-color: #4a86e8; color: white; text-align: center; line-height: 15px;">60%</div>	<b>Original Date</b>	31-May-2023
<b>Project Summary</b>	In this year, to progress negotiations with HCC regarding the acquisition of vehicular access rights over their land and to maintain ongoing dialogue with interested party whilst seeking to acquire access rights.						
<b>Latest Update</b>	07-May-2024 As of 30 April 2024, the access situation has been looked at, but further investigations need to be carried out as it appears this has been the subject of investigation going back a number of years without any breakthrough. The interest from the adjoining Health Centre has been discussed with the tenant of that property but the new building they require is too large to be accommodated on the land available. Any other interest depends on access being available. We are still waiting for HCC's agents to engage, which should happen shortly as the lease of the car park in King James Way is up for renewal. HCC have appointed agents to deal with the matter, but we have only had an initial email from them advising of this. Given the complications of the site, project to be removed from the Council Delivery Plan for 2024/25 whilst we continue work and engagement with others and until a clear way forward has been determined.						
<b>Milestone</b>		<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>			
Commencement of negotiations with HCC regarding the acquisition of vehicular access rights over their land from the public highway.		14-Feb-2024	Yes	Following completion of a review of our freehold interest at the location to understand whether access rights are in fact needed from HCC, it was discovered that rights are needed over the car park unless the access from Melbourn Street can be opened (currently blocked by bollards). Still waiting for HCC agents to engage. From looking at the information on file the access situation has been an issue going back several years and there appears to be no quick and easy way to resolve the situation.			
Completion of negotiations with HCC regarding the acquisition of vehicular access rights over their land and arrangements formalised.		30-Jun-2024	No	Due date to be confirmed. Progress dependent on HCC's willingness to engage with us. Project (and milestones) to be removed from the Council Delivery Plan for 2024/25 whilst we			



					continue work and engagement with others and until a clear way forward has been determined.				
Maintain ongoing dialogue with interested party whilst seeking to acquire access rights from HCC.		30-Jun-2024		No	Ongoing. Project (and milestones) to be removed from the Council Delivery Plan for 2024/25 whilst we continue work and engagement with others and until a clear way forward has been determined.				
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					



Page 73		<b>Town Centre Recovery</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	31-Oct-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #4a86e8; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; display: inline-block;">83%</div>	<b>Original Date</b>	31-Mar-2023	
	<b>Project Summary</b>	Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders in Hitchin and Royston town centres to be made permanent. Facilitate work with key stakeholders to develop and implement formal recovery/improvement programmes for each town utilising available Shared Prosperity Fund funding.							
	<b>Latest Update</b>	18-Apr-2024 The Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) has continued through to the end of 2023/24 with relatively little town activity as the BIDs were preoccupied with their renewal ballots. Royston has completed the painting and refurbishment of the street furniture in the town centre and the Letchworth Recovery Plan is pretty much complete. This ties in with the new branding and marketing plan for LGC and the relaunch of the BID. A development plan for Baldock is next, followed by Royston. These should be simpler than the LGC task, although we may have to extend the October 2024 deadline a little for complete delivery of both plans. The Baldock Traders Group still needs to pull together to form a formal entity with officers of some sort if we are to progress to giving them funding. This will be addressed during Q1 2024/25. We are also consulting as to whether the seats in the town should be replaced like for like or whether more maintenance free styles should be considered. Either option is likely to be funded by the SPF. The first two years of SPF funding was relatively small and has now been totally allocated and largely distributed. Cabinet approved 2024/25 SPF allocations on 19 March 2024 and we will be asking for further projects shortly. The funding has been widened to include proposals from Parishes and Community Groups, with £210k available for this and £90k reserved for Town Centres.							
<b>Milestone</b>			<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>				
Detailed town centre programmes produced by each of the four towns.			31-Oct-2024	No	As previously reported via the Q3 2023/24 Council Delivery Plan monitoring report - NHC is assisting Letchworth, Baldock and Royston to develop Town Centre Programmes via People and Places. The Letchworth programme is close to completion, and the Baldock and Royston programmes are due to be completed by October 2024. Understand Hitchin already have a programme in place via the Hitchin Initiative/BID.				
Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
- Limited budget available via the Shared Prosperity Fund. - Town Centre Programmes for each town not yet in place. - Reputational damage if improvements/initiatives are not progressed or delayed.		3	1	1					

	<b>Town Centre Strategies</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	30-Sep-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<input type="text" value="40%"/>	<b>Original Date</b>	31-Jan-2023			
<b>Project Summary</b>	Progress development of overarching Town Centre Strategy and individual Town Centre Strategic Masterplans.									
<b>Latest Update</b>	02-May-2024 A survey of stakeholders was undertaken in February-March 2024. Consultants due to present an initial report on the evidence base by mid-May 2024, with a stakeholder workshop to review findings planned for June 2024. The need for possible further refinements following this workshop means that the evidence base is now likely to be completed in July 2024. Engagement will take place with members in the summer as officers still anticipate presenting a draft Town Centre Strategy to Cabinet in September 2024, with formal consultation following in October 2024. Therefore, formal adoption by Cabinet/Council is now likely to be in January 2025. Although work has already commenced on preparations for the Letchworth Town Centre strategic masterplan, this will not be approved until the wider strategic approach has been agreed. Details of key activities following the September 2024 Cabinet meeting will be reported via the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan.									
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>							
Undertake work to complete evidence base and prepare draft Strategy.	30-Jun-2024	No	Due date to change to 31 July 2024. Consultants due to present an initial report on the evidence base by mid-May 2024, with a stakeholder workshop to review findings planned for June 2024. The need for possible further refinements following this workshop means that the evidence base is now likely to be completed in July 2024 informing the work on the preparation of the draft Town Centre Strategy.							
Present details of draft Strategy to Cabinet, along with a scoping report to agree overall project plan for progressing individual Town Centre strategic masterplans.	30-Sep-2024	No	Still anticipate presenting a draft Town Centre Strategy to Cabinet in September 2024, with formal consultation following in October 2024.							
Finalise plans for approving the Letchworth Town Centre strategic masterplan, following presentation of Cabinet report.	30-Sep-2024	No	Aligns with Cabinet report milestone. Work has already commenced on preparations for the Letchworth Town Centre strategic masterplan, but this will not be approved until the wider strategic approach and a more detailed work programme has been agreed.							
<b>74</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Original Score</b>	<b>Current Score</b>	<b>Target Score</b>	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Trend</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Target</b>
	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					


	<b>Cycling Network</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	31-Mar-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<input type="text" value="100%"/>	<b>Original Date</b>	31-Mar-2023
<b>Project Summary</b>	Working with HCC as they develop a Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and Hertfordshire Active Travel Strategy. Work in partnership with HCC to develop plans/projects for progressing cycling opportunities within North Herts.						
<b>Latest Update</b>	02-May-2024 HCC adopted its Hertfordshire Active Travel Strategy on 18 March 2024. Project to be removed from the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan. HCC is responsible for leading on and delivering associated projects. We continue to direct officer effort at seeking funding to assist with the design and delivery of schemes outlined in the LCWIP, and to work effectively in partnership with HCC to help identify, fund, and deliver the best schemes for North Herts.						
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>				
HCC adopt Hertfordshire Active Travel Strategy.	29-Feb-2024	Yes	Adopted on 18 March 2024. Delay in adoption was out of NHC control.				


Further milestones dependent on adoption of LCWIP and Hertfordshire Active Travel Strategy.			31-Mar-2024	Yes	Project to be removed from the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan. HCC is responsible for delivering specific projects, working in partnership with NHC.				
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 (no longer a risk). 3. Limits to what can be achieved in the short-term.		3	1	1					



	<b>Health Inequalities</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	30-Apr-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 50px; height: 15px; background-color: #e1ecf4; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">100%</div>	<b>Original Date</b>	31-Mar-2023		
<b>Project Summary</b>	Deliver projects to address health inequalities using approved funding for 2023/24. Following confirmation of HCC funding arrangements for 2024/25, agree delivery plans for 2024/25 projects (delivery plans to be agreed by end of March 2024).								
<b>Latest Update</b>	01-May-2024 HCC approved plans for 2024/25 on 30 April 2024. Certainty regarding 2024/25 funding arrangements and plans mean the short-term risk level associated with the delivery of projects and support services is low. However, there is less certainty regarding funding and the level of service provision possible in later years.								
<b>Milestone</b>			<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>				
Royston Men's Club – January 2024 course.			31-Jan-2024	Yes	Course began late January 2024 and was fully booked, with 10 participants.				
Letchworth Horticultural Therapy.			31-Mar-2024	Yes	35 placements were delivered during 2023/24. 14 of these were provided via the £5K funded by NHC.				
Review 2023/24 projects and submit proposed annual delivery plan for 2024/25 projects to HCC.			31-Mar-2024	Yes	Meeting with HCC held on 30 April 2024. Plans for 2024/25 approved, subject to HCC seeing services agreements with the providers. NHC proposals were submitted within requested timeframes and the delay finalising and agreeing 2024/25 plans rests with HCC.				
Royston Emotional Wellbeing project.			31-Mar-2024	Yes	Two support groups continued to meet every week throughout 2023/24. Funding has been agreed for the project to continue in 2024/25.				
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					



	<b>Investigate Options for Solar PV on Leisure Centres</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	31-Mar-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<div style="width: 100%;"><div style="background-color: #4F81BD; height: 10px; width: 100%;"></div></div> 100%	<b>Original Date</b>	31-Mar-2024			
<b>Project Summary</b>	To determine the feasibility of installing solar PV at the three main leisure facilities. Following a decision on our Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant application, installation is likely to be scheduled during a two-year period commencing April 2024, as part of delivering a wider project to install a variety of energy efficiency measures at our leisure facilities to improve their carbon footprint.									
<b>Latest Update</b>	17-Apr-2024 Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding secured, along with additional Capital funding, to install a variety of energy efficiency measures at our leisure facilities to improve their carbon footprint. This wider project, which is in the process of being set up, will include the installation of solar PV. The Council Delivery Plan for 2024/25 will include a new item detailing the key milestones and risks associated with the wider decarbonisation project. As such, this Council Delivery Plan action has been completed, as all previously reported milestones due in 2023/24 have been completed. The associated risk entry will be archived following presentation of the 2023/24 year-end monitoring report to relevant committees, as the management of key risks relating to the installation of solar PV at our leisure facilities (currently being considered and assessed) will now be recorded via the new 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan item.									
<b>Milestone</b>		<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>						
Decision received on our Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant application.		31-Mar-2024	Yes	Funding secured in February 2024.						
<b>Risks</b>		<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Original Score</b>	<b>Current Score</b>	<b>Target Score</b>	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Trend</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Target</b>
Risks: - Design specification identifies significant issues. - Tender returns over budget. - Delays to project plan.			5	5	3					

	<b>Leisure Contract Procurement</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	01-Apr-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<div style="width: 100%;"><div style="background-color: #4F81BD; height: 10px; width: 100%;"></div></div> 100%	<b>Original Date</b>	01-Apr-2024
<b>Project Summary</b>	Procurement of leisure management contracts. Current contracts end on 31 March 2024. Includes development of strategies and procurement processes.						
<b>Latest Update</b>	24-Apr-2024 Procurement completed successfully. New contract with Sport and Leisure Management (SLM) trading under the brand name Everyone Active commenced on 1 April 2024. The new contract has secured a business case for further investment into facilities and will improve the management fee received despite broadening the scope of services to include a new Active Communities Programme. Everyone Active commenced management of facilities on 1 April 2024 and provided additional support on site to support the transition and new operational processes. Following early feedback, we worked in partnership with Everyone Active to respond to users and increase communication regarding use of the new app and booking system to clarify how they work and the benefits they bring. This is an ongoing activity, and the early level of user contact is now settling down. As the new contract is mobilised, this Council Delivery Plan project is complete. Residual risks around day-to-day contract delivery will continue to be recorded on the Risk Register via a service risk entry.						
<b>Milestone</b>		<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>			
Finalise Contract Award.		02-Jan-2024	Yes	Completed.			
Mobilisation period - 3 January 2024 to 31 March 2024.		31-Mar-2024	Yes	Mobilisation period commenced on 3 January 2024.			
Start of new contract.		01-Apr-2024	Yes				

Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
Risks: - In-house staff capacity to deliver procurement on time. (No longer applicable.) - Limited flexibility in project plan leaves little room for manoeuvre if key milestone dates are not met. (No longer applicable.) - Poor quality specification will impact contract delivery. (No longer considered a risk in view of specification produced.) - Lack of responses to tender. (No longer applicable.) - Low value bids from respondents. (No longer applicable.) - Awarding contract to new supplier could lead to mobilisation/operational issues at handover.		5	3	3					

	Playground Renovation Programme	Due Date	31-May-2024	Progress	<div style="width: 100%;"><div style="width: 100%; background-color: #4f81bd; color: white; padding: 2px;">100%</div></div>	Original Date	31-Mar-2024		
<b>Project Summary</b>	Progress playground renovation projects, as per the Greenspace Strategy. Two identified projects for 2023/24 (budget £180K).								
<b>Latest Update</b>	28-May-2024 Improvements at Serby Avenue Recreation Ground completed April 2024. Renovation of playground at Bancroft Recreation Ground completed May 2024.								
<b>Milestone</b>		Due Date	Complete	Note					
	Complete renovation of the playground at Bancroft Recreation Ground.	31-Mar-2024	Yes	Completed in May 2024.					
	Complete replacement of one piece of equipment and associated surfacing at Serby Avenue Recreation Ground.	31-Mar-2024	Yes	Project completed at the end of April 2024.					
Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
Risks: - Budget insufficient to deliver project following appropriate public consultation. - Supply issues linked to materials/equipment. Leading to: - Planned playground renovations being revised/delayed.		3	1	1					





	<b>Shared Prosperity Fund</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	30-Apr-2024	<b>Progress</b>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 50px; height: 15px; background-color: #ADD8E6; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">100%</div>	<b>Original Date</b>	31-Mar-2023		
<b>Project Summary</b>	Deliver projects to support the aims of the Shared Prosperity Fund, as agreed with Government.								
<b>Latest Update</b>	25-Apr-2024 Update on producing town centre programmes and related SPF funding provided via the Town Centre Recovery update. Cabinet approved 2024/25 SPF allocations on 19 March 2024. This included widening the funding to include proposals from Parishes and Community Groups, with £210k available for this. A further £90k is reserved exclusively for town centre improvements. Funding has also been made available to part-fund a Solar for Business pilot project, through which the Council will supply and install solar panels to selected businesses in North Herts. The SPF contribution will cover start-up costs and provide initial capital investment. This general SPF Council Delivery Plan item will not be carried forward into the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan, although specific significant projects will be considered for inclusion. Installation of outdoor fitness equipment in Hitchin and Letchworth was completed and opened to the public in mid-April 2024.								
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Note</b>						
Approve BIDs (and other town centre stakeholder groups) programmes for use of 2023/24 town centre improvement funding.	31-Mar-2024	Yes	All 2023/24 towns funding has been allocated to projects.						
Provide 2023/24 allocation of funding for town centre improvements.	31-Mar-2024	Yes	All 2023/24 towns funding has been allocated to projects and payments have been made for the majority of these. One project has been held up, as we are waiting on statutory consultation to spend the money.						
Installation of outdoor fitness equipment in Hitchin.	30-Apr-2024	Yes	Project completed and opened for public use on 16 April 2024.						
Installation of outdoor fitness equipment in Letchworth.	30-Apr-2024	Yes	Project completed and opened for public use on 16 April 2024.						
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Original Score</b>	<b>Current Score</b>	<b>Target Score</b>	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Trend</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Target</b>
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					

## Risks and PIs Not Linked to Specific Projects

Risks	Risk Level	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score
<p><b>Resourcing</b> 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 shortage of staff and other resources may affect our ability to respond, even if money is available. Significant difficulties in being able to recruit and retain roles in some key areas.</p>		8	9	2
<p><b>Cyber Risks</b> Risk: Prolonged widespread disruption to/failure of IT infrastructure/systems. Possible causes: - Deliberate and unauthorised breaches of security e.g., ransomware, denial of service. - Unintentional/accidental breaches of security e.g., action of individual staff/Members. - Weakness/failure of essential IT infrastructure e.g., loss of internet access. - Evolving risk appetite/profile associated with IT systems, as we pursue increased use of hosted systems and associated risks to individual systems are transferred to suppliers. Leading to: - Inability to deliver services/projects. - Over budgeted costs to enable recovery. - Reputational damage.</p>		8	8	8

Page 79

Performance Indicators	Status	Trend	Value	Target
Percentage of NNDR collected in year			97.51%	93%
Percentage of council tax collected in year			97.9%	95%
Museum general admittance visitor numbers			30,910	27,500
Miles driven by NHC full electric vehicles			104,300	55,000
Hitchin Town Hall income			£269,543*	N/A Data Only
Value of sales at Bancroft Cafe Kiosk			£21,603	N/A Data Only
Percentage of raised sales invoices due for payment that have been paid			97.16%	97%
Percentage of payments received that were paid by electronic methods			99.4%	99.3%
Kg residual waste per household			334kg*	350kg

Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting			57.11%*	56.5%
Electricity and gas energy consumption (kWh) - 100% of reported energy consumption is from green energy sources			2,061,598	2,416,439

\* Reported data is only provisional and still needs to be finalised.



**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
18 JUNE 2024**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF REPORT: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2024/25**

REPORT OF: *SERVICE DIRECTOR: RESOURCES*

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: *FINANCE AND IT*

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

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*This report recommends the adoption of Council key performance indicators for 2024/25. The intention of these indicators is that they provide a view of how the Council is performing overall, with a particular focus on key priorities and areas of significant risk. The indicators will be reported on a quarterly basis to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. There will be scope to amend the key performance indicators during the year.*

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. That Overview and Scrutiny recommend to Cabinet that the performance indicators set out in paragraph 8.3 be adopted for 2024/25.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1. We had tried to move towards having indicators that were focused on our key projects. However we have found that these do not generally give the level of Council oversight that we would want. Therefore these performance indicators are proposed to give that view of overall performance.

**4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1. We could continue to just look at indicators that are linked to key Council projects. This is rejected for the reason set out above.
- 4.2. We could move to having a much larger set of key performance indicators. Whilst this would be feasible, as we do collect data across our various service areas, it would mean losing the focus on a key set of indicators.

**5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- 5.1 *A report went to the internal informal Political Liaison Board of the Executive and the Leadership team, in June 2024 and the issues with performance indicators for sickness absences was discussed.*

## 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. In March 2024, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee received a report making recommendations on the projects that would form part of the Council Delivery Plan (CDP) for 2024-25. This reduced the number of projects that would form part of the CDP, so that it was more focused on key projects.

- 7.2. That report also provided the following commentary on performance indicators:

*Before we moved to the current CDP process, we were reporting on a lot of performance indicators that did not provide much insight on how the Council overall was performing (i.e. from a corporate perspective). The idea with the CDP was that we would link performance indicators to the projects. However we have found that very few projects have meaningful indicators. Also, for those projects that do have indicators they tend to only provide meaningful data after implementation/ completion, and by that point the project itself has been removed from the CDP. Whilst it is important that we make sure that projects have achieved their goals, that is probably best assessed through the project management process. It is recommended that we develop a set of performance indicators that give a view of how the Council overall is performing. This could include measures in relation to customer services performance, customer satisfaction and complaints, HR and resourcing, environmental sustainability,*

- 7.3. Based on the above, this report makes recommendations on the performance indicators for 2024/25.

## 8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. The overall purpose of the performance indicators is to allow Councillors, Officers and residents to get an insight in to how the Council is performing, with a focus on key Council objectives. Measures are either strategic or focused on key service areas.

- 8.2. The more detailed suggested principles are:

- The aim is not to create significant additional workload to compile the indicators. We will put effort into a new indicator if it provides meaningful insight. We will not just carry on compiling and reporting on indicators just because we have always done so. We will continue to satisfy statutory requirements to provide data.
- There will still be service level performance indicators as well. If Overview and Scrutiny want to focus on a particular service area then that greater level of detail can be provided.
- This will be reported quarterly to O&S/ Cabinet, and also be a dashboard on IdeaGen (previously Pentana).
- Where targets are set they will be set on a RAG basis. Amber should be at a level where need to consider appropriate action. Red should be where urgent action is required. Green shows that performance is at an acceptable level.

- Measures and targets will aim to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). This includes not setting targets which are unavailable and only act as an aspiration.

8.3. The proposed Performance Indicators are set out in the following tables, which are separated by theme:

### Customer Services

Measure	Frequency of reporting	Recent data	Targets and Comments
% CSC calls answered	Quarterly	2023/24 Q1 91%, Q2 88%, Q3 86%	Currently an aspirational target of 95% but in the revised context (i.e., amber means take action, red means take urgent action) it is not unrealistic. In the medium term we will have the impact of waste customer services being brought back in-house which may affect performance.  Revised target of 90% Green, 80-90% Amber, below 80% = Red.
% calls answered within 45 seconds	Quarterly	2023/24 Q1 87%, Q2 80%, Q3 80%	Current target of 80% is realistic. That will be set as Green level, with Amber 70%-80% and Red below 70%.

### Customer Feedback

Measure	Frequency of reporting	Recent data	Targets and Comments
Stage 1 Number of complaints	Quarterly	2023/24 Q1 30, Q2 39, Q3 42	No target, for information only. Having a target would imply that we are seeking a level of complaints. Zero complaints is not realistic.
% of complaints resolved within 10 days	Quarterly	2023/24 Q1 77%, Q2 80%, Q3 83%	Current target of 80% is realistic. Set that as Green level. Amber 70%-80% and Red below 70%.
% of stage 2 complaints resolved within 20 days	Quarterly	2023/24 Q1 71%, Q2 70%, Q3 70%	Currently an aspirational target of 80% but in the revised context (i.e., amber means take action, red means take urgent action) it is not unrealistic. Set Green at 70%, with Amber 60%-70% and Red below 60%.

The intention is that there will still be additional half-yearly reports that provide more detail on customer services and customer feedback performance. Those reports will include more detail on how customers access our services, number of contractor complaints and detail on LGO (Local Government Ombudsman) complaints.

### Staff Wellbeing

Measure	Frequency of reporting	Recent data	Targets and Comments
Working days lost due to short-term absence (per FTE)	Quarterly (for	4.18 days (at end of March)	Used to be 3.5 days, but general trend is that short-term sickness is now higher. Suggested target is that below 4 is Green, 4-5 is Amber and above 5 is Red.

	previous 12 months)		
Working days lost due to long-term absence (per FTE)	Quarterly (for previous 12 months)	4.02 days (at end of March)	No target as generally can't control or influence significantly, but long-term sickness will affect productivity. Note that although overall level could be low, it could still be having a significant impact on specific teams.

When timing is relevant, we will also add in results from staff surveys.

### Staff Recruitment and Retention

Measure	Frequency of reporting	Recent data	Targets and Comments
Staff turnover	Monthly refresh of annual value	9.16% (to March 24)	Up to 15% is Green, 15-20% is Amber, above 20% is Red.
% of advertised vacancies filled in first round	Quarterly	New for 24/25	Above 75% is Green, 50-75% is Amber, under 50% is Red.

### Financial Sustainability

Measure	Frequency of reporting	Recent data	Targets and Comments
Percentage of annual Council Tax collected	Updated monthly, reported to Cabinet and O&S each Quarter.	97.9% at end of March	Already monthly profile target in place. Green where at or exceed target. Amber up to 2 percentage points below target. Red more than 2 percentage points under target.
Percentage of annual NNDR collected		97.5% at end of March	Already monthly profile target in place. Green where at or exceed target. Amber up to 2 percentage points below target. Red more than 2 percentage points under target.
Performance against revenue budget (projection against original budget)	Quarterly	(10%) at Q3	Underspend = Green. Overspend of up to 2% is Amber. Overspend above 2% is Red. More detail would be available in finance reports that go to Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and Cabinet.

### Environmental Sustainability

Measure	Frequency of reporting	Recent data	Targets and Comments
Council's scope 1-3 emissions	Annual	4,030 tonnes CO2e (19/20). 22/23 and 23/24 data will be available soon.	To develop targets that reflect actions that are realistic and the impact of those actions.

## Service Performance

Measure	Frequency of reporting	Recent data	Targets and Comments
Careline - Number of alarm calls in a given period	Updated monthly, reported to Cabinet and O&S each Quarter.	388,053 (23/24)	Relevant targets still to be determined. The Service Director: Customers (in discussion with the relevant Executive Member) will confirm these as part of the Quarter 1 update (in September). O&S and Cabinet will then have a chance to comment.
Careline - Number of service users supported in the month	Updated monthly, reported to Cabinet and O&S each Quarter.	6,827 (March 23)	
Careline - Percentage of non-urgent installations turned around within 20 working days	Updated monthly, reported to Cabinet and O&S each Quarter.	New for 24/25	
Planning- NI157e (percentage of all applications within time periods)	Quarterly	85.4% (Q4 23/24)	This indicator can be affected by factors that are outside of the Council's control, such as applicants agreeing to extensions to time limits. The targets may be subject to caveats, but proposed to be set at: Above 80% Green, 70-80% Amber, Below 70% Red.
Waste- percentage of household waste that is recycled, reused or composted	Quarterly	57.2% (Q4 23/24)	Above the annual target of 57.5% is Green. Amber from 55% to 57.5%. Below 55% is Red.
Leisure Centre Visitor numbers	Updated monthly, reported to Cabinet and O&S each Quarter.	1,609,760 (at end of March)	Target by month. Green at or above target. Amber under 5% less than target. Red more than 5% below target.

## 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 5.7.3)

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 areas. To consider risk to the achievement of those objectives/ priorities. To make recommendations to Cabinet” (paragraph 6.2.7 (s)).

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

11.1. Good Risk Management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.

11.2. Effective monitoring of performance helps us to spot areas where we might not achieve our outcomes. Focusing on key performance indicators ensures that the overview is manageable, and therefore any actions taken are proportionate and appropriately focused.

## **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 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. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that directly apply to this report.

## **15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

15.1 Whilst it takes time to collate performance data, the proposals in this report are generally:

- Data that is already collected, including data that must be collected for other purposes (e.g. statutory data reporting),
- Data that is useful for the Service in assessing their performance anyway.
- Not overly onerous.

15.2 The data will be collected via IdeaGen (previously Pentana) which allows the automation of reporting on performance.

## **16. APPENDICES**

16.1 *None*

**17. CONTACT OFFICERS**

17.1 *Ian Couper, Service Director: Resources, [ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk), Ext: 4243*

17.2 *Tim Everitt, Performance and Risk Officer, [tim.everitt@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:tim.everitt@north-herts.gov.uk), Ext: 4646*

17.3 *Ellie Hollingsworth, Trainee Policy Officer, [ellie.hollingsowrth@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:ellie.hollingsowrth@north-herts.gov.uk), Ext: 4220*

**18. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

18.1 *COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN: Q3 UPDATE AND PROJECTS FOR 2024/25, Cabinet report March 2024*

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Cabinet  
25 June 2024

## PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

**TITLE OF REPORT: LEISURE INVESTMENTS AND DECARBONISATION PROJECT**

REPORT OF: THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - PLACE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE: CLLR MICK DEBENHAM

COUNCIL PRIORITY: SUSTAINABILITY

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Cabinet on Phase 3c of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) project for the Council's three leisure centres and seeks approval to take the next steps to deliver the project. The report also asks Cabinet to consider the business case for the construction of a learner pool at Royston Leisure Centre. It also seeks an increase in the capital allocation for the fitness extension at Royston Leisure Centre.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet takes into account the matters set out in the Part 2 report when reaching the following decisions:

- 2.1 That Cabinet agree in principle to terminate the Combined Heat and Power Centrica contracts at North Herts Leisure Centre (NHLC) and Hitchin Swimming and Fitness Centre (HSFC) at the appropriate time during the PSDS project and recommend to Council as per 2.6 below regarding the termination fee.
- 2.2 That Cabinet expresses its profound disappointment at the position taken by Centrica over the cost of the CHP contract termination, given the company's stated position as "Energising a greener, fairer future" and requests that the Council continues to raise, and seek solutions to, the issue of long-term inflexible agreements for gas CHPs with Salix and Government, which will inevitably prevent many public sector organisations from achieving their net zero ambitions.
- 2.3 That Cabinet does not approve the business case for Royston Leisure Centre Learner Pool and the capital budget is removed from the capital programme, due to the matters identified in the Part 2 report.

That Cabinet recommends to Council:

- 2.4 an increase in capital expenditure of £2.4m into the capital programme for the decarbonisation work to the three leisure centres. The overall budget will be profiled across 2024/25 and 2025/26.

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 2.5 | an increase in the capital budget of £250k for the Royston Leisure Centre (RLC) gym extension, to ensure the extension is built to net zero carbon standards.   |
| 2.6 | approval of revenue expenditure of up to £757k for termination and removal fees of the gas CHPs at North Herts Leisure Centre and Hitchin Fitness and Swimming Centre. This would be funded from General Fund reserves. |

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 North Herts Council passed a climate emergency motion in May 2019. This declaration asserted the council's commitment toward climate action beyond current government targets and international agreements. This is currently pursued through the North Herts Climate Change Strategy 2022-2027 which sets out what the council will aim to do to reduce its own carbon emissions to achieve Carbon Neutrality for the Council's own operations by 2030 and a Net Zero Carbon district by 2040.
- 3.2 Gas use from our leisure centres is a significant contributor towards the Council's own emissions. In 2022-23, gas use across the three leisure centres accounted for 1,428 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. This equates to 45% of the Council's Scope 1-3 emissions. Taking action to replace gas heating for our leisure centres with low carbon alternatives is the single most effective action we can take towards meeting our target of being carbon neutral by 2030.
- 3.3 There is currently a capital allocation in the 2024/25 budget to build a gym extension and learner pool (subject to business case) at Royston Leisure Centre.
- 3.4 During the procurement for the leisure and active communities contract, the Council committed to deliver the gym extension project which is incorporated in to the contractual management fee. The initial tender stage returns showed that extension would generate additional income of at least £150k per year, and subject to inflationary increases. The latest estimate is that the capital costs will be £1.25m. This is an increase from the initial estimate of £1m and includes making the extension net-zero. The income generated will still exceed the revenue cost of capital (at around £90k per year), but in line with the financial regulation the increased capital spend needs to be approved by Cabinet.
- 3.5 The business case for the learner pool has not yet been agreed and is included in the Part 2 report.

### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 Not proceed with the decarbonisation project. This option is not recommended as the Council will not be able to meet its 2030 carbon reduction targets. The council will also need to commit its own capital expenditure to install the proposed technology (or similar) at a later date. The gas boilers at the leisure centres are at the end of their life and are in need of replacement. If the PSDS project does not proceed, they will have to be replaced, meaning the council will not be eligible for further rounds of funding. There is an option that the council could complete scaled back energy efficiency works and install solar PV and not change the heating source from gas, however this would also not be recommended as the council will not meet its decarbonisation objectives.



- 4.2 Proceed with a scaled back version of the decarbonisation project (i.e. only progressing with decarbonisation at one or two of the centres), to lower the Council's capital contribution to the overall project. However, this would mean a significant reduction in the grant value allocated to the council and would mean the Council would also be ineligible for future rounds of funding for the other sites, due to the need to replace the gas boilers at the sites, which are end of life. There is also a significant risk that Salix would not accept such a large change to the original application. This option would also mean that the council would not make as significant progress towards meeting 2030 net zero carbon targets.
- 4.3 Approve the business case for the learner pool at Royston due to the community benefits of enhanced swimming provision on site. This is not recommended due to the financial position.

## 5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. A project board has been established for consultation on the leisure decarbonisation project and RLC options. The project board includes senior officers and the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure, Cllr Debenham and Cllr Ian Albert, Executive Member for Finance and IT. The Service Director – Place is Project Executive and a representative from SIAS (Shared Internal Audit Service) is also included to ensure good project management governance.

## 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 5 January 2024.

## 7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 In November 2023 the Council submitted an application for Phase 3c of the PSDS. The application included details of existing buildings and heating systems and high-level proposals to enable substantial decarbonisation of the three major leisure centres.
- 7.2 In February 2024, the Council was advised its application was successful, securing £7.74m to assist in replacing end of life gas boilers with Air Source heat pumps and on-site generation of electricity through installing Solar PV panels. Other measures such as new air handling units and external and internal insulation also form part of the project at the three leisure centres; North Herts Leisure Centre (NHLC), Hitchin Swimming and Fitness Centre (HSFC) and Royston Leisure Centre (RLC).

The following table details the total project value and the total grant value.

Total Project Value	£8,799,119.00
Total Grant Value	£7,743,224.00

- 7.3 During development of the PSDS application, costs were developed based on the findings of Heat Decarbonisation Plans which had been produced. At this stage, very early design stages were submitted. Additional costs incurred during the delivery of a project, such as preliminary costs are not incorporated into the application. A value for money metric is also applied by Salix during their review process, costs supplied were

therefore reflective of market prices at the time of submission. Further capital was therefore secured to cover these additional costs, plus the Council's own match funding contribution required as part of the grant award criteria. The total capital allocation for 2024/25 is £10,803,000 (including the grant). In the capital programme (agreed in February 2024) this was made up of the following items:

<b>Capital Programme item</b>	<b>Amount (£000)</b>
HSC Boiler replacement	200
HSC PV panels	142
NHLC Boiler replacement	200
NHLC PV panels	338
RLC Boiler replacement	100
RLC Solar Thermal	67
RLC PV panels	241
PSDS Top-up	9,515
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,803</b>

7.4 The 2024/25 Revenue Budget assumed a decrease in energy costs equal to the revenue costs of capital from undertaking the decarbonisation works. That was based on the element that wasn't covered by the PSDS grant and a cost of capital at 7.5%.

7.5 **Royston Leisure Centre Developments**

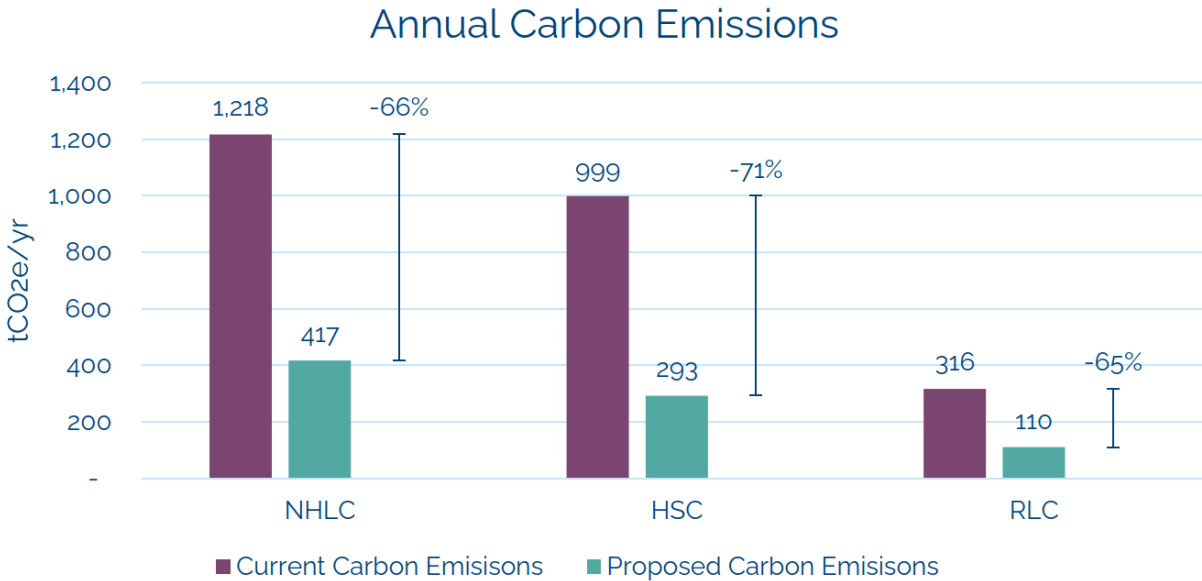
To save on preliminary construction costs, it is planned that any Royston Leisure Centre developments will be carried out at the same time as the PSDS works. There is currently a capital allocation in the 2024/25 capital budget to build a gym extension (£1m) and learner pool (£2.5m) at the centre. The 2024/25 Revenue Budget incorporates the management fee from the contract with Everyone Active (EA), inclusive of inflationary increases. This incorporates the increased income that EA expect the fitness extension to generate. The 2024/25 Budget also included assumed income equal to the revenue costs of capital from building the learner pool. That was based on a capital cost of £2.5m and a cost of capital at 5%. A lower cost of capital was used to reflect that any additional income generated would increase in line with inflation.

7.6 The business case for the gym extension was tested as part of the procurement of the Council's Leisure and Active Communities contract and it was agreed to proceed with this element as part of the process. It was however agreed that the business case for the learner pool be brought back to Cabinet, once the capital costs had been through feasibility stage.

**8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 The annual carbon emissions before and after low-carbon interventions have been calculated using the 2023 UK government carbon factors, published by DESNZ. The proposed carbon emissions include both the additional grid import due to the loss of CHP-generated electricity, and PV generation. After the decarbonisation measures, there would be over 60% reduction in CO2e emissions for all sites. There are still some carbon emissions for each site, partly due to residual emissions from energy consumption. These will reduce year-on-year as the UK's power grid transitions to renewable sources, in line with the Government's 2050 net-zero target. NHLC also has gas boilers for the learner pool which are not included in the project, due to the boilers

not being eligible for funding, as they are not end of life (less than 10 years old). At Hitchin, the emissions include those from the outdoor pool which also are not included in the project, due to the boilers being too new to qualify. The following graph demonstrates the carbon savings at each facility following completion of the decarbonisation project:



8.2 Once the works are complete there will be anticipated revenue savings from lower energy consumption, of approximately £32,000 per year (based on the leisure operator’s current energy prices). Due to current low gas prices and the decarbonisation project leading to a higher reliance on grid electricity, the anticipated savings based on current prices are low.

8.3 The future savings will be affected by any change in gas and electricity prices, especially where the changes are relatively different. Electricity has the potential to be produced with a lower (or zero) carbon impact, relative to gas. Electricity production can also be achieved without using limited resources. This could be an indication that electricity prices are more likely to move downwards relative to any movement in gas prices. The heatmap below shows a comparison of estimated current usage (pre decarbonisation interventions) and estimated future energy usage (after decarbonisation interventions). Each usage estimate is costed at various relative prices for gas and electricity. The difference between the total cost is shown (in £000’s) and shaded as green to red. Green shows cost decreases and red shows cost increases. The £32k annual cost reduction is highlighted at that shows the impact at current prices. Under the leisure contract, the Council takes on the risk and reward in relation to energy prices. If energy prices increase with general inflation, then it is estimated that they would increase by around 20% over a 10 year period. In that scenario the estimated savings would actually reduce slightly to £26k annually. In paragraph 8.13 it shows a revenue cost of capital of around £450k. The heatmap shows that there would need to be a significant increase in gas prices (80%+ increase) and a significant fall in electricity prices (20%+ decrease) to move to a point where the cost of capital would be covered by energy savings.

COMPARING COST OF CURRENT USAGE WITH FORECAST USAGE (POST DECARBONISATION) AT VARIOUS PRICE POINTS FOR ELECTRICITY AND GAS																
Amounts are £000		ELECTRICITY PRICES AS A PERCENTAGE OF CURRENT														
		60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	110%	120%	130%	140%	150%	160%	170%	180%	190%	200%
GAS PRICES AS A PERCENTAGE OF CURRENT	60%	-46	-12	22	56	89	123	157	191	225	259	293	327	360	394	428
	70%	-77	-43	-9	25	59	93	127	161	194	228	262	296	330	364	398
	80%	-107	-73	-39	-5	29	62	96	130	164	198	232	266	300	333	367
	90%	-137	-104	-70	-36	-2	32	66	100	134	167	201	235	269	303	337
	100%	-168	-134	-100	-66	-32	2	35	69	103	137	171	205	239	272	306
	110%	-198	-164	-131	-97	-63	-29	5	39	73	107	140	174	208	242	276
	120%	-229	-195	-161	-127	-93	-59	-26	8	42	76	110	144	178	212	245
	130%	-259	-225	-191	-158	-124	-90	-56	-22	12	46	80	113	147	181	215
	140%	-290	-256	-222	-188	-154	-120	-86	-53	-19	15	49	83	117	151	185
	150%	-320	-286	-252	-218	-185	-151	-117	-83	-49	-15	19	53	86	120	154
	160%	-351	-317	-283	-249	-215	-181	-147	-113	-80	-46	-12	22	56	90	124
	170%	-381	-347	-313	-279	-245	-212	-178	-144	-110	-76	-42	-8	26	59	93
	180%	-411	-378	-344	-310	-276	-242	-208	-174	-140	-107	-73	-39	-5	29	63
	190%	-442	-408	-374	-340	-306	-273	-239	-205	-171	-137	-103	-69	-35	-2	32
	200%	-472	-438	-405	-371	-337	-303	-269	-235	-201	-167	-134	-100	-66	-32	2

8.4 The issue with the heatmap above is that it is comparing relative costs, and in some cases both impacts would be unaffordable against current budgets. The revised heatmap below compares the costs at various gas and electricity prices, with the cost of current usage at inflated current prices. The inflation that has been added is based on 10 years of general price inflation, which is estimated at around 22%. This shows that we get towards the right size of savings (to cover the revenue costs of capital) when there is a fall in electricity prices by 40%, with a lower impact from any change in gas prices.

COMPARING COST OF FORECAST USAGE (POST DECARBONISATION) AT VARIOUS PRICE POINTS FOR ELECTRICITY AND GAS WITH ESTIMATED IMPACT OF INFLATION (2% PER YEAR OVER 10 YEARS) ON CURRENT USAGE AND PRICES																
Amounts are £000		ELECTRICITY PRICES AS A PERCENTAGE OF CURRENT														
		60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	110%	120%	130%	140%	150%	160%	170%	180%	190%	200%
GAS PRICES AS A PERCENTAGE OF CURRENT	60%	-469	-402	-334	-267	-199	-132	-64	3	71	138	206	273	341	408	476
	70%	-465	-397	-330	-262	-195	-127	-60	8	75	142	210	277	345	412	480
	80%	-461	-393	-326	-258	-191	-123	-56	12	79	147	214	282	349	417	484
	90%	-456	-389	-321	-254	-186	-119	-51	16	84	151	219	286	354	421	489
	100%	-452	-385	-317	-250	-182	-115	-47	20	88	155	223	290	358	425	493
	110%	-448	-380	-313	-245	-178	-110	-43	25	92	160	227	295	362	430	497
	120%	-443	-376	-308	-241	-173	-106	-38	29	96	164	231	299	366	434	501
	130%	-439	-372	-304	-237	-169	-102	-34	33	101	168	236	303	371	438	506
	140%	-435	-367	-300	-232	-165	-97	-30	38	105	173	240	308	375	443	510
	150%	-431	-363	-296	-228	-161	-93	-26	42	109	177	244	312	379	447	514
	160%	-426	-359	-291	-224	-156	-89	-21	46	114	181	249	316	384	451	519
	170%	-422	-354	-287	-219	-152	-85	-17	50	118	185	253	320	388	455	523
	180%	-418	-350	-283	-215	-148	-80	-13	55	122	190	257	325	392	460	527
	190%	-413	-346	-278	-211	-143	-76	-8	59	127	194	262	329	397	464	531
	200%	-409	-342	-274	-207	-139	-72	-4	63	131	198	266	333	401	468	536

- 8.5 The PSDS application included details of high-level site surveys for existing buildings and heating systems and high-level proposals to generate the required technical appraisals to support the application. Following the grant award, the Council commissioned Willmott Dixon (WD) to carry out further detailed feasibility studies to ensure the decarbonisation measures set out in the application could be achieved. WD also carried out feasibility for the gym extension and the learner pool at Royston.
- 8.6 During feasibility, WD identified a technical issue regarding the proposal to insulate the underside of the roofs at all three centres. These would have carried a significant risk of condensation and are not therefore deemed viable options. This option would also have meant the pools would have to be closed for several weeks while the works are carried out. Due to this, the proposal is now to install new roofing systems on the outside of all three roofs, which has led to a significant increase in costs. In addition, there have been amendments to the cladding replacement required at Royston Leisure Centre. Temporary plant costs have also been added to ensure any closures to the leisure facilities are kept to a minimum.
- 8.7 The Council would need to fund these additional costs using its own capital, as the Salix grant conditions do not allow an increase to the overall grant value under any circumstance.
- 8.8 Council funding of £3.060m was agreed last year, in addition to the grant value, giving a total of £10.803m. This budget included original estimates for the works to the leisure centres at £10.55m plus provisional costs associated with required upgrades to the

electricity network. Following detailed feasibility works and as a result of the issues identified at 8.6, WD have advised of an increase in budget of £2.24m.

The following table details the budget costs by leisure centre.

<b>Leisure Centre</b>	<b>Previous Budget</b>	<b>Revised Budget</b>	<b>Cost Increase</b>
NHLC	£3,920,815	£4,215,742	£294,927
HSFC	£3,308,226	£4,187,520	£879,294
RLC	£3,324,819	£4,388,591	£1,063,772
<b>Total</b>	<b>£10,553,860</b>	<b>£12,791,853</b>	<b>£2,237,993</b>

8.9 As part of the PSDS application, high level site surveys were undertaken across all three centres to generate the required technical appraisals to support the application. Two of these sites, NHLC and HSFC, have Combined Heat and Power (CHP) units installed. CHP's use gas to generate electricity and additionally gives the opportunity to use the excess heat for heating and hot water. It was originally intended that the units would remain in place as emergency backups, with the primary source of heating being switched to Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs).

8.10 At the detailed feasibility stage of the project, it was identified that 15-year Discount Energy Purchase (DEP) Agreements are in place for both CHPs with Centrica, which end in 2035. These agreements also have a minimum usage requirement of 19 hours a day and therefore it is not feasible to keep the CHPs in place as emergency backup only, under the terms of the agreement. There are financial penalties of £737k (as of 31 March 2025) for early termination of these agreements, plus fees of approximately £10,000 per site for removal of the CHPs. The Council did attempt to negotiate with Centrica on these fees, however they have advised that they will not change their position. The termination fee per centre can be found below:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Amount</b>
31 March 2025	NHLC	£434,523
31 March 2025	HSFC	£302,201

8.11 The proposed PSDS works would see improvements to some of the building fabric (e.g. walls, glazing and roofing) at each of the leisure centres. These improvements may mean that future works to these areas are not required or can be significantly delayed. This could therefore mean that this investment is providing future capital savings. However, there is no capital budget currently allocated for any such works to the building fabric.

**Project management and Quantity Surveyor costs**

8.12 Due to the scale of the projects and limited officer technical expertise and resource, it is recommended that the Council appoint an external Quantity Surveyor (QS) to oversee North Herts Council's interests. Services would include reviewing and negotiating the Contractor's second stage tender price, agreeing any variations and producing cost update reports. The cost of appointing a QS to the project is up to £170,000 (this could be reduced depending on appointment date). These costs directly relate to the delivery of the capital project so can be treated as capital expenditure. These costs take the increase up to £2.4m as detailed in recommendation 2.4.

### Financial Summary

- 8.13 With the latest forecasts, the total capital spend that the Council would need to fund is around £5.5m. Assuming a 7.5% cost of capital this gives an annual cost of capital of £413k. Whilst the buy-out of the CHP is not capital expenditure, it is a significant payment that has not been budgeted for. At a 5% interest rate, £737k would generate annual income of £37k. The current annual cost is therefore estimated at £450k.
- 8.14 As detailed in paragraph 8.2, the estimated energy cost savings are forecast to be around £32k per year. Paragraphs 8.3 and 8.4 show how these savings could be impacted by future movements in energy prices. They focus on the scenarios where price changes would enable the costs of capital to be covered by savings. However, the heatmaps also show the impact of energy prices making the financial situation worse. This is also covered in the risk implications (section 11). Overall, the decision on whether to proceed with the leisure sector decarbonisation project has to be made on the basis of environmental sustainability, and noting that it will come at a significant financial cost. As detailed in section 10, this will require financial savings to be made on other areas of revenue spend.

### Royston Leisure centre investments

- 8.15 Following feasibility assessments, WD have advised an increase in budget of £470k for the learner pool and gym extension at Royston. This increase is primarily due to the building upgrades needed to ensure they are built to net zero carbon standards.

Project	Previous Budget	Revised Budget	Cost Increase
Gym Extension	£1m	£1.25m	£250k
Learner Pool	£2.5m	£2.72m	£200k
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3.5m</b>	<b>£3.97m</b>	<b>£470k</b>

As referenced in paragraph 3.4, there is still a viable business case for the gym extension.

- 8.16 EA have provided a forecast of additional income from the building of a learner pool at Royston Leisure Centre. This forecast reflects the impact of the closure of the Ward Freman Pool in Buntingford (East Herts). They have also advised that the closure of the pool at Melbourn (South Cambs) could further increase income, but it is not certain whether that pool will stay closed, so they cannot commit to that further additional income. In accordance with the contract, the increase from the learner pool would increase by inflation each year (using CPI). Further details are in the part 2 report.
- 8.17 WD have provided an estimate of the capital cost of building a learner pool at Royston, which is £2.72 million. That estimate is based on a previous design, and WD have advised that it is likely to be necessary to change the roof design and they would also recommend some internal layout changes. They have not been able to advise on the impact of those changes, except to say that they would increase the build costs. It would therefore be prudent to assume build costs of at least £3 million.
- 8.18 As detailed in paragraph 10.2, capital investment has a revenue cost. Based on a revenue cost of capital of 7.5% (2.5% MRP and 5% interest) this is an annual cost of £225k.

- 8.19 The revenue implications of the £3m build cost are far higher than the forecast additional management fee income in the short and long-term. The average annual revenue loss from the learner pool is forecast to be over £100k per year on an ongoing basis. The Part 2 report provides specific details of the forecast additional income and how this could be affected by increases in line with inflation.
- 8.20 The non-financial benefits of a learner pool would include:
- Capacity for more swimming lessons. Royston is current at capacity for stage 1 and 2 classes. These are the first two stages for school age children. The centre is also at 86% capacity for pre-school classes.
  - The teaching pool would also add value to school swimming lessons, increasing capacity and providing a more comfortable environment for non swimmers.
  - The teaching pool could also be used for under 5s fun swimming (to build water confidence), quiet adult swimming (which may be of particular benefit to those living with dementia and those who are neurodivergent) and quiet family swimming (which may be of particular benefit to those living with SEND, those who are neurodivergent or people living with other long term health conditions).
- 8.21 On financial grounds it is recommended to not proceed with the learner pool at Royston. It is recommended that the capital budget is removed from the capital programme, as keeping it in there means the costs of capital have to continue to be forecasted in later years. But the business case could be kept under review as it could change with the following factors:
- Further increases in income projections e.g. from greater certainty over the Melbourn pool and/or greater demand from population growth.
  - Relative reductions in construction costs.
  - Improvements in interest rates.
  - External funding (e.g. s106 contributions).
  - To promote the potential non-financial benefits and see if there is the opportunity for alternative funding (e.g. suitable central government, lottery or sports body grant funding), especially in relation to the quiet adult and quiet family sessions.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. Cabinet has remit as per section 5.7.3 of the Cabinet's terms of reference "*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.*". Where budget is required, then appropriate recommendations to Council should be made.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The financial implications are generally covered in the body of this report, and also in the part 2 report.
- 10.2 The Council has a reasonable level of financial reserves but is currently budgeting to spend more than its forecast funding whilst it identifies the decisions that it needs to take to achieve a balanced budget. Any decision that results in an increase in expenditure above that currently reflected in the budget, will further increase the level



of savings that will need to be identified and delivered. It is therefore vital that decisions reflect Council priorities, as there will be an inherent need for other services/ projects to have a lower priority attached to them.

- 10.3 The Council is moving to a position where it has a need to borrow to fund its capital spend (i.e. it cannot fund them from previous capital receipts). This does not mean that the Council has to borrow externally, as it can initially borrow against its internal cash reserves. But in the longer term those reserves will run out and external borrowing will be required. The revenue costs of the capital spend are then made up of (1) lost interest that would have been generated from investing those cash reserves or in the longer term the cost of external borrowing, and (2) a requirement to charge a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) which spreads the capital investment over the life of the asset.
- 10.4 For a new building or significant alternation works it can be reasonable to assume a useful life of 40 years, which gives an annual MRP charge of 2.5% of the capital cost. There is some risk with assuming a 40 year life for the works covered by this report as they are change to buildings that are already fairly old (e.g. RLC is 20 years old and NHLC is over 40 years old. But this is mitigated by the fact that we continue to invest in the building and carry out condition surveys.
- 10.5 Air Source heat pumps will have a shorter expected useful life of around 20-25 years. Using a 20 year life equates to an annual MRP charge of 5%. However the PSDS grant will fund the costs of the heat pumps. As that means that the Council funded element will be on building fabric works, it is appropriate to use a MRP charge of 2.5%.
- 10.6 Interest rates remain high and currently borrowing rates and investment returns are both around 5%. We had expected that we would see a drop in interest costs by now, but economic conditions have not yet enabled that to happen. The Council can borrow from the Public Works Loan Board and they publish borrowing rates for various durations of borrowing. There is currently very little variation between across the various borrowing terms (e.g. around 5.2% for 10 years, 5.4% for 20 years and 5.7% for 40 years). Based on that we cannot assume that there will be a drop in borrowing rates.
- 10.7 If the decision is taken to proceed with the leisure centre decarbonisation, then it needs to be accepted that it comes with an annual revenue cost of around £400k per year. The forecasts in the Medium Term Financial Strategy are that the Council already needs to make significant savings, so this will add to that requirement, and require further decisions in relation to service changes, income generation (including increases in fees and charges) and reduced capital spend. Most of the capital spend that will be funded from Council resources will not be incurred until 2025/26, so there will not be a need to revise the current Council Investment Strategy.
- 10.8 If there was a decision to proceed with the learner pool, then it needs to be accepted that it comes with an average annual revenue cost of around £100k per year. This would be higher in the earlier years and slowly reduce over time. The forecasts in the Medium Term Financial Strategy are that the Council already needs to make significant savings so this will add to that requirement, and require further decisions in relation to service changes, income generation (including increases in fees and charges) and reduced capital spend. The level of capital spend in 2024/25 may mean that there is a need to revise the current Council Investment Strategy.

## 11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The decisions contained within this report cannot be made on a financial basis, due to the capital costs involved and relatively low value of the energy savings that will be generated. The decision needs to therefore be based on relative priorities, whilst also considering risk. Risks that would favour making a decision to continue with the decarbonisation works are:

- By not progressing we will lose access to the substantial PSDS funding, and (due to the need to replace the boilers) would not have access to any such funding in the future.
- The work by WD and the Quantity Surveyor may identify capital cost savings.
- Gas prices may increase by more than projected, which makes the move to electricity more economically viable (note: this improves the business case but doesn't actually help the Council's budget)
- Electricity prices may drop by more than projected, which helps reduce the cost of heating generated by electricity.
- As we approach national net zero targets (which we're not currently on track to achieve), one aspect that may drive behavioural change, may come in the form of a carbon tax, which could financially penalise bodies for carbon emitted over baseline/benchmark values. However, this is not a current policy direction which has been set by Government.

Risks that would **not** favour making a decision to continue with the decarbonisation works are:

- We have already seen cost increases, and there is the potential that further capital cost increases could be identified.
- Gas prices may increase by less than projected (or even fall), which makes the move to electricity relatively even more expensive.
- Electricity prices may not drop as much as projected (or could increase) which increases the relative cost of heating generated by electricity.
- There is a low risk that alternative, non-fossil fuel-based heating sources, such as hydrogen, will emerge as commercially viable options in the long term. However, the UK Government has indicated that the use of technologies such as heat pumps will be "the primary means of decarbonisation for the foreseeable future."

11.2 A representative from SIAS will sit on Project Board to mitigate project risks and ensure good governance of the project.

11.3 There are numerous risks relating to the delivery of decarbonisation schemes, including risks associated with the installation and operation of measures as well as programme related risks, such as delays resulting from supply chain issues. Salix Finance, as the fund administrator, sets extremely short project delivery timescales, with a completion date set of 31 March 2026.

11.4 The risks relating to these programmes have been captured in a risk register, which sets out the risk owners and mitigation strategies. The risk registers will be kept up to date and reported to the Project Board, which will have oversight of the project.

- 11.5 Otherwise, good risk management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2 The Council has a responsibility to achieve a balanced budget in order to provide a wide range of services to residents in North Hertfordshire. There is already a provision for swimming lessons at Royston which provides an opportunity for those who wish to learn. However, it is acknowledged at paragraph 8.20 that a learner pool may increase participation opportunities. If the learner pool provision is to be kept under review, these opportunities should be taken into consideration, in conjunction with consideration of the council's priorities.

## **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 As the recommendations in the report relate to a contract above £50,000, Social Value will be incorporated in the procurement process.
- 13.2 The Public Services (Social Values) Act 2012 imposes an active duty on relevant contracting Authorities to consider the economic, environmental and social benefits that can be achieved through commissioning. It does so by requiring consideration of the improvements of economic, environmental and socio-economic of the procurement to wider society.
- 13.3 The Council will be using the SCAPE Procure Regional Construction Framework for the procurement and social value is integral to SCAPE's approach and operations. Utilisation of the Framework ensures Social Value outcomes; for example, utilising a 'go local' approach to spend which benefits the local economy.
- 13.4 SCAPE unlocks social value at scale, through procurement solutions and innovative joint ventures, which engender long-term collaborative relationships with framework delivery partners and with the Council, creating scope to plan sustainably and invest for the future. SCAPE generates social value both directly, through its activities; and indirectly, by regulating supplier behaviour through procurement and thought leadership.

## **14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1. Section 8 highlights that whilst there are carbon costs associated with construction, the project is solely focused on improving the energy efficiency of the sites and implementing renewable energy solutions to substantially decarbonise the sites. This should lead to an overall reduction in operational carbon emissions as identified at the graph at 8.1. Section 8.11 identifies that fabric work (glazing, new roofing, cladding etc) may prolong the life of the buildings, reducing the risk of needing to demolish and replace buildings from scratch, which may have a higher carbon cost. Additionally, the proposed gym extension will be built to net zero carbon standards.

**15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 15.1 A project of this size will have considerable resource implications internally. To ensure resource can be appropriately managed, a Project Manager has been appointed to support the project and the costs of appointing a quantity surveyor to act on the council's behalf are included in recommendation 2.3.

**16. APPENDICES**

- 16.1 None

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**18. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 18.1 None