

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



1 November 2024

Our Ref Overview and Scrutiny Committee 12
November 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, GERNON
ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, SG6 3JF**

On

TUESDAY, 12TH NOVEMBER, 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

Item		Page
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Members are required to notify any substitutions by midday on the day of the meeting. Late substitutions will not be accepted and Members attending as a substitute without having given the due notice will not be able to take part in the meeting.	
2. MINUTES - 3 SEPTEMBER 2024	To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 3 September 2024.	(Pages 5 - 20)
3. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS	Members should notify the Chair of other business which they wish to be discussed at the end of either Part I or Part II business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances which they consider justify the business being considered as a matter of urgency. The Chair will decide whether any item(s) raised will be considered.	
4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS	Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chair of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, wishing to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then must leave the room before the debate and vote.	
5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public.	
6. URGENT AND GENERAL EXCEPTION ITEMS	The Chair to report on any urgent or general exception items which required their agreement. At the time of printing the agenda, the Chair had not agreed any urgent or general exception items.	

7. CALLED-IN ITEMS

To consider any matters referred to the Committee for a decision in relation to a call-in of decision. At the time of printing the agenda, no items of business had been called-in.

8. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

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

9. 3CS HALF YEAR 24/25 UPDATE

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL SERVICES MANAGER

(Pages
21 - 30)

To provide a half year update for Comments, Compliments & Complaints for 24/25.

10. SUPPORTED HOUSING SCHEME FOR WOMEN

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

(Pages
31 - 46)

To consider the allocation of £73k of ringfenced MHCLG Homelessness Prevention Grant to Herts County Council to match fund the two-year pilot of Druglink's Supported Housing Scheme for Women.

11. ENTERPRISE DIRECTORATE UPDATE

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – ENTERPRISE

(Pages
47 - 64)

To provide the committee with an update on the progress of the Enterprise Directorate.

12. MUSEUM STORAGE OPTIONS APPRAISAL

REPORT OF THE CULTURE AND FACILITIES SERVICE MANAGER AND PRINCIPAL ESTATES SURVEYOR

(Pages
65 - 136)

This report explores the current options with regards to solving or alleviating the storage pressures facing the museum collection of North Hertfordshire.

13. TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON SECTION 106 CONTRIBUTIONS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY OFFICER

(Pages
137 -
152)

To consider establishing a Task and Finish Group on Section 106 Contributions and alternatives available.

14. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY OFFICER

(Pages
153 -
170)

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.

15. SCRUTINY DECISIONS AND MONITORING
REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY OFFICER

(Pages
171 -
176)

To consider the outcome of Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolutions, decisions and referrals.

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERONON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, SG6 3JF
ON TUESDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER, 2024 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: 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.

In Attendance: Georgina Chapman (Policy & Strategy Team Leader), Ian Couper (Service Director - Resources), Christine Crofts (Communications Manager), Sarah Kingsley (Service Director - Place), James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager), Jeevan Mann (Scrutiny Officer), Louise Randall (Leisure and Active Communities Manager) and Jeanette Thompson (Service Director - Legal and Community).

Also Present: There were no members of the public present for the duration of the meeting.

Councillors Ian Albert, Val Bryant and Daniel Allen were also in attendance as Executive Members.

26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 1 minute 26 seconds

N.B. Councillor Laura Williams entered the Chamber at 19.32.

There were no apologies for absence received.

27 MINUTES - 18 JUNE, 2 JULY 2024

Audio Recording – 1 minute 37 seconds

Councillor Matt Barnes, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Tom Tyson seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 18 June and 2 July 2024 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

28 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 16 seconds

There was no other business notified.

29 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 19 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.
- (4) The Chair advised Members of the ongoing Community Governance Review survey which was being conducted to look at parish arrangements. The survey was open until the 7 October 2024 and posters had been provided to Members to distribute in their wards.

30 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 3 minutes 35 seconds

There was no public participation at this meeting.

31 URGENT AND GENERAL EXCEPTION ITEMS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 39 seconds

No urgent or general exception items were received.

32 CALLED-IN ITEMS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 46 seconds

There have been no called-in items.

33 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 50 seconds

No questions had been submitted by Members.

34 COMMUNITY SURVEY ROUND TWO RESULTS (MARCH-MAY 2024)

Audio recording – 3 minutes 56 seconds

Councillor Daniel Allen, as Leader of the Council, presented the report entitled 'Community Survey Round Two Results (March-May 2024)' and advised that:

- The first digital residents survey was conducted last year by Zencity.
- Digital surveys were able to be conducted more regularly than phone surveys, to provide 'of the moment' opinions from residents.
- As this was the second survey conducted in this way, the current satisfaction levels of residents can be directly compared with the results from last year.
- The sample size aimed to be representative of the North Herts population as possible by using the 2021 Census population data to guide who their digital adverts targeted.

- It was noted that satisfaction scores were often lower on digital surveys than those conducted by phone, where interviewers can explain questions in more detail and build a relationship with the interviewee.
- Surveys were just one method of receiving feedback from residents, with Councillor surgeries and forums offering in-person opportunities to provide feedback.
- There had been a 3% increase in satisfaction with waste and recycling services, the Council provided value for money, and how the Council involved, consulted, engaged and listened to residents.
- Residents had continued to be satisfied with North Herts as a place to live (74%), and around two thirds had said they would recommend it as a place to live.
- There had been a 3% increase in trust in North Herts Council, with a 22% increase in Royston and a 12% in Southern Rural areas compared to 2023.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Jon Clayden
- Councillor Claire Winchester
- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis
- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Donna Wright
- Councillor Laura Williams
- Councillor Tina Bhartwas
- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Matt Barnes
- Councillor Daniel Wright-Mason
- Councillor Louise Peace

In response to questions, Councillor Daniel Allen advised that:

- The digital survey was one way of receiving feedback from residents and there were other non-digital methods, such as Councillor surgeries, Community Forums, Ward Walks and customer complaints and contact via the website.
- The Council had two further rounds of surveys to be conducted by Zencity, and it was felt that a new approach should be taken in future, which would allow for more targeted and specific questions.
- There had been a 'who does what' poster produced to try and provide detail on which services were provided by District and County Councils, which had been promoted online and in print.
- He was confident that the Communications team were able to put out the information, but it was difficult when you try to engage but this is not listened to.
- There had been an increase in direct communication with the public through increased surgeries and forums.
- Whilst there were some issues the Council could not improve, such as roads, there would be a focus on the issues which could be addressed, such as housing, car parking, provision of activities for young people and teenagers and listening to residents.
- Further questions directed at young people and teenagers could be added to the next survey to scope out what provisions or support they would require from the Council.
- Letchworth was an outlier where several levels of government or charitable organisations existed which was contributing the specific concerns raised in the town.
- The Council wanted to make sure that Councillors were visible to residents, which was being done through increasing the number of surgeries and forums which residents could attend and speak to Councillors.

- The demise of local press had also been a factor in declining communication with residents. However, the Council was exploring different ways of engaging with residents, such as using YouTube videos, as had been recently demonstrated with a recruitment video which increased traffic to the recruitment page.
- The number of responses from an area was based on the most recent census population data.
- Ward walks were an opportunity for Councillors to discuss Ward issues which affected their residents with the Managing Director. They were not publicised in advance but often involved talking to residents too.
- Surgeries were already provided for direct contact by residents and ward walk were to look at specific issues within a ward, not to attract public to raise specific issues, therefore it would not be suitable to advertise these.

In response to questions, the Communications Manager advised that:

- It was unclear why the Royston scores had a red exclamation mark note next to them and this would need to be clarified after the meeting.
- One of the limitations of Zencity was that the survey was owned and managed by them. Previous internally conducted surveys were provided in different ways and could be promoted using various methods to reach more people, including those without digital means.
- The contract with Zencity was until March 2025, with two further surveys planned between September and November 2024 and January and March 2025.
- The 'who does what' services artwork had been shared across digital channels, was published in the most recent Outlook magazine and had been used by Councillors in conversations with residents.
- Communicating to residents that the Council had listened to feedback from community surveys and were taking action required a whole Council approach and more work was required to find out why messaging was not getting through and what else needed to be done.
- A free text question asking 'How can the Council improve the running of North Herts' had been included in this survey, as with previous surveys.
- Any future surveying alternatives would need to provide value for money, reach a wider number of residents, allow for flexibility and be able to reach people without digital means.
- As outlined in the Community Survey 5-point action plan included in the appendix to the report, some actions were already being taken to address issues raised, however there would need to be more focus on developing the understanding of what Councillors do.
- There was the ability to drill down into demographics of the Zencity results, however just the headlines were presented within the report.
- She had received results from a similar size council who had conducted surveys through Zencity, but these had not yet been made public and therefore could not be shared. However, North Herts was roughly 10% above the other council.
- A specific session with Letchworth residents could be set up to help understand specific concerns from residents of the town.
- The Budget Hub had been established to raise awareness of the financial situation that local authorities are in and to allow residents to provide feedback and thoughts on proposals.
- The hub process was new to the Council. The Climate Hive had been active for around 18 months and had around 400 subscribers, the Budget Hub had around 200 in a shorter period, which was a good start.
- Herts County Council conducted an annual survey with residents.
- The results of the survey could be shared publicly on the Council website.

In response to questions, Councillor Val Bryant advised that the Police were conducting a trial in schools in Hitchin in autumn to get young people to engage with the priority setting for the area, where previously no input from this group had been provided.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Jon Clayden
- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis

The following points were raised as part of the debate:

- Some of the questions included were not very actionable and it would be difficult to know how to address these with such broad terms. Consideration should be given to whether questions were poised in the most useful way and whether the response received could be turned into actionable policies.
- It was important that previous results continue to be used to benchmark for future surveys when the contract with Zencity came to an end. If there were significant differences, it would make it difficult to monitor trends over time and compare against previous performance.
- The 5 point plan should be a live and agile document which should be revised and refreshed. Actions should not only be ticked off but should be reviewed to consider the effectivity of the action at improving results.
- Ward walks could be used more effectively to become a genuine outreach option.

Councillor Matt Barnes, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Tom Tyson seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Committee commented on and noted the key findings and observations from round two of the Community Survey and commented on the approach to future surveys (as detailed in section 8.7.2).

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That Cabinet consider the recommendations and comments from Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

REASONS FOR DECISION: To ensure that Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet are aware of the round two results of our digital Community Survey and how they compare to both our round one (2023) results and the Local Government Association (LGA) February 2024 Resident Satisfaction phone survey results.

35 COUNCIL PLAN 2024-2028

Audio recording – 47 minutes 02 seconds

Councillor Daniel Allen, as Leader of the Council, presented the report entitled 'Council Plan 2024-2028' and advised that:

- The Council Plan sets out the vision and priorities of the administration over the next four years, as well as outlining key projects to support these.
- The Council Delivery Plan (CDP) and Medium Term Financial Strategy would align with this Council Plan.
- There was a workshop held in June for members of the administration where aspirations for the next four years were discussed, and previous achievements were considered.
- Following this a smaller working group was established to develop this, which included Officers and members of the administration, which was then followed up with two further administration workshops in July.
- Officers from the Policy and Communications teams had been involved in the development of the Plan.

- The version presented was a plain text version and further graphics and design would be added at a later stage.
- The overarching theme was 'Working with you for a fairer, greener North Herts', with the four priorities being 'Thriving Communities', 'Accessible Services', 'Responsible Growth' and 'Sustainability'.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Laura Williams
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis
- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Matt Barnes

In response to questions, Councillor Daniel Allen advised that:

- These four priorities had been chosen following evaluation of other Council Plans, consideration of national changes and what the Council wanted to offer. These were decided as achievable priorities over the next four years.
- The Council had reopened the Council offices to the public, were available on the phone and Councillors were available in the community to engage with residents without, or with limited, digital access.
- An annual review of the Plan could be brought to the Committee, should that be requested.
- Finance was the biggest issue facing the delivery of the Plan.
- A response on whether there were areas that would be reduced, with the adoption of the new Plan and its priorities, would be provided outside of the meeting.

In response to questions, the Policy and Strategy Team Leader advised that:

- Responses from Round Two of the Community Survey had not been directly considered with the Plan, but the concepts and ideas have been addressed by some policies and actions within it.
- The Plan did not include everything that would be done over the next four years, but the administration wanted to highlight the key areas where priority would be given, with further detail to be provided in service plans.
- Projects to improve provision for young people had been addressed in the Plan.
- The Plan noted that not all residents had digital access and the Policy team would flag any concerns regarding consultations or reviews where inadequate consideration to non-digital methods existed.
- Support for businesses was included within the 'Responsible Growth' priority, which covered both developments, as well as economic growth. This included the Tourism and Town Centre strategies for engagement with business.
- There were many projects which could fall within multiple priority areas and the most suitable had been chosen.
- The Plan could be reviewed, when requested, and the working group could look at the publication and monitoring of the Plan.
- An explanation could be added to provide context to 'net zero'.

In response to questions, Councillor Ian Albert advised that:

- The CDP sat under the Council Plan and ensured that the key aspects of the Plan were being managed well and reviewed.
- Overview and Scrutiny could review the CDP and make judgements on performance against the Plan.

- It was not always easy to measure performance, but the CDP helped to reflect what was being done to address the areas within the Council Plan.
- Resources would continue to be an issue, not just finance, but staffing, including the retention and recruitment of staff, was important to deliver on many projects going forward.
- The production of an Economic Development Strategy and Tourism Strategy would be hugely valuable, and the input of Overview and Scrutiny would be key to developing these.
- The Council Plan offered an overarching theme, but other strategies and policies would be developed outside of those listed in the report.
- It was vital that this was communicated to residents through different means.

In response to questions, the Service Director – Place advised that reference to increased opportunity to recycle had been included as changes to the waste collection service would include soft plastic recycling, as well as the introduction of a new bin for paper and cardboard, which would overall increase volume capacity for recycling.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis
- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Daniel Wright-Mason
- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Tina Bhartwas

The following points were raised as part of the debate:

- The process for the production of a Council Plan was always tight, but this felt unfinished, with some priorities lacking clarity and would be difficult for residents to know what they meant in reality. It would be helpful to include some commentary on each to outline what the aim was and what would indicate having achieved it.
- Where timeframes for projects and initiatives were known, these should be included within the Plan.
- There was a lack of tangibility with some of the priorities and they needed to be tied down to actionable content.
- Achieving net zero was already an aim of the Council and strategies had already been developed to help achieve this. Where things had not been achieved, it was important to be honest and open about these areas.
- It was a good start, but needed further development to be a strong, strategic, priority setting document.
- Some areas still had multiple tasks which required completion and there was too much included, with more focus on key areas needed.
- An annual review of the Plan, presented by the Leader, at Scrutiny would be helpful in monitoring performance.
- Would be a good idea to include some of the challenges that local authorities face and make this clearer to set the scene for residents.
- The district council was one layer of government in North Herts, and it would be useful to explore the relationship with others and reflect that in this document.
- More emphasis should be placed on the link to the Citizens Panel, which would be a good way to encourage engagement.
- It would be useful to have some key performance indicators or measurable content against which performance could be judged.
- This was a good Plan with substance that was meaningful. It contained clear objective and whether they were achievable was for the Executive to consider.

In response to a point of clarification, the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager advised that this Committee was making recommendations to Cabinet on the Council Plan and comments at the meeting would be provided at the Cabinet meeting where the item was to be considered.

Councillor Matt Barnes, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Tom Tyson seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

- (1) That Cabinet reviews and recommends the approval of the Council Plan to Full Council (Appendix A) with the four new Council Priorities as outlined below:
 - Thriving Communities
 - Accessible Services
 - Responsible Growth
 - Sustainability
- (2) Delegate authority to the Managing Director and Leader of the Council to approve any minor amendments to wording required as a result of the design process.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION: The Council Plan is a key element of the corporate business planning process, as a high level strategic document it sets out the Council's Priorities for the next four years. As an overarching policy framework document, it guides and influences the use of Council resources; providing a focus for activities, plans, and services that the Council provide. The introduction to the plan highlights the link between the Council Plan and the Medium Term Financial Strategy and service delivery plans.

N.B. Following the conclusion of this item there was a short break in proceedings, and the meeting reconvened at 21.05.

36 COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2024-25 (QUARTER 1 UPDATE)

Audio recording – 95 minutes 14 seconds

The Service Director – Resources presented the report entitled 'Council Delivery Plan 2024-25 (Quarter 1 Update)' and advised that:

- The Council Delivery Plan (CDP) had been shortened following comments from Overview and Scrutiny Committee in during the 2023/2024 Civic Year.
- Projects could be added into the CDP to reflect the new Council Plan, if required.
- A report around KPIs was brought to the Committee in June 2024 to agree what would be included and regular updates were agreed.
- The quarter 1 update is to end of June 2024, but some further information had been added to around mid-August.
- All milestones were new, and as there were now fewer projects, the aim was to provide more detail on the milestone for each project.
- There were 5 amber rated performance indicators, and these were outlined, alongside contextual commentary, at paragraphs 8.3 and 8.4 of the report.
- The County Council had previously funded the flu vaccine for staff but had confirmed they would not continue to do that this year, so options for funding would need to be explored to support this.
- It was difficult to establish comparative staff turnover data with other authorities, but there was some general data provided by the LGA. However, this covered all authority types, where some may run services in house and would not be a fair comparison.

- Leisure centres visits were doing well against performance indicators, but target was set against the target from last year, not the actual number achieved last year, which exceeded the target.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Matt Barnes
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis
- Councillor Jon Clayden
- Councillor Donna Wright

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

- The biggest issue with staffing was where the vacancies were and if a number existed in one team, then contractors were required to fulfil the service. It could be explored whether the position vacancy rate could be provided and whether it would add context.
- Staff surveys were conducted infrequently so would not be reported on a quarterly basis. The recent survey was still being reviewed.
- Some KPIs of third party contractors had been included where it was deemed most relevant.
- A piece of work could be conducted to look at the rise in alarm calls to Careline and further information could be provided. This could be supplemented by a presentation from Careline, or the Executive Member.
- Numerical changes in trends could be provided rather than up or down arrows, may help to add context.
- Major projects would have a project board in place, and, at end of project, a lesson learnt report would be compiled and presented to the Officer Leadership Team. This can come to Scrutiny, if requested, and is shared with other project managers to help with the learning of lessons.
- Clarity would need to be provided on the Local Plan Review project from the Executive Member.
- Details on the number of EV charging points to be installed could be provided outside of the meeting.

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

- The Letchworth depot lease assignment had now been completed.
- The appointment of a quantity surveyor to oversee the Leisure Centre Decarbonisation Project was in progress, with an appointment expected shortly.
- The first waste mobilisation project board was due to meet tomorrow. There was a work programme in place, but due to delays in the completion of the depot leaser, the milestone dates had not yet been published.

Councillor Matt Barnes, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Donna Wright seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented on the Council Delivery Plan Quarter 1 monitoring report, including the recommendations made to Cabinet.
- (2) That Overview and Scrutiny Committee determined any project that they want to receive more detail on as part of the next monitoring report.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That Cabinet notes the progress against Council projects as set out in the Council Delivery Plan (Appendix A) including the new milestones that have been set for the current year.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION: 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.

37 LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT PROCUREMENT - END PROJECT REPORT

Audio recording – 114 minutes 50 seconds

The Service Director – Place presented the report entitled 'Leisure Management Contract Procurement – End Project Report' and highlighted that:

- The project closure reports were produced to identify lessons learnt and achievements of a project.
- The leisure contract procurement followed a robust process, which included a competitive bidding negotiation. This meant that bids could be tested before the final specification was produced.
- The outcome was a 10 year contract with Everyone Active, with a possible additional 5 year extension.
- Throughout the project there had been a project board and team established, which included specialist consultants and lawyers, where required.
- This ultimately led to significant financial and quality achievements of the contract, which included capital investment from Everyone Active as part of their bid, alongside Council investment.
- The use of specialist consultants and lawyers provided good value for money, as they produced a robust specification which achieved strategic aims and it was unlikely the same outcome would have been possible without them.
- The procurement timeline was challenging, but this had been largely down to the impact of Covid on the leisure market nationally and time was needed to ensure the leisure markets recovered sufficiently.
- The contract award date was met ahead of the expected deadline.
- The competitive procurement process was valuable, as it allowed the Council to consider what it wanted to realistically include within the final tender.
- Everyone Active had a communications plan in place, however there were some teething issues experienced at the start of the contract. This was compounded by the first day of the contract being on a bank holiday weekend during the Easter school holidays, when demand was higher than usual.
- Everyone Active had accessed the sites prior to handover and started signing people up to the app and had contacted existing members in advance.
- Concerns from the public regarding the booking system, and whether booking was required, were initially underestimated. However, Everyone Active and the comms team at the Council worked together to address these initial issues and communicate with users.
- Following these initial issues, lessons had been learnt by the time the outdoor pools opened and this process was much smoother.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Matt Barnes
- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Louise Peace

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

- Performance indicators were in place to monitor achievements against goals, including total members, number of casual users and frequency of activity. This data was also provided monthly broken down by demographic.
- There was also data provided on customer and partner satisfaction, retention of users and mystery visit scores. The first quarterly report containing performance indicator data was included in MIS.
- Some of the issues identified on the issue log included consideration as to whether the Letchworth Outdoor Pool would be included in the contract, or whether this could be run through a community group, and also whether all year opening was possible.
- Further issues included whether the living wage would be provided, and whether this was affordable.
- Investment in Royston Leisure Centre had already been included in the capital programme, however the bidding process was used to test whether there was a market case for this investment.
- In previous contracts the Council retained a say in fees and charges at the centres, however under the new contract the operator was free to set their own prices.
- Following discussions with Everyone Active, it was apparent that issues were normal in handovers, but it was difficult to identify what these might be as they varied by site. Early engagement and discussions on this had been identified as a lesson learnt and was already being implemented on the waste contract service changes.
- FAQ documents needed to be updated and pushed through all channels.
- Everyone Active had staff on site prior to the start of the contract and there were also extra staff on site at the beginning of the contract to communicate with users, including those without internet access.
- A competitive dialogue process had been used on the waste contract, rather than competitive bidding, which allowed the Council to negotiate with bidders to test the market and ensure the best value for money was achieved.
- Communication had been the biggest lesson learnt from the leisure contract process and the waste and communications teams at East and North Herts Councils were already engaging on this for the waste contract process.
- An extension to the 10 year contract was not currently being actively considered.
- The end date of the contract was a risk, as the 31 March was when contracts ended with the financial year and instead for future would look for a September or October start date instead.

Councillor Matt Barnes, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Tom Tyson seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented on and noted the Leisure Management Contract Procurement End Project Report.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable Overview and Scrutiny to consider lessons learned from the major procurement project.

38 SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

Audio recording – 136 minutes 07 seconds

Councillor Val Bryant, as Executive Member for Community/Partnerships, presented the report entitled 'Safeguarding Annual Report 2023-24' and advised that this report provided detail of the background on safeguarding over the past year.

In response to a question from Councillor Matt Barnes, Councillor Bryant advised that:

- The training provider had confirmed that increased training did increase confidence of staff to raise concerns and led to a rise in information being shared and discussed, and ultimately referrals increased.
- Feedback was requested after training sessions by the training provider, including a question on whether confidence had increased to raise concerns. From the sessions held in June and July the average response for the courses were; Basic Child 4.1 out of 5, Basic Adult 4.5 out of 5, Advanced Child 4.8 out of 5 and Advanced Adult 4.5 out of 5. Overall, the average was 4.4 out of 5, from 72 responses received. Therefore, there can be confidence that cultural change had taken place following training.

In response to a question from Councillor Jon Clayden, the Service Director – Legal and Community advised that:

- There was context regarding domestic abuse reporting figures within the table in the report.
- The number of child referrals relating to domestic abuse would generally be higher than the number of adults, as adults referred could have multiple children.
- All staff at the Council were trained on raising safeguarding concerns, but the front facing services were most likely to report these, such as housing, who represented the majority of referrals made.

Councillor Matt Barnes, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Jon Clayden seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) Received and commented on the annual report of progress made against the Council's fulfilment of the statutory duty to maintain an effective safeguarding function regarding children, adults with care and support needs, modern slavery, Prevent and domestic abuse.
- (2) Noted the SIAS Audit Action Plan tracker (Appendix A).
- (3) Agreed that sufficient and robust processes were in place at the Council for application and review of safeguarding processes, and that an annual review and presentation to this committee should continue.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: The recommendations made, contained within paragraphs 2.1 to 2.3, are the best course of action that can be accommodated within the approved budget and officer resources, that will fulfil our statutory and lawful obligations but also ensure that a regular, corporate review exists.

Following the outcome of the vote, Councillor Val Bryant noted that:

- Councillor safeguarding training completion was very low for 2023 and efforts had been made to address that this year, including training provided before a Full Council meeting.
- All Councillors had been provided the documentation required to be signed via email.
- The aim was to achieve 100% of Members having completed the safeguarding training and this would be tracked in future years.
- To date, 27 Members had attended the session before Council in July, 17 Members had returned their signed form and 3 Members had completed the GrowZone e-learning module.

39 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Audio recording – 146 minutes 44 seconds

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report entitled 'Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme' and advised that:

- The Enterprise Portfolio update and Museum Storage Options items had been included for November 2024 meeting, and Members should raise any specific areas of interest ahead of this meeting, so detail can be provided by Officers.
- The Crime and Disorder Matters item was scheduled for January 2025 with a view to look at violence against women and children in the district.
- Planning and Transport portfolio updates had been scheduled for February 2025 and Members should provide detail of any specific areas of interest.
- Health matters was proposed for March 2025.
- Several topics had been included as candidate topics to be scheduled, including Waste Contract Mobilisation, Digital Transformation and Corporate Peer Challenge report.
- A form had been developed to assist Members with raising topics for a Task and Finish Group, and this would be included on the Scrutiny intranet pages once this was made live.
- Several topics had been included as candidate topics for Task and Finish Groups, including Staff Recruitment and Retention, Impact on Grant Policies, Impact of Council Tax Reduction Scheme, Tackling Homelessness in North Herts and Effectiveness of Section 106 Funds.
- Peer review actions were included at Appendix C and had been discussed with the Chair and Vice Chair.

The following Members took part in a discussion on the Work Programme:

- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Daniel Wright-Mason
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis
- Councillor Daniel Wright

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- A key theme from this meeting was communication with residents and this could be explored further as a Task and Finish Group.
- That the Crime and Disorder Matters item cover overarching themes of crime across the district, which could include detail on violence against women and girls.
- The LGA Peer Review to take place in November, should be reported at meetings in January or February, as this was an important piece of work for the Committee to consider.
- Health provisions were important to look at, specifically with regard to new developments, and a representative of the Integrated Care Board should be invited to provide detail.
- The effectiveness of Section 106 money should be explored further.
- Concerns had existed for a while that Section 106 contributions were not being spent and allocations of money were not put into schemes. Regular updates on Section 106 had been requested at Planning Control Committee, but a further in-depth look by the Committee would be worthwhile.
- Information on Task and Finish Groups processes in general was required.

In response to points raised in discussions, the Scrutiny Officer advised that:

- It was unlikely the Peer Review report would be ready for presentation to the Committee by the January 2025 meeting.

- A Member would need to take a lead on developing the concepts of Task and Finish Groups, including considering what evidence was required, which Officers would be included, what the objectives of the group were and expected timescales.
- A lot of information on Task and Finish Groups would be included on the intranet pages being developed, including case studies of where these had been successfully used.

In response to points raised, the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager advised that:

- A previous Task and Finish Group looking at communications had been developed but was significantly delayed due to Covid restrictions and it was eventually agreed with the then Chair that it was no longer suitable.
- Should Members want to move forward with a topic, this may be suitable as some of the documentation had been produced and could be revised.
- The historic documents on this could be shared with the Committee.

Following discussions, Councillor Muncer advised that he would take forward work around scoping out possible work on a Section 106 Task and Finish Group, alongside the Scrutiny Officer.

Councillor Matt Barnes, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Tom Tyson 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, determines 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.

40 SCRUTINY CHARTER

Audio recording – 162 minutes 17 seconds

Councillor Matt Barnes, as Chair, presented the report entitled 'Scrutiny Charter' and advised that:

- This Charter had been developed following the Corporate Peer Challenge action to better define what scrutiny wanted to achieve at the Council.
- It was also felt necessary to consider scrutiny in the context of the administration change which had taken place.
- Further input to the Charter had been taken from Members following training provided and it had been devised with the support of the Scrutiny Officer and colleagues.

- The intention was that the Charter would be published on the Scrutiny intranet pages being developed and would be included on each agenda.

During the debate, Councillor Ralph Muncer thanked the Scrutiny Officer for the work in supporting the production of this Charter, and that it would help not only members of this Committee, but Members across the Council, to understand their roles.

Councillor Matt Barnes, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Tom Tyson seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee adopted the Scrutiny Charter for Scrutiny at North Herts Council, attached as Appendix A.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee members have a clearly defined purpose, objectives, and expectations of Scrutiny at North Herts Council.

41 DECISIONS AND MONITORING TRACKER

Audio recording – 164 minutes 34 seconds

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report entitled 'Decisions and Monitoring Tracker' and advised that:

- This tracker replaced the report on resolutions which had been previously presented to the Committee.
- It would enable more consistent recording of decisions and recommendations made in one place, although only open decisions or recommendations would be included.
- All recommendations made by the Committee at its meeting on 25 June 2024 and extraordinary meeting on 2 July 2024 were approved by Cabinet and would be marked as complete on the tracker.

Councillor Matt Barnes, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Jon Clayden seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the report entitled 'Decisions and Monitoring Tracker' 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.

The meeting closed at 10.17 pm

Chair

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: Half Year Update on Comments, Compliments and Complaints (3C's) 24/25

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE CUSTOMER & DIGITAL SERVICES MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COUNCILLOR VAL BRYANT

PRIORITY: ACCESSIBLE SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This information note is to provide an update on the half year (24/25) 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 has ensured the Council and communities we serve know how to access help, and that a safe and compassionate system to deal with complaints is in place.

3. INFORMATION TO NOTE

- 3.1 Between April and September 2024, the number of complaints and comments received directly by North Herts Council has increased in volume compared to the same period in the previous year. The number of compliments has decreased. The increase of complaints is largely due to the change of the Leisure contract as explained at 3.10
- 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 has increased from 209 in April – September 2023 to 358 in the same period in 2024. Of the

total 358 complaints, 236 (66%) relate to services delivered by our key contractors, including waste and recycling (10) and the leisure centres (226).

- 3.4 The percentage of complaints resolved within 10 days between April and September is 90%, 10% above the target of 80%. April saw the highest number of complaints logged (38) with 95% resolved within the 10 & 20 day targets.
- 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 Leisure & Active Communities had the highest number of complaints not resolved within 10/20 days (4); however, two of the cases were not resolved on time due to waiting for a response from Everyone Active. Complainants were kept updated regarding changing timeframes.
- 3.7 The summary dashboard at Appendix A shows annual comparisons of both 3C's received directly at North Herts Council and 3C's received by our contractors. The dashboard also details the percentage of interactions resulting in a formal complaint. It is worth noting that the percentage of interactions/collections/visitors resulting in a complaint remains at less than 1%.
- 3.8 Appendix B provides a breakdown of all 3C's received by service and type. The areas of highest complaints reported directly were Leisure (30) & Green Space (15).

Some specific areas of the Leisure complaints were regarding:

- Everyone Active (various)
- Price increases
- Poor website
- Cleanliness

Some specific areas of the Green Space complaints were regarding:

- Grass cutting
- Overgrown vegetation
- Poor litter picking

- 3.9 As seen on the 3C's dashboard at Appendix A, the volume of 3C's received by all Contractors has increased, with the total 3C's being 307 between Apr-Sept 2023 and 442 between Apr-Sept 2024.
- 3.10 The volume of 3C's received by the leisure centres marks the largest increase, with the total 3C's being 190 between Apr-Sept 2023 and 418 between Apr-Sept 2024. This increase relates to the start of a new contract with Everyone Active, which commenced on the 1 April 2024, and new processes and systems implemented as a result, for example the new booking system and spilt sessions at the lidos. From 1 April 2024 KPI data will be collected by the Leisure and Active Communities team and used as baseline data to be able to monitor trends moving forward.
- 3.11 Urbaser have seen an 81% decrease in complaints logged; with 53 in April – September 2023 to only 10 complaints logged in the same period in 2024.
- 3.12 Urbaser also received several compliments (10). Some specific compliments included:

- “Thank you for such a prompt clearance of the two Diamond End fly tips – fantastic job!”
 - Resident called to say how lovely and honest the crew were for finding her phone and knocking on the door to give it to her.
- 3.13 There were 57 compliments received directly to the Council between April & September. The Careline service received the highest number, with 23. These are generally submitted by a client’s family following an incident where the Careline staff had provided an emergency response service.
- Resident said she would like to pass on her thanks to the operators. She said it was his lifeline in the end and whenever he pressed the alarm everyone was so nice and accommodating and gave him the help that he required. She said she would recommend the service to anyone.
 - Resident called to say that in today's world, our Careline service was outstanding and particularly Shane Hinds, Careline Technician as he was so kind and caring, and she felt completely at ease with him. She wants to pass her sincere thanks on to him.
- 3.14 There were 16 stage 2 complaints between April and September across a range of service areas; 8 of which were not justified.
- 3.15 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.
- 3.16 The LGO received 3 complaints during this period. It’s prudent to note there may be some cases that do not reach the Council, as they are premature and will be referred to go through the 3C’s procedure (for example). These cases will then be shown in the Annual Review Letter received from the LGO in July 2025.
- 3.17 One complaint received was not upheld nor investigated by the LGO as it did not meet their criteria, and one complaint has recently been passed to the LGO investigation team for further consideration.
- 3.18 The third complaint regarding Planning Enforcement was upheld with fault and injustice caused by the Council. In summary, the resident complained the Council failed to follow its planning enforcement policy when investigating her reports of planning breaches. The Council agreed to the LGO’s recommendations of:
- Apologising to the customer for the frustration caused
 - Issuing a written reminder to enforcement staff about the need for clear and accurate communication with residents on enforcement cases. The aim behind this being to ensure officers do not inappropriately raise residents’ expectations about what action it would take and when by

The LGO have now recorded a compliance outcome of ‘remedy complete and satisfied’.

- 3.19 One LGO complaint was received in March 2024, and has been investigated throughout the course of the year. The final report was received on 19 September.

‘Miss F complained the Council wrongly delayed serving an abatement notice on a neighbouring business after it had identified a statutory noise nuisance. Although the Council has accepted it was at fault for this, Miss F complained it has not offered a

financial remedy to reflect her loss of amenity and distress arising from the delay. Miss F also says the business is yet to comply with the requirements of the abatement notice, but the Council has not taken action to enforce it.'

The LGO has found fault, causing injustice, and has made recommendations:

'The Council must consider the report and confirm within three months the action it has taken or proposes to take. The Council should consider the report at its full Council, Cabinet, or other appropriately delegated committee of elected members and we will require evidence of this.'

To remedy the injustice identified in this report, the LGO recommend to:

- Offer to pay Miss F £3,000, to recognise her loss of residential amenity because of its failure to serve an abatement notice sooner; and
- Circulate guidance to relevant staff to ensure they are aware of the law requiring them to make a timely, formal decision about whether a reported nuisance amounts to a statutory nuisance

3.20 The report was published on the [LGO's website](#) on 25 October 2024, then our Communications team subsequently published two public notices in the local newspapers as requested. Paper copies of the report have also been made available at the District Council Offices.

3.21 The Environmental Health management team have decided to accept the recommendations, and the report will be discussed at the Cabinet committee on 19 November 2024.

4. NEXT STEPS

4.1 3C's performance will continue to be monitored and reported to this Committee on a six-monthly basis.

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

5. APPENDICES

5.1 Appendix A – Dashboard

5.2 Appendix B - Breakdown by service area

6. CONTACT OFFICERS

6.1 Chris Jeffery
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6.2 Jo Dufficy
Service Director - Customers
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7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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3C's Performance Summary: April – Sept 2024

3C's Received directly at NHC - 6 monthly comparisons

	22/23	23/24	24/25
Number of Comments received	14	15	35
Number of Compliments received	67	81	57
Number of Complaints received	105	86	106
Total received	186	182	198
% complaints resolved within 10 working	74%	79%	90%
Complaints received by the LGO	8	1	3

[only 2/3 complaints received by LGO have been investigated by them & 1 remains open]

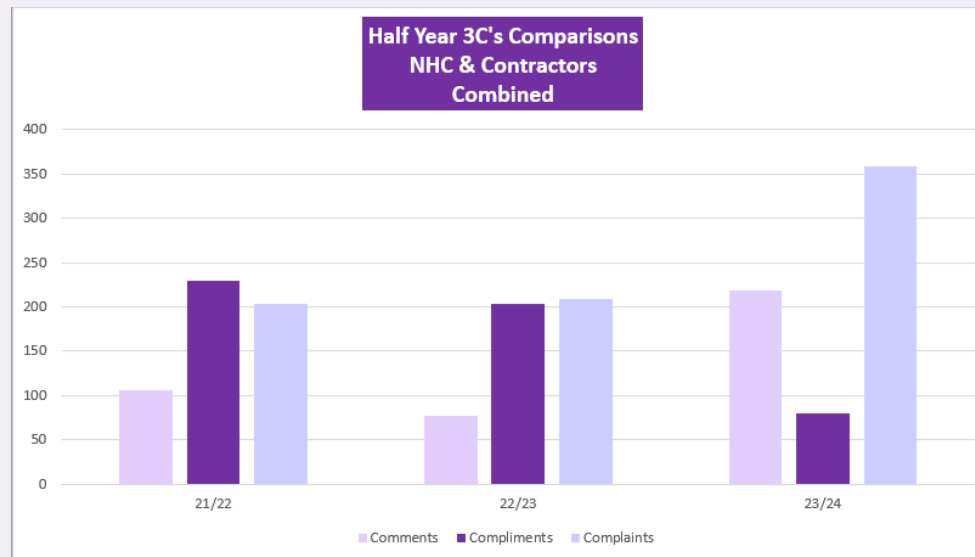
Contractor Complaints Data (all contractors)

	22/23	23/24	24/25
Number of Comments received	92	62	183
Number of Compliments received	162	122	23
Number of Complaints received	98	123	236
Total received	352	307	442

Combined Totals

	22/23	23/24	24/25
Number of Comments received	106	77	218
Number of Compliments received	229	203	80
Number of Complaints received	203	209	358
Total received	538	489	656

Half Year 3C's Comparisons NHC & Contractors Combined



Percentage of interactions resulting in a formal complaint

	Number of interactions /	% of
NHDC	77,889 interactions	0.136%
Urbaser	8,319,842 collections	0.00012%
North Herts Leisure Centre	316,272 visitors	0.093%
Hitchin Swim Centre & Archers	337,439 visitors	0.0228%
Royston Leisure Centre	163,182 visitors	0.026%

Waste and Recycling Data (combined)

	Comments	Compliments	Complaints	Totals
24/25	12	12	16	40
23/24	19	54	61	134
22/23	10	32	53	95

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Breakdown of 3C's by service area – 1st April to 30th September 2024

Regulatory	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
Planning Control & Conservation	0	3	14
Planning Policy	2	0	2
Parking Enforcement	1	1	6
Place	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
Leisure	11	0	30
Parks & Open Spaces / Green Space	4	6	15
Waste Management	8	2	6
Housing & Environmental Health	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
Housing Needs	0	0	14
Homelessness & Housing Advice	0	6	9
Environmental Health – Protection	0	1	4
Environmental Health - Commercial	0	1	2
Customers	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
Benefits	0	2	4
Careline	0	23	1
Customer Service Centre	4	2	2
MSU Post & Administration	1	6	0
Revenues Billing and Recovery	2	0	11
Enterprise	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
Museum	0	1	0
Estates	0	0	1
Legal & Community	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
Electoral Services	2	1	1
Community Health & Wellbeing	0	1	0
Licensing	0	1	0
Totals	35	57	122
Contractor Data	Comments	Compliments	Complaints
Waste (Urbaser)	4	10	10
North Herts Leisure Centre	65	3	106
Hitchin Swim Centre	73	6	77
Royston Leisure	41	4	43
Contractor Totals	183	23	236
Combined Totals	218	80	358

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 November 2024

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

SUPPORTED HOUSING SCHEME FOR WOMEN

REPORT OF: Service Director of Housing and Environmental Health

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Cllr Dave Winstanley, Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health

COUNCIL PRIORITY: ACCESSIBLE SERVICES

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council no longer owns any affordable housing, and it works closely with registered providers and partners to meet the housing needs of its residents.
- 1.2 Demand for homeless individuals in North Herts remains high following the increase in numbers following the pandemic, including a significant number of women.
- 1.3 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have commissioned Druglink, a substance misuse charity based in Hertfordshire, to run a two-year pilot of small service for single homeless women that will be based in North Herts.
- 1.4 The Cabinet previously agreed match funding of Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) ring fenced Homeless Prevention Grant (HPG) to support a similar scheme, and this report seeks approval of a revised proposal.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the Cabinet supports the allocation of £73k of ring fenced MHCLG Homelessness Prevention Grant to HCC to match fund the two-year pilot of Druglink's Supported Housing Scheme for Women.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. This proposal has been made in order to enable the two-year pilot to go ahead.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. None.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. Cllr Dave Winstanley, Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health has been consulted and is supportive of this proposal.

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 16th October 2024.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 Demand for homelessness assistance from the Council remains high following the pandemic, driven to a large degree by increased approaches from single homeless people including some with multiple support needs. The following table outlines the Council's legal duties to homeless households over recent years (the **bold figures** represent the number of single people – and some couples, without children – who approached the Council because they were homeless):

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Households owed a prevention duty	275	229	194	175	207
Households owed a relief duty	219	385	281	241	269
of which, single households	170	322	217	168	178
Households owed a main housing duty	65	90	128	123	131
of which, single households	14	33	53	43	43

- 7.2 Single women make up a significant proportion of homelessness demand in the district. Just under one-third of single homeless people to whom the Council owed a relief duty in 2023/24 were women, whilst a similar proportion of single people entering temporary accommodation (TA) in that year were women. The vast majority of women (in common with the TA cohort as a whole) have a support need, with 59% of single women having two or more support needs. The most common support needs were poor mental health (47% of women) and poor physical health (35%). Half (51%) of single women in TA had however experienced or had been at risk of abuse, mostly domestic abuse but also sexual or other forms of abuse. This is almost double the proportion of the TA cohort as a whole who had experienced abuse.
- 7.3 Whilst a number of single homeless accommodation schemes have recently been developed in the district, there are currently no female only schemes. At its meeting on 13 December 2022, Cabinet approved the allocation of £73k of Homelessness Prevention Grant funding to Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing (MTVH) for a scheme in Letchworth for single homeless women with complex needs in conjunction with HCC. However, HCC subsequently decided against appointing MTVH for the scheme, and it did not progress.
- 7.4 The proposed pilot is designed to help women with a variety of support needs. This is likely to include women who are survivors of domestic abuse. In September 2024, Hertfordshire (led by HCC) took part the Women's Rough Sleeping census for the first time; this is designed to collect information about women who experience homelessness,

such as rough sleeping. This includes women who might not always be sleeping out on the street and acknowledges that women's rough sleeping can be hidden, transparent and intermittent. Partners identified 107 women known to services who had slept rough in the last three months; with the 107, 60 women completed the recent Hertfordshire survey, and seven women indicated they had slept rough within North Herts at some point over the last three months.

- 7.5 The Council has recently achieved White Ribbon Accreditation, and this service contributes to its commitment to provide support and housing services for women fleeing domestic abuse.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Whilst the Council no longer owns any housing stock, as the local housing authority, NHC retains legal housing responsibilities including accommodation duties towards homeless households. The Council is reliant on registered providers (formerly known as housing associations), and in some cases the private rented sector, to help us meet local housing need. The provision of single homeless accommodation has therefore been a long-term strategic challenge for the Council in light of continuing high demands for homelessness assistance, particularly from vulnerable single homeless people.
- 8.2 Around one-third of single homeless people approaching the Council for assistance are women and about half of these women have experienced, or been at risk of, some form of abuse. Trauma and abuse from partners in particular mean that female only spaces are essential for women who may not feel safe in mixed environments and who, in the absence of such spaces, may fail to engage with support. There are currently no female only supported housing schemes in the district for homeless women.
- 8.3 HCC have recently commissioned Druglink to run the proposed two-year pilot. This will be located in the District although the exact address of the scheme has to remain confidential due to the fact that some residents will include women who are survivors of domestic abuse. The property is owned by HCC and they have confirmed there are no planning implications and/or requirements. The service will offer six rooms and Druglink will provide daily support for all residents. All referrals into the scheme will come from the Council and we will also provide support with move on options for residents when they are ready for more independent settings.
- 8.4 The Council, Druglink and HCC will monitor the progress of the pilot throughout the two-year period; if successful, funding options for its continuation will be considered at the appropriate time.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Cabinet's Terms of Reference provides at paragraph 5.7.15; "To oversee the provision of all the Council's services other than those functions reserved to the Council".
- 9.2 The Housing Act 1985 Section 1 (1) confirms that the District Council is the Local Housing Authority (LHA).
- 9.3 LHAs' homelessness duties are contained within the Housing Act 1996 Part VII, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which placed significant new duties on English local housing authorities.

- 9.4 LHAs have a legal duty to provide interim (also known as emergency) accommodation to homeless applicants, if, at any point during their enquiries, there is a reason to believe that an applicant may be:

- homeless
- eligible for assistance, and
- in priority need

If an LHA fails to provide interim accommodation, or if the accommodation provided is unsuitable for the applicant, this can be challenged by way of judicial review.

- 9.5 The LHA also holds the 'Relief Duty' which applies when a council is satisfied that an applicant is homeless and eligible for assistance; it requires the Council to take reasonable steps to help the applicant secure that suitable accommodation becomes available for the applicant's occupation for at least six months. This therefore requires the Council to work with the applicant to help them find and retain accommodation to meet this legal duty.

- 9.6 Should Cabinet agree this proposal, the Council will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with HCC for the two-year pilot.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 At its meeting in December 2022, the Cabinet earmarked a contribution of £73k for a Supported Housing Scheme for Women. This was funded by ring-fenced Homelessness Prevention Grant provided by MHCLG. This amount match funds a similar contribution from HCC that is required to make the scheme financially viable and is currently held in reserve.

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 provision of supported accommodation for single homeless people has been a long-term challenge for the Council and this specialist supported housing scheme for women provides some mitigation to the risk of long-term hotel use for some clients.

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 provision of this specialist accommodation scheme will meet evidenced need for female only accommodation for women with complex support needs who have fled trauma and abuse from partners.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. Social Value will be realised by the employment opportunities offered by the new housing scheme and by the service itself and its fundamental aim to support local homeless women on their journey to independence.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to the proposal in this report.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 None

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Equality Analysis – Supported Housing Scheme for Women

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 17.1 Jo Doggett, Service Director – Housing and Environmental Health, jo.doggett@north-herts.gov.uk, ext 4470;
- 17.2 Tiranan Straughan, Housing Policy Office, Tiranan.Straughan@north-herts.gov.uk, ext 4842;
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- 17.4 Jodie Penfold, Group Accountant, Jodie.Penfold@north-herts.gov.uk, ext 4332;
- 17.5 Isabelle Alajooz, Legal Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer, Isabelle.Alajooz@north-herts.gov.uk, ext 4346;
- 17.6 Martin Lawrence, Strategic Housing Manager, martin.lawrence@north-herts.gov.uk, ext 4250.

18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1 Cabinet minutes 13 December 2022: ([Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 13th December, 2022, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council](#) (item 144))
- 18.2 Druglink's website: [Druglink](#)

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Appendix 1 – Draft Equality Analysis

1. Name of activity:	Supported Housing Scheme for Women			
2. Main purpose of activity:	Proposed provision of a small (6 bed) accommodation and support scheme in the district for women with complex support needs			
3. List the information, data or evidence used in this assessment:	Separate and single-sex service providers: a guide on the Equality Act sex and gender reassignment provisions , Equality and Human Rights Commission, April 2022 Women's Aid Position regarding member services and direct services to survivors , March 2022 NHC analysis of case level data for households approaching for homelessness assistance, October 2024 NHC Review of Homelessness in North Hertfordshire , January 2024 Statutory homelessness live tables , Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government			
4. Assessment				
Characteristics	Neutral (x)	Negative (x)	Positive (x)	Describe the person you are assessing the impact on, including identifying: community member or employee, details of the characteristic if relevant, e.g. mobility problems/particular religion and why and how they might be negatively or positively affected. Negative: What are the risks? Positive: What are the benefits?
Community considerations (i.e. applying across communities or associated with rural living or Human Rights)			x	Negative
				Positive This specialist female only scheme would cater for women who have experienced, or are at risk of, domestic or other abuse. Nationally, there has been a notable increase in women facing homelessness due to fleeing domestic abuse and this is reflected in the district – by 2023/24, 19% of homeless households were homeless due to fleeing domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 was introduced to provide greater protection for victims and ensure they have the support they need. As part of the Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership, the Council is committed to preventing domestic abuse wherever possible, and where it is not, supporting victims and survivors to stay safe and rebuild their lives.

A person living with a disability	x			Negative
				Positive
A person of a particular race	x			Negative
				Positive
A person of a gay, lesbian or bisexual sexual orientation	x			Negative
				Positive
A person of a particular sex, male or female, including issues around pregnancy and maternity		x	x	Negative
				The scheme will be a female only space because residents would feel unsafe if men were also able to access the service due to the nature and history of the trauma that they have experienced. Although it is recognised that there are also male victims of domestic abuse, the numbers are comparatively very low (6 men had an accepted relief duty in 2023/24 compared to 44 women). Male victims will have access to homelessness support services from the Council and alternative accommodation where the Council has a duty to accommodate.
				Positive
				The provision of a female only service provides a safe, trauma-informed environment in which survivors of domestic abuse can receive the support they need to begin the journey towards rebuilding lives and independent living. The service will provide on-site intensive support for residents who will have multiple support needs including mental health issues.
A person of a particular religion or belief	x			Negative
				Positive
A person of a particular age	x			Negative

				Positive
				Negative
Transgender	x			Positive
				The provider will consider referrals of transgender women on their merits as with any other referral

5 Results

	Yes	No	
Were positive impacts identified?	x		The proposed scheme will positively benefit homeless single women who have experienced abuse and require a safe, female-only space in which to receive support to recover. It will also contribute towards our commitment to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse, also included within the Council's Housing Strategy 2024-2029 .
Are some people benefiting more than others? If so explain who and why.	x		The proposed scheme is female-only and will therefore specifically benefit women. There is a need for a female-only scheme in order to provide residents with a safe, trauma-informed environment in which they can receive the support they need to begin their journeys towards independent living.
Were negative impacts identified (what actions were taken)	x		Men will not be able to access the scheme due to the need to provide a safe, trauma-informed environment for female survivors of domestic abuse. Alternative accommodation will be provided where the Council has a legal duty to accommodate.

6. Consultation, decisions and actions

If High or very high range results were identified who was consulted and what recommendations were given?

Describe the decision on this activity

List all actions identified to address/mitigate negative impact or promote positively

Action	Responsible person	Completion due date
Male victims of domestic abuse will be provided with support and accommodation in accordance with homelessness legislation, including signposting to alternative schemes if appropriate.	Homelessness and Housing Advice Manager Strategic Housing Manager	Ongoing

When, how and by whom will these actions be monitored?	
Monitoring of overall need for domestic abuse services will take place as part of monitoring of the Council's Housing Strategy 2024-2029.	
7. Signatures	
Assessor	
Name: Tiranan Straughan	Signature** T F Straughan
Validated by	
Name:	Signature**
Forward to the Corporate Policy Team	
Signature**	
Assessment date:	Review date:

**** Please type your name to allow forms to be sent electronically.**

A copy of this form should be forwarded to the corporate policy team and duplicate filed on the council's report system alongside any report proposing a decision on policy or service change.

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee
12 November 2024**

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: ENTERPRISE UPDATE

REPORT OF: STEVE CROWLEY, SERVICE DIRECTOR - ENTERPRISE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: CLLR TAMSIN THOMAS, EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENTERPRISE AND THE ARTS

COUNCIL PRIORITY: THRIVING COMMUNITIES / ACCESSIBLE SERVICES / RESPONSIBLE GROWTH / SUSTAINABILITY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To provide the committee with an update on the progress of the Enterprise Directorate.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

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

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1. None

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1. The Executive Member for Enterprise and the Arts have been kept regularly updated on the Service Plan for the Enterprise Directorate and has been fully briefed and supports the contents of this report.

5.2. Key projects are run via the Council's Project Management Framework, with ensure relevant Executives are members of the Project Board.

5.3. The Service Director and Service Managers hold quarterly meetings with the Shadow Executives and keep them up to date on key projects and operational items.

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 Executive Member for Enterprise and the Arts and the Service Director – Enterprise have been asked to provide an update to this committee.

8. ENTERPRISE UPDATE

- 8.1 The Committee raised several questions prior, therefore, the format of the report is based on these questions.

8.2 Strategy

- 8.2.1 What are the administration's strategic objectives within this portfolio?

- 8.2.2 The Council Plan is the key document that sets out the objectives for the Council and each portfolio and the Enterprise department plays an important part in the delivery of this. The current plan includes the following project/service deliveries; Churchgate Regeneration, Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Museum Storage, Riverside Walk between Bridge Street and Biggin Lane, and to continue to investigate income generation opportunities.

- 8.2.3 The Council also has a delivery plan, of which the Churchgate Regeneration project is a key project.

- 8.2.4 The Enterprise department has its own Service Plan, which is provided in Appendix 1, this shows the key and high-level projects/tasks that the team are undertaking this year. Also, each team has their own Service Plan which provides more detail.

8.3 Budget/headcount/key suppliers

- 8.3.1 The current revenue budget for the Enterprise directorate for 2024/25 is shown below

	Enterprise	Estates	Museum and Hitchin Town Hall	Total
Expenditure	£359,581	£322,734	£646,597	£1,328,912
Income	£634,310	£632,651*	£222,169	£1,489,130
Total	£274,729	£309,917	- £424,428	£160,218

*There is £159k debit on the Churchgate Income line. This relates to outstanding debt which has been accrued from previous years. If this debt is recovered the income would be £792k, making the total net position £469k surplus to date.

- 8.3.2 The table below sets out the capital receipts that this directorate has generated over the last 4 years.

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
£2,364,841	£4,217,000	£639,000	£0	£7,222,841

8.3.3 The current headcount is as follows:

Enterprise: 1 Full Time (Enterprise Manager), 1 Part Time (Economic Development Officer), 1 Full Time Graduate apprentice and 1 Part Time agency staff member (who is employed by the agency directly, but provides Part Time Communications support to the Enterprise Manager).

Estates: 2 Full Time (Principal Estates Surveyor and Graduate Estates Surveyor), 1 Part Time (Admin Support Officer) and 1 Full Time agency Surveyor.

Museum and Hitchin Town Hall: 28 people, which works out as 18 Full Time equivalents, plus casual staff for events. Their job titles are as follows: Culture & Facilities Service Manager, Operations & Events Manager, Events Team Leader, Duty Manager, Events Assistants, Support Officers (x3), Cleaners (x2), Catering Manager, Catering Supervisor, Catering Assistants (x2), Seasonal Kiosk Attendant, Catering Casual Bank, Digital Marketing Apprentice, Cultural Services Manager, Curator & Education Officer, Digital Audience Development Officer, Education Apprentice, Curator & Heritage Access Officer, Assistant Curator, Museum Technician and Visitor Services Assistant (x3)

8.3.4 Key suppliers

8.3.4.1 Enterprise – Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH) provides expert consultancy advice associated with the regeneration of Churchgate. The Council has a direct contract with LSH under the Crown Commercial Service framework. Other consultants that assist LSH in the project are David Leonard Designs and KMC Transport Consultants. Both of these consultants are involved in the project, however, are contracted to LSH. PLMR has been appointed as our Communications Agency support.

SQW Limited have been appointed to assist the team in writing the new Economic Development strategy.

Hitchin Markets Limited are appointed to run the day-to-day management of Hitchin Market on the Council's behalf

8.3.4.2 Estates key suppliers – Brown and Lee for management of Churchgate Shopping Centre (Contract being re-tendered). Professional one-off valuation, building surveying, development and agency work from Brown and Lee, Carter Jonas, Aitchison Raffety, Philip Reynolds, Moulton Walker, Janes Surveying.

8.3.4.3 Museum and Hitchin Town Hall rely on a wide range of suppliers from stock provision, entertainment and equipment to repairs, security and grounds maintenance, as just a handful of examples. Whilst there is a very wide range of suppliers, there are not thought to be key suppliers.

8.4 What challenges, barriers, and/or risks most affect this portfolio?

8.4.1 The following sections focus on the key challenges, barriers and risks for the department.

8.4.2 Change in legislation

One of the biggest barriers took place in December 2021 through changes to The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (Prudential Code) with regards commercial investments. This change means Councils can only invest in their own area. Also, the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb) have changed their rules, meaning that Councils can only borrow for investment where the primary reason is not to provide a financial surplus. In recent years, local councils have made increasing use of cheaper borrowing from the PWLB to invest in commercial property with a view to generating revenue. The rules governing the purposes for which local councils may borrow for commercial investment are set out in CIPFA's prudential code.

8.4.3 The Churchgate Regeneration Project

This project is likely to be the largest financial project that the Council has undertaken to date, and therefore provides many challenges and risks as the project progresses. The Project is being managed using the Council Project Management framework, therefore, an active risk log and issue log is in place to try and control any risks and issues. This project also has many stakeholders that have varying interests in the project, and therefore one of the major challenges is ensuring that all groups are kept up to date and satisfied.

This project is subject to ensuring it is financially viable to deliver and maintain, as well as choosing the most appropriate partner to assist in the planning and delivery.

8.4.4 It is a challenge to continue to retain and attract tenants at Churchgate Shopping Centre and justify acceptable repair and maintenance as we progress towards vacant possession for the redevelopment, with corresponding impact on delivering adequate financial returns.

8.4.5 Economic Development and Tourism Strategy

We are in the process of producing a new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, however this has been delayed for several reasons. One of these reasons, is Hertfordshire Futures are also in the process of writing their Economic Strategy and we want to ensure we know what will be included in theirs and if this will impact on ours. We have arranged a meeting which is due to take place in November, we hope this meeting will help us better understand how this will impact ours and if it is best for us to complete ours inline with theirs (March 2025), or if we can complete ours sooner.

8.4.6 Ensuring planned and reactive repair and maintenance of properties is undertaken, especially the older stock properties where the Council has repair responsibilities and where the asset may be delivering a limited financial return.

8.4.7 Recruiting and retaining general practice property surveyors is a challenge, this is an issue that many councils are facing. At present we are using an agency member of staff within this post.

8.4.8 Our Museum and Town Hall Team hold many events with the aim of making a surplus from these events. In recent years we have delivered many events inhouse, by doing this we can generate greater profits, however, this means we must ensure they are run professionally, otherwise there is the risk of losing money. This is very challenging, however, the team have really risen to the challenge and last year delivered

approximately 20 internal events which contributed to an increase in event income, bar and catering income from £64k (22/23) to £125k (23/24).

8.5 What opportunities do you see in the future within this portfolio?

8.5.1 The Churchgate Regeneration Project

As mentioned above, this project has the potential to bring a wealth of opportunity to the district and further. Not only will this enhance the town, but it will also look to bring more jobs, housing and create a destination space for the town. It is likely to attract more visitors from outside the district and will encourage business growth and social value. Now that the Council owns both the freehold and leasehold of the shopping centre, the Council are in the best possible position to unlock the potential on this site and the surrounding Council owned car parks.

8.5.2 The Economic Development & Tourism Strategy

This strategy is currently being rewritten to reflect the Council's future position regarding economic development and growth within the district – especially in relation to business growth and engagement. Research shows that North Herts is perfectly placed for business, and we are fortunate enough to have a range of SME's and large businesses willing to work alongside us to provide more jobs, better upskilling programmes and generally putting 'back into the community'. Going forward, the Council aim to build a stronger relationship with businesses in order to promote the growth and engagement within the District.

8.5.3 Growing Broadwater Hundred (a Local Authority Trading Company "LATCo")

There is an opportunity to grow the existing property company to include more properties within its portfolio. The company currently manages the four properties at Harkness Court, Hitchin however depending on the success of this it could broaden its portfolio.

8.5.4 Opportunities for income generation from the Council assets

Opportunities for income generation from improving the commercial property portfolio, identifying and executing opportunities through reviews, reinvestment, redevelopment and re-gearing of leases. Further investment in commercial property through either capital being made available or reinvestment of disposal proceeds to improve the asset or portfolio should be considered. Opportunities for income generation for property held for operational purposes should also be considered, such as the successful letting of the 2nd floor of DCO.

8.5.5 Asset Management

Opportunities via Asset Management and Development - Within both the property portfolio assets should be identified for refurbishment and redevelopment where they are failing to achieve their potential. They will be assessed in detail, possibly in conjunction with outside experts to provide an assessment of the existing asset and identify and appraise viable options.

8.5.6 Charnwood

The details of this project are set out below in 8.14. Charnwood House, Paynes Park, Hitchin was gifted to the Urban District Council of Hitchin in 1937, subject to the Council holding the property in perpetuity for public community use. It is Grade II Listed. The property has been largely vacant since 2013. There was previous interest in the building from Charnwood Community Management Association, a registered charity, with the aim of taking a lease and maintaining the building for community use, providing a community hub for Hitchin residents with an emphasis on supporting those groups with an educational focus. This did not come to fruition for various reasons. The Council subsequently openly marketed the property but received limited interest due to the condition of the property and limited permitted use. Recently another Hitchin based organisation has shown an interest, and Estates are in dialogue with them with a view to agreeing a long lease, on suitable terms and conditions in line with landlord and tenant's respective investment obligations to bring the property into the required use, for a mix of community uses. Estates will be reporting back on this shortly to enable a decision on whether this proposal can proceed, or alternative options considered for the long-term preservation and use of the building.

8.5.7 Thomas Bellamy

Thomas Bellamy House, Bedford Road, Hitchin is Grade II Listed and constructed in circa 1850. According to local history, the building was previously used as a hospital and subsequently been split into individual offices/suites which have been sub-let on a room or floor basis. The property has been vacant for a number of years. Last year the Council obtained a report on the building's condition, and costings to undertake internal upgrade and refurbishment together with a marketing report for potential sale or letting as office, residential or other potential acceptable uses. The Council has undertaken external works to correct structural issues, and repair and redecorate the external fabric. Decisions have not been made on the recommended next steps and the property has not formally been marketed. There is current interest from a local organisation to occupy the property under a new lease, subject to terms. Estates will be reporting back on this shortly to enable a decision on whether to proceed with marketing for sale or let, subject to discounting any other potential alternative options.

8.5.8 Hitchin Town Hall

The opportunities for Hitchin Town Hall rest in ensuring the potential bookings calendar is as saturated as possible and that the team are working towards maximum coverage of the available hireable periods. To this end, there have been a number of steps in terms of marketing, with a new website, new booking system and introduction of a digital marketing apprentice to increase staffing capacity around the various marketing channels available (website, social media, newsletters and leaflets).

8.5.9 North Herts Museum

The museum is not generally judged on its commercial success, but does have its own income targets from services such as the gift shop and education service to meet along with costs which need to be managed. Instead, its success lies in enhancing the cultural offering for the community of North Herts by continuing to offer a wide range of exhibitions, events and outreach initiatives. The ability to reach and attract new audiences, support education at all stages of life and contribute to local pride, sense of

place and community cohesion are all ways in which the museum service seeks to serve and benefit North Herts. In the future, the continued surveillance of grant funding opportunities to enhance the museums offering will be key given that funding pressures limit the council's ability to solely fund additional outreach ventures and cultural projects.

8.6 Performance

8.7 What does success look like in this portfolio?

8.7.1 The success of this portfolio can be measured in many ways. This includes but is not limited to delivering of the directorate Service Plan, achieving our financial budgets, holding successful events at the Museum and Town Hall, securing international exhibitions and speakers to the Museum, or achieving projects that are set out in the Council Plan and Council delivery Plan.

8.8 How do you measure performance? What are the key metrics? Are they being met?

8.8.1 We have an active work programme that is reviewed at monthly Departmental Management Team meetings, this is included in Appendix 1. Also, all Service Managers have their own work programme, this is reviewed at 1-1 with the Service Director.

8.8.2 Specific projects, like the Churchgate Regeneration project are measured by objectives/milestones set out in the project's work programme. The project is set out in stages and is delivered by a collective project team made up of consultants and Council officers – who report into the established Project Board. This project has also been subject to three internal audits, conducted by SIAS and Hertfordshire County Council. All audits have passed, but with minor recommendations that are followed up and monitored by the Project Manager responsible and the Risk Manager at North Herts. As the project progresses into the delivery phase, more specific milestones/key performance indicators will be set and agreed.

8.8.3 All services and projects have budgets, which are monitored and if there are significant variances they are reported to Cabinet as part of the budget monitoring process.

8.9 How does North Herts compare to other similar councils on some of these measures?

8.10 We do not currently compare our services against other councils as it would be difficult to ensure like for like comparison.

8.11 Projects

8.12 Enterprise/Economic Development Strategy

a. What is the goal of the project?

To refresh the current Commercial strategy to ensure it is more in line with how the team are operating today under the recent changes in legislation and to include more recent projects such as Churchgate Regeneration. The Economic Development Strategy has been rewritten to include business engagement, and Tourism at North

Herts. The strategies are both updates to reflect how the team are acting commercially and developing the economic agenda of North Herts Council.

- b. When is the project expected to complete?

The delivery of this strategy is behind the original timescale, this is mainly due to capacity in the team, and it has also taken longer than anticipated for the consultants to undertake interviews with local businesses.

The aim is to take the Economic Development strategy to March 2025 Cabinet for approval. This is an updated timescale to coincide with Hertfordshire Futures Economic Development Strategy being pushed back until March due to potential changes in direction from central government. The Enterprise strategy will continue to be worked on alongside this, with a first draft due in February 2025.

- c. What has been achieved to date?

Due diligence such as interviews with over 15 local businesses (varying in size and industry) have been completed, as well as a detailed Research Report conducted by the consultants. The businesses interviewed include Willmott Dixon, Letchworth Heritage Foundation and Aztek Logistics Limited. This has allowed the Council to identify what can be achieved and how – and is written in storyboard format before being written up into a strategy. The team have also researched other Councils Commercial/Enterprise strategies to find out where and how the North Herts version needs adaptation.

- d. What is the current status of the project?

We are working with our consultants to produce the Economic Development Strategy as part of this we are also working with Hertfordshire Futures to better understand how their strategy could impact on ours.

- e. What are the next steps?

To continue writing and refreshing the Commercial strategy, and to seek approval of the Economic Development strategy at Cabinet (as well as other approval loops mentioned above). Following Cabinet approval, the team will implement the work programmes for both strategies.

- f. What are the key risks and issues affecting this project?

The Council will need to put the relevant resources in place to execute the strategy, currently the team is not fully staffed, therefore at the moment it will be difficult to deliver the new and exciting work streams within the strategy. There is also a risk that the strategy is not approved or adopted, and therefore the timescale risks being delayed. Another risk is that businesses do not engage with the Council, and therefore it could be difficult to measure success and deliver high quality business engagement.

8.13 Churchgate Regeneration

- a. What is the goal of the project?

The following is an extract from the Project Business Case: -

Expected Benefits

To improve the current condition of the Churchgate Shopping Centre, to ensure it is fit for purpose for the next 20 years

To improve the street scene within the agreed project areas so it is fit for purpose for the next 20 years

To improve the current condition of the surrounding areas (actual areas to be agreed as the project progresses) so it is fit for purpose for the next 20 years.

To improve the condition of Hitchin Market so it is fit for purpose for the next 20 years.

To provide a return on investment to the Council as set out in the Project Executive section.

- b. When is the project expected to complete?

This is a long-term project and it is hard to give a timeframe of the overall delivery at the moment, however, our consultants have advised the estimated timeframe for commencing work on site is the middle of 2027.

- c. What has been achieved to date?

Following the success of purchasing the leasehold, the Council appointed Lambert Smith Hampton, Leonard Design and KMC Transport Planners and we have been working alongside them to complete the required analysis of the site. This includes completing a series of due diligence activities on the site to see what could be possible (in terms of legalities, size, market demand etc).

The team attended The UK's Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum earlier this year to seek potential development partners for the regeneration, this proved to be very successful, and since UKREiF the team have met and toured all interested partners around the site.

The team have also successfully launched the consultation, via an online survey that has received over 1,000 responses so far (October 2024). The team have also opened an in-person 'Hub' whereby various stakeholder workshops have been conducted with the likes of Hitchin Market Board and current Churchgate tenants to find out what their needs, concerns and/or challenges are associated with the project. The Hub is also open to the public three times a week, whereby the community are encouraged to visit the team to find out more about the journey so far. The consultation runs until 3rd November, after which the data will be analysed and fed back to the Project Board early December (4th).

- d. What is the current status of the project?

The status is continuation of the public consultation until 3 November (both in-person and online). The team are also working alongside Lambert Smith Hampton on the financial viability testing that will support the various options coming from the consultation data. Both stages will be complete by December 2025.

- e. What are the next steps?

Following the public consultation the data will be analysed and fed back to the Project Board early December. The Project Board will also receive a report on the financial viability results that will aim to inform the next decision on this project. Both the due diligence and feedback from the public consultation will form our Council-led vision that will set out what the site is likely to include and achieve. The vision will make up an important part of the Procurement process when looking to appoint a development partner. Key themes, principles and objectives will be set within the vision – as dictated to the Council team via the public consultation. The Procurement process is likely to begin early 2025.

- f. What are the key risks and issues affecting this project?
The following is a summary of the current highest scored risks taken from the project risk log.

Funding available - Regeneration Project

There is a risk that the project cannot be delivered due to lack of funding associated with the preparation, master planning, construction and delivery phases of this project. This risk is hard to determine as we are so early in the due diligence stages required to secure finance viability of the project. This financial appraisal is due to be undertaken in the next few months and will outline the different options available to the Council with regards funding and scale/type of development.

Funding available - Consultants

There is a risk that the project cannot be delivered due to lack or shortage in funding specifically for the consultants. As part of the business case the Council agreed to set aside £250K per year for the first three years to fund this. Future bids may be required, and this will be reviewed as part of the annual process.

Ongoing management of the consultation Hub (Churchgate Conversation)

There is a risk that due to the consultation extension, the Hub cannot open on dedicated days due to staffing shortages (particularly on Saturdays). This means that the Hub may not be able to open on these set days, and therefore the public have less of a chance or opportunity to 'have their say'.

8.14 Charnwood House

- a. What is the goal of the project?
To bring the property back into good repair and condition, and community use.
- b. When is the project expected to complete?
Mid 2025, subject to a successful long-term letting on acceptable terms and conditions.
- c. What has been achieved to date?
Options appraisal and capital budget secured. Main external roof and structural works completed so the building is wind and watertight. Asbestos removed. The former museum items removed along with other items and cabling, redundant cabinets and lighting etc. Initial marketing exercise undertaken but limited demand due to restricted use and investment required.
- d. What is the current status of the project?
This is our third round of exploring a local organisation to operate the building. Currently in dialogue with a Hitchin based organisation to agree terms for a long lease, on suitable terms and conditions, and landlord and tenant's respective investment obligations to bring the property into the required use, for a mix of community uses.
- e. What are the next steps?
Continue discussions with said organisation through to conclusion or consider bringing forward recommendations for alternative options for the property.
- f. What are the key risks and issues affecting this project?
Covenant restriction on use.
Statutory restriction on use.

Viability of Listed Building consent conditions.
Demand for community hub.
Achieving mutually acceptable and viable terms for the letting.
Delays due to Asset of Community Value (ACV) listing.

8.15 Museum Storage

- a. What is the goal of the project?
To solve the current pressures on capacity and strive for improved environmental stability to secure the long-term future and preservation of the museum collection of North Hertfordshire. A modern and upgraded store would also facilitate greater community outreach and engagement opportunities along with enhancing our ability to rotate lesser seen items from our collection so that these may be placed on temporary display.
- b. When is the project expected to complete?
Current estimate would be 2027/2028.
- c. What has been achieved to date?
Officers have engaged with three developers via three separate procurement frameworks.
Costing reports have been drawn up for a) a pre fabricated facility, b) a standalone museum storage facility, and c) a museum storage facility alongside a commercial venture.
All of the above option pointed towards a greater budget being necessary. As a result of this market testing and feasibility discussions, the budget was revised upwards and officers sought to offset some of the costs by exploring an overall scheme comprising of museum storage being built alongside a self storage facility operated as a commercial venture.
Having investigated this option with a self storage consultant, it became clear that the facility could not be made large enough to reach the required level of yield which would result in a suitable return on investment.
Other possibilities, such as various leisure pursuits were explored but discounted.
More recently and with greater capacity in the Council's Estates team, a new approach has been explored whereby the Council would move forward with plans for a warehouse on the site, which would then be altered to deliver the required internal conditions for the storage of museum artefacts. This approach would mean that the venture was less bespoke and would keep the Council's options open in the future as should the site ever be vacated the facility could be altered at minimal cost back into a sought after asset. This is now the leading option on the land at Bury Mead Rd.
- d. What is the current status of the project?
A full options appraisal is due to be taken to November Cabinet and is also due to be discussed at this meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- e. What are the next steps?
The next steps will ultimately depend on the decisions taken at November cabinet, but the officer recommendations are to allocate £30k to progress the warehouse plans for the Bury Mead site to planning application stage. By taking this step, officers will then

be able to conduct market testing with much greater confidence over the full cost estimates provided.

In addition to the progression of plans for the Bury Mead Rd site, there is also a recommendation to allocate a separate £20k budget to explore any options on the open market. This budget would be used for any initial surveys or other investigations necessary if any alternatives are to be brought to committee level for approvals to progress further or to ultimately purchase/lease.

- f. What are the key risks and issues affecting this project?
Financial pressure, escalating costs, staffing capacity, possible damage to the collection, possible loss of accreditation.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Overview and scrutiny committees were established by the Local Government Act 2000 (s.9) (amended by the Localism Act 2011). Members of a local authority who are not part of the executive can hold the executive to account for the decisions that affect their communities. This report seeks to update the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Enterprise/Economic Development Strategy and how the projects the Council's Enterprise team is involved with are progressing.
- 9.2. There are various legislative provisions that give local authorities the power to trade commercially, in order to improve the range of services they can offer, such as S1 of the Local Authority (Goods and Services) Act 1970 (which allows local authorities to provide goods and services to other local authorities); S95 of the Local Government Act 2003 (which allows local authorities to engage in entrepreneurial commercial trading with private bodies and persons); S1 of the Localism Act 2011 ('the general power of competence', which allows local authorities to do anything individuals can do unless prohibited by law and subject to public law principles) and S19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (which allows local authorities to provide facilities associated with recreational facilities). As part of the assessment of any proposed trading activity pursuant to the Enterprise/Economic Development Strategy the Council will need to ascertain the most appropriate power and comply with any associated requirements and consider the limitations imposed by the legislation.
- 9.3. Section 4(2) of the Localism Act 2011 provides that where, in exercise of the general power of competence, a local authority does things for a commercial purpose a local authority must do them through a company. This is particularly pertinent to the use of Broadway Hundred Ltd (referred to above at paragraph 8.5.3). By using a LATCo the Council can take advantage of the wider market place in terms of the services being provided.
- 9.4. The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 allows local authorities to provide and maintain museums and art galleries. The act, however, does not place a statutory duty on local authorities to do so. Therefore, the Council's commitment to the North Herts Museum arises more from a concern for the Museum and its collection than obligation.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. Financial implications are covered in the body to the 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. There are no direct risk implications relating to this report, as it is solely providing an update on the progress of activities and projects within the Enterprise directorate. Key risks are assessed and managed for each individual project and where appropriate, these are recorded on a Risk Log and/or the Risk Register. Section 8 of the report highlights key risks relating to specific projects and the directorate in general.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2. The strategy states that all proposed ideas will be of an ethical nature and will be considered to have a positive impact on the community as a basis for consideration. In line with the Council's commitment to demonstrate due regard the Equality Duty, it will conduct equality impact assessments where required (i.e. any key decisions, major budget implications and any revisions to major service provisions).

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

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

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply directly to this report. The Council will conduct environmental impact assessments where required (i.e. any key decisions, major budget implications and any revisions to major service provisions).

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

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

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1 Appendix 1 – Service Plan - Enterprise

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1 Council Plan
- 18.1 Council's Delivery Plan

Appendix A - Service Action Plan

Enterprise

Action	Corporate Objective	Target/Aim/Outcome	Planned Start Date	Due Date	Assigned to	Other services required (only list those service inputs which would not be considered 'business as usual')
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2024/25

Service Director
Specific

Baldock Industrial Estate Recovery	Sustainability	To liaise with Baldock Industrial Estate companies and assist them in the recovery of the Industrial Estate.	13/07/23	Ongoing	Steve Crowley	Environmental Health, Planning
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Museum and Town
Hall

Surpass Pre Pandemic Visitor and Income Levels for the facility	Brighter future together	To attract more bookings of Hitchin Town Hall, host more events and attract more visitors to the museum than typically pre pandemic.	01/04/24	01/04/25	Katie Hasler & Ros Allwood	
Launch internal operation of Howard Park Kiosk	Brighter future together	To have successfully launched the Howard Park Kiosk and for this to have met financial targets by the end of the season.	01/02/24	01/05/24	Katie Hasler & Rob Orchard	Comms, Property Services, Env. Health, Building Control.
Museum Storage Solution	Brighter future together	To have thoroughly explored all options and presented a detailed options appraisal to members so that a decision can be made over how best to proceed.	01/12/24	03/09/24	Rob Orchard & Ros Allwood	Legal, Planning, Building Control, Property Services, I.T., Comms
Chiller Replacement	Brighter future together	To have replaced the roof chiller, which is an essential component of maintaining a stable environment within our museum galleries but which, following multiple attempts to repair it, is now in need of wholesale replacement.	01/04/24	30/09/24	Rob Orchard & Ros Allwood	Property Services, Procurement

Estates

Block letting of 55 Harkness Court, Hitchin.	Brighter future together	Letting entire building to North Herts Council's trading company with aim of generating rental income for Council and providing four new homes.	Ongoing	30/04/24	Philip Doggett	Property Services. Legal Services.
Churchgate Shopping Centre.	Brighter future together	Agree with managing agent a schedule and programme of repairs to Churchgate Shopping Centre and commission the agent to undertake the repairs, Estates overseeing the entire process.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Philip Doggett	Legal Services.
Marketing & disposal of Land at The Snipe, Weston.	Brighter future together	Remove maintenance obligation and generate capital receipt in line with capital projections.	Ongoing	31/08/24	Philip Doggett	Legal Services.
Progress preferred options for potential development land at : Yeomanry Drive (Baldock) - Meadow Way (Therfield) - Land rear of Baldock Road/Radburn Way (Letchworth) - Orchard Way, Breachwood Green	Brighter future together	Finalise preferred options for disposal to generate a capital receipt and/or retention of housing stock for revenue as appropriate on a site by site basis.	Ongoing	30/11/24	Philip Doggett/Estates Team	Legal Services. Planning.

Investigation of options for repurposing of Royston Town Hall Annexe.	Brighter future together	Remove maintenance obligations, improve building energy efficiency & environmental performance, generate new long-dated rental income stream and partially provide new community space.	Ongoing	31/03/25	Philip Doggett/Steve Hensby	Legal Services. Planning.
Riverside Walk, Hitchin.	Sustainability	Acquire ownership and improve riverside walkway from Jill Grey Place to Bridge Street.	Ongoing	31/03/25	Philip Doggett/Julie Gray	Legal Services. Planning.
Property acquisitions & developments.	Brighter future together	Integrate property acquisitions into estate portfolio and asset manage to explore and initiate opportunities with view to maximising income and capital appreciation.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Philip Doggett	Legal Services.
Procurement of managing agent for Churchgate Shopping Centre. (plus other contracts)	Brighter future together	Undertake a procurement exercise to determine the managing agent for Churchgate Shopping Centre	Ongoing	01/02/25	Philip Doggett	Legal Services. Finance. Procurement
Investigate & pursue options for future use of Charnwood House.	People First	To accommodate community hub use with aim of bringing a town centre asset into beneficial occupation for wider community & reduce holding costs.	Ongoing	31/12/24	Philip Doggett	Legal Services. Finance. Planning. Property Services.
Review the Property Acquisition and Development Strategy.	Sustainability	In light of the changing financial regulations, update the Property Acquisition and Development Strategy.	Ongoing	31/03/25	Philip Doggett/Estates Team	Legal Services. Finance.
Negotiations and appropriation of land needed at Great Ashby for the access to site GA2 allocated in NHDC Local Plan for around 600 homes	Brighter future together	Generate a capital receipt from grant of access.	Ongoing	31/03/25	Philip Doggett/Steve Hensby	Legal Services. Planning.
Review options for property management system record keeping (including updating existing and new systems).	Brighter future together	Efficient management of the Council's investment property portfolio and timely completion of lease renewals and rent reviews to ensure maximum rental income. Improved performance management and reporting, including centralised storage of key information including capital valuations.	01/05/24	31/03/25	Philip Doggett/Estates Team	Finance. Procurement
Marketing & disposal of Former Depot, Icknield Way, Letchworth.	Brighter future together	Remove maintenance obligation and generate capital receipt in line with capital projections.	Ongoing	Onhold	Philip Doggett/Estates Team	Legal Services. Planning.
Enterprise						
Manage the Property Letting Company	Brighter future together	Aim to ensure the company is fully functional and in line with the Property and Development Strategy. Ensure that the letting of Harkness Court is run smoothly, and is generating an agreed income back into the Council.	Underway	Ongoing	Chloe Gray	Company Directors, Legal
Manage the Hitchin Market contract with Hitchin Markets Limited	Brighter future together	Continue to monitor and manage the contract. Attend Board meetings and plan for the future of the market as well as provide social media support. Conduct a yearly financial review to assess the position of HML.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Chloe Gray	Legal

Plan and manage the future redevelopment/ regeneration of Churchgate, Hitchin	Brighter future together	Project manage the project alongside internal teams, Lambert Smith Hampton and David Leonard Designs regarding the future regeneration of the property and its surroundings.	27/05/22	This stage is due to end January 2025	Chloe Gray	Legal, Procurement, Estates, Planning
Enterprise Strategy	Brighter future together	Refresh the current Commercial Strategy to reflect the change in focus from Commercial to Enterprise and the reasons behind this. Set out objectives in line with the current financial position of the Council, taking into consideration the financial climate today. Include a section on regeneration - in relation to the Churchgate project and ensure that all objectives are aligned to both financial and social value. Also, rewrite and update the Economic Development Strategy alongside a consultant. This will be a complete refresh, and be aligned to the aspirations/ priorities set by the current administration and Leader. The Strategy will focus on better business engagement, putting NH on the map as an attractive place to work, utilising opportunities within the District associated with employment and tourism etc.	Ongoing	31/03/25	Chloe Gray with Andrew Figgis	Comms, Finance, Community Partnerships, Consultants
North Herts Community Lottery	People First	Continue to manage Gatherwell and the lottery process. Aim to increase ticket sales and good cause sign ups as much as possible in a bid to exceed existing forecasts.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Chloe Gray	Comms
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	People First	Set out the remaining work programme for the UK SPF allocation according to the criteria set. Once agreed, deliver and monitor the projects alongside community stakeholders and Cllrs.	Ongoing	30/03/25	Chloe Gray with Andrew Figgis	Comms, Community Partnerships, Cllrs

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Overview and Scrutiny

12 November 2024

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: Museum Storage Options Appraisal

REPORT OF: Culture and Facilities Service Manager & Principal Estates Surveyor

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Executive Member for Enterprise and the Arts

COUNCIL PRIORITY: THRIVING COMMUNITIES / ACCESSIBLE SERVICES / SUSTAINABILITY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents an appraisal of the options available to the Cabinet to address the museum collection storage pressures. The appraisal aims to provide a balanced evaluation of the options on the basis of financial cost, adequacy for storage of historic objects and any other relevant considerations. At this stage officers are seeking approval from members in respect of which options are to be discounted and which options officers should pursue further, along with approving the costs involved in developing these options, where applicable.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet:

- 2.1. That Cabinet note the current projected costs, advantages and disadvantages of each option.
- 2.2. That Cabinet approve use of the allocated £4m budget in the current capital programme for this project to develop more detail on the costs of Option D and to acquire the necessary details for a planning application to be made.
- 2.3. That Cabinet approve use of the allocated £4m budget in the current capital programme for this project to develop more detail on the costs of Option E, should a suitable property become available.
- 2.4. That Cabinet consider and give approval for officers to apply for grant funding towards the investigations mentioned in 2.2 and 2.3 and recognise the need to align investigations with grant funding timetables in this instance.
- 2.5. That Cabinet resolve to discount options A, B and G and recommend that they are no longer developed or explored further.
- 2.6. That Cabinet indicates which of the other options outlined within the report (C and F) should be pursued further and which should be discounted.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. Officers do not have the capacity or financial budget to progress all 8 options to an advanced stage and some early decisions are required in order to focus time and budget on pursuing the most advantageous options based on the best information available to officers and members at the present time.
- 3.2. In addition, the pursuit of greater detail on a number of the options will require expenditure on external reports and consultants which officers are seeking Cabinets approval to progress. Estimated figures are included in the main body of the report which can be found in Appendix 1 and are summarised in the Executive Summary Grid in Appendix 2.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. Officers believe that all realistic options have been identified and explored and the nature of this report as an options appraisal is intended to provide an objective, balanced comparison of the option available in order to inform onward decision making.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. The Executive Member for Enterprise and the Arts has been kept fully informed of the museum collection storage pressures officers are facing along with the developments and updates on the exploration of each solution.
- 5.2. A report went to the internal informal Political Liaison Board of the Executive and the Leadership team, on 03/09/24 and the following comments were made:
 - It was agreed that some options should be discounted and not pursued further.
 - It was agreed however that all options considered should remain in the Cabinet report and highlighted as options which it is recommended the Cabinet discounts for transparency purposes.
 - It was requested that more detail of the costs of developing certain options to the next stage should be included to better inform decisions over next steps.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 15th July 2024.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. Officers have been asked to present a paper on the options for resolving museum collections storage to the committee.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. The main body of the report is found in Appendix 1 – Museum Storage Report

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the following functions at 6.2.7 (c) of the Constitution; "To make reports or recommendations to the authority or the Executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive."
- 9.2 Cabinet Terms of Reference in the Constitution state that it may by resolution exercise the following functions set out at 5.7.15 'To oversee the provision of all the Council's services other than those functions reserved to the Council.'
- 9.3 There are no specific legal implications arising from the various options. 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. The revenue implications vary depending on which option is taken forward. Details of this can be found in Appendix 1, with a summary also available in Appendix 2.
- 10.2 The capital implications vary depending on which option is taken forward. Details of this can be found in Appendix 1, with a summary also available in Appendix 2.
- 10.3 There are different financial implications for each option, however in order to progress as highlighted in the officers recommendation an expenditure of up to £30k will be incurred on developing plans for the existing land at Bury Mead Road (Option D) to planning application stage, with a further expenditure of up to £20k possible if a suitable building becomes available on the market (Option E) which officers feel is worth exploring further. All expenditure would be undertaken and managed in line with the Councils published contract and procurement rules.

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 risks of allowing the current storage conditions to persist are evidenced through the main body of the report in Appendix 1 and supported by Appendix 4 – Damage and Deterioration Details.
- 11.3. By evaluating all of the possible options using the best information available to officers at this time, it is intended that risks of proceeding with a less advantageous option are minimised. Further investment will be required before more reliable cost figures are ascertained however developing further detail on all options would lead to an avoidable waste of financial resources. Instead the officer recommendation is to progress options in a low risk and low cost approach at first, until greater dependency can be placed on the financial figures which are required to make a final decision. That final decision will be over which of the available options should be taken forward to ultimately address the museum collection storage pressures.

- 11.4. Although a £4m budget has been allocated for this project within the capital programme, the expenditures of £30k and £20k in pursuit of further details regarding options D and E respectively can only be considered as capital expenditure if one of these options is ultimately taken forward. If one or both of these options are discounted from the process then this expenditure would be treated as revenue expenditure and would therefore be unfunded expenditure.

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. A combined Environmental and Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix 10) has been undertaken, based upon and addressing all of the criteria within the Councils usual corporate template. The adapted impact assessment has been undertaken in order to separate the impacts of each option within the options appraisal. The primary equalities disadvantage with the current museum storage facility is that it is not accessible, however it is only possible to address this through some of the options evaluated within the report.
- 12.3. As some options are discounted and others are explored further in greater detail, the impact assessments will need to be updated and revised accordingly. These would then be included in any future committees where the project is reviewed.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report.
- 13.2. Depending on the options chosen to progress further, officers will liaise with the procurement team and abide by the stipulations of the go local policy and any social value expectations as applicable to the value and nature of any contracts which are entered into in enacting members decisions.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 A combined Environmental and Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix 10) has been undertaken and completed based upon the criteria within the Councils usual corporate templates. This combined impact assessment has been created so that all options considered within the report can be compared and contrasted over the key criteria.
- 14.2 At this stage, the primary environmental issues are the fact that the existing facility is very inefficient in its insulative credentials and its utility usage; coupled with the aesthetic appearance of both the primary facility and the overall site, which is in a poor state of repair overall and negatively impacts the collective appearance of surrounding areas. More detailed information on the remaining options will become clearer as these are investigated further however officers have strived to give an indication of the costs of developing options to net zero standards where this is feasible. This complies with the Council's Climate Change Strategy, but additional consideration will be given as more details emerge. For example, considerations over the heatings systems of

different buildings, their proximity to public transport links and energy efficiency ratings are not possible to compare and contrast for all options at this stage.

- 14.3 As some options are discounted and others are explored further in greater detail, the impact assessments will need to be updated and revised accordingly. These would then be included in any future committees where the project is reviewed.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 Officers within the museum service are currently tasked with working to preserve the museum collection of North Hertfordshire under difficult circumstances. The primary facility is at capacity which is creating health and safety issues for staff and visitors accessing the collection. Officers are managing these health and safety issues though they are having an impact on operations as a result of the control measures required. In addition, the current storage facility is not accessible. As a result, the options discounted and progressed further will have varying impacts on the degree to which these matters can be addressed and approved.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1 Appendix 1 – Museum Storage Report
- 16.2 Appendix 2 – Executive Summary Grid
- 16.3 Appendix 3 – North Herts Museum Collection Summary
- 16.4 Appendix 4 – North Herts Museum Collection Objects
- 16.5 Appendix 5 – Damage and Deterioration Details
- 16.6 Appendix 6 – Grants and Funding Considerations
- 16.7 Appendix 7 – Remodel Advice
- 16.8 Appendix 8 – Council Buildings Considered
- 16.9 Appendix 9 – Museum Storage Options Appraisal Financial Calculations
- 16.10 Appendix 10 – Equalities and Environmental Impact Assessment

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1 There are no background papers for this report.

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North Herts Council
Museum Storage Solution
Options Appraisal
Overview and Scrutiny Committee 12/11/2024

Contact Officers:

Philip Doggett, Principal Property Surveyor

Robert Orchard, Culture and Facilities Service Manager

Steve Hensby, Estates Surveyor

Date of Report: 30/10/2024

Contents

- 1. Executive Summary**
- 2. Introduction**
- 3. Background**
- 4. Financial Context**
- 5. Options Explored**
- 6. Limitations**
- 7. Climate Change Strategy**
- 8. Option A - Do Nothing**
- 9. Option B - Prolong the life of the existing facilities for a further 5-10 years**
- 10. Option C – Renovation or enhancement of the existing facilities**
- 11. Option D - Redevelop the existing site**
- 12. Option E - Purchase of a freehold/long leasehold building (new or existing)**
- 13. Option F - Leasing a building (new or existing)**
- 14. Option G - Relocate the museum storage to another building the Council owns**
- 15. Option H - Partnership solutions with other museum providers in the district**
- 16. Report Recommendations and Conclusion (Preferred Option/s)**
- 17. Definitions**

1. Executive Summary

N.B. Please read in conjunction with the Executive Summary Grid provided in Appendix 2

- 1.1 North Herts Council's new central museum opened in July 2019, located adjacent to Hitchin Town Hall in Brand Street, Hitchin.
- 1.2 The main facilities for storage of the museum's collection is at the Resource Centre on Bury Mead Road Industrial Estate, Hitchin, with additional storage at the former Letchworth Museum on Broadway Gardens. The collection moved to Bury Mead Resource Centre in the 1980s in what was intended to be a temporary solution at that time. The Museum Service has a responsibility to safeguard and preserve the collection for the benefit of future generations and the items are held in trust for the benefit of North Herts residents and their descendants.
- 1.3 The current facilities are not fit for purpose, with insufficient capacity and have fallen into a state of disrepair. This is increasing the risks posed to the collection objects, staff working within the museum service and the continued accredited status of North Herts Museum Service.
- 1.4 The North Herts Museum collection is of great regional, academic and scientific importance and contains many notable items and objects within its range of collections, as shown in Appendix 3.
- 1.5 This reports outlines the importance of suitable storage facilities, ongoing risks of not having this and options to address the museums pressures and needs, both in the short and longer term
- 1.6 The financial implications for each option are projected, along with setting out the key advantages and disadvantages with regards to collections, estates, social and environmental considerations.
- 1.7 Based on the research undertaken, there are three general categories that these options fall into:
 - Low cost, short term options
 - High cost, long term options
 - Alternative and partnership options
- 1.8 The report recommends the option(s) to pursue further and those to discount on the basis of the work undertaken to date.
- 1.9 A summary grid (Appendix 2) has been prepared to highlight the top level detail of each option, however the decision is best informed through the wider background and context provided in the body of the report.
- 1.10 Based upon the findings in the report, the recommended options to review in more detail with a view to informing onward decision making are as follows:
- 1.11 Introduction of a mezzanine floor at Unit 3 (Option C) represents the best low cost short term option based upon the research undertaken, though this option also has a number of disadvantages.

- 1.12 If the Council is in a position to make a more substantial investment in order to secure a long term solution then redevelopment of the existing site (Option D) or the purchase of a freehold property on the market (Option E) represent the most favourable ways to achieve this, based upon the research undertaken.
- 1.13 The Council does not have an alternative facility within its property portfolio which would be suitable as a solution to solve the museum storage pressures. However, the option of a partnership arrangement with the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation (LGCHF) does appear to offer a number of unique advantages and officers recommend exploring this possibility further.
- 1.14 In summary, if the Council is not in a position to make a significant investment then Option C should be pursued, whereas if there is the possibility of a more significant investment then Option D and E and H should be explored further.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 North Herts Museum is the leading accredited museum in the district, dedicated to preserving the history of the district and the only local museum able to host travelling exhibitions within a (high value) government indemnity standard exhibition gallery space. Alongside the core collection objects, the museum also holds the Hertfordshire County Herbarium, the most complete collection of local news archives, the bulk of the planning records from the former Hitchin Urban District Council and is the designated receiving site for archaeological depositions resulting from development within the district.
- 2.2 In 2019, North Herts Council completed a project to modernise the museum service of North Hertfordshire. The project included the closure of the former Letchworth and Hitchin Museums in favour of the creation of a central district museum adjacent to Hitchin Town Hall in Brand Street.
- 2.3 Alongside this move, there was originally an intention to address the long standing storage pressures facing the museum collection, which, since the 1980s, has been stored at the Museum Resource Centre on Bury Mead Road Industrial Estate in Hitchin.
- 2.4 The Bury Mead Road facility is operating beyond capacity and the Museum Service needs additional space to store artefacts. Further, the building is deteriorating, operating well beyond its considered economic life. In 2024 the Council commissioned a survey on the building. The report found that the facility is anticipated to cost an estimated £175k to maintain for the next 10 years at its current standard, leading to an additional £39k incurred each year to the Councils revenue budget.
- 2.5 The current risks to staff and the collection would remain regardless of this investment, including the risks of gradual deterioration and damage of the objects, safety and fire concerns for staff and the lack of space to effectively manage the collection.
- 2.6 An independent audit and accompanying report by external auditors, SIAS, on the state of museum collection storage and the potential for rationalisation was completed for the Council in 2018, This confirmed that the museum service was managing its collection in line with best practice and established policies and that it would not be possible to address the storage pressures through rationalisation alone. For most objects there are no alternative museums or collections to which the museum service

can seek to rationalise, as other museums cover a different subject matter to that stated in the [North Herts Museum Collections Development Policy](#).

- 2.7 Museum collections are constantly expanding as history is created. The growth of the North Herts Museum Collection has been limited in recent years (<1m² per year on average), assisted by a very clear and updated [Collections Development Policy](#) governing the criteria for accepting further objects into the collection. However, this level of growth cannot account for any major finds, donations or bequests which may occur in the coming years, all of which could lead to above average growth.
- 2.8 The North Herts Museum collection is of great regional, academic and scientific importance and contains many notable items and objects within its range of collections, as shown in Appendix 3.
- 2.9 The collection as a whole is estimated to feature over 1 million individual items as detailed in Appendix 4.
- 2.10 The stored collection is currently occupying a floor area of approximately 750m² across a number of Council owned facilities. Officers have calculated that this could be condensed to around 500-550m² with use of contemporary storage techniques, such as roller racking (also known as mobile shelving), if a future facility could support such an installation.
- 2.11 Due to a number of unforeseen delays and complications with the primary ambition of opening a new cutting edge museum in Brand Street, Hitchin, the secondary objective of addressing the museum collection storage pressures was pushed back in favour of focussing capacity and efforts on the launch of the new customer facing facility.
- 2.12 The new North Herts Museum launched in July of 2019. Having then faced the complications brought about by the Covid Pandemic in early 2020, it is now fully operational and hosts a diverse programme of engaging and thought provoking exhibitions.
- 2.13 Alongside its changeable programme, the museum also hosts and displays the best examples of the district's heritage, ranging from prehistoric to modern social history.
- 2.14 The collection also allows the Council to aid wider research and education. For example, the natural history collection can be used to plot the impact of climate change and biodiversity changes in the locality through time. The social history collection captures the prominent businesses and institutions which were started or based in the district, whilst the art collection ensures the works of various local artists are retained for the enjoyment of the wider public.
- 2.15 Since the North Herts Museum is now in full operation, attention has turned again to the storage pressures and how best to resolve these. Officers have explored a number of options with regards to how the storage pressures can be eased in the short term, together with longer term proposals. This report details the alternative solutions, along with the costs and risks of each option to provide recommended next steps and the leading proposals to explore further.
- 2.16 The North Herts Museum Service has a responsibility to safeguard and preserve the collection for the benefit of future generations. The museum collection is the instrument through which the stories of the district can be told and its visitors and residents can discover the heritage of the local area. These items are held in trust for the benefit of North Herts residents and their descendants. Furthermore, if the service were to stop

collecting objects then the continuation and value of the collection as a continuous record is lost. North Herts Museum service is the only museum with a remit to capture the history of the district in its entirety.

3. Background

- 3.1 North Herts Museum is an accredited museum, which is a mark of quality and adherence to best practice in the sector in accordance with the guidelines published by the Arts Council.
- 3.2 Accreditation not only signifies the quality standards of a museum, but it also provides the museum with access to apply for a range of grants and additional funding which would otherwise be unavailable to a non-accredited museum. In the last 10 years, North Herts Museum Service has benefitted from grants totalling circa £1m in Capital investment towards the North Herts Museum itself and a further circa £250k of grants towards various projects and fixed term project roles.
- 3.3 Accreditation standards cover a range of matters but are primarily concerned with the care and preservation of historical artefacts. An accredited museum is tasked with maintaining a register of accessioned items which have legally been transferred into the museum's ownership. Accession records track the origin of the object and its relevance to the museum's [Collection Development Policy](#).
- 3.4 It is expected that accredited museums, having been charged with the care of such objects, which are often family heirlooms or items of considerable nostalgic value to their former owners; will take all reasonable steps to care for and preserve the objects for the enjoyment of future generations, along with enrichment of the historical stories they help the museum to tell about the local area.
- 3.5 For this reason, any decision to de-accession (permanently remove) an object from a collection must follow a strict process. Specifically it must first be acknowledged that the object does not align with the museum's [Collection Development Policy](#) (duplication, degradation, more aligned with another museum's collection policy) and then a documented transfer or disposal process must be undertaken and recorded.
- 3.6 As a result, it is not an acceptable practice under museum accreditation standards to dispose of objects purely in the pursuit of cost savings or space limitations. If the museum were to follow this course of action, then it would suffer adverse PR, risk being stripped of its accreditation and in turn risk losing access to the vast majority of sources of grant funding which it is currently able to apply for.
- 3.7 The museum collection currently occupies space within Council facilities which, if vacated, could potentially be put towards other uses, or to provide income or capital receipts. The facilities currently housing elements of the museum collection include North Herts Museum, Bury Mead Resource Centre (former window manufacturing plant) and the former Letchworth Museum on Broadway Gardens.
- 3.8 The facilities at Bury Mead Resource Centre alone are not large enough to accommodate all of the museum collection and the buildings at this location are in poor condition. Poor storage facilities pose a risk to losing historical records and damaging irreplaceable objects. Other buildings at the site are no longer accessible for safety reasons, though the museum team have taken steps to limit the impact of this on the museum collection.

- 3.9 Most of the collection moved to Bury Mead Resource Centre in the 1980s in what was intended to be a temporary solution at that time. Given the short term nature of the solution, no investment was made at the time to convert the facilities into more appropriate storage for historic objects and there was limited expenditure on repair and maintenance. The collection has remained on this site since this date. The Bury Mead Resource Centre has housed the collection without any form of temperature or humidity controls, other than partial central heating. Officers have taken steps to limit the impact of this on the collection objects by moving elements of the collection to other temporary locations, such as the former Letchworth Museum. However, some deterioration has already been sustained to museum objects as a result of the storage conditions and this is only likely to increase in the coming years. Appendix 5 details the damage, deterioration and mitigating steps officers have taken in years gone by to protect the collection to the best of their ability.
- 3.10 The collection includes social history, geology and archaeology, natural history, textiles, paper archives, records and art. All these collections should ideally be kept at strict temperature and humidity ranges dependant on their characteristics and unique sensitivities.
- 3.11 Other museums also face storage pressures. The most complete modern solutions have taken the form of new purpose-built warehouses with temperature and humidity controls. The facilities have also typically offered an educational and outreach offering to the local community through providing unique access to the storage of the local museum collection, for example:
- Behind the scenes tours
 - Classroom sessions
 - Conservation workshops
 - Academic study sessions

These services diversify the benefits such facilities can provide as they allow the community to get hands-on with the collection and discover the ongoing work to preserve the history of the region, expanding the range of social benefits and services a museum service can provide. Such activities not only enhance services but help to inspire and train the curators and archaeologists of tomorrow. None of this is currently possible at the Bury Mead Resource Centre which is at full capacity and not suitable as an outreach and engagement offering.

4. Financial Context and General Assumptions

- 4.1 Where the Council incurs capital expenditure that it cannot immediately fund, through capital receipts or external funding, then it must make a charge to its revenue budget known as a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). This allocates the cost of the asset over its useful life. For example, spend of £1m on a new building (presumed to have a useful life of 40 years, the maximum such investments can be spread over) would be a cost of £25k per year. Capital expenditure either reduces investment returns that could have been generated or requires external borrowing. Currently the cost of external borrowing is around 5% per year, so spend of £1m results in an additional annual cost of £50k. Every £1m of spend on a new building is, therefore, a revenue cost of the interest, plus MRP ie a total of £75k per year (every year for 40 years).

- 4.2 This report also seeks to compare the differing capital and revenue requirements, and timelines of the options to enable comparison. A recommendation is provided based upon the research gathered, however colleagues in finance will add further financial input before the next steps are finalised, including the wider financial considerations facing members and the competing priorities requiring funding across all areas of the Council.
- 4.3 The disposal of the Bury Mead Road site could generate a capital receipt of around £500K. If it was cleared of all buildings and left with a levelled hardstanding surface it is expected to generate an income of around £50,000 per annum as a secure yard. The cost of demolishing the existing buildings and levelling the site would require the services of a Quantity Surveyor to fully quantify. However, from experience, officers have estimated the approximate cost of this work to be in the region of £30-50K. Should half the site be available as a result of a museum storage solution being built on part, but not all of the land then it is reasonable to assume that the above figures would roughly half in value. If the current site layout should remain in its current form, then this currently comprises a separate raised, self contained area with perimeter fencing, which could be let for around £12 to £15k per annum.
- 4.4 Should the chosen option involve redevelopment of the existing site and facilities, the museum collection may need to be temporarily housed elsewhere for a period of up to 2 years. Based on previous quotes the cost of moving and storing the museum artifacts temporarily is estimated to be between £70,000 to £200,000 depending on whether the artifacts can be stored at a property owned by the Council, such as the former Letchworth Museum or whether it is necessary to pay for specialist storage. A lesser cost may apply to some of the other options for the wholesale relocation of the museum collection, though these costs are difficult to accurately predict and would need to be investigated further depending on the option pursued.
- 4.5 In addition, the cost to fit out any space will vary depending upon whether a roller racking system is introduced or a more basic storage system is used. The cost of a roller racking system and other fit out works such as desks etc may be in the order of £200,000 but the cost of this would need to be considered against the reduced space requirements needed. The cost of the fit out would be accounted for in the year the money was spent.
- 4.6 The Council's Climate Change Strategy outlined later in this report promotes the aim that the activities of the Council should be as environmentally sustainable as possible. To this end, a sum of money has been suggested to upgrade any building acquired to achieve net zero carbon emissions (where this is considered possible). The best general indication of this figure, which will vary depending on the age of any building acquired or leased, is in the region of an additional 15% cost as a proportion of the overall cost for building a new building to this standard as opposed to current building regulation standards. As the achievement of net zero carbon emissions is not possible for all options considered, this has been identified as an additional sum where such action is applicable.
- 4.7 Consideration should also be given to the possibility of grant funding towards this project. Appendix 6 details the possible grant funding sources and the criteria for the larger grants identified. Whilst grants are available, the application process for most large value grants is highly competitive and the informal advice officers have received to date is that a project to resolve storage issues lacks the more tangible deliverables

of other grant project submissions. Officers have previously applied unsuccessfully for a number of grants for storage requirements but an ongoing review of potential funding opportunities continues.

5. Options Explored

5.1 Several options have been explored by officers to provide as full and complete an options appraisal as possible and these are set out below and grouped into categories. The options recommended not to take forward, based on the work to date and with member engagement, are shown in italics and greyed out below.

5.2 The Low cost short term options are as follows:

- *Option A - 'Do nothing': which is included to provide a baseline for comparison.*
- *Option B - 'Make do for now': Prolong the life of the existing facilities for a further 5-10 years. This will involve carrying out the minimum work necessary to keep the building wind, watertight and operational but would not address risks to collections and staff, in addition to providing no capacity for further acquisitions.*
- Option C - 'Renovate or enhance the existing facilities': Renovation of the facility at Bury Mead Road by removing internal walls to create a more open and useable space has been explored, supplemented with additional storage by way of portacabins or modular temporary structures on site or alternatively by adding a mezzanine at Unit 3 City Park, Letchworth Garden City. None of these options would be considered as suitable long term options and risks to the collections would remain as a result of gradual deterioration brought about by the environmental conditions.

5.3 The high cost, long term options are as follows:

- Option D - 'New build at the existing site': Construct a new build facility at Bury Mead. This was explored via the SCAPE procurement framework, from which Ashe Construction, based in Hitchin, produced an indicative feasibility report and cost plan, and through engagement with consultants over a more standardised single storey steel portal frame approach.
- Option E – 'Purchase of a freehold/long leasehold': An option which may be available on the market. This could potentially be split into two parts with the purchase of a site with a contract for construction of a new building or the acquisition of an existing building which would need to be adapted to suit.
- Option F – 'Lease a building as an alternative to purchase': It would depend on a building of the right size or larger being available on the market. An alternative to this option would be leasing a property from an owner who is prepared to renovate a dilapidated building to suit the Council's requirements.

5.4 The alternative or partnership options are as follows:

- *Option G – 'Explore whether there are any suitable buildings owned by the Council': Could any facility or facilities be made available to accommodate the museum storage.*

- Option H – *‘Explore a partnership solution’*: Pursue discussions with another museum provider in the district to provide a shared facility.

6. Limitations

- 6.1 This report is intended to aid onward decision making and narrow down the options. Further work will then be completed before final decisions are taken on the way forward.
- 6.2 Additional costs of occupying an alternative property such as rates and utility costs cannot be calculated at this stage until full details are available.
- 6.3 As previously mentioned, the costs of fitting out and moving costs can only be estimated at this stage and will vary depending on whether a roller racking system is installed for example or a more basic storage system. The precise climate control requirements are also unknown at this stage.
- 6.4 The aim of this report is to provide a high-level overview to enable a recommendation to further pursue one or more options in greater detail which may involve additional expenditure on external consultants to work up full costings.
- 6.5 This options appraisal is not, therefore, intended or able to accurately define the final costs of each option, but to give an indicative range of the costs of each option to help inform the next steps in the decision-making process.
- 6.6 Consideration of the Council's Climate Change Strategy is a key aspect. Whilst a new build solution is likely to present the best route to meeting the Council's desired environmental targets, it may also be possible to achieve this via a comprehensive refurbishment and retrofit of an existing building and in both instances, it may be possible to buy or lease the completed building.
- 6.7 Many options explored have alternative uses or possibilities for future use, which this report does not cover. For instance:
 - The onward renovation and future use of Letchworth Museum
 - The use of the land at Bury Mead, either alongside a museum storage solution or the full use of the site if the collection storage is relocated elsewhere.
 - Any commercial use of Unit 3 and the IT infrastructure considerations which would need to be made to unlock this.
- 6.8 To make the report as objective and comparable as possible, several assumptions have been made as follows:
 - The museum storage solution must be within the district boundary.
 - The minimum the Council aims to achieve is to vacate Letchworth Museum to facilitate the onward sale or letting of the property.
 - Assuming a modern, condensed storage method (such as roller racking) is applied, the minimum museum storage the Council aims to facilitate is 550m² (for the current size of the collection). However, this is increased to 650m² for options

requiring a large or long term financial investment to allow for future expansion to be incorporated. Given that any facility would also require a limited amount of circulation space, toilets and office/desk space as a minimum, the overall minimum footprint of any solution will need to be around 750m² (8,073sq ft).

- The options include acquiring, letting or renovating a new or existing building and the current building regulation standard and energy performance of each option will vary. Any additional investment to achieve greater environmental standards can only be considered as a provisional sum at this stage without detailed investigation.

6.9 Another consideration is the wider storage pressures facing the organisation as a whole. This report does not detail the storage pressures facing other departments but highlights the Council does not currently have permanent solutions for the storage of various other items. Such items include ballot boxes and voting booths, along with surplus office furniture and is currently stored across various temporary storage locations, including the ground floor of the former Letchworth Museum. In addition, the archives and IT servers are currently stored at Unit 3, City Park, Letchworth Garden City and occupy a significant floor area. With the exception of the IT servers, all of these elements of Council storage could be relocated elsewhere and possibly combined with the future museum storage solution. Should members wish to evaluate the wider council storage pressures then it is understood that a subsequent report will be required.

6.10 The possibility of a partnership project has been raised in the past with various approaches made to prospective partner organisations. This has not previously resulted in any clear interest until recent communication with Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, which is outlined in the option below. The organisations approached are as follows:

- Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation
- Herts County Council
- All of the 9 other Local Borough and District Councils in Hertfordshire

6.11 Additionally, it should be noted that there are discussions at a county level regarding the possibility of a county-wide archive. North Herts could benefit from such a project, however discussions have been progressing for several years without any firm agreement. If a new county archive were to come to fruition, officers understand that this would be for the deposition of archaeological materials and not for general museum collections. Consequently, such an archive would only offset around 10% of the North Herts Museum storage requirements and NHDC would still require a long-term storage solution for the rest of its collection.

6.12 The Arts Council have stripped other museum services of their accreditation, predominantly as a consequence of decision making over the selling or voluntary destruction of collections. Officers are not aware of the Arts Council removing accreditation due to storage falling into disrepair, but this remains a significant risk, especially in the event an item (or items) of high value or importance sustaining damage or complete destruction as a result. Museums are required to periodically renew their accreditation documents and can be inspected as was the case at the former Letchworth Museum several years ago. If collections are considered to be at

risk due to unsuitable storage conditions, this heightens the risk of accreditation coming under threat in such instances.

- 6.13 For the reasons stated, officers have attempted to provide a menu of options, with as much clarity as possible without incurring excessive fees pursuing all options.
- 6.14 Finally, the major limitation for leasing or acquiring a completed building will depend upon what is available on the market at that point in time.

7. Climate Change Strategy

- 7.1 In 2019, the Council passed a motion to declare a Climate Emergency. In this motion the council pledged their commitment to do everything within its power to make North Hertfordshire Carbon Zero by 2030. This declaration asserted the council's commitment toward climate action beyond current government targets and international agreements.
- 7.2 This revised Climate Change Strategy updates the Council's plans and commitments to build on the results of the work with the community and with other Councils across Hertfordshire. It firstly sets out what the Council will do to reduce its own carbon emissions to achieve a carbon neutral position by 2030. It then sets out what will be done to help achieve a net zero carbon district by 2040, both by creating policies which enable others to reduce their emissions, and by encouraging residents and businesses to reduce their own carbon emissions.
- 7.3 As a result of the ambitions detailed within the Climate Change Strategy, officers have ensured that each option has been considered not solely from a financial and museums/outreach perspective, but also from an environmental standpoint. The Council has strived to do all within its power to seek out environmental benefits and reduce its impact through its various activities, but this is balanced against the budget pressures and practical considerations of each option.

THE OPTIONS

- 8. **Option A – Do Nothing This option has been investigated but is not considered to be one of the preferred options as it does not change the current situation and does not release the former museum in Letchworth Garden City.**

OPTION A - COLLECTIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 *The facility is not fit for purpose, with limited climate control and some of the artifacts are likely to deteriorate with a possible loss of the Museum's accreditation if conditions are not improved. In addition, the artefacts are currently split between Bury Mead Road and the former Letchworth Museum. Spreading a museum collection across multiple facilities and geographic locations is detrimental to its access, management and public engagement opportunities.*
- 8.2 *Were the decision made to continue using the Bury Mead site in its current form without any further investment or increase in capacity it would have a detrimental impact on the collection with accessioned items coming under threat or irreparable damage.*
- 8.3 *This in turn, with no plan to address and correct the situation, could lead to a loss of accreditation from the museum collection being put at risk of avoidable harm.*

- 8.4 *Loss of accreditation and deterioration of objects we have been entrusted to preserve on behalf of the public would lead to reputational damage.*

OPTION A - ESTATES CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.5 *This does not change the current situation and does not release the former museum in Letchworth Garden City for sale or letting.*

OPTION A - FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.6 *This option involves minimal costs beyond that which are already incurred in the form of rates and utilities.*

9. **Option B - Prolong the life of the existing facilities for a further 5-10 years. This option has been investigated but is not considered to be one of the preferred options as it is only a short-term measure which prevents further dilapidation of the building. It does not release the former museum in Letchworth Garden City and it does not provide a longer term solution to the existing storage pressures.**

- 9.1 *The details of this option have been informed through a planned preventative maintenance survey of the existing facility. This option is intended to maintain the existing facility at its current standard and prevent any further dilapidation.*

OPTION B - COLLECTIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.2 *This option is to undertake the minimum action required to keep the building useable for the next 5-10 years to preserve the current storage conditions of the artefacts, although there would be no environmental stability in terms of temperature and humidity and there would still not be enough room to store the full extent of the collection on one site. The collection would remain at risk of harm from the sub-standard environmental conditions within the current facilities, although officers would do all that they could to mitigate the environmental conditions during this period.*

OPTION B - ESTATES CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.3 *This option has limited estates considerations as it has no impact on any wider property considerations.*

OPTION B - FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.4 *The cost of carrying out works to keep the building useable for the next 5-10 years is estimated to be £39k per year in terms of the calculated net annual revenue impact. There are a number of high priority works identified within the report including a new external render and extensive replacement of the existing windows.*

10. OPTION C - Renovation of the existing facilities.

- 10.1 Four variations on this solution were considered as part of this options assessment: Remodelling the existing primary facility, investing in shipping containers, investing in portacabins or modular solutions or installing a mezzanine floor at Unit 3, Works Rd Letchworth. These options have been considered as the most affordable ways of

addressing the overall storage capacity pressures, whilst stopping short of delivering the ideal environmental stability for museum collection objects.

OPTION C – COLLECTIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.2 Retrofitting the largest building on the site is one option that officers have engaged with the construction sector to explore.
- 10.3 The footprint of this facility is 470m² split over two floors, which is still short of the 650m² target floor area. However, the inefficient use of space and subdivision of the areas within this building further impact its ability to effectively store the museum collection in as small a space as possible.
- 10.4 It is accepted practice within the sector that the pursuit of efficient use of space is maximised by introducing roller racking to storage areas, which is mobile storage racks stemming from a single aisle through which each rack can be accessed in turn.
- 10.5 The option of remodelling the primary building on the Bury Mead site will not allow us to improve the environmental conditioning of our objects or of the building. However, it would be an improvement on the existing storage conditions.
- 10.6 If the remodelling option were to be selected, then the museum collection would also need to move location to facilitate the construction works on the site. The most economical way in which to facilitate this is to make use of the former Letchworth Museum site in Broadway Gardens, Letchworth and to supplement this with other temporary storage solutions such as rentable storage space or shipping containers on a temporary basis for some of the less sensitive items in the collection.
- 10.7 If parts of the collection were to be moved into a shipping container style structure then they would be highly likely to come to harm. Shipping containers, though relatively inexpensive as a storage option, suffer problems with condensation and a government indemnity advisor has also cautioned museums that these can be the target of theft. These containers can be treated to provide limited improvements to their environmental profile, however the standards would vary and they would be far from ideal as museum storage solutions.
- 10.8 If porta-cabins or modular solutions were to be pursued then these could represent an improved possibility over and above the shipping container option however these are more expensive, especially in the form of a hire arrangement and are still susceptible to a lack of environmental stability. Bought or hired from new, these become very expensive compared to conventionally built solutions. Second hand options can be sourced but these are an unknown quantity and generally of lesser quality. Costs in the second hand market vary but this is not seen as a sensible solution due to the number of unknown factors such as the environmental stability they can deliver.
- 10.9 A mezzanine floor has also been considered at unit 3. The conditions at unit 3 are not considered ideal however it is considered that this solution perhaps represents the best way in which to increase the storage capacity for the museum collection and relieve some of the pressure in the short term. The other disadvantage to this particular solution is that the collection would still be split across multiple locations.

- 10.10 None of these options would resolve the long term collections storage and this would need to be revisited in the future to explore a long term solution. In addition, objects such as fine art and textiles could come to harm if any of these solutions were selected.

OPTION C – ESTATES CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.11 The removal of beams and columns from the existing building structure would be needed to create clear floor space to allow for the installation of roller racking.
- 10.12 This option would involve detailed investigation by a structural engineer to ensure that it will support two floors of roller racking and the weight of the museum collection. It will also require the stripping back and rerouting of services. It would be extremely difficult and costly to achieve a building that had a satisfactory EPC rating let alone one that looks to achieve a net zero carbon building.
- 10.13 Even an extensive renovation will not fulfil the overall storage footprint required to safeguard the future of the museum collection. As a result, this solution alone will not solve the museum pressures but could help to relieve them in tandem with another scaled down solution in the form of one of the other options.
- 10.14 However, advice from the private sector, including Ashe Construction, has strongly suggested that this is not considered to be a viable option. The building is not considered suitable for renovation to comply with current building regulations and any works to address this would require the building being stripped back and altered to such an extent that it appears it would be more economical to demolish and rebuild. Appendix 7 provides the advice received from Ashe Construction.
- 10.15 The most straightforward ways in which basic storage could be expanded in a cost-effective manner are through renting or purchasing portacabins or shipping container-style storage units and placing them on the Bury Mead site.
- 10.16 Additional capacity could also be secured through the introduction of a mezzanine floor at Unit 3, which would provide a second level at that site which could accommodate the overspill of museum objects from Bury Mead.
- 10.17 The installation of additional storage capability by providing shipping containers or installing a mezzanine should enable the former Letchworth Museum to be released for sale or letting following suitable refurbishment and investment.

OPTION C – FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.18 All of the solutions costed within Option C would be supplementary to the costs detailed in Option B and as such the overall net annual revenue impact detailed below and in appendix 2 reflects this.
- 10.19 Given the complexities expressed through engagement with the private sector over the option of remodelling the current primary building at Bury Mead, detailed costings were not pursued further.
- 10.20 The cost of providing shipping containers or portacabins is estimated to be between £10k and 20k depending on the quality of the units purchased. Hire options have also been explored, however these represent very expensive options over a long term hire.

- 10.21 A modular solution would deliver preferable environmental stability for the collection however at a cost of £1m to top up the storage capacity on the existing site this represents a prohibitive cost for a short term solution.
- 10.22 If additional storage is provided by the installation of a mezzanine floor at Unit 3 City Park, Letchworth Garden City this will provide an additional 266 sq m of storage and will cost in the region of £103k.
- 10.23 The annual net revenue impact of the renovation and/or provision of additional storage capability will therefore be between £47k and £136k depending on the option chosen. This will result in an increase to the annual museum service budget of between 5% and 19%.

11. Option D – Redevelop the existing site

- 11.1 A redevelopment of the current site has been looked at in the form of an initial Feasibility Report from Ashe Construction. It should be noted that in officers view, an over allowance for circulation and office space has been proposed in this report (overall footprint of 900m² compared to the 750m² minimum working assumption in other options), meaning there are likely to be some savings in the finances proposed if this option is taken forward. However, the Feasibility Report was originally provided 12 months ago, so there may also be some inflation.
- 11.2 The Ashe proposal was based on a purpose-built facility to suit the museum collection with minimal windows and it could not easily be used for any other use. The Estates team have further reviewed this proposal and provided details below for construction of a 750 sq m building on the site, based on a single storey steel portal frame industrial building with an outline specification to provide a high-level costing. Most of the current museum storage buildings could remain in situ whilst a new building is constructed, but this would be subject to further detailed work with associated professional fees. The initial step would be to work up a scheme to a standard where it could be fully costed and submitted for planning permission, as outlined below.

OPTION D – COLLECTIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.3 As the current buildings on site are falling into a state of disrepair, the most straightforward option to resolving the museum storage pressures would be to redevelop the entirety of the Bury Mead Road site and seek to build a facility which would solve and future proof the museum storage for the foreseeable future.
- 11.4 By building a facility from scratch this facility would avoid the need to compromise on aspects of environmental conditioning or space as demonstrated with later options and would ensure that North Herts is fully addressing the needs of the collection, both in terms of its storage capacity and the stable environmental conditions it would facilitate.
- 11.5 If this option were to be selected, there may be a need for the museum collection to move location, at least in part, in order to facilitate the construction works on the site.

OPTION D – ESTATES CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.6 The Ashe proposal is predicted to last around 2 years from initial surveys through to obtaining planning permission, mobilisation and final construction, so the costs are based on this timescale.
- 11.7 If the Ashe Construction option was to be progressed the next steps would be to sign a pre-construction services agreement which would commit the Council to a spend of around £400k and lead to a fixed design in approximately 3 months' time. This would include the full cost of working up a scheme to a detailed design along with all the necessary surveys and investigations required. Prior to moving forward with the planning process and construction a revised cost plan for the facility, factoring in any other costs arising from the preliminary surveys, would also be presented.
- 11.8 We have obtained outline cost estimates from three building surveyors based on a single storey steel portal frame industrial building with adaptations to suit the museum storage facility. Reviewing these indicates a professional fees budget required to work up a scheme to a standard suitable for a planning application in the sum of £30,000. This fee would include consultant's fees for a scheme that could be submitted for planning permission and provide us with a detailed building construction estimate which would be reported back to Cabinet prior to the submission of a planning application.
- 11.9 Once realised, this option would leave no remaining museum storage at Letchworth Museum, facilitating the letting or sale of that property along with clearing the area at the front of the Bury Mead Road site for some form of alternative commercial venture.
- 11.10 During the feasibility investigations with Ashe the costings of a second storage facility for commercial and private storage was explored. Officers from the Enterprise team engaged with a consultant to look at the possible return on investment from such a venture along with the local competition. Through these investigations the surplus space available on the site was not sufficient to generate a return on investment, even when this was spread over a 40-year timeframe.
- 11.11 Whilst the intention of utilising the surplus land for a commercial and private storage facility has been discounted, any surplus land at the front of the site after redevelopment could still be let as open storage which would involve minimal upfront cost whilst generating an income for NHDC. This land could be explored as a possible storage solution for the wider Council, as officers are aware that there are further storage pressures in other departments such as Democratic Services.
- 11.12 The original costings put forward to Political Liaison Board were based on the Ashe Construction proposal as this is a comprehensive proposal including the employment of all professionals and obtaining planning permission and other necessary consents. The fee estimates from the three building surveyors are based on them working as the employer's agent, overseeing external consultants as required and tendering the building contract. This would require early input from Estates and the museum team and ongoing discussion with the employer's agent, but it is intended that the consultant appointed would have primary responsibility to deliver a building that suited the Council's requirements.
- 11.13 As the land and buildings are already owned by the Council this option keeps matters entirely within the control of the council and enables this to be progressed at an early stage, although planning permission and further preparatory work is still required. It

also enables the former Letchworth Museum to be sold or let once a new facility is delivered.

OPTION D – FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.14 The construction of a new facility has been costed through a feasibility report compiled by Ashe Construction. This feasibility report assessed the plot of land at Bury Mead Road and proposed a solution on the land available.
- 11.15 The cost of demolition, landscaping, construction and fit out along with all services, consultants' fees and preliminary surveys costed by Ashe Construction is projected to be £3.2m for a facility which meets current building regulations standards.
- 11.16 If the Council wished to ensure this building met net zero carbon in operation, then it was suggested that this would add a premium of approximately £600k to the original cost, requiring an overall investment in the region of £3.8m.
- 11.17 The net annual revenue impact of this option is estimated to be £316,550. However, this could rise further if the total costs of the new build including the upgrade to net zero carbon emissions and relocation costs are considered. A like for like comparison would not be possible if the figures for achieving net zero were included as not all options will facilitate this possibility. Therefore, the estimated costs of achieving this environmental standard, where applicable, have been provided separately for additional consideration.
- 11.18 The other cost estimates to construct a single storey steel portal frame industrial building with adaptations to suit the museum storage facility at Bury Mead Road are in the region of £2,250,000 to include all professional fees, demolition and fit out. However, if Cabinet could approve the spending of £30,000 in professional fees, we can work up a scheme to a standard to more accurately provide a cost estimate and to a stage to enable submission of a detailed planning application. The cost estimate would then include for all professional fees and for the consultant acting as the Employer's agent. This figure would be looked at internally and discussed with procurement to make sure that the building could be delivered in accordance with the Council's procedures and would then be reported back to Cabinet. If a planning application was submitted but it was subsequently decided to pursue another option which presented itself, securing planning permission will potentially make disposal of the site easier to achieve and improve the sale price compared to the site being sold with no permission in place.
- 11.19 The net annual revenue impact of this latest option, once net zero enhancements and the anticipated investment in fit out costs are considered, is estimated to be £200,300 per annum.

12. Option E – Purchase of a freehold/long leasehold building (new or existing)

OPTION E – COLLECTIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.1 The option of purchasing a new build or existing building is an important comparable for the options appraisal as it enables us to compare option D with properties available on the open market.

- 12.2 Such an option also puts less strain on internal staffing capacity in terms of developing a major capital project whilst arguably there is less overall risk as the facility is either already in existence or is to be constructed by others.
- 12.3 The issue with most existing industrial properties is the limited environmental control and they are typically not well insulated. The collection may still be exposed to changes in temperature and humidity without further investment. If this option were to be pursued then consideration would need to be given on a case-by-case basis as to whether the proposed property offered, or could be adapted to offer, the desired levels of improvement to environmental stability.
- 12.4 Depending on the property concerned, the Council may need to invest further to upgrade insulation, replacing main access doors or perhaps supplemented with a secondary lobby area. Furthermore, some element of heating and humidity control would be required to ensure the collection is managed and maintained effectively and allow staff the ability to configure the internal environment, in line with best practice.

OPTION E – ESTATES CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.5 If a warehouse/industrial building were to be acquired these are normally of standard construction and are typically equipped with offices and welfare facilities which the museum team would require.
- 12.6 The placement of industrial/warehouse buildings is typically in employment areas which may not be ideal from the perspective of maximising community engagement. This would also be the case for a new development at Bury Mead Road but should be considered in contrast to Option H.
- 12.7 If this option were to be pursued, consideration should be given to potential revenue generation or capital receipt from surplus land and buildings at Bury Mead and possible offset, against the revenue cost of providing the new facility elsewhere.
- 12.8 The availability of suitable buildings or sites on the open market is difficult to predict and NHDC would be competing with others seeking commercial space. As a result, if this is to be the instruction, officers will need to be empowered to act swiftly, subject to agreed due diligence, to seek acquisition of a property which meets the Councils requirements and move through any conveyancing process in step with the committee cycles.
- 12.9 Various sizes of buildings all with their own set of unique considerations in different locations come up for sale on the open market from time to time and it is likely that some compromise will be needed from the Council's ideal specification.
- 12.10 As this would be a high value capital purchase, it is reasonable to aim to achieve an overall floor area of at least 750m², for both the collection and additional circulation/office areas, so that the option can continue to accommodate the museum collection for many years into the future and ensure that the issue is solved on a long-term basis.
- 12.11 In terms of acquiring an existing building either on a freehold or long leasehold basis it is unlikely that a building of exactly the right size will become available on the market, and it will be necessary to look at buildings from 750m² (8,073sq ft) to 930m² (10,000sq ft). In addition, the age and quality of the existing building will vary depending on when it was built. This could produce a wide range of values from

(£1,000 to £2,150 per m²) but against that the refurbishment cost for an existing building of poor quality will be much greater.

- 12.12 It is possible that an agreement could be reached with Urban & Civic for a new build facility on the allocated employment land at Royston Road, Baldock. However, the masterplan for the whole site, including the residential allocation, is currently still in negotiation and it is unlikely that a building will be available for occupation until at least 2026, if not later. This would be built to the latest standards as required under building regulations and if agreement could be reached with Urban & Civic, additional measures could be introduced at the Council's cost to achieve a net zero carbon building.

OPTION E – FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.13 Based on today's values a newly completed building of around 750 sq m (8,073 sq ft) is likely to cost between £1.8-1.9M, plus any costs required to fit out and upgrade the building, plus the possible cost of upgrading the building to net zero. A new build property is likely to be built to a standard approaching an EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) A, already an energy efficient rating and detailed consideration would then need to be given as to whether it is necessary to seek an upgrade to net zero. There is of course still the cost of fitting out of the unit and the cost of transferring the artifacts to the new building which will be in the order of £300-400K plus any environmental requirements. Potentially the additional cost could reach £500k but this would need to be reviewed by an external Quantity Surveyor and based upon a specific building. This will have a net revenue impact of £263,700 per annum.
- 12.14 If a good quality existing building of precisely the right size were to be marketed it may prove to be a cheaper option than buying a newly constructed building, even with the cost of upgrading. Without precise details of what it would cost to refurbish an existing building until one has been identified it is difficult to give other than indicative figures. A possible option could cost between £1.8M and £1.9M to acquire. An older building is likely to be more expensive to renovate than a building constructed in the last 5-10 years and the cost of any renovation would need to be carefully considered by an external Quantity Surveyor. However, for indicative purposes at this stage an allowance of between £500k for a newer building ranging to £1M for an older building may be required for fitting out, removal of artifacts and renovation. The total cost may not be that different to acquiring a newly completed building if this proves to be possible.
- 12.15 Officers would require Cabinet to approve the spending of up to £20K in professional fees to assess the suitability of any freehold/long leasehold properties that may be appraised to allow a further detailed report to be considered by Cabinet. This should also include looking at properties under option H.

- 13. Option F – Leasing a building (new or existing) This option has been left as a possibility at this stage although taking a lease of a building would significantly limit the museum team from applying for any grants and the capital cost of environmental requirements and adaption of a leased building will result in an additional revenue impact to the Council on top of the rental payments.**

OPTION F – COLLECTIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 13.1 This option has many of the same considerations as Option E in the section above. The way in which the option is funded, along with the risks this introduces over a longer timeframe are the main additional considerations.
- 13.2 The benefit of a rental option is that the Council could fund this from revenue budgets and therefore the costs of borrowing are eliminated.
- 13.3 Should adaptations be required to the building to specifically suit museum storage the freeholder is likely to require these works to be removed at the end of the lease.

OPTION F – ESTATES CONSIDERATIONS

- 13.4 In the case of a rental, the Council's covenant would be attractive to landlords, and it should be possible to achieve a lease of at least 20-25 years and in some instances, it could be possible to agree a 40-year lease. If a lease of 20 years or more is agreed, we could seek to include suitable break options in the Council's favour only to give the Council flexibility should they wish to reconsider their options in the future. Against this, if a lease of 20-25 years is all that can be achieved then there is a potential risk as to what would happen beyond this timeframe. However, officers would look to ensure that any lease had Landlord and Tenant protection so that there would be limited grounds on which the landlord could require the Council to give vacant possession, but this needs to be highlighted as a potential risk.
- 13.5 There is, therefore, a potential risk that the Council find itself in the same position in 25 years or less, with no permanent home for the museum collection, whilst rents and construction costs will continue to have risen in the meantime.
- 13.6 It may be possible to rent a newly completed building where the Council's requirements may be incorporated at an early stage of the process. Alternatively, the council could seek to rent an existing building which would then be refurbished by the landlord.
- 13.7 We are aware of a dilapidated building situated on a plot of land held on a long lease from the Council. It may be possible to agree terms with the leaseholder for the building to be taken back to the frame and refurbished to suit the Council's requirements. The Council could then lease this for a period of, for example, 40 years subject to break clauses in the Council's favour. This is a two-storey former office building split into separate areas, and it may lend itself to museum storage in a better way than a standard industrial/warehouse building. The building may be refurbished to look more like an industrial property similar in many ways to the Ashe Construction proposal.

OPTION F – FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 13.8 The cost of leasing such a facility will vary depending on whether it is a new build or refurbishment and will cost from £104,000 per annum at the lower end of the size range to around £145,000 per annum for a building of 930m² (10,000sq ft). In addition, there will be a capital cost to alter and upgrade the building depending on the specification.
- 13.9 The cost of altering and upgrading an existing building to make it suitable can only be properly ascertained by an external Quantity Surveyor when a building is identified. The costs will depend on the age and structure of the building. Indicative costs from an article posted by Hollis Real Estate online (April 2023) suggest that a figure of £40 per sq ft or £430 per sq m is reasonable as a central assumption, however the Council may wish to include an allowance to get to net zero which would add up to £400K depending on the size of the building. It would be possible to disregard the

improvements from any future rent review. In addition, to this there will also be the costs of moving the artifacts to the property and the costs of fitting out.

13.10 The net annual revenue impact of this solution is estimated to be £282,775.

14. **OPTION G – Relocate the museum storage to another building the Council owns. This option has been investigated but is not considered to be one of the preferred options as there are no other buildings owned by the Council that are available and suitable for occupation by the museum service for the purposes of storing the museum collection.**

14.1 *Officers have reviewed the availability of existing facilities and land within the Council's portfolio. No land appears to lend itself to the construction of a new facility, whilst most of the existing buildings are already being put to other uses. Appendix 8 provides a list of the properties considered.*

OPTION G – COLLECTIONS CONSIDERATIONS

14.2 *If the necessary modifications could be made to an existing Council owned building, or buildings, to deliver a stable internal environment for the collection, then this would be preferable over the current environmental conditions at Bury Mead.*

14.3 *The collection is too large to be accommodated within any individual building available and as such, this would lead to the collection being housed in multiple locations across the district. This would be detrimental to the museum services ability to manage the collection and deliver outreach and engagement offerings.*

OPTION G – ESTATES CONSIDERATIONS

14.4 *Excluding buildings of less than 100m², The Council currently owns the following buildings which are either available or could be made available:*

- *Third floor District Council Offices - Circa 325m² (3,500ft²) - This would not be suitable for storage purposes as it is too small and would be expensive when the rates and service charge are factored in. The office nature of the accommodation with windows on both sides would not support the museum storage although it does have air conditioning.*
- *Thomas Bellamy House, Hitchin - 328 sq m (3,528ft²) - Again, this is too small and unsuitable for storage being an older building with separate rooms and no lift.*
- *Charnwood House, Hitchin - This building is already earmarked to become a community hub and is already being marketed as such. It is also too small to accommodate the full collection.*
- *Former Letchworth Museum – Circa 470m² (5059ft²) - Currently used for storage, but is too small to accommodate the full collection and its location means it might be more ideally suited to alternative future uses.*
- *Former Iceland Unit, Churchgate Shopping Centre, Hitchin. This unit is 697 sq m (7,500 sq ft) net which would be big enough for the museum storage, but this is a retail location, and this would not be a permanent solution as Churchgate Shopping Centre is likely to be redeveloped. In addition, there would be rates and service charges to be paid on the basis of it being a retail unit.*

- *First floor above Former Nat West, Churchgate Shopping Centre, Hitchin - This would not be a permanent solution as Churchgate Shopping Centre is likely to be redeveloped.*

OPTION G – FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 14.5 *Due to the lack of details over a specific property on which to base any calculations, a financial view on this option is difficult to provide at present.*

15. OPTION H - Partnership solutions with other museum providers in the district

- 15.1 To explore possibilities for a partnership solution, officers contacted other similar local organisations. The Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation have proposed a partnership solution involving a particular site in Letchworth. These discussions are in their infancy and as such there is a greater level of uncertainty over the financial figures involved with this option than with other options.

OPTION H – COLLECTIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 15.2 If a partnership project could be undertaken with another museum service then this could represent a good solution from a collections standpoint. Museum collections will have similar general requirements in terms of the need for a stable internal environment, whilst there could be a possibility for crossover and collaboration on any outreach and engagement opportunities.
- 15.3 Access and security risks would need to be considered as the Council may be reliant on another organisation to some extent in terms of the management of the building and the maintenance of any environmental and security working practices/equipment. There is also a greater risk in terms of overall loss of heritage through fires, floods or other disasters by storing multiple museums collections within the same building.
- 15.4 Depending on the agreement and arrangement entered into, Cultural Services officers may also be restricted in their current ease of access to the collection as a result of requirements placed upon them by the partnership organisation. As a result, the intended operational practices expected by either party within a shared facility would need to be agreed in advance of further discussions to ensure these are not overly onerous or unacceptable to either side.

OPTION H – ESTATES CONSIDERATIONS

- 15.5 Other local authorities have been contacted by Anthony Roche regarding their own museum storage needs. None of these have led to discussions which are likely to be productive as any Councils are taking the same approach as North Herts Council and are looking for museum storage to be within their own administrative area.
- 15.6 However, a meeting has recently taken place with Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation and there may be a possibility of having a joint facility with them. This would be a leasehold situation and the building they highlighted is Vantage Point on Works Road at the junction with Pixmore Avenue in Letchworth Garden City.
- 15.7 This is a building that has been vacant and dilapidated for some time. LGCHF would like to see the building brought back into use and would be prepared to invest in the property if the Council were to take a lease and would be more than happy to grant a term of 40 years in which we would want to build in break clauses.

- 15.8 This was a preliminary meeting, and no floor areas were available, so this would need to be discussed further with LGCHF. LGCHF have suggested they could lease a floor or two when refurbished at an indicative rate of £12 per sq ft plus £5 per sq ft service charge.
- 15.9 The building does need comprehensive refurbishment, but there is a lift shaft in the facility and the building is of solid construction.

OPTION H - FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 15.10 This option is estimated to have a net annual revenue impact of £335,325 per annum, though it is worth noting that discussions are in their infancy and this could therefore change.

16. Report Recommendation and Conclusion

- 16.1 Based upon the findings in the report, the recommended options to review in more detail with a view to informing onward decision making are as follows:
- 16.2 Introduction of a mezzanine floor at Unit 3 (Option C) represents the best low cost short term option based upon the research undertaken, though this option also has a number of disadvantages.
- 16.3 If the Council is in a position to make a more substantial investment in order to secure a long term solution then redevelopment of the existing site (Option D) or the purchase of a freehold property on the market (Option E) represent the most favourable ways to achieve this, based upon the research undertaken.
- 16.4 It should also be noted that Option D and Option E would both potentially meet the criteria for eligibility to apply for a National Lottery Heritage Grant. More information on this can be found in Appendix 6.
- 16.5 Although Options F and H are not currently seen as the most advantageous options, the Council is at no disadvantage by retaining these options whilst others are pursued further.
- 16.6 In officers view, the Council does not have an alternative facility within its property portfolio which would be suitable as a solution to solve the museum storage pressures. However, the option of a partnership arrangement with the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation (LGCHF) does appear to offer a number of unique advantages and officers recommend exploring this possibility further.
- 16.7 In summary, officers recommend the following actions be taken in light of the detail contained in this report:
- That Cabinet note the current projected costs, advantages and disadvantages of each option.
 - That Cabinet approve use of the allocated £4m budget in the current capital programme for this project to develop more detail on the costs of Option D and to acquire the necessary details for a planning application to be made.

- That Cabinet approve use of the allocated £4m budget in the current capital programme for this project to develop more detail on the costs of Option E, should a suitable property become available.
- That Cabinet consider and give approval for officers to apply for grant funding towards the investigations mentioned in these recommendations and recognise the need to align investigations with grant funding timetables in this instance.
- That Cabinet resolve to discount options A, B and G and recommend that they are no longer developed or explored further.
- That Cabinet indicates which of the other options outlined within the report (C and F) should be pursued further and which should be discounted.

16.8 Supporting information in the financial calculations made for all of these options can be found within Appendix 9.

17. Definitions

Carbon Neutrality

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

Zero Carbon

This is typically considered to mean that there is no emission of carbon dioxide at all from a product or service, with no need for offsetting.

Further Appendices:

2. Executive Summary Grid
3. North Herts Museum Collection Summary
4. North Herts Museum Collection Objects
5. Damage and Deterioration Details
6. Grants and Fundraising Considerations
7. Remodel Advice
8. List of Council Buildings Considered
9. Supporting Financial Calculations

10. Equalities and Environmental Impact Assessment

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Appendix 2 – Executive Summary Grid

- This grid provides an easy reference guide to the options considered. Note that where a range has been provided within the central report narrative, the financial calculations in this table have been based on the central assumption for each option to better enable comparison of the options and potentially assist with decision making.
- The costs included are best estimates based on the information currently available. In order to achieve a greater level of certainty over the figures presented additional expenditure will be required in the form of surveys and consultants reports.

- Appendix 2 – Executive Summary Grid**
- This grid provides an easy reference guide to the options considered. Note that where a range has been provided within the central report narrative, the financial calculations in this table have been based on the central assumption for each option to better enable comparison of the options and potentially assist with decision making.
 - The costs included are best estimates based on the information currently available. In order to achieve a greater level of certainty over the figures presented additional expenditure will be required in the form of surveys and consultants reports.

Option #	LOW COST, SHORT TERM OPTIONS			HIGH COST, LONG TERM OPTIONS			ALTERNATIVE / PARTNERSHIP OPTIONS	
	Option A – Recommend that this option is discounted.	Option B – Recommend that this option is discounted.	Option C	Option D	Option E	Option F – Not preferred option as per report.	Option G – Recommend that this option is discounted.	Option H
Title	Do Nothing	Prolong the life of the existing facilities for a further 5-10 years	Renovation of the existing facilities (*Figures are combined with those detailed in Option B)	Redevelop the existing site	Purchase of a freehold/long leasehold building (new or existing)	Leasing a building (new or existing)	Relocate the museum storage to another building the Council owns	Partnership solutions with other museum providers in the district
<div>Page 91</div> <div>Capital Expenditure Estimate</div>	£0	£75k of the maintenance work forecast in year 1 has been treated as capital with the rest of the expenditure considered as revenue.	Remodel the existing building (C i): Discounted (See Appendix 5) Basic Containers (C ii): £10,000 (purchase) Treated Containers: £20,000 (purchase) Premium Containers £52,000 (2 year hire) Modular (C iii): £368,400 (2 year hire) £1,011,200 (Purchase) Mezzanine (At Unit 3) (C iv): £102,913 (purchase)	Ashe Construction proposal (D i) cost is estimated to be £2.9M plus £0.3M in fit out and additional professional fees. There would be a 15% supplement to upgrade the building to net zero, which is not included in the costs below. The additional capital cost involved could be as high as £600k. The revised estimate for a single storey steel portal frame building (D ii) is £1.65M including fees, with a fit out cost of £300k and net zero costs of a further £300k.	Estimated £1.8 - £1.9M purchase cost. Plus fit out costs of an estimated £500k which is included in the costs below. Plus a further estimated 15% to upgrade to net zero, or around £375k. This is not included in the costs below.	Estimated £500k fit out which is included in the costs below. There would be a further supplement to meet net zero, which could be approximately £375k. This is not included in the costs below.	Estimated £500k fit out. There would be a supplementary figure for upgrading to net zero, though this would vary widely depending on the building selected.	Estimated £500k fit out There would be a supplementary figure for upgrading to net zero. The details for this option are in their infancy and so it is difficult to estimate an additional figure, whether it would be possible to achieve and what North Herts contribution might be towards this goal in a partnership arrangement. This would need to be discussed further, but using the other options as a guideline, setting aside a figure in the region of £400k would seem prudent. This value is not included in the costs presented below.
<div>Revenue Expenditure Estimate</div>	Rates for this option are £17,200 annually. £0 (£0 beyond the existing costs incurred in terms of rates, utilities)	Rates for this option are £17,200 annually. £142,400 has been profiled over the next 10 years as revenue expenditure on repairs. General maintenance and utilities costs will also be incurred but will be applicable for all options.	Rates are estimated to be £23,700 annually. Maintenance and utilities will need to be included but are currently unknown.	Rates are estimated to be £36,300 annually for both proposals. Maintenance and utilities will need to be included but are currently unknown.	Rates are estimated to be £44,700 annually. Maintenance and utilities will need to be included but are currently unknown.	Rates are estimated to be £44,700 annually. Rent would be £104k to £145k per annum. Maintenance and utilities may also need to be included but are currently unknown.	Rates would vary widely depending on the building/s selected. Maintenance and utilities will need to be included but are currently unknown.	Rates are estimated to be £46,000 for the intended NHDC occupied area. Maintenance and utilities will need to be included but are currently unknown.
<div>Net Present Value Estimate</div>	£133,000	£319,000	Container: £388,000* Modular: £467,000* Mezzanine: £467,000*	Ashe Construction proposal - Total estimated net present value is £4,062,000. The single storey steel portal frame approach is calculated to lead to a £2.6m estimate.	Total estimated net present value is £3,548,000.	Total estimated net present value is £3,941,000.	These options are too wide ranging for a figure to be provided confidently.	Total estimated net present value is £4,646,600.
<div>Net Annual Revenue</div>	£17,200	Estimated to be £39,000.	Container: £47,000* Modular: £136,000* Mezzanine: £55,000*	Ashe Construction proposal - Estimated to be £317,000	Estimated to be £264,000	Estimated to be £283,000	These options are too wide ranging for a figure to be provided confidently.	Estimated to be £335,000

Impact Estimate	<i>(This represents a 0% impact to the annual revenue budget of the museum service).</i>	<i>(This represents a 3% increase to the annual revenue budget of the museum service).</i>	Increase to annual revenue budget: Container: 5%* Modular: 19%* Mezzanine: 6%*	(This represents a 46% increase to the annual revenue budget of the museum service). Revised proposal preliminary estimate: £200,000 (This represents a 28% increase to the annual revenue budget of the museum service.)	(This represents a 38% increase to the annual revenue budget for the museum service).	(This represents a 41% increase to the annual revenue budget for the museum service).		(This represents a 49% increase to the annual revenue budget for the museum service).
Net Zero Possible?	<i>Unlikely</i>	<i>Unlikely</i>	Unlikely	Yes – additional cost of up to £600k (Ashe Construction) Yes – Revised proposal is anticipated to have additional costs of £300k.	Yes – additional cost of around £375k.	Yes – additional cost of around £375k.	<i>Unlikely</i>	Possibly – additional cost of around £400k.
Heritage Grant Eligibility?	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	<i>No</i>	No – but the LGCHF may be able to apply.
Financial Considerations	<p>Key Advantages: <i>Minimal costs.</i></p> <p>Key Disadvantages: <i>Significant risk to loss of accreditation.</i></p>	<p>Key Advantages: <i>Annual average cost over next 10 years is XXX</i></p> <p>Key Disadvantages: <i>This option could lead to loss of accreditation.</i></p>	<p>Key Advantages: The cost of any variation of this option represents a considerable saving compared to the long term options explored.</p> <p>Key Disadvantages: None of these options are intended to be permanent solutions and as such, the long term future of the collection will still need to be addressed. When the Council comes to address this in the future costs could have risen.</p>	<p>Key Advantages: A new facility is unlikely to have unexpected or unforeseen repair costs.</p> <p>Key Disadvantages: The Ashe Construction option is the most costly option officers have investigated. The revised proposal leads to a more favourable comparison with other proposals.</p>	<p>Key Advantages: Requires less investment when compared to construction of a purpose built facility.</p> <p>Key Disadvantages: Investment required is still substantial. Options on the market could typically be put towards alternative income generation, representing an opportunity cost.</p>	<p>Key Advantages: Cost would be spread and would avoid interest on borrowing.</p> <p>Key Disadvantages: There may be the requirement to remove and make good alterations at the end of the term. The Council does not have an asset at the end of the lease period.</p>	<p>Key Advantages: <i>Costs could be limited as the Council already own the buildings.</i></p> <p>Key Disadvantages: <i>The majority of the facilities the Council owns are earmarked for other (sometimes income generating) future uses.</i></p>	<p>Key Advantages: A partnership project can share the costs of any project, limiting NHDCs up front investment and risk.</p> <p>Key Disadvantages: The Council may lack flexibility during the life of a partnership agreement.</p>
Estates Considerations	<p>Key Advantages: <i>None. This option has no impact on the wider property considerations.</i></p> <p>Key Disadvantages: <i>The land at Bury Mead cannot be redeveloped or let and the presence of the collection elsewhere (such as at the former Letchworth Museum) blocks future use of other assets.</i></p>	<p>Key Advantages: <i>None. This option has no impact on the wider property considerations.</i></p> <p>Key Disadvantages: <i>The land at Bury Mead cannot be fully redeveloped or let.</i></p>	<p>Key Advantages: May enable the former Letchworth Museum to be released for letting or sale.</p> <p>Key Disadvantages: In the case of the purchase options above, these will most likely need to be removed at the end of the period of use at an additional cost as they are unlikely to be desirable to future users of the land or buildings.</p>	<p>Key Advantages: If a new museum storage facility is built at the back of the Bury Mead plot, this would enable the front of the plot to be let or sold.</p> <p>Key Disadvantages: The Council would only be able to let or sell a small piece of land at the front of the site in Bury Mead Road.</p>	<p>Key Advantages: Reduced risk than constructing from scratch. Reduced staffing resource required to oversee construction project.</p> <p>Key Disadvantages: No certainty in terms of which properties will be available on the market. The Council would be competing on the open market and is at a disadvantage in this respect due to the need to follow committee cycles.</p>	<p>Key Advantages: The Council could build in break clauses and would avoid the risks of owning an asset outright.</p> <p>Key Disadvantages: Freeholders may be adverse to alterations made to buildings which push it outside of what would be considered standardisation due to its reduced resale value.</p>	<p>Key Advantages: <i>No need to acquire another building either freehold or leasehold.</i></p> <p>Key Disadvantages: <i>None of the buildings are of sufficient size to accommodate all of the museum storage.</i> <i>The running costs of some facilities could increase.</i></p>	<p>Key Advantages: There is a potential to explore solutions which might otherwise be too large or costly to pursue unilaterally.</p> <p>Key Disadvantages: The Council may be tied into partnership agreements which limit its options in the future, whilst break clauses, particularly if there is an up front capital cost incurred by the partner would be difficult to agree.</p>

					Any environmentally friendly enhancement costs are difficult to predict.			
Collections Considerations	<p>Key Advantages: <i>Most of the collection can remain in situ, reducing the risk of damage from moving.</i></p> <p>Key Disadvantages: <i>Conditions continue to worsen at the current facilities.</i></p> <p><i>Safety concerns for staff given that storage capacity is at its limit.</i></p> <p><i>The collection would continue to be split across multiple locations, compromising collections management.</i></p>	<p>Key Advantages: <i>A lot of the collection can remain in situ, as relocation of any collection risks damage.</i></p> <p>Key Disadvantages: <i>The conditions at the primary storage facility at Bury Mead are already poor and a scheme of ongoing maintenance is unlikely to improve the environmental stability of the storage facilities to acceptable levels.</i></p>	<p>Key Advantages: In the case of some of the variations of this option, the collection can all be housed on the same site, making management of the collection more straightforward. These solutions would also provide additional capacity, easing the cluttered nature of the current storage slightly.</p> <p>Key Disadvantages: These are short term options, which means introducing multiple movements of the collection in the future. Advice from the Government Indemnity advisor is for museums to avoid shipping containers due to the prevalence of container theft increasing recently.</p> <p>None of these solutions introduce the environmental control ideally required for the museum collection.</p> <p>The opportunities for outreach and engagement are still very limited.</p>	<p>Key Advantages: A purpose-built facility would be expected to deliver the ideal conditions for a museum collection and would safeguard its future for decades to come.</p> <p>If a single storey steel portal frame approach were to be taken, then it is thought this could be upgraded to the conditions required for museum objects with minimal adjustments if this requirement were to be considered from the start.</p> <p>Key Disadvantages: The collection would potentially need to be relocated for approximately 2 years for the work to be carried out.</p>	<p>Key Advantages: A suitably sized facility would ease the collections pressures and allow the collection to be housed within one facility, benefitting public engagement opportunities.</p> <p>It should be possible to adapt some facilities to achieve stable internal environmental conditioning, though this would need to be explored on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>This option could also be the most time efficient means to relocate the collection into a more stable environment.</p> <p>Key Disadvantages: Most facilities of this size coming to market are within industrial employment areas and as such are not ideally located to maximise public engagement and outreach, though this is similar to the current situation.</p>	<p>Key Advantages: This option could meet the required standards to store museum objects securely and appropriately, depending on the facility.</p> <p>Key Disadvantages: The challenges arising from lease expiry and relocation of the museum collection.</p>	<p>Key Advantages: <i>If the necessary modifications could be made to sustain a stable internal environment then this would represent an improvement over the current internal environmental conditions.</i></p> <p>Key Disadvantages: <i>It is unlikely that any building within the Councils property portfolio would facilitate the storage of the entirety of the museum collection under one roof. This would be detrimental to the management and access to the collection. Location could also be an advantage or a disadvantage dependant on the particular facility or facilities.</i></p>	<p>Key Advantages: There is a potential for collaboration in engagement and outreach offerings, whilst the same general requirements in terms of a stable internal environment are likely to be similar for all museum collections.</p> <p>Key Disadvantages: The museum service may be reliant on other individuals from an environmental and security standpoint. It should also probably be highlighted that in the case of a disaster with a total loss, the damage and loss of irreplaceable objects would be multiplied with multiple collections under one roof.</p>

Social Considerations	Key Advantages: <i>None.</i>	Key Advantages: <i>None.</i>	Key Advantages: None.	Key Advantages: The public would be able to visit the museum store and the collection would be in a presentable state to facilitate improved community engagement in the form of education and academic study, aiding scientific research and providing the public with greater access to their history. There would be an obligation to offer some of the construction works to local companies.	Key Advantages: Purchase of a suitable facility could allow the museum service to increase public engagement, learning and outreach opportunities.	Key Advantages: A suitable leasehold or rental building could provide the required facilities to expand the museums public engagement and outreach offering, delivering benefits to the community.	Key Advantages: <i>It would be beneficial to bring any disused building back into use and if there was a way in which the collection could be under less spatial pressure then this could facilitate some improved collections access and public engagement over the current situation at Bury Mead Rd.</i>	Key Advantages: There is potential for social benefits to the community to be amplified by having multiple museum collections in the same location.
	Key Disadvantages: <i>The public will continue to have limited access to the collection due to the conditions, location and accessibility of the current site.</i> <i>In addition, this location is in a poor state of repair and aesthetically is having a detrimental impact on the wider employment centre of Bury Mead.</i>	Key Disadvantages: <i>The public will continue to have limited access to the collection due to the conditions, location and accessibility of the current site. In addition, this location is in a poor state of repair and aesthetically is having a detrimental impact on the wider employment centre of Bury Mead.</i>	Key Disadvantages The public will continue to have limited access to the collection due to the conditions, location and accessibility of the current site. In addition, this location is in a poor state of repair and aesthetically is having a detrimental impact on the wider employment centre of Bury Mead.	Key Disadvantages: The location of Bury Mead on an industrial estate is not the most advantageous in terms of accessibility, aesthetics or public transport, though parking could be facilitated within the plans.	Key Disadvantages: The likely location of such facilities on industrial employment areas is also to the detriment of being able to maximise public engagement.	Key Disadvantages: The majority of buildings of this size are based within industrial employment areas and as such are not typically easily accessible for the public or via public transport.	Key Disadvantages: <i>Locating the collection across multiple geographic locations will have a negative impact on to any potential public access, outreach and engagement offering.</i>	Key Disadvantages: Depending on the agreement entered into, there may be barriers to the Council arranging public access to its collection.
Environmental Considerations	Key Advantages: <i>The continued use of the primary facility at Bury Mead would negate redevelopment elsewhere.</i> Key Disadvantages: <i>The current facility has poor environment standards and is not easily retrofitted to modern environmental standards.</i>	Key Advantages: <i>The continued use of the primary facility at Bury Mead would negate redevelopment elsewhere.</i> Key Disadvantages: <i>The current facility has poor environment standards and is not easily retrofitted to modern environmental standards.</i>	Key Advantages: The continued use of the primary facility at Bury Mead would negate redevelopment elsewhere. In the case of the mezzanine option, this would make use of surplus space at one of the Councils other facilities without much impact on utilities for example. Key Disadvantages: Containers and portacabins are unlikely to meet very high environmental standards.	Key Advantages: A new facility would be built to modern building regulations and environmental standards and could be upgraded to meet a greater level of environmental standard if required for an additional premium. The proximity of Bury Mead to the North Herts Museum would reduce the journey time for museum staff moving between sites. Key Disadvantages: If the Council wished to achieve an environmental standard of Net Zero in operation then it has been suggested that this cost would be around 15% of construction costs, but	Key Advantages: Purchase of an existing facility would negate any construction impact. If the facility is modern, it is more likely to have greater environmental sustainability and EPC rating. The Council could undertake a decarbonisation exercise on any building acquired to improve its environmental credentials. Key Disadvantages: Depending on the type of facility, it can be difficult to upgrade existing buildings to greater environmental standards.	Key Advantages: A newer leasehold or rental building has the potential to have a good quality EPC rating. Key Disadvantages: It is unlikely that a rental or leasehold building will meet the Councils ideal requirements in terms of environmental sustainability and the fact	Key Advantages: <i>Utilising a disused building would be beneficial in terms of limiting further development elsewhere.</i> Key Disadvantages: <i>Most of the facilities within the Councils property portfolio are not ideally suited to this use and would require redevelopment or refurbishment to meet the</i>	Key Advantages: This would depend on the facility identified however it is reasonable to assume that a shared facility would generally lead to less carbon emissions than two separate comparable facilities. Key Disadvantages: Depending on the partnership agreement reached, the Council may not have direct control over the environmental credentials of the building

		<i>Containers and portacabins are unlikely to meet very high environmental standards.</i>		<p>could be as high as £600k for this scale of project as an additional premium for the Ashe proposal, or £300k for the single storey steel portal frame approach.</p> <p>Any construction project will result in pollution, although the presence of the plot within an industrial site should limit the impact of this and we would be redeveloping a ‘Brownfield’ site.</p>		<p>that The Council would only be a tenant may limit the Councils ability to modify a building and improve this, given this would need to be approved by the freeholder.</p> <p>Depending on the length of any lease or alternative agreement, there may be a limited timescale in which to realise the monetary benefits/payback of any sustainability equipment of decarbonisation projects.</p>	<i>needs of the museum collection. This is unlikely to be without an environmental impact although without a specific solution it is difficult to comment further.</i>	and the management of its energy use.
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Sub-Category	Significance	Curators Assessment
Natural History Current Size Estimate: 55m2		
County Herbarium	National Significance	<p>The natural history collection contains around 100,000 items collected over the last century and continues to grow due to the collection being an ongoing continuous record of the natural world in this locality. The items in the collection has significant local value and large parts of them are of regional, national and in the case of our chalk stream collection, even international importance. Examples include the County herbaria (collection of dried plants) for flowering plants and for bryophytes (mosses, liverworts and hornworts), the large Lepidoptera collection (butterflies and moths) and the extensive geology collections (Regional Significance); the small but rare Myxomycete (fungus) collection and first and last records for various species of birds and animals such as the Blue Rock Thrush and both Red and Black Squirrels (National Significance); records of fauna (animals) and flora (plants) relating to chalk streams (International Significance). This special but very threatened habitat is almost unique to England, which has 85% of the 200 chalk streams in the world. Most of the streams in our area fall into this category.</p> <p>This collection contains a broad range of examples which have been used for academic study and help us to chart the local impact of climate change on biodiversity, including plant life and migration patterns. Our collection is the only record of this at a local level. The Natural History collection is the only sub set of our collection which transcends administrative boundaries given that nature itself does not recognise such boundaries and the presence of specimens within the locality is therefore often indicative of a broader presence in the region and vice versa. For these reasons we do have samples within this collection from outside of North Herts, whilst the County herbaria is a county collection rather than a district collection. Lots of our specimens are what are known as Indicator Species, which essentially means that their presence is often indicative of the presence of a wider pool of species in an area. We are therefore able to monitor and investigate the changing profile of the natural world in North Herts through time as a result of this collection, including the impact climate change has had and is currently having on the area.</p>
Naturalists Notebooks	National Significance	
Taxidermy and Insects	National Significance	
Birds Eggs Collection	Regional Significance	
Butterfly Collection	Regional Significance	
Archaeology Current Size Estimate: 104.5m2		
Cadecote Deserted Village Excavations	National Significance	The archaeology collection contains around 250,000 items, collected over the last century. As the official depositing museum for archives generated by external organisations through the planning process, the collection

Hitchin Lower Palaeolithic Handaxe Collection	International Significance	is constantly growing. Our archaeology collection boasts finds from Caldecote deserted village, taught on all undergraduate medieval archaeology courses; the Hitchin lower palaeolithic handaxe collection, which is of international significance due to the rarity of these early tools; and finds from the various Baldock excavations, which include the largest collection of human remains from Roman Britain. These latter are often used for research by postgraduate students, looking into, for example health and lifestyle in the Roman period. The collection also includes a good sample of Iron Age and early Roman brooches, local coins from the second century BC onwards, including many rare or unique examples, and prehistoric flints. Every period in the archaeology of the district is represented, with the Late Iron Age and Roman periods particularly strongly.
Baldock Excavation Finds	National Significance	
Fine Art Current Size Estimate: 71.5m2		
Henry Moore	International Significance	Our art collection contains around 3,400 works in total. The collection contains a number of works by internationally famous artists, such as a maquette by Herts sculptor Henry Moore, 2 Letchworth oils by the artist Spencer Gore, artwork by Letchworth born Richard Smith, and a stained glass design by Pre-Raphaelite Burne Jones. Of national significance are the many paintings by Letchworth resident William Ratcliffe, and etchings by Hitchin-born F L Griggs, one of the early 20th century's most important printmakers. Also nationally significant are the 3 paintings by E R Frampton, a turn of the 20th century British Symbolist artist, and a 1930s painting by Letchworth-born Brynhild Parker Of regional importance are the oils by the Belgian Gerard Ceunis and the Austrian Theodor Kern. Both were refugees before the 1st and 2nd WW respectively, and both settled in Hitchin. Kern taught art at Luton School of Art. Works by Hitchin's Samuel Lucas depicting farming in the district in the 19th century are also regionally important – the British Museum has examples of his work. The collections also hold very many watercolours, prints and drawings by local artists, which often show views in North Hertfordshire which have now disappeared, or have changed beyond recognition, making them of great local significance.
E Burne Jones	International Significance	
Spencer Gore	International Significance	
Richard Smith	International Significance	
William Ratcliffe	National Significance	
Edward Frampton	National Significance	
F L Griggs	National Significance	
Brynhild Parker	National Significance	
Various Local Artists	Local Significance	
Social History Current Size Estimate: 159.5m2		

The World's first football museum	National Significance	<p>The social history collection contains around 31,000 items collected across the last century. Objects within this collection relate to human life in North Herts. The collection is used for research and temporary display. For example, a recent display inspired by D-Day reflected stories of local life in WW2, including medals won by local citizens, a can of coffee-substitute dandelion coffee, the casing of an incendiary bomb which fell in Hitchin and a local air raid warden warrant.</p> <p>Hitchin had the first football museum in the UK, and almost certainly the world. Our collection is of national importance. It contains material previously lent to the National Football Museum, which was returned when North Herts Museum opened, including Bert Trautmann's neckbrace, a pair of Stanley Matthews' football boots, and a very rare 1889 velvet cap from Burnley, donated by the FA.</p> <p>Our suffragette collection is primarily based around Elizabeth Impey, a prominent local suffragette. the collection includes items of national importance, like her Vote for Women rosette, and her husband's Men's League for Women's Suffrage badge, both rare items.</p> <p>The costume collection was mainly collected by Hitchin Museum. It is stored behind the stage at HTH as the items are too delicate to be stored at Burymead. The collection contains a couple of nationally notable items; an 18th century man's suit and 18th century silk dress. Also notable are 18th century embroidered waistcoats. There is a good local collection of dresses from the late 18th and entire 19th centuries, and many good items of militaria, Herts Yeomanry and WW2 uniforms. The militaria is often regionally significant. The shoe collection is good (mainly 20th century but with 18th and 19th century examples) but sadly there is often only one of a pair due to an earlier curatorial practice of disposing of one to make space. The Queen Mother's christening gown is of national significance.</p>
Suffragette Collection	National Significance	
Costume Collection	Regional Significance	
Wartime Collection	Local Significance	
Agricultural Collection	Local Significance	
Archives, Library, Journals and other documents Current Size Estimate: 110m2		
Local history Book Collection	Local Significance	<p>The books, maps, newspapers and documents held by the museum are used every week by local and regional researchers, and occasionally by national researchers/TV companies. They are invaluable to staff when answering enquiries and to those researching the subjects contained within them as they provide so much specific information on a broad range of matters. The information held in these documents is often extremely rare and difficult to source from anywhere else.</p> <p>This local history collection includes biographies of local figures and studies of the development of the district's</p>
Document Collections	Local Significance	
Maps	Local Significance	
Newspaper Collection	Local Significance	
Photographs	Local Significance	

		<p>towns and villages. It includes many notable local documents, ranging from late 15th century to modern land transactions, with manorial documents, sale catalogues and documentation relating to large-scale slum clearances in the inter-war years and beyond. The collections of local historian Reginald Hine are of regional significance.</p> <p>The archaeology library contains general works and site reports relevant both to the museum collections and to the local area. We have the principal period journals through to about 2010 (there have been few purchases since then). Not all these journals have yet been fully digitised, and they contain important information about the area and excavations relating to items in the collection.</p> <p>There are also over 700 maps of the local area, including some manuscript estate maps and printed maps for the 18th century. There is a large collection of local newspapers stored at Burymead, mainly 19th century and early to mid 20th century, which are often requested by reseachers and used by staff to answer enquiries..</p> <p>The museum also has several thousand photographs of the local area by amateur and commercial photographers, especially TB & TW Latchmore, a Victorian Hitchin father-and-son team. Some of these are of regional rather than purely local importance.</p>
School Loans and Learning Collection Current Size Estimate: 49.5m2		
Loans Boxes for Schools	Local Significance	<p>The loan collection was started at Letchworth Museum before WW2, as a collection of sturdy boxes containing a range of items for schools to borrow. It contains around 3000 items and has recently been re-organised, to make it easier for teachers to borrow everything they need for a specific curriculum subject in one lightweight box. The collection now includes original and replica items covering the last 40,000 years of history. We have Stone Age hand axes and scrapers, ancient Egyptian shabti and mummy wrappings, real Bronze Age axe heads and a replica Bronze Age sword; many Roman artifacts including pottery, helmets, scutum and a child size lorica. There are also natural history specimens.</p> <p>The loan items allow children to touch objects of great historic age; the impact of carefully holding something made 40,000 years ago cannot be overstated and is one of our USPs. Although mainly used by schools, boxes may now be borrowed by care homes for reminiscence.</p>

Collection Subject Areas	Total Objects (Estimated)	Estimated Collection area %	Estimated size required (m2)
Archaeology (small finds)	5,000	5%	27.5
Archaeology (incl. objects, paper and digital archive)	250,000	13%	71.5
Art	2,600	8%	44
Decorative art (e.g. ceramics and glass)	800	5%	27.5
Coins	5,200	1%	5.5
Costume	4,550	7%	38.5
Documents	20,000	9%	49.5
Militaria	420	4%	22
Football Collection	1000	5%	27.5
Natural Sciences (including archive)	100,000	10%	55
Newspaper Collection	500	7%	38.5
Pharmacy (loan in)	2,800	2%	11
Photography	650,100	4%	22
Social History	22,000	11%	60.5
Total	1,063,470		
Education Loans Collection (typically not accessioned objects)	3000	9%	49.5

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Appendix 5 – Damage and Deterioration Details

The museum curatorial team has a current full time head count of 4, and amongst its other demands, such as keeping the North Herts Museum operational, it does not have capacity to keep a continuous watching brief on the deterioration of objects within the collection.

That said, the following issues, which we know are problems at the current facilities, typically result in the following impacts:

	Metals	Textiles	Paper including watercolours	Wood	Art (Paintings)	Natural History	Photography	Labels	Geology	Glass and ceramics
Low Humidity	<i>Low humidity is good for metals. Iron and corroding metals are best stored with as low an RH% as possible</i>	<i>Textile fibres become brittle if too dry</i>	<i>Paper becomes brittle and cracks or tears</i>	<i>Wood cracks and warps when dry, veneers can shrink</i>	<i>Wooden stretchers can shrink if too dry, which can damage or tear the attached canvas</i>	<i>Too dry conditions will damage insect specimens</i>	<i>Low humidity is good as the gelatine in old photographs is reactive</i>	<i>If too dry, paper labels become brittle and can crack</i>	<i>Some rocks and minerals containing pyrites (eg Iron Pyrites – Fool's Gold) need a low RH, ideally 30%</i>	<i>Acceptable</i>
High Humidity	<i>High humidity can cause rust and corrosion.</i>	<i>Textiles become damp and mouldy, colours can run; metal fastenings can rust</i>	<i>Paper becomes damp, ink runs, mildew, mould growth</i>	<i>Dampness can lead to swelling, joints opening, differential</i>	<i>The canvas can swell and droop, risk of mould</i>	<i>Damp leads to mould. Metal armatures inside taxidermy objects</i>	<i>Photographs damaged due to gelatine changes, mould growth.</i>	<i>Label becomes damp, ink runs making it hard to read</i>	<i>Can cause reaction in certain minerals, causing them to degrade</i>	<i>Generally acceptable but in old glass can cause delamination, or old repairs with metal staples can rust</i>

				movement		may rust				
Fluctuations in Humidity	Can cause irreversible damage	Cause irreversible damage	Cause irreversible damage	Cause irreversible damage	Cause irreversible damage	Cause irreversible damage	Cause irreversible damage	Cause irreversible damage	Cause irreversible damage	Generally acceptable but in ceramics with salts in the fabric, these can come to the surface and damage the glaze, and repaired items will be damaged through changes to the glue
Low Temperature	Good if relatively dry	Good if relatively dry	Good if relatively dry	Good if relatively dry	Good if relatively dry	Good if relatively dry	Good if relatively dry	Good if relatively dry	Good if relatively dry	Acceptable
High Temperature	Acceptable up to 20° as long as it is dry, but best stored at around 15°	Acceptable up to 20 as long as it is dry but best stored at around 15°	Acceptable up to 20° as long as it is dry	Acceptable up to 20° as long as it is dry	Acceptable up to 20° as long as it is dry	Acceptable up to 20° as long as it is dry	Damaged by high temperature, best stored around 15°	Acceptable up to 20° as long as it is dry	Acceptable up to 20 as long as it is dry but best stored at around 15°	Generally acceptable

Fluctuations in Temperature	<i>Can cause irreversible damage</i>	<i>Cause irreversible damage</i>	<i>Cause irreversible damage</i>	<i>Cause irreversible damage</i>	<i>Cause irreversible damage</i>	<i>Cause irreversible damage</i>	<i>Cause irreversible damage</i>	<i>Cause irreversible damage</i>	<i>Can cause irreversible damage</i>	<i>Generally acceptable</i>
Lack of effective pest control	<i>Rare</i>	<i>Moths can destroy textiles; other insects eg carpet beetles can also cause damage</i>	<i>Paperwork can be eaten by certain pests, and stained through their secretions</i>	<i>Woodworm can damage wood</i>	<i>Woodworm can damage frames and stretches</i>	<i>All taxidermy specimens, butterflies and moths are a food source, and so at risk from pests</i>	<i>Gelatine is a food source for beetles</i>	<i>Labels can be eaten by certain pests.</i>	<i>Specimens can be preyed upon by certain pests and improper furnishings such as carpet can exacerbate infestations.</i>	<i>Rare</i>
Natural Light	<i>Light stable</i>	<i>Fading, damages the fibres</i>	<i>Fading, bleaching, brittleness</i>	<i>Fading, splitting and warping in strong light</i>	<i>Fading, discolouration over time</i>	<i>Fading of colours</i>	<i>Photographs fade in natural light</i>	<i>This can cause the fading of information on labels, making objects difficult to identify.</i>	<i>Light stable</i>	<i>Acceptable</i>

Best practice in the museum world is to ensure stable conditions as it is the fluctuations in temperature and humidity which cause the most damage. 'It is generally better to keep conditions stable, i.e. not moving up or down too much, rather than trying to keep all the different parts of your collections at different specific RH's.' (SHARE Museums East, 'The Museum Environment'); 'Stability is key. When controlling or creating a museum environment, aim for a stable relative humidity. Preference should be given to maintaining a stable level approximating the desired level all of the time, rather than maintaining the exact desired level only part of the time. (Temperature & Humidity in Museums, Museums Galleries Scotland); 'The main impact that temperature has on collections is its part in affecting RH (relative humidity)..High and low levels and fluctuations cause most of the problems' (Association of Independent Museums, Successful Collections Care.)

For these reasons, the curatorial team have already mitigated the risks for the most sensitive parts of the collection by moving objects to Letchworth Museum or other temporary storage areas:

- Some fine art is stored in a secure store off the exhibition gallery at North Herts Museum. The remainder is temporarily stored at the former Letchworth Museum.
- Costumes are stored within a windowless room behind the Hitchin Town Hall stage.
- Many objects from the social history collection are temporarily stored at Letchworth Museum.
- Archaeological metals have been bagged with silica gel to attempt to protect them from the ambient humidity levels in the archaeological bulk store.
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Although these steps have been taken for the most sensitive items in the collection, it should be noted that background deterioration of the other objects will still be occurring.

It is fully expected that any wholesale relocation of the museum collection from the current facilities to any alternative storage location will result in the discovery of far more widespread deterioration of the objects which remain at the Burymead facilities, however the following examples of damage or deterioration have already been discovered in the last 35 years:

Object/s at Burymead	Deterioration/Damage/near misses
200? hundred butterflies and moths	Destroyed by pests
Herts Yeomanry material including medals	Unsuitable to store at Burymead so temporarily moved to former Letchworth Museum
Tudor cradle (now on display)	Needed conservation after flood damage
Wooden 3-seater loo seat	Cracking due to RH/temp fluctuations

Local history archives from former Hitchin Museum	Unsuitable to store at Burymead so temporarily moved to former Letchworth Museum
Labels on Natural History boxes	Fading linked to natural light exposure
Archaeology files	Have been damaged by water ingress
Maps	Glue weakened by temp and RH changes, causing them to come off their hangers
Social history store	Flood (staff on site at time so major damage was averted)
Newspapers	Printed on poor quality paper, so deteriorating at a faster rate than other paper items; becoming friable and crumbling.
Metal archaeology	Humidity leading to corrosion, so that metal small finds had to be individually bagged with silica gel
Labels in Nat History store	Eaten by pests (some feed on the glue)
Ceramics and glass	Broken as packed too closely because of space limitations
Metallic weapons and tools	Signs of corrosion
Fine Art from former museums	Unsuitable to store at Burymead so temporarily moved to former Letchworth Museum
Football items	Some of collection unsuitable to store at Burymead so temporarily moved to former Letchworth Museum

It is not possible in most instances to link cause and effect to the conditions within Burymead. We cannot know for certain and all museum collections suffer some loss over time due to the fragile nature and age of objects. However it is clear that the conditions are not going to be helping to limit the loss and deterioration in the way that museum collection storage facilities should do.

Curators can take mitigating action, but there is no substitute for secure and environmentally stable stores. The North Herts museum collection will continue to deteriorate until this is addressed.

Due to the scale of our collection and the lack of capacity within the curatorial team the Council does not currently have surveillance of the whole collection and the deterioration taking place.

It should be noted that museum collections are stored at the former Letchworth Museum rather than at Burymead because although not ideal, the environmental conditions there are more stable than Burymead, due to the nature and materials of the building itself. Over time, there will still be risks at Letchworth Museum, due to fluctuations in the environmental conditions there, but these are less than at Burymead, and therefore, for now, it is a better temporary store for some of the more sensitive objects.

Appendix 6 - Grants and Funding Opportunities

Accredited museums are able to access and apply for grant funding towards a range of projects. For large scale projects, the typical funding route is to apply to the Arts Council for funding via the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), (Formerly the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)) or the Museum Estates Development Fund (MEND).

Officers have been advised that the MEND fund, part of the Cultural Investment Fund linked to the Levelling Up agenda, is unlikely to apply to most of the options within this report as it is focused on the maintenance and regeneration of existing buildings rather than the acquisition, or comprehensive rebuild of such fixed assets.

As a result, the primary large-scale grants (up to £10million project value) are best sought via the National Lottery Heritage Grants. These grants can cover a range of projects but can cover capital works and acquisitions of fixed assets.

It should be noted that in terms of acquisitions, the grant conditions stipulate that any acquisition must either be on a freehold or long leasehold basis, with a minimum of 99 years left to run on the lease. This is a key consideration as proceeding with an option involving capital works or freehold acquisition will therefore allow officers to continue applying for a National Lottery Heritage Grant to potentially support the project. Many of the options explored within this report do not meet this criteria and in this case the Council would need to accept that by pursuing these further it is accepting that the project would be ineligible for a potentially large National Lottery Heritage Grant.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund also support the exploration of options for capital cultural projects and this is something officers would plan to investigate further and apply for based on the decision taken by the committee. This would potentially share the costs of these investigations but would involve working within the National Lottery Heritage Funds prescribed timescales. It could however stand our project in good stead as and when a larger capital grant was applied for.

Officers previously applied for a grant via the Capital Investment Programme (a now discontinued capital grants allocation from the Arts Council) towards the redevelopment of the Bury Mead Rd site but on this occasion the application was unsuccessful. The general feedback was that the process was highly competitive and ultimately the grants panel could see the merits in our project but did not choose to shortlist it based on the merits of other applications.

Officers were also separately advised that an application to the National Lottery Heritage Grants was unlikely to be successful for similar reasons, though a new formal Expression of Interest has been submitted to ensure this has been fully and formally explored. If this formal Expression of Interest should prove unsuccessful, officers can seek to re-apply, and the grants are open to applications on a quarterly basis.

National Lottery Heritage Grants require projects under £1m to be supported by a minimum of 5% of the overall cost contribution and this must be committed by the organisation applying, whilst for projects over £1m, this rises to a minimum of 10%.

Full details of the conditions of such grants can be found on the National Lottery Heritage Fund [website](#), however an indicative list of over-arching criteria is as follows:

Projects should have a clear focus on heritage – this can be national, regional or local heritage of the UK.

- Projects must take into account all four investment principles (1. Ambition & Quality, 2. Dynamism, 3. Environmental Responsibility and 4. Inclusivity & Relevance).
- Projects must have a clear plan with a defined start, middle and end.
- Projects must have not already started.
- Projects should demonstrate the need for National Lottery investment.

Based on the above, the chances of successful grant funding applications may be markedly improved if an application could be made on the basis of a thoroughly detailed and comprehensively planned project. This would not lead to any guarantees over the outcome of any grant application but clearly if a consensus could be reached over how the Council intends to solve the museum storage pressures, even without the full funding identified, then this would pave the way for officers to apply for National Lottery Heritage Fund Grants with far more definitive, detailed plans, potentially maximising the chances of success.

The risks in relying on this course of action are that should such applications prove unsuccessful then the project intentions would need to be re-evaluated once more. The grants would not be applicable to all of the options detailed within this report and there is a danger that other opportunities might pass us by whilst waiting for grant funding support which might never materialise.

Whilst every effort is made to explore all potential grant funding opportunities which may benefit the North Herts Museum Service as a whole, there could be other grant funding sources available of which Cultural Services officers are unaware. The Council's Corporate Grants Officer is actively exploring alternative sources of funding which may be applicable to this project but as of the date of this report, this exercise has yet to identify other major funding possibilities applicable to this project.

There could also be wealthy individual donors or charitable trusts which may be minded to assist in funding such projects, however officers are not presently aware of any such contacts through which the Council can apply for funding.

Some charitable trusts are restricted to solely funding other charities or charitable causes and as such, some museums have their own affiliated trusts, typically in the form of 'Museum Friends' schemes or similar. North Herts Museum does not currently have a 'Museum Friends' scheme, would rely on members of the community coming forward to fill the administrative and leadership roles of such an organisation. It should be noted that the creation of such an organisation would not automatically guarantee forthcoming funding or success in applying for it however this might open up new funding opportunities.

One alternative route through which the museum service may be able to apply for charitable support is through the Workman's Hall Trust. This trust is an active legacy entity from the days before the North Herts Museum was created. The trust existed to run the Workman's Hall which previously stood in the location of the North Herts Museum. The details and limitations of this trust in the context of applying for funding on behalf of the North Herts Museum Service are currently unclear, but this is being actively explored by the Council's Corporate Grants Officer.

Appendix 7 – Remodel Advice from Ashe Construction

In exploring the options to renovate the existing facilities at Burymead, Officers considered the possibility of undertaking works to remodel the existing primary building to open up the internal space.

The intention of this would have been to reduce the pressure on collection storage through introduction of a more efficient layout of the existing building. Officers engaged with the private sector and this option was discounted on account of the complexities and likely costs this would entail. Given the option did not appear to be a likely solution and further exploration would involve expenditure on consultants reports and surveys, the decision was made to discount this option from the overall options appraisal.

The advice obtained from Ashe Construction can be summarised as follows:

There are structural issues that would require further investigation, and the floor plan layouts would need a lot of work to make them compliant with regulations with regards to fire strategy, escape, etc. As the building will be used for storage, most of the internal partitions will need to be fire rated and it may be difficult to validate some of the existing walls. There is no lift and so one would need to be installed or a detailed management strategy be prepared to justify this and confirm this does not discriminate against disabled persons.

The roof deck appears to be formed from woodwool slabs which may limit the options of overlaying roof insulation to improve the U-values to threshold levels. It is likely there is no wall insulation and so some upgrading of the external fabric may be required to achieve Building Regs compliance. The ground floor slab is also unlikely to have any insulation. The main incoming services panel is within an open area rather than a dedicated room/cupboard and is unlikely to comply with the latest regulations. The services throughout would need to be renewed. The external render is in poor condition with a lot of vegetation growth along the side elevation.

Bearing in mind all the above, it seems as though there is a high level of risk in retaining the existing building which has a lot of issues yet to fully investigated. A renovation is unlikely to provide the desired result in terms of layout, thermal performance, fire performance, etc.

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APPENDIX 8 – COUNCIL BUILDINGS CONSIDERED

LOCATION	REASON FOR DISCOUNTING	EXPLANATION
19 PROPERTIES IN ROYSTON	These properties are held on long leases, which the Council would wish to honour. Even if the Council were to explore these properties it would be difficult to negotiate a surrender.	The buildings are situated in the industrial area and consist mainly of larger industrial buildings. Royston is on the edge of the Council's district and is not perhaps as convenient as other locations.
CHURCHGATE SHOPPING CENTRE	Most of the shop units apart from the Iceland Unit mentioned in the report are too small to be considered.	The Churchgate Shopping Centre will be redeveloped
LAND ALLOCATED FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT	The museum storage facility would be an inappropriate use on these sites.	The returns from housing coupled with our targets under the Local Plan for additional dwellings means that these areas of land have not been considered.
OTHER PROPERTIES IN BURY MEAD ROAD, HITCHIN	The other properties in Bury Mead Road are let on long leases.	The Council would wish to honour the existing leases in place but even if this was not the case, the Council would need to negotiate a surrender of existing leases and lose the income currently generated from those properties. In addition, none of the properties would appear to be suitable for the museum storage facility.
10 PROPERTIES IN BLACKHORSE ROAD, KNAPP CLOSE & FLINT ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY	These properties are held on long leases which the Council would wish to honour, and even if this were not the case, it would be difficult to negotiate a surrender although it may be possible to negotiate a lease of a building on one of the sites.	The properties are held on long leases which the Council would wish to honour and the buildings situated on them are in the main unsuitable for the museum storage facility. The only site where it may be possible for us to rent a building from the long

		leaseholder is Site 8 Blackhorse Road, LGC where there is a dilapidated office building known as UMO house.
TOWN HALL, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY	This property is let and income producing.	The Council would wish to honour the existing lease agreements in place, and even if this were not the case, the Council would need to negotiate a surrender of the lease and lose the income currently generated from this property plus the property is not really suited to museum storage.
MISCELLANEOUS PROPERTIES	Football ground, former toilet blocks, Community Centres, Scout Huts, Childrens Nursery, car parks, BP petrol station, garden land, Bury Mead Waste facility, Royston Town Hall annexe, Brotherhood Hall, Letchworth, licences of access roads, and properties under 1,000 sq ft (92.9 sq m)	These properties are not suitable for the museum storage facility

		Net Present Value (£)	Net Annual Revenue Impact (£)	Impact on Budget <i>i</i>
Option A	Do nothing	132,814	17,200	0%
Option B	Prolong the life of the existing facilities for a further 5-10 years Ongoing Repair and maintenance	318,570	38,690	3%
Option C	Renovation of the existing facilities			
Option Ci	Remodel the existing building	Unknown	Unknown	<i>ii</i>
Option Cii	Shipping Containers	387,809	47,190	5% <i>iii</i>
Option Ciii	Purchase of Modular	466,857	139,170	19% <i>iii</i>
Option C iv	installation of mezanine	466,857	55,490	6% <i>iii</i>
Option D	Redevelop existing site			
Option Di	Ashe Construction proposal	4,049,243	316,550	46%
Option Dii	Revised Proposal - preliminary estimate	2,602,531	200,300	28%
Option E	Purchase of a freehold/long leasehold building (new or existing)	3,547,964	263,700	38%
Option F	Leasing a building (new or existing)	3,941,341	282,775	41%
Option G	Relocate to another building the Council owns	Unknown	Unknown	
Option H	Partnership Solutions with other museum providers in the district	4,646,600	335,325	49%

i- Based on the Net Working Budget for Museum and Cultural Service in 24/25 is £652,500

ii- Option C would require further surveys to be undertaken to estimate costs. The costs of the surveys and likley outcomes are considered not to be ecomically feasible.

iii - As option C would supplement Option B, costs of option B have been included within Options C

iv - impact on budget - £17,200 has been deducted as this cost is already incurred

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Name of Activity		Museum Storage Facility Project – Options Appraisal							
Date of Assessment		14/10/2024							
Main Purpose of Activity		To assess the available options for addressing the current pressures on the storage of the museum collection of North Hertfordshire.							
List the information, data or evidence used in this assessment		The majority of information used in this assessment has been based on officers existing knowledge and awareness of environmental and equalities issues. As the project develops further, with some options being explored further and others being discounted, more information will emerge and the impact assessment will be revisited and updated accordingly.							
Option Categories (linked to report categories)		Low Cost Short Term Options			High Cost Long Term Options			Alternative Options	
#	Area of Potential Impact and Examples to Consider	Option A – Do Nothing	Option B – Prolong	Option C – Renovate	Option D – Redevelop	Option E – Freehold Purchase or long leasehold	Option F – Leasehold/Rental Option	Option G – Reuse Existing site owned by NHDC	Option H – Partnership Options
1	<p>Impact on greenhouse emission and support adaption to the effects of climate change</p> <p><i>Will energy needs be met through renewable sources?</i></p> <p><i>Will it reduce emissions through retrofitting new technology?</i></p> <p><i>Will it reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing energy consumption and the need to travel?</i></p>	<p>Negative Impacts The current facility is very inefficient and if no action is taken then the current utilities usage at the facility will remain very inefficient.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are no positive impacts on the emissions if no action is taken.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact is negative.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There would be no negative impacts over and above those detailed in this section for option A.</p> <p>Positive Impacts The works forecast for the next 5-10 years may have some limited impact on addressing the buildings environmental inefficiencies via potential improved insulation.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact is positive.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There are a number of different ways to address this option included in the report, however most options will involve more vehicles on the road to facilitate the necessary adaptations to the sites at Burymead and/or Unit 3.</p> <p>Positive Impacts As these alterations would be in addition to the work to prolong the existing facility, there would again be a positive impact as a result of some of the works forecast for the next 5-10 years in terms of the insulative properties of the building.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts The activities relating to construction along with the production and manufacturing and transport of building materials will result in additional emissions. In addition, as the building would seek to drastically improve the internal environment for the storage of museum objects there would be increased demand for utilities to support the necessary mechanical equipment.</p> <p>Positive Impacts A new facility would be built to more modern building regs standards which would dramatically</p>	<p>Negative Impacts As a freehold option has already been built, there are no direct negative impacts relating to construction, though there could be in relation to any modifications required. It is not possible to know the potential efficiency of any building the Council may seek to acquire in future should this option be selected however consideration would be given in any such scenario as to the efficiency of any potential facility.</p> <p>Positive Impacts A specific freehold option is yet to be identified, however this is highly likely to be superior in terms</p>	<p>Negative Impacts This option has the same negative impacts as Option E.</p> <p>Positive Impacts This option has the same positive impacts as Option E</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) Overall the impact of this option is considered to be positive.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts This option would bring a disused site back into operation and therefore there would be a negative impact in the form of increased emissions.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are not thought to be any positive impacts associated with this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) Overall the impact of this option is considered to be negative.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be</p>

				<p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be positive.</p>	<p>improve the efficiency of the building and could also be built to reach net zero standards.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact over the life of the facility as an asset is considered to be positive.</p>	<p>of insulative quality in comparison with the existing storage facility, given the poor levels of efficiency currently achieved. Officers would also be seeking for a facility which either already delivered or was capable of delivering superior efficiency subject to intended modifications.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be positive.</p>			neutral at the present time.
2	<p>Use of natural resources including water and energy</p> <p><i>Will it reduce water consumption?</i></p> <p><i>Will it reduce energy consumption?</i></p>	<p>Negative Impacts There are no opportunities to do this at the present site.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are no positive impacts as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) Overall the impact of this option is considered to be neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts The works forecast for the next 5-10 years will not mitigate the existing negative impact identified in Option A. Resource use is expected to remain the same.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are no positive impacts as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) Overall the impact of this option is</p>	<p>Negative Impacts The works forecast for the next 5-10 years will not mitigate the existing negative impact identified in Option A and the enhancements considered at other sites would not improve this position either.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are no positive impacts as a result of this option.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts An improved facility will result in greater community outreach and enhanced mechanical installations to maintain a stable internal environment for the collection. These two aspects will result in increased demand for water and energy use.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are no positive impacts</p>	<p>Negative Impacts As with Option D, a new store will result in more community engagement and additional mechanical equipment, placing more demands on utilities than at present.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are no positive impacts as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral,</p>	<p>Negative Impacts The impacts of this option are the same as Option E.</p> <p>Positive Impacts The impacts of this option are the same as Option E.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) Overall the impact of this option is considered to be negative.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There would be a negative impact as a result of a disused building changing and creating demand for natural resources where previously none existed.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are no positive impacts as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral,</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific</p>

			thought to be negative.	Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) Overall the impact of this option is thought to be negative.	as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) Overall the impact of this option is considered to be negative.	Negative or Positive) Overall the impact of this option is thought to be negative.		Negative or Positive) Overall, the impact of this option is considered to be negative.	partnership option has not been identified. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be neutral at the present time.
3	<p>Minimisation of flood risks to the area (i.e. promotion of SUD's. protect surface and ground water quality)</p> <p><i>Will it minimise flood risk from all sources of flooding?</i></p> <p><i>Will it reduce property damage due to storm events/ heavy rainfall by improving flood resistance and flood resilience?</i></p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts As this option would develop an existing hardstanding surface with minimal drainage, the presence of a larger building is unlikely change the current drainage levels.</p> <p>Positive Impacts A new facility would involve drainage surveys as standard and therefore it is likely mitigating steps such as soakaways would be considered if any concerns were raised about the presence of a new facility.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts As freehold options are already in existence there is considered to be no negative impact on this criteria.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts This option has the same considerations as Option E.</p> <p>Positive Impacts This option has the same considerations as Option E.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) There is considered to be a neutral overall impact as a result of this option.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) There is considered to be a neutral overall impact as a result of this option.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be neutral at the present time.</p>

4	<p>To protect, enhance and create environments that encourage and support biodiversity</p> <p><i>Will it protect, enhance and increase biodiversity and protect habitats?</i></p> <p><i>Will it improve access to and promote educational value of sites of biodiversity interest?</i></p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts Depending on the make up of the development it may be that there is a requirement to introduce Biodiversity Net Gain on the plot as per new requirements from central government. It is also likely that there would be some foliage added on the plot of land to improve the street scene in any development and enhance the aesthetics of a new facility, regardless of requirements.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is positive.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>
5	<p>To improve Air Quality <i>(air quality describes how polluted the air we breathe is)</i></p> <p><i>Will it improve air quality?</i></p> <p><i>Will it reduce emissions of key pollutants?</i></p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There may be an impact as a result of this option in the form of the additional heating usage for any supplementary cabins or short term storage solutions,</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option once built, however as it will involve construction works, these will have a temporary negative impact on air quality.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no known impact as a result of this option but this will depend on the heating system in any selected building and its emissions in comparison with the existing site.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no known impact as a result of this option but this will depend on the heating system in any selected building and its emissions in</p>	<p>Negative Impacts It is likely that brining a disused building back into use will involve introducing new heating requirements which depending on the heating</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p>

		Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	depending on their heating system. There could also be some additional pollution from delivery vehicles of new storage containers or the works involved in maintaining the current building/enhancing Unit 3. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral but could also be negative depending on the heating systems used.	Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is negative.	Positive Impacts There is no known impact as a result of this option but this will depend on the heating system in any selected building and its emissions in comparison with the existing site. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	comparison with the existing site. Positive Impacts There is no known impact as a result of this option but this will depend on the heating system in any selected building and its emissions in comparison with the existing site. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	system could impact on emissions and pollution, however it is unclear whether the emissions would be greater than the current usage at the existing site. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.
6	To reduce need to travel, the use of private motorised vehicular transport as well as encourage walking, cycling, and use of public transport <i>Will it encourage increased walking, cycling and use of public transport?</i> <i>Will it increase the proportion of journeys using modes other than a car?</i>	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts Arguably an improved storage facility with enhanced community engagement is likely to lead to more vehicles on the road. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts Arguably an improved storage facility with enhanced community engagement is likely to lead to more vehicles on the road. Positive Impacts There is no known impact as a result of this option, though officers would consider the merits of any potential facilities	Negative Impacts Arguably an improved storage facility with enhanced community engagement is likely to lead to more vehicles on the road. Positive Impacts There is no known impact as a result of this option, though officers would consider the	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified. Positive Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the

					Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is negative.	on the market from the perspective of access, amongst other considerations. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is negative.	merits of any potential facilities on the market from the perspective of access, amongst other considerations. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is negative.		present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be neutral at the present time.
7	To reduce waste production and increase recycling, recovery and reuse of waste <i>Will it lead to reduced consumption of materials and resources?</i> <i>Will it reduce household waste?</i> <i>Will it reduce construction waste?</i> <i>Will it increase recovery recycling and re-use?</i>	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There will be construction waste generated from the ongoing works to maintain the facility. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is negative.	Negative Impacts There will be construction waste generated from the demolition of the existing facilities. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is negative.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is likely to be construction works leading to construction waste with the modification of any of the Councils existing buildings. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is negative.	Negative Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified. Positive Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be

									neutral at the present time.
8	<p>To enhance the public realm and street improvements</p> <p><i>Will it reduce litter?</i></p> <p><i>Will it enhance the quality of public realm?</i></p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts Minor improvements would be made to the external of the building as a result of the forecast works, which would have a limited positive impact on the aesthetics of the facilities and the wider area.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is positive.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts Linked with the works in option B, minor improvements would be made to the external of the building as a result of the forecast works, which would have a small positive impact on the aesthetics of the facilities and the wider area.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is positive.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts Aesthetically, the current facilities are in a very poor state of repair and regeneration of the site would have a positive impact on the site itself and the perception of the wider industrial area and employment zone around it due to it looking less dilapidated. Improving the site through a new building and landscaping would make the area feel a more welcoming place to work, both for current and prospective employees at the various businesses located on the industrial estate.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is positive.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts Bringing a disused building back into use would be expected to have a positive impact on the public realm.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is positive.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be neutral at the present time.</p>
9	To protect, enhance and seek opportunities to increase open space	Negative Impacts	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.	Negative Impacts	Negative Impacts	Negative Impacts There are too many

	<p><i>Will it improve open space?</i></p> <p><i>Will it improve landscape character?</i></p> <p><i>Will it minimise development on Greenfield sites?</i></p>	<p>There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There may be a</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be neutral at the present time.</p>
10	<p>To reduce noise and impact of noise</p> <p><i>Will it reduce noise pollution from vehicles?</i></p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There will be some impact as a result of the works necessary to the site and any additional containers/cabins introduced.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive)</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is likely to be a lot of noise and disruption over a 2 year period due to the construction works involved with this project, however this would be mitigated by the sites location on an industrial area and employment zone, limiting impact on residential areas.</p> <p>Positive Impacts</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the</p>

				The overall impact of this option is negative.	There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is negative.				present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be neutral at the present time.
11	Impact on a person living with a disability	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts A new facility would be required to meet all modern accessibility standards and this would improve the ability of the museum collection to be accessed by staff and visitors living with disabilities.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is positive.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts A new facility would be required to meet all modern accessibility standards and this would improve the ability of the museum collection to be accessed by staff and visitors living with disabilities.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is positive.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts A new facility would be required to meet all modern accessibility standards and this would improve the ability of the museum collection to be accessed by staff and visitors living with disabilities.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is positive.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be</p>

									neutral at the present time.
12	Impact on a person of a particular race	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be neutral at the present time.</p>
13	A person of a gay, lesbian or bisexual sexual orientation	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive)</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive)</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive)</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive)</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive)</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive)</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive)</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p>

		Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Positive Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be neutral at the present time.
14	Impact on a person of a particular sex, male or female, including issues around pregnancy and maternity	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified. Positive Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified. Overall Impact (Neutral,

									Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be neutral at the present time.
15	Impact on a person of a particular religion or belief	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.	Negative Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified. Positive Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be neutral at the present time.
16	Impact on a person of a particular age	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option. Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the

		<p>There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>A new facility would provide the opportunity for the museum collection to be more accessible, with space for prams and other mobility aids, typically sought after by those of various age demographics.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is positive.</p>	<p>An alternative facility, particularly if this is more modern, would be expected to be more accessible for prams and various other mobility aids, typically sought after by those of various age demographics.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is positive.</p>	<p>An alternative facility, particularly if this is more modern, would be expected to be more accessible for prams and various other mobility aids, typically sought after by those of various age demographics.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is positive.</p>	<p>There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be neutral at the present time.</p>
17	Impact on a Transgender person	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There is no impact as a result of this option.</p> <p>Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is neutral.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option has not been identified.</p> <p>Positive Impacts There are too many uncertainties to comment on this option at the present time as a specific partnership option</p>

									has not been identified. Overall Impact (Neutral, Negative or Positive) The overall impact of this option is considered to be neutral at the present time.
Summary and Sign Off									
<p>Summary: Given that the purpose of the report to which this impact assessment relates is that of an early and indicative options appraisal, further details will be needed to fully explore the impacts of any chosen option. As a result, and given that some early positive and negative impacts have been identified, officers will ensure that as certain options are discounted from the process and others are taken forward that the impact assessment on environmental and equalities considerations is revisited and updated. In time, it is expected that an impact assessment adopting the corporate template can be completed for one single option to assist with the final decision making process over this project. No final decision is being taken as a result of this options appraisal and the above indicative impact assessment will only be used at this stage to assist with informing members over decisions regarding which options should be discounted and which should be explored further.</p>									
<p>Signed by Ros Allwood, Cultural Services Manager:</p> <p><i>R. C. Allwood</i></p> <p>Date: 31/10/24</p>									
<p>Signed by Robert Orchard, Culture & Facilities Service Manager (Deputising as Service Director – Enterprise):</p> <p><i>[Signature]</i></p> <p>Date: 31/10/24</p>									
<p>Signed by designated member of the Policy & Strategy team: Ellie Hollingsworth – Policy & Strategy Officer</p> <p>E A Hollingsworth</p> <p>Date: 31/10/2024</p>									

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Tuesday 12 November 2024

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON SECTION 106 CONTRIBUTIONS – DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY OFFICER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: NOT APPLICABLE

COUNCIL PRIORITY: NOT APPLICABLE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is to update Members on the progress towards establishing the Task and Finish Group to review the Section 106 (S106) process. It proposes that the core elements of the scope for the proposed group be endorsed including: the title, objectives of the review, the key lines of enquiry, timeframe and methodology.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Overview and Scrutiny committee:

- 2.1. Review and comments on the draft scoping document as attached at Appendix A.
- 2.2 Notes the Task and Finish Group Protocol 2020 as attached at Appendix B.
- 2.2. Endorse the principles of the review and approves consultation with Group Leaders to appoint members and a Chair for the Task and Finish Group.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. To ensure that the final scoping document takes into account suggestions from Members and relevant officers.
- 3.2. To allow Members to be appointed to the Task and Finish Group.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. This report has been brought to the Committee prior to the appointment of any members and a Chair to the Task and Finish Group to allow for additional consultation with Members and relevant officers.

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 programme of works.

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. At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on Tuesday 3 September, Members agreed to investigate the effectiveness of S106 contributions at North Herts.
- 7.2. Prior to the adoption of the Local Plan in 2022, Councillors had concerns that S106 contributions were not being spent and allocations of money were not put into community and social infrastructure for existing and new development within North Herts. It should be considered whether another mechanism, such as a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), would deliver better outcomes for communities in North Herts prior to the adoption of the Local Plan.
- 7.3 However, with the Local Plan now being implemented, these concerns have been exacerbated amongst Councillors, local residents and other stakeholders, as development is taking place without appropriate levels of community infrastructure (such as, but not limited to Education, Healthcare and Highways Infrastructure) in order to mitigate the negative impacts of development and provide services to new and existing communities and residents in North Herts.
- 7.4. Regular updates on S106 had been requested at Planning Control Committee, but a further in-depth look at the overall process by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be worthwhile.
- 7.5. Following discussions with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, Cllr Muncer volunteered to develop the scoping documents for a potential Task and Finish Group to investigate Section 106 (attached as Appendix A).

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. Paragraph 6.2.7(u) of the Council's Constitution enables the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: To appoint time limited task and finish groups to undertake detailed scrutiny work and report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations to the Cabinet/Council/relevant Executive Member.
- 8.2. In 2020 the Committee approved the Task and Finish Group Protocol (attached at Appendix B) which sets out the process to be followed for the establishment of task and finish groups. Core parts of the protocol are as follows:

- 8.3. "2.4: The committee will ask the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager to scope any topics which it has chosen. The committee will indicate which general issues the scope should cover."
- 8.4. "2.5: The draft scope shall include (but not be limited to) consideration of the following:
- The terms of reference/purpose for the task and finish group
 - Setting boundaries for the review, what will and will not be included in the review
 - The nature of the expected outcomes, as far as this is practicable
 - Its timeframe and availability of key officers
 - How it links to the council's priorities, core business, other activities or to the interests of the people of North Hertfordshire
 - Potential witnesses and community engagement
 - Key questions, including costs
 - Environmental issues
 - Briefing arrangements
 - Whether any visits might be included in the review
 - Its membership, including the possibility of co-opting outside members
 - The relevant Executive Members
 - The lead officer
 - The support officer"
- 8.5. "1.6. A lead officer will be appointed by the authority and will act as support to ensure only that factual/legal guidance is given to and discussed by the Task and Finish Group."
- 8.6. "1.9. All drafts of the scope, report and recommendations will be shared with the lead officer/Leadership Team so that a parallel report can be produced by them in whatever format they see fit. This is crucial to ensure that informed decisions are taken that take into account the advice and guidance of senior officers.
- 8.7. "3.1 The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager will contact the Group Leaders seeking nominations for the task and finish group. The principle of political proportionality will apply inasmuch as this is possible within a small group. Attempts should be made to involve smaller parties where they otherwise would not be entitled to a seat. Members of a Task and Finish Group do not have to be a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee."
- 8.8. "2.9: The Chair of the Task and Finish Group will finalise the scope in conjunction with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee."
- 8.9. The Corporate Peer Action Plan 2020 at part 57 recommends that the Committee "Use the task and finish programme to support early engagement and involvement with policy making."

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Overview and Scrutiny Committees were established by the Local Government Act 2000 (s.9) (amended by the Localism Act 2011).

- 9.2. Section 6 of the Council's Constitution set out the Council's obligations with regard to scrutiny.
- 9.3. A task and finish group is an informal group, which undertakes scrutiny work, but is not covered by legislation. Section 6.2.7(u) of the Council's Constitution, however, permits the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to: appoint time limited task and finish groups to undertake detailed scrutiny work and report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations to the Cabinet.
- 9.4. S.106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides that planning obligations (commonly known as s106 Agreements) can be imposed by local authorities upon developers to make a development proposal acceptable, that otherwise would not be acceptable. They are usually focussed on site specific mitigation on the impact of a development and therefore it is important that s106 Agreement contributions are spent as intended. The work of the task and finish group is assessing the effectiveness of s106 Agreement contributions is in keeping with the spirit of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. As detailed Section 14, Human Resource Implications, the wider the reach, the more significant the impact on officer time in terms of report writing, data analysis and meeting attendance. Given recent funding pressures and the consequent reduction in officer numbers, significant requests to support scrutiny work will limit officer time available to spend on activities such as identifying and delivering cost reductions, income generation and project management.
- 10.2. Although not significant, a committee attendance allowance of £25.17 per officer per evening meeting is payable to officers in attendance. This is in addition to providing time off in lieu, or overtime as an alternative.
- 10.3. It is proposed that to limit the financial implications and impact on other workloads associated with this review that meetings be conducted during normal working hours and, where possible, are held remotely.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. Effective overview and scrutiny of policy, administrative, service delivery and the scope and time frame for scrutiny interventions should be considered in the light of the potential impact of inappropriate scrutiny leading to decisions not being made, inappropriately made, or not made at the right time.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

- 12.2. There are no known equalities implications or requirements that apply to this report. Effective scrutiny is an essential part of ensuring that local government remains transparent, accountable and open which ensures that the delivery of public services benefits all aspects of the community, where practical.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

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

14. 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 and resources. There is also the potential for additional resource requirements in relation to report writing, information collection and analysis and committee attendance. Delivery of service plans to achieve the Council’s agreed Corporate Plan objectives might, therefore, be potentially negatively impacted.
- 15.2. Following the agreed protocol regarding the establishment of this review is essential to ensure that the additional resource requirements associated with the Task and Finish Group are manageable and deliverable and that the service plans of the departments involved are not disrupted. The input of relevant officers in consultation is therefore essential to ensure that the scope of the review remains deliverable with current resources.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1. Appendix A – Task and Finish Group – S106 Scoping document
- 16.2. Appendix B – Task and Finish Group Protocol 2020

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 17.1. Jeevan Mann, Scrutiny Officer, Jeevan.Mann@north-herts.gov.uk
- 17.2. James Lovegrove, Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager, James.Lovegrove@north-herts.gov.uk
- 17.3. Doug Traill-Stevenson, Property Lawyer, Douglas.Traill-Stevenson@north-herts.gov.uk
- 17.4. Reuben Ayavoo, Policy and Communities Manager, Reuben.Ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk

17.5. Ellie Hollingsworth, Policy Officer, Ellie.Hollingsworth@north-herts.gov.uk

18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1. Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Meeting on Tuesday 3 September, at which the Section 106 Task and Finish group was discussed - [Minutes from Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Tuesday, 3rd September, 2024 7.30 pm](#)

APPENDIX A – DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT
TASK AND FINISH GROUP – Section 106 Contributions

Concerns had existed for a while that Section 106 contributions were not being spent and allocations of money were not put into schemes. Regular updates on S106 had been requested at Planning Control Committee, but a further in-depth look at the overall process by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be worthwhile.

The aim of this review is:

To investigate the effectiveness of Section 106; and

To examine whether it is the best mechanism to deliver community infrastructure.

Key issues:

- What is the current process for allocating the S106 contributions?
- What happens to unallocated S106 contributions?
- What are the alternatives to the S106 mechanism?

Key questions to be answered:

- How does the S106 funding system currently operate in North Hertfordshire?
- Is S106 funding in North Hertfordshire effective in providing community and social infrastructure for existing and new development?
- What are the alternatives to S106 funding?
- Would alternatives to S106 funding deliver better outcomes for residents in North Hertfordshire?
- Should the S106 funding system continue in North Hertfordshire or should it be reformed?

Areas of investigation and scope:

1) Rules governing S106 agreements

- a) To identify how the mechanism for S106 works.
- b) To understand if there are any draw backs of the S106 mechanism.

2) How the current mechanism operates in North Herts Council

- a) To understand and assess how the S106 has been implemented at North Herts Council.
- b) To understand how S106 funding is being allocated to provide community and social infrastructure for existing and new developments.
- c) To understand the limitations of the S106 mechanism, establish how these limitations are restricting effective allocation of funds.
- d) To identify if there are any opportunities to enhance the current S106 mechanism to address any limitations.

3) Issues/ concerns with the current mechanism

- a) To identify why the current S106 contributions are not being allocated and spent in a timely manner.
- b) To establish how and why such problems are arising, understand if such issues could have been foreseen and highlight any specific characteristics such problems have in common.

APPENDIX A – DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT

TASK AND FINISH GROUP – Section 106 Contributions

4) Improvements or alternative mechanisms

- a) To identify what lessons can be learned from the assessment of the S106 mechanism.
- b) To identify and examine alternative available mechanisms and their benefits/limitations.
- c) Comparison of S106 and alternative mechanisms.
- d) To understand what elements, make up best practice and identify new ideas that can be incorporated into future development of the mechanism.
- e) To consider future changes in development at North Herts and challenges the Council may face that the mechanism would need to track/ take into account.

The following topics will *not* be considered by this review:

- The Scrutiny will not look at Planning policies or process as part of this review.
- The Scrutiny will not look at planning applications.
- The Scrutiny will not look at specific allocations of the S106 funding other than to understand the decision-making process and associated timelines.

Timeframe

TBC

Link with Council Priorities

Thriving Communities / Accessible Services / Responsible Growth / Sustainability

Potential Witnesses and Contributors

- Executive Member for Planning and Transport (Past and Present)
- Planning Officers at NHDC
- Hertfordshire County Council (Particularly those involved in Education and Highways)
- Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB (Local GP/Primary Care Provision)
- Local Parish Councils who have been involved in S106 negotiations
- Community Organisations who have/plan to benefit from S106 Funding
- Local Residents

Methodology

To assist members with the Scrutiny, a training session for Section 106 will be held in advance of the formal topic group meeting (date tbc).

Live Evidence Sessions consisting of workshops, interviews, and written submissions.

Information documents

- North Hertfordshire Local Plan
- Past and Present Strategic Site S106 Agreements
- Current allocations of S106 (spent and unspent)

Membership

5 Members - to be confirmed

Lead Support Officer - to be confirmed

Support Officer - Jeevan Mann, Scrutiny Officer, Jeevan.Mann@north-herts.gov.uk

APPENDIX A – DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT
TASK AND FINISH GROUP – Section 106 Contributions

APPENDIX A: AREAS OF INVESTIGATION – QUESTIONS

Members and Officers have proposed the following questions. These questions are included under each heading of the areas of investigation identified above.

1) Rules governing S106 agreements

- a) To identify how the mechanism for S106 works
 - i) X
 - ii) Y
 - iii) Z
- b) To understand if there are any draw backs of the S106 mechanism
 - i) X
 - ii) Y
 - iii) Z

2) How the current mechanism operates in North Herts Council

- a) To understand and assess how the S106 has been implemented at North Herts Council.
 - i) X
 - ii) Y
 - iii) Z
- b) To understand the how S106 funding is being allocated to provide community and social infrastructure for existing and new developments.
 - i) X
 - ii) Y
 - iii) Z
- c) To understand the limitations of the S106 mechanism, establish how these limitations are restricting effective allocation of funds.
 - i) X
 - ii) Y
 - iii) Z
- d) To identify if there are any opportunities to enhance the current S106 mechanism to address any limitations.
 - i) X
 - ii) Y
 - iii) Z

3) Issues/ concerns with the current mechanism

- a) To identify why the current S106 contributions are not being allocated and spent in a timely manner.
 - i) X
 - ii) Y
 - iii) Z
- b) To establish how and why such problems are arising, understand if such issues could have been foreseen and highlight any specific characteristics such problems have in common.
 - i) X
 - ii) Y
 - iii) Z

APPENDIX A – DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT
TASK AND FINISH GROUP – Section 106 Contributions

4) Improvements or alternative mechanisms

- a) To identify what lessons can be learned from the assessment of the S106 mechanism.
 - i) X
 - ii) Y
 - iii) Z
- b) To identify and examine alternative available mechanisms and their benefits/limitations.
 - i) X
 - ii) Y
 - iii) Z
- c) Comparison of S106 and alternative mechanisms.
 - i) X
 - ii) Y
 - iii) Z
- d) To understand what elements, make up best practice and identify new ideas that can be incorporated into future development of the mechanism.
 - i) X
 - ii) Y
 - iii) Z
- e) To consider future changes in development at North Herts and challenges the Council may face that the mechanism would need to track/ take into account.
 - i) X
 - ii) Y
 - iii) Z

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TASK AND FINISH GROUP PROTOCOL

1. PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 Task and Finish Groups are opportunities for a more detailed gathering of information from this authority, other organisations and members of the public
- 1.2 The Task and Finish Group should be as politically balanced as possible, however attempts should be made to involve smaller parties where they otherwise would not be entitled to a seat
- 1.3 The Chair of the Task and Finish Group will generally rotate around the political parties, however the Party rotation system should be flexible enough to ensure that, with the agreement of the political parties, the most suitable Member chairs the group.
- 1.4. The Task and Finish Group members drive the process from 'scope to recommendations' to Cabinet/Council/Executive Member.
- 1.5. Inviting external input into the Task and Finish Group should be strongly encouraged. A balance of examples from other relevant Local Authorities and similar public and private sector organisations should be included where possible.
- 1.6. A lead officer will be appointed by the authority and will act as support to ensure only that factual/legal guidance is given to and discussed by the Task and Finish Group.
- 1.7. The Task and Finish Group Members are encouraged to focus their discussions on what could be possible and not be too detail-centric.
- 1.8. The report and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It will then be considered by Cabinet/Council/Executive Member together with any additional report required by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.9. All drafts of the scope, report and recommendations will be shared with the lead officer/Leadership Team so that a parallel report can be produced by them in whatever format they see fit. This is crucial to ensure that informed decisions are taken that take into account the advice and guidance of senior officers.
- 1.10 The report of the Leadership Team will accompany the Task and Finish Group report to Cabinet/Council/Executive Member however the Overview and Scrutiny Committee/Chairman may opt for this report to also be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the same time as the Task and Finish Group report.

2. Choosing topics and drafting the Scope

- 2.2 Paragraph 6.2.7(u) of the Council's Constitution enables the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: To appoint time limited task and finish groups to undertake

detailed scrutiny work and report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations to the Cabinet/Council/Executive Member.

Choosing Topics

- 2.3 The committee can discuss possible Task and Finish Group topics at any of its regular meetings. The committee will choose which topics to consider and prioritise them. Subsequently, the committee may decide that a topic is not suitable or timely and may either remove it from the list or leave it pending with a future date indicated dependant on business needs.

Drafting the scope

- 2.4 The committee will ask the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager to scope any topics which it has chosen. The committee will indicate which general issues the scope should cover.
- 2.5 The draft scope shall include (but not be limited to) consideration of the following:
- The terms of reference/purpose for the task and finish group
 - Setting boundaries for the review, what will and will not be included in the review
 - The nature of the expected outcomes, as far as this is practicable
 - Its timeframe and availability of key officers
 - How it links to the council's priorities, core business, other activities or to the interests of the people of North Hertfordshire
 - Potential witnesses and community engagement
 - Key questions, including costs
 - Environmental issues
 - Briefing arrangements
 - Whether any visits might be included in the review
 - Its membership, including the possibility of co-opting outside members
 - The relevant Executive Members
 - The lead officer
 - The support officer
- 2.6 The lead officer may wish to use the following as a checklist:
- Sources and usefulness of evidence
 - Potential witnesses
 - Where the group might look for best practice
 - Any scheduling issues
 - What officer resources will be required
 - Whether the review duplicates work already being carried out
 - Whether the review might consider other aspects of the subject
 - Any other issues or problems with conducting the review eg timing, availability of information and/or key personnel, and legal issues.
- 2.7 The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager will discuss the draft scope with the lead officer and the Chair of the Task and Finish Group.
- 2.8 The review should be completed in a reasonable time and the draft scope will state how long it is intended to last. The review may be conducted by a variety of means to aid efficiency.

Finalising the scope

- 2.9 The Chair of the Task and Finish Group will finalise the scope in conjunction with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.10 If the Task and Finish Group wishes to make any further changes to the scope, the Chair of the Task and Finish Group will agree all changes with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3. Organising the Task and Finish Group

- 3.1 The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager will contact the Group Leaders seeking nominations for the task and finish group. The principle of political proportionality will apply inasmuch as this is possible within a small group. attempts should be made to involve smaller parties where they otherwise would not be entitled to a seat. Members of a Task and Finish Group do not have to be a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.2 It is intended that each Task and Finish group be chaired by the best person available whichever party they come from, whilst still ensuring that, over time, all parties take their turn chairing task and finish groups. The Committee will therefore take a flexible approach to chairing Task and Finish Groups. Instead of rotating automatically from one party to the next, Group Leaders will be asked to indicate whether their nominee(s) would be a good person to chair the Task and Finish Group. If there is more than one suitable Member, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will choose the chair for the Task and Finish group.
- 3.3 Once nominations are received, the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager will arrange a date for the first meeting.

Meetings

- 3.4 The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager will liaise with the Members of the Task and Finish Group to set dates for meetings. Where possible dates for the whole of the Task and Finish programme will be allocated at the beginning of the process.
- 3.5 The Chair of the Task and Finish Group will be responsible for the management of the meeting. The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager will record the evidence given to the meeting along with the subsequent discussion, during which the Group will weigh the evidence and reach initial conclusions and recommendations.
- 3.6 The task and finish group can gather evidence through a variety of ways, such as:
- written evidence
 - oral evidence and interviews with external and internal witnesses
 - site visits
 - Interview experts
 - visiting other organisations - partners, user groups, other councils
 - research
 - talking to people who are affected by the issue

- 3.7 On occasion, a Task and Finish Group will, through its investigations, discover things which are important but not within the scope of the review. In such cases the Group will either:
- amend the scope of the inquiry with the agreement of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee so that they can be considered during the review; or
 - flag any important issues in the report which were not considered as they were outside the scope so that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may consider them if it wishes to.

4. Producing a report and subsequent steps

Drafting the report

- 4.1 The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager will draft the report on behalf of the Task and Finish Group so they are satisfied that the report reflects their views and the evidence given.
- 4.2 The Scrutiny Officer will share all drafts of the report with the lead officer. The lead officer will seek the comments of the Leadership Team and prepare a report on their behalf. This report will accompany the Task and Finish Group report to Cabinet/Council/Executive Member however the Overview and Scrutiny Committee/Chairman may opt for this report to also be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the same time as the Task and Finish Group report.

Consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

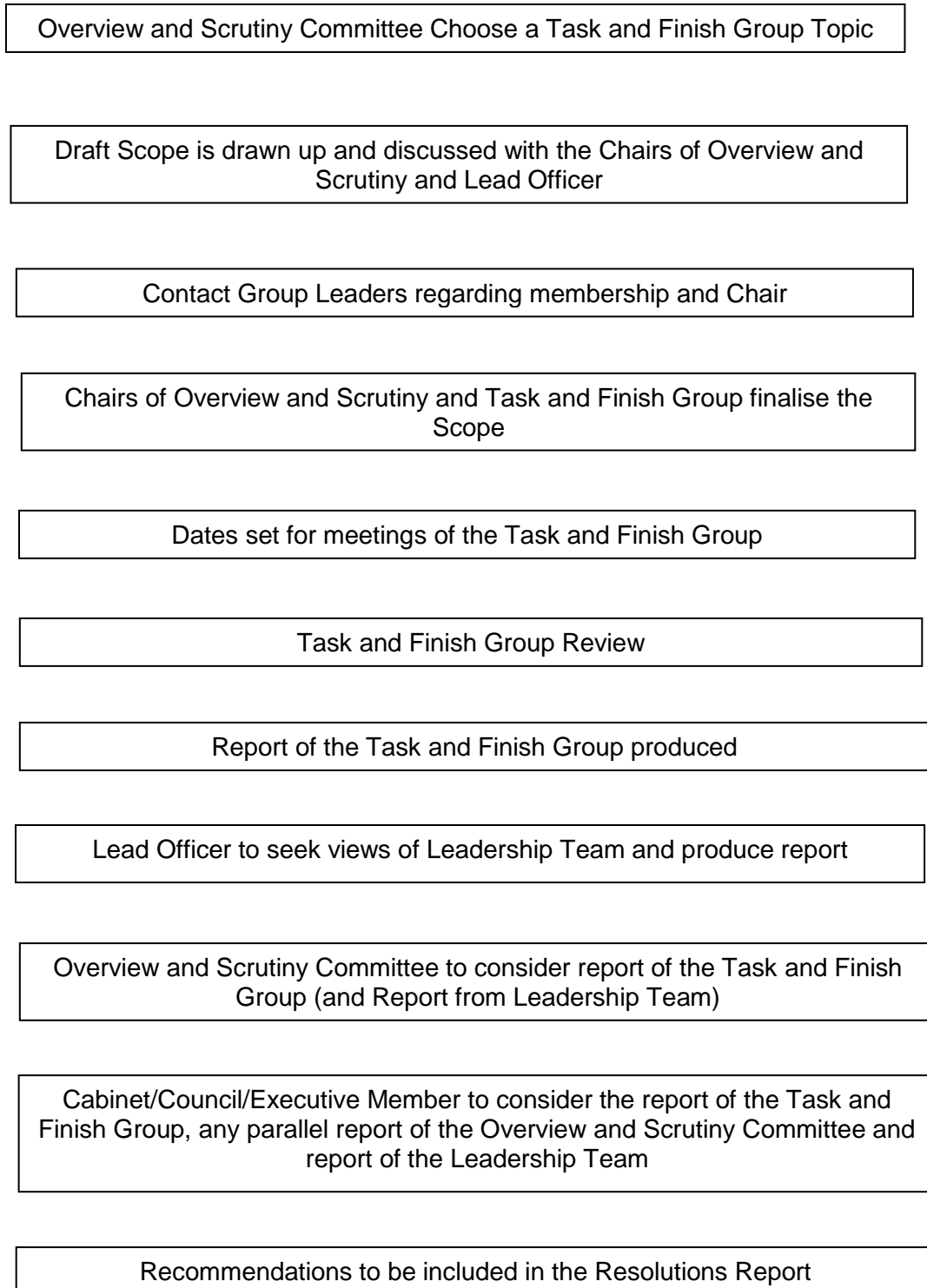
- 4.3 The Chair of the Task and Finish Group will present the report to the next scheduled meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the report and either:
- With the agreement of the Task and Finish Group Chair, make any changes that it considers appropriate or
 - Produce a parallel report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be presented to Cabinet/Council/Executive Member alongside the Task and Finish Group report.
- 4.5 The Committee will refer the report to Cabinet/Council/executive Member for its consideration. Reports will normally be sent to Cabinet for consideration but in certain circumstances reports may be more appropriately sent to Council or an Executive Member
- 4.6 The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager will prepare a covering report for Cabinet/Council/Executive Member. The Chair of the Task and Finish Group will present the Task and Finish Group report to Cabinet/Council/Executive Member. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will present any parallel report produced.
- 4.7 The lead officer will prepare a report for the same meeting of Cabinet/Council/Executive Member that records the comments of the Leadership Team. This report can be in whatever format deemed appropriate by the Leadership Team.

- 4.8 Cabinet/Council/Executive Member will consider the reports and comment on and consider all recommendations.

Follow up to the Report

- 4.9 The recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and any parallel Overview and Scrutiny recommendations will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the Resolutions report.

FLOW CHART



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 12 November 2024

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

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

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY OFFICER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: NOT APPLICABLE

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

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<p>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.</p>

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- | |
|--|
| <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>2.3. That the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan as attached at Appendix C be considered.</p> |
|--|

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 October 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 – 18th October 2024
- 16.3. Appendix C – Corporate Peer Committee Support Action Plan in regard to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 17.1. Jeevan Mann, Scrutiny Officer, Jeevan.Mann@north-herts.gov.uk , ext 4295

- 17.2. 17.2.James Lovegrove, Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager, james.Lovegrove@north-herts.gov.uk , ext 4204
- 17.3. Isabelle Alajooz, Legal Commercial Team Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer, Isabelle.Alajooz@north-herts.gov.uk , ext 4346
- 17.4. Tim Everitt, Performance and Risk Officer, Tim.Everitt@north-herts.gov.uk , ext 4646

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

KEY:

Items identified for work programme

Annual reports

Scrutiny reports

MEETING DATE	ITEMS AT MEETING	REPORT AUTHOR	PORTFOLIO HOLDER
3 September 2024	<p>Community Survey Results</p> <p>Leisure contract project closure report</p> <p>Safeguarding Report</p> <p>Council Plan 2024-25</p> <p>Council Delivery Plan & Key Performance Indicators - Q1 Update</p> <p>Adoption of Scrutiny Charter</p> <p>Decisions and Monitoring Tracker</p> <p>Work Programme</p>	<p>Christine Crofts</p> <p>Louise Randall/ Sarah Kingsley</p> <p>Helen Rae/ Jeanette Thompson</p> <p>Rachel Cooper</p> <p>Rachel Cooper</p> <p>Cllr Matt Barnes</p> <p>Jeevan Mann</p> <p>Jeevan Mann</p>	<p>Cllr Mick Debenham</p> <p>Cllr Val Bryant</p>
12 November 2024	<p>Enterprise Portfolio Update</p> <p>Museum Storage Options</p> <p>3cs Half Year Update</p> <p>Decisions and Monitoring Tracker</p> <p>Work Programme</p>	<p>Steve Crowley</p> <p>Robert Orchard</p> <p>Chris Jeffrey</p> <p>Jeevan Mann</p> <p>Jeevan Mann</p>	<p>Cllr Tamsin Thomas</p> <p>Cllr Val Bryant</p>
7 January 2025	<p>Crime and Disorder Matters (Youth Engagement and Crime prevention)</p> <p>Digital Transformation</p> <p>Council Delivery Plan & Key Performance Indicators – Q2 Update</p> <p>Decisions and Monitoring Tracker</p> <p>Work Programme</p>	<p>Hertfordshire police</p> <p>Chris Jeffrey</p> <p>Ian Couper</p> <p>Jeevan Mann</p> <p>Jeevan Mann</p>	<p>Cllr Val Bryant</p>
4 February 2025	<p>Planning & Transport portfolio update</p> <p>RIPA Annual Report</p> <p>Decisions and Monitoring Tracker</p> <p>Work Programme</p>	<p>Ian Fullstone</p> <p>Jeanette Thompson</p> <p>Jeevan Mann</p> <p>Jeevan Mann</p>	<p>Cllr Daniel Allen</p>

11 March 2025	<p>Health Matters in NHS (topic tbc)</p> <p>Council Delivery Plan & Key Performance Indicators – Q3 Update</p> <p>Draft Annual Report of O&S Committee</p> <p>Decisions and Monitoring Tracker</p> <p>Work Programme</p>	<p>tbc</p> <p>Ian Couper</p> <p>Cllr Barnes</p> <p>Jeevan Mann</p> <p>Jeevan Mann</p>	
	<p>Candidate topics to be scheduled:</p> <p>Waste contract mobilisation – readiness, resident engagement</p> <p>Digital transformation project update</p> <p>LGA peer challenge report</p>		
	<p>Candidate topics for Task and Finish Groups:</p> <p>Effectiveness of Section 106 funding</p> <p>Officer recruitment & retention</p> <p>Impact of the Council's grant policies</p> <p>Impact of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme</p> <p>Tackling Homelessness in North Herts</p> <p>Review of the Master-planning process</p>		

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Forward Plan of Key Decisions - 18 October 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
Further decisions in relation to the Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract		Service Director - Resources	Before 7 Oct 2024		Chloe Hipwood, Service Manager chloe.hipwood@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Museum Storage Options Review		Cabinet	19 Nov 2024		Robert Orchard, Culture and Facilities Services Manager robert.orchard@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Land required for access to GA2		Cabinet	19 Nov 2024		Philip Doggett, Principal Estates Surveyor philip.doggett@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
GA2 (Great Ashby) Strategic Masterplan		Cabinet	19 Nov 2024		Nigel Smith, Strategic Planning Manager nigel.smith@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Codicote Neighbourhood Plan		Cabinet	19 Nov 2024		Clare Skeels, Senior Planning Officer clare.skeels@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6

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Decision required	Overview and Scrutiny	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Documents to be submitted to Decision Maker	Contact Officer from whom documents can be requested	Confirmation that other documents may be submitted to the Decision Maker	Procedure for requesting details of other documents
Careline - Continuation of partnership working with HCC		Cabinet	19 Nov 2024		Jo Dufficy, Service Director - Customers johanne.dufficy@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
North Herts Council Draft Town Centres Strategy		Cabinet	26 Nov 2024		Louise Symes, Strategic Planning and Projects Manager louise.symes@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Supported housing scheme for women		Cabinet	26 Nov 2024		Martin Lawrence, Strategic Housing Manager martin.lawrence@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Homelessness Prevention Grant allocations and update		Cabinet	26 Nov 2024		Martin Lawrence, Strategic Housing Manager martin.lawrence@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Baldock Strategic Masterplan		Cabinet	14 Jan 2025		Nigel Smith, Strategic Planning Manager nigel.smith@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
SECOND QUARTER REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2024/25		Cabinet	14 Jan 2025		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6

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Decision required	Overview and Scrutiny	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Documents to be submitted to Decision Maker	Contact Officer from whom documents can be requested	Confirmation that other documents may be submitted to the Decision Maker	Procedure for requesting details of other documents
INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY) MID-YEAR REVIEW 2024/25		Cabinet	14 Jan 2025		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Q2 Council Delivery Plan Update		Cabinet	14 Jan 2025		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Permit Review		Cabinet	11 Feb 2025		Louise Symes, Strategic Planning and Projects Manager louise.symes@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26		Cabinet	11 Feb 2025		Ian Couper, Service Director - Resources ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk	Yes	Via the Contact Officer named in Column 6
Proposed Off-Street Car Parking Tariffs for 2025/26		Cabinet	11 Feb 2025		Louise Symes, Strategic Planning and Projects Manager louise.symes@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

Key
Open Actions
Complete Actions

Action No.	Recommendation	Action	Led By	Timescale	Update
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	Oh Hold	Officers from Hertfordshire County Council have confirmed that there is an opportunity to conduct peer-to-peer chair/ vice chair training and will respond with possible dates (currently on hold due to changes at Hertfordshire County Council).
Page 159	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	On going	Officer engagement information has been produced and will be shared on the Officer Scrutiny Intranet page to assist with these processes.
	Define what you want your scrutiny panels to achieve.	To be discussed with the scrutiny committee but approach based on the 4 principles of good scrutiny would make sense: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Provides critical friend challenge to policymakers and decision makers · Enables the voice and concerns to the public · Is carried out by independent minded people who lead and own the scrutiny role · Drives improvement in public services 	Scrutiny Committee	Completed	The Scrutiny Charter was adopted by the O&S committee on 3 rd September 2024.

Action No.	Recommendation	Action	Led By	Timescale	Update
2	Put into place scrutiny training for the whole council (members and officers) and experiment with how training could be more effective for the 2024 new intake. Ensure all members understand the benefits and role of scrutiny.	Will be incorporated within the Member training programme being developed. Group Leaders need to <u>reinforce the importance of attending training with their groups.</u>	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development	Completed	Training was provided in May 2024 and is available on GrowZone. Further training development is ongoing and will next be rolled out in the 25/26 Civic year.
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	Completed	The Scrutiny Officer was appointed and start on 26 March 2024.
Page 160	Members to actively review the Forward Plan and invitation of cabinet members to attend O&S. This could	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	Completed	The forward plan was on the O&S agenda on 3rd September 2024 and will continue to be on the agenda for all future meetings.
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.	Scrutiny Committee/ Scrutiny Officer	Completed	It was agreed that the Chair and Vice chair will attend Cabinet meetings together where possible, to report on O&S discussions. A written referral will also be provided to Cabinet.
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	Completed	It was agreed that the O&S work programme will be shared as part of the resolutions to Cabinet so that members have a view and can note the planned work for O&S.

Action No.	Recommendation	Action	Led By	Timescale	Update
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	Completed	Covered under action point 2 and therefore this action point is closed.
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	Complete	The Task and Finish Groups were discussed at the O&S on 3rd September 2024 and added to the work programme for scheduling.
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	Complete	The Chair encouraged Councillors to identify items for the work programme at the meeting on 3rd September 2024 and will continue to do so at all future meetings.

Action No.	Recommendation	Action	Led By	Timescale	Update
14	Provide O&S training in Chairing Skills.	Will be incorporated within the Member training programme being developed.	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development	Completed	Covered under action point 3 and therefore this action point is closed.
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	Complete	Recommendations and referrals will be monitored going forward. These will be reviewed, and target dates set at the monthly meeting between the Chair, Vice-chair and Scrutiny Officer.
17	Consideration should be given by the cabinet and portfolio holders on how they can carry out their role in a way that supports scrutiny being able to act as effectively as possible.	This links to the vision for scrutiny in recommendation one 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	Completed	Similar to action points 6&19 and therefore closed.
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	Completed	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	Completed	It was agreed that the Chair and Vice chair will build out working relationships with the Cabinet to encourage them to attend O&S meetings as appropriate.

Action No.	Recommendation	Action	Led By	Timescale	Update
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	Completed	Similar to action point 6. It was agreed that the Chair and Vice chair will attend Cabinet meetings together where possible, to report on O&S discussions. A written referral will also be provided to Cabinet.
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	Completed	Reasons for a recommendation not being accepted by Cabinet will be included in the Committee's Resolutions report.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DECISIONS AND MONITORING TRACKER

DECISIONS

Item number	Recommendation/ Referral	Details from Cabinet	Status
September 2024 - COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2024-25 (QUARTER 1 UPDATE)			
12	One recommendation was made to Cabinet on 9th September 2024, following the O&S meeting of 3rd September 2024. Cabinet considered and noted as recommended.	That Cabinet notes the progress against Council projects as set out in the Council Delivery Plan including the new milestones that have been set for the current year. Cabinet meeting: Tuesday 10th September 2024 @7.30pm	Open
September 2024 - COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN UPDATE			
11	Two recommendations were made to Cabinet on 9th September 2024, following the O&S meeting of 3rd September 2024. Cabinet considered and noted as recommended.	<p>1. The approval of the Council Plan (Appendix A) with the four new Council Priorities as outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Thriving Communities •Accessible Services •Responsible Growth •Sustainability <p>2. That authority be delegated to the Managing Director and Leader of the Council to approve any minor amendments to wording required as a result of the design process.</p> <p>Reason for Recommendation: The Council Plan is a key element of the corporate business planning process, as a high- level strategic document it sets out the Council's Priorities for the next four years. As an overarching policy framework document, it guides and influences the use of Council resources; providing a focus for activities, plans, and services that the Council provide. The introduction to the plan highlights the link between the Council Plan and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and service delivery plans.</p> <p>Cabinet meeting: Tuesday 10th September 2024 @7.30pm</p>	Open

September 2024 - COMMUNITY SURVEY ROUND TWO RESULTS (MARCH-MAY 2024)			
10	One recommendation was made to Cabinet on 9th September 2024, following the O&S meeting of 3rd September 2024. Cabinet considered comments on the approach to future surveys and noted as recommended.	<p>That Cabinet commented on and noted the key findings and observations from round two of the Community Survey and comment on the approach to future surveys (as detailed in section 8.7.2).</p> <p>Reasons: To ensure that Cabinet are aware of the round two results of our digital Community Survey and how they compare to both our round one (2023) results and the Local Government Association (LGA) February 2024 Resident Satisfaction phone survey results.</p> <p>Cabinet meeting: Tuesday 10th September 2024 @7.30pm</p>	Open

MONITORING

Item number	Recommendation/ Referral for Monitoring	Date accepted by Cabinet	Review Period	Monitoring Information	Status
June 2024 - LEISURE INVESTMENT OPTIONS					
4	<p>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 Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme project and recommend to Council as per recommendation 2.7 below regarding the termination fee.</p> <p>2.2 That Cabinet expresses its profound disappointment at the position taken by Centrica over the cost of the combined heat and power 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.</p> <p>2.3 That Cabinet does not approve the business case for Royston Leisure Centre Learner Pool at this time due to matters identified in the part 2 report.</p> <p>2.4 That Project Board will review the business case for the Royston Learner Pool, after further work has taken place to explore any other funding options that are realistically available. That review will then feed into the planned review of the Council's capital</p>	18th June 2024			Open

	<p>programme, as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process.</p> <p>That Cabinet recommends to Council:</p> <p>2.5 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.</p> <p>2.6 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.</p> <p>2.7 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.</p>				
June 2024 - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2024/25					
6	<p>That Cabinet adopted the performance indicators set out in paragraph 8.3 for 2024/25.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered adding Key Performance Indicators regarding performance of third-party suppliers and staff satisfaction. • Agreed that Key Performance Indicators were published to the Members Information Service when provided to Cabinet. 	18th June 2024			Open
July 2024 - WASTE CONTRACT					
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Cabinet agrees to award the waste, recycling and street cleansing contract to the preferred bidder, as identified in Part 2 of this report. 	9th July 2024			Open

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Cabinet agrees to the delegation of powers to the Director of Resources and the Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Members for Finance and IT and Recycling and Waste Management to determine whether the Council Capital funds vehicles. • That Cabinet agrees to approve the formation of a joint mobilisation project board to include the Executive Members responsible for Finance and IT as well as the Executive Member covering waste, recycling and street cleansing services for both EHC and North Herts to monitor the progress of the mobilisation of the waste, recycling and street cleansing contract. • That Cabinet has regard for the draft statutory guidance in Appendix 6 and taking into account the matters set out in this Part 2 report and any Part 2 clarifications, reconfirms the decision on the 3-weekly collection frequency of residual waste collections made by Cabinet as per 7.5 and provides clear reasons for the decision. 				
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