

# NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3JF on Tuesday, 11th March, 2025 at 7.30 pm

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence from Members.

### 2 MINUTES - 4 FEBRUARY 2025

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 4 February 2025 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

### 3 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business notified.

### 4 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (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 reminded Members of the adopted North Herts Scrutiny Charter and the need to ensure that the meeting was conducted with independence, initiative and integrity. The full Charter was available to Members via the Scrutiny Intranet pages.
- (5) The Chair advised of a change to the order of the Agenda and Agenda Item 14 would be taken after Agenda Item 7.

### 5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this meeting.

### 6 URGENT AND GENERAL EXCEPTION ITEMS

The Chair noted two urgent items in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan Referendum for Barkway and Nuthampstead and Local Government Reorganisation – Interim Plan Submission. The Chair provided details for their urgency and advised that the full Urgency Notices for both items had been published on the Council website.

### 7 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

No questions had been submitted by Members.

8 CALLED-IN ITEMS

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that:

- (1) Cabinet reconsiders the proposed on-street and off-street charging tariffs in Royston and Knebworth in light of the information received at the meeting.
- (2) Cabinet considers the increase in parking charges based on the updated modelling, specifically around the 4% increase in charges, where this had not been applied to all charges.
- (3) Cabinet notes the importance of Overview & Scrutiny in supporting Cabinet in reaching robust policy decisions and works with the Chair of the Committee to effectively facilitate this.

9 PLANNING AND TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO UPDATE

**RESOLVED:** That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted the report and its appendices.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** This report was following the request of the Committee for an update on the Planning and Transport portfolio.

10 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

**RESOLVED:** That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the following report will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended)

11 MUSEUM STORAGE OPTIONS - PART 2

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that: Cabinet approve the acquisition of Unit 1 City Park, Letchworth Garden City on the terms set out in the Part 2 report and noting the detailed Budget Cost Plan for adapting, fitting out and upgrading the building for museum storage at Appendix A.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:** A limited number of modern buildings of this age and size become available to purchase or lease in Letchworth Garden City and surrounding area, particularly one on a long lease at a peppercorn rent for the full term, with an expiry date in 2150. Unit 1 includes land fronting Works Road and to the side of the unit, plus a large part of the car park with the ability to erect a fence to separate the area from the rest of the car park used by adjoining units. In addition, the Council already owns the long leasehold interest in Unit 3 City Park, Letchworth Garden City, having acquired it in June 2016 with that building being used for general archive storage, IT servers, offsite disaster recovery, careline business continuity and legal department storage.

12 MUSEUM STORAGE OPTIONS - PART 1

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### 13 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

**RESOLVED:** That the content of the Corporate Peer Challenge report and its recommendations were noted.

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented on the proposed Action Plan, and referred it onto Cabinet, to be considered on 18 March 2025.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:** To ensure that the Council responded to the matters identified within the CPC report, ensuring that the benefits of the CPC process are realised.

### 14 RIPA ANNUAL REPORT

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the content of the report.

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:** The adoption of the amended RIPA Policy (Appendix A).

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

### 15 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Committee prioritises topics for inclusion in the Work Programme attached as Appendix A and, where appropriate, determines the high-level form and timing of scrutiny input.
- (2) 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.
- (3) That the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan as attached at Appendix C be 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.