

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber - District Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth, SG6 3JF on Tuesday, 24th March, 2026 at 7.30 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tina Bhartwas, Sadie Billing, Cathy Brownjohn and Daniel Wright-Mason.

Having given due notice, Councillor Vijaiya Poopalasingham substituted for Councillor Wright-Mason.

2 MINUTES - 3 FEBRUARY 2026

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2026 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 informed Members that a Scrutiny Training and Work Programming Workshop for 2026/27 had been arranged for Tuesday 12 May 2026, and that they should try to attend, if available.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

6 URGENT AND GENERAL EXCEPTION ITEMS

There were no urgent or general exception items.

7 CALLED-IN ITEMS

There were no called-in items.

8 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

No questions were submitted by Members.

9 COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26 (Q3 UPDATE)

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee provided comment on the Council Delivery Plan Quarter 2 monitoring report.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That Cabinet notes progress against Council projects and performance indicators, as set out in the Council Delivery Plan (Appendix A), and approves new milestones and changes to milestones.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION: The Council Delivery Plan (CDP) monitoring report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and Cabinet, with an opportunity to monitor progress against the key Council projects, and understand any new issues, risks, or opportunities.

10 DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

Councillor Val Bryant, as Leader of the Council, presented an Information Note entitled 'Digital Transformation Update', following which Members asked questions.

11 LEASE ON LETCHWORTH MULTI STOREY CAR PARK

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

- (1) That Cabinet approve the surrender of the lease for the Letchworth Multi Storey Car Park.
- (2) That, subject to recommendation 1 above, delegated authority is granted to the Director – Enterprise in consultation with the Executive Member for Enterprise to negotiate and approve the details of any surrender in line with the broad principles in this report.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS: After undertaking a review of the current operation and long-term needs of this car park, the surrender of this lease provides a positive outcome to the Council and the conditions that have been negotiated ensure there will be improvements to the car park which will benefit the public and economic vitality of the town centre.

12 COUNCILLOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROTOCOL

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Councillor Learning and Development Protocol, attached as Appendix A, be noted and endorsed with the following amendments:

Remove – *'The report will detail the completion rate of required, compulsory training by Councillors and will detail those individuals who have not completed the specified training by the required date.'*

Add – *'The report presented to Overview and Scrutiny will be a high-level, annual report which will detail the completion rate of required, compulsory training. The Standards Committee will consider individual accountability, particularly in circumstances where Councillors repeatedly fail to attend mandatory training as this is likely to fall below the threshold of expected behaviours of Councillors.'*

- (2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee scheduled an 'Annual Report on Councillor Training' onto their Work Programme for future years.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure that the Councillor Learning and Development Protocol is current, relevant and includes clear reporting on the completion rate of compulsory Member Training with accountability.

13 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT ('RIPA') ANNUAL REVIEW

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:

- (1) The Council is required to ensure it has an up-to-date, compliant and operationally usable RIPA framework that reflects current legislation and codes of practice and supports effective governance and assurance.
- (2) Approval of the updated policy reduces legal, regulatory and reputational risk, supports lawful enforcement activity where required, and strengthens transparency and democratic oversight.

14 SECTION 106 TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- (1) Noted the content of the report and its recommendations.
- (2) Provided comment on the proposed recommendations and confirmed which recommendations were to be recommended to Cabinet.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That recommendations 1-8, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be considered by Cabinet.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION: To enable the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to scrutinise the s106 Task and Finish Group report and to consider which recommendations should be considered by Cabinet.

15 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

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

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 effectively 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.