

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

**Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices, Gernon Road,
Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3JF
on Thursday, 29th January, 2026 at 7.30 pm**

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sean Prendergast, Lisa Nash, Clare Billing, Dominic Griffiths and Bryony May.

2 MINUTES - 4 DECEMBER 2025

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 4 December 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 reminded Members that the Council had declared both a Climate Emergency and an Ecological Emergency. These are serious decisions, and mean that, as this was an emergency, all of us, Officers and Members had that in mind as we carried out our various roles and tasks for the benefit of our District.
- (3) 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.
- (4) The Chair advised that the normal procedure rules in respect of debate and times to speak will apply.
- (5) The Chair advised that 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution did not apply to this meeting. A comfort break would be held at an appropriate time, should proceedings continue at length.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

6 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

The Chair advised that the items referred from the Standards Committee, the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and Cabinet would be taken with the respective items on the agenda.

7 SECOND QUARTER TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2025/26

RESOLVED: That Council noted the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of September 2025.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure the Council's continued compliance with CIPFA's code of practice on Treasury Management and the Local Government Act 2003 and that the Council manages its exposure to interest and capital risk.

8 UPDATED FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

RESOLVED: That Council agreed to the adoption of the Financial Regulations as per Appendix A.

REASON FOR DECISION: Due to the passage of time since the last major review of the Financial Regulations, it was considered appropriate to carry out a full review. The proposed changes are detailed in Appendix A alongside the reasons for them.

9 THE COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME (EFFECTIVENESS AND PROPOSALS FOR 2026/27)

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Amended the Council Tax discretionary policy to include the support provided to residents with a terminal illness, with the wording detailed in paragraph 8.17.
- (2) Approved changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme bands to reflect the impact of inflation and delegated a decision on those increases to the Director – Resources in consultation with the Executive Member for Resources.

REASON FOR DECISION: To respond to the request from Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and to consider changes for next year.

10 ELECTORAL SERVICES - SCALE OF FEES 2026/27

RESOLVED: That the Council agreed the Scale of Fees for 2026/27 as set out in Appendix A.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Council to remunerate the Returning Officer and the staff employed to carry out tasks during electoral events and to be open and transparent regarding other payments.

11 INTERIM REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICT, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

RESOLVED: That Council designated the Polling Districts and Polling Places as per the Returning Officer's Proposals attached as Appendix A to the submitted report, effective as of 2 March 2026.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (1) The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places, which had to be concluded by 31 January 2025.
- (2) Outside of compulsory reviews, the (Acting) Returning Officer (RO) for each authority is also encouraged to conduct regular assessments of existing arrangements. Following completion of the Community Governance Review (CGR) 2025 which resulted in changes to parish wards – specifically in Ickleford, Baldock, Royston, Clothall and Bygrave. Therefore, the polling arrangements were required to be considered.

12 APPOINTMENT OF REPLACEMENT RESERVE INDEPENDENT PERSON

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Appointed Joel Rogers as Reserve Independent Person;

such appointments/ confirmation of continuing appointments under 2.1 be for a fixed term of up to 4 years from 29 January 2026, based on 2-years, with delegation to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Standards Committee to extend for a further 2 years.

- (2) Delegated to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Standards Committee, the decision (if the current Independent Person decides within term to resign/ unable to act/ no longer qualifies), to appoint one of the existing Reserve Independent Persons as the Independent Person and/ or to undertake any further recruitment, as may be required.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure that the Council's Standards processes can operate in accordance with legislative requirements if one or both Independent Person and Reserve IPs are unable to advise on a matter. This should also allow for a degree of succession planning/ training whilst experienced persons are in place.

13 ADOPTION OF UPDATED GUIDANCE TO COUNCILLORS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED: That Council approved and adopted the updated guidance for Councillors.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (1) The Council's current guidance to Councillors on Outside Bodies was last updated in 2016.
- (2) A full review of the guidance to Councillors on outside bodies has been necessary to ensure:
- Councillors are aware of their liabilities based on the type of organisation which they are appointed to and the risks associated with these appointments both to the Councillor and the Council.
 - That the guidance available to Councillors aligns with the updated statutory position and also best practice.

14 ADOPTION OF THE MONITORING OFFICER PROTOCOL

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Approved and adopted the Monitoring Officer Protocol into the Constitution.
- (2) Noted the guidance attached at Appendix 2 titled: The Golden Triangle: Governance Roles and Responsibilities.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) The role of the Monitoring Officer has expanded over recent years. Monitoring Officers are also required to act as consultants to anyone within the Council on matters of legality, maladministration, and impropriety.
- (2) It is therefore considered that it would be good practice for the Council to introduce an appropriate Protocol.

- (3) In August 2025, Lawyers in Local Government (LLG), the Chartered Institute for Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society for Local Authority Chief Executives & Senior Managers (SOLACE) collaborated to produce a new guide: 'The Golden Triangle: Governance Roles and Responsibilities' (attached at Appendix 2). Members are invited to give consideration to this guidance to enhance their overall understanding of the interwoven nature of the roles of the three statutory officers within the Council.

15 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE, MEMBER, CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF THE FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE (AND NOTING THE APPOINTMENT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER OF COUNCIL, APPOINTMENT OF A NEW EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS)

RESOLVED:

- (1) That for the remainder of the 2025/26 civic year Council appointed Members to the following vacancies on the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee:
- Councillor Daniel Wright-Mason be appointed as a Member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee to the vacant seat on the Labour and Co-Operative Group.
 - Councillor David Barnard be appointed as a Substitute Member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee to the vacant seat on the Conservative Group.
- (2) That Councillor Vijaiya Poopalasingham be appointed as the Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee for the remainder of the 2025/26 civic year.
- (3) That Councillor Sarah Lucas be appointed as the Vice-Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee for the remainder of the 2025/26 civic year.
- (4) That Council noted the appointment of Councillor Sean Nolan as the Executive Member for Customer Experience and Deputy Leader for the remainder of the 2025/26 civic year.
- (5) That Council noted the appointment of Councillor Val Bryant as Member Representative and Councillor Sean Nolan as reserve Member Representative on the Outside Organisations 'Herts Leaders Group' and 'East of England Leaders Group'.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To comply with the provisions of 4.8.1 (a) (vii), (viii) and (ix) of the Council's Constitution following Councillor Sean Nolan resigning from the Committee / position of Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and appointment as the Deputy Leader / Executive Member for Customer Experience.

16 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

In accordance with Standing Order 4.8.11(b), two questions had been submitted by the required deadline set out in the Constitution.

(A) Support for Compassionate Neighbours Scheme and Other Schemes

Councillor Jon Clayden to Councillor Daniel Allen (Executive Member for Governance).

(B) Protection of the Romano-British small town and Late Iron Age settlement at Baldock

Councillor Sam Collins to Councillor Donna Wright (Executive Member for Place).

17 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

There were three motions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12.

(A) 'Grey Belt' Land and Planning Applications in North Herts

RESOLVED: That the Executive Member for Place:

- (1) Writes to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to express concern about the rise of speculative development in the countryside in North Herts.
- (2) Responds to the consultation on proposed changes to the NPPF by 10 March 2026, including the following points:
 - Green belt assessment should include villages.
 - Ensure grey belt developments occur only on previously developed land.
 - Ensure high-quality farmland and important wildlife habitats are protected from development.
 - Set ambitious and legally binding targets for genuinely affordable and socially rented homes in all new developments, with developers held to account if they are not delivered.

(B) HertsLynx Expansion

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Executive Member for Environment, Transport and Growth at Hertfordshire County Council, urging them, once funding is available, to expand the HertsLynx service to the communities within the Southern Rural area who don't currently enjoy the benefits of this innovative service, as well as to welcome the planned enhancements to the service currently experienced by those living elsewhere in North Herts.
- (2) Instruct Officers to work with Hertfordshire County Council in order to identify the best way North Hertfordshire District Council can encourage and support any proposals for the expansion and service enhancement of the HertsLynx, including investigating any potential financial support from S106 contributions that this Council could offer in order to deliver these ambitions.

(C) Action on Fly-tipping

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Use its powers given under the Environmental Protection Act (1990) to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for minor fly tipping offences. In line with the 2023 amendment increasing the maximum fine to £1000, higher penalties will be applied where appropriate.
- (2) Instruct Officers to work on a public information campaign to increase awareness of the SCRAP code, as well as the steps members of public should take to report fly-tipping to the Council.
- (3) Continue to work with the police to tackle the crime of fly-tipping by unauthorised commercial operators and pursue the objective of prosecuting all serious offenders.