

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



Publication Date

Our Ref Baldock and Villages Community Forum
8 December 2025

Contact. Community and Partnerships Team
Direct Dial. 01462 474207
Email. community@north-herts.gov.uk

To: Members of the Area Forum: Councillors Alistair Willoughby (Chair), Emma Rowe (Vice-Chair), Rhona Cameron, Steve Jarvis, Michael Muir, Tom Tyson and Stewart Willoughby

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

**MEETING OF THE BALDOCK AND VILLAGES COMMUNITY
FORUM**

to be held in the

**BALDOCK LIBRARY, SIMPSON DRIVE, BALDOCK.
HERTFORDSHIRE SG7 6DH**

On

MONDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 2025 AT 7.30 PM

Yours sincerely,

Isabelle Alajooz
Director – Governance

****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.	HOUSEKEEPING	
2.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
3.	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.	
4.	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - GRANT APPLICATIONS	(Pages 5 - 10)
5.	PRESENTATION - REVIVEL	
6.	PRESENTATION - NORTH HERTS COMMUNITY LOTTERY	
7.	PRESENTATION - DRAFT TOWN CENTRES STRATEGY	(Pages 11 - 24)
8.	INFORMATION NOTE ON THE PROPOSED PARKING TARIFF INCREASES 2026/27 To inform the Community Forum of the proposed tariff increases for 2026/27 initial option. For the Community Forum to provide any views on the initial proposed car parking tariff increases as set out in Appendix A.	(Pages 25 - 32)
9.	URBAN & CIVIC UPDATE	
10.	WARD MATTERS & OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS To receive any verbal reports from Members and members of the public regarding Ward matters and Outside Organisations.	
11.	COMMUNITY UPDATE To provide the Forum with an update to ensure Members are kept informed of the work of the Community and Partnerships Team.	(Pages 33 - 34)

12. **FUTURE COMMUNITY FORUMS**
To discuss topics for future meetings.

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SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION 2025/26

<u>Original Budget</u> <u>2025/26</u>	<u>Carry Forward Budget</u> <u>2024/25</u>	<u>Total Funding</u> <u>2025/26</u>	<u>Grants</u> <u>Allocated</u>	<u>Unallocated</u> <u>Budget</u>
£8,600	£362	£8,962	£2,995	£5,967

FUNDED PROJECTS

<u>Project</u>	<u>Forum Date</u>	<u>Grant Allocated</u>
First Garden Cities Homes - Venue and entertainment for the No Limits Social Club	18th June 2025	£1,475
Avenue Park Sports and Social Club - resolving issues with plumbing in WC	15th September 2025	£1,020
Weston Luncheon Club - hire of village hall to host the Luncheon Club	15th September 2025	£500
TOTAL BALDOCK AND DISTRICT		£2,995

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Appendix 2 – Resolve

=Document Control:

Version	Issue Date	Changes
1.0	NA	First Draft (BE)

Reference	6148			
Name of Organisation	Resolve			
Organisation Type	Registered Charity			
Ward	Various / The Application Baldock & Villages			
Project Type	Support for substance / alcohol misuse			
Green option considered?	N/A			
NHC Councillor involvement that may constitute a conflict of interest	None known			
Previous financial support within six years	Jan 2024: £915 from Royston, £500 from Southern Rural, £1.5k from Letchworth £1.5k from Baldock £1.5k from Hitchin March 2025: £1.5k from Hitchin Sept 2025: £1k from Royston £1.5k from Letchworth			
Documentation reviewed and approved*	Safeguarding	yes	Accounts	yes
	Demonstrates clear governance	yes		
Total applied for	£1,000	Total project cost	£174,813.00 (Running costs for one year)	

Officer Summary

[Resolve](#) support people dealing with alcohol/drug misuse or homelessness on their journey to recovery. Resolve's primary aim is to assist Service Users to move to a manageable, positive lifestyle, contributing to and enhancing the communities within which they live.

Funding is being requested towards the cost of a Key Worker who runs the Group Therapy and Key Work Sessions with Baldock clients.

Overall running costs for Resolve for one year is £174,813. £133,654 has been raised so far and they have an income generation plan to raise the remaining amount which includes various events such as a sponsored walk and sky dive, along with a refreshed brand and website in Autumn. Being awarded this funding also makes applications to other funders stronger, as it enables them to seek additional 'match funding'.

Currently there are no statutory or community drug and alcohol treatment day services in North Herts, north of Stevenage, other than Resolve. In 2024, the service helped residents

*Funding will only be released on receipt and approval of all supporting documentation

from: Letchworth 41; Royston & villages 7; Baldock and villages 15; Hitchin and surrounding area 28.

Analysis of their client data demonstrates significant outcomes in 2024/25: 96% reported improved psychological health, 77% improved physical health and 83% experienced enhanced overall quality of life. Additionally, 90% reported improved family relationships and 75% increased volunteering days.

Feedback from a small sample of clients 3 months after treatment demonstrates sustained progress with 70% reporting continued improvement in their quality of life and 50% had maintained abstinence.

Research by the Institute of Alcohol Studies in 2024 indicates that £27 billion is spent annually in England on the health and social harms of alcohol. According to the Black Independent Report into Drugs 2020, the total cost to society of illegal drugs is around £20 billion per year, but only £600 million is spent on treatment and prevention. This represents a huge social cost and demonstrates the value for money of Resolve.

They have also just received in September:

- Royston Community Forum, £1,000 towards the costs of a Key Worker
- Letchworth Community Forum, £1,500 towards the cost of a Key Worker

Appendix 2 – Rotary

=Document Control:

Version	Issue Date	Changes
1.0	NA	First Draft (BE)

Reference	6149			
Name of Organisation	The Rotary Club of Baldock			
Organisation Type	Registered Charity			
Ward	Baldock East & Baldock West			
Project Type	Improvement and updating of Baldock's Christmas light display			
Green option considered?	Upgrading to LED lighting is a move to an overall greener light display each year			
NHC Councillor involvement that may constitute a conflict of interest	Cllr Muir is a member and a Trustee of the Rotary Club of Baldock. The Monitoring Officer, Isabelle Alajooz has given written consent for the Grant to proceed provided Cllr Muir is not involved in the discussion or voting			
Previous financial support within six years	None			
Documentation reviewed and approved*	Safeguarding	Yes	Accounts	YES
	Demonstrates clear governance	YES		
Total applied for	£1,500	Total project cost	£4,088	
Officer Summary				
<p>The Rotary Club of Baldock have been putting up the Christmas Lights in Baldock for over 40 years.</p> <p>They have received feedback from the public that the light frames and strings they assemble on buildings in the High St and Whitehorse St are becoming dated.</p> <p>The Rotary Club of Baldock plan to introduce some new technology ideas. Which include a light net around the Church and projectors mounted high up on a private residence in the High Street to shine Christmassy symbols onto the square pavement area where the Christmas fair and tree switch on event take place.</p> <p>This project is taking place over two years. Some items will be purchased from the Rotary Club's own funds for the 2025 Christmas season to test the suitability before purchasing additional items after Christmas to hopefully obtain seasonal discounts and provide better value for money.</p>				

*Funding will only be released on receipt and approval of all supporting documentation

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Information Report for Noting and Discussion by the Community Forum

BALDOCK COMMUNITY FORUM 8 DECEMBER 2025
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DRAFT TOWN CENTRES STRATEGY FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: PLACE

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Community Forum of the draft Town Centres Strategy agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 19th November 2025 for public consultation in December and January.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The adopted Local Plan 2011-2031 stipulates that the Council “prepare and maintain up-to-date town centre strategies to support its strategic policy approach and / or adapt to change. These will be used to inform the approach to retail at the time of the early review of the Local Plan.”
- 2.2 As such, we are preparing an overarching Town Centres Strategy to
- provide additional guidance to current Local Plan Policies: ETC3: New retail, leisure, and other main town centre development, ETC4: Primary Shopping Frontages, ETC5: Secondary Shopping Frontages and SP4: Town Centres, Local Centres and Community Shops.
 - Set out the Council’s planning priorities for its town centres which can be given appropriate weight in relevant planning decisions; and
 - Act as a ‘bridging document’ pending the approved review of the Local Plan.

3.0 OVERVIEW OF THE CONSULTATION DRAFT STRATEGY

- 3.1 In summary, the draft Strategy:
- Incorporates advice on a range of changes in national policy and guidance and takes account of the updated evidence in the Town Centres and Retail Study (2024).
 - Addresses the relevant policy criteria identified in the adopted Local Plan by providing more robust guidance for developers and stakeholders that should be taken into consideration for any type of development or improvements within the town centres to promote their vitality and viability.
 - Is a planning-led document and should be read in conjunction with relevant policies in the adopted Local Plan whilst also taking into consideration other important Council Strategies and projects, such as the emerging Economic Development Strategy, the Churchgate project, the Council Plan and the

Council's Sustainability Strategy. All these documents together contribute towards the Council's overall strategy for its town centres.

- Has been prepared following similar principles to a Supplementary Planning Document including reference to relevant policies and evidence and stakeholder engagement in its preparation and will be subject to Cabinet approval and public consultation.
 - Provides the overall direction of travel with clear policy guidance and priorities for each town centre to guide developers when submitting planning applications and other town centre improvements. It is based on a sound evidence base with clear connections to published policy and supplementary planning documents, including other Council and external organisations documents. These together inform the Strategy and contribute towards meeting the Council's Plan and the Local Plan goals and vision.
- 3.2 The Strategy covers a range of town centre topics including land use capacities and distributions, mixed-use needs, vacancy reoccupation, public realm quality, heritage preservation, sustainable transport, connectivity, active travel, and community facilities and community well-being.
- 3.3 The draft Strategy covers all four town centres of the district: Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Royston, and Baldock, with considerations and implications for the surrounding context of each centre. It sets out the Council's vision for the town Centres across four generic themes: land use and retail, built environment, transport access and movement and communities.
- 3.4 The Strategy is delivery and development focussed. **Part 1** sets out the purpose of the Strategy providing a comprehensive overview and summary of the Council's evidence base for development in and affecting town centres. This section will assist landowners, architects, planners, and stakeholders bringing forward development proposals in understanding the relevant context for North Herts' town centres.
- 3.5 In order to bridge the gap between current and emerging Local Plans and to provide further details and guidance to support compliance with relevant town centre policies in the existing Local Plan, **Part 2** sets out a series of Guidance Notes. These Guidance Notes provide supplementary information to inform planning applications for development proposals affecting town centres.
- 3.6 Each of North Herts' town centres have specific strengths and weaknesses, offering their own unique offer and **Part 3** provides a vision statement, summary of key priorities for each centre including development opportunities for larger parcels of land and how these could be taken forward through partnership working. An extract from Part 3 of the Strategy incorporating Baldock at section 3D is attached at **Appendix 1** and should be read alongside other parts of the Strategy.
- 3.7 **Part 4** identifies opportunities to support the vitality and viability of the town centres and proposes further actions together with several funding and delivery options that the Council could consider in delivering the ambitions set out within the draft Strategy. The effective delivery of the Strategy will require the Council to work closely with several partners and stakeholders. It is proposed to gauge the support of key identified partners

and stakeholders through the formal consultation process of the Strategy. This will be important in terms of delivering the identified priorities for each of the town centres and the recommended further actions. This approach will help inform a clearer, action-oriented delivery plan to be included in the final version that can be subject to regular review and update.

3.8 The **appendices** to the draft Strategy comprise:

- Appendix 1: providing a full reference list and hyperlinks to the comprehensive evidence base at Part 1.
- Appendix 2: outlines the Town Centre Policy Direction recommending alterations to the adopted Local Plan given the significant changes in retail floorspace demand, changes in use classes and other policy recommendations identified in the 2024 Retail and Town Centre Study. This has informed the guidance principles outlines in Part 2 of the draft Strategy, but its recommendations will be formally considered and taken forward through the Local Plan review.
- Appendix 3: includes further background evidence notes for each of the town centres to be read alongside Part 3.

3.9 The full draft Strategy can be viewed on the Council's Website at [Town centres strategy | North Herts Council](#)

3.10 Appendix 1 of this Information note is an extract from Part 3 of the Strategy incorporating Baldock at section 3D. **It is to be noted that all parts of the Strategy should be read alongside the respective town centre section outlined in Part 3.**

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 The consultation period will run from **3 December 2025 to 30 January 2026**. This will be through an online consultation platform available on the Council's website.

4.2 We encourage, members, local businesses, organisations and residents to submit their comments via the Council's consultation platform 'Placemaker' or visit our [website](#) for more information. Request for any further information regarding the draft Strategy or the consultation period should be made through the following email address: towncentres@north-herts.go.uk

4.3 The draft Strategy will be a topic for discussion at all Town Community Forums through December affording wider public consultation in addition to consulting with key stakeholders, local businesses and members of the public registered on the Council's Local Plan data base.

4.4 A leaflet outlining the details of where to view the consultation documentation, together with a QR code link to the Council's website will be available as a handout at the Community Forum.

- 4.5 The consultation will be widely publicised on the Council's website and through various social media channels. Members will also have been informed through Members Information Service (MIS)

5.0 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Following the public consultation, any comments received will inform the final version of the Strategy which would then be re-presented to Cabinet for approval and adoption at an appropriate time in early 2026. The final version of the Strategy will be desktop published with graphics, photos and designed as a readable and well-presented document.
- 5.2 If / once adopted, the Town Centres Strategy would be a material planning consideration for relevant planning applications and would supersede the Council's previous town centre strategies for Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Royston prepared between 2004 and 2008.

6.0 APPENDICES

- 6.1 Appendix 1 - Extract from Part 3: Individual Town Centre Strategies - Section 3D Baldock (North Hertfordshire Town Centres Strategy draft for public consultation 21.10.2025)

CONTACT OFFICERS

Louise Symes, Strategic Infrastructure & Projects Manager (Tel) 01462 474359
louise.symes@north-herts.gov.uk

Michael Nartey, Senior Planning Officer michael.nartey@north-herts.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

- **Extract from Part 3: Individual Town Centre Strategies - Section 3D Baldock (North Hertfordshire Town Centres Strategy draft for public consultation 21.10.2025)**

Part 3: Individual Town Centre Strategies

Introduction

The following strategies for North Hertfordshire's individual towns focus on a concise series of key priorities for the town centres, that will work alongside the Guidance Notes set out in Part 2 to steer development and investment in and surrounding Hitchin, Letchworth, Royston and Baldock.

The priorities identified provide a focus and key actions for the Council, and work within the planning policy context of the Council's adopted Local Plan 2011-2031, ahead of the new Local Plan. Part 4 also sets out further District-wide initiatives for the Council to undertake alongside the key priorities identified. The Council may wish to revisit these sections and update the priorities in due course as actions are undertaken and new opportunities emerge.

The key priorities are informed by the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis for each town, based on the context and evidence summarised in Part 1 and Appendix 3 alongside consultations, ranging from residents to stakeholder workshops, undertaken during the Town Centre and Retail Study (2024), as well as subsequent meetings with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), landowners and stakeholders.

Consideration of the suitability of planning obligations will be particularly relevant where proposals impact town centres, either through trade diversion or any increases in the number of visitors or users of existing or proposed town centre services. Part 4 sets out how the Council may also seek to explore alternative funding options including national government funding opportunities, private investment, or direct funding allocations from District Council or County Council budgets to deliver identified priorities.

The strategies' key priorities identify opportunities to support vitality and viability of the town centres.

This strategy has been developed with a planning and delivery focus, setting out next steps and actions to bring forward the key priorities. One area that this can be achieved is through financial contributions from developments that would affect the town centres in the form of planning obligations. It is noted that Section 106 sets out the tests for requesting planning obligations¹, in accordance with Regulation 122 of The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010. It is not for strategies such as this, to specifically set out formulaic requests for such financial contributions, which would be subject to viability and costings via the Council or applicant.

¹ Planning obligations assist in mitigating the impact of unacceptable development to make it acceptable in planning terms. Planning obligations may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission if they meet the tests that are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. They must be:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- directly related to the development; and
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

3D: Baldock

Further information on Baldock town centre is found in Appendix 3D: Baldock Town Centre Evidence Notes.

Identity

Baldock is the smallest town centre in North Herts and is located to the east of Letchworth. The town centre provides a mix of independent specialist retailers, food and beverage outlets and service businesses alongside a historic open market that operates every Wednesday.

Baldock town centre has a strong local identity with a thriving cafe and pub culture, which takes full advantage of the wide High Street and its refined old buildings. Baldock's strength lies with its specialist, independent retailers and service business sector which make a valuable contribution to the local economy and community. Combined, the built environment and town identity provides a pleasant social centre for residents and visitors to interact.

The town centre has retained its traditional market town character with the historic core containing fine architecture from the medieval and Georgian periods. St. Mary's Church, a Grade I Listed Building, lies in the northern part of the town centre and is surrounded by historic and more recent residential areas. The town centre is designated a Conservation Area and contains a mix of uses with town houses, inns and commercial buildings.

Since the completion of the A505 bypass, opportunities exist to promote a more vibrant and sustainable town centre, a social centre for residents as identified in the North Hertfordshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Moreover, the Tesco Extra – located on the periphery of the town centre – attracts customers from neighbouring villages and towns, as well as locals but would benefit from better links to the town centre.

Looking forward, significant residential development surrounding Baldock town centre will likely increase town centre footfall and demand; the Growing Baldock scheme is planned to provide an additional 3,000 homes.

Vision

Baldock will maintain and maximise its town centre's strengths, namely, its historical market context, network of pedestrian paths, leafy green features, and local identity for cafe culture – by enhancing its attractive, safe, accessible, and lively town centre that incentivises investment for the local community and visitors to work, live and relax. Significant growth surrounding Baldock will provide a vibrant new resident and working population to visit and spend in the centre.

SWOT Analysis

Summary of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Strengths

1. Baldock is an attractive historic market town with period buildings and a pleasant environment. The centre has a wide and attractive tree lined High Street and a high-quality public realm.
2. The town centre is relatively compact, easy to navigate and generally accessible. The pavements are relatively wide and well maintained.
3. The shop vacancy rate is below the District and UK averages, and this has not increased significantly since 2015.
4. The centre has a strong presence of small independent outlets and primarily serves the day-to-day shopping and service needs of local residents.
5. There is adequate on-street parking provided within the centre and off-street parking at the Tesco Extra store and the Twitchell car park.
6. Baldock has a well-established evening economy with a wide selection of restaurants, pubs and bars for a centre of its size. The town centre has a higher-than-average proportion of food and beverage outlets.
7. Following the completion of the A505 Baldock bypass, the centre has benefited from investment and public realm improvements with recent updates including the replacement of street furniture along High Street and Whitehorse Street.
8. The town hosts a variety of regular community events that 'activate' the High Street ranging from Ecofest to Baldock Beer Festival, as well as the weekly outdoor market on Wednesdays.

Weaknesses

9. The large Tesco Extra on the edge of the town centre is a significant draw, but there is little evidence of a commensurate level of linked trips into the town centre. This is potentially exacerbated by the poor wayfinding and a lack of clear pedestrian links between Tesco Extra and the centre. As such, Baldock currently draws trade from a relatively small catchment area, similar to Royston, in contrast to Hitchin and Letchworth.
10. The public realm in the core Market Square is directly adjacent to parking bays, which may detract from the quality and experience of the public realm.
11. High volumes of traffic along Hitchin Street, Whitehorse Street, and High Street undermine the ambience of the shopping environment and inhibit pedestrian movements. Additionally, the pedestrian crossings of High Street, which is a busy road, are far apart (240m and 300m). Pedestrians are often observed walking on the road, especially near Simpson Drive.
12. The centre has no banks or building societies.

13. Shopping areas are fragmented with several breaks in the retail frontage by offices and dwellings located on the High Street.
14. Many of the shops are converted dwellings and some are also listed buildings, which can limit interest from potential occupiers that require a specific spatial format.
15. There are a limited range of retail shops, including national multiples. There are few comparison goods retailers within Baldock, well below the District and UK averages.
16. There is no co-ordinating body between local businesses and the District Council, and limited demand for a group (such as a BID) that would facilitate stakeholder engagement and local representation.

Opportunities

17. Shop rental rates are lower in Baldock than the other town centres in North Herts and more affordable for small independent traders.
18. The Local Plan (2011 – 2031) allocates 3,360 homes in Baldock. This could significantly increase the resident population supporting new and existing shops and services within the town centre.
19. The BA10 employment land allocation (19.6ha) could increase spending in the town. This will depend in part on improving cycling and walking connectivity between the industrial/employment land and the town centre.
20. The Growing Baldock development will provide a greater critical mass of businesses and commercial activity within the town, attracting a wider variety of retail and leisure operators.
21. If more of the customers drawn to the Tesco Extra, some of whom are from outside the district, could be attracted to other shops and services in the town centre, that would boost the vitality and viability of the town centre. This depends in part on improving pedestrian routes and signage through the memorial gardens from Tesco to the High Street.
22. The transport strategy for Growing Baldock redirects through traffic away from the centre to A505/A1(M)/Letchworth Gate. This provides an opportunity to address east-to-west traffic on Hitchin Road/Whitehorse Road that detract from the centre, as well as to provide an additional pedestrian crossing on High Street (as recommended by the LCWIP).
23. Baldock town centre is dominated by independent traders, which could benefit from planning policy support for growth and opportunities for diversification through potential amalgamation, subdivision and investment in existing units.

Threats

24. Since 2015, the number of comparison goods shops has decreased significantly. The continuation of this trend could undermine the centre's attraction as a shopping, food and beverage destination.
25. Whilst Growing Baldock will increase the resident population within the town's catchment, the edge of centre Tesco Extra store provides an extensive range of food and

non-food goods, which may directly attract the new spending, reducing the potential spending available to new and existing facilities in the town centre.

26. The increase in spending and activity generated by the Growing Baldock development may be lost by the limited opportunities/vacant units for existing businesses to expand or relocate within the town centre.
27. Failure to appropriately manage, monitor and influence the Growing Baldock development may result in an adverse impact on the town centre in terms of loss of vitality or footfall, increased traffic etc. if the emerging residents and workers are drawn to alternative destinations.

Key Priorities – Baldock Town Centre

Theme	Priority areas	Actions / Planning considerations	Responsibility
<p>A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use and retail • Built environment 	<p>Growth and evolution of independent and speciality operators, protecting their contribution to Baldock's character</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the Council's <i>development management role</i> in the planning system, the Council will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – recognise the benefits of the viability of existing operators that contribute to the vitality and viability of the centre through amalgamation and subdivision of units, and investment in existing town centre facilities as a material benefit to be weighed against limited loss of floorspace or less than substantial harm to heritage assets in the determination of planning applications. – give positive weight to new uses and formats (including non-main town centre uses) where it can be demonstrated that they would contribute to the character of the street (to be weighed against any loss of main town centre uses and floorspace). 	<p>NHDC (as Local Planning Authority (LPA) development management)</p> <p>Existing and future operators</p> <p>Landowners</p> <p>Developers</p>
<p>B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built environment • Transport, access and movement 	<p>Connectivity and wayfinding as the wider centre grows</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deliver a joint public realm, connectivity and wayfinding strategy taking forward the recommendations of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). For Baldock: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Growing Baldock residential-led development should support new residents access to the town centre via cycling 	<p>NHDC</p> <p>HCC</p> <p>Future development partners</p>

		<p>and pedestrian routes, car, and public transport in accordance with the approved masterplan. This will include the redesign of Station Road / Icknield Way junction and additional cycle routes, and overall improvements to Whitehorse Street, amongst others;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – links to new employment floorspace at Local Plan Allocation Policy BA10 including development of a new access from Royston Road alongside additional signage and access routes to draw workers into the town centre; and – improvements to pedestrian links between Tesco Extra and Baldock Town Centre to incentivise and support linked trips. 	
<p>C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use and retail • Community 	<p>Monitoring of town centre service provision and infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will request funding from development such as Growing Baldock to support the Council’s monitoring of the mix of uses and services within and surrounding Baldock Town Centre including main town centre uses, community administrative and medical facilities in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – identify and address any deficiencies through the loss of existing services and/or capacity as a direct result of the planned increases in residential population, visitors and employees; and – build-up an evidence base to support intervention through additional allocations, 	<p>NHDC</p> <p>Future development partners</p>

		funding bids, or marketing initiatives.	
D <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use and retail 	Capture benefits of planned growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the Council's <i>development management role</i> in the planning system, the Council will require developments in and surrounding the town centre, such as Growing Baldock to enter into planning obligations for financial contributions to deliver the actions and town centre priorities (as well as those within the approved masterplan, LCWIP amongst others) to mitigate the impact of otherwise unacceptable developments to make them acceptable in planning terms. 	NHDC (as Local Planning Authority (LPA) development management) Future development partners

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Information Report for Noting by Community Forum

BALDOCK COMMUNITY FORUM 8 DECEMBER 2025
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PROPOSED PARKING TARIFF INCREASES FOR 2026/27 INITIAL OPTION

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: PLACE

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Community Forum of the proposed tariff increases for 2026/27 to be presented to Cabinet in February 2026.
- 1.2 For the Community Forum to provide any views on the initial proposed car parking tariff increases as set out at Appendix A

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council's approved Medium-Term Financial Strategy sets an annual budget assumption that the Council would increase parking fees and charges annually by 2%. The last tariff increases were approved by Cabinet in March 2025 and were implemented on 30 June in the 4 towns and 11 July 2025 in Knebworth.
- 2.2 The Executive Member for Place, Cllr Donna Wright, has requested that the Community Forums and key organisations (i.e. the Knebworth Parish Council, the Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston BIDs and the Royston Town Council), are informed and invited to provide any views if they wish on the proposed tariff increases in advance of a report being taken to Cabinet in February 2026 for their decision on the final proposed tariff increases for 2026/27. These changes are part of the Council's efforts to ensure fair and sustainable parking fees across the district.

3.0 TARIFF PROPOSALS FOR 2026/27

- 3.1 The approach adopted by the Council is to be consistent across all car parks and harmonize tariffs where possible within each town whilst respecting their separate identities.
- 3.2 The aim is to set car parking tariffs that support the achievement of modal shift away from private car use in seeking to reduce carbon emissions and supporting more sustainable initiatives as set out in the Council's Climate Change Strategy (2022-2027).
- 3.3 The Executive Member and the Executive Member for Finance have been involved in discussions and considered various options for the selection of the proposed tariff increases for 2025/26. The following rationale has been applied when considering the proposed tariff increases for next financial year:
 - To apply a 2% inflationary increase to all tariffs across all Council operated car parks in Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth, Royston and Knebworth rounded up to the

nearest 10p except for the free 0-2 hour tariff at the Norton Common car parks in Letchworth to facilitate users of the common and being out of centre car parks. This 2% increase is below the general level of inflation, as the Council is conscious of the increase in the cost of living and seeks to support local businesses and visitors to its town centres and to Knebworth where possible.

- To retain the off-peak (after 3pm) incentives in Hitchin, Letchworth, and Royston to support the vitality of the town centers, with a flat rate tariff whereby people can choose to stay for 1,2 or 3 hours.
- 3.4 This means that the 2, 3 and 4hour + tariffs in some car parks across the district will increase by 10p and the 1-hour tariffs and post 3pm flat rate tariffs in Hitchin and Letchworth will remain unaltered. Included in this option is a proposal to increase the flat rate tariff in Royston from 50p to £1.00.
- 3.5 These proposals do not include any increase in the long stay tariffs at the Twitchell Car Park in Baldock. (See **Table 3** at Appendix A)
- 3.6 At present, the Royston BID and Royston Town Council (RTC) subsidises the post 3pm 50p tariff as free parking , and we (officers and the Exec Member) are in on-going discussion with Royston BID and RTC regarding this initial proposed 'post 3pm' increase in considering other possible options in Royston car parks which will seek to achieve the Council's overall 2% inflationary increase and the any further subsidy options for 2026/27. This could result in other tariff bands increasing by 10p in the Royston car parks as a means of reducing the proposed 'post 3pm' £1.00 flat rate tariff.
- 3.7 It is also proposed to increase Season Tickets in the long stay car parks in Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston and Business permits in Knebworth car park for 2026/27 by 2%.
- 3.8 These proposals are shown in the Tables 1 – 8 at Appendix A (see copy attached)

4.0 YOUR VIEWS

- 4.1 We are inviting the Community Forums to share their thoughts and submit their views before the Council's Cabinet makes a final decision in February 2026. All views will be summarised in the Officers' report presented to Cabinet. Any views need to be submitted by 9th January 2026.

5.0 ATTACHMENTS

- 5.1 Appendix A - Proposed Parking Tariff Increases for 2026/27 (Initial Option 4 Nov 2025)

CONTACT OFFICERS

Louise Symes, Strategic Infrastructure & Projects Manager (Tel) 01462 474359
louise.symes@north-herts.gov.uk

Appendix A: Proposed Parking Tariff Increases for 2026/27
(Initial Option 4 Nov 2025)

NOTE: Proposed Tariff band increases highlighted and shown in ***bold italics***.

TABLE 1: HITCHIN CAR PARKS

Car Park		Duration / hours	Current Tariff 2025/26	Proposed Tariff 2026/27
Bancroft (long stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.40	£1.40
		2	£2.50	£2.60
		3	£3.20	£3.30
		All Day	£5.30	£5.40
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.50	£1.50
		2	£1.50	£1.50
		3	£1.50	£1.50
Biggin Lane (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.60	£1.60
		2	£2.70	£2.80
		3	£4.30	£4.40
		4	£5.80	£5.90
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.70	£1.70
		2	£1.70	£1.70
		3	£1.70	£1.70
Christchurch (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.60	£1.60
		2	£2.70	£2.80
		3	£4.30	£4.40
		4	£5.80	£5.90
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.70	£1.70
		2	£1.70	£1.70
		3	£1.70	£1.70
Lairage MSCP (long stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.40	£1.40
		2	£1.40	£1.40
		3	£2.40	£2.40
		All Day	£4.70	£4.80
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.50	£1.50
		2	£1.50	£1.50
		3	£1.50	£1.50

Car Park		Duration / hours	Current Tariff 2025/26	Proposed Tariff 2026/27
Portmill East (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.60	£1.60
		2	£2.70	£2.80
		3	£4.30	£4.40
		4	£5.80	£5.90
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.70	£1.70
		2	£1.70	£1.70
		3	£1.70	£1.70
Portmill West (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.60	£1.60
		2	£2.70	£2.80
		3	£4.30	£4.40
		4	£5.80	£5.90
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.70	£1.70
		2	£1.70	£1.70
		3	£1.70	£1.70
St Mary's Square (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.60	£1.60
		2	£2.70	£2.80
		3	£4.30	£4.40
		4	£5.80	£5.90
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.70	£1.70
		2	£1.70	£1.70
		3	£1.70	£1.70
Woodside (long stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.40	£1.40
		2	£2.50	£2.60
		3	£3.20	£3.30
		All Day	£5.30	£5.40
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.50	£1.50
		2	£1.50	£1.50
		3	£1.50	£1.50

TABLE 2: LETCHWORTH CAR PARKS

Car Park		Duration / hours	Current Tariff 2025/26	Proposed Tariff 2026/27
Hillshott (long stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.00	£1.00
		2	£1.70	£1.70
		3	£2.60	£2.70
		All Day	£5.10	£5.20
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.10	£1.10
		2	£1.10	£1.10
		3	£1.10	£1.10
LMSCP Short Stay	Standard Tariff	1	£1.00	£1.00
		2	£1.70	£1.70
		3	£2.60	£2.70
		4	£4.70	£4.80
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.10	£1.10
		2	£1.10	£1.10
		3	£1.10	£1.10
		4	£1.10	£1.10
LMSCP Long Stay	Standard Tariff	1	£1.00	£1.00
		2	£1.70	£1.70
		3	£2.60	£2.70
		All Day	£5.10	£5.20
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.10	£1.10
		2	£1.10	£1.10
		3	£1.10	£1.10
Letchworth Town Hall (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.40	£1.40
		2	£2.10	£2.10
		3	£3.40	£3.50
		4	£5.10	£5.20
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.50	£1.50
		2	£1.50	£1.50
		3	£1.50	£1.50
		4	£1.50	£1.50

Car Park		Duration / hours	Current Tariff 2025/26	Proposed Tariff 2026/27
Norton Common Bowling Club	Standard Tariff	2	£0.00	£0.00
		4	£1.90	£1.90
		Max stay 5	£5.00	£5.10
Norton Common Swimming Pool	Standard Tariff	2	£0.00	£0.00
		4	£1.90	£1.90
		Max stay 5	£5.00	£5.10

TABLE 3: BALDOCK CAR PARK

Car Park		Duration / hours	Current Tariff 2025/26	Proposed Tariff 2026/27
The Twitchell (long stay)	Standard Tariff	3	£1.40	£1.40
		All Day	£1.80	£1.80

TABLE 4: KNEBWORTH CAR PARK

Car Park		Duration / hours	Current Tariff 2025/26	Proposed Tariff 2026/27
St Martin's Road (short stay except business permit holders)	Standard Tariff	30 Mins	£0.50	£0.50
		1	£0.80	£0.80
		2	£1.60	£1.60
		3	£2.20	£2.20
		Max Stay 4	£4.40	£4.50

TABLE 5: ROYSTON CAR PARKS

Car Park		Duration / hours	Current Tariff 2025/26	Proposed Tariff 2026/27
Angel Pavement (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£0.90	£0.90
		2	£1.70	£1.70
		3	£4.00	£4.10
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£0.50	£1.00
		2	£0.50	£1.00
		3	£0.50	£1.00
Civic Centre (long stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£0.90	£0.90
		2	£1.00	£1.00
		3	£1.30	£1.30
		All Day	£3.60	£3.70
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£0.50	£1.00
		2	£0.50	£1.00
		3	£0.50	£1.00
Market Place (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£0.90	£0.90
		2	£1.70	£1.70
		3	£4.00	£4.10
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£0.50	£1.00
		2	£0.50	£1.00
		3	£0.50	£1.00
Priory Gardens (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£0.90	£0.90
		2	£1.70	£1.70
		3	£4.00	£4.10
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£0.50	£1.00
		2	£0.50	£1.00
		3	£0.50	£1.00
The Warren (long stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£0.90	£0.90
		2	£1.50	£1.50
		3	£2.00	£2.00
		All Day	£4.10	£4.20
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£0.50	£1.00
		2	£0.50	£1.00
		3	£0.50	£1.00

TABLE 6: ROYSTON ON-STREET PARKING CHARGES

Car Park		Duration / hours	Current Tariff 2025/26	Proposed Tariff 2026/27
Market Hill (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£0.90	£0.90
		2	£1.10	£1.10
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£0.50	£1.00
		2	£0.50	£1.00
		3	£0.50	£1.00

TABLE 7: SEASON TICKETS IN LONG STAY CAR PARKS

All Long Stay Car Parks (Hitchin, Letchworth & Royston)	Current Prices 2025/26	Proposed increased Prices 2026/27
1 month	£87.00	£89.00
3 months	£215.00	£219.00
6 months	£399.00	£407.00
12 months	£740.00	£755.00

TABLE 8: BUSINESS PERMITS – ST. MARTINS ROAD CAR PARK

St. Martins Road Car Park, Knebworth	Current Prices 2025/26	Proposed increased Prices 2026/27
Six months	£156.00	£159.00
Twelve months	£260.00	£265.00

Districtwide Community Updates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Community Grants Application platform was launched on 17th November. • The Community Partnerships Team launched the North Herts Heroes Awards on 21st November, in which we aim to celebrate people in the local community. There are five categories for nominations, please nominate anyone who you think deserves to be recognised. Nominations close on Sunday 4 January. The winners will be celebrated at an awards event on Thursday 19th March 2026. Information on how to nominate will be available on the North Herts Heroes web page • The Community Partnerships team worked with the Royal British Legion and Letchworth BID to deliver the Letchworth Remembrance Day parade on 9 November 2025. • To commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day, a video will be shared via North Herts Council socials on 27 January. • We continue to co-ordinate various local and district wide Network Groups including Youth Action, Food Provision, Arts and Culture and the Green and Growing Group. • We continue to facilitate NHC Councillors' Community Surgeries. • Sharing and disseminating information on social media and to mailing lists, keeping in touch with the community, voluntary, statutory, and non-statutory agencies.
Area Community Updates
<p>The Community Partnerships Officer Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am still looking into the Baldock & Villages community networking event along the lines of the Community Breakfast in Royston. • I have taken over the support role for the North Herts Wellbeing Network. • I have investigated and to a certain degree resolved the issue with the Clothall Common Noticeboard. • I attended the Hertfordshire Community Energy Conference. Cllr A Willoughby has approved inviting them to present at a future Community Forum. • I continue to attend as many Parish Council meetings as I can. • On World Peace Day, I attended the Peace Pole Ceremony in the Rotary Woods at Ivel Springs. • I attended the Herts County Council, Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise Conference which was an excellent networking opportunity, and I learnt about an exciting new, first-of-its-kind, digital tool called Our Social Impact, launched on 20th October by the University of Hertfordshire. • Confirmation to Councillors that they are very welcome to arrange any meetings or ward walks with the Community Partnerships Officer.

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