

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



16 September 2025

Our Ref Letchworth Community Forum 24
September 2025
Contact. Community and Partnerships Team
Direct Dial. 01462 474274
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To: Members of the Area Forum: Councillors Sadie Billing (Chair), Tamsin Thomas (Vice-Chair), Amy Allen, Daniel Allen, Tina Bhartwas, David Chalmers, Mick Debenham, Emma Fernandes, Ian Mantle, Sean Nolan, Sean Prendergast and Claire Winchester

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

MEETING OF THE LETCHWORTH COMMUNITY FORUM

to be held in the

**LETCHWORTH LIBRARY, BROADWAY, LETCHWORTH
GARDEN CITY, SG6 3PF**

On

WEDNESDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER, 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.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2.	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.	
3.	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - GRANT APPLICATION To consider a community grant application for recommendation to the Executive Member for Governance.	(Pages 5 - 12)
4.	PRESENTATION - LETCHWORTH DESIGN PRINCIPLES Presentation from Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation on the Design Principles, followed by Q&A. Further details on design principles are available here Forms & Guides - Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation	
5.	LEITCHWORTH BID TOWN CENTRE UPDATE To receive a verbal update from the Letchworth BID on their work in Letchworth town centre.	
6.	PRESENTATION - LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION Presentation and Q&A on Local Government Reorganisation. Information on the Local Government Reorganisation can be found in the links below. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help shape Hertfordshire's future - have your say on changes to local government North Herts Council• Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation North Herts Council	(Pages 13 - 14)
7.	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 15 - 16)

8. WARD MATTERS & OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

To receive any verbal reports from Members and questions from members of the public regarding Ward matters and Outside Organisations.

9. FUTURE COMMUNITY FORUMS

To discuss topics for future meetings.

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REPORT (FOR RECOMMENDATION & NOTING BY COMMUNITY FORUM)

LETCHWORTH COMMUNITY FORUM
DATE 24 SEPTEMBER 2025

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: GOVERNANCE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Community Forum on the current expenditure and balances of the Community Grant budget.
- 1.2 To bring to the Forum's attention details of recent requests received for Community grant funding, made by community groups and local organisations.
- 1.3 To enable Forum Members to make recommendations to the Executive Member for Governance (formally Community & Partnerships), the Leader on grant applications.
- 1.4 To advise the Forum of the activities and schemes with which Community & Partnerships officers have been involved in and some important community-based activities that will take place during the next few months.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT THE COMMUNITY FORUM:

- 2.1 Considers and notes the information within this report.
- 2.2 Makes recommendations to the Executive Member for Governance on the grant applications detailed below.
- 2.3 Resolve - **£1,500** towards the costs of Key Worker staff members who run the Group Therapy and Key Work Sessions.

3. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Community Grant budget for Letchworth Community Forum 2025/26 is **£18,900**.
- 3.2 Community grant payments totalling **£3,098** have been made to date, as itemised in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The remaining budget available for community grants for the Letchworth area for 2025/26 therefore stands at **£15,802**.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Following the decision of Full Council on 18 April 2023, a Community Forum shall consider applications for community grants in its area and make recommendations to the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships (now Governance) on them.

The Executive Member is the Leader of the Council and has delegated authority to make these Executive decisions under section 14.6.9(b)(iii)A of the constitution, in consultation with the Service Director: Governance. That decision will be subject to a 5 clear working day call-in period, following publication in the Members Information Service (MIS) and on the Council's website.

- 4.2 The Terms of Reference of the Community Forum can be found in Section 9 of the constitution which states that the forum will *'consider and act as an advisory body to the relevant Executive Member responsible for grants who approves these (in consultation with the relevant Director)'*.
- 4.3 Other issues raised in this report are for information and noting and therefore no direct legal implications arise.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As outlined in Appendix 1 and under item 3.3 the Community Grant budget available is **£15,802**.
- 5.2 The total amount of funding requested for this meeting is **£1,500**.
- 5.3 If the application outlined in Appendix 2 is recommended by the Forum and subsequently approved by the Executive Member for Governance there would be **£14,302** available for Community Grants for the remainder of the 2025-2026 financial year.

6. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Ideagen Risk Management, the Council's performance and risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues. Whenever a request for grant funding for equipment is received, the recipient of the funding will be advised to obtain insurance for the item to avoid a repeat request for funding in the event of the equipment being stolen or damaged. There are no pertinent risk implications for the Authority associated with any items within this report.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 Community Grant funds are awarded to community groups that clearly demonstrate positive impact on the community and wider environment. The projects outlined in this report seek to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

8. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Social Value Act and "go local" policy do not apply to the matters contained within this report, as there are no recommendations on procurement.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

10. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The activities of the Community & Partnerships team are covered by existing budgets.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Terms of Reference for Community Forums, Section 9 of the Council Constitution updated May 2024.
- 11.2 Community Grants Criteria Policy March 2025.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix 1. Letchworth Grant Budget 25-26
- 12.2 Appendix 2. Resolve
- 12.3 Appendix 3. Community Updates

13. CONTACT OFFICERS

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LETCHWORTH COMMUNITY FORUM

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 Allocated</u>	<u>Unallocated</u> <u>Budget</u>
£18,900		£18,900	£3,098	£15,802

FUNDED PROJECTS

<u>Project</u>	<u>Forum Date</u>	<u>Grant Allocated</u>
Saracens Sport Foundation - dance project for women over 50 (at Jackmans Community Centre)	25th July 2025	£1,508
Letchworth Educational Settlement - setting up sewing starter course	25th July 2025	£1,590
TOTAL LETCHWORTH COMMUNITY FORUM		£3,098

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Appendix 2: Resolve

=Document Control:

Version	Issue Date	Changes
1.0	NA	First Draft (BE)

Reference	6138			
Name of Organisation	Resolve			
Organisation Type	Registered Charity			
Ward	Various			
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	<p>In January 2024 the below was awarded towards running costs:</p> <p>£1,500 Hitchin Area Forum £1,500 Baldock Area Forum £1,500 Letchworth Area Forum £915 Royston Area Forum £500 Southern Rural Area Forum</p> <p>March 2025 £1,500 Hitchin Community Forum towards costs of Key Worker</p> <p>In October 2019 the Letchworth Committee awarded £5,000 towards setting up utilities in the new premises in Letchworth.</p>			
Documentation reviewed and approved*	Safeguarding	Yes	Accounts	Yes
	Demonstrates clear governance	Yes		
Total applied for	£1,500	Total project cost	£174,813 (Running costs for one year)	
Officer Summary				
<p>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.</p> <p>Funding is being requested towards the cost of a Key Worker who runs the Group Therapy and Key Work Sessions with Letchworth clients.</p> <p>Overall running costs for Resolve for one year is £174,813. £131,154 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'.</p> <p>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 from: Letchworth 41; Royston & villages 7; Baldock and villages 15; Hitchin and surrounding area 28.</p>				

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

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 applied to:

- Royston Community Forum for £1,000 towards the costs of a Key Worker

All Forums, September 2025: Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Update

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 The government's requirement for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) has now reached an important stage in Hertfordshire, as all 11 councils begin to engage with residents, businesses, community groups and other stakeholders on principles and priorities, as well as potential options for future council arrangements.
- 1.2 Engagement events are being held across Hertfordshire throughout September, including the community forums in North Herts. A survey is now open to allow residents to give their views on how local government in Hertfordshire should be organised.

2. **Overview:**

- 2.1 The government's Devolution White Paper requires all local authorities in areas where there are currently two tiers of local government, to develop proposals for reorganisation. These proposals should seek to establish a single tier of local government. District and Borough Councils across Hertfordshire, along with the County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner, are working closely together to consider future arrangements that will best meet the needs of our communities.
- 2.2 This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to help shape how local services, from bins and planning to libraries and social care, are delivered in Hertfordshire. Councils want to protect what already works well while improving the things that could be better. By taking part, residents and organisations can ensure their voices are heard and any future changes deliver long-term benefits to our communities.
- 2.3 The objectives for LGR are:
 - Simplified, more efficient and more resilient council structures
 - More consistent service access
 - Greater transparency in decision-making
 - A stronger local voice in how councils operate

3. **Steps to date:**

- 3.1 A single unitary council for the whole of Hertfordshire has been ruled out. With a population of 1.2 million, Hertfordshire is too big to be viable as just one council area. It would be larger

than any local authority in the UK and decision-making would become too far removed from our communities. Instead, councils are working together to explore options that are more locally focused and responsive, including multiple unitary authorities that better reflect the identity of different parts of our county.

- 3.2 An initial round of engagement took place in July with several key strategic partners of the council, including town business improvement districts (BIDs). This initial phase focussed on the principles and opportunities behind potential reorganisation options, and aimed to build understanding of the LGR process.

4. Information to note

- 4.1 Hertfordshire's 11 councils have developed three potential options for how local government could be structured in the future. Details for each of the three options can be seen on the display boards at the Community Forum.
- 4.2 A survey is now available online for residents to have their say on the proposals. It's the easiest way to give feedback. The link to the survey is on the display boards.
- 4.3 A website has also launched which has more information about the three options for unitary councils and updates related to LGR in Hertfordshire. The link to the survey is also there. The North Herts Council website also has more information and a link to the site.

5. Next steps:

- 5.1 Feedback from this phase of engagement will be collated and used to shape a final submission for LGR in Hertfordshire. The deadline for submissions is 28 November 2025.
- 5.2 An Extraordinary Council meeting will take place on 13 November 2025 to consider the submission, and a final decision will be made at a Cabinet meeting on 19 November 2025. Other Herts local authorities will also make a final decision that week.
- 5.3 A decision on which proposal to take forward is expected in 2026. It is anticipated that elections to the new unitary authorities will take place in May 2027, and Vesting Day (the date the new councils officially take over from the current councils) will be in 2028.

Note prepared by: Gavin Midgley, Senior Digital Communications Officer and Christine Crofts, Communications Manager

Districtwide Community Updates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team members are presenting and holding a stall at the North Herts & Stevenage Centre for Voluntary Service's Funding Summit on 18th September. Register at North Herts & Stevenage Centre for Voluntary Services GoVolHerts • Co-ordinating various local and district wide Network Groups including Youth Action, Food Provision, Arts and Culture and Green and Growing Group. • Coordinating voluntary support response to Asylum Seekers based in North Herts. • Continuing 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"> • Attended community events which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open Day at the Jackmans Community Centre - Community Energy England held a local workshop at Jackmans Community Centre as they are investigating a community owned, low carbon heat network in the Jackmans area. - Broadway Gallery Exhibition opening, the exhibition is on until 18 October Leaving Were The Ones Who Could Not Stay - Broadway Gallery, Letchworth • Met with the Head of Arts, Culture and Heritage at the Letchworth Heritage Foundation to explore ways of working together to support the networking of arts and culture groups in the town. • Met with All Saints Church in Willian. After recent changes to the interior of the Church where it now has a kitchen and toilet, they support the community with a Food Hub, Grief Café and host a Wellbeing Hub run by Garden House Hospice - Services & Events - All Saints, Willian They are now seeking funding for Masonry repairs. • A reminder to Councillors that they are very welcome to arrange any meetings or ward walks with the Community Partnerships Officer.

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