

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



16 September 2025

Our Ref Royston and Villages Community Forum
 24 September 2025
Contact. Community and Partnerships Team
Direct Dial. 01462 474230
Email. community@north-herts.gov.uk

To: Members of the Area Forum: Councillors Tim Johnson (Chair), Bryony May (Vice-Chair), Matt Barnes, Ruth Brown, Cathy Brownjohn, Ruth Clifton, Sarah Lucas and Martin Prescott

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

MEETING OF THE ROYSTON AND VILLAGES COMMUNITY
FORUM

to be held in the

HARDWICKE HALL, ROYSTON TOWN HALL, SG8 7DA

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 APPLICATIONS To consider community grant applications for recommendation to the Executive Member for Governance.	(Pages 5 - 8)
4.	PRESENTATION - BURLOES DEVELOPMENT Presentation by Ian Keith (Vistry) and David Fletcher (Ceres Property), regarding planning application 24/01013/HYA .	
5.	PRESENTATION - LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION Presentation and Q&A on Local Government Reorganisation, by Cllr Daniel Allen, Leader of the Council. 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 9 - 10)
6.	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 11 - 12)
7.	ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL Presentation by Mayor Luke Haugh.	
8.	HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL	

Presentation by the Leader of Hertfordshire County Council, Cllr Steve Jarvis.

9. WARD MATTERS & OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

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

10. OPEN DISCUSSION

To open the floor to questions and discussion relevant to Royston and the surrounding villages.

11. FUTURE AREA FORUMS

To discuss topics for future meetings.

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REPORT (FOR RECOMMENDATION & NOTING BY COMMUNITY FORUM)

ROYSTON & VILLAGES COMMUNITY FORUM 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.

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 Barkway Parish Council - **£1,350** towards display units for The Reading Room.
- 2.4 Barley Community Garden - **£1,043** towards standing veg trugs and gardening tools.
- 2.5 Resolve - **£1,000** towards the costs of key worker staff members who run Group Therapy and Key Work sessions.

3. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Community Grant budget for Royston & villages Community Forum 2025/26 is **£10,825**.
- 3.2 Community grant payments totalling **£4,503** have been made to date, as itemised in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The remaining community grants budget available for Royston and villages in 2025/26 stands at **£6,322**.

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 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 **£6,322**.
- 5.2 The total amount of funding requested for this meeting is **£3,393**.
- 5.3 If the application outlined in Appendices 2-4 are recommended by the Forum and subsequently approved by the Executive Member for Governance there would be **£2,929** available for Community Grants for the remainder of the 2025-2026 financial year.
- 5.4 Precepting authorities have the ability to raise additional funds by raising their precept.

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.
- 7.3 The grant application in 2.4 requests funds towards raised beds which would assist those with mobility issues, therefore making Barley Community Garden more accessible for other members of the community.

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. Royston & villages Community Grant Budget 2526
- 12.2 Appendix 2. Barkway Parish Council
- 12.3 Appendix 3. Barley Community Garden
- 12.4 Appendix 4. Resolve

13. CONTACT OFFICERS

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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"> • The team presented and held a stall at the North Herts & Stevenage Centre for Voluntary Service's Funding Summit. • 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"> • Met with a group who are interested in the format of the Royston Community Breakfast for Hitchin. • Visited various groups in the community including Barley Community Garden, Royston Coombes Association, Royston Day Centre and Parkinsons Royston. • Continuing to attend Parish Council meetings to make closer links with the parishes and local groups. • 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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