NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

11 September 2026

Our Ref Cabinet Tuesday, 22 September 2026
Contact. Committee Services
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To: Members of the Cabinet:

Executive Members Councillors: Val Bryant (Chair), Sean Nolan (Vice Chair), Ian Albert, Amy Allen, Daniel Allen, Mick Debenham, Tamsin Thomas, Laura Williams and Donna Wright.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

MEETING OF THE CABINET

to be held in the

COUNCIL CHAMBER - DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH, SG6 3JF

on

TUESDAY, 22ND SEPTEMBER, 2026 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. MINUTES - 16 JUNE 2026 (Pages 7 - 28)

To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 16 June 2026.

3. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Members should notify the Chair of other business which they wish to be discussed at the end of either Part I or Part II business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances which they consider justify the business being considered as a matter of urgency.

The Chair will decide whether any item(s) raised will be considered.

4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Climate Emergency

The Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to achieving a target of zero carbon emissions by 2030 and helping local people and businesses to reduce their own carbon emissions.

A Cabinet Panel on the Environment has been established to engage with local people on matters relating to the climate emergency and advise the council on how to achieve these climate change objectives. A Climate Change Implementation group of councillors and council officers meets regularly to produce plans and monitor progress. Actions taken or currently underway include switching to green energy, incentives for low emission taxis, expanding tree planting and working to cut food waste.

In addition the council is a member of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership, working with other councils across Hertfordshire to reduce the county's carbon emissions and climate impact.

The Council's dedicated webpage on Climate Change includes details of the council's climate change strategy, the work of the Cabinet Panel on the Environment and a monthly briefing on progress.

Ecological Emergency

The Council has declared an ecological emergency and is committed to addressing the ecological emergency and nature recovery by identifying appropriate areas for habitat restoration and biodiversity net gain whilst ensuring that development limits impact on existing habitats in its process.

The Council has set out to do that by a) setting measurable targets and standards for biodiversity increase, in both species and quantities, seeking to increase community engagement, b) to work with our partners to establish a Local Nature Partnership for Hertfordshire and to develop Nature Recovery Networks and Nature Recovery Strategy for Hertfordshire and c) to investigate new approaches to nature recovery such as habitat banking that deliver biodiversity objectives and provide new investment opportunities.

Declarations of Interest

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.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public.

6. ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES (Pages 29 - 36)

6A) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Allocation of MHCLG Homelessness Grant – **to be considered with Agenda Item 12.**

6B) Finance, Audit and Risk Committee – First Quarter Revenue Budget Monitoring 2026/27 – **to be considered with Agenda Item 14.**

6C) Finance, Audit and Risk Committee – First Quarter Capital Budget Monitoring 2026/27 – **to be considered with Agenda Item 15.**

6D) Finance, Audit and Risk Committee – First Quarter Treasury Management Review 2026/27 – **to be considered with Agenda Item 16.**

7. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN UPDATE (Pages 37 - 48)

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on progress against the agreed Action Plan that was developed following the November 2024 Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC). The Action Plan was approved by Cabinet on 18 March 2025, with an update reported to Cabinet on 23 September 2025 and again on 17 February 2026 (alongside the CPC follow up report from the LGA).

8. LOCAL PLAN - CONTENT AND EVIDENCE BASE CONSULTATION (Pages 49 - 702)
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – PLACE

This report seeks approval for the Local Plan - Content and Evidence Base document for consultation. The Content and Evidence Base document is the second stage in the new plan-making system. Its purpose is to present the Council's emerging policy approach across a range of thematic areas and what evidence has been or will be collected to support the Local Plan. It will also explain which planning matters will be addressed through the new National Development Management Policies.

9. STRATEGIC PLANNING MATTERS REPORT (Pages 703 - 724)
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – PLACE

This report identifies the latest position on key planning and transport issues affecting the Council.

10. NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY (Pages 725 - 854)
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – PLACE

The draft Town Centres Strategy has been updated following public consultation. The report outlines the results of that public consultation, the proposed modifications to the Strategy and seeks approval to adopt the Town Centres Strategy.

11. CHARNWOOD HOUSE, HITCHIN (Pages 855 - 874)
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – ENTERPRISE

The Council has a policy for Charnwood House to be brought back into use to support community-based activities. A Record of Decision dated 3 August 2026 by the Executive Member for Enterprise approved the re-marketing of Charnwood House on a long lease to organisations with the vision and expertise to transform it into a thriving community asset. This Cabinet report seeks approval to the basis for assessing and scoring the applications, and delegating final approval of the successful organisation to the Executive Member for Enterprise in consultation with the Director of Enterprise.

12. ALLOCATION OF MHCLG HOMELESSNESS GRANT (Pages 875 - 886)
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – REGULATORY

The Council has received a multi-year funding settlement from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), ring-fenced for the purpose of supporting the Council in meeting its homelessness duties. This report details proposals for the allocation of some of this funding in line with grant conditions, national policy and local priorities.

13. 2026-27 Q1 COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN UPDATE (Pages 887 - 926)
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES

This report presents progress on delivering the Council Delivery Plan for 2026-27. This is a Quarter 1 update, but generally reflects progress up to the point that the report was prepared (early August 2026).

14. FIRST QUARTER REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2026/27 (Pages 927 - 940)
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES

The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the summary position on revenue income and expenditure forecasts for the financial year 2026/27, as at the end of the first quarter.

15. FIRST QUARTER CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REVIEW 2026/27 (Pages 941 - 948)
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES

To update Cabinet on progress with delivering the Capital Budget Monitoring for 2026/27, as at the end of June 2026.

16. FIRST QUARTER TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2026/27 (Pages 949 - 968)
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES

To update Cabinet on progress with delivering the Treasury Strategy for 2026/27, as at the end of June 2026.

17. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT REVIEW (Pages 969 - 982)
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – ENVIRONMENT

To review the grounds maintenance contract and seek approval for a five-year contract extension with John O'Conner (Grounds Maintenance) Ltd until 31 March 2032.

18. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC
To consider passing the following resolution: That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the following report will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

19. PART 2 MINUTES - 25 JUNE & 9 JULY 2024 AND 16 JUNE 2026 983 - 992
To take as read and approve as a true record the Part 2 minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on the 25 June & 9 July 2024, and 16 June 2026.

20. KEYSTAGE AND THE TREATMENT OF HOUSING BENEFIT 993 - 1000
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES AND DIRECTOR – REGULATORY

Previous reports have highlighted the viability issues faced by Keystage Housing in the provision of supported accommodation at the former Lord Lister hotel site in Hitchin. The Council needs to resolve how it will treat the Housing Benefit overpayment in relation to this.