NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber - District Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth, SG6 3JF
on Tuesday, 22nd September, 2026 at 7.30 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Laura Williams.

2 MINUTES - 16 JUNE 2026

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 16 June 2026 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 for the purposes of clarification that 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution did not apply to this meeting.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair invited Mr David Cook to provide a 5-minute verbal presentation relating to Agenda Item 8 – Local Plan – Content and Evidence Base Consultation.

6 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

The Chair advised that the items referred from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee would be taken with the respective items on the Agenda.

7 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN UPDATE

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

(1) Noted the progress against the agreed Action Plan.

(2) Agreed no further progress updates are required at meetings, but ongoing actions should be appropriately continued and developed between Directors and relevant Executive Members.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: As the Action Plan is as complete as it is likely to be, plus the need to focus resource on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), it is recommended that no further updates are provided to the Action Plan. To be clear this does not mean that the Council will now ignore the recommendations, but rather reflects that changes have been embedded in how we work and that these have now become business as usual.

8 LOCAL PLAN - CONTENT AND EVIDENCE BASE CONSULTATION

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

(1) Noted the following documents:
- Consultation Summary Report – scoping consultation (Appendix A)
- Gateway 1 self-assessment (Appendix B)
- Consultation and Engagement Strategy (Appendix C)

(2) Approved the Local Plan using a plan-period of 11 years from 2029 – 2040

(3) Delegated authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Director of Place, to amend and update the Statement of Community Involvement.

(4) Approved for consultation, the following documents:
- Content and Evidence Base document (Appendix D)
- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (Appendix E)
- Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix F)
- Health Impact Assessment (Appendix G)

and delegated to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member of Place, to make any minor updates of a non-substantive nature to these documents, including in relation to any updates on Local Government Reorganisation.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure the Council continues to meet the agreed milestones set out in the published timetable required under new Plan-making system.

9 STRATEGIC PLANNING MATTERS REPORT

RESOLVED: That the report on Strategic Planning Matters was noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To keep Cabinet informed of recent developments on Strategic Planning Matters.

10 NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

RESOLVED:

(1) That the Town Centre Strategy attached as Appendix 1 was adopted.

(2) That authority was delegated to the Director, Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Place to make any minor non-material corrections, including but not limited to cosmetic additions or presentational alterations, to the adopted Town Centres Strategy as considered necessary for publication and publicity.

(3) That Officers proceed with the preparation of Delivery Plans for each of the town centres following adoption of the Town Centres Strategy.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

(1) To allow the Town Centres Strategy to be adopted as a material planning consideration to support developers, landowners and relevant stakeholders when considering developing proposals and to provide policy advice to development management officers when determining planning applications until superseded by any new Local Plan.

(2) To set key priorities which seek to maintain and enhance the unique character and vitality and viability of the district's four town centres through agreed partnership working and the preparation of Delivery Plan for each town.

(3) To reinforce and deliver the Council's ambitions as set out in the Council Plan (2024 - 2028).

11 CHARNWOOD HOUSE, HITCHIN

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

(1) Approved the basis and process for assessing and scoring applications from suitable interested parties (or groups).

(2) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Enterprise in consultation with the Director of Enterprise, to finalise the terms for the lease and to complete any other documentation required to give effect to the decision.

(3) Approved grant of a long lease of Charnwood House, including a restriction to community use, and delegates to the Director of Enterprise in consultation officers in Estates and Legal Services to consider rental at a value less than best consideration where it can be shown that the disposal will promote and improve social well-being pursuant to the Local Government Act 1972: General Disposal Consent 2003.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

(1) The Council has a policy for Charnwood House to be brought back into use to support community-based activities, recognising the potential value of the asset to local and regional groups and the wider town centre.

(2) The Council Plan 2024-2028 identifies Thriving Communities as one of the Council's priorities which includes looking for opportunities to develop community hubs that provide public spaces and support for communities.

(3) This recommendation sets out how the successful applicant will be selected to enable the Council to progress granting a lease of Charnwood House and deliver the policy for the property.

12 ALLOCATION OF MHCLG HOMELESSNESS GRANT

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the funding proposals for the allocation of Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant received from the MHCLG as outlined in Table 1 in paragraph 8.13.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

(1) There is a need to secure housing services for homeless households in the district, including key existing services on the single homeless pathway. Adopting the recommendation at 2.1 secures the provision of high-quality local services to help those in need and provides stability into the first year of the new unitary authority.

(2) The recommendation at 2.1 is consistent with the priorities set out in the Council's Housing Strategy (2024 – 2029) and the Council Plan.

13 2026-27 Q1 COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN UPDATE

RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted progress against the Council projects and performance indicators, as set out in the Council Delivery Plan (Appendix A) and approves new projects, milestones and changes to milestones.

REASON FOR DECISION: The Council Delivery Plan (CDP) monitoring reports provide Cabinet, with an opportunity to monitor progress against the key Council projects, and understand any new issues, risks or opportunities. Overview and Scrutiny Committee have the opportunity to review the monitoring reports sent via the Members Information Bulletin (MIB) and request more detailed updates to be presented.

14 FIRST QUARTER REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2026/27

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

(1) Noted this report.

(2) Approved the changes to the 2026/27 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a £753k decrease in net expenditure.

(3) Noted the changes to the 2027/28 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a total £337k increase in net expenditure. These will be incorporated in the draft revenue budget for 2027/28.

(4) Approved the debt write-off as detailed in paragraph 8.19.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

(1) Members are able to monitor, make adjustments within the overall budgetary framework and request appropriate action of Services who do not meet the budget targets set as part of the Corporate Business Planning process.

(2) To comply with the financial regulations in relation to debt write-offs.

15 FIRST QUARTER CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REVIEW 2026/27

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

(1) Noted the forecast expenditure of £13.570M in 2026/27 on the capital programme, paragraph 8.3 refers.

(2) Approved the adjustments to the capital programme for 2027/28, as a result of the revised timetable of schemes detailed in table 2 and 3, increasing the estimated spend by £0.67M.

(3) Noted the position of the availability of capital resources, as detailed in table 4 paragraph 8.6 and the requirement to keep the capital programme under review for affordability.

REASON FOR DECISION: Cabinet is required to approve adjustments to the capital programme and ensure the capital programme is fully funded.

16 FIRST QUARTER TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2026/27

RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of June 2026 and as set out in Appendix 1.

REASONS 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.

17 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT REVIEW

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

(1) Approved a five-year contract extension of the Grounds Maintenance Contract with John O'Conner (Grounds Maintenance) Ltd to 31st March 2032.

(2) Commented on the proposal at 8.1 to include a proposal as part of the budget setting process for 2027/28, to enhance the contract specification for border maintenance at key town centre green spaces – at a cost of approximately £25k per year.

REASON FOR DECISION: A contract review process has been undertaken in the lead up to a potential break clause (31 March 2027) in the existing contract with John O'Conner for delivering our grounds maintenance services. The recommendations arise following that review process.

18 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: 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

RESOLVED: That the Part 2 Minutes of the meetings held on 25 June 2024, 9 July 2024 and 16 June 2026 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

20 KEYSTAGE AND THE TREATMENT OF HOUSING BENEFIT

Details of decisions taken on this item are restricted due to the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972.