

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



29 September 2026

Our Ref Council 8 October 2026
Contact. Committee Services
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To: The Chair and Members of North Hertfordshire District Council

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

to be held in the

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

on

THURSDAY, 8TH OCTOBER, 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 Members are required to notify any substitutions by midday on the day of the meeting. Late substitutions will not be accepted and Members attending as a substitute without having given the due notice will not be able to take part in the meeting.	
2.	MINUTES - 16 JULY 2026 To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 16 July 2026.	7 - 26
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 <u>Climate Emergency</u> 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

To consider any items referred from other Committees. Any items referred to this meeting will be published as a supplementary document.

7. CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – GOVERNANCE

27 - 44

This report proposes changes to section 2, Purpose, Definition Interpretation and Amendment of the Constitution to expand the definition of a 'key decision' to include a monetary threshold to assist in defining a 'significant decision'.

8. NATIONAL SCHEME OF DELEGATION

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – PLACE

45 - 82

This report introduces the statutory National Scheme of Delegation for planning applications that comes into effect on 31 October 2026. It seeks approval for necessary amendments to the Council Constitution to operate the National Scheme of Delegation. It also introduces (i) operational guidance that will be maintained and update as required by officers and (ii) discretionary guidance on the use of member briefings and site visits for applications of significance.

9.	CHANGES TO THE CONTRACT PROCUREMENT RULES REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES	83 - 90
	This report proposes two changes to the Council's Contract Procurement Rules. The first is to increase the threshold for procurements that only require a single quote, to reflect inflation. The second change is to allow a restriction on the location and type of supplier that can bid for contracts.	
10.	USE OF URGENCY IN RELATION TO CALL-IN FOR DECISIONS ON AWARDING UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF) ALLOCATIONS REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES	91 - 110
	To notify Council that the urgency provisions were applied to four delegated decisions made by the Director: Enterprise (in consultation with the Executive Member for Enterprise) in relation to allocations of UKSPF funding. This was due to the need to award funding to projects that could spend the available funds by the end of September 2026. This deadline is a condition of the grant, and it is likely that the funding would have had to be returned to Government if it had not been complied with. Allowing for potential call-in would have made it extremely difficult to meet the deadline. In accordance with the Constitution, the Chair of the Council agreed to the decision being treated as a matter of urgency. The Constitution as set out in paragraph 6.3.11 (b) (i) requires that use of this provision is reported to the next meeting of Council, together with the reasons for urgency.	
11.	APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR - FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – GOVERNANCE	111 - 114
	To confirm the appointments of a new/replacement Member and Substitute Member to the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and to appoint a Vice-Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee for the remainder of the civic year 2026-27.	
12.	NOMINATION OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – GOVERNANCE	115 - 118
	To consider appointing a Member Representative to the Baldock Community Centre Association 2025 and to note that the Letchworth Garden City Town Twinning Association and the Bedford and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board were no longer active bodies.	
13.	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 Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).	
14.	PART 2 MINUTES - 16 JULY 2026	119 - 122
	To take as read and approve as a true record the Part 2 minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 16 July 2026.	

15. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

To consider any questions submitted by Members of the Council, in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.11 (b).

16. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

To consider any motions, due notice of which have been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12.

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber - District Council Offices, Gernon Road,
Letchworth, SG6 3JF
on Thursday, 16th July, 2026 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors: Keith Hoskins MBE (Chair), Sean Prendergast (Vice-Chair), Clare Billing, Ian Albert, Daniel Allen, Amy Allen, Matt Barnes, Ruth Brown, Val Bryant, Rhona Cameron, David Chalmers, Jon Clayden, Ruth Clifton, Sam Collins, Mick Debenham, Elizabeth Dennis, Emma Fernandes, Joe Graziano, Dominic Griffiths, Steve Jarvis, Tim Johnson, Chris Lucas, Ian Mantle, Nigel Mason, Bryony May, Caroline McDonnell, Ralph Muncer, Michael Muir, Sean Nolan, Steven Patmore, Louise Peace, Vijaiya Poopalasingham, Martin Prescott, Emma Rowe, Claire Strong, Tamsin Thomas, Tom Tyson, Paul Ward, Laura Williams, Alistair Willoughby, Stewart Willoughby, Dave Winstanley, Donna Wright and Daniel Wright-Mason.

IN ATTENDANCE: Isabelle Alajooz (Director - Governance and Monitoring Officer), Luca Benedito (Trainee Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Rumi Bose (Churchgate Project Manager), Ian Couper (Director - Resources), Steve Crowley (Director - Enterprise), Robert Filby (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Chloe Gray (Enterprise Manager), James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager), Anthony Roche (Chief Executive) and Melanie Stimpson (Democratic Services Manager).

ALSO PRESENT: At the commencement of the meeting 6 members of the public.

Ben Evans, as Senior Associate Director and Neil Parlett, as Director of Planning, Development and Regeneration at Lambert Smith Hampton.

17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 04 minutes 19 seconds

N.B. Councillor Martin Prescott entered the Council Chamber at 19:33.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tina Bhartwas, Cathy Brownjohn, Sarah Lucas, Lisa Nash and Claire Winchester.

Councillor David Barnard was absent.

18 MINUTES - 21 MAY 2026

Audio Recording – 04 minutes 37 seconds

Councillor Keith Hoskins, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Sean Prendergast seconded and, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2026 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

19 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 05 minutes 07 seconds

There was no other business notified.

20 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 05 minutes 13 seconds

- (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, everyone including Officers and Members had that in mind as they carried out their 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 that the normal procedure rules in respect of debate and times to speak would apply.
- (5) The Chair advised that 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution did not apply to this meeting. A comfort break would be held at an appropriate time, should proceedings continue at length.
- (6) The Chair announced that Karen Pullham, Accountancy Technician, had been working at North Hertfordshire for 30 years, and extended his gratitude to Karen for her services to the Council.

Councillor Keith Hoskins proposed and Councillor Sean Prendergast seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council placed on record its sincere thanks and appreciation to Karen Pullham for her long and valuable service to Local Government.

- (7) The Chair announced that Jo Blake, Senior Officer (Council Tax), had been working at North Hertfordshire for 40 years, and extended his gratitude to Jo for her services to the Council.

Councillor Keith Hoskins proposed and Councillor Sean Prendergast seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council placed on record its sincere thanks and appreciation to Jo Blake for her long and valuable service to Local Government.

- (8) The Chair advised that the IT Team had increased the level of security on incoming emails and that if Members would like their personal email address added to the safe sender list, they should contact IT or Committee Services with confirmation. The Chair also reminded Members that Council business should only be conducted through a North Herts Council email account.

21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 09 minutes 50 seconds

In accordance with Standing Order 4.8.10(c), one question was submitted by a member of the public by the required deadline date set out in the Constitution.

(A) Letchworth Lido Toilets for Norton Common Users

As Ms Crighton was unable to attend the meeting, the Chair presented the question to the Executive Member for Environment in their absence, as follows:

‘Given the importance of accessible toilet facilities for disabled people, older residents, and families, how does the Council justify the absence of publicly available toilets in the green spaces it manages? Will the Council consider opening up the toilets at Letchworth Lido free for use by Norton Common visitors?’

Councillor Amy Allen provided the following response:

‘I completely recognise the importance of having available facilities for people to use, especially those that are disabled, elderly, and in need. There used to be public toilets in Norton Common a very long time ago. They were inappropriately used and resulted in a lot of issues, including vandalism, and they had to be constantly repaired, closed and many years ago, there a simple discussion amongst the Safety Audit, the Police, etcetera, that the best thing we could do would be to close it because unfortunately, they were a magnet for inappropriate behaviour. As I understand it, there is not scope at the moment to in any way rebuild, reopen, or include new toilets there because of exactly how I’ve just explained it. As for the toilet at the Lido, it is a paid entry place. It would be incredibly difficult to safeguard and monitor members of the public just wandering in and out of it. The whole point of it set up the way it is, is to monitor the numbers, to monitor safety, and to look after the patrons that are there. So, I cannot see in any way that we would be able to open them up to become effectively public toilets. There are other public toilets in town and in the area, but regrettably we don’t have any in the Common as we aren’t able to provide that. I will be putting together a further, more detailed full answer to Ms Crighton upon further investigation but that is the answer.’

22 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Audio recording – 12 minutes 23 seconds

The Chair advised that Referrals 6D, 6E, 6F and 6G referred from Cabinet, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee would be taken with the respective items on the Agenda, and that Referrals 6A, 6B and 6C from Cabinet would be considered as standalone items.

6A) Cabinet – Revenue Budget Outturn 2025/26 (Final)

Councillor Ian Albert, as Executive Member for Resources, presented Referral 6A and advised that:

- The report, which set out the end of year, healthy position in terms of the General Fund and the main financial indicators and variances, was debated and scrutinised at both the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and Cabinet.
- They were asking Council to approve the net transfer of £4.925M from earmarked reserves, as set out in Table 9 of the report.

- Those reserves were made up of the planned use of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Business Rates Reserve to support general funding, the Waste Reserve for waste contractor implementation costs, and the Waste Vehicle Reserve for new vehicles, including electric vehicles under 3.5 tonnes.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Val Bryant seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Council approved the net transfer from earmarked reserves, as identified in table 9, of £4.925 million.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (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) Changes to the Council's balances are monitored and approved.

6B) Cabinet – Treasury Management End of Year Review 2025/26

N.B. Councillor Paul Ward left the Chamber at 19:46.

Councillor Ian Albert, as Executive Member for Resources, presented Referral 6B and advised that:

- Discussions by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and Cabinet were detailed within the referral.
- The Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and its Members were thanked for their work and scrutiny.
- A good return on investments had been seen recently, but this could not be guaranteed in the long-term.
- Return on investments had been investigated carefully, and implementation of the new Ethical Investment Policy had begun.
- Actions were in place to ensure that the single breach of the strategy earlier in the year did not happen again.

Councillor Matt Barnes informed the Chair that Councillor Paul Ward had left the Chamber due to an interest on this item related to his employment.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Val Bryant seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Approved the actual 2025/26 prudential and treasury indicators as detailed in Appendix B.
- (2) Noted the annual Treasury Management Review for 2025/26 (Appendix B).

REASON FOR DECISIONS: 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.

N.B. Councillor Paul Ward returned to the Chamber at 19:47.

6C) Cabinet – 2025-26 Year End Report of Risk Management Governance

Councillor Ian Albert, as Executive Member for Resources, presented Referral 6C and advised that:

- This was an important area for the Council considering all things happening for local authorities currently.
- This report provided assurances that the Council was effectively managing risk.
- Discussion points were set out by the Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee in the referral.
- It was worth noting that the two highest scoring risks were related to Local Government Reorganisation and resourcing.
- There was also the addition of the Renters Rights Act to the report.
- Cabinet had considered the impacts to different service areas and the overarching risks to the Council.

Councillor Claire Strong left the Chamber at 19:49 and returned at 19:49.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Val Bryant seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Council noted the report.

REASON FOR DECISION: To provide assurance that the Council is effectively managing risk. The Council's Risk Management Strategy details that this annual review should be presented to Council. Cabinet have responsibility for the management of risk.

23 FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Audio recording – 20 minutes 13 seconds

N.B. Councillor Dominic Griffiths entered the Chamber at 19:51.

Councillor Vijaiya Poopalasingham, as Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, presented Referral 6D and the report entitled 'Finance, Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report' and advised that:

- It was important to recognise that there had been a period of transition for the Committee following his appointment as Chair and new Members joining the Committee in the new Civic Year, but the Committee had maintained a strong focus on its core responsibilities.
- Thanks were put on record to Councillor Sean Nolan for chairing the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee until January this year.
- This report provided an overview of the work undertaken in the previous Civic Year reflecting on their effectiveness and setting out priorities for the year ahead.
- Assurance was given to the Council that effective processes were in place.
- The Committee had overseen a wide range of important matters and timelines for those were outlined on the grid at page 48 of the Agenda Reports Pack.
- Significant corporate risks like Local Government Reorganisation and corporate capacity had continued to be monitored, and focus had been given to manage and identify risks like these.
- Discussion at the Committee had been constructive over the year, and Members had challenged and sought clarification appropriately while working together.
- The Work Programme remained comprehensive, and they would continue to oversee the audit process and monitor financial resilience and procurement arrangements when needed.

- Members would continue to receive appropriate training to strengthen their understanding of financial governance.
- It was hoped that Members from all political groups would attend Committee meetings this Civic Year as the Committee was stronger when every group was present.
- The Independent Member, Director – Resources, Shared Anti-Fraud Service, KPMG, Executive Member for Resources and Officers were thanked for their support.
- New Members and previous Members of the Committee were also thanked for their approach to matters.

Councillor Vijaiya Poopalasingham proposed the recommendation in the report, and this was seconded by Councillor Val Bryant.

As part of the debate, Councillor Paul Ward put on record his thanks to the Independent Member for their thorough work at Committee meetings.

Having been proposed and seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Council noted the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report.

REASON FOR DECISION: To provide Council with assurance as to the effectiveness of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

24 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2025/26

Audio recording – 25 minutes 31 seconds

Councillor Jon Clayden, as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented Referral 6E and the report entitled 'Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2025/26' and advised that:

- 30 items had been considered by the Committee during the Civic Year.
- There had been good online engagement with 750 views of the committee meetings throughout the year on the YouTube channel.
- Thanks were put on record to the Chair and Members of the S106 Task and Finish Group for their investigations on S106 contributions, and 8 recommendations had been made by the group to Cabinet for their consideration.
- Thanks were also put on record to Councillor Claire Winchester as the Chair of the Committee in the previous Civic Year, the Scrutiny Officer for their support, Members of the Committee for their apolitical scrutiny on a wide view of Council functions, and Officers for their attendance and contributions at Committee meetings.
- It was hoped that the Committee would continue to provide effective scrutiny at the right time.

Councillor Claire Strong advised that her name was spelt incorrectly on page 64 of the Agenda Reports Pack and asked for this to be corrected.

Councillor Jon Clayden proposed the recommendation in the report, and this was seconded by Councillor Ralph Muncer.

As part of the debate, Councillor Ralph Muncer highlighted that:

- The quality of scrutiny had improved over recent years and would continue to improve through the new Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Thanks were put on record to the Scrutiny Officer for facilitating good quality scrutiny since they had joined the Council.

- The S106 Task and Finish Group should be proud of the work they had carried out, and they looked forward to the possibility of empowering communities in the planning process and seeing how the recommendations from the group would be taken forward.

Having been proposed and seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Council noted the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny 2025/26, attached as Appendix 1.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable Council to consider and comment on the report of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the work of the Committee in the 2025/2026 Civic Year.

25 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Councillor Keith Hoskins proposed and Councillor Sean Prendergast seconded and, it was:

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and Public were excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the following report will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

26 PART 2 MINUTES - 21 MAY 2026

Councillor Keith Hoskins, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Sean Prendergast seconded and, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Part 2 Minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2026 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

27 CHURCHGATE REGENERATION PROJECT UPDATE & NEXT STEPS - PART 2

N.B. This item was considered in restricted session and therefore no recording was available.

Councillor Tamsin Thomas, as Executive Member for Enterprise, presented Referral 6F and the report entitled 'Churchgate Regeneration Project Update & Next Steps – Part 2'.

Councillor Tamsin Thomas proposed and Councillor Val Bryant seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Council approved the additional revenue funding referred to in section 10 of the report to support the next steps of the project, as set out in the Part 1 report.

REASON FOR DECISION: to proceed with the Procurement stage referenced in Part 1 of this report, the Council requires additional funding to support this work. These funds were not originally set out in the budget, as the need has been identified since the original budgets were set. The funds will be enough to cover the required package of work with the selected developer for the next phase and continue to support the regeneration project in progress to delivery.

28 CHURCHGATE REGENERATION PROJECT UPDATE & NEXT STEPS - PART 1

Audio recording – 55 minutes 08 seconds

Councillor Tamsin Thomas, as Executive Member for Enterprise, presented Referral 6G and the report entitled 'Churchgate Regeneration Project Update & Next Steps – Part 1' and advised that:

- The project would deliver a redeveloped shopping centre and market, revitalised public spaces around the River Hiz, and vital footfall and housing to the area.
- Thanks were put on record to the Churchgate Project Board, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet for their input on this stage.
- Full Council were being asked to approve funding to procure regeneration expertise to undertake detailed analysis for the project in this phase.
- Work undertaken in the last 12 months had put the project into a fundamentally more stable position as a financial and technical evidence base had been produced and a greater insight into other factors had been achieved.
- Churchgate was close to full occupancy for the first time in a while, which mirrored the strong developer confidence shown in soft market testing, but it was also recognised that it was a complex and finely balanced scheme where specialist regeneration expertise would be needed to derisk the project and remove cost elements while maintaining overall control.
- A masterplan would be formulated in this phase from the completed feasibility study, which would allow them to progress the project in a measured and controlled way while further testing viability and deliverability.
- Any uncertainty of deliverability would be decreased through this phase before a long-term decision on the project was taken.
- The ambition to deliver a high-quality regeneration scheme that secured the long-term success of Hitchin Town Centre remained unchanged.

Councillor Tamsin Thomas proposed the recommendation in the report, and this was seconded by Councillor Val Bryant.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Sam Collins
- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Tim Johnson
- Councillor Matt Barnes

The following points were made as part of the debate:

- Hitchin residents were fed up with the amount of time that had been spent on project planning and consultancy.
- The final part of the project was the riskiest, and they should not lose sight of what was right for the district and its residents in their approach.
- There had been a £200K overspend on consultants for the project and the administration was seeking to request substantial funding for this phase.
- The Council was fast approaching a tipping point where any future spending would be absorbed, regardless of the financial burden.
- All options including site disposal or no affordable housing provision as part of the regeneration would need to be considered to reduce the cost to the taxpayer.

- Residents of other towns and villages would be questioning whether their communities would receive a multi-million investment in a project in their area as well.
- It was desired for the project to succeed, but not at any cost.
- The project had shown transparency as there was a project board, Hitchin residents had been consulted, and 3 member briefing sessions had already taken place.
- A weekly project timetable was in place to take it into a favourable position before the creation of the new unitary authorities.
- Overspend on consultants totalled £137K, not £200K.
- A quick outcome for the project was desired, but a careful approach was needed and being taken on this fantastic opportunity.
- Reports on the Churchgate project had been given regularly at Hitchin Community Forum.
- Feasibility work proposed in this phase would inform the right choice for the project.
- The project had already cost a lot of money and would cost more going forward.
- Various feasibility studies had been undertaken in the past, and various developers had failed to develop the site and its surroundings.
- The project would have progressed a lot quicker if a developer had undertaken it.
- So many questions were unanswered and exact plans were still yet to be seen.
- This project was huge, expensive, and would be made viable through a loss of parking and housing.
- Problems relating to parking had not been sufficiently addressed, and these would need solving before progression to phase two.

In response points made during the debate, the Chair advised that this phase would ensure that the Council understood the options available to them.

In response to points made during the debate, Councillor Tamsin Thomas advised that:

- Market conditions were much different since the regeneration of Churchgate was first considered 31 years ago.
- There was evidence of a viable development route, and this should be explored.
- Hitchin was thriving, and they had an evidence base for a viable route to develop and regenerate the area.
- Members should stop worrying about what had happened in the past and focus on the future.

Having been proposed and seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Council approved the additional capital/revenue funding set out in the Part 2 report to support the single competitive procurement, comprising of two phases of a partner to assist the Council with the next stage of the Churchgate Regeneration Project.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

- (1) The Council has undertaken significant technical work, specialist studies and preliminary market engagement to inform the next stage of the Churchgate Regeneration Project.
- (2) The findings indicate that further feasibility, viability and delivery planning work is required before future decisions can be taken regarding the preferred delivery model and implementation of the regeneration proposals.
- (3) Approval is therefore sought for the additional funding required to undertake this next phase of work, enabling future decisions to be informed by robust technical, commercial and financial evidence.

29 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

Audio recording – 01 hours 15 minutes 58 seconds

In accordance with Standing Order 4.8.11, five questions had been submitted by the required deadline set out in the Constitution. However, following publication of the Agenda, question (B) had been withdrawn.

(A) Charnwood House, Hitchin Vacancy Period

Councillor Chris Lucas to Councillor Tamsin Thomas, Executive Member for Enterprise:

‘In the Members Information Service (MIS) bulletin released on 3rd July, I read with interest that BTG Eddison’s have been appointed to undertake a new market campaign for Charnwood House, Hitchin this summer.’

Can the Portfolio Holder for Enterprise explain how long the property has been vacant?’

Councillor Tamsin Thomas provided the following response:

‘For the benefit of colleagues who may not know the building’s history, Charnwood House was generously donated to the community by a local family in 1937 and it served us incredibly well as the home of the Hitchin Museum until those services were relocated to our modern facility on Brand Street. The doors closed to the public in 2012 for the decade that followed but the building served as an additional storage area for the Museum’s collection while we worked on a long-term plan to bring it back into active use. Following the election of the joint administration, the Cabinet formally decided to retain Charnwood House rather than dispose of it in 2020 and set aside £400,000 to help achieve this. To prepare the building for its next chapter, in 2022, Officers successfully relocated the stored museum artifacts and items and carried out essential safety works, which included asbestos removal and weather proofing etc. We then ran two separate efforts under the joint administration to find a community occupier. While we had interested parties, neither round ultimately resulted in a successful tenancy. When our new Estates Lead joined the Council, as the Executive Member, I asked for a clear lessons learned review on those previous rounds so we could understand what held those bids back, and this led to an options paper in 2025 focused entirely on delivering on that 2020 promise of community use. As a direct result, we have appointed BTG Eddison’s as the marketing agent due to their track record in marketing community and heritage assets, something we think was part of the gap on past efforts to help us finally secure the right future for Charnwood House. I think everyone in this Chamber would have liked to have seen this resolved much sooner but heritage buildings are notoriously difficult to bring back into use. Everyone wants projects to be delivered fast, well and cheaply and my experience is that you can often manage just two of those, but never all three. We must demonstrate value for our taxpayers, and we must deliver a high-quality result for our residents. Doing both of those things well means unfortunately that it is taking us time to get it right.’

N.B. Councillor Emma Rowe left the Chamber at 20:49.

Councillor Chris Lucas asked a supplementary question, as follows:

‘Could the portfolio holder explain why she thinks the previous market campaign failed to produce a lease? It was interesting to hear that you mentioned about lessons learned, so perhaps you could summarise those lessons learned and explain to us why the previous marketing campaign failed to produce a lease resulting in Charnwood House remaining vacant for the best part of 14 years.’

N.B. Councillor Emma Rowe returned to the Chamber at 20:50.

Councillor Tamsin Thomas responded:

'It has not been vacant, it has been in use as a storage facility for much of that time. It's only since 2022 and the removal of the museum items that it has been vacant in that sense. I don't want to comment on any individual bid as I don't think that would be right but I will say that a general challenge has not been an absence of interested parties, nor has it been a lack of people who could really make that building thrive as a community centre. The challenge is one that many heritage buildings face in that they require the capacity to generate significant funding through grant applications and to have an estates management capability to maintain a heritage building. Even with preferential rent terms, that is quite challenging and that's why we've partnered with BTG Eddison's who have got expertise and a proven track record in this area.'

(B) Thomas Bellamy House, Hitchin Vacancy Period

The Chair advised that this question had been withdrawn.

(C) Charnwood House and Thomas Bellamy House, Hitchin Maintenance and Security Costs

Councillor Chris Lucas to Councillor Tamsin Thomas, Executive Member for Enterprise:

'Could the Portfolio Holder for Enterprise please explain how much money has been spent on maintenance and security for Charnwood House, Hitchin and Thomas Bellamy House, Hitchin since they have been left vacant?'

Councillor Tamsin Thomas provided the following response:

'I repeat that particularly in the case of Charnwood that the building has not been left vacant for much of that time, its recent asbestos has been cleared. So, the total costs for Thomas Bellamy House have been £85,000, and the total costs for Charnwood House have been £68,000. That includes within it, capital expenditure for Thomas Bellamy House of £60,000 and Charnwood of £30,000. The holding costs for Thomas Bellamy House have been £25,000 and for Charnwood House, £38,000.'

Councillor Chris Lucas asked a supplementary question, as follows:

'Does the Portfolio Holder for Enterprise think that this is a good use of public money given that both properties have been left dormant for such a ridiculous length of time or could both properties not have been used for better use by the public within Hitchin?'

Councillor Tamsin Thomas responded:

'I hope that my initial remarks showed that through the entire period of vacancy, the Council has been engaged in an active process to resolve the long-standing use of Charnwood House, including ensuring it serves the public in some form through museum storage. No one in this Chamber needs me to talk about the challenges of museum storage for the residents of North Herts and why we need additional space. We are the custodians of those facilities and a quick route to resolving this would be disposal or would be to leverage options around a very loose understanding of community use to get someone in. I don't think that's the right approach, I think that the facilities are heritage buildings, listed buildings, and it is right that we take a measured approach to, one, ensuring that they don't degrade, which they would if they were dormant, and they are being maintained, hence the cost. But also, that Officers are working as proactively as they can to ensure that they remain in the public realm and they remain in community use for many decades to come. It is incredibly frustrating, I share with Councillor Lucas's concern about time, but I come to the point that you can get things cheap, you can get things fast, but you can't get them done well if you're aiming for that. So, I think that Officers have been taking an appropriate approach to ensuring that both buildings remain

in good standing and that they are returned in as measured a pace as we can manage back into public use.'

(D) Impact of the Planning and Infrastructure Act on North Hertfordshire

Councillor Ralph Muncer to Councillor Val Bryant, Leader of the Council:

'To ask the Leader of the Council what assessment has been made as to the impact of the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 on North Hertfordshire?'

Councillor Val Bryant provided the following response:

'First of all, the background. The Government intends to play a key role in unlocking more housing and infrastructure across the country and supporting sustained economic growth. The act is being rolled out in stages via secondary legislation, such as the National Scheme of Delegation (NSD). There are five overarching objectives, delivering faster and more certain consenting processes for critical infrastructure. Two, introducing a more strategic approach to nature recovery. Three, improving certainty and decision making in the planning system. Four, unlocking land and securing public value for large scale investment, and five, introducing effective new mechanisms for cross-boundary strategic planning. The key operational and structural changes affecting North Hertfordshire, first of all, committee streamlining. The National Scheme of Delegation will encourage more delegated decision making with the aim of limiting committee involvement to the most significant developments that are of wide public interest, thereby freeing up resources, allowing committees to concentrate on those applications that have the greatest impact upon the residents and businesses within North Herts. This will be addressed through the constitutional review and the first sub stream meeting is scheduled for Friday 17 July. Any decisions that are made after 31 October and not in accordance with the NSD, which is the National Scheme of Delegation, will be susceptible to judicial review or complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman, so it is something that we've got to bring in. It is anticipated that it will result in a reduction in the number of Planning Control Committee meetings and/or the length of meetings. Mandatory training for Planning Control Committee Members. We already undertake mandatory Member training although this is a statutory requirement, and Members will be required to successfully complete training to obtain a valid completion certificate, without which, they will not be able to sit on the Planning Control Committee. Planning Committees will be limited to no more than 13 Members. This will not affect North Herts as currently, the Planning Control Committee has 12 Members. Localised Planning Fees, North Herts will have great autonomy to set application fees. Currently, it is intended to liaise with other authorities on fees following the impending decision on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Strategic spatial planning reintroduces a requirement for North Herts to plan more strategically across wide regional areas with the aim of ensuring that housing growth aligns with infrastructure needs. Environmental delivery plans to change how developers protect and enhance our environment when building by financing habitat restoration and pollution reduction measures such as river cleanups. Finally, compulsory purchase order powers. North Herts will be able to assemble land quickly and cheaply for public interest projects. Hope value can be bypassed when acquiring land, and then there's the question of compensation.'

Councillor Ralph Muncer asked a supplementary question, as follows:

'Who does she think is best suited to take decisions as to the future of our communities? Is it the locally elected representatives in this Chamber or is it the faceless bureaucrats in Whitehall?'

Councillor Val Bryant responded:

'I'm on the Planning Committee, I've been on the Planning Committee for many years and I think that many of the applications that we look at are very worthy, and others you sit there and think 'What are we doing here looking at these?', and I do think that there needs to be a new look at what comes to planning and if you look at the details of the legislation, it is in fact not as clear cut as you're talking about with bureaucrats, etcetera. But hopefully, there will be a more common-sense approach and I think it will shake down and give it a chance, and I think you'll find it will work well.'

(E) Approach to Active Travel

Councillor Ralph Muncer to Councillor Donna Wright, Executive Member for Place:

'To ask the Executive Member for Place to set out the Administration's approach to Active Travel policy ahead of the Local Plan Review and the upcoming consultation on Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 5?'

Councillor Donna Wright provided the following response:

'I think firstly, I do have to admit that I haven't yet read the County Local Transport Plan 5. I've been on holiday and it was only circulated to district councils a couple of weeks ago, so I haven't had a chance to look at it. But obviously, it's on my list and we will, as a Council, be responding to the consultation in September when the final draft has been produced. In terms of our approach to active travel, the Labour Party strongly supports active travel as part of its wider goals on public health, economic growth, cleaner air, decarbonisation, and sustainable transport. The Government's Active Travel Strategy, anchored by the third Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy and led by Transport Secretary, Heidi Alexandr features a £4.5bn investment over five years to build 5,000 new routes and 10,000 safer crossings. Our approach tends to focus more on active travel being integrated with other modes of transport rather than replacing them entirely, recognising that many journeys involve a combination of walking, cycling, bus and rail. So, this is where we might differ from some other parties. In practice, this mean prioritising infrastructure and planning that make active travel safe, convenient, and attractive whilst ensuring it is integrated with wider transport networks. People should have more transport choices, but we also recognise that cars will continue to be necessary for many journeys, particularly in rural areas and for people with mobility needs, etcetera. This is reflected in Labour's broader transport policy, which continues to invest in roads alongside public and active transport. So, in summary, we aim for a balanced, integrated approach with strong support for active travel, where appropriate.'

Councillor Ralph Muncer asked a supplementary question, as follows:

'Could I ask the Executive Member, will she commit to advocating for and enshrining within the next iteration of the Local Plan, a more pragmatic and realistic approach to active travel policy implementation in regard to planning applications proposed within our rural communities here in North Hertfordshire?'

Councillor Donna Wright responded:

'I think in answer to the previous question, I've already outlined our approach, and we will take a balanced approach, and we do recognise that cars are still needed for many journeys, particularly in rural areas. So, we will take a balanced, integrated approach.'

In accordance with Standing Order 4.8.11(d)(ii), one urgent question had been submitted and accepted by the Chair.

(A) Widespread Disruption from Iron Maiden concert at Knebworth House

Councillor Paul Ward to Councillor Mick Debenham, Executive Member for Regulatory:

‘Last weekend’s Iron Maiden concert at Knebworth House caused unusual levels of widespread congestion in the main Knebworth village, other nearby villages and Stevenage. There were several issues with traffic management, with reports of residents stuck for hours and ticket holders abandoning their journeys.

Can the Portfolio Holder for Regulatory please explain what action is being taken to learn lessons from this to make future events safe and successful?’

Councillor Mick Debenham provided the following response:

‘The Iron Maiden concert at Knebworth was a major event that attracted many thousands of visitors to North Hertfordshire. While many people enjoyed the concert, I recognise that some residents, businesses and attendees experienced significant disruption, particularly due to traffic congestion and extended journey times. I would like to reassure Members that North Hertfordshire Council, working with the event organisers, Knebworth Estate, emergency services, highway authorities and other partner agencies, is already undertaking a formal post-event review through the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) process. This review will examine all aspects of the event, including traffic management, transport planning, vehicle and pedestrian movements, communications and the wider impact on local communities. The SAG met several times before the event and carried out a site visit shortly beforehand. During the concert itself, the Council and partner agencies also took part in operational planning and event control arrangements. Prior to the event, all relevant organisations were satisfied that the plans submitted met the required standards and appropriately addressed the risks identified at the time. However, a key purpose of the SAG process is to learn from experience. We are therefore gathering feedback from residents, attendees, councillors, partner organisations and event staff. This is being considered alongside information provided by the organisers and emergency services, as well as commentary shared on social media. We have already received a wide range of comments and suggestions relating to traffic management, pedestrian safety, communications and routing arrangements. These will all be considered as part of the review. It would not be appropriate to pre-empt the findings before all the evidence has been assessed. However, I can assure Members that any lessons identified will be discussed with organisers and partner agencies and will help shape planning for future events at Knebworth. Our shared objective is clear, to ensure that future events are safe, well managed and successful whilst minimising disruption to local residents and communities.’

Councillor Paul Ward asked a supplementary question, as follows:

‘Can Councillor Debenham confirm he’s willing to work with the organisers, the Officers and the SAG to update the Council with an appropriate summary of the improvements once those investigations are concluded, noting that some of the details have to remain confidential for security reasons?’

Councillor Mick Debenham responded:

‘Yes.’

N.B. Following the conclusion of the item, there was a break in proceedings at 21:08 and the meeting reconvened at 21:19. During the break, Councillors Ruth Clifton and Dominic Griffiths left the Chamber and did not return.

30 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Audio recording – 01 hours 50 minutes 07 seconds

There were three motions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12.

(A) Objection to the National Scheme of Delegation for Planning Applications

Councillor Steve Jarvis proposed the motion as follows:

‘Council regrets the decision of the Government to introduce a "National Scheme of Delegation" for planning applications.

It believes that:

- a) Planning decisions should continue to be made by locally elected councillors rather than being increasingly determined by officers under national rules.
- b) the Secretary of State is being given excessive power to dictate council constitutions and planning procedures.

Council resolves:

To instruct the Leader of the Council to write to all North Herts MPs setting out these views.’

Councillor Ruth Brown seconded the motion.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Donna Wright
- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Daniel Wright-Mason
- Councillor Paul Ward
- Councillor Daniel Allen
- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis
- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Tim Johnson
- Councillor Nigel Mason
- Councillor Matt Barnes

The following points were made as part of the debate:

- Concerns from Members were understood, but they must acknowledge that the current arrangements were deeply flawed and inconsistent between authorities and did not serve residents or applicants well, and the new scheme was designed to improve this.
- Planning Control Committees would continue to have an important role as large applications would be considered by them.
- Some Planning Control Committees were politically charged under the current setup, which meant that some applications were not decided on their merits.
- The Council should be able to trust Planning Officers with professional expertise to make independent, evidence-based judgements.
- Reform to the scheme would help Members to focus on other areas where they added the most value such as setting visions and establishing policy frameworks.
- The country faced a housing crisis and a critical need for new infrastructure, and growth in the economy was also needed, which a fair planning system would address.
- The scheme would take away community voices and the democratic oversight that members of the public gave on decisions taken by Planning Control Committees.

- The perception that the Government imposed development on residents without accounting for local concerns would be reinforced, and public trust in the planning system would be eroded.
- Shifting the responsibility of decision-making onto Officers was undemocratic.
- Service delivery for homes had experienced a fundamental failure in recent years, which North Herts district had been part of as their share of national housing delivery had declined by a third in the last 25 years.
- The Government were trying to correct decades of service failure and under delivery in an area of great importance, and those who were in desperate need of housing, including those on the housing register and in temporary accommodation deserved this response.
- These reforms would place an onus on the limited number of Planning Officers.
- Members would have a vote on this scheme at the next Full Council meeting, so the motion was pointless.
- Neither the broken planning system nor the social housing required across the country would be addressed by the scheme.
- The UK had a developer-led planning system, where developers only built homes if they were viable in term of profit, and this scheme would not change that or the problems it presented where developers sought to legally challenge financial contributions.
- Taking decision-making powers from Members would not lead to more homes being built.
- This motion represented a centralisation of power as the role of the Planning Inspectorate would be increased, and the comments made by Chris Hinchliff MP about empowering residents and not disregarding their concerns were agreed with.
- The Secretary of State already had the powers to set this important regulatory framework as local authorities were governed by statute.
- Planning Control Committee meetings were long and frequent under the current system, and this scheme would contribute towards resolving this.
- This scheme would not take power from Members as they would still be able to perform their democratic function in decision making by communicating with Planning Officers and expressing concerns on behalf of residents.
- The Planning Control Committee was not driven by political imperatives.
- It was condescending and patronising and they fully supported the motion.
- The Council would not have a Planning Control Committee if they did not pass the scheme into their Constitution at the Council meeting later in the year.
- Going forward, Members should work with Planning Officers and the Planning Control Committee to make wise decisions and make the new scheme work.
- What remained of the democratic planning system would be demolished by these reforms and the removal of public voices would drive public outrage.
- It was outrageous for this scheme to be forced through, and Government Ministers should work with Members to put power back into communities.

Councillor Steve Jarvis replied to the debate and advised that:

- It was agreed that Planning Officers were experts and their valuable advice should be considered, but the democratic element of their decision making was questioned.
- Planning applications should not be determined in the same way across the county as local considerations should be accounted for.
- This scheme showed a lack of trust by the Government in councillors.
- No evidence supported the notion that this scheme would result in more housing being built as there were thousands of unimplemented applications across the country due to developers not proceeding until they were able to obtain the right level of profit.

Having been proposed and seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Council instructed the Leader of the Council to write to all North Herts MPs setting out the views in the motion.

Councillor Nigel Mason advised that there were no political Members on the Planning Control Committee and that Members of the Committee were there to do things well, not represent their parties.

(B) Mimram Valley Landscape Designation Project

Councillor Ralph Muncer proposed the motion as follows:

‘The River Mimram runs from its source near Whitwell to join the River Lea at Hertford and is one of only 260 chalk streams that exist in the world.

Earlier this year, the Mimram Valley Local Landscape Designation steering group submitted an outline case for a Local Landscape Designation (LLD) for the Mimram Valley to be included in the next iteration of the Local Plan, with this proposal being submitted to North Hertfordshire District Council, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and East Hertfordshire District Council.

A LLD protects areas considered by the Local Planning Authority to be of particular landscape value to the local area and if granted, the designation would ensure this precious natural and heritage-rich environment is sustained by making landscape impact a primary consideration in planning decisions.

The designation would also play an important role in developing an awareness of the landscape qualities that make the Mimram Valley distinctive, promote awareness amongst the various communities in the valley and help to strengthen local rural economies.

Therefore, Council resolves:

1. To express its support for the Mimram Valley being granted Local Landscape Designation status.
2. To instruct Officers engage in discussions with the Mimram Valley Local Landscape Designation Project steering group in order to progress the ambition of the Mimram Valley being granted Local Landscape Designation status in the upcoming revision of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan
3. To instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Leader of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and the Leader of East Hertfordshire District Council calling on their respective Councils to support the Mimram Valley being granted Local Landscape Designation status within their Local Development Plans.’

Councillor Joe Graziano seconded the motion.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Joe Graziano

The following points were made as part of the debate:

- This designation had already been included in the Draft Local Plan Review to ensure that all chalk streams in North Herts, including the River Mimram were locally valued landscapes. The Strategic Planning Board would consider this soon and public

consultation would take place on this as part of the Local Plan Review if approved by Cabinet.

- The River Mimram was an internationally rare chalk stream, and the Mimram Valley connected many communities and provided important landscape for wildlife, recreation, heritage and wellbeing.
- It faced water abstraction, pollution, habitat loss, and development pressures.
- The Council must ensure that the valley was enhanced for future generations.
- This designation would ensure future planning decisions would give greater weight to conserving the character, nature assets and biodiversity of the valley, and ensure an additional layer of safeguarding from inappropriate development.
- The Council should work with landowners to preserve the ecological health of the River Mimram and heritage of the Mimram Valley as they were irreplaceable.

Having been proposed and seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Expressed its support for the Mimram Valley being granted Local Landscape Designation status.
- (2) Instructed Officers to engage in discussions with the Mimram Valley Local Landscape Designation Project Steering Group in order to progress the ambition of the Mimram Valley being granted Local Landscape Designation status in the upcoming revision of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan. Thursday, 16th July, 2026.
- (3) Instructed the Leader of the Council to write to the Leaders of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and East Hertfordshire District Council calling on their respective Councils to support the Mimram Valley being granted Local Landscape Designation status within their Local Development Plans.

(C) Future of Land Holdings South of the A505, Royston

N.B. Councillors Steve Jarvis and Chris Lucas declared an interest on this item due to their positions as Members of Cabinet at Hertfordshire County Council and left the Chamber for the duration of the motion.

Councillor Ralph Muncer proposed the motion as follows:

‘On 17 June, the Cabinet at Hertfordshire County Council declared land holding to the South of the A505, Royston to be “surplus to operational requirements” and took the decision to dispose of the land.

The Land North of Roysia School was acquired in the 1980s using statutory compulsory purchase powers for education purposes and whilst the land in question has been allocated for residential development within the North Herts Local Plan, the decision of the County Council to dispose of this land has not adequately addressed the cumulative impact of significant additional housing on the existing highway network, particularly the single point of access that already serves over 1,000 homes in the surrounding area.

Additionally, there is no evidence that any public consultation has been undertaken with local residents, community groups or stakeholders in Royston regarding the proposed disposal and the residential development it will facilitate, particularly in light of existing pressures on local infrastructure.

Whilst the County Council has concluded there is “no current or future need” for the land for County Council service delivery, it does not appear to have fully considered whether retention of all or part of the land could deliver alternative public or community benefits, for example sports facilities of which there are a significant shortage within the town, and whether the proposed joint disposal strategy with the Highfield Land Trust represents the option that best serves the wider public interest.

Therefore, Council Resolves:

1. To instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Leader of Hertfordshire County Council requesting that the Cabinet examines, again, its decision to dispose of the land in question and fully considers if the proposed joint disposal strategy with the Highfield Land Trust best serves the wider public interest or whether retention of the land could deliver alternative public/community benefits, for example, the health and wellbeing benefits from additional sports/recreational facilities, of which there are a significant shortage within the town.
2. To instruct the Officers at North Hertfordshire District Council to work with Hertfordshire County Council in order to identify the best possible future community use of this land.'

Councillor Martin Prescott seconded the motion.

Councillor Tim Johnson proposed an amendment to be included in the motion to instruct Officers at North Herts to investigate ways this land could be acquired to provide additional sporting facilities for Royston.

Councillor Ralph Muncer, as the proposer, accepted the amendment into the substantive motion and this was also accepted by Councillor Martin Prescott as seconder.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Sadie Billing, Councillor Ralph Muncer advised that:

- The proposal had gone through the committee process at Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and Members had raised concerns through this.
- There was a worrying trend on the disposal of land allocated for key community infrastructure by HCC and other authorities, which was the key principle for this motion.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Matt Barnes
- Councillor Alistair Willoughby
- Councillor Tim Johnson
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Laura Williams

The following points were made as part of the debate:

- The decision taken by HCC could have been called-in as it was taken by Cabinet.
- Even though the site had been allocated for 100 homes in the Local Plan, there was no reason why it could not be reallocated for sports provision.
- Roysia School had been shut in 2019 by the administration at the time, and neither they nor the current administration had done anything to address this.
- There had been numerous opportunities to comment on the disposal of land at HCC meetings, but no comments had been made.

- Acquiring land for sports facilities would be ideal, but it was not viable for the Council to do this, and sending a letter to HCC was not likely to make a difference.
- Residents attending Royston & Villages Community Forum had expressed a dire need for more sports facilities in the town and it would be nice for funding to go towards this.
- This motion failed to mention the Outdoor Sports Strategy published by the Council, which gave high priority to working with multiple organisations to develop a new multi-sports facility to address shortfalls for sporting provision in Royston.
- Sports provision could be delivered on this land as it was undeveloped and flat, and the amendment played a tangible role in delivering on the Outdoor Sports Strategy.
- This proposal could have been included in the Work Programme at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at HCC as it could have carried more weight there.
- A Council meeting was not the right place for this issue to be resolved, and they could easily talk to the Leader of the Council outside the meeting about this.
- There were opportunities to work with Royston Town Council to investigate how they could acquire the land.
- There was no indication of how much the land would cost.

In response to points raised by Councillor Ian Albert, the Monitoring Officer advised that the motion was reasonable as it would not commit funding at this stage.

In response to points raised by Councillor Ian Albert, the Chief Executive advised that every motion could have implications on Officer time.

Councillor Emma Rowe left the Chamber at 22:31 and returned at 22:32.

Councillor Ralph Muncer replied to the debate and advised that:

- Matters decided by other authorities such as HCC should be subject to debate by the Council as they had an impact on their communities.
- Debating this motion gave Members a chance to raise issues of concern and made sure that HCC were held accountable for their decisions.

Having been proposed and seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the motion, as amended, was **LOST**.

The meeting closed at 10.36 pm

Chair

FULL COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2026

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: Constitutional Changes

REPORT OF: Director - Governance

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Executive Member - Resources

COUNCIL PRIORITY: Sustainability;

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report proposes changes to section 2, Purpose, Definition Interpretation and Amendment of the Constitution to expand the definition of a 'key decision' to include a monetary threshold to assist in defining a 'significant decision'.

A consequential minor amendment to Section 21, Contract Procedure Rule is also required.

This report also proposes a rewrite of section 16 of the Constitution ("Budget and Policy Framework Rules"). The changes would better reflect current practice in relation to policy framework rules and set out a more structured approach to the budget setting process.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. To approve that the proposed changes to the Council's Constitution are adopted

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council's constitution is the framework for the Council's operations and decision making – it ensures that the Council operates in a way which is efficient and transparent, ethical and accountable to local people.

It is a reference point for Members, officers and the public and is a living document which must be kept up to date and legally compliance. This is an iterative process which has been undertaken throughout the year by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the 'Duty to Monitor and Review the constitution which is set out in Section 2 of the constitution and includes a combination of updates under the general housekeeping delegations in respect of minor amendments as well as more substantive amendments which are undertaken through engagement of the cross-party Constitutional Working Group.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. The Constitution could remain unchanged, however the Constitution would remain unclear in relation to defining key decisions.
- 4.2. Not making some of the changes to section 16 would risk a process that was not robust in terms of setting budgets.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

On the 21st July, the Constitutional Working Group was stood up for the first meeting to debate and discuss constitutional changes. Since that time a number of additional meetings have been held to invite Members to comment on the proposals in this report.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND:

Expansion of the definition of a key decision:

- 7.1 This report seeks approval from Council to attach a financial threshold of £75,000 to the definition of a key decision. The current constitution relies on the statutory definition of a key decision.
- 7.2 The statutory definition comes from the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. It states that a Key Decision is an executive decision which is likely:
 - (a) to result in the local authority incurring expenditure, or making savings, which are significant having regard to the authority's budget for the service or function concerned;
 - or
 - (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards of the authority.
- 7.3 The regulations deliberately do not prescribe a national monetary figure for "significant". Instead, each authority can provide further local guidance in its constitution on what constitutes "significant expenditure" or "significant savings"
- 7.4 In practice this means that a decision will normally be a Key Decision if **either** of the following tests is met:

Test	Practical meaning	Example
Financial significance test	The level of expenditure or savings is sufficiently large when compared with the relevant service budget. Councils often set local thresholds	Awarding a major waste collection contract worth several million pounds.
Community impact test	The decision materially affects residents, businesses or communities in two or more wards. The impact does not have to be financial.	Closing a facility used by residents from several wards, or introducing a district-wide parking scheme.

- 7.5 If a matter is a Key Decision:
- It must be included in the authority's Forward Plan 28 days before the decision is taken
 - Advance notice must be given to members of the public and councillors.
 - The decision is subject to the authority's call-in and scrutiny arrangements unless an exception applies.
 - Additional transparency and access-to-information requirements apply.
- 7.6 Council is asked to approve that the value of £75,000 be set down as significant for the determination of a key decision.

Development of a policy framework

- 7.7 The Council has an established process for taking decisions, which would include any decisions related to the policy framework. This includes consideration of and carrying out public and stakeholder engagement, engagement with Overview and Scrutiny Committee and ultimately decision by Council. These are all set out in the Constitution and relevant strategies (e.g. community consultation strategy). The current wording of section 16 does not add to these established processes, and in place may detract from them.

Current budget setting process

- 7.8 The Council is required to set a balanced budget each year. This is a political decision as it reflects the priorities of the Council, but there are certain duties placed on the Council's Chief Finance Officer (Director – Resources) to ensure that budget is robust and set in accordance with legislation. Whilst the current processes have worked effectively, there would be a benefit to setting them out more clearly, and in some places adding timescales to them.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

Constitutional changes relating to Key Decisions:

- 8.1 North Herts Constitution does not currently include a monetary figure for "significant".
- 8.2 In order to provide clarity, it is proposed that the Council approve the insertion of a financial threshold of £75,000 into the definition set out in Section 2 of the constitution.
- 8.3 To assist, the following table sets out how neighbouring authorities deal with key decisions within their constitutions:

Authority	Constitutional key decision threshold
Stevenage Borough Council	The Council has determined that for Key Decisions, 'significant' means expenditure or savings exceeding £75,000 that has not already been last accounted for in the Council's budget, excluding any of the following excluding any of the following:

Authority	Constitutional key decision threshold
	a. Decisions relating to borrowing and investment within the Council's treasury management strategy; b. Decisions relating to the engagement and payment of staff, unless the Chief Executive determines otherwise; c. Decisions relating to the sale and purchase of land or property below £250,000; and d. Decisions relating to the acquisition of goods, services or works where provision has been made within the budget, and which are to be in accordance with existing Council policy, Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, and where the cost does not exceed £250,000
Hertfordshire Council	The Council will regard a decision as being a Key Decision under (i) above if the expenditure or savings concerned exceeds £500,000
East Hertfordshire Council	A Key Decision is an executive decision which is likely to: (a) result in new expenditure, income or savings of more than £200,000 in relation to the council's revenue or capital budget, this being deemed significant having regard to the council's overall budget; or (b) be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area consisting of two or more Wards
Central Bedfordshire Council	Over £500,000 expenditure (or equivalent significant savings) or is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the area of the Council.
Luton Borough Council	Statutory Definition only
St Albans City & District Council	Committee system
Dacorum Borough Council	Statutory Test only

- 8.4 The definition of key decision is found in Section 2 of the constitution. The changes to the definition are shown in red track changes in Appendix 1. Essentially the word 'significant' as shown in the statutory definition is replaced with the words 'exceeds £75,000.'
- 8.5 An additional consequential change is also required to the Contract Procedure Rules found in Section 21. The table shown on page 232 of the constitution contains a mandatory requirement for a decision notice being published for contracts exceeding £75,000, as shown in **bold** below.
- 8.6 Given that the effect of including a financial threshold to the definition of a key decision is that all decisions in excess of £75,000 will now be key decisions that are evidenced on the forward plan, a further decision notice, post award is no longer necessitated. The bold text can therefore be removed in its entirety.

Section 21, Contract Procurement Rules

Table 1 – Below Threshold Notice Requirements

Requirement	Procurement Activity	Notice Publication	Frequency
Optional	Preliminary market engagement	Preliminary market engagement notice	Publish where pre-market engagement is planned or has taken place
Mandatory	Request for Quotation / Invitation to Tender over £25k	Tender notice	Once at the start of the procurement process
Mandatory	Following award of a contract over £25k	Contract details notice	Once the contract is entered into
Mandatory	Following award of a contract over £75k	Decision notice	Once the contract is entered into and sent to Legal
Mandatory	When a contract modification would take the value of the contract above the relevant threshold, known as “convertible contracts”	Contract change notice	Once when the below-threshold contract becomes a convertible contract and again if further permitted modifications are made

Constitutional changes relating to Section 16

- 8.7 Appendix A sets out the proposed new version of Section 16 of the Constitution. Due to the substantial changes in wording this is shown as a new version, rather than as tracked changes.
- 8.8 Paragraphs 16.1 and 16.2 clarify and simplify the scope of this section, and the process for developing and changing the policy framework.
- 8.9 Section 16.3 sets out the approach for setting the budget each year. This mostly details established practice. The main changes (or formalising what has more recently been developed as good practice) are:
- For opposition alternative budget preproposals to be provided to the Chief Finance Officer in advance of the budget meeting. This allows time for comply with requirements in relation to setting a balanced budget. This is in paragraph 16.3.7.
 - Limiting any late administration budget amendments. This is in paragraph 16.3.8.
 - Each opposition group set of proposals will be treated as a package only. But with an exception where it is necessary to achieve an agreed budget. This is in paragraphs 16.3.9 and 16.3.10.
- 8.10 Sections 16.4 and 16.5 detail the process to be followed for decisions that are outside the policy framework or budget. Unless urgency provisions apply (section 16.5) then this will be a referral to Council. This section also adds new clarification as to what constitutes a decision that is contrary to the agreed budget.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Except where delegated by Council, variations to the Constitution may only be made by Full Council.
- 9.2. Pursuant to Section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council must prepare a constitution and keep it up to date. It must be available to the public and, under the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, be published on the Council's website. The proposed changes in this report will create greater clarity

Other legal implications are stated in the body of the report.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Overall the proposed changes should support improved financial management and decision making by the Council.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. 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.
- 11.2. The proposed changes help to clarify and strengthen the processes that the Council will follow. This includes improved compliance with legislation relating to key decisions and budget setting. Better governance is an important tool in reducing risk to the Council.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. 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.
- 12.2. There are no direct equalities impacts arising from these proposals.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Social Value Act and "go local" requirements do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. There are no specific Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 There are no direct HR implications arising from this report.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1 Appendix 1 – Amended Section 2 of the Constitution
- 16.2 Appendix 2- Amended Section 16 of the Constitution.

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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“Cabinet Panel”	This is a group of members that has ² been established by Cabinet as an investigatory and advisory body to Cabinet, Executive Members or relevant Directors on a subject area that falls within their terms of reference. For the avoidance of doubt the Panel will not duplicate the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. As defined under section 12.8.1(c) ³
“Chief Officer”	As defined under section 12.8.1(c) ³
“Councillor”	a person elected to the Council to represent an area (called an electoral ward) within North Hertfordshire District Council;
“Deputy Chief Officer”	As defined under the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 and relevant Regulations
“Executive”	the Cabinet or a Member or Members of the Cabinet when exercising Executive Functions;
“Executive Decision”	any decision taken by the Cabinet to exercise or refrain from exercising an Executive Function. It also includes decisions made by persons or member bodies to whom the Cabinet has delegated Executive Functions to exercise or refrain exercising those functions;
“Executive Function”	Executive Functions are defined by the Local Government Act 2000, subsidiary legislation and associated guidance. In general terms the provision of services, how the Council spends its budget, the Council’s procedures and management are Executive Functions. Contractual matters, the acquisition and disposal of land and financial support to organisations and individuals are also Executive Functions. The regulatory functions, for example, planning licensing and building control, are not Executive Functions; In this constitution the Notice of Key Decision and a Notice of Private Meeting of the Cabinet published by the Council over a four-month period (including decisions to be made by the Cabinet, individual Cabinet members or delegated officers).
“Forward Plan”	
“Full Council”	the body where all Councillors act to exercise functions of the Council;

² NB may be established by Council, but usually Cabinet.

³ To include all Directors irrespective of whether they directly report to the Head of Paid Service on the basis that they are directly accountable to the Head of Paid Service as per Regulation 2(7)(b) of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 1989

“Head of Paid Service”	an officer who must be appointed by law to carry out certain functions. See Section 12.2 for more details. The officer will usually have other duties and a different job title. See Section 12.1.4 for which officer is the Head of Paid Service. Any reference to Chief Executive in legislation or Council Policy and Procedure documents is deemed to be a reference to the holder of this position
“Independent Person”	the person(s) appointed by Full Council to fulfil the requirements of section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of complaints about Members
“Key Decision”	as defined in the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) (Regulations) 2012, means an executive decision which is likely:- (a) to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which exceed £75,000 having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District;
“Leader”	a Member of Cabinet responsible for chairing Cabinet.
“Legislation or Legislative”	See section 5.3. reference to legislation or legislative means any Act, Regulation, order, instrument or rule and/ or statutory guidance under such provisions, however expressed;
“Local Choice Functions”	there are some functions which the Council may treat as being the responsibility of the Cabinet (in whole or in part) or as being non-executive, at its discretion;
“Member”	a Councillor;
“Monitoring Officer”	an officer who must be appointed by law to carry out certain functions. See Section 12.3 for a description of those functions. The officer will usually have other duties and a different job title. See Section 12.1.4 for which officer is the Monitoring Officer;

² NB may be established by Council, but usually Cabinet.

³ To include all Directors irrespective of whether they directly report to the Head of Paid Service on the basis that they are directly accountable to the Head of Paid Service as per Regulation 2(7)(b) of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 1989

“Non-Executive Functions”	all functions of the Council which are not Executive Functions;
“Neighbourhood plans and orders”	Neighbourhood Plans, Neighbourhood Development Plans/ Orders, Community Right to Build Orders, Designation of Neighbourhood Area, Neighbourhood Forum or Business Area, including related referenda, Independent Examination (‘IE’) and incidental matters, or any other descriptions amending or replacing the same.”
“Policy Framework”	See Section 4.2;
“Executive Member”	a Member of Cabinet with particular responsibilities determined by the Leader
“Proper Officer”	means an officer to whom a duty/ role or decisionmaking power is delegated, as set out at Section 14.5 – 14.6 unless otherwise described;
“Section 151 Officer”	an officer who must be appointed by law to carry out certain functions. Also known as Chief Finance Officer. See Section 12.4 for a description of those functions. The officer will usually have other duties and a different job title. See Section 12.1.4 for which officer is the Section 151 Officer;
“Service”	one of the services provided by the Council, for example Waste collection, Council Tax collection, Leisure;
“SIAS”	means the Shared Internal Audit Service appointed by the Chief Finance Officer to undertake the Internal Audit function for the Council
“Statutory Officer”	the Head of Paid Service, the Section 151 Officer or the Monitoring Officer A Councillor representing an individual or group within a ward (or at the request of another Councillor in a single “Ward Advocate” Member ward to so so) on an issue, application, concern. This should be subject to the Code of Conduct rules on interests and not being involved in any subsequent decision making on the matter.

2.3 Interpretation of the Constitution

2.3.1 We have tried to make the Constitution as clear and as easy to understand as possible. Inevitably, people will have different views about what certain passages mean.

2.3.2 During meetings, the ruling of the person chairing or presiding at the meeting either to the interpretation or application of the Constitution or as to any proceedings of the Council (or part of it) shall be final and not challenged.

2.3.3 In all other situations, the Monitoring Officer will determine the interpretation and application of the Constitution.

2.4 Duty to Monitor and Review the Constitution

² NB may be established by Council, but usually Cabinet.

³ To include all Directors irrespective of whether they directly report to the Head of Paid Service on the basis that they are directly accountable to the Head of Paid Service as per Regulation 2(7)(b) of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 1989

The Monitoring Officer will monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure that the aims and principles of the Constitution are given full effect. The Chief Finance Officer shall be responsible for keeping under review the Financial Regulations set out in Section 19 of the Constitution and shall make any necessary amendments and revisions as are required from time to time as defined in paragraph 2.6 of the Constitution. The Constitution will be reviewed on an annual basis with a substantive review every 3 years.

2.5 Protocol for Monitoring and Review of Constitution by Monitoring Officer

A key role for the Monitoring Officer is to make recommendations for ways in which the Constitution could be amended in order to better achieve the purposes set out in this Section. In undertaking this task, the Monitoring Officer may:

2.5.1 Observe meetings of different parts of the Member and officer structure;

2.5.2 Undertake an audit trail of a sample of decisions;

2.5.3 Record and analyse issues raised with them by Members, officers, the public and other relevant stakeholders; and

2.5.4 Compare practices in this Council with those in comparable authorities, or national examples of best practice.

The Monitoring Officer must consult with Group Leaders and other Members as appropriate if proposing changes to the Constitution.

2.6 Changes to the Constitution including the Contract Procurement Rules and Financial Regulations

2.6.1 Approval

Subject to paragraph 2.6.2 below, changes to the Constitution are for Full Council to decide after consideration of the proposal by the Monitoring Officer, and on recommendation of the Standards Committee, or on recommendation of the Cabinet.

2.6.2 Minor Changes

If, in the reasonable opinion of the Monitoring Officer or the Chief Finance Officer, a change is:

- a) a minor variation; or
- b) required to be made to remove any inconsistency, ambiguity or typographical error; or
- c) required to be made so as to put into effect any decision of the Council or its committees or the Cabinet; or
- d) requested only for practical purposes, in order to ensure the proper administration of the Council, the Monitoring Officer or the Chief Finance Officer may make such a change.

2.6.3 Any change made under paragraph 2.6.2(d) shall come into force with immediate effect but shall be referred to Full Council as soon as is reasonably possible and shall continue to have effect only if Full Council agree.

2.6.4 Changes made under paragraph 2.6.2 must be notified to all Members.

2.6.5 Changes to Mayoral Form of Executive

² NB may be established by Council, but usually Cabinet.

³ To include all Directors irrespective of whether they directly report to the Head of Paid Service on the basis that they are directly accountable to the Head of Paid Service as per Regulation 2(7)(b) of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 1989

The Council must take reasonable steps to consult with local electors and other interested persons in the area when drawing up proposals and must hold a binding referendum.

2.6.6 Legislative Change

Any part of the Constitution may be amended by the Monitoring Officer where such amendment is required to be made so as to comply with any legislative provision. Such amendments shall take effect when the Monitoring Officer so decides, or the legislation (where relevant) so provides. Such changes shall be reported to the next full Council meeting.

2.7 Suspension of the Constitution

2.7.1 Limit to Suspension

The Rules of this Constitution may not be suspended. Any of the Rules, with the exception of those contained in Sections 4.8.16(f), 4.8.16(h) and 4.8.17(b) may be suspended to the extent permitted within these Rules and the law.

2.7.2 Procedure to Suspend

A motion to suspend any Rules will not be moved without notice unless at least one half of the whole number of Councillors is present. The extent and duration of suspension will be proportionate to the result to be achieved, taking account of the purposes of the Constitution set out in this Section.

2.8 Publication

2.8.1 The Proper Officer will ensure that copies of this Constitution are available for inspection at Council offices.

2.8.2 The Proper Officer will if requested, give a printed copy of this Constitution to Members of the Council upon delivery to them of that individual's declaration of acceptance of office on the Member first being elected to the Council.

2.8.3 The Constitution will be published on the Council's website.

² NB may be established by Council, but usually Cabinet.

³ To include all Directors irrespective of whether they directly report to the Head of Paid Service on the basis that they are directly accountable to the Head of Paid Service as per Regulation 2(7)(b) of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 1989

SECTION 16

16. Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules

16.1 The Framework for Decisions

- 16.1.1 The Council will be responsible for the adoption of its Budget and Policy Framework as set out in Section 4. Once a Budget or a Policy Framework is in place, it will be the responsibility of the Cabinet to implement it.

16.2 Process for developing and changing the Policy Framework

- 16.2.1 The processes and protocol for changes to the Constitution are set out in Sections 2.4 to 2.6. Changes to the Financial Regulations (Section 20) and the Contract Procurement Rules (section 21) that require approval by Council, are referred via Finance, Audit and Risk Committee for review of the governance implications.
- 16.2.2 Other elements of the Policy Framework will be recommended by Cabinet on to Council. Overview and Scrutiny Committee can consider it as part of their work programme. Either Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee can consider stakeholder engagement, but consultation should not be duplicated. To the extent that it is covered by their terms of reference, other Committees can also provide input in the process. Cabinet will consider all the comments and recommendations that are made to it, and detail how they have been considered in making its recommendation on to Council.

16.3 Process for developing and approving the Budget

- 16.3.1 The section should be read in conjunction with sections 2 and 4 of the Financial Regulations (section 20 of the Constitution).
- 16.3.2 Council will approve a revised Medium Term Financial Strategy each year. This will be recommended to Council by Cabinet, and Finance, Audit and Risk Committee will provide comment (as per their terms of reference) in advance of this being considered by Cabinet. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy will estimate the financial resources available and make recommendations on general budget estimate (e.g. inflationary impacts).
- 16.3.3 All budget proposals should be in accordance with the adopted Council Plan or to respond to a statutory obligation. Executive Members will work with Officers to determine priorities and the cost and other resource implications of implementing proposals. Where Council Motions have been passed during the year that make recommendations with cost or resource implications then these will be considered as part of this process.
- 16.3.4 The proposals (which will include both increases and decreases to revenue and capital expenditure) will be presented to informal Budget Workshops. The Budget Workshops will be split between administration and opposition Councillors. They provide a confidential opportunity to review and ask questions of the proposals that have been put forward. The Workshops also provide an opportunity for alternative proposals to be considered.
- 16.3.5 Following the Budget Workshops, Cabinet will determine which proposals will be taken forward to be considered as part of the final budget. In considering this, they will receive an update on funding forecasts. Finance, Audit and Risk Committee will provide comment (as per their terms of reference) in advance of this being considered by Cabinet.
- 16.3.6 The final budget will be considered by Cabinet in early February, for recommendation on to Council at the end of February. Finance, Audit and Risk Committee will provide comment (as per their terms of reference) in advance of this being considered by Cabinet.
- 16.3.7 Opposition Groups can each propose a package of alternative budget proposals. These must be provided to the Chief Finance Officer (or a designated member of the finance team) at least 5 working days in advance of the Council meeting that approves the budget. The alternative budget proposals will be published as an addendum to the Council report, along with a report on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the Council reserves to afford the financial

impact. This is in accordance with section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003. The Chief Finance Officer has a statutory obligation to refuse any proposals that do not allow the Council to set a balanced budget.

- 16.3.8 The Administration Group can only make minor changes to their budget proposals to the extent that they reflect new information that has become available. Such changes should be provided to the Section 151 Officer as soon as is practicable, so that they can determine the impact on the budget estimates. The changes will be published as an addendum to the Council report, along with a report on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the Council reserves to afford the financial impact. The Chief Finance Officer has a statutory obligation to refuse any changes that do not allow the Council to set a balanced budget.
- 16.3.9 At the Council meeting, the changes detailed in paragraph 16.3.8 will form part of the substantive budget proposal. Any opposition group proposals (as per paragraph 16.3.7) will each be considered as a package, and it will not be permitted to vote on individual items within those proposals.
- 16.3.10 With the agreement of the Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer, rules 16.3.8 and 16.3.9 can be waived where it is in the interests of achieving sufficient consensus to get the Budget approved by Council.

16.4 Decisions Outside the Policy Framework or Budget

- 16.4.1 Decisions must be taken in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework. Any decision being taken that is contrary to this must be taken by Full Council, unless urgency provisions apply (see paragraph 16.5). The decision by Council can be to allow an exceptional decision to be taken outside of the Policy Framework or Budget, or to change the Policy Framework or Budget. The Monitoring Officer will approve changes to the Policy Framework to ensure compliance with the law, ministerial direction or government guidance. The Chief Finance Officer will approve changes to the Budget that ensure compliance with the law, ministerial direction or government guidance.
- 16.4.2 It is the responsibility of the decision-taker to take advice from the Monitoring Officer and/or the Chief Finance Officer as to whether the decision they want to make would be contrary to the Policy Framework or Budget.
- 16.4.3 In general, an item of revenue expenditure will be determined to be contrary to the Budget if it is either:
 - (a) A completely new item of expenditure that is not in line with approved budgets or existing delegations, or;
 - (b) An item of expenditure that is linked to an approved budget but is delivering it a new way or extending how it is being delivered, and leads to a significant increase in Council expenditure (above £75k).
- 16.4.4 For new items of capital expenditure, the financial regulations (section 20, paragraph 5.7) allow the Executive Member with responsibility for Finance to approve up to £100k. New items of expenditure above that threshold will be outside the approved budget. Increases in costs to deliver approved capital projects, will only be considered to be outside the budget where they arise from material changes to the scope of the project.

16.5 Urgent Decisions Outside the Policy Framework or Budget

- 16.5.1 In addition to other urgency powers, urgent decisions that are outside the Policy Framework or Budget can be taken:
 - (a) if it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of the Full Council; and
 - (b) if the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees that the decision is a matter of urgency.

- 16.5.2 The reasons why it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of Full Council and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's consent to the decision being taken as a matter of urgency must be noted on the record of the decision. In the absence of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the consent of the Head of Paid Service will be sufficient. The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee should receive copies of any individual Executive delegated decision that could be subject to call-in. Delegated decisions must be taken, recorded and published in accordance with the Council's Guidance the statutory requirements and procedures.
- 16.5.3 Following the decision, the decision taker will provide a full report to the next available Council meeting explaining the decision, the reasons for it and why the decision was treated as a matter of urgency.

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COUNCIL
THURSDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2026

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: National Scheme of Delegation

REPORT OF: Director - Place

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Executive Member - Governance; Executive Member - Place

COUNCIL PRIORITY: All Priorities;

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
This report introduces the statutory National Scheme of Delegation for planning applications that comes into effect on 31 October 2026. It seeks approval for necessary amendments to the Council Constitution to operate the National Scheme of Delegation. It also introduces (i) operational guidance that will be maintained and update as required by officers and (ii) discretionary guidance on the use of member briefings and site visits for applications of significance.
2. RECOMMENDATIONS
2.1. That the amendments to Section 8.4 of the Constitution, attached as Appendix 1, be approved for implementation from 31 October 2026.
2.2. That the Planning Scheme of Management, attached as Appendix 2 and guidance in relation to committee briefings and site visits, attached as Appendix 3, are noted.
3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS
3.1. A mandatory, National Scheme of Delegation (NSD) takes effect from 31 October 2026. Statutory Government guidance states that authorities' Constitutions must be amended to give effect to these new requirements in time.
3.2. Alongside the constitutional changes, operational guidance – the Planning Scheme of Management - will also be published. This sets out arrangements by which schemes for potential referral to Planning Control Committee are considered, as well as operational delegations to officers to make decisions in accordance with the NSD.
3.3. A report was published for Full Council to consider the committee briefings and site visit guidance at its meeting in April 2026. This item was deferred from consideration.
3.4. Subsequent legal advice, as well as good practice guidance published to assist with implementing the NSD, is now that additional and administrative guidance should not be constitutional. This enables it to be updated more efficiently and responsively.
3.5. This guidance is presented to provide broader context to the operational implications and procedural changes that are being introduced.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. There are no reasonable alternatives to recommendation 2.1. The National Scheme of Delegation is a nationwide change to statutory and regulatory requirements.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. The informal, cross-party Strategic Planning Project Board were briefed in June 2026 and have been kept apprised of work being undertaken to ensure compliance, as well as with broader procedural changes arising from a peer review of the planning service conducted in late 2025.
- 5.2. An information note on the NSD was presented to Planning Control Committee in July 2026 and was debated by Members.
- 5.3. A constitutional working group to discuss the changes necessitated by the NSD was held in September 2026. Representatives of the three main political groups were invited to attend. This included discussion of the draft Scheme of Management.
- 5.4. All Members were invited to attend a briefing on 30 September 2026 to explain the NSD in more detail and set out the practical implications.
- 5.5. All Parish Councils have been invited to attend information sessions as part of the upcoming Local Plan consultation. Officers are presenting to each of these sessions on the NSD.
- 5.6. Following deferral of the guidance from Full Council in April, Group Leaders were requested to provide any additional comments for consideration. Those comments received have been considered in the revised version of the guidance attached to this report.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. Considering applications for planning permission is one of the core, statutory duties of local authorities. Town and Country Planning was nationalised in the post-war era to ensure that proposed developments could be consistently assessed against relevant interests, policies and guidance. Over time a substantial legal, regulatory framework has been developed.
- 7.2. Applications are considered via two main routes. Offices consider and determine most applications under delegated powers. For North Herts, approximately 96% of applications are determined this way.
- 7.3. The remainder are determined by Planning Control Committee (PCC). PCC determines the largest applications and matters of local interest. Broadly speaking, there are two main routes by which applications currently reach PCC (though this doesn't cover all scenarios):

- a. Applications which are referred by default due to their nature or size
 - b. Applications which are 'called-in' for consideration by elected Councillors, either directly or in support of an objection made by a Parish Council
- 7.4. The scope of (a) and (b) have previously been matters for local determination. Authorities use their constitutions and associated guidance to set out which matters should be referred by default and how local councillors might call-in applications for consideration.
- 7.5. The NSD changes this by stipulating, through secondary legislation, which planning applications local councils must delegate to planning officers and which can be considered for referral to committee.
- 7.6. This follows a Government consultation earlier in the year. The response on Planning Committee Reform was published on 2 June 2026 alongside draft regulations. The accompanying statutory guidance states local authorities will need to amend their constitutions to align with the national scheme. Draft regulations have been laid before Parliament with an implementation date of October 31 2026.
- 7.7. The NSD will split all planning applications into either
 - Schedule 1 (Mandatory Delegation) that must be determined by planning officers; or
 - Schedule 2 (Presumed Delegation) which are presumed to be delegated unless:
 - a. they meet certain criteria;
 - b. are made on behalf of the Local Authority or a Councillor or employee; or
 - c. a nominated officer and nominated Councillor (see below) agree it should be referred for Committee consideration.
- 7.8. Schedule 1 includes all householder applications, minor commercial applications and minor residential applications as well as all reserved matters other than in respect of a "large" outline permission (defined as 500 or more homes or 50,000m2 of floorspace).
- 7.9. The authority will need to identify the "nominated officer" and "nominated Councillor". This function may be fulfilled by more than one person and / or provide for substitutes. However, the statutory guidance sets a presumption these roles will be fulfilled by the Chief Planning Officer (or equivalent) and the chair of planning committee.
- 7.10. The nominated individuals will be charged with determining whether a Schedule 2 application raises one or more issues of economic, social, environmental or planning significance ('the gateway test'). If the consensus is that they do, then they may be reported to Planning Control Committee. The test of significance relates to material planning considerations and will not be triggered solely by the level of public interest or opposition to a scheme. The nominated officer has final decision-making power on this matter.
- 7.11. However, it is not a requirement that all Schedule 2 applications must be considered in this way; Councils set out which Schedule 2 applications will be subject to this consideration with the remainder being delegated. Officers may also use their professional judgment and discretion to identify Schedule 2 applications which are clearly unlikely to trigger the gateway test.
- 7.12. Under the NSD current 'call-in' practices will not be possible. This includes those in support of an objection by a Parish or Town Council. The response from parish and town

councils will be considered by officers as they are for all applications currently when a comment is received, whether they are determined under delegated powers or by the Planning Control Committee (PCC).

- 7.13. The NSD does not diminish the importance of representations made by Parish and Town Councils – who remain statutory consultees – or their abilities to (for example) raise relevant considerations, request appropriate contributions towards infrastructure projects or attend PCC to speak in relation to committee items. Their comments will continue to be treated as material planning representations and considered in the same way as any other consultation response. The change affects only the mechanism by which an application may be referred to Committee.
- 7.14. The regulations also place a statutory limit on the size of the planning committee at 13 members. As North Herts' PCC currently has 12 members this does not require any change but Members should remain mindful of this in any future reviews.
- 7.15. It will also be necessary to make appropriate accompanying and complementary changes to officer delegations and procedures. To support Councils, the Planning Officers' Society have produced a range of templates and good practice guidance which have been considered and used as appropriate.
- 7.16. Whilst the NSD reduces the circumstances in which planning applications may be referred to Committee going forward, it does not alter the fundamental role of elected Members in setting planning policy through the Local Plan and associated planning documents, determining applications that raise issues of planning significance, assisting residents on planning matters, establishing the Council's planning service priorities and scrutinising planning performance

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

Recommendation 2.1 – The Constitution

- 8.1. Giving effect to the NSD requires changes to the Council's Constitution relating to Planning Control Committee (Section 8.4). These changes are set out at Appendix A.
- 8.2. These changes **introduce**:
 - Reference to PCC determining applications referred to it in accordance with the regulations (Section 8.4.4 of the Constitution);
 - All other applications being determined under delegated powers (8.4.5)
 - Requirements to be met for applications to be referred to PCC (8.4.6, 8.4.7)
 - Nominated officer and Member provisions (8.4.8)
 - Record keeping and transparency, including maintaining an operational scheme of management (8.4.9, 8.4.10)
- 8.3. The practical effect of these is discussed further below under Recommendation 2.2.
- 8.4. The remaining, current provisions of the Constitution in relation to PCC are deleted. These changes **remove**:
 - The ability of the Director: Place to directly refer a matter to PCC (deleted 8.4.4); and
 - The various criteria used under the current constitution to determine whether applications are referred to PCC, including call-in provisions for Councillors (deleted 8.4.5).

- 8.5. As set out above, there are no alternates to this course of action. The Statutory Guidance is clear that authorities' who do not align their Constitutions to the NSD in readiness for 31 October 2026 would be liable for judicial review.

Recommendation 2.2 – The Scheme of Management

- 8.6. The Scheme of Management says how the NSD will be implemented in practice for North Herts. This includes establishing appropriate delegations for officers to make decisions, prescribing nominated persons and substitutes for the purposes of the regulations, and setting out how applications will be considered under the regulations (broadly referred to as triaging).
- 8.7. The Scheme of Management will sit outside of the Constitution. As operational guidance, it falls within the general delegation for planning matters granted to the Director: Place by Section 14 of the Constitution. As the NSD beds in, it is possible that changes will need to be made to the Scheme of Management to better reflect how new processes are operating in practice, or to respond to any issues that arise. The Scheme of Management is presented for information as part of this report for transparency and to inform any debate.
- 8.8. Any queries or points of clarification raised by Members at the meeting will be considered by the Director: Place prior to final publication.
- 8.9. Key elements to highlight within the Scheme of Management (beyond matters that are already secured in the recommended constitutional amendments above) are:
- That the Vice-Chair of Planning Control Committee will act as the substitute nominated member;
 - That the Director: Place will likely, in practice, sub-delegate their nominated officer responsibilities to the Development & Conservation Manager with the principal officers acting as substitutes;
 - That the following 'Schedule 2' application types will be automatically delegated for decision by officers:
 - a. S73 [variation of existing permission] applications where there are no objections
 - b. Advertisement consent where there are no objections
 - c. Tree Preservation Orders where there are no objections
 - d. Listed building consent to Grade II buildings without an associated planning application where there are no objections
 - That the Director: Place, Development & Conservation Manager and Principal Planning Officers may use their professional judgement to identify Schedule 2 applications that would not meet the threshold in the gateway test; and
 - Standard explanations to be inserted into report templates to explain how the means of determining that application has been arrived at.
- 8.10. The Schedule 2 application types identified in the third bullet point above are generally technical, specialist or regulatory in nature and officers' professional judgement is that they very rarely raise issues that would be capable of satisfying the statutory significance threshold in the gateway test. There may be other Schedule 2 applications that, following (e.g.) an initial assessment or the receipt of consultation responses, officers will be able to determine should be determined under delegated powers.

Recommendation 2.2 – Planning Guidance on Briefings and Site Visits

- 8.11. A report was prepared for Full Council in April 2026 outlining a proposed approach to member briefings and site visits. Under the terms of that report, the guidance would have been incorporated into the Constitution if approved. The matter was deferred without being debated.
- 8.12. As above, more recent advice is now that operational guidance should sit outside the constitution to allow for regular review and update. Notwithstanding this, and given that the April 2026 deferral remains ‘unresolved’, the guidance is presented for information.
- 8.13. Key changes to the guidance from the version published in April are:
- Amending introductory sections in line with the NSD and Constitution (as proposed)
 - Additional text around timings and intended notice periods for site visits
- 8.14. Other issues raised following the April deferral, relating to call-in, have been negated by the NSD.
- 8.15. Both documents provided under Recommendation 2.2 will be published as operational guidance under delegated authorities. However, any comments from Members raised through debate will be taken into consideration in their finalisation. Updates are additionally being made to speaking procedures at Committee meetings. This is in response to the recommendations of a voluntary peer review of the planning service by the Planning Officers Society and to reflect the NSD insofar as it relates to advocacy and call-in. The recommendations of the POS review on this matter and the proposed response have previously been reviewed and endorsed by the cross-party Strategic Planning Project Board in consultation with the chair and vice-chair of PCC.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The National Scheme of Delegation is introduced by The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026, which give effect to new provisions introduced into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 by the Planning & Infrastructure Act 2025.
- 9.2. The accompanying statutory guidance makes clear that failure to implement the NSD carries a significant legal risk:

For the avoidance of doubt, where local planning authorities do not comply with the Regulations from the date they come into force (31 October 2026) and their planning committees make decisions on applications which must be delegated officers, those decisions may be subject to judicial review by anyone aggrieved by the decision. This may lead to the quashing of the decision.

- 9.3. Section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000 as amended sets out the duty of the Council to prepare and keep up to date its constitution.
- 9.4. The Council Constitution is made available on our public website and it is for the Monitoring Officer to monitor and review the operation of the constitution on an ongoing basis and where necessary bring forward amendments to Council.

- 9.5. The Director: Place holds a general delegation for Planning and Development Management issues other than matters reserved to the Planning Control Committee under Section 14.6.10(b)(iv) of the Constitution. Sub-delegations to officers are being reviewed and updated as required to implement the NSD.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. No direct financial implications. The administrative costs of introducing the NSD and associated procedures is being met from within existing staff resources.
- 10.2. Government has separately legislated to increase planning fees from December 2026, though this is not explicitly linked to the introduction of the NSD. The implications of this rise will be considered through normal budget processes.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. 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.
- 11.2. The key risk is as set out in the legal implications above.
- 11.3. Clear and appropriate guidance and frameworks help to ensure good governance of the Council and therefore reduce risk of poor practice or unlawful decision making.
- 11.4. During the implementation period there is a risk of misunderstanding by applicants, residents and elected Members regarding the changed arrangements. This will be mitigated through training, briefing sessions and publication of guidance.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. 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.
- 12.2. There are no equalities implications.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 None, though this will be monitored. It is presently anticipated that the effects of the NSD can be managed through existing staff resources and / or regular reviews of the service through normal budget setting cycles. Although procedures and the balance of committee vs delegated decisions are altering, the NSD is not expected to directly lead to any substantive change in the number of applications received.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1. Appendix 1 – Amendments to Section 8.4 of the Constitution
- 16.2. Appendix 2 – Planning Scheme of Management
- 16.3. Appendix 3 – Planning Control Committee Guidance on Briefings and Site Visits

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1 [Report to Full Council – April 2026: Adoption of the Planning Control Committee Additional Guidance](#)

SECTION 8

8. Regulatory Committees

8.1 ...

8.2 ...

8.3 ...

8.4 Planning Control Committee

8.4.1 Membership

No more than twelve (12) members shall be appointed to the Planning Control Committee.

[Note - members may be requested to present to a Planning Inquiry or Hearing any Planning Control Committee objection to a planning application or reasons for refusing an application.]

8.4.2 Quorum

The quorum for a meeting of the Planning Control Committee shall be five (5) voting members of that Committee.

8.4.3 Meetings

There shall be twelve (12) regular meetings of the Committee per year. The procedure for the participation of members of the public and non-Committee members is set out in Appendix 1 to this Section 8.

8.4.4 The Planning Control Committee shall determine those planning applications and related matters referred to it in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 (as may be amended) and any associated statutory guidance.

8.4.5 Applications not referred to the Planning Control Committee in accordance with those Regulations shall be determined by officers under delegated authority in accordance with the Council's Planning Scheme of Management which may be altered from time to time.

8.4.6 Applications falling within Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 may be referred to the Planning Control Committee only where:

- (a) the nominated officer and member agree that referral is appropriate; and
- (b) the requirements of Regulation 5 are satisfied.

8.4.7 Applications made by the Council, a Member, or officer, or any application in which the Council, a Member or an officer has an interest shall be considered in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026.

Nominated Officer / Nominated Member Provisions

8.4.8 For the purposes of the National Scheme of Delegation:

- (a) the Director: Place (or officer delegated officer under the Planning Management Scheme and delegated such authority in accordance with Section 14 of The Constitution) shall act as the nominated officer;
- (b) the Chair of the Planning Control Committee (or such substitute arrangements as the Council may determine) shall act as the nominated member.

Appropriate substitute arrangements shall be maintained where either individual is unavailable or has an interest in the application concerned.

Record Keeping and Transparency Provision

- 8.4.9 The Council shall maintain a record of:
 - (a) Applications considered for referral to the Planning Control Committee under the National Scheme of Delegation;
 - (b) Whether referral was agreed or refused; and
 - (c) The reasons for that decision.Such information shall reported periodically to the Planning Control Committee and published on the Council's website.
- 8.4.10 The Director: Place shall maintain, periodically review and publish a scheme of management setting out operational arrangements for the National Scheme of Delegation.

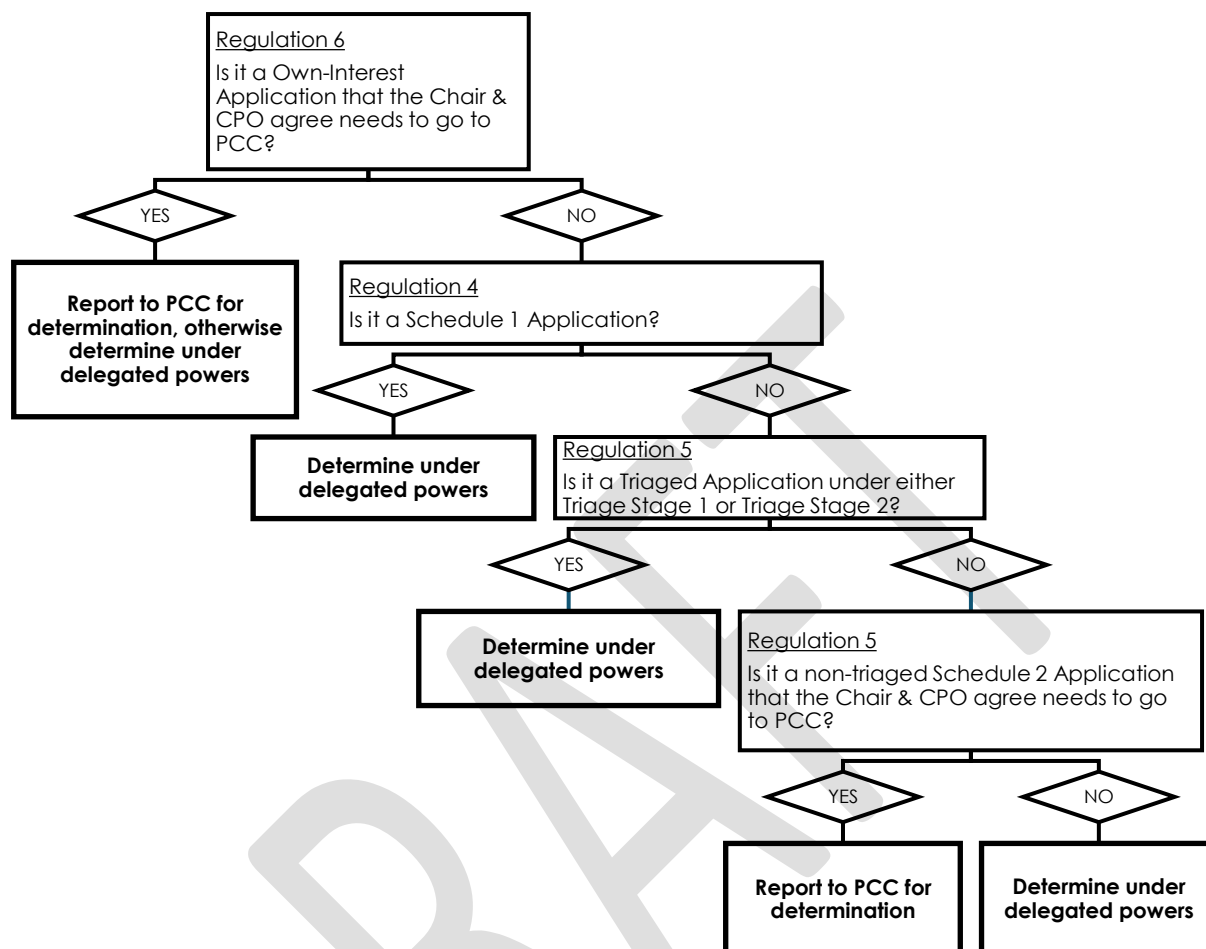
[No changes to Appendix 1 to Section 8 – THE MEMBERS PLANNING CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE]

Planning Scheme of Management

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Reference to Regulations in this document is a reference to the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026.
- 1.2 The Regulations split all applications for development into either:
- Schedule 1 applications which **must** be determined by officers under delegated authority
 - Schedule 2 applications which **may** be determined by Planning Control Committee. Where a Schedule 2 application is not determined by Planning Control Committee it is determined by officers under delegated authority.
- 1.3 The following planning applications must be determined by Planning Control Committee:
- Those applications listed in Schedule 2 of the Regulations that the Nominated Member and the Nominated Officer agree that referral to and determination by Planning Control Committee is necessary.
 - An Own-Interest Application, as defined in the Regulations, that the Nominated Member and the Nominated Officer agree that referral to and determination by Planning Control Committee is necessary.
 - Any other planning matter that an officer of the authority with delegated powers considers that referral to and determination by Planning Control Committee is necessary
- 1.4 The means of determining a Schedule 2 application is decided through:
- A locally-formulated **Triage System**. This identifies categories of Schedule 2 applications that will be determined by officers in all cases.
 - Those applications which are not triaged will be *considered* for referral to Planning Control Committee through a **Gateway Test**.

- 1.4 These processes and officer delegations are summarised in this diagram and set out in detail below.



Adapted from template provided by the Planning Officers Society (see Appendix 3)

Triage System

- 1.5 As recommended in the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Guidance that accompanied the Regulations, where local planning authorities anticipate that there may be a significant number of cases which meet the criteria in regulation 5(3) (Gateway Test) or which may fall under regulation 6 (Own-Interest Application) and which could therefore be considered for referral to committee, they may wish to put in place a triage system to ensure that the nominated officer and nominated member of the committee are not overwhelmed and to avoid any unnecessary delays in planning decision making.
- 1.6 The Council's Triage System has two stages:
- Stage 1: a category or part of a category of an application of a kind specified by Schedule 2 which should be treated as such.

- Stage 2: a specific application of a kind specified by Schedule 2 where an officer with delegated powers considers it should be treated as such because the criteria in Regulation 5(3) are clearly not engaged.

1.7 Those application types that fall into stage 1 are listed in the Schedule 2 appendix.

Delegation And Sub-Delegation

This Planning Scheme of Management for the purposes of Regulation 3 sets out the following:

- A. the member of the authority who acts as the Nominated Member;
- B. one or more members of the authority who act as a substitute for the Nominated Member;
- C. the officer of the authority who acts as the Nominated Officer; and
- D. one or more officers of the authority who act as a substitute for the Nominated Officer.

1.8 With respect to A and B different members can be nominated for different purposes. With respect to C and D different officers can be nominated for different purposes.

1.9 This document also sets out:

- the officer(s) of the authority who have delegated powers to determine a Schedule 1 planning application (Regulation 4) (See Appendix 1);
- the officer(s) of the authority who have delegated powers to determine a Schedule 2 planning application (Regulation 5) (see appendix 2);
- the officer(s) of the authority who have delegated powers to determine an Own-Interest Application (Regulation 6); and
- the officer(s) of the authority who have delegated powers under the Constitution to determine any other planning matter.

1.10 This document is published on the Council's website.

2 Nominated Members

2.1 Pursuant to Regulation 3(1)(a) and 3(2)(a):

- The Nominated Member for the purposes of Regulations 5 and 6 is the Chair of Planning Control Committee.

Substitutes

2.2 Pursuant to Regulation 3(2)(b), where the Nominated Member is unavailable for whatever reason, the substitute Nominated Member is the Vice Chair of Planning Control Committee.

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3 Nominated Officers

3.1 Pursuant to Regulation 3(1)(b) and 3(2)(a):

- The Nominated Officer for the purposes of Regulations 5 and 6 is the Director: Place. The Nominated Officer may, by sub-delegation under Section 14 of the Constitution, permit the Development & Conservation Manager to discharge the responsibilities of the Nominated Officer.

Substitutes

3.2 Pursuant to Regulation 3(2)(b), and absent any sub-delegation under 3.1, where the Nominated Officer is unavailable for whatever reason, the substitute Nominated Officer is the Development and Conservation Manager.

3.3 In exceptional circumstances where both the Director: Place and Development & Conservation Manager are unavailable for whatever reason, the substitute nominated officers are the Principal Planning Officer: Development Management and the Principal Planning Officer: Major Sites.

4 Sub-Delegation

- 4.1 The Regulations and the Constitution provide that different officers can be nominated for different purposes with respect to the determination of planning applications and other planning matters.

Schedule 1 And Schedule 2 Triaged Applications

- 4.2 The Director: Place has sub-delegated the task of determining the following planning application categories to the following officers of the LPA.

Schedule 1 Applications (Regulation 4)

- 4.3 Applications that must be determined by officers.

Table 1

Application category	Development & Conservation Manager	Principal Planning Officers	Senior Planning Officers
Householder development	Yes	Yes	No
Minor commercial development	Yes	Yes	No
Discharge of conditions	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prior approval applications	Yes	Yes	No
Permission in principle	Yes	Yes	No
Non-material amendments	Yes	Yes	No
Section 73 applications	Yes	Yes	No
Reserved matters approval	Yes	Yes	No
S106A applications	Yes	Yes	No
Biodiversity Net Gain	Yes	Yes	No
Certificates of Appropriate alternative development	Yes	Yes	No
Certificates of lawfulness	Yes	Yes	No

Schedule 2 Triaged Applications (Regulation 5) [Triage Stage 1]

- 4.4 Triaged Applications identified in the Scheme of Delegation.
- 4.5 Under Regulation 5 of The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026, triaged applications are specific planning proposals listed in Schedule 2 that carry a default presumption of being decided by a planning officer. Applications in this category are automatically delegated and decided by a planning officer.

Table 2

Application category	Development & Conservation Manager	Principal Planning Officer
S73 applications where there are no objections	Yes	Yes
Advertisement consent where there are no objections	Yes	Yes
Tree Preservation Orders where there are no objections	Yes	Yes
Listed building consent to Grade II buildings without an associated planning application where there are no objections	Yes	Yes

Schedule 2 Residual Applications (Regulation 5) [Triage Stage 2]

- 4.6 Triaged Applications capable of being identified and determined by officers.
- 4.7 Under Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026, "residual applications" (referred to as **Schedule 2 applications**) are those planning and related consent applications that are **not** strictly mandated for mandatory officer delegation under Schedule 1, meaning they *may* potentially be referred to a planning committee instead of being automatically decided by an officer.

Table 3

Application category	Development & Conservation Manager	Principal Planning Officer
Major development	Yes	Yes
Listed building consent Grade I and II* and	Yes	Yes

Grade II where there is a connected planning application		
Connected to LB application	Yes	Yes
Large reserved matters	Yes	No
Retrospective applications	Yes	Yes
S73 applications where there are objections	Yes	Yes

Residual Schedule 2 And Own-Interest Application

- 4.6 The role of Nominated Member and Nominated Officer is to decide whether a non-triaged Schedule 2 application or an Own-Interest Application is determined by Planning Control Committee. Where it is not to be determined by Planning Control Committee, the Director: Place has sub-delegated the task of determining the following planning application categories to the following officers of the LPA.

Schedule 2 Non-Gateway-Test Applications (Regulation 5)

Table 4

Application category	Development & Conservation Manager	Principal Planning Officer
Major development	Yes	Yes
Listed building consent	Yes	Yes
Connected to LB application	Yes	Yes
Large reserved matters	Yes	Yes
Retrospective applications	Yes	Yes
S73 applications	Yes	Yes

Own-Interest Applications (Regulation 6)

Table 5

Application category	Director: Place	Development & Conservation Manager	Principal Planning Officer
Made by the Authority	Yes	Yes	No

Made by Personnel within Place	No	No	No
Made by a Member	No	No	No
Perceived interest	Yes	Yes	Yes

Other Planning Matters

- 4.7 The Constitution delegates all planning matters to the Director: Place, save for those matters that must be determined by Full Council, the Executive or Planning Control Committee. The Director: Place has sub-delegated the task of determining the following planning matters to the following officers of the LPA.

Category	Director: Place	Development & Conservation Manager	Principal Planning Officer
Pre-application enquiries	Yes	Yes	Yes
Purchase Notices	Yes	No	No
Identifying a Schedule 2 Residual Application for determination under delegated powers [Triage Stage 2]	Yes	Yes	Yes

- 4.8 With respect to a planning matter that is delegated to the Director: Place but is not listed above, the Director: Place can, at their discretion, sub-delegate the task of determining the matter to another officer.

5 Use of Delegated Powers

5.1 When using delegated powers or referring a matter to committee for a determination, the Nominated Officer and the Nominated Member, when involved, and an officer of the LPA must make sure that they take such decisions in the appropriate way and that they are recorded. This should be captured in the associated delegated or committee report with respective sections titled:

- Reason for determining under delegated powers
- Reason for referral to Committee

5.2 These reasons should be succinct but clear.

Schedule 1

5.3 These applications must always be determined under delegated powers and cannot be referred to committee for determination. The associated delegated report should therefore state:

This is a Schedule 1 Application. By virtue of Regulation 4, it must be dealt with under delegated powers.

Schedule 2

Triaged Applications

5.4 Some categories of application in Schedule 2 have been identified in the Scheme of Delegation as Triaged Applications and should be determined under delegated powers. The other categories of application in Schedule 2 can be treated as a Triaged Application by officers if they consider that, in the context of a particular application, the criteria in the Gateway Test (see below) are clearly not engaged. In both cases, the associated delegated report should state:

This is a Schedule 2 Application. By virtue of Regulation 5, it should be dealt with under delegated powers because the Gateway Test is not engaged.

Gateway Test Applications

5.5 The Regulations make provision, in Regulation 5(3), for the matters that must be considered by the Nominated Member and Nominated Officer when they agree

whether or not to refer a proposal to determine a Schedule 2 Application to committee. They are known as the Gateway Test and are that the proposal raises:

- a) one or more issues of economic, social or environmental significance to the local area; or
- b) one or more significant planning matters having regard to the development plan and any other material considerations.

5.6 If it is agreed to refer an application to committee, that decision and the reasons for it should be set out succinctly and clearly in the associated committee report as follows:

This is a Schedule 2 Application. By virtue of Regulation 5, it is being reported to Committee because the Nominated Member and Nominated Officer agree that it is necessary because [it raises one or more issues of economic, social or environmental significance to the local area] [and] [it raises one or more significant planning matters having regard to the development plan and any other material considerations].

5.7 If it remains a delegated decision, the associated delegated report should state:

This is a Schedule 2 application. By virtue of Regulation 5, it is being dealt with under delegated powers because the Nominated Member and Nominated Officer do not agree that the Gateway Test is engaged because it does not raise any issues of economic, social or environmental significance to the local area and nor does it raise any significant planning matters having regard to the development plan and any other material considerations.

Triage Process for Own-Interest Applications

5.8 These are applications made by or on behalf of:

- a) the Council;
- b) a member of the Council;
- c) an officer of the Council; or
- d) the Council or any of its members or officers otherwise has an interest in the application.

5.9 The decision-making process for these applications should be one of ensuring openness and transparency. In deciding whether to refer to committee, the Nominated Member and Officer should ensure that, because of the nature of the

applicant, there is not a real (or reasonably perceived) risk of bias by determining the application under delegated powers and secondly that, because of the nature of the development, there is a good reason to refer it to Committee.

Own-Interest Applications: Applicant Considerations

5.10 In this context, category (c) Linked Persons should normally be narrowed to only apply to:

- a Senior Officer of the Council; or
- an ‘officer of the Local Planning Authority’.

5.11 The first would be defined as Deputy Chief Officer level and above.

5.12 The second, would be defined as an officer within the Council who, in the opinion of the Director: Place, is closely involved in the day-to-day work of the Council’s planning function.

5.13 It is reasonable to conclude that other officers of the Council would probably not be known to the planning service and therefore the risk of bias is not engaged. Such applications should be determined in the same way that any other application in that Schedule would be determined. The details of the Own-Interest applicant status should be recorded in the respective committee or delegated report with the following introduction:

This is an Own-Interest Application because the applicant is an officer of the Council, but as they are not a senior officer nor closely involved in the day-to-day work of the Council’s planning function it has not been reported to committee for that reason. [This is a Schedule 1 Application. By virtue of Regulation 4, it must be dealt with under delegated powers.] [This is a Schedule 2 Application. By virtue of Regulation 5, it should be dealt with under delegated powers because the Gateway Test is not engaged.]

Own-Interest Applications: Development Considerations

5.14 For any application:

- caught by the above category (c) ‘Own-Interest applicant status’ criteria; or
- an Own-Interest Application in categories (a), (b) and (d);

with respect to whether there is a good reason to refer that application to committee because of the nature of the development, the following criteria should be used:

Such an Own-Interest Application should only be considered by the Nominated Member and Nominated Officer for referral to and determination by committee if one of the following criteria applies:

- the proposal has been advertised under Article 15 of the DMPO because it does not accord with the provisions of the development plan; or
- one or more material planning considerations are raised that have the potential to have a significant impact.

- 5.15 This allows the circumstances of each application to be assessed and if it is for a development that complies with policy and there is not considered to be a material planning objection, it can be dealt with under delegated powers, with the reason recoded in the delegated report as follows:

This is an Own-Interest Application. By virtue of Regulation 5, it is not being reported to committee because it has not been advertised under Article 15 of the GMPO as a departure and nor is there considered to be a material planning objection.

- 5.16 Where either of these criteria applies, the Nominated Member and Nominated Officer must agree that it is necessary for the planning application to be referred to and determined by committee and this should be recorded in the normal way in the associated committee report as follows:

This is an Own-Interest Application. By virtue of Regulation 5, it is being reported to Committee because the Nominated Member and Nominated Officer agree that it is necessary because [it has been advertised under Article 15 of the GMPO as a departure] [and] [there is considered to be a material planning objection].

- 5.17 Limitations should be set on the receipt of material planning considerations by the Planning Service to ensure that these matters can be safely administered, and the risk of fraudulent objections is minimised:

A material planning consideration must have been made in writing in response to the publicity/advertisement/notification of the application, be from a person with an address within the LPA area and be received within the specified deadline.

- 5.18 With these safeguards in place, such applications will be put to committee where that serves a legitimate purpose but can be dealt with under delegated powers where committee involvement is not necessary.
- 5.19 Under Regulation 10 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, where a local planning authority is determining its own application for planning permission, it must not be determined by a committee, sub-committee or officer responsible for the management of the building or land to which the application relates. In addition to this restriction, where a planning application is made by or on behalf of a nominated officer or member or an entity owned or controlled (whether wholly or partly) by a member or officer (including jointly with another person), in the interests of propriety, they should not be involved in the decision on whether to refer it to committee or not.

Officer's Discretion to Use Delegated Powers

- 5.20 With respect to planning applications covered by the Regulations, officers do not have discretion to decide to report a matter to committee. Only the nominated member and officer can jointly take that decision.
- 5.21 With respect to any other planning matter that is capable of being dealt with under delegated powers, an officer does have the ability, in their absolute discretion, to decide that it is not appropriate in the circumstances of a particular case to exercise those powers with respect to that planning matter and therefore report it to members (Full Council, the Executive or Planning Control Committee as appropriate) for determination. Again, it is not possible to advise further on this because these are essentially exceptional circumstances.
- 5.22 In both cases, that decision and the reasons for it should be set out succinctly and clearly in the associated committee report, as follows:

This is [describe the planning matter]. It is being reported to [Council] [Cabinet] [Planning Control Committee] because the [Director: Place / Development & Conservation Manager] considers that it is necessary because [...].

Lobbying

- 5.23 The Council's Scheme of Delegation prohibits the Nominated Member or the Nominated Officer or any other officer of the authority, when exercising their powers under Regulations 4, 5 or 6 and the Scheme of Delegation, being lobbied

or otherwise contacted by any person or organisation, including by members or officers of the relevant authority, to use their power in a particular way.

- 5.24 The Constitution requires that any such lobbying that is received should be reported to the Monitoring Officer, who must develop and publish procedures to deal with these issues and other vexatious planning complaints.

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Appendix1: Schedule 1

As provided for by the Regulations, this Schedule contains those application types that must be determined by officers, pursuant to Regulation 4:

Schedule 1 Applications

1. An application made under section 17(1) of the Land Compensation Act 1961 (certificates of appropriate alternative development) **(a)**.
2. An application made under section 26H(1) of the Listed Buildings Act (certificate of lawfulness of proposed works) **(b)**
3. A householder application.
4. A minor commercial application.
5. A minor residential application.
6. An application for permission in principle **(c)**.
- 7.—(1) An application made under section 73(1) of TCPA 1990 (application to develop land without compliance with conditions previously attached) in respect of which the original planning permission was a Schedule 1 planning permission.
(2) In this paragraph—
“original planning permission” means a planning permission which is the first in a sequence of two or more planning permissions, where the second and any subsequent planning permissions were granted under section 73(1) of TCPA 1990;
“Schedule 1 planning permission” means a planning permission granted pursuant to an application which is of a kind specified in this Schedule.
8. An application made under section 96A(4) of TCPA 1990 (non-material changes to planning permission or permission in principle) **(d)**.
- 9.—(1) In respect of a planning obligation that the authority concerned considers is connected with a Schedule 1 approval—
 - (a) a request to agree to modify or discharge that obligation under section 106A(1)(a) of TCPA 1990 (modification and discharge of planning obligations) **(e)**;
 - (b) an application to modify or discharge that obligation under section 106A(3) of TCPA 1990 (modification and discharge of planning obligations) **(f)**.
(2) In this paragraph, ‘Schedule 1 approval’ means any permission, agreement, consent or approval (other than a planning obligation) pursuant to an application which is of a kind specified in this Schedule.
10. An application made under section 191(1) of TCPA 1990 (certificate of lawfulness of existing use or development) **(g)**.
11. An application made under section 192(1) of TCPA 1990 (certificate of lawfulness of proposed use or development) **(h)**.

- 12.** The submission of a biodiversity gain plan under paragraph 13(2)(a) of Schedule 7A to TCPA 1990 (i).
- 13.** A reserved matters approval application in respect of an outline planning permission other than a large outline permission.
- 14.** An application made under article 27(1) of DMPO (applications made under a planning condition).
- 15.** An application pursuant to provision in Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (j) for—
 - (a) prior approval, or
 - (b) determination as to whether prior approval is required.

NOTES

- (a) 1961 c. 33. Section 17 was substituted by section 232(3) of the Localism Act 2011 (c. 20) and was amended by section 189(3) of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (c. 55).
- (b) Section 26H(1) was inserted by section 61 of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 (c. 24).
- (c) For the definition of ‘permission in principle’, see section 336(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (c. 8).
- (d) Section 96A was inserted by section 190(2) of the Planning Act 2008 (c. 29). Subsection (4) was amended by regulation 3(4)(c) of S.I. 2017/276.
- (e) Section 106A was inserted by section 12(1) of the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 (c. 34); section 106A(1)(a) was amended by section 34(2) of the Greater London Authority Act 2007 (c. 24).
- (f) Section 106A(3) was amended by section 34(3) of the Greater London Authority Act 2007 (c. 24).
- (g) Section 191 was substituted by section 10(1) of the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 (c. 34).
- (h) Section 192 was substituted by section 10(1) of the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 (c. 34).
- (i) Schedule 7A was inserted by paragraph 2 of Schedule 14 to the Environment Act 2021 (c. 30).
- (j) S.I. 2015/596.

Appendix: Schedule 2

As provided for by the Regulations, this Schedule contains those application types that should be determined by officers, pursuant to Regulation 5, unless the nominated member and officer agree to refer it to committee.

Triaged Applications

The following categories of application should be determined by officers:

- S73 applications where there are no objections
- Advertisement consent where there are no objections
- Tree Preservation Orders where there are no objections
- Listed building consent to Grade II buildings without an associated planning application where there are no objections

A Triaged Application can also be identified, from the list of Residual Schedule 2 applications below, by an officer with delegated powers in the context of a particular application.

Residual Schedule 2 Applications

The Gateway-Test must be applied to a Schedule 2 application, which is not a Triaged Application, to decide whether it needs to be reported to Planning Control Committee, these include:

1. An application for listed building consent made under section 10(1) of the Listed Buildings Act (making of applications for listed building consent).
2. An application made under section 19(1) of the Listed Buildings Act (variation or discharge of conditions of listed building consent).
3. An application for planning permission that the authority concerned considers is connected with an application of a kind specified in paragraph 1 or 2.
4. An application for planning permission that is not—
 - (a) a householder application,
 - (b) a minor commercial application, or
 - (c) a minor residential application.
- 5.—(1) An application made under section 73(1) of TCPA 1990 (application to develop land without compliance with conditions previously attached) in respect of which the original planning permission was a Schedule 2 planning permission.
(2) In this paragraph—

“original planning permission” means a planning permission which is the first in a sequence of two or more planning permissions, where the second and any subsequent planning permissions were granted under section 73(1) of TCPA 1990;

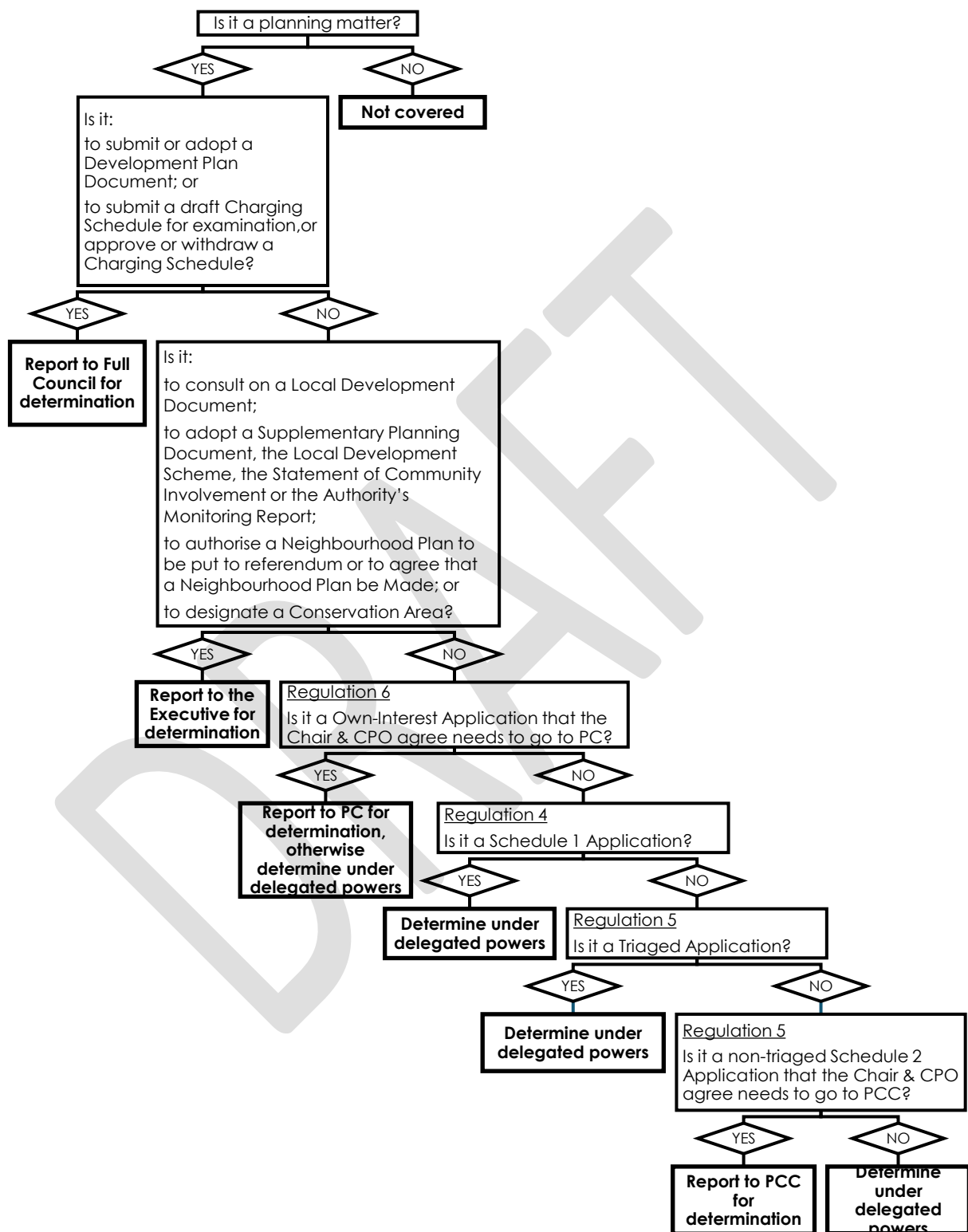
“Schedule 2 planning permission” means a planning permission granted pursuant to an application which is of a kind specified in this Schedule.

- 6.** An application made under section 73A(1) of TCPA 1990 (planning permission for development already carried out) **(a)**.
- 7.—(1)** In respect of a planning obligation that the authority concerned considers is connected with a Schedule 2 approval—
- (a)** a request to agree to modify or discharge that obligation under section 106A(1)(a) of TCPA 1990 (modification and discharge of planning obligations);
 - (b)** an application to modify or discharge that obligation under section 106A(3) of TCPA 1990 (modification and discharge of planning obligations).
- (2)** In this paragraph, 'Schedule 2 approval' means any permission, agreement, consent or approval (other than a planning obligation) pursuant to an application which is of a kind specified in this Schedule.
- 8.** A reserved matters approval application in respect of a large outline permission.
- 9.** An application made under regulation 9(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (application for express consent to display advertisement) **(b)**.
- 10.** An application made under regulation 16(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 (application for consent under tree preservation order) **(c)**.

NOTES

- (a)** Section 73A was inserted by paragraph 16(1) of Schedule 7 to the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 (c. 34).
- (b)** S.I. 2007/783.
- (c)** S.I. 2012/605.

Appendix 3: Planning Scheme Of Delegation Flow Diagram



PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE – ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

Introduction:

The aim of this additional guidance is to supplement the Members Planning Code of Good Practice which forms part of the Council's Constitution and ethical framework. This should be read in conjunction with the Members' Code of Conduct and the Protocol on Councillor- Officer Relations. The purpose of this guidance is to provide additional advice on the standards to be applied specifically in relation to planning matters. The key purpose of Planning is to proactively manage development in the wider public interest.

This note does *not* replace or otherwise affect the ability of Community Forums to receive any presentations from developers, their agents and / or Council officers, ask questions and provide comments accordingly under Section 9.7.6 of the Constitution.

1. Planning Control Committee

The Terms of Reference can be found in the constitution at Section 8 ([Council constitution | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#))

The Planning Control Committee (PCC or 'the Committee') considers schemes referred to it under the provisions of the National Scheme of Delegation (the NSD) and local operational guidance on its implementation, the Scheme of Management.

Under the NSD, certain types of applications, including minor and householder developments must, in almost all circumstances, be determined by officers.

Other application types *might* be referred to PCC. But this is subject to a particular referral process.

Under the NSD, former rights which allowed Councillors to 'call-in' applications have been removed. Ward councillors may no longer request that certain applications from the weekly lists are called in. Similarly they can no longer call-in applications in support of Parish Council objections.

Councillors retain a right to address committee under speaking procedures.

2. Decision making:

Planning decisions should be made impartially with sound planning judgement.

When planning applications are reported to Committee, the report will contain an Officer recommendation as to whether planning permission should be granted or refused.

Members are entitled to bring their own judgment to bear on planning applications and to make a decision contrary to Officer recommendation **but** it is important that such decisions are taken on sound planning grounds and produce substantive and defensible evidence to support the decision in all respects which will withstand scrutiny at a possible appeal (if planning permission is refused) or if the decision is referred to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Members should bear in mind their overriding duty is to the whole community, not just to the people in their Ward and, taking account of the need to make decisions impartially, they should not favour, or appear to favour any persons, business or locality irrespective of other considerations.

The Planning Advisory service provides some additional useful advice for councillors and officers making planning decisions, called Probity in Planning (December 2019).

3. Pre Application Discussions:

The National Planning Policy Framework recognises the value of and encourages Pre-Application discussions between Local Planning Authorities and developers and Members can also encourage the use of this to reduce the pressure they may experience from members.

The NPPF supports the use of pre-application discussions. Proposals for major development should be informed by early engagement with neighbours and local communities as well as with the local planning authority and other, relevant parties.

As a general principle, Members should, where appropriate, **seek to encourage** promoters of development schemes to **engage in the Pre-Application process**.

Promoters of development schemes wishing to engage in Pre-Application discussions will be advised that:-

- (a) if they wish to secure Member input into the Pre-Application discussions they can request that the Ward members attend a meeting with a Planning Officer present.
- (b) although (subject to the Environmental Information Regulations Act and any other relevant legislation) the Council will respect the confidentiality of information which the scheme promoter makes clear is disclosed in confidence, Members will have access to Council files on Pre-Application discussions.
- (c) If a Member wishes to express their views on Pre-Application discussions they may set out those views in writing sent to the relevant

Planning Officer who will place a copy of the communication from the Member on the Pre Application file.

Members should be aware that such comments may in due course become publicly available. Members should not disclose any confidential information or documents held on Pre Application files other than to another Member or to an officer of the Council.

To ensure that decisions remain impartial, it will be made **clear** at pre-application meetings that:

- Officers' initial views and advice are given on a without prejudice basis which will be consistent with the provisions of the current adopted Council policy (unless there are clear material considerations that would justify consideration of a development contrary to policy;)
- no decisions may be made or advice given which would bind or otherwise compromise the Planning Control Committee (or the senior Officer responsible for Planning if delegated to make the decision); and
- for all pre-application meetings, a note of the discussion (not a formal advice note) will be taken by the Planning Officer, including details of those present, and will be made available for public inspection subject to the usual rules about access to information.

At least one appropriate Planning Officer will be present at all such meetings. Members may, following discussion with the appropriate Planning Officer, take part in organised post-submission meetings with applicants or other parties.

If Members do engage in pre-application discussions with developers they should observe the rules on lobbying. However North Herts encourages appropriate Member engagement in the pre application process. This assists in responding to communications from residents in an informed manner (subject to the advice on confidentiality above).

4. Members Briefing:

The introduction of member briefings at North Herts will assist in reducing the length of the Committee and also the risk of appeals. These are separate to the Chair's procedural briefing held prior to the PCC meeting.

It is essential that Members should understand that an **informal briefing is not the Committee meeting** and therefore no decisions or agreements will or should be taken at the briefing.

The informal briefing is essentially a fact-finding exercise to allow Members to understand more about the proposal **before** an application is submitted to the council, once an application has been submitted to the Council **or** before formal consideration of the scheme at the Committee.

Members can ask questions about the scope of the proposal and about any issues they do not understand. It is **not a forum for debate** or for stating opinions about the application as a whole and not for the Committee Members to declare how they will vote at the formal meeting.

Whilst Members can begin to form views about the scheme and certain aspects of it, it is important at this stage for members **not to form and express firm views** or to decide how they will vote at the Committee meeting. If they do so, they will not be able to take part in the Committee consideration and determination of the application as they will be deemed to have predetermined the application and will have closed their minds.

The meeting is not a public meeting. The primary audience for briefings will be Members who are likely to sit on the determining Committee. However, briefings may be open to other (or all) Members including, but not limited to, Committee substitutes, ward members and members of the Council's internal Strategic Planning Project Board.

Formal minutes or notes of the meeting **will not be made or published** as this is not a formal committee meeting and no decisions will have been taken. A record will be kept of the fact that the meeting took place and who attended the meeting and general topics/subject areas will be noted on the application record.

Although attendance by Members will be encouraged, non-attendance at informal briefings will not prevent their subsequent participation in deciding an application when it comes before the Committee.

Facilitation of the Briefings will be by the planning team and in all cases at least two planning officers will be in attendance to deliver the presentation and address questions raised by Members

The Members briefing will be used to enable Members to bring matters to be discussed **prior** to a committee decision making and can also be used for members to discuss matters which they seek to call in.

5. Site Visit Protocol:

A decision to carry out an organised, accompanied site visit may be made where a proposal is contentious or complex and the impact is difficult to visualise or assess from the plans or any supporting presentation, including photographs taken by officers.

The visit is intended to enable Members to gain knowledge of the proposal and its physical context. The purpose of the site visit is to obtain information relevant to the determination of the application only. The decision should not be arbitrary, unfair or be used as a lobbying device.

Site visits can, however, cause delay and additional cost and can be difficult to co-ordinate around the commitments of multiple Councillors and Officers, so should only be used where the expected benefit is clear and substantial and in accordance with the criteria set out in this protocol. The visit can assist in understanding

- the granular details of a site where development is planned;
- the details of the surrounding area such as levels and proximity to other buildings; and
- issues raised by residents and others about the plans that need to be experienced such as noise/pollution/smells near the site

This advice does not preclude Members from undertaking unaccompanied site visits (for any application) for their own information where the application site and / or key receptors can be viewed from publicly accessible vantage points such as public highway or rights of way.

Requests for a Site Visit:

A site visit request will need to be made in writing unless it has been deemed necessary by the Development and Conservation Manager in consultation with the Chair. It can be made in one of two ways:

i) Pre Committee:

Site visits should usually take place prior to Planning Control Committee to support expedient decision-making.

If a site visit is conducted prior to the item being heard at the Planning Control Committee then the item cannot be again deferred for a further site visit unless there are new planning matters to be considered on the site (see advice below).

A site visit will be arranged:

- If before a planning application is put on the Planning Control Committee Agenda the Development and Conservation Manager and the Chair agree that a Planning Control Committee site visit should be conducted sometime before that Committee meeting.
- For all sites of more than 200 homes where the application is to be determined by the Planning Control Committee
- Where requested in writing by at least 4 members of the Planning Control Committee

- Where a Ward Councillor who intends to speak at Planning Control Committee in this capacity considers that PCC should visit the site and at least one of the criteria above is satisfied in support of this request

ii) At a Planning Control Committee

Any Planning Control Committee Member may propose that a decision on an application be deferred to allow a site visit to take place. If seconded and voted upon by a majority of Members, a site visit will take place.

Members proposing a site visit must state planning reasons for visiting the site and identify how / why the pre-meeting site visit protocols set out above were not utilised and are not sufficient to allow a decision to proceed. This will assist the Committee in determining the proposal to defer. These reasons will be recorded in the minutes.

If an application is deferred for a site visit then the site visit will form part of the formal meeting, which would be resumed / re-presented at an appropriate Committee date following the visit. Attendance at the site visit is required in order to be eligible to vote at any subsequent Committee meeting(s) where the application is considered.

A site visit should not be used as an opportunity to defer consideration or determination of an application. Any proposal to defer a decision at Planning Control Committee to allow a site visit to occur should be wholly exceptional and will require clear justification, seconding and voting upon by a majority of Members.

Practical Arrangements for the site visit

The site visit may take place at any reasonable time during any working day (including the day of the Committee) before the Committee meeting at which it is proposed to determine the application. This should be within standard working hours, but it is recognised that seasonal variations in daylight hours may impact upon the times that might be suggested. Arrangements for a site visit should be communicated at least five working days in advance.

The circumstances where attendance at the site visit will be mandatory are set out above. In all other cases, a site visit should be attended by all members of the Committee wherever possible. The appropriate Council officers will attend the site visit. This would include the Planning Officer and may on occasion include other officers who may be required to provide specialist advice and information relevant to the application.

The applicant will be notified of the date and time of the site visit and if it is proposed to enter onto private land as part of the site visit, it will be necessary to obtain permission from the landowner first.

A site visit is ordinarily to be attended only by Officers and Members of the Committee or substitutes.

Procedure at the site visit

The Planning Officer will explain the proposal to members and provide a summary of the objections and should confirm that the site visit is being undertaken in accordance with the this guidance.

The Chair, or any nominated substitute, will be responsible for the overall oversight and conduct of site visits and will formally open and close the organised site visit.

Members can ask any questions concerning the proposal to the respective officer(s) in attendance, such questions should be limited to factual clarification on the application only and should not provide comment on the merits of the application.

In the event that anyone other than Officers or Members of the Committee is in attendance, the Chair or Planning Officer (as appropriate) will inform those attending the site visit that they should not approach or attempt to speak to or engage with any member or officer of the Council about the application during the site visit and that this is not an opportunity for lobbying, representations, public address or debate.

In order to ensure transparency of public dealing by members, members shall keep together as a group and shall not engage individually in discussion with any local members, applicants, objectors and other interested parties present at the site visit.

Members should not express an opinion on the planning application or on its merits (or otherwise) at the site visit. Members should be mindful at all times of the need to avoid allegations of predetermination or bias, or the fettering of the Council's discretion in relation to the application.

No hospitality may be accepted by members and officers from any party present at the site visit.

A note shall be taken by the Planning Officer of any significant events occurring during the site visit which will include the names of those in attendance which will be available for public inspection.

Procedure at Committee following the site visit

Officers will provide a brief update to members of any significant additional information or issues raised at the site visit.

Following the update, members of the Committee who were not able to attend the site visit should consider whether they have sufficient information before them to enable them to take part in determining the application and, if not, should ask the case officer for further information to ensure they are sufficiently informed or take no part in the deliberation and should abstain from the vote on the proposals.

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COUNCIL
THURSDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2026

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: Changes to the Contract Procurement Rules

REPORT OF: Director - Resources

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Executive Member - Resources

COUNCIL PRIORITY: Sustainability;

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
This report proposes two changes to the Council's Contract Procurement Rules. The first is to increase the threshold for procurements that only require a single quote, to reflect inflation. The second change is to allow a restriction on the location and type of supplier that can bid for contracts,
2. RECOMMENDATIONS
2.1. To adopt the changes to the Council's Contract Procurement Rules detailed in this report.
3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS
3.1. The increase in the threshold for single quotes reflects the impact of inflation and that not changing them creates additional work for Officers.
3.2. The introduction of geographical and supplier type restrictions gives the opportunity for procurements to be better aligned with policy objectives.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. The Contract Procurement rules could remain unchanged, but then wouldn't get the proposed outcomes.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1 No external consultation has taken place. The Council's internal Contract Procurement Group have discussed and support these proposed changes.
- 5.2 The report was considered and recommended on to Council by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. The Council substantially updated its Contract Procurement Rules for the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023 in February 2025. Since then, there have been minor changes to the Contract Procurement Rules. In line with the constitution these have been notified to Members via the Members Information Service/ Bulletin.
- 7.2. The Contract Procurement Rules form part of the Constitution. The current rules are section 21 (<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-07/Section%2021%20-%20Contract%20Procurement%20Rules%20%28July%202026%29.pdf>). Section 22 is retained for contracts that were let before the introduction of the Procurement Act. The proposed changes are only to section 21.
- 7.3. In 2013, the requirement was to seek 2 quotes for procurements above £500, and 3 quotes for procurements above £10k (up to £50k). A subsequent change meant that 2 quotes were required for procurements above £5k and 3 quotes above £10k (up to £25k). In 2022 the requirement changed to 1 quote for up to £10k and 2 quotes above £10k (up to £25k). These rules were not changed for the Procurement Act changes.
- 7.4. There is an increased focus in procurement to ensure that spend is aggregated, which includes considering everything that you might buy from a supplier and also considering spend over time. This means that the value that is being procured can quickly add up, especially when this is combined with the impact of inflation.
- 7.5. The Council implemented Social Value into its Contract Procurement Rules in 2015, this included a Go Local policy (i.e. a focus on use of local suppliers). The Go Local policy does not restrict procurements to just the local area, but does encourage getting quotes from local suppliers.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

Increase in limits for when more than a single estimate is required

- 8.1. The recommendation is that the limit for when more than a single estimate is required is increased up to £25k for goods and services (from the current threshold of £10k). Retaining the limit at £10k is dragging more procurements in to the level that requires 2 estimates.
- 8.2. A lower increase has been considered (e.g. to £15k or £20k). However, retaining the current requirement for goods and services contracts from £25k to £50k (which requires 3 quotes, notice requirements and additional risk and compliance steps) seems reasonable. It would not be desirable to have a narrow value band requiring 2 estimates.
- 8.3. The rules set out the minimum requirement and Officers should still obtain multiple estimates where they think there is sufficient competition and it will provide value for money.

8.4. The current rule is not clear on the lower threshold for works contracts that require 2 estimates. It is proposed that this is specified as £25k, with the upper threshold retained at £100k.

8.5. To achieve these changes, it is recommended that the current rule 19.2 of the Contract Procurement Rules:

Estimates (above £10,000, and below £25,000 Goods and Services and below £100,000 Works): is the direct acquisition of quotes from suppliers against a specification. Officers must:

Mandatory	Procurement/ Legal Requirement	Minimum Requirement
√	Number of quotes required	2
√	Specification of Requirements	√
√	Comply with relevant procurement checklist	√
√	Maintain records either in Intend or locally in line with retention periods	- the number of estimates or offers invited - the method of inviting estimates or offers - the basis of selecting suppliers/contractors
√	Terms and Conditions	Official order must be raised through the Council's electronic ordering system in line with Financial Regulations

Is changed to:

Estimates (up to £25,000 for Goods and Services and up to for £100,000 Works): is the direct acquisition of quotes from suppliers against a specification. Officers must:

Mandatory	Procurement/ Legal Requirement	Minimum Requirement
√	Number of quotes required	At least one quote. Two quotes required for Works contracts over £25,000. Multiple quotes (above the minimum requirement) should be obtained where it is likely to provide the Council with better value for money (including

		<i>considering the additional time required to get those quotes).</i>
√	<i>Specification of Requirements</i>	<i>√ To be used where there is a need to clearly detail what is being purchased, including any minimum requirements. May not be required for lower value purchases.</i>
√	<i>Comply with relevant procurement checklist</i>	√
√	<i>Maintain records either in Intend or locally in line with retention periods</i>	<i>Where multiple quotes are obtained then records should be kept which detail:</i> <i>• the number of estimates or offers invited</i> <i>• the method of inviting estimates or offers</i> <i>• the basis of selecting suppliers/contractors</i>
√	<i>Terms and Conditions</i>	<i>Low value items can be purchased using a purchasing card. Otherwise, an official order must be raised through the Council's electronic ordering system in line with Financial Regulations.</i>

Restricting tenders based on location and organisation type

- 8.6 In February 2025, Government issued an updated Procurement Policy Note in relation to “reserving below threshold procurements” (see background papers). This note means that below threshold procurements can be limited to bidders from a specific location. The location of the bidder is based on where they are based, established or have substantive business operations, and not by location of corporate ownership. If the location restriction is applied, then a further restriction can be placed on only allowing small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs) to bid.
- 8.7 This has been updated by guidance on “reserving competitions for below-threshold contracts” from December 2025/ February 2026 that was linked to the Local Government (Exclusion of Non-commercial Considerations) (England) Order 2026 (see background papers). That guidance defines the locations that procurements can be restricted to as being: the Council area (i.e. North Herts), the County area (i.e. Hertfordshire), the County area plus neighbouring Counties and London Boroughs. It also states that the restriction to just SMEs and VCSEs can be applied independently of the location provisions.
- 8.8 Restricting tenders by local area and/or to SMEs and VCSEs, is aligned with the Council’s Procurement Strategy (see background papers). The recommendation is that the Contract Procurement Rules are updated to allow these restrictions. This would be achieved via the following changes:

- To each of the tables in paragraphs 19.2, 19.3, 19.4 and 19.5 (i.e. all those that apply to below threshold procurements) add a line that says: “Location and Organisational restrictions: Consider applying restrictions in line with the detail contained in the paragraphs 12 and 15.
- Extend paragraph 15 as detailed below (additions in red):

15. Go Local Policy and restricting below threshold procurements to the local area

15.1 The 'Go Local' policy requires that, wherever possible, local suppliers should be invited to participate in all procurements, to support local businesses and economic growth.

15.2 Officers must document the process of supplier selection under the Go Local policy, noting why local suppliers were either selected or unavailable based on the procurement requirements.

15.3 For below threshold procurements, Officers can consider whether to restrict procurements to the local area (which can be the District area of North Hertfordshire, the County area of Hertfordshire or the County area of Hertfordshire and the neighbouring Counties and London Boroughs. The location of a bidder is determined by where they are based, established or have substantive business operations.

12. Consideration of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs)

12.1 Officers must consider the potential barriers faced by SMEs and VCSEs when competing for contracts. Before issuing quotations or tenders, Officers will proactively identify and, if possible, mitigate these barriers.

12.2 This may involve:

- adjusting procurement practices to be more accessible to SMEs and VCSEs;
- dividing the procurement into multiple Lots
- simplifying the tendering process;
- Use the appropriate procurement documents for the level of procurement.
- ensuring that financial status requirements are proportionate to the contract's scope and value.
- Changing evaluation criteria in the tendering process to use Most Advantageous Tender criteria, (MAT) rather than Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT)
- For below threshold procurements, Officers can consider whether to restrict procurements to just be available to SMEs and VCSEs.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1. The Council has a legal obligation to have Contract Procurement rules in order to comply with Section 135 of the Local Government Act of 1972. The Public Contracts Regulations

2015, the Healthcare Services (Provider Section Regime) Regulations 2023 and the Procurement Act 2023 provide the legal framework for procuring goods, works and services which the Council must comply with.

The Local Government (Exclusion of Non-commercial Considerations) (England) Order 2026 (the Order) updates the longstanding restrictions on the use of non-commercial considerations in local authority procurement and aligns them with the framework introduced by the Procurement Act 2023. The Order amends section 17 of the Local Government Act 1988 (the 1988 Act), which restricts the Council from taking certain non-commercial considerations into account when awarding contracts. Specifically, the Order clarifies circumstances in which the location of a supplier may be considered in relation to below-threshold contracts. Under the amended regime, the Council is permitted, on a discretionary basis, to reserve certain below-threshold procurements to suppliers based in the UK or within a defined local area (which may include neighbouring authorities). In parallel, section 3(8)b of the Order states that: 'Where the relevant authority advertises for the purpose of inviting tenders.... the authority must specify which paragraph applies, and (where paragraph (3) applies) the extent of the local area for the purposes of paragraph (5)—

(a) in respect of a notifiable below-threshold contract, in the below-threshold tender notice, and

(b) in respect of all other relevant contracts, in the advertisement.

- 9.2. It is expected that amendments to the Procurement Regulations 2024 will require below-threshold tender notices to state whether a contracting authority has exercised the option to reserve a contract to UK or locally based suppliers, in accordance with the Order. The recommendations of this report enable the Council to adopt the flexibility afforded by the changes set down by the Order.

- 9.3. Further the changes to the proposed thresholds around the limit for when more than a single estimate is required is a matter for the authority to determine. Adoption of constitutional changes is a matter for full Council.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. There are not expected to be any direct financial implications of these proposals. The reduction in number of estimates obtained (for procurements between £10k and £25k) could lead to higher prices, but Officers are instructed to get multiple quotes where appropriate to ensure they get value for money. Restricting tenders by location and organisation type could also increase tender prices, but even if this occurred it would be expected to be off-set by wider social value benefits.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. 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.

- 11.2. There are some financial risks detailed in section 10 above.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1. 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.

12.2. There are no direct equalities impacts arising from these proposals.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1. The aim of the second recommendation in this report is to support the delivery of the Social Value Act and “go local” requirements.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1. There are no specific Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report. Use of local suppliers can reduce transport requirements which could have a positive impact on related emissions.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1. Increasing the threshold for where 2 estimates are required should help to manage the workload of those Officers involved in procurements.

16. APPENDICES

16.1. None.

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Natasha Jindal	Governance Consultant	Natasha.jindal@north-herts.gov.uk

18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Procurement Note – PPN 005 Reserving below threshold procurements](#)

[Reserving competitions for below-threshold contracts - GOV.UK](#)

[Procurement Strategy 2025-28.pdf](#)

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COUNCIL
THURSDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2026

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF REPORT: USE OR URGENCY IN RELATION TO CALL-IN FOR DECISIONS ON
AWARDING UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF) ALLOCATIONS**

REPORT OF: Director - Enterprise

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Executive Member - Enterprise

COUNCIL PRIORITY: All Priorities;, ,

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To notify Council that the urgency provisions were applied to four delegated decisions made by the Director: Enterprise (in consultation with the Executive Member for Enterprise) in relation to allocations of UKSPF funding. This was due to the need to award funding to projects that could spend the available funds by the end of September 2026. This deadline is a condition of the grant, and it is likely that the funding would have had to be returned to Government if it had not been complied with.

Allowing for potential call-in would have made it extremely difficult to meet the deadline. In accordance with the Constitution, the Chair of the Council agreed to the decision being treated as a matter of urgency. The Constitution as set out in paragraph 6.3.11 (b) (i) requires that use of this provision is reported to the next meeting of Council, together with the reasons for urgency.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Council notes the use of urgency provisions in relation to the decisions on the award of UKSPF funding attached at Appendix A.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. Urgency provisions were used to ensure that the funding was allocated and spent by the 30th September deadline.
- 3.2. This is reported to Council to comply with the requirements of the Constitution.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. It is likely that not applying urgency provisions would have meant that the funding could not be spent in time. This was rejected as it would have meant that the funds should be returned to Government, and therefore the local community would not have been able to benefit from the funding.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. In accordance with the constitution, the Chair of the Council agreed to the use of the urgency provisions in relation to call-in.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. At its meeting on 18th March 2025, Cabinet approved the allocation of UKPSF funds (see background funds). Government later extended the amount of time when the funds had to be spent by to the end of September.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. Most of the UKSPF funds were allocated and spent well within the time period stipulated in the grant conditions. Unfortunately circumstances and projects can change and in late July it was identified that around £30k of UKSPF funds would not be spent in time, a total of four projects were identified as being able satisfy the grant conditions and spend the money in the tight timeframe. Officers sought to quickly identify projects that the funding could be awarded to, that met the conditions of the grant, aligned with Council priorities and could spend the funding by the necessary deadline.
- 8.2. The decision notices for the funding where urgency was applied are detailed in the Appendix A.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Paragraph 6.3.11 b) i) of the Constitution details the process in relation to urgency and call-in.
- 9.2. It states that “a decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would, for example, seriously prejudice the Council’s or other public interests”.
- 9.3. The approval process is that “the Chair of the Council must agree both that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency”. Following the use of this urgency provision it must be reported to the next available Council meeting.
- 9.4. This report discharges the constitutional requirement to report instances where the urgency provisions have been engaged.
- 9.5. The monitoring officer is satisfied that there is no prejudice through the necessity to waive the opportunity for the call in period for these four decisions.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. No specific financial implications relating to the use of the urgency provision.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

11.1. 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.

11.2. Applying the use of the urgency provisions was to reduce the risk of not being able to use the UKSPF funding in time.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1. 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.

12.2. There are no equalities implications relating to this report.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1. The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to *this report*.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1. There are no HR implications.

16. APPENDICES

16.1. Appendix A: Decision Notice UKSPF funding to Hitchin BID

16.2. Appendix B- Decision Notice UKSPF funding to Baldock Community Centre

16.3. Appendix C- Decision Notice UKSPF funding to Letchworth BID

16.4. Appendix D- Decision Notice- UKSPF funding to Royston BID

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

Ian Couper, Steve Crowley	Director - Resources, Director - Enterprise,	ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk, steve.crowley@north-herts.gov.uk, Tel: 01462 474 243, Tel: 01462 474 211
Natasha Jindal	Governance Consultant	Natasha.jindal@north-herts.gov.uk

18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1. Cabinet report in allocation of UKSPF grant <https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/documents/s27824/Cabinet%20Report%20-%20UK%20Shared%20Prosperity%20Fund%202025-6%20Allocation%20and%20Delegated%20Approvals%20FINAL.pdf>

RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted for the Officer or Executive Member [NO]

Any queries must be directed to the Democratic Services Manager

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: Enterprise

1. DECISION TAKEN

To approve the allocation of £980 of UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding (UK SPF) to Hitchin Business Improvement District (BID) for the Visit Hitchin website appraisal.

2. DECISION TAKER

Director of Enterprise in consultation with the Executive Member for Enterprise Cllr Thomas.

3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:

21st September 2026

4. REASON FOR DECISION

- 4.1 To enable the some of the remaining UKSPF allocation to be utilised within the programme timescales to support eligible activity aligned with the Council's approved UKSPF interventions and priorities.
- 4.2 The proposed project has been assessed for eligibility, deliverability and value for money, with further detail set out in section 8.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The alternative option was not to allocate UKSPF funding to the proposed project. This was rejected as the project has been assessed as eligible and deliverable within the programme timescales and representing value for money.
- 5.2 Alternative levels of funding were considered through the quotations received. The proposed award of £980 reflects the preferred quotation of Hitchin BID and has been assessed against relevant UKSPF requirements, deliverability, value for money and available funding. Further details of the assessment are set out in section 8.

6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)

- 6.1 No formal public consultation is required in relation to this decision.
- 6.2 In accordance with the delegation approved by Cabinet, the relevant Executive Member and Director have been consulted. The S151 Officer and Legal Services have also been consulted as part of the assessment and governance process.

- 6.3 The Hitchin BID proposal is intended to support economic development and town centre activity within North Herts. No significant adverse impacts on stakeholders, partners or the public have been identified.

7. FORWARD PLAN

- 7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The UKSPF is a government funded programme intended to support local priorities, including communities and place and supporting local business.

- 8.2 In March 2025, Cabinet approved the proposed allocation of the Council's UKSPF funding across a number of interventions and schemes. Cabinet also delegated approval of individual grants and payments to the relevant Director, in consultation with the relevant Executive Member. Cabinet Report 18 March 2025 [Link](#)

- 8.3 Following a review of expenditure and commitments within the programme, the Council have £23,206 remaining budget against the Council's UKSPF allocation of £490,574. Potential projects have been considered to maximise the use of the remaining funding with the applicable programme timescales. Of the remaining £23,206 Economic Development allocation, £980 is being allocated to Hitchin BID through this decision. The remaining £22,226 is being progressed against a small number of other identified proposals capable of delivery within the UKSPF deadline of 30th September 2026. These proposals are not approved through this decision and remain subject to the relevant governance and approval requirements.

- 8.4 Relevant local partners were invited to put forward potential projects for consideration. Proposals were required to demonstrate alignment with the relevant UKSPF interventions.

The Hitchin BID proposal relates to an appraisal of the Visit Hitchin website appraisal and improvements to the Visit Hitchin website, including new and refreshed visitor content, expansion of the attractions offer, performance optimisation and development of local business content and connections.

- 8.5 The assessment considered:

- The activity proposed and its alignment to UKSPF objectives.
- Anticipated outputs and outcomes.
- Deliverability within the required programme timescales.
- Project costs and value for money.
- Subsidy control requirements, where applicable.

- 8.6 Further information and supporting evidence were sought from Hitchin BID where required to complete the assessment. Three quotations have been provided, and Hitchin BID has confirmed its preferred quotation of £980.

- 8.7 The specific interventions, outputs and outcomes associated with the project will be recorded and monitored as part of the Council's UKSPF monitoring and reporting arrangements.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 At the Cabinet meeting on 18th March 2025, Cabinet approved the proposed allocation of the Council's UKSPF and delegated approval of individual grants and payments to the relevant Director, in consultation with the relevant Executive Member.

This delegated report gives effect to that delegation. Relevant consideration has been given to the Subsidy Act in taking this decision and Legal Services will be instructed to assist in the drafting a grant funding application.

- 9.2 Due to the deadlines on spending UKSPF funding, the Chair of the Council has agreed that urgency provisions apply in relation to call-in. As per paragraph 6.3.11 b) i) of the Constitution.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The proposed £980 grant to Hitchin BID will be funded from the Council's existing UKSPF Economic Development allocation. Finance has confirmed that £22,226 of UKSPF funding remains available within the relevant allocation following deduction of the proposed £980.
- 10.2 The proposal has been assessed with regard to cost and value for money. As the proposed decision involves providing financial assistance to external organisations, the subsidy control implications of the proposed awards have been assessed in accordance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 There is a risk that funded activity may not be delivered within the applicable UKSPF programme timescale. This risk has been mitigated by considering deliverability as part of the assessment process. Hitchin BID has advised that it will have all of the proposed work completed by 30th September 2026.
- 11.3 There is a risk that expenditure may not meet UKSPF eligibility, procurement or subsidy control requirements. This could result in expenditure being considered not eligible. Officers have mitigated this by carrying out appropriate checks prior to the award of funding, including review of supporting information, procurement evidence and completion of any required subsidy control assessment.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 There are no equalities implications.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Social Value Act and "go local" policy do not apply to this decision.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this decision.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 There will be no impact.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 [Shared Prosperity Fund process and proposed allocation for 2025/26](#)

17. APPENDICES

None.

NOTIFICATION DATE

25 September 2026

Signature of Executive Member Consulted Tamara N

Date 21st September 2026

Signature of Decision Taker [Signature]

Please Note: Due to the deadlines on spending UKSPF funding, the Chair of the Council has agreed that urgency provisions apply in relation to call-in. As per paragraph 6.3.11 b) i) of the Constitution.

RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted for the Officer or Executive Member [NO]

Any queries must be directed to the Democratic Services Manager

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: Enterprise

1. DECISION TAKEN

To approve the allocation of £4,500 of UK Shared Prosperity (UKSPF) funding Baldock Community Centre towards the installation of air conditioning and associated works at the Community Centre.

2. DECISION TAKER

Director of Enterprise in consultation with the Executive Member for Enterprise Cllr Thomas.

3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:

18.09.26

4. REASON FOR DECISION

- 4.1 To enable the remaining UKSPF allocation to be utilised within the programme timescales to support eligible activity aligned with the Council's approved UKSPF interventions and priorities.
- 4.2 The proposed project has been assessed for eligibility, deliverability and value for money, with further detail set out in section 8.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The alternative option was not to allocate UKSPF funding to the proposed project. This was rejected as the project has been assessed as eligible and deliverable within the programme timescales and representing value for money.
- 5.2 Alternative levels of funding were considered through the quotations received and available UKSPF budget. The proposed award of up to £4,500 represents a contribution towards the eligible air-conditioning and associated works and has been assessed against UKSPF requirements, deliverability, value for money and available funding. Further details of the assessment are set out in section 8.

6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)

- 6.1 No formal public consultation is required in relation to this decision.

- 6.2 Relevant partners and potential delivery organisations have been engaged to identify activity capable of delivery within the remaining UKSPF programme timescales. Further information has been sought where required to support the assessment of proposals.
- 6.3 In accordance with the delegation approved by Cabinet, the relevant Executive Member and Director have been consulted. The S151 Officer and Legal Services have also been consulted as part of the assessment and governance process.
- 6.4 The proposed funding for Baldock Community Centre is intended to support improvements to the facilities, including air-conditioning works serving the bar area, supporting continued effective operation and financial sustainability of the Community Centre and contributing to the vitality of the local area, No significant adverse impacts on partners have been identified.

7. FORWARD PLAN

- 7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The Cabinet report at 16.1 allocated UKSPF funding to the Enterprise Directorate for Renovation of Estate and Community Buildings, as detailed in Appendix 7. Appendix 7 provides for the renewal and renovation of buildings, including community halls to enable them to function properly and maximise their benefit to the community.
- 8.2 Funding of £4,500 will contribute towards air-conditioning and supporting facilities at Baldock Community Centre. The proposal has been assessed against deliverability and value for money. Of the £22,226 remaining Economic Development UKSPF allocation, £4,500 is being allocated to Baldock Community Centre through this decision. The remaining £17,726 is being progressed against a small number of other identified projects capable of delivery within the UKSPF deadline of 30 September 2026. These proposals are being progressed separately and remain subject to the relevant governance and approval requirements.
- 8.3 Appendix 7 identifies the UKSPF investment priority as Communities and Place under the Thriving Places theme.
- 8.4 The assessment considered:
- The activity proposed and its alignment to UKSPF objectives.
 - Deliverability within the required programme timescales.
 - Project costs and value for money.
 - Subsidy control requirements, where applicable.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 At the Cabinet meeting on 18th March 2025, Cabinet approved the proposed allocation of the Council's UKSPF and delegated approval of individual grants and payments to the relevant Director, in consultation with the relevant Executive Member. This delegated report gives effect to that delegation. Relevant consideration has been given to the Subsidy Act in taking this decision and Legal Services will be instructed to assist in the drafting a grant funding agreement.

- 9.2 Due to the deadlines on spending UKSPF funding, the Chair of the Council has agreed that urgency provisions apply in relation to call-in. As per paragraph 6.3.11 b) i) of the Constitution.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The proposed £4,500 grant to Baldock Community Centre will be funded from the Council's existing UKSPF allocation for Renovation of Estate Buildings (Appendix 7). Sufficient budget is available within relevant UKSPF allocation to meet the proposed expenditure. The remaining balance within this allocation is £17,726.
- 10.3 The proposal has been assessed with regard to cost and value for money. As the proposed decision involves providing financial assistance to external organisations, the subsidy control implications of the proposed awards have been assessed in accordance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 There is a risk that funded activity may not be delivered within the applicable UKSPF programme timescale. This risk has been mitigated by considering deliverability as part of the assessment process. Baldock Community Centre has advised that it can complete all of the proposed work by 30th September 2026.
- 11.3 There is a risk that expenditure may not meet UKSPF eligibility, procurement or subsidy control requirements. This could result in expenditure being considered not eligible. This risk has been reduced by carrying out appropriate checks prior to the award of funding, including review of supporting information, procurement evidence and completion of any required subsidy control assessment.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 There are no equalities implications.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 *The Social Value Act and "go local" policy do not apply to this decision.*

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1 The proposed project involves the replacement of defunct air conditioning equipment at Baldock Community Centre. Working air conditioning will allow the safe and pleasant use of all areas of the Community Centre during times of extreme heat, and will reduce waste by extending the shelf life of perishable products by facilitating their storage at appropriate temperatures. Due to the location of the areas to benefit from the improved air conditioning, it is not possible to achieve the same effect by use of natural ventilation.

By installing more modern, efficient air conditioning than has previously been used at the Community Centre, the adverse effects of Baldock Community Centre's use of air conditioning plant will be reduced from previous levels while allowing effective, comfortable use of the building.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There will be no impact.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

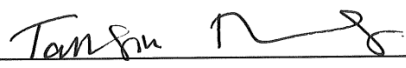
16.1 [Shared Prosperity Fund process and proposed allocation for 2025/26](#)

17. APPENDICES

None

NOTIFICATION DATE

Date that the decision appears in MIB – Committee, Member & Scrutiny Services can confirm this with you

Signature of Executive Member Consulted 

Date17.09.26.....

Signature of Decision Taker 

Please Note: Due to the deadlines on spending UKSPF funding, the Chair of the Council has agreed that urgency provisions apply in relation to call-in. As per paragraph 6.3.11 b) i) of the Constitution.

RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted for the Officer or Executive Member [NO]

Any queries must be directed to the Democratic Services Manager

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: Enterprise

1. DECISION TAKEN

To approve the allocation of up to £10,000 of UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding (UK SPF) to Letchworth Business Improvement District (BID) towards Phase 1 research to support the development of a destination marketing strategy for Letchworth, subject to the required procurement requirements being satisfied and funded activity being delivered within the required UKSPF timescales.

2. DECISION TAKER

Director of Enterprise in consultation with the Executive Member for Enterprise Cllr Thomas.

3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:

24.09.26

4. REASON FOR DECISION

- 4.1 To enable the some of the remaining UKSPF allocation to be utilised within the programme timescales to support eligible activity aligned with the Council's approved UKSPF interventions and priorities.
- 4.2 The proposed project has been assessed for eligibility, deliverability and value for money, with further detail set out in section 8.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The alternative option was not to allocate UKSPF funding to the proposed project. This was rejected as the project has been assessed as eligible and deliverable within the programme timescales and representing value for money.
- 5.2 Alternative levels of funding were considered through the quotations received. The proposed award of up to £10,000 was the amount initially requested for this project. It may be lower depending on the deliverability by the of September, as per the grant conditions. There is no value limit for individual awards set out in grant criteria. Further details of the assessment are set out in section 8.

6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)

- 6.1 No formal public consultation is required in relation to this decision.
- 6.2 In accordance with the delegation approved by Cabinet, the relevant Executive Member and Director have been consulted. The S151 Officer and Legal Services have also been consulted as part of the assessment and governance process.
- 6.3 The Letchworth BID proposal is intended to support economic development and town centre activity within North Herts. No significant adverse impacts on stakeholders, partners or the public have been identified.

7. FORWARD PLAN

- 7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The UKSPF is a government funded programme intended to support local priorities, including communities and place and supporting local business.
- 8.2 In March 2025, Cabinet approved the proposed allocation of the Council's UKSPF funding across a number of interventions and schemes. Cabinet also delegated approval of individual grants and payments to the relevant Director, in consultation with the relevant Executive Member. The Letchworth BID proposal falls within the Economic Development project identified in Table 8.1 of the Cabinet Report 18 March 2025 [Link](#) and will be funded from the Council's UKSPF Economic Development allocation.
- 8.3 Following a review of expenditure and commitments within the programme, the Council have around £10k of remaining budget against the Council's UKSPF allocation of £490,574. Potential projects have been considered to maximise the use of the remaining funding with the applicable programme timescales. Up to £10,000 is being allocated to Letchworth BID through this decision. The exact allocation will be dependnt on what can be delivered within the grant conditions.
- 8.4 Relevant local partners were invited to put forward potential projects for consideration. Proposals were required to demonstrate alignment with the relevant UKSPF interventions.
- 8.5 The Letchworth BID proposal relates to Phase 1 research to support the development of a destination marketing strategy for Letchworth,
- 8.5 The assessment considered:
- The activity proposed and its alignment to UKSPF objectives.
 - Anticipated outputs and outcomes.
 - Deliverability within the required programme timescales.
 - Project costs and value for money.
 - Subsidy control requirements, where applicable.

- 8.6 Further information and supporting evidence were sought from Letchworth BID where required to complete the assessment. Three quotations have been acquired and grant funding of up to £10,000 allocated.
- 8.7 The specific interventions, outputs and outcomes associated with the project will be recorded and monitored as part of the Council's UKSPF monitoring and reporting arrangements.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 At the Cabinet meeting on 18th March 2025, Cabinet approved the proposed allocation of the Council's UKSPF and delegated approval of individual grants and payments to the relevant Director, in consultation with the relevant Executive Member. This delegated report gives effect to that delegation. Relevant consideration has been given to the Subsidy Act in taking this decision and Legal Services will be instructed to assist in the drafting a grant funding application.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The proposed £10,000 grant to Letchworth BID will be funded from the Council's existing UKSPF Economic Development allocation. The remaining £226 represents the projected residual balance once the proposed allocations have been accounted for.
- 10.2 The proposal has been assessed with regard to cost and value for money. As the proposed decision involves providing financial assistance to external organisations, the subsidy control implications of the proposed awards have been assessed in accordance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 There is a risk that funded activity may not be delivered within the applicable UKSPF programme timescale. This risk has been mitigated by considering deliverability as part of the assessment process. Letchworth BID has advised that it will have all of the proposed work completed by 30th September 2026.
- 11.3 There is a risk that expenditure may not meet UKSPF eligibility, procurement or subsidy control requirements. This could result in expenditure being considered not eligible. Officers have mitigated this by carrying out appropriate checks prior to the award of funding, including review of supporting information, procurement evidence and completion of any required subsidy control assessment.
- 11.4 There is a risk that some funding will need to be returned to government, either due to identified projects not being able to deliver to the funding conditions or residual balances that can not be allocated. But this amount will be much lower than it would have been without this work to award these final grants.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 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.

12.2 There are no equalities implications.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to this decision.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this decision.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There will be no impact.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

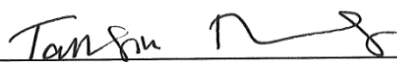
16.1 [Shared Prosperity Fund process and proposed allocation for 2025/26](#)

17. APPENDICES

None

NOTIFICATION DATE

Date that the decision appears in MIB – Committee, Member & Scrutiny Services can confirm this with you

Signature of Executive Member Consulted 
Date ...24.09.26.....

Signature of Decision Taker ... 

Please Note: Due to the deadlines on spending UKSPF funding, the Chair of the Council has agreed that urgency provisions apply in relation to call-in. As per paragraph 6.3.11 b) i) of the Constitution.

RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted for the Officer or Executive Member [NO]

Any queries must be directed to the Democratic Services Manager

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: Enterprise

1. DECISION TAKEN

To approve the allocation of up to £7,726 of UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding (UK SPF) to Royston Business Improvement District (BID) for Visit Royston destination marketing activity, including the launch of Visit Royston website, PR and digital outreach and the design, print and distribution of a destination map.

2. DECISION TAKER

Director of Enterprise in consultation with the Executive Member for Enterprise Cllr Thomas.

3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:

28. 09.26

4. REASON FOR DECISION

- 4.1 To enable the some of the remaining UKSPF allocation to be utilised within the programme timescales to support eligible activity aligned with the Council's approved UKSPF interventions and priorities.
- 4.2 The proposed project has been assessed for eligibility, deliverability and value for money, with further detail set out in section 8.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The alternative option was not to allocate UKSPF funding to the proposed project. This was rejected as the project has been assessed as eligible and deliverable within the programme timescales and representing value for money.
- 5.2 Alternative levels of funding were considered through the quotations received. The proposed award of up to £7,726 reflects the maximum UKSPF contribution towards the proposed activity. Royston BID and has been assessed against relevant UKSPF requirements, deliverability, value for money and available funding. Further details of the assessment are set out in section 8.

6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)

- 6.1 No formal public consultation is required in relation to this decision.
- 6.2 In accordance with the delegation approved by Cabinet, the relevant Executive Member and Director have been consulted. The S151 Officer and Legal Services have also been consulted as part of the assessment and governance process.
- 6.3 The Royston BID proposal is intended to support economic development and town centre activity within North Herts. No significant adverse impacts on stakeholders, partners or the public have been identified.

7. FORWARD PLAN

- 7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The UKSPF is a government funded programme intended to support local priorities, including communities and place and supporting local business.
- 8.2 In March 2025, Cabinet approved the proposed allocation of the Council's UKSPF funding across a number of interventions and schemes. Cabinet also delegated approval of individual grants and payments to the relevant Director, in consultation with the relevant Executive Member. The Royston BID proposal falls within the Economic Development project identified in Table 8.1 of the Cabinet Report 18 March 2025 [Link](#) and will be funded from the Council's UKSPF Economic Development allocation.
- 8.3 Following a review of expenditure and commitments within the programme, the Council have £17,726 remaining budget against the Council's UKSPF allocation of £490,574. Potential projects have been considered to maximise the use of the remaining funding with the applicable programme timescales. Of the remaining £17,726 Economic Development allocation, up to £7,726 is being allocated to Royston BID through this decision. The remaining £10,000 is being progressed against another identified proposal capable of delivery within the UKSPF deadline of 30th September 2026. This proposal is not approved through this decision and remain subject to the relevant governance and approval requirements.
- 8.4 Relevant local partners were invited to put forward potential projects for consideration. Proposals were required to demonstrate alignment with the relevant UKSPF interventions.

The Royston BID proposal relates to Visit Royston destination marketing activity, including the launch of Visit Royston website, PR and digital outreach and the design, print and distribution of a destination map.

- 8.5 The assessment considered:
- The activity proposed and its alignment to UKSPF objectives.
 - Anticipated outputs and outcomes.
 - Deliverability within the required programme timescales.
 - Project costs and value for money.
 - Subsidy control requirements, where applicable.

- 8.6 Further information and supporting evidence were sought from Royston BID where required to complete the assessment. Two quotations have been received for the map design element, with approval obtained to proceed on this basis. The proposed funding of up to £7,726 remains subject to confirmation that all funded activity can be completed by 30th September 2026 and satisfactory evidence being provided.
- 8.7 The specific interventions, outputs and outcomes associated with the project will be recorded and monitored as part of the Council's UKSPF monitoring and reporting arrangements.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 At the Cabinet meeting on 18th March 2025, Cabinet approved the proposed allocation of the Council's UKSPF and delegated approval of individual grants and payments to the relevant Director, in consultation with the relevant Executive Member. This delegated report gives effect to that delegation. Relevant consideration has been given to the Subsidy Act in taking this decision and Legal Services will be instructed to assist in the drafting a grant funding application.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The proposed grant of up to £7,726 to Royston BID will be funded from the Council's existing UKSPF Economic Development allocation. Finance has confirmed that £10,000 of UKSPF funding remains available within the relevant allocation following deduction of the proposed £7,726.
- 10.3 The proposal has been assessed with regard to cost and value for money. As the proposed decision involves providing financial assistance to external organisations, the subsidy control implications of the proposed awards have been assessed in accordance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 There is a risk that funded activity may not be delivered within the applicable UKSPF programme timescale. This risk has been mitigated by considering deliverability as part of the assessment process. Royston BID has advised that it will have all of the proposed work completed by 30th September 2026.
- 11.3 There is a risk that expenditure may not meet UKSPF eligibility, procurement or subsidy control requirements. This could result in expenditure being considered not eligible. Officers have mitigated this by carrying out appropriate checks prior to the award of funding, including review of supporting information, procurement evidence and completion of any required subsidy control assessment.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 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.

12.2 There are no equalities implications.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to this decision.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this decision.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There will be no impact.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

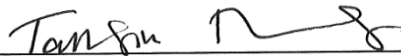
16.1 [Shared Prosperity Fund process and proposed allocation for 2025/26](#)

17. APPENDICES

None

NOTIFICATION DATE

Date that the decision appears in MIB – Committee, Member & Scrutiny Services can confirm this with you

Signature of Executive Member Consulted 

Date22.09.26.....

Signature of Decision Taker ... 

Please Note: Due to the deadlines on spending UKSPF funding, the Chair of the Council has agreed that urgency provisions apply in relation to call-in. As per paragraph 6.3.11 b) i) of the Constitution.

**COUNCIL
THURSDAY 8 OCTOBER 2026**

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE, MEMBER AND VICE CHAIR OF THE FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

REPORT OF: Director - Governance

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: N/A

COUNCIL PRIORITY: All Priorities

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
1.1 To confirm the appointments of a new/replacement Member and Substitute Member to the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.
1.2 To appoint a Vice Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee for the remainder of the civic year, 2026-2027.
2. RECOMMENDATIONS
2.1. That for the remainder of the civic year 2026-2027 the following Member and Substitute be appointed to the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee: Councillor Elizabeth Dennis to become a Member of the Committee; and Councillor Nigel Mason to become a Substitute Member of the Committee
2.2. That Councillor Stewart Willoughby be appointed as the Vice Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee for the remainder of the civic year, 2026-2027.
3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS
3.1. To comply with the provisions of 4.8.1 (a) (viii) and (ix) of the Council's Constitution following Councillor Sarah Lucas resigning as Vice Chair and from the Committee.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. That the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee operates without a Vice Chair to preside in the Chair's absence, if present, and that a Chair is elected for that meeting only.
- 4.2. The option is not recommended as the efficient conduct of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee requires significant coordination between officers and the Chair/Vice Chair, particularly approaching a time where the Committee is required to consider the budget implications and make recommendations to the Cabinet.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. The vacancies are within the Labour and Cooperative Group therefore the Leader of the Council has given consideration and made nominations to the vacant positions.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. Following notification on 9 September 2026 that Councillor Sarah Lucas, who was Vice Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, has resigned from this position as well as from the Committee.
- 7.2. There was an existing Labour and Cooperative Group vacancy on this Committee following the resignation of Councillor Alistair Willoughby in June 2026.
- 7.3. Based on the current recommendations there remains one Labour and Cooperative Group vacancy on this Committee.
- 7.4. As detailed in paragraph 5.1, all vacancies are within the Labour and Cooperative Group and it is therefore a matter for the respective Group Leader to consider and make nominations to vacant positions from within the party.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. The Director Governance and Democratic Services Manager, by way of sub delegation, can make in year changes to the membership of Committees (not Chair or Vice Chair). However, for completeness the changes to the membership, substitutes, and Vice Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee have been contained within this report

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The legal and constitutional requirements are set out in the main body of this report.

- 9.2. 14.6.9 (a) Delegation of Authority – Director: Governance of the Constitution states:

(xix) To make appointments (or where relevant nominate) Councillors or Substitutes to Committees, Sub-Committees, panels, boards and outside bodies, in consultation with Group Leaders during the civic year in respect of the appointments that have previously been made at Annual Council.

- 9.3. Sub delegation to Democratic Services Manager under 1.14.1 of officer's delegations:

e) The appointment, nomination or revocation of appointment of any individual to any office/ body other than to Full Council in the event of vacation of office, in consultation with Group Leaders in respect of elected Councillors (In accordance with any requirements under the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups)

Regulations 1990, or any legislation replacing the same under section 14.5.1 of the Constitution.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. 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.
- 11.2. The efficient conduct of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee requires significant coordination between Officers and the Chair/Vice Chair. The Vice Chair automatically presides in the absence of the Chair. It would create difficulties to adequately prepare for meetings in the absence of a consistent elected Vice Chair, particularly given that the Committee consider budget implications and makes recommendations to Cabinet, and will soon be considering the budget, prior to Council approval.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. 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.
- 12.2. There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1. There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1. None.

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Amber Smith-Howell	Policy and Strategy Officer	Amber.smith-howell@north-herts.gov.uk

18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1. None.

COUNCIL
THURSDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2026

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: NOMINATION OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

REPORT OF: Director - Governance

COUNCIL PRIORITY: All Priorities

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
1.1 To consider appointing a Member Representative to the Baldock Community Centre Association 2025 and to note that the Letchworth Garden City Town Twinning Association and the Bedford and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board were no longer active bodies. <i>N.B. If a Member is nominated to or is on an outside body, they have an Interest under the Code of Conduct, they must comply with the Code requirements Section 17, Appendix B – Constitution [page click here]. If unclear, seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer.</i>
2. RECOMMENDATIONS
2.1. That Council nominate and approve one Member to the outside organisation the Baldock Community Centre Association 2025. 2.2. That Council note that the Bedford and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board and the Letchworth Garden City Town Twinning Association are no longer active and will be removed from the list of appointments the Council makes.
3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS
3.1. To comply with the provision of Standing Order 4.4.1(h) of the Council's Constitution.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. To not appoint a Member representative to the organisation.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. Group Leaders were reminded of the vacancy on Wednesday 26 August and were requested to make nominations to this position to be considered at Council on 8 October 2026.
- 5.2. Details on the reasons for removal of the Bedford and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board and the Letchworth Garden City Town Twinning Association as outside organisations are provided in section 7 of this report.

5.3. No other consultation took place with Members or External Organisations.

6. FORWARD PLAN

6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND

7.1. Councillors may be appointed to varying organisations with differing roles, these are defined as outside bodies. In some instances, Councillors will be bringing their experience, knowledge and expertise flowing from their appointment as a Councillor and in other instances the appointment will be distinct from your Councillor appointment.

7.2. The role of Councillors on outside bodies will depend on the nature of the outside body and the capacity in which you are appointed. Whilst they are independent from the Council they may have an impact on service areas. In order that the Council can maintain effective partnerships with a number of these organisations elected Members are appointed to sit on the various committees and forums that are responsible for these bodies.

7.3. Section 4.8.1(b)(iv) of the Council's Constitution ("Standing Orders") states that at the Annual Meeting, the Council will "receive nominations of Councillors to serve on each Committee and outside body".

7.4. Standing Order 4.8.1(b)(v) states that at the Annual Meeting, the Council will also "make appointments to those Committees and nominations to outside bodies, except where nomination to those bodies has been delegated by the Council or is exercisable by the Cabinet".

Baldock Community Centre Association 2025

7.5. At Annual Council on 21 May 2026, a point was raised as to whether the appointment of a Councillor to the Baldock Community Centre Association 2025 would be in conflict with a position they held on the outside body that the council previously appointed to known as Baldock Youth & Community Association, following which the nomination was withdrawn. Therefore, a vacancy remains on this outside organisation.

Bedford and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board

7.6. At Annual Council on 21 May 2026, Councillor Emma Fernandes was appointed as the Member Representative on the Bedford and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board. On notifying the body of this appointment, the Council was advised that Bedford and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board had been dissolved formally in February 2026 and was amalgamated into a single statutory entity, the Upper Ouse Water Management Board, from 1 April 2026.

7.7. The Upper Ouse Water Management Board required only one appointed member to serve from either Buckinghamshire Council, West Northamptonshire Council or North Herts Council.

- 7.8. It was confirmed by the Upper Ouse Water Management Board via email on 11 June 2026 that a representative from Buckinghamshire Council had been appointed, following agreement with the three appointed Members from the respective authorities. Therefore, North Herts Council was no longer required to appoint a Member Representative to this body.
- 7.9. However, Councillor Fernandes was advised that she could attend the Bedfordshire and River Ivel Advisory Board, which would meet two to three times per year, and would discuss important local matters and make recommendations to the main Board.

Letchworth Garden City Town Twinning Association

- 7.10. At Annual Council on 21 May 2026, Councillor Mick Debenham was appointed as the Member Representative on the Letchworth Garden City Town Twinning Association. However, following their Annual General Meeting, Councillor Debenham advised via email on 28 June 2026 that this body had decided to dissolve. Therefore, North Herts Council was no longer required to appoint a Member Representative to this body.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. The Council is required to appoint Member representatives to the vacant Outside Organisation positions. In the interest of transparency, this has been brought to the next ordinary Council meeting, following Annual Council, to consider these appointments.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The legal and constitutional requirements are set out in paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 of this report.
- 9.2. Whilst Annual Council delegated that Political Group Leaders notify the Democratic Services Manager of nominations to the remaining vacancies or any changes to the existing representatives on outside organisations, in the interests of openness and transparency Council is being requested to agree and nominate a District Councillor representative.
- 9.3. Members are required to include any appointments to Outside Organisations or Bodies on their Register of Interests within 28 days of the appointment.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. 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.
- 11.2. Failure to appoint a Member Representative to the outstanding vacancy would leave the Council short of representation on the outside organisation.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. 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.
- 12.2. There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements arising from this report.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1. There are no HR implications arising from this report.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1. None.

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Natasha Jindal	Governance Consultant	Natasha.Jindal@north-herts.gov.uk

18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1 [Reports and Minutes from Annual Council meeting on 21 May 2026.](#)

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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**COUNCIL
8 OCTOBER 2026**

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: NOTICE OF MOTIONS

The following motion has been submitted, due notice of which has been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12.

To be moved by Councillor Dominic Griffiths and seconded by Councillor David Chalmers.

Paternity Leave

This council, like many public sector organisations, faces ongoing challenges with staff recruitment and retention. These challenges can directly affect service delivery and organisational resilience.

The UK offers some of the weakest statutory paternity and second parent adoption leave in Europe: just two weeks at a flat statutory rate of £194.32 per week from 6 April 2026. This is equivalent to around 40% of the national minimum wage. For many households, this level of pay is not financially viable.

According to a 2023 TUC poll, over half (53 per cent) of families struggle financially when fathers and second parents take paternity leave. One in five fathers and second parents (21 per cent) are forced to return to work early because they cannot afford to stay off. Around 1 in 3 fathers take no paternity or adoption leave at all.

Children with more involved fathers have improved outcomes across education, cognitive development, and emotional wellbeing. They are less likely to experience emotional or behavioural problems as teenagers and adults, and are better able to regulate stress. Paternity leave plays a crucial role in establishing this early involvement.

Better paternity leave also benefits mothers. New mothers are currently left without support while recovering from birth, including the 40 per cent of births that end in caesarean section. Research shows that enabling both parents to take leave together reduces maternal postnatal depression by 26 per cent.

Inadequate paternity leave is also damaging to men's mental health. Research by The Dad Shift and Movember found that 45 per cent of UK fathers experience multiple symptoms of depression or anxiety in their baby's first year. Eighty-two per cent of fathers said that improving paternity leave is the single biggest action the government could take to support new dads' mental health. Poor mental health is a leading driver of absenteeism at work: better paternity leave could reduce this pressure on fathers employed by this council.

A review from the Leeds University Business School found a strong corporate consensus that generous, enhanced parental leave acts as a vehicle for talent management. Employers who invest in these policies reap measurable rewards in long-term staff loyalty and retention rates improve.

This Council believes that offering enhanced paternity and adoption leave for second parents will strengthen this council's reputation as a modern, family-friendly employer and help address longstanding workforce retention issues.

As one of the largest employers in the area, this Council has an opportunity to lead by example and promote better working standards for second parents.

Therefore, Council resolves:

- 1. To request that the Cabinet explore, with the aim of introducing enhanced paternity leave and adoption leave for second parents for council employees, offering a minimum of six weeks paid paternity or adoption leave at a minimum 90% of their salary for all eligible fathers and second parents.**
- 2. That the leader of the Council writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Business and Trade urging the Government to introduce a minimum of six weeks' paid (at a minimum of 90% of their salary) paternity leave nationally.**

TITLE OF REPORT: NOTICE OF MOTIONS

The following motion has been submitted, due notice of which has been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12.

To be moved by Councillor Chris Lucas and seconded by Councillor David Chalmers:

Local Government Reorganisation

This Council welcomes the Government's decision, announced by Angela Rayner MP, on 7 September 2026 to halt implementation of its deeply flawed four-unitary model for Hertfordshire, but condemns the Government's shambolic handling of Local Government Reorganisation and the substantial waste of public money, officer time and resources caused by the process.

Council further calls for full transparency over the costs already incurred and for the Government to ensure that North Hertfordshire taxpayers are not left to pick up the bill for a reorganisation process imposed upon councils and then abruptly halted.

Council notes:

1. That the Government required councils across Hertfordshire to devote substantial political, managerial, financial and officer capacity to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), culminating in its decision on 16 July 2026 to impose a four-unitary model on Hertfordshire, with four new authorities due to take over services from April 2028.
2. That North Hertfordshire District Council established an LGR budget of £2 million across 2026/27 and 2027/28, including provision for county-wide costs, additional staffing, staff backfill and training, with £450,000 allocated to four additional HR and IT posts to deal with LGR workload pressures.
3. That councils, officers and partners were instructed to proceed at pace with preparations for implementation, including transition arrangements and May 2027 shadow authority elections. The Government has now halted this work pending its review, acknowledging the risk of councils undertaking "nugatory work".
4. That the proposed May 2027 elections to the new shadow unitary authorities will consequently not take place, with elections instead proceeding for the existing councils on their existing boundaries. This represents a major reversal of the implementation timetable and creates further disruption and uncertainty for councils, officers, councillors, prospective candidates and residents.
5. That the halt follows a series of legal challenges to LGR decisions elsewhere in Essex, Hampshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Portsmouth. By June, three quarters of the county councils affected by the reorganisation process had signed a letter demanding that the Government disclose the evidence and departmental analysis behind its decisions.

Hertfordshire County Council subsequently issued a Pre-Action Protocol letter seeking disclosure of the evidence, analysis and financial assessments underpinning the Government's decision to impose four unitary authorities in Hertfordshire.

6. That this is particularly significant because published financial modelling indicated that the proposed Central Hertfordshire authority, which would include most of North Hertfordshire, could begin with an estimated £22 million budget deficit in its first year.
7. That Hertfordshire modelling estimated savings of up to £418 million over ten years under the two-unitary model compared with up to £124 million under the four-unitary model.
8. That this Council last year voted against the four-unitary model, which would divide the existing North Hertfordshire district between Central and Eastern Hertfordshire, with Royston and surrounding villages separated from the rest of the district, and removed the Council Leader when he acted against that decision.

Council believes:

1. That the decision to halt implementation of the four-unitary model is welcome, but the Government's handling of LGR has been chaotic and wasteful, creating unnecessary uncertainty for residents and council staff while diverting significant resources and officer time away from frontline services and other council priorities.
2. That abandoning the planned May 2027 shadow authority elections, after councils had already been instructed to prepare for them, demonstrates the scale of the disruption caused by the Government's reversal and raises serious questions about the future viability and timetable of the reorganisation process.
3. That the decision to halt the process only weeks after announcing the four-unitary model, raises serious questions about whether the financial, legal and practical implications were adequately considered before councils were instructed to begin implementation.
4. That council officers should not have been expected to design new structures, recruit, train, procure and prepare for transition, while planning their own futures, without confidence that the Government's decisions were financially sustainable, legally robust and capable of being delivered.
5. That the four-unitary model was the wrong option for North Hertfordshire because of concerns about financial sustainability, the division of existing communities, additional transition costs and the ability of the proposed authorities to protect essential local services.
6. That it is unacceptable for local taxpayers to bear the costs of a process driven forward at speed before the Government had established that its decisions were financially credible, legally robust and deliverable.

Therefore, Council resolves to:

1. Request the Chief Executive of North Hertfordshire District Council to provide a full accounting of the costs already incurred by the Council as a result of LGR, including additional staffing, officer time, consultants' fees, legal advice, recruitment, training, project management and other transition costs.
2. Request the Leader of North Hertfordshire District Council to write to Angela Rayner MP, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to:
 - a) demand publication of the full rationale, evidence, financial assessments and departmental analysis underpinning the decision to select four unitary authorities for Hertfordshire.
 - b) seek an explanation of how ministers assessed the financial sustainability of the four-unitary model, including the projected £22 million first-year deficit for Central Hertfordshire.
 - c) seek a commitment that councils will be fully compensated for reasonable and demonstrable costs incurred as a direct consequence of the Government's LGR programme and its subsequent halt.
 - d) seek immediate clarity and reassurance for council officers whose employment, structures, reporting arrangements and career prospects have been thrown into uncertainty.
 - e) seek clarity on the Government's intentions and timetable for the future of Local Government Reorganisation in Hertfordshire following the cancellation of the May 2027 shadow authority elections; and
 - f) demand that North Hertfordshire District Council is fully consulted before any further decision is taken, with that consultation involving representatives of all political groups on the Council and not solely the administration.
3. Call on the Government to ensure that any future proposals for local government in Hertfordshire put financial sustainability, effective public services, community links and the interests of residents, council taxpayers and frontline staff ahead of arbitrary ministerial timetables.
4. Call on the Government to learn the fundamental lesson from this process: councils should never again be required to spend millions of pounds, consume thousands of hours of officer time and destabilise local government before the Government has established that its proposals are financially credible, legally sound and capable of being delivered.

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