NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE (LOCAL AUTHORITY TRADING COMPANIES' SHAREHOLDER)

MEETING HELD IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM 2 - DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH, SG6 3JF
ON TUESDAY, 22ND SEPTEMBER, 2026 AT 5.30 PM

MINUTES

Present:	*Councillors: Val Bryant (Chair), Ian Albert and Tamsin Thomas.*
In Attendance:	*Isabelle Alajooz (Director - Governance and Monitoring Officer), Ian Couper (Director - Resources), Steve Crowley (Director - Enterprise), Robert Filby (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager) and Nigel Smith (Director - Place).*
Also Present:	*There were no members of the public present for the duration of the meeting.*

59 ELECTION OF A CHAIR

Audio recording – 23 seconds

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Tamsin Thomas seconded and it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Val Bryant be elected as Chair for the remainder of the 2026/2027 civic year.

60 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 50 seconds

No apologies for absence were received.

61 MINUTES - 28 NOVEMBER 2024

Audio Recording – 58 seconds

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

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 28 November 2024 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

62 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 1 minutes 59 seconds

There was no other business notified.

63 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 04 seconds

(1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;

(2) 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.

64 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 2 minutes 28 seconds

There was no public participation at the meeting.

65 ANNUAL REVIEW OF NORTH HERTS' TRADING COMPANIES - BROADWATER HUNDRED

Audio recording – 2 minutes 34 seconds

The Director – Resources presented the report entitled ‘Annual Review of North Herts’ Trading Companies – Broadwater Hundred’ and advised that:

- The report covered both Broadwater Hundred Limited and Broadwater Hundred Property Management Limited, which were companies wholly owned by the Council.
- The history of the companies was outlined in Section 7 of the report.
- The details of trading over the past two years were included in Section 8 of the report, including the published accounts for the 2025 financial year and the draft accounts for the financial year to 31 March 2026.
- The property management company had successfully let the properties for the majority of the previous financial year. Whilst overall they remained in a net negative position, the position was improving and it was expected to move into positive position in the next financial year.
- The holding company had less income, but was moving into a positive position and the initial upfront costs had now been made.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Tamsin Thomas

In response to questions, the Director – Resources advised that:

- He would need to look at what previous reports had been provided in the interim between the Annual Reports but would be able to provide an interim update to Sub-Committee members once the accounts were finalised for 2025/26.
- It was worthwhile retaining Harkness Court, but purchasing another property of a similar size would probably not be worthwhile. Any other project such as this would need to be bigger in scale to be viable. However, any larger scale project would need to consider the resourcing available, as the work of the company was currently undertaken by the Company Directors.

In response to questions, the Director – Enterprise advised that:

- The original business case was that this specific venture would be a starting point, after which the company could consider if any additional residential could be added to the portfolio.
- Currently there were options to consider in terms of the Churchgate project and land already in the ownership of the Council.
- However, it may not be viable to deliver on these and any additional work would need to be considered within the overall time spent and expenditure return expected.
- Any other projects which were brought into the portfolio of the company would need to be assessed to ensure they would provide a return to the Council.
- Officers had previously looked at options for land already owned by the Council to see if a partnership could be established, but as yet this had not led to a successful proposition.
- Options around the Churchgate project could be explored further.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed the recommendations and this was seconded by Councillor Tamsin Thomas.

The following Members made points as part of the debate:

- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Tamsin Thomas

The following points were raised as part of the debate:

- It would be useful to look into providing an interim report once the 2026 accounts had been confirmed.
- It would be worthwhile to continue to look for future opportunities in the coming months.
- As projects progressed, such as Churchgate, it was important that the Council was aware of the purpose of the companies and whether future opportunities should be taken forward now the infrastructure was in place.

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

RESOLVED:

(1) That the Cabinet sub-committee noted this report.

(2) That the Cabinet sub-committee made recommendations on the content of future reports and annual reviews.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Cabinet Sub-Committee to fulfil its role and responsibilities as shareholder in the Broadwater Hundred local authority trading companies.

66 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE NORTH HERTS' TRADING COMPANIES - BUILDING CONTROL

Audio recording – 14 minutes 07 seconds

The Director – Place presented the report entitled 'Annual Review of the North Herts' Trading Companies – Building Control' and advised that:

- North Herts Council was one of 8 equal shareholders relating to Hertfordshire Building Control (HBC), which had previously been provided in house until 2016. The joint service was established due to increasing costs to the individual authorities.
- The services were supplemented by consultancy arms of the business.

- Hertfordshire Building Control was celebrating its 10th anniversary this year and the key headline was that there had been a return to profitability to the group of companies.
- Following the Grenfell Inquiry, there was a Building Safety Levy introduced which was a statutory charge to make good substandard buildings. The board had agreed that HBC should cover this on behalf of the member authorities, but this required shareholder agreement which was part of the recommendations within the report.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Tamsin Thomas
- Councillor Ian Albert

In response to questions, the Director – Place advised that:

- The centralised HBC meant that there was a better economy of scale, as it was providing services to a wider area, and increased resilience in the service.
- St Albans City and District Council and Watford Borough Council were not part of HBC currently. However, prior to the pause in the Local Government Reorganisation process, it was the aim to bring all new unitary authorities into HBC.
- There was potential for growth in the services provided, including to London Boroughs and into Essex, which were both key areas of growth.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed the recommendations and this was seconded by Councillor Tamsin Thomas.

As part of the debate, Councillor Ian Albert noted that the previous Director – Place, Ian Fullstone, had been part of the set up of this company and put a significant amount of time and effort into doing so. It was a great, and successful, example of authorities working together.

Councillor Albert requested that it be noted that the Sub-Committee place on record their thanks to Ian Fullstone for his work on this. This was agreed with the other members of the Sub-Committee.

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

RESOLVED:

(1) That the Cabinet Sub-Committee noted the report.

(2) That the Cabinet Sub-Committee provided shareholder consent to the proposed arrangements for the Building Safety Levy recommended by the Hertfordshire Building Control Board.

(3) That the Cabinet Sub-Committee made recommendations on the content of future reports and annual reviews.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

(1) To enable the Cabinet Sub-Committee to fulfil its role and responsibilities as shareholder in the local authority trading companies for building control.

(2) To ensure the Council appropriately discharges its new responsibilities under the Building Act in relation to the Building Safety Levy from October 2026.

67 ANNUAL REVIEW OF NORTH HERTS' TRADING COMPANIES - CCTV

Audio recording – 20 minutes 46 seconds

The Director – Resources presented the report entitled 'Annual Review of North Herts' Trading Companies – CCTV' and advised that:

- This service was hosted by Stevenage Borough Council, which provided the service to the four members of the partnership, which were North Herts Council, Stevenage Borough Council, East Herts District Council and Hertsmere Borough Council.
- The service continued to perform well.
- The financial performance had been impacted by upgrades required to the CCTV Control Room. However, if it were not for the company being in place this requirement would have to have been paid in full by the member authorities.
- Following the previous manager leaving the service, a restructure was agreed which meant there was now a new manager, who was supported by the Business Support Officer role.
- Overall, the company was profitable and had seen increased business in terms of CCTV monitoring services, as well as CCTV camera installations.
- The company would continue to contribute towards the Control Room and any required upgrades.

As part of the debate, Councillor Ian Albert thanked the Director – Resources and all Officers involved for their work to make the service a success, which was in addition to their regular duties.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Tamsin Thomas seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

(1) That the Cabinet sub-committee noted this report.

(2) That the Cabinet sub-committee made recommendations on the content of future reports and annual reviews.

REASON FOR DECSIONS: To enable the Cabinet Sub-Committee to fulfil its role and responsibilities as shareholder in the local authority trading company for CCTV.

The meeting closed at 5.59 pm

Chair