

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



11 September 2026

Our Ref Cabinet Sub-Committee (Council
Charities) 22 September 2026
Contact. Committee Services
Direct Dial. (01462) 474655
Email. committee.services@north-herts.gov.uk

To: Members of the Committee: Councillors Val Bryant, Mick Debenham and Sean Nolan

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

**MEETING OF THE CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE (COUNCIL
CHARITIES)**

to be held in the

**COMMITTEE ROOM 2 - DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERNON
ROAD, LETCHWORTH, SG6 3JF**

On

TUESDAY, 22ND SEPTEMBER, 2026 AT 4.30 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.	ELECTION OF A CHAIR To elect a Chair of the Cabinet Sub-Committee (Council Charities) for this meeting.	
2.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
3.	MINUTES - 19 NOVEMBER 2025 To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 19 November 2025.	(Pages 5 - 8)
4.	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.	
5.	CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chair of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, wishing to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then must leave the room before the debate and vote.	
6.	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public.	

7. RESPONSE TO PLANNING APPLICATION FOR HITCHIN TOWN HALL GYMNASIUM AND WORKMAN'S HALL TRUST (Pages 9
- 24)
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – RESOURCES

The Council are undertaking a capital project to decarbonise the buildings that make up Hitchin Town Hall and North Herts Museum. These works require planning permission. These buildings share a footprint with the Hitchin Town Hall Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust property. This Cabinet Sub-Committee acts as the trustee for the Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust property. The Council has written to the Trustees to notify them of the planning application. This report provides the Trustees with the opportunity to comment on the planning proposal and determine whether to make any representations on that planning proposal.

This page is intentionally left blank

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE (COUNCIL CHARITIES)

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERONON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, SG6 3JF
ON WEDNESDAY, 19TH NOVEMBER, 2025 AT 5.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Ian Albert (Chair), Amy Allen and Mick Debenham.*

In Attendance: *Ian Couper (Director - Resources), Robert Filby (Trainee Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Susan Le Dain (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer) and Douglas Traill-Stevenson (Property Solicitor).*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting there were no members of the public present.*

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Audio recording – 59 seconds

Councillor Amy Allen proposed, and Councillor Mick Debenham seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Ian Albert be elected as Chair of the meeting.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 1 minute 44 seconds

There were no apologies for absence received.

3 MINUTES - 19 NOVEMBER 2024

Audio recording – 1 minute 49 seconds

Councillor Ian Albert, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Mick Debenham seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 19 November 2024 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

4 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 31 seconds

There was no other business notified.

5 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 34 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.

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 3 minutes 17 seconds

There was no public participation.

7 ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS FOR COUNCIL ADMINISTERED CHARITIES

Audio recording – 3 minutes 20 seconds

The Director – Resources presented the report entitled 'Annual Reports and Accounts for Council Administered Charities' and advised that:

- This report detailed the returns required for the five Charities/Charitable Trusts administered by the Council.
- This Sub Committee was required to approve the accounts and annual reports prior to them being submitted to the Charities Commission.
- There was a verbal update in relation to the progress on the internal audit of the charities as outlined in paragraph 8.9 of the report, as a draft report was still in progress.
- The number of volunteers for King George V Charitable Trust was still yet to be confirmed as outlined in Appendix 5, but this number was anticipated to be similar to last year.

In response to a question from Councillor Ian Albert, the Director – Resources advised that these assets were restricted funds which could not be dispersed and that the Council used the standard accounting policy to depreciate these assets over their lifespan.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Amy Allen seconded, and following a vote, it was

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Charities Sub-Committee approved the information required by the Charities Commission for the five registered charities, so that the returns can be submitted prior to the 31st January 2026 deadline.
- (2) That the Charities Sub-Committee noted the requirement for those charities with gross income of more than £25k in their financial year to have their accounts independently examined and, as this applies to King George's Field and Hitchin Town Hall Gymnasium and Workmans Hall, instructs this to be undertaken for those accounts for 2024/25. This will be undertaken by the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS).

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To facilitate the submission of approved returns to the Charities Commission.

The meeting closed at 5.40 pm

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE (COUNCIL CHARITIES) TUESDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2026

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: Response to planning application for Hitchin Town Hall Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust

REPORT OF: Director - Resources

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Executive Member - Environment

COUNCIL PRIORITY: Sustainability;,, ,

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council are undertaking a capital project to decarbonise the buildings that make up Hitchin Town Hall and North Herts Museum. These works require planning permission. These buildings share a footprint with the Hitchin Town Hall Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust property. This Cabinet Sub-Committee acts as the trustee for the Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust property. The Council has written to the Trustees to notify them of the planning application. This report provides the Trustees with the opportunity to comment on the planning proposal and determine whether to make any representations on that planning proposal.
--

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- | |
|--|
| <p>2.1. That the Sub-Committee comment on the planning proposal for the decarbonisation works at Hitchin Town Hall and Museum (as they share a footprint with the Trust property of the Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust) and determine whether to make any representations on that planning proposal.</p> <p>2.2. That the Sub-Committee consider whether to make any representation to the Council on the proposed works being undertaken and the impact on the Hitchin Town Hall Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust property.</p> <p>2.3. That the Sub-committee note that an agreement (between the Council and the Trust) may be required for the decarbonisation works to take place. This will be entered in to in accordance with the delegated powers set out in the table in paragraph 5.11.4 of the Constitution.</p> |
|--|

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- | |
|--|
| <p>3.1. The planning proposal covers the Trust property of the Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust. The Council has therefore provided a notice to the Trust that they have made a planning application. It is therefore appropriate that the Trustees, via the Cabinet Sub-Committee, can comment on the planning application.</p> |
|--|

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1. None.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1 This report enables consultation with the Sub-Committee. The general reports on the decarbonisation project would enable any wider consultation that was required.

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 On 21 May 2019 the council passed a climate emergency motion recognising the urgency of acting on the climate crisis. This is being pursued through our Sustainability Strategy 2025-2030 which aligns to the Council priority of Sustainability. This strategy replaced the Climate Change Strategy 2022-2027.

7.2 Action 1 on the Sustainability Strategy is to “[d]eliver decarbonisation of key council buildings, particularly the council offices and Hitchin Town Hall and North Herts Museum, and utilise heat decarbonisation an assessment management plans to prioritise future projects and deliver a net zero estate”. The Council has been awarded grant funding, and added its own capital funding towards the delivery of those carbon objectives in relation to the Hitchin Town Hall and North Herts Museum.

7.3 Part of the Hitchin Town Hall and North Herts Museum is on land which is owned by the Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust, which this Sub-Committee acts as trustee for. Broadly the Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust property comprises at ground floor level the two museum exhibition rooms (Discovering North Herts and special exhibition space), local studies room, store room, archive room, server room, café and area between the museum entrance area and the café. It is the same footprint at the first floor level which comprises the Living in North Herts gallery, some of the Terrace gallery, most of the roof terrace, the toilets, lobby area and museum office. At second floor level it is the lobby and the classroom. Appendix A shows a plan of the property owned by the Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust highlighted in green.

7.4 The various parts of the building (i.e. the property owned by the Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust, the Town Hall and the area that was 14/15 Brand Street) are inherently inter-linked. This was agreed by the Sub-Committee when approving the development of the North Herts Museum and works to the Town Hall. It is impractical to decarbonise part of the site, and plant will tend to be put where it is most practical, rather than directly in (or above) the building that it serves.

7.5 The Council manages the day-to-day operation of the Trust building as part of the overall North Herts Museum. It has previously been determined that this meets the Trust's Charitable Objectives, which are:

“Upon trust to use or permit it to be used as a Gym for the benefit of the residents of Hitchin and for other purposes mentioned in s6(3) Museums and Gymnasiums Act 1891 and also for any other (charitable) purpose for the benefit of the North

Hertfordshire District for which North Hertfordshire District Council can lawfully use building and land vested in them”.

- 7.6 As part of running the building, the Council subsidises the running costs of the Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust building. The last approved accounts (2024/25) show that the Council contributed £75,661 towards total running costs £105,518.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. The Council have submitted a planning application for the decarbonisation works. This was under two planning applications (references 26/01938/LBC and 26/01937/FP). Most of the proposed works are to the Hitchin Town Hall building. The works that affect the land owned by the Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust are:

- Solar panels in various locations including the roof above the area classroom (above the second floor level), on the elevation facing South-East and the roof above the terrace gallery (inclusive of the area comprising the Trust property).
- A new air handling unit to replace an existing unit would be placed on the roof above the terrace gallery (inclusive of the area comprising the Trust property)
- Replacement of the existing chiller which is on the roof above the Living in North Herts gallery.
- Various cabling and pipework to connect the above (and other equipment) across the overall site.

- 8.2. The Sub-Committee should consider whether it wants to provide any comments to the planning application (i.e. the Council acting as Planning Authority) or to the Project Executive (i.e. the Council undertaking this capital project). In considering this it should bear in mind the Trust's objectives (as detailed in Paragraph 7.5) and whether this supports the public benefit. A public benefit test should consider the following:

The 'benefit aspect'

To satisfy this aspect:

- a purpose must be beneficial - this must be in a way that is identifiable and capable of being proved by evidence where necessary and which is not based on personal views.
- any detriment or harm that results from the purpose (to people, property or the environment) must not outweigh the benefit - this is also based on evidence and not on personal views.

The 'public aspect'

To satisfy this aspect the purpose must:

- benefit the public in general, or a sufficient section of the public - what is a 'sufficient section of the public' varies from purpose to purpose.
- not give rise to more than incidental personal benefit - personal benefit is 'incidental' where (having regard both to its nature and to its amount) it is a necessary result or by-product of carrying out the purpose.

- 8.3. Overall, the proposed changes would see the decarbonisation of the building and installation of solar panels to generate electricity. This makes a positive contribution towards tackling climate change (a public benefit) and is at no detriment to the provision of a museum facility which can be used by the public (maintaining the Trust Objectives and a public benefit).

- 8.4. Part of the changes to the Trust building do not directly benefit the Trust property itself, e.g. the air handling unit is for the Town Hall part of the building. The sub-committee may want to consider this against the overall public benefit and that the Council have and will continue to subsidise the cost of running the Trust building.
- 8.5. Even if the sub-committee concludes that the changes meet the objectives of the Trust, they will still have an impact on the Trust property, particularly whilst the works are being carried out. Officers will act on behalf of the Trust to determine if an agreement (e.g. a licence agreement) between the Council and the Trust should be in place to cover the works. If this is deemed necessary or good practice, then it will be entered into in accordance with the table in paragraph 5.11.4 of the Constitution.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The Cabinet Sub-Committee has within its terms of reference (Constitution 5.11.4 a)) to act on behalf of the Council as corporate trustee for all assets of the Council that are held on a charitable trust. This report also aligns with sub-paragraphs b), c) and e) of the terms of reference in 5.11.4.
- 9.2. The Sub-Committee Members are not themselves charity trustees (the Council remains the trustee). They must, however, act in a responsible way so as to ensure that the local authority acts properly as a charity trustee. If Members fail to do this they may be liable to the Council under local government law for any losses it bears as a charity trustee. Members must, on behalf of the trustee, ensure that the charity does not breach any of the requirements or rules set out in its governing document and that it remains true to the charitable purpose and objects set out there. If trustees act prudently, lawfully and in accordance with the governing document then any liabilities that they incur can normally be met out of the charity's resources. If the trustees act imprudently, or are otherwise in breach of the law or the governing document, the position is different. Here trustees may be responsible for liabilities incurred by the charity or for making good any loss to the charity.
- 9.3. The table in paragraph 5.11.4 of the Constitution provides delegated powers "[t]o authorise the entering into any agreement, contract, lease, consent, or deed to surrender or termination for administrative or minor matters (including minor amendments)." This is delegated to the "Sub-Committee Chair in consultation with lead Officer for the Trust concerned and Trust lawyer". It is essential that ethical walls remain in place to ensure that there is no compromise in the legal advice provided to the Council.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The cost of the decarbonisation works is being met by the Council, with a contribution from grant funding. The charity is not required to contribute to the costs. The Council will also continue to subsidise the running costs of the Trust property.

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. Providing the sub-committee an opportunity to engage in the planning application process, and the impact on the proposed works on the Trust building, helps to ensure the delivery of the Trust's charitable objectives. This reduces the risk of acting in a way that did not comply with the Council's obligations as a corporate trustee.

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 known equalities Implications arising from this decision.

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 An Environmental Impact Assessment has been undertaken. This shows that the decarbonisation project has a positive environmental impact. The assessment is attached at Appendix B.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

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

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1. Appendix A- plan of the land owned by the Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust (edged in green)
- 16.2. Appendix B- Environmental Impact Assessment for the decarbonisation project. Elements related to the part of the project affecting the Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust property highlighted in yellow.

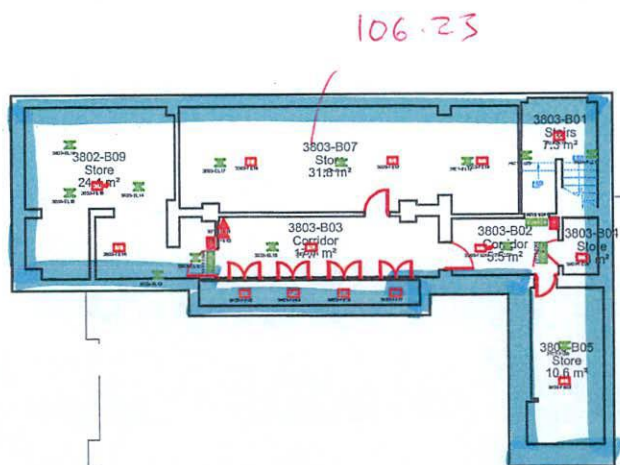
17. CONTACT OFFICERS

Ian Couper	Director - Resources,	ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk, Tel: 01462 474 243
James Lees	Climate Change and Sustainability Project Manager	James.lees@north-herts.gov.uk
Natasha Jindal	Governance Consultant (Legal)	Natasha.jindal@north-herts.gov.uk

18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

3803 - North Herts Museum (Town Hall)
Basement
GIA: 135.02 m²



NHDC

3803 - North Herts Museum (Tov

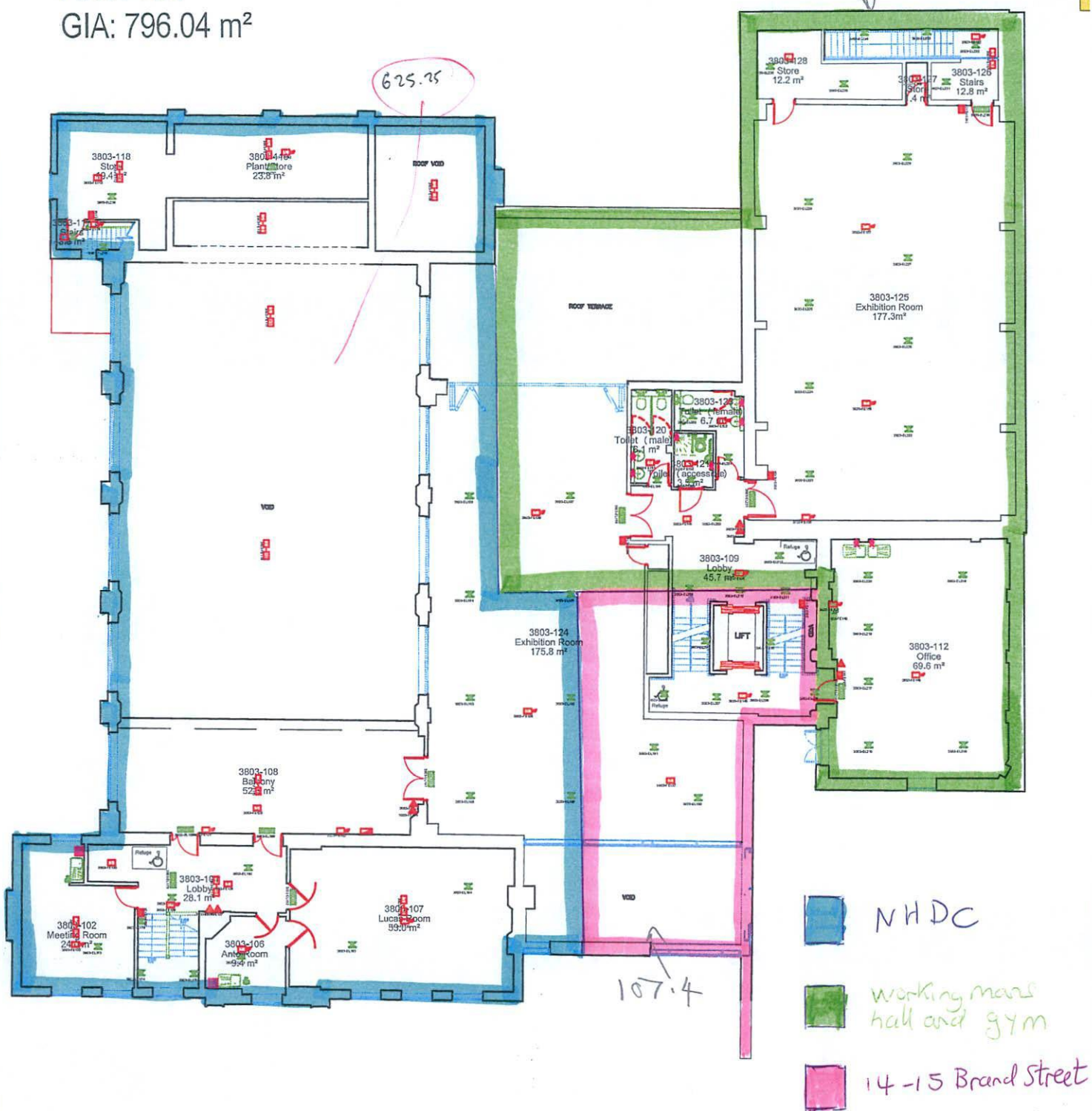
Ground floor



3803 - North Herts Museum (Town Hall)

First Floor

GIA: 796.04 m²



3803 - North Herts Museum (Town Hall)

Second Floor

GIA: 110.01 m²



Environmental Impact assessment

1. Name of activity:	Decarbonisation Phase 2				
2. Main purpose of activity:	To decarbonise (remove direct use of fossil fuels from) the council's key buildings, particularly Hitchin Town Hall and North Herts Museum and the learner pool at North Herts Leisure Centre. This will be achieved by replacing existing gas boilers with air source heat pumps or other clean, electricity-based heating, install measures to reduce energy consumption, such as secondary glazing, and measures to generate renewable electricity, e.g. solar panels. The project also covers the district council offices.				
3. List the information, data or evidence used in this assessment:	This assessment is based on the funding application form to Salix, the government body, where carbon savings were calculated.				
Area of Potential Impact	Examples to Consider (non-exhaustive)	Neutral (X)	Negative (X)	Positive (X)	Describe the contribution/impact on the area that the decision may have - assess whether this impact is a negative or positive or neutral one . Negative: What are the risks? Positive: What are the benefits?
1. Impact on greenhouse emission and support adaption to the effects of climate change	Will energy needs be met through renewable sources?			X	Negative
	Will it reduce emissions through retrofitting new technology?			X	
	Will it reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing energy consumption and the need to travel?			X	Positive
					Installation of a small solar array on Hitchin Town Hall will lead to generation of renewable electricity The intervention will lead to a net annual reduction in CO2e emissions of around 100 tonnes in year one,

					increasing annually as the electricity grid moves to low carbon sources. This results from a reduction of 175-190 tCO₂e from gas use and increase of 84 tCO₂e from additional electricity use based on current conversion factors. Crucially, installation of heat pumps will involve replacing fossil fuel (and climate change causing) based gas boilers with electricity based air source heat pumps which overall reduce energy consumption.
2. Use of natural resources including water and energy	Will it reduce water consumption?	X		X	Negative
	Will it reduce energy consumption?				
					Positive
3. Minimisation of flood risks to the area (i.e. promotion of SUD's. protect surface and ground water quality)	Will it minimise flood risk from all sources of flooding?	X			
	Will it reduce property damage due to storm events/ heavy rainfall by improving flood resistance and flood resilience?	X			Positive
4. To protect, enhance and create environments that encourage and support biodiversity	Will it protect, enhance and increase biodiversity and protect habitats?		X	X	Negative
	Will it improve access to and promote	X			Loss of some grass area next to the learner pool at North Herts Leisure Centre.

	educational value of sites of biodiversity interest?				Positive As part of the planning condition for North Herts Leisure Centre, a planting scheme of native hedging will be planted to shield the heat pump enclosure, replacing grass and so improving biodiversity on site.
5. To improve Air Quality <i>(air quality describes how polluted the air we breathe is)</i>	Will it improve air quality?			X	Negative There are likely to be some local air pollutants released from construction related vehicles e.g. for transporting contractors, the crane that will be used and delivery vehicles. However, the contractor that has been appointed for the pre-construction period has a fleet that is 50% or more fully electric and has highlighted that they would encourage car sharing for site visits.
	Will it reduce emissions of key pollutants?			X	Positive Burning natural gas e.g. through gas boilers leads to emissions of key local air pollutants, particularly Nitrogen Oxides, which are known to cause harm to human health. Replacing gas boilers with air source heat pumps would reduce emissions of these local air pollutants, helping to improve air quality in the area.
6. To reduce need to travel, the use of private motorised vehicular transport as well as	Will it encourage increased walking, cycling and use of public transport?	X			Negative
	Will it increase the proportion of journeys using modes other than a car?	X			

<i>encourage walking, cycling, and use of public transport</i>					Positive

<i>7. To reduce waste production and increase recycling, recovery and reuse of waste</i>	Will it lead to reduced consumption of materials and resources?	X	X	X	Negative
	Will it reduce household waste?				The project will involve removal of old plant e.g. gas boilers and an air handling unit and installation of new resources.
	Will it reduce construction waste?				Positive
	Will it increase recovery recycling and re-use?				Old plant that is removed will be assessed by the leisure contractor at NHLC to see if anything can be used elsewhere and similarly by property services for Hitchin Town Hall. The contractor delivering the pre-construction element of the works identified that 70% of the components of an air source heat pump can be full recycled at the end of their working life. The contractor will also record and report on embodied carbon.
<i>8. To enhance the public realm and street improvements</i>	Will it reduce litter?	X			Negative
	Will it enhance the quality of public realm?				
					Positive

9. To protect, enhance and seek opportunities to increase open space	Will it improve open space? Will it improve landscape character? Will it minimise development on Greenfield sites?	X X X			Negative
					Positive
10. To reduce noise and impact of noise	Will it reduce noise pollution from vehicles?		X		Negative
					There are likely to be some noise pollution from construction related vehicles. There will also be ongoing noise from operation of the air source heat pumps but acoustic testing has identified that noise levels will be within planning limits with measures to be installed on the heat pumps at Hitchin Town Hall to reduce noise levels.
					Positive

6.0 Results			
	Yes	No	
Were positive impacts identified?	☒	☐	The key positive impact is related to reduced carbon emissions.
Were negative impacts identified (what actions were taken)	☒	☐	The main negative impact is increased noise levels both during construction and during operation. However, the air source heat pumps at Hitchin Town Hall will be fitted with measures to reduce noise levels.
7.0 Consultation, decisions and actions			
Describe the decision on this activity (refer to section 3.2)			
No major change			
List all actions identified to address/mitigate negative impact or promote positive impact			
Action	Responsible person		Completion due date
Ensure noise mitigation in place for air source heat pumps at Hitchin Town Hall	Climate Change Project Manager to oversee		Mid-December 2026
Ensure contractor, if appointed to main contract, delivers on commitments related to EVs and car sharing	Climate Change Project Manager to oversee		January 2027
Ensure contractor, if appointed to main contract, delivers on commitments related to resource consumption and circular economy	Climate Change Project Manager to oversee		January 2027
Ensure monitoring in place related to reduction in carbon emissions so that realises proposed benefits	Climate Change Project Manager to oversee		February 2028
When, how and by whom will these actions be monitored?			
Climate Change Manager to monitor delivery of these actions. Firstly, ensuring noise mitigation in place when detailed designs are complete. Then ensure main contract includes requirement to fulfil sustainability commitments from contractor and lastly to ensure monitoring is in place for energy consumption and related carbon emissions reductions.			