

**CONSERVATIVE GROUP: Proposed amendment to  
BUDGET 2025/26 (REVENUE BUDGET AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY)**

Proposer: Cllr Ralph Muncer

Seconder: Cllr David Barnard

The Conservative Group propose the following amendments to the revenue budget:

Ref No	Description of Proposal	Conservative Group Proposal
R4	Reinstatement of the part time posts of Empty Homes Officer (0.5 FTE) and Housing Grants Officer (0.5FTE) and the Air Quality Officer position (0.5 WTE) to the Council's permanent staffing establishment. These posts were deleted as part of a restructure in 2023/24 to release resource to meet other urgent staffing priorities. The requested reinstatement of these roles will enable the delivery of essential work to address empty homes in the district and to develop and support an air quality strategy in line with our climate emergency and the upcoming challenges to be faced regarding the proposed Luton Airport expansion.	Keep Air Quality Officer proposal, do not reinstate the other two posts
R5	Creation of a part-time (0.5 FTE) Private Water Supply Officer (PWSO) post for the Environmental Health Commercial Team. The PWSO would support the existing Private Water Supply Scientific Officer in delivering the increased workload caused by the imposed changes to statutory guidance and water quality requirements and would also increase service resilience in this area.	Remove
R7	Recruitment of an additional Senior Environmental Health / Food Officer in the Commercial Team, on a 4-year fixed-term contract, to accommodate the increased pro and reactive workload, including the additional food inspections required, and the additional Health & Safety interventions necessary for the service to achieve and maintain this legally required competency.	Remove
R8	Permanent budget provision for an additional Environmental Health Regulatory Officer in the Commercial Team, initially at a junior level to support the senior officers in undertaking essential roles, including the food sampling programme and the assessment of those food businesses classed as lower concern. The officer would also provide advice to new businesses following the increase in new food registrations seen over recent years.	Remove
R17	Introduction of a permanent career graded Policy and Strategy Officer post to replace the existing fixed term trainee role, which has to date been part funded from contributions from the Climate Change earmarked reserve. Grade progression would be dependent on completion of relevant training at first diploma and then degree level. The proposal will increase the scope, range, and ability of the Policy & Strategy team to support NHC officers, North Hertfordshire residents and district wide partnerships. The Team is becoming involved in more partnership work across the district (e.g., Herts Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership and associated subgroups, Equality and Diversity Networks) and corporate governance matters (the production of the Annual Governance Statement, associated Local Code of Governance and cumulative equality and environmental impact assessments). The permanence of this role will ensure that these obligations can be discharged to a consistent standard. Investment value reflects the maximum additional cost of this proposal and includes the removal of the budgeted contribution from reserve when the reserve balance reduces to zero.	Remove

R18	Leadership team restructure. Make permanent the seventh Service Director post, with realignment of responsibilities across the seven roles. This would be subject to consultation with affected staff and separate Full Council approval of the revised structure. This can in effect be part funded by the salary inflation provision for 2024/25 that wasn't all required.	Remove
R19	Permanent budget provision for the Climate Change and Sustainability Manager role, which is currently funded on a fixed term basis until September 2026. The post will be necessary to help the Council make progress on its sustainability priority and net zero targets in future years.	Remove
R23	Repairs and maintenance at Ransoms Rec, Hitchin. Following receipt of a number of complaints about the lighting and condition of this busy footway, repairs to the lighting and footpaths are required to ensure continued public safety.	Delay by 1 year
R26	Waste contract client team staffing expenditure. Net cost of recruitment of two temporary full-time Mobilisation Contract Officers (one of which will be funded by East Herts DC) to support the mobilisation of the new waste and recycling services for up to 6 months, as originally proposed in the report to Cabinet in October 2022.	Remove
R27	Addition of a new part-time (0.5 FTE) Commercial Waste Officer post to the Council's permanent staffing establishment. As originally proposed in the report to Cabinet in October 2022, the new role would support the implementation of Commercial Food Waste Collections, commercial clinical waste collections and evolve and develop the Commercial Waste and Recycling business. Half of the cost of the post will be funded by East Herts, with the aim for this post to be self-funding within 3 years.	Remove
R28	Net cost (after East Herts 50% contribution) of recruitment to a six month temporary full time post that will be responsible for fixing issues which arise with containers, as detailed in the report to Cabinet in December 2023. This staff member would be issued with a van and would assist with container swaps, delivery of ad hoc missing containers, stickering containers and resident run throughs to help residents adjusting to the change. Investment estimate includes box van vehicle hire costs for 4 months.	Remove
R29	Provision of Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel for the waste, recycling and street cleansing service vehicles. Based on the annual requirement for 280,000 litres, the additional cost is anticipated to be 12% higher than diesel and this cost is outside the provision of the waste contract. The use of HVO reduces CO2 emissions by approximately 90% in comparison to diesel, thus significantly reducing the carbon impact of the service. Investment value is based on the provision of 100% HVO, but HVO can be blended in proportions of 10% increments with diesel and this provides directly proportionate cost impacts and carbon savings (e.g. opting for 50% HVO would halve both the investment value and the carbon emission saving).	Remove
R30	Commissioning of a waste compositional analysis (WCA). The last was completed in 2021 and is periodically completed to inform the Council of the effectiveness of recycling services. WCA will be a requirement of the data provision from Extended Producer Responsibility Funding (EPR) and undertaking a composition in late 25/26 will allow us to assess the effectiveness of the new services in comparison to the previous composition in 2021. The Hertfordshire Waste Partnership will collectively procure on behalf of the districts and boroughs to provide a wider Hertfordshire analysis for comparison.	Move to 26/27 so that better data after contract change
R31	Provision of a comprehensive communications plan to support the roll out of waste and recycling service changes, as detailed in the previous Cabinet report of 9 July 2024. Costs are estimates and will vary depending on the number of collection day changes and the confirmation of costs following procurement.	Reduce so that maximum of £50k

R32	Provision of a mobile application for residents to support the waste and recycling service provision. The app would provide service and collection updates via push notifications to those residents subscribed to the app, as well as look up functionality regarding collection days and options for recycling. The additional 'reporting' functionality via the app would also support the CRM. The app would have capabilities to be expanded to a wider range of council services including planning.	Remove
R36	Recruitment of an additional Transport Officer for a fixed term of five years to; assist the Senior Transport Officer with the delivery of various transport projects emerging from the adopted Local Plan, the Growth Transport Plan and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan; to assist with the review of transport policies relating to the Local Plan review; to allow the Senior Transport officer to lead and input on transport initiatives associated with masterplanning for strategic site allocations in the Local Plan and to focus on key strategic transport projects working together with Herts County Council.	Remove
NEW	Additional Environmental Crime Officer, including on-costs and vehicle	NEW

### **Commentary from the Chief Finance Officer**

I note that this includes a proposal that relates to Agenda Item 8 (Leadership Team and Senior Management Structure) that would have a financial impact. I confirm that if that decision is made on that item then I will have ready an amended forecast spend for the Revenue Budget. But the impact is not included within the numbers below. I confirm that the proposal would result in a reduction in ongoing spend of £112k per year compared with the current substantive budget assumptions.

For the investments (spend increases) that will not be delivered as part of these proposals. The service impact is detailed in Appendix G.

The estimated impact of the proposals is shown in the table on the next page. As a total package the year 5 impact is a net reduction in spend of £279k. This is the value that is used in medium term financial planning to set the overall savings targets for the Council. As this is a net reduction in spend it does not negatively affect my section 25 report (Appendix D).

Ref No	CONSERVATIVE GROUP PROPOSAL	Description of Proposal	ORIGINAL BUDGET PROPOSAL					REVISED PROPOSAL					CHANGE				
			2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
			£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
R4	Keep Air Quality Officer proposal, do not reinstate the other two posts	Reinstatement of the part time posts of Empty Homes Officer (0.5 FTE) and Housing Grants Officer (0.5FTE) and the Air Quality Officer position (0,5 WTE) to the Council's permanent staffing establishment. These posts were deleted as part of a restructure in 2023/24 to release resource to meet other urgent staffing priorities. The requested reinstatement of these roles will enable the delivery of essential work to address empty homes in the district and to develop and support an air quality strategy in line with our climate emergency and the upcoming challenges to be faced regarding the proposed Luton Airport expansion.	77	77	77	77	77	26	26	26	26	26	(51)	(51)	(51)	(51)	(51)
R5	Remove	Creation of a part-time (0.5 FTE) Private Water Supply Officer (PWSO) post for the Environmental Health Commercial Team. The PWSO would support the existing Private Water Supply Scientific Officer in delivering the increased workload caused by the imposed changes to statutory guidance and water quality requirements and would also increase service resilience in this area.	26	26	26	26	26	-	-	-	-	-	(26)	(26)	(26)	(26)	(26)
R7	Remove	Recruitment of an additional Senior Environmental Health / Food Officer in the Commercial Team, on a 4 year fixed-term contract, to accommodate the increased pro and reactive workload, including the additional food inspections required, and the additional Health & Safety interventions necessary for the service to achieve and maintain this legally required competency.	64	64	64	64	-	-	-	-	-	-	(64)	(64)	(64)	(64)	-
R8	Remove	Permanent budget provision for an additional Environmental Health Regulatory Officer in the Commercial Team, initially at a junior level to support the senior officers in undertaking essential roles, including the food sampling programme and the assessment of those food businesses classed as lower concern. The officer would also provide advice to new businesses following the increase in new food registrations seen over recent years.	51	51	51	58	64	-	-	-	-	-	(51)	(51)	(51)	(58)	(64)
R17	Remove	Introduction of a permanent career graded Policy and Strategy Officer post to replace the existing fixed term trainee role, which has to date been part funded from contributions from the Climate Change earmarked reserve. Grade progression would be dependent on completion of relevant training at first diploma and then degree level. The proposal will increase the scope, range, and ability of the Policy & Strategy team to support NHC officers, North Hertfordshire residents and district wide partnerships. The Team is becoming involved in more partnership work across the district (e.g., Herts Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership and associated subgroups, Equality and Diversity Networks) and corporate governance matters (the production of the Annual Governance Statement, associated Local Code of Governance and cumulative equality and environmental impact assessments). The permanence of this role will ensure that these obligations can be discharged to a consistent standard. Investment value reflects the maximum additional cost of this proposal and includes the removal of the budgeted contribution from reserve when the reserve balance reduces to zero.	7	11	16	16	16	-	-	-	-	-	(7)	(11)	(16)	(16)	(16)
R19	Remove	Permanent budget provision for the Climate Change and Sustainability Manager role, which is currently funded on a fixed term basis until September 2026. The post will be necessary to help the Council make progress on its sustainability priority and net zero targets in future years.	-	31	62	62	62	-	-	-	-	-	-	(31)	(62)	(62)	(62)
R23	Delay by 1 year	Repairs and maintenance at Ransoms Rec, Hitchin. Following receipt of a number of complaints about the lighting and condition of this busy footway, repairs to the lighting and footpaths are required to ensure continued public safety.	25	-	-	-	-	-	25	-	-	-	(25)	25	-	-	-
R26	Remove	Waste contract client team staffing expenditure. Net cost of recruitment of two temporary full-time Mobilisation Contract Officers (one of which will be funded by East Herts DC) to support the mobilisation of the new waste and recycling services for up to 6 months, as originally proposed in the report to Cabinet in October 2022.	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(16)	-	-	-	-

R27	Remove	Addition of a new part-time (0.5 FTE) Commercial Waste Officer post to the Council's permanent staffing establishment. As originally proposed in the report to Cabinet in October 2022, the new role would support the implementation of Commercial Food Waste Collections, commercial clinical waste collections and evolve and develop the Commercial Waste and Recycling business. Half of the cost of the post will be funded by East Herts, with the aim for this post to be self-funding within 3 years.	9	7	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(9)	(7)	(5)	-	-
R28	Remove	Net cost (after East Herts 50% contribution) of recruitment to a six month temporary full time post that will be responsible for fixing issues which arise with containers, as detailed in the report to Cabinet in December 2023. This staff member would be issued with a van and would assist with container swaps, delivery of ad hoc missing containers, stickering containers and resident run throughs to help residents adjusting to the change. Investment estimate includes box van vehicle hire costs for 4 months.	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(13)	-	-	-	-
R29	Remove	Provision of Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel for the waste, recycling and street cleansing service vehicles. Based on the annual requirement for 280,000 litres, the additional cost is anticipated to be 12% higher than diesel and this cost is outside the provision of the waste contract. The use of HVO reduces CO2 emissions by approximately 90% in comparison to diesel, thus significantly reducing the carbon impact of the service. Investment value is based on the provision of 100% HVO, but HVO can be blended in proportions of 10% increments with diesel and this provides directly proportionate cost impacts and carbon savings (e.g. opting for 50% HVO would halve both the investment value and the carbon emission saving).	40	40	40	40	40	-	-	-	-	-	(40)	(40)	(40)	(40)	(40)
R30	Move to 26/27 so that better data after contract change	Commissioning of a waste compositional analysis (WCA). The last was completed in 2021 and is periodically completed to inform the Council of the effectiveness of recycling services. WCA will be a requirement of the data provision from Extended Producer Responsibility Funding (EPR) and undertaking a composition in late 25/26 will allow us to assess the effectiveness of the new services in comparison to the previous composition in 2021. The Hertfordshire Waste Partnership will collectively procure on behalf of the districts and boroughs to provide a wider Hertfordshire analysis for comparison.	20	-	-	-	-	-	20	-	-	-	(20)	20	-	-	-
R31	Reduce so that maximum of £50k	Provision of a comprehensive communications plan to support the roll out of waste and recycling service changes, as detailed in the previous Cabinet report of 9 July 2024. Costs are estimates and will vary depending on the number of collection day changes and the confirmation of costs following procurement.	100	-	-	-	-	50	-	-	-	-	(50)	-	-	-	-
R32	Remove	Provision of a mobile application for residents to support the waste and recycling service provision. The app would provide service and collection updates via push notifications to those residents subscribed to the app, as well as look up functionality regarding collection days and options for recycling. The additional 'reporting' functionality via the app would also support the CRM. The app would have capabilities to be expanded to a wider range of council services including planning.	25	20	20	20	20	-	-	-	-	-	(25)	(20)	(20)	(20)	(20)
R36	Remove	Recruitment of an additional Transport Officer for a fixed term of five years to; assist the Senior Transport Officer with the delivery of various transport projects emerging from the adopted Local Plan, the Growth Transport Plan and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan; to assist with the review of transport policies relating to the Local Plan review; to allow the Senior Transport officer to lead and input on transport initiatives associated with masterplanning for strategic site allocations in the Local Plan and to focus on key strategic transport projects working together with Herts County Council.	56	56	56	56	56	-	-	-	-	-	(56)	(56)	(56)	(56)	(56)
NEW	NEW	Environmental Crime Officer, including on-costs and vehicle	-	-	-	-	-	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56
<b>Total Net Budget Increase from new pressures and investment proposals</b>			<b>529</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>(397)</b>	<b>(256)</b>	<b>(335)</b>	<b>(337)</b>	<b>(279)</b>