

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 10 June 2025

Note: Regarding Deferral of North Herts Town Centres Strategy and Pay On Exit Parking:

1. North Herts Draft Town Centres Strategy:

- Officers presented an overview of the Town Centres Strategy to the Strategic Planning Board on 20th May 2025. The Board received a presentation from officers and their consultants, Lichfields, on the current status of the project, an overview of the interim draft, timeline and next steps. The Board members acknowledged receipt of the presentations and the comprehensive work undertaken by officers and their consultants.
- The Board members recognised the need for a more policy weighted strategy supported by a robust evidence base in order to respond and guide future development proposals, with sub-sections detailing specific town centre aspirations to be more visionary setting out the Council's proposed direction of travel and priorities for each of the town centres that could be taken forward as part of the Local Plan review.
- The Board, recognising that further work needed to be undertaken following the discussion around the priorities for the town centres, and to allow time for officers and their consultants to complete the draft, the Board requested to have sight of the draft once complete for their review prior to it being submitted to Cabinet.
- It was therefore agreed that the Draft Strategy is withdrawn from the 24 June 2025 Cabinet meeting and scheduled for a future 2025 Cabinet meeting (ideally September 2025). Hence the reason for the deferral of the draft town Centres Strategy from this meeting of O&S committee. Officers have included the request for the draft Town Centres Strategy to be presented to a future meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee prior to Cabinet in their work programme.

2. Pay on Exit Parking:

- The roll out of the new parking machines and associated signage across all 4 town centres including Knebworth took place over March and April. The previous chair of O&S requested a detailed update for this meeting including a range of

data and comparisons. Officers identified only a limited amount of information (circa six weeks) would be available by the report deadline and this sample would likely be skewed by the 'settling down' period. Following Annual Council, there was further liaison with the new O&S chair on this matter.

- A report will be prepared for the next meeting of O&S, after Quarter 1 financial year, where officers will have at least 3 to 4 months' worth of data and the technology issues with the new machines should have been resolved. This will enable officers to provide more accurate figures and to compare these to last year's data as requested.
- In the interim officers will prepare and circulate to members an update on the implementation of the new machines and the arrangements being put in place to address the various technology issues with the new machines and user queries. The update will be circulated by the end of June.