

Updates from North Herts Council's Enterprise and Estate Teams

Churchgate Regeneration Project

The team are working through the final stages of the viability stage of this project, in preparing for bringing a report to Cabinet in February 2026. We have completed a detailed car parking survey and analysis that tells us how the future programme could impact the town, thinking about measures that will need to be put in place as part of our parking strategy to mitigate congestion and/or a shortage of parking.

We have also been working on a market proposal, that responds to what the community told us in the consultation this time last year. The proposal suggests a purpose-built indoor facility, with outdoor space for dining and stalls – creating a destination hub in the centre of the regeneration zone. The Cabinet report will provide more details of each work package and clearly state the next steps in our business plan.

Churchgate Shopping Centre Management

Praxis Property Management continue the day-to-day management of the centre. They have built good relationships with tenants with an improved presence at the centre, and ensuring compliance and day to day management aspects are actioned. Praxis are working closely with Visit Hitchin regarding events over the coming months that we can collaborate on. Christmas lights have been put up in the main walkway and we are looking at planters and hanging baskets again for next year. A number of new lettings have taken place in the centre recently, including a temporary letting of Unit 39 for Shop Small Pop-Up / Giftware Collective and Unit 18 to Smash Burgers.

Riverside Walk

This remains within the Responsible Growth priority of the Council Plan with the aim of delivering the walkway between Bridge Street and Biggin Lane to increase footfall in this part of the town centre. An outline proposal has been prepared by consultant engineers. The river banks have been cleared and uneven sections of paving repaired. Consultation is underway with the Environment Agency to enable the design of the proposed bridge to be finalised and with Herts County Council Highways for linking with existing footpaths with a view to submitting a planning application in the New Year. There are a number of stages to delivery of this project including outline and detailed design, consultation with key stakeholders, planning consent, Highway and Environment Agency consents, tender for the works and delivery. The target is to begin and complete the project during spring/summer 2026.

Charnwood House

The Council remain committed to delivering its ambition to revitalise Charnwood House for the benefit of Hitchin and the wider district. An options paper is being drafted with a view to Executive Members being able to confirm the next steps before Christmas. Whilst Charnwood House is not formally on the market at present pending the outcome of this work, we are maintaining a list of organisations and groups who have expressed an interest and they will be informed of next steps which may include a new period of marketing to secure a suitable organisation to occupy and operate the building.