*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

**TITLE OF REPORT: COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26 (QUARTER 2 UPDATE)**

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR - RESOURCES

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: RESOURCES

COUNCIL PRIORITY: THRIVING COMMUNITIES / ACCESSIBLE SERVICES / RESPONSIBLE GROWTH / SUSTAINABILITY

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**1.    EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents progress on delivering the Council Delivery Plan for 2025-26. This is a Quarter 2 update but generally reflects progress up to the point that this report was prepared (late November 2025). The report includes:

- For the projects identified by Cabinet, it details milestones and progress against them.
- The risks in relation to the delivery of those projects, as well as the corporate risks that could impact the delivery of all our projects and services.
- Latest data for the Council's key performance indicators (KPIs).

Two projects have been completed (King George V Skate Park and Waste and Street Cleansing Contract) and associated risks have been managed to the target level. Five projects have an amber delivery status (Decarbonisation of Council Buildings - Phase 2, Digital Transformation, Oughtonhead Common Weir, Pay on Exit Parking, and Resident/Public EV Charging in our Car Parks). Four projects have a red risk status (Churchgate, Decarbonisation of Council Buildings - Phase 2, Leisure Centre Decarbonisation, and Local Plan review). The four over-arching Corporate Risks also have a red status. There are three KPIs that have a red status (two relating to Careline installations and one relating to CSC calls answered in 45 seconds).

This report also sets out plans for developing KPIs that align better to the objectives within our Council Plan.

**2.    RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

2.1    Provide comment on the Council Delivery Plan Quarter 2 monitoring report, including the recommendation to be made to Cabinet i.e.:
      - That Cabinet notes progress against Council projects and performance indicators, as set out in the Council Delivery Plan (Appendix A), and approves new milestones and changes to milestones.

2.2    Determine any project they want to receive more detail on, as part of the next monitoring report.

## 3.    REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1    The Council Delivery Plan (CDP) monitoring reports provide Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and Cabinet, with an opportunity to monitor progress against the key Council projects, and understand any new issues, risks, or opportunities.

## 4.    ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1    In developing the CDP, it was agreed that Cabinet would receive quarterly updates. The updates are also provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committee so that they can provide additional oversight and support to Cabinet.

4.2    In relation to adding new KPIs to better reflect delivery of the Council Plan, there would be an option to just retain the current KPIs and accept that they are primarily focused on delivery of core services.

## 5.    CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1    Service Directors and Service Managers have provided updates on progress and will have made Executive Members aware of progress made.

5.2    A draft of the Quarter 2 update was provided to the Risk and Performance Management Group (RPMG) in November 2025. The Group has a standing invite to the Executive Member for Resources (has responsibility for performance monitoring), the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S) and the Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (FAR). Other members of O&S and FAR are also encouraged to attend when they can. RPMG were asked to comment on the Q2 update. There were no specific issues raised by the Group.

5.3    The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to provide comments on the current progress of the CDP, including recommendations to Cabinet.

5.4 In August 2025, proposals in relation to adding new KPIs to better reflect the Council Plan were discussed at the internal informal Political Liaison Board of the Executive and Leadership Team. The conclusion was that it would be desirable to have additional KPIs that helped describe the actions in the Council Plan. This was followed by a further discussion at the Political Liaison Board in December.

**6. FORWARD PLAN**

6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan dated 21 November 2025.

**7. BACKGROUND**

7.1 The CDP brings together projects, risks, and performance indicators in one document. The projects and performance indicators have been rolled forward from 2024/25 into the current year. There has been one project added (decarbonisation phase 2).

**8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 Appendix A provides an update on the progress made in delivering the Council Delivery Plan 2025-26. Whilst it is labelled as a Quarter 2 update, it generally reflects the latest position at the time the report was written (late-November). Milestones are set as far ahead as possible but are not included where there is too much uncertainty over the scope or timing of the milestone.

8.2 Five projects have an amber status, with the remaining seven having a green status, two of which have now been completed. Comments on the amber statuses are provided below, and as detailed in Appendix A, some of the projects with a green status also have proposals for changes to (yellow highlights) or new (blue highlights) project milestones.

| | |
|---|---|
| Decarbonisation of Council Buildings - Phase 2 | Amber status reflects that target dates for some milestones will not be confirmed until a quantity surveyor, designer, and architect have been appointed. |
| Digital Transformation | Amber status reflects a delay in the go live date for the new Safety Advisory Group (SAG) platform, which will now follow a feedback session with SAG scheduled for mid-January 2026. |
| Oughtonhead Common Weir | Amber status reflects delays to previously reported milestone dates and that we are awaiting a further update from HCC's Countryside Management Service on revised project timings. |
| Pay on Exit Parking | Amber status reflects a delay confirming requirements for an updated TRO for Hitchin Swimming & Fitness Centre and concerns with the quality of installed parking signage. However, the project is still expected to be completed within the Capital funding period. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Resident/Public EV Charging in our Car Parks | Amber status reflects delays commissioning new charging points due to the need to obtain required third party wayleave agreements and lead in times for required Distribution Network Operator works. |

8.3    Our performance indicators reflect the overall performance of the Council. Performance levels are rated as either green (achieving or exceeding the target), amber (not achieving the target level and look to take action to get back on track) or red (urgent action needed to get back to target). For this report:

- 5 indicators are rated green.
- 6 indicators are rated amber.
- 3 indicators are rated red.
- 9 indicators do not have a target.

8.4    For performance indicators rated red, the following actions are being taken:

**Careline Installations:** Although year-to-date performance remains below target, we have seen a marked improvement over recent months. In September 2025, Careline achieved 89.2% of installations within 5 working days (only 0.8% below the 90% target) and in October 2025, performance improved to 90.1% (exceeding the target by 0.1%). Key factors behind current performance of both KPIs are workforce constraints (redeployment and recruitment efforts are mitigating this), and training and development of new staff (training programmes are progressing well, and efficiency is improving). Positive indicators are that despite the challenges, the upward trend demonstrates that corrective actions are working and that year-to-date performance against the 10 working days KPI remains high despite performance issues earlier in the year. We are currently ensuring that almost all installations are completed within 10 working days. Next steps will be to continue monitoring client availability issues and explore proactive contact strategies, maintain focus on staff training and onboarding to accelerate productivity, and ongoing recruitment.

**Call Answering:** There have been several key factors influencing performance during the first half of 2025-26. The Customer Service Centre (CSC) has experienced ongoing staffing challenges, and temporary staff were brought in to help manage contacts. Alongside this, the CSC has had increased call demand due to seasonal peaks and service changes. Notably, the annual Council Tax billing period combined with the garden waste resubscription period in March/April 2025 followed by the introduction of new Waste services in August/September 2025, significantly increased call and email volumes. In terms of mitigation and improvement action, we have had ongoing campaigns to fill vacancies and retain temporary staff in order to stabilise the workforce. Fast track training has been implemented to get any new starters or temporary staff up to speed as soon as possible. The Council's new AI telephony system is helping to promote self-service options on our website, and the chatbot is receiving good usage since its implementation earlier this year. As we moved through the first half of the year, the percentage of calls answered improved, but meeting the 45-second target remains challenging, with continued focus on resourcing, training, and digital channel adoption expected to deliver improvements in the coming months.

8.5    As can be seen in Appendix A, there is no 2025-26 data for the previously reported KPI entitled 'Number of collections missed per 100,000 collections of domestic household waste'. Officers are working with Veolia on contract data, but currently the only missed collections data available to us from the start of the new contract relates to the contract as a whole, covering both East and North Herts:

|  | Apr 25 | May 25 | Jun 25 | Jul 25 | Aug 25 | Sep 25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Missed collections per 100,000 lifts (per month) |  | 40 | 79 | 72 | 317 | 236 |

8.6    There are 12 risk entries linked to specific projects and four over-arching corporate risks. For this report:

- 4 risks are assessed low risk (green).
- 4 risks are assessed medium risk (amber).
- 8 risks are assessed high risk (red).

8.7    As referenced in the 2024-25-year-end CDP report, the Council's Corporate Peer Challenge report included recommendations around better linking KPIs to the Council Plan. An Internal Audit report then provided some benchmarking as to how this could be achieved. A summary was then considered by the informal Political Liaison Board in August, and it was recommended that KPIs be developed that reflect the outcomes achieved by the Council Plan. Following further discussion, the KPIs detailed in Table 1 below are proposed to be added to future monitoring. These were developed by reviewing the Council Plan for specific actions and then considering whether there was something that could be measured. It was also considered whether there was likely to be sufficient variation in that measure, the extent to which Council actions would have a direct impact, and how much work it would be to measure. Most of the results are input or output measures, but over time we will look at how we can develop more outcome-based measures. Initially, there are no targets set, but these will also be reviewed. Some of the measures may be changed slightly if it is found that a similar measure provides a better view of performance or is easier to measure. Some are ones that we measure already (and these ones may have a target), but this confirms the link to the Council Plan action.

**Table 1**

| KPI | Council Plan Priority | Detailed Council Plan Link | Executive Member | Frequency of Measuring |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Leisure Centre Visits | Thriving Communities | "we support our communities to improve their health and wellbeing" | Environment | Monthly |
| Measure linked to Active Communities (number of users) | Thriving Communities | "we support our communities to improve their health and wellbeing"/ "deliver physical activities for beginners, older age groups, and those who are less active" | Environment | Quarterly |

| KPI | Council Plan Priority | Detailed Council Plan Link | Executive Member | Frequency of Measuring |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Value of community grants awarded (£) | Thriving Communities | "support local groups who provide important services to our residents"/ "Continue to allocate grant funding to local groups who provide important services and activities for our residents and enable our communities to thrive" | Governance | Quarterly |
| Environmental Health – number of food premises inspected | Thriving Communities | "Protect our communities from environmental and noise hazards and ensure that restaurants and hospitality venues in the district are hygienic and safe" | Regulatory | Quarterly |
| Environmental Health – number of noise complaints responded to/ number or percentage upheld | Thriving Communities | "Protect our communities from environmental and noise hazards and ensure that restaurants and hospitality venues in the district are hygienic and safe" | Regulatory | Quarterly |
| Number of people responding to consultations | Thriving Communities | "support local people to have a say in the future of where they live and on the issues that matter locally" | Customers | Annually |
| Landlords signed up to Good Landlords Charter | Thriving Communities | "Develop and launch a Good Landlords Charter to encourage landlords to voluntarily commit to higher standards than are currently required by law" | Regulatory | Quarterly |
| Percentage of (primary) schools subscribed to the museum loan service | Thriving Communities | "loaning objects and archives to schools and digitising our archives so the wider museum collection is accessible to the community" | Enterprise | Annually |
| Current CSC measures | Accessible Services | "We want to make sure that our services are accessible to everyone and easy to use" | Customers | Monthly/ Quarterly |
| Staff Turnover | Accessible Services | "look at ways to improve recruitment and retention, making sure North Herts Council is an excellent place to work" | Resources | Quarterly |
| Number of new properties built/ growth in properties paying Council Tax/ number of new homes granted planning permission | Responsible Growth | "places that are created here to have the necessary infrastructure to make new development sustainable and to be well-designed, reflecting the local landscape and character of the area"/ "deliver more sustainable growth" | Place | Annually |

| KPI | Council Plan Priority | Detailed Council Plan Link | Executive Member | Frequency of Measuring |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Section 106 spend – value returned to developers (zero target) | Responsible Growth | "places that are created here to have the necessary infrastructure to make new development sustainable and to be well-designed, reflecting the local landscape and character of the area"/ "deliver more sustainable growth" | Place | Annually |
| Carbon emissions | Sustainability | "sets out our approach to reducing carbon emissions"/ "Reducing our contribution to climate change" | Environment | Annually |
| Number (number of BNG units) of Council- approved habitat banks in the district | Sustainability | "supporting the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain" | Place | Annually |
| Number of electric vehicle charge points (in Council car parks and through HCC partnership) | Sustainability | "More electric vehicle charge points, making it easier for residents to access chargers in our town centres and to switch to an electric vehicle" | Place | Annually |

8.8     The CDP is intended to be a live document. Councillors and Officers can access Ideagen for the latest position. New projects can be added to the Plan if they are a strategic priority and resources are available to deliver them. Projects will be removed when they are completed, or if they are no longer a priority. Cabinet (following prior review by Overview and Scrutiny Committee) will be asked to approve any changes to milestones. An initial meeting of the Project Board for the new museum collection facility project was held in September 2025, and this project will be added to the CDP in time for the next monitoring report.

8.9     Overview and Scrutiny Committee can ask for more detail on any of the CDP projects. This can either be provided as a written update or can be included as part of the next quarterly update, to support discussion in the meeting.

8.10     <u>Access to Ideagen</u>

All the detail behind the projects, risks and performance indicators is available to view in Ideagen, the Council's performance and risk system. A guest login is provided on the intranet for any Member to use, along with a procedure note and short video on how to view the data.

**9.    LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1    The constitution determines the role of Cabinet as including: "To take decisions on resources and priorities, together with other stakeholders and partners in the local community, to deliver and implement the budget and policies decided by the Full Council. To monitor performance and risk in respect of the delivery of those policies and priorities" (paragraph 5.7.3).

9.2    The constitution determines the role of Overview and Scrutiny Committee as including: "To review performance against the Council's agreed objectives/priorities and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or service areas. To consider risk to the achievement of those objectives/priorities. To make recommendations to Cabinet" (paragraph 6.2.7 (s)).

9.3    There are no specific legal implications arising from the CDP. However, there may be individual legal implications for some of the projects outlined. Any commissioning of work on new and existing projects will follow the standard legal requirements and those required by the Council's internal standing orders, contained within the Constitution.

9.4    It is worth noting that a robust and measurable delivery plan is an important tool for the Council to fulfil the 'best value' requirement set out in Section 3 of the Local Government Act. The Act requires authorities, including the Council, to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness." Monitoring reports to Members and actions arising from those reports will ensure discharge of this statutory responsibility.

**10.    FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1    There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Where projects are linked to efficiencies or investments then these are included in the budget proposals and monitored through the quarterly finance reports.

**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    The CDP aims to support the risk management process by directly linking the risks to projects being undertaken. The aim of these proposals is to strengthen the link between performance and risk and make risks more current. This should provide an improved perspective of the risks that the Council faces.

**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 direct equalities implications arising from this report.

**13.    SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

13.1    The Social Value Act and "go local" requirements do not apply to this report.

**14.    HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

14.1    There will continue to be a need to align Council and Service objectives with available people resources to be able to achieve them. The CDP helps to make that link clearer.

**15.    ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

15.1    There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report. However, a number of the projects to be monitored throughout the year are related to key environmental issues.

**16.    APPENDICES**

16.1    Appendix A – Council Delivery Plan 2025-26 Q2 Monitoring Report

**17.    CONTACT OFFICERS**

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**18.    BACKGROUND PAPERS**

18.1    None