

REVENUE BUDGET SAVINGS AND INVESTMENTS

New Revenue Efficiency Proposals and Savings Identified

Service Directorate	Description of Proposal	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Customers	Careline service income. Estimated additional income associated with proposals (below) to increase spend on Careline marketing activity, with the appointment of an additional Marketing Officer and use of Google advertising. Efficiency estimate based on an average of 300 new clients per year.	(79)	(151)	(223)	(295)	(367)
Place	Place Directorate staffing costs. Deletion of permanent PA to Director: Place post. Previous postholder retired in August 2025 and some responsibilities have transferred to the Regulatory directorate. A revenue investment bid for an additional full-time post to provide service-wide administrative support was approved by Council in setting the 2024/25 budget. This post is currently out to advert and will absorb the residual duties of the PA post.	(20)	(20)	(20)	(20)	(20)
Place	Planning applications income. Householder Planning Fee increases. Fees are presently set nationally and householder application fees were increased by Government in April 2025. Estimated permanent increase in income based upon activity in preceding years.	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)
Place	Planning Pre-applications income. Pre-application charges were reviewed in 2025. This, alongside a revision to the Council's pre-application protocol and changes to Government rules around resubmissions of applications, have led to an increase in income which is expected to be sustained in future years.	(60)	(60)	(60)	(60)	(60)
Enterprise	Additional Estates income- Forecast that the capacity created by the additional Surveyor post below will generate annual income at least equal to the cost of the post. This will be kept under review and is expected that will be greater.	(70)	(70)	(70)	(70)	(70)
Customers	District Wide Survey Expenditure. The successful adoption of the free Microsoft Forms web-based software tool to conduct online surveys has removed the need to separately procure a digital survey platform from which to run the biannual district wide survey.	-	(18)	-	(18)	-
		(429)	(519)	(573)	(663)	(717)

New Revenue Pressures and Investment Proposals

Service Directorate	Description of Proposal	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive	Transfer to a specific reserve to support the process and impacts of Local Government Reorganisation	1,000	1,000	-	-	-
Customers	Careline Service marketing. Creation of a permanent Marketing Assistant post. Increase in marketing capacity will help to sustain current growth in customers and revenue (as indicated by efficiency proposal above) through enhanced marketing output. Investment value is an estimate as new role would be subject to job evaluation.	43	43	43	43	43
Customers	Careline Service marketing. Permanent budget provision for spend on Google advertising. Families seeking support for vulnerable loved ones, and professionals looking to make referrals, increasingly begin their search online. At present, Careline's visibility on Google is limited, with larger national providers dominating results through higher advertising spend. Increase in budget will allow Careline to maintain consistent daily visibility on Google, strengthening Careline's ability to reach families at the exact point of need, while improving financial sustainability through higher customer acquisition. Estimated corresponding increase in revenue income is included in the efficiency above.	5	5	5	5	5
Customers	Careline Service staffing costs. Increase in management capacity through the creation of two Team Leader positions. The new posts would replace existing Senior Administrative Support Officer roles. The investment will increase service resilience and reduce operational risk, while increasing strategic capacity.	6	6	6	6	6
Customers	Careline Service staffing costs. Temporary additional administrative staffing support (65 weekly hours of bank staff) to manage spike in demand for installations while clients transition to new digital assistive technology equipment. This will involve more than 5,500 installer installation bookings over the next 18-24 months, with current administrative capacity unable to absorb the associated additional workload.	70	70	-	-	-

Service Directorate	Description of Proposal	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Customers	Communications staffing. Budget is requested to offer the current Communications Apprentice a two-year fixed-term full-time contract as a Communications Assistant from when their apprenticeship ends in June 2026 until June 2028. Role is required with the increased workload associated with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), increased filming requests, our Newsflash redevelopment project and the Museum Storage Project.	29	36	8	-	-
Customers	Process mapping tool. A process mapping tool is required for the Digital Business Analyst and wider team to use to map processes, and to enhance efficiencies across the Council. The tool will be used to create a library of process maps ahead of LGR. The tool will go towards identifying time saving across the organisation.	13	13	-	-	-
Customers	IT Services staffing costs. Due to the significant increase in workload, rapid technology advancements, heightened importance of cybersecurity, and the transition from a virtual environment to laptop end user devices, it is essential to make the current temporary Developer role a permanent position within the IT department. This change will ensure continuity, maintain service quality, and support the department's ability to meet ongoing and future operational demands as well as effective preparedness for the transition to a new unitary authority.	61	61	61	61	61
Enterprise	Recruitment of an additional Estates Surveyor on a fixed term two year contract. There remains a backlog of case work (rent reviews and lease renewals) which require actioning and will deliver back rent and increased revenue going forwards. The proposed role will assist with this and free up existing team members to progress a number of capital projects which require increased resource to progress (including Riverside Walk, Charnwood House, Thomas Bellamy House, former WC building at Royston and bringing forward development sites). This is in addition to overseeing the day to day management of Churchgate Shopping Centre to ensure it is appropriately managed and delivering net income pending the planned re-development, and supporting the Local Government Reorganisation estates workstream across the Hertfordshire authorities.	67	67	-	-	-
Enterprise	Churchgate Project Manager Role. The extension of the dedicated Project Manager to focus on the preparation and delivery of the next phases of the Churchgate Shopping Centre regeneration beyond that approved by Full Council in July 2025.	130	-	-	-	-
Enterprise	Shared Economic Development Officer role. This role is a shared agreement with East Herts to deliver economic development activity across the two Districts. In the next financial year this role will be focusing on both the monitoring of continuing Shared Prosperity Fund projects and delivering elements of the newly adopted Economic Development Strategy such as business partnerships and growth, which is critical to establishing economic development in North Herts.	30	-	-	-	-
Enterprise	Enterprise Team staffing expenditure. The new Economic Development Strategy was approved at Cabinet in September 2025. The strategy sets out the need for a much greater economic footprint within North Herts - more than the current 0.5 ED Officer currently delivers. Cabinet recognised the importance of having a strong Economic Development presence across the Council, and are committed to delivering a large portfolio of projects that will address the following: 1) business and enterprise; 2) people and skills; 3) innovation and economic change; 4) site and premises and 5) investment, position and promotion. Therefore, the Enterprise Team (supported by the Executive Member) will be proposing a team restructure in the coming months to deliver the strategy and its action plan. The team have worked with a consultant to map out the 'most effective' way to structure the team - utilising the current staffing budget (which has been significantly underspent for the past three years) and requesting some financial growth (50K) ongoing. This will ensure the team are experienced and strong, and are set up correctly to deliver on both the Enterprise and Economic Development Strategies. The full restructure proposal will be taken to SLT, Executive Members, Cabinet and Full Council.	50	50	50	50	50
Environment	Creation of fixed term Climate Project Officer post to support the delivery of Sustainability Strategy actions and outcomes related to the Climate Emergency. There are 29 actions in the strategy related to reducing emissions for both the council's own operations and the wider district. The officer would help with delivery of these actions, which could have wider benefits for residents around health related to warmer homes, reduced air pollution related to transition to cleaner vehicles / machinery, and potentially saved costs from energy efficiency measures in council buildings. Investment value is an estimate with the new role subject to job evaluation.	49	49	49	-	-
Environment	Tree maintenance expenditure. Increase to cemetery tree budget to ensure adequate provision for essential tree works. In recent years the budget has either been exceeded or important works deferred.	12	12	12	12	12

Service Directorate	Description of Proposal	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Environment	Planting borders at Bancroft, Hitchin and Priory Memorial Gardens, Royston. Royston Priory Memorial Gardens – planting scheme to address lack of planting and loss of borders. This will enhance biodiversity, seasonal interest visitor enjoyment, and a sense of care, while directly supporting our Green Space Management Strategy for town parks. We will look to use these borders for plants that are sustainable, interesting, colourful, wildlife friendly, drought tolerant and low maintenance. They will be a great example to our residents of sustainable planting and will boost the presentation of the park hugely.	57	-	-	-	-
Environment	Renovations and repairs of paths at Walsworth Common, as outlined in the Greenspace Action Plan for the site.	10	-	-	-	-
Environment	Ash Dieback removal. An increase in the incidence of Ash Die back has occurred over the last few years in the District. In particular, Weston Hills and Norton Common are both sites where a programmed schedule of works over the next 3 years has been planned. Working with Hertfordshire County Council / Countryside Management Service in following the Greenspace Action Plan.	15	15	15	-	-
Environment	Permanent budget provision for the Community Wellbeing Officer at 32 hours a week. This post has been funded for the past two years through external grants to develop and deliver community wellbeing interventions across the district. From April 2026, the external grants are reduced and are sufficient to fund the service delivery but not the coordinating officer role, without which the services will not be delivered. The post will ensure the delivery of; social isolation projects & falls prevention, creative wellbeing for mental health and food poverty interventions district wide. They will also maintain the Community Wellbeing website, social channels and monthly newsletter. The Community Wellbeing team also have funding from Herts County Council to deliver the North Herts Healthy Hub (alongside none other district and borough hubs) with a funded Healthy Hub Coordinator. This post needs a wellbeing colleague to support safe working practices when working with vulnerable individuals, as well as holiday and other absence cover. This post, alongside the Community Wellbeing Team Leader, will ensure continuity of cover for the Healthy Hub. They will also support the Community Wellbeing Team Leader to identify and apply for sources of external funding to tackle health inequalities in North Herts.	42	42	42	42	42
Governance	Recruitment to a fixed-term Policy and Strategy Officer post until March 2028. The team, currently comprising a Team Leader, officer, and apprentice (contract ending early 2026), supports the Policy & Strategy Service Action Plan and various Council and service priorities across multiple directorates. This new role will expand the team's capacity to deliver good governance, transparent decision-making, equality and environmental impact assessments, and administration of Assets of Community Value, while also absorbing increased workload from Local Government Reorganisation. Additionally, the officer will be responsible for leading external grants identification, application, monitoring, and impact reporting in support of Council objectives. The post is career graded, with the investment value representing the maximum cost of the appointment.	46	46	-	-	-
Governance	Increase of hours for the Safeguarding Team Leader from 30 hours to 37 hours per week. The increase in hours is crucial given the growing complexity of safeguarding demands across the Council. The expanded role will provide ongoing support and expertise to officers and councillors, ensuring that safeguarding is fully embedded into Council culture and practice. Key responsibilities will now include delivering bespoke inhouse safeguarding training, hence reducing reliance on external trainers and reducing pressure on corporate training budgets, while ensuring staff are confident and prepared to address safeguarding concerns. The Team Leader must also ensure compliance with new legislation, county-wide protocols, and recommendations from County Boards and Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs).	12	12	12	12	12
Place	Planning Control staffing. Permanent budget to increase two part-time posts, including the Team Leader role, to full-time positions to meet both flexible working requests from employees and capacity requirements in this area of the service.	17	17	17	17	17
Place	Creation of a new Conservation Assistant permanent post within Planning Control. North Herts has more than 1,700 Listed Buildings and 400 Conservation Areas. There are presently only two professional Conservation Officers to provide advice on relevant schemes & enforcement activities affecting these historic assets. This post would support professional officers with research required for individual schemes or applications, provide additional capacity to support project work (e.g. undesignated heritage assets, new listings, listed buildings at risk, reviews of conservation area boundaries etc.) and resilience / future-proofing of the service by potentially providing a gateway to the professional posts. The investment value is estimated with the new role subject to job evaluation.	49	49	49	49	49

Service Directorate	Description of Proposal	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Place	Planning Technical Support staffing. Improvement of service resilience with the enhancement of the existing Technical Support Officer (TSO) post and the recruitment to a new, dedicated permanent TSO post for planning appeals. Increasing capacity at the start of the process and providing dedicated TSO support for planning appeals should enable quicker processing of applications, facilitating the timely consideration of applications in line with Government targets.	36	36	36	36	36
Place	Planning Services management. Additional budget is requested to finance additional management capacity and alleviate pressure on service managers through the uplifting of one existing post to a supervisory role. The proposed investment budget will be used in conjunction with the previous ongoing investment of £9k approved by Council for 2025/26 to review management and team arrangements across the Planning Service.	13	13	13	13	13
Place	Planning IT software expenditure. Software to assist with the statutory assessment of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and reporting requirements of the Biodiversity Duty. Consideration to be given to compatibility with potential IT setups leading into and following Local Government Reorganisation. Anticipated introduction from January 2026 with first years' costs funded by residual Government grant for BNG activities.	3	10	10	10	10
Place	Digital Traffic Regulation Orders. Budget to support new statutory requirement for existing and new Traffic Regulation Orders to be produced and made available digitally. Hertfordshire County Council are currently leading an exercise to investigate IT-based solutions and funding on behalf of all authorities. Further information on potential costs anticipated October / November and will be added once known.	8	8	8	-	-
Regulatory	Expenditure on Community Safety projects and initiatives. Increase ongoing Community Safety budget from £10k to £20k. The budget for the current year will be fully spent, while there are so many more initiatives we can deliver to reduce crime and tackle fly-tipping.	10	10	10	10	10
Environment	Radburn Way Habitat Bank. Improve management of the land and provide a habitat bank with improved public access as appropriate. The site to be a potential source of income as a BNG habitat bank. Long term management likely by CMS.	15	-	-	-	-
Environment	Annual software costs for new burial management system.	21	21	21	21	21
Customers	Extend the trial of Co-pilot (AI) to around 50 users (currently 20 licenses). By increasing to 50 users we get the benefit of additional analytics. The licenses will be targetted based on what has been learnt from the initial trial.	8	-	-	-	-
		1,927	1,691	467	387	387