

**COUNCIL**  
**23 APRIL 2026**

**PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF REPORT: NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

The following motion has been submitted, due notice of which has been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12.

**Protection of North Herts Chalk Streams**

To be moved by Councillor Tom Tyson and seconded by Councillor Louise Peace:

Council notes that:

1. Chalk streams are globally rare ecosystems that require our protection. There are only around 260 chalk streams in the world, with 85% of them being in southern England. We have ten in North Herts and it behoves us to offer these precious and vulnerable assets the maximum level of protection against over-abstraction and pollution, particularly in the face of huge potential levels of housing development locally.
2. South Cambs MP Pippa Heylings is currently sponsoring a Chalk Streams (UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site) Bill in parliament<sup>1</sup>. Our MP for NE Herts Chris Hinchliff is a signatory. The bill seeks to give our chalk streams status as a serial UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site, which requires the government to make a national commitment to their conservation. However, the status could take years to achieve.
3. At a time when the government is pushing to enable housing development to take place more rapidly and with less local control than ever before, it is essential that North Herts Council does everything possible to protect its unique chalk streams and the irreplaceable habitats associated with them.
4. The draft NPPF (2025)<sup>2</sup> now makes two mentions of the need to protect chalk streams – in policies P3 2(e) and N1 1(a) – but this protection must also be embedded at the local level.
5. The new North Herts Local Plan currently under development offers an opportunity to do this. The presence of our chalk streams should be woven into the visions and objectives of the Local Plan.
6. Whilst only part of North Herts lies within the Chilterns National Landscape, the Planning Guidance set out for it by the Chilterns Chalk Streams Project<sup>3</sup> is equally valid for the whole of North Herts. This should be applied across the District and its plan-making checklist be implemented in development of the new North Herts Local Plan.

Therefore, Council resolves to:

1. Instruct the Executive Member for Place to write to MPs Pippa Heylings and Chris Hinchliff expressing the Council's support for the Bill to make all UK chalk streams a serial UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site.

2. Ensure the Chilterns Chalk Streams Project checklist with the two amendments shown is adopted and applied throughout the preparation of the Council's new Local Plan (see details below).
3. Ensure that the Council as LPA places the highest possible priority on the protection and conservation of the District's chalk streams, taking appropriate measures to safeguard their ecological integrity and the quality and quantity of their water, including the imposition of planning conditions as necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> Hansard entry for first reading of the Bill [Chalk Streams \(UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site\) - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

<sup>2</sup> Draft NPPF December 2025 [National Planning Policy Framework: draft text for consultation](#)

<sup>3</sup> Chapter 04 of the Chilterns Chalk Stream Planning Guidance [Chilterns-Chalk-Stream-Planning-Guidance-May25.pdf](#) deals with planning policy and specifically contains the following checklist requiring the Local Plan to:

- Name the chalk streams present within the area District in the plan
- Identify chalk streams on the policies map or map showing sites of ecological value
- Make specific reference to chalk streams within policies relating to the ~~Chilterns National Landscape~~ Local Plan area
- Make specific reference to the unique nature of chalk streams in policies relating to water quality and quantity
- Include protection and enhancement of chalk streams in criteria-based policies relating to the natural environment
- Include specific protection or enhancement measures for chalk streams in site allocations policies
- Ensure specific reference to the protection of habitats and species related to chalk streams