

Updates from North Herts Council's Enterprise and Estate Teams

Churchgate Regeneration Project

The project team presented a report to Full Council in July, to gain approval to launch a two-phase Procurement process - starting in mid-September 2026. The Procurement will look to appoint a partner to work on the next, required feasibility stage that will give the Council greater detail on what is possible on the Churchgate site from a developer perspective and according to the specification set out by the Council. The Procurement is an open tender, and invites interested parties to bid for the feasibility work which makes up Stage 1 of the process. This is a really exciting time for the Churchgate Project Board, as it demonstrates significant progress in the project and we look forward to working with a selected partner to draft a plan for the site.

Churchgate Shopping Centre Management

Praxis Property Management continue the day-to-day management of the centre. The Council continues to manage the centre to support and maintain existing lettings and attract new tenants pending any potential longer-term redevelopment. This includes exploring and completing recently on a number of innovative short term community uses of vacant units. The centre is currently close to full occupancy. Praxis also continue to work collaboratively with Visit Hitchin regarding events over the coming months that we can work on together.

Riverside Walk – Riverside Walk, Hitchin

This remains a priority of the Council to deliver opening up the walkway between Bridge Street and Biggin Lane to increase footfall in this part of the town centre.

A consultant engineer has been advising on the specification and design of the walkway, including the installation of a new footbridge. A topographical survey and trial pits have been undertaken out to identify the appropriate location of the bridge. Consultation has taken place with the Environment Agency, nearby residents, the planning department and Hertfordshire County Council as highways authority, which has informed the production of a potential design for the walkway.

The next steps will be to finalise the design of the walkway, together with supporting documentation so that formal applications can be made for the regulatory and other consents required for the project (planning consent, Environment Agency/Lead Local Flood Agency consent and Highways Agency consent). It is envisaged that these consents will be submitted simultaneously this autumn.

The Council will identify an appropriate contractor to complete the manufacture and installation of the new bridge (and refurbishment of an existing bridge) and new connection to the highway at Biggin Lane, refurbishing the railings and associated works. Pending the grant of permissions authorising the walkway, the works are planned to take place in Spring/Summer next year.

Charnwood House

The new marketing of Charnwood House went live on Monday 24th August as part of the Council's plan for the property to be brought back into use to support community-based activities and there has been early interest in the opportunity. The details can be found at <https://www.eddisons.com/property-search/charnwood-house-paynes-park-hitchin-hertfordshire-sg5>

The particulars and application form clearly set out the Council's aspirations, seeking proposals from suitable interested parties (or groups) and offers based on the Council's proposed letting arrangement which includes works required to the property, lease length and acceptable uses.