CABINET
TUESDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2026

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: 2026-27 Q1 Council Delivery Plan Update

REPORT OF: Director - Resources

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Executive Member - Resources

COUNCIL PRIORITY: Sustainability

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents progress on delivering the Council Delivery Plan for 2026-27. This is a Quarter 1 update, but generally reflects progress up to the point that the report was prepared (early August 2026). 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).

Points to note:

- A new item relating to the Royston Learner Pool has been added to the Council Delivery Plan.
- 2 Projects have an amber delivery status – Decarbonisation of Council Buildings, Phase 2 and Resident/Public EV charging in our car parks.
- 6 Projects have proposed changes to milestones - highlighted in yellow on the report.
- 3 Projects have proposed new milestones – highlighted in blue on the report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. That Cabinet notes progress against the Council projects and performance indicators, as set out in the Council Delivery Plan (Appendix A) and approves new projects, milestones and changes to milestones.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. The Council Delivery Plan (CDP) monitoring reports provide Cabinet, with an opportunity to monitor progress against the key Council projects, and understand any new issues, risks or opportunities. Overview and Scrutiny Committee have the opportunity to review the monitoring reports sent via the Members Information Bulletin (MIB) and request more detailed updates to be presented.

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 via the Members

Information Bulletin (MIB), to enable them to provide additional oversight and support to Cabinet.

4.2. Therefore, no alternative options were considered for this report.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1. 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 1 update was provided to the Risk and Performance Management Group (RPMG) in August 2026. The Group has a standing invite to the Executive Member for Resources (who 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, FAR, and Cabinet are also invited to attend if they can. RPMG were asked to comment on the Q1 update. There were no specific issues raised by the Group.

6. FORWARD PLAN

6.1. This report contains a recommendation on a key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 19th June 2026.

7. BACKGROUND

7.1. The CDP brings together projects, risks and performance indicators in one document. The projects and performance indicators to be included are agreed by Cabinet in June each year, although can be added to during the year.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1. Appendix A provides an update on the progress made in delivering the Council Delivery Plan 2026-27. Whilst it is labelled as a Quarter 1 update, it generally reflects the latest position at the time that the report was written (early August). 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. In some cases, the expected actions are included, but without a target date.

8.2. The focus of the report is on providing a description of the progress made. Projects are rated on overall progress i.e., shown as completed, on track, some delays, significant delays. Where there are delays, Cabinet will be asked to consider revisions to milestones.

8.3. A new project for the Royston Learner Pool has been added to the CDP. The current milestones show that the project is anticipated to complete in April 2028. No projects were completed in this quarter.

8.4. 2 Projects have an amber status, with the remaining 9 having a green status. Comments on the amber statuses are provided below. As detailed in Appendix A, some projects with a green status also have proposals for changes to (yellow highlights) or new (blue highlights) project milestones.

Resident/Public EV Charging in our Car Parks	The amber status relates to proposed changes to due dates for the project, following issues identified with the format of the site plans which need to be resolved before the leases can be finalised. Progress has also been hindered by the contractor changing our assigned project manager which has led to delays while they familiarise themselves with the project/issues.
Decarbonisation of Council Buildings – Phase 2	The amber status relates to a change to when we expect to receive planning approval, due to the planning application for Hitchin Town Hall being submitted later than originally planned. Following feedback from the Senior Conservation Officer about proposals for Hitchin Town Hall, the Project Board supported changes to designs with the proposed location of the air source heat pump moving to the rear of the building. Additionally, Project Board agreed to incorporate additional interventions to provide cooling to the site which required designs for inclusion in the planning application. These two additional requirements led to a delay in submission of the planning application to 3 August 2026. Planning permission, with conditions, was granted at North Herts Leisure Centre on 15 July 2026. Planning permission for Hitchin Town Hall is predicted to be granted in late Autumn 2026. The project team are currently procuring a contractor through a two-stage design and build approach to develop detailed designs and, subject to approval, deliver the works. The tender process is anticipated to complete by 1 September 2026. Detailed designs will then be undertaken with these completed, with costings, to inform papers to take a decision to the Cabinet meeting on 19 January 2027. Outside the scope of the CDP project, decarbonisation of the council offices is taking place in August to September 2026.

8.5. Our performance indicators now 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 need to look at actions to get back on track) or red (urgent actions needed to get back to the target performance). For this report:

- 13 indicators are rated green
- 3 indicators are rated amber
- 2 indicators are rated red
- 18 indicators are for information only

8.6. For performance indicators that are rated red, the following actions are being taken:

- Percentage of NNDR collected in Year – Performance remains below target due to technical issues with the new reliefs and multipliers brought in for 2026/27. We undertook the annual billing process without issue, but problems remained with issuing new or amended bills. This caused a delay in issuing amended bills and the subsequent temporary suspension of recovery. It is expected that we will see an improvement in the in-year collection rate for Q2 and beyond now that the issues have been resolved.

- Number of reported missed household garden waste collections per 100,000 collections - There has been an increase in reported missed garden waste collections since the start of the new subscription period in April 2026. A significant contributing factor has been residents subscribing to the service shortly before, or on the day of, their scheduled collection. While these subscriptions are processed as quickly as possible, there can be a short delay before the information is updated across operational systems. Residents are advised of a 10-working day activation period; however, some collections are still reported as missed during this grace period and are subsequently recorded within the missed collection figures. We have been working closely with our contractor to improve performance. Measures include monitoring missed collection data on a weekly basis, reviewing rounds where issues are identified, and ensuring subscription information is updated and communicated to crews as quickly as possible. These actions are already having a positive impact, with missed collections reducing month on month. Although not related to the reported Q1 2026/27 cumulative figure, there were only 60 missed collections in July 2026 from 69,569 scheduled lifts, equating to 86 missed collections per 100,000. We expect performance to continue improving during the remainder of the year.

8.7. For the indicators that are rated amber, the following actions are being taken:

- Percentage of Careline installations completed within 10 working days (achieving 99.8% against a target of 100%) – Tolerable performance is considered to be between 97% and 100%. Once the indicator has fallen below 100% it cannot be achieved for the year. Only one installation in April was out of time and performance for May and June was 100%.

- Working days lost due to short-term sickness absence in the last 12 months per FTE employee (4.54 days against a target of 4 days) - In the last 12 months KPI data has been relatively consistent, although there has been a slight increase between June 2025 (4.26) and June 2026 (4.54). This is in line with general trends and average sickness absence levels across local authorities with available benchmarking data. There is a risk that such absences could increase with the workload and wider implications of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process. Whilst managers will continue to be supported with absence prevention and management, the risk is that short-term absence may continue to increase.

- Percentage of CSC calls answered within 45 seconds (achieving 62% against a target of 80%) - Quarter one was very strong in terms of calls answered, as we achieved 93%. Whilst the service level of answering calls within 45 seconds was under target at 62%, this is an increase from 2025/26 performance levels. Staffing is stable, with temporary staff continuing to help manage any peaks of demand. Self-service options continue to be promoted via the automated telephony system and online chatbot.

8.8. There are 11 risk entries linked to specific projects and four over-arching corporate risks. For this report

- 3 risks are assessed low risk (green).
- 5 risks are assessed medium risk (amber).
- 7 risks are assessed high risk (red).

Access to Ideagen

8.9.8 All the details behind the projects, risks and performance indicators are available to view in Ideagen, the Council's performance and risk software. A guest login is provided on Sharepoint 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 Full Council. To monitor performance and risk in respect of 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 risks to projects being undertaken, and strengthens the link between performance and risk, making risks more current and providing 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, however individual projects may lead to procurements that will follow our Contract Procurement Rules.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report. However, some of the projects to be monitored throughout the year are related to key environmental issues. Environmental Impact Assessments are conducted for individual projects as needed.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1. 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 and highlights the risks to achieving them.

16. APPENDICES

16.1. Appendix A– 2026-27 Q1 Council Delivery Plan Update

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1. None