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EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of East Hertfordshire District Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Wallfields, Hertford on <u>Wednesday 18th December, 2019 at 7.00 pm</u>, for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the Agenda below, and you are hereby summoned to attend.

Date this 10th day of December 2019
                  Jonathan Geall
                  Head of Housing and Health *and*
                  Acting Head of Legal and Democratic Services

<u>Note:</u> *Prayers will be said before the meeting commences. Those Members who do not wish to participate will be invited to enter the Chamber at their conclusion*

<u>AGENDA</u>

1.   Chairman's Announcements

    To receive any announcements.

2.   Apologies for Absence

    To receive any Members' apologies for absence.

3.   Minutes - 23 October 2019 (Pages 9 - 44)

    To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 October 2019.

4.   Declarations of Interest

To receive any Members' declarations of interest.

5.   Petitions (Pages 45 - 48)

To receive any petitions.

6.   Public Questions

To receive any public questions.

7.   Members' questions (Pages 49 - 50)

To receive any Members' questions.

8.   Executive Report - 3 December 2019 (Pages 51 - 114)

To receive a report from the Leader of the Council and to consider recommendations on the matters below:

(A)   Council Tax Long Term Empty properties

(B)   Benington Conservation Area Character Appraisal

(C)   Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Stewardship Objectives and Principles

9.   Council Tax Calculation of Council Tax Base (Pages 115 - 122)

10.   Licensing Committee Report - 30 October 2019 (Pages 123 - 130)

To receive a report from the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and to

consider recommendations from the Licensing Committee on the matter below:

(A) Consideration of Responses to the Proposal to Limit Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences to Two Hundred

11. Adoption of the IHRA Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism (Pages 131 - 136)

12. Appointment of Chairman to Development Management Committee (Pages 137 - 140)

13. Treasury Management Annual Review 2018/19 (Pages 141 - 160)

14. Treasury Management Mid Year Review 2019-20 (Pages 161 - 180)

15. Information and Communications Technology Partnership Strategy (Pages 181 - 256)

16. Appointment of Monitoring Officer (Pages 257 - 262)

17. Appointments to Independent Remuneration Panel (Pages 263 - 268)

18. Revised Community Grants Policy 2020/21 (Pages 269 - 294)

19. Development Management Committee: Minutes - 6 November 2019 (Pages 295 - 308)

20. Performance, Audit and Governance Oversight Committee: Minutes - 24 September and 29 October 2019 (Pages 309 - 330)

Chairman: Councillor M Pope

21. Motions on Notice (Pages 331 - 332)

    To receive a Motion on Notice.

22. Exclusion of Press and Public

    To move that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of Essential Reference Paper B of item 23 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

23. Old River Lane and Northgate End Land Assembly (Pages 333 - 340)

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

1. A Member, present at a meeting of the Authority, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Authority, with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in any matter to be considered or being considered at a meeting:

   - must not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting;

   - must not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;

   - must disclose the interest to the meeting, whether registered or not, subject to the provisions of section 32 of the Localism Act 2011;

   - if the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days;

   - must leave the room while any discussion or voting takes place.

2. A DPI is an interest of a Member or their partner (which means spouse or civil partner, a person with whom they are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom they are living as if they were civil partners) within the descriptions as defined in the Localism Act 2011.

3. The Authority may grant a Member dispensation, but only in limited circumstances, to enable him/her to participate and vote on a matter in which they have a DPI.

4. It is a criminal offence to:

- fail to disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest at a meeting if it is not on the register;
- fail to notify the Monitoring Officer, within 28 days, of a DPI that is not on the register that a Member disclosed to a meeting;
- participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which a Member has a DPI;
- knowingly or recklessly provide information that is false or misleading in notifying the Monitoring Officer of a DPI or in disclosing such interest to a meeting.

(Note: The criminal penalties available to a court are to impose a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale and disqualification from being a councillor for up to 5 years.)

Public Attendance

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If you think a meeting you plan to attend could be very busy, you can check if the extra space will be available by emailing democraticservices@eastherts.gov.uk or calling the Council on 01279 655261 and asking to speak to Democratic Services.

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Everyone is welcome to record meetings of the Council and its Committees using whatever, non-disruptive, methods you think are suitable, which may include social media of any kind, such as tweeting, blogging or Facebook. However, oral reporting or commentary is prohibited. If you have any questions about this please contact Democratic Services (members of the press should contact the Press Office). Please note that the Chairman of the meeting has the discretion to halt any recording for a number of reasons, including disruption caused by the filming or the nature of the business being conducted. Anyone filming a meeting should focus only on those actively participating and be sensitive to the rights of minors, vulnerable adults and those members of the public who have not consented to being filmed.

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 23 OCTOBER 2019, AT 7.00
PM

PRESENT: Councillor J Kaye (Chairman).
Councillors A Alder, A Alder, D Andrews,
T Beckett, S Bell, R Buckmaster, R Bolton,
P Boylan, M Brady, E Buckmaster, S Bull,
J Burmicz, L Corpe, K Crofton, B Crystall,
A Curtis, G Cutting, B Deering,
I Devonshire, H Drake, J Dumont,
R Fernando, J Frecknall, M Goldspink,
J Goodeve, L Haysey, D Hollebon,
A Huggins, I Kemp, G McAndrew,
M McMullen, S Newton, T Page, M Pope,
J Ranger, C Redfern, S Reed, C Rowley,
P Ruffles, D Snowdon, M Stevenson,
T Stowe, N Symonds, A Ward-Booth,
G Williamson, C Wilson and J Wyllie.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Richard Cassidy	-	Chief Executive
Jessica Brucher	-	Electoral Services Officer
Rebecca Dobson	-	Democratic Services Manager
Steven Dupoy	-	Leisure and Environment Services Manager
Helen Standen	-	Deputy Chief Executive
Alison Stuart	-	Head of Legal and

		Democratic Services
Tamara Jarvis	-	Improvement and Insight Manager
Jess Khanom-Metaman	-	Head of Operations
Jonathan Geall	-	Head of Housing and Health
Su Tarran	-	Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service
Rhys Thomas	-	Theatre Director and Arts Advisor

174   CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting, and reminded them that the meeting was being webcast.

The Chairman gave an account of his recent civic activities, including attending the ceremony for winners of the Campaign to Protect Rural England's Rural Living Awards. He was pleased to say the Rivers Heritage site in Sawbridgeworth had had a commendation, and Jonathan Forgan of Little Hadham had received the Peterkin Award; and the Community Award had been given to Mudlarks Café. The Chairman also reported on his attendance at a community choir event at Haileybury School. He congratulated Herts Chiefs Basketball on their achieving an award for diversity and equality in sport.

Forthcoming events the Chairman would be attending included the Bishop's Stortford Breathe-Easy Support Group coffee morning on 24 October. On 23 November,

the Chairman would be hosting his Civic Dinner, and all Members were invited to contact his PA to ensure they had tickets.

The Chairman said he would bring forward agenda items regarding Hertford Theatre and the Review of Polling Districts and Places.

175   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Jones and S Rutland-Barsby.

It was noted that Councillors A Curtis and I Kemp were delayed but would be attending.

176   MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor J Kaye and seconded by Councillor T Beckett, that the Minutes of the meetings held on 24 July and 3 September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

> RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meetings held on 24 July and 3 September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

177   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In respect of Minute 181– Hertford Theatre Growth and

Legacy Scheme, Councillor S Bell declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of the Hertford Operatic Society, as although she was not a member of that society, she was involved in volunteering on its behalf.

178   <u>APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER</u>

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services left the Council Chamber for the duration of the item.

The Chief Executive submitted a report on appointment of an Interim Monitoring Officer. He said the Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, Alison Stuart, would be leaving the employ of East Herts Council to take up a position as Head of Legal at the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. Recruitment was taking place for the post which would be vacated by her departure. As the Council was required by law to appoint a Monitoring Officer, and as under the legislation, neither the Head of Paid Service nor the Chief Finance Officer could hold such position, it was proposed to appoint Alison Stuart as Interim Monitoring Officer, to provide consistency and resilience, until a permanent appointment was made.

Councillor D Andrews moved, and Councillor L Haysey seconded, a motion that the recommendations as detailed in the report be approved.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

> <u>RESOLVED</u> – that Alison Stuart be appointed as the Council's Interim Monitoring Officer.

Councillor M Goldspink requested that thanks to Alison Stuart be recorded, on behalf of her Group for her support to all Members, and wished her well for the future.

Members supported these sentiments.

179   <u>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</u>

Bailey Nash-Gardner asked the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability, "What steps have East Herts Council taken so far in response to the climate change declaration at the last Council meeting on 24 July?"

Councillor G McAndrew welcomed the opportunity to provide an update. On 24 July 2019, the Council had voted unanimously to make a climate change declaration which committed the Council to a proactive stance on net carbon neutrality and acting as an exemplar of best practice. Councillor McAndrew set out how the Council would realise this aim in three ways: by changes directly to its own buildings, through its people and through its services; by its powers to prioritise actions taken by others, under regulation; and by influencing and encouraging others to act.

Councillor McAndrew referred to current analysis of the carbon footprint of East Herts, which was 2,800 tonnes of CO_2 per year, and said there was much further to go to meet the aspiration to be carbon neutral by 2030. He outlined measures which had been taken since the Declaration had been made, including enhancing the sustainability specification of the development of the Leisure Centres at Grange Paddocks and Hartham, going beyond building regulation requirements. The Council was facilitating Officers' use of electric vehicles; and would

move towards swapping its diesel van to electric vans. The
Council was developing an environmental sustainability
Supplementary Planning Document, a draft of which would
be consulted upon in the New Year. The Council's revised
taxi emissions policy was having a significant impact, and
the Council was in the process of registering the first two
electric cars as taxis. On 25 September the Council had
held an E-vehicle roadshow in Bishop's Stortford. He
reminded all that they could book the Council's e-pool cars
could be booked outside work. There was more to do, and
he would be working to promote BREEAM (the Building
Research Establishment Environmental Assessment
Method). The Council would not be working alone, as he
was pleased to announce that the first meeting of the East
Herts Environmental Climate Forum would be taking place
in Ware on 4 December. The Forum would bring together
local groups, Members and others, and invitations would
be issued shortly. He encouraged all to participate.

Mr Nash-Gardner thanked Councillor G McAndrew for his
answer.

Jill Goldsmith, on behalf of Bishop's Stortford Climate
Change Group, asked Councillor McAndrew as the
Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability, "What
has the Council done to examine whether its current
District Plan includes the very best measures to help the
District become carbon neutral by 2030 and more
specifically has it examined whether and to what timescale
it could revise the Climate Change chapter in the Plan or
agree a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to
deliver its commitment in its Climate Change motion?"

Councillor McAndrew said the Council was committed to
addressing climate change, and recognised its role in

reducing emissions. The SPD would reduce emissions to sustainable levels, through requiring use of less energy and increasing energy efficiency. The detail of the SPD was currently being finalised, and would, once adopted, become a material consideration in development. Work would also be undertaken in planning for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town to enhance sustainability, and Officers would ensure all planning guidance would promote the Council's policy. Work was also being brought forward on the Hertfordshire Planning Partnership.

Jill Goldsmith welcomed the response and said she looked forward to being involved in consultations. She said it was important the SPD should require developers to be committed to measuring their predicted emissions, and asked whether the SPD would include this requirement.

Councillor McAndrew said he anticipated that the SPD would include this provision, but he would reply in writing to that further question.

Joe Thomas asked the Executive Member for Communities what the Council was doing in order to ensure that young people's voices were being listened to and taken into consideration when decision making.

Councillor G Cutting, on behalf of Councillor S Rutland-Barsby as the Executive Member for Communities, said it was important to ensure the Council was able to hear the voices of all members of the community. The Executive now included a new portfolio responsibility of resident engagement, and Councillor H Drake had been appointed the Member Champion for Young People. Only 3% of people who visited her website were aged 18 – 24, so there was a need to be more proactive. Councillor Drake and the

Leader had visited the District's schools before the Local Plan had been adopted. Regarding Hertford Theatre, feedback had indicated showing first release films was what young people wanted, and the Council's plans for Hertford Theatre included proposals to deliver that service. Councillor Drake had attended Downing Street with a group of young people, and had had feedback on getting young people involved. The Council always listened and sought the views of young people.

Joe Thomas asked whether any particular schemes had been implemented in the last few years for young people.

Councillor Cutting said he would research the answer to this supplementary question and respond in writing.

Daniel Chichester-Miles asked the Leader what the Council had done to engage with the new owners of Bircherley Green to ensure that the heart of Hertford had a vibrant town centre.

Councillor L Haysey said the site had been purchased by Chase New Homes at the end of August. The company had local connections, being based in Welwyn Garden City. Officers from the planning team had met the company and an introductory meeting had taken place. Members had made a number of suggestions, and looked forward to collaborating with them on a way forward to engage in the Masterplanning process . The company was amendable to working with the Steering Group, which would act as a preliminary sounding board . Last week the first meeting of the Steering Group had taken place, with Officers and Members from each tier of government, the Civic Society and Traders. All were agreed this was a key site in the middle of a country town. The development needed to

attract footfall, to support shops, which otherwise might not survive, so should be mixed development with access to the River. The development needed to bring different demographics into the Town. The Steering Group would meet monthly but was not the only forum of engagement. Chase New Homes aimed to submit a planning application prior to Christmas. The Council looked forward to working in partnership with them.

180   MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Councillor N Symonds asked the Executive Member for Planning and Growth the following question:

"With all the new developments going up in East Herts are we sticking to 40% social housing and not deviating from it regardless of pressure from the developers who often wriggle and squirm not to fulfil that percentage?"

Councillor J Goodeve reminded all Members that the Council did not own its own social housing stock but worked in partnership with registered housing providers to provide a range of affordable housing, including social rents, affordable rents and shared ownership. On new developments the Council secured nomination rights, and the proposed policy requirement was as follows: up to 35 percent on sites proposing 11 – 14 additional dwellings; up to 40 percent on sites proposing 15 or over additional dwellings. There was no requirement for affordable housing provision on new developments where the number of additional dwellings was 10 or less, and lower provision would be permissible where it was shown that the standard percentage would not be viable, or where it would prejudice the need to secure other infrastructure

priorities. Applicants seeking to justify a lower proportion would be required to provide a Financial Viability Assessment as part of a planning application.

Councillor Goodeve said that in 2017/18, 182 affordable homes were completed in East Hertfordshire, which represented 29.6% of all completed dwellings in the District.   She said the SPD on affordable housing would shortly be out for consultation, and she encouraged all to participate.

Councillor D Hollebon asked the Executive Member for Wellbeing:

"How do you intend to build on the successes of the Community and Wellbeing Forum?"

Councillor E Buckmaster explained the purpose of the Community Wellbeing Forum. Public engagement had been discussed by the Executive Members recently, and it had been clear that many of the Council's members already worked extremely hard to engage with communities.   Much of this work took place outside the formal meetings of the Council, through organisations and clubs across the District, many of which aimed to support the most vulnerable. Member Champions had been appointed over the last two years, with roles spanning a range of areas including social isolation, mental health, walking and cycling, arts and culture, and youth. The Forum would build on these existing links which Members already had in the community, to deliver the Council's wellbeing and community initiatives. Important work was being done in health and wellbeing, and making communities stronger, for example, social prescribing. For example, many older residents had been introduced to

activities supporting mental health and resulting in fewer GP surgery visits; and others had participated in the Breathe Easy Support Group. The Council, both Members and Officers, would work to deliver the aims of the wellbeing strategy and the Forum would enable Member Champions to meet every two months. Communication about this work was important, to encourage support and engagement. The Autumn edition of The Link Magazine, which was delivered to every household, included information about the initiatives. The Council also planned a dedicated social media page to raise awareness of this work.

Councillor Hollebon asked whether the Forum would be considering any particular topics for 2020.

Councillor Buckmaster said a calendar of World Wellbeing and National events was being arranged. The Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020 launch event in December was being planned and Members would be acting as ambassadors for the community to explain to groups how to apply for funding and seek support for arts and culture activities. Finally, he was working to establish Healthy Herts in two locations, a County public health funded initiative, to provide places where residents could receive advice and support.   Members' links to community and patient participation groups could help cascade support more widely, and he would encourage all to become involved.

Councillor A Huggins asked the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, "What steps has the Council made to implement the Armed Forces Covenant and how are the effects of these actions being monitored?"

Councillor P Boylan said the Armed Forces Act 2011 had introduced the principle of the Armed Forces Covenant, which was a promise by the nation that members of the Armed Forces would face no disadvantage in gaining access to services. In 2012 Hertfordshire had launched one of the first such Covenants, and East Herts was one of the signatories. The Armed Forces Covenant Board was responsible for delivering the aims and monitoring the impact of the Covenant. The Board comprised representatives of several bodies, including the Royal British Legion and the 10 district and borough Councils, as well as the County Council. The Board met twice a year, and Councillor Huggins had since earlier this year been appointed as the Council's representative on the Board. Although the Covenant covered a wide range of services, the most significant provided by this Council was housing.

Following changes to the Housing Act in 2012, the Council had changed its policy and now the Council provided Forces and Families additional priority for social housing, when they had a defined need, and when the need was urgent. The Council also allowed current members of the Armed Forces to join the Housing Register regardless of where they had previously been posted, and ensured they were not disadvantaged if they did not have a strong local connection to the district. He encouraged all to visit the Council's website page describing the work of the Armed Forces Covenant Board which also provided tailored advice to members of the Forces. The Council was also commemorating veterans of the Armed Services and Royal British Legion through street names including in Buntingford and Bishop's Stortford. The progress of the Board was reported each year to the County Council which published the reports on its website. He was willing to work with Councillor Huggins to seek further

improvements in the future.

Councillor Huggins asked the Executive Member if he was willing to arrange a meeting to explore the opportunity for the Council to become accredited under the Defence Employers' Recognition Scheme.

Councillor Boylan said he would certainly do so.

Councillor M Goldspink said her question had substantively already been answered. Her question was to the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability, as follows: "What progress is this Council making in the setting up of a District Environment and Climate Forum? This Forum is designed to bring together all the excellent Community Groups so that they can share their knowledge and ideas with each other and with the Council."

Councillor G McAndrew said setting up such a forum was a vital part of the Council's climate change declaration. The first meeting of the Forum would take place on 4 December, and would take the form of a summit, with the express aim of sharing local knowledge and ideas, to map out next steps. Community Groups, Council Members and others were all invited. The aim was to hold future meetings across the district to maximise engagement. He asked all to publicise the Forum amongst their networks.

Councillor Goldspink asked that the Forum be publicised to local schools, in view of the interest shown by the young people here tonight.

Councillor G McAndrew concurred.

The Chairman said the time limit of 15 minutes had been

reached, so the final question from Councillor C Redfern would be answered by Councillor Boylan as a written response, to be copied to all Members.

181   HERTFORD THEATRE GROWTH AND LEGACY SCHEME

Councillor Buckmaster submitted a report on the progress of the theatre expansion work and business plan for the Hertford Theatre Growth and Legacy Scheme. The report requested additional funding of £6.4mn for the delivery of the scheme.

Councillor Buckmaster drew Members' attention to the detailed explanation for the additional funding as set out in the report, which included for structural reasons replacing the existing building. Additional funding of £6.4m was sought. Councillor Buckmaster explained that following analysis of the original costs and additional information arising from a more comprehensive understanding of the design and build requirements, the existing building structure and external market information and influences, a number of revised cost requirements, over and above those captured in the £13.5mn figure for the original design, had been identified. He said whilst the additional costs of £6.4m were a significant increase on the agreed funding, the business case demonstrated a strong return on investment. On completion, Hertford Theatre would deliver an operational result of £1,244,372m per year, and after support service costs and the increased capital charges, the Theatre would operate with a surplus and would bring a contribution to the Council of + £110,201 per year.

Councillor Buckmaster proposed recommendation (A) in

the report, and subject to the consent of his seconder, and the consent of the meeting, said he now proposed an additional recommendation (B), "to provide the range of good value and free activities for vulnerable and hard to reach audiences, and ensures a pricing structure that was reflective of the new and expanded offer and endeavoured to keep price increases to a minimum".

Councillor G Williamson gave his consent to the alteration of the motion to support the recommendation, as seconder.

The Chairman asked for the meeting to signify consent to the alteration, which was given.

Councillor Redfern asked a question regarding the ability to use royalties.

Rhys Thomas said amended royalty rights were measured against the capacity of the auditorium.

Councillor S Bell sought an explanation regarding the alteration of the motion.

The Democratic Services Manager said the Council's standing orders provided that a Member could alter the wording of his or her motion with the consent of the seconder and the consent of the meeting.

Councillor G Williamson, as seconder, said he supported this project.

Councillor A Curtis said Members should bear in mind the cultural enhancement the project would bring.

Councillor S Bell proposed an amendment to the recommendation.   She said this project sought to provide a valuable community asset, and this development should have the ethos of a project that was delivered ultimately to benefit the residents of Hertford and the surrounding area. In order to ensure the Council recognised the importance of amateur and not for profit groups within the community and to ensure that the Theatre remained affordable and accessible to those groups following its refurbishment, she proposed that the motion be amended to add the following wording as recommendation (B): "The higher rates for all amateur and not for profit groups who wish to use the Theatre will be capped at the current rate and will only increase in line with inflation".

Councillor J Dumont seconded the amendment.

Councillor J Wyllie sought clarification of the intention regarding whether the rates would or would not be capped.

Councillor Bell said she proposed the only increase would be that caused by inflation.

Councillor Buckmaster said his recommendation took account of the current ethos, and the amateur dramatic groups were thriving with the help of the Theatre. He was content that his additional recommendation addressed this point, and did not consider the amendment now proposed added any merit.

Councillor M Goldspink said whilst she welcomed the additional recommendation put forward by Councillor Buckmaster, it was not strong enough. All Members wanted to provide a good theatre for Hertford, but this

was a community project and it should be available for community groups and amateur performers.

Rhys Thomas said community groups were prioritised and the organisations would be able to book space in the auditorium, whilst smaller performances could take place in the studio theatre.

Members debated the amendment at length.

Councillor J Dumont as seconder said he supported the comments made by Councillor M Goldspink although he noted protection would be given to smaller groups.

Councillor M Brady questioned how the Council would repay the debt, as she was concerned this debt would impact on other essential services.

Councillor Buckmaster said the report set out a good business model and he was confident it would be sustainable. The Council had a low interest rate over that period.

Councillor C Redfern expressed concerns and questioned why there seemed to have been no consultation on this or the original plan.

Councillor Buckmaster reminded all that the debate should focus on the proposed amendment.

Members continued to debate the motion and issues referred to in the report. The Chairman reminded all Members to speak to the amendment currently under debate.

In response to a question regarding the wording of the amendment, Councillor Bell said she was content that the wording "would be capped at the current rate" would be deleted.

Councillor E Buckmaster, opposing the amendment, said it was necessary to be adaptable and flexible.

The Chairman read out the amendment, as proposed by Councillor S Bell and seconded by Councillor J Dumont, as follows: "The hire rates for all amateur and not for profit groups who wish to use the Theatre would only rise in line with inflation."

A vote being taken, the amendment was declared LOST.

Members continued to debate the substantive motion. Councillor C Redfern said many of the residents of Hertford felt they were not consulted. She had been unable to attend the presentation on 8 October, and the information at that meeting had been confidential until publication of the agenda. She asked where parking for the Theatre would be sited, and questioned why cinema screens needed to be part of the Theatre. She proposed that the request for additional funding be delayed until the December Council meeting.

Councillor M Brady seconded the amendment.

Members debated the matter further, raising aspects such as the forecast net contribution of £110k for the proposals, and the intention that the facilities were not only for Hertford, but for residents across the District.

Further points were raised, including what assurances

could be given that the figures were correct; what headroom was factored in for any further costs increases and whether instead of aiming to make a profit, the approach should be to provide subsidies.

Councillor E Buckmaster responded to the various points made. He said consultation had taken place in the public domain for over a year; the Council was exploring options for parking and public transport; this was a discrete project and the money could not necessarily be allocated to other purposes. A new theatre would provide for the residents provided for under the District Plan. The project was good value. He provided assurance as to the process for costing which was driven by three factors, cost, inflation and the previous feasibility study, which did not include inflation. A robust approach had been taken and inflation had now been built into the calculations through until completion. Councillor Buckmaster summarised further factors taken into account regarding the evolution of the brief.

Councillor L Haysey said, in further response to points which had been made, that she had been an Executive Member at the time the Theatre had been built, and the Council had transformed Castle Hall into the Theatre. The new Theatre had been accepted as an asset, despite at the time similar doubts and questions having been raised. The use of the space which was now proposed had been fully explained. Without investing in the Theatre as a legacy project, it would go downhill, and this was an opportunity to recreate a regional centre for excellence.

The amendment to defer the request for additional funding as proposed by Councillor C Redfern and seconded by Councillor M Brady being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the amendment was declared LOST.

Councillor E Buckmaster spoke to the substantive motion, which he then proposed. The motion being put the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

>RESOLVED that (A) the additional funding of £6.4m be approved for the delivery of the Hertford Theatre Growth and Legacy scheme (subject to planning approval); and

>(B) The Hertford Theatre continue to provide the range of good value and free activities for vulnerable and hard to reach audiences and ensure the pricing structure that is reflective of the new and expanded offer and endeavours to keep price increases to a minimum.

182   REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report seeking approval for the revisions to the current polling districts places and stations within the District.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services drew Members' attention to a slight amendment regarding a prefix to the code for Buntingford. She highlighted the main elements of the report, which aimed to "future proof" the register of electors.

Councillor D Snowden proposed a motion to support the recommendations as set out in the report. Councillor D Andrews seconded the motion.

In response to a question by Councillor D Snowden, the Electoral Services Officer explained the schedules appended to the report were summaries of the new polling scheme. The new prefixes would be substituted for the former prefixes. The changes would take effect when the register was published, due to be on 1 December.

In reply to a question from Councillor D Andrews, the Electoral Services Officer said that a typographical error regarding the polling place for Polling District reference JG in the ward of Hertford Rural South would be corrected.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that this correction could be delegated to the Electoral Registration Officer.

> RESOLVED – (A) the revised scheme of polling districts, places and stations as set out in Essential Reference Paper 'B' be approved;
>
> (B)   the ward register number changes as set out in Essential Reference Paper 'C', be approved; and
>
> (C) the Electoral Registration Officer be authorised to effect minor alterations to the scheme.

183   EXECUTIVE REPORT - 3 SEPTEMBER 2019

> RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 3 September 2019 be received.

184   NORTH OF HERTFORD (SACOMBE ROAD, BENGEO) (HERT4)
        <u>MASTERPLANNING FRAMEWORK</u>

Council considered the recommendation from the Executive on the Masterplanning Framework for the HERT4 North of Hertford (Sacombe Road, Bengeo) site. She moved, and Councillor G Goodeve seconded, a motion that the recommendations, as now detailed in the report submitted, be approved.

After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

> <u>RESOLVED</u> - that the North of Hertford (Sacombe Road, Bengeo) Masterplanning Framework for the first phase of the strategic allocation known as HERT4 North of Hertford, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'B' to the report, be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.

185   NORTH OF SAWBRIDGEWORTH (SAWB4)
        <u>MASTERPLANNING FRAMEWORK</u>

Council considered the recommendation from the Executive on the Masterplanning Framework for the SAWB4 site, land to the North of Sawbridgeworth.

Councillor L Haysey moved, and Councillor J Goodeve

seconded, a motion that the recommendations, as now detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

>RESOLVED – that the land to the North of Sawbridgeworth Masterplanning Framework for the strategic allocation known as SAWB4, be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.

186   EXECUTIVE REPORT - 8 OCTOBER 2019

>RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 8 October 2019 be received.

187   AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) - DRAFT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Council considered the recommendation from the Executive on a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the emerging Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and seeking Members' agreement to publish the draft Affordable Housing SPD for public consultation.

Councillor L Haysey proposed, and Councillor T Page seconded, a motion that the recommendations as detailed in the report be approved. After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

>RESOLVED - that (A) in accordance with the

Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 it has been determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the emerging Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is not required as it is unlikely to have significant environmental effects; and

(B) the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), be agreed and published for a period of public consultation.

188   NORTH AND EAST WARE (WARE2) MASTERPLANNING FRAMEWORK

Council considered the recommendation from the Executive on the Masterplanning Framework for the WARE2 land North and East of Ware.

Councillor L Haysey proposed, and Councillor J Goodeve seconded, a motion that the recommendation be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that the Land North and East of Ware Masterplanning Framework for the strategic allocation known as WARE2 Land North and East of Ware, be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.

189   STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - FINAL FOR ADOPTION

Council considered the recommendation from the

Executive on a report outlining the results of the public consultation on the draft revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and seeking Members' agreement to adopt a revised document.

Councillor L Haysey proposed, and Councillor A Ward-Booth seconded, a motion to support the recommendations detailed in the report. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that (A) the responses of the consultation be noted and the officer responses and proposed changes to the draft revised Statement of Community Involvement be supported; and

(B) The East Herts Statement of Community Involvement 2019, as detailed, be approved for adoption.

190   RETAIL FRONTAGES, DESIGN AND SIGNAGE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT - FINAL FOR ADOPTION

Council considered the recommendation from the Executive on East Herts District Plan, in respect of the retail frontages, design and signage SPD.

Councillor L Haysey proposed, and Councillor A Huggins seconded, a motion to support the recommendations detailed in the reports. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that (A) the responses of the

consultation be noted and the officer responses and proposed changes to the Retail Frontages, Design & Signage Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) be supported;

(B) The Retail Frontages, Design & Signage Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'B' to this report, be approved for adoption; and

(C) In accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 it has been determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the emerging Retail Frontages, Design & Signage Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is not required as it is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

191   ANSTEY CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

Council considered the recommendation from the Executive on the Anstey Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan following public consultation.

Councillor L Haysey proposed, and Councillor D Andrews seconded, a motion to support the recommendations detailed in the report. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that (A) the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Anstey Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be supported;

(B) the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth, be authorised to make any
further minor and consequential changes to the document which may be necessary; and

(C) the Anstey Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted.

192   COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Council considered the recommendation from the Executive on the current local Council Tax Support Scheme at East Herts and whether any changes to the scheme should be considered for 2020/21.

Councillor L Haysey proposed, and Councillor G Cutting seconded, a motion to support the recommendations as detailed in the report. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that there be no changes to the scheme design for East Herts local Council Tax Support scheme for 2020/21.

193   REVISED TAXI LICENSING SUITABILITY POLICY

Council received a report submitted by Councillor D Andrews as Chairman of the Licensing Committee, detailing recommendations from the Committee to Council on the draft Taxi Licensing Suitability policy.

Councillor D Andrews said the Council was under a

statutory obligation to ensure public safety, and took this duty seriously. He commended the draft policy, and proposed a motion that the recommendations be approved. Councillor P Boylan seconded the motion.

After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

> RESOLVED to approve the adoption of the revised Taxi Licensing Suitability Policy, as detailed in the report, to take effect from 1 November 2019.

194   POLITICAL BALANCE - SUBSTITUTE MEMBER APPOINTMENTS

Council considered a report submitted by the Democratic Services Manager on allocation of Committee seats to the Substitute Members of the Green and Labour Groups. The review of political balance had taken place upon notification of the change of these two Groups before the last Council meeting.

Councillor B Crystall proposed, and Councillor C Redfern seconded, a motion to support the recommendation in the report. The motion being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, it was declared CARRIED.

> RESOLVED - to (A) approve the allocation of the number of Substitute Members to the Labour and Green Groups on the Committees referred to in the report; and
>
> (B) note that the Members of the Labour and Green Groups, as nominated by their respective

Group Leaders be Substitute Members for such Committees.

195   DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 17 JULY AND 14 AUGUST 2019

Councillor T Page explained the Minutes of the meeting of the Development Management Committee which had taken place on 11 September 2019 had not yet been received by the Committee, as its meeting of 9 October 2019 had been cancelled.

> RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Management Committee meetings held on 17 July and 14 August 2019, be received.

196   PERFORMANCE, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 21 MAY, AND 31 JULY

> RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Performance, Audit and Governance Oversight Committee meetings of 21 May and 31 July 2019 be received.

197   OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 11 JUNE 2019

> RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 June 2019, be received.

198   LICENSING COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 19 MARCH AND 21
        AUGUST 2019

            RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Licensing
            Committee held on 19 March and 21 August
            2019, be received.

199   HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 3 JULY 2019

            RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Human
            Resources Committee held on 3 July 2019, be
            received.

200   MOTIONS ON NOTICE

        Councillor C Wilson submitted the following motion on
        notice:

        "The Council recognises that there is a need to improve
        public transport in the District, and laments the decline in
        availability and use of buses in the area. The relative
        paucity of public transport negatively affects the air quality
        in the District, and also contributes to the failure to
        produce a modal shift. Moreover, it disproportionally
        disadvantages the more elderly, the disabled, and rural
        and poorer members of our society.
        In some other Local Authority areas, public transport has
        been greatly improved by setting up an "On-Demand
        Service" - mainly using an app on people's mobile phones.
        This Council therefore requests its Overview and Scrutiny
        Committee to investigate the possibility of working with
        Hertfordshire County Council to research the possibility of
        setting up such an "On-Demand" service in East Herts."

        Councillor Wilson said the new technology to support on-

demand, responsive public transport, existed and the benefits to residents of this District should be explored. He outlined the benefits this proposal could bring, in terms of flexibility, reduced journey times and contribution to reduction of car use. He proposed the motion.

Councillor J Dumont seconded the motion.

Councillor G McAndrew proposed an amendment. The amendment would remove words and add or substitute other words, as follows:

"The Council recognises that there is a need to improve public transport in the District, ~~and laments the decline in availability and use of buses in the area. The relative paucity of public transport negatively affects the air quality in the District, and also contributes to the failure to produce a~~ and encourage modal shift.   *This Council supports local on-demand services such as Hertfordshire County Council's 'Dial-a-Ride' service which plays a vital role in providing sustainable transport for*
~~Moreover, it disproportionally disadvantages~~ the more elderly, the disabled, and rural and poorer members of our society.

"This Council also recognises that local town and parish councils have worked hard to improve local transport options through community transport schemes such as the Sawbo bus, Stortford Shuttle and the Hadham Hopper.

"This Council also supports the Community Car Scheme, which is operated by the CVS for Broxbourne and East Herts, has 600 clients and enables thousands of journeys a year.

"This Council will therefore continue to work with Hertfordshire

County Council and other local stakeholders to improve local public transport and encourage modal shift.

"In some other Local Authority areas, public transport has been greatly improved by setting up an "On-Demand Service" - mainly using an app on people's mobile phones.

"This Council therefore requests *its newly formed Environmental and Climate Change Forum* ~~Overview and Scrutiny Committee~~ to investigate the possibility of working with Hertfordshire County Council to research the possibility of setting up such an "On-Demand" service in East Herts."

Councillor G McAndrew said at the meeting of Shaping Stortford that day he had raised the issue of an On-Demand service with Hertford County Councillors.

Councillor D Andrews seconded the motion, and spoke in favour of the amendment. He described the extensive work which had already been undertaken, and said all Members recognised the issue as important. However there were some issues, such as the fact that the likely user demographic tended not to be familiar with app technology and in rural areas, it was not necessarily the case that such a service could take shorter routes. He supported the amendment.

Councillor J Dumont welcomed the positive reception the substance of the motion had received. The route detours he had suggested were for urban not rural areas. However, clearly any improvement of transport needed to be practical, and he would support taking account of lessons learned and outcomes of similar initiatives being trialled or implemented elsewhere.

Councillor McAndrew referred to the Interlink Partnership, which was the first in the County, and which adhered to sustainable travel.

Councillor Wilson said he had no issue with the wording of the amendment.

Councillor L Haysey said it was also relevant to note that the Growth, Infrastructure, Planning and Environment strategy for the A414 corridor had been approved. This strategy would look at establishing a more rapid transport system.

Councillor S Bell supported the motion, and referred to difficulties faced at Watton-at-Stone by rail commuters. An option for residents other than driving and parking was needed.

Councillor L Corpe said all Members were concerned about environmental and transport matters. The Council should make every effort to reduce car use by changing people's attitudes. The task was challenging as buses were deemed unreliable and expensive, so radical suggestions were needed. Smartphone technology was an opportunity and should be explored.

The amendment having been proposed and seconded, it was put to the meeting and a vote taken. The amendment was declared CARRIED, and became the substantive motion.

The substantive motion was put to the meeting, and a vote taken, and declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - The Council recognises that there is a need to improve public transport in the District, and encourage modal shift. This Council supports local on-demand services such as Hertfordshire County Council's 'Dial-a-Ride' service which plays a vital role in providing sustainable transport for the more elderly, the disabled, and rural and poorer members of our society.

This Council also recognises that local town and parish councils have worked hard to improve local transport options through community transport schemes such as the Sawbo bus, Stortford Shuttle and the Hadham Hopper.

This Council also supports the Community Car Scheme, which is operated by the CVS for Broxbourne and East Herts, has 600 clients and enables thousands of journeys a year.

This Council will therefore continue to work with Hertfordshire County Council and other local stakeholders to improve local public transport and encourage modal shift.

In some other Local Authority areas, public transport has been greatly improved by setting up an "On-Demand Service" - mainly using an app on people's mobile phones.

This Council therefore requests its newly formed Environmental and Climate Change Forum to investigate the possibility of working with

Hertfordshire County Council to research the possibility of setting up such an "On-Demand" service in East Herts.

Councillor M Goldspink submitted the second motion on notice, which was seconded by Councillor T Beckett, as follows:

"East Herts District Council is dismayed by H.M.Treasury's recent and unexpected decision to raise the interest rate charged by the Public Works Loans Board. This 1% increase has come without any warning and it takes effect immediately. It will have serious consequences for many Local Authorities across the Country and may put many excellent projects at risk.

"This Council requests that its Leader and the Executive member for Financial Sustainability should write immediately to H.M. Treasury and ask for the increase to be scrapped and for the interest rate to be kept at 1.8%."

Councillor Goldspink expressed dismay at the lack of funding for local government, and said the Council needed to look at investing to raise income. The Government's increase in the interest rate for loans should be opposed as this made the task of local government much harder.

Councillor G Williamson said there were issues around local authority financing, and the Financial Sustainability Committee had looked at opportunities for investment. Whilst the Public Works Loan Board proposal could impact on the Council's schemes, the

Council's loan had been taken out with fixed interest rates, so had the benefit of certainty. The Council had capital reserves which it could use, but as a contingency the Council had already assumed the higher interest rate. The matter had already been taken up by the Local Government Association and the Society of District Council Treasurers.

Councillor Goldspink welcomed these assurances, but said she saw no reason why this Council could not write to HM Treasury, to add weight to such representations.

The motion being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, it was declared LOST.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm

Chairman ....

Date   ....

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 18 DECEMBER 2019

(A)   PETITION – "STOP EXPANSION OF HARLOW AND BUILDING ON
       GREEN WEDGES WITH 23,000 NEW HOMES"

A petition has been submitted by Charles Browne, on behalf of 223
signatories, seeking that the Council and its neighbouring authorities,
Epping Forest District Council and Harlow District Council, cease
plans for the expansion of Harlow. Signatures have been collected
via an online petition hosted by Change.org. The petition states:

The government has issued a requirement for local authorities to
greatly expand house building in every part of the country. Harlow
District Council, Epping Forest District Council and East Herts District
Council have come together to draw up a plan to build 23,000 new
houses in and on the edge of Harlow.

These new houses will be built in five areas:

Between Harlow Common and Latton Priory Farm up to the M11
roundabout; close to Radburn Close, Corner Meadow, Hawthorns,
Gibb Croft, Sibney Green, Spruce Hill, Rye Hill Road, Berecroft. This
comprises 200 hectares of housing, and will all be on farm land
(Epping Forest District Council);

Each side of Water Lane; bordering on Silvesters, Heighams, Red
Willow, Little Cattins, Taylifers, Hull Grove, Archers, Savoy Wood
(Epping Forest District Council);

So-called Gilston/Hunsdon Garden Villages; which will consist of
seven large areas of housing separated by narrow green wedges.
This conurbation will have at least one new secondary school and five
new primary schools. 10,000 new homes will be built between

Hunsdon, Wilford and Gilston, on Green Belt land including Briggens Estate and Gilston Park Estate. It will come very close to the A 414 (East Herts District Council);

To the east of Harlow; right up to the M11 (Epping Forest District Council and Harlow District Council);

Within the precincts of the existing town on many sites including some green wedge areas and play areas. Pollards Hatch, Joscelyns, St Andrews Meadow, Fennells, Deer Park, south of Clifton Hatch and Hawthorns (Harlow District Council).

This will result in us having to walk a lot further to get into open country, which is one of the things which makes Harlow so pleasant to live in.

Some of the open green spaces and play areas within the town will be lost. The town will become a part of the London-Cambridge megalopolis. Most of the new housing is unlikely to be social housing.

The argument for the expansion is that Britain needs to infinitely expand its economy (and so its workforce, which will need more housing), to be competitive in the world market; and to support an aging population in retirement. However, Britain is the fifth richest country in the world, and can surely afford to look after the people who created that wealth, in their old age.

Britain only has enough land to produce 60% of the food we need, and needs to save its farmland from being built over.

This drive to build on green farmland is happening all over the country and is being challenged wherever it is planned.

Hopefully our democratically elected councils and government can be persuaded to cancel this initiative.

Ward: Hunsdon

Note:

Members are reminded that the lead petitioner is permitted to address Council for up to three minutes. The relevant Executive Member will respond to the petition. There is no provision for any general debate by Members, however, local ward Members may comment if they wish.

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COUNCIL – 18 DECEMBER 2019

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Question 1

Councillor I Devonshire to ask the Executive Member for Planning and Growth:

Broadband is an essential service, not just for rural businesses, but for children doing their homework, day to day internet business (such as banking/ renewing vehicle road tax etc.) and streaming and On-Demand Television services. What is East Herts is doing to ensure fast and reliable Broadband Services are provided in our rural areas?

Question 2

Councillor M Stevenson to ask the Executive Member for Wellbeing:

What are East Herts' plans for the Hertfordshire year of Culture 2020, and how can Members be involved?

Question 3

Councillor J Wyllie to ask the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods:

What steps East Herts Council are taking to minimise the disruption and distress caused by fireworks, particularly towards animals in our District as well as the anti social behaviour issues?

Question 4

Councillor A Curtis to ask the Leader of the Council:

What steps she is taking to attract investment into East Hertfordshire?

Question 5

Councillor J Dumont to ask the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability:

Is the Executive Member aware that doubling tree cover across the UK could draw down 50 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually across the country and significantly contribute to reducing the effects of climate change? With this in mind and given that the Gilston Villages development is the largest release of Green Belt land in England will he adopt the ambition to double the amount of tree cover over the whole of the East Herts District?

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 18 DECEMBER 2019

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE REPORT – 3 DECEMBER 2019

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

_____

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report details the recommendations made by the Executive at its meeting held on 3 December 2019.

1.0   Background

1.1   Since the last Council meeting, the Executive has considered and supported a number of recommendations on the following items:

- Council Tax Long Term Empty Homes Premiums
- Benington Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan
- Harlow and Gilston Garden Town: Stewardship Objectives and Principles

The full reports can be viewed at: Executive agenda 3 December 2019 and the draft Minutes of the meeting are attached as Essential Reference Paper A.

2.0   Agenda Item 8 – Long Term Empty Homes Premiums

2.1   The Executive considered options for changes to Council Tax for long term empty homes premiums, as detailed in the report submitted to that meeting. The Executive supported a change

to a 100% premium to take efffect from April 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL: that:	
(A)	**a Council Tax premium of 100% be proposed for Long Term Empty Homes.**

3.0 **Agenda Item 9 - Benington Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan**

3.1 The Executive considered the results of the public consultation on the Benington Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and supported recommendations on officer responses.

3.2 The Executive supported a recommendation to adopt the Benington Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, which is attached as Essential Reference Paper 'B'.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL: that:	
(A)	**the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Benington Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be supported;**
(B)	**the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth, be authorised to make any further minor and consequential changes to the document which may be necessary; and**
(C)	**the Benington Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, set out as Essential Reference Paper , be adopted.**

4.0 **Agenda Item 10 – Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Stewardship Objectives and Principles**

4.1 The Executive considered and supported recommendations on the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Stewardship Objectives and Principles at this early stage, to reflect Garden City Principles. Establishing such principles and objectives in relation to this site could also provide the basis for the application of guidelines for sites across the District.

4.2 The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Stewardship Objectives and Principles are attached as **Essential Reference Paper 'C'.**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL: that:	
(A)	**the Stewardship objectives and principles, relating to development proposals coming forward as part of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, be endorsed.**

5.0 Background Papers

The full reports for the Executive meeting can be viewed at:
[Executive Agenda](#)

Contact Member: Councillor L Haysey, Leader of the Council
                    linda.haysey@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Jonathan Geall – Head of Housing and Health
                    and
                    Acting Head of Legal and Democratic Services
                    jonathan.geall@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author: Rebecca Dobson, Democratic Services Manager
                    rebecca.dobson@eastherts.gov.uk

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 3 DECEMBER 2019, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor L Haysey (Chairman/Leader)
                Councillors E Buckmaster, G Cutting, J
                Goodeve, G McAndrew, S Rutland-Barsby
                and G Williamson.

ALSO PRESENT:

                Councillors K Crofton, M Goldspink,
                M Pope, P Ruffles and J Wyllie.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

        Richard Cassidy   - Chief Executive

        Rebecca Dobson   - Democratic
                                    Services Manager

        Andrew Figgis   - Economic
                                    Development
                                    Officer

        Peter Mannings   - Democratic
                                    Services Officer

        Sara Saunders   - Head of Planning
                                    and Building
                                    Control

        Kevin Steptoe   - East Herts Garden
                                    Town Lead Officer

        Alison Stuart   - Interim
                                    Monitoring Officer

240   APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Boylan.

241   LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader welcomed all those present, and reminded them that the meeting was being webcast.

242   MINUTES - 8 OCTOBER 2019

Councillor G Cutting proposed, and Councillor G McAndrew seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

> RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 8 October 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

243   UPDATE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor J Wyllie, as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, gave a verbal report. He said the Committee had at its meeting on 5 November 2019, considered a number of items. The subjects which had been considered included Council Tax on long term empty properties, as it was desirable to ensure such properties were returned to use as soon as possible. The Committee had also received an update on the operation of the waste management contract and service level agreements, particularly in relation to missed bins, with which Members

were generally content. Regarding the work of the Parking Task and Finish Group, evidence from a wide range of contributors had been taken, and substantial proposals had been submitted to the Committee, for consideration at its next meeting on 10 December. The Committee would submit a report and make its recommendations on the proposals to the Executive. Councillor Wyllie said in conclusion that the work programme of the Committee included a Task and Finish Group review of aspects of social housing, to take place in the New Year.

The Executive received the report.

> RESOLVED – that the report be received.

244   UPDATE FROM PERFORMANCE, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

The Executive received a report of the Performance, Audit and Governance Oversight Committee. The items which had been considered were the draft Statement of Accounts for 2018/19, the Treasury Management outturn for 2018/19, the Treasury Management Mid-Year Review for the current year and the Economic Development Strategy.

Councillor M Pope, as Chairman of the Committee, said at the Committee's meeting on 19 November, the Statement of Accounts for 2018/19 had been approved, and he was pleased to say it was available on the Council's website. In addition, the meeting had considered the budget monitoring report for quarter 2, and a draft work programme.

The Executive received the report.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

245   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Interim Monitoring Officer said that in relation to Item 8 on the agenda, the Council Tax Empty Homes Premium, Members who had a disclosable pecuniary interest as disclosed on their notice of registrable interests, had been granted a dispensation to enable them to participate in the discussion and voting on that item. The dispensation had been granted by the Members of the Performance, Audit and Governance Oversight Committee.

246   DETERMINATION OF ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION ON EMPLOYMENT AREAS

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth submitted a report on the introduction of Article 4 directions on designated employment sites in the district. The measure would, following 12 months' notice, remove the use of permitted development rights to convert employment land to residential use without planning permission.

Councillor J Goodeve summarised the background to the report and the reasons for the recommendations. Permitted development rights (PDRs) could detrimentally affect employment. There was a need to consider the impact of change of use from employment to residential use, particularly in areas where there was already significant residential development. Councillor Goodeve referred to the detriment if unchecked use of PDR continued, such as avoidance of obligations under section 106 to bring benefits to the community and loss of potential employment land. Proper consideration should

be given through the planning process to development. Giving notice of the intention to use the Article 4 Direction process would be likely to mitigate against potential claims for compensation.

Councillor S Rutland-Barsby welcomed the measure, as employment land in her area was under threat.

Councillor J Goodeve proposed, and Councillor S Rutland-Barsby seconded, a motion to support the recommendations detailed in the report. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

> RESOLVED - (A) to approve the making of a non-immediate Article 4 direction to remove Permitted Development Rights to convert buildings or land currently in B1(a), B1(c) or B8 use into C3 use in the Designated Employment Areas in East Herts Council's adopted District Plan, as detailed in Essential Reference Paper 'B' to the report; and
>
> (B) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, acting in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth, to commence public consultation on the non-immediate Article 4 direction and confirm the Article 4 direction having considered the outcome of the public consultation unless material amendments to the direction are required following public consultation in which case, a report will be brought back to the Executive for consideration.

247   COUNCIL TAX LONG TERM EMPTY HOMES PREMIUMS

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability submitted a report proposing changes to the Council Tax long term empty homes premiums from April 2020. He said since 2013 local authorities had been given the power to increase council tax on some long term empty properties by increasing the Council Tax charge by up to 50%. Legislation had subsequently come into effect to apply a maximum premium at higher rates. A range of options was available to authorities, depending on the duration of the property being left empty. The report invited the Executive to consider such options and recommend the option which had been identified for Council's approval. The preferred option was to increase the premium only to the next tier, so that the impact on re-occupation of the District's empty homes could be reviewed.

Councillor G Williamson read from a statement submitted by Councillor P Boylan, in relation to implications for the Neighbourhoods Executive portfolio. Councillor Boylan's statement referred to the need to use other options to encourage the owners of such properties to bring them back into use, including measures such as certifying owner's works to properties for reduced VAT liability on works from 20% to 5%. Members were encouraged to work with the Housing and Health team so that owners of properties which could potentially be affected could receive practical advice.

Councillor G Williamson proposed, and Councillor G Cutting seconded, a motion to support the recommendations detailed in the report. After being put

to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared
CARRIED.

> RESOLVED – to recommend to Council that for
> Long Term Empty homes a Council Tax premium
> of 100% be approved.

248   <u>BENINGTON CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL</u>

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth
considered a report on the Benington Conservation Area
appraisal and management plan, following public
consultation. She referred to representations which had
been received, some of which had expressed concern
regarding the exclusion of land east of Duck Lane from the
conservation area. These concerns had been addressed
with the additional paragraphs which had been included in
the plan to reflect the protection afforded by the adopted
District Plan.

The Leader thanked all involved for their excellent work,
and acknowledged the work of the parish councils in
highlighting any issues.

Councillor J Goodeve moved, and Councillor S Rutland-
Barsby seconded, a motion to support the
recommendations to Council now detailed.

> RESOLVED – to recommend to Council that (A)
> the responses to the public consultation be
> noted and the Officer responses and proposed
> changes to the Benington Conservation Area
> Appraisal and Management Plan be supported;
>
> (B) the Head of Planning and Building Control, in

consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth, be authorised to make any further minor and consequential changes to the document which may be necessary; and

(C) the Benington Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted.

249   HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN STEWARDSHIP
       OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

The Executive considered a report submitted by the Leader of the Council on the Stewardship objectives and principles in relation to the development coming forward at the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT).

The Leader said the objectives and principles for the HGGT Vision were high level guidelines for standards, and reflected the need for that development to be informed by the Town and Country Planning Association Garden City principles. The stewardship work that was being undertaken now, in relation to the Garden Town, could provide the basis of guidelines for other sites across the District.

Councillor E Buckmaster agreed that the principles and objectives would ensure a consistent approach. The focus was on community cohesion, environmental sustainability and community wellbeing. The guidelines could be adapted as necessary. Speaking as the local Ward Member he looked forward to the community being at the heart of the stewardship objectives. It was important that the stewardship guidelines should work as intended.

The Leader supported these comments. She moved, and Councillor E Buckmaster seconded, a motion that the recommendations now detailed, be supported. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

> RESOLVED – to recommend to Council that the Stewardship objectives and principles, relating to development proposals coming forward as part of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, be endorsed.

250   HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD

The Executive considered a report submitted by the Leader of the Council on the Hertfordshire Growth Board Memorandum of Understanding. The report sought approval of the objectives, principles and scope of the collaborative work undertaken through the Hertfordshire Growth Board.

The Leader said the 10 district councils and the County Council would work together to meet key growth challenges for Hertfordshire, identify programmes of work and key features of an emerging proposition to government. The document was not legally binding, but was a step towards putting a cohesive argument to government.

Councillor E Buckmaster said the Memorandum of Understanding empowered the authorities to work collectively. Each authority would retain its current powers.

Councillor M Pope asked how the Council would be

informed of progress.

The Leader said updates would be brought to Members on any significant decisions.

The Leader moved, and Councillor J Goodeve seconded, a motion that the recommendation now detailed, be supported. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

> RESOLVED – that the Executive agree the Hertfordshire Growth Board - Memorandum of Understanding set out in the accompanying papers.

251   QUARTERLY CORPORATE BUDGET MONITOR - QUARTER 2 2019/20

The Executive considered a report submitted by the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability on the quarterly corporate budget monitoring for Quarter 2 2019/20.

Councillor G Williamson said the report had been considered by the Performance, Audit and Governance Oversight Committee. He referred Members to the predicted revenue underspend of £37,000 and the fact that there would be a carried forward amount of £62.7m from the capital budget. He said the report also sought agreement to fund, up to £100,000, the planning costs relating to the recent Little Hadham planning application issues from the New Homes Bonus priority spend reserve. Finally, the report sought agreement to the use of equalisation reserves to offset the Planning Service under-achievement of income by £150,000.

Regarding monitoring of performance, Councillor G Williamson drew Members' attention to the fact that missed bin collections were gradually improving. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also considered the reasons for not achieving the target at its meeting of 5 November 2019. The target would be reviewed in line with the new corporate strategy.

Councillor G Williamson proposed, and Councillor G Cutting seconded, a motion that the recommendations now detailed be supported. After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

> RESOLVED – that the projected revenue budget forecast underspend of £37k in 2019/20 be noted;
>
> (B) the capital budget for 2019/20 is £78.319m, of which £62.787m is to be carried forward to future years be noted;
>
> (C) the reported performance for the period April 2019 to September 2019 be noted;
>
> (D) it is agreed to fund, up to £100k, of planning costs relating the recent Little Hadham planning application issues from the New Home Bonus priority spend reserve; and
>
> (E) it is agreed that equalisation reserves are used to offset the Planning service under achievement of income by £150k.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm

Chairman   ……………………………………………
Date   ……………………………………………

BENINGTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION 2018

Consultation period 29 November 2018 - 24 January 2019. Further consultation 9 September -30 September 2019, land and buildings rear of School.

Some fine detail of the interior of St. Peter's church. Top, delicate old wall paintings; middle, tomb and effigies of members of the Benstede family; bottom, long solid wooden plank pew seat (some pews date from the 15th century).

East Herts District Council, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8EQ

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BENINGTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

2018

This document has been produced by officers of East Hertfordshire District Council to assess the current condition of the Benington Conservation Area, to identify where improvements can be made and to advise of any boundary changes that are appropriate. The document is in draft form and will be subject to public consultation and agreement by District Council Members.

The content of Appraisals written from 2016 which include this paragraph may differ from predecessor documents. Selected revisions have been incorporated to reflect content and policies set out in the District Plan which was adopted on 23in October 2018, changes to legislation, the emerging District Plan, nomenclature, consolidation, and other improvements resulting from experience gained to date. This process is ongoing.

The document will be subject to public consultation a process that will be advertised separately. Any comments received (omitting personal details) will be available for public inspection. To comply with data protection legislation the local planning authority will destroy such personal details provided within six months of adoption of the appraisal.

1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. The historic environment cannot be replaced and is a resource that is both fragile and finite. Particularly in an age when society and its needs change with rapidity, the various historic and architectural elements of conservation areas can be perceived to interact in a complex manner and create a 'unique sense of place' that is appreciated by those lucky enough to reside in such special places and the many interested persons who appreciate and visit them.

1.2. East Hertfordshire District has a particularly rich and vibrant built heritage, currently featuring 42 conservation areas and approximately 4,000 fine listed buildings displaying a variety of styles representative of the best of architectural and historic designs from many centuries. Generally and very importantly the clear distinction between built form and open countryside has been maintained.

1.3. The District is situated in an economically buoyant region where an attractive environment, employment opportunities and excellent transport links, road rail and air, make it a popular destination to live and work. In

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addition to London a short commuting distance away, the District is influenced by other factors beyond its administrative area, such as Stansted Airport and the towns of Harlow, Stevenage, Royston and Cambridge. With such dynamics it is inevitable that the historic environment will be subject to pressures which emphasize the need to protect it.

1.4. The ~~East Hertfordshire Local Plan Second Review,~~ previous Local Plan adopted in April 2007, ~~adopted in April 2007,~~ recognise~~d~~s these facts and commit~~ted~~s the Council to review its ~~C~~conservation ~~A~~areas and their boundaries, a process which is now nearing completion. ~~The production of this document is part of this process.~~ The replacement District Plan which was adopted on 23~~in~~ October 2018 contains the current policies affecting conservation areas.

1.5. Conservation areas are environments which are considered worthy of protection as a result of a combination of factors such as the quality of design and setting of the buildings or their historic significance. In addition to the individual qualities of the buildings themselves, there are other factors such as the relationships of the buildings with each other, the quality of the spaces between them and the vistas and views that unite or disrupt them. The relationship with adjoining areas and landscape, the quality of trees, boundary treatments, advertisements, road signage, street furniture and hard surfaces, are also important features which can add to or detract from the conservation area.

1.6. This Appraisal recognises the importance of these factors and will consider them carefully. Once approved this document will be regarded as a 'material consideration' when determining planning applications. Where appropriate the documents put forward simple practical management proposals to improve the character of the conservation area and which are capable of being implemented as and when resources permit.

1.7. The recommendations concerning non-listed buildings and structures are normally formed by the field workers observations made from the public realm and seldom involve internal inspection or discussions with owners. Thus such recommendations contained in this Appraisal might be subject to reconsideration through the planning application process, where that is necessary, and which would involve the submission of additional information. Similar considerations apply to estimating dates of buildings and also to their legal status in relation to householder permitted development rights (i.e. either being considered as single dwellings or alternatively as flats). Similar considerations may apply as to determining whether or not a building is within the curtilage of a listed building.

1.8. This Conservation Appraisal will:

- **Identify the special character of the conservation area.**
- **Identify elements that should be retained or enhanced;**
- **Identify detracting elements;**
- **Review the existing boundaries;**
- **Put forward practical enhancement proposals;**

1.9. The document will be prepared in partnership with the Parish Council and the local community through the consultation process.

1.10. Acknowledgement and thanks are recorded to Hertfordshire County Council who's Natural Historic and Built Environment Team has been particularly helpful.

1.11. This document is written in three parts: Part A - Legal and Policy Framework; Part B - Appraisal; Part C - Management Proposals.

PART A - LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

2. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK.

2.1. The legal background for designating a conservation area is set out in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This states that the Council shall from time to time designate Conservation Areas, which are defined as being *'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance'.* **The same section of the Act also requires that Councils undertake periodic reviews.**

2.2. Section 71 of the Act requires Councils to *'formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement'* **of Conservation Areas and hold a public meeting to consider them.**

2.3. Within ~~C~~conservation ~~A~~areas there are additional planning controls and if these are to be supported it is important that the designated areas accord with the statutory definition and are not devalued by including land or buildings that lack special interest.

2.4. Planning permission is required for the demolition of a building in a conservation area but is subject to certain exceptions. For example, it does not apply to Listed Buildings which are protected by their own legislation but is relevant to other non listed buildings in the conservation area above a threshold size set out in legislation*. Looking for and assessing such buildings is therefore a priority of this Appraisal.

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* The demolition of a building not exceeding 50 cubic metres is not development and can be demolished without planning permission. Demolition of other buildings below 115 cubic metres are regarded as 'Permitted Development' granted by the General Permitted Development Order, subject to conditions that may require the Council's 'prior approval' regarding methods of proposed demolition and restoration.

2.5. Certain ecclesiastical buildings (which are for the time being used for ecclesiastical purposes) are not subject to local authority administration provided an equivalent approved system of control is operated by the church authority. This is known as the 'ecclesiastical exemption'. Importantly in such circumstances, church authorities still need to obtain any other necessary planning permissions under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2.6. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England), Order 2015 (further amended) defines the range of minor developments for which planning permission is not required and this range is more restricted in conservation areas. For example, the Order currently requires that the addition of dormer windows to roof slopes, various types of cladding, satellite dishes fronting a highway and a reduced size of extensions, all require planning permission in a conservation area.

2.7. However, even within conservation areas there are other minor developments associated with many non-listed buildings that do not require planning permission. So as to provide further protection the law allows Councils to introduce additional controls if appropriate. Examples of such controls can commonly include some developments fronting a highway or open space, such as an external porch or the demolition of some gates, fences or walls or their alteration. The removal of existing important architectural features that are important to the character or appearance of a conservation area such as chimneys, traditional detailing or materials, distinctive porches, windows and doors or walls or railings can be subject to a more detailed assessment and if appropriate made subject to protection by a legal process known as an 'Article 4 Direction' which withdraws 'Permitted Development Rights'. The use of such Directions needs to be made in justified circumstances where a clear assessment of each conservation area has been made. In conducting this Appraisal, consideration will be given as to whether or not such additional controls are appropriate. The Council has introduced a similar Article 4 Direction elsewhere in the District. and agreed the general principle of introducing further Directions in other conservation areas.

2.8. Works to Trees. Another additional planning control relates to trees located within conservation areas. Setting aside various exceptions principally relating to size, any proposal to fell or carry out works to trees has to be 'notified' to the Council. The Council may then decide whether to make the tree/s subject to a Tree Preservation Order. This Appraisal diagrammatically

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identifies only the most significant trees or groups of trees that make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area, particularly when viewed from the public realm. Other trees not specifically identified may still be suitable for statutory protection.

2.9. Some hedges may be protected by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. This legislation is extremely complicated and only applies in certain situations that are determined by the location and extent of the hedge, its age and or its historical importance, the wildlife it supports and its number of woody species. The Regulations do not apply to domestic garden hedges.

2.10. National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (updated 2019). The principle emphasis of the framework is to promote sustainable development which has three main objectives which are Economic, Social and Environmental. Achieving good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and new development should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

2.11. Of particular relevance to this document, the National Planning Policy Framework advises as follows:

- Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment.
- Conservation Areas. Such areas must justify such a status virtue of being of special architectural or historic interest and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.
- Heritage assets. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance. They are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance to be enjoyed by present and future generations.
- Considerable weight should be given to conserving such heritage assets and the more important they are the greater the weight. For example the effect of an application affecting a non- designated heritage asset should be taken into account and a balanced judgment reached. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II Listed Building or Registered Park or Garden should be exceptional whilst similarly, substantial harm to heritage assets of higher status, e.g. those listed grade I or II* should be wholly exceptional.
- Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas to enhance or better reveal their significance and proposals that preserve such elements should be treated favourably.
- The use of Article 4 Directions to remove national permitted development rights should be limited to situations where this is necessary to protect local amenity or the well being of the area.

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- **Green Spaces.** Such areas of particular importance can properly be identified for special protection as Local Green Spaces in selected situations.

2.12. East Hertfordshire's environmental initiatives and Plan Policies. East Hertfordshire is committed to protecting conservation areas and implementing policies which preserve and enhance them; to support their preservation through the publication of design and technical advice and to be pro-active by offering grants and administering an Historic Buildings Grant Service. With regard to the latter grants are awarded on a first come first served basis in relation to works which result in the maintenance of listed buildings and other unlisted buildings of architectural or historic interest. The maximum grant will not normally exceed £2,000.

2.13. In respect of the above the Council has produced a number of leaflets and guidance notes that are available on line and on request. These guidance notes on the preservation and repair of historic materials and buildings provide useful information relevant to the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. They will be updated as resources permit.

2.14. The Council also has a 'Heritage at Risk Register', originally produced in 2006, and further updated. This document is available on the Council's website. Grant assistance not exceeding £10,000 may be available for necessary works that lead to such buildings' long term security. The summer house and curtain wall at Benington Lordship is included on the Council's Register.

~~**2.15. The East Herts Local Plan was adopted by the Council in 2007. The 'saved' policies set out in the plan remain in force and are relevant in relation to conservation area and historic building considerations. The Local Plan and its policies can be viewed on the Councils website or a copy can be obtained from the Council (contact details are set out in section 7).**~~

2.1~~6~~5. In accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Council ~~is in the process of~~ has prepar~~ed~~ing a planning policy document which ~~will~~has ~~replace~~now replaced the 2007 Local Plan. This ~~is~~ will be known as the East Herts District Plan (DP~~)~~) ~~. Once adopted the DP~~ which was adopted on 23~~in~~ October 2018 and which ~~will~~ contain~~s~~ the relevant ~~Council~~ planning policies. ~~As currently drafted this emerging~~ The District Plan advises that development in conservation areas should, inter alia, ~~conform~~ have regard to ~~with~~ the content of the Appraisals.

2.1~~7~~6. Benington conservation area was first designated in 1968 and boundaries revised/redesignated in 1981.

PART B - APPRAISAL

3. ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1. There are about 20 records within or close to the existing conservation area held by the County Historic Environment Records. Some relate to Listed Buildings, with a selection of some descriptions being included later in this document. Other interesting entries relate to:

(a) Benington Castle which is described as a late 11th century motte and bailey with 12th century keep and 1832 mock Norman Gatehouse.

(b) Possible Medieval foundations which may have been of an ecclesiastical building were found circa 1870 in an orchard on the village green. Similarly a 15th century bronze seal of the Guild of St Nicolas was found in the same location at the same time.

3.2. Prehistoric. Unknown.

3.3. Roman settlement. Possible - Roman sherd find (see below reference to Samian bowl below).

3.4. The Domesday Book was a census commissioned by William I in 1086. In relation to Benington it notes concerning the land of Peter de Valognes that *Peter himself holds Benington. It is assessed at 10 hides and there are 3 ploughs and there can be 2 more. There are 16 villans with a priest and 17 bordars have 8 ploughs. There is 1 cottar and 5 slaves, woodland for 100 pigs* (and) *a park* (apparently only one of three mentioned in Domesday) *for wild beasts. In all it is worth £12; when received £6. TRE Almaer of Benington held this manor.* Source: Domesday Book a complete translation, Alecto Historical Editions Penguin Books 2002.

3.5. Interpretation: A 'Hide' was a standard unit of land measurement interpreted to be about 120 acres. A 'villan' was a peasant legally tied to land he worked on and of higher economic status than a 'bordar'. A cottar was a peasant occupying a cottage in return for services. TRE is an abbreviation essentially meaning 'In King Edward's time'.

3.6. Anglo Saxon. County records advise of a small number of residual sherds dating from the mid 9th/10th centuries having been found suggesting Anglo Saxon settlement. See also reference to Mercian kings set out below in Kelly's Directory 1874.

3.7. Medieval settlement. An abbreviated description from the County Historic Environment Records for Benington reads as follows. *…The parish church stands here next to the manorial centre and the main settlement, which has always been small, emerged around the meeting point of four lanes adjacent to the manor*

and church…. The 1840 tithe map shows only about a dozen properties in single plots around the green and along the approach roads.

3.8. Another description relating to medieval earthworks (ditch which had formed part of the churchyard's southern boundary and which probably was part of the defences of the Norman castle) advises as follows: *The lower fill contained Norman and later domestic refuse including meat bones and pottery and a single large sherd of a Flavian rouletted Samian bowl; nothing else on the site was Roman. The pottery ranged from hand –made Norman types to Herts Glazed ware, the overall date being 12th century.*

3.9. The 19th century. A picture of the settlement as it can be recognised in part today is set out in Kelly's Directory of 1874 which refers as follows: *Bennington (note double 'nn' spelling) is a parish…6 miles from Hertford, 6 south east from Stevenage station on the Great Northern Railway…The church of St Peter is very ancient with square tower containing a fine peal of 8 bells; it contains two fine monuments, one of which is of the Bensted family…Here is a National school for boys, girls and infants, under Government inspection: the school premises were greatly enlarged in 1872. The Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists have chapels here. The charities from different sources amount to about £20 per annum. A fair is held here yearly on July 10. Bennington was anciently a residence of the Kings of Mercia. A parliamentary council was held here by Bertulph, King of the Mercians about the year 850.The soil is mixed, principally heavy; subsoil chalk and clay. The chief crops are wheat, barley, beans &etc…and the population in 1871 was 581.*

3.10. Commercial activities in addition to farmers in the parish listed in Kelly's at this time were Post Office, carrier (to Hertford and Ware), bakers (2), carpenter, shopkeepers (3), blacksmith, shoemaker, builder, Bell PH, yeast dealer, beer retailer (2), Cricketers PH and shoemaker, tailor, bricklayer. This represents a wide range of local commercial activities and a high level of self-sufficiency, common even for small settlements at this time.

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Picture 1. Church of St Peter Benington - date unknown probably late 19th early 20 century. Church interpreted as being covered in vegetation; fence no longer in place, neither is semi circular metal structure appearing to support a lantern. Reproduced courtesy of Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS).

Picture 2. The pond in centre of village date probably late 19th/early 20th century. Reproduced courtesy of Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS).

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3.11. Mapping from 1874 -1894 (Plan 1) identifies the location of some of the activities listed above. It shows the Rectory, the school, Bell PH, Post Office opposite the Bell, Benington Lordship earthworks, chalk pit and lime kiln (now site of pumping station). Mapping from 1897 shows that that the Post Office had moved to a new location north of the school. Little had changed by 1920, the mapping of which shows the lych gate to the church, erected to commemorate those from the parish who gave their lives in WW1, the Parish Hall and greenhouse structures to the north of Benington Lordship and what is now Benington Bury Farm.

3.12. The publication, Place Names of Hertfordshire, Cambridge University Press 1970 advises several names, a selection of which is included thus: Belintone and Beninton (1086), Benetone (1235), Benytone (1279) Banyngton (1316). It has already been noted that Kelly's of 1874 refers to Bennington. Derivation of name – perhaps meaning farm by the river Beane (with connective 'ing').

3.13. Benington - a collection of historical anecdotes of a Hertfordshire village by Eve Duncan is interesting reading and is available for purchase in the church.

3.14. Plan 1 shows the existing Conservation Area plotted on historic map dating from 1874-1894.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGNATIONS AND CRITERIA USED TO IDENTIFY OTHER IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

4.1. Scheduled Ancient Monuments. A National designation. Benington Castle is an ancient somonument so scheduled - see below.

4.2. Areas of Archaeological Significance. Designated locally by EHDC on advice from HCC. The areas identified by this Appraisal are areas as shown on the Council's most up to date mapping system and may sometimes differ from that shown on the adopted Plan. The identification and refinement of such areas is an ongoing process. Much of the conservation area is so designated.

4.3. Listed buildings. A National designation. Individually listed buildings have been identified, plotted and a selection briefly described, such abbreviated descriptions being based on the national list, occasionally with additional comments *in italics* by the fieldworker. Full descriptions can be obtained on line at Historic England's website List.HistoricEngland.org.uk Listed buildings are protected from unauthorised demolition, alteration or extension. Structures, including railings and walls, within the curtilage of listed buildings, if they are pre-1948, are subject to the same controls as listed buildings.

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4.4. The issue of deciding whether or not a building is 'curtilage listed' can sometimes be problematic and there is no exact legal definition of a building's curtilage. The main tests relate to the physical layout of the land surrounding the main building/s at the date of listing, the physical layout and functional relationship of structures to each other; ownership, past and present and use or function, past and present. Structures need to be ancillary or subordinate to the main Listed Building and form part of the land and not be historically independent. Protection is granted to such objects or structures within the curtilage of a Listed Building if they were built prior to July 1, 1948. In determining the extent of a Listed Building and its curtilage, a key assessment will be to examine the situation at the time of listing.

4.5. Non listed buildings of quality and worthy of protection. Several other non-listed buildings and structures that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the conservation area are identified by this Appraisal. The basic questions asked in assessing such buildings/structures are:

(a) Is the non listed building/structure of sufficient architectural or historic interest whose general external form and appearance remains largely unaltered?

(b) Does the building contain a sufficient level of external original features and materials?

(c) Has the building retained its original scale without large inappropriate modern extensions that destroy the visual appearance particularly in respect of the front elevation?

(d) Is the building visually important in the street scene?

(e) Determining which properties to include or which to exclude is occasionally a matter of difficult judgement.

4.6. Important trees and hedgerows are identified by this Appraisal. Their positions are shown very diagrammatically indeed and access to some rear areas has not been obtained. The basic criteria for identifying important trees and hedgerows are:-

(a) They are in good condition.

(b) They are visible at least in part from public view points.

(c) They make a significant contribution to the street scene or other publicly accessible areas.

4.7. Open spaces or gaps of quality that contribute to the visual importance of the conservation area where development would be

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inappropriate are identified by this Appraisal. The basic question asked in identifying such areas is does the open space or gap form an important landscape feature contributing to the general spatial quality and visual importance of the conservation area? Private open spaces forming an important setting for an historic asset and unkempt spaces that have the potential to be enhanced are candidates for selection subject to complying with the principle question.

4.8. Other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution are identified by this Appraisal. In relation to walls and railings those at and above prescribed heights in a conservation area 1m abutting a highway (including a public footpath or bridleway, waterway or open space) or 2m elsewhere, are protected and require permission for their demolition.

4.9. Reference has previously been made to the potential of introducing Article 4 Directions in justified circumstances. The Appraisals undertaken to date have identified elsewhere in the District that many historic architectural features of quality remain unaltered on some non listed buildings but, on the other hand, the exercise of Permitted Development rights has eroded other parts of some conservation areas. Should Members decide to proceed with such an initiative in Benington, such important historic detailing including features as identified below could justifiably be retained and inappropriate alterations to them controlled. (Update: Members have introduced a similar Article 4 Direction elsewhere in the District). and agreed the general principle of introducing further Directions in other conservation areas.

- Chimneys, in good condition, contemporary with the age of the property, prominent in the street scene and generally complete with chimney pots.
- Selected windows, on front or side elevations, fronting and visible from the street/s, generally contemporary with the age of the property or of a sympathetic historic design and where the majority of windows of respective elevations retain their original characteristics and have not been replaced by disruptive modern glazing units.
- Other features might include good quality architectural materials and detailing constructed of wood, metal or other materials.
- Walls or railings which make a positive architectural or historic contribution to the visual appearance of the conservation area.
- It may also be appropriate to introduce Article 4 Directions to retain quality buildings below the prescribed Permitted Development threshold.

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4.10. Features that are out of character with the conservation area and detract or are in poor repair are identified.

4.11. Important views are identified.

4.12. Conservation area boundaries. In suggesting any revisions to the Conservation Area boundaries, principal consideration is given as to whether or not the land or buildings in question form part of an area of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance should be conserved. The conservation area can include open land that has historical associations with the built form. This may particularly be the case if such open land is environmentally important and visually forms part of the conservation area's setting and is distinct from open farmland. Current advice from Historic England advises against the inclusion of agricultural land forming part of the wider landscape.

4.13. Wildlife sites. Those shown are identified on the ~~emerging~~ District Plan ~~(which may differ from those on the Adopted Plan due to updates)~~. There are none at Benington.

4.14. Historic Park and Garden. This one designated nationally that is referred to in detail below being located at Benington Lordship (see below). The remnants of a further historic garden at Bury Lodge Farm are also described below.

4.15. For information there is another of local importance identified by East Herts District Council at Benington Place, Town Lane beyond the conservation area.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS.

5.1. *General Landscape setting.* The Council's Landscape Character Assessment produced in 2007 (which is Supplementary Planning Guidance) identifies the distinct landscapes of the District in terms of their wider settings. The conservation area is located within Area 71, the Benington - Sacombe Ridge. It is described as *an area of ancient countryside with small woods, winding green lanes and numerous stream- eroded valleys… Benington was one of only three deer parks listed at Domesday.* **In respect of the gardens of Benington Lordship the document notes that** *One of the main features of the gardens is a rectangular sunken terrace dating from the 17th or possibly 16th century.* **Benington is described as a medieval settlement with a 14th century flint church and 'almost perfect' village Green (Pevsner).**

5.2. *General overview.* Positive attributes. Benington conservation area is particularly fine with many listed buildings of high quality centred around the

village green where all the main roads converge and flanked by the church and Benington Lordship to the immediate west. Throughout the conservation area trees and some hedgerows make an important environmental contribution.

5.3. Negative attributes. Although not within the conservation area, the latter's historic nature is compromised by adjacent 20th century suburban developments accessed by Three Stiles which detrimentally impacts its eastern edge.

5.4. *Individually Listed Buildings.* There are 22 listed buildings/groups within the existing conservation area. Of this total, 41% date from the 17th century, 27% from the 16th century and 18% from the 19th century. The 12th, 13th and 20th centuries are also represented.

5.5. The above buildings are grade II except two which are Grade I (church and remains of Benington Castle) and three which are grade II* (Benington Lordship, The Bell PH and Beningtonbury/Peterscourt). Proportionally the numbers of Grade I and II* are high. Combined with the fact that several grade II buildings are former open hall houses, this makes the concentration of high quality buildings within Benington conservation area particularly important.

5.6. Individually *Listed Buildings.* A selection of Listed Buildings with abbreviated descriptions based on the National list is provided below. Any comments by the fieldworker are in *italics.*

5.7. Parish Church of St Peter - grade I. Late 13th or early 14th century nave and chancel, early 15th century west tower. Restored 1889 by John Oldrid Scott. Flint rubble with stone dressings. Steep old red tile roof to porch, chancel and similar roof, hipped at east, to north chapel. Parapet hides low pitched nave roof and embattled parapet to the Hertfordshire spike on the tower. Simple 15th century oak benches. Traceried tomb chest of Sir John de Benstede and his lady with life size recumbent effigies. The wall to the east has been pierced for a similar canopied tomb chest circa 1430 of Sir Edward de Benstede and his lady. The underside of the 4- centred arch is panelled with a central angel holding their souls in a napkin. The church stands on a prominent elevated site by the castle overlooking the green. Of outstanding interest for its chapel and tombs.

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Picture 3. Grade I church of St. Peter occupies a prominent elevated location in the conservation area.

5.8. ~~Lych.~~ Lych gate at St Peter's Church - Grade II. Circa 1919 for Canon Mills erected in memory of son and others killed in Great War. Oak timber frame on a knapped flint waist-high plinth with limestone capping, quoins, and buttress offsets. Red tile steep roof gabled to front. *Details read* *Erected by Canon Mills Rector of Benington in memory of his son…and 18 comrades from this parish who gave their lives in the Great War 1914-1919.*

5.9. No.11 Church Green - Grade II. 17th century or earlier, Timber frame on brick sill part painted, part stucco. Fake timbering applied to west gable facing road. Steep thatched roof. Unusual single-storey thatched house.

Picture 4. Unusual 17th century single storey thatched property with later fake timbering applied.

15

5.10. Remains of Benington Castle - Grade 1. Ruined keep of medieval ringwork castle. 1130's for the De Valognes family, slighted *(ignored?)* in 1176/7 by Henry II, garrisoned again in 1192/3, destroyed 1212 after Robert Fitz Walter was outlawed. Flint rubble walls 7- 8 ft thick with some herringbone-coursed flint facing and limestone quoins and plinth offset of dressed stone with diagonal tooling, exposed on exterior north wall. A small square stone tower about 44 feet x 41 feet with pilaster buttresses at the middle and ends of each face. A small square north east annexe may be original. Demolition involved removal of one side entirely. South wall is reduced to footings. A fallen mass of masonry lies on the north east annexe and an imitation Norman doorway was inserted circa 1842.

Picture 5. Grade 1 12th century remains of Norman castle for the De Valognes family.

5.11. Benington Lordship - Grade: II*. Country house. Late l7th century, east entrance and gatehouse circa 1842 by James Pulham a modeller from Broxbourne, for the Proctor family, west wing circa 1906 for Bott family. Knapped flint faced walls with stone dressings and gatehouse modelled in Pulham's Portland Stone Cement to appear to be weathered cubical ashlar. Red brick west wing. Steep old red tile roofs. A large square 3-storeys house of double-pile plan with 2 mid-wall chimneys. Symmetrical south front 7 windows wide. Box sash windows. Attached at north east is a tall Norman revival gatehouse with twin flint-faced circular towers. Runic inscription on cartouche over gate.

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Pictures 6 and 7. Benington Lordship a fine grade II* listed building with 7 window range to south elevation and a tall Norman revival gatehouse with twin flint-faced circular towers to north east.

5.12. Summerhouse and Curtain Wall at Benington Lordship - Grade II. Summerhouse and adjoining curtain wall. Circa 1842 by James Pulham for the Proctor family. Flint and stucco modelled to appear ashlar, Front a ruined tower with machicolations overhanging a wide Romanesque arched doorway of 2 recessed orders and hood mould each with chevron ornament. Demi-figures holding battle axes as stops. Winged head and cartouche with runic inscription over door. *This is included on the Council's Heritage at Risk Register where the objective is to secure consolidation of the ruin and prevent ongoing deterioration. Grant assistance may be available.*

17

Picture 8. Grade II summer House, a building included on the Council's Heritage at Risk Register.

5.13. Benington Bury, and Peterscourt - Grade II*. *Former* **Rectory, now 2 houses. 1637 for Nathaniel Dod, Rector. Divided in 1980's. Red brick with front plastered and stone dressings. Steep red tile roofs. Built as a 2-storeys and attics, central-chimney, lobby- entry, 2-cell plan house facing east with symmetrical red brick front with 2-storeys porch and 2 gables with moulded parapet and finials at apex and feet, and mullioned wood windows with labels. Good interiors to main range with 4-centred chamfered red brick fireplaces to hall and chamber over.**

5.14. Grotto at Peterscourt - Grade II. Grotto-maze. Early 19th century incorporating 18th century red brick structure at ~~north west~~North West **corner. Brick-kiln wasters and stucco, covered in ivy. Open at top. A large maze with winding passages and chambers off with pools and central viewing mound, all built of grotto-work within an irregular enclosure of high brick walls.** *Most unusual and delightful.*

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Picture 9. The most unusual and delightful grotto at Peterscourt.

5.15. <u>Scheduled *Ancient Monument.*</u> This abbreviated description of Benington Castle is based on Historic England's entry details. Benington Castle is a motte and bailey west of Church Green. Such structures are medieval fortifications introduced into Britain by the Normans and comprised of a conical mound of earth or rubble, the motte, surmounted by a palisade and a stone or timber tower. In a majority of examples an embanked enclosure containing additional buildings, the bailey, adjoined the motte. They acted as garrison forts during offensive military operations, as strongholds, and, in many cases, as aristocratic residences and as centres of local or royal administration. Although many were occupied for only a short period of time, they continued to be built and occupied from the 11th to the 13th centuries, after which they were superseded by other types of castle.

5.16. Benington Castle is a well-documented example of a Norman motte and bailey castle with a tower keep. Its historical records date back to the 11th century. Benington Castle includes a large square mound, or motte, which measures 45m across and about 6m in height. The remains of a rectangular tower keep, of flint rubble construction, stand on the east side of the motte. The keep, a listed building Grade I, measures 13.5m by 12.5m with walls about 2.2m thick and up to 2.5m high. The south wall is reduced to its footings.

5.17. Also situated on the motte is Benington Lordship, a Grade II* listed Georgian house, the summerhouse, Grade II listed, and the curtain wall and gatehouse both of which were built in about 1832 and are also listed Grade II.

5.18. Surrounding the motte is a ditch about 6m deep and nearly 19m wide in some places. The bailey forms a semicircle to the north-east of the motte and was surrounded by a curtain wall, fragments of which have been found. A

second bailey surrounds the church and churchyard which are situated to the south of the motte. This area is not included in the scheduling as both church and churchyard remain in use by the parish. A third bailey is believed to have existed to the west of the motte.

5.19. The earthworks are considered to have been built by Peter de Valognes who was sheriff of the county in 1086. His son Roger erected the masonry castle in 1136. In 1176-7 one hundred picks were purchased for the demolition of the castle but it appears that this was never carried out as the castle was still strongly garrisoned in 1193. It was passed on shortly afterwards to Robert Fitzwalker on his marriage and was destroyed in 1212 on his outlawry. The house, the summerhouse, curtain wall, gatehouse, driveway, paths and fences are excluded from the scheduling although the ground beneath these features is included.

Picture 10. Defensive earthworks at Benington Lordship.

5.20. _Areas of Archaeological Significance._ Much of the conservation area is so designated.

5.21. _Important buildings within the curtilages of Listed Building._ The issue of deciding whether or not a building is 'curtilage listed' can sometimes be problematic and there is no exact legal definition of a building's curtilage. The buildings identified below have been considered curtilage listed on the basis of existing information for the purpose of this exercise. However should detailed information reveal otherwise their status of important buildings to be retained remains unaltered.

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5.22. The Lodge to Benington Lordship. Probably of early 20th century origin, this red brick property with steeply sloping tiled roof and chimneys with windows is contemporary to its period - some decorative wooden detailing.

Picture 11. The Lodge an ancillary listed building to Benington Lordship probably dating from the early 20th century.

5.23. Curtilage building to east of Kitchen Garden and north of Benington Lordship, 19th century of red brick construction with steep tiled roof, chimneys and decorative barge board detailing.

Picture 12. 19th century curtilage listed building of quality to east of Kitchen Garden, Benington Lordship.

5.24. Building attached to and to north of Benington Bury. Does not appear to be included in the listed building description. Is shown on late 19th century mapping. Single storey with steeply sloping tiled roof, some scalloped decorative tiles.

21

5.25. _Other non listed buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution._ This Appraisal identifies a small number of other buildings of high quality that are not listed but that should be retained. These generally date from the late 19th/ early/mid 20th century and are an important element in the high environmental quality of the conservation area and make a very positive contribution to its built form and historical evolution. Any Important architectural features they possess and worthy of retention are identified.

5.26. Beech House, Duck Lane. Probably 19th century with early 20th century extension to west. Late 20th century extension to east. Bay windows to both floors. Tiled roof and chimney stacks with pots. Porch detracts but historic parts of building worthy of retention. An Article 4 Direction may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.

Picture 13. Beech House although some modern additions detract, the historic parts of the building are worthy of retention.

5.27. Nos. 32 -36 Walkern Road. 19th century terrace constructed of red brick with slate roof and chimneys. Early/sympathetic windows; No. 36 has bay window to ground floor. An Article 4 Direction may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.

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Picture 14. Nos. 32-36 Walkern Road.

5.28. The School House, Walkern Road. Dating from the 19th century this two storey property is of brick and knapped flint construction with steep tiled roof and decorative tiled detailing and ridge tiles, chimney stack to rear. Vertically hung tiles to front. An Article 4 Direction may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.

Picture 15. The School House, Walkern Road.

5.29. Benington Primary School. Of 19th century date with steeply sloping decorative tiled roof and decorative ridge tiles. Early /sympathetic windows. Decorative plaque to front reads Bennington National School.

23

Pictures 16-17. Benington School Parts of the building are visually most worthy of retention. Note spelling of Bennington (with double n) in centrally located stone detail.

5.30. *Other distinctive features that make an important architectural or historic contribution.* **Walls and railings so identified are protected to varying degrees virtue of exceeding specified height relevant to the conservation area legislation or by being within the curtilage of a Listed Building unless otherwise noted.**

5.31. Walls of varying heights and detailing defining the Kitchen Garden at Benington Lordship. Of red brick construction with piers and rounded capping detail.

24

Picture 18. High quality wall enclosing western side of Kitchen Garden.

5.32. Dwarf flint wall capped with concrete to south of remains of Benington Lordship. This wall has recently been repaired following collapse of nearby mature tree.

5.33. Side wall to south of school about 1.5 m in height of red brick with rounded capping detailing. The latter (because not fronting the road and less than 2m is unprotected and thus potentially appropriate for protection by Article 4 Direction subject to further consideration and notification).

5.34. Entrance gates to Benington Lordship. Tall brick pillars topped with finial detail. Metal gates in need of repair. Date unknown but probably early 20th century as entrance point shows first on mapping dating from this time. Provenance of metal work unknown. In urgent need of repair. Potentially grant assistance available.

Picture 19. Fine entrance gates to Benington Lordship in urgent need of repair.

5.35. Good quality cast iron street lamp - lantern atop a tapering octagonal column probably of late 19th century date.

26

Picture 20. Cast iron lamp on tapering octagonal column probably of late 19th century date.

5.36. War Memorial. Commemorating those who gave their lives in both World Wars. Tapering stone column in sections with cross on two stepped octagonal raised Portland stone bases.

27

Picture 21. War Memorial in churchyard, adds to the visual quality of this important open space.

5.37. Gravestones in churchyard. See below.

5.38. Walls and associated building (potting shed?) to former kitchen garden at Bury Lodge Farm. Brick walls about 3m in height. Most attractive walls of 19th century date enclosing former kitchen garden. Generally in fair condition but some repair work desirable. May be eligible for grant assistance.

Picture 22. Walls to former kitchen Garden Bury Lodge Farm.

28

5.39. Short length of wall Bury Lodge Farm. Brick construction about 3m in height.

Picture 23. Brick wall Bury Lodge Farm worthy of retention.

5.40. _Important Open Spaces._ **The spaces identified below are most important and should be preserved. Together with a significant number of trees they are an integral part of the conservation area and its overall high quality.**

5.41. Churchyard. A linear space with traditional churchyard trees that is well maintained and at different levels. There are large numbers of gravestones many from the 19th/ early 20th century. Several war graves noted. Also grave of PC Benjamin Snow who died aged 32 in January 1871, killed arresting a poacher called John Chapman. Because the former did not have an official warrant for the arrest, the latter was found guilty of manslaughter only and thus avoided the death penalty. (The southernmost corner of the churchyard appears as part of the Historic Park and Garden designation which needs resolving).
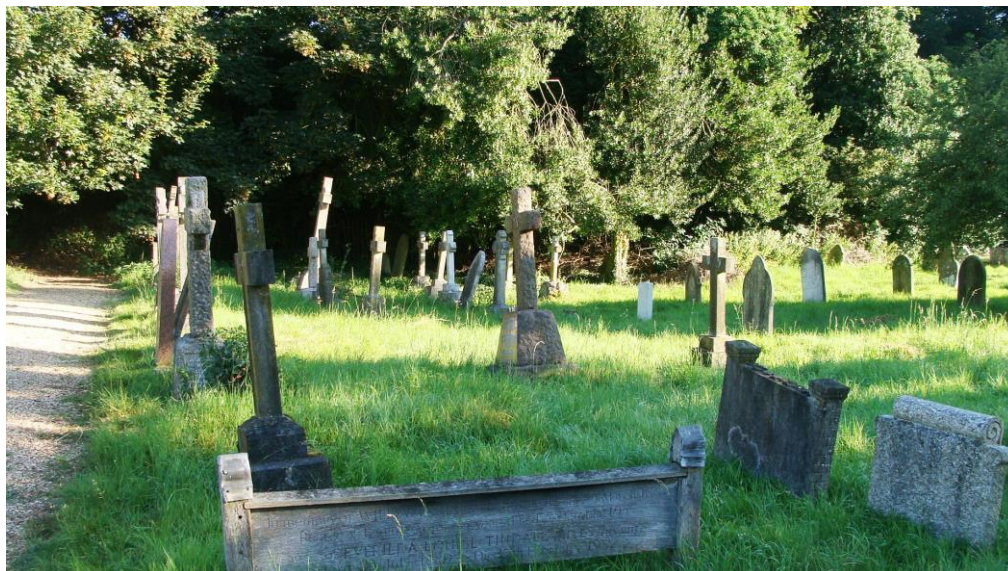
Picture 24. St Peter's graveyard - an interesting linear space providing an elevated setting for the magnificent church and crammed with interesting gravestones.

29

5.42. Church Green and associated nearby smaller greens in the centre of the village is the meeting point of four roads. It is an uncluttered space of visual and focal importance to the village framed by important listed buildings in several locations. The mature trees it supports add to its overall high quality.

Picture 25. Church Green - an important focal point framed by important listed buildings.

5.43. Open grassland opposite Beech House. This open space is visually important, close to the centre of the village and forms an immediate open setting for nearby historic buildings to which its character and visual connection is closely linked, in part due to the open nature of its frontage.

Picture 26. An important open area at Duck Lane near the centre of the conservation area and also important the immediate setting of nearby historic buildings.

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5.44. Open land to east of The Bell PH, Town Lane. Although currently overgrown and disused for the most part this open land performs an important general visual function in providing an open space within the conservation area at a point where modern development impacts nearby at Three Stiles. It is a gap on Town Lane between the important listed grade II* PH and nos. 12-14 Town Lane and clearly separated from the open countryside to its south.

Picture 27. Disused open land between the grade II* listed PH, the edge of the settlement which is also strategically important to the general setting of the conservation area. Its southern boundary clearly separates it from open countryside beyond.

5.45. *Open countryside to the east of Duck Lane.* During the consultation process concern was raised relating to ensuring proper protection of the countryside to the east of Duck Lane. Historic England advises that conservation area designation is *not generally an appropriate means of protecting the wider landscape.* It should be noted however that such an area forms part of the 'Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt' and is subject to, and thus protected by, District Plan Policy GBR2. The Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt is a considerable and significant countryside resource, which Policy GBR2 seeks to maintain.

5.46. This appraisal therefore recognises the importance of maintaining the general openness of this area from inappropriate development and as such it will be protected by Policy GBR2 as a valued countryside resource.

31

5.45~~7~~. _Important Historic Parks and Gardens._ The extensive park and garden at Benington Lordship is partly located within the conservation area but extends expansively into open countryside beyond in a westerly direction. The boundaries of the conservation area include those areas of the designated garden most closely associated with the house. The abbreviated description below is based on Historic England details.

5.46~~8~~. Benington Lordship - Grade II. A country house surrounded by mid-19th and early 20th century gardens, within a landscape park. In about 1700 the Caesar family of Benington Place (now Benington Park) built Benington Lordship on the site of an Elizabethan farmhouse, adjacent to the castle ruins. In 1826 the last John Chessyre sold Benington Lordship to George Proctor, who, circa 1832, commissioned a neo-Norman gatehouse, summerhouse and curtain wall to connect them, which together are known as The Folly, as well as additions to the house.

5.~~47~~49. In 1905 Arthur Bott, a Staffordshire engineer, bought the Lordship upon his return from working in India. Mr Bott and his wife Lilian enlarged the house and garden, taking in areas of the park, and built a new kitchen garden adjacent to the stables. The existing garden areas were remodelled by the Botts, influenced by the designers of the period. By the 1970s the gardens required renovation, and were restored. The main approach enters off the village green. The gardens, flanked by the park to the west and south, surround the house and are broken into several formal and informal compartments.

5.~~48~~50. The path along the south front of the house leads east into the forecourt between the house and keep. To the west the path leads to a flight of steps, linked to the south end of the adjacent veranda. The steps lead down to the gravel path which was formerly part of the south drive. The path is flanked to the east by the west sides of the house and Rose Garden, and to the west by the broad, terraced west lawn, overlooking two ponds in the valley at the bottom of the lawn (lawn and ponds incorporated into the garden in the early C20). The ponds are probably the remains of medieval fishponds. The park, laid to pasture and planted with scattered mature trees, lies west and south-west of the house and gardens.

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Picture 28. View looking west to ponds.

5.~~49~~51. **The Herbaceous Border, flanking a gravel path broken by steps down to the west, forms the northern boundary of the garden, and is itself bounded to the north by the south wall of the kitchen garden, stepped down to the west. The Border connects the orchard at its east end with the Rockery and north pond at its west end.**

Picture 29. The herbaceous border to south of the Kitchen Garden.

5.5~~0~~2. **The rectangular, brick-walled kitchen garden (1906) lies adjacent to the north boundary of the site.**

Picture 30. View into Kitchen Garden from south entrance.

5.5~~13~~. _Other Garden of Historic Importance._ Garden probably of 19th century origin at Bury Lodge Farm. This shows on Plan 1 (the 1874 -1894 OS map). Walls and potting shed remain but greenhouses appearing on the mapping no longer exist. Walls enclosing former kitchen garden are about 3 m in height and appear in reason able condition although some repair work is needed. Without prejudice to outcome, grant assistance may be appropriate. The owners are encouraged to retain those historic elements of the garden which still remain, for example, the yew hedges.

34
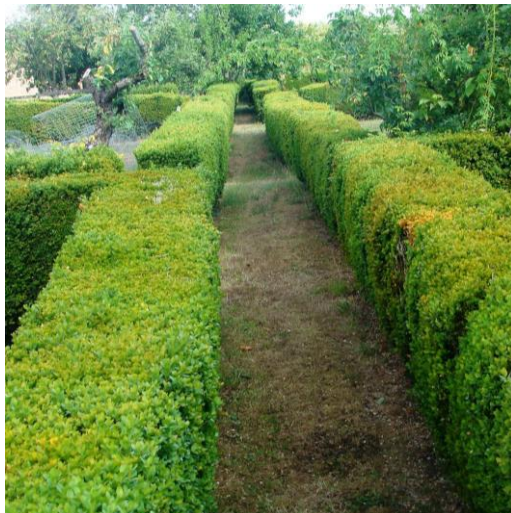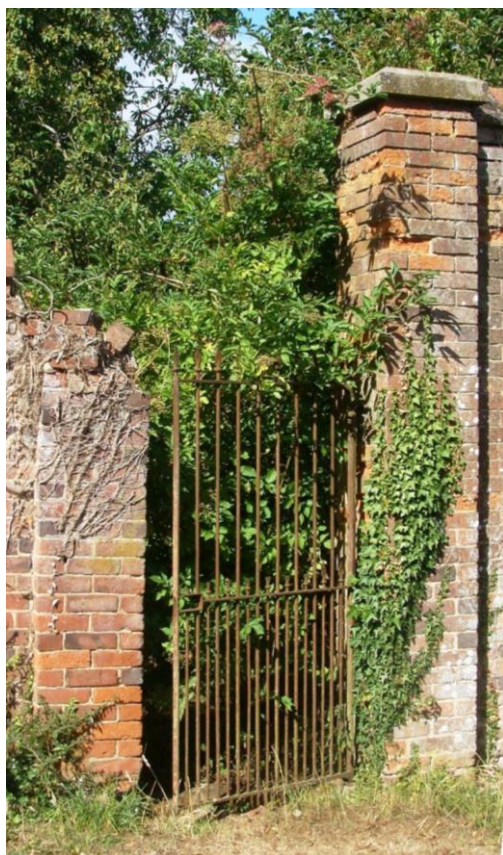
Pictures 31-33. Former kitchen garden at Bury Lodge Farm. Top traditional box edgings which the owners are encouraged to retain. Below walls about 3m in height, some repairs desirable. Grant assistance may be available.

5.5~~24~~. *Particularly important trees and hedgerows.* **Those trees that are most important are shown very diagrammatically on the accompanying plans. As can be seen from the accompanying plan trees are important and extensive throughout the conservation area. Also and as previously advised some rear**

boundaries and other areas were not accessible so in such locations information regarding trees may be limited.

5.535. Village approach. The village approach from the south with its overhanging trees on steep banks is visually important and a feature of this part of the conservation area.

Picture 34. Looking south out of the conservation area. A combination of overhanging trees and steep banks makes an important visual contribution to this part of the conservation area.

5.546. *Water features.* A pond at the junction of Duck Lane and Walkern Road in the centre of the conservation area makes a valuable visual contribution. Also two ponds to the west of Benington Lordship.

Picture 35. Attractive water feature junction of Duck Lane and Walkern Road.

5.557. *Important views.* A selection as shown on accompanying plans.

5.568. *Elements out of character with the Conservation Area.* Site of the Bell PH. The Bell PH is a most important listed building but the exposed nature of the car park together with various fencing elements currently detract. A young yew hedge has been planted to the front which when mature should secure visual improvements. Perhaps a few additional native trees strategically

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planted within the hedge would in time provide vertical emphasis in keeping with other planting in the village nearby.

Picture 36. The exposed nature of the Bell PH car park will be much improved once the hedge to front has matured. Possible further improvements could be sought by some small number of strategically located tree planting. Note: since this photograph was taken the asbestos outbuilding in the picture is currently being refurbished.

5.~~57~~59. Utility poles and overhead services. There are several such poles and overhead services which detract to a modest degree although Benington is fortunate in the limited nature of this issue, commonly encountered in other conservation areas. Nevertheless the Parish Council may wish to contact the appropriate service company to establish whether or not opportunities exist to make selected improvements.

5.~~58~~60. *Opportunities to secure improvements.* Consider repair work and potential grant assistance with owners in relation to the summer house at Benington Lordship. Repair entrance gates to Benington Lordship. Consider repairs to walls at former Kitchen Garden, Bury Lodge Farm.

5.~~59~~61. *Suggested boundary changes.* It is proposed to amend the conservation area as follows:

(a) Minor extension at Benington Bury Farm area (part western boundary) to remove any ambiguity relating to historic wall remaining within the conservation area.

(b) Minor extension At Benington Bury Farm area to include entirety of residential building on eastern boundary.

(c) Minor extension to west of ponds at Benington Lordship to better reflect existing boundaries.

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(d) Exclude field to north of buildings at Benington Bury Farm which visually appears as part of open countryside (but retain narrow strip to ensure there is no ambiguity relating to historic wall remaining within the conservation area).

Picture 37. Land to north of Benington Bury Farm, excluded from the conservation area as it reads more as being part of the open countryside.

(e) exclude an area of open land including ménage and associated buildings on the east side of Duck Lane, north-east of Beech House. This land is interpreted as being part of the open countryside.

Pictures 38 - 39. Modern buildings set in a wider landscape and now proposed to be excluded from the conservation area.

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(f) exclude an area to rear of school principally consisting of buildings, hard surface and play areas. This area is not of special architectural or historic quality and is proposed for exclusion following detailed examination and consequential to the period of further consultation 9-30 September 2019.

Pictures 40-41. Area to rear of school, now proposed to be excluded from the conservation area.

5.602 **Looking at the Character Analysis (Plan 2) it can be seen there are many examples of the red line denoting the existing conservation area being off-set from the physical boundaries meant to be followed. These are particularly apparent on the Benington mapping and will be rectified in the production of the final document. Such positional inaccuracies are not referred to above.**

5.613. *Other Actions.* **Check issue of southern part of churchyard falling within an area designated by Historic England as an Historic Park and Garden.**

6. OVERALL SUMMARY.

6.1. Benington's conservation area is of high quality. It is assuredly considered to be *'special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance'.* **In addition to the diverse selection of important listed buildings of the highest quality there are**

strong historical associations going back to the Norman period. Great care needs to be exercised in relation to new development proposals.

6.2. This Appraisal has also identified several late 19th/early 20th century non listed buildings that add to the quality of the built environment whose retention through the planning process and by additional controls is advised. There are also other features of importance that should be retained.

6.3. Throughout the conservation area trees play a most important role in visually enhancing the village street scenes in many locations. There are also important open spaces and historic gardens which need protecting.

6.4. In relation to the requirement to enhance, several improvements have been identified which are set out in summary tabular form in the Management section below. The suggested improvements, both large and small, will principally be implemented by the goodwill and with the co-operation of individual owners. However the Council may be able to offer advice and guidance and, subject to staff resources, will be prepared to do so, as and when appropriate. Some improvements may be potentially eligible for grant assistance.

6.5. Several alterations to the Conservation Area boundary have been proposed.

PART C - MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS.

7. MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS.

7.1. *Revised Conservation Area Boundary.* The revised boundary is shown on accompanying Management Plan to which the reader is referred and includes the following amendment/s.

(a) Minor extension at Benington Bury Farm area (part western boundary) to remove any ambiguity relating to historic wall remaining within the conservation area.

(b) Minor extension At Benington Bury Farm area to include entirety of residential building on eastern boundary.

(c) Minor extension to west of ponds at Benington Lordship. ~~to better reflect existing boundaries.~~

(d) Exclude field to north of buildings at Benington Bury Farm which visually appears as part of open countryside (but retain narrow strip to ensure there is no ambiguity relating to historic wall remaining within the conservation area).

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(e) exclude an area of open land including ménage and associated buildings on the east side of Duck Lane, north-east of Beech House.

(f) exclude an area to rear of school principally consisting of buildings, hard surface and play areas.

7.2. *General Planning Control and Good Practice within the Conservation Area.* All 'saved' pPlanning policies are contained in the East Herts Local District Plan Second Review adopted in April 2007in October . 2018. It is currently against this document and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that the District Council will process applications. The NPPF is supplemented by Planning Practice Guidance. One such guidance note of particular relevance is 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'. When the 2007 Local Plan is replaced by the District Plan the latter's policies will then be relevant. District Plan policies HA1, HA4, HA5 and HA6 are particularly relevant.

7.3. Applicants considering submitting any application should carefully consider the relevant District Plan policies and if necessary contact Officers to seek pre-application advice.

Telephone 01279 655261 (For development proposals ask for Development Management. For general conservation advice ask for a Conservation Officer).

E-mail: planning@eastherts,.gov.uk

Website: www.eastherts.gov.uk

Or write to Development Management, East Herts. District Council, Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8EQ

7.4. Applicants may also wish to refer to one of the several Guidance Notes previously referred to which will be updated as resources permit.

7.5. *Planning Control - Potential need to undertake an Archaeological Evaluation.* Within the Scheduled Ancient Monument and within Areas of Archaeological Significance (as shown on either the adopted Local Plan or emerging District Plan), the contents of policies BH1, BH2 and BH3HA1 and HA3 are particularly relevant.

7.6. *Listed Building Control and Good Practice.* Those buildings that are individually listed are identified. Other pre-1948 buildings, structures or walls within the curtilage of a Listed Building are similarly protected in law. Policy HA 7 particularly applies.

7.7. Listed Buildings are a significant asset in contributing to the quality of the conservation area. It is essential that their architectural detailing is not eroded nor their other qualities and settings compromised.

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7.8. *Planning Control – Other Unlisted Buildings that make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution.* **Within the existing Conservation Areas this Appraisal has identified several unlisted buildings/ groups of buildings that are considered to have sufficient qualities to be described thus. Any proposal involving the demolition of these buildings is unlikely to be approved. Policies HA2 and HA4 II particularly apply.**

7.9. These buildings are: Beech House, Duck Lane; 32-36 Walkern Road; The School House, Walkern Road and part of Benington Primary School.

7.10. There are other distinctive features that are integral to some of the important unlisted buildings identified above that make an important architectural or historic contribution, including selected chimneys, windows and other architectural detailing where protection could be provided by removing Permitted Development Rights via an Article 4 Direction. The associated legislation is ~~complex. Should the Council consider such a course of action appropriate~~**complex and there would be a process of notifying the affected owners separately at a later date. This would be associated with further detailed consideration and possible refinement. Policy HA4 I (f) particularly applies.**

7.11. *Planning Control – Other distinctive features that make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution.* **This Appraisal has identified a number of walls and other features that make a particular contribution to the character of the conservation area. These will be protected from demolition within the parameters of legislation.**

7.12. *Planning Control – Important Historic Park and Garden.* **There is one such garden being that at Benington Lordship which is on Historic England's national register and listed grade II. Proposals that significantly harm the garden's special character will not be permitted.** ~~and will be considered against Policy BH16.~~ **Policies HA1, HA4 and HA8 particularly apply.**

Other Garden of Historic Importance. **Garden probably of 19th century origin at Bury Lodge Farm. The owners are encouraged to retain those historic elements of the garden which still remain, for example, the yew hedges. District Plan Policy HA2 particularly applies.**

7.13. *Planning Control – Important open land, open spaces and gaps.* **This Appraisal has identified the following particularly important open spaces: The Churchyard; Church Green and associated subsidiary greens; grassland opposite Beech House; land to the east of the Bell PH. These spaces will be protected. Policy HA4 I (e) particularly applies.**

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7.14. *Planning Control* – Open countryside to the east of Duck Lane. This land will be protected as a valued countryside resource. District Plan Policy GBR2 particularly applies.

7.145. *Planning Control – Particularly important trees and hedgerows.* Only the most significant trees are shown very diagrammatically. It has not been possible to plot trees on inaccessible land. Subject to certain exceptions all trees in a conservation area are afforded protection and a person wanting to carry out works has to notify the Council. Trees that have not been identified may still be considered suitable for protection by Tree Preservation Orders. Owners are advised to make regular inspections to check the health of trees in the interests of amenity and Health and Safety. Policy NE3 III particularly applies.

7.16. *Planning Control – Water Features.* Pond at the junction of Duck Lane and Walkern Road and two ponds to the west of Benington Lordship will be protected. District Plan Policy NE3 IV particularly applies.

7.157. *Planning Control - Important views.* A selection of general views is diagrammatically shown. Policy BH6 is particularly relevant. Policy HA4 I (e) particularly applies.

7.168. *Enhancement Proposals.* The Appraisal has identified utility poles that detract which are summarised in the Table below together with a proposed course of action; other actions are also identified. Within the staff and financial resources available, Council Officers will be pro-active and provide assistance. It must be recognized that such improvements will generally be achieved only by the owner's co-operation. The reader's attention is drawn to the potential of grant assistance in eligible circumstances.

Detracting element	Location	Proposed Action.
Utility poles and overhead services.	Various.	The PC may wish to selectively pursue with the appropriate services company.
Other actions, including opportunities to secure improvements.		
Discuss the potential of repair work and potential grant assistance with owners in relation to the summer house at Benington Lordship.		
Discuss the potential of repair work and potential grant assistance with owners in relation to the metal entrance gates to Benington Lordship.		

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Discuss the potential of repair work and potential grant assistance with owners in relation to the walls at former kitchen garden, Bury Lodge Farm. Also encourage owner to retain other historical elements such as veteran trees and formal hedging.
Resolve issue of apparent conflict of southern area of churchyard being within an area designated by Historic England as an Historic Park and Garden.

HGGT Stewardship Objectives and Principles

Objectives

The objectives establish the intended outcomes to be achieved through any stewardship arrangements and that any stewardship body established will need to fulfil. However, it is acknowledged that depending on the model(s) selected and the assets conferred to the body(ies), it is possible that not all objectives will necessarily be applicable to all types of bodies.

a) Community assets will be well managed and maintained as part of a high-quality development.

b) Community assets will be maintained, enhanced and promoted to develop the health and wellbeing of residents.

c) Community assets will be maintained, enhanced and promoted to support the social cohesion of the local community.

d) Green spaces will be created, restored and managed to improve the natural environment to deliver net biodiversity gain and enhanced habitats.

e) Green spaces, sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDs) and community assets will complement and enhance the existing natural, semi-natural and built public assets within the wider area.

f) An accessible, inclusive and sustainable community will be promoted.

g) Local people will be involved in volunteering schemes linked to the stewardship of the assets.

h) Economic participation and skills development of residents will be facilitated and encouraged through vocational education and training opportunities.

Principles

The principles define how the stewardship body will operate and make decisions. Any stewardship body will:

1. Uphold the objectives of stewardship for the HGGT and ensure decisions are made in the long-term public interest.

2. Be an effective, credible and respected custodian of assets.

3. Be financially sustainable, offering value for money services and develop, maintain and monitor a long-term viable and prudent business plan to ensure the efficacy and success of the stewardship arrangements.

4. Enable long term resilience through a flexible, adaptable and entrepreneurial approach.

5. Ensure that it has access to suitable skills and expertise and has sufficient capacity to enable it to undertake its role successfully.

6. Encourage collaboration and partnership working between local authority partners, the community and wider stakeholders, to take full advantage of their contribution to stewardship, where appropriate.

7. Include representation from the HGGT Garden Community site residents on the stewardship body once the occupation of the HGGT Garden Community sites begins.

8. Embed transparent monitoring and accountability requirements from the outset to ensure the benefits of the development are realised and maintained.

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

THE COUNCIL –18 DECEMBER 2019

REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

COUNCIL TAX - CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2020/21

WARDS AFFECTED: All

Purpose/Summary of Report

1.1 To recommend to the Council the calculation of the council tax base for the whole district, and for each parish and town council, for 2020/21

RECOMMENDATION FOR :	
(A)	the calculation of the Council's tax base for the whole district, and for the parish areas, for 2020/21 be approved.
(B)	pursuant to the report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by East Hertfordshire District Council as its council tax base for the whole area for 2020/21 shall be **61272.0** and for the parish areas listed below for 2020/21 shall be as follows:- **Table 1**

ALBURY	277.33	HIGH WYCH	343.19
ANSTEY	168.09	HORMEAD	330.64
ARDELEY	209.16	HUNSDON	507.65
ASPENDEN	124.41	LITTLE BERKHAMPSTEAD	271.36
ASTON	427.53	LITTLE HADHAM	529.43
BAYFORD	229.85	LITTLE MUNDEN	417.74
BENGEO	283.51	MUCH HADHAM	962.60
BENNINGTON	398.53	SACOMBE	91.20
BISHOP'S STORTFORD	15963.24	STANSTEAD ST.	693.95

		MARGARETS	
BRAMFIELD	110.02	SAWBRIDGEWORTH	3762.58
BRAUGHING	642.22	STANDON	1856.27
BRENT PELHAM /			
MEESDEN	148.15	STANSTEAD ABBOTTS	692.24
BRICKENDON	341.23	STAPLEFORD	266.85
BUCKLAND	117.12	STOCKING PELHAM	80.83
BUNTINGFORD	3071.25	TEWIN	868.32
COTTERED	312.95	THORLEY	151.36
DATCHWORTH	732.77	THUNDRIDGE	677.57
EASTWICK / GILSTON	436.54	WALKERN	701.41
FURNEUX PELHAM	260.73	WARESIDE	309.70
GREAT AMWELL	965.23	WARE TOWN	7511.09
GREAT MUNDEN	143.46	WATTON - AT - STONE	1063.43
HERTFORD	12015.52	WESTMILL	160.30
HERTFORD HEATH	972.32	WIDFORD	271.35
HERTINGFORDBURY	328.00	WYDDIAL	71.78

1.0 <u>Background</u>

1.1 Calculation of the council tax base is governed by statutory regulation and the Council has limited discretion.

1.2 As a billing authority the council must notify the County Council and the Police Authority of the tax base and must do this between 1 December and 31 January preceding the tax year. The Council must also tell a parish what their tax base is within 10 working days of any written request.

1.3 The tax base will be used by the Council when setting the rates of council tax at the March Council meeting.

1.4 The tax base calculations must be made by the Authority as a whole.

1.5 The regulations set out the following formula to be used to calculate the tax base:-

   Tax base = A x B

(A is the total of the "relevant amounts")
(B is the estimated collection rate)

Item A, the total of "relevant amounts" is found by a second formula:-

Item A   = $(H - Q + E + J) - Z \times (F/G)$

where:

H   is the estimated number of dwellings, which are shown in the valuation list at 9 September 2019, adjusted for exemptions.

Q   is a factor to take account of the discounts to which the amount of Council Tax payable was subject on the relevant day.

E   is a factor to take account of the premiums, if any, to which the amount of Council Tax payable was subject on the relevant day.

J   is the amount of any adjustment in respect of changes in the number of chargeable dwellings, discounts or premiums calculated by the authority.

Z   Is the total amount that the authority estimates will be applied pursuant to the authority's council tax reduction scheme in relation to the band, expressed as an equivalent number of chargeable dwellings in that band.

F   converts the number of dwellings in each valuation band to a

G   "Band D" equivalent.

Item A can be summarised as the effective number of equivalent Band D properties after taking the actual number in each valuation band and allowing for valuation changes, for errors and

appeals, new properties, periods of exemption, reductions for disabled persons and discounts for single occupiers and unoccupied properties, and the Council Tax reduction scheme.

2.0   Report

2.1   The assumptions made are as follows:

Number of taxable properties

2.2   For 2020/21 it is assumed that there will be limited new completions with a net addition of 704 new properties by 31 March 2021. These have been allocated to parish areas on the basis of development in hand and planning approvals. It is assumed that all new dwellings will be exempt for the first three months and that a proportion of discounts will apply thereafter. No valuation increases have been assumed for improvements and extensions as these do not take effect until properties are sold on.

2.3   It has been assumed that 219 properties will qualify for disabled persons reductions, based on experience in the current year.

2.4   A figure of 794 exemptions/voids is included in line with the current position. Further increases will have a negative impact on the tax base.

Collection Rate

2.5   Item B in the tax base formula is the estimate of the collection rate for 2020/21. For 2020/21 this will be 98.9%, which is the same as 2019/20.

2.6   This gives an overall tax base of 61272.0

2.7   Should any Member have detailed questions or comments on the assumptions it would be of great benefit to advise the Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service or the Executive Member - for Financial Sustainability well in advance of the meeting.

3.0   Implications/Consultations

3.1   Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A' (Page x)**.

Background Papers
Local Authorities (Calculation of the Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended)

Contact Member: Councillor Geoff Williamson – Executive Member for
                        Financial Sustainability
                        Geoffrey.williamson@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Su Tarran - Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared
                        Service ext 2075

Report Author   Su Tarran - Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared
                          Service ext 2075

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IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives	Priority 1 – Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities Priority 2 – Enhance the quality of people's lives Priority 3 – Enable a flourishing local economy
Consultation:	*None*
Legal:	*The Tax base must be calculated in accordance with legislation*
Financial:	• *Only as referenced in the report*
Human Resource:	N/A
Risk Management:	• *Only as referenced in the report*
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	*N/A*
Equality Impact Assessment required:	*Equality impact analysis was undertaken with the Equality and Diversity officer. As this work affects the entire district, and as discounts and disregards awarded on the basis of age, disability or marital status are determined by central government , there are no equality or diversity implications for this work.*

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<u>EAST HERTS COUNCIL</u>

<u>COUNCIL – 18 DECEMBER 2019</u>

<u>REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS</u>

<u>LICENSING COMMITTEE REPORT</u>

<u>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</u>   All

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report details the recommendations made by the Licensing Committee at its meeting held on 30 October 2019.

1.0   **Background**

1.1   Since the last Council meeting, the Licensing Committee has considered and supported a number of recommendations on the following items:

- Consideration of Responses to the Proposal to Limit Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences to Two Hundred

The full reports can be viewed at: [Licensing Agenda](#)

2.0   **Agenda Item 9(A) – Consideration of Responses to the Proposal to Limit Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences to Two Hundred**

2.1   The Licensing Committee considered and supported a recommendation regarding consultation responses and whether or not the proposed limit of Two Hundred Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences was the correct level.

2.2   The Licensing Committee supported the recommendation, as now detailed, that a limit of Two Hundred be imposed on the

number of Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences that were issued, including the level of that limit from 1st January 2020. Council is asked to approve the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL: that	
(A)	**A limit of 200 be imposed on the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences that are issued, from 1 January 2020.**

Background Papers

The Minutes of the meeting are attached at Essential Reference Paper A. The full agenda for the Licensing Committee meeting can be viewed at: Licensing Agenda

Contact Member: Councillor P Boylan, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods peter.boylan@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Jonathan Geall – Head of Housing and Health and Acting Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Tel: 01992 531594 jonathan.geall@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author: Peter Mannings, Democratic Services Officer, Tel: 01279 502174 peter.mannings@eastherts.gov.uk

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LICENSING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 30 OCTOBER
2019, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D Andrews (Chairman)
              Councillors B Crystall, M Goldspink, A Hall,
              J Jones, M McMullen, T Page, S Reed,
              M Stevenson, N Symonds and C Wilson

ALSO PRESENT:

              Councillors P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

              Brad Wheeler   -   Senior Licensing
                                      and Enforcement
                                      Officer

205   APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R
Bolton.

206   CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed all Members to the meeting.
Councillor M Goldspink was welcomed to the
Committee as a replacement for Councillor S Bell.
Stephanie Tarrant, Democratic Services Officer from
Hertfordshire County Council, was introduced to the
Members.

207   <u>MINUTES - 21 AUGUST 2019</u>

Councillor N Symonds proposed and Councillor S Reed
seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting
held on 21 August 2019 be confirmed as a correct
record and signed by the Chairman. After being put to
the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared
CARRIED.

> <u>RESOLVED</u> – that the Minutes of the meeting
> held on 21 August 2019 be confirmed as a
> correct record and signed by the Chairman.

208   LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE - 28 AUGUST, 4 AND 19
SEPTEMBER 2019

Councillor N Symonds proposed and Councillor S Reed
seconded a motion that the Minutes of the Licensing
Sub Committees held on 28 August, 4 September and
19 September 2019 be received.

> <u>RESOLVED</u> – that the Minutes of the Licensing
> Sub Committees held on 28 August, 4
> September and 19 September 2019 be received.

209   CONSIDERATION OF RESPONSES TO THE PROPOSAL TO
LIMIT HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE LICENCES TO TWO
HUNDRED

The Senior Licensing and Enforcement Officer drew
Members' attention to the results of the consultation,
which took place between 26 August 2019 and 19
September 2019, to limit the number of Hackney
Carriage Vehicle Licences. Approximately 250
consultation letters were sent and a total of three

responses were received. It was noted that the first response agreed with the proposal and further suggested that the limit of licences issued should be set between 180-190, however a reason for this was not provided. The second response noted that it was too little too late and the third response agreed with the proposal and accounted for the views of 9 licenced drivers.

Councillor D Andrews acknowledged that the lack of response suggested that those in the trade were not unduly worried about the proposed limit.

Councillor M McMullen sought and was provided with clarification that the limit would not affect current licence holders. The number of licences would diminish through natural wastage and polices being applied flexibly. New applications could still be submitted with each application considered in its own merits. Electric vehicles with disabled access could receive dispensation.

Councillor M Stevenson commented on the effects of vehicles from other areas operating in Hertford, as mentioned in the first consultation response. It was advised that Licensing Officers actively patrolled local areas to enforce regulations.

In response to a query from Councillor M Goldspink, it was noted that the limit would be monitored by Licencing Officers and could be reviewed in the future if required.

It was moved by Councillor M McMullen and seconded by Councillor S Reed that the Hackney Carriage trade

be limited to 200 with a flexible approach being taken in terms of the application of policy in relation to wheelchair accessible vehicles and electric vehicles. The overall number would be reduced by natural wastage and this approach should be adopted. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared carried.

> RESOLVED – that (A) the proposed limit of 200 Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences was the correct level;
>
> (B) recommend to Council that a limit be imposed on the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences that were issued, including the level of that limit from 1st January 2020.

210   CONSIDERATION OF MANDATING SUBSCRIPTION TO THE DBS UPDATE SERVICE FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS

Members considered a report which proposed consultation on mandatory subscription to the DBS update service for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers. Currently a combination of Enhanced and Basic DBS checks were used to ensure that drivers were fit to hold a licence, with an Enhanced DBS check every 3 years and a Basic DBS check for the subsequent two years, before the three year cycle restarted.

Members noted the four outcomes of a DBS check using the update service as detailed at paragraph 2.5 of the report and acknowledged the benefits of the update service which were detailed at paragraph 2.4 of

the report.

Councillor D Andrews sought and was provided with clarification that DBS renewals would still need to be diarised by officers as the update service would not create an automatic renewal notification. The service would however dramatically reduce the time officers spent processing DBS checks and alleviate the need for drivers to attend for a face to face meeting to complete the check.

Councillor B Crystall queried if there were any disadvantages to using the subscription service. The Licensing and Enforcement Officer advised that they did not see any disadvantages and had experience of using the system elsewhere. It was noted that checks would be with driver consent and that the record would be marked to show when and by whom a DBS was checked. The system reduced risk and strengthened the renewal and safeguarding process.

Councillor C Wilson sought and was provided with clarification of the proposed action if an updated certificate detailed unknown information. Drivers would have their licence suspended until a full renewal had been undertaken. In response to concerns that this would cost a driver their livelihood for a period of time, it was noted that drivers were legally obliged to inform the Council of any convictions within 7 days and therefore there should not be any unknown reports arsing. It was noted that any offences would be presented to the Sub-Committee and that drivers also had the opportunity to appeal a suspension.

It was moved by Councillor C Wilson and seconded by

Councillor J Jones that a 6 week public and trade consultation take place regarding the mandatory requirement for licensed drivers to maintain a subscription to the DBS Update Service whilst they remain licensed. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared carried.

> RESOLVED – that a 6 week public and trade consultation take place regarding the mandatory requirement for licensed drivers to maintain a subscription to the DBS Update Service, whilst they remain licensed, with the results of that consultation to be brought back to Licensing Committee for consideration.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm

Chairman   ………………………………………………………

Date   ………………………………………………………

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 18 DECEMBER 2019

REPORT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

ADOPTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report sets to give a clear message that East Herts Council will not tolerate antisemitic behaviour or any forms of intolerance in any way. To unequivocally demonstrate this, Council members are invited to formally adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism and reaffirm the Council's commitment to promoting equalities in East Herts.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:	
That:	
(A)	**East Herts Council adopts the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, that is, "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."**
(B)	**East Herts Council reaffirms that it finds antisemitism and all forms of prejudice targeted at those with a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 abhorrent and not in keeping with the council's values and its duties under that Act.**

1.0 Background

1.1 East Herts has a numerically small though nonetheless valued and important population who identify as Jewish. It is vital that the council demonstrates that it will not tolerate antisemitism.

2.0 The report

2.1 Over the last few years, the Council has taken pride in annually recognising Holocaust Memorial Day, with events hosted by the council which seek to commemorate the Holocaust in a fitting and meaningful way while also aiming to inform and inspire the values of inclusion and cohesion in future generations. The legacy of the Holocaust continues to drive this work as a symbol of the council's ongoing commitment to remembrance.

2.2 The Council recognises, respects and values all of the district's many and diverse communities including its Jewish citizenry, as articulated through the council's Corporate Equality Policy 2016-2019. This document makes explicit that *'the council is dedicated to the promotion of equal opportunities and to removing any discrimination in service delivery, procurement and employment'* and that *'the council is committed to achieving equality and community cohesion in partnership with other organisations and local communities'*.

2.3 Given the Council's approach to equality issues, adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism is clearly in-keeping with East Herts Council's strategic direction and aspirations.

2.4 The adoption of the working definition of antisemitism gives clarity to the Council's understanding of the term and provides a strong and potent signal of a responsible organisation giving assurance to the district's Jewish residents and indeed all those living, working or visiting here that antisemitic discrimination will not be tolerated and has no place within East Herts.

3.0   Implications

3.1   The Council is committed to working to promote and tackle discrimination in line with the Equality Act 2010. Adopting the working definition of antisemitism provides a further demonstration of how seriously the council takes both its duties under the Act and its leadership role in confronting the scourge of antisemitism.

3.2   There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

3.3   The complete implications of the report are provided Essential Reference Paper A.

Background Papers

None

Contact Member: Cllr Linda Haysey, Leader of the Council

  linda.haysey@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer and

Report Author: Jonathan Geall, Acting Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Tel No 01992 531594

  jonathan.geall @eastherts.gov.uk

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IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives *(delete as appropriate):*	The recommendations support the following corporate priorities: Priority 1 – Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities Priority 2 – Enhance the quality of people's lives
Consultation:	The case for the recommendations is considered to be so strong and self-evident that specific consultation has not been carried out although consultation on the updated Equality Policy referred to in the report and to which the recommended actions will contribute will be subject to wide consultation.
Legal:	The council is subject to the public sector equality duty brought in by the Equality Act 2010. In summary, the duty obliges the council to have due regard to the need to: • eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation • advance equality of opportunity between different groups • foster good relations between different groups. Approving the recommendations would contribute to the council's overall demonstration that it is paying due regard to its equality duty, in this case, particularly with regard to Jewish residents.
Financial:	There are no revenue or capital implications arising directly from this report.
Human Resource:	If approved, all staff will be made aware of the council's adoption of the working definition of antisemitism and it will be incorporated as an element and definition within the council's Equality Policy.

Risk Management:	There is a reputational risk to the council should Council decide not to adopt the working definition of antisemitism as an increasing number of councils and private and public organisations are adopting the definition and thus the council could be questioned on its motives for not adopting it.
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	Clear and explicit signals that the council will not tolerate prejudice and discrimination, in this instance antisemitism, contribute to a culture of tolerance in the district which, in turn, aids the wellbeing of all residents.
Equality, diversity and human rights considerations, and whether Equality Impact Assessment required:	As noted above, approval of the recommendations would be in keeping with the council's equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. The adoption of the working definition would, in turn, inform the updating the council's Equality Policy which will itself be subject to an equality impact assessment.
Environmental Sustainability	There are no environmental sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL - 18 DECEMBER 2019

REPORT BY THE INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

REPORT TITLE: APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN TO DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- Following the resignation of the Chairman of the Development Management Committee, the Council is requested to approve the appointment of the Committee's Chairman.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL TO:	
(A)	**Approve the appointment of Councillor R Deering as the Chairman of the Development Management Committee.**

1.0   Background

1.1   Councillor T Page having resigned as Chairman of the Development Management Committee, the appointment of a Chairman to that role is necessary.

2.0   Report

2.1   Councillor T Page has tendered his resignation as Chairman of the Committee.

2.2   The Council's Constitution provides that the appointment of chairmen of Committees is a matter for the Council to

determine. By convention, Committees elect a Vice Chairman at the next meeting following the appointment of a Chairman. A nomination to that role will be considered by the Committee at its next meeting, therefore this report deals solely with the appointment of the Committee's Chairman.

2.2   The nomination of Councillor R Deering to the post of Chairman of the Development Management Committee has been submitted.

2.3   The Council is invited to agree that the nomination of Councillor Deering as Chairman of the Development Management Committee be approved.

3.0   Implications/Consultations

3.1   Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

None

Contact Member: Councillor Linda Haysey – Leader of the Council
                    linda.haysey@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Alison Stuart, Interim Monitoring Officer
                    monitoring.ehcofficer@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author: Rebecca Dobson, Democratic Services Officer
                    Contact Tel No 01279 502082
                    Rebecca.dobson@eastherts.gov.uk

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives *(delete as appropriate):*	Priority 1 – Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities Priority 2 – Enhance the quality of people's lives Priority 3 – Enable a flourishing local economy
Consultation:	The Leader and Group Leaders have been consulted on this report
Legal:	Under the Council's functions set out in the Constitution, it is a function of full Council to approve receiving, or arranging the delegation of, nominations of Members to serve on each committee of the Council and any outside body for which a new appointment or reappointment is required
Financial:	None
Human Resource:	None
Risk Management:	If the Development Management Committee is not constituted in accordance with the Council's Constitution, decisions taken could be challenged
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	N/A
Equality, diversity and human rights considerations, and whether Equality Impact Assessment required:	Nominations will be for the Leader of the Administration Group

Environmental Sustainability	N/A

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL –18 December 2019

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2018-19

WARD(S) AFFECTED: NONE

Purpose/Summary of Report

The report reviews the Council's treasury management activities for 2018/19, including the prudential indicators and identifies the associated impact on the 2019/20 treasury management strategy.

RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL: that	
(A)	**The 2018/19 Treasury Management Activity and Prudential Indicators be approved.**

1.0   Background

1.1   Treasury management is defined as: 'The management of the Council's investments and cash flows, its banking arrangements, money market and capital transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with these activities; and the pursuit of optimum returns consistent with the Council's risk management policy for treasury management.'

1.2   This activity is supported by the council's appointed independent advisors – Link Asset Services.

1.3   This report has been written in accordance with the

requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised 2017).

1.4   This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).

1.5   The Council is required by the CIPFA Prudential Code to approve an annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy.

2.0   <u>Report</u>

2.1   Please refer to the Annual Treasury Management Review, Essential Reference Paper 'B': Annual Treasury Management Review 2018-19 and Prudential Indicators 2018-19.

3.0   <u>Implications/Consultations</u>

3.1   Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

<u>Background Papers</u>
CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (2017)
CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (2017)

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IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives*:*	Priority 1 – Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities Priority 2 – Enhance the quality of people's lives Priority 3 – Enable a flourishing local economy
Consultation:	*Not Applicable*
Legal:	*There are no legal implications.*
Financial:	*Within the body of the report.*
Human Resource:	*There are no Human Resources implications.*
Risk Management:	*Within the body of the report.*
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	*There are no Health and Wellbeing issues raised as part of this report.*
Equality, diversity and human rights considerations, and whether Equality Impact Assessment required:	*There are no equality, diversity and human rights implications.*
Environmental Sustainability	*There are no environmental sustainability implications raised as part of this report.*

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East Herts District Council Annual Treasury Management Outturn 2018/19

Outturn Report 2018/19

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

ALMO: an Arm's Length Management Organisation is a not-for-profit company that provides housing services on behalf of a local authority. Usually an ALMO is set up by the authority to manage and improve all or part of its housing stock.

LAS: Link Asset Services, Treasury solutions – the council's treasury management advisers.

CE: Capital Economics - is the economics consultancy that provides Link Asset Services, Treasury solutions, with independent economic forecasts, briefings and research.

CFR: capital financing requirement - the council's annual underlying borrowing need to finance capital expenditure and a measure of the council's total outstanding indebtedness.

CIPFA: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy – the professional accounting body that oversees and sets standards in local authority finance and treasury management.

CPI: consumer price index – the official measure of inflation adopted as a common standard by countries in the EU. It is a measure that examines the weighted average of prices of a basket of consumer goods and services, such as transportation, food and medical care. It is calculated by taking price changes for each item in the predetermined basket of goods and averaging them.

ECB: European Central Bank - the central bank for the Eurozone
EU: European Union
EZ: Eurozone -those countries in the EU which use the euro as their currency

Fed: the Federal Reserve System, often referred to simply as "the Fed," is the central bank of the United States. It was created by the Congress to provide the nation with a stable monetary and financial system.

FOMC: the Federal Open Market Committee – this is the branch of the Federal Reserve Board which determines monetary policy in the USA by setting interest rates and determining quantitative easing policy. It is composed of 12 members--the seven members of the Board of Governors and five of the 12 Reserve Bank presidents.

GDP: gross domestic product – a measure of the growth and total size of the economy.

G7: the group of seven countries that form an informal bloc of industrialised democracies--the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom--that meets annually to discuss issues such as global economic governance, international security, and energy policy.

Gilts: gilts are bonds issued by the UK Government to borrow money on the financial markets. Interest paid by the Government on gilts is called a coupon and is at a rate that is fixed for the duration until maturity of the gilt, (unless a gilt is index linked to inflation); while the coupon rate is fixed, the yields will change inversely to the price of gilts i.e. a rise in the price of a gilt will mean that its yield will fall.

HRA: housing revenue account.

IMF: International Monetary Fund - the lender of last resort for national governments which get into financial difficulties.

LIBID: the London Interbank Bid Rate is the rate bid by banks on deposits i.e., the rate at which a bank is willing to borrow from other banks. It is the "other end" of the LIBOR (an offered, hence "ask" rate, the rate at which a bank will lend).

MHCLG: the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government -the Government department that directs local authorities in England.

MPC: the Monetary Policy Committee is a committee of the Bank of England, which meets for one and a half days, eight times a year, to determine monetary policy by setting the official interest rate in the United Kingdom, (the Bank of England Base Rate, commonly called Bank Rate), and by making decisions on quantitative easing.

MRP: minimum revenue provision -a statutory annual minimum revenue charge to reduce the total outstanding CFR, (the total indebtedness of a local authority).

PFI: Private Finance Initiative – capital expenditure financed by the private sector i.e. not by direct borrowing by a local authority.

PWLB: Public Works Loan Board – this is the part of H.M. Treasury which provides loans to local authorities to finance capital expenditure.

QE: quantitative easing – is an unconventional form of monetary policy where a central bank creates new money electronically to buy financial assets, such as government bonds, (but may also include corporate bonds). This process aims to stimulate economic growth through increased private sector spending in the economy and also aims to return inflation to target. These purchases increase the supply of liquidity to the economy; this policy is employed when lowering interest rates has failed to stimulate economic growth to an acceptable level and to lift inflation to target. Once QE has achieved its objectives of stimulating growth and inflation, QE will be reversed by selling the bonds the central bank had previously purchased, or by not replacing debt that it held which matures. The aim of this reversal is to ensure that inflation does not exceed its target once the economy recovers from a sustained period of depressed growth and inflation. Economic growth, and increases in inflation, may threaten to gather too much momentum if action is not taken to 'cool' the economy.

RPI: the Retail Price Index is a measure of inflation that measures the change in the cost of a representative sample of retail goods and services. It was the UK standard for measurement of inflation until the UK changed to using the EU standard measure of inflation – CPI. The main differences between RPI and CPI is in the way that housing costs are treated and that the former is an arithmetical mean whereas the latter is a geometric mean. RPI is often higher than CPI for these reasons.

TMSS: the annual treasury management strategy statement reports that all local authorities are required to submit for approval by the full council before the start of each financial year.

VRP: a voluntary revenue provision to repay debt, in the annual budget, which is additional to the annual MRP charge, (see above definition).

Annual Treasury Management Review 2018/19

1. Introduction

This Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2018/19. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, (the Code), and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, (the Prudential Code).

During 2018/19 the minimum reporting requirements were that the full Council should receive the following reports:

- an annual treasury strategy in advance of the year (Council 01/03/2018)
- a mid-year (minimum) treasury update report (Council 05/03/2019)
- an annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy (this report)

The regulatory environment places responsibility on members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. This report is, therefore, important in that respect, as it provides details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by members.

This Council confirms that it has complied with the requirement under the Code to give prior scrutiny to all of the above treasury management reports by the Performance, Audit and Governance Scrutiny Committee before they were reported to the full Council.

2. The Council's Capital Expenditure and Financing

The Council undertakes capital expenditure on long-term assets. These activities may either be:

- Financed immediately through the application of capital or revenue resources (capital receipts, capital grants, revenue contributions etc.), which has no resultant impact on the Council's borrowing need; or
- If insufficient financing is available, or a decision is taken not to apply resources, the capital expenditure will give rise to a borrowing need.

The actual capital expenditure forms one of the required prudential indicators. The table below shows the actual capital expenditure and how this was financed.

£m	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Budget	2018/19 Actual
Capital expenditure	**2.4**	**6.1**	**6.2**
Financed in year	2.4	6.1	6.2
Unfinanced capital expenditure	**0**	**0**	**0**

3. The Council's Overall Borrowing Need

The Council's underlying need to borrow to finance capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR).

Gross borrowing and the CFR - in order to ensure that borrowing levels are prudent over the medium term and only for a capital purpose, the Council should ensure that its gross external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year (2017/18) plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current (2018/19) and next two financial years. This essentially means that the Council is not borrowing to support revenue expenditure. This indicator allowed the Council some flexibility to borrow in advance of its immediate capital needs in 2018/19. The table below highlights the Council's gross borrowing position against the CFR. The Council has complied with this prudential indicator.

	31 March 2018 Actual	31 March 2019 Budget	31 March 2019 Actual
Total CFR	(£23.1m)	(£21.1m)	(£23.1m)
Gross borrowing position	£7.5m	£7.5m	£7.5m

The authorised limit - the authorised limit is the "affordable borrowing limit" required by s3 of the Local Government Act 2003. Once this has been set, the Council does not have the power to borrow above this level. The table below demonstrates that during 2018/19 the Council has maintained gross borrowing within its authorised limit.

The operational boundary – the operational boundary is the expected borrowing position of the Council during the year. Periods where the actual position is either below or over the boundary are acceptable subject to the authorised limit not being breached.

Actual financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream - this indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital, (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income), against the net revenue stream.

	2018/19
Authorised limit	£11.7m
Maximum gross borrowing position during the year	£7.5m
Operational boundary	£7.5m
Average gross borrowing position	£7.5m
Financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream	4.49%

4. Treasury Position as at 31 March 2019

At the beginning and the end of 2018/19 the Council's treasury, (excluding borrowing by PFI and finance leases), position was as follows:

DEBT PORTFOLIO	31 March 2018 Principal	Rate/ Return	Average Life yrs	31 March 2019 Principal	Rate/ Return	Average Life yrs
Fixed rate funding:						
-PWLB	£1.5m	8.875 %	37	£1.5m	8.875 %	36
-Market	£6.0m	8.785 %	2	£6.0m	8.785 %	1
Variable rate funding:						
-PWLB	£0.00m			£0.00m		
-Market	£0.00m			£0.00m		
Total debt	£7.5m			£7.5m		
CFR	(£23.1m)			(£23.1m)		
Over / (under) borrowing	£7.5m			£7.5m		
Total investments	£65.9m			£60.7m		
Net debt	(£58.4m)			(£53.2m)		

The maturity structure of the debt portfolio was as follows:

	31 March 2018 actual	31 March 2019 actual
Under 12 months	£0.0m	£0.0m
12 months and within 24 months	£0.0m	£6.0m
24 months and within 5 years	£6.0m	£0.0m
5 years and within 10 years	£0.0m	£0.0m
10 years and over	£1.5m	£1.5m

INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO	Actual 31.3.18	Actual 31.3.18 %	Actual 31.3.19	Actual 31.3.19 %
Treasury investments				
Banks	£39.9m	61%	£40.7m	67%
Building Societies - rated	£0.0m	0%	£0.0m	0%
Building Societies – unrated	£0.0m	0%	£0.0m	0%
Local authorities	£6.0m	9%	£0.0m	0%
DMADF (H M Treasury)	£0.0m	0%	£0.0m	0%
Total managed in house	**£45.9m**		**£40.7m**	
Property funds	£20.0m	30%	£20.0m	33%
Total managed externally	**£20.0m**		**£20.0m**	
TOTAL TREASURY INVESTMENTS	**£65.9m**	**100%**	**£60.7m**	**100%**

Non Treasury investments				
Non Treasury investments				
Wholly owned company (loan)	£0.0m	0%	£0.5m	4%
Wholly owned company (equity share)	£0.0m	0%	£0.3m	2%
Property	£13.4m	100%	£13.6m	94%
TOTAL NON TREASURY INVESTMENTS	**£13.4m**	**100%**	**£14.4m**	**100%**

Treasury investments	£65.9m	83%	£60.7m	81%
Non Treasury investments	£13.4m	17%	£14.4m	19%
TOTAL OF ALL INVESTMENTS	**79.3m**	**100%**	**£75.1m**	**100%**

The maturity structure of the investment portfolio was as follows:

	2017/18 Actual	31 March 2019 Actual
Investments		
Longer than 1 year	£20.0m	£20.0m
Up to 1 year	£45.9m	£40.7m
Total	**£65.9m**	**£60.7m**

5.   The strategy for 2018/19

4.1 Investment strategy and control of interest rate risk
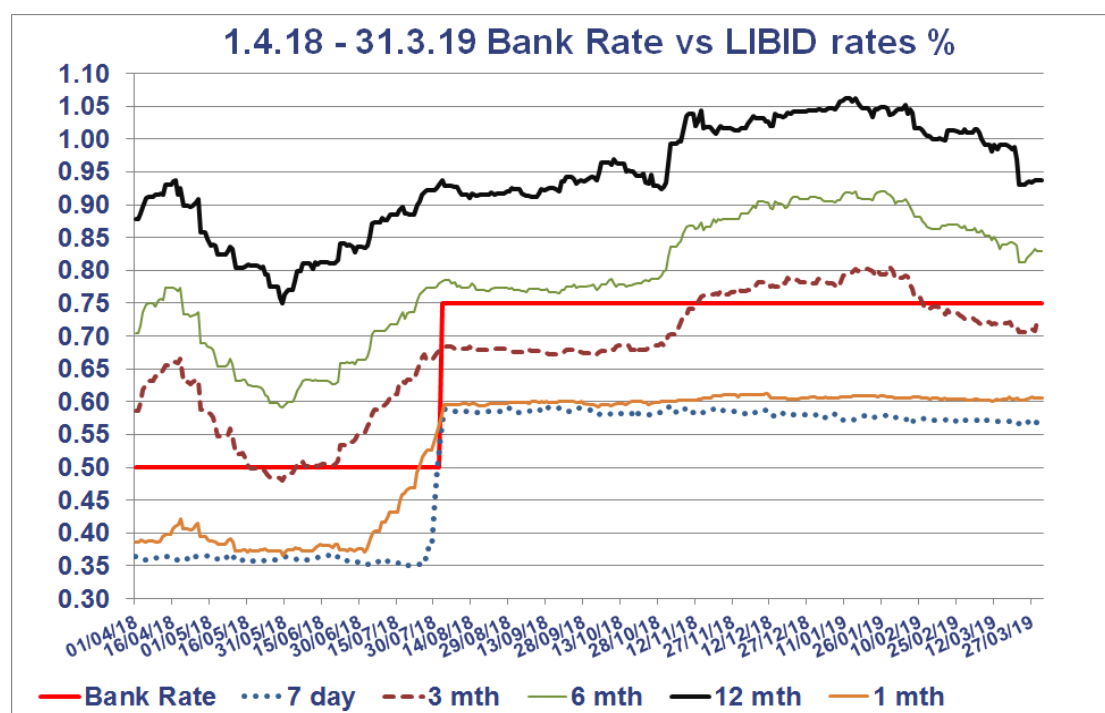
For authorities that have sufficient cash balances to place longer term investments -

Investment returns remained low during 2018/19.   The expectation for interest rates within the treasury management strategy for 2018/19 was that Bank Rate would rise from 0.50% to 0.75%. At the start of 2018-19, and after UK GDP growth had proved disappointingly weak in the first few months of 2018, the expectation for the timing of this increase was pushed back from May to August 2018. Investment interest rates were therefore on a gently rising trend in the first half of the year after April, in anticipation that the MPC would raise Bank Rate in August. This duly happened at the MPC meeting on 2 August 2018.   During this period, investments were, therefore, kept shorter term in anticipation that rates would be higher later in the year.

It was not expected that the MPC would raise Bank Rate again during 2018-19 after August in view of the fact that the UK was entering into a time of major uncertainty with Brexit due in March 2019.   Value was therefore sought by placing longer term investments after 2 August where cash balances were sufficient to allow this.

Investment rates were little changed during August to October but rose sharply after the MPC meeting of 1 November was unexpectedly hawkish about their perception of building inflationary pressures, particularly from rising wages. However, weak GDP growth data after December, plus increasing concerns generated by Brexit, resulted in investment rates falling back again.

Continued uncertainty in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis has promoted a cautious approach whereby investments would continue to be dominated by low counterparty risk considerations, resulting in relatively low returns compared to borrowing rates.

4.2 Borrowing strategy and control of interest rate risk

The Council is currently in a negative CFR position. This means that the capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement), has not been reached due to the level of the Council's reserves.

A cost of carry remained during the year on any new long-term borrowing that was not immediately used to finance capital expenditure, as it would have caused a temporary increase in cash balances; this would have incurred a revenue cost – the difference between (higher) borrowing costs and (lower) investment returns.

The policy of avoiding new borrowing by running down spare cash balances, has served well over the last few years. However, this was kept under review to avoid incurring higher borrowing costs in the future when this authority may not be able to avoid new borrowing to finance capital expenditure and/or the refinancing of maturing debt.

Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution was adopted with the 2018/19 treasury operations. The Head of Strategic Finance and Property therefore monitored interest rates in financial markets. No decisions were made which resulted in a significant change to the CFR and this Council's need to borrow.

Interest rate forecasts expected only gradual rises in medium and longer term fixed borrowing rates during 2018/19 and the two subsequent financial years. Variable, or short-term rates, were expected to be the cheaper form of borrowing over the period.

Link Asset Services Interest Rate View 2.1.18	Mar-18	Jun-18	Sep-18	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21
Bank Rate	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.25%	1.25%
5yr PWLB rate	1.60%	1.60%	1.70%	1.80%	1.80%	1.90%	1.90%	2.00%	2.10%	2.10%	2.20%	2.30%	2.30%
10yr PWLB rate	2.20%	2.30%	2.40%	2.40%	2.50%	2.60%	2.60%	2.70%	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	2.90%	3.00%
25yr PWLB rate	2.90%	3.00%	3.00%	3.10%	3.10%	3.20%	3.20%	3.30%	3.40%	3.50%	3.50%	3.60%	3.60%
50yr PWLB rate	2.60%	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	2.90%	3.00%	3.00%	3.10%	3.20%	3.30%	3.30%	3.40%	3.40%

Link Asset Services Interest Rate View 12.2.18	Mar-18	Jun-18	Sep-18	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21
Bank Rate	0.50%	0.75%	0.75%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.25%	1.25%	1.25%	1.50%	1.50%	1.50%
5yr PWLB Rate	1.90%	2.00%	2.10%	2.10%	2.20%	2.30%	2.30%	2.40%	2.40%	2.50%	2.50%	2.60%	2.60%
10yr PWLB Rate	2.50%	2.50%	2.60%	2.70%	2.70%	2.80%	2.80%	2.90%	3.00%	3.00%	3.10%	3.10%	3.20%
25yr PWLB Rate	2.80%	2.90%	3.00%	3.10%	3.20%	3.20%	3.30%	3.30%	3.40%	3.50%	3.50%	3.60%	3.60%
50yr PWLB Rate	2.60%	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	3.00%	3.00%	3.10%	3.10%	3.20%	3.30%	3.30%	3.40%	3.40%

PWLB Rates 1.4.18 - 31.3.19 and US 10 & 30 year Treasuries
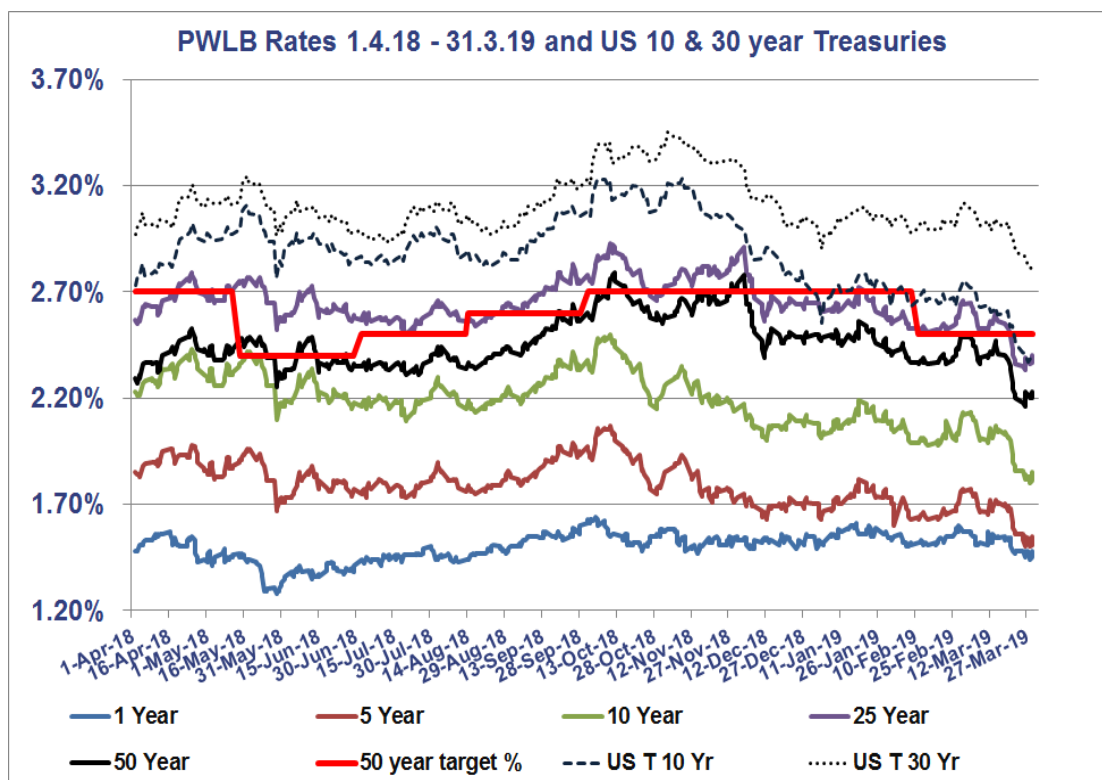
Since PWLB rates peaked during October 2018, most PWLB rates have been on a general downward trend, though longer term rates did spike upwards again during December, and, (apart from the 1 year rate), reached lows for the year at the end of March. There was a significant level of correlation between movements in US Treasury yields and UK gilt yields - which determine PWLB rates. The Fed in America increased the Fed Rate four times in 2018, making nine increases in all in this cycle, to reach 2.25% – 2.50% in December. However, it had been giving forward guidance that rates could go up to nearly 3.50%. These rate increases and guidance caused Treasury yields to also move up. However financial markets considered by December 2018, that the Fed had gone too far, and discounted its expectations of further increases. Since then, the Fed has also come round to the view that there are probably going to be no more increases in this cycle. The issue now is how many cuts in the Fed Rate there will be and how soon, in order to support economic growth in the US. But weak growth now also looks to be the outlook for China and the EU so this will mean that world growth as a whole will be weak. Treasury yields have therefore fallen sharply during 2019 and gilt yields / PWLB rates also fell.

6. Borrowing Outturn

Borrowing - No borrowing was undertaken during the year.

Borrowing in advance of need
The Council has not borrowed more than, or in advance of its needs, purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed.

Rescheduling
No rescheduling was done during the year as the average 1% differential between PWLB new borrowing rates and premature repayment rates made rescheduling unviable.

Repayments

No repayments were made by the Council during the year.

7. Investment Outturn

Investment Policy – the Council's investment policy is governed by MHCLG investment guidance, which has been implemented in the annual investment strategy approved by the Council on 1st March 2018. This policy sets out the approach for choosing investment counterparties, and is based on credit ratings provided by the three main credit rating agencies, supplemented by additional market data, (such as rating outlooks, credit default swaps, bank share prices etc.).

The investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy, and the Council had no liquidity difficulties.

Investments held by the Council
- The Council maintained an average balance of £68.3m of internally managed funds.
- The internally managed funds earned an average rate of return of 0.75%.
- The comparable performance indicators are 1 Month Uncompounded which was 0.5350% and 3 month Uncompounded which was 0.6753%.
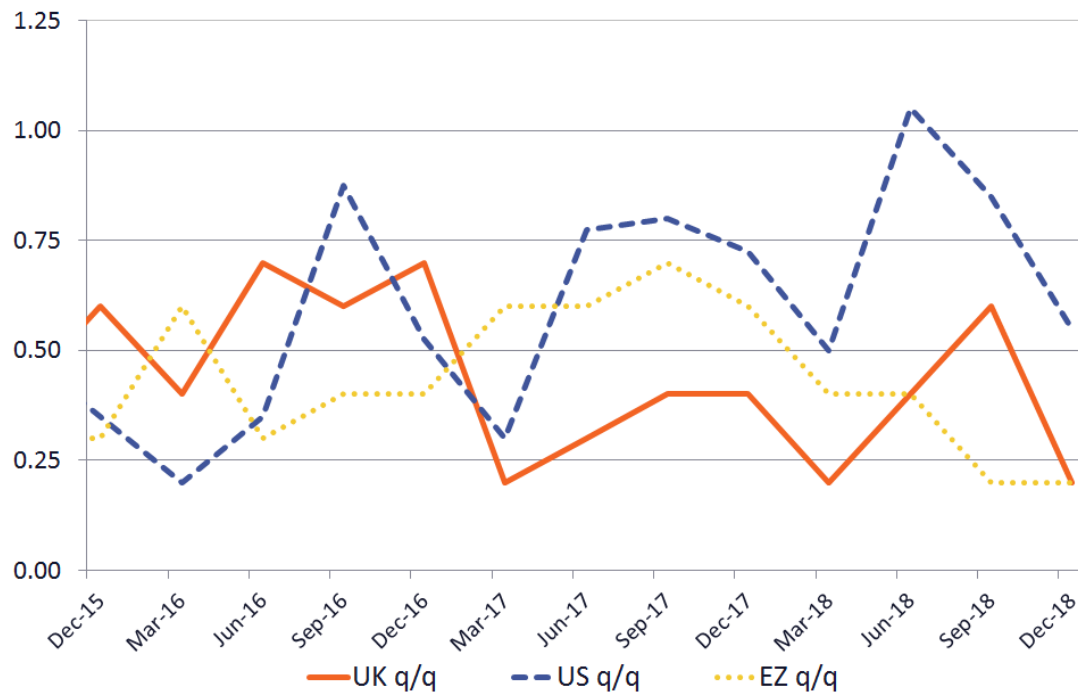- Total investment income was £1.272m compared to a budget of £1.090m

Investments held by fund managers – Property Funds

The Council approved the use of property funds up to a value of £20m, at the time of investment. Working with our advisors Capita Asset Services, two funds were chosen, Lothbury Property Trust and Hermes Property Unit Trust. Both funds had waiting lists to invest. The invitation to invest in the Lothbury fund arose in June 2015 and the Hermes fund in December 2015. The performances of these funds for 2018/19 are detailed below:
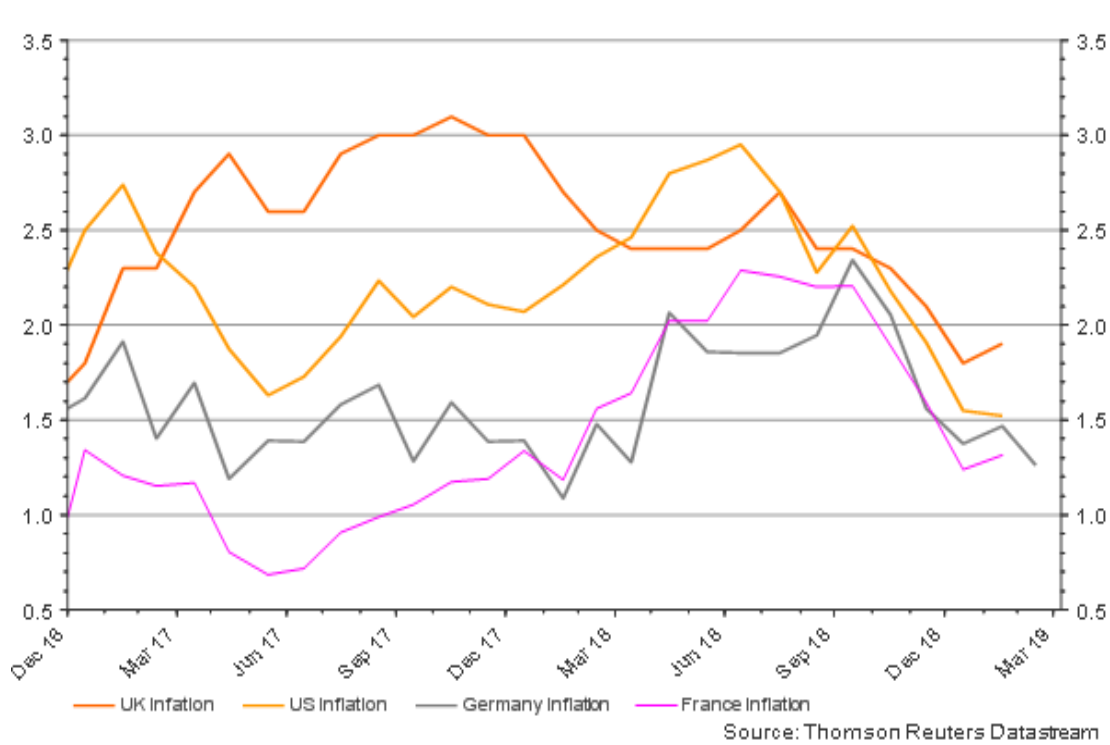
Fund Manager	Investments Held	Return
Lothbury Property Trust	£10.0m	3.38% (Net)
Hermes Property Unit Trust	£10.0m	3.84% (Net)
Total	£20.0m	3.61% (Net)

Appendix 1: Graphs

UK, US and EZ GDP growth

Inflation UK, US, Germany and France

Source: Thomson Reuters Datastream

Appendix 3: Borrowing and investment rates

a) PWLB borrowing rates

PWLB certainty rate variations in 2018-19
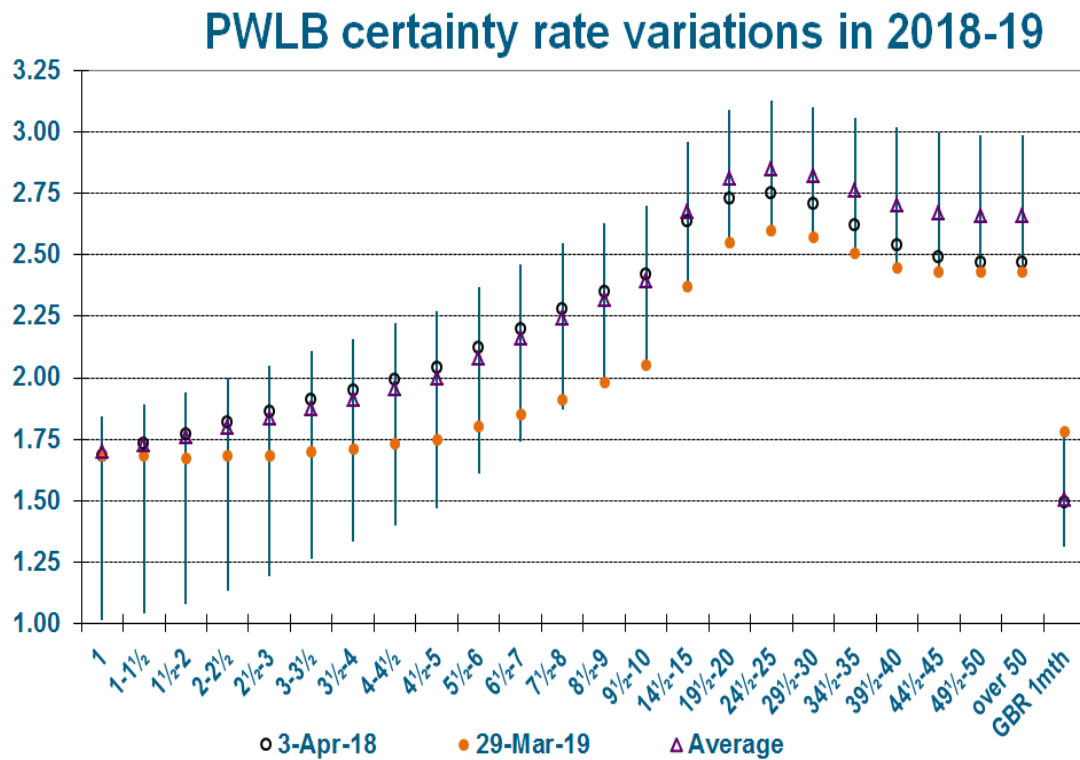
	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
02/04/2018	1.48%	1.85%	2.23%	2.57%	2.29%
29/03/2019	1.48%	1.55%	1.85%	2.40%	2.23%
Low	1.28%	1.50%	1.80%	2.33%	2.16%
Date	29/05/2018	26/03/2019	28/03/2019	26/03/2019	26/03/2019
High	1.64%	2.07%	2.50%	2.93%	2.79%
Date	04/10/2018	10/10/2018	10/10/2018	10/10/2018	12/10/2018
Average	1.50%	1.80%	2.20%	2.66%	2.47%

b) Money market investment rates and forecasts 2018/19

	Bank Rate	7 day	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
01/04/2018	0.50	0.36	0.39	0.59	0.70	0.88
31/03/2019	0.75	0.57	0.61	0.72	0.83	0.94
High	0.75	0.59	0.61	0.81	0.92	1.06
High Date	02/08/2018	01/11/2018	10/12/2018	29/01/2019	15/01/2019	11/01/2019
Low	0.50	0.35	0.37	0.48	0.59	0.75
Low Date	01/04/2018	19/07/2018	30/05/2018	30/05/2018	30/05/2018	30/05/2018
Average	0.67	0.51	0.54	0.68	0.79	0.94
Spread	0.25	0.24	0.25	0.33	0.33	0.31

Link Asset Services Interest Rate View	7.11.17												
	Dec-17	Mar-18	Jun-18	Sep-18	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21
Bank Rate	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.25%	1.25%
3 Month LIBID	0.40%	0.40%	0.40%	0.40%	0.60%	0.60%	0.60%	0.70%	0.90%	0.90%	1.00%	1.20%	1.20%	1.20%
6 Month LIBID	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.60%	0.80%	0.80%	0.80%	0.90%	1.00%	1.00%	1.10%	1.30%	1.30%	1.40%
12 Month LIBID	0.70%	0.80%	0.80%	0.90%	1.00%	1.00%	1.10%	1.10%	1.30%	1.30%	1.40%	1.50%	1.50%	1.60%

Link Asset Services Interest Rate View 2.1.18													
	Mar-18	Jun-18	Sep-18	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21
Bank Rate	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.25%	1.25%	1.25%
3 Month LIBID	0.40%	0.40%	0.40%	0.60%	0.60%	0.60%	0.70%	0.90%	0.90%	1.00%	1.20%	1.20%	1.20%
6 Month LIBID	0.50%	0.50%	0.60%	0.80%	0.80%	0.80%	0.90%	1.00%	1.00%	1.10%	1.30%	1.30%	1.40%
12 Month LIBID	0.80%	0.80%	0.90%	1.00%	1.00%	1.10%	1.10%	1.30%	1.30%	1.40%	1.50%	1.50%	1.60%

Link Asset Services Interest Rate View	12.2.18												
	Mar-18	Jun-18	Sep-18	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21
Bank Rate	0.50%	0.75%	0.75%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.25%	1.25%	1.25%	1.50%	1.50%	1.50%
3 Month LIBID	0.40%	0.70%	0.70%	0.90%	0.90%	0.90%	0.90%	1.20%	1.20%	1.20%	1.40%	1.40%	1.40%
6 Month LIBID	0.50%	0.80%	0.80%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.10%	1.30%	1.30%	1.40%	1.50%	1.50%	1.50%
12 Month LIBID	0.80%	1.10%	1.10%	1.20%	1.20%	1.20%	1.30%	1.40%	1.40%	1.50%	1.70%	1.70%	1.70%

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 18 December 2019

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REVIEW 2019-20

WARD(S) AFFECTED: NONE

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Purpose/Summary of Report

The report reviews the Council's treasury management activities for the first 6 months of 2019/20 financial year, including the prudential indicators.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL: that	
(A)	**The Treasury Management Activity for the first 6 months of the 2019/20 financial year, be approved.**
(B)	**The changes to the Prudential Indicators discussed paragraph 2.6, be approved.**

1.0   Background

1.1   Treasury Management is defined as: 'The management of the Council's investments and cash flows, its banking arrangements, money market and capital transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with these activities; and the pursuit of optimum returns consistent with the Council's risk management policy for treasury management.'

1.2   This activity is supported by the Council's appointed independent advisors – Link Asset Services.

1.3   This report has been written in accordance with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised 2017).

1.4   The Council is required by the CIPFA Prudential Code to approve a mid-year review annual review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy.

2.0   <u>Report</u>

2.1   Please refer to the Treasury Management Mid-Year Review, Essential Reference Paper 'B': Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2019-20.

2.2   Due to the re-profiling of major capital spend, the Council no longer has a need to borrow in 2019/20. The prudential indicators have been adjusted accordingly.

2.3   The Authorised Borrowing Limit has been reduced to £11.5m from £41.0m, being the current borrowing level with a £4m margin for possible short term emergency cash flow requirements.

2.4   The Operational Boundary has been reduced to £7.5m from £31.0m being the actual, expected borrowing position at year end.

2.5   The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) has been reduced to 12.7m from £31.0m. Due to the reduction in estimated capital spend, the requirement to finance this spend has also reduced, resulting in the Council's CFR remaining negative.

2.6   Changes to the Prudential Indicators are included in Essential Reference Paper 'B': Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2019-20 paragraphs 4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4.

3.0   Implications/Consultations

3.1   Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (2017)

CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (2017)

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IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives:	Priority 1 – Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities Priority 2 – Enhance the quality of people's lives Priority 3 – Enable a flourishing local economy
Consultation:	*Not Applicable*
Legal:	*There are no legal implications.*
Financial:	*Within the body of the report.*
Human Resource:	*There are no Human Resources implications.*
Risk Management:	*Within the body of the report.*
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	*There are no Health and Wellbeing issues raised as part of this report.*
Equality, diversity and human rights considerations, and whether Equality Impact Assessment required:	*There are no equality, diversity and human rights implications.*
Environmental Sustainability	*There are no environmental sustainability implications raised as part of this report.*

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East Herts District Council Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy

**Mid-Year Review Report
2019/20**

1. Background

1.1 Capital Strategy

In December 2017, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, (CIPFA), issued revised Prudential and Treasury Management Codes. As from 2019/20, all local authorities have been required to prepare a Capital Strategy which is to provide the following: -

- a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services;
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed;
- the implications for future financial sustainability.

A report setting out our Capital Strategy was taken to the full council on 5th March 2019.

1.2 Treasury management

The Council operates a balanced budget, which broadly means cash raised during the year will meet its cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operations ensure this cash flow is adequately planned, with surplus monies being invested in low risk counterparties, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering optimising investment return.

The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer term cash flow planning to ensure the Council can meet its capital spending operations. This management of longer term cash may involve arranging long or short term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses, and on occasion any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.

Accordingly, treasury management is defined as:

> "The management of the local authority's borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

2. Introduction

This report has been written in accordance with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised 2017).
The primary requirements of the Code are as follows:

1. Creation and maintenance of a Treasury Management Policy Statement which sets out the policies and objectives of the Council's treasury management activities.
2. Creation and maintenance of Treasury Management Practices which set out the manner in which the Council will seek to achieve those policies and objectives.
3. Receipt by the full council of an annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement - including the Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy - for the year ahead, a Mid-year Review Report and an Annual Report, (stewardship report), covering activities during the previous year.
4. Delegation by the Council of responsibilities for implementing and monitoring treasury management policies and practices and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions.
5. Delegation by the Council of the role of scrutiny of treasury management strategy and policies to a specific named body. For this Council the delegated body is Performance, Audit and Governance Oversight Committee:

This mid-year report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management, and covers the following:

- An economic update for the first part of the 2019/20 financial year;
- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy;
- The Council's capital expenditure, as set out in the Capital Strategy, and prudential indicators;
- A review of the Council's investment portfolio for 2019/20;
- A review of the Council's borrowing strategy for 2019/20;
- A review of any debt rescheduling undertaken during 2019/20;
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2019/20.

3. Economics and interest rates

3.1 Economics update

UK. This first half year has been a time of upheaval on the political front as Theresa May resigned as Prime Minister to be replaced by Boris Johnson on a platform of the UK leaving the EU on or 31 October, with or without a deal. However, in September, his proroguing of Parliament was overturned by the Supreme Court and Parliament carried a bill to delay Brexit until 31 January 2020 if there is no deal by 31 October. MPs also voted down holding a general election before 31 October, though one is likely before the end of 2019. So far, there has been no majority of MPs for any one option to move forward on enabling Brexit to be implemented. At the time of writing, (first week in October), the whole Brexit situation is highly fluid and could change radically by the day. Given these circumstances and the likelihood of an imminent general election, any interest rate forecasts are subject to material change as the situation evolves. If the UK does soon achieve a deal on Brexit agreed with the EU, including some additional clarification wording on the Irish border backstop, then it is possible that growth could recover relatively quickly. The MPC could then need to address the issue of whether to raise Bank Rate when there is very little slack left in the labour market; this could cause wage inflation to accelerate which would then feed through into general inflation. On the other hand, if there was a no deal Brexit and there was a significant level of disruption to the economy, then growth could weaken even further than currently and the MPC would be likely to cut Bank Rate in order to support growth. However, with Bank Rate still only at 0.75%, it has relatively little room to make a big impact and the MPC would probably suggest that it would be up to the Chancellor to provide help to support growth by way of a fiscal boost by e.g. tax cuts, increases in government departments and services annual expenditure budgets and expenditure on infrastructure projects, to boost the economy.

The first half of 2019/20 has seen UK **economic growth** fall as Brexit uncertainty took a toll. In its Inflation Report of 1 August, the Bank of England was notably downbeat about the outlook for both the UK and major world economies. The MPC meeting of 19 September reemphasised their concern about the downturn in world growth and also expressed concern that the prolonged Brexit uncertainty would contribute to a build-up of spare capacity in the UK economy, especially in the context of a downturn in world growth. This mirrored investor concerns around the world which are now expecting a significant downturn or possibly even a recession in some major developed economies. It was therefore no surprise that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) left Bank Rate unchanged at 0.75% throughout 2019, so far, and is expected to hold off on changes until there is some clarity on what is going to happen over Brexit. However, it is also worth noting that the new Prime Minister is making some significant promises on various spending commitments and a relaxation in the austerity programme. This will provide some support to the economy and, conversely, take some pressure off the MPC to cut Bank Rate to support growth.

As for **inflation** itself, CPI has been hovering around the Bank of England's target of 2% during 2019, but fell to 1.7% in August. It is likely to remain close to 2% over the next two years and so it does not pose any immediate concern to the MPC at the current time. However, if there was a no deal Brexit, inflation could rise towards 4%, primarily as a result of imported inflation on the back of a weakening pound.

With regard to the **labour market,** despite the contraction in quarterly GDP growth of -0.2%q/q, (+1.3% y/y), in quarter 2, employment continued to rise, but at only a muted rate of 31,000 in the three months to July after having risen by no less than 115,000 in quarter 2 itself: the latter figure, in particular, suggests that firms are preparing to expand output and suggests there could be a return to positive growth in quarter 3. Unemployment continued at a 44 year low of 3.8% on the Independent Labour Organisation measure in July and the participation rate of 76.1% achieved a new all-time high. Job vacancies fell for a seventh consecutive month after having previously hit record levels. However, with unemployment continuing to fall, this month by 11,000, employers will still be having difficulty filling job vacancies with suitable staff. It was therefore unsurprising that wage inflation picked up to a high point of 3.9% in June before easing back slightly to 3.8% in July, (3 month average regular pay, excluding bonuses). This meant that in real terms, (i.e. wage rates higher than CPI inflation), earnings grew by about 2.1%. As the UK economy is very much services sector driven, an increase in household spending power is likely to feed through into providing some support to the overall rate of economic growth in the coming months. The latest GDP statistics also included a revision of the savings ratio from 4.1% to 6.4% which provides reassurance that consumers' balance sheets are not over stretched and so will be able to support growth going forward. This would then mean that the MPC will need to consider carefully at what point to take action to raise Bank Rate if there is an agreed Brexit deal, as the recent pick-up in wage costs is consistent with a rise in core services inflation to more than 4% in 2020.

In the **political arena**, if there is a general election soon, this could result in a potential loosening of monetary policy and therefore medium to longer dated gilt yields could rise on the expectation of a weak

pound and concerns around inflation picking up although, conversely, a weak international backdrop could provide further support for low yielding government bonds and gilts.

USA. President Trump's massive easing of fiscal policy in 2018 fuelled a temporary boost in consumption in that year which generated an upturn in the rate of strong growth to 2.9% y/y. Growth in 2019 has been falling back after a strong start in quarter 1 at 3.1%, (annualised rate), to 2.0% in quarter 2. Quarter 3 is expected to fall further. The strong growth in employment numbers during 2018 has reversed into a falling trend during 2019, indicating that the economy is cooling, while inflationary pressures are also weakening The Fed finished its series of increases in rates to 2.25 – 2.50% in December 2018. In July 2019, it cut rates by 0.25% as a 'midterm adjustment' but flagged up that this was not to be seen as the start of a series of cuts to ward off a downturn in growth. It also ended its programme of quantitative tightening in August, (reducing its holdings of treasuries etc). It then cut rates again in September to 1.75% - 2.00% and is thought likely to cut another 25 bps in December. Investor confidence has been badly rattled by the progressive ramping up of increases in tariffs President Trump has made on Chinese imports and China has responded with increases in tariffs on American imports. This trade war is seen as depressing US, Chinese and world growth. In the EU, it is also particularly impacting Germany as exports of goods and services are equivalent to 46% of total GDP. It will also impact developing countries dependent on exporting commodities to China.

EUROZONE. Growth has been slowing from +1.8 % during 2018 to around half of that in 2019. Growth was +0.4% q/q (+1.2% y/y) in quarter 1 and then fell to +0.2% q/q (+1.0% y/y) in quarter 2; there appears to be little upside potential to the growth rate in the rest of 2019. German GDP growth fell to -0.1% in quarter 2; industrial production was down 4% y/y in June with car production down 10% y/y. Germany would be particularly vulnerable to a no deal Brexit depressing exports further and if President Trump imposes tariffs on EU produced cars. The European Central Bank (ECB) ended its programme of quantitative easing purchases of debt in December 2018, which meant that the central banks in the US, UK and EU had all ended the phase of post financial crisis expansion of liquidity supporting world financial markets by purchases of debt. However, the downturn in EZ growth in the second half of 2018 and into 2019, together with inflation falling well under the upper limit of its target range of 0 to 2%, (but it aims to keep it near to 2%), has prompted the ECB to take new measures to stimulate growth. At its March meeting it said that it expected to leave interest rates at their present levels "at least through the end of 2019", but that was of little help to boosting growth in the near term. Consequently, it announced a third round of TLTROs; this provides banks with cheap borrowing every three months from September 2019 until March 2021 which means that, although they will have only a two-year maturity, the Bank is making funds available until 2023, two years later than under its previous policy. As with the last round, the new TLTROs will include an incentive to encourage bank lending, and they will be capped at 30% of a bank's eligible loans. However, since then, the downturn in EZ and world growth has gathered momentum so at its meeting on 12 September, it cut its deposit rate further into negative territory, from -0.4% to -0.5%, and announced a resumption of quantitative easing purchases of debt. It also increased the maturity of the third round of TLTROs from two to three years. However, it is doubtful whether this loosening of monetary policy will have much impact on growth and unsurprisingly, the ECB stated that governments will need to help stimulate growth by fiscal policy. On the political front, Austria, Spain and Italy are in the throes of forming coalition governments with some unlikely combinations of parties i.e. this raises questions around their likely endurance. The recent results of two German state elections will put further pressure on the frail German CDU/SDP coalition government.

CHINA. Economic growth has been weakening over successive years, despite repeated rounds of central bank stimulus; medium term risks are increasing. Major progress still needs to be made to eliminate excess industrial capacity and the stock of unsold property, and to address the level of non-performing loans in the banking and credit systems. Progress also still needs to be made to eliminate excess industrial capacity and to switch investment from property construction and infrastructure to consumer goods production. The trade war with the US does not appear currently to have had a significant effect on GDP growth as some of the impact of tariffs has been offset by falls in the exchange rate and by transhipping exports through other countries, rather than directly to the US.

JAPAN - has been struggling to stimulate consistent significant GDP growth and to get inflation up to its target of 2%, despite huge monetary and fiscal stimulus. It is also making little progress on fundamental reform of the economy.

WORLD GROWTH. The trade war between the US and China is a major concern to financial markets and is depressing worldwide growth, as any downturn in China will spill over into impacting countries supplying raw materials to China. Concerns are focused on the synchronised general weakening of growth in the major economies of the world compounded by fears that there could even be a recession looming up in the US, though this is probably overblown. These concerns have resulted in government bond yields in the developed world falling significantly during 2019. If there were a major worldwide downturn in growth, central

banks in most of the major economies will have limited ammunition available, in terms of monetary policy measures, when rates are already very low in most countries, (apart from the US), and there are concerns about how much distortion of financial markets has already occurred with the current levels of quantitative easing purchases of debt by central banks. The latest PMI survey statistics of economic health for the US, UK, EU and China have all been sub 50 which gives a forward indication of a downturn in growth; this confirms investor sentiment that the outlook for growth during the rest of this financial year is weak.

3.2   Interest rate forecasts

The Council's treasury advisor, Link Asset Services, has provided the following forecast:

Link Asset Services Interest Rate View											
	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22
Bank Rate View	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.25
3 Month LIBID	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.10	1.20
6 Month LIBID	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.10	1.10	1.20	1.30	1.40
12 Month LIBID	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.10	1.20	1.30	1.30	1.40	1.50	1.60
5yr PWLB Rate	2.20	2.30	2.50	2.60	2.70	2.70	2.80	2.90	3.00	3.00	3.10
10yr PWLB Rate	2.50	2.60	2.80	2.90	3.00	3.00	3.10	3.20	3.30	3.30	3.40
25yr PWLB Rate	3.10	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.60	3.70	3.70	3.80	3.90	4.00	4.00
50yr PWLB Rate	3.00	3.20	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.60	3.60	3.70	3.80	3.90	3.90

The above forecasts have been based on an assumption that there is some sort of muddle through to an agreed deal on Brexit at some point in time. Given the current level of uncertainties, this is a huge assumption and so forecasts may need to be materially reassessed in the light of events over the next few weeks or months.

It has been little surprise that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has left Bank Rate unchanged at 0.75% so far in 2019 due to the ongoing uncertainty over Brexit. In its meeting on 1 August, the MPC became more dovish as it was more concerned about the outlook for both the global and domestic economies. That's shown in the policy statement, based on an assumption that there is an agreed deal on Brexit, where the suggestion that rates would need to rise at a "gradual pace and to a limited extent" is now also conditional on "some recovery in global growth". Brexit uncertainty has had a dampening effect on UK GDP growth in 2019, especially around mid-year. If there were a no deal Brexit, then it is likely that there will be a cut or cuts in Bank Rate to help support economic growth. The September MPC meeting sounded even more concern about world growth and the effect that prolonged Brexit uncertainty is likely to have on growth.

Bond yields / PWLB rates. There has been much speculation recently that we are currently in a bond market bubble. However, given the context that there are heightened expectations that the US could be heading for a recession, and a general background of a downturn in world economic growth, together with inflation generally at low levels in most countries and expected to remain subdued, conditions are ripe for low bond yields. While inflation targeting by the major central banks has been successful over the last thirty years in lowering inflation expectations, the real equilibrium rate for central rates has fallen considerably due to the high level of borrowing by consumers: this means that central banks do not need to raise rates as much now to have a major impact on consumer spending, inflation, etc. This has pulled down the overall level of interest rates and bond yields in financial markets over the last thirty years. We have therefore seen over the last year, many bond yields up to ten years in the Eurozone actually turn negative. In addition, there has, at times, been an inversion of bond yields in the US whereby ten year yields have fallen below shorter term yields. In the past, this has been a precursor of a recession. The other side of this coin is that bond prices are elevated as investors would be expected to be moving out of riskier assets i.e. shares, in anticipation of a downturn in corporate earnings and so selling out of equities. However, stock markets are also currently at high levels as some investors have focused on chasing returns in the context of dismal ultra-low interest rates on cash deposits.

What we have seen during the last half year is a near halving of longer term PWLB rates to completely unprecedented historic low levels. There is though, an expectation that financial markets have gone too far in their fears about the degree of the downturn in US and world growth. If, as expected, the US only suffers a mild downturn in growth, bond markets in the US are likely to sell off and that would be expected to put upward pressure on bond yields, not only in the US, but due to a correlation between US treasuries and UK gilts, which at various times has been strong but at other times weaker, in the UK. However, forecasting the

timing of this and how strong the correlation is likely to be, is very difficult to forecast with any degree of confidence.

One potential danger that may be lurking in investor minds is that Japan has become mired in a twenty year bog of failing to get economic growth and inflation up off the floor, despite a combination of massive monetary and fiscal stimulus by both the central bank and government. Investors could be fretting that this condition might become contagious.

Another danger is that unconventional monetary policy post 2008, (ultra-low interest rates plus quantitative easing), may end up doing more harm than good through prolonged use. Low interest rates have encouraged a debt fuelled boom which now makes it harder for economies to raise interest rates. Negative interest rates could damage the profitability of commercial banks and so impair their ability to lend and / or push them into riskier lending. Banks could also end up holding large amounts of their government's bonds and so create a potential doom loop. (A doom loop would occur where the credit rating of the debt of a nation was downgraded which would cause bond prices to fall, causing losses on debt portfolios held by banks and insurers, so reducing their capital and forcing them to sell bonds – which, in turn, would cause further falls in their prices etc.). In addition, the financial viability of pension funds could be damaged by low yields on holdings of bonds.

The balance of risks to the UK
- The overall balance of risks to economic growth in the UK is probably to the downside due to the weight of all the uncertainties over Brexit, as well as a softening global economic picture.
- The balance of risks to increases in Bank Rate and shorter term PWLB rates are broadly similarly to the downside.

One risk that is both an upside and downside risk is that all central banks are now working in very different economic conditions than before the 2008 financial crash. There has been a major increase in consumer and other debt due to the exceptionally low levels of borrowing rates that have prevailed for eleven years since 2008. This means that the neutral rate of interest in an economy, (i.e. the rate that is neither expansionary nor deflationary), is difficult to determine definitively in this new environment, although central banks have made statements that they expect it to be much lower than before 2008. Central banks could, therefore, over or under-do increases in central interest rates.

Downside risks to current forecasts for UK gilt yields and PWLB rates currently include:
- **Brexit** – if it were to cause significant economic disruption and a major downturn in the rate of growth.
- **Bank of England** takes action too quickly, or too far, over the next three years to raise Bank Rate and causes UK economic growth, and increases in inflation, to be weaker than we currently anticipate.
- A resurgence of the **Eurozone sovereign debt crisis.** In 2018, Italy was a major concern due to having a populist coalition government which made a lot of anti-austerity and anti-EU noise. However, in September 2019 there was a major change in the coalition governing Italy which has brought to power a much more EU friendly government; this has eased the pressure on Italian bonds. Only time will tell whether this new unlikely alliance of two very different parties will endure.
- Weak capitalisation of some **European banks**, particularly Italian banks.
- **German minority government.** In the German general election of September 2017, Angela Merkel's CDU party was left in a vulnerable minority position dependent on the fractious support of the SPD party, as a result of the rise in popularity of the anti-immigration AfD party. Then in October 2018, the results of the Bavarian and Hesse state elections radically undermined the SPD party and showed a sharp fall in support for the CDU. As a result, the SPD had a major internal debate as to whether it could continue to support a coalition that is so damaging to its electoral popularity. After the result of the Hesse state election, Angela Merkel announced that she would not stand for re-election as CDU party leader at her party's convention in December 2018. However, this makes little practical difference as she has continued as Chancellor, though more recently concerns have arisen over her health.
- **Other minority EU governments.** Austria, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Netherlands and Belgium all have vulnerable minority governments dependent on coalitions which could prove fragile.
- **Italy, Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary** now form a strongly anti-immigration bloc within the EU. There has also been rising anti-immigration sentiment in Germany and France.

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- There are concerns around the level of **US corporate debt** which has swollen massively during the period of low borrowing rates in order to finance mergers and acquisitions. This has resulted in the debt of many large corporations being downgraded to a BBB credit rating, close to junk status. Indeed, 48% of total investment grade corporate debt is rated at BBB. If such corporations fail to generate profits and cash flow to reduce their debt levels as expected, this could tip their debt into junk ratings which will increase their cost of financing and further negatively impact profits and cash flow.
- **Geopolitical risks,** for example in North Korea, but also in Europe and the Middle East, which could lead to increasing safe haven flows.

Upside risks to current forecasts for UK gilt yields and PWLB rates
- **Brexit** – if agreement was reached all round that removed all threats of economic and political disruption between the EU and the UK.
- The **Bank of England is too slow** in its pace and strength of increases in Bank Rate and, therefore, allows inflationary pressures to build up too strongly within the UK economy, which then necessitates a later rapid series of increases in Bank Rate faster than we currently expect.
- **UK inflation,** whether domestically generated or imported, returning to sustained significantly higher levels causing an increase in the inflation premium inherent to gilt yields.

Society of District Council Treasures (SDCT) and Head of Strategic Finance and Properties update on the recent PWLB rate rise

Following the unexpected news regarding the PWLB interest rate rise last week Society of District Council Treasurers (SDCT) have had discussions with the Treasury and MHCLG officials to try to understand the rationale behind the decision and the potential impact it may have.

In terms of the rationale, the treasury is concerned about the significant increase in borrowing over the last 12 months and the risk that the overall borrowings limit could be reached. The maximum net amount of PWLB loans that can be outstanding at any time is subject to a statutory limit. In order to ensure that lending continues to be available for local authorities that need it, the Government has legislated to increase the lending limit from £85bn to £95bn. The Treasury aim is to slow the pace of borrowing but not cut off LA activity completely. The rate increase will apply indefinitely but will be kept under review.

There is an expectation that market rates will increase to broadly mirror PWLB rates, so they are likely to increase to at or slightly below the new rates. However, Treasury Advisors don't seem to agree with this assessment.

There doesn't appear to have been an impact assessment carried to understand the impact the increase may have on local authority capital schemes – particularly those linked to housing or regeneration initiatives which are government priorities. We have asked whether there is any scope for a bigger discount for specific types of project, similar to the current Local Infrastructure Rate. The Treasury are open to considering this but we must provide evidence of schemes that may not happen as a result of the rate rise. The LGA will also be supporting us in making the case to Treasury and MHCLG.

There will be no impact on East Herts District Council's existing loans of £7.5m as these have a fixed rate of interest.

The Council has a number of major projects for delivery in the medium term which will require financing. Our business plans currently take account of the interest rate rise but should it increase any further this may impact our ability to deliver.

Borrowing from PWLB will be driven by the timeframe of the current projects in our capital programme, but it is unlikely we would be requesting any borrowing from PWLB before April 2021.

For clarification there is no single PWLB loan rate. Rates are dependent on time frame (years) and individual council's rights to certainty rates. All current business plans take a prudent approach to borrowing so there is no immediate concern for East Herts.

4. Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Update

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, (TMSS), for 2019/20 was approved by this Council on 5th March 2019.

- The underlying TMSS approved previously requires revision in the light of economic and operational movements during the year, mainly due to the re-profiling of capital spend with the need to borrow no longer expected in 2019/20. The proposed changes and supporting detail for the changes are set out below:

Prudential Indicator 2019/20	Original £m	Revised Prudential Indicator £m
Authorised Limit	£41.0m	£11.5m
Operational Boundary	£31.0m	£7.5m
Capital Financing Requirement	£31.0m	(£12.7m)

5. The Council's Capital Position (Prudential Indicators)

This part of the report is structured to update:
- The Council's capital expenditure plans;
- How these plans are being financed;
- The impact of the changes in the capital expenditure plans on the prudential indicators and the underlying need to borrow; and
- Compliance with the limits in place for borrowing activity.

5.1 Prudential Indicator for Capital Expenditure

This table shows the revised estimates for capital expenditure and the changes since the capital programme was agreed at the Budget.

Capital Expenditure by Service	2019/20 Original Estimate	Current Position	2019/20 Revised Estimate
Services	£40.6m	£1.9m	£9.3m
Commercial activities / non-financial investments	£19.8m	£2.3m	£6.2m
Total capital expenditure	**£60.4m**	**£4.2m**	**£15.5m**

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There has been significant re-profiling of the capital programme for 2019/20, in particular around the major projects, as cost consultants have been able to more accurately predict spend profiles across future financial years.

5.2   Changes to the Financing of the Capital Programme

The table below draws together the main strategy elements of the capital expenditure plans (above), highlighting the original supported and unsupported elements of the capital programme, and the expected financing arrangements of this capital expenditure.   The borrowing element of the table increases the underlying indebtedness of the Council by way of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), although this will be reduced in part by revenue charges for the repayment of debt (the Minimum Revenue Provision). This direct borrowing need may also be supplemented by maturing debt and other treasury requirements.

Capital Expenditure	2019/20 Original Estimate		2019/20 Revised Estimate
Total capital expenditure	£60.4m		£15.5m
Financed by:			
Capital receipts	(£0.8m)		(£3.0m)
Capital grants	(£4.9m)		(£2.1m)
Capital reserves	(£0.3m)		(£0.0m)
Revenue	(£0.0m)		(£0.0m)
Total financing	(£6.0m)		(£5.1m)
Borrowing requirement	£54.4m		£10.4m

5.3   Changes to the Prudential Indicators for the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), External Debt and the Operational Boundary

The table below shows the CFR, which is the underlying external need to incur borrowing for a capital purpose.   It also shows the expected debt position over the period, which is termed the Operational Boundary.

Prudential Indicator – Capital Financing Requirement
A reduction in capital spend for 2019/20, has significantly reduced the adjustment to the capital financing requirement, moving to a no borrowing requirement position.

Prudential Indicator – the Operational Boundary for external debt

	2019/20 Original Estimate		2019/20 Revised Estimate
Prudential Indicator – Capital Financing Requirement			
Total CFR	(£23.1m)		(£23.1m)
Net movement in CFR	**£54.1**		**£10.4m**
Prudential Indicator – the Operational Boundary for external debt			
Borrowing	£31.0m		£7.5m
Other long term liabilities*	£0.0m		£0.0m
Total debt (year end position)	**£31.1m**		**£7.5m**

Includes Finance leases etc.

5.4   Limits to Borrowing Activity

The first key control over the treasury activity is a prudential indicator to ensure that over the medium term, net borrowing (borrowings less investments) will only be for a capital purpose*. Gross external borrowing should not, except in the short term, exceed the total of CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2019/20 and next two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years. The Council has approved a policy for borrowing in advance of need which will be adhered to if this proves prudent.

	2019/20 Original Estimate £m		2019/20 Revised Estimate £m
Borrowing	£31.0m		£7.5m
Other long term liabilities*	£0.0m		£0.0m
Total debt	**£31.0m**		£7.5m
CFR* (year end position)	**£31.0m**		(£12.7m)

Includes finance leases etc.

The Head of Strategic Finance and Property reports that no difficulties are envisaged for the current or future years in complying with this revised prudential indicator.

A further prudential indicator controls the overall level of borrowing. This is the Authorised Limit which represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited, and needs to be set and revised by Members. It reflects the level of borrowing which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. It is the expected maximum borrowing need with some headroom for unexpected movements. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

Authorised limit for external debt	**2019/20 Original Indicator**		**2019/20 Revised Indicator**
Borrowing	£36.0m		£9.5m
Other long term liabilities*	£5.0m		£2.0m
Total	£41.0m		£11.5m

Includes finance leases etc.

6. Investment Portfolio 2019/20

In accordance with the Code, it is the Council's priority to ensure security of capital and liquidity, and to obtain an appropriate level of return which is consistent with the Council's risk appetite. As shown by forecasts in section 3.2, it is a very difficult investment market in terms of earning the level of interest rates commonly seen in previous decades as rates are very low and in line with the current 0.75% Bank Rate.

The continuing potential for a re-emergence of a Eurozone sovereign debt crisis, and its impact on banks, prompts a low risk and short term strategy. Given this risk environment and the fact that increases in Bank Rate are likely to be gradual and unlikely to return to the levels seen in previous decades, investment returns are likely to remain low.

The Council held £62.4m of investments as at 30th September 2019 (£60.7m at 31 March 2019.

The Head of Strategic Finance and Property confirms that the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were not breached during the first 6 months of 2019/20.

The Council's budgeted investment return for 2019/20 is £990K, and performance for the year to date is an estimated £100K above budget.

Investment Counterparty criteria

The current investment counterparty criteria selection approved in the TMSS is meeting the requirement of the treasury management function.

7. Borrowing

The Council's capital financing requirement (CFR) for 2019/20 is (£23.1m). The CFR denotes the Council's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. If the CFR is positive the Council may borrow from the PWLB or the market (external borrowing) or from internal balances on a temporary basis (internal borrowing). The balance of external and internal borrowing is generally driven by market conditions. Table 5.4 shows the Council has borrowings of £7.5m.

The Council is currently in a negative CFR position. This means that the capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement), has not been reached due to the level of the Council's reserves. It is therefore anticipated that further borrowing will not be undertaken during this financial year.

The graph and table below show the movement in PWLB certainty rates for the first six months of the year to date. PWLB rates have been on a falling trend during this period and longer rates have almost halved to reach historic lows. The 50 year PWLB target (certainty) rate for new long term borrowing fell from 2.50% to 2.00% during this period.

PWLB Rates 1.4.19 - 30.9.19

Legend: 1 Year, 5 Year, 10 Year, 25 Year, 50 Year, 50 year target %

• 11
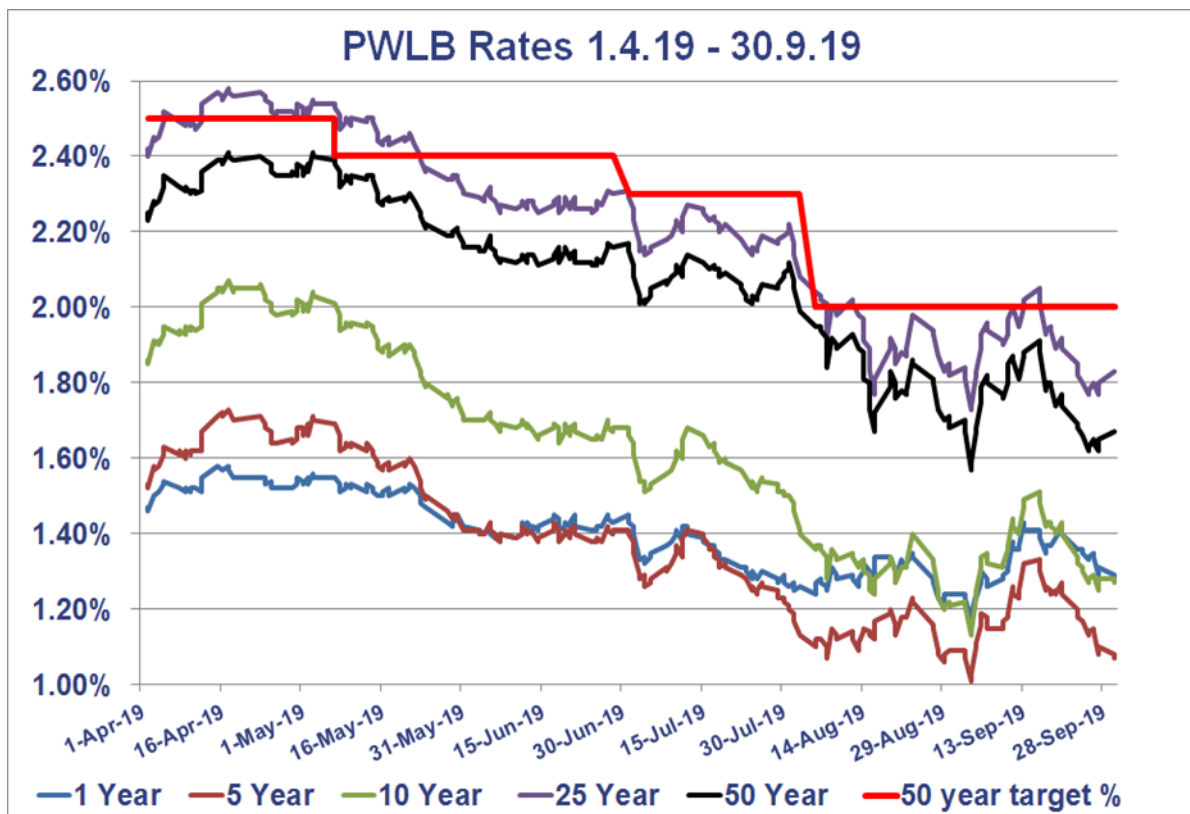
	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
Low	1.17%	1.01%	1.13%	1.73%	1.57%
Date	03/09/2019	03/09/2019	03/09/2019	03/09/2019	03/09/2019
High	1.58%	1.73%	2.07%	2.58%	2.41%
Date	15/04/2019	17/04/2019	17/04/2019	17/04/2019	17/04/2019
Average	1.40%	1.37%	1.62%	2.20%	2.07%

8. Debt Rescheduling

Debt rescheduling opportunities have been very limited in the current economic climate given the consequent structure of interest rates, and following the increase in the margin added to gilt yields which has impacted PWLB new borrowing rates since October 2010. No debt rescheduling has therefore been undertaken to date in the current financial year.

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APPENDIX 1: Approved countries for investments as at 30.9.19

Based on lowest available rating

AAA

- Australia
- Canada
- Denmark
- Germany
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Singapore
- Sweden
- Switzerland

AA+

- Finland
- U.S.A.

AA

- Abu Dhabi (UAE)
- Hong Kong
- France
- U.K.

AA-

- Belgium
- Qatar

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 18TH DECEMBER 2019

REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

ICT Partnership Strategy 2019/20 – 2021/22

WARD(S) AFFECTED: None

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To present and seek approval of the ICT Partnership Strategy 2019/20 – 2021/22 which sets out the joint approach proposed between East Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:	
(A)	**That the joint ICT Partnership Strategy 2019/20 – 2021/22 between East Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council be approved; and**
(B)	**That delegated authority be granted to the Deputy Chief Executive, acting in consultation with the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability, to negotiate and agree a new ICT Shared Service Agreement with Stevenage Borough Council for period 2019/20 – 2021/22 .**

1.0   Background

1.1   The joint ICT Partnership Strategy was last published in 2015. The majority of recommendations and actions in the strategy have now been completed or superseded.

1.2   Following a series of independent reviews an ICT Improvement Plan was established in November 2017 to enable the ICT

Partnership to take immediate action to improve the foundations of the ICT service with a primary focus on strengthening the resilience and security of the ICT infrastructure and to enhance ICT governance and service management.

1.3   Key outcomes achieved since the adoption of the plan include:

- Decommissioning of legacy business applications and servers to improve the security of the Council's systems
- Closure of the Hertford Data Centre
- Improved power resilience through the installation of a new power generator at Daneshill House and new uninterruptible power supply units that contain batteries to maintain power to the Daneshill data centre in the event of a power surge or outage.
- Completion of the Microsoft Exchange 2013 Migration Project
- Implementation of mobile device management
- Public Sector Network Accreditation in May 2019 following over 100 actions being completed over the preceding 9 month period.
- Award of a packaged software contract to enable direct purchase of 'off the shelf' software products
- Appointment of an ICT Strategic Partnership Manager with the right level of technical ICT knowledge
- Establishment of a New Security and Networking Team to look after the security and performance of ICT systems and network
- Creation of a Programme Management Office (PMO) to drive forward key ICT projects
- Procurement of Microsoft 365 and Hosted Desktop licences (to be implemented and rolled out during 2019/20)
- Installation of enhanced telephony technology

1.4   Despite this progress being made the adoption of a new ICT Partnership Strategy for the ICT Partnership is critical and will ensure that the operational services across East Herts Council (EHC) and Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) are provided with

the appropriate technology, and that the technology is supportable, updated when needed, and that users are assisted in making the best use of it.

1.5   The Council's Corporate Plan relies on the efficient and effective operation of many services of a diverse nature. One factor that unites them all is a reliance on information technology. Technology continues to evolves at pace, and that means that user expectations are constantly changing, and so continual investment is required. The technology must not only be actively maintained, to keep it secure and fully operational, but regularly updated as older solutions become obsolete and unsupportable. It is important that this is done in a planned and coordinated way.

1.6   This approach extends beyond staff and Members to residents, who will need to be provided with the means to obtain many of their services online that is simpler, quicker and easier for them to use and cheaper for both authorities. This aligns closely with the Corporate Plans of SBC and EHC.

2.0   <u>Report</u>

2.1   In developing the ICT Partnership Strategy it has been necessary to take an incisive and realistic view of the current state of ICT across both SBC and EHC. This has helped determine how fit for purpose the existing infrastructure, applications and end user equipment is, how well the ICT Team serves the two organisations currently in terms of its structure, processes and relationships, and what shape the team is in to move things forward. Many ICT strategies focus only on the new and exciting projects to be done to move the organisation forward, but these must be built on a sound base if they are not to fail in the future, and an honest appraisal must be undertaken to understand what must be remedied, to underpin future success.

2.2 The relevant key ICT issues and challenges faced by the Council that have helped to inform the development of the new ICT Partnership Strategy include:

2.3 Changing customer expectations: The last decade has seen major changes to how customers engage with business, public services and each other, and the pace of change is increasing. It is vital that the Council exploits these channels to provide responsive engagement with its customers.

2.4 Digital Technology is now of even greater importance than 'traditional' ICT. Digital is disrupting everything and providing unprecedented opportunities, and we are living in a time of enormous change. It has been said that change is happening 10 times faster and at 300 times the scale of the first Industrial Revolution—and thus is having a major impact.

2.5 As Digital becomes ubiquitous, it is rewriting the way local authorities are delivering their corporate priorities and meeting business challenges. As local authorities continue to face austere times, the need for change has never been more important and the need for Digital transformation more relevant. It provides the opportunity to redesign the way in which the Council delivers services, to allow residents to have more control over how and when they access their services, to collaborate efficiently with communities and partners, and to support a culture of innovation. A Digital Strategy will need to be developed to demonstrate how the Council will effectively use new digital platforms and web based digital technologies to improve service delivery and help drive efficiencies.

2.6 An ageing Infrastructure: Following the creation of the ICT Shared Service in July 2013 between Stevenage Borough Council and East Herts Council, significant effort in the first couple of years went into the creation of ICT services that met the needs of both councils and delivered savings in the region of £400,000.

2.7 To this end the ICT Shared Service has delivered a shared network, data centres, corporate Wi-Fi, an ICT Service Desk and hosted desktops and delivered a range of projects from mobile working to customer payments. However over a period of several years, primarily due to austerity in the Public Sector, much of the technical infrastructure that supports the Council's ICT has been under-invested in, and become aged, unreliable, difficult to support operationally, and hard to maintain in a secure state. A substantial 'catch up' programme of work is now essential and needs to be built around sound strategic and architectural principles.

2.8 Cyber Security: the changing nature of cyber-attacks means that the ICT Partnership must manage the risk exposure of both councils and ensure that appropriate controls are in place to protect the information and data that is held.

2.9 ICT skills gap: Similarly to the ICT infrastructure until recently there has been a lack of investment in staff skills which has meant that the service has been lacking key technical capabilities to support the current infrastructure and the adoption of new technology. This has been addressed in part through the ICT Improvement Plan, however, there will be a need to permanently fund the additional capabilities and skills that have been recently recruited into the ICT Service.

2.10 A complex and inefficient business application landscape: Until recently ICT investments have been based on a bottom-up tactical approach, whereby operational teams within both councils have selected the technology solutions for their local area and presented these to the ICT team to implement. This approach has created a complex variety of systems, a lengthening list of outstanding requirements for new business applications, and a burgeoning need to update the supporting infrastructure technology. This has resulted in both a complex and inefficient application landscape (143+ applications across the ICT Partnership), a heavy burden on the ICT team to maintain them, heightened security risks (as keeping them all

fully patched and updated is a huge challenge), and insufficient free effort to address the ever-growing list of requested projects. Thus, the ICT Service has become a service that is both overloaded and often too busy to help, despite the best efforts of its dedicated staff, leading to reduced user satisfaction of services, the infrastructure receiving insufficient attention, and a significant degree of 'technical debt' accumulating.

2.11 The key considerations are that the underlying technical debt must be addressed, applications must be rationalised, the journey to the cloud must accelerate, governance must be further strengthened, and an overall strategic approach (as opposed to a reactive approach), in line with mandated principles of a new enterprise architecture that determines the type and number of business applications and systems, must be adopted. It is important that this is done in a strategically planned and co-ordinated way, to avoid unwise tactical investments in short term fixes, duplicated solutions, and the procurement of hard to manage systems. In addition the digital revolution is changing both the way that customers want to engage with council services and the consequent efficiencies and increases in productivity with which the council can achieve through the adoption and deployment of ICT and digital solutions.

2.12 The need for a strategic ICT approach: for the ICT Service to properly support both organisations, the ICT Partnership needs a sound ICT Partnership Strategy that matches and supports its strategic aims and enables both councils to keep in step with developing technology.

2.13 The Council is facing challenging financial circumstances over the next three financial years and one of the main challenges for the ICT Partnership will be how to harness the potential of ICT to help maintain priority services and enable changes to service delivery all within the context of reducing financial and

staffing resources. The contribution ICT will make to these endeavours is must be set out in future.

2.14   As part of the Council's integrated planning activities, a revised ICT Partnership Strategy in partnership with Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) has been prepared to cover the period 2019 to 2022. The ICT Partnership strategy is contained in ERP B.

2.15   Best practice, as encapsulated in the new ICT Partnership Strategy, requires that SBC and EHC jointly take a strategically-planned, top-down, approach to technology, which will represent a change to past practice.

2.16   The strategy has been developed in consultation with the ICT Team, Business Transformation teams, service teams, collaborative workshops, technological reviews, IT and service capability assessments and through an informal Executive session.

2.17   A series of independent reviews of the ICT service have also been undertaken over the last two financial years to help inform the new strategy, these have included:

•   Socitm (Society of IT Managers in the Public Sector) Review and Security Assessment - 2018
•   SIAS Disaster Recovery Audit - 2018
•   Annual Public Sector Network Assessment (and associated independent health check)
•   Microsoft Navigator Discovery and Planning Sessions - 2018/19
•   Service Governance Review completed in May 2018

       Socitm, Microsoft and other external partners have helped to also validate the strategical approach outlined within the strategy to delivering a resilient and secure ICT offer that meets the future requirements of both SBC and EHC. An examination of best practice in the sector, based on recently published ICT and digital strategies of other councils, along

with advice from Central Government, shows that the Council is strategically aligned with others. The vital importance of a sound ICT infrastructure is universally recognised and the technical approaches (Enterprise Architecture, Digital Strategy, Software as a Service, a focus on cyber security, etc.) have been widely adopted.

3.   Aim and Vision

3.1   The ICT Partnership Strategy articulates the ICT vision and objectives now and in the future. The Partnership vision is to create a modern and transformational ICT service that drives and supports delivery of joined up services to customers through the effective use of technology.

3.2   Ensuring residents and businesses can access key transactional services and information 24 hours, 7 days a week is a key priority of the Council.

3.3   The Council is committed to develop and publish a Digital Strategy during 2020 and to redefine/refresh the Digital East Herts Programme, aimed primarily at streamlining the way customers interact with the Council, but also seeking to achieve internal efficiency improvements. There is an opportunity to do this in partnership with SBC and/or align digital programmes and projects in the future that benefit both councils.

3.4   The current estate of 143+ applications is extreme and best practice elsewhere indicates that an estate across SBC and EHC of 100 or so applications is a realistic goal to aim for. This may require some compromises, but will be overall far more efficient and cost effective for the ICT Partnership as a whole, will allow applications to be properly supported, and will assist in the provision of training and recruitment of local super users. Any future investments in business applications must be based on full business cases, approved through the ICT governance structure, and incorporating planned benefits

realisation, metrics and the recouping of planned financial savings. This has already commenced with the formation of the IT Steering Group, which has been meeting regularly since September 2018.

3.5   The ICT Partnership will build a culture of innovation where SBC and EHC make the best use of the creative talents of staff, Members, partners and customers to improve working practices and processes. The ICT Partnership will provide mobile ICT and digital services and tools that allow staff and Members to work anywhere at any time.

3.6   A strong project management approach will be taken to ensure the delivery of the plan. The intention of the ICT Partnership Board is for iterations of work programmes to be developed, each of which will be published with a corresponding implementation plan or roadmap. The plans will be submitted for approval in line with the ICT Partnership governance arrangements, culminating in an evolving ICT Partnership Strategy. These plans in future will include, a new Enterprise Architecture that incorporates the consolidation, simplification and standardisation of business systems, the Digital Strategy and finally business priority led delivery projects such as the replacement of Geographical Information Systems.

3.7   The Council entered into an ICT Shared Service Agreement for an initial five years with Stevenage Borough Council in 2013. The recommendation is that the Council should enter into a further 3 year partnership agreement to coincide with the lifespan of the proposed ICT Partnership Strategy. Both councils through the delivery of the strategy will continually look to achieve maximum value for money from their ICT investments. The success of the shared ICT Partnership Strategy depends on close working between SBC and EHC. This includes exploiting and promoting common software and hardware solutions across organisations.

3.27   It is therefore recommended that delegated authority should be given to the Deputy Chief Executive, who is the appointed EHC representative on the ICT Partnership Board to negotiate and agree a new 3 year Partnership Agreement and funding model in consultation with the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability.

4   Options

4.1   Do Nothing: Failure to adopt the ICT Partnership Strategy will result in increasingly poor levels of service, and the risk that the Council will not be able to deliver its services effectively.

4.2   Propose spot fixes and short term extra resource: Spending additional funds by increasing the size of the ICT team short term, and adopting solutions that have been proposed to meet limited local needs would be an expensive way of propping up a fundamentally flawed ICT landscape, and would lead to spiralling costs and further declines in service quality. Such an approach would not be sustainable and would likely lead to the growth of 'shadow IT', with departments seeking their own solutions from external providers without the involvement of the ICT team, thereby risking overall security, achieving poor value for money for the Council, and limiting the Council's ability to make best use of its data.

4.3   Adopt a strategic approach: recommended. ICT exists only to support the needs and successful operation of the organisations, and an ICT Partnership Strategy must operate top down if it is to achieve this. The approach recommended provides a logical flow from corporate to operational needs, examines relevant technology trends and best practice, examines where the ICT Partnership's current provision is and where it falls short, paints a vision of a desirable and achievable future state, and proposes how to get there, in the context of improved organisational governance. It is recommended that this approach is adopted. The ICT Partnership Strategy and to follow a Digital Strategy will be

significant enablers for the Council to meet its strategic needs, both will ensure that the present 'log jam' of poor service, frustrated users and a difficult to maintain ICT landscape is resolved.

4.4   The draft ICT Partnership Strategy has been considered and approved by members at Stevenage Borough Council in October 2019 and if now also approved by East Herts Council ICT Partnership Strategy a public facing digital document summarising the key ambitions and ICT projects will be produced and placed onto the Council's website. The ICT Partnership Strategy has also been captured as a 'plan on a page' as an easy reference document for staff and members and can be seen in ERP C.

5.0   Implications/Consultations

5.1   Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

5.2   Finance: The Head of Strategic Finance and Property has confirmed that all budget requirements arising from adoption of the ICT Partnership Strategy have already been included in the MTFP.

Background Papers
ERP B – Strategy
ERP C – One Page Plan
ERP D – Implementation Plan

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IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives *(delete as appropriate):*	Priority 1 – Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities Priority 2 – Enhance the quality of people's lives Priority 3 – Enable a flourishing local economy
Consultation:	*ICT Team, Business Transformation teams, service teams, collaborative workshops, technological reviews, IT and service capability assessments and through an Informal Executive session.*
Legal:	*Advice from Legal colleagues will be sought before the Partnership Agreement is entered into.*
Financial:	• *Significant investment in ICT is required in order to make it fit for purpose. All financial implications have been discussed and agreed by S151and a breakdown is provided at ERPD*
Human Resource:	*None EHC specific*
Risk Management:	*The key risk, if the Council does not approve the approach recommended in the strategy, is that the quality of ICT services provided will continue to decline, as the technical debt grows, and the increasingly overloaded ICT team have progressively less time to modernise the ICT estate or attend to service requests. • Technical Debt not addressed: If the existing infrastructure is not updated, the effort and cost to maintain the existing infrastructure will continue to grow, and the security risks will rise.* • *Bottom up approach to business unit/service needs continues: If a strategic approach to service needs is not adopted, the Balkanisation of the estate will grow and the overall value for money achieved will diminish. Interoperability will also suffer, and the ICT Partnership's*

	ability to make best use of its data assets will diminish.
	• *Failure to attend to service and customer needs: If the current approach continues of having services determine their technical solutions, then adding their proposed implementation projects to the ICT team's backlog, then not only their frustration grow but they will be increasingly tempted to adopt a 'shadow IT' approach, commissioning solutions without going via ICT, this will have multiple disadvantages, in terms of potential security risks, poor value for money, interoperability challenges, and reduced ability to coalesce and analyse data at a strategic level.*
	• *Failure to deliver a secure and resilient 'hybrid' (on premise and cloud based) infrastructure: The current infrastructure is ageing and most components need replacing. Failure to replace hardware and software will mean that the ICT Partnership will continue to experience poor systems performance and will be greater exposed to security risks and significant technical failures including potential loss of business data.*
	• *Overall if the ICT Strategy is not adopted the existing service will continue to decline, and there will be almost irresistible pressures to increase the ICT Service further than proposed in the strategy, simply to 'keep the infrastructure lights on', and avoid what could be increasingly common system outages. This will then represent poor value for money for a poor service.*
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	*The Strategy itself has no impact or issues. It is, however, recognised that the users of ICT need to make reasonable adjustments to ensure they are using ICT effectively and with due consideration of their personal health and wellbeing.*
Equality, diversity and human rights considerations, and whether Equality Impact	*At this stage the proposals impact on staff and customers is either neutral (in that there are no discernible equalities impacts) or positive. In the main the proposals make an indirect, but positive contribution to equality and diversity as the proposals will help enable the delivery of new digital channels that may be easier for*

Assessment required:	*people with certain kinds of disability to use than existing channels. The proposed new business tools for staff and Members will also improve people's ability to work remotely and more effectively out in the community to the benefit of residents.*
Environmental Sustainability	*The progressive move to smarter technology and cloud based solutions will reduce energy costs for the Council and will be a more environmentally appropriate way of delivering ICT.* *The ICT Partnership is committed to ensuring where possible it reduces its carbon footprint. Highlight any implications of the proposals which could contribute to environmental sustainability.*

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ICT Partnership Strategy
2019/20 – 2021/22

(East Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council)

Authors: Simon Russell, Strategic ICT Partnership Manager

Helen Standen, Deputy Chief Executive

Revision History

Date	Version	Description	Author(s)
16 June 2019	0.1	Initial Draft	Simon Russell
17 July 2019	0.2	Amendments	Simon Russell/Richard Protheroe
2 Sept2019	0.3	Draft	Simon Russell/Richard Protheroe
02/12/2019	0.4	Draft	Simon Russell/Helen Standen

Contents

Glossary

ACM
Adoption and **C**hange **M**anagement, a Microsoft service to help the Partnership to prepare for and manage change, therefore help ensure adoption. The service focuses on achieve more value from investments by carrying out plans for communicating changes, readiness and training, and support.

API
Application **P**rogramme **I**nterface is a gateway that allows software to talk to other software and also defines how that conversation takes place.

BDO
Binder **D**ijker **O**tte a company that provide audit and assurance services

Cloud
Cloud computing is storing and accessing data and applications over the Internet instead of your computer's hard drive, Cloud can be used for storing just data but can also be used for run applications sometimes known as SaaS.

Critical Path
Longest sequence of activities in a project plan which must be completed on time for the project to complete on due date. An activity on the critical path cannot be started until its predecessor activity is complete; if it is delayed for a day, the entire project will be delayed for a day unless the activity following the delayed activity is completed a day earlier.

CRM
Customer **R**elationship **M**anagement is a technology for managing all Partnership's relationships and interactions with citizens and businesses. It provides a history of previous engagements with citizens and business making interactions much easier.

DPA
Data **P**rotection **A**ct

Firewall
A Firewall is a network security device that establishes a barrier between a trusted internal network and an untrusted external network such as the internet. The Firewall acts as a filter and therefore is crucial to the security of the internal network it protects. The general life span of a Firewall is 5 years, out of date firewalls risk being "hacked" and the network becoming vulnerable to attack.

GDPR
General **D**ata **P**rotection **R**egulation

Hosted Desktop
Technology that hosts a desktop operating system and its applications/data on a centralized server which is then accessed remotely, also known as a Virtual Desktop.

Hybrid Infrastructure
Is composed of a combination of on-premises data centers, private clouds and/or public clouds. Enterprise systems and

applications can be deployed on any of these environments, depending on the strategic business need, the tactical requirements and the required outcome

ICT
Information and **C**ommunications **T**echnology is a term for information technology (IT) that stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications (telephone lines and wireless signals) and computers, as well as necessary enterprise software, middleware, storage, and audio-visual systems, that enable users to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information.

Latency
Network Latency is either "one-way", the time from source to destination, or more commonly "round-trip delay time", the time it takes between a requests and a response (excluding destination processing time). From a user's perspective, for example on a VDI device, if I start typing, what the delay from when a key is pressed to when I see it appears on the screen.

Malware
Short for "Malicious Software", it is code specifically designed to gain access to or damage IT systems. There are various types of malware, including spyware, ransomware, viruses, worms, Trojan horses and adware.

MSM
Modern **S**ervice **M**anagement is designed around ITIL practices, but with the additional speed, agility and automation required to support rapidly changing business needs. Through the use of data-driven analytics and advanced algorithms, modern service management seeks to systematically remove waste, improve efficiencies, cut costs and delight end users.

On Premises
Technology (including Software and hardware) that is located within the physical confines of the Partnerships offices / data center – as opposed to running remotely on hosted servers or in the cloud.

OSS
Open **S**ource **S**oftware is software with its source code made available with a license in which the copyright holder provides the rights to study, change, and distribute the software to anyone and for any purpose. Open-source software may be developed in a collaborative public manner.

PSN
Public **S**ervices **N**etwork compliance enables access to Internet content and shared services to be controlled.

SaaS
Software **a**s **a** **S**ervice is a software licensing and delivery model in which software is licensed on a subscription basis and is centrally hosted. It is sometimes referred to as "on-demand software". SaaS is typically accessed by users using a thin client, e.g. via a web browser

SOA   **Service Oriented Architecture** is an architectural methodology/ best practice around specifying separation of responsibility from a business oriented view into independent services which is communicated by an API. These applications to be less isolated and fosters service re-use.

Socitm   Is the operating name of the Society of Information Technology Management, a professional body based in the United Kingdom representing people involved in the leadership and management of IT and digitally enabled services delivered for public benefit.

Softphones   A softphone (software telephone) is an application program that enables voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone calls from computing devices. Most softphone applications work in conjunction with a headset and microphone, a specialized VoIP phone. Although softphones are most often associated with mobile or home users, office workers are also choosing to use softphones as a convenient replacement for traditional desk phones.

Switch   A Switch is a key hardware component of the network; it has a number of ports, normally 50 for a large network, which Ethernet cables are plugged into. The switch links devices together, everything from Servers, printers, laptops, desktops to IP Phones. Switches, you will normally find a "rack" of switches together, manage the flow of data across the network, transmitting data only to the one or more devices for which the data is intended. Each networked device (such as a laptop) can be identified by its network address, allowing the switch to direct the flow of data maximizing the security and efficiency of the network. Therefore it is critical for the stability, reliability, security and speed of the network, that switches are keep up to date, maintained and within their lifespan, normally 6 years. Older switches are vulnerable to hardware failures and

VDI   **V**irtual **D**esktop **I**nfrastructure is a technology that hosts a desktop operating system and its applications/data on a centralized server which is then accessed remotely.

WEEE   **W**aste **E**lectrical and **E**lectronic **E**quipment recycling European Community Directive 2012/19 become European Law in February 2003

Zero Client   Zero Client is a small device that serves to connect a keyboard, mouse, monitor and Ethernet connection to a remote server. The Partnership use these devices on "Hot Desks" to give access to the VDI environment, therefore any Partnership users can go to any "Hot Desk" or work from a remote location and log on to their desktop and access their applications/data. The Benefits over a traditional desktop PC or laptop include, 1/50th power usage,

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much cheaper to purchase / support and secure way of delivering applications/data

Foreword

The next three years will witness significant changes across the public sector. The shape and size of councils are likely to change but the need to provide high levels of service to residents will remain and be set against a backdrop of further reduced budgets.

With these challenges will come new opportunities; using ICT to enable both councils to achieve efficiencies, providing the infrastructure to front line and   shared services and most importantly, keeping pace with customers' changing needs and expectations.

Throughout the period of this strategy, ICT will underpin and support the strategic objectives of both East Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council. ICT is no longer just a support service; it has become a critical service. If it is unavailable, organisations cannot operate. It has the ability to transform the way services are organised and delivered. It has a fundamental role to play in improving efficiency, reducing cost across the organisation and underpinning the organisational change programme. This strategy sets out how we will ensure that ICT will support services in responding to these challenges.

We will begin the process of standardisation and simplification of our ICT systems and applications based on the premise of a common resilient and secure infrastructure and a new Enterprise Architecture designed to enable local service delivery suited to local needs.

Demand for public services and expectations of levels of service are ever increasing. Residents and businesses expect the same levels of access and personalisation that they see online from large private sector organisations such as Amazon. They expect to be able to access their services from multiple locations and in ways that suit them. Our strategy will place a strong emphasis on providing choice in the way people access services, by utilising digital platforms and applications. This will ensure maximum choice to respond to individuals' circumstances and preferences, and the provision of quick and effective responses.

We will use ICT to allow each council to embrace modern working practices, rationalising office accommodation, eliminating unnecessary bureaucracy and administration, and supporting community based service delivery.

Investing in our people is a high priority. We will continue to improve the ICT skills of our workforces and our communities, equipping them with the skills they need to enhance their lives and their neighbourhoods. At the same time we will continually review the replacement and upgrading of ICT hardware and systems to ensure that our workforces have the right solutions for their work.

Where possible, the use of ICT will contribute to the economic success of both districts, and facilitate the delivery of key service initiatives.

Information security is a critical focal point within the strategy given the increase in the amount of malware and the diverse ways that information can be shared. We

place great emphasis on protecting our systems against threats and maintain constant vigilance to protect against any new threat. We will continue to invest in training and education for our users, to raise awareness of security risks and to promote good data security practice both at work and at home in their private lives.

Images of ICT Portfolio Holders to be inserted at design stage

Introduction

> **The term "ICT Partnership" used throughout the document, refers to both East Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council.**
>
> **ICT Policies and statements are universal to both councils. The Partnership was established in July 2013 with the purpose of; determining the strategic direction, overseeing the preparation / implementation of this ICT Strategy, monitoring service performance, review customer feedback and setting ICT budgets.**

This document sets out the Partnership's joint strategy for Information, Communication, Technology and Digital (ICT) over the period 2019-2022. The ICT strategy reflects the corporate plans of both councils in promoting cost effectiveness and high quality front line service delivery.

This strategy has been developed in consultation with ICT, Business Transformation Teams, Leadership Teams and with Members. A number of external partners including BDO, Microsoft and Socitm were also engaged to help inform and validate the Partnerships approach to deliver a resilient and secure ICT offer that meets the future requirements of both councils.

Some of the key features in developing this ICT Strategy for the Partnership have included:

- **Business interviews**: the ICT Team, Socitm and Microsoft conducted a number of interviews with senior stakeholders from across the Partnership to understand the perspectives on technology provision and to understand business strategy and technology requirements;
- **Collaborative workshops** – several current state assessment and target stated development workshops were held to challenge and shape the specific focus areas for the strategy;
- **Technology review** – the ICT team with Microsoft assistance have undertaken a high level review of core business applications to understand key challenges that will help influence a new Enterprise Architecture;
- **IT and Service Capability Assessments** – to improve the quality of analysis, and accelerate delivery, an assessment of the ICT Service and capability was carried out; and
- **Desktop and research analysis –** Socitm and Microsoft along with the ICT Team reviewed a wide range of documentation, including current business and past IT strategies and the emerging digital transformation programmes of both councils, alongside broader research into technology solutions and leading practice.
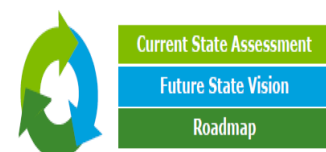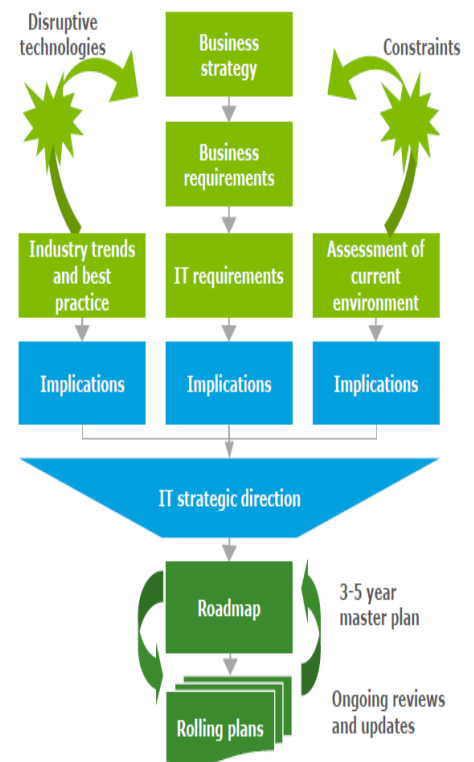
The diagram above illustrates the approach used to develop the ICT Strategy.

In seeking to define how best to develop a new approach to ICT it was identified that the focus should not be on technology, but on the customer and other business drivers. Enabling and innovative ICT will provide the Partnership with an effective, efficient and reliable set of services, in support of the business plans of both councils.

Our ICT Strategy is business driven and action orientated. By defining our approach on the benefit that different customers will gain through the use of ICT and digital services, we will maximise the value that can be delivered by our reducing resources. This will help us to deliver a partnership focus to designing and sourcing ICT and digital platforms/ applications whilst allowing a customer driven delivery; what each council needs in order to deliver services where the customer needs them.

The strategy aims to build on existing technologies and investments, support Partnership wide transformation programmes and initiatives, accelerate self -service digital delivery for our customers and increase staff productivity through opportunities for more agile, flexible and mobile workforces.

The principles within this strategy provide a framework for how ICT services will be designed, sourced and delivered and how ICT and Digital services can support ways of working and ways of doing things where the customer experiences real benefits.

The strategy sets out the necessary detail, the guiding principles and objectives of the ICT Partnership. It contains the key achievements the Partnership will meet, ensuring critically important milestones are managed to completion. These include a more strategic approach – to what we do, the services we provide, who we work with and what technology we will source.

This document also underpins the governance and culture needed to ensure government's legislation / guidance are followed and creating a culture of data security which is essential to protect the Partnership systems and the public's data.

Latter parts of the document provide a plan for 2019/20 to 2021/22, due to the fast moving nature of the ICT environment this is by necessity a front loaded strategy and will be a 'living' document requiring annual adjustment due to priorities, hardware / software "life cycles" and changes either internally or externally. It is critical that ICT investment is not seen as one off or periodic, it has to be a "rolling change programme", refining and replacing as elements of the ICT environment become out of date, non-supportable or just not fit for purpose.

Our ICT Partnership Vision

Our vision is:

To create a modern and transformational ICT service that drives and supports delivery of joined-up services to Customers through the effective use of technology.

Both Councils entered into an ICT Shared Service Agreement in July 2013 and are committed to the ICT Partnership over the lifetime of this strategy. A new 3 Year Partnership Agreement will be entered into during 2019/20.

The ICT Partnership is continually looking to achieve maximum value for money from its ICT investments. Connectivity solutions are key in supporting greater accessibility, flexibility and information provision. The increasing complexity of ICT solutions, their rapid evolution and the need to be agile in responding to organisational and customer needs and to partnership opportunities that reduce cost, increase resilience and improve quality requires a less traditional approach to ICT strategy moving forward.

Reliance on ICT infrastructure and solutions to support an agile and flexible working culture is a significant part of the overall transformation of both councils.

The success of this shared strategy depends on close partnership working. We will look for new partners where there is a business case to do so. We will continue to explore, exploit and promote common software and hardware solutions and consequently deliver platforms that can be utilised across both councils.

Benefits of the Shared ICT Service

Why bother?	What this means …	But it doesn't apply
Economies of Scale /reduce duplication	Buying and caring for one system is cheaper than doing so for two	If you run different systems / applications
Improved quality / breadth of skills	A bigger ICT service offers more career opportunities and affordability for better technology	If you choose to have different objectives
Resilience / risk taking	You have more people, can take more risks and absorb more shocks	If you manage risks and shocks separately
Critical friend / shared ides	You have a wider variety of experiences to draw on and can use each other as a benchmark	If your relationship is not trusted

The Partnership's Vision will be delivered through four Strategic Ambitions

Ambition	What does this mean?	Why is this important for the Partnership?
Empowered Customers	We will investment and deliver new digital customer facing services. In providing this we will improve the responsiveness, availability and usability of services. This will accelerate of take up of online services by customers. We will put user experience and customer focus at the heart of the design and evolution of our services. We will deliver end to end solutions that provide a more responsive and cost effective service offer.	**Customer demand –** Technology has increase the expectations of the customer and therefore business
Consolidation, simplification and standardisation of the ICT and digital estate	We have a real opportunity to consolidate, standardise and simplify our current technology estate. Through the design and adoption of a new Enterprise Architecture we will improve the integration and connectivity between services and more streamlined processes will unlock significant efficiencies and direct funds to frontline service delivery.	**Duplicate functionality** – over time both councils have deployed a large number of line of business solutions across the business to meet demand. **Complexity –** The Partnership has an application landscape with limited integration and automation, which inhibits the ability to gain insight from data.
Working Smarter	The Partnership wishes to build a culture of innovation where we make the best use of the creative talents of our staff, our partners and our customers to improve working practices and processes. We will provide mobile ICT and digital services and tools that allow staff and Members to work anywhere at any time.	**Business Demand –** Appetite from within the Partnership for technology enabled solutions will require Digital Services to deliver innovation within both councils. **Operational efficiency –** By utilising certain emerging technologies the Partnership will be able to make efficiency gains in cost reduction and resource demand. **Corporate approach –** Data should be integrated and shared across the relevant organisation.
Improved ICT governance and security	We will upskill our ICT and digital transformation teams in new technologies and ways of working.	**Organisational governance –** improving the decision making process and transparency around demand and prioritisation will enable the ICT Service and the Partnership to forecast and plan more accurately. **Impact of new technology on ICT Service –** To adapt and flex the ICT resource profile with the emergence of new technology, will become increasingly important in embracing new capabilities such as cloud.

Our Strategic Technology Objectives

The overall strategic technology objectives of the Partnership:

- ✓ Digital services become the primary means of better serving and understanding customer needs
- ✓ The design of an Enterprise Architecture that enables the provision of 24x7 public services, available to customers whenever and wherever
- ✓ To create a secure and resilient infrastructure that enables the Enterprise Architecture to be delivered
- ✓ To position ICT as a key business enabler in delivering the strategic objectives of the Partnership
- ✓ Technology is maximised to meet the commercial needs of the Partnership

Our Commitment to Green ICT

The partnership is committed to ensure that where possible it reduces it carbon footprint.

This will be achieved through:

- ✓ Continuing to optimise our application portfolio. Only those applications that are essential to the running of the organisation will be maintained. We will apply application lifecycle management to ensure that for all systems there are reviews in place to identify future development, replacement or cessation requirements.
- ✓ Maximising the use of existing applications and hardware including the reuse of devices where possible and equipment disposal will meet WEEE requirements. Where possible, third sector organisations will be used for recycling of legacy equipment.
- ✓ We will take into account the total cost of ownership, including energy and disposal costs, over the lifecycle of a device or system, not just the procurement costs.
- ✓ Environmental criteria will be specified for all new devices including energy consumption and robust energy management facilities.
- ✓ Developing and promote 'paper-light' environments in which documents are stored and shared electronically.
- ✓ The introduction of new Hosted Desktops and software such as Office 365 we will deliver targeted benefits include a reduction in travel costs and other environmental benefits including reductions in CO2 emissions.
- ✓ Improving the efficiency of servers to ensure resilience and performance, deploying desktop and server virtualisation which can extend the life of devices.
- ✓ The development of print strategies that gradually reduce the need for print through the adoption of electronic only media and the use of multi-function networked devices.
- ✓ Integrating the cost of technology into the design of new public buildings to minimise energy consumption and other running costs.

Our Key Technology Outcomes

The following benefits have been identified based on this current strategy, but as the plans of the Partnership develop further more benefits will be identified:

Customers	Digitise online services to enable customers to self-services 24/7
	A leaner, better and more unified customer experience
	Create opportunities to interface with the Partnership with new technologies such as smart devices (IoT)
	Single identities and authentication management
Members / Staff	Increase productivity by improving the reliability of the infrastructure to reduce downtime from aging equipment failures
	Enabling staff to work flexibly and increase productivity through effective use of technology, allowing more flexible working with secure access to corporate systems from a choice of device and locations
	Increase productivity through improved collaboration and "paperless office" through screen sharing, real time document sharing, instant messaging and desktop video conferencing
	Improved access to information, enabling better and faster decision making for all
	Significant reduction in the use of email through the use of new modern messaging and collaboration applications
	An organisation wide strategic technology awareness programme
Partnership	An enhanced, resilient and secure infrastructure
	Improved financial planning and control by understanding the "Technology Life Cycle" and introducing rolling change programme
	Reduction of annual cost by reducing duplication of systems through rationalisation and consolidation of software products
	A reduction in the number of 'suppliers' and an increase in partners
	Practising strategic partner management and recruiting the staff it requires
	Retiring the use of ageing server operating systems and the introduction of a new Active Directory
	Reduced risk of litigation by introducing standardised policy framework
	Improved governance and benefit realisation

Guiding Principles

Our ICTD guiding principles underpin our three 'Simplify, Standardise and Share' design principles and are used as the framework that governs the development of the strategy and the subsequent Design, Build and Running of ICT.

Principle 1 – secure by design
The security of our systems and data is of overriding importance. Information security will be designed in to all our systems, changes and processes right from the start.

Principle 2 – cloud where appropriate
We will reduce our local infrastructure through a preference that systems will be vendor or cloud hosted where it is cost effective to do so.

Principle 3 – information-led design
We will better use the data we hold to allow us to design and provide more tailored services.

Principle 4 – share and reuse
We will seek to join up with others and share services, capacity and capability. We will learn from others and reuse existing software, processes and ideas.

Principle 5 – using open data
Wherever it is possible we will publish our data openly and online, for reuse by citizens, our partners, researchers and investors.

Principle 6 – using open source software
We will always consider the use of open source software.

Principle 7 – any device, anywhere, anytime computing
Our staff and citizens will be able securely use our platform and services at any time and from any location using appropriate devices.

Principle 8 – integration
Regardless of where our systems are hosted we will always work to ensure that the systems can talk to each other and are integrated with our partners where necessary.

Principle 9 – a digitally capable workforce
To realise maximum benefit from new technology we will create a skilled and technology confident workforce through investing in learning and development

Strategic Ambition 1: Empowered Customers

Responding flexibly and with agility to customer needs

IMPACT	BENEFITS	DELIVERABLES
Improving responsiveness to ensure that customers experience consistent service through appropriate and modern service channels	Improve customer experience with greater first line resolution and provide a consistent customer experience across services. Making services more accessible and offering the customer greater choice in how they contact us at what time and on what device.	• Expand access channels to allow for 24/7 access to key services • Citizens encouraged to take up service • Promote and encourage community engagement through modern technologies • Digital East Herts and Digital Stevenage Strategies and supporting roadmaps • Provide an assisted digital offer that helps address the issue of digital exclusion.

ICT is key to the transformation of both councils and developing a smart approach will enhance the quality and performance of services, encourage innovation and increase customer participation.

Ensuring residents and businesses can access and use digital services has the potential to transform the way both council's work – increasing productivity, connecting individuals and communities and reshaping how services are provided.

The Partnership is committed to doing this in a fair and equitable way that puts customers at the heart of how we design and deliver public services working in collaboration with partners and communities to do things differently and revitalise how local services are delivered.

The current digital aspirations of the Partnership can deliver significant benefits to both councils and stakeholders through enhancing capabilities to:

✓ Co-design services based on customer need and to deliver better outcomes
✓ Develop end to end digital services that enable citizens to take control of how and when they consume services (24/7)
✓ Provide customers and businesses with the confidence and skills to assess their needs and determine the right solutions for themselves
✓ Deliver better 'Value for Money' services and increase efficiencies and provide easier ways
✓ Stimulate service transformation, through innovation and new ways of working
✓ Create and release data that enables both councils to have business insight to drive forward service improvements

In order to leverage these benefits, the Partnership will be reviewing existing digital programmes that have already started and will be aligning them going forward

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across both councils to get the optimal benefits, cost and efficiencies for its stakeholders.

Digital Services

We want to make it easier for customers to access more services online, and to meet the growing demand. Our aim is to enhance the user experience through improving the range of services offered through a variety of digital channels. This will mean building our technology platforms to deliver intuitive end to ensure public services that enable simple, swift, personalised and secure access using single sign on and authentication solutions that remember and relate to users intelligently, so each council interact as a single organisation. Both partners will enable the sharing of data across their organisations and those of providers to track service requests and deliver an enhanced service that over time will remove administrative inefficiencies that don't add value to customers or staff.

The Partnership is committed to delivering all services in a fair and equitable manner so as to ensure individuals and/or groups are not unfairly disadvantaged by the 'Digital Divide' created by technology. Through the development of new digital strategies each council will look to address this challenge through the creation of digital platforms that will simplify and connect people to the services and support they need, far more effectively. This will include an assisted digital service offer to help people who are digitally excluded to access our online services.

Citizen Identity

Working together to allow citizens to have one log-in to all web based Partnership's services is vital to encourage take-up and provide a smooth and simple service. This will also allow us to make sure the user data we keep on our citizens is correct across our many systems.

Strategic Ambition 2: Consolidation, Simplification and Standardisation of the ICT and Digital Estate

Ongoing sustainability of the ICT infrastructure and systems to support the use technology solutions which improve efficiency and effectiveness.

IMPACT	BENEFITS	DELIVERABLES
Enabling the greater flexibility and agility of both employees and Members through a resilient and secure infrastructure and the deployment of appropriate technology including effective collaboration systems and tools. Support decision making through business intelligence by utilising the Partnership's information asset	Ensures a modern workplace that is flexible and agile to enable the Partnership to be responsive to organisational and customer needs. Provides relevant communications and collaboration tools to enable an efficient work place and one that is attractive to employees and partner organisations. Reduces the Partnership's environmental impact.	• Complete a hardware and software audit • A new Enterprise Architecture that enables the Partnership to make the best use of existing and new technology • The introduction of new hosted desktops and Microsoft Office 365 • A resilient and secure 'hybrid' infrastructure that support both on premise and cloud based applications and systems • A Cloud Strategy for software as a service • Enhance systems to design in agility and flexibility • Applications and Hardware Asset Register • Execution of an Application Rationalisation Roadmap that creates a smaller ICT estate that may deliver efficiencies

The future of the Partnerships' ICT Operating Model is at a critical point of evolution. Major changes need to be implemented to enable both councils to take control of the design, build and operational aspects of software applications.

Since the Partnership was established there has been limited investment based on tactical business decisions. The net effect is that opportunities to leverage the potential of the digital revolution have started to be missed and a significant proportion of the software and hardware is now in need of refreshing and enhanced to meet the current and future needs of the Partnership.

The ICT Strategy has created the opportunity to radically reinvent the ICT Operating Model and landscape. Based on current developments, professional advice from Socitm, BDO and Microsoft the Partnership will consider appointing a Technology Advisory Partner(s) to help develop the Enterprise Architecture required across the Partnership.

Enterprise Architecture

At the heart of the Partnership's future ICT and digital strategies will be an Enterprise Architecture that will lay out the fundamental design of the Partnership's ICT and digital services going forward.

The Enterprise Architecture will have a number of layers, each designed to play their own unique role in supporting the Partnership's key customers:

- **Core Components** – the core components of the architecture that are designed to underpin multiple business processes. They will be implemented once and used often. Examples include citizen authentication, master citizen record, document management, geographical information systems and single payment engine.

- **Business Solutions –** Business solutions are the solutions designed to drive operational efficiency. These solutions are normally designed for the professional user and therefore require a high level of knowledge to use effectively. Examples include finance system, council tax system and asset management systems.

- **Engagement –** This layer ensures that causal users can interact with the Council in an easy-to-use and preferably personalised way. This layer must remove the complexities of underlying core components and business solutions and present required parts of both these in a simple and appealing way. Examples include websites, mobile applications and performance dashboards.

Each of the three layers is vitally important to the Partnership achieving an accessible, scalable, flexible and functional architecture at a minimised cost of ownership.

It is not thought practical to source one solution that meets all the needs of the Partnership, therefore 'best of breed' business solutions will be sourced and interfaced as required.
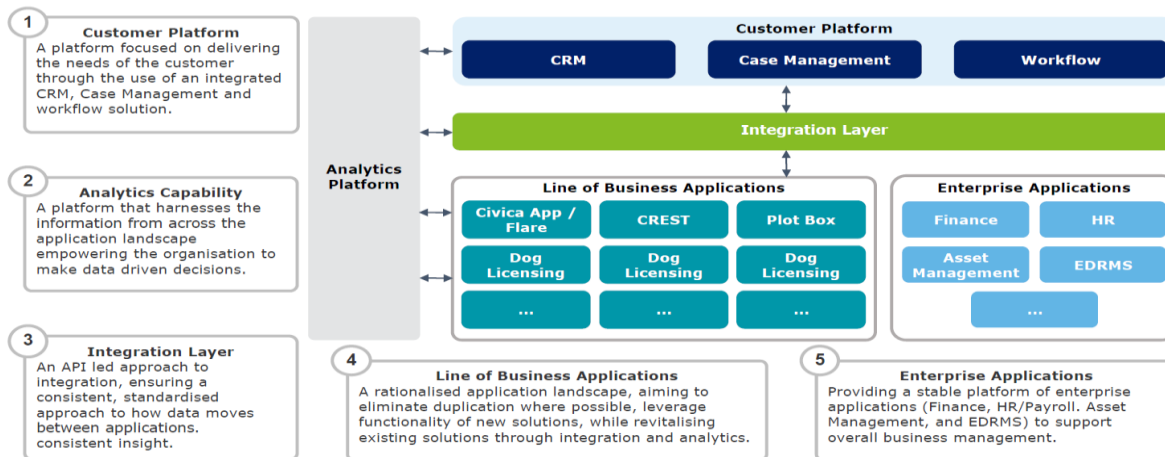
An investment plan and associated programme of work will be developed with the assistance of an Enterprise Architect to implement the agreed 'to-be' Enterprise Architecture.

High Level Solution Architecture
An indicative view of an application landscape

Evolving the application landscape can support the Council to reduce costs alongside improving data quality and operational efficiency. The proposed customer platform can be a key component and enabler of a streamlined application landscape.

The following diagram provides a high level overview of a potential solution architecture for the Council, with a summary of its key components.

1 Customer Platform
A platform focused on delivering the needs of the customer through the use of an integrated CRM, Case Management and workflow solution.

2 Analytics Capability
A platform that harnesses the information from across the application landscape empowering the organisation to make data driven decisions.

3 Integration Layer
An API led approach to integration, ensuring a consistent, standardised approach to how data moves between applications. consistent insight.

4 Line of Business Applications
A rationalised application landscape, aiming to eliminate duplication where possible, leverage functionality of new solutions, while revitalising existing solutions through integration and analytics.

5 Enterprise Applications
Providing a stable platform of enterprise applications (Finance, HR/Payroll. Asset Management, and EDRMS) to support overall business management.

Customer Platform — CRM | Case Management | Workflow

Integration Layer

Analytics Platform

Line of Business Applications — Civica App / Flare | CREST | Plot Box | Dog Licensing | Dog Licensing | Dog Licensing | … | … | …

Enterprise Applications — Finance | HR | Asset Management | EDRMS | …

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Enterprise Architecture Principles

In developing the required Enterprise Architecture the Partnership will apply the following principles:

Enterprise Principles
Improve the customer experience Use the organisation's collective knowledge of individual stakeholders to ensure that all engagements are as personalised and customer-centric as possible.
Fit for Purpose Core Components Invest in delivering fit-for-purpose core components, and then ensure 100% use wherever the function they perform is required. For example, the Partnership will aim to have one solution to authenticating a customer and will always use this where a customer is required to prove their identity to complete a transaction.
Proactively share core components and business solutions Proactively seek to share its core components and business solution with other local authorities or wider parts of the public sector. Ideally, the Partnership would not own or manage any of these; instead it would consume the services from across public sector shared services or directly from a commercial source. The Partnership acknowledges that to achieve this it may be necessary to adjust its business processes to comply with the standard processes provided.
Minimise the number of business solutions Strive to minimise the number of business solutions used with the aim of delivering best-in-class, joined up, efficient processes, whilst minimising the requirement to interface between business solutions.
Interface/Integrate Where interfacing/integration is required between any elements of the architecture, the Council will require the solution provider to support an SOA/API approach therefore minimising the Council's total cost of ownership.
Business Solution will have vendor supported APIs Ensure that, where required, the business solutions or core components will make their processes available to the engagement layer via a fully supported presentation layer and

independent APIs.

Invest in Engagement Layer
Invest to make the engagement layer robust, responsive, scalable, flexible and channel independent. This will allow the Partnership to react quickly to the changing behaviours and needs of our customers, local businesses and other key stakeholders. The objective will be to attract people to use on-line channels wherever possible, striving for 'digital by desire'.

Consistent user experience through engagement layer
Use the engagement layer to ensure that our stakeholders receive a consistent and high quality service regardless of their channel of choice, including face-to-face, phone, email, and on-line.

Make our services available on other channels
Make its high volume services available to authorised non-council channels and work with these channels to ensure that these services are available where our citizens and local businesses find most useful. Such an approach will maximise the adoption of our on-line services by targeted stakeholders.

Business Applications

Business Functions – Solution Requirements

The core component and business solution elements of the Enterprise Architecture are vital to the smooth running of ICT and future Digital Services. In order to understand our ICT estate a full audit of software and licences is being undertaken.

A 'Current State' analysis will identify how up-to-date our systems are, what improvements in functionality service areas would like, and how the systems are being supported to enable the proactive management of systems towards the future Enterprise Architecture.

Information on core components and business solutions across the Partnership will be maintained in an Information Asset Register. This will enable the Partnership to have a clear view of the cost incurred by each service area or individual member of staff, enabling us to ensure we are only purchasing the licenses required and stop paying for any software which is not required.

We will use this information to wherever possible replace legacy and/or consolidate applications.

We will utilise existing systems wherever possible rather than buying and developing new service specific solutions and this will offer clear savings by reduced licence costs, utilising existing support skills and cover, as well as reducing the requirement for underlying hardware, hosting and database management resources.

To achieve this the Partnership will maintain and publicise an applications register outlining modules and capabilities of existing systems. This systems portfolio will support the rationalisation of systems in use across the two councils and support improved systems integration.

We will make use of training to make more efficient use of applications that we already use and to create a deeper understanding of the applications to promote ideas to improve the systems and processes.

Standardise and Consolidate

Where new business processes require support from information systems the capabilities and sustainability of existing systems will be examined prior to the consideration of new software.

It is important that core components and business solutions remain up-to-date, reliable and fit for purpose. Where practical, any duplication in solutions will be removed and where gaps are identified, suitable solutions will be implemented.

We will seek through the new Enterprise Architecture to standardise and consolidate our existing applications to achieve cost savings, simplify support and aid cross-organisational working. Where practical the ICT Service will seek to work with service teams to standardise similar business processes, simplifying the requirements for supporting information systems.

We will develop and execute an application rationalisation roadmap that allows us to achieve the Enterprise Architecture. Also we will replace key systems as they approach end of life with systems that provide the functionality required and that exploit digital technologies to support the ICT Partnership's future Digital Strategies.

Wherever possible we will source one solution that meets the needs of the Partnership Where this is not practical the best of breed business solutions will be sourced and interfaced as required.

Business Solutions will be sourced in logical groupings designed to minimise their number and interfaces whilst not compromising the desire to deliver best in breed solutions.

Cloud Strategy

The Partnership has agreed a strategy to look at cloud-based solutions when applications and systems come up for replacement or during the implementation of new solutions.

This is not to be confused with the governments suggested 'Cloud First Strategy', which states:

"When procuring new or existing services, public sector organisations should consider and fully evaluate potential cloud solutions first before considering any other option. This approach is mandatory for central government and strongly recommended to the wider public sector."

This fails to accept the increase in cost that most clouds solutions bring. If a cloud solution is the only available solution, is cost neutral or brings considerable other benefits then it should be considered but to ignore self-hosted solutions in the initial evaluation is not a feasible solution for our restricted finances.

Applications Programme Interfaces (APIs)

The interface between systems is essential to support current and future digital transformation ambitions. To enable this we will make sure that Application Programme Interfaces are open and accessible.

Geographic Information Systems

The use of geographically referenced information is changing the face of the internet and the way we interpret and view data. For our services to deliver insight capability we must start to exploit the use of GIS more effectively. GIS currently sits outside of the ICT Partnership.

Corporate Applications

Microsoft Office 365

We currently use Microsoft Office 2007 but the Partnership is planning to move to a Microsoft Windows 10 Operating System and Office 365 which will move its email, word, excel and unstructured data into the cloud during 2019-20. Office 365 will empower all users of the ICT systems, now and into the future. Outside of the 'basic' offers of past Office versions such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook, there is new an increasing offering included at no extra cost. These include Intune, Teams SharePoint and many others.

The continued use of Microsoft tools carries considerable advantages including:

- Local Authority line-of-business applications are heavily integrated with Microsoft tools as standard.
- Financial applications have export routines to Microsoft Excel where the information is modelled for the purposes of making key financial decisions.
- Key business systems such housing systems and revenue and benefit systems are integrated with Microsoft Word for the purpose of producing written letters.

If we were to use open source software as an alternative, the integration would have to be re-written from scratch, and may not even be possible.

The benefit of Microsoft Office 365 is that it is a cloud hosted solution that brings improved system resilience and performance. As an evergreen product the Partnership will benefit from timely upgrades and patching as this will be automatically delivered by Microsoft.

Hosted Desktops

The ICT Partnership's aim is to provide a high performance network connectivity that supports mobile working, enables system interfaces, electronic communication, access to the internet and the support of digital services.

In future new and legacy applications will be presented to users via new hosted (VMWare) desktops.

The Partnership at present uses a Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) called VMWare Horizon 5 which is becoming end of life. VDI enables the provision of the same desktop to HP Zero Clients installed on all desks in every building allowing for great flexibility for staff as well as ease of hot-desking. VDI also allows for the same desktop on any windows-based hardware be it a tablet or laptop.

There is a limitation on Apple operating system which at present fails to work with Horizon version 5. A project is in place to upgrade to VMWare Horizon 7, which will increase speed and stability and is a legislative compliance requirement.

VDI will continue to be a core component with the following benefits;

Flexible working	Users can work from the office, at home or in the community. For example, a user can use Zero Client devices in the office, then go home and continue to access the same applications with the same data on their own laptops or Tablets at home
Reduce bandwidth	All the processing and file sharing is done on the Server, only information to update the screen is transmitted across the network to the user's device and only mouse and keyboard inputs are transmitted back.
Improved Security	Data is only kept on the server therefore isn't lost or taken if a laptop is lost.
Centralised Backup	Data is on the server not on the user's devices so data can easily be backed up

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▪ **Reduced Cost**   VDI is much easier to support and maintain

A Secure and Resilient Infrastructure

Up to date infrastructure is at the heart of any good ICT Strategy providing secure, stable, reliable platform for both virtual and physical systems that provide storage, data flow, analysis and processing of data.

It is important that the lifespan for each element of the infrastructure is planned in to ensure future investment is available to keep the benefits and systems running effectively.

It is important to understand the relationship between the different layers of technology; security or reliability issues in one area will effective the resilient, speed, security and stability of the whole system.

Lack of investment in one area means other investments aren't fully realised or worse put at risk.
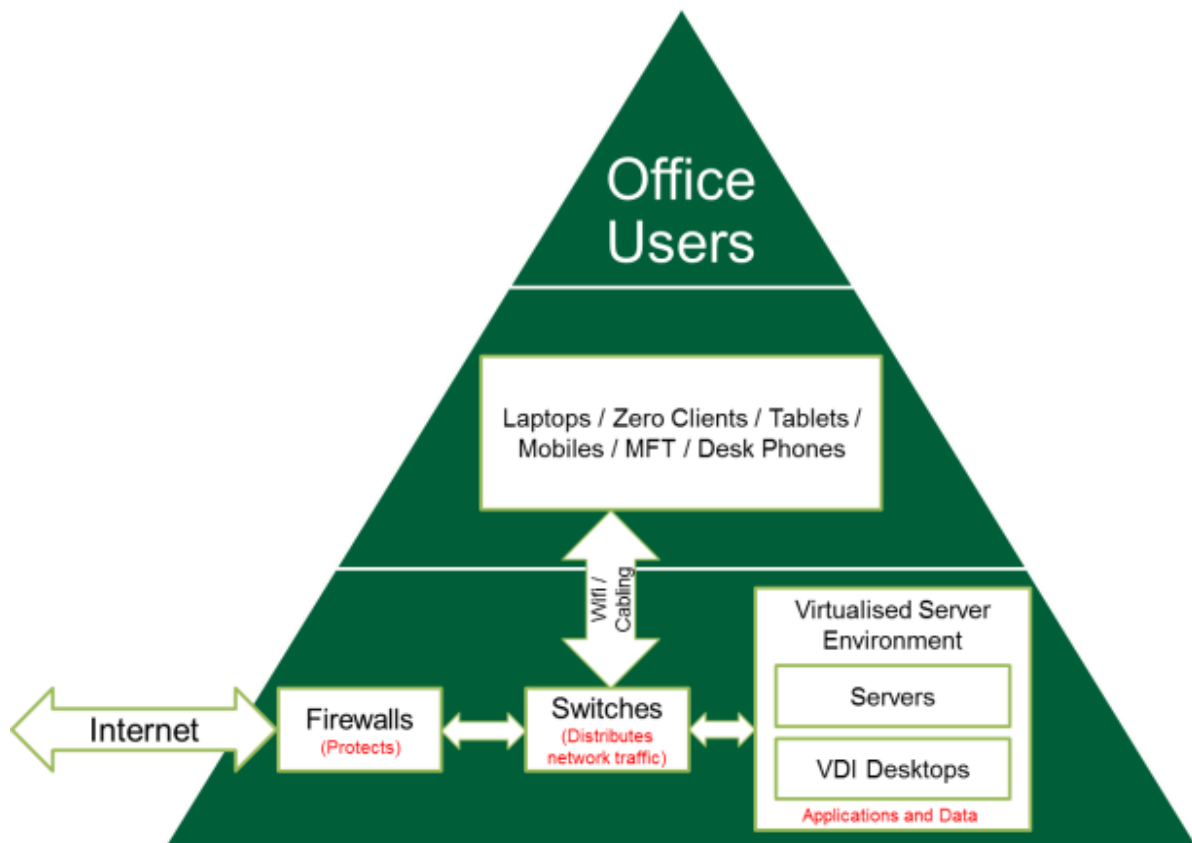
Technology Life Cycle / Rolling Change Programme

Every component of the ICT platform has usable life span; some are determined by the support a supplier is willing to provide, the speed at which it runs, supportability, reliability, compatibility with new systems and many more.

The diagram below gives an indication of the life span of the key components which make up the ICT platform:

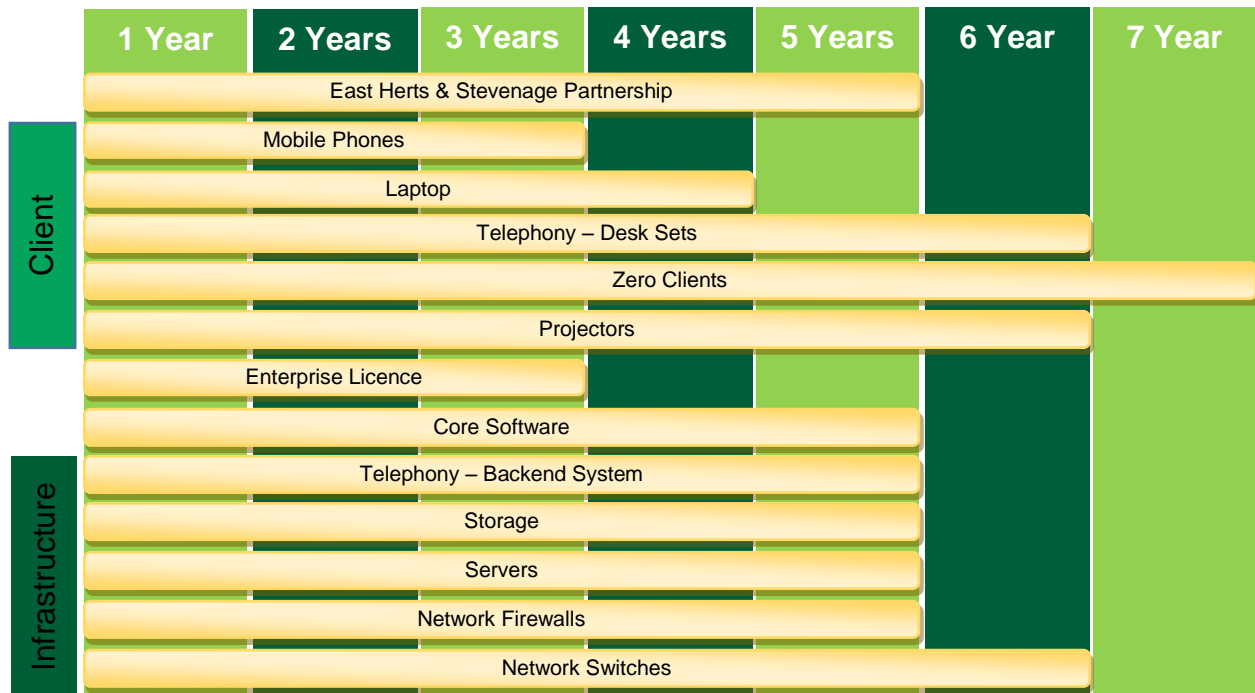|	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years	6 Year	7 Year
Client	East Herts & Stevenage Partnership						
	Mobile Phones						
	Laptop						
	Telephony – Desk Sets						
	Zero Clients						
	Projectors						
	Enterprise Licence						
Infrastructure	Core Software						
	Telephony – Backend System						
	Storage						
	Servers						
	Network Firewalls						
	Network Switches						

Investment in the corporate ICT networks, central servers and storage equipment, mobile computing and desktop device refresh will be phased in accordance with the above lifecycles. This will ensure the ICT infrastructure continues to be "fit for purpose". To support this approach a replacement plan will be established by the PMO to enable good financial planning and effective hardware and software replacement.

Network

The present network devices are aging in most areas, with some elements such as switches being as old as 13 years (at least 8 years beyond its expected life span). This is unsustainable with the average hardware life being 5 years before support from supplier's ends and physical failure start to become regular.

The core cabling will be replaced as part of the Partnership Accommodation Strategy, which is currently under development.

The benefits of a new Network (made up of cabling, switches, Wi-Fi routers and firewalls) include;

- **Reduced Latency**   Improve speed of responses

▪ **Increased Reliability**   Improved availability

▪ **Improved Security**   Reduce chance of security breeches

Several projects have been commissioned to replace the existing network hardware across the board. Alongside this a 5-year hardware replacement plan will be established by the PMO to enable good financial planning but also a structure for known future projects.

The overall network control is in the hands of the Security and Network Team who will rationalise the network and ensure security as a core function.

Dependent on the Enterprise Architecture there may be a future requirement to put in place web acceleration technology that allows the prioritisation of data flow to cloud based services.

Server Provision

At present 95% of our servers are hosted on a virtualised VMWare environment at two locations Daneshill House and Cavendish.

Virtualisation lets us host much of our service on a limited number of physical servers allowing cost savings as wells as supporting our disaster recovery plans and provisioning abilities, not offered by physical servers.

As we gradually move systems to cloud based solutions the requirement may fall. However, our major solution providers are not moving quickly in that direction and is anticipated that with the move to new offices will require a data centre on premise.

Data Centres

The current data centres at Daneshill House and Cavendish will need to be replaced as part of future accommodation strategies being developed by each council the timing of this is still to be determined.

The option of potentially to moving to a single data centre has been considered by the ICT Partnership Board, but due to significant disaster recovery implications it is not recommended at this stage. Currently if one Data Centre stopped working, we have sufficient resilience to continue working from the other.

Multi-Function Devices

The Partnership has recently replaced its' entire Multi-Function Devices (MFD) fleet with devices from Konica Minolta, reducing the number across all sites with fast speed colour machines. The project includes software which monitors all printing allowing controls to limit large print runs and report on which departments are printing and drive down the overall cost of printing. Reduction in machine numbers already brings considerable savings. These machines will be replaced when the contract ends in 2024.

Aligned with the Digital Post project we should see a major reduction in printing within the organisations and the 'appearance' of paper files in the buildings.

Reduction of printing is also part of any data protection strategy, as the move away from any paper-based data to electronic allows greater control and protection.

Strategic Ambition 3: Working Smarter

Enabling Efficiency by ensuring Staff have the digital tools, processes and skills to deliver services effectively

IMPACT	BENEFITS	KEY DELIVERABLES
Enabling the partnership to redesign processes/services to be more accessible and efficient, producing better, quicker and more consistent outcomes for customers. Using Digital by Design principles to automate business processes. Recognising employees as a key organisational resource and ensuring access to appropriate technology and information to promote efficient and effective working. Enabling financial stability and the promotion of environmental good practice.	Operational efficiency through the effective use of existing or new technologies. Reduced waste through automated processing and streamlined manual procedures taking opportunities to remove bureaucracy. Improved service delivery through operational consistency.	- Standardise the mobile devices and operating systems to be supported by the ICT Service to ensure effective support. - Service catalogue that captures the range of hardware on offer to support efficient working - Promote Digital by Design principles throughout the organisations - Develop a new approach to adoption and change management and modern service management to enable services to accelerate the adoption of change - Develop Digital Transformation Strategies and Programmes that review and exploit technology to ensure the greatest operational benefit being gained - Capture efficiencies and lessons learned to avoid cost and effort - Design and Implement ICT profiles, competencies and a supporting ICT learning offer

The Partnership must have workforces that possess the right skills to make sure both organisations can provide customer focused services and deliver improved outcomes through collaboration, innovation and integration.

Therefore staff in future will have access to the devices and software they need to deliver a high level of service and will be equipped to use them.

Mobile ICT (Hardware)

The move to a more flexible and digital workforce where employees will be able to work in the community, at home and via hot desking will be facilitated through the effective provisioning of hardware such as laptops, tablets and smart phones.

The Partnership will be looking to minimise the number of hardware and operating systems we support to enable the ICT Service to offer a higher level of support.

Currently the service has to support over 2,000 devices, which use a range of different operating systems. This is unsustainable in the future therefore we will only supply Partnership owned hardware on the following operating systems:

- Android OS
- Windows 10 Mobile

Due to the flexibility of our VDI solution staff and Members may be able to install and access their hosted desktops on their privately owned devices and with the advent of Office 365 will give them the option to access email via their web browser. Security restrictions will be required and enforced on devices to meet data protection requirements.

During 2019 the Partnership will be moving to a Microsoft Windows 10 Operating System which will mean that a large number of mobile devices such as laptops will need to be replaced as they are compatible with the new operating software.

Currently there are no annual budgets in place for device replacement. In future the Partnership will correct this by allocating a rolling replacement capital budget to ensure the timely provisioning of new devices.

A service catalogue will be created that enables staff and Members to understand the range of hardware on offer and that can be supported by the ICT Service.

Building Digital Capabilities

As technology increasingly supports how the Partnership delivers services, then to engage in, and contribute to tech-driven business environments. To be able to quickly learn the next big emerging technology functions, and to grow professionally, all employees from senior management to apprentices will need to learn much more about the Partnership's critical business systems and applications; their capabilities and adjacencies, their strategic and operational value, and the particular possibilities they enable. This means individuals must become tech fluent.

The three layers of tech fluency are:

- **Basic** – a basic understanding of enterprise technology principles and systems makes it possible for employees to understand technology concepts, enabling them to follow technology trends, differentiate between tech "myth" and fact, and understand how the tools they use each day contribute, directly or indirectly, to business success.
- **Intermediate** – tech fluency becomes more role and business function specific consisting of a detailed working knowledge of how technology capabilities and their adjacencies can drive new revenue and open fresh opportunities in the near term. At this intermediate level, employees may be able to understand the possibilities of technology more broadly and harness system capabilities to create efficiencies and revenue, drive strategy and enhance the customer experience**.**
- **Advanced** – individuals can sense further disruptive opportunities that emerging innovation may make possible three or five years down the line – and use that

foresight to help councils to transform and take full advantage of commercial opportunities.

For most employees across the Partnership the level of tech fluency should move towards the basis and intermediate levels; while the Digital Delivery Teams should be at least at an intermediate or ideally at an advanced level.

As the trusted adviser to the Partnership the ICT Service must build upon its knowledge to possess an advanced level of tech fluency on emerging technologies. In addition to learning programmes, this will require capacity among the team to research, understand and develop use cases to be able to be aware of the possibilities, test viability and to advice the Partnership effectively.

ICT has to be seen as a core competency for staff. The Partnership will undertake workstyle assessments and establish a set of ICT profiles that can be applied to different job roles across both organisations. The profiles will help to determine the ICT competency levels, services and tools required to perform roles in the most cost effective way.

The Partnership will build a culture of continuous learning through learning programmes that help employees to develop technology skills and knowledge quickly. To meet this need the Partnership will adopt the following strategies:

- **Make technology learning programmes self -directed, digital and dynamic.** Traditional learning management programmes are being replaced by new technologies for curation, delivery and mobile use that put learners in the driver's seat. Moreover, a wide variety of low-cost learning opportunities are emerging in various online and video channels and will be used to target improvements in tech fluency.
- **Tie learning to professional development.** The Partnership will offer a curriculum focused on the baseline learning requirements of given roles. This will help people to develop their knowledge and skills to fulfil their current roles and also to prepare for other jobs within the organisations.
- **Make continuous learning opportunities part of the corporate brand for both councils**. The employment brands of both councils need to be visible and attractive and learning including tech fluency – needs to be part of the brands.

Service Transformation through effective Adoption and Change Management

Change is difficult to achieve and requires input, direction and support from the leadership of both councils to deliver the ICT vision and ambitions set out in this strategy.

Both councils have aspirations to deliver service transformation through ICT and digital enablement. As already stated both councils will be developing digital transformation strategies that will help set out how they will use digital platforms, hosted desktops, Office 365, business applications and innovative technology to redesign their service delivery models and supporting processes. This will potential

include the development of channel shift strategies and new approaches to service redesign that optimise technology and new ways of working.

The Partnership will develop a new approach to adoption and change management (ACM) and modern service management (MSM). This will help enable both councils to drive and accelerate the adoption of change, by engaging and guiding end users and ICT professionals to understand the new ways of working and the impact and benefits of those changes. ACM and MSM will work to enable both workforces to maximise the benefit from new ICT and digital services and tools, facilitating their tasks and increasing their productivity. Empowering ICT staff and end users to deliver and adopt these new tools will help the Partnership to realise business value from its technology investments such as Microsoft Office 365.

As both councils establish their transformation programmes, they must define the resource requirements to provide digital services support.

Both councils will need to review their planned and in-flight digital initiatives as an immediate priority to determine how to meet current commitments against their transformation programmes and align wherever possible.

Given the potential volume and complexity of transformation required, the Partnership will look to using a combination of internal and external sourcing strategies to meet future demand. This includes the consideration of a Technology Advisory Partner(s).

Technology Advisory Partner(s)

The ICT Partnership will consider the value a Technology Advisory Partner (s)will bring in that they could help to deliver the following three workstreams:

1. **Modern Workplace - Office 365 Enablement and Adoption**
   - To enable Office 365 and on-board SBC/EHC to a new technology platform
   - To empower SBC/EHC users with the knowledge and technical tooling to use, manage and extend the Office 365 platform, including Exchange Online, Teams, SharePoint Online, One Drive – and maximise investment through the full suite of Office 365 applications.
   - To deliver an agreed compliant platform that meets the needs of the Partnership and users' needs.

2. **Digital Strategy and Roadmap**
   - To work with SBC and EHC leadership teams to develop a joint digital strategy which :
     o Aligns to the realisation of the councils' business strategies and objectives
     o Provides a realistic roadmap to the delivery of new digital capabilities
     o Shows how new digital services will enable sustained improvements in customer outcomes and employee empowerment

3. **New Ways of Working – Adoption and Change Management // Modern Service Management**

- To enable SBC and EHC to drive and accelerate adoption of change, by engaging and guiding end users and IT professionals to understand the new ways of working and the impact and benefits of those changes
- Adoption and change management and modern service management will work to enable managers and employees to maximise the benefit from new services and tools, facilitating their tasks and increasing their productivity. Empowering IT staff and end-users to deliver and adopt these new tools will help SBC and EHC to realise business value from its technology investment

Encouraging Innovation

The ICT Partnership will focus on innovative technologies to reduce costs, such as the use of business intelligence to improve decision making and artificial intelligence to manage automated workflows. Business Intelligence (BI) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) require access to information across disparate systems to use this data to continuously improve its processes to be more efficient and effective. New systems capitalising on these extensive data sets, known as Big Data, and designed to reflect the structure of data have entered the software market and the ICT Partnership will look to maximise the potential use of Business Intelligence.

The ICT Partnership will use existing tools such as Business Objects, Excel and specialised open source software to provide business intelligence capabilities. System interfaces, web services and electronic forms will continue to be developed to support the delivery of digital transformation.

A key enabler of innovation is emerging technologies which provide new ways of completing processes or tasks, provide new insight, or deliver services that were not simply not possible before. Both councils as part of their digital transformation strategies will therefore look to utilise innovative technologies such as:

- Chat Bots or Virtual Assistants - There is an increasing take-up of the use of chat-bots, even in the home they are becoming common place in devices such as Google Home and Amazon Echo. Commercial use of "Virtual Agents" powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) allows a relativity cheap way of responding to customers with simple requests or need of documentation.
- Internet of Things (IoT) / Smart Devices - There are opportunities to use emerging technology that now being built into electronic devices or can be added, such as sensors. This can both help manage office spaces, housing stock and even help in day to day life. Although it still early days for IoT, it is fast becoming an important part of people's lives and integration/interaction between Smart Devices such as Chat Bot's, smart phones/watches can provide all sorts of benefits, one device triggering an action on another device is already common place.

Innovation Board

The Partnership will create an Innovation Board where staff can present ideas on how existing and new technology could be used to improve service delivery and remove inefficiencies in the way that they work.

Innovation Forum

An Innovation Forum to discuss emerging industry trends and technology will promote idea generation across the Partnership. For example the Forum will investigate how to increase the use of cloud services and technology, how the customer and user experience can be enhanced through digital, or how to use emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things and Robotics to improve business processes and service delivery. This will help embed a change culture across the Partnership, limiting duplication of effort and investment and increasing knowledge sharing.

Innovation Governance Framework

Innovation is increasingly important for the Council as it targets improved outcomes for residents. However, risks associated with innovation must be correctly managed. A Partnership wide innovation governance framework will define processes for generating, exploring, prototyping and piloting ideas in a sustainable manner.

This framework will become a common mechanism for governing innovation that is being driven from internal initiatives. The governance framework will be aligned with the transformation programmes of each council.

Business Cases and supporting Digital Transformation Roadmaps will be required where technology is being used to deliver business transformation or improvements in service delivery.

Strategic Ambition 4: Improved ICT Governance and Security

Business continuity, Information Management and Governance and Security

IMPACT	BENEFITS	DELIVERABLES
Delivering robust and resilient safeguards ensuring ongoing availability of priority services and a means of recovery in the event of a disaster. Safeguarding the Partnership's data by ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation and security standards. Improving the maturity of the management and governance of information assets and delivering appropriate arrangements to ensure compliance with for example General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Enhancing security to better address cyber security threat vectors. Ensuring our information assets are effectively managed in line with relevant legislation through the deployment of appropriate technology standards and solutions	Ensures availability and continuity of services to our customers and the management of risk related to the Partnership's ICT assets. Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and good practice standards.	- Maintain compliance with legislative and agreed security standards (e.g. PSN and GDPR) ensuring standards are applied in proportionate way so as not to stifle our ability to deliver effective services. - Enhance arrangements for business continuity utilising mobile devices and remote-working arrangements. - Achieve compliance with Cyber Essential and enhance the Partnership's awareness in relation to the growing cyber threat vectors - Implement appropriate software/procedures to support archiving and retention in support of Information Management Strategies - Establish effective ICT and Digital delivery teams - Creation of a Members ICT Group - Technology and governance implementation plans

Working in a disjointed and silo manner and without an Enterprise Architecture causes a cacophony of duplicate processes and technologies, architecture in a distributed way. Because of this approach projects have taken longer to deliver and failed to deliver a good return on investment in the form of increased productivity, cost reduction and/or improved user experience.

A lack of effective ICT governance in the past has encouraged a silo mentality to the design and delivery of ICT. If this were to continue without proper co-ordination architectural disorder will continue to occur.

ICT is a key enabler for both councils and therefore in future the Partnership will take a more disciplined approach to commissioning of services, driven by strategic objectives and managed via a strong business and ICT aligned governance framework.

Governance Framework

Recent enhancements include the creation of the ICT Partnership Board (ITPB) and the ICT Steering Group (ITSG), which control and manage the governance of ICT for the Partnership. In addition a Member ICT Working Group that represents all political parties will be created across the Partnership to help ensure the effective governance and delivery of this strategy and ICT services.
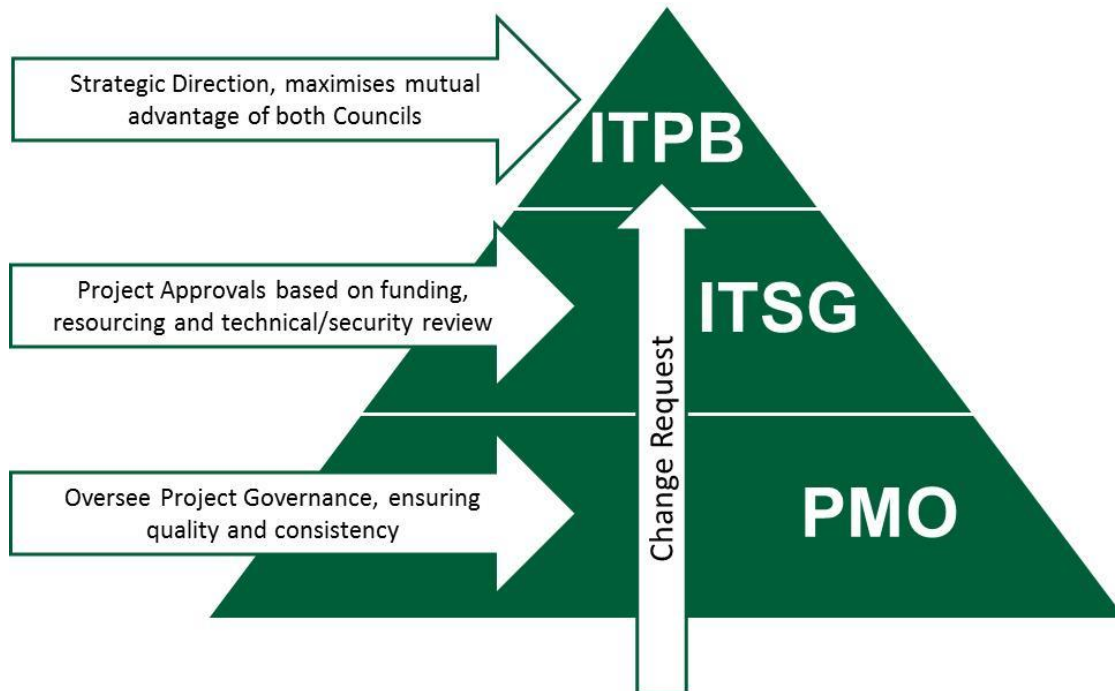
Benefits of good ICT governance include:

- **Benefit Realisation**   Ongoing and future initiatives meet Partnership goals and aspirations

    Partnership benefit from the synergy of merging systems, gaining efficiencies and cost reductions

    Business Cases are well defined with realistic benefits defined and have been approved by appropriate authority

- **Change Management**   Targeted investment on priorities based on available funding, resources, Policies/Legislation/Security, Partnership needs, to increase productivity and deliver efficiency processes

    Change Champions to ensure adoption of new systems across the Partnership and wider community

- **Risk Management**   Ensuring stakeholders are aware of the risks associated with ongoing and future initiatives

ICT Quality and Standards

Digital leadership is needed if we are to nurture a digital culture. To enable the ICT Partnership to do this we are adopting Government Digital Services and Local Government Digital Service Standards, which will ensure we deliver and design high quality end to end digital services that use open standards and make data open by default, accessible and secure.

The ICT Partnership is focused on the outcomes delivered by ICT and Digital Services and therefore has focused on prescribing what standards are required to ensure high quality, scalable and flexible ICT services.

Quality and Standards	Description
Vendor supported APIs	Ensure that, where required, the business solutions will make their processes available via a fully supported presentation layer and independent APIs built to the Representational State Transfer (REST) Standard.
Security Rules	Adopting best practice approaches for security management to protect users, customers, partner organisations and the Council drawing on best practice from the Government Digital Service and other associated bodies.
Information Management	Adopting best practice approaches for information management and working towards information security (ISO 27001 and ISO 27002) and records management standards (ISO 14589).
Identity Access Management	Framework of policies and technologies for ensuring that the approved people have the appropriate access to technology resources.
Website Management	Our preferred approach to websites will be responsive in order ensure that content can be displayed on the customer's choice of device.
Agile	Our preferred approach to manage business change in ICT is through agile project management and delivery techniques.
Cloud computing	To support a more cohesive infrastructure as well as the sharing and re-use of services/solutions, we will explore cloud computing with the aim of increasing our agility and reducing the cost of ICT.
End user device	The Council's aim is that, as much as possible, the workforce will be able to work from any location on any suitable Council or non-Council end-user device through a defined Mobile Device Policy.
Green ICT	ICT will be used to maximise efficiency, minimise environmental impact and support the wider carbon reduction policies, of the Partnership.
Information strategy	To recognise the value of information that it holds, the Council will optimise secure, efficient, open and safe creation and the use and re-use of information assets.
Channel of Choice	The Partnership is committed to providing easy-to-use, trusted and flexible information and transactional services that support our 'digital by desire' approach. For those for whom digital channels are less accessible we will ensure access is maintained through a network of 'assisted digital' service provision.
Social Media	Social media enables greater dialogue and collaboration between the Partnership and its stakeholders. It also provides benefits in terms of its reach, accessibility, immediacy and ease with which content can be disseminated.

Securing the ICT Infrastructure, Systems and Data

The ICT Partnership recognises the increased reliance and dependency on ICT systems to support the redesign of council services enable the delivery of efficiency savings and meet the needs of our customer's means that these systems have to be protected from cyber-attacks.

At its heart the storing, processing and delivery of data is what the ICT systems deliver. As part of that work we need to protect the data under our control and ensure it only gets delivered to the correct parties, internally and externally. Therefore we are required to adhere to legislation and ensure an ICT infrastructure which is designed with security built in.

In accordance with the National Cyber Security Strategy 2016-2021 the ICT Partnership will take the necessary "DEFEND" measures for the protection of information systems (hardware, software and associated infrastructure), the data on them and the services they provide, from unauthorised access, harm or misuse.

Creation of a Security and Network Team has enabled focused work on security requirements. The ageing hardware is not conducive to good security and considerable work is required to get us to an acceptable standard. This will need to be in co-ordination with the Information Governance Team.

Projects have been identified which are high on the security radar such as firewall and switch replacement. There is also the requirement for network and security monitoring tools to enable active protection measures. These areas have been identified in several cyber security audits as areas of high concern.

There is also a continued requirement for all staff and members to be trained on data protection requirements of their position.

In summary the main security activities planned during the lifetime of the strategy will be:

- The deployment of the latest antivirus, malware, email filtering and encryption software to protect the ICT Partnership's systems and data across all networks. The achievement of the Public Services Network (PSN) Code of Compliance will continue to be an annual objective.
- The ICT Partnership will annually achieve Cyber Essentials Accreditation from 2020/21 onwards
- The ICT Service will implement effective defences to the network, data and system and have in place cyber incident reporting measures and be able to respond effectively to cyber-attack, maintain functions and recovering quickly through appropriate service and business continuity arrangements.
- Implement "Security by Design" by carrying out cyber risk assessments when selecting new systems, online services or implementing digital processed.
- Ensure that cyber security skills and awareness within the Council are maintained to mitigate the cyber security threats including the monitoring and reporting of incidents.

ICT Policies

The policies the Partnership create and work to, are the bedrock of any ICT security culture. They must be universal to all staff and members regardless of the seniority of the individuals involved.

A standardised policy framework ensures that a high level of security is met across the entire Partnership's network. To have differing ICT policies applied across both councils is not only technically difficult but will cause problems when it comes to enforcement, so the polices need to be universal.

Policies need to be relevant to the work of the Partnership and should not be used as way to solve a data protection problem that can be prevented by a software solution. The first stance should always be a technical response to any issues and policies should only be used when human interaction needs to be defined and limited in its scope.

All staff must be aware of the policies the Partnership has in place and to aid adherence they need to be written in a concise and plan language template. In the event of a non-adherence of any policy there needs to be a robust response including where the circumstances require disciplinary sanctions to enforce the seriousness of the policy in questions.

Policies required include:

ICT Related Policies	
Policies	**Status**
Acceptable Usage Policy	Written and gone to HR for consultation
Data Protection Policy	Completed and on intranet
Mobile Device Policy	In draft Security Team to approve
ICT Monitoring Policy	Security Team to write
ICT Remote Working Policy	Security Team/MGT Team to write
Social Media Policy	Completed and on intranet
Data sharing Policy (Contractors)	Security Team to write

Protocols	
Policies	**Status**
Security Breach Response Protocol	Security Team to write
Change Control Protocol	In draft

ICT Service

The ICT department supplies the ICT infrastructure, support, hardware and software for the Partnership.

The Partnership must create ICT and Digital teams, roles and make data driven decisions that reflect the aims of both councils.

The Partnership will gradually reorganise the ICT and Digital delivery teams as related roadmap milestone items are achieved. This has already involved the creation of a dedicated Programme Management Office and the introduction of security and networking capabilities.

Stevenage Borough Council's Assistant Director for Digital and Transformation will oversee the execution of the strategy and will report to the ICT Partnership Board and ICT Portfolio Holders.
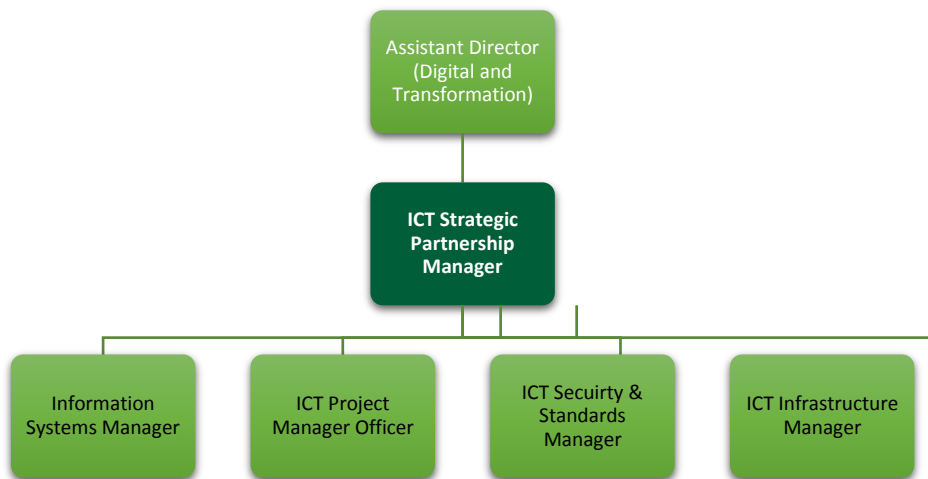
ICT Service Teams

The ICT Service has 8 sub-service teams:
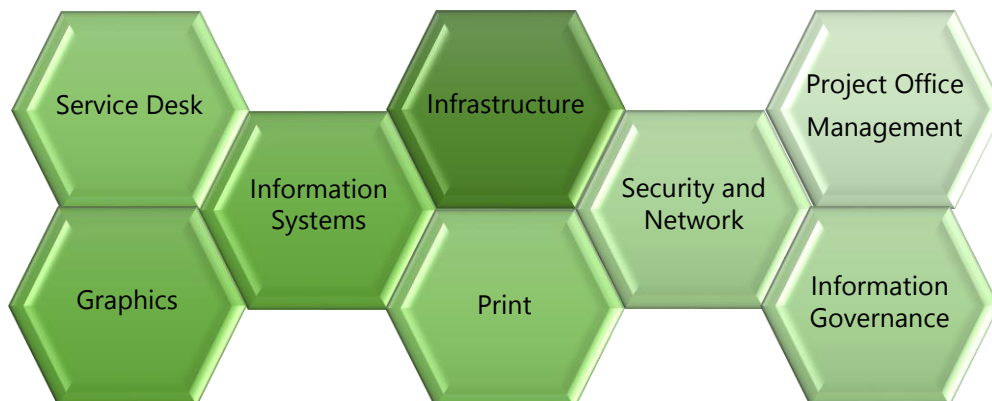
Service Desk

As part of the recent ICT restructure the Service Desk has been increased to 5 staff plus a Team Leader and a Support Manager.

The Service Desk is the portal for all request of the department, which if not resolved are then handed over to the Second Line Support depending on the nature of the work required. Statistics are collected on the volume and resolution of requests and presented to the governance boards for review.

Information Systems

The Information Systems department supports and resolves issues with the software and databases the Partnership requires to run its business, this is separated into three categories:

- **Corporate Software**   Software required for all users of the Partnership such as Office, PDF readers etc.

- **Business Software**   Software specific to a department such as Housing department requiring Northgate Housing to run its operations.

- **Databases**   The Partnership runs several data bases predominantly SQL and one instance of Oracle. It is not envisaged that this will change as focusing on one database type allows for easier support from the departments regardless of the overreaching software.

Infrastructure

The Infrastructure Team is responsible for running the core infrastructure providing a reliable, resilient, secure platform for the networking, telephony and servers.

At present this team deals with all invoices with an ICT component, which creates a large admin overhead for ICT managers. This is to be reviewed to see where those invoices with a single department focus can be dealt with locally to reduce this overhead.

Security & Network Team

As of April 2019, the Partnership has a Security & Network Team consisting of two posts, managed by the ICT Services Security & Standard Manager. These roles ensure the security standards are set and adhered. They also ensure that all ICT provision and planned projects meets or exceed security requirements.

Project Management Office (PMO)

The Partnership has created and ICT Project Management Office (PMO) which will consist of one PMO Manager and two Project Managers.

The purpose of the PMO is to oversee all ICT related projects from inception, guide them through the Governance Boards (ITSG, ITPB) and if approved to final delivery. As part of this work they will engage with the business to identify future projects and help the departments.

Risks associated with the implementation of any programme will be reduced through the use of structure techniques for programme and project management.

Alongside the project work the PMO will oversee the internal auditing for software, hardware and licensing to ensure compliance and control.

In order to maintain a close working relationship between the ICT function and services across the Partnership, regular account management meetings will be organised. These include annual meetings between the ICT Strategic Partnership Manager, the ICT Programme Management Officer and Assistant Directors and Heads of Service.

Information Governance

A proposal is being writing to create an Information Governance Team to cover the Partnership's DPA, GDPR and FOIO requirements. This team will work closely with the Security & Network Team to ensure full legislative compliance.

At present there is a single Data Protection role in the Information & Governance management. A business case is being proposed to create a team of staff to deal with all data protection regarding data process including adherence by the Partnership, departments and staff to required legislations, with a focus on the data protection act (DPA 2018) and general data protection regulation (GDPR 2016). The two acts constitute most requirements that the Partnership must adhere to in the realms of data security.

If a team is not created to adhere to these acts, then the work will have to be undertaken by the individual department's staff.

At present the Partnership is failing to adhere to this legislation, but several projects have been commissioned to address this issue alongside the creation of Information Governance Team.

Print Room

The Print Room Team is currently under review and maybe relocated away from ICT, therefore it outside the scope of this strategy. EHDC has decided to end the partnership arrangement regarding print.

Graphics

The Graphics Team is currently under review and may be relocated away from ICT, therefore it outside the scope of this strategy. It will remain part of the partnership agreement.

Sourcing Strategy

The convergence to a single ICT strategy for the Partnership and associated ICT and Digital Technology roadmaps will enable us to make strategic investment decisions, based on agreed objectives and outcomes as opposed to short term tactical business priorities and decisions.

The Partnerships approach to sourcing ICT products and services is an important aspect of how it will deliver its ICT vision and ensure value for money is achieved.

Based on current ICT market trends such as cloud computing mean that it is not practical to think that a single supplier approach will deliver the best results for the Partnership. Making use of the market will allow the Partnership to take advantage of 'best of breed' services and harness external capabilities and innovation.

The Partnership will commission the most suitable ICT that provides flexibility of service, performance and cost that makes the best of the ICT market.

We will conform to our future Enterprise Architecture and the associated design and guiding principles to deliver clear and measured ICT. We must avoid poor decision making around the choice of new systems, whilst supporting the future consolidation and rationalisation of our existing 'as-is' ICT estate.

As part of the new operating model the partnership will develop a commissioning framework for business as usual and steady state ICT.

Making technology purchases in line with this strategy is an important discipline. Straying from what this strategy defines will have a long term impact on the businesses ability to execute the roadmap in a timely way.

1. Purchasing criteria will stipulate minimum levels that each technology purchase should conform to. This criteria is being formulated.
2. All technology purchases will be reviewed by the ICT Steering Group and the technology strategy owner.
3. All existing purchases will be reviewed against this new criteria to help understand our digital landscape and if it is in keeping with this strategy
4. Tracking adherence to this standard (and the gaps, if any) will be the responsibility of the ICT Service

Strategic technology purchases will each be successful when a virtual team is formed, comprising of stakeholders across the Partnership which will include:

• Procurement
• Partner Management
• Data and Architecture
• Project Management
• Information Management and Governance

Purchases will follow the summarised pattern below, as well as the principles set out above.

Business and financial needs being met

- Having a champion who understands the business need
- Pricing model (i.e. a transparent pricing model in keeping with cost visibility)
- Contracts compliant to the new contract clauses relating to data and intellectual property ownership)
- Meets service level minimums (availability, performance, modes of support)

Strategic

- Complies with principles
- Is purchased with our customers in mind
- Can't be done with existing tools
- Enables us to consolidate other tools into it
- Doesn't require tailoring such that the real cost of ownership defeats the bsuiness case

Technical needs being met

- Product is in line with reference architecture and strategic design principles
- Browser based as required
- Use of well documented APIs
- Compatibility of APIs with our digital platforms
- No code or low code, absolute clarity on skill requirements
- Compatibility with out chosen identity and authenication providers
- Assurance level and controls in place proportionate to its use
- General Data Protection Regulation impact

With criteria in place the ICT Partnership can ensure business decisions are made based on data. Even where a system does not meet some of the criteria, it may still be chosen, but it is done so based on the Partnership being aware of and accepting its shortcomings.

This practical process of evaluation being followed ensures record keeping and continuity at important times, such as contract renewal points.

Supporting Capabilities

Each council requires easy access to ICT and Digital resources, with the appropriate capability and experience, which are committed to meeting and exceeding the needs of the Partnership and its customers.

Our Sourcing strategy will enable the Partnership to have access to external expertise to ensure our services continually and sustainably develop and keep up with the constantly changing technology landscape.

The objective is to have the correct skills that the Partnership can access to ensure ICT solutions meet the needs of its customers.

ICT and Digital Implementation Plans

The Partnership is taking a medium to longer term strategic view of the development and deployment of ICT and digital services. To support this we have produced a Strategic ICT Plan which can be seen in Appendix B it captures the known projects associated to each of the four strategic ICT ambitions.

Further roadmaps will be produced to stimulate discussion about the longer term direction of travel. The intention is for iterations of work programmes to be developed, each of which will be published with a corresponding implementation roadmap. The plans will be submitted for approval in line with the governance arrangements of the Partnership, culminating in an evolving ICT Strategy programme being presented to the ICT Partnership Board on annual basis.

The first two of these will be:

- **Enterprise Architecture –** this will be an all domains roadmap, incorporating the Partnership's consolidation, simplification and standardisation of business systems. It will detail the required Architecture building blocks for the creation of our future architecture and ICT operating model. It will ensure projects are aligned strategically, as part of the Enterprise Architecture.
- **Digital Strategy –** following the development of a new digital strategy (ies) a digital transformation roadmap will be produced that sets out how each council is going to enhance its online service offer and use digital solutions to improve staff productivity and achieve process automation.

ICT and Digital Investment

As the Partnership moves more services into Cloud, funding will move away from Capital to Revenue funding.

If we are to become a true 'Intelligence Led' Partnership, then ICT will need to be as flexible as our business functions, utilising capacity on demand methods and delivering 'Utility Based' or 'Pay and Use' ICT – designing our ICT by using our design and guiding principles to balance Value for Money against security and risk compliance.

To do so we will need over the next five years to rebalance capital investment (CAPEX) on bought and paid for ICT technology with an operating expenditures (OPEX or revenue) Pay and Use model removing the inevitable stranded investment in technology that rapidly becomes out-dated – this will need to be factored into the Medium Term Financial Strategies of both councils.

As an example; new servers run faster, use less energy and provide more computing power every year. It doesn't make sense to invest in equipment that's surpassed by the very next model.

The rapid use of Cloud computing, commissioning and managed services shows that many things that were on premise are now provided by external Cloud based service providers such as Microsoft Azure, Amazon and Google. By utilising Cloud computing in the future it is anticipated that we will reduce long term ICT costs.

SBC's Capital requirements for the project deliverables currently known at the time of writing the strategy can be seen in Appendix C and the Revenue requirements have been captured within the ICT Strategy covering Executive Report date 9 October 2019.

The Software Audit and the Enterprise Architecture once designed will help to determine what software investment is required and where software and hardware can potentially be rationalised which in turn could deliver revenue savings for the Partnership. These additional requirements along with future digital transformation resourcing demands will need to be captured within both council's Medium Term Financial Strategies and Plans.

Value Delivery

Once solutions have been delivered, ensuring the Partnership is realising the improvements and efficiencies that are highlighted within business cases will be essential. Benefits realisation therefore will be reported monthly or quarterly through to the ICT Partnership Board.

Measuring Success

There are four key measures of success for this strategy:

1. Empowered customers through the increased take up of digital services and evidenced through outstanding customer feedback
2. The development and implementation of an agreed Enterprise Architecture that enables the rationalisation and consolidation of business systems
3. Significant improvements in the performance of core ICT services including the adoption and deployment of the likes of Office 365 and new hosted desktop technology
4. A resilient and secure ICT infrastructure that provides the required foundation to build front facing digital services

Other measures include:

✓ Our ability to execute high priority aspects of the published roadmaps
✓ The positive use of data to create and successfully launch new services and measurable improvements to existing services

✓ Presentation of actionable information to internal and external audiences
✓ Increased registrations and voluntary enrolment onto digital services by customers

Performance Management and Progress Reporting

A number of measures are to be put in place as part of an ICT Strategy Scorecard to ensure that the regular performance management and progress monitoring is carried out.

An ICT management KPIs report will be produced monthly for consideration of the ICT Partnership Board. This document will contain details of security incidents, the number of calls received by the service desk, the percentage of responses achieved within the service level targets, the percentage of time the systems are available and customer satisfaction survey results.

In addition a monthly highlight report will be produced by the Programme Management Office that will be used to monitor progress against the ICT roadmaps, giving full transparency to the state of all projects and programmes.

The new Members ICT Group will receive quarterly reports covering performance against the performance indicators in the ICT scorecard and also a progress update against the ICT roadmap and a summary of the benefits realised.They will function as a reference group and updates will be provided by the Partnership

ICT Strategy Scorecard

The ICT Service will report on the following key measures of success throughout the lifetime of the ICT Strategy, targeting performance improvement against the baseline year of 2018/19 where applicable. The scorecard will be reviewed annually to reflect the changes needs of the ICT Partnership and also to take into account the new Enterprise Architecture and Digital Strategy (ies).

Indicators	Baseline Performance 2018/19	Target 2019/20	Target 2020/21	Target 2021/22
Website availability		99.9%	99.9%	99.9%
Maintain Optimum server process capacity		75%	75%	75%
Percentage availability of the data network across the ICT Partnership		99.9%	99.9%	99.9%
Reduction in email storage requirements following introduction of Microsoft Office 365				
Percentage annual Service Continuity Test that support business continuity plans	N/A	N/A	100%	100%
Percentage of cyber risk assessments	N/A	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of cyber protection software deployed on mobile devices e.g. laptops and tablets	N/A	100%	100%	100%
Annual PSN Compliance Certification	100%	100%	100%	100%
Annual Cyber Security Essentials Accreditation	N/A	N/A	100%	100%
Percentage of staff with an email account who have completed the ICT Partnership's mandatory information management and data protection online training	N/A	80%	100%	100%
ICT User satisfaction with ICT Services			80%	90%
Customer satisfaction with ICT Service Desk			80%	90%
Reduction in ICT Service Desk enquiries	N/A	3%	10%	20%
Percentage of customers who rated the overall performance in ICT Project Management as good or excellent	N/A	N/A	80%	80%
Capital to Revenue funding ratio	N/A			
Percentage reduction in internal print costs		5%	10%	30%

Appendix A: Governance Board Terms of References

ICT Partnership Board (ITPB)	
The Partnership Board is responsible for the strategic direction of the Service ensuring that the benefits of partnership are maximised to the mutual advantage of both Councils.	
Members	
Tom Pike Strategic Director and Deputy CEO (SBC)	Helen Standen Deputy Chief Executive (EHDC)
Phil Emmet **Finance Business Partner (SBC)**	**Nicola Munro** **Finance Business Partner (EHDC)**
Simon Russell **Strategic ICT & Partnership Manager CTO (Partnership)**	
Mandate (including but not limited to)	
Determining the strategic direction of the Shared Services	
Overseeing the preparation of separate ICT Strategy for each Authority, including ensuring that the benefits of partnership are maximised to the mutual advantage of both Councils	
Resolving conflicts between competing interests amongst the Authorities collectively and individually relating to the shared Services, the Shared Services Board and / or the Service	
Setting, monitoring and reviewing service performance	
Reviewing customer satisfaction and feedback	
Determining the Partnership Budget and contribution from each Authority, on the basis of reasonable information provided by the Head of Shared Services	

ICT Steering Group (ITSG)

The ITSG approves upcoming projects with an ICT element. This is to ensure that there are the correct ICT resources available to the project and that the correct process has been followed to ensure that financial, joint working and data protection elements have been satisfied before project approval. The PMO will work with departments to ensure that the correct processes are being followed.

Members

Helen Standen Deputy Chief Executive (EHDC)	**Benjamin Wood** Head of Communications Strategy & Policy (EHDC)
Craig Miller Assistant Director - Stevenage Direct Services (SBC)	**Carol Bulloch** Shared Services Manager, Systems Support & Control (Partnership)
Isabel Brittain Head of Strategic Finance & Property (EHDC)	**Jaine Cresser** Assistant Director - Housing and Investment (SBC)
Richard Protheroe Interim Strategic Director (SBC)	**Simon Russell** Strategic ICT & Partnership Manager CTO (Partnership)
Su Tarran Head of Revenues & Benefits Shared Service (Partnership)	

Mandate (including but not limited to)

|	
Develop and sustain the ICT plan for the SCB-EHC Group (referred to as the Partnership Group) and approval Partnership Board. In order to accomplish its activities IT Steering Group will	Collect ICT related information from any business area of the Partnership Group as required;
	Coordinate the ICT components of the ICT plans from all units across the Partnership Group
Coordinate the IT components of the ICT plans from all units across the Partnership Group	
Develop and recommend Partnership Group policy with relation to IT.	
In line with SIAS recommendations, IT Steering Group will perform the function of Solutions Design Authority within the Shared ICT Service, the responsibilities of which should include, but not be limited to:	Identifying appropriate technologies in response to the challenges faced by the Councils
	Identifying appropriate technologies in response to the challenges faced by the Councils
	Promoting the use of common technologies across both Councils
	Assessing the impact of new technologies on the Councils
Review and recommend on IT project development plans within the context of IT plans.	
Create ad hoc Groups to address strategic IT issues, as required.	
Review, coordinate and arbitrate major IT activities across the Partnership Group	
Provide an annual report to Partnership Board that details ICT activities.	
Report to Partnership Board at each necessary	

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ICT Joint Strategy - PLAN ON A PAGE

Our values

One team	Responsive	Straightforward	Innovative	Caring	Excellent
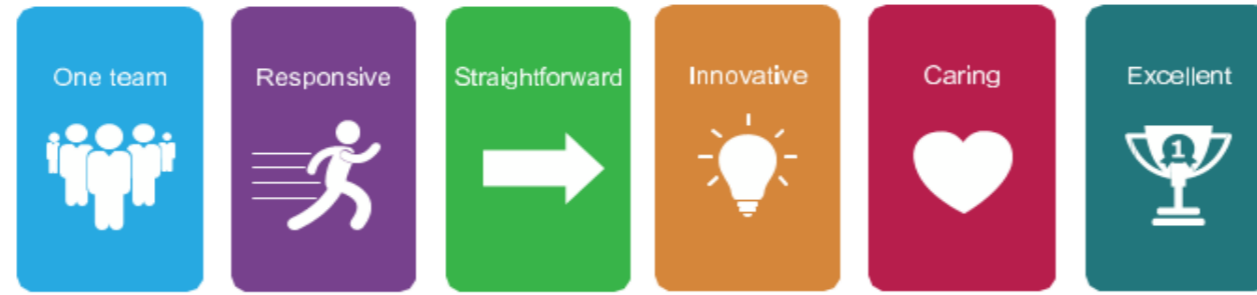
Strategic ICT Vision

A modern and transformational ICT service that drives and supports delivery of joined up services to customers through the effective use of

Strategic Ambitions

Empowered Customers	Consolidation, simplification and standardisation of the ICT and digital estate	Working Smarter	Improved ICT governance and security

Action plan - areas of focus

Development and launch a new website and online customer channels that enable 24/7 access to key council services	The design and implementation of a new Enterprise Architecture that makes the best use of existing and new technology.	The provision and effective use of new business tools including Microsoft Office 365 to increase staff productivity and reduce email traffic and on	Rollout of a device (laptops and tablets) replacement programme	Decommission GCSX Email due to product being discontinued	Establish and deliver Cyber Essentials Programme to further strengthen the security of ICT systems and
A single citizen identification to allow customers to access all online services with a single login which should encourage take up of	Execution of a business application rationalisation plan that creates a smaller and more manageable ICT estate that will deliver efficiencies	Rollout of Microsoft Intune and the installation of Microsoft Windows 10 Operating System on mobile devices to improve information and network security	Publication of a service catalogue that captures the range of hardware on offer to staff and Members to	Delivery of Public Sector Network Programme to ensure legislative ICT security compliance	Establishment and embedding of the new ICT Programme Management Office (PMO) , Security and Networking Team and
Development of a new Digital Strategy and roadmap and investment plan that sets out how the Council will use digital technology to increase the range of online services, automate processes and	Delivery of a resilient and secure Hybrid ICT infrastructure through the installation of new hardware and software	The introduction of single sign on for staff through the use of multi factor	Undertake workstyle assessments and establish a set of ICT profiles for job roles to help determine ICT competency levels required and the tools to perform	Replacement of email and web filtering systems to	The drafting and approval of a new 3 year ICT Partnership
Development of an Assisted Digital Service offer to enable people who are digitally excluded to access online services	The implementation of a new Microwave Solution to remove the single of failure between the data centres at Daneshill House and Cavendish Road	The deployment of back up and replication software that will provide enhanced ICT disaster recovery capability	The design and rollout of ICT and Digital Learning Programmes for staff and Members	Annual hardware and software audits	
Implementation of a new digital waste system to allow for automation of waste processes and new online transactional	The provision of new Hosted Desktops that allow for flexible working and improved application performance , system	Decommission Windows 2008 servers and business applications	Create a technology innovation board, framework and forum for	Introduction of Meta Compliance software to monitor, test and ensure policy compliance and reduce the threat of	
Robotic Process Automation Pilots. This will involve the use of software that allows the automation	The establishment of a Hardware and Software Asset Register that enables timely replacement, rationalisation and upgrade		Development of a new Adoption and Change Management Approach to help the Council to accelerate the adoption of change, through enabling end users to understand and benefit from new	Deployment of network monitoring software to ensure high performance and improve disaster recovery through the quick identification of ICT	
			Appointment of a Technology Advisory Partner(s)to support the development of a new Digital Strategy, an Enterprise Architecture, assist with the full	The procurement and use of data discovery software to enable data protection compliance and enable greater visibility of data	
				Development and deployment of ICT Policy Framework	
				Establish ICT Members Group to monitor ICT	

Action plan outcomes

ICT Risks

Cyber Security Threats	ICT Infrastructure failures and poor system performance	Ongoing single points of failure	Unsupported legacy software and hardware	Tactical software and hardware purchases will continue that lead to an ever increasing and inefficient ICT estate that demonstrates poor VFM	Ability to make the best use of data will diminish	ICT Service will decline and will be unable to guarantee security of systems and provide the right technical support	Failure to take advantage of new digital technologies that will allow for the redesign of services, automation of	Unable to meet the customer needs and expectations

Performance management & governance

ICT Partnership Agreement	Monthly ICT Scorecard reporting to ICT Partnership Board and quarterly to the ICT Members	Monthly reports to the ICT Partnership Board and quarterly to the ICT Members Group on progress made against the ICT Strategic	Public Sector Network Compliance health checks and annual assessments and accreditation	Cyber Essentials Accreditation and supporting Programme	Members ICT Group, ICT Partnership Board, ICT Steering Group, ICT PMO and Small Change Group

Finance

Core ICT Partnership Revenue Budgets	EHC and SBC Capital Strategy 2019/20 onwards and 2020/21 Revenue Budget	External Grant Funding for ICT Cyber Security Projects

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Appendix C: ICT Strategy – EHC's known ICT capital projects and funding requirements 2019/20 to 2022/23

ICT Strategy Capital Requirements	Project Ref No.	Capital in 2019/20	Capital in 2020/21 £	Capital in 2021/22 £	Capital in 2022/23 £	GF 67% HRA 33% Yes/No	Reason for Spend
VMWare ESX and Horizon Upgrade	CSS4, CSS5	250,000				Y	To implement new hosted desktop hardware and software to improve performance and stability. Required for Window 10 Operating System and Office 365.
Hosted Desktop Refresh	CSS4	40,000				Y	To migrate hosted desktop Gold image from Windows 7 to windows 10 and also implement MS software to control Windows 10 on laptops/PCS
Intune Implementation	CSS8	20,000				Y	Device Management Software for mobile device such as laptops & mobiles.
OS/Database Upgrades (Windows 2008 and 2008 SQl)	CSS15	75,000				Y	Upgrade of all systems on Windows 2008, which will be end of life in January 2020. Removal required if we are to meet PSN security requirements.
Web and email filtering software	GS3 GS4	6,000				Y	Security software to replace present ageing solution
Storage replacement	CSS11	180,000				Y	Replacement of present aging storage
Secondary Link - Microwave Solution	CSS10	50,000				Y	Secondary link between data centres to give greater resilience to network
Microsoft Office 365 On-boarding	CSS13, CSS14	51,875				Y	Office 365 configuration: planning and enabled (Exchange Online, SharePoint, OneDrive, Teams etc) Migrate all mail content from Exchange 2013 into Exchange Online.
Microsoft Office 365 Productivity Governance and Compliance	CSS12	63,000				Y	Implement Governance and compliance requirements around usage of Office 365 (SharePoint Online and Teams) Develop a Governance and compliance plan specific to EH&SBC's use of the productivity platform. Technical and operational directives are produced that control, administer, and manage O365 collaboration services.
Microsoft Office 365 Modern Work Place Security Essentials	CSS12	65,000				Y	Solution architecture planning, team collaboration planning, business process management and implementing a production deployment that will support the cloud solution enablement. Protect employee corporate credentials and allow employees to securely share data with external partners and vendors. Provide employees with the capabilities to communicate and collaborate with internal and external contacts in a secure manner.
Next Generation Telephony	CSS17	25,000				Y	Upgrade Mitel telephony solution.
Modern Devices And Devices in Intune	CSS8	58,000				Y	Modern Desktop & Devices (Intune and System Center Configuration Manager) deployment planning and implementation -to provide an increased user experience and address security concerns.
Firewall Replacement Programme including management	GS5		74,950			Y	Replace ageing hardware and strengthen ICT security.
Switch Replacement Programme	CSS16		125,000			Y	Replace switches to improve ICT Infrastructure performance and security e.g. speed of data transfer.
Network Monitoring Solution (SIEM)	GS9		40,000			Y	Allows Security and Networking Team to monitor security of systems and network performance. Audit related requirement.
Data Discovery Software	GS10		35,000			Y	Allows us to identify and monitor structured and unstructured data on our network. GDPR enforcement tool.
Robotic Process Automation Pilot Projects	EC8		90,000			Y	Software, which allows automation of repetitive processes to improve productivity and reduce error in data entry.
Technology Advisory Partner	CSS1,CSS2, CSS12, CSS13,CSS14, CSS17 EC1, EC8,WS5		55,000			Y	Programme Capital Costs - associated to Office 365, Cloud Operating System
VEEAM Back up Software Upgrade	CSS6		7,500			Y	Upgrade and improve of backup software.
Ongoing hardware devices - for staff and Members and organisation	CSS19		150,000	100,000	100,000	Y	To fund hardware replacement programme as per Technology Roadmap e.g. laptops, tablets, mobile phones etc. and replace aging hardware running Windows 7
Telephony Hardware	CSS17		125,000			Y	Desk phone replacement programme that are compatible with new Mitel software
Audio Video Conferencing	WS7		15,000			Y	To equip meeting rooms with smart display screens, PCs and web cams to allow video conferencing and allow general display presentations.
Cloud network acceleration	CSS18			250,000		Y	Hardware - that priorities data flow to the cloud to improve data flow performance between user and cloud systems. Links to Cloud Operating Model.
Capital TA		57,500	57,500	57,500	57,500	Y	
Total		**941,375**	**774,950**	**407,500**	**157,500**		

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Appendix B: ICT Joint Strategy Implementation Plan 2019/20 to 2021/22

ICT Strategic Ambition	Project Ref. No.	Project Title	Project Description	Lead Officer	Project Status	2019/20 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2020/21 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2021/22 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Empowered Customers	EC1	Digital Strategy	Creation of Digital strategy to compliment ICT strategy and provide a digital vision.	AD Digital and Transformation													
	EC2	Website	The procurement, design, development and launch of a new corporate website.	Hannah Brunt	Active												
	EC3	SBC Specific - Customer Experience Platform CSC	SBC CTOC funded project Replacement of current Customer relationship management (CRM) software with digital platform Firmstep	Hannah Brunt													
	EC4	Customer Experience Platform - Customer Portal	CTOC funded project. Exploitation of digital platform Firmstep to allow more automation of web based services for all departments	Hannah Brunt	Active												
	EC5	Assisted Digital	Software assistance to aid customer to access systems simply and 24/7, for example chat bots and online payments.	Hannah Brunt													
	EC6	Citizens Identification	Single Citizen ID to allow access to all online services with a single login	Information Systems Manager													
	EC7	Waste Department solution	New software solution to allow greater productivity and digital inclusion to waste solution.	Carig Miller	Active												
	EC8	Robotic Process Automation Pilots	Software, which allows automation of repetitive processes to improve productivity and reduce error in data entry.	Information Systems Manager													
Consolidation, Simplification and Standardisation of the ICT and Digital Estate	CSS1	Enterprise Architecture	Evolution of network and systems to improve data quality, security and performance to streamline processes and increase overall productivity of systems and staff.	Simon Russell													
	CSS2	Application Rationalisation Roadmap	Reduce number of duplicate applications, applications not used and or licenses where possible.	Simon Russell	Active												
	CSS3	Azure Active Directory Exploitation	Single sign on (SSO) and Multi factor authentication (MFA) setup and deployment	Chris Day	Active												
	CSS4	Horizon Virtual Desktop Infrastructure	Upgrade to Windows 10	Chris Day	Active												
	CSS5	VMWare ESX Upgrade	To implement new hosted desktop hardware and software to improve performance and stability. Required for Window 10 Operating System and Microsoft Office 365.	Chris Day	Active												
	CSS6	VEEAM Back Software Upgrade	VEEAM Back up and Replication Software will provide the ICT Partnership with backup, restore and replication functionality for the new Virtual Desktops.	Chris Day													
	CSS7	Microsoft Windows Version 7 to 10 upgrade	Desktop/Laptop Upgrades	Peter Wain													
	CSS8	Intune Project	Mobile device management software (part of O365) for mobiles and laptops	Peter Wain	Active												
	CSS9	Auto Pilot	Operating System automation software (part of O365) to ease deployment of upgrades.	Peter Wain	Active												
	CSS10	Microwave Link	Procurement and installation of a Microwave Solution to provide a secondary link between the data centres at Dane shill House and Cavendish Road. Will remove the single point of failure that exists between the two sites.	Chris Day	Active												
	CSS11	Storage Replacement	Replacement of aging storage	Chris Day	Active												
	CSS12	Pre-Office 365 Configuration	Office 365 Pilot (if approved)	Information Systems Manager													
	CSS13	Microsoft Office 365 Deployment	O365 deployment and staff training	Information Systems Manager													
	CSS14	Microsoft Office 365 Exploitation	Exploitation of O365 to reduce software estate and increase productivity	Information Systems Manager													
	CSS15	Microsoft Windows 2008 Upgrade Programme	Remove all instance of Win 2008 to achieve security compliance	Chris Day	Active												
	CSS16	Switch Replacement	Replace switches to improve ICT Infrastructure performance. e.g. speed of data transfer.	Chris Day													
	CSS17	Telephony Upgrade	Upgrade Mitel telephony solution.	Paul Edwards													
	CSS18	Cloud Network Acceleration	If required as move to Cloud solutions increases.	Chris Day													
Working Smarter	CSS19	Hardware Replacement Programme	3-7 Year replacement programme depending on device	Simon Russell													
	WS2	Service Catalogue	A standard catalogue of available IT services to advice the wider organisation as to what is available from ICT.	Peter Wain													
	WS3	Promotion of ICT Design Principles	Communication to wider organisation of reason and purpose of design structure.	Peter Wain													
	WS4	ICT Profiles, Competencies and Supported Learning Programme	Staff work profiles to determine services required	Simon Russell													
	WS5	Adoption and Change Management Approach	Develop a new approach to adoption and change management and modern service management to enable services to accelerate the adoption of change	AD Digital and Transformation	Active												
	WS6	Innovation Board, Governance Framework and Forum	Forum to explore digital improvements across the council	AD Digital and Transformation													
	WS7	Audio Video Conferencing	Software and hardware implementation	Denis kalema													
Improved ICT Governance and Security	GS1	GCSX- Security and end of use	End of GCSX email use due to solution being discontinued	Peter Wain	Active												
	GS2	PSN Security Programme	Security changes to ensure legislative security compliance	Peter Wain	Active												
	GS3	Email Filtering Replacement	Replacement of current system	Peter Wain	Active												
	GS4	Web Filtering Replacement	Replacement of current system	Peter Wain	Active												
	GS5	Fire wall replacement	Replace firewalls to improve ICT & Cyber security	Peter Wain													
	GS6	Hardware and Software Audit	Audit of all software and hardware	Simon Russell	Active												
	GS7	Meta-Compliance	Deployment of Policies software	Peter Wain	Active												
	GS8	Meta Compliance Security Model	Software to deploy test phising campaigns	Peter Wain	Active												
	GS9	Network Monitoring Solution (SIEM)	Solution to enable network monitoring	Chris Day													
	GS10	Data Discovery Software	Software to enable GDPR compliance and greater visibility of data	Dumi Williams													
	GS12	Members ICT Group	Creation of Members group	Richard Protheroe													
	GS13	Print Service	Restructure of Print service - subject to staff consultation	Simon Russell	Active												
	GS14	Information Governance - Joint Proposals SBC/EH	Creation of Joint Information Governance department	Simon Russell	Active												
	GS15	Cyber Essential Programme	Security changes to ensure enhanced security compliance	Peter Wain	Active												

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL- 18 DECEMBER 2019

REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT TITLE: APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER

WARD(S) AFFECTED:

Purpose/Summary of Report

- In accordance with s5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, James Ellis to be confirmed as the Council's Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL: That:	
(A)	**Agree to the appointment of James Ellis as the Council's Monitoring Officer.**

1.0   Background

1.1   Under s5 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 (as amended) the Council has a duty to appoint a Monitoring Officer.

2.0   Report

2.1   After an extensive and open recruitment process led by the Chief Executive, James Ellis, was successfully appointed to the position of Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Council's Monitoring Officer, with a start date of 3 February 2020.

2.2 Chapter 10, paragraph 10.1 (g) of the Constitution provides that the appointment of the Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer (s151 officer) are to be carried out by the Chief Executive and ratified by Council.

2.3 Under the legislation, neither the Head of Paid Service nor the Chief Finance Officer can hold the position of Monitoring Officer. There is no statutory requirement for the position to be held by a legally qualified officer.

2.4 The Monitoring Officer has a number of statutory duties and responsibilities relating to the Council's Constitution and our arrangements for effective governance. These duties include maintaining the Constitution, ensuring that no decision or omission of the Council is likely to give rise to illegality or maladministration and promoting high standards of conduct. A full list of the Monitoring Officer's responsibilities and delegated powers is included within the Council's Constitution.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

None

Contact Member: Councillor George Cutting – Executive Member for
                   Corporate Services
                   george.cutting @eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Jonathan Geall, Acting Head of Legal and

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IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives *(delete as appropriate):*	Priority 1 – Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities Priority 2 – Enhance the quality of people's lives Priority 3 – Enable a flourishing local economy
Consultation:	The Leader and Deputy Leader have been consulted on this report
Legal:	Under s5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 a local authority must appoint a Monitoring Officer. Section 113 (2) Local Government Act 1972, enables an authority to appoint /second an officer from another authority as an officer of the authority being appointed and thereby satisfy the requirement under s 5 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 that an authority appoint "one of its staff" to be Monitoring Officer. The General power of competence under the Localism Act 2011 allows a local authority to do anything that individuals may do unless there are restrictions applied by other statute. This power can be used by a local authority to provide back office functions to other bodies.
Financial:	The interim arrangement will conclude upon the start of the employment of the new post holder, at which time the approved salary budget for the Monitoring Officer will apply.
Human Resource:	None other than those contained within the report
Risk Management:	The Council is not permitted to act unlawfully by not having a Monitoring Officer in post.
Health and wellbeing –	N/A

issues and impacts:	
Equality, diversity and human rights considerations, and whether Equality Impact Assessment required:	An equal fair and transparent process will be undertaken in the recruitment of a permanent appointment
Environmental Sustainability	*N/A*

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL- 18 DECEMBER 2019

REPORT BY THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND HEALTH AND ACTING HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

REPORT TITLE: APPOINTMENT PROCEDURE FOR INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

WARD(S) AFFECTED:

_____

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To seek Council's approval of an approach to other Hertfordshire authorities to request the services of one of their Independent Remuneration Panel members, as there is a vacancy on the membership of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel. For reasons of resilience and contingency it is desirable that the vacancy is filled.

	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL: that:
(A)	**it is approved that whenever a vacancy on the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel arises, other Hertfordshire authorities are approached in the first instance to request the services of the authorities' remuneration panel members to serve on the council's Panel; and**
(B)	**that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be granted delegated authority to consider and confirm appointments of Independent Panel Members approached in this way.**

1.0 Background

1.1 In accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council is required to have regard to the recommendations made to it by an independent remuneration panel in respect of any review of its scheme of allowances. The Council's independent remuneration panel consists of between three and five members. Following the resignation of a member of the Panel earlier in 2019, due to her election as a Member of the Council, there is a vacancy on the Panel.

2.0 Report

2.1 The Council's Independent Remuneration Panel is appointed to consider Members' allowances. Whilst the quorum is three, it is advisable to maintain a Panel of five members so as to minimise the risk of inquorate meetings and therefore postponement of business.

2.2 It is accepted practice among authorities that appointments to independent remuneration panels may be made by approaching another authority within the county area to seek the services of that authority's panel members. This report proposes that East Herts Council participates in such an arrangement.

2.3 This proposal would enable a timely appointment to the vacancy to be made. The Members' allowances scheme currently in force at East Hertfordshire was agreed by the Council at its meeting on 25 July 2018 to have effect for a period of two years, with the next review in 2020. The Council's Constitution provides that the duration of the current scheme persists until 11 May 2020. Accordingly the work of the panel should commence in time to submit a report before the next annual meeting of the Council, which is scheduled to take place on 13 May 2020.

2.3   A consideration in making a decision to agree the proposed arrangement is the fact that it is necessary to ensure any member of an independence remuneration panel is a person of independence from the Council, so that there is confidence in their ability to make recommendations as to the allowances to be paid to Members. It would seem to be reasonable to place reliance upon the recruitment process followed by other local authorities in Hertfordshire in appointing panel members to serve on other authorities.

2.4   A further consideration is that it is necessary that such persons are not a close friend of relation of any East Hertfordshire District Councillor. In order to obtain assurance on this aspect, it is proposed that if Council approves the recommendation in this report, any panel member of other Hertfordshire authorities who is then approached would be required to confirm they are not in such a social or family relationship with any East Hertfordshire Members. It is proposed that this assessment be conducted by the Acting Head of Legal and Democratic Services, and that they should have the authority to confirm acceptance of that individual's services upon satisfactory assurance being received.

2.4   A number of alternative options have been considered.

- to continue without appointing to the vacancy on the panel – REJECTED because not making an appointment to the vacancy on the panel would risk Panel meetings being postponed due to unavailability of members and/or being inquorate
- to enter into a full recruitment process – REJECTED as there is a limited timeframe before the panel needs to prepare recommendations and submit a report which would be taken up with advertising for applicants and interviewing shortlisted applicants.

2.5   The recommended approach is seen as an expedient way to recruit new Panel members.

3.0   Implications/Consultations

3.1   Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

Minutes of Council meeting of 25 July 2018

Contact Member: Councillor George Cutting – Executive Member for Corporate Services
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Contact Officer: Jonathan Geall, Acting Head of Legal and Democratic Services
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Report Author: Rebecca Dobson, Democratic Services Manager
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rebecca.dobson@eastherts.gov.uk

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives *(delete as appropriate):*	The recommendations indirectly support the following corporate priorities as ensuring the Council's scheme of allowances for Members has been independently reviewed contributes to ensuring Members are recompensed fairly for their approved duties: Priority 1 – Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities Priority 2 – Enhance the quality of people's lives Priority 3 – Enable a flourishing local economy
Consultation:	The Leader of the Council and Executive Member have been consulted and support the proposals.
Legal:	The Council must have regard to the recommendations of a panel in relation to its scheme of Members' allowances. The panel must be independent. This approach relies on the independence of panel members of other authorities, and therefore an assessment of independence by means of assurances sought direct from those approached is required.
Financial:	There are no additional revenue or capital implications arising directly from this report although it is noted that recruitment without the need for external advertising could lead to the avoidance of advertising costs.
Human Resource:	Independent remuneration panel members are not employees of the Council, so there is no implication.
Risk Management:	Risks are that the panel would be inquorate and meetings could be delayed if the vacancy is not filled.
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	None

Equality, diversity and human rights considerations, and whether Equality Impact Assessment required:	None, as the approach relies on the process followed in recruitment by other authorities.
Environmental Sustainability	There are no environmental sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 18 DECEMBER 2019

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES

REPORT TITLE: REVISED COMMUNITY GRANTS POLICY 2020/21

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- The council's Community Grants Policy includes the provision for members to review the priorities for grant giving on an annual basis. This report sets out the proposed revisions for 2020/21.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL: That:	
(A)	**the revised Community Grants Policy 2020/21, as detailed in Essential Reference Paper 'B', be approved**

1.0   Background

1.1   The council has allocated grants to the voluntary and community sectors and towns and parish councils for many years. The council does this to facilitate positive change at the local level, enable local people to develop their own infrastructure to bring about change and work collaboratively with our communities, leading to improved health and wellbeing for residents in East Herts.

1.2   The council's grants policy was subject to a major review in 2017/18, with a new approach adopted by full Council in July 2017. This revised policy included the provision for members to

review and amend the priorities for grant giving on an annual basis; a draft revised policy for 2020/21 is contained at ERP 'B'.

1.3   The Community Grants Policy is part of the council's policy framework and so it is determined by full Council.

2.0   <u>Report</u>

2.1   This latest review of the Community Grants Policy was conducted by officers of the Housing and Health service in consultation with the Executive Member for Communities, the Leader of the Council, the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability and members of the Community Wellbeing Forum.

2.2   The key proposals that have emerged from this exercise can be summarised thus:

- an amendment to the eligibility criteria to allow individuals and groups with no legal status to apply for small grants up to £300 so long as they have the agreement of an East Herts councillor to be a mentor for the project for which funding is sought
- that the above proposal should be piloted in 2020/21, with an evaluation of the approach being conducted to inform the 2021/22 policy
- grants of up to a maximum of 50% of the total funding needed or £2,000, whichever is the lesser, be provided for projects or schemes seeking crowdfunding support, with a view that around five such schemes will be supported in this way in 2020/21
- that all groups enquiring about applying for a community grant are encouraged to participate in the East Herts Lottery
- that two new priorities be added to the list of criteria for assessing projects/schemes, these being:
  - arts and cultural activities that increase residents' wellbeing and so further the aims of the Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020

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- high quality, accessible and environmentally sustainable community buildings and green spaces
- *note: the existing criteria of community issues, including engaging and consulting, and health for all still apply.*

2.3   All members are encouraged to serve in a mentoring role for informal groups and individuals wishing to apply. The role will require members to:

- assist in writing the application
- ensure safe and appropriate delivery and
- monitor the benefits of the scheme/project to the wider community.

2.4   The full revised draft Community Grants Policy 2020/21, incorporating the above amendments, is included at ERP 'B'.

3.0   Implications/Consultations

3.1   Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

3.2   The latest draft of the Equalities Impact Assessment is included **ERP 'C'**. This recognises that the council may need to take additional efforts to publicise available grants among some harder-to-reach groups.

Background Papers
A list of recently funded grants can be found on the council's website.

Contact Member: Councillor Suzanne Rutland-Barsby, Executive Member for Communities
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Contact Officer: Jonathan Geall, Head of Housing and Health
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Report Author: Claire Pullen, Housing and Health Projects Officer
claire.pullen@eastherts.gov.uk; Ext 1459

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives *(delete as appropriate):*	Priority 1 – Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities Priority 2 – Enhance the quality of people's lives Priority 3 – Enable a flourishing local economy Effective use of grant giving contributes to the council's ability to obtain some of the outcomes required in one or more of its corporate objectives.
Consultation:	Members of the Health and Wellbeing Forum were consulted on the 26th September 2019. Leadership Team was consulted on 25th November 2019. Members of the Executive were also consulted.
Legal:	The council must comply with equality and human rights legislation.
Financial:	The total resources available for grant giving 2020/21 are subject to member approval of the council 2020/21 at full Council in January 2020. Approval of the revised policy itself will not incur any revenue or capital liabilities for the council. It is noted that successful capital schemes may incur expenditure over more than one year. This does not pose any treasury management concerns.
Human Resource:	Housing and Health Business Support Unit will provide dedicated administrative support in terms of monitoring.
Risk Management:	Grant-aided projects may not go ahead and the council's money may require re-allocating or sliding into the next financial year.
Health and wellbeing – issues and	The aim of the service is to administer grant giving in all its forms in a fair, consistent and transparent manner to maximise health and wellbeing outcomes

impacts:	for residents in East Herts and supporting those suffering from income deprivation. Funded projects have a direct or indirect impact on modifiable determinants of health, such as access to services, built environment, social support, lifestyle factors and others. Addressed throughout the report but specifically paragraph 1.1 and in ERP 'B.'
Equality, diversity and human rights considerations, and whether Equality Impact Assessment required:	An updated EIA outlining officers' consideration of how the proposed revised policy may impact residents with the various protected characteristics has been completed and is in the process of being approved. Officers believe that the new recommendations will support protected groups and encourage them to apply.
Environmental Sustainability	Ensuring high quality, accessible and environmentally sustainable buildings and green spaces is one of the priorities for the Council. See Appendix 1 of the new Community Grants Policy.

Discretionary Community Grants Policy

Introduction

East Herts Council will grant aid eligible voluntary and community groups, town and parish councils, faith groups, not-for-profit organisations and individuals for activities that build stronger, more connected, self-reliant communities, leading to improved health and wellbeing outcomes for residents in East Herts.

The council's Community Wellbeing and Partnerships Team manages this funding programme.

East Herts Council Priorities

Grant giving supports the council's wider Corporate Priorities as well as the health and wellbeing outcomes described in the new East Herts Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2023. For information and health sources to help with evidencing your application bid, please see "Health and Wellbeing Resources" also on Strategy web page.

The council's annual priorities and outcomes for grant giving are listed on Appendix 1. These will be updated each year by councillors to reflect local priorities and county-wide initiatives. Applications must evidence that the grant requested will directly or indirectly support at least one priority identified and publicised each year.

Eligibility

All applicants must live, or be proposing a project, in the East Herts district area which includes Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth, Buntingford, Hertford, Ware and the surrounding villages. If you are unsure if your project is in our area, please contact us.

There are three types of grants which have different eligibility criteria.

- Small grants between £100 and £300 (pilot scheme until 31st March 2021)
- Project grants (from £301 up to £3,000 for delivery/up to £8,000 for building works/equipment)
- Match Funding for local Crowdfunder campaigns up to £2,000

The table below lists eligibility criteria for the three types of grants

Small Grants	- Individuals and groups without a constitution can apply alongside constituted voluntary organisations and not for profits. - The application has the written support of an East Herts Councillor (representing the area from which most of the residents who will benefit from the activity come), including that councillor's agreement to serve as a mentor for the project/scheme for which grant funding is being applied. - Note if the group applying does not have its own bank account the council will accept the offer of a third party to serve as a banker

Project Grants – delivery	• Constituted voluntary organisations and not for profit organisations can apply.
	• The body applying is financially viable with its own bank account that requires two unrelated people to authorise payments and make withdrawals. The account must be in the name of the organisation applying.
	• The body applying has an open-door membership policy and provides services that are accessible to people from all backgrounds. This does not preclude single-gender organisations from applying as long as they can demonstrate, if asked, that they comply with the Equality Act 2010.
	• The body applying has good governance in place including a management committee/board of directors that includes at least three unrelated individuals.
	• The body applying has the endorsement of an East Herts Councillor representing the area from which most of the residents who benefit from the activity come. In cases where an East Herts Councillor is a member of the applying organisation and there is no other ward member, then the East Herts Executive Member for Communities may endorse the application.
	• The project is capable of being completed within a year of grant being awarded.
Project Grants – building works/equipment	• Same as Project Grants – Delivery, plus:
	• The body applying must own the freehold of the land or building, or lease that cannot be ended within five years of completion of works, subject to the proposed works/equipment.
	• The body applying must demonstrate that the relevant permissions are in place, including planning, if applicable, to complete the works
	• Note: the council will not fund projects that have already started though we may fund a later stage of a building project that is not dependent on an earlier stage.
Match Funding for local Crowdfunder campaigns	• Same as Project Grants – both above, plus:
	• If the proposal includes works to an East Herts owned asset, the body applying must have the written permission of East Herts Council to apply for Match Funding.

Eligible costs

Grants may be made for:

- Building works and improvements to community assets that result in high quality, accessible sports and community facilities or accessible outdoor spaces
- Large items of equipment, including digital assistive technologies
- Delivery costs of an activity/service (either new or existing) including staff costs. Maximum grant is £3,000
- Volunteer training or fees to bring in additional expertise to an area
- Start-up funding including hire costs, publicity materials, refreshments, travel, and small items of equipment

The council will have the discretion to award less than the amount bid for in such cases listed below

- Budget is oversubscribed
- Partial eligibility; a number of beneficiaries outside the district
- Inflated budgets
- Untested idea

East Herts Council will not provide grants for:

- purchase of medical equipment
- promotion of a particular religion or political belief
- a service that the state is obligated to provide
- land or building where ownership (freehold or eligible lease) is not yet established
- purchase of items on behalf of another
- VAT that can be recovered
- Maintenance or minor repair work on buildings or spaces
- General fundraising campaigns
- Hardship where an organisation is in a crisis which requires a rapid response
- Commercial ventures

<u>Implementation process</u>

All requests for funding must be submitted on the council's application forms and contain all the required documentation. The preferred method of application is via email to Grants.Admin@eastherts.gov.uk .   Decisions will be provided eight to 10 weeks after the application deadline.

Assessment of applications for Small Grants (up to £300) – The purpose of this grant is to help an individual or group get their idea off the ground. Applications can be submitted at any time whilst funding remains available and a decision provided within three to four weeks. Applications will be assessed on the following:

- Provision of a solution to an identified community, health or environmental issue
- Delivery of activities in outdoor spaces or in other community buildings or assets
- Demonstrated link to council priorities and annual theme
- Whether there is intent to become a more formalised group with a statement of intent

Applications will be judged on their own merit.

Small grants will be paid once evidence of delivery has been submitted to the council. The council has the discretion to choose to pay a third party, which may be another charity that has agreed to serve as the "banker" or a supplier.

Assessment of applications for Project Grants (from £301 up to £3,000 for delivery/up to £8,000 for building works/equipment) – There will be two funding rounds each year. The first application deadline will be in the spring, the second in the autumn. Applications will be carefully assessed to ensure that funding is allocated for activities that will have the most impact on the council's priorities. The process includes a:

- Application verification: this looks at whether the application is complete, whether the project can be finished within the year and safeguarding
- Priority assessment: this looks at need, delivery and impact on at least one of the council's key priorities/outcomes identified for that year

- Financial assessment: this looks at organisational viability, the proposed budget, sustainability of the project, and evidence of activity seeking to generate income in practical ways

Applications for projects in areas of deprivation are a priority and will be considered first. Applications will be scored in a fair and consistent manner against the same assessment criteria (Appendix 2). The assessment will take place after the application deadline over an agreed period of time. Applications will not be considered outside of the assessment window.

Allocation of funding: Stage One - Applications will be assessed on merit. Only those that score more than 50% of the maximum points available from the scoring criteria will be considered for funding. These applications will be ranked in order of highest to lowest score. Funding will then be allocated to those applications receiving the highest scores.

Allocation of funding: Stage Two - Where there are a number of lower scoring applications with similar scores and there is still funding to allocate, the council may decide to enter into a dialogue with applicants to seek mutually agreed amendments. These amendments would increase the impact of a lower scoring proposal and would become a condition of grant funding. Potential amendments include:

- the applicant agrees to deliver activities to support the council's East Herts social prescribing service (EHSPS)
- the applicant agrees to expand their activities to a nearby wards or area that is known to have a high level of income deprivation
- the applicant agrees to ensure that the activity will reach a minimum number of vulnerable residents or 'new' residents who would not been assumed to be involved or benefit given the terms of the application as submitted.
- the applicant agrees to one or all of the following: engage with the community at least once a year, write a business plan, invest in skills development

The council reserves the right to apply these conditions to any of the grants it awards.

Each year, the council will determine what percentage of the available budget will be distributed via this competitive process. Up to 20% of the budget can be held back for events of national or local importance in accordance with agreed priorities and criteria (agreed by councillors)

Assessment of applications for Match funding for local Crowdfunder campaigns (up to £2,000) – The purpose of this grant is to support projects that are proposed by residents in the community. There will be one funding round in the spring. Please note, a maximum of one bid for a campaign to raise funds for a playground owned by East Herts Council will be supported each year.

Applications will be carefully assessed to ensure that funding is allocated for activities that will have the most impact on council priorities. This process includes:

- Checking that the application has been submitted at least 4 to 6 months prior to online campaign going live

- How much has already been pledged/granted to similar projects.
- Whether the project is in line with the council's policy and practices around development of play facilities.
- Whether the project is in an area of deprivation. These are a priority and will be considered first.

Applications for funding to support a campaign on the Hertfordshire Crowdfunding platform will be scored in a fair and consistent manner against the same assessment criteria (Appendix 2). Applications will be judged on their own merit and will also be taken through the stages described above. The assessment will take place after the application deadline over an agreed period of time. Applications will not be considered outside of the assessment window.

East Herts Council can match fund a maximum of 50% of the fundraising target up to a maximum of £2,000. If a group does not reach their full target by the time the online campaign closes East Herts Council may retract its pledge.

Advice and information

Organisations are expected to discuss their proposed project with the council's grants officer prior to submitting an application. It is expected that organisations will have investigated other funding sources listed here Other grant making trusts. Individuals and organisations with no legal status can obtain advice and guidance on governance issues from the Broxbourne and East Herts Council's for Voluntary Service   Community Voluntary Services Broxbourne and East Herts or the Community Development Action Hertfordshire. The council will run an annual advice workshop with all eligible applicants making themselves known to the council.

East Herts Lottery

All charities and other good causes are encouraged to raise funds via the East Herts Lottery. To register go to East Herts Lottery. Monies raised for the East Herts Community Fund will be ring fenced toward the council's community grants budget.

Member involvement in implementation

Councillors that have agreed to mentor an individual/informal group that has applied for a small grant will be expected to take an active role in the delivery of the proposed project, support the individual/group and monitor outcomes. It is anticipated that this support, and the support of a "banker" will enable the groups to write a Statement of Aims and become more fundable and self-reliant in the future. All applicants are to invite their ward member to the activity / event being funded or to view the project that has been funded.

Version: 14 March 2018
Version 2: 1 May 2018 List of LSOAs updated
Version 3: 23 May 2018 Appendix updated
Version 4: 28 Feb 2019 Appendix 1 updated
Version 5: 5 April 2019 Appendix 1 updated

APPENDIX 1: PRIORITIES AND OUTCOMES FOR 2020/2021

The priorities for discretionary grant funding in 2020/21 are listed below. Successful applications are those that address one or more priorities and clearly demonstrate how the changes they want to achieve will contribute to at least one of the council's outcomes. Applications focused in areas of deprivation will be considered first.

Arts and cultural activities that increase residents' wellbeing and so further the aims of the [Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020](#)

We want to see projects that:
- Widen access to arts and culture, especially among those who haven't participated in the past
- Encourage people to come together
- Reconnect residents to local history and enhance pride in place
- Connect arts, culture, health and wellbeing themes amongst communities or bring different generations together

Community issues, including engaging and consulting

We want to see projects that:
- Tackle social isolation and support residents experiencing loneliness or those who find it difficult to interact with the community
- Help residents come together to tackle an identified local problem
- Create safer and resilient neighbourhoods
- Use the assets and strengths of the area you live in to create a new approach to an issue

Health for all

We want to see projects that:
- Enable all residents to achieve a healthy weight, eat well, stay active, maintain their independence and take care of their mental health
- Provide activities to support Dementia Friendly East Herts
- Help relieve pressure on GP Practices and their teams by assisting the East Herts Social Prescribing Service (non-medical community based health solutions).
- Support people who are tackling addictions
- Use technology to assist those living with long-term conditions to help with independent living

High quality, accessible and environmentally sustainable community buildings and green spaces

We want to see projects that:
- Enable a new activity, or existing activity to expand, that addresses a specific environmental sustainability issue, rather than simply promotes awareness of environmental sustainability
- Increase usage of community buildings and outdoor spaces, making it as convenient as possible for more people to get involved in leisure
- Use community spaces such as village greens, halls, play areas and leisure spaces to run events that help individuals to be more active and promote emotional wellbeing
- Create facilities that are more than "a hall for hire" and proactively meet the needs and interests of local residents
- Reduce the carbon footprint of an asset or organisation

APPENDIX 2: GUIDANCE – HOW YOUR APPLICATION WILL BE SCORED

Only applications that score more than 50% of the maximum available points detailed below in score sheet will be considered for funding.

KEY AREA: BUDGET		
0 points	**1 point**	
The application included arithmetic errors in the budget, an itemised list that included ineligible costs or was otherwise unclear. Assessors have serious reservations about the ability of applicant.	The application included a budget that is correct, realistic with an itemised list of eligible costs and with clarity on where/how the money will be spent	

KEY AREA: BENEFICIARIES		
0 points	**1 point**	**2 points**
More than 50% of beneficiaries are located in adjacent district council areas, outside East Hertfordshire	Beneficiaries are considered to be vulnerable	Beneficiaries are residents living in the top 10 disadvantaged areas in East Herts

KEY AREA: DELIVERY		
0 points	1 point	2 points
The applicant appears to be working in isolation. A realistic, detailed plan of delivery has not been included. Assessors have serious reservations about the project. Use of paid staff only.	The application has provided some details on how the project will be delivered but there are areas of weakness and the council has concerns whether the project will be completed in the time frame Paid staff plus volunteers. Assessors have some reservations about the project	The application has provided significant details to reassure the council that the delivery will be effective and completed within 1 year of the grant offer. For example ➤ Volunteer led and managed ➤ Partners identified ➤ Referrals systems set up ➤ Communications/publicity plan in place ➤ Previous experience/track record described Assessors have confidence in project.

KEY AREA: SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT/SCHEME		
0 points	**1 point**	**2 points**
The application does not demonstrate how the project will be continued or improvements cared for and maintained after the funding has been spent. Assessors have serious reservations about the project.	The application demonstrates that some elements of the project and some actions will be taken but the council is not fully convinced. An average quality response but lacks sufficient detail to warrant a higher score.	The application shows that all elements of the project will be continued beyond the grant. For example ➢ Future partners identified ➢ Match funding ➢ Upskilling of volunteers ➢ Plans showing how the group will generate income Assessors are positive and have confidence in the project

AREA: MATCH FUNDING		
0 points	**1 point**	**2 points**
The applicant has not secured funding from another source nor is it contributing cash itself. The council is concerned that the amount still to raise is significant and will not be achieved in the one year time scale	The applicant is providing some cash and has **applied for** funding of 15% or more and/or in kind support from another source.	The applicant is providing cash for the project or has **secured** funding and/or in kind support from another source >15%. This must be evidenced via a grant offer letter.

AREA: SIZE OF ORGANISATION		
0 points	**1 point**	**2 points**
The applicant reports annual income >£200,000.	The applicant reports annual income between £50,000 and £199,000. The council will also consider amount in bank account.	The applicant reports an annual income of less than £50,000. The council will also consider amount in the bank. Assessors believe the applicant to be grass roots organisation and a good local cause

AREA: PREVIOUS SUPPORT FROM THE COUNCIL		
0 points	**1 point**	**2 points**
The applicant has received a grant in the previous 12 months or has an existing grant for a project or service which it has not yet completed. **Bid will be rejected**	The applicant has received a grant from the council before – within 1 to 5 years ago.	The applicant has not applied to the council before or received a grant more than 5 years ago.

KEY AREA: IMPACT / BENEFITS			
0 points	**1 point**	**2 points**	**3 points**
The application does not clearly demonstrate how the project will contribute to a council priority and outcome. Assessors have serious reservations about the project. And whether it would be completed within the year timescale.	The application demonstrates that some elements of the project will contribute to a council priority and outcome but there are areas of weakness and gaps. Assessors have some reservations about whether the benefits will really be achieved within the year timescale and what will change for the community.	The application generally demonstrates that the project will contribute to a council priority and outcome but lacks sufficient detail to warrant a higher score. Assessors are content with project.	The application clearly shows how **all** elements of the project will contribute to more than one council priority and outcome. For example ➢ It is clear what will change in the community following the project Assessors are positive and have confidence in the project and that it will be delivered within the year timescale.
KEY AREA: NEED			
0 points	**1 point**	**2 points**	**3 points**
The project has an insignificant or tenuous link to local need for the project. Assessors have serious reservations about the rationale and need for the project. **Bid will be rejected**	The application has provided information to suggest that the project is needed within the community but quality of answers are poor. Assessors have some reservations about the project.	The application generally demonstrates need with an average answer but lacks sufficient detail to warrant a higher score. Assessors are content with project	The application has provided high quality answers and good supporting evidence to demonstrate the project is a solution to an identified need within the community. For example: ➢ Letters of support ➢ Feedback from local consultation ➢ Research/statistical data ➢ Link to neighbourhood plan Assessors have confidence in project.

APPENDIX 3: REQUIRED DOCUMENTS (to be attached to application)

- Name and contact details of main contacts, (including chair, treasurer and secretary if applicable), in your organisation or informal group
- Written endorsement from an East Herts Councillor
- If an informal group with no legal status or individual, written statement from an East Herts Councillor who has agreed to serve as a mentor
- Bank statement showing current balance
- If applying for £301 or above, constitution / set of rules or charity commission number
- Safeguarding policy (if your organisation works with children or vulnerable adults)
- Health and safety policy (if you are proposing an event)
- Evidence that the **owner of building or space** has approved the building work
- Evidence that applicant has checked that planning permission from the council is **not** required (if a building improvement project)
- Two quotes for building projects or large items of equipment

APPENDIX 4: MOST DEPRIVED LSOAs IN EAST HERTS DISTRICT (Area details)

Whilst East Hertfordshire as a whole ranks above the national average on the scale on Income Deprivation (IMD[1]), there are still certain areas within wards (known as Lower Supra Output Areas LSOAs) that fall below the average IMD[2] ranking for both Hertfordshire and nationally. **The most deprived areas in East Herts in 2019 are:**

LSOA	Ward	IMD Rank within East Hertfordshire LSOAs
007E	Bishop's Stortford (formerly Bishop's Stortford Central)	1
015B	Hertford Sele Ridgeway (formerly Hertford Sele)	2
015A	Hertford Sele Windsor Drive (formerly Hertford Sele)	3
002B	Throcking/Cottered/Westmill	4
012D	Ware Centre (formerly Ware Trinity)	5
001A	Great Hormead/little Hormead/Brent Pelham	6
017A	Hertford Hornsmill (formerly Hertford Castle)	7
018B	Amwell South/St Margarets (formerly Great Amwell)	8
011A	Sawbridgeworth North	9
006B	Wadesmill/High Cross/Thundridge	10

[1] The Indices of Deprivation 2015 provide a set of relative measures of deprivation for small areas (Lower-layer Super Output Areas) across England, based on seven domains of deprivation. The domains were combined using the following weights to produce the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation:

- Income Deprivation (22.5%)
- Employment Deprivation (22.5%)
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation (13.5%)
- Health Deprivation and Disability (13.5%)
- Crime (9.3%)
- Barriers to Housing and Services (9.3%)
- Living Environment Deprivation (9.3%)

In addition to the Index of Multiple Deprivation and the seven domain indices, there are two supplementary indices: the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index and the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index.

[1] IMD data is measured according to individual Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), however by taking the average IMD scores across the LOSA's within each ward we have calculated an average IMD score for each of the wards in East Herts.

NB: Much Hadham is officially listed as having the LSOA with the highest IMD however research has shown that this data reflects the residents of St Margaret's and St Elizabeth's as opposed to the wider residential population.

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Essential Reference Paper C – Draft Equality Impact Analysis

1. Equality Impact Analysis (EqIA) Form

Title of EqIA (policy/change it relates to)	Discretionary Grants Policy	**Date**	November 2019
Team/Department	Community Wellbeing and Partnerships		
Focus of EqIA What are the aims of the new initiative? Who implements it? Define the user group impacted? How will they be impacted?	To administer the **Community Grants Programme** in a fair, consistent and transparent manner to help take forward the Council's emerging corporate priorities in sustainability, engagement and collaboration with the community, economic growth and digital innovation. Officers within the Community Wellbeing and Partnerships Team will manage the programme with administrative support. All residents living, working and playing in East Herts benefit. Report to Full Council to ask Members whether they would like to open up the programme to individuals and informal groups and enable them to apply for a small grant up to £300. • High quality, accessible sports and community facilities and accessible outdoor spaces so it is easier for people with learning disabilities or mobility difficulties to take part • More arts, culture, sports and health and wellbeing activities to assist with the East Herts Social Prescribing Service (non medical community based health solutions), Dementia Friendly East Herts and tackle isolation and loneliness among all ages • Widen access to arts and culture and encourage people to come together • Reconnect residents to local history and have pride in place • Increased number of residents coming together to tackle an identified local problem, using local assets • Safer and resilient neighbourhoods • Support for all residents to achieve a healthy weight, eat well, stay active and maintain their independence and take care of their mental health • Support people who are tackling addiction • Increased usage of community buildings and outdoor spaces • Creating facilities that are more than a "hall for hire" • Reducing the carbon footprint by installing energy efficiency measures		

2.   Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions

Please fill in when appropriate to the change. If it does not, please put N/A

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
Age	We know that many successful applicants are groups that are in the Council's system and are repeat applicants. Most are established charities, town and parish councils, sports clubs and village halls 25% of grant funded projects benefit older or vulnerable people. Vulnerable groups and residents living in disadvantages areas are a priority for the Council.	In the past, feedback has been that the online form is difficult to use; doesn't work properly on some personal IT devices. Difficult to obtain endorsement from EH Member in the required time.	Lack of uptake by grass roots organisations and voluntary led groups. disinterest and perception that effort required to be awarded a grant is too much, lack of confidence in ability to be successful.	Set up a small grants programme for individuals and informal groups with a very simple online application Provide a named officer who can help. Continue to improve online application process. Provide a paper copy if requested Advise organisations that work with older people of grant deadlines. Prioritise projects in areas of disadvantage.
Disability	As above	As above	As above	As above plus advise organisations that work with people with disabilities and long term conditions of deadlines.

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	**What do you know?** Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	**What do people tell you?** Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	**What does this mean?** Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	**What can you do?** All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
Gender reassignment	As above	As above	As above	As above plus advise organisations that support residents in this situation about grant deadlines.
Pregnancy and maternity	N/A			
Race	We know that many successful applicants are groups that are in the Council's system and are repeat applicants. Most are established charities, town and parish councils, sports clubs and village halls *25% of grant funded projects benefit older or vulnerable people. Vulnerable groups and residents living in disadvantages areas are a priority for the Council.*	As above	As above	As above, plus ensure that groups working with people from ethnic minoritiy communitys are receiving notifications about grant deadlines. Provide Members with more details on deadlines and encourage them to help groups with the application questions.

3

Protected Characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
Religion or belief	Projects that promote a specific religion or political belief are ineligible	As above	As above	As above, plus ensure that churches and faith groups are groups are receiving notifications about grant deadlines. Applications from church halls or religious organisations may only be made where the halls are used for physical recreation, cultural, social and community benefit and where the project is to benefit the wider community with a secular aim.
Sex/Gender	We know that many successful applicants are groups that are in the Council's system and are repeat applicants. Most are established charities, town and parish councils, sports clubs and village halls *25% of grant funded projects benefit older or vulnerable people. Vulnerable groups and residents living in disadvantages areas are a*	As above	As above	As above, plus ensure that womens organisations or mens organisations are receiving notifications about grant deadlines.

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
	priority for the Council. Single gender organisations are invited to to apply as long as they can demonstrate if asked that they comply with the Equality Act 2010			
Sexual orientation	As above	As above	As above	As above, plus ensure that local LGBTQ organisations are receiving notifications about grant deadlines.
Marriage and civil partnership	N/A			

Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations

The council is committed to ensuring that individuals or groups of individuals are not treated differently or less favourably in terms of being able to apply for a community grant. At all times, it aims to take an inclusive approach and ensure that any individual or group that wants to is able to fully participate in applying for a grant..

The council's preferred method of receiving applications in online. However if requested a paper copy can be sent out and postal applications will be accepted. Friendly advice and guidance on completing the forms are available from Council officers and the Broxbourne and East Herts Councils for Voluntary Service and Community Development Action Herts, free of charge.

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	**What do you know?** Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	**What do people tell you?** Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	**What does this mean?** Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	**What can you do?** All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
Information about grants is available through the Council's ebulletin and is promoted in Link magazine and on social media. Traditional flyers are also produced on occasion and distributed to Members, libraries, leisure centres and village halls and parish/town councils. Information on deadlines and priorities is available on the website and via parish/village newsletters. Announcement about deadlines is done via emails to Members, external partners and database of known community and voluntary organisations. Members are asked to refer organisations to the scheme. There is no evidence to suggest that grants are being unfairly allocated. An independent audit (Dec 2019) concluded that there is satisfactory assurance that there are effective controls in place and good decision making processes.				

3.   List detailed data and/or community feedback which informed your EqIA (If applicable)

Title (of data, research or engagement)	**Date**	**Gaps in data**	**Actions to fill these gaps: who else do you need to engage with?** (add these to the Action Plan below, with a timeframe)
None.			

4. Prioritised Action Plan (If applicable)

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Timeframe
NB: These actions must now be transferred to service or business plans and monitored to ensure they achieve the outcomes identified.				
None.				

EqIA sign-off: (for the EQIA to be final an email must sent from the relevant people agreeing it or this section must be signed)

Lead Equality Impact Assessment officer: **Date:**

Directorate Management Team rep or Head of Service: **Date:**

Author of Equality Impact Analysis: **Claire Pullen, Housing and Health Projects Officer**   **Date: 27/11/19**

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2019, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor T Page (Chairman)
                Councillors T Beckett, R Buckmaster, S Bull, B Crystall, B Deering, R Fernando, I Kemp, C Redfern and P Ruffles

ALSO PRESENT:

                Councillors E Buckmaster, J Dumont, J Goodeve and D Snowdon

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Sara Saunders	- Head of Planning and Building Control
Jill Shingler	- Principal Planning Officer
David Snell	- Service Manager (Development Management)
Stephen Tapper	- Principal Planning Officer
Victoria Wilders	- Legal Services Manager

220   APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of
Councillors D Andrews, A Huggins, J Jones and T Stowe.
It was noted that Councillors S Bull and R Fernando
were substituting for Councillors T Stowe and J Jones
respectively.

221   MINUTES - 11 SEPTEMBER 2019

Councillor B Deering proposed and Councillor R
Fernando seconded, a motion that the Minutes of the
meeting held on 11 September 2019 be confirmed as a
correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to
the following amendments:

Minute 140 – 3/18/2731/FUL – Demolition of
Building P5 and associated structures and the
erection of a manufacturing building and
associated works at GlaxoSmithKline Services
Ltd, Priory Street, Ware, Hertfordshire, SG12 0DJ

In 3rd paragraph, add 15 after the word
condition in the 1st sentence.

Delete in 1st sentence in 8th paragraph –
'....developed.'

Replace with – 'development'.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this
motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting

held on 11 September 2019, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

Minute 140 – 3/18/2731/FUL – Demolition of Building P5 and associated structures and the erection of a manufacturing building and associated works at GlaxoSmithKline Services Ltd, Priory Street, Ware, Hertfordshire, SG12 0DJ

In 3rd paragraph, add 15 after the word condition in the 1st sentence.

Delete in 1st sentence in 8th paragraph – '….developed.'

Replace with – 'development'.

222   3/19/1689/FUL - ERECTION OF 8NO. DWELLINGS, NEW ACCESS AND LANDSCAPING AT LAND WEST OF HODDESDON ROAD, ST MARGARETSBURY, STANSTEAD ABBOTS

The Head of Planning and Building Control recommended that in respect of application 3/19/1689/FUL, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

The Service Manager (Development Management), on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, summarised the application and detailed the relevant planning history. He said that the application was essentially the same as the application refused by the

Committee on 17th July 2019. Members were referred to paragraph 1.5 of the report for the additional information and amendments that had been submitted and proposed.

The Service Manager (Development Management), on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, referred to additional biodiversity information, a pedestrian crossing point with tactile paving and a swept path for 12.1 metre refuse vehicles. He said that the reported response of the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) was as per the previous application. The LLFA had objected to the current application advising that infiltration testing was required to overcome the objection.

The Service Manager (Development Management), on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, said that there had been no changes in respect of the drainage situation. He advised that additional testing on site regarding infiltration was not currently possible as the site was not accessible for additional testing. In the circumstances, the previous LLFA case Officer had accepted that this matter could be addressed by condition.

Members were advised that a very comprehensive pre-commencement condition had been applied in respect of surface water drainage on the basis that this must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

The Service Manager (Development Management), on

behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, confirmed that the applicant had agreed to pre-commencement conditions. Members were advised that paragraph 8.43 on page 38 of the report incorrectly stated that a planning obligation would satisfy a Section 106 test of reasonableness. The wording should have stated "would not satisfy".

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 1.6 of the report and they were advised that the principal issues for consideration were highways safety and the ecological impact and all other details were substantially the same. Mrs Hind addressed the Committee in objection to the application. Mr Shrimplin spoke for the application. Mr Cox addressed the Committee on behalf of Stanstead Abbots Parish Council. Councillor J Dumont addressed the Committee as the local ward Member.

Councillor P Ruffles said that he would welcome comment from Officers in respect of the combined foul and surface water sewer. He acknowledged that there would be a big change in the nature of this site in terms of ecology. In response to comments by Councillor P Ruffles and Councillor B Deering, the Service Manager (Development Management), provided some further clarity for Members.

The Service Manager (Development Management), on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, confirmed that the provisions of the pre-commencement condition stipulated that development could not commence until the drainage issues were resolved. The LLFA had written to Officers

to confirm that they did not recommend refusal of the planning application. He said that as regards the foul and surface water combined sewer, it was for Thames Water to provide the capacity for the proposed development. He also confirmed that the Conservation Officer had stated that there would be no adverse impact on the conservation area.

The Service Manager (Development Management), on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, confirmed to Councillor R Buckmaster that the conditions could be amended to preserve the provision of bird and bat boxes on the site in the event of any change of ownership.

Councillor S Bull commented on the pedestrian footpath at the Western End of Hoddesdon Road. He also referred to the access being on a bend of a busy road. The Service Manager (Development Management), on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, advised that only personal injury accidents were recorded and there had no recorded accidents from this location in the last 5 years.

Councillor R Fernando said that there were small but significant positive changes to the proposed development. He commented on the proposed pedestrian crossing and whether trees would be lost. The Service Manager (Development Management), on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, confirmed that Officers were not aware of additional trees being removed other than those proposed for removal by the application and the trees on the site would be protected by the conservation area. The

plans for the pedestrian crossing were included with the application.

Councillor I Kemp said that traffic calming could be utilised to slow the traffic and improve highway safety. The Service Manager stated that this could not be conditioned as the highway authority had not objected to the application.

It was moved by Councillor S Bull and seconded by Councillor I Kemp that the application be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report submitted.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED. The Committee accepted the recommendation of the Head of Planning and Building Control as now submitted.

> RESOLVED – that in respect of application 3/18/1689/FUL, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report submitted.

223   3/19/1642/FUL - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING LEISURE CENTRE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REPLACEMENT LEISURE CENTRE WITH ASSOCIATED CYCLE PARKING FACILITIES, LANDSCAPING, FOOTPATHS, CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA, FLOOD ATTENUATION AND AMENDMENTS TO PLAYING PITCHES AT GRANGE PADDOCKS POOL AND GYM, RYE STREET, BISHOP'S STORTFORD

The Head of Planning and Building Control recommended that in respect of application

3/19/1642/FUL, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted. The Principal Planning Officer, on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, highlighted that the recommendation on page 74 of the report submitted should end after the word "below".

Members were advised that the existing leisure centre had reached the end of its life and the proposed replacement centre was considerably larger at more than double the existing floor space. The proposal included enhanced pool and gym facilities and a new café area. The Principal Planning Officer, on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, confirmed that the proposed development would be to the south of the existing centre, which would remain open during construction.

The Committee was advised that the application constituted inappropriate development in the Green Belt and very special circumstances should exist for approval of planning permission. The evidence of increasing demand for pool and gym facilities and the sustainable location of the site, together with the lack of alternate sites weighed heavily in favour of development and site was well served by public transport and existing car parks. Officers therefore considered that special circumstances applied in this case.

The Principal Planning Officer, on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, referred to the town centre location and the good public transport links plus the proposed cycle parking. Members were

advised that there would no long term loss of playing fields and the building exceeded building regulations in design due to fabric first principles being applied. She also referred to the proposed use of photo voltaic cells and air source heat pumps.

The Principal Planning Officer, on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, said that the site was close to the boundary of the Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area and there would be no harm to heritage assets. The curving nature of the design represented a significant visual improvement over the existing leisure centre.

Councillor D Snowdon addressed the Committee as the local ward Member. He was supportive of the development and referred to a number of the key features that made this a great development that was wanted by the public and clearly met the demand for leisure provision. He concluded that a new pool was needed and there would be an 11.2% reduction in carbon emissions. He said that his only concern was the impact of the application on Rye Street and asked whether this impact could be controlled by conditions.

The Principal Planning Officer, on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, confirmed to Councillor S Bull that the option of a multi storey car park had not been considered and Officers believed this would not be appropriate in this location. She said that this was a sustainable location and the proposed 240 spaces were considered to be sufficient.

The Principal Planning Officer, on behalf of the Head of

Planning and Building Control, responded to a comment by Councillor T Beckett that the car park fronting onto Rye Street had been included in the parking provision. Councillor B Deering referred to the importance of the facilities being of sufficient and proper size for competitions. The Principal Planning Officer, on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, confirmed that there had been input from Sport England. The Chairman referred to the lack of a height restriction to allow easy access for coaches to the proposed facilities.

It was moved by Councillor P Ruffles and seconded by Councillor S Bull that the application be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report submitted, on the basis that the special circumstances outweighed the harm and there would no loss of habitat and the loss of open space was considered to be acceptable.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED. The Committee accepted the recommendation of the Head of Planning and Building Control as now submitted.

> RESOLVED – that in respect of application 3/19/1642/FUL, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report submitted.

224   3/18/1820/FUL - EXTENSION OF SPINE ROAD FROM
        HOGGATE'S PARK TO THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SITE AT
        STORTFORD FIELDS, BISHOP'S STORTFORD

The Head of Planning and Building Control recommended that in respect of application 3/18/1820/FUL, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

The Principal Planning Officer, on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, summarised the application and Members were advised of the unusual nature of an application for the extension of a spine road without an accompanying development. This was to facilitate access to the secondary school site in the eastern neighbourhood of Bishop's Stortford North.

The Principal Planning Officer, on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, referred to technical work and a higher standard now expected in terms of roads and cycle ways. The applicant had responded with wider roads and improvements to cycle ways and enhanced footpath provision. He also referred to work that been undertaken in respect of biodiversity and tree planting.

The Principal Planning Officer, on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, referred to the complex drainage situation. He said that the Lead Local Flood Authority had set very high standards for the triple natural filtration of highways run off due to accumulations of oil, fuel and dust from both vehicle tyres and brakes.

The Principal Planning Officer, on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, commented on the relationship of the application with Farnham Brook and the River Stort. He referred to the comments of the Ramblers Association and Bishop's Stortford Town Council regarding ensuring that footpaths were not blocked.

It was moved by Councillor T Beckett and seconded by Councillor R Fernando that the application be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report submitted. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED. The Committee accepted the recommendation of the Head of Planning and Building Control as now submitted.

> RESOLVED – that in respect of application 3/18/1820/FUL, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report submitted.

225   ITEMS FOR REPORTING AND NOTING

> RESOLVED – that the following reports be noted:

> (A) Appeals against refusal of planning permission / non-determination;

> (B) Planning Appeals lodged;

> (C) Planning Appeals: Inquiry and Informal Hearing dates; and

(D) Planning Statistics.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

Chairman ………………………………………………

Date ………………………………………………

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2019, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Pope (Chairman)
Councillors A Alder, J Burmicz, L Corpe, A Curtis and T Stowe

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors J Goodeve and P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Robert Allwood	-	Leisure and Parks Development Officer
Lorraine Blackburn	-	Democratic Services Officer
Isabel Brittain	-	Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Jackie Bruce	-	Infrastructure, Contributions and Spend Manager
Steven Dupoy	-	Leisure and Environment Services

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		Manager
Mike Edley	-	Interim Scrutiny Officer
Graham Mully	-	Insurance and Risk Business Advisor
Helen Standen	-	Deputy Chief Executive
Alison Stuart	-	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Robert Winterton	-	Financial Services Manager

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Nick Jennings	-	Shared Anti-Fraud Service (SAFS)
Simon Martin	-	Shared Internal Audit Service

144   APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S Bull.

145   MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor A Alder and seconded by Councillor L Corpe that the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. After being put to the meeting and a

vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

> RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

146   CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman asked that, with Members' consent, the order of the agenda be changed so that the Code of Conduct be considered before the Annual Leisure Contract Performance report and that Insurance Contract Options be considered after the Shared Anti-Fraud Service 2018/19 Annual Fraud Report. This was supported.

147   CODE OF CONDUCT

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained that a Code of Conduct complaint had been received whereby the complainant wished to remain anonymous. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services asked that, in line with procedure, an Assessment Standards Sub-Committee be convened to establish whether the complainant should retain anonymity.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained that Standards training would be provided to Members.

Members supported the recommendation and agreed that the Assessment Standards Sub Committee should comprise Councillors A Alder, L Corpe and A Ward-Booth. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken the motion was declared CARRIED.

> RESOLVED - that an Assessment Standards Sub

Committee comprising Councillors A Alder, L Corpe and A Ward-Booth be established to consider a complainant's wish to retain anonymity in relation to a Code of Conduct complaint.

148   ANNUAL LEISURE CONTRACT PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018

The Executive Member for Wellbeing submitted the annual report of the Council's ten year leisure contract with Sports and Leisure Management Ltd (SLM) trading as "Everyone Active" (EA). The Leisure and Environment Service Manager provided a summary of the report specifically, performance in relation to the specification of the contract and qualitative successes and improvements.

The Chairman referred to targets which had been set in 2009 and sought assurances that these would be updated following proposed capital investments and improvements in relation to changes to leisure provision on all sites. The Leisure and Environment Service Manager acknowledged that the targets in the new contract would reflect the enhanced facilities.

Members debated the report at length seeking clarification in relation to:-

- customer satisfaction levels generally and in relation to Fanshawe Pool;
- financial performance in terms of the cost per visit;
- Health and Safety and the number of recorded accidents (including those which were sporting injuries vs those which were injuries relating to natural causes);
- Income flows in relation to changes to the

management fees which would increase the Council's revenues;

- The Council's liability in relation to injuries and assurances (that it had sufficient insurance to protect the Council's position) and in relation to the need to carry out appropriate risk assessments. Assurances were provided.
- The need to review customer feedback and consider what modest investments could be made at the joint use facilities.

The Leisure and Environment Service Manager provided a summary in relation to work in progress to reduce energy consumption across all sites and so reduce operating costs and improve energy ratings. Other aspects in relation to Hartham leisure centre were discussed, including customer parking, the changing rooms and possible over-roofing.

Councillor A Curtis suggested that "Added Social Value" should seek to be quantified in future reports. This was supported. The Leisure and Environment Service Manager undertook to take this on board.

The Chairman on behalf of Members, welcomed the move to improve energy efficiency and the assurance that maintenance investments would continue where needed in relation to Leventhorpe and Fanshawe facilities. Additionally, Members acknowledged that attendance targets across the Council's facilities had been established in 2009, at the beginning of the current leisure contract and that these would be reviewed going forward.

It was moved by Councillor A Alder and seconded by Councillor T Stowe that the Annual Report be received and Members' comments be submitted to the Executive. After

being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Annual Report be received;

(B)   the Executive be advised that Members welcomed the move to improve energy efficiency and that maintenance investment would continue where needed, in relation to Leventhorpe and Fanshawe facilities.

(C) Members acknowledged that attendance targets across the Council's facilities had been set in 2009, at the beginning of the current leisure contract and that these would be reviewed going forward and updated where required.

149   SECTION 106 AGREEMENT - UPDATE REPORT

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report updating Members on the current positon of Section106 Agreements.

The Infrastructure, Contributions and Spend Manager provided a summary of the report and referred Members to the exempt Essential Reference Paper "B" detailing the contribution allocations, the planning application, location, obligation, wording, timescale for allocation and RAG (Red, Amber Green) rating for each unallocated contribution in order to facilitate the distribution of contributions for community use. She provided a summary of how the spend was monitored and ongoing negotiations with developers and Officers in relation to potential allocations. The Infrastructure, Contributions and Spend Manager confirmed that there were currently no allocations that the

Council might have to return to the developers.

Councillor A Curtis welcomed the report. He emphasised the role to be played by Members in relation to publishing funds available for use in their wards. The Infrastructure, Contributions and Spend Manager confirmed that she was in touch with Town and Parish Councils to discuss how monies could be spent and explained the restrictions in relation to the use of Section 106 monies. The Deputy Chief Executive further explained that monies could only be allocated to "named projects".

Councillor L Corpe sought and was provided with clarification on how community groups could submit "expressions of interest".

Councillor A Curtis sought clarification on what Members could do in advance to engage with the public in identifying a pool of ideas of potential schemes which might benefit from Section 106 monies. This was provided.

Members debated the issue of requests by developers to minimise their contributions because of unforeseen circumstances which compromised the viability of their schemes. Councillor A Curtis asked whether Members could receive a report next year on ideas and projects so that Members could engage with other external groups. This was supported.

It was moved by Councillor A Alder and seconded by Councillor T Stowe that the report be received and that a progress report be submitted to Members next year. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received and

(B)   Members be provided with a progress report next year.

150   SHARED INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE (SIAS) PROGRESS REPORT

The Shared Internal Audit Service submitted a report on the progress made by the service in delivering the Council's 2019/20 and Internal Audit Plan as at 6 September 2019 and its findings. The report set out the proposed amendments to the approved Internal Audit Plan, the status of previously agreed audit recommendations and an update on performance management information. The Client Audit Manager provided a summary of the report.

Councillor A Curtis sought and was provided with clarification regarding a number of recommendations which had been identified following a review by Hertfordshire County Council in relation to the Herts Home Improvement Agency. This included the introduction of a formal project plan to review existing systems across the service such as governance structures, management information, and financial monitoring and key performance indicators. The Client Audit Manager explained that partners were taking a balanced view that the agency was a good concept. He explained that the recommendation was a high priority and would be monitored.

In response to a query from Councillor A Alder, the Client Audit Manger confirmed that there had been no adverse feedback from East Herts residents. The Head of Strategic Finance and Property confirmed that she would ask the

Head of Housing and Health to confirm whether there had been any adverse comments.

The Client Audit Manager confirmed that the majority of recommendations had been addressed and explained the relationship between the time taken to implement a recommendation (its complexity) and the resources available to address recommendations impacted on its status.

The Head of Strategic Finance and Property confirmed that there had been no financial or resource restrictions imposed. She suggested that Members be emailed with a short progress report from the Lead Officer in relation to Herts Home Improvement Agency. This was supported.

It was moved by Councillor A Alder and seconded by Councillor T Stowe that the report as detailed, be received and that the Shared Internal Audit Service Officer email Members with a short progress report in relation to the Herts Improvement Agenda. This was supported. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

> RESOLVED – that (A) the report as detailed be received and
>
> (B) the Shared Internal Audit Service Officer email Members with a short progress report in relation to the Herts Improvement Agenda.

151   SHARED ANTI-FRAUD SERVICE - 2018/19 ANNUAL FRAUD REPORT

The Head of the Shared Anti-Fraud Service submitted a

report detailing the work undertaken to protect the Council against the threat of fraud and the Council's Anti-Fraud Action Plan for 2018/19.

The Head of the Anti-Fraud Service provided a summary of the report and said that fraud levels within the District were comparable to other councils. The Officer reported that there were 38 live cases at 31 March 2019 and a further 41 had been reported between April and August. Of 14 cases investigated and closed between April and August fraud had been identified in 8 cases with a value of loss/savings of £63,000 recorded.

In response to a query by the Chairman, the Head of the (SAFs) Service provided a summary of the types of fraud investigated including email (spoofs) and VAT Fraud.

It was moved by Councillor A Curtis and seconded by Councillor L Corpe, that the report as detailed be received. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

152   INSURANCE CONTRACT OPTIONS

The Executive Member for Corporate Services submitted a report summarising the options available going forward, in relation to the Council's Insurance Contracts. The Insurance and Risk Business Advisor provided a summary of the report and referred Members to the exempt Essential Reference Paper "B" for more detailed information on the options available. He provided background information in relation to the negotiations with the Local Government Mutual. Members debated the

options available and the Council's position. Given the ongoing negotiations with the Local Government Mutual (LGM), a number of Members urged a cautious approach.

It was moved by Councillor A Curtis and seconded by Councillor L Corpe that the report as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken the motion was declared CARRIED.

> RESOLVED – that (A) the Executive be advised that Members of Performance Audit and Governance Oversight Committee support an extension of the insurance contracts for a further and final year; and
>
> (B)   Members of Performance Audit and Governance Oversight Committee be provided with an update report at its meeting in March 2020 outlining options for 2021.

153   CORPORATE QUARTERLY HEALTHCHECK : QUARTER 1

The Head of Strategic Finance and Property and the Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy submitted a report setting out the results of the finance and monitoring figures for the Council for the Quarter 1 period (as at 30 June 2019). The Head of Strategic Finance and Property provided a summary of the report adding that a large amount of the capital budget (£61.258m) would be carried forward to future years due to re-profiling of spend on major projects. She provided a breakdown regarding the Council's debtors. As at the end of July £260k of £684k had been paid.

Councillor A Curtis referred to the fact that Priority code QC HH 151 (Number of Homeless Households living in

temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter) had no current target. He suggested that this be set at zero. The Head of Strategic Finance and Property said that she would raise this issue with the Head of Housing and Health.

The Chairman commented on the number of variances and underspends. The Head of Strategic Finance and Property said that these were being managed within existing resources.

Councillor A Curtis referred to code MC OP 2.2 (Waste missed collections per 100,000) adding that this needed to be a top priority. The Head of Strategic Finance and Property explained that in real terms this figure was 0.03% (and was approximately 60 bins per month). The Chairman explained that this was being reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It was moved by Councillor M Pope and seconded by Councillor T Stowe that the report be received as detailed. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken the motion was declared CARRIED.

> RESOLVED – that (A) the projected revenue budget forecast underspend of £1k in 2019/20 be noted;
>
> (B)   it be noted that the capital budget for 2019/20 is £77.940m of which £61.258m be carried forward to future years; and
>
> (C)   the reported performance for the period April 2019 to June 2019 be noted.

154   PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE OVERSIGHT -
        <u>WORK PROGRAMME PROPOSALS 2019-20</u>

The Interim Scrutiny Officer submitted a report setting out a draft work programme of Performance Audit and Governance Oversight Committee. The Head of Strategic Finance and Property commented that the draft agenda for the meeting on 19 November 2019 was too lengthy as it stood, for all the reports to be considered in detail at that meeting. She suggested that an informal meeting of Performance Audit and Governance Oversight Committee members be established in advance of 19 November to pre-review the Statement of Accounts and the Treasury Management reports so that these items could be dealt with quickly at the formal meeting. This was supported.

It was moved by Councillor A Alder and seconded by Councillor T Stowe that the report as detailed be approved and that an informal meeting be convened end October / early November. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken the motion was declared CARRIED.

> <u>RESOLVED</u> – that (A) the agenda items for the meeting on 19 November 2019 be approved;
>
> (B)   the draft work programme for the reminder of the civic year be approved.
>
> (C)   an informal meeting of Performance Audit and Governance Oversight Committee be convened end October / early November to consider the Statement of Accounts and the Treasury Management and update reports.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm

Chairman ………………………………………………….
Date   ………………………………………………….

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PERFORMANCE, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON TUESDAY 29 OCTOBER
2019, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Pope (Chairman)
                  Councillors A Alder, S Bull, J Burmicz,
                  L Corpe, A Curtis and T Stowe

ALSO PRESENT:

                  Councillor P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	-	Democratic Services Officer
Richard Cassidy	-	Chief Executive
Andrew Figgis	-	Economic Development Officer
Ashok Mistry	-	Finance Business Partner
Nicola Munro	-	Principal Accountant
Chris Smith	-	Business Engagement Manager
Alison Street	-	Finance Business Partner
Robert Winterton	-	Financial Services Manager

Ben Wood   - Head of
Communications,
Strategy and
Policy

201   STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS – PRESENTATION

The Financial Services Manager gave a presentation on the Draft Statement of Accounts. The presentation provided a summary of:

- why the audit process had been delayed;
- when the off-site worked commenced and when this would finish; and
- that as at 29 October – 10 outstanding items were being reviewed.

The Financial Services Manger provided a summary of the proposed changes to the Statement of Accounts and why these had been requested by the External Auditor. He explained that PAGO at its meeting on 19 November 2019, would be asked to approve the Statement of Accounts and seek authority for the Chairman to sign off the accounts. The Committee would also be asked to approve that the Chairman be allowed to sign the Letter of Representation.

Members sought clarification on a number of issues including:

- The review of 10 outstanding issues and whether these related to Council activity;
- Whether Officers had provided all the evidence needed to conclude the review (so that further delays

would be avoided);

- The proposed change to IAS19 (Pension) required to the statement of accounts and the disclosure ruling;
- Minor errors which had been picked up by the External Auditor;
- Going forward, how external auditor providers were chosen;
- Information provided to the External Auditors and comparisons to what had been provided in the past;

At the request of Members, the Financial Services Manager agreed to circulate the draft Audit Report to Members.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the presentation be received.

202   TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2018/19

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability submitted a report reviewing the Council's treasury management activities for 2018/19 including the prudential indicators and the associated impact on the 2019/20 treasury management strategy.

The Financial Business Partner provided a summary of the report adding that there were no significant changes to the outturn. She explained that there was some intrinsic debt (£6m) which would be cleared in May 2020.

The Chairman and Members sought and were provided with clarification in relation to a number of issues including:

- The level of reserves;

- The Council's negative capital financing requirement (CFR), when this was set, how this was determined and what this was used for;
- Confirmation that the Council's level of reserves stood at between £39m - £40m, where and how long these were held on deposit and whether the funds deposited in approved countries, were limited;
- The rate of return on the monies invested with Millstream; and
- why the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) had increased their borrowing rates.

Members supported the recommendation to advise the Executive that the Treasury Management Outturn for 2018/19 be approved.

It was moved by Councillor A Alder and seconded by Councillor L Corpe that the recommendation be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

> RESOLVED - that the Executive be advised that Members support approval of the Treasury Management 2018/19 activity and Prudential Indicators.

203   TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REVIEW

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability submitted a report on the Council's treasury management activities for the first six months of 2019/20 financial year including the prudential indicators. The Finance Business Partner explained that the only major change was the significant reduction in capital spends owing to some

larger projects being re-profiled and explained how this would affect future borrowing.

The Chairman and Members debated the report at length and sought clarification on a number of issues including, the Council's long term liabilities, why the Council would need to borrow in April 2021 and the various projects which would require a loan from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). The Finance Business Partner explained the rationale behind the need to change to the Prudential Indicators for the Capital Financing Requirement.

Members supported the recommendation to receive the report and to advise the Executive that Performance Audit and Governance Oversight members support the Treasury Management Outturn activity and proposed changes to the prudential indicators for the first six months of the 2019/20 financial year.

It was moved by Councillor A Alder and seconded by Councillor J Burmicz that the recommendation as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

> RESOLVED – that the (A) report be received and
>
> (B)   the Executive be advised that Performance Audit and Governance Oversight Members support the Treasury Management Outturn activity and proposed changes to the prudential indicators for the first six months of the 2019/20 financial year.

204   ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY – UPDATE

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth submitted a report which provided an update on the Economic Development Vision for East Herts. The Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy provided a summary of the report in terms of achievements since 2015 based on the six key themes and the challenges the Council could face after BREXIT in terms of supporting local businesses and the local economy.

The Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy explained that 11,700 businesses were registered in the District but this figure had become skewed and it was difficult to establish which were "shell" companies which masked statistics in terms of macro-economics.

The Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy referred to the need to hold onto employment land as this was being lost at a rapid pace and converted into more profitable residential land. Members noted that 20HA of employment land had been identified within the District Plan to provide an additional sustainable level of employment space over a period for the next 10 – 15 years.   It was noted that the use of an Article 4 Direction could play some part in protecting land. Further work was being undertaken on this aspect.

Members debated the report at length in terms of:

- Approaches taken by neighbouring authorities (such as Welwyn Garden City) in developing business land;
- The role of the Herts LEP in identifying the net loss of employment space over the last decade;

- The potential to work with others on e.g. DIZ, tourism, inward investors and why certain towns had been targeted;
- the challenges of boundaries and how this impacted on employment land/investment opportunities;
- Whether Life Sciences in the Cambridge corridor could be extended south and the need to attract global "players". It was noted that a bid for Euro Development Monies had been submitted for investment in three sectors including Life Sciences and Stansted Airport.
- The success of Launch-pad in Bishop's Stortford and the need to accommodate the facility within plans for the Old River Lane;
- The need to protect the vibrancy of all Town Centres, including Sawbridgeworth Town Centre and how business rate relief could help some new businesses;
- The roads and poor infrastructure in the approach to Buntingford which could detract businesses from establishing a presence locally;
- The need to review inward investment and encourage employment opportunities in the District. The role of the District Plan in this process was acknowledged.

Members further debated the need to encourage employment opportunities in the District and that there should be greater narrative in supporting what was being done in the five towns in the district. This was supported.

Following a review of the Economic Development Vision it was moved by Councillor A Alder and seconded by A Curtis that the recommendations on (A) the need to encourage employment opportunities in the District and (B) that there

be greater narrative in supporting what was being done in the five towns in the district be conveyed to the Executive Member for Planning and Growth. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the progress made against the Economic Development Vision be noted; and

(B) that Members' views that greater narrative be included within the Plan in supporting what was being done in the five towns in the District be conveyed to the Executive Member for Planning and Growth and that Officers prepare a written statement for circulation on how the five towns are being supported.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Chairman ....

Date   ....

COUNCIL – 18 DECEMBER 2019

MOTION ON NOTICE

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

This Council is extremely concerned about the inadequate provision of Affordable and Social Housing within the District. There are 2,000 Families on the housing "Waiting List", and the prices being charged for so-called affordable homes are way beyond the reach of many, many people in our community.

This Council, therefore, resolves to conduct an investigation into the possibility of building its own council houses once more (as was done in the past.)

Proposed by Councillor M Goldspink
Seconded by Councillor T Beckett

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL ON 18th DECEMBER 2018

REPORT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

REPORT TITLE: OLD RIVER LANE & NORTHGATE END LAND ASSEMBLY

WARD(S) AFFECTED: BISHOP'S STORTFORD, MEADS

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report provides members with the case for the council to acquire a plot of land at Northgate End, Bishop's Stortford from Hertfordshire County Council in pursuance of delivery of the Old River Lane scheme and seeks approval to proceed with this acquisition.
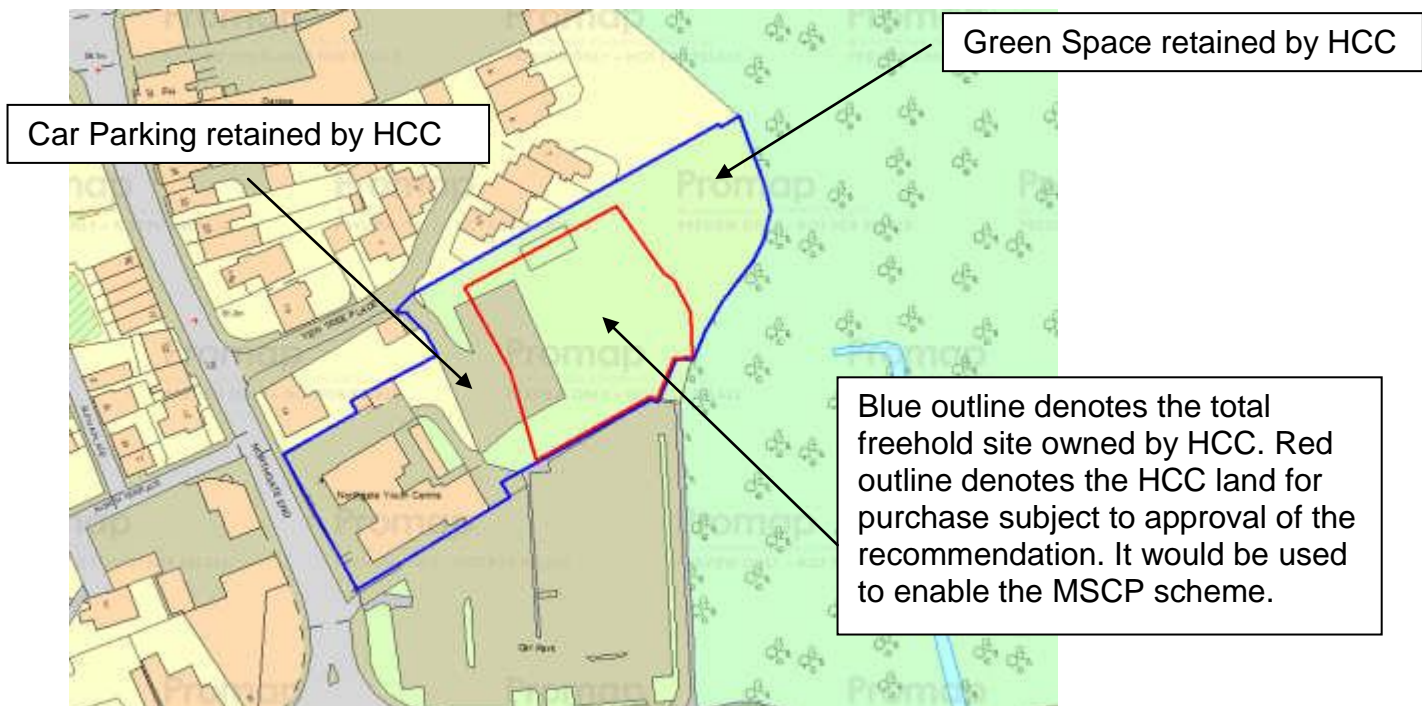
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL That:	
(A)	**a section of the land currently in the ownership of Hertfordshire County Council at Northgate End, Bishop's Stortford be purchased in line with the valuation presented in the Exempt Essential Reference Paper B in pursuance of delivery of the Old River Lane scheme**
(B)	**the Head of Legal and Democratic Service be delegated to make all necessary arrangements to complete the purchase of the land at Northgate End, Bishop's Stortford.**

1.0   Background

1.1   The council is actively engaged in the Old River Lane programme of works to deliver a major regeneration scheme at this important site in the centre of Bishop's Stortford.

1.2 Most of the land proposed for redevelopment is now in the ownership of the council, with the exception of one final parcel of land required for land assembly; a parcel of land which is in the ownership Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) at the Northgate Centre which makes up part of the footprint of the new Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) and the small surface car park to the rear of that building.

1.3 Full Council's consideration and approval of the delivery of the Northgate End car park and residential units on 25th July 2018 was predicated on the total land area within the agreed planning proposals. This report seeks approval to acquire the final plot of land required.

2.0 <u>Report</u>

2.1 The Northgate End works will enable development across the wider Old River Lane site as it is the delivery of the new MSCP that will allow for the surface parking area at the Causeway to be released for use without detrimentally impacting provision within the town centre.

2.2 The design for the new MSCP includes the use of a portion of HCC owned land for both the building mass and as surface parking to the rear of the structure.

Green Space retained by HCC

Car Parking retained by HCC

Blue outline denotes the total freehold site owned by HCC. Red outline denotes the HCC land for purchase subject to approval of the recommendation. It would be used to enable the MSCP scheme.

2.3   Negotiations with HCC on the acquisition have now concluded. The agreed valuation, informed by detailed analysis by Montagu Evans consultancy, is included at ERP B. The council would acquire the leasehold of the land for 250 years.

2.4   The agreement struck with HCC includes:

- provision of a maximum of 150 parking permits in total per year for the staff/users of the HCC Youth Centre subject to a maximum of 15 parking permits being used on any given day. This will apply to the new MSCP once developed (and other council car parks in the town during development)
- use by EHDC of some land on the wider HCC site during the development phase to enable building of the MSCP for which a disturbance payment and land usage licence fee will be paid to HCC. Details are included in ERP B.

3.0   Implications/Consultations

3.1   The corporate implications are included in ERP A. The financial requirements will be met through the ongoing grants provided by the LEP.

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Contact Officer: Isabel Brittain
Head of Strategic Finance and Property
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IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives	Priority 1 – Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities Priority 2 – Enhance the quality of people's lives Priority 3 – Enable a flourishing local economy
Consultation:	Consultation has included ORL delivery board and Full Council.
Legal:	Proposed leasehold acquisition of the HCC land at Northgate End 4.0 Decisions outside the budget and Policy Framework 4.1 Subject to the provisions of Rule 6 below, the Executive, committees of the Executive, individual members of the Executive and any officers, or joint arrangements discharging Executive functions may only take decisions which are in line with the budget and Policy Framework. 4.2 If any of these bodies or persons wishes to make a decision which is contrary to policy, or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget approved by the Council, then that decision may only be taken by the Council, subject to Rules 5 and 7. 4.3 If the Executive, committees of the Executive, individual members of the Executive and any officers, or joint arrangements discharging Executive functions want to make such a decision, they shall take advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Financial

	Officer as to whether the decision they want to make would be contrary to policy, or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget. 4.4 If the advice of either of those officers is that the decision would not be in line with the existing budget and Policy Framework, then the decision must be referred to the Council for decision, unless the decision is a matter of urgency, in which case the provisions in Rule 5 (Urgent decisions outside the budget and Policy Framework) shall apply.
Financial:	The purchase cost of the building and disturbance and license payments will be funded using LEP grant, allocated for land assembly at Old River Lane. Revenue implications are set out in paras 2.6 and 2.7 of the report.
Human Resource:	n/a
Risk Management:	Set out in para 2.3 of the report
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	n/a
Equality Impact Assessment required:	No.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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