

Public Document Pack

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 Wednesday 22nd July, 2026 at 7.00 pm, for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the Agenda below, and you are hereby summoned to attend.

Date this 14 day of July 2026

Jonathan Geall
Director for Communities
and Monitoring Officer

This meeting will be live streamed on the Council's Youtube page:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/EastHertsDistrict>

AGENDA

1. Chairman's Announcements

To receive any announcements from the Chairman.

2. Leader's Announcements

To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council.

3. Apologies for Absence

To receive any Members' apologies for absence.

4. Minutes - 13 May 2026 & 10 June 2026 (Pages 6 - 36)

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Council meetings held on 13 May 2026 & 10 June 2026.

5. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Members' declarations of interest.

6. Petitions

To receive any petitions.

7. Public Questions

To receive any public questions.

8. Members' Questions

To receive any Members' questions.

9. Executive Report - 14 July 2026 (Pages 37 - 38)

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

(A) Annual Report for 2025/26 and refresh of LEAF Priorities (Pages 39 - 58)

(B) Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-31 (Pages 59 - 94)

10. Review of the Constitution (Pages 95 - 121)

11. Reports by Members appointed to Outside Bodies for the civic year 2025/26 - Follow Up Report (Pages 122 - 131)

12. Motions on Notice

To receive Motions on Notice.

(A) Motion - Procurement of Palantir in public sector contracts in East Herts (Pages 132 - 135)

(B) Motion - Rye Meads (Pages 136 - 137)

(C) Motion - Socio-economic Duty (Pages 138 - 139)

13. Exclusion of the Press and Public (if required)

No Part II business has been notified for this meeting.

If Part II business is notified and the procedures set out in the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 have been complied with, the Chairman will 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 item XX on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph XX of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

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.

Public Attendance

East Herts Council welcomes public attendance at its meetings and meetings will continue to be live streamed and

webcasted. For further information, please email democratic.services@eastherts.gov.uk or call the Council on 01279 655261 and ask to speak to Democratic Services.

The Council operates a paperless policy in respect of agendas at committee meetings and the Council will no longer be providing spare copies of Agendas for the Public at Committee Meetings. The mod.gov app is available to download for free from app stores for electronic devices. You can use the mod.gov app to access, annotate and keep all committee paperwork on your mobile device.

Visit [Political Structure, Scrutiny and Constitution | East Herts District Council](#) for details.

Audio/Visual Recording of meetings

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 Communications@eastherts.gov.uk). 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.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 13 MAY 2026, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor J Dunlop (Chairman).
Councillors M Adams, D Andrews,
R Buckmaster, C Brittain, I Devonshire,
E Buckmaster, S Bull, V Burt, R Carter,
N Clements, M Connolly, S Copley, N Cox,
B Crystall, A Daar, B Deering, T Deffley,
J Dumont, Y Estop, V Glover-Ward,
M Goldspink, C Hart, G Hill, D Hollebon,
A Holt, S Hopewell, C Horner, T Hoskin,
D Jacobs, J Jones, G McAndrew, S Nicholls,
C Redfern, T Smith, T Stowe, M Swainston,
J Thomas, R Townsend, S Watson,
G Williams, C Wilson, J Wyllie and
D Woollcombe.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Jonathan Geall	- Director for Communities and Monitoring Officer
Brian Moldon	- Director for Finance, Risk and Performance
Sara Saunders	- Director for Place
Helen Standen	- Interim Chief Executive
Stephanie Tarrant	- Assistant Director for Democracy, Elections and Information Governance

1 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and

reminded attendees that the meeting was being webcast. The full webcast of the meeting can be viewed here: Council – [13 May 2026](#)

The Council were shown the Annual Report video for 2025-26.

The Chairman reflected on a successful and rewarding year in office and acknowledged the preparatory experience gained during the preceding Vice-Chairman role. He expressed thanks to his predecessor for guidance, to officers for organising engagements and to colleagues for their support.

The Chairman highlighted that throughout the year he had attended a wide range of civic, community and commemorative events, including the County Council Chairmen's lunch, VE Day celebrations, the White Glove Ceremony in Hertford, Holocaust Memorial commemorations and various cultural and charity events.

He highlighted collaboration with fellow civic leaders, including the Lord-Lieutenant, High Sheriff, local mayors, and Members of Parliament, noting the importance of cross-community engagement regardless of political alignment. He commended participation in initiatives such as the Purple Flag accreditation for Bishop's Stortford, recognising contributions from partners in achieving this status.

The Chairman noted memorable community events, including local shows, performances, heritage celebrations and community recognition ceremonies, which demonstrated strong civic pride and engagement across the district. He concluded by stating that the role had been an honour and commended the strength and vibrancy of the district's communities.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor

Boylan, Councillor Butcher, Councillor Marlow, Councillor Parsad-Wyatt, Councillor V Smith and Councillor Willcocks.

3 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN 2026/27

It was proposed by Councillor Crystall and seconded by Councillor Wilson that Councillor Dunlop be elected as Chairman of the Council for the 2026/27 Civic Year. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Dunlop be elected as Chairman of the Council for the 2026/27 Civic Year.

Councillor Dunlop made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office and took the chair.

4 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN 2026/27

It was proposed by Councillor Goldspink and seconded by Councillor Daar that Councillor Thomas be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2026/27 Civic Year. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Thomas be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2026/27 Civic Year.

Councillor Thomas made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

Councillor Thomas thanked the Council for electing him to the position of Vice Chairman and said he looked forward to serving in the role.

5 FURTHER CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked Councillor Adams, for his guidance and support in preparing him for the role. He said it had been an honour to take on the position and expressed commitment to undertaking both the chairing and representative aspects of the role to the best of their ability.

The Chairman announced that his chosen charity for the coming year was Space Hertford, highlighting its work in supporting neurodiverse young adults, particularly in employment and the value such individuals bring to the community and workplaces.

The Chairman shared his expectations for concise and focused contributions, aiming to keep meetings efficient and to cover as much business as possible. He encouraged respectful, succinct input from members and proposed short breaks to maintain engagement.

6 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader expressed sincere thanks to the outgoing Chairman, Councillor Adams, for his calm and effective leadership over the past year and for his wider representation of the Council and fundraising efforts.

Congratulations were extended to the newly appointed Chairman/Vice-Chairman, with confidence expressed in their ability to serve successfully.

Councillor Jeff Jones was welcomed back to the Council following the Little Hadam and The Pelhams by-election. The long service of Councillor Williamson, who had represented the ward for many years, was acknowledged following his retirement. The Returning Officer and Elections team were thanked for their work in delivering the by-election.

The Deputy Leader informed Members of the successful delivery of 15 new affordable homes in Bishop's Stortford. The scheme had been achieved through partnership

working between the Council, a housing association and Homes England, supported by financial contributions from developer funds. The homes, provided at genuinely affordable social rent levels, had been allocated to local residents in housing need, including individuals who had been homeless, those unable to sustain private rents and households living in overcrowded conditions. The provision was welcomed as a positive outcome for the district.

The Leader made a statement condemning the recent violent attacks against Jewish people and reiterated the Council's opposition to all forms of racism, hate and antisemitism and affirmed its commitment to ensuring that all communities could live safely and peacefully. This position was supported by the Deputy Leader, who also emphasised the importance of protecting the right of individuals to practise their faith freely and without fear.

7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

8 MINUTES - 4 MARCH 2026

Councillor Burt proposed, and Councillor Copley seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2026, be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

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

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2026, be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.

9 PETITIONS

There were no petitions

10 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

11 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The full responses to the submitted Members' Questions can be found in the supplementary document [here](#).

12 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 24 MARCH 2026

The Leader of the Council presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 24 March 2026.

12 THE HERTFORDSHIRE HEALTHY AND SAFE PLACES FRAMEWORK

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the report. Members were advised that the Council had agreed to update the District Plan, with formal work scheduled to commence in autumn 2026. It was noted that the development of the Plan would require a comprehensive and robust evidence base to inform future planning policies and ensure they addressed key local priorities.

The Hertfordshire Healthy and Safe Places Framework, produced by the Hertfordshire Growth Board, promoted the integration of health considerations into planning to support improved outcomes and reduce inequalities. The framework also encouraged the use of health impact assessments, master-planning and community engagement as part of the planning process.

Members were asked to agree that the framework be adopted as part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan and be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Councillor Glover-Ward, the Executive Member for

Planning and Growth proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Swainston seconded the proposal.

Members raised questions regarding the application of the Healthy and Safe Places Framework. Concerns were expressed about the vulnerability of Gypsy and Traveller communities, and whether additional planning considerations could be applied to support their needs. It was confirmed that welfare checks were undertaken where sites were occupied and that further consideration would be given to planning provisions for these communities.

Members also highlighted concerns about whether the aims of the framework could be achieved without sufficient infrastructure funding, particularly in relation to congestion, pollution and sustainable transport. In response, it was noted that improved approaches to developer contributions, including more robust Section 106 agreements linked to occupation thresholds, had strengthened the Council's ability to secure infrastructure delivery.

Support was expressed for the integration of health considerations into planning, particularly the stronger links to air quality and environmental health. However, concerns were raised about wider infrastructure issues, including wastewater capacity and sewage discharges. It was clarified that these matters were largely outside the direct control of the planning system, although mechanisms existed where infrastructure providers indicated capacity constraints. Members were informed that Thames Water were due to attend Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 June 2026, to address concerns.

The motion to support the recommendation, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that (A) the Hertfordshire Healthy and Safe Places Framework (2025) attached as Appendix A, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform the new East Herts District Plan and as a material consideration for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications.

13 APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

The Chief Executive presented the report which outlined proposed interim arrangements following the departure of James Ellis, Director of Legal, Policy and Governance and Monitoring Officer. It was proposed that Jonathan Geall, Director of Communities, be appointed as Interim Monitoring Officer for an initial six-month period.

It was noted that changes had been introduced across the service, including Legal Service Manager support from Broxbourne and revised reporting arrangements, with Elections and Democratic Services now reporting directly to the Chief Executive.

Members were advised that Jonathan Geall had significant experience of the Council's constitution and would be able to provide appropriate advice and support to Members in the role.

Members supported the appointment and wished Jonathan Geall well in the role.

Councillor Connolly proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Dumont seconded the proposal.

The motion to support the recommendation, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) Council ratified the appointment of Jonathan Geall, Director of

Communities as the Council's interim Monitoring Officer, for an initial period of six months.

14 MINOR AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Monitoring Officer presented the report which set out minor amendments to the Councils constitution. The Monitoring Officer explained that the Constitution required Council to be notified of minor amendments, which were set out within the report and appendix.

It was reported that Council approval was required for the amendments to the terms of reference of the Audit and Governance Committee, with the rationale provided in the report.

Members were informed that arrangements were being made to reconvene the Member Constitution Review Group to consider future amendments to the Constitution prior to submission to Council.

The motion to support the recommendation, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

Councillor Williams proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Adams seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be accepted as the notification to Council required by the Constitution of minor changes, these being to the remits of two Executive Members, reference to the Deputy Chief Executive's responsibilities for human resources and amendments consequent to the six-month trial of revised responsibilities for legal services and the Monitoring Officer function.

B) the change to the Audit and Governance Committee's Terms of Reference to ensure compliance with the recently introduced Global

Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) for the UK public sector be agreed.

15 POLITICAL BALANCE AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL 2026/27

The Monitoring Officer presented the report and explained that, at its annual meeting, the Council was required to approve the decision-making arrangements for the discharge of its functions.

It was noted that committees and their number of voting Members had remained unchanged. The membership of these were set out alongside the political balance in the relevant appendices.

The programme of meetings for the coming year had been shared, and it was confirmed that there were no additional changes to the Executive, other than the minor amendment approved as part of constitutional changes.

Councillor Watson proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Townsend seconded the proposal.

The Conservative Group advised that they were happy with the proposals, with one exception, in that the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be selected from their group following a period of being Chaired by the Labour Group.

Councillor Deering proposed that Councillor Wyllie should be Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2026/27. Councillor Hollebon seconded this proposal.

It was stated that, historically, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny had been drawn from the opposition and, as the largest opposition group, it had been considered appropriate for one of the Conservative Members to undertake the role.

It was clarified that, between 2019 and 2023, the Chair had been a member of the administration rather than the opposition. It was further observed that the current Chair was regarded as an effective and impartial leader, who had significantly improved and advanced the work of Overview and Scrutiny.

The motion to support the amendment having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared LOST.

The motion to support the recommendations in the report, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Scrutiny Committees, Regulatory Committees and Joint Committees with the number of voting Members listed in paragraph 2.1 be appointed;

(B) the political balance of the Council at Appendix A be agreed;

(C) the membership and Chairman of Scrutiny Committees, Regulatory Committees and Joint Committees be as set out in Appendix B, with Members being appointed in accordance with the wishes of the political group to whom the seats on these bodies have been allocated;

(D) the intention of the Leader of the Council to appoint Members to the Executive (in addition to the Leader) with the portfolio responsibilities as detailed in Appendix C be noted;

(E) That the programme of Council meetings, as detailed at paragraph 4.1, be approved;

(F) the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make

changes in the standing membership of committees, joint committees and panels in (A) above, in accordance with the wishes of the political group to whom seats on these bodies have been allocated;

(G) the action to be taken by the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Leader, under delegated authority, concerning the appointment of representatives to outside bodies, be noted; and

(H) The Monitoring Officer be authorised to make such amendments to the Council's Constitution as may be necessary to account for the decisions in (A) to (G) above.

16 ANNUAL AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT 2025/26

The Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee introduced the annual report. Attention was drawn to recommendations made by the Section 151 Officer, which were due to be presented to the committee for consideration in relation to its effectiveness.

Councillor Adams, Chair of Audit and Governance proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Nicholls seconded the proposal.

The Chair and Members of the Audit Committee were thanked for the work they undertook. The importance of the committee in advance of Local Government Reorganisation was acknowledged.

The motion to support the recommendation, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Annual Audit and Governance Committee Report covering the 2025/26 Civic Year be noted.

17 ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2025 - 2026

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee introduced the annual report and thanked committee members for their diligence, hard work and approach to the role of scrutiny. This was extended to officers who supported the committee and Executive Members who presented to the committee.

Councillor Jacobs, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Horner seconded the proposal.

The Chair's leadership was commended, and it was noted that several new practices had been introduced during the year, including regular opportunities for Executive feedback at meetings and the establishment of a task and finish group. The work of this group, particularly in relation to housing associations and their communication with the Council, was highlighted as a key achievement.

The motion to support the recommendation, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Annual Scrutiny Report covering the 2025/26 Civic Year be agreed and published on the Council's website.

18 REPORTS BY MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2025/26

The Leader of the Council introduced the Outside Bodies report for 2025/26. As with previous years, the Council received and noted reports from Members appointed to outside bodies, with 18 reports for the 2025/26 civic year appended to the paper. Several changes were highlighted, including the cessation of representation on the Hertford Museum trustee board due to its change in status, and two organisation name changes (England

LGA was now Local Government East and the District Council Network was now the Local Council Network). Members serving on outside bodies were thanked for their time and contributions.

Councillor Crystall, Leader of the Council, proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Goldspink seconded the proposal.

Members raised concerns that reports from representatives on some outside bodies had not been provided, particularly in relation to significant organisations such as Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. It was noted that these bodies made an important contribution to residents' health and wellbeing and should be more effectively reported to Council, with a request that missing reports be brought forward to a future meeting.

The issue of attendance and representation at external meetings, particularly those relating to Stansted Airport, was also discussed. Members emphasised the importance of consistent attendance and questioned whether substitute representatives were in place, where appointed Members were unavailable. In response, it was acknowledged that attendance had been impacted by work commitments, although improvements were anticipated. It was confirmed that, where necessary, arrangements would be reviewed, including the potential use of substitutes or changes to representation.

The motion to support the recommendations, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the reports of Members appointed to Outside Bodies for the 2025 - 26 civic year be received and noted.

(B) That the removal of Hertford Museum Trust from the list of Outside Bodies be noted.

(C) That the change in Councillor representation for Ware Charities be noted.

(D) That the change of name for East of England LGA, now known as Local Government East, be noted.

(E) That the change of name for Local Government District Council Network, now known as Local Council Network, be noted.

19 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

There was one Motion on Notice.

19 MOTION TO PROMOTE ETHICAL SOLAR POWER IN OUR DISTRICT

Councillor Cox presented his motion on notice highlighting that the Council should demonstrate its values in practice by addressing climate change without compromising human rights, acknowledging evidence of abuses linked to solar supply chains and the district's historical responsibility to oppose exploitation. Whilst the motion supported the use of renewable energy it proposed practical steps such as auditing supply chains, improving transparency and promoting ethical sourcing.

Councillor Glover-Ward seconded the motion.

Councillor Copley proposed the following amendment:

- Replace resolution 2) Update Procurement Policy: Formalise an "Ethical Procurement Policy" that requires all future bidders for council-led solar PV projects to provide a full "Supply Chain Transparency Statement," tracing components back to the raw material (polysilicon) stage in accordance with the Solar Stewardship Initiative (SSI) standards on any recognised alternative or successor standards.

- With: 2) Update Procurement Policy: Formalise an "Ethical Procurement Policy" that requires all future bidders for council-led solar PV projects to provide a full "Supply Chain Transparency Statement," tracing components back to the raw material (polysilicon) stage in accordance with the Solar Stewardship Initiative (SSI) standards on any recognised alternative or successor standards. Any procurement requirements arising from this policy shall be applied proportionately, with due regard to accessibility for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The Council shall also, where practicable, support SME participation through the use of recognised independent assurance schemes and proportionate evidence requirements consistent with the aims of this policy.

Councillor Dumont seconded the amendment.

Members debated the proposed amendment and indicated support for its intent, particularly in helping small businesses achieve higher ethical standards whilst maintaining proportionality. Concerns were raised about whether the approach should apply more widely given supply chain and cost implications, but it was explained that larger companies were already subject to requirements under the Modern Slavery Act and that the amendment had therefore been aimed at smaller businesses not currently covered by legislation.

Having been proposed and seconded, the amendment was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

Councillor E Buckmaster proposed the following amendment:

- Replace resolution 4) Provide information to residents: Require that when providing advice, guidance or support to residents on energy efficiency

or domestic retrofit, officers signpost residents to credible information sources on how to acquire ethically produced solar PV panels.

- With: 4) Provide information to residents: Require that when providing advice, guidance or support to residents on energy efficiency or domestic retrofit, including reasonable endeavours through Hertfordshire Climate Change Sustainability Partnership Energy Hubs and Environmental Forums, officers signpost residents to credible information sources on how to acquire ethically produced solar PV panels.

Councillor R Buckmaster seconded the amendment.

Having been proposed and seconded, the amendment was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

Members discussed the substantive motion.

Members expressed support for the principle of the motion, whilst acknowledging wider economic realities, including affordability for residents and reliance on lower-cost imports.

It was noted that importing goods from countries with lower environmental and welfare standards undermined domestic standards and effectively shifted negative impacts overseas. Concerns were also raised about global supply chains, particularly the lower costs associated with production in countries with reduced regulatory standards.

Whilst concerns were highlighted in relation to certain regions in relation to allegations of cultural repression and exploitation, Members noted that manufacturing conditions varied significantly and that not all overseas production involved poor labour practices.

Having been proposed and seconded, the motion as amended was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED. It was noted that Councillors Andrews and Stowe abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED: That the Council Notes:

1. That East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC) is committed to its Climate Change Strategy and the transition to renewable energy.
2. The significant increase in planning applications and private sector projects involving large-scale solar photovoltaics (PV) within the district.
3. Credible international reports, including from the UN and the Sheffield Hallam University Helena Kennedy Centre, which identify a "high risk" of state-sponsored forced labour in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of China being used in the production of polysilicon, a compound essential to for synthesising monocrystalline silicon found in modern solar PV panels—with a number of credible sources reporting this to be a key component of 95% of solar panels¹.
4. That the UK Procurement Act 2023 empowers local authorities to exclude suppliers from bidding for contracts if there is evidence of modern slavery or serious professional misconduct in their supply chains.

The Council Believes:

1. That the transition to "Net Zero" must be a "Just Transition" that does not come at the cost of human rights or the exploitation of forced labour.

2. That as a public body, EHDC has a moral duty and a legal duty under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to ensure its own procurement activities and the developments it encourages are ethically sourced.

The Council Resolves to:

1. Audit Council Procurement: Conduct a review of the council's own supply chains for any planned solar installations, including drafting specifications for solar PV hardware in accordance with the Solar Stewardship Initiative (SSI) standards or any recognised alternative or successor standards.
2. Update Procurement Policy: Formalise an "Ethical Procurement Policy" that requires all future bidders for council-led solar PV projects to provide a full "Supply Chain Transparency Statement," tracing components back to the raw material (polysilicon) stage in accordance with the Solar Stewardship Initiative (SSI) standards on any recognised alternative or successor standards. Any procurement requirements arising from this policy shall be applied proportionately, with due regard to accessibility for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The Council shall also, where practicable, support SME participation through the use of recognised independent assurance schemes and proportionate evidence requirements consistent with the aims of this policy.
3. Planning: Request that the Executive Member for Planning and Growth and the Director for Place include "Supply Chain Ethics" as a recommended advisory note (informative) on all approvals for large-scale solar farms,

encouraging developers to use Solar Stewardship Initiative (SSI) certified hardware or other hardware compliant with any recognised alternative or successor standards.

4. Provide information to residents: Require that when providing advice, guidance or support to residents on energy efficiency or domestic retrofit, including reasonable endeavours through Hertfordshire Climate Change Sustainability Partnership Energy Hubs and Environmental Forums, officers signpost residents to credible information sources on how to acquire ethically produced solar PV panels.
5. Lobby National Government: Write to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, supporting the "forced labour" amendments to the Great British Energy Bill, urging stronger national import bans on goods produced with forced labour and requesting that central government provides financial and technical assistance to local authorities, businesses and residents on how to ascertain the ethical standards associated with solar PVs thus enabling the most ethical solutions even if they are more expensive.

The meeting closed at 8.56 pm

Chairman

Date

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE 2026, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor J Dunlop (Chairman).
Councillors D Andrews, R Buckmaster,
C Brittain, M Butcher, E Buckmaster, S Bull,
V Burt, R Carter, N Clements, M Connolly,
S Copley, N Cox, B Crystall, A Daar,
T Deffley, J Dumont, V Glover-Ward,
M Goldspink, C Hart, G Hill, D Hollebon,
A Holt, S Hopewell, C Horner, T Hoskin,
S Marlow, G McAndrew, S Nicholls,
A Parsad-Wyatt, C Redfern, V Smith,
T Stowe, M Swainston, S Watson, C Wilson,
J Wyllie, D Woollcombe, J Jones and
J Thomas.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Stephanie Tarrant	- Assistant Director for Democracy, Elections and Information Governance
Brian Moldon	- Director for Finance, Risk and Performance
Sara Saunders	- Director for Place
Helen Standen	- Chief Executive

1 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded attendees that the meeting was being webcast. The full webcast of the meeting can be viewed here: Council – [10 June 2026](#).

It was noted that there had been a recent change within

the Conservative Group, with Aubrey Holt appointed as the new Group Leader. Councillor Holt paid tribute to Councillor Bob Deering, who had stood down after three years as Group Leader. Thanks were expressed for his hard work, dedication and leadership, both to the Group and to the wider district. Councillor Holt shared that it was an honour to take on the role of Group Leader and acknowledged the responsibility it carried. He confirmed that the Group's focus would remain on representing local residents.

The Chairman also recorded thanks to Councillor Deering.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adams, Boylan, Deering, Devonshire, Jacobs, Townsend, Willcocks and Williams.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 2 JUNE 2026

The Leader of the Council presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 2 June 2026.

4 LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE AND NOTICE OF INTENTION TO COMMENCE LOCAL PLAN PREPARATION

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the report and explained that East Herts Council had a statutory duty to maintain an up-to-date Local Plan which would guide development and was central to setting out the spatial strategy, planning policies and land allocations. Members were advised that the Government had introduced a new plan-making system in November 2025, with regulations coming into force on 25

March 2026, including a statutory 30-month timetable and gateway assessments.

The report was presented as the first formal step in implementing this framework, initiating the preparatory phase and seeking approval to publish the Local Plan timetable and Notice of Intention, which would establish key milestones, ensure transparency and formally commence the plan-making process in line with national guidance. It was further noted that, despite uncertainty regarding local government reorganisation, progressing the Local Plan would ensure an up-to-date planning framework and a robust evidence base for future arrangements.

Councillor Glover-Ward, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth, proposed the recommendations as detailed in the report. Councillor Goldspink seconded the proposal.

Members suggested that the timetable remained indicative, with a typical minimum period of approximately 36 months required to adoption and highlighted that concerns persisted with regards to the five-year housing land supply and the implications of the tilted balance. It was suggested that the Council write to Government to seek recognition of progress on the District Plan and to secure protection from speculative development, particularly given that major schemes were already underway locally. Members heard that engagement with Government was ongoing, and that existing or emerging plans were usually completed in areas moving to unitary authorities, and that coordination across authorities was already taking place.

Members raised queries regarding the role and membership of the District Planning Executive Panel. It was confirmed that the Executive Member for Planning and Growth chaired the Panel alongside the Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Services and that all Councillors could attend and participate in the Panel's

discussions.

Members commented on the significant workload required within the proposed timescales, particularly in the context of Local Government Reorganisation, with concerns about pressures on staff and potential impacts on service delivery. It was confirmed that the planning policy team responsible for progressing the plan were largely separate from the development management function and that government grant funding would be available to support the work.

The motion to support the recommendation, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the East Herts Local Plan Timetable, attached at Appendix A, be approved for publication; and

(B) the Notice of Intention to Commence the East Herts Local Plan, attached at Appendix B, be published on the Council's website.

4 LOCAL PLAN SCOPING CONSULTATION

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the report and explained that following the publication of the Local Plan timetable, the scoping consultation represented the third stage of the plan-making process and would be undertaken in accordance with Government regulations.

The report sought agreement to the consultation document, engagement approach and its distribution, with the consultation forming part of the four-month preparatory period prior to the formal 30-month plan timetable. It was noted that the consultation would run for four weeks from 11 June to 10 July 2026, exceeding the minimum requirement and would enable early, high-level engagement with statutory bodies, stakeholders and

residents.

Members were advised that responses would focus on key strategic issues, including plan content and methods of engagement, with the consultation document structured around concise questions to encourage focused feedback. It was further noted that the outcomes would inform subsequent stages of plan preparation, with a further report to be brought forward ahead of the next phase of engagement in 2027.

Councillor Glover-Ward, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth, proposed the recommendations as detailed in the report. Councillor Copley seconded the proposal.

Members discussed the need to maximise awareness and participation in the scoping consultation, particularly among residents without digital access and emphasised that communication should extend beyond online channels.

It was suggested that town and parish councils be formally engaged to support wider communication, and Members highlighted their own role in promoting the consultation within their wards and communities. In response, it was confirmed that a briefing for town and parish councils had been arranged and that councillors were requested to act as community ambassadors, supported by existing communications activity.

Concerns were raised that the proposed four-week consultation period, during a busy time of year, may limit engagement and that a longer duration could provide greater opportunity for residents and local councils to participate. It was noted that previous consultations in the district had achieved comparatively strong response rates and that whilst the consultation period was constrained by timetable requirements, further opportunities for engagement would follow as the plan progressed, particularly at more detailed stages.

The motion to support the recommendation, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED. It was noted that Councillor Hart abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED – that (A) Subject to the publication of the Notice to Commence Local Plan Preparation and the Local Plan Timetable, the East Herts Local Plan – Scoping Consultation document (Appendix A) is made available to relevant stakeholders and the wider community to begin a discussion about the

district's new Local Plan, and to seek comments in accord with the Regulations;

(B) Engagement on the Scoping Consultation document should commence, taking place between June 11 and July 10 2026, through a range of different forums, including online on the Council's website; and

(C) Any minor amendments required to the content of the Scoping Consultation document prior to the consultation period be delegated to the Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth; and

(D) A further report detailing any feedback is prepared for Executive following engagement, with the intention of informing the Local Plan content and evidence stages of the plan-making process.

4 LOCAL PLAN SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (SA) / STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) SCOPING REPORT

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the report and explained that the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) were separate but complementary processes

required to be undertaken alongside the Local Plan. The SA, required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, assessed the extent to which the emerging plan, when considered against reasonable alternatives, would support environmental, social and economic objectives, whilst identifying opportunities for improvement and mitigating potential adverse impacts. The SEA, undertaken in accordance with the relevant Regulations, focused specifically on likely significant environmental effects.

It was noted that the scoping document identified relevant plans, baseline conditions and future trends and established a framework of objectives against which policies and site options would be tested. Members were informed that statutory consultees would be consulted at the same time as the wider public, in line with the Local Plan scoping exercise and that the findings would help shape, refine and monitor the plan.

Councillor Glover-Ward, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth, proposed the recommendations as detailed in the report. Councillor Swainston seconded the proposal.

Members sought clarification on how the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) was being incorporated into the Local Plan, including its influence on the call for sites process and whether relevant agencies had been engaged. It was confirmed that the LNRS formed part of the evidence base and that matters such as biodiversity net gain were being considered alongside it.

It was confirmed that population projections were based on ONS data and Members were encouraged to contribute further during the consultation period given the iterative nature of the process.

The motion to support the recommendation, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) subject to the publication of the ‘Notice to Commence Local Plan Preparation and the Local Plan Timetable’, the content of the SA/SEA Scoping document (Appendix A) is approved;

(B) the SA/SEA Scoping document be formally consulted upon with the Environment Agency (EA), Historic England (HE) and Natural England (NE) in accordance with statutory requirements;

(C) That subject to the approval of the ‘Local Plan Scoping Consultation’, the SA/SEA Scoping document will be made available alongside the Local Plan Scoping Consultation, and will include a period of activity between 11 June 2026 and 10 July 2026 through a range of different forums, including online on the Council’s website; and

(D) Any minor amendments required to the content of the SA/SEA Scoping document prior to the consultation period be delegated to the Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.

5 PROPOSAL FROM MILLSTREAM PROPERTY INVESTMENTS LTD TO SELL THE COMPANY TO ENABLE DISPOSAL OF ALL ITS PROPERTIES

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the report and explained that following the Council’s February 2025 resolution for Millstream Property Investments Limited to dispose of its property portfolio, an approach had subsequently been received from a prospective purchaser expressing interest in acquiring the entire portfolio. Negotiations had progressed and an offer was received which was considered to represent fair value.

The company therefore sought consent from the Council,

as sole shareholder, to dispose of the company as a whole, in line with the original intention to liquidate its investment. Members were advised that approval was sought only for the principle of disposal, not the sale price or purchaser. It was further noted that disposal of the company offered financial advantages, including earlier capital receipt, reduced borrowing and associated costs.

Councillor Brittain, the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability, proposed the recommendations as detailed in the report. Councillor Goldspink seconded the proposal.

Members reiterated their support for the principle of disposing of the Millstream assets, as previously agreed, but expressed concern at the delay in progressing disposals over the preceding period and the impact this had on the Council's financial position. It was suggested that slower action and changing market conditions had reduced the effectiveness of the original approach of selling properties individually. In response, it was clarified that the original strategy had been to dispose of properties gradually as they became vacant, in part to avoid displacing tenants and that lower than anticipated tenant turnover had slowed progress.

It was further noted that the proposed sale of the company represented an unexpected opportunity, enabling properties to be sold with tenants in situ and delivering a more efficient outcome. Members acknowledged the advantages of the revised approach and expressed support for proceeding.

The motion to support the recommendation, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that A) acting as Millstream's sole shareholder, Council uses its reserved power, under the Shareholder Agreement with the company, to consent to Millstream's request to sell

the company in pursuit of the shareholder's existing resolution that the company disposes of all of its properties.

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm

Chairman

Date

Agenda Item 9

East Herts Council Report

Council

Date Of Meeting: Wednesday, 22 July 2026

Report By: Councillor Ben Crystall, Leader of the Council

Report Title: Executive Report – 14 July 2026

Ward(S) Affected: All

Summary

- This report details the recommendations to Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 14 July 2026.

1.0 Item considered and recommended to Council

1.1 The Executive met on 14 July 2026. At this meeting the Executive considered and supported recommendations for Council on the following items:

- 1.1.1 Annual Report for 2025/26 and refresh of LEAF Priorities
- 1.1.2 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2026-2031

2.0 Annual Report for 2025/26 and refresh of LEAF Priorities

2.1 The Executive were asked to review progress against last year's LEAF priorities and recommended changes to the 2026/27 priorities to Council for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

- a) **That Council review performance over the 2025/26 year.**
- b) **That Council adopt the refreshed LEAF priorities for 2026/27 and beyond (see sections 2.8 – 2.11).**

3.0 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2026-2031

- 3.1 Under the Homelessness Act 2002 all local authorities are required to carry out a homelessness review and to develop and publish a strategy based on the review every five years. East Herts published its first Homelessness Strategy in July 2003. This is the fifth Strategy and is due to run from 2026 to March 2031.
- 3.2 The Executive considered the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2026-31 and recommended its approval.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

A) That the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2026-2031, as detailed in Appendix A be approved.

5.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

5.1 [Executive – 14 July 2026](#)

Contact Member

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Agenda Item 9a

East Herts Council Report Council

Date of meeting: 22 July 2026

Report by: Councillor Ben Crystall, Leader of the Council

Report title: Annual Report for 2025/26 and refresh of LEAF Priorities

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary – this report provides Council with an update on performance against LEAF priorities over the 2025/26 year and refreshed priorities going forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:

- a) That Council review performance over the 2025/26 year.
- b) That Council adopt the refreshed LEAF priorities for 2026/27 and beyond (see sections 2.8 – 2.11).

1.0 Proposals

- 1.1 That Council review progress against last year's LEAF priorities and adopt changes to these priorities going forward

2.0 Background

- 2.1 On 28 February 2024, Council approved its new "LEAF" corporate priorities. These set out the strategic priorities of the Council and were grouped under the following four headings:

- Listening, Open and Transparent
- Environmentally Focused
- Acting with the Community
- Fair and Inclusive

- 2.2 Under each of these headings are a series of sub objectives and actions which officers were tasked with delivering. The paper to Council can be found here: [New Corporate Plan for 2024/25 onwards](#)¹
- 2.3 A further, more detailed set of actions, projects and measures were then implemented at an operational level. This framework helped inform the delivery plans for services, teams and individual staff performance goals. In theory, every East Herts Council staff member should be able to relate their day-to-day actions to strategic delivery of LEAF priorities agreed by Members.
- 2.4 The LEAF priorities are kept under review by Executive on an annual basis and adjusted/ amended as required. This enables The Council to change priorities to accommodate new challenges (e.g. in national legislation) and local issues as well as progress against key objectives.
- 2.5 Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an update in 2025 on progress over the 2024/25 year and made recommendations to Executive. These were considered by Executive and Full Council and refreshed priorities were adopted. The same process has been followed this year, and Overview and Scrutiny reviewed the annual plan on 9 June 2026 ahead of Executive consideration on 14 July 2026.
- 2.6 Appendix A sets out updates against each area over the 2025/26 year in detail. A short video has also been produced highlighting some of the achievements which can be found here: [East Herts Council Annual Report Video 2025 2026 - YouTube](#)
- 2.7 Executive have also recommended a refresh to some elements of the LEAF priorities for 2026/27 and onwards, as follows:

1

<https://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/documents/s65262/East%20Herts%20Council%20Corporate%20Plan.pdf?J=3>

2.8 Listening, Open and Transparent:

- Listen and be open and transparent in decision making and actions. We will prioritise improved consultation, engagement and conversation with our communities and evaluate the impact
- Strive to achieve excellent customer service, focusing on improved response times
- Encourage residents to use our digital communication channels where they can. This will help us focus resources on those residents who are not digitally able, allowing them to more easily talk to us by phone or in person
- Engage the community and Councillors in Local Government Reorganisation
- Engage with residents through Community and Development Management Forums, to enhance planning outcomes at strategic sites

2.9 Environmentally Focused

- Implement our new Air Quality Action Plan to cut pollution and improve health
- Implement our Parking Strategy and other options including the LCWIP to encourage active travel
- Encourage the reduction of carbon emissions from homes and businesses through training and by supporting “Energy Hubs” in towns and parishes
- Roll out more EV chargers in urban and rural locations across the district
- Encourage residents to play their part in supporting local wildlife and improving our natural environment and support delivery of the Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Strategy
- Maximising the positive environmental impacts of the new waste contract

2.10 Acting with the Community

- Consult with communities to update our Local Plan, prioritising improved sustainability standards
- Prioritise actions that can provide housing which is truly affordable

- Help create thriving high streets, by encouraging local markets and by working positively with partners
- Support transfer of assets into community ownership when appropriate
- Support voluntary sector groups to continue their work in helping the whole community
- Support more communities to create or update their Neighbourhood Plans

2.11 Fair and Inclusive

- Deliver the Cultural Strategy, with support for art and cultural events
- Maintain and improve council services for all residents during LGR, and make provision for those who are vulnerable or digitally excluded
- Support those facing homelessness or recovering from it, and include them in consultations
- Deliver our Thriving Together Plan to promote physical exercise, healthy lifestyles and support other measures including healthy hubs that boost community wellbeing
- Communicate council tax and other support schemes to residents

2.12 Appendix B presents the refreshed LEAF priorities against last year's priorities, highlighting changes and the proposed reasons. The overall LEAF framework has been maintained with some priorities amended in recognition of progress made and also in anticipation of Local Government Re-organisation.

3.0 Reason

3.1 The LEAF Corporate Plan helps residents understand the priorities of the Council and how resources are used to achieve them. The plan also drives service, team and individual performance goals.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 LEAF priorities have been developed by the Joint Administration with support and advice from officers on deliverability, risks and financial implications. Executive Members are able to recommend changes to priorities for adoption at Council following an assessment of progress to date.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 There is no legal requirement for councils to develop a corporate plan, however, should the Council fail to refresh priorities there may be a risk that resources are not directed towards achieving key priorities.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 The new Corporate Plan priorities will guide the organisation's work over the coming years. They will be reviewed on an annual basis and agreed at Council. A key priority is to ensure that consultation is carried out effectively.

Community Safety

Not directly however some of the priorities and subsequent actions will be focused on supporting community safety

Data Protection

None arising directly from this report.

Equalities

As the Corporate Plan is translated into operational priorities, individual equalities impact assessments will be undertaken where there is a change to service delivery

Environmental Sustainability

Actions under the Environmentally Focused section of the Corporate Plan will address issues around Sustainability

Financial

None arising directly from this report.

Health and Safety

None arising directly from this report.

Human Resources

None arising directly from this report.

Human Rights

None arising directly from this report.

Legal

None arising directly from this report.

Specific Wards

No

Background papers, appendices and other relevant material:

Appendix A – Annual Plan for 2024/257

Appendix B – Changes to LEAF priorities

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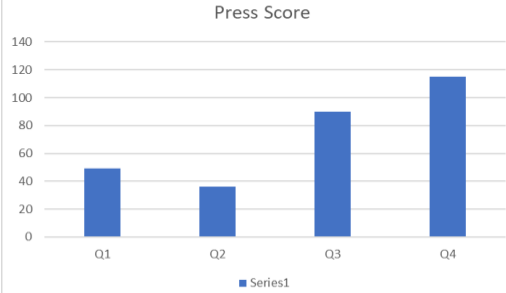
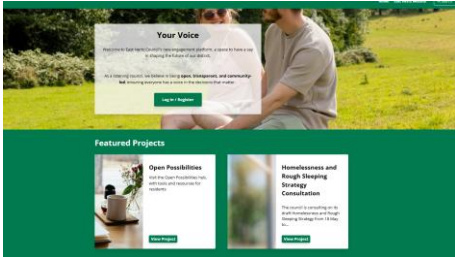
*Benjamin Wood, Director for Regeneration,
Customer and Commercial*

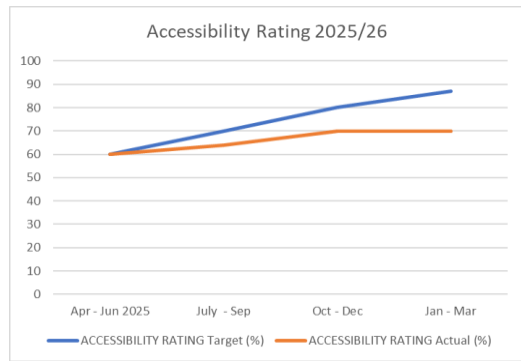
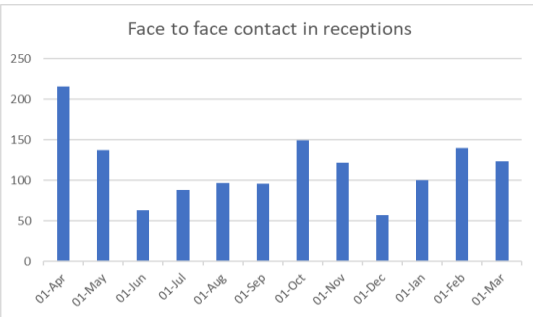
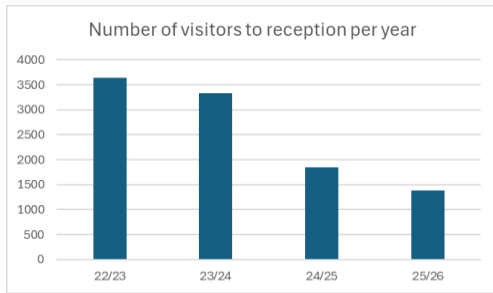
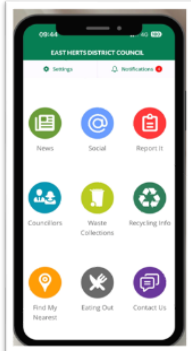
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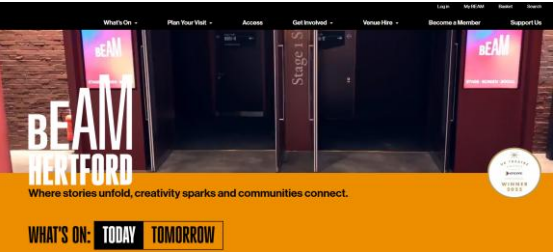
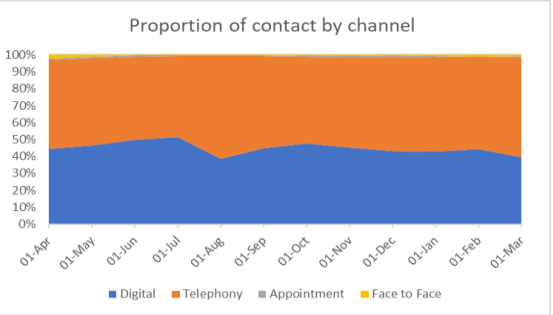
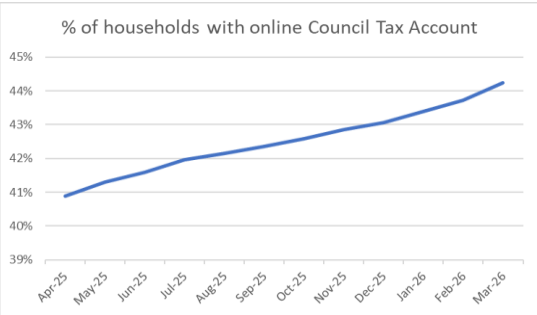
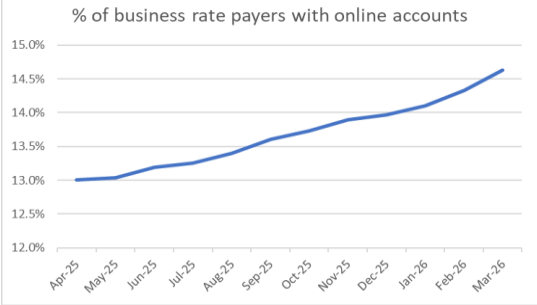


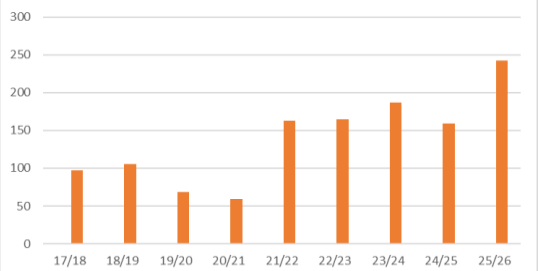
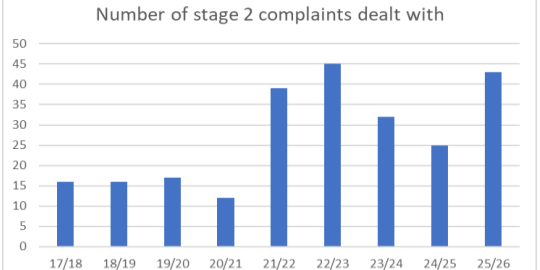
Listening, Open and Transparent

	Objective	Actions	Measure	Update for 2025/26	
				Progress and measure/ results	
1	Listen and be open and transparent in decision making and actions. We will prioritise improved consultation, engagement and conversation with our communities and evaluate the impact	Promote the council's key messages priorities through campaigns including 16 Days of Action, Arts in East Herts and Explore East Herts	Reach on social media (per campaign/ post)	More than 35,000 people saw or engaged with our campaign calling for an end to violence against women and girls. This ran for 16 days in mid December. Nearly 90,000 people saw our campagin promoting rural businesses across the district. This ran from October to the end of March.Our Arts in East Herts promotion drove over 5,000 hits to the campaign page 	
			Keep press favourability score above 0	Our average press score for the year has been 58, meaning we havThis is testament to more positive coverage than negative coverage over the year. a testament to the team's efforts to publicise as much positive news about the council as possible. This includes coverage on key council updates such as the reduction in household waste being sent to landfill, successful council prosecutions, Arts in East Herts and Love Parks Week. Scores are measured per mention in press. Positive coverage = 1, neutral = 0, negative = -1 	
			Followers (insta, fb, X, network, nextdoor)	We have increased our Facebook followers this year from 7,123 to 9,967, representing a 39% uplift. Strategically, this is our most important channel (overtaking X) and this success reflects its prioritiation in our work. We have increased our Instagram followers this year from 3,160 to 3,650. Whilst this is slower growth than Facebook, it still represents a 15% jump. We have incresed our LinkedIn followers this year from 3,202 to 3,728 - an uplift of 16%	
		Launch "Your Voice" consultation tool and Nextdoor as a new social channel	Increased response rates to consultaions	The parking consultation which ran in October generated 643 responses online. We also drove a higher number of responses to more localised consultations, including on Burley Road play area which generated nearly 40 responses. We also used Your Voice to spark engagement on some more light-hearted topics, including choosing names for the bin trucks. This generated more than 700 suggestions and helped create positive community PR for the crews as the new service bedded in. 	
		Undertake consultations key proposals including Water Lane Hall, Old River Lane and Housing	Number of responses	Face to face consultation took place for Water Lane Hall over the summer of 2025, focusing on two face to face sessions with residents. A futher online survey, with a third party undertaking face to face consultation in the town centre took place in February/ March 2026. The Old River Lane masterplan formed the basis of two sets of consultations with residents (online and face to face) in the Autumn of 2025 to agree the details and principles behind the planning application which was submitted by Cityheart in December. 	
		Collect customer feedback in BEAM	Net Promoter Scores	BEAM is averaging 73.41 for NPS over 2025/26 showing very high level of customer service compared to industry benchmarks (typically anything about 70 is vert good). Emails are sent to all ticket purchasers after the event to ask for feedback and QR codes also placed around the building. Response rates tend to be higher from email follow ups. QR code response rate is much lower.	

2	Ensure information on our website is as up to date as possible	Ensure Forward Plan is up to date	N/A	The Forward Plan is published on a monthly basis. The calendar of meetings for the whole year in advance has been published.	
		Feedback rating for website	We have introduced a new feedback mechanism for the website (using the Your Voice platform). This has generated 60 responses where we have taken direct action to improve the content. 13% of respondents have found the content useful or very useful. The negative feedback is predominantly from Veolia's collection look up tool being down every Tuesday for routine maintenance We have undertaken a review of the Revs and Bens, Housing and Environmental Health (particularly in view of the Renters' Rights Bill) and waste pages. Reviews of the planning, parks and parking pages are underway. Planning content will be regularly refreshed as the District Plan work progresses		
		Regularly review web content to ensure it is accurate	Maintain accessibility standards (against WCAG 2.2 standards)	Our web accessibility rating is 70%, lower than we would aim for. An action plan has been developed and is underway to ensure the score is brought up to indutry average (around 85%).	
		Maintain a front of house/ walk in offer for those customers who need it, alongside a "call back" option for housing, benefits and planning enquiries	Number of people visiting reception	Over the year we had 1380 visitors to our receptions, down from 1840 last year. This is consistent with a downward trajectory of residents seeking face to face contact. However we also know that most of the residents that do visit receptions have more complex needs and require assistance. This is fundamentally we why have a walk in reception service and although numbers are going down, the overall time needed to assist individuals has stayed constant. The vast majority of visits (1003) are for council tax or benefits related enquiries, usually support with council tax payments/ arrears and discounts along with housing benefit applications and amendments.	
			Number of "call backs"	Planning advice - 859 Housing call backs – 126 Benefits call back - 29 A total of 1014 call backs over the year is less than last year (1300 in 2024/25). The benefits call back option has had a very low take up and we are unsure why. Customer services are actively encouraging this route for residents who require more complex support and we expect this number of call backs to increase in 2026/27	
		Launch new engagement tools including Cloud 9 App and Customer Services chat bot	Number of downloads for Cloud 9 app	12,300 residents have downloaded the East Herts App since launch in November. Anecdotedly, it has also received very positive feedback from residents.	

Encourage residents to use our digital communication channels, so those who are not digitally able, can contact us by phone or in person

		Number of chatbot conversations	1490 requests received in the first month since launch Respondents have rated 88% of chats as successful, which means it has given residents an accurate and useable response
Launch new website for BEAM		Conversation rate for bookings/ net promoter scores	A new website launched on March 18th. We have seen improvements since then of: Global conversion rate of 21.5% compared to 12% previously. In terms of visitor growth: – 34% increase in total visitors since launch – 42% of users being new visitors In terms of revenue impact: – 7.5% increase in e commerce revenue since launch – 2,600% increase in membership uptake – 145% increase in donations In terms of checkout behaviour: – Checkout abandonment rate at 6.8% – A strong proportion of customers return to complete purchase within 2.5 days 
Increase the proportion of digital contacts		Proportion of overall contact by channel (Digital/ F2F/ telephony/ appointment)	East Herts residents have a preference for contacting the council via telephony. In recent years we have invested in other channels including chat bots, call backs, and website forms to nudge people on to these platforms. There has been a steady increase in the proportion of people contacting us via digital routes as a result and over 24/25 telephony represented around half of all contacts - down considerably from 75-80% in previous years. However 25/26 has been disappointed with telephony contact rates as a proportion of overall contact rates reducing slightly, between 40% - 50% (annual average of 45%). This is largely down to the new waste contract which created a lot of additional pressures over the year. Looking at the numbers, there were 48,888 calls into customer services 24/25 and just over 47,000 digital contacts. Over 25/26 this increased to 109,314 calls and 89,905 digital contacts. Thus more people contacted us via digital channels however it is clear that residents default to calling us when they are concerned. Due to the additional pressures we know that many of these residents chose to call after making digital contact about the bin changes/ deliveries as they had not heard back in sufficient time. 
	Increase % of residents who have online accounts for council tax		Steady trend continues of nudging households towards having online accounts. Typically we are able to increase the take up by around 5% of this year and this has been consistent over the past few years (24/25 it increased from 35% to just under 40%) 
	Increase % of businesses that have online NNDR accounts		Steady trend continues of nudging business owners to online accounts however this is harder than with council tax accounts. A few percentage point increases amounts to around 150 - 200 businesses per year 

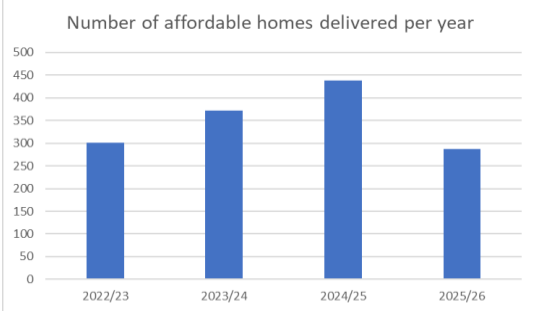
				Email rating feedback 578 responses were received between 1 April - 30 November 2025. Just unded 59% of these rated the interaction as "good" with 12% as "average" and 29% as "poor". In order to make savings and increase feedback we switched from govemetric to a locally designed feedback widget (please note this was primarily as a response to poor website engagement rather than over email). From November to end of March we had 89 instances of feedback which is less than we would have expected based on the trend up until that point. In addition feedback from the new system has indicated a more even spread on customer experiences. Very happy 29 – (36.3%) Happy – 12 – (15%) Neutral – 3 (3.8%) Unhappy – 4 (5%) Very unhappy – 32 (40%) Planning services feedback Low response rate meaning not enough information to actively use to drive service improvement Monitor customer feedback and implement any learning Number of Stage 1 complaints dealt with in timescales (10 working days) Over the year we dealt with 242 Stage 1 complaints. Of these, 135 were resolved within 10 working days (equivalent to 55%). The most complained about service was Operations/ Waste, with 136 formal complaints. The majority of these relate to the roll out of the new contract. Please note we received many more "complaints" from residents about waste services however in the vast majority of these cases residents simply wanted their new bins delivered or their bins emptied and were recorded as service requests as opposed to formal complaints. Formal complaints were only recorded where there havd been serious or repeated failures and required investigation. Number of stage 1 complaints dealt with  Number of stage 2 complaints death with 43 stage 2 complaints were dealt with over 25/26. Of these, 14 were partially upheld and 3 were fully upheld. All of these complaints related to waste services where we accepted the service was not good enough and issued and apology and where appropriate, remedial action. Number of stage 2 complaints dealt with 
4	Engage with residents through Community Forums and the Development Management Forum, to enhance planning outcomes at strategic sites	N/A	N/A	Gilston Area Community Forum - 27 Feb 25, 13 May 25, 14 Oct 25, 18 Feb 26. Stortford Fields Community Forum - 25 Jun 25, 18 Feb 26. Development Management Forum - March/April 2026 (previous meetings held in July & September 2024)
5	Strive to achieve customer service excellence	Achieve accreditation through CSE framework	Compliance in CSE assessment areas	CSE Assessment took place February and March following self assessment in the Autumn. We are compliant in 46 of the 57 key lines of enquiry. Action plan to be implemented in 2026 to achieve accreditation. We will be undertaking another assessment in October 2026 and will aim to be fully compliant by then
6	Engage the community in Local Government Re-organisation	Full engagement programme developed including face-to-face engagement at market stalls in each of the five towns.	Number of responses	We generated 600 responses to Hertfordshire's LGR consultation, which represented 10% of the total response rate across Hertfordshire. A detailed engagement report was compiled and used as part of the submission to government 

Environmentally Focused				
	Objective	Actions	Measure	Update for 2025/26
				Progress and measure/ results

7	Implement our Parking Strategy and other options including the LCWIP to encourage active travel	Implement more Resident's Permit Zones where there is local support	Number of RPZs in consideration	New RPZ policy was adopted by Council in October 2025. This follows on from a review conducted by a Citisense to look at possible changes and ways of making it easier to implement schemes. As a result of this we have been able to unlock appetite to progress some schemes. Currently the roadmap for considering new schemes is as follows: - Gladstone Road, Ware: scheme about to be formally launched through creation of new traffic regulation order (will also include some changes to yellow lines). Likely implementation in 2-5 months (depending on time to seal order following statutory consultation and implementation of signage, etc) - New Road, Ware: survey completed. Consultation with residents due to begin. If this is supported, likely implementation to be 12 months - Tamworth Road and/ or Currie Street. Public petition received expressing an interest, supported by Ward Members. Survey will begin as soon as Gladstone Road scheme is implemented. Section 106 funding in place to support this. - Woodlands and/ or Stortford Hall Park (Stortford). Residents gathering evidence of issues caused by airport parking. Parking Team in consultation with MAG about funding to support moving to consultation stage. - Park Street, Hertford. Residents have expressed interest and supported by Ward Members. Survey timescales not yet defined. - West Street, Hertford. Survey timescales not yet defined.
		Encourage use of cheaper, town centre periphery car parks such as Northgate End (Stortford) and away from premium priced town centre car parks	Car park usage trends	Focus has largely been on Bishop's Stortford as the pricing policy was explicit about making Northgate End cheaper (£4.40 for a whole day) and the other town centre car parks priced at a more premium level. Trend data indicates this strategy is working albeit incrementally rather than a sudden shift in driver behaviours. Overall in the town, there have been an increased number of parking transactions in recent years however dwell times are also generally reducing. In short, more people are parking but spending less time in town is the general trend. Specifically, Northgate End has moved from an average dwell time of 5hrs when it first opened to over 6.5hrs in the last 12 months. The number of users has also increased from around 2800 p/m to 3200 p/m from 2024/25 to 2025/26. Interestingly however, some other car parks have also grown by number of transactions but at a faster rate. Basbow Lane and Link Road have seen a 16% and 22% increase respectively over the same period. However dwell times in both have also reduced from 5.1 hrs to 3.1 hrs and 4.3 hrs to 2.7 hrs respectively. In terms of policy objectives, it seems clear that more people are opting to use Northgate End for longer term parking however that is in the context of more parking transactions generally.
		Implement the Active Travel app	N/A	The Active Travel App is a digital behaviour change platform to support a shift toward active and sustainable travel in line with the Council's climate and sustainability objectives. The platform and associated promotional services will incentivise active travel by enabling users to earn points redeemable for rewards, predominantly from local businesses. It will provide measurable and verifiable travel data to evidence modal shift and long-term behaviour change.
		Support production of the LCWIP		The East Herts LCWIP has been completed and has now been adopted by East Herts Executive 02 06 2026 and Hertfordshire County Council's Cabinet 17 06 2026. The LCWIP will be used to inform future planning policy and planning application decisions involving the provision and enhancement of walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure and measures as part of development and other proposals in East Herts, including S.106 funding. It may also open up greater access to potential funding streams and application opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable.
8	Implement our Air Quality Action Plan to cut pollution and improve health	N/A	Reduction in NO2 levels across the 3 AQMAs in East Hertfordshire	While the Council has not had any dedicated resources to impliment the air quality action plan, a number of actions have taken place, both by East Herts Council and our key partners (HCC for example). Additional resources will be needed to implement more East Herts Council led projects. All our waste collection vehicles now use Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) instead of diesel. This cuts carbon emissions by 90% and also reduces other air pollutants. The new waste management contract came into operation in May 2025. The new contractor is using electric vehicles for lighter duties, such as road sweeping and the switch from diesel to hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) is also now operational. This results in 5% of emissions from the waste management service being removed by a switch to e-vehicles powered by a carbon free tariff and 75% of the remaining 95% of emissions from diesel use subject to a 90% reduction due to a switch to HVO (which has 90% lower emissions than diesel), using the 2024/25 nationally defined diesel conversion to carbon emissions factor. Note, all figures from last audit 25_26) Data and local knowledge (from consultation conluding Nov 25) has been used to identify routes with the greatest potential demand, and where changes would most benefit local people to form a 'priority network'. All priority routes have now been assessed, and changes suggested to make them better for walking and cycling. At this stage, all suggested improvements are concepts. All routes will now undergo further design, feasibility work and public engagement after the plan is adopted later in 2026.
9	Roll out more EV chargers in urban and rural locations across the district.	Implement EV contract	Number of EV chargers installed	Contract now signed. Mobilisation started. EV Concession will ensure 10% of all spaces in EH car parks (collectively for those car parks in scope) will become EV. Roll out will begin in priority areas, following in phases to other areas. The project will initially deliver 193 live chargers over three years with 44 more made ready for future demand. The Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) tender is also now awarded and will deliver a proposed 478 onstreet chargers, again over three years, throughout the district. Both projects have used commercial leverage to ensure rural areas with less demand will also be well served with charging provision. The council is confident that the EV bays will be well utilised to ensure car parks operate at the optimum in terms of supply and demand to support local businesses, residents and visitors. Officers will closely monitor usage. Installation completed of 11 new Podpoint EV chargers at Wallfields for staff and fleet vehicles, which enables tracking of usage, consumption and charging for private use. 14 EV chargers installed at Buntingford depot for Shared Service vehicles and Waste Fleet vehicles

10	Encourage the reduction of carbon emissions from homes and businesses through training and by supporting “Energy Hubs” in towns and parishes	N/A	N/A	The Energy Hubs created using UKSPF 23_25 funding and now established and events are ongoing year on year £1.5m has been awarded to East Herts via Warm Homes:Local Grant (DESNZ) over three years. National Energy Foundation have been procured as our delivery agent and, while challenging, is performing well The ECO4/Flex scheme (OFGEM) has now closed and resulting in 21 vulnerable homes receiving measures with annual cost and carbon savings of £10,300 and 16,118kgCO2 annually, resectively Cllr Tim Hospkin, Linda Meehan and Jenny Foster are members of Hertfordshire Retrofit Steering Group which brings together organisations, experts, and community representatives involved in Hertfordshire’s retrofit system. Its purpose is to: •Connect people, ideas and initiatives •Inspire behaviour change and collective action through stewardship of the Retrofit System •Coordinate and prioritise funding and initiatives to influence the System •Support shared learning, expert insight and lived experience •Influence wider decision-making through system-wide perspectives BEAM has achieved basic Green Book accreditation and is almost at intermediate, which will be achieved in teh coming months.
11	Encourage residents to play their part in supporting local wildlife and improving our natural environment and support delivery of the lcal Nature Recovery Strategy	Promote the county's work on the LNRS	Reach, engagement and responses	We drove 108 responses to the county's consultation on the LNRS. This represented 27% of their total response rate - the most of any district/borough. Parks teams have continued to support habitat improvements, reduced mowing initiatives and natural environment projects across a number of open spaces in support of wider biodiversity objectives. Engagement with local Friends Groups and volunteers has helped support environmental stewardship and community understanding of nature recovery initiatives.

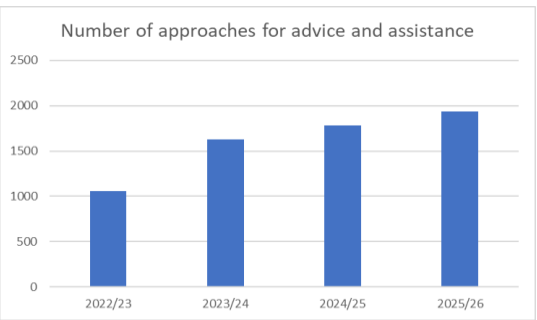
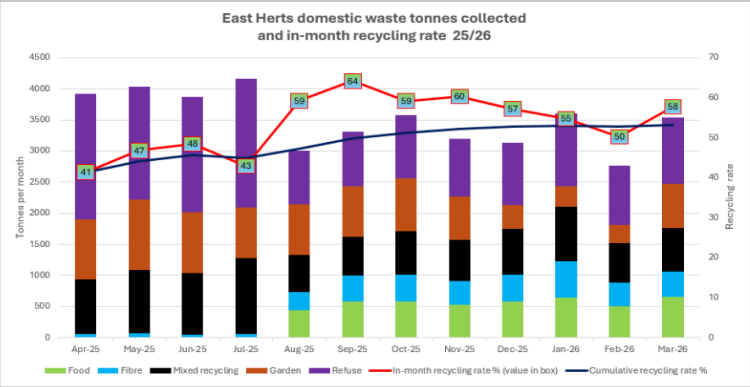
Acting with the Community				
	Objective	Actions	Measure	Update for 2025/26
				Progress and measure/ results
12	Consult with communities to review and refresh our Local Plan, prioritising improved sustainability standards.	N/A	N/A	Updated Statement of Community Involvement published in July 2025. Call for Sites process and extensive programme of site visits underway. 283 site submissions were received. This year saw the completion of several studies including the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy and Buntingford Employment Study, while also progressing an ambitious programme of other ongoing evidence base work, including: - Green Belt Assessment - LCWIP - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment - Open Space Assessment - Indoor Sports Needs Assessment and Strategy - Retail and Town Centres Study - District-Wide Employment Land Review, and - Employment Studies for Bishop’s Stortford, Hertford, Ware and Sawbridgeworth Work has also commenced on a District Design Code. A draft Strategic Vision for the new Local Plan has been agreed. Notice of Intent to Commence Local Plan Making will be given in June 2026. A Scoping Consultation will take place from 11 June to 10 July 2026. This is the first stage of engagement in the preparation of the new Local Plan. Its purpose is to provide meaningful early engagement with stakeholders and the local community, including residents, businesses, infrastructure providers, and other organisations, to help shape the direction of the Local Plan. A Planning Newsletter keeps stakeholders and communities up to date with the latest news.
		Updated market policy and regular promotion of Trader offers.	Number of traders on the Charter Market	A total of 26 traders covering 35 pitches are on the Charter Markets (6 traders over 9 pitches in Ware and 20 traders over 32 pitches in Hertford) along with 5 traders on the Hertford Farmer’s Market. Local markets has a regular feature of the councils communications programme, receiving a mention at least monthly on all the council’s major platforms.
		Encouraging further spending in Hertford through BEAM visits	Number of events/ screenings and attendance	 Stage Performances 321  Stage Attendance 75,331  Stage Occupancy% 62%  Stage ATP (net) £18.38  Cinema Screenings 2,849  Cinema Attendance 53,028  Cinema Occupancy% 25%  Cinema ATP (net) £8.77  F&B Income (net) £620,123  Spend Per Head (net) £4.85  Booking and Transaction Fees (net) £255,090  Net promoter Score 73.41 We don’t have a full year of comparable data from 24.25. But some key areas of growth from Q3 & Q4 are: Booking and Transaction Fees +73.7% Stage ATP +10.7% SPH +19% Stage Occupancy% +17.5% Screen Occupancy% +26% 

13	Help create thriving high streets, by encouraging local markets and by working positively with partners			45% of audiences for BEAM travel from outside of Hertford. A growing % of tickets are being bought from outside of EHC district generally, with audiences travelling from Broxbourne and North London. We are currently developing a tool to measure the wider economic impact of the theatre on the town. BEAM also launched its food offer in September. Over 2025/26, there were 321 stage performances at BEAM and attendance of 75,331.	
		Careers fairs in Hertford and Stortford	Number of businesses and young people engaged	Two careers fairs took place. One in BEAM focused on secondary schools from Hertford and Ware and a second fair focused on schools from Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth and Buntingford. 11 secondary schools took part and both sessions also included "twilight" opening (after 3pm) for the general public. Over 50 businesses took part with 1400 young people from schools and a further 200 in the twilight sessions.	
		Visit East Herts campaign to promote rural businesses and activities	Reach and engagement	Explore East Herts reached over 90,000 people and generated over 700 engagements (likes, comments, shares). A variety of businesses and local attractions/venues were featured over the 6 month campaign, promoting visits to rural businesses and showcasing some of the districts' best but less well known attractions	
		Create a campaign for skills promotion to residents and businesses, including SEEDL, HOP and the Careers Fairs	Reach and engagement	Open Possibilities reached over 90,000 people and generated 3,404 engagements (likes, comments, shares and click-throughs)	
14	Support communities to create or update their Neighbourhood Plans.	N/A	N/A	The Stocking Pelham Neighbourhood Area was designated on the 8 July 2025. The Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan was adopted by the Council on 4 March 2026. Ongoing support is being provided to Hertford Castle Plus (Castle Ward, Kingsmead West Ward and Bengoe South Ward).	
		Housing - working to change housing from affordable rent to social rent. Pushing the amount of affordable housing as part of developments.	Number of affordable homes delivered	287 affordable homes delivered over the year (166 for rent, 121 for shared ownership)	

15	Prioritise actions that can provide Housing which is truly affordable.	Disposal of Lime Kiln Place	N/A	All 15 units disposed of to Hightown to let at social rent. The tranaction completed end of March following several months' of work and units were let to tenants almost immediately providing much needed affordable accomodation in the town	
		Deliver the rent reduction scheme	N/A	The council provided funding to reduced the rents of fournewly built four-bedroom houses in Bishop's Stortford to the three-bedroom local housing allowance level making the rents truly affordable as they are now less than 60% of the private rent for an equivalent property.	
17	Support voluntary sector groups to continue their work supporting the whole community	Encouraging volunteering at BEAM to help run the business and allow people to build up skills and experience	Number of volunteers and work experience programmes delivered.	100+ volunteers working at BEAM, with impactful work experience programme being developed for 26/27.	
		New strategic partnership to be established and co-location of community services	N/A	Community Alliance now co-located at Jackson Square with Customer Services, initially focusing on Healthy Hub delivery. Citizens Advice will be co-located at Hertford	
18	Create a long term asset management plan based on community values		Review ongoing	Work ongoing with other Local Authroities to create a joint community lettings policy, incorporating Assets of Community Value and Community Asset Transfer policy all to be set out in the new Asset Management plan for the new unitary authority as part fo LGR	

Fair and Inclusive

	Objective	Actions	Measure	Update for 2025/26	
				Progress and measure/ results	
19	Deliver the Cultural Strategy, with support for new events	BEAM Cultural Outreach work	Number of participants	nearly 700 Participants took part in Learning & Wellbeing workshops at BEAM and nearly 200 people are now signed up to BEAMs Local Creative Network.	
		Delive the River Lea Towpath project	Number of benches improved	10 benches located along the river Lea between Ware and Hertford painted with designs created by local artists under the theme of nature. This project was a community collaboration with local artists with support from Ware Men's Shed. The project is designed to increase footfall along the route, encourage active travel and also support wellbeing but meeting Age UK's "Take a Seat" initiative. The project has created a permanent physical legacy for the district and has been warmly received by residents and visitors.	
		Deliver Arts in East Herts	Number of participants / number of projects supported	Delivered 'Arts in East Herts' 2025 - evaluation report being finalised (JG & OR). Hilary now has the final report. 46 local artists were supported with small grants to deliver workshops and performances throughout September and October 2025. Activities ran across the district with a good take up in villages. The council dispersed over £36.5k of grants with plans ro establish an Arts based charity to align with Beam's outreach work and to secure the future of Arts in East Herts.	

20	Deliver our Thriving Together Plan to promote physical exercise, healthy lifestyles and support other measures including healthy hubs that boost community wellbeing	Regular health & wellbeing content in network	Referrals to Healthy Hub / outcomes from HH	1108 clients engaged with Healthy Hub services across our Hertford Fore Street, Hertford Sele Farm and Bishop's Stortford locations.	
21	Improve our Council Tax Support scheme to make it fairer, simpler and more transparent.			Changes put on hold pending Local Government Re-organisation	
22	Support those facing homelessness or recovering from it, and include them in consultations	Develop Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy using customer's 'lived experience'	Number successfully prevented/relieved	40.1% homelessness successfully prevented within 56 days (from 80 cases) 37.6% homelessness successfully relieved within 56 days (from 93 cases)	
			Number of people in temporary accomodation	80 Households as of May 2026	
		Review Housing Register and Allocations Policy, to ensure this contributes to reducing homelessness.	Number of approaches for advice and assistance	Continued economic uncertainty coupled with some private landlords existing the market following the introduction of the Renters' Right Act 2025 have combined to see increases in the number of people approaching the council for housing advice.	
23	Maintain and improve council services while making them more cost efficient through the	Deliver Transforming East Herts	Savings delivered	Moving into LGR means that the transformation agenda has different requirements, essentially less focused on existing systems and processes as these will be fully redesigned when mergers with other authorities occur. As a result the Transformation Team has been re-structured to a smaller team of two people focused on improving the customer experience particularly through the website, CRM, cloud 9 and BEAM	
					

Kg per household - cumulative (NI 191)

Date	Est pre-Aug 25 (cumulative)	Est pre-Aug 25 projection
Apr-25	~70	~70
May-25	~80	~80
Jun-25	~110	~110
Jul-25	~150	~150
Aug-25	~170	~180
Sep-25	~190	~210
Oct-25	~240	~260
Nov-25	~280	~310
Dec-25	~320	~360
Jan-26	~350	~400
Feb-26	~370	~430
Mar-26	~300	~450

3867 tonnes of food waste collected since the weekly service launched



East Herts Council Corporate Priorities

L – Listening, Open and Transparent	
1. Listen and be open and transparent in decision making and actions. We will prioritise improved consultation, engagement and conversation with our communities and evaluate the impact	No change
2. Strive to achieve excellent customer service	Add “focusing on improved response times” in recognition of resident concerns over 25/26 call response times and need to address this
3. Encourage residents to use our digital communication channels so those who are not digitally able can easily talk to us by phone or in person	Amend wording to “Encourage residents to use our digital communication channels where they can. This will help us focus resources on those residents who are not digitally able, allowing them to more easily talk to us by phone or in person” due to importance of having a face to face offer
4. Engage the community in Local Government Reorganisation	Add “and Councillors” to recognise engagement work that is required at Member level as well as with residents on LGR
5. Engage with residents through Community Forums, to enhance planning outcomes at strategic sites.	Slight amendment to include “and Development Management” Forums
E - Environmentally Focused	

1. Implement our new Air Quality Action Plan to cut pollution and improve health	No change
2. Implement our Parking Strategy and other options including the LCWIP to encourage active travel	No change
3. Encourage the reduction of carbon emissions from homes and businesses through training and by supporting “Energy Hubs” in towns and parishes	No change
4. Roll out more EV chargers in urban and rural locations across the district	No change
5. Encourage residents to play their part in supporting local wildlife and improving our natural environment and support delivery of the Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Strategy	No change
6. Maximising the positive environmental impacts of the new waste contract	Slight amendment of wording given new waste contract is now in place
A – Acting with the Community	
1. Consult with communities to update our Local Plan, prioritising improved sustainability standards	No change
2. Prioritise actions that can provide housing which is truly affordable	No change
3. Help create thriving high streets, by encouraging local markets and by working positively with partners	No change
4. Create a long term asset management plan based on community values	Change to “support transfer of assets into community ownership when appropriate”. Executive proposing to consider on an individual basis (eg. Water Lane Hall) rather than a generic approach across all assets. Also recognises Council’s role in support communities rather than directly transferring where we may not be the asset owner (eg. Ward Freman)
5. Support voluntary sector groups to continue their work in helping the whole community.	No change

6. Support more communities to create or update their Neighbourhood Plans	No change
F - Fair and Inclusive	
1. Deliver the Cultural Strategy, with support for art and cultural events	No change
2. Maintain and improve council services while making them more cost efficient through the “Transforming East Herts” programme	Change to “Maintain and improve council services for all residents during LGR, and make provision for those who are vulnerable or digitally excluded”. The East Herts Transformation programme has closed and therefore the focus is more service delivery and quality going into LGR rather than major transformation of services
3. Support those facing homelessness or recovering from it, and include them in consultations	No change
4. Deliver our Thriving Together Plan to promote physical exercise, healthy lifestyles and support other measures including healthy hubs that boost community wellbeing	No change
5. Improve our Council Tax Support scheme to make it fairer, simpler and more transparent	Change to “Communicate council tax and other support schemes to residents”. Council Tax scheme wont be redesigned ahead of LGR however Executive are keen to ensure all residents are aware of support available to them

Agenda Item 9b

East Herts Council Report

Council

Date of meeting: Wednesday, 22 July 2026

Report by: Councillor Mione Goldspink, Executive Member for Communities

Report title: The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2026-2031

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary – This report presents the draft version of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2026-31 to Council for approval, following presentation to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 June 2026 and Executive on 14 July 2026.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:

A) That the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2026-2031, as detailed in Appendix A be approved.

1.0 Background

1.1 Under the Homelessness Act 2002 all local authorities are required to carry out a homelessness review and to develop and publish a strategy based on the review every five years.

1.2 East Herts published its first Homelessness Strategy in July 2003. This is the fifth Strategy and is due to run from 2026 to March 2031.

2.0 Report

2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 placed enhanced duties on local authorities to assist homeless and potentially homeless people. One of the key aims of the Act was to ensure that housing authorities take a comprehensive and strategic approach to managing and preventing homelessness in their districts.

2.2 The Council's last Homelessness Strategy was adopted and published in 2019 and the council and its partners have made significant progress on providing and improving services to those

people that are homeless or potentially homeless. The Strategy includes a section on the achievements by the council and its partners to improve the homeless services provided, since the last Strategy was adopted.

- 2.3 The previous Strategy covered the period 2019-2024. Delivery of review of the strategy was delayed as the post responsible for this work was not in place until September 2025.
- 2.4 Much has changed both locally and nationally since the last Homelessness Strategy was adopted. The most significant recent changes include the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and A National Plan to end Homelessness published in December 2025. The latter includes an outcomes framework for local authorities and the requirement for areas to have local targets to move from a crisis response to one focused on prevention.
- 2.5 A draft Strategy has been developed. This has 5 objectives around which the Housing Service will build its Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan will shape the emphasis of the Housing Options Team's work for the next five years.
- 2.6 The strategic priorities in the strategy are:
- Continue to prevent and relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity
 - Increase temporary accommodation options to improve suitability and sustainability, reducing the use of bed and breakfast accommodation
 - Continue to improve the pathways in and out of supported housing and the support available to vulnerable single people
 - Maximise the availability of affordable housing
 - Continue to provide support to reduce rough sleeping and where this occurs, ensure it is brief and not re-occurring
- 2.7 The draft Strategy was published for consultation. Customers of the homeless service were specifically asked to contribute as they had insight into any gaps in service provision they experienced and what could have been done which may have prevented their homelessness.
- 2.8 All the responses to the consultation were considered. The responses have been used to inform the strategy and action plan for 2026/27.

- 2.9 A copy of the updated Strategy is attached at Appendix A. An Equalities Impact assessment has also been prepared for the Strategy and included at Appendix B.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 To enable Members to consider the draft Strategy and to ensure the Council meets its statutory requirement to have an up-to-date Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 Accept the recommendations- RECOMMENDED for the reasons outlined above.
- 4.2 Not to accept the recommendations- NOT RECOMMENDED. As explained in 5.1 there is currently no strategy which is a statutory requirement.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 The Council currently does not have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which is a statutory requirement and necessary to provide the strategic direction of the service. Approval of the Strategy would mitigate this risk.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 Community Safety
Yes – preventing and relieving homelessness, positively contributes to community safety.

Data Protection

None arising directly from this report.

Equalities

Yes – the purpose of the strategy is to prevent and relieve homelessness, which has implications in terms of equalities. An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken and is shown at Appendix B.

Environmental Sustainability

None arising directly from this report.

Financial
None arising directly from this report.

Health and Safety
None arising directly from this report.

Human Resources
None arising directly from this report.

Human Rights
None arising directly from this report.

Legal
None arising directly from this report.

Specific Wards
None arising directly from this report.

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

- 7.1 Appendices
- a) Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
 - b) Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.2 [Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 9 June 2026](#)
[Executive -14th July 2026](#)

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East Herts District Council

Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2026-2031

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Section 1 – Foreword

Welcome to the Council’s new Preventing Homelessness Strategy for 2026-2031. This is East Herts’ fifth Homelessness Strategy, setting out our approach for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping within the district.

Homelessness and poor housing conditions blight lives, damage health, and reduce opportunities. This Strategy aims to continue the work to prevent and relieve homelessness as early as possible, ensure suitable and sustainable temporary accommodation is available to meet emergency needs and that the needs of our most vulnerable customers are met. Underpinning this work is a continued drive to maximise the availability of affordable housing in our district as the most sustainable way of supporting our current residents and future generations.

I am confident that this Strategy establishes key objectives and provides a comprehensive framework, clearly outlining the Council's approach and commitment to addressing homelessness over the next five years.

The Strategy will concentrate on 5 key objectives:

1. Continue to prevent and relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity
2. Increase temporary accommodation options to improve suitability and sustainability, reducing the use of bed and breakfast accommodation
3. Continue to improve the pathways in and out of supported housing and the support available to vulnerable single people
4. Maximise the availability of affordable housing
5. Continue to provide support to reduce rough sleeping and where this occurs, ensure it is brief and not re-occurring

I would like to extend my thanks on behalf of the Council to everyone who has been involved in developing this Strategy. Your dedication and hard work are greatly appreciated as we strive to make East Herts a place where everyone has the opportunity for safe, stable housing.

Section 2 - Executive Summary

The objective of this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is to enable early intervention to prevent homelessness and, when prevention is not feasible, to assist homeless households and those in housing need obtain appropriate help. The data and research enables understanding of the scale of the problem and the specific drivers for homelessness in the district, which is crucial for tailoring our response.

The data between 2020/21-2024/25 show an increase in homeless households approaching the council for help, with 2023/24 representing the highest level of homeless approaches since the adoption of the Homeless Reduction Act in 2018. This increase related to in households being made homeless due to their private sector tenancy ending by way of a 'no fault eviction' and an increase in households fleeing their previous home due to domestic abuse.

Since 2020/21 there have been increases in the support needs of homeless households. Nearly half of the households approaching for homelessness assistance have support needs and 90% of those households have support needs in more than one area. This tells us that homeless households are more vulnerable than ever and providing a 'bricks and mortar' solution alone is not enough. To address this, we need to focus on supported housing pathways and how specialist support can be provided in a coordinated way for these clients.

Our response needs to address these challenges, and therefore the following priorities have been identified for the period 2026-31:

- Continue to prevent and relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity
- Increase temporary accommodation options to improve suitability and sustainability, reducing the use of bed and breakfast accommodation
- Continue to improve the pathways in and out of supported housing and the support available to vulnerable single people
- Maximise the availability of affordable housing
- Continue to provide support to reduce rough sleeping and where this occurs, ensure it is brief and not re-occurring

An action plan has been developed to address these strategic aims.

It is recognised that much of this work needs to take place in partnership with others; other services, the Voluntary and Community Sector and our customers. Consultation has taken place with these partners to ensure this is a strategy which reflects the views of partners and provides a shared vision to respond to homelessness in East Herts.

Section 3 – Review of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024

The council's previous Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy set out the following priorities:

- Strong and effective partnership working
- Early targeted intervention and advice to prevent the loss of accommodation
- Effective action to relieve homelessness and sustain tenancies to prevent repeat homelessness
- Protect and increase local housing options

It is important to recognise the achievements of the previous strategy so that these are factored into work in the upcoming period. The key accomplishments of the previous strategy include:

- Successfully secured funding through the Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative to provide a full-time Rough Sleeping Coordinator to assist clients with securing long-term accommodation
- The development of 1,130 affordable new homes for rent and 525 for shared ownership, totalling 1,655 new affordable homes
- Secured Next Steps Accommodation Programme funding to convert two council-owned properties into six self-contained units for rough sleepers.
- Additional revenue funding enabled the employment of a Single Person Support Officer to help residents develop independent living skills
- Developed a "Duty to Refer" portal on the East Herts website, allowing partners to easily alert the Housing Options Team about customers at risk of homelessness
- Created a single pathway for residents and support agencies to request housing advice and assistance via the East Herts Council website
- Agreed on a county-wide protocol to assist homeless 16/17-year-olds, care leavers, and intentionally homeless families, ensuring consistent support across the region

- The Council procured new temporary, self-contained accommodation for 16 households, reducing reliance on Bed and Breakfast options.
- Increased the staff resource to support residents in temporary accommodations and facilitate their transition to permanent housing
- Collaborated with partners, including Hertfordshire County Council, Change Grow Live (CGL), Probation, Registered Providers, and MIND, in monthly MDT meetings to support single residents at risk of homelessness.

Section 4 – Review of Homelessness Data 2020-2025

To identify the priorities for 2025-2030, data from 2020-2025 has been examined to understand:

- the demand for homelessness support
- the customer profile in terms of age and household composition
- the support needs of households and how these impact on priority need
- the reasons for homelessness
- the households placed in temporary accommodation, and the type of accommodation used
- the outcomes for the households supported

Definition of Homeless Duties

When examining homelessness data between 2020-2025 terminology taken from homelessness legislation is used. An explanation of these terms is shown below:

Prevention Duty: Owed to individuals and households who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days. The local authority must take reasonable steps to help them remain in their current accommodation or secure alternative accommodation for at least six months.

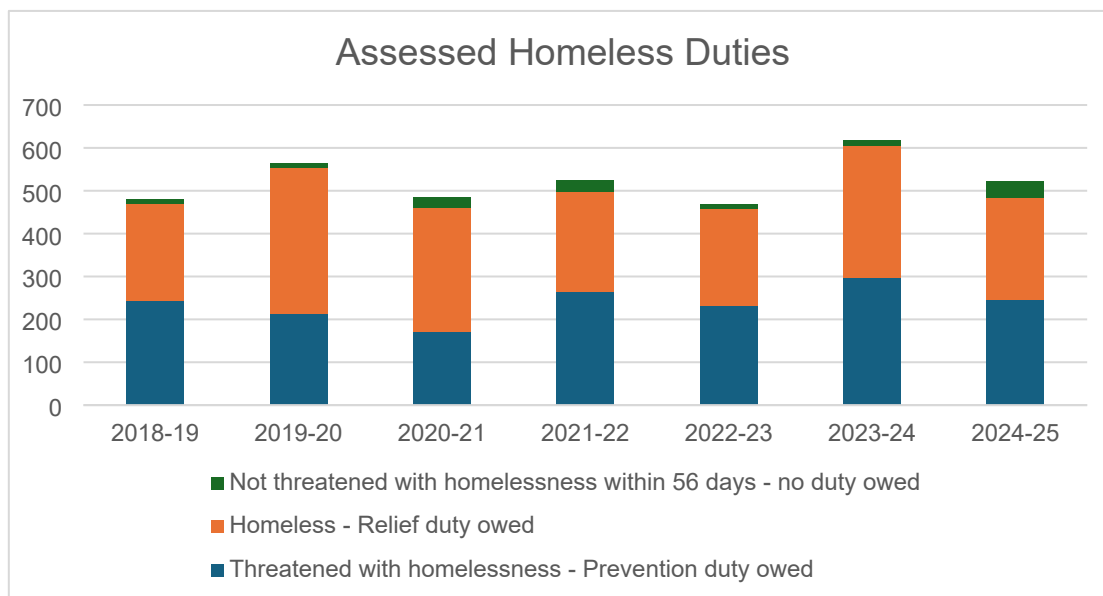
Relief Duty: Owed to individuals and households who are already homeless. The local authority must take reasonable steps to help them secure accommodation for at least six months.

Main Housing Duty: Owed to households in priority need and unintentionally homeless after the relief duty has ended without securing accommodation. The local authority must ensure that suitable accommodation is available for the household until the duty ends under specified conditions.

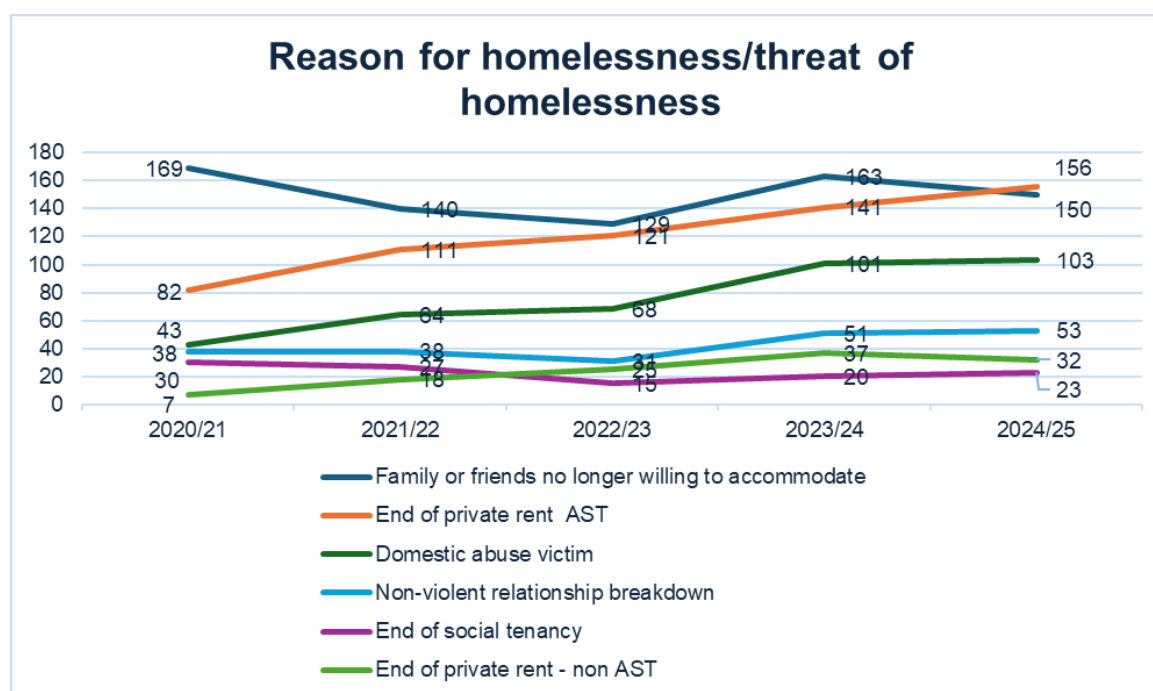
Priority Need: In homelessness law, a priority need determines the legal obligation for emergency accommodation, while a support need (or vulnerability) is a factor used to determine if a priority status may exist. Priority need mandates immediate interim housing. Priority need groups include households with dependent children, pregnant women, and individuals vulnerable due to old age, mental illness, or physical disability. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 provided that those fleeing domestic abuse would have priority need.

Demand for Homelessness Support

The year 2020/21 saw a reduction in homeless approaches due to measures introduced during the coronavirus pandemic which prevented evictions from social and private sector tenancies. Figures for 2023/24 show a considerable increase presentations, higher than pre-pandemic levels. The percentage of customers presenting at the 'relief stage' (already homeless) in 2023-24 was 52% so also higher than previous years outside of the pandemic period. 2024-25 saw a reduction in approaches but a continuation of a higher percentage of approaches at the relief stage.



Reasons for Homelessness



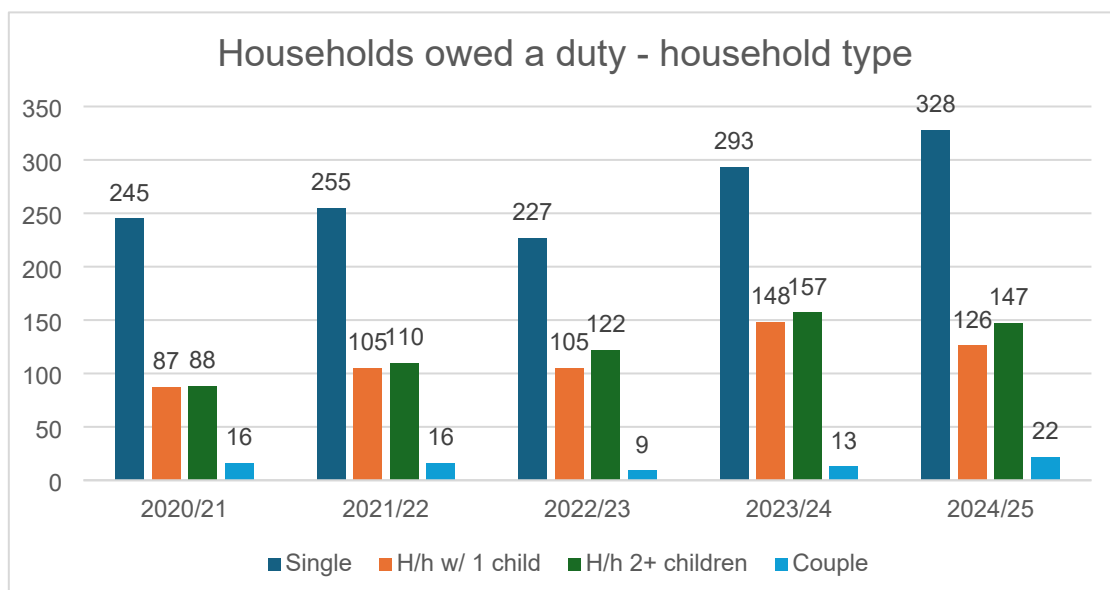
The primary reasons for homelessness or the threat of homelessness in 2024/25 were:

- End of a private rented tenancy AST (30%)
- Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate (29%)
- Domestic abuse (20%)
- Non-violent relationship breakdown (10%)
- End of a non-assured shorthold rented tenancy (6%)

Presentations from households due to their private rented tenancy coming to an end was the single highest reason for homelessness in 2024/25 and on a steady upward trajectory since 2020/21, with 74 more presentations in 2024/25, representing an increase of 90%. This increase was related to instability in the private rented sector caused by interest rate increases and concerns about legislative changes (including Renters Rights) resulting in landlords leaving the sector. This resulted in the supply of private rented accommodation reducing and rental prices increasing sharply.

The highest percentage increase in presentations in this period was from households homeless due to domestic abuse which increased 139.5% between 2020/21 and 2024/25. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 was enacted in April 2021. This legislation provided that those fleeing domestic abuse had priority need and introduced a range of other protections around security of tenure and removing local connection requirements.

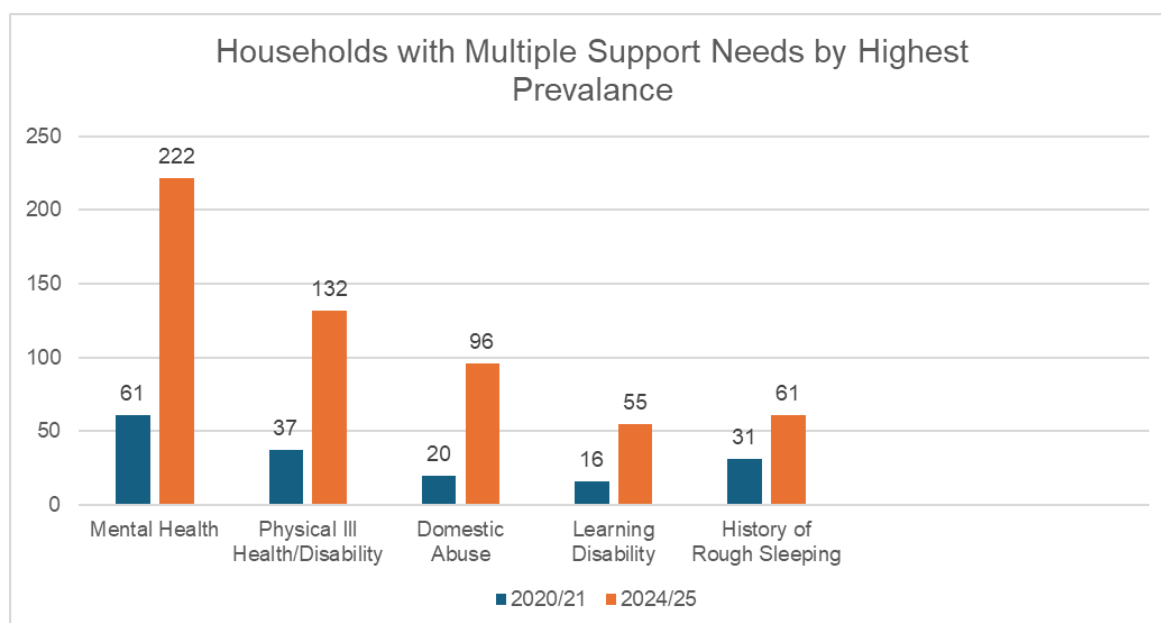
Customer Profile



Almost half (48%) of households owed a duty are single person households (33% male and 15% female) a further 33% are single parent households (2% male and 31% female). While the largest cohort is single males (33%), single females with or without children account for 46% of all households owed a duty.

Homeless households are far less likely to be in employment than other households. The employment rate for East Herts in June 2023 was 81.9%. By contrast, only 30% of main applicants owed a duty in 2022/23 were in employment and 19% were unemployed. 55% of applicants owed a duty are between the ages of 25 and 44

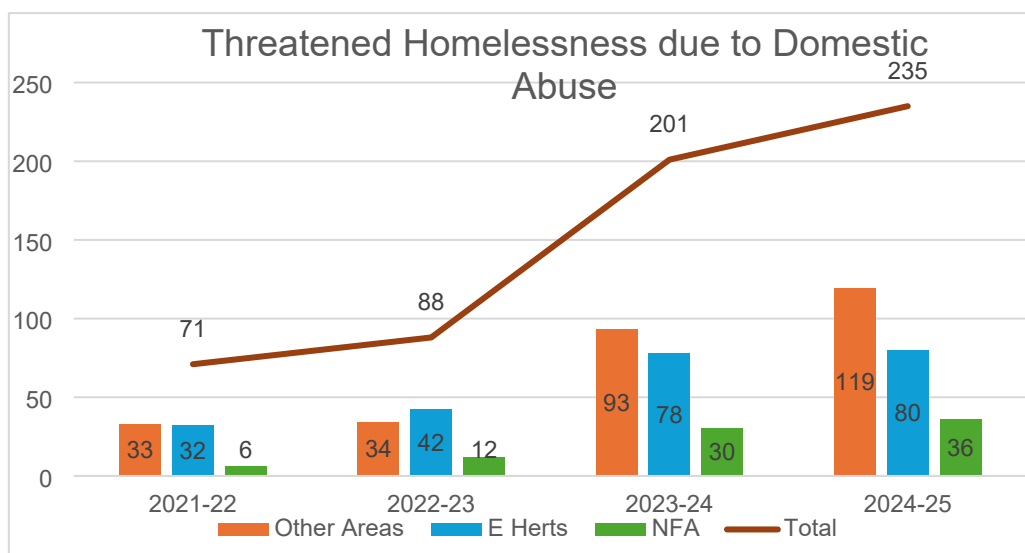
Support Needs



An increasing proportion of households are presenting with support needs. Around 19% of homeless households in 2020/21 had support needs, which increased to 49% of applicants in 2024/25. Alongside this, there is significant growth in the number of households with more than one support need. 90% of homeless households with support needs in 2024/25 had needs in more than 1 area.

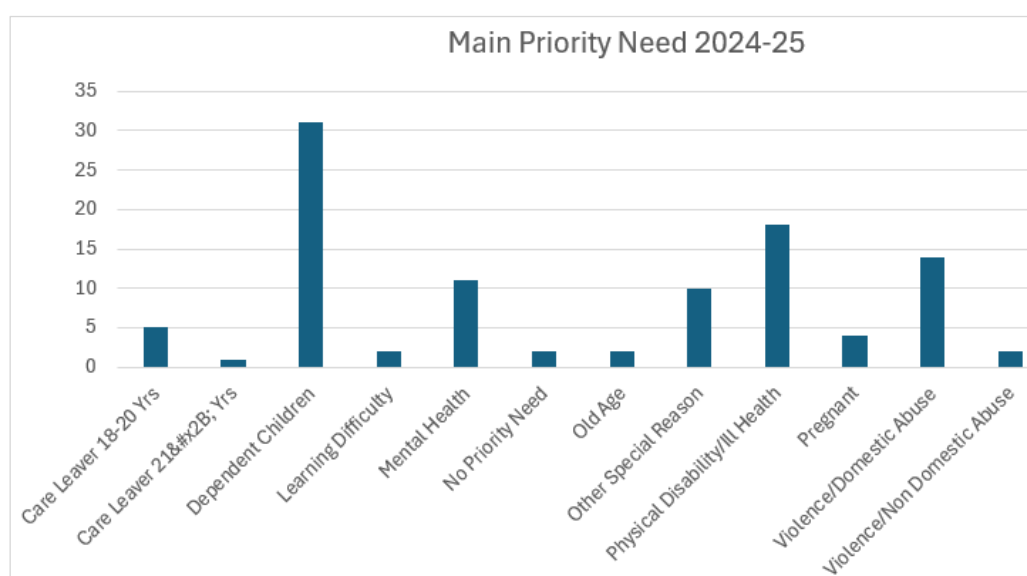
The most prevalent support needs were mental health problems, physical ill health and disability and domestic abuse. The most significant percentage increase between 2020/21-2024/25 was for support needs due to domestic abuse which increased by 380%, but there were also substantial increases in all support needs with mental health increasing by 264%, physical ill health and disability increasing by 257%, learning disabilities increasing by 243% and a history of rough sleeping increasing by 97%.

The increase in domestic abuse is more significant when examining all cases where domestic abuse was a feature of the case, not just the principal cause of homelessness. When looking at all cases where domestic abuse was a feature shows a 231% increase in homelessness where domestic abuse as the primary or secondary cause in the period between 2021/22 and 2024/25. The most substantial increases were from applicant households who were either not previously living in East Herts (260% increase) or those who were previously of no fixed abode (500% increase) usually customers leaving refuge.



Priority Need

As explained previously, support needs are not exactly the same as a priority need but can indicate that a priority need should be considered. When looking at those provided with temporary accommodation in 2024-25 the main priority need categories were:

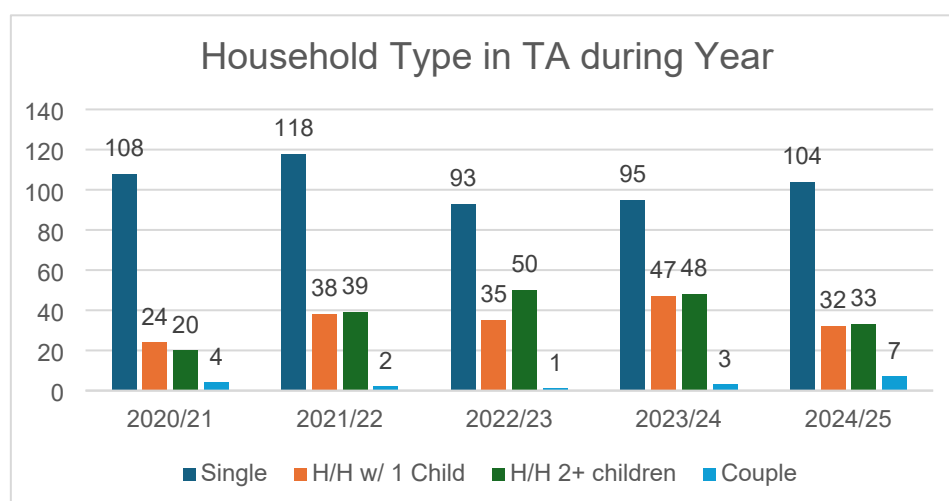


As can be seen from this data most household's primary priority need in this period were dependent children (30%), physical disability (18%), domestic abuse (14%) and mental health (11%). 70% of homeless households had a priority need other than dependent children, which translates into a high homeless need from single homeless households.

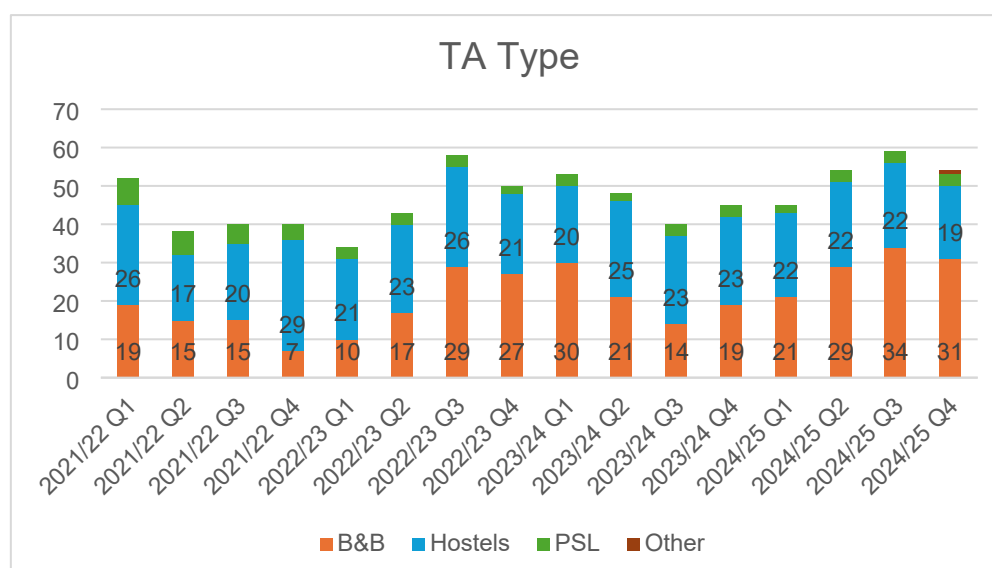
Temporary Accommodation

If prevention efforts for households who are eligible for assistance and in priority need fail and the household becomes homeless, the council has a statutory duty provide temporary accommodation. The average number of households requiring temporary accommodation per year since 2020/21 is 180, with 156 households accommodated in 2020/21 and 176 households accommodated in 2024/25. The highest number of households in temporary

accommodation was 2021/22 when 197 households were accommodated. Most households in temporary accommodation are single person households.



The below chart shows a snapshot of the number of people in temporary accommodation and the type of accommodation they were in at the end of the quarter since 2021/22. As can be seen from this data East Herts is heavily reliant on bed and breakfast accommodation, usually commercial hotels, to meet its accommodation duties. This 'gap' in accommodation is an average of 21 units of temporary accommodation per quarter, as can be seen from the below:



Rough Sleeping

In 2022 the previous government published a cross-party Rough Sleeping Strategy. The Strategy set out a vision for ending rough sleeping, which is that it is prevented wherever possible, and where it does occur it is rare, brief and non-recurrent. It emphasised three aspects of its approach:

- Prevention
- Intervention
- Recovery

In March 2020 the government launched the 'Everyone In' initiative, to house rough sleepers in response to the pandemic. Over 35 people were accommodated by East Herts in this period primarily in a hotel procured with two other local authorities. When the initiative ended in June 2020 most applicants were enabled to move into more settled accommodation.

Every year local authorities report the number of people rough sleeping in their area on a typical night. This is a chosen night between 1 October and 30th November. Each year the date is coordinated with the 9 other districts in Hertfordshire.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of people recorded by East Herts & partners	9	15	6	5	5	7	7	5

Significant efforts have been made to ensure rough sleeping in the district is kept to a minimum as can be seen from the annual snapshot data.

Homelessness Outcomes

Between 2018 and 2025, 46% of households who were owed the prevention duty had their homelessness prevented with 37% of applicants continuing to the relief stage, so becoming homeless and requiring further support.

Of those owed the relief duty 43% had their homelessness relieved and 57% remained homeless after 56 days.

The prevention or relief of homelessness is predominantly achieved through an offer of social housing. This can be shown by the below:

Accommodation secured at end of prevention duty

Year	Social rented sector	Private rented sector	Staying with family
2018-19	74	12	4
2019-20	54	15	4
2020-21	31	17	3
2021-22	110	28	12
2022-23	269	72	23
2023-24	122	27	1
2024-25	126	23	10
All	786	194	57
	75.79%	18.71%	5.5%

Accommodation secured at end of relief duty

Year	Social rented sector	Private rented sector	Other
2018-19	68	8	15
2019-20	153	19	12
2020-21	109	48	10
2021-22	68	22	33

2022-23	110	26	7
2023-24	129	23	12
2024-25	109	20	10
All	617	143	87
	72.85%	16.88%	10.27%

Section 5 – Our Priorities 2026-2031

Priority 1: Continue to prevent and relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity

Preventing homelessness as early as possible continues to be a priority, as this provides the best outcomes for homeless households and the council. The council aims to prevent homelessness by ensuring that households at risk are identified as soon as possible and that high quality help and advice is deployed to maximum effect. When a homeless application is made the council will draw on partners to provide specialist support to customers, to aid this. We have identified that to meet the demands of our customers we need to support more customers to access accommodation in the private sector and will work with our customers and the private sector to ensure this is an affordable and sustainable option.

To continue to prevent and relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity the council will:

- work with key partners to ensure there is an effective early intervention service and referral pathway for households at risk of homelessness. This work will be concentrated on the areas which result in the most homelessness in the district, so those leaving private rented tenancies and those who have experienced domestic abuse
- refine and improve the approach to Personal Housing Plans, including developing effective multi-agency interventions with the full participation of key partners
- work to ensure an ongoing supply of private sector accommodation is available for customers
- review the housing and homelessness information, advice and guidance available to local people making sure that applicants have information to help themselves and retain their independence

This will be measured by monitoring the:

- Homeless presentations by duty owed
- Homeless prevention case outcomes
- Homeless relief case outcomes

Priority 2: Increase temporary accommodation options to improve suitability and sustainability, reducing the use of bed and breakfast accommodation

The council wants to ensure that where temporary accommodation is necessary this is of an acceptable standard and, wherever possible, is within the district, or as near as possible. The costs of procuring temporary accommodation will be reduced to provide maximum value for money to local taxpayers.

The council will achieve this by:

- minimising the use of bed and breakfast and spot purchased nightly-paid accommodation
increasing the level of hostel and other in-house temporary accommodation provision, developing a range of solutions including hostels, modular homes, self-contained units and leased properties to meet demand
- maximising the collection of rents, and maintaining adequate controls in arrears cases
- maximising the throughput into permanent accommodation by ensuring that where suitable accommodation is available for a homeless household this is offered
- maximising and optimising the use of specialist accommodation such as refuge and other supported housing for customers who need this support

This will be measured by monitoring:

- Total net cost of temporary accommodation
- Total number of households in temporary accommodation
- If the temporary accommodation is in or outside East Herts

Priority 3: Continue to improve the pathways in and out of supported housing and the support available to vulnerable single people

It is clear from our analysis of homelessness data that East Herts has high numbers of homeless approaches from single adult households with multiple support needs, particularly mental and physical ill-health, disabilities and life experiences that have caused trauma. The council will seek to ensure that there are clear pathways into and out of supported housing and that this support prepares residents for independence.

The council will achieve this by:

- improving the supported housing options available for customers who require this
- increasing support delivered through partnership work reflected in Personal Housing Plans
- creating a clear pathway which provides intensive and step-down support for the most vulnerable customers, to decrease repeat homeless presentations
- assist customers with engagement with partner agencies to help them sustain this engagement
- provide tailored personal support to the most vulnerable applicants

This will be measured by recording:

- repeat homeless presentations
- the number of households moving to independent living

Priority 4: Maximise the availability of affordable housing

The council will maximise the delivery of affordable homes and ensure that these are available for local people to meet local housing need.

The council will achieve this through:

- work with providers to deliver more housing at social rent level, particularly larger homes where affordability is the most challenging for customers
- ensuring the new District Plan reflects the needs and challenges faced by homeless households by considering options for affordable housing as 40% of habitable rooms rather than of units, to encourage the provision of more family sized homes
- continuing the work with providers to deliver homes that meet local housing needs in terms of design
- reviewing the Housing Register and Allocations Policy to ensure that local housing needs are met, specifically those of homeless households in the district
- work with Environmental Health, Trading Standards and others to ensure that East Herts has a private rented sector which is legally compliant and provides a viable housing option

This will be measured by:

- recording the number of new affordable homes per quarter, including those let at social rent

Priority 5: Continue to provide support to reduce rough sleeping and where this occurs ensure it is brief and not re-occurring

The council remains committed to ending rough sleeping but where this occurs ensures this is brief and not repeated. The council will maintain effective support and continue to improve rehousing pathways for rough sleepers. Single homeless people will be able to access the advice and support they need and have viable rehousing options which do not require individuals to sleep rough to receive support.

The council will achieve this by:

- continuing to fund the winter night shelter and support their work through the development of Personal Housing Plans which aid the rehousing of night shelter guests
- ensuring that all partner agencies and other stakeholders understand and use the 'duty to refer'
- continuing to provide bespoke services to those rough sleeping to ensure sleeping rough occurs for as short a time as possible
- support the implementation of a countywide approach to rough sleeping including information exchange protocols and severe weather protocol activations to ensure consistency of service offer
- maintaining relationships with external providers to ensure single homeless cases can access move-on support, so do not have to start rough sleeping

This will be measured by recording:

- the number of rough sleepers who have been supported on a quarterly basis
- the number of 'long term' rough sleepers not in accommodation

Section 7 – Action Plan and Monitoring

Priority	Actions	Key Performance Indicators
Continue to maximise homeless prevention and relief	Collocate with a specialist domestic abuse service to provide good quality support at point of homeless approach	Homeless prevention case outcomes- % increase of those successfully closed at prevention
	Work with Environmental Health, Trading Standards and others to ensure tenants and landlords are compliant with the Renters' Rights Act and opportunities under this legislation are used to prevent homelessness	
	Make best use of Personal Housing Plans to encourage engagement with support services at the earliest opportunity	Homeless relief case outcomes- % increase in those successfully closed at relief
	Increase the opportunities to get housing advice and assistance through Healthy Hubs and other	
	Work with colleagues across Hertfordshire to develop eviction protocols to ensure that all opportunities are taken to prevent eviction, particularly from supported accommodation	
	Review homelessness IAG on website to include changes under RRA and to enable residents to get tailored advice as early as possible	

	Establish project to expand private rented sector supply	
	Work with Healthy Hubs to improve the partnership response to homeless prevention	
	Establish the Renters Rights Coordination Group to provide a partnership response focused on improvement to sector driven by RRA	
Increase temporary accommodation options	Work with registered providers to identify TA opportunities	Total net cost of TA
	Apply to LAHF4 for provision of additional TA units	Total number of households in temporary accommodation
	Change of use of council asset for further hostel accommodation	Temporary accommodation in/outside East Herts- reduction in out of area TA
	Develop further leased accommodation options	
Continue to improve the pathways in and out of supported housing and the support available to vulnerable single people	Develop a Local Supported Housing Strategy, needs assessment and delivery plan	Reduction in repeat homeless presentations- % decrease
	Develop intensive supported accommodation offer for customers with complex needs	The number of households moving to independent living- % increase
	Encourage partner engagement through the re-establishment of an East Herts Homeless Strategy Monitoring group focused on reducing homelessness	
	Encourage partner engagement in supporting homeless applicants through Personal Housing Plans, with issues around engagement and support fed into East Herts Homeless Strategy Group	
	Review the staffing resource for hostels, to ensure this is sufficient to meet the needs of customers with more complex needs	
Maximise the availability of affordable housing	Contribute to the development of the new Local Plan, to ensure that the needs of homeless households are reflected specifically in terms increasing the supply of social rent level properties of the required size to meet need	The number of new affordable homes per quarter
	Review the Housing Register and Allocations Policy to ensure this addresses local housing need, balancing the need to prevent and respond to homelessness	Number let at social rent
	Continue to deliver against the Housing Strategy Action Plan	
	Continue to use the planning process to ensure that this is effective in ensuring new developments address local housing needs	

Continue to provide support to reduce rough sleeping	Establish mechanisms to identify any long-term rough sleepers to provide intensive support for this cohort	The number of rough sleepers who have been supported on a quarterly basis
	Work at a Hertfordshire level to establish consistent practices around SWEPP activation	
	Work at a Hertfordshire level on the eviction protocol and referral process, to reduce those entering rough sleeping via eviction	The number of 'long term' rough sleepers not in accommodation
	Continue to support the Voluntary and Community Sector to deliver services to ensure support is available across the district and reflects the needs of local people	
	Ensure VCS organisations providing direct support to rough sleepers are included in the East Herts Homeless Strategy Monitoring Group and have opportunities to inform strategy	
	Contribute to providing a Hertfordshire wide Accommodation for Offenders Programme to ensure there are robust plans around those who are most likely to sleep rough	

Section 8 – Consultation

Consultation on this strategy has been undertaken in 2 ways:

- Consultation with partners, residents and businesses through East Herts consultation portal in May 2026
- Consultation with customers of the homeless service in May 2026 to discuss their experience and to identify any changes to service provision would have had a positive impact on their experience and feedback on the actions proposed in the plan

Feedback

41 responses to the online consultation were received, with the highest respondents being from residents who live in East Herts who had not personally experienced homelessness.

83% of those who responded agreed with the priorities to reduce homelessness. A range of suggestions were made to improve interventions to prevent homelessness and increase the supply of temporary accommodation, and these have been considered when developing the actions outlined in the plan.

Consultation with homeless customers took place through telephone and face-to face contact and was more focused on the specific actions which they felt would have either made their experience better or would have resulted in their homelessness being prevented or relieved sooner. This feedback identified that customers agreed with the priorities proposed. The issues which impacted customers most were the location and type of temporary accommodation available and the supply of affordable housing. Customers were also asked to identify if there were interventions which could have prevented their homelessness. Customers identified that services to support their wellbeing, particularly around mental health may have prevented homelessness as would services to support with benefits and financial management. This feedback has been included when developing the actions around improving prevention, specifically around improving the homelessness advice available through Healthy Hubs.

Section 9 – Links to Other Strategies and Frameworks

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, all housing authorities must have a homelessness strategy renewed at least every five years. East Herts District Council operates alongside many strategies, policies, and frameworks nationally and locally which have been considered when developing this strategy:

- A National Plan to End Homelessness (December 2025): the strategy outlines 5 pillars- universal prevention, targeted prevention, preventing crisis, improving emergency responses and recovery and preventing repeat homelessness
- The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023): The framework emphasises sustainable development, ensuring sufficient affordable housing supply, and promoting efficient land use. It mandates up-to-date local plans that address housing needs, encourages healthy and safe communities, and prioritises climate change mitigation. These principles guide local authorities in creating strategies to prevent homelessness, increase housing availability, and foster sustainable, inclusive communities.
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017: Ensures that all homeless people receive advice and assistance from their council, with a focus on preventing homelessness.
- Health and Social Care Act 2012: Obligates local authorities to take steps to improve the health of people in their area, including those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- Homes England Strategic Plan 2023-28: Ensures affordable and sustainable homes are built in areas of greatest need and supports broader regeneration and community well-being
- Renters' Rights Act 2025-

East Herts District Council specific strategies:

- **Corporate Plan 2024-2027:** Focuses on themes of transparency, environmental focus, community engagement, and inclusivity.
- **Climate Change Strategy 2022-2026:** Addresses reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality, and enhancing the natural environment.
- **Local Plan 2018-2033:** Guides development and land use in the district. Review getting under way.
- **Annual Plan 2023-2024:** 2024-25 Outlines specific initiatives and goals for the year.
- **Vision and Corporate Priorities:** Updated periodically to reflect current objectives and community needs.

Hertfordshire County Council's influencing Strategies and Policies:

- **Corporate Plan 2022-2025:** This outlines the council's vision for creating a cleaner, greener, and healthier Hertfordshire, focusing on environmental leadership, healthy lifestyles, and inclusive communities.
- **Healthy Housing Strategy:** Part of their broader health initiatives to ensure residents live in safe, secure, and healthy environments.
- **Climate Change Strategy:** Embedded in various plans, including the Corporate Plan, which aims for carbon neutrality in council operations by 2030 and promotes sustainability throughout the county.
- **Economic Growth and Development:** Plans like the Integrated Plan (budget) 2024-2025 detail the financial strategies to support sustainable growth, infrastructure investment, and economic development.
- **Digital and Technology Strategy 2023-2027:** Focuses on leveraging digital technologies to improve council services and resident engagement.
- **Local Transport Plan 2018-2031:** A comprehensive plan for improving transport infrastructure to support economic growth and meet housing needs.
- **Live Well Strategy:** Initiatives under the Healthy and Fulfilling Lives priority aim to promote healthy lifestyles and support for those in need, aligning with a broader "Live Well" ethos.

- **Housing Strategies and Policies:** These include the Market Sustainability Plan and the Adult Disability Service Accommodation Strategy, which ensure that housing needs are met, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Equality Impact Analysis Form

1. Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) Form

Title of EIA (policy/change it relates to)	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2026-2031	Date	11/5/2026
Team/Department	Housing Service, Housing and Health		
Focus of EIA What are the aims of the new initiative? Who implements it? Define the user group impacted? How will they be impacted?	The overall purpose of the Homeless Strategy (Strategy) is to ensure that as a Council we address homelessness strategically by ensuring suitable accommodation, support and advice is available and accessible to all client groups and to encourage a multi-agency approach to preventing homelessness. Aim • To meet the Council's statutory duty to produce a homelessness review and strategy once every five years. • To present a full picture of the reasons for homelessness and the groups of people most likely to become homeless. • To define strategic priorities local to East Herts for homelessness and the prevention of homelessness and actions for the council and its partners. To prioritise resources for the groups most in need of assistance. • To produce better outcomes for homeless households, enabling them to live in accommodation suitable for their needs with appropriate support if required. Implementation The Strategy is implemented and monitored by the council's Housing Service with assistance from the council's internal and external partners. The council has a duty to provide housing advice and assistance to all those that are eligible, i.e. the applicant meets immigration criteria as defined by the Government. For Service users that approach the council an assessment will be carried out regarding their current housing situation and advice and assistance offered according to current legislation and best practice to		

	prevent or relieve homelessness.
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Please note: Prepopulated data for protected categories other than Age and Gender come from 2021 census results¹. If the service has specific demographic data for service users/residents than this should be used instead.

¹ [How life has changed in East Hertfordshire: Census 2021](#)

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	16-17 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74 Over 75	0% 17% 31% 27% 14% 6% 4% 1%	Younger age groups remain the most susceptible to homelessness. Those between 18 and 54 are 75% of homeless applicants. This is in line with national trends	The homelessness legislation defines which groups have a priority for housing, a key group is households with children. Younger people are also less likely to be home-owners and more likely to be living with family or renting privately, which have limited security	Legislation to promote stability in the private sector may help the insecurity faced by those renting privately. Continuing work with families/friends to prevent homelessness and prioritising those threatened with homelessness though the housing register and private sector offers
Disability	29% of the households accepted under the homelessness legislation in 2023/24 (last full year) disclosed they had a disability. This is higher than the 2021 Census figures for East Herts which recorded 4.9% of the population who stated that they were disabled and limited a lot in their daily lives		Applicants with a registered disability are likely to be given a higher priority for rehousing or be accepted as vulnerable as defined under the	Legislation and policy are designed to give certain groups who are less able to access suitable accommodation a higher priority for housing and applicants with a	The legislation framework promotes discrimination. However the higher percentage of homeless service users who describe themselves as disabled identifies that

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
		homelessness legislation.	disability are one of these groups.	the service is accessible and supporting those most in need.
Gender	1.9% of homeless applicants in 2023/24 recorded a different gender to the sex they were registered at birth. This is slightly above the 2021 census information for East Herts which estimates that locally around 0.04% of residents identify as a different gender to the sex they were registered as at birth.	Gender does not impact priority for housing	The higher rate of applications from those who identify as a different gender to the sex assigned to them at birth indicates that there is equitable access to service which would be expected to improve outcomes for underrepresented and vulnerable groups	No action required
Pregnancy and maternity	There is no reporting around pregnancy or maternity in statutory homelessness reporting, but pregnancy is considered as a priority need for housing and recorded on the case management system. The data on household composition for 2023/24 (last full year) showed 31.6% of homeless households had children. Of households with children, 23.3% were single parent female headed	Applicants who are pregnant or have a child are likely to be given a higher priority for rehousing or be accepted as vulnerable as	Female applicants are more likely to be single parent households and the most likely group to be homeless with children.	The Homeless legislation confers an additional priority for rehousing an applicant that is pregnant or has a child above someone that is not pregnant or does not

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
	households, 4.8% were headed by couples and 1.3% were single parent male headed households with 0.6% were households with children headed by 3 adults or households which identified as 'other' in terms of gender. The council's case management system recorded 123 pregnant applicants in 2023/24, which was around 8.4% of total applications.	defined under the homelessness legislation.		have a child. This would be expected to improve outcomes for vulnerable groups
Ethnicity	White English/Welsh/Scottish/N.Irish/British 85% Irish 73% Gypsy or Irish Traveller 1% Other White 1% Mixed/multiple ethnic groups 4% White and Black Caribbean 10% White and Black African 2% White and Asian 0.45% Other Mixed 0.55% Asian/Asian British 1% Indian 0.3% Pakistani 0.3% Bangladeshi 0% Chinese 0.2% Other Asian 0.2% Black/African/Caribbean/British 6% African 3%	The 2021 census recorded approximately 92.2% of the population in East Herts as White British, in comparison with 73% of homeless applicants. This suggests that homeless households are more diverse in terms of ethnicity than the population as a whole in East	The data suggests that there is equitable access to service which would be expected to improve outcomes for underrepresented groups	No action required

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
	Caribbean 2.5% Other Black 0.5% Arab 0% Any other ethnic group 2% Other ethnic group	Herts		
Religion or belief	2021 Census religious data for East Hertfordshire: • Christian: 49.1% (down from 62.7% in 2011) • No Religion: 41.8% (up from 27.7% in 2011) • Not Stated: 6.0% (down from 7.3% in 2011) • Muslim: 1.2% • Other religions: Other religions comprised 7.9% of the population, which may include Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, or other religious affiliations. Religion is a question on housing register applications. 43% of live housing applicants declined to answer this question. From the applications who did answer the question 39.9% of respondents described themselves as Christian, 31.9% as having no religion, 19.2% 'prefer not to say', 3.9% Muslim and 5.1% stated they were either Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, Zoroastrian or Baha'i	Religion is not monitored under homelessness.	From the housing register data held it appears that applicants are broadly similar in terms of religion to the general population of East Herts according to the 2021 Census.	No action required
Sex	The district is 51% female and 49% male. The homeless applicants in 2023/24 were 56% female and 44% male.	There are more women than men recorded as having an accepted	Households defined as having a priority need include those with dependent children or a pregnant woman. In	No action required

Essential Reference Paper B

EIA updated as of 2026

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
		homeless application.	addition, a significant number of households with dependent children are headed by single women. The discrepancies between the census data and housing register figures can therefore be explained by the legislation governing how homeless applications are assessed.	
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual/straight- 82.7% Homosexual/gay- 1.97% Bisexual- 1.97% Other- 0.33% Prefer not to say- 13.77%	The sexual orientation of homeless applicants broadly matches that recorded by the population in East Herts in the 2021 census	The data suggests that the homelessness service contributes positively to reducing barriers based on sexual orientation	No action required

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
Marriage and civil partnership	Census data from 2021 shows the marriage and civil partnership status of residents in East Herts as:	Marriage and civil partnership is not monitored under homelessness. However as shown under Pregnancy and Maternity in terms of households with children, these are most likely to be single parent female headed households. Couples were 7% of homeless households in 2023/24, 4.8% of these with children and 2.2% without.	Households defined as having a priority need include those with dependent children or a pregnant woman. In addition, a significant number of households with dependent children are headed by single women. The lower % of homeless couples could be impacted by the higher household income expected in a household with 2 (or more) adults	No action required
Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations				

Essential Reference Paper B

EIA updated as of 2026

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
The Governments homeless legislation defines who should be owed a housing duty or assisted under homelessness. The legislation and associated case law is specifically designed to ensure those less able to access their own housing solutions are assisted – i.e. those that are considered vulnerable are more likely to ask for assistance and be assisted under Homelessness legislation. The government has carried out its own Equalities Impact assessment during the legislative process. Equalities monitoring data for all Local Authorities is available as part of the statutory returns and publicly available at Tables on homelessness - GOV.UK This impact assessment has identified that the homelessness service strengthens equitable access and is expected to improve outcomes for underrepresented and vulnerable groups				

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)
Data from Council's own monitoring systems, which is publicly available at Tables on homelessness - GOV.UK	11/5/2026	Marital/Civil partnership data and religion do not form part of statutory reporting. This data is collected during case management, but customers are not	While these areas are protected characteristics the statutory reporting was devised following a robust equalities impact process and the

Essential Reference Paper B

EIA updated as of 2026

		required to provide this.	decision reached not to make questions on marital status or religion mandatory. Therefore, it is not proposed further action is taken.

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.				

EqlA 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:	Vacant post	Date:	
Directorate Management Team rep or Head of Service:	Ben Woods	Date:	
Author of Equality Impact Analysis:	Katherine Gilcreest	Date:	13/5/2026

Agenda Item 10

East Herts Council Report

Leadership Team Meeting

Date of meeting: Tuesday 14 July 2026

Report by: Councillor Calvin Horner, Chair of the Member Constitution Review Group

Report title: Review of the Constitution

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Summary – In accordance with Council Procedure Rules at section 2.6 of the Constitution (pertaining to changes to the Constitution), this report details amendments to the Constitution as recommended by the Member Constitution Review Group, which met on 17 June 2026.

In addition, there are some minor amendments to the Constitution to report, which have been made by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with paragraph 2.6.3(a) of the Constitution.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL

- a) To approve the changes to procedures relating to Questions by the Public and Questions by Members submitted to Council, as summarised in paragraph 2.3 of this report and set out in detail in appendix A.
- b) To note, as required by the Constitution, the changes made to remove inconsistency and ambiguity by the Monitoring Officer, as summarised in paragraph 2.4 of this report and set out in appendix B.

1.0 Proposal

1.1 As set out above.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The council's procedure rules require that substantive updates and changes to the Constitution are approved at a meeting of Council, after consideration by the Monitoring Officer.
- 2.2 The Member Constitution Review Group was reconvened by Council and met on 17 June 2026. The group's remit is to consider proposed Constitution amendments to bring forward to Council for consideration. The group was informed that the recent change allowing elected members to opt into the Local Government Pension Scheme needed to be reflected in the Constitution. In addition, the group discussed Section 3 – Full Council, paragraphs 3.18 – Questions by the Public and 3.19 – Questions by Members.
- 2.3 Following a comprehensive discussion, the Member Constitution Review Group decided to make the following recommendations (as set out in appendix A):
- to increase the allocated time for both Questions by the Public and Questions by Members from 15 minutes to 20 minutes each
 - to incorporate a predetermined maximum time per question and answer, this being, one minute per initial question, two minutes per answer, one minute per supplementary question and one minute per supplementary answer.
- 2.4 Under paragraph 2.6.3(a) of the Constitution, if in the reasonable opinion of the Monitoring Officer a change is 'required to be made to remove any inconsistency, ambiguity, typographical or other such error, changes to staffing structures, job descriptions or changes in terminology' then the Monitoring Officer may make such a change, with the requirement that all members are notified at the next Council meeting. In line with this:
- Section 20.8.1 has been amended to reflect that members can now join the Local Government Pension Scheme
 - Schedule 1 of Section 20 – Members' Allowances Scheme has been updated to reflect that business mileage is now paid at a rate of 55p per business mile

- Section 3.40 has been amended to reflect responsibilities that now reside with the Director for Place rather than the Director for Communities. Of note, these changes ensure the paragraphs listed are now consistent with the Director for Place's functions as already listed in section 10.10.

2.5 These changes are detailed at appendix B.

3.0 Reason

3.1 To ensure that the Constitution remains up-to-date and provides clarity regarding decision-making and procedures throughout the year.

3.2 The Constitution requires the changes referred to under paragraphs 2.4 of this report must be notified to all members at the next Council meeting. This report fulfils this requirement.

4.0 Options

4.1 To not accept the changes proposed at paragraph 2.3 of this report and appendix A. NOT RECOMMENDED as the proposals have been considered in depth by the Member Constitution Working Group which has been expressly set up to provide informed options to Council.

4.2 Amend the proposed changes at paragraph 2.3 of this report. NOT RECOMMENDED as they have been derived at by the Member Constitution Working Group after much deliberation and it is the Group's view that they provide a viable means of accommodating as many questions as possible within a reasonable, slightly expanded, amount of time.

4.3 Accept the recommendations of the Member Constitution Review Group for the reasons outlined in this report.

4.4 There is no option but to note the minor changes to the Constitution listed in paragraphs 2.4 of this report as the Constitution empowers the Monitoring Officer to make these on the

condition that they are notified to all members rather than brought to members for their approval.

5.0 Risks

5.1 Not reporting the changes detailed in 2.4 would be contrary to the requirements of the Constitution.

5.2 That decisions may not be taken in accordance with the appropriate authority, increasing the risk of challenge.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

None arising directly from this report.

Data Protection

None arising directly from this report.

Equalities

None arising directly from this report.

Environmental Sustainability

None arising directly from this report.

Financial

None arising directly from this report.

Health and Safety

None arising directly from this report.

Human Resources

None arising directly from this report.

Human Rights

None arising directly from this report.

Legal

The amendments to the Constitution made by the Monitoring Officer and notified to Council add to the clarity and consistency in the council's governance arrangements thus helping to minimise the risk of challenge to the council's decision-making and strengthen the council's ability to defend any challenge made.

Specific Wards

No

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

Contact Member Calvin Horner, Chair of the Member Constitution Review Group

calvin.horner@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer Jonathan Geall, Director for Communities and Monitoring Officer

Contact Tel. No.

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Report Author Jonathan Geall, Stephanie Tarrant, Director for Communities, Assistant Director for Democracy, Elections and Information Governance

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Appendix A – proposed tracked changes

3.18 Questions by the public

- 3.18.1 Members of the public may ask questions of the Leader and Members of the Executive at Ordinary Meetings of the Council.
- 3.18.2 Questions will be asked in the order notice of them was received, except that the Chairman may group together similar questions.
- 3.18.3 A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to democratic.services@eastherts.gov.uk no later than midday, three working days before the meeting. Each question must give the name and address of the questioner and must name the Member of the Council to whom it is to be put.
- 3.18.4 At any one meeting no person may submit more than one question and no more than one such question may be asked on behalf of one organisation.
- 3.18.5 The Monitoring Officer may reject a question if it:
- (a) is not about a matter for which the council has a responsibility or which affects the district;
 - (b) is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
 - (c) is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months;
 - (d) requires the disclosure of Confidential or Exempt Information; or

- (e) contravenes the rules around the Pre-Election Period of Sensitivity, where such rules are in place from time to time.

3.18.6 All questions and answers given will be summarised in the minutes of the meeting [with full written answers to submitted questions, whether asked at the meeting or not, published as soon as possible after the meeting.](#)

[3.18.7](#) [The time allowed for consideration of any questions submitted under 3.18 shall not exceed 20 minutes unless the Chairman consents to a longer period to \(a\) enable the conclusion of the asking and answering of a question, including the asking and answering of any supplementary question or \(b\) they make known at the meeting but prior to commencement of the Public Questions item that they are allowing a longer time, in which case the longer period must be specified and a further extension as allowed for under criterion \(a\) shall be allowed at the Chairman's discretion.](#)

3.18.[78](#) The Chairman will invite the questioner to put the question to the Member named in the notice. If a questioner who has submitted a written question is unable to be present, or if they so elect, they may ask the Chairman to put the question on their behalf. The Chairman may ask the question on the questioner's behalf, indicate that a written reply will be given or decide, in the absence of the questioner, that the question will not be dealt with. [The questioner will have up to one minute to ask a question and the Members responding shall have up to two minutes to respond.](#)

~~3.18.8 The time allowed for consideration of any questions submitted under 3.18 shall not exceed 15 minutes unless the Chairman consents to a longer period.~~

3.18.9 A questioner who has put a question in person may also put one supplementary question without notice to the Member who has replied to their original question. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. The Chairman may reject a supplementary question on any of the grounds in paragraph 3.18.5 above. The questioner will have up to one minute to ask a supplementary question and the Member responding shall have up to one minute to respond.

3.18.10 Any question which cannot be dealt with during Public Question time, either because of lack of time or because of the non-attendance of the Member to whom it was to be put, will be dealt with by a written answer. ~~Any answers which cannot be given during the meeting due to lack of time will also be summarised in a supplementary document to be published as soon as practical after the meeting.~~

3.18.11 Unless the Chairman decides otherwise, no discussion will take place on any question, but any Member may move that a matter raised by a question be referred to the Executive or the appropriate Committee or Sub-Committee. Once seconded, such a motion will be voted on without discussion.

3.19 Questions by Members

3.19.1 A Member of the Council may ask the Leader or Chairman of a Committee any question without notice upon an item of the report of the Executive or a Committee or statement by the Leader when that item is being received or under consideration by the Council.

3.19.2 A Member of the Council may ask:

- (a) the Chairman;
- (b) the Leader;
- (c) a Member of the Executive; or
- (d) the Chair of any Committee or Sub-Committee

a question on any matter in relation to which the council has powers or duties or which affects the district.

3.19.3 A Member of a Committee or Sub-Committee may ask the Chairman of it a question on any matter in relation to which the council has powers or duties or which affect the district and which falls within the terms of reference of that Committee or Sub-Committee.

3.19.4 A Member may only ask a question under paragraph 3.19.2 or 3.19.3 if either:

- (a) they have given notice in writing of the question to the Monitoring Officer, which has been received not later than midday, three working days before the meeting; or
- (b) the question relates to urgent matters, they have the consent of the Chairman to whom the question is to be put and the content of the question is given to the Monitoring Officer by midday on the day of the meeting.

- 3.19.5 Questions will be asked in the order notice of them was received, except that the Chairman may group together similar questions.
- 3.19.6 A Member may ask only two questions under 3.19.2 or 3.19.3 except with the consent of the Chairman of the Council, Committee or Sub-Committee.
- 3.19.7 The Monitoring Officer may reject a question if it:
- (a) is not about a matter for which the council has a responsibility or which affects the district;
 - (b) is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
 - (c) is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
 - (d) contravenes the rules around the Pre-Election Period" of Sensitivity, where such rules are in place from time to time
- 3.19.8 The time allowed for consideration of any questions submitted under 3.19.2 or 3.19.3 shall not exceed 20 minutes unless the Chairman consents to a longer period to (a) enable the conclusion of the asking and answering of a question, including the asking and answering of any supplementary question or (b) they make known at the meeting but prior to commencement of the Member Questions item that they are allowing a longer time, in which case the longer period must be specified and a further extension as allowed for under criterion (a) shall be allowed at the Chairman's discretion.

3.19.9 A Member asking a question under 3.19.2 and 3.19.3 and a Member answering such a question shall ensure that the question and the reply is succinct. A Member will have up to one minute to ask a question and the Member responding shall have up to two minutes to respond.

~~3.19.9 The time allowed for consideration of any questions submitted under 3.19.2 shall not exceed 15 minutes unless the Chairman consents to a longer period.~~

~~3.19.10 Any remaining questions shall be responded to in writing before the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council. Any answers which cannot be given during the meeting due to lack of time will also be summarised in a supplementary document to be published as soon as practical after the meeting.~~

3.19.110 Every question on notice will be answered without discussion. The Member who is asked the question on notice may ask another Member to answer. An answer may take the form of:

- (a) a direct oral answer;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the council or other published work, a reference to that publication;
- (c) a written answer circulated later to the questioner;
or
- (d) a combination of any of the above

3.19.112 If the Member who gave notice of a question is not present at the meeting, the question shall be noted and the Member to whom the question was asked shall reply.

- 3.19.1³² A Member asking a question under paragraph 3.19.2 or 3.19.3 may ask one supplementary question without notice of the Member to whom the first question was asked. The supplemental question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. The Chairman has the right to prevent any Members from asking a protracted supplementary question or giving a protracted answer. A Member will have up to one minute to ask a supplementary question and the responding Member shall have one minute to respond.
- 3.19.1³⁴ If the Member who gave notice of a question is not present at the meeting, there ~~will~~^{may} be no supplementary question after the Member to whom the question was asked has given their response.
- 3.19.15 All questions and answers given will be summarised in the minutes of the meeting with full written answers to submitted questions, whether asked at the meeting or not, published as soon as possible after the meeting.

Appendix B – amended tracked changes

3.40 Responsibility for Local Choice Functions

The Council has the discretion to choose which part of the structure should be responsible for certain functions (known as “Local Choice Functions”). These are set out in Schedule 2 of The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 as amended (the Regulations). The Council has determined that these functions will be the responsibility of the bodies set out in Column 2. In turn, the decision making body may delegate to the person or body specified in Column 3.

Function	Decision Making Body	Delegation
Functions under local Acts (other than a function specified in Regulations 2 and Schedule 1 of the Regulations)	Council	Directors within their area of responsibility as defined in the Officer Scheme
The determination of an appeal against any decision made by or on behalf of the authority	Council	Committee of the Council or an officer as detailed elsewhere in this Constitution
Any function relating to contaminated land	Council	Director for Place <u>Director for Communities</u>
The discharge of any function relating to the control of pollution or the management of air quality	Council	Director for Place <u>Director for Communities</u>

The service of an abatement notice in respect of a statutory nuisance	Council	<u>Director for Place</u> Director for Communities
The passing of a resolution that Schedule 2 to the Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 1993 should apply in the authority's area	Executive	
The inspection of the authority's area to detect any statutory nuisance.	Council	<u>Director for Place</u> Director for Communities
The investigation of any complaint as to the existence of a statutory nuisance	Council	<u>Director for Place</u> Director for Communities
The obtaining of particulars of persons interested in land under section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 or S.330 Town & Country Planning Act as amended 1990	Council	Shared Corporate Legal Service Manager
The appointment of any individual (a) To any office other than an office in	Council	As delegated elsewhere in this Constitution or by the decision of Council on a case-by-case basis

which he is employed by the authority: (b) To any body other than i. The authority; ii. A Joint Committee of two or more authorities; or (c) To any Committee or Sub-Committee of such a body and the revocation of any such appointment		
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Section 20 – Members’ Allowances Scheme

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING ACT 1989

AND

**LOCAL AUTHORITIES (MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCES)
REGULATIONS 2003 (AS AMENDED)**

**MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCES SCHEME
(including Special Responsibility Allowances)**

(Revised October 2025)

20.1 Introduction

20.1.1 This scheme is made by East Hertfordshire Council ("the Council") pursuant to the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. It was approved by the Council on 18 October 2023 after consideration of the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel.

20.1.2 The Scheme will apply for the civic year from the next day after the meeting of the Council to the date of the next annual meeting of the Council, unless the Council decides otherwise.

20.2 Basic Allowance

20.2.1 Subject to paragraphs 20.9 and 20.10 below, for each year a basic allowance shall be paid to each Member as set out in Schedule 1 to the scheme.

20.2.2 The basic allowance includes incidental costs such as stationery, printing telephone and broadband.

20.2.3 The basic allowance is to be paid in equal instalments on the 15th day of each month.

20.3 Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)

20.3.1 Subject to paragraphs 20.9 and 20.10 below, for each year a SRA shall be paid to those Members who hold the special responsibilities that are set out in Schedule 1 to the scheme.

20.3.2 Members will be restricted to receiving only one SRA (that of the higher value) if they occupy two or more posts which attract SRAs.

20.3.3 The SRA is to be paid in equal instalments on the 15th day of each month.

20.4 Indexation

20.4.1 Neither the basic allowance nor the SRAs are index linked.

20.5 Travel and Subsistence Allowance

20.5.1 Members may claim travel allowance in respect of their travel to and from the following approved duties:

- (a) meetings covered by the list of duties referred to in Schedule 2;
- (b) meetings of outside bodies and organisations to which they have been appointed by the Council as set out in Schedule 3, provided that no other arrangements for payment exist in respect of such bodies to which the Authority makes appointments or nominations; and
- (c) meetings with the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and/or Heads of Service/Service Managers, subject to such meetings having been pre-arranged and not relating specifically to a Member's ward work or activities.

20.5.2 Travel allowances in connection with attendance at approved duties may be claimed, subject to the following:

- (a) the claim must be for actual mileage incurred/actual public transport used; and

- (b) the base for starting and finishing all journeys will normally be regarded as the member's home address, provided that the home address is within the District or an adjacent District/Borough.

- 20.5.3 Subsistence allowances in connection with attendance at approved duties may be claimed, subject to the following. Members are able to claim subsistence allowances where they are prevented by official duties from taking a meal at home or other place where normally taken. Claims will not be permitted where refreshment has been provided by the meeting organiser.
- 20.5.4 VAT receipts for the purchase of fuel must be provided with all claims for travel expenses. Receipts must be provided for all subsistence/hotel accommodation/public transport claims and for any expenditure incurred on parking fees when using a vehicle on an approved duty.
- 20.5.5 Details of the rates of travel and subsistence allowances are set out in Schedule 1. The rates are index linked to the rates payable to officers.

20.6 Child Care and Dependant Carers' Allowance

- 20.6.1 Contribution towards costs incurred for the provision of care may be claimed, at the rates set out in Schedule 1, in respect of care costs incurred due to attendance at approved duties. Claims are subject to the following.
- 20.6.2 The principle of providing the allowance is to allow members who are carers to undertake their duties and to allow others who might otherwise be deterred from Council membership by virtue of caring responsibilities to consider standing for election. Contributions in 20.6.1 above will be paid towards care in respect of:

- (a) children aged 14 or under;
- (b) a dependant, that is, someone who relies on the member for care (the member's spouse, partner, child, parent, dependant relative or someone who lives in the same household as the member but who is not his or her employee, tenant, lodger or boarder);

In each case, the dependant must normally live with the Member as part of the family and be unable to be left unsupervised. The carer can be any responsible mature person who does not normally live with the claimant as part of the family. The allowance should not be payable in respect of members of the member's immediate and close family.

20.6.3 Receipts must be provided for all carer claims.

20.7 Homeworking Allowance

20.7.1 Contribution toward the costs incurred in homeworking is included within the basic allowance.

20.8 Pensions

~~20.8.1 No Members be admitted to the Local Government Pension Scheme.~~

20.8.1 Members who are under the age of 75 and receive allowance(s) from the Council may elect to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) by completing and returning the required opt-in form to the Payroll team.

20.8.2 Membership of the LGPS will commence from the beginning of the pay period following receipt of a

completed opt-in form.

20.8.3 Where a Member receives allowance(s) from more than one authority, a separate opt-in form must be submitted in respect of each authority.

20.8.4 Further details of the Scheme, including contribution rates, are available at www.lgpsmember.org

20.9 Renunciation

20.9.1 A Member may, by notice in writing given to the Monitoring Officer, elect to forego any part of their entitlement to an allowance under this scheme.

20.10 Part Year Entitlements

20.10.1 Where a Member's term of office begins or ends, or the holding of a special responsibility begins or ends, part way in the year, then the entitlement to any allowances due to a Member will be in the same proportion as the number of days served in the year.

20.10.2 When an amendment to this scheme changes the amount to which a Member is entitled, then the existing rates are payable ending with the day before the amendment takes effect.

20.10.3 The s151 Officer be authorised to determine allowance entitlements in circumstances where:

- (a) the scheme of allowances is amended at any time throughout the year;
- (b) an individual ceases to be a Member, or an individual

is elected to the office of Councillor of East Hertfordshire Council;

- (c) in the event that a new chairmanship of a Committee or Panel is created the s151 Officer be authorised to determine the allowance entitlement by reference to the lowest relevant comparable allowance until review by the Panel.

20.11 Claims

- 20.11.1 Claims should be made using method prescribed by the Council, on a monthly basis. Claims submitted by the fifth day of the month will be processed for payment on the 15th day of that month. Claims received after the 5th day will be processed for payment in the following month.
- 20.11.2 Receipts as described in paragraphs 20.5.4 and 20.6.3 above, must accompany each claim.
- 20.11.3 In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, claims for duties performed more than three months ago are not permitted.

20.12 Record of Allowances

- 20.12.1 The Deputy Chief Executive or Senior Human Resources Officer shall keep a record of all payments made to all Members in accordance with the scheme and the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. Such records shall be available for public inspection free of charge at all reasonable times during usual office hours.

20.12.2 The Monitoring Officer will issue the required notice under the Regulations providing summary information on the payments made under the scheme each year.

SCHEDULE 1

	£
<u>Basic Allowance :</u>	6,178.79
<u>Civic Allowances:</u>	
Chairman	6,500
Vice Chairman	1,450
<u>Special Responsibility Allowances:</u>	
Leader of the Council	19,767
Deputy Leader	12,225.96
Executive Member	9,780.96
Committee Chair (Development Management)	7,336
Committee Chair (Licensing)	6,051
Committee Chair (Human Resources)	4,842
Committee Chair (Overview and Scrutiny)	6,464.04
Committee Chair (Audit and Governance)	6,646.04
Committee Chair (Standards)	2,421
Committee Vice Chair (Development Management)	2,200
Leader of a minority political group	A factor of 0.1 of the Basic Allowance multiplied by the number of members
<u>Mileage allowance:</u>	
Motor vehicles (<i>incl. motor cycles</i>)	£0.545 per mile for the first 10,000 miles of a (return) journey

Electric vehicle	£0.545 per mile per mile for the first 10,000 miles of a (return) journey
Bicycles	£0.20 per mile
<u>Public Transport:</u> (including the use of taxis for short journeys where public transport is not convenient)	Reimbursement of actual cost or ordinary standard fare, whichever is the lesser, upon production of a receipt
<u>Carer's Allowance – Dependent care:</u>	Up to £35 per hour
<u>Childcare Allowance</u>	Up to £20 per hour
<u>Subsistence Allowance</u> in the case of an absence from the member's normal base, not involving an absence overnight from the usual place of residence:	
of more than 4 hours before 11 am Breakfast*	£7.21
of more than 4 hours, including the period between noon and 2.30 pm Lunch*	£9.95
of more than 4 hours ending after 7 pm Evening Meal*	£15.20
* Not claimable where refreshments have been provided at the meeting/event attended.	
<u>Subsistence Allowance</u> in the case of an absence involving an absence overnight from the usual place of residence:	
The actual cost of the most cost effective overnight accommodation and where meals are not included, subsistence allowance as detailed above.	

APPROVED DUTIES

1. The following shall be recognised as approved duties:
 - attendance at meetings of the Council, the Executive, a Committee, Sub-Committee, Panel, Working Party or Task and Finish Group of the Authority;
 - attendance at any other meeting which has both been authorised by the Authority (Executive, Scrutiny or Regulatory Committee) and to which representatives of more than one political group have been invited;
 - the attendance at a meeting of a Local Authority Association of which the Council is a Member;
 - carrying out any other duty connected with the Authority's functions approved by the Council (Executive);
 - the following conferences, approved for the purposes of Section 175 of the Local Government Act 1972:
 - i. Local Government Association
 - ii. Chartered Institute of Housing - Housing Conference
 - iii. Royal Town Planning Institute - Summer School
 - any other conference not mentioned above, or a training course or seminar shall be considered as an approved duty provided that such attendance has been authorised in advance by either the Executive or the Chief Executive.
 - attendance relating to site visits in respect of Development Management Committee business for

members and substitutes of the Development Management Committee.

2. A member attending any conference, training course or seminar shall be entitled to receive the relevant allowance for travelling and subsistence.
3. The Chief Executive may, upon application to him/her by any Member of the Council, subject to consultation with the Leader of the Council for the time being, designate the attendance of that Member at any other meeting, training session, seminar or conference or other attendance not hereinbefore specifically referred to as an approved duty for the purpose of this scheme.

SCHEDULE 3 – OUTSIDE BODIES

1. Attendance at any meeting of an outside body on which the Member is appointed to represent the Council.
2. Attendance at any conferences, seminars or training events, the attendance at which is approved by the Council, or the Executive or a Committee of either, or the Chief Executive.
3. Attendance at any meetings of a Local Government Association or any Joint or Liaison Committee for Members of Local Authorities.

East Herts Council Report

Council

Date of meeting: Wednesday, 22 July 2026

Report by: Ben Crystall - Leader of the Council

Report title: Reports by Members appointed to Outside Bodies for the civic year 2025/26 - Follow Up Report

Wards affected: All

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Council

(A) That the additional reports of Members appointed to Outside Bodies for the 2025 - 26 civic year be received and noted.

1.0 Proposal(s)

1.1 This report presents the additional reports submitted by Members appointed to Outside Bodies for the 2025/26 civic year, which were not available for inclusion in the *Reports by Members Appointed to Outside Bodies for the 2025/26 Civic Year* report considered by Council on 13 May 2026. Council is asked to note the contents of these additional submissions.

2.0 Background

2.1 At the Annual Council meeting each year Council determines the arrangements for Outside Bodies and receives annual updates on outside body activities from appointed Members. At the time of publication, a number of Member reports were outstanding and therefore could not be included within the main report.

This follow-up report presents the outstanding submissions that have since been received, ensuring that Council has a complete record of Members' activities and observations arising from their participation in Outside Bodies during the reporting period.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 In order to increase transparency and improve the process for reviewing activities of Outside Bodies, Members appointed to Outside Bodies compile an annual report on their involvement and activities on these Outside Bodies. This provides an opportunity for Members to report back and to highlight any issues that might need to be addressed.
- 3.2 To improve consistency in reporting, Members were requested to use a standard report template when compiling their reports.
- 3.3 This report completes the annual reporting process for Outside Bodies by providing those Member updates that were unavailable when the original Annual Outside Bodies Report was published.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 No other options are considered for recommendation a) as this is a requirement in accordance with the Council Constitution.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 Reputational. Members appointed to an Outside Body could act contrary to East Herts Council policies/guidelines. As this is unlikely, the Risk is classified as minor.
- 5.2 Financial. Members could claim substantial expenses if an Outside Body had a large number of meetings. As most Outside Bodies have a set number of meetings, this is unlikely, and the Risk is classified as minor.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

None arising directly from this report.

Data Protection

None arising directly from this report.

Equalities

None arising directly from this report.

Environmental Sustainability

None arising directly from this report.

Financial

None arising directly from this report.

Health and Safety

None arising directly from this report.

Human Resources

None arising directly from this report.

Human Rights

None arising directly from this report.

Legal

None arising directly from this report.

Specific Wards

None arising directly from this report.

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 Appendix 1 – Additional Outside Body Annual Update reports.

Contact Member	Ben Crystall, Leader of the Council ben.crystall@eastherts.gov.uk
Contact Officer	Stephanie Tarrant, Assistant Director for Democracy, Elections and Information Governance. stephanie.tarrant@eastherts.gov.uk
Report Author	Michele Aves, Committee Support Officer michele.aves@eastherts.gov.uk

OUTSIDE BODY – ANNUAL UPDATE

Outside Body:

Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust

Purpose:

The preservation of historic buildings in Hertfordshire

East Herts Council Representative(s):

Cllr Steven Watson

Update:

There were just two meetings this year, both of which I was unable to attend.

The Trust's financial position has improved, with the projected annual deficit reduced to around £94,000, approximately £160,000 better than the previous year. However, investments have fallen in value by £8,400, and directors are considering the sale of a property to improve finances.

The BEAMS consultancy reported ongoing work on Conservation Area Appraisals, plans to increase hourly rates, and a greater focus on marketing, including parish magazine advertising and improved online visibility.

Within the property portfolio, Forge Cottage at Much Hadham is to be marketed for sale. Cromer Windmill has been placed on Historic England's highest-risk (Category A) register, with major repairs estimated at £100,000 and grant funding opportunities being explored. Place House in Ware continues to perform well with strong bookings and growing wedding business, while a legal claim from former tenants is being dealt with at Castles Cottages in Hertford.

The Buildings at Risk report highlighted ongoing concerns across Hertfordshire. Key East Herts projects include restoration plans for features at Hertford Castle, the Panshanger Park Orangery, and the church tower at Thundridge. Other concerns include the deteriorating condition of Briggens House, repairs needed at Hertford East Station, and delays to approved works at St Andrew Street in Hertford. Across the county, a number of listed buildings remain at risk or await restoration, including Clay Barn in Broxbourne, Temple Dinsley in

North Herts, Starveacres in Radlett, Croxley Great Barn in Three Rivers, and several historic buildings in Watford.

Directors agreed to change the format of the 2026 AGM to reduce costs. The next meeting will take place on 22 September 2026. Overall, the meeting focused on improving the Trust's finances, organisational changes, the future of Cromer Windmill, and ongoing efforts to protect Hertfordshire's historic buildings.

Update provided by: Cllr Steven Watson

Date: 03/06/2026



OUTSIDE BODY – ANNUAL UPDATE

Outside Body:

Hertfordshire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee

Purpose:

The Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Health Scrutiny Committee is responsible for reviewing NHS services, mental health trusts, and public health policies to hold local health providers accountable and ensure they meet the needs of Hertfordshire residents

East Herts Council Representative(s):

Update:

The Committee focused its 2025/2026 work programme on evaluating regional NHS trust performance, local maternity changes, and mental health service capacity.

13 June 2025

- Appointment of Chair: Formally agreed that Councillor Dee Hart would continue to chair the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC).
- Maternity Services: Reviewed strategic updates and performance markers for the Local Maternity and Neonatal System (LMNS).
- Forward Planning: Debated and agreed upon the overarching framework for the Scrutiny Work Programme 2025/26.

19 September 2025

- Routine Minutes: Approved procedural records and evaluated active localized health items to carry forward into the autumn schedule.

10 November 2025

- Mental Health Services: Discussed regional learning disability and mental health services alongside the Chief Executive of the Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT).
- Bed Capacity: Agreed to issue an official letter to the Secretary of State addressing funding constraints for adult acute mental health beds.
- Work Programme Alterations: Refined themes for future 2026 meetings, which included prioritizing feedback on Integrated Care Board (ICB) variations, phlebotomy waiting times, gambling harms, and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Early 2026 (March Review Cycles)

- Patient Experience: Evaluated the organizational transition of the local ICB and cross-referenced public patient complaints.
- Specialist Care Updates: Requested formal updates from the Integrated Care Board regarding wait times, service continuity, and long-term provisions at the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre.

Update provided by: Cllr Simon Marlow

Date: 12 July 2026



OUTSIDE BODY – ANNUAL UPDATE

Outside Body:

Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

Purpose:

Lea Valley Regional Park Authority is responsible for the 26 mile long, 10,000 acre park with its huge variety of award-winning green spaces, world class sports venues and ecologically vital wildlife havens.

East Herts Council Representative(s):

Cllrs Steven Watson and George Williams

Update:

This was an interesting year for the authority with a new chair (Cllr Ross Houston) and vice-chair elected and several large projects either completed and beginning to bear fruit or in the pipeline.

For East Herts Council representation, Cllr George Williams joined the authority and was appointed to the audit committee, and Cllr Steven Watson moved to the regeneration and planning committee and was appointed to the executive committee.

Overall, I, Cllr Watson, attended 17 meetings. I believe there were at least 8 other meetings of committees or working groups that I am not on.

The Authority made strong progress on key capital and infrastructure projects during the year. The redevelopment of the Lee Valley Ice Centre is nearing completion and is expected to be delivered under its £30 million budget. A further £1.955 million was invested in essential maintenance works, including marina roof renewal, solar panel installation, bridge repairs, drainage improvements, and upgrades to footpaths and sports facilities. The acquisition of land at Glen Faba also expanded the Authority's open space provision.

Public access and recreational opportunities were enhanced through the completion of the St Paul's Field project, which delivered 2km of new footpaths and opened previously inaccessible parkland. Progress also continued at East India Dock Basin, while plans advanced for the expansion of Sewardstone Campsite.

The Authority also maintained its focus on environmental stewardship through ongoing investment in biodiversity, countryside management, and infrastructure. Long-term sustainability was strengthened through renewed angling leases and a new 25-year lease with Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust for Rye Meads Nature Reserve.

Update provided by: Cllr Steven Watson

Date: 03/06/2026



OUTSIDE BODY – ANNUAL UPDATE

Outside Body:

Ware Charities

Purpose:

Relief of poverty in the parishes of Ware, Wareside and Thundridge. The charity can give individual grants for items such as white goods or furniture to people in need. The charity can also support other groups such as the Ware Foodbank and Citizens Advice who support people in financial difficulties.

East Herts Council Representative(s):

Cllr Graeme Hill

Update:

I have only recently been assigned this group, and it has not held a meeting since then. I will report again for 2027

Update provided by: Cllr Graeme Hill

Date 04-Jun-2026



OUTSIDE BODY – ANNUAL UPDATE

Outside Body:

Wodson Park Sport and Recreational Association Executive Committee

Purpose:

The running of Wodson Park leisure centre for the benefit of the community with a focus on health, sports and fostering community and social benefits.
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East Herts Council Representative(s):
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Cllrs Steven Watson, Martin Butcher, Chris Hart and Graeme Hill.
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<u>Update:</u>

A key update was that former Fanshawe gym members are now joining Wodson Park, partly due to changes in membership rates elsewhere and travel costs. Bookings for school events and weekend sports hall use remain strong, and new events are planned. There was a concern about café availability during a badminton tournament, but this was due to the organiser's choice. Efforts are underway to build a network of cover instructors to reduce class cancellations.

Financially, the centre reported a small profit for the first time since 2021, reflecting significant improvement. The Friends of Wodson Park group is focusing fundraising on three specific projects, with upcoming events planned to raise the centre's profile. The CEO's report highlighted progress in digital engagement, with increased views on social media and the website. The Board discussed the upcoming Ware2 development and agreed to form a group to review the planning application. Finally, concerns about the car park's condition were raised, with immediate repairs to potholes and repainting of sleepers prioritized.

<u>Update provided by:</u> Cllr Steven Watson
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<u>Date:</u> 03/06/2026

Motion against the future procurement of Palantir in public sector contracts in East Herts

Proposed by: Councillor Alex Daar

Seconded by: Councillor Vicky Smith

Background and Context

Over recent years the USA owned company Palantir has been awarded many public sector contracts. Locally Hertfordshire Police and the various NHS bodies have engaged or considered engaging in contracts with Palantir. See Police Accountability and Performance Meeting, 12 March 2026, 10:30-11.30: Gold Command, Police HQ, North and East Hertfordshire NHS Trust and [NHS FDP Rollout information](#). There is a key decision coming up in February 2027 for NHS contracts when there is a break point in the contract.

We note that

- Palantir is now deeply embedded in the NHS and Ministry of Defence – and the longer they are in place, the harder and more expensive it becomes to remove them and the more the risk of poor value for money increases.
- NHS staff report that this tool is 10x slower than other standard NHS tools <https://democracyforsale.substack.com/p/revealed-palantirs-nhs-tech-is-ten-times-slower-than-nhs-thiel-trump>
- In a [substantial report \(PDF\)](#) examining the government's plans to make the UK a "digital state", MPs on the Science, Innovation and Technology Committee concluded that "Palantir's increasing presence across the public sector represents an unacceptable point of weakness".
- The report also calls for the government to reveal why the Ministry of Defence handed Palantir a £240m contract "without a competitive tender process", argues that ministers should use UK suppliers for the proposed NHS single patient record and declares it would be "irresponsible to roll out a digital ID built on the UK's current digital infrastructure".
- The BMA last year passed a formal resolution [calling for the Palantir NHS contract to be cancelled](#) saying it, "threatens to

undermine public trust in NHS data systems” and is unclear how the sensitive patient data would be processed by Palantir, citing the firm’s track record of creating discriminatory policing software in the US” and its “close links to a US government which shows little regard for international law”.

- The Government has mandated providers and Integrated Care Boards to Palantir’s Federated Data Platform (FDP) to ‘start making use of core products, data capabilities and population health management tools by 2028/29, according to the [Medium Term Planning Framework](#) published by the Department of Health.
- However, according to NHS figures, fewer than a quarter of England’s 215 hospital trusts were actively using FDP by the end of 2024. Some Trust’s are on record as [questioning its functionality and purpose](#).
- £330 million NHS contract awarded – no competitive tender
- Data management, data purposes and data protection very unclear
- At the national level, a recent Health Service Journal article highlighted that the true cost of FDP implementation is likely to be over £1 billion. [Exclusive: Full cost of federated data platform to exceed £1bn | News | Health Service Journal](#)
- The Federated Data Platform is driving out locally tailored and trusted data solutions. In February 2025, the NHS Chief Data and Analytical Officer Network (CDAON) wrote an open letter to Chief Digital and Information Officer, Ming Tang, detailing objections to the FDP’s roll-out. The letter concluded, “we already have similar tools in use that presently exceed the capability and application of what the FDP is currently trying to develop or roll out at a system level”.
- The Palantir claim is based on very few hospitals as recently claimed in the Financial Times <https://www.ft.com/content/a3e94197-87a8-4ba5-8a6d-4b7193993af9?syn-25a6b1a6=1>
- Palantir technology has reportedly been used by U.S. immigration authorities to profile and target migrants and has been used by the Israeli military in Gaza through integration into targeting systems to aid in mapping, identifying, and evaluating targets.

We believe

That this American owned firm does not share our ethical values as demonstrated by its other business interests and its founders' speeches on media and in books. It is therefore in contravention of ethical standards we expect in procurement policies.

That it has not demonstrated that it understands the standards of data security that our residents expect.

That it is not good value for money.

That it will stifle innovation by UK based providers.

Council resolves to

Request the Leader of East Herts Council to:

- To write to the following bodies: Integrated Care Board/Hertfordshire County Council/NHS Trusts/Police and Crime Commissioner to urge them not to engage in contracts with Palantir or to cease involvement as soon as possible. These will include Jan Thomas, CEO Hertford and West Essex ICB, Angie Ridgwell, CEO Hertfordshire County Council, Thom Lafferty, CEO The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust, Martin Armstrong, CEO East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust, Karen Taylor, Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Trust, Rafal Hejne CEO Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commission office.
- To write to all our local MPs representing East Herts residents – Kevin Bonavia, Lewis Cocking, Josh Dean, Chris Hinchcliffe,
- To inform these organisations of our extreme concern on behalf of all our residents about the security of their data in a firm based in the USA and the escalating cost of one firm holding so many contracts and the loss of alternative UK based providers and associated skills development in a market held hostage by one provider.
- To request to our Leader that the responses from these MPs and organisations are shared back with Members.

We also resolve that the Leader write to request that:

- Hertfordshire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee invite the heads of the local trusts and ICB to a Health Scrutiny

Committee to question them on their plans to join and/or remain with the Federated Data Platform using Palantir and discuss alternative providers.

Motion in relation to Rye Meads

Proposed by: Councillor George Williams

Seconded by: Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward

Overview

Earlier this year the RSPB, after conducting a review of its operations, announced its intention to withdraw from RSPB Rye Meads by the 30th of November 2026. Without new arrangements in place the management of the site will fall to the owners, Thames Water. As the Site is a designated SSSI, an SPA and has Ramsar designation it is afforded protections and Thames Water are obliged to manage it in accordance with those protections.

Those protections do not include public access, educational experiences or a visitors' centre. These facilities are vital to ensuring future interest in nature conservation for both local residents and visitors from further afield.

As the district council in which this precious site is located we must not risk losing the effort invested over decades, in building the hides, bridges, walkways, ponds and educational facilities. We should instead make sure that legacy continues and is built upon.

Action

I ask that the Council consider this motion.

That this Council believes public access to Rye Meads must be maintained.

That this Council requests that the Executive consider working with its partners, Thames Water, HMWT, Broxbourne Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council, the RSPB, LVRPA and other interested voluntary organisations to produce a management framework that ensures the public are able to enjoy the site far into the future.

That this Council requests the that the Executive consider all practical options including but not limited to financial commitments to achieve these aims and direct its officers to investigate options for this site to be retained in the public domain.

That Executive is requested to share any work on this matter with all members of the Council as soon as possible.

Motion in relation to Socio-economic Duty

Proposed by: Councillor Calvin Horner

Seconded by: Councillor Miriam Swainston

Council notes that:

- Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 (“the socio-economic duty”) requires public authorities, when making strategic decisions, to have due regard to reducing the impact of socio-economic disadvantage.
- This duty has not been enacted in England but may be voluntarily adopted by local authorities to strengthen action on poverty and disadvantage.
- While Hertfordshire ranks among the least deprived counties nationally on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025, there are pockets of disadvantage across East Herts, and rural deprivation is known to be masked by district-level averages.

Council believes that:

- Socio-economic disadvantage is a driver of unequal outcomes in health, education and employment, and must be addressed to improve residents’ life chances.
- Strategic decisions taken by the council can either reduce or reinforce inequalities and should therefore be informed by a clear understanding of their impact on people experiencing disadvantage, with steps taken to mitigate any adverse effects.
- Adoption of the socio-economic duty would further strengthen the commitment to being Fair and Inclusive in the East Herts Council’s Corporate Plan.

Council resolves to:

- Ask Executive to consider inclusion of the voluntary adoption of the socio-economic duty within the council’s revised Equalities Strategy, to come before Council for adoption this autumn,

committing the council to have due regard to socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decision-making.

- Request that when drafting the revised Equalities Strategy for adoption by Council, Executive leads the development of a clear and fair definition of socio-economic disadvantage, including measures of poverty and other relevant indicators, to support consistent application of the duty.
- Request that, should Council adopt a revised Equalities Strategy which voluntarily includes the socio-economic duty, Executive ensures that the duty is applied in a proportionate way, focusing on improving life chances and access to services for residents experiencing disadvantage, while maintaining fairness for all communities.