SECTION 9 COMMUNITY FORUMS[1]

9.   Community Forums

9.1   **Introduction:**
To promote greater engagement with our communities, North Herts Council has five informal Forums which cover different geographical areas of the district. These are to provide a 'sounding board' for community opinion and an opportunity to input to the Council, via a Forum or their Councillors at a local level. In addition to the local community, County Councillors, Parish/Town, Community Councillors and other partners such as the Police, are welcomed to the Forum meetings, and to speak on an item.

9.2   All Members of the Council will be a member of a Forum that includes their own Ward.

9.3   Each Forum elects its Chair and Vice-Chair annually. If a Chair and Vice Chair cannot be appointed at the first meeting of a Forum or at the next available meeting, such appointment shall be made at the subsequent ordinary Council meeting by Full Council.

9.4   Meetings: each Forum will aim to meet at least four (4) times per year, with the flexibility to meet virtually, hybrid or in person. The dates are agreed by Full Council at Annual Council, however, may be moved or cancelled in consultation with the Chair (or Vice Chair in their absence).

9.5   Although this is an informal body, the quorum for all Forums shall be 3 (three). The Forums will aim to make recommendations by consensus; however, in the event of a vote, and a tie, the Chair will have a casting vote under normal principles.

9.6   The aim is for each Forum to set a topic or theme for each meeting at the start of the municipal year, with input from the Councillors, communities and partners. The Chair will aim to do this with all the Forum membership, however, will have the final say as to agenda setting.

9.7   **Terms of Reference**

9.7.1. To act as a Forum for discussion on matters of local interest and to elicit/hear the views of local bodies and organisations.

9.7.2. To consider and act as an advisory body to the relevant Executive Member for grants who approves these (in consultation with the relevant Service Director). Any 'between meeting' grant applications can be dealt with in urgent situations with the recommendation of the Area Forum members by email or in urgent situations, the Chair.

9.7.3. To undertake a community leadership role in bringing together different interest groups from the public, private and voluntary sectors to work in partnership to meet the Council's corporate strategic and local objectives.

9.7.4. To receive petitions, presentations and questions from members of the public, groups and outside bodies on matters relating to their area.

9.7.5. To provide local input into service specifications where feasible for a local area and input for relevant local area consultations.

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[1] These terms of reference may be amended by the Leader, Executive or Officer in consultation with the Executive. These are not formal decision-making bodies

9.7.6. In line with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement to receive any presentations from developers, their agents and/ or Council officers on relevant applications for Strategic Housing Sites and other significant development (as defined in Policy SP9 of the Council's Local Plan), ask questions and provide comments accordingly.

9.8 **Community area, membership and wards**

Community Forum	Membership	Composition
Baldock and District	7	The Wards of Baldock East, Baldock West, Arbury and Weston & Sandon which comprise the parishes of Ashwell, Baldock (unparished) Bygrave (East & West ward), Caldecote, Clothall, Hinxworth, Newnham, Radwell, Rushden, Sandon, Wallington and Weston.
Hitchin	12	The Wards of Hitchin Bearton, Hitchin Highbury, Hitchin Oughton, Hitchin Priory (including Hitchin unparished, the north ward of the parish of St Ippolyts) and Hitchin Walsworth.
Letchworth	12	The Wards of Letchworth Grange, Letchworth Norton, Letchworth South East, Letchworth South West and Letchworth Wilbury (including Letchworth unparished).
Royston and District	8	The Wards of Ermine, Royston Heath, Royston Meridian and Royston Palace (which comprise the area of Royston Town Council and the parishes of Barkway, Barley, Kelshall, Nuthampstead, Reed and Therfield).
Southern Rural	12	The Wards of Cadwell, Codicote, & Kimpton, Graveley St Ippolyts & Wymondley, Great Ashby, Hitchwood, Knebworth and Offa (which comprise the parishes of Codicote, Graveley, Great Ashby, Hexton, Holwell, Ickleford, Kimpton Kings Walden, Knebworth, Langley, Lilley, Offley, Pirton, Preston, St Ippolyts (south ward), St Pauls Walden and Wymondley.