

## SECTION 9 AREA FORUMS<sup>26</sup>

### 9. Area

#### 9.1 Introduction:

To promote greater engagement with our communities, North Herts Council has five informal Area 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 the Area Forum that includes their own Ward.

9.3 The Area Forum elects its Chair and Vice-Chair annually. If a Chair and Vice Chair cannot be appointed at the first meeting of an Area 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 Area 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 Area 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 Area 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.

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<sup>26</sup> 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

9.7.4. 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.

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 Area, wards and membership

Area Forum	Membership	Composition
Baldock and District	6	The Wards of Baldock East and Baldock Town, the Arbury Ward and the Weston and Sandon Ward which comprise the parishes of Ashwell, Bygrave, Caldecote, Clothall, Hinxworth, Newnham, Radwell, Rushden, Sandon, Wallington and Weston.
Hitchin	13	The Wards of Hitchin Bearton, Hitchin Highbury, Hitchin Oughton, Hitchin Priory (including the north ward of the parish of St Ippolyts) and Hitchin Walsworth.
Letchworth	13	The Wards of Letchworth Grange, Letchworth East, Letchworth South East, Letchworth South West and Letchworth Wilbury.
Royston and District	7	The Wards of Royston Heath, Royston Meridian and Royston Palace (which comprise the area of Royston Town Council) and the Ermine Ward (which comprises the parishes of Barkway, Barley, Kelshall, Nuthampstead, Reed and Therfield).
Southern Rural	10	The Wards of Cadwell, Chesfield, Codicote, Graveley and Wymondley, Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo, Kimpton and

		<p>Knebworth which comprise the parishes of Codicote, Graveley, Great Ashby, Hexton, Holwell, Ickleford, the south Ward of the parish of St Ippolyts (south ward), Kings Walden, Kimpton, Knebworth, Langley, Lilley, Offley, St Pauls Walden, Pirton, Preston and Wymondley.</p>
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