

## RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

### **\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted n/a

#### **SERVICE DIRECTORATE: LEGAL & COMMUNITY**

##### **1. DECISION TAKEN**

To approve the updated Forums name to 'Community' Forums and *to note* the administrative changes to section 8 to reflect the name changes to certain wards and membership numbers per Forum, as per Appendix A (as shown as tracked changes).

##### **2. DECISION TAKER**

The Leader, Cllr Elizabeth Denis in consultation with Jeanette Thompson, Service Director, Legal & Community.

##### **3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:**

1 May 2024

##### **4. REASON FOR DECISION**

4.1 To update to reflect a request following Chair and Vice Chair Forum discussions for a more inclusive title of 'Community' Forum (the remainder is not a decision – as it falls into the category of administrative accuracy).

##### **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1. To retain the current title of 'Area Forums' until the Constitutional Review is undertaken, and reported through to Council in the autumn of 2024 (for implementation in 2025).

5.2. However, given the overall feedback from the Chairs, Vice Chairs and Executive Member for Community & Partnerships, and the fact that administrative changes were required before the new municipal year, the new title for the 'Community' Forums was considered appropriate and approved.

##### **6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS, AND THE PUBLIC)**

6.1. An informal 'year' end discussion was undertaken with the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Area Forums in April, with the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships. Whilst some of the procedures and processes are yet to be considered as part of the Constitutional/ Forum review, one regarding an aspiration to increase community involvement was expressed, and the perception that 'Community Forum' as opposed to 'Area Forum' may lead to better understanding and involvement of North Herts residents. This name change has therefore been taken forward at this stage, in advance of the new municipal year, to encourage such involvement and to ensure consistency throughout 2024/25. The Deputy Leader was part of that aforementioned discussion, and has also been notified of this decision.

##### **7. FORWARD PLAN**

7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

## **8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1. Regarding the name change – see 6.1 above.
- 8.2. A calendar of meetings will need to be approved by Full Council at its Annual meeting in May. To ensure consistency of name throughout that municipal year, it was considered appropriate to make that change in advance of such a meeting. This also means that this can be reflected in the Council's meeting case management system – Mod.gov, and relevant Community & Partnership officers can publicise the newly titled Forum meetings appropriately.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. The Area Forums are informal bodies without decision making powers, and the Terms of Reference can be amended by Leader, or executive/ officer as per the report to Council 14 April 2023. As per 14.6.16.1 of the Constitution, the scope of the Leader's responsibilities spans all Portfolios, ensuring co-ordination and a coherent approach to the Council's decision making. The Leader can make any decision which is delegated to any Executive Member. In discharging this particular decision, the Leader is exercising her overall specific responsibility for strategic decision making, following cross party issues raised with the Leader, and does so under section 14.6.16.5 of the Constitution. The relevant Executive Member with responsibility for Community & Partnerships had also requested this name change.
- 9.2. The Service Director: Legal & Community has delegations under 14.6.9(a): (v). *To authorise changes to the Governance Policies/ Protocols/ Codes or Guidance (as the case may be) that fall within the remit of the Monitoring Officer and/ or Legal Services (and are not already covered by 14.6.9 to reflect decisions of the Council / Committees and the Cabinet, or minor ones relating to changes of fact and law, or if required for practical purposes, in order to ensure the proper administration of the Council, subject to regular notification to all Members of such changes.* The Service Director concerned also has responsibility for Community & Partnerships and was therefore consulted.
- 9.3. The North Hertfordshire (Electoral Changes) Order 2023 No 1024, created 25 wards some with differing names to those previously set out under the areas listed in section 9.8 of Appendix A. This Order also increased the number of Councillors from 49 to 51 and this needs to be reflected in the relevant section cited.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. None.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Good Risk Management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.
- 11.2 Otherwise none.

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty seeks Public Authorities to have due regard to encourage persons those who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or other activities where participation is usually low. The decision may assist in this area.

**13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 In respect of procurement, none identified.

**14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 None identified.

**15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

15.1 None identified.

**16. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

16.1 None.

**17. APPENDICES**

17.1 Appendix A – Community Forums as amended.

**NOTIFICATION DATE**

**3 May 2024**

**Signature of Executive Member (Leader) Decision taker...**



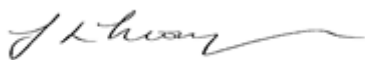
**Date .....30 April 2024**

**Consultees:**

**Signature of Executive Member for Community & Partnerships**



**Signature of Service Director: Legal & Community consultee Decision Taker**



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**Call-in does not apply to NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS. This decision is partly Executive and administrative (therefore Non-Executive).**

## SECTION 9 COMMUNITY FORUMS<sup>1</sup>

### 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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<sup>1</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

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

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