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 Area Forums Terms of reference Appendix A (as shown as tracked changes) & approve the Area Forum Protocol, Appendix B.

2.   DECISION TAKER

Leader, Cllr Elizabeth Denis in consultation with Cllr Alistair Willoughby, Executive Member for Community & Partnerships, and Jeanette Thompson, Service Director, Legal & Community.

3.   DATE DECISION TAKEN:

6 December 2023

4.   REASON FOR DECISION

4.1   To update the Area Forums' Terms of Reference to better align with Members aspirations for more flexible public engagement.

5.   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1.   To retain the currently worded Area Forums' Terms of Reference and not have a Protocol. However, the intention was to better demonstrate the flexibility of Forum meeting arrangements, and the Protocol to reflect the practicalities for arranging the meetings and conducting of them.

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

6.1.   Amendments had been agreed with the Leader in advance of the Constitutional review report being presented to Council on 23 November, and were for noting by Full Council. That report consideration was, however, deferred until the next Council meeting in January. The Leader therefore decided to expedite the decision regarding amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Area Forums and also approval of a supporting Protocol.

6.2.   Area Forums are informal bodies and as such the Terms of Reference can (as per the information presented at the Council meeting in April 2023) be amended by the Leader, executive or officer. Further amendments were proposed; they did not require approval by Full Council, and are therefore dealt with in this decision. These amendments and Protocol have now been approved following liaison with those detailed under section 2 above, the Deputy Leader of Council and the Leadership team.

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. A [Constitutional Amendment](#) report was presented to Full Council on 18 April 2023. The report covered changing the Area Committees to Area Forums.

8.2. Since May 2023 these have been implemented with 4 meetings per Area Forum approved annually. There was concern expressed by some Members that more of these meetings needed to be in person.

8.3. In terms of numbers of evening meetings, the Leader has taken into account that prior to the changes in 2023, there were staffing objections to increased number of evening meetings/ timings of meetings. See Human Resource implications below. Therefore, to ensure that staff concerns are taken into account regarding additional meetings, a further amendment has been made by the Leader, so that additional meetings would only be arranged following the Leader's agreement, having consulted the Executive Member with responsibility for Community & Partnerships and Service Director with responsibility for that service area.

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. This has also been undertaken in consultation with the relevant Executive Member with responsibility for Community & Partnerships and Deputy Leader.

9.2. The Protocol has been created to regularise the arrangements for Area Forum meetings and imbed principles.

9.3. 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 Grants and was therefore consulted.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1. There is a budget of £2.5K currently for venue hire. It is currently anticipated that c£2K would be required for all 5 Area Forums to meet in person during a civic year. That does not cover include costs for any refreshments or other equipment hire (or additional staffing costs if further evening meetings are arranged – covering evening meeting attendance and overtime per officer).

10.2. There is no budget for venue equipment hire or ability to live stream or participate in a hybrid Area Forums for certain venues. If hybrid meetings were required and more effective microphones equipment and live streaming procured per meeting (to

mitigate the potential equalities issues raised). It should be noted that when audio and video equipment hire and operation was arranged at Hitchin Town Hall in 2021, the total cost for this was £1627 for *one* meeting. There is no budget allotted for this level of hire and operation outside of the District Council's Letchworth offices.

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 There are risks involved in changing meeting arrangements and associated costs as detailed. These risks have been mitigated, to the extent possible, with oversight of requests for additional Area Forum meetings by the Leader, who will make such decisions in consultation with the relevant Executive Member and Service Director for the area concerned.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The amendments approved could all be in person and therefore see Equality Impact Assessment. This sets out the potential impacts of moving back to holding in person meetings. Overall results could provide better face to face engagement; however, this is dependent on attracting a wider range of participants. There is no obvious group who will benefit from one form of meeting to another mode, albeit that meeting organisers will need to be mindful of accessibility of venues and reasonable adjustments.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 If meetings are in person, then local venues will be procured (subject to any exceptional reasons why on occasions these need to arrange in person outside of District).

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1 Moving to more in person meetings or more such meetings would have environmental impact for the public, Members and Officers. An Environmental Assessment has been completed to highlight potential impacts. Overall, more in person meetings will increase emissions, which includes travel to and from the venues, and venue energy demands. This may be mitigated, in terms of heating requirements, where the venues have been in use during the day. Further mitigation measures include, having a chosen venue with good public transport links, and lift sharing should be encouraged.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 In the autumn 2022, following a request for later and /or further (then) Area Committees, staff consultation was undertaken regarding this subject. All staff in Community & Partnerships and Democratic Services (Committee, Member & Scrutiny element) were, at that time, consulted on the proposals. Unison was involved and the proposals rejected unanimously by staff. In respect of the replacement Area Forums, it was anticipated that these would be more flexible, however, with some held virtually/ hybrid (and therefore not all in person). This was to recognise that not only staffing issues, but the equality issues of access, and the elected Member ability to participate in these Forums in a more flexible manner.

15.2   If more evening meetings (in addition to the 20 fixed) are required, then consideration as to arrangements and consultation would be required, given the staff welfare and wellbeing implications.

16.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1   See link for report of 18 April 2023, and documents referred to/ links.

17.   APPENDICES

17.1   Appendix A – Terms of reference Area Forums amended.

17.2   Appendix B - Area Forum Protocol.

17.3   Appendix C - Equality Impact Assessment [Delegated Decision page only click here]

17.4   Appendix D - Environmental Impact Assessment [Delegated Decision page – see above]

NOTIFICATION DATE

8 December 2023
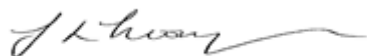
Signature of Executive Member (Leader) Decision taker…

Date ……6 December 2023

<u>**Consultees:**</u>
Signature of Executive Member for Community & Partnerships

Signature of Service Director: Legal & Community consultee Decision Taker

…

Call-in does not apply to NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS. This decision is partly Executive and Non-Executive.

SECTION 9

Area Forums[1]

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 as agreed by the Forum Chair (or Vice Chair in their absence, or in consultation with Members of that Forum if neither are available). 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). If the Chair in consultation with Area Forum members considers additional meetings beyond the 4 agreed per year, per Area Forum, would be beneficial to effective community engagement in the area these may be arranged following the agreement of the Leader in consultation with the Executive Member and Service Director with responsibility for Community & Partnerships.

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/ or in their absence Vice 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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[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

9.7.4. 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 masterplans or 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.

Deleted: n

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 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.

AREA FORUM PROTOCOL

The five Area Forums provide the opportunity for two-way engagement with the local communities of North Herts. Unlike Council meetings, the Forums are informal and allow for an open discussion.

They provide a vehicle to promote the actions and activities of North Herts Council and local Voluntary Charity Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) groups to share information about their activities, services, and projects within the district.

The Area Forums are non-party political and are for the benefit of the people of North Herts in line with the People First strategic Council priority.

The five Area Forums cover the following geographical areas:

- Baldock & District
- Hitchin
- Letchworth
- Royston & District
- Southern Rural

Each Area Forum will meet at least four times per civic year.

It is possible for Area Forums to be held either in-person, virtually (online) or hybrid (using the microphones and camera equipment in the District Council Offices' Council Chamber). The Council will look to explore other locations for hybrid meetings if appropriate. Where possible, the Chair of the Area Forum will be consulted. It is suggested that a mix of meeting types is used, to reach a range of different parts of our community, however the decision on mode of meeting will be for the Chair, or Vice Chair of each Area Forum to determine or Members of their Forum in their absence, as per the Terms of Reference.

1   What is the purpose of Forums?

Area Forums are a way for the council and elected members to engage with our local communities and to consult on grant applications.

This Protocol is an informal document, it is possible that the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Area Forums will change. The ToR for the Area Forums can be found on line on the Council Constitution page [CLICK HERE], and in the event that there are inconsistencies between the ToR and the Protocol, the ToR will be correct version to follow. In summary, however, the purpose of the Forums is:

1.1   **Community engagement**

Each Area Forum meeting will have a topic or theme chosen in advance by the Chair, Vice Chair and Forum members in consultation with the relevant Community Partnerships Officer.

The theme / topic should be of interest and relevant to the people of the local area.

The relevant Executive Member will be invited to attend. If the Executive Member is unavailable, their Deputy will be invited to present at the Forum meeting.

The Forum will seek to ensure that consideration of agenda items minimises additional burdens on staff resources. Wherever possible, requests will be made for the presentation of material already in existence rather than the production of new

material. Apart from Community Partnerships Officers, Officers from other areas of the Council are not required to attend. The aim of these Forums is to be as engaging as possible for all participants and therefore should try to avoid being 'report heavy' in the way a formal Council or Council Committee can be.

Officers may use the Area Forums to undertake consultation exercises where they are seeking to consult on Council policies / activities. The Executive Member or Deputy would normally present these.

Any Member or member of the public can attend any Area Forum if they wish to do so. They may take part in open discussions on the topic being discussed. If they, or Members (or Officers) would like a topic to be included on the agenda, then they must provide a note or where relevant, a presentation to the Community Partnerships Officer, at least two weeks prior to the meeting date and this would need to be agreed with the Chair (or Vice Chair in their absence) as to whether it can be included.

If a Forum Chair and/or their Vice Chair would like a particular topic on the agenda, then, if a report is already available, a request should be made to the relevant Service Director. Where resource and practicality allow, an informal note may also be provided. As a rule, the relevant Executive Member or their Deputy will be invited to present this note and respond to questions raised by the public and or Members of the Forum (if appropriate).

1.2 **Grants**

The Area Forum Members are consulted on grant applications in their area and provide recommendations to the relevant Executive Member to sign off on grant decisions.

Grant applicants will be invited to provide presentations in support of their applications and to return to a later meeting to provide updates on projects.

The Forum acts as an advisory body to the Executive Member for Community and Partnerships, who approves grants (in consultation with the Service Director for Legal and Community). Any 'between meeting' grant applications can be dealt with in urgent situations, with the recommendation of the Area Forum members by email or the Chair/ or in their absence the Vice Chair.

The Community Grants policy can be found [here](#).

2. **Template Agenda**

The order of agenda items is up to the Chair of the Forum to decide on. The below is a suggested agenda.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Chair's Announcements
3. Grant Presentations from applicants – recommendations on applications
4. Grants and Community Update
5. Presentation(s) in relation to the theme for the meeting
6. Question & Answer session on the presentation(s) or any other matters from the floor
7. Ward Matters – reports from Forum Members regarding their activities.
8. Suggestion of topics for future Forum meetings

3. Process - Community Partnerships Officers co-ordinate the Area Forums

3.1 **Planning the Forum meeting.**

- Agree on a theme/ liaising with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Forum
- Agree on whether to meet virtually, hybrid or in person with the Forum Chair (or Vice Chair in their absence, or in consultation with Members of that Forum if neither are available).
- Booking the venue – Venue is decided by the Chair, or as above with the Vice Chair, in their absence, in consultation with officers where the Forum is in-person.
- Set up a Zoom meeting / book Council Chamber for virtual / hybrid meetings (as appropriate).
- Produce the Grant and Community Update Report
- Invite and liaise with presenters, including grant applicants.
- Put forward a request to a relevant Service Director for any material that is available (or where not and time allowing a briefing note) and liaise with the relevant Executive Member for the topic area regarding attendance.
- Marketing and publicity - an overall graphic layout has been finalised which all the Area Forums use.
- Community Partnerships Officers finalise the content of the graphic for each Forum, in liaison with the Communications team.
- Publicise the Forum in-person and on social media.
- Plan and publish the agenda on Modern.gov at least 5 clear working days prior to the meeting.
- Produce and send the Chair's Notes prior to the Forum meeting.

3.2 **During the Forum – In-person**

- Set up the room.
- Display signage and banners.
- Put out refreshments.
- Take notes and record attendance.
- Assist the Chair throughout the meeting.
- Present the Grants and Community update.
- Tidy and clear up the room – lock up where appropriate.

3.3 **During the Forum – Virtual**

- Start the Zoom meeting.
- Start the YouTube live stream.
- Take notes and record attendance.
- Assist the Chair throughout the meeting.
- Adhere to the instructions outlined in the on-line meeting etiquette instructions or any etiquette document.

3.4 **Hybrid meetings**.

- Due to the availability of equipment, these can currently only take place in the Council Chamber.
- Two Community Partnership Officers will be in attendance to deal with the meeting arrangements.
- Officers need to undertake the points in both 3.2 and 3.3.

3.5   **After the Forum**

- Send the Forum meeting notes to the Chair for any comments.
- Chair to respond within 5 working days of receiving the notes.
- Upload the notes on Modern.gov as a supplementary document.
- Upload Member attendance.
- Prepare a delegated decision report in relation to any recommended Grants, for the Executive Member for Community and Partnerships
- Consult with Service Director regarding grants recommendations and follow the process for ensuring relevant payments are made.
- Forward any final Delegated decision to the Member Information Service and Committee, Member & Scrutiny Services for publishing.

4.   **District Member involvement**

4.1   Members will be consulted on the themes for future Forums.

4.2   Members are encouraged to promote the Forums to their local constituents.

4.3   Members should familiarise themselves with the agenda and report documents regarding grants prior to the meeting.

4.4   Members will be available before the meeting to greet presenters and members of the public attending the meeting and assist with setting up the room where necessary.

4.5   The Chair will facilitate the meeting and encourage open and inclusive discussion around the presentations and any other queries that arise as part of the Forum.

Equality Analysis Template

1. Name of activity:	**Area Forum in person**
2. Main purpose of activity:	**Change from hybrid meetings to in person area forums**
3. List the information, data or evidence used in this assessment:	**LGA Virtual council meeting survey – pg 12 Table 8: How do you think your council would use the flexibility of virtual meeting technologies at statutory council meetings?** 46% of respondents selected: All council meetings would be hybrid and councillors could decide whether to attend in person or virtually

4. Assessment				

Characteristics	Neutral (x)	Negative (x)	Positive (x)	Describe the person you are assessing the impact on, including identifying: community member or employee, details of the characteristic if relevant, e.g. mobility problems/particular religion and why and how they might be **negatively or positively** affected. **Negative: What are the risks?** **Positive: What are the benefits?**
Community considerations (i.e. applying across communities or associated with rural living or Human Rights)	☐	☒	☐	**Negative** By moving all meetings to in person may have impacts on community and public engagement and participation for reasons such as travel to and from the meeting, timings of meetings for those who have children or caring responsibilities. There may also be an impact on the availability of recordings for meetings as in person meetings are often harder to document/record for watch after the event. Issues around increased emissions for travel to and from the meeting, increased frequencies of meetings. Issues of parking at the venue (DCO shuts at 7, where can people park) and increases expense for people wishing to attend. Increase costs with childcare, public travel, car parking, petrol/mileage. Consideration needs to be made for the venue to have appropriate accessibility for people with disabilities and hearing loss/hard of hearing – sign language/closed captions. Additional travel means additional overall time surrounding the meeting, lengthens time involved and shortens that of other commitments for both officers and participants. Thos in rural areas may not have access to public transport links. **Positive** Bring community together in person and can offer a better rapport/connection with other meeting participants. There are benefits to greater social interaction such as mental health and being more active etc. negates the potential impact of wi-fi issues, those

				with limited IT skills or connectivity to use online platforms.
A person living with a disability	☐	☒	☐	**Negative**
				Venues may not all have accessible entrances or adaptations made to suit those with disabilities or additional mobility needs. Travel to and from the venue may be difficult due to evening meetings, require use of public transport, may be dependent on bus/train times etc. Someone who currently benefits from hybrid/online meetings due to a lack of mobility may not be able to participate in the meetings going forwards if they are in person, ultimately decreasing participating engagement. Extends to additional need for carers if required to move or assist someone with a disability. Current meetings do not have the facilities to provide translation services or BSL. Adverse weather conditions may make it difficult for someone with a disability to get to the meeting, i.e. cancelled buses, increased risk of falling – consideration needs to be taken for adverse weather conditions on all members of the public and officers attending meetings.
				Positive
A person of a particular race	☐	☐	☐	**Negative**
				Positive
A person of a gay, lesbian or bisexual sexual orientation	☒	☐	☐	**Negative**
				Positive
A person of a particular sex, male or female, including issues around pregnancy and maternity	☐	☐	☒	**Negative**
				Both men and women with children may be negatively affected by this change due to childcare responsibilities, may decrease participation if they are unable to attend to due caring needs. Similarly, this could increase the cost of attending these meetings through paying for childcare. Some pregnant/expectant mothers may not wish to travel to meetings if they have previously had option to stay at home – risks with travel/infection from mingling with other members of the public etc.
				Positive
	☐	☐	☐	**Negative**

A person of a particular religion or belief				**Positive**
				Negative
A person of a particular age	☐	☐	☐	Elderly more at risk of falls, likely to have more mobility issues. Issues with travel and accessibility in facilities.
				Positive
				Negative
Transgender	☐	☐	☐	Consideration to be made to provide accessible toilets if person is not comfortable with using gendered toilets. Unsure of the circumstances (layout and accessibility of building) may mean they do not attend/participate in meeting compared to attending meeting from home.
				Positive

5 Results

	Yes	No	
Were positive impacts identified?	☒	☐	In person interaction can sometimes provide for better engagement but it dependant on attracting a wider range of participants.
Are some people benefiting more than others? If so explain who and why.	☐	☐	
Were negative impacts identified (what actions were taken)	☒	☐	Meeting organisers will need to be mindful of the accessibility of venues and where possible, put in place reasonable adjustments to where resource allows to increase engagement.

6. Consultation, decisions and actions

If High or very high range results were identified who was consulted and what recommendations were given?

Describe the decision on this activity

List all actions identified to address/mitigate negative impact or promote positively

Action	Responsible person	Completion due date
As listed in Section 5	Community & Partnerships and Policy & Strategy Team Leaders (TLs)/ Policy & Communities Manager	04/12/2024

When, how and by whom will these actions be monitored?

As set above. The TLs and Manager will regularly review the attendance and engagement levels at the Forum meetings throughout the Civic Year.

7. Signatures

Assessor	
Name: **Ellie Hollingsworth**	Signature** E A Hollingsworth
Validated by	
Name: **Reuben Ayavoo**	Signature** [redacted]
Forward to the Policy & Strategy Team	
Signature** G R Chapman	
Assessment date: 04/12/2023	Review date: 04/12/2024

** **Please type your name to allow forms to be sent electronically.**

A copy of this form should be forwarded to the corporate policy team and duplicate filed on the council's report system alongside any report proposing a decision on policy or service change.

Environmental Implications assessment

1. Name of activity:	*Area forum change to all meetings in person*				
2. Main purpose of activity:	*Engagement with residents in regard to recommendation of Community Grants, and other local issues and concerns.*				
3. List the information, data or evidence used in this assessment:					
Area of Potential Impact	***Examples to Consider*** *(non-exhaustive)*	***Neutral*** *(X)*	***Negative*** *(X)*	***Positive*** *(X)*	*Describe the contribution/impact on the area that the decision may have - assess whether this impact is a* ***negative or positive or neutral one.*** ***Negative: What are the risks?*** ***Positive: What are the benefits?***
1. Impact on greenhouse emission and support adaption to the effects of climate change	Will energy needs be met through renewable sources? Will it reduce emissions through retrofitting new technology? Will it reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing energy consumption and the need to travel?	☐	☒	☒	*Negative* Increase of emissions due to increased travel to the additional 2 meetings (or more). Due to timings of meetings, travel is most likely to be cars as bus services may not run until the end of the meeting. *Positive* Active travel/lift share encouraged where possible.
2. Use of natural resources including water and energy	Will it reduce water consumption?	☐	☒	☐	*Negative* Extra energy needed for running of venue – dependent on which venue is used or is already being used

	Will it reduce energy consumption?				prior to the forum meeting. The District Council Offices/Town Hall may be already heated but community halls may not be and require additional resources to heat and manage.
					Positive
3. Minimisation of flood risks to the area (i.e. promotion of SUD's. protect surface and ground water quality)	Will it minimise flood risk from all sources of flooding? Will it reduce property damage due to storm events/ heavy rainfall by improving flood resistance and flood resilience?	☒	☐	☐	*Negative*
					Positive
4. To protect, enhance and create environments that encourage and support biodiversity	Will it protect, enhance and increase biodiversity and protect habitats? Will it improve access to and promote educational value of sites of biodiversity interest?	☒	☐	☐	*Negative*
					Positive
5. To improve Air Quality (air quality describes how polluted the air we breathe is)	Will it improve air quality? Will it reduce emissions of key pollutants?	☐	☒	☐	*Negative* Increased travel to and from meetings will potentially increase emissions and reduce air quality.
					Positive
		☐	☒	☐	*Negative*

6. To reduce need to travel, the use of private motorised vehicular transport as well as encourage walking, cycling, and use of public transport	Will it encourage increased walking, cycling and use of public transport? Will it increase the proportion of journeys using modes other than a car?				Increased travel to and from meetings. Bus/trains may not run on time for times of meetings. Those with additional needs that may not be able to use public transport or engage in active travel are likely to use cars to attend. Active Travel option may not be available or safe dependent on time of meeting, especially in winter, dark and dangerous conditions, increasing chances of people taking cars. Those in rural areas are less likely to be connected to public transport links.
					Positive

7. To reduce waste production and increase recycling, recovery and reuse of waste	Will it lead to reduced consumption of materials and resources? Will it reduce household waste? Will it reduce construction waste? Will it increase recovery recycling and re-use?	☒	☐	☐	*Negative*
					NA
					Positive
					NA
		☐	☐	☐	*Negative*

					NA.
8. To enhance the public realm and street improvements	Will it reduce litter? Will it enhance the quality of public realm?				**Positive**
					NA.
					Negative
					NA.
9. To protect, enhance and seek opportunities to increase open space	Will it improve open space? Will it improve landscape character? Will it minimise development on Greenfield sites?				**Positive**
					NA.
					Negative
10. To reduce noise and impact of noise	Will it reduce noise pollution from vehicles?	☐	☒	☐	Increased traffic to venue during evening and time of meeting could impact on noise levels, neighbouring residents. More frequent gathering of people, 4 meetings compared to 2.
					Positive

6.0 Results

	Yes	No	
Were positive impacts identified?	☒	☐	
Were negative impacts identified (what actions were taken)	☐	☐	If suitable Active Travel/lift sharing opportunities are available to those who wish to attend, then emissions can be lowered. If multi use venues are already being used during the day, then energy demands may be lower (for example it is easier to maintain the heat of a building than heating a cold building).

7.0 Consultation, decisions and actions

Describe the decision on this activity (refer to section 3.2)

List all actions identified to address/mitigate negative impact or promote positive impact

Action	Responsible person	Completion due date
Where possible Officers will look to find venues that have good public transport links and encourage lift sharing as appropriate.	Policy & Strategy and Community Partnerships TL/Policy and Community Manager	Ongoing

When, how and by whom will these actions be monitored?

8.0 Signatures

Assessor (report author):	
Name: Ellie A Hollingsworth	*Signature*** E A Hollingsworth
Validated by (line manager):	
Name: Reuben Ayavoo	*Signature***[redacted]

Forward to the Corporate Policy inbox: corporatepolicy@north-herts.gov.uk

Signature** G R Chapman

Assessment date: 04/12/2023	*Review date:* 04/12/2024

** **Please type your name to allow forms to be sent electronically.**
A copy of this form should be forwarded to corporatepolicy@north-herts.gov.uk and a duplicate filed on the council's report system, alongside any report proposing a decision on policy or service change.