EASTWICK AND GILSTON PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN
MARK ORSON
89 PYE CORNER
GILSTON
NR HARLOW
HERTS CM20 2RD
TELEPHONE 01279 453257
Email: cllr.m.orson@eastwickandgilstonparish.gov.uk

PARISH CLERK
CHRISTINE LAW
9 CHURCH COTTAGES
GILSTON
NR HARLOW
HERTS CM20 2RH
TELEPHONE 01279 411646
Email: clerk@eastwickandgilstonparish.gov.uk

EASTWICK AND GILSTON PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING
(The cessation of the Annual Meeting)
Parish Council meeting of Monday 11th May 2026 at 8.00pm, Village Hall, Pye Corner

PRESENT: Cllrs Bryant, Harvey, Marx, Orson
In attendance: Christine Law (Parish Clerk), Eric Buckmaster (CC) John Dunlop (DC). 3 members of the public.

Public Participation

1. A resident had concerns about unlit vehicles being driven on the new road in the dark and was advised to report any re-occurrence to the Police.

1.APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.
a. Cllr Beazley

2. RECEIVE COUNCILLOR'S DECLARATION OF INTERESTS
None.

3. **MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**
   a. Minutes of our Annual Parish Meeting and the business meeting of 9th March 2026. Were proposed by Cllr Marx and seconded by Cllr Harvey. These were then signed as a true record by Cllr Orson.

4. **ACCOUNTS**
   a. The Clerk presented the written report of the Council's Accounts summary.
   b. The Council agreed the Annual Governance Statement 2025-2026 then it was signed as a true record by Cllr Orson as Chair and Christine Law (Clerk) as a true record. (Appendix 1)
   c. The Council agreed the Accounting Statements for year ended 31st March 2026 then it was signed as a true record by Cllr Orson as Chair and Christine Law (Clerk) as a true record. (Appendix 2)
   d. HAPTC membership – then annual membership to HAPTC is now due at the sum of £594.36. This was agreed for the Clerk to pay this amount.
   e. Zurich Insurance – Invoice has been received for the council's yearly insurance of the amount of £302.00. This was agreed for the Clerk to pay this.
   f. Eastwick Footpath Map Board – the two columns of this board are in urgent need of being replaced. This was agreed for the clerk to go ahead and order two new columns at the cost of £666.00 each, this includes the VAT which can be reclaimed.

g. Gilston Gateways (planters) each entrance to Pye Corner. One at each end has started to rot away and it was agreed at a cost of £898.68 to have these replaced. Clerk will contact the contractor to carry out this work.
a-g were proposed by Cllr Bryant and seconded by Cllr Harvey.

5. **PLANNING AND ASSOCIATED APPLICATIONS**
   a. Grassland, Pye Corner – 3/23/1110/FUL – Retrospective change of use of buildings. Amended plans – Awaiting Decision. This is a 2023 planning request with no outcome. The Clerk has written to planning about this application with no result. Cllr John Dunlop said he would contact planning to see what the problem was.
   b. Channocks Farmhouse – Amendment – Erection of cart lodge building to accommodate garage for 2 vehicles, domestic storage and workshop, with the associated construction of a new driveway – 3/25/1815/HH. Planning application has been granted.
   c. The Old Rectory, Gilston – 3/25/1522/FUL. This has been refused by Planning, and the applicant has taken this to appeal. Planning Inspectorate has dismissed the appeal. **Cllr J Bryant asked for her surprise and dismay to be recorded, as she finds the decision inexplicable; this application being for the simple conversion of an existing building to residential.**
   The Parish Council will write to Sara Saunders, EHC Director of Place asking how can we avoid similar situations occurring in the future when it would seem that a Planning decision is paper based with no application of local knowledge or common sense?
   d. 70 Eastwick Road, Eastwick – 3/26/0260/HH & 3/26/0261/LBC – Single storey rear extension, fenestration alteration, internal layout alterations, addition of partition walls, replacement door and removal of non-original doors, repair work to render, roof and timber work. Awaiting decision.
   e. 14 Turvin Crescent, Terlings, Park, Gilston – 3/26/0539/HH – Erection of rear balcony at first floor level; removal of a window and replacement with a new door to provide access to the balcony. This application was discussed this evening at the meeting and the councillors had not objections to this application. The Clerk will write to planning with these comments.
   f. Hodgson House, 3 Gilston Park, Gilston – 3/26/0593/HH – Single storey rear extension with green roof and alterations to fenestration. This application was discussed this evening at the meeting and the councillors had not objections to this application. The Clerk will write to planning with these comments.

6. **PARISH PATHS**
   a. Cllr Orson reported that the HCC rights of way confirm:
   Orders placed for replacement waymark posts on Eastwick bridleway 2 (at the junction with FP3), and footpath 8 (at the junction with the permissive path.
   Order placed for the post installed in an incorrect location on Eastwick 22 (by the pylon) to be moved to the correct location.
   b. The meeting was informed that the County's Footpaths Officer Nicholas Maddex is retiring and we are waiting for the name of his replacement.
7. **COMMUNITY FORUM/NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT**
   Cllr Bryant reported:
   Proposed roadworks in and around Gilston C161
   Proposed 24/7 road closure of C161 for 7 weeks (between Eastwick roundabout and The Dusty Miller)

Several meetings / events have been held during 2026 explaining the potential / proposed roadworks planned for 2026 – 2028, where various drawings were presented or displayed showing the phasing

and detail of proposed roadworks, and impact on traffic flow, necessary for the northern section of the Central Stort Crossing (CSC).

- EHC Community Forum (CF), 12th February - where PfP presented phasing and likely road restrictions, including contraflows.
- HGGT Joint Committee, 23rd March – available as a webcast Find your councillor - Epping Forest District Council

https://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=12642&x=1
Phil Bradbury, Hertfordshire CC Highways Dept presented Upcoming Works for the Central Stort Crossing, showing contraflows and short duration road closures

- PfP Public Drop-In event, 14th April – PfP's Infrastructure consultants, NATTA, numerous drawings showing location of roadworks and traffic management. This included a drawing showing **24/7 x 7 week road closure between Eastwick roundabout and The Dusty Miller**.
- NPG and County & District Councillors asked for a meeting with PfP, NATTA & HertsCC, to discuss proposed roadworks questioning the necessity for a 7 week total closure of the C161 between the Eastwick Roundabout and The Dusty Miller.

Despite 2 presentations on the proposed roadworks, CF 12th Feb and HGGT 23rd March, it was only revealed at the 14th April Drop-in event the intention to impose a **24/7 closure of the C161 for 7 weeks**, starting late Sept / early Oct 2026! This requirement was allegedly known at both the CF and HGGT meetings but was not raised at either meeting. This suggests a lack of transparency in both the council and developers communications with residents, which has led to a **significant breakdown in trust**
Since the 14th April Drop-in event the NPG has met with PfP, NATTA and the HertsCC Highway representatives asking them to reconsider the need for the 7 week full road closure; suggesting the use of 3 way traffic lights at the Eastwick roundabout or, alternatively, the trench (which is needed for the various utility services Affinity Water, UK Power Network and BT Openreach) could be moved a short distance north of the C161 thus removing the need for the full road closure.

HertsCC Highway is unwilling to have 3 way traffic lights and has "advised that this would lead to significant congestion and tailbacks on the A414 and Fifth Avenue" and also "advised that fewer, longer closures are overall less disruptive to local residents than a series of shorter but more frequent closures spread across the network.". Once again implying the **residents of Eastwick and Gilston are of little importance.**
The NPG, our County and District Councillors and many residents have written to (emailed) the developers, EHC Planning and HertsCC Highways plus the 3 local MPs and HertsCC Councillors and local newspapers asking what alternatives were considered and what justification they have to close a critical road for 7 weeks. The NPG has asked for sight of various traffic impact assessments, etc. These have not yet been forthcoming resulting in a Freedom of Information request being submitted by our District Councillor, John Dunlop. Unfortunately, they have a 4 week period in which to respond.

To date there does not appear to have been any assessment of the impact on local residents; such as the 20+ plus families whose children attend Hunsdon Primary School, or whether any children travel from the west to schools in Sawbridgeworth & Bishop's Stortford.

A further meeting of NPG & our County and District Councillors with PfP, NATTA and the HertsCC Highway representatives is being scheduled at which we hope representatives of the various utility companies will attend.
To be followed by another public event (with presentations and opportunity for Questions & Answers - not simply a drop-in).

EHC Gilston Area Community Forum next meeting 12th May 2026

Following the last meeting in February which focussed on the roadworks in the Gilston / C161 area, this meeting will focus on updates from the **Village 7 developer (Taylor Wimpey) in relation to their programme of development/ highway impacts etc.**.

As normal, you are invited to attend from 6.30pm onward when tea/ coffee will be available and you will be able to meet and discuss issues informally with representatives from the Council and the Gilston Area landowners.

AGENDA

6.30pm Drop In Sessions An opportunity to speak to developers and Council Officers – please come along with any specific questions you would like to ask.

The formal meeting will commence at 7pm.

- Welcome by Cllr Vicky Glover-Ward (Chair)
- Following which this session will be focussed on the forthcoming programme of highways and other **works in relation to the Village7 site**. The Landowners/ developers will be able to provide details of their programme of works.

8.25pm Formal Close – but with Council Officers and other reps remaining for further informal questions/ discussions until 8.55pm.

The agenda for the meeting is available on the East Herts website here: Gilston Area Community Forum | East Herts District Council

EHC and Places for People presentations are available via the parish website and at the East Herts Gilston Area Community Forum webpage. In addition, there is a brief PPT by Taylor Wimpey which was not presented at the CF due to lack of time.
https://eastwickandgilstonparish.gov.uk/ NEWS Section
https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-and-building/community-forums/gilston-area-community-forum.
Previous forum presentations are also available here.

We urge residents to attend these forums and, if possible, submit questions, via email, at least 10 days before to **community.forum@eastherts.gov.uk**
There is also an opportunity to "drop-in" between 6:30 and 7:00pm for informal discussion with EHC councillors, planning officers and developer representatives.

You can also ask for specific topics you want to learn more about to be included in future meetings.

Neighbourhood Development –
Villages 5 & 6 Master Planning - Places for People have held 2 workshops with "Stakeholders". The design of Villages 5 & 6 is needed to position the Strategic Transport Corridor (STC) between Villages 1 & 7. The STC must be constructed, as part of the early development, to enable children from V7 to travel to the proposed new V1 Primary school – or vice versa. **It has not yet been decided whether the 1st new Primary school should be in V1 or V7.**
A Community Drop-in event took place 28th April
Submission of the Village 5 and 6 Masterplans to East Herts District Council is anticipated later in 2026.

Useful websites:

All planning documents are on the East Herts Planning website
https://publicaccess.eastherts.gov.uk/online-applications/

Villages 1 - 6 OPA 3/19/1045/OUT
Strategic Landscape Masterplan – amended – approved
Village 1 – 6 X/25/0215/CND Discharge condition 6 (Strategic Landscape Masterplan) attached to 3/19/1045/OUT, 15th December 2025

Village 7 - X/25/0225/CND Full Discharge of Condition 10 (Strategic Landscape Masterplan) and Full Discharge of Condition 11 (Strategic Landscape Design Code) Pursuant to Outline Planning Permission 3/19/2124/OUT (Gilston - Village 7), 15th December 2025
Central Stort Crossing (3/19/1046/FUL)
The Eastern Crossing (3/19/1051/FUL)

Eastwick & Gilston Community website
https://eastwickandgilstonparish.gov.uk

Estate Management – Reminder
Places for People's **gilston.info** website demonstrated at the February Community Forum
The website has 3 headings:
Current Works – a map of current and planned works in the Gilston Area.
Report an Issue – a map where any issues, eg tree fallen across a RoW, fly tipping, etc., can be reported
News – construction works and developments for the Gilston Area.

Roadworks updates.

- For information on current and upcoming roadworks go to Causeway one.network https://one.network/uk/hertfordshire
- Places for People gilstonparkestate website NEWS page https://www.gilstonparkestate.com/news/enabling-works-for-gilston-underway/

Village 1 and Strategic Landscape Master Plan
https://www.gilstonparkestate.com/get-involved/
Section 106 docs Villages 1 - 6
https://publicaccess.eastherts.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PRSRKCGL00V00

Village 7 https://www.village7.co.uk

Section 106 docs Villages 7
https://publicaccess.eastherts.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PZKRYCGL05I00
East Herts Community Forums
https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-and-building/community-forums/gilston-area-community-forum

East Herts Community Forums
https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-and-building/community-forums/gilston-area-community-forum

8. **HIGHWAYS**
   a., Cllr Harvey had nothing to add to Cllr Bryant's report.

9. **NEW HOMES BONUS / INVESTMENT ACCOUNT**
   a. New Gilston sign
      The meeting was informed that the new Gilston sign and planter that had been installed on the verge just before Church Cottages as you are entering from High Wych.

10. **VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**
    Cllr Harvey reported:
    a. As Treasurer I can confirm that we are in a positive balance of £20,642.95
    b. The new booking system c/o the parish website continues to make monitoring of the hall users easier whilst allowing easier bookings.

c. Once the hall deeds have been accepted by the charity commission the details will be available on the parish website.
d. We are continuing to promote the hall and the Facebook page has received an increasing number of followers.
e. All new bookings have been retained.
f. We are pursuing a grant that will allow an upgrade to all three toilet facilities. When these are complete it remains to redecorate the hall lobby and improve the committee room.

11. **CORRESPONDENCE**
    a. Eric Buckmaster – County Councillor report is with these minutes.
    b. District Councillor John Dunlop report is with these minutes. Cllr Dunlop informed the meeting that Local Government Reform is still being look at and we were informed due to this there will not be any District Council elections in 2027.

12. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWAR AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR INFORMATION ONLY

None.

13. ITEMS COUNCILLOR WOULD LIKE TO BE ADDED TO THE NEXT AGENDA

None.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of our next meeting will be on Monday 13th July at 8.00pm in the Village Hall Following from that the next one is the 14th September followed by the 9th November. 2027 dates to follow.

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/2026

EASTWICK AND GILSTON PARISH COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We have assured ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A — has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.
			✗
10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review.	✓		has made suitable arrangements for its IT and data management and has complied with proper practices in doing so.

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

11/05/2026

and recorded as minute reference:

4. Accounts b.

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

Clerk

eastwickandgilstonparish.org.uk

Section 2 Accounting Statements 2025-2026

EASTWICK AND GILSTON PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures* ***must*** *agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	232620	244618	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value* ***must*** *agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	12750	9750	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	15476	17794	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	3674	3793	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	12554	38458	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	244618	229911	*Total balances and reserves at the end of the year.* ***must*** *equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).*
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	244618	229911	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March –* ***To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	26907	26827	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0		*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	
11 Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?		0	*For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval.

[signature]

Date 11/05/2026

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

11/05/2026

as recorded in minute reference:

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

[signature]

E Buckmaster County Councillor Report May 2026

Improvement notice lifted for Hertfordshire SEND services

Following our Area SEND monitoring inspection in October 2025, the Secretary of State for Education has confirmed the decision to lift Hertfordshire's Improvement Notice.

The decision recognises key improvements and progress made across the local area partnership, including stronger governance and quality assurance, improved performance against statutory timescales, better use of data, and more meaningful coproduction with children, young people and families.

Albury School

WHETHER TO AGREE TO THE STATUTORY PROPOSAL TO CLOSE ALBURY Church of England VA PRIMARY SCHOOL ON 31 AUGUST 2026

DECISION: -Cabinet, in relation to the proposal to close Albury C of E VA Primary School, decided to approve the proposal. The cabinet decision has subsequently been called in and will be discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Hertfordshire moves forward with franchising

Hertfordshire County Council is progressing with its involvement in the Government's Bus Reform and Franchising Pilot Programme. Bus franchising could improve routes, fares, and service standards by giving it more control over how services are run. Mark Doran, Executive Director for Growth and Environment, said: "This is an exciting step for Hertfordshire. More regular and reliable bus services could make a real difference to our residents."

Hertfordshire County Council appoints Believ to deliver £38m of EV infrastructure |

Hertfordshire County Council has appointed electric vehicle (EV) charge point operator (CPO) Believ to assist in the £38 million rollout of public EV charging infrastructure for residents without off-street parking.

Mark Doran, Executive Director for Growth and Environment, said: "We know that lack of access to home charging can be a barrier for many people, particularly those without driveways. This programme will help address that by providing reliable, convenient charging options closer to where people live. It

also supports our commitment to growing a greener Hertfordshire by reducing emissions and enabling more sustainable journeys across the county."

£169m sales of Hertfordshire council land and buildings expected by 2030

Hertfordshire County Council has agreed plans that could see £169 million raised from the sale of land and buildings by March 2030 as part of a new strategic asset management plan. The proposed disposals are intended to help address a significant funding gap, with the council stating that assets should only be retained where they directly support services, deliver community benefits or generate income.

Consultation on Bus Services Help us choose new stop locations - HertsLynx Survey

HertsLynx is Hertfordshire's on-demand bus service, providing flexible transport in rural and less well-served areas.

We want to make HertsLynx easier for people to use. We're looking at where we could add new stops. Your feedback will help us decide.

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/

Closes 8th May 2026. Separate email sent to local parishes

About HertsLynx

HertsLynx is an on-demand bus service serving villages in North and East Herts and fixed destinations in Key Hub Towns: Bishop's Stortford, Royston, Baldock, Stevenage, Hitchin and Letchworth. The HertsLynx service is designed to improve connections between rural areas and town centres, as well as expand access to employment, education, healthcare and shopping.

Click here to find out more about HertsLynx.

UPDATE ON DELIVERY OF NEW SCHOOL PLACES TO SUPPORT EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE TO SERVE THE GILSTON DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL TO CAPITAL SPEND AGAINST S106 DEVELOPER FUNDING

Cabinet agreed to authorise:

(i) approval of the capital budget for a 3FE Primary School in Village 1 of £18.53m (DfE scorecard cost plus indexation and 10% sustainability uplift) – funding dependent upon timing of programme (either through Housing Investment Grant or S106);

(ii) approval of the capital budget for Village 7 Primary School of £18.53m (funded by s106 contributions);

(iii) approval to allocate funding from s106 contributions (as funding is received) for Village 1 Primary School (dependent upon timing and HIG) and Village 7 Primary School; and

(iv) approval for the final contract value of Village 1 primary school and Village 7 primary school schemes to be delegated to the Executive Director of Childrens Services & Education, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Executive Members of Education, SEND & Inclusion and Resources and Performance.

Cabinet also noted that the Council will, at an appropriate time in the school delivery programme, run a competition to seek an appropriate School Trust to run the new school(s) within the development.

++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++

District Councillor Update – Key Highlights (2025–26)

🔷 Headline Themes

- 🏗️ *Major Planning Pressure – Gilston progressing but with legal and sequencing challenges*
- 🏛️ *System Change Ahead – Local Government Reform and District Plan updates*
- ♻️ *Environmental Shift – Significant improvements in recycling and sustainability*
- 🌱 *Community Focus – Skills, arts, and wellbeing initiatives expanding*
- 💷 *Financial Pressure – Balanced budget but tightening outlook*

🏗️ Gilston Park Estate

- *Judicial Review dismissed and appeals delayed start before being dismissed*
- *SLMP approved and Village 7 and 1 Master plans submitted V1*
- *There are major concerns around traffic, sequencing, and major road closures which are in discussion for more options and mitigations*
- *Community forums ongoing; potential interim uses slowly emerging with requests for more ideas*

🏛️ Local Government Reform

- *Move toward unitary authority model under consideration*
- *Options include 2, 3 or 4 councils across Hertfordshire, with 4 unitary councils considered the most likely*
- *Government decision was expected Summer 2026 but slipping towards Autumn 2026*
- *This will significantly reshape local governance, more services devolved to untitaries although with financial challenges given the smaller authorities replacing County Council*

📜 District Plan & Planning Policy

- *District Plan update begins in 2026 with ~30 month program*
- *District Plan Executive Panel (DPEP) has been reconvened (19th May) to consider matters related to the Councils new Local Plan*
- *Housing targets have increased by 30%, requiring 1300 new homes per annum and asking the 5 year land Supply much more difficult to achieve*
- *Given the 5 year land supply shortfall local decision-making influence is reduced*

♻️ **Waste & Environment**

- *New system: weekly food waste, less frequent general waste. After a slow roll out the system is working well, with the App which gives bin alerts the night before collection proving very effective*
- *Non-recyclable waste significantly reduced*
- *Food waste reused for energy and fertiliser*
- *Lower carbon emissions through cleaner fleet fuels*

🌱 **Community, Skills & Wellbeing**

- *Free training via Open Possibilities programs for residents, pupils and local businesses to access training and boost employment opportunities*
- *Wellbeing mapping and health initiatives expanding with an online wellbeing map to help people find services more easily*
- *Arts programs engaged thousands locally through the Arts in East Herts showcase event in September and October*

💶 **Funding Opportunities**

- *Up to £1,000 available per sustainability project*
- *Additional funding for green and community initiatives*
- *Strong opportunity for parish-led projects*

📊 **Council Finances**

- *Balanced budget achieved through careful management including management restructuring and a 'Transforming East Herts' initiative*
- *Funding reductions and inflation have created pressure and will continue to do so as inflation and interest rates are expected to rise again*
- *Local Government Reform adds additional cost burden, estimated to be £1.5m over 2 years*

🌍 **Climate & Environment**

- *Climate forums are supporting local environmental action*
- *Thermal imaging scheme improving home efficiency, with meters available from local libraries*
- *Air quality campaigns raising awareness. Air quality monitoring in Hertford, Bishop Stortford and Sawbridgeworth*