

DRAFT CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN 2016/17 – 2019/20 - *To preserve the unique character of East Herts and ensure it remains one of the best places to live and work*

Introduction from Leader of the Council:

This Corporate Plan sets out the strategic direction and priorities for East Herts Council over the next four years. It describes what we will do to ensure the best possible services are delivered for our residents, partners and businesses at a time of change for councils. Every district councillor plays a role in ensuring this plan is delivered, whether they are an Executive, scrutiny or regulatory committee member and of course as an elected ward member.

East Herts has a lot to offer. Generally we enjoy a good quality of life, good education and healthcare making it an attractive place to live and work for many families. We also enjoy high levels of employment and a diverse local economy made up of small to medium sized businesses with added benefit of being close to London, Cambridge and with good access to Stansted and Luton airports. There are however challenges. For example the largely rural nature of the district can leave some people feeling isolated, with limited access to technology improvements (eg. high speed broadband and 4G mobile phone coverage) and public transport (for those without regular access to a car).

The national government is pursuing an ambitious agenda and, like many areas across the country, local residents and families are likely to be impacted. On-going welfare reform as well as the forthcoming Housing and Planning Bill are likely to impact upon some of our most vulnerable individuals and families. The good quality of life attracts many people to the area and we need to accommodate population growth in a managed way. The construction of up to 15,000 new homes is being discussed over the next 20 years, and large scale developments are under varying degrees of progress. Around 750 homes are expected to be built every year in order to meet our housing needs and for every year we haven't done this since 2011 we need to make up the shortfall. The latest expectation is that we will need to build 900 – 1000 new homes each year. We need to work closely with developers and key partners to ensure growth is balanced with the right infrastructure and high quality design (such as better road and rail networks). Overall we need to balance the pressure of new housing and new developments in keeping with the local area as well as ensure our local businesses remain competitive.

Amongst all these challenges I want to preserve the unique character of East Herts and ensure it remains one of the best places to live and work in the country.

Introduction from Chief Executive:

Our elected representatives have set out what they want to achieve over the next four years and it is my job to ensure the organisation makes this a reality. This will be no small challenge given the pressure on public finances – we know our grant funding from central government will be completely withdrawn over the next 4 years. We need to think about new ways of doing things, generating new income streams and working with other key public sector organisations to reduce costs, share resources and improve the quality of the services delivered to residents.

The way we will do things is to ensure all our activities are customer led – providing more choice in how customers can access our services and delivering value for money in everything we do. Some of the key actions we will be pursuing over the next few years are as follows:

- Building on the success of our current shared services with Stevenage Borough Council (for ICT and Revenues and Benefits), develop a Shared Service for Waste and Street Cleansing with North Herts District Council
- Introduction of a joint Building Control service to ensure the continuity of an efficient and effective building control service
- Making better use of technology to deliver our services, recognising that different people want to engage with the council in different ways
- Delivering an organisational development strategy to ensure our workforce has the right skills needed for the future
- Re-tendering of key contracts (such as parking enforcement) to ensure value for money
- Implementing our new Economic Development Strategy to ensure we are business friendly council.

Priority and outcomes we want to see		Why is it important?	Key actions and measures that will help get us there	Timescales			
				16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Priority 1 – Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities	Residents living active and healthy lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The health of people in East Herts is generally better than the England average. We want to ensure this continues by focusing on providing early support and joined up services with our partners. Priorities in East Herts include reducing the levels of excess weight in adults, reducing the prevalence of smoking and to help the growing older population maintain their health¹. Mental Health issues are also likely to affect one out of four people in any given year. The Council has signed a pledge to work with all partners and to make mental health a priority across all its areas of responsibility 	<p>Current and planned actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide sport activities for over 50's in our towns and villages through the 'Forever Active' East Herts programme Invest in our parks and open spaces to encourage health, fitness and biodiversity including improvements to Grange Paddocks, Hartham Common and Presdales Recreation Ground Undertake a pilot on tackling obesity in conjunction with the County Council and Leeds Beckett University Implement the Wellbeing Dementia Project in order to increase the quality of life for those diagnosed with dementia and their carers Produce a leisure strategy to determine future direction and planning for the Council's two Leisure Centres and three joint use swimming pools <p>Performance measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be developed around public health 	↔			
	Support for our vulnerable families and individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant welfare reform over recent years as well as anticipated legislative changes through the new Housing and Planning Bill means we are likely to continue experiencing an increase in the demand for support across a range of services particularly for households with lower incomes. We want to improve life chances for vulnerable families and individuals by providing good quality services from Housing and Benefit advice to the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants. 	<p>Current and planned actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the Homeless Strategy, focusing on providing appropriate and timely housing advice to prevent homelessness Work with partners to assist people through the transition into universal credit Process new housing benefit claims and changes in circumstances within 10 working days <p>Performance measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time taken to process housing benefit and new claims and change of events Number of prevented homeless applications Number of affordable homes delivered 	↔	↔	↔	
	Communities engaged in local issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with local residents, partners and the voluntary and community sector is paramount for improving outcomes for local people. Reductions in public sector spending means that greater collaborative working is required and we need to find new ways of engaging local residents to determining what East Herts will be like in future 	<p>Current and planned actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local community groups to develop community energy schemes Support communities in rural areas with accessing infrastructure for super-fast broadband Move all services to a platform of digital delivery whilst still ensuring face to face and telephone services are maintained for those who need them <p>Performance measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction levels with council services % of services accessible via digital channels Percentage of superfast broadband accessibility in the district (defined as over 30 Mb/s) Digital media transactions (twitter and gov delivery) 	↔	↔		
Priority 2 – Enhance the quality of people's lives	Attractive places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The appearance of the local environment is a major factor in determining what makes somewhere a good place to live. Well maintained and clean streets and green spaces, free from litter, graffiti, fly tips and abandoned vehicles are ranked as important to our residents². Alongside this reducing waste and increasing our recycling rate is important to us and to our residents. Our 2013 residents' survey showed that 	<p>Current and planned actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the Environmental Crime Strategy (focusing on new measures and penalties for environmental crimes such as dog fouling) and Public Space Protection Orders Work with owners to return empty properties back into use Deliver successful Heritage Lottery Fund Stage 1 bid for Waytemore Castle (Bishop's Stortford) and deliver management plan for Hertford Castle Grounds (in partnership with the Town Council) Secure Local Nature Reserve Status for Pishiobury Park, Sawbridgeworth <p>Performance measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street and environmental cleanliness: Litter levels 	↔	↔	↔	↔

¹ East Hertfordshire Health Profile 2015 – Public Health England.

² 2013 East Herts Residents Survey

		our residents had high levels of satisfaction with our waste and collection services and wished to see opportunities to develop services further ³ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street and environmental cleanliness: Detritus levels Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting Waste: missed collections per 100,000 collections of household waste Number of empty properties brought back into use 				
	Future development best meets the need of the district and its residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We want to ensure that new development continues to achieve outcomes that are positive for our residents, the local economy and the environment. Our Local Plan which is currently being updated (and renamed the District Plan) provides the framework to shape the district's built environment for the future. Also as part of this we need to ensure affordable housing is delivered so our residents can continue to live in their local area. 	<p>Current and planned actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication and adoption of the District Plan Seek to shape development proposals for key sites in the district including the broad locations for development identified in the District Plan Support and maximise the provision of additional affordable housing in association with developers and registered providers Undertake feasibility work on setting up a company to build new homes <p>Performance measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processing of planning applications: major applications Processing of planning applications: minor applications Processing of planning applications: other applications Percentage of affordable homes agreed on affordable sites Net additional homes provided 	↔	↔	↔	↔
Priority 3 – Enable a flourishing local economy	Support for our businesses and the local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Herts is a relatively affluent area with high employment rates and a highly skilled population. Businesses registered here are mostly made up of small to medium sized enterprises across diverse sectors including professional, scientific and technical services, administrative and support services and construction. Maintaining a good quality of life is crucial to keeping East Herts an attractive place for business and entrepreneurs to want to locate 	<p>Current and planned actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review business start-up provision and identify further opportunities to improve support to new businesses Work with the Local Enterprise Partnership on the “growth hub”, an enterprise network for small businesses that are seeking to grow Deliver the EU-funded Rural Development Programme to support business growth <p>Performance measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business counts (enterprises and local units) Number of new business registrations and number still trading after one year 	↔	↔	↔	↔
	Vibrant town centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our five urban areas in the district (Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, Ware, Sawbridgeworth and Buntingford) are seeing a change in nature of the town centre, with a reduction in the retail offer and an increase in other offers (e.g. catering). There is an opportunity around tourism and the visitor economy, which is a growing sector in the district. 	<p>Current and planned actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a planning framework for Bishop's Stortford, focusing on Old River Lane and key adjoining town centre sites and develop a masterplan for Old River Lane Actively contribute to the Urban Design Study in Hertford town centre Work with Visit Herts to increase the profile of local attractions and support businesses in their supply chains Undertake feasibility work with town centre businesses on implementing Business Improvement Districts <p>Performance measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town centre footfall 	↔	↔		
	Working with others, to have achieved the right infrastructure for our businesses and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being part of the A10/ M11 “corridor” brings enormous benefits to East Herts through good connectivity into the economies of London and Cambridge as well as connectivity through Stansted airport. It also brings challenges to businesses who are concerned about the ability of infrastructure (such as road and rail networks) to support growth in these areas 	<p>Current and planned activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with key partners such as the Local Enterprise Partnership, County Council and London Stansted Cambridge Consortium on identifying infrastructure requirements and ways to bring them to fruition Work with key partners such as the County Council on sustainable transport solutions for East Herts, including community transport and green travel planning <p>Performance measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>To be developed</i> 	↔	↔		

³ 2013 East Herts Residents Survey