

A close-up photograph of a hand watering a small green seedling. The hand is positioned at the top, with water dripping from the fingers onto the plant. The seedling has three large green leaves and is growing out of a mound of dark soil. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

EAST HERTS: A place to grow 2020/21 – 2023/4

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Sustainability at the heart of everything we do

Enabling our communities

Encouraging economic growth

Digital by design



Foreword

We have chosen the “seed” concept to represent the priorities of the Council as it characterises much of what our district offers. As well as our commitment to sustainability and being greener, East Herts is a place where you can grow whether you want to move to a new, energy efficient home, expand your business or enjoy our market towns and fantastic green spaces whilst still being in easy reach of London. My priority is continue to delivering much needed housing but ensuring this comes with the right investment in infrastructure for travel, education and health. We also have planned investments of well over £100m in the next few years to improve our leisure and arts offering as well as help keep town centres vibrant and relevant. This plan states the actions that we will undertake during 2020/21 to deliver my priorities and they will be reviewed annually.



Councillor Linda Haysey, Leader

Sustainability at the heart of everything we do



Our recent declaration on climate change emphasised our appetite to continue to reduce our impact on the environment. We need to reduce reliance on cars to get around the district, improve air quality at pinch points, and increase our use of sustainable materials. We are committed to providing good quality housing with a sustainable travel infrastructure which will support the needs of our communities. We will ensure that the development planned across the district maintains the highest environmental standards, and our member champions for heritage will ensure that we uphold the character of our places.

Where we are now

The council has made a Climate Change Declaration which affirms the council's commitment to use its powers and influence to promote carbon neutrality both on the part of the council and the district more broadly. Latest records indicate the council itself produced 2,800 tonnes of CO₂ in 2017 (the latest full year data), with 4.6 tonnes of CO₂ being produced per head across the whole district each year. We need to ensure that we collect and use relevant data in order to drive progress on climate change.

Where do we want to get to?

- Environmental Sustainability to be at the heart of everything the council does
- The council to be carbon neutral by 2030
- Climate friendly planning and building control regulations to be in force
- Joined up multi-agency action being taken to tackle climate change
- The council to have fully used its powers and influence to promote the district being carbon neutral by 2030
- The council to achieve 65% recycling rate by 2035

Strategy/objectives

1. We will make changes to how the council manages its own premises, people and services

Actions/key projects in 2020/21

- 1a. Draw up a carbon assessment tool to be used to assess the carbon footprint of all council projects
- 1b. Audit the council's vehicles with a view to replacing them with e-vehicles
- 1c. Audit all our buildings to identify options to increase energy efficiency/reduce the carbon footprint

Who

When

2. We will use our powers to promote action by others

- 2a. Publish an Environmental Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document
- 2b. Facilitate the installation of rapid e-chargers to support a move to more e-taxis
- 2c. Survey locally active residential developers to better understand barriers to building higher energy efficient / Passivhaus properties

Environmental Sustainability Co-ordinator
Environmental Sustainability Co-ordinator
Property Manager
Service Manager
Planning Policy
Environmental Sustainability Co-ordinator
Head of Housing and Health

30/09/20
31/12/20
31/03/21

3. We will influence and encourage others to be more environmentally sustainable

- 3a. Work with business organisations and groups to promote environmental sustainability
- 3b. Establish and run a multi-agency Environmental and Climate Change Forum
- 3c. Actively implement and encourage waste minimisation initiatives

Business and Economic Development Manager
Head of Housing and Health
Waste Shared service

31/03/21
01/04/20
31/03/21

Enabling our communities – we will invest in our places



The quality of life on offer in East Herts – good schools, urban and rural space, historic market towns and excellent connectivity to London and Cambridge - makes it an ideal place to prosper. Our population is estimated to grow by 27,600 people by 2041, meaning we will be creating new communities as well as enabling our existing communities. We will work with partners to ensure that residents have a say in the future of their local area and that the council can enable those who most need support. Investing in major projects such as theatres and leisure services will make our district a more attractive destination for people to live, visit and invest.

Where we are now

We are investing in several high profile projects which will improve the wellbeing of our residents. We need to ensure momentum is kept on delivery, ensure a clear and consistent narrative is understood by stakeholders and that services to our most vulnerable continue to be delivered.

Where do we want to get to?

- Delivery of key milestones within major projects
- Deliver 150 new affordable homes each year
- Work with our vulnerable residents to prevent them becoming homeless by either maintaining their current home or assisting them to obtain more suitable alternative accommodation
- Time taken to process housing benefit claims/ changes (target: 10 days)
- Increased reach and engagements on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter
- Increased referrals from the social prescribing project

Strategy/objectives

1. We will invest in our places

Actions/key projects in 2020/21

- 1a. Complete construction of new Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre (78 week build starting Feb 2020)
- 1b. Deliver £20m investment in Hertford Theatre
- 1c. Deliver the Castle Park project
- 1d. Support the Herts 2020 Year of Culture
- 1e. Deliver improvements to Ward Freman swimming pool in Buntingford

Who

When

2. We will ensure all voices in the community are heard

2. Grow our digital communications channels (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn)

Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy

3. We will support our vulnerable residents

- 3a. Continue to deliver social prescribing and launch the Hertford and Bishop's Stortford Healthy Hubs
- 3b. Deliver affordable housing
- 3c. Support people with the transition to universal credit

Healthy Lifestyles Programme Officer 31/3/2021
Housing Services Manager 31/3/2021
Head of Revenues & Benefits Shared Service 31/3/2021

Encouraging economic growth



The district's prosperity is supported by our proximity to London and the large employers and supply chains in our neighbouring towns. However, we also have a large number of micro-businesses operating in the district. We are committed to supporting and listening to local businesses in order to grow our local economy - providing flexible working space, creating opportunities for networking and supporting the application of new technology. To enable future prosperity we must plan for it - our District Plan protects existing employment space and plans for more of it. We are committed to ensuring that housing growth is delivered alongside the right infrastructure.

Where we are now

The district plan has been adopted and key sites are being developed. The local economy remains robust with high numbers of small and micro-businesses operating across different sectors. However we need to ensure that investment in infrastructure is realised to ensure we build communities not just housing estates. Equally we need to ensure that employment land is retained on current sites and built out within any new developments.

Where do we want to get to?

- Increase capital and revenue income from Millstream Property Investment Ltd to support key council priorities
- Increase the number of subscribers to the East Herts Lottery
- Increase the number of Launchpad users and the income generated from the facility
- Article 4 directions implemented on the 32 designated employment sites across our towns and villages within the District Plan
- Delivery of at least 839 new dwellings per year
- Determine 80% of minor/other applications within 8 weeks
- Determine major planning applications within 13 weeks

Strategy/objectives

1. We will develop new sources of income

Actions/key projects in 2020/21

- 1a. Deliver the Millstream Property Investment Ltd's Business plan
1b. Grow the East Herts Lottery

Who

Head of Housing and Health
Housing and Health Projects Officer

When

31/3/21
31/3/21

2. We will support businesses growth

- 2a. Expand the Launchpad in Bishop's Stortford and Ware
2b. Provide discretionary business rate grants to incentivise new businesses to set up/ existing businesses to expand

Business and Economic Development Manager
Head of Communications Strategy and Policy

31/3/21
30/12/20

3. We will create viable places

- 3a. Begin construction of the multi-story car park on the Old River Lane site
3b. Implement Article 4 Directions on designated employment sites
3c. Support the Herts Growth Board with presenting a case for additional infrastructure investment in Hertfordshire
3d. Delivery of the strategic sites allocated in the District Plan in accordance with the housing trajectory

Project Manager
Economic Development Officer
Chief Executive

30/12/20
31/1/21
31/1/21
31/3/21

Digital by design



East Herts is made up of many different towns, villages and communities. The use of new technology and digital connectivity are key to providing the best possible services for all our residents and businesses, in towns and rurally. The way people work, interact, and access goods and services is changing rapidly. Connecting people with ideas and information can help us address some of the district's difficult issues – such as social isolation and access to services in rural areas. We will work with partners such as the Digital Innovation Zone to put in place strong foundations for digitally enabled communities, particularly new communities such as Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. At the same time, the council will continue to transform its own services so they are more customer responsive and maximise the use of digital technology.

Where we are now

The geographic make up of the district means telephony remains the channel of choice for residents. Equally footfall into our main reception areas remains high. Whilst we recognise the importance of providing these services we also need to ensure demand is managed where possible. Alongside this we need to work with partners and the private sector to ensure the digital technology and infrastructure is in place for new developments.

Where do we want to get to?

- Increase proportion of customer contacts undertaken via the website
- Ensure 80% of govmetric ratings for face to face are rated as good
- Ensure 50% of govmetric ratings for web and email are rated as good
- Increase SOCITM ratings
- Increase % of households that have signed up to self service
- Increase % of businesses that have signed up to self service
- Increase % of landlords that have signed up to self service

Strategy/objectives

1. We will improve the customer experience for those who use council services

Actions/key projects in 2020/21

- 1a. Sign up to the MHCLG Digital Declaration
- 1b. re-design reception areas to encourage customer self-service
- 1c. Put core staff competences in place for all staff which include customer focus and making effective use of digital solutions

Who

Deputy Chief Executive
Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy
Head of HR

When

30/9/20
31/3/21
31/3/21

2. We will work with partners to ensure our communities are digitally enabled

- 2a. Ensure fibre to the premise (FTTP) is provided on all new developments
- 2b. Support joint delivery of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town as a fully sustainable and digital 'place'
- 2c. Support the Digital Innovation Zone to lobby for investment in our towns and villages
- 2d. Provide a programme of business networking and awareness raising on GDPR and cyber-security

Principal Planning Officer
Senior Planning Project Officer
Deputy Chief Executive
Economic Development Officer

31/3/21
31/3/21
31/3/21
31/1/21