

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

JOINT SCRUTINY– 1 JUNE 2010

REPORT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

REPORT ON THE SIX MONTHLY PROGRESS AGAINST THE ALL SURVEY ACTION PLAN

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Corporate Business Scrutiny with details of the progress against the All Survey Action Plan.

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEES:</u>	
(A)	That Members note the progress against the All Survey Action Plan (Essential Reference Paper B).
(B)	That Members recommend to the Executive that the actions which relate to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) are removed from the All Survey Action Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 2.5

1.0 Background

- 1.1 A biennial Residents' Survey has been undertaken by East Herts Council since 1993. Previously this has been conducted by Ipsos Mori. The 2009 survey was the first residents' survey conducted by Opinion Research Services. The survey has traditionally been used to track customer satisfaction with the Council and individual service areas, and also as a vehicle for more service specific questions relevant at the time.
- 1.2 In addition to the Residents' Survey, East Herts Council gathers information regarding residents' satisfaction and local priorities

through the Place Survey. This is a biennial postal survey, with the questions set by central government. The Place Survey replaced the Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) Survey. In replacing the BVPI survey, some questions have been changed. To retain tracking data from BVPI questions which are not asked in the Place Survey, it was necessary to include these questions in the Residents Survey.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 At the meeting of the 6 October 2009 Corporate Business Scrutiny were presented with the full Opinion Research Services (ORS) report on the 2008 Place Survey. This included an action plan that detailed how we would look to maintain the good results and where improvements can be made. On the 17 November 2009 Corporate Business Scrutiny were presented with the full ORS report on the 2009 Residents' Survey, along with an action plan which combined the actions coming out of both the Residents' Survey and the Place Survey – creating one holistic tool.
- 2.2 At the outset it is important to stress that the survey results were extremely pleasing. In certain areas we had improved on previous scores. This report is based on capitalising on those good results and not being complacent about them.
- 2.3 It was agreed that the action plan would be monitored by officers on an annual basis in line with the timetable for the 2011 Residents' Survey and the 2010 Place Survey. This report is the first progress report against that action plan.
- 2.4 The action plan included 21 actions in total.

Of these; 9 have been actioned
 5 are in progress
 1 has been postponed
 6 require LSP input

There are 3 actions specific to East Herts Council that were already planned that should lead to improvement

Of these; 2 have been actioned
 1 is in progress

There are 7 actions relating to East Hertfordshire as an area that were already planned that should lead to improvement:

Of these; 5 have been actioned
 1 are in progress

Six actions specific to East Herts Council where activity could be considered in order to improve performance

Of these; 3 have been actioned
 2 are in progress
 1 has been postponed and is to be considered at a later date

- 2.5 The action plan also included 6 actions relating to East Hertfordshire where activity could be considered in order to improve performance (Actions 17 – 22). The local LSP was requested to consider possible actions for this issue in response to the information provided by the surveys. Acknowledging the severity of the economic climate, the partnership has declared that with resources being reduced and further under threat that it must focus its efforts on:

- Supporting the vulnerable and promoting economic wellbeing
- Wider community safety

The partnership has also commissioned officers to undertake an exercise of resource mapping so partners can better understand the extent of resources employed in different priorities and hopefully identify a small number of joint commissioning opportunities/ pilots to deliver better outcomes for less cost. Therefore in light of this re-prioritisation it is recommended that these actions are removed from the action plan.

- 2.6 Originally the action plan contained an item which was to increase the percentage of residents who feel they belong to their neighbourhood. This has been removed from the National Indicator basket and therefore the corresponding action has been deleted – reducing the number of items from 22 to 21.
- 2.7 Details of progress against each of the actions can be found in Essential Reference Paper ‘B’.

2.8 The second Place Survey is due to be undertaken in the autumn of 2010. The success of the activity achieved should be reflected in improved satisfaction and perception ratings. The results of the 2010 Place Survey will be reported alongside the next action plan progress report and any new actions will be added to the current plan. The next Residents' Survey will be undertaken in 2011.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 The action plan has been shared with the LSP and relevant East Hertfordshire Officers. Details can be found in Essential Reference Paper 'A'.

Background Papers

Report on the Results of the 2008 Residents Survey presented to Corporate Business Scrutiny on 6 October 2009

Report on the Results of the 2009 Residents Survey presented to Corporate Business Scrutiny on 17 November 2009

Contact Officer: Ceri Pettit – Head of Strategic Direction and Performance Manager (Shared) – ext 2240

Report Author: Lorna Georgiou – Performance and Improvement Co-ordinator - ext 2244

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):	<p>Promoting prosperity and well-being; providing access and opportunities <i>Enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.</i></p> <p>Fit for purpose, services fit for you <i>Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.</i></p> <p>Pride in East Herts <i>Improve standards of the neighbourhood and environmental management in our towns and villages.</i></p> <p>Caring about what's built and where <i>Care for and improve our natural and built environment.</i></p> <p>Shaping now, shaping the future <i>Safeguard and enhance our unique mix of rural and urban communities, ensuring sustainable, economic and social opportunities including the continuation of effective development control and other measures.</i></p> <p>Leading the way, working together <i>Deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.</i></p>
Consultation:	The Action Plan was shared with the LSP and individual service leads have been consulted with regards to the viability of the actions included.
Legal:	N/A
Financial:	There are no direct financial implications with this report however the actions included in the plan may require resources. Some of these have already been reported separately and others may require further reports to be presented.
Human Resource:	There are no direct human resource implications with this report however the actions included in the plan may require resources. Some of these have already been reported separately and others may require further reports to be presented.

Risk Management:	N/A
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a) Work/activity that is already planned that should lead to improvement

East Herts Council

Ref	Recommendation	Management Response	Responsibility	Timescale
1	<p><i>Place Survey: 42% of respondents were satisfied with sport/ leisure facilities in the district compared to a Hertfordshire average of 52%.</i></p> <p><i>Residents Survey: 46% of respondents identified swimming pools as an area that need improving</i></p> <p>Increase satisfaction with leisure facilities by the 2010 Place Survey</p>	<p>Actioned: The completion of the refurbishment plans to revitalise Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre and Hartham Leisure Centre. Both facilities have been improved so that each venue has a new studio space for dance and exercise classes and better high tech exercise stations. It is too early to say whether these changes have increased satisfaction, although the measurements in place should start to demonstrate this during the course of 2010/11. However baseline data does show a significant increase in the gym membership at Grange Paddocks, exceeding the expectations of Everyone Active. Hartham has increased its memberships but due to the phased nature of the opening of the site to the public there has not been such a dramatic increase. Qualitative feedback for both sites show that users like the improved gyms and quality of the changing facilities.</p> <p>Since the official opening in January 2010, there's been an increase of 9,142 visits to Hartham in Hertford and Grange Paddocks in Bishop's Stortford, compared to the same months last year (January 2009 to March 2009 there were 7,272 visits compared to 16,414 from January 2010 to March 2010). Also qualitative</p>	Head of Community and Cultural Services	Increase by 2010 Place Survey

Essential Reference Paper B - Action Plan

		feedback for both sites show that users like the improved gyms and quality of the changing facilities.		
2	<p><i>Place Survey: Only 33% of respondents in East Hertfordshire said they agreed that their local council provides value for money.</i></p> <p><i>Residents Survey 53%: agreed that East Herts Council provides value for money</i></p> <p>Increase percentage who agree East Herts Council provides value for money by 2010 Place Survey</p>	<p>In progress: We are currently engaging residents in our budget setting process by holding:</p> <p>Focus Groups</p> <p>Citizens Panel Workshops</p> <p>We also include a section in the Spring edition of Link magazine which informs residents on how their money has been spent.</p> <p>Opinions on value for money are partly determined by satisfaction levels: Please see Ref 3</p>	Head of Strategic Direction	Increase by 2010 Place Survey
3	<p><i>Place Survey: 20% of respondents are dissatisfied with how East Hertfordshire Council runs things. 36% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. This means that satisfaction is 44% currently.</i></p> <p><i>Residents Survey: 61% were satisfied. Respondents significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with the way the Council is running East Herts are those aged 35-44 or with children in the household.</i></p> <p>Increase satisfaction with East Herts Council by 2010 Place Survey</p>	<p>In progress: To increase satisfaction as whole it is necessary to increase satisfaction with individual services we provide as well as ensuring that we keep residents regularly informed.</p> <p>In addition to communicating our achievements via Link magazine (that goes to every home in the district four times a year) and via press releases and letters to the newspaper, we are also in the process of improving and expanding our website content. This will see an advancement in the use of our website as a communications tool and a primary source of news and information for residents wanting to</p>	CMT	Increase by 2010 Place Survey

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		<p>know what the council does. This reflects the desire of the public as expressed in the Residents' Survey last year.</p> <p>It should not be forgotten that there is also a significant amount of marketing activity that takes place by services in relation to campaign work and information sharing – for example, leaflets produced that explain the introduction of the Community Toilet Scheme or the changes to bin collections around Christmas, for example. While Communications is not always intimately involved in these 'service comms', their influence should be recognised. Likewise, communications in partnership with other stakeholder organizations (such as the Police) also have an influence on our reputation.</p>		
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East Hertfordshire

Ref	Recommendation	Management Response	Responsibility	Timescale
4	<p><i>Place Survey: 62% of residents believe that local public services are working to make the area cleaner and greener. This is significantly below the Hertfordshire average of 67%.</i></p> <p><i>Residents Survey: Respondents aged 16 – 34 or living in rented accommodation are significantly less likely to agree that they are well informed about climate change and what they can do to help reduce its impact.</i></p>	<p>Actioned:</p> <p>The successful implementation of the Alternate Refuse Collection (ARC) scheme which resulted in houses in the district being able to collect kitchen waste and cardboard. Alongside this kerbside collection and processing of plastic bottles across the district was designed and delivered. Although it is too early to say whether resident satisfaction with recycling has increased, estimated performance for NI 192 - Percentage of household waste sent for reuse,</p>	<p>Head of Environmental Services</p> <p>LSP/ RSLs</p>	<p>Perception of respondents to have increased by 2010 Place Survey and 2011 Residents</p>

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	<p>Increase the percentage of residents that believe local public services are working to make the area cleaner and greener.</p>	<p>recycling and composting has increased from 34.85% in 2008/09 to an estimated 41.0% in 2009/10. Going forward the Council is predicting that the recycling rate will increase to 48% in 2010/11 and 50% in 2011/12.</p> <p>Following the re-tender of the grounds maintenance contract in 2008/09 East Herts Council has obtained two Green Flag awards during 2009/10 - the Council retained its rating for Southern Country Park and obtained an award for Ridgeway Local Park on Sele Farm, Hertford.</p> <p>The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan was agreed by Council and is being implemented. The Executive agreed a range of building related environmental improvements to reduce carbon emissions and reduce the Council's carbon footprint, provide community leadership and consider adaptations to cope with climate change.</p>		<p>Survey –</p> <p>Satisfaction after the introduction of ARC may drop initially.</p>
5	<p><i>Place Survey: There are 4 services for which their satisfaction levels have ranked them in the bottom 25% of all English Local Authorities:</i></p> <p><i>Doorstep Recycling</i></p> <p><i>Local tips/ household waste recycling centres</i></p>	<p>Actioned:</p> <p>For doorstep recycling please see Ref 4.</p> <p>The Council has re-focussed and re-structured its approach to its preparation of its local Transport and Parking Strategy, originally due to be completed in late 2009. All highway</p>	<p>Head of Environmental Services</p> <p>LSP/ HCC</p>	<p>Increase by 2010 Place Survey</p>

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	<p><i>Local transport information</i></p> <p><i>Local bus services</i></p> <p><i>Residents' survey:</i> 51% of respondents are satisfied with the types of material collected with regards to recycling and composting collection.</p>	<p>authorities, including Hertfordshire County Council, have been tasked by central government to prepare new, county-wide Local Transport Plans according to a new framework, which will serve as a valid framework for the preparation of East Herts' own strategy. The Council is therefore preparing its local strategy during 2010/11, alongside HCC's preparation of its LTP3 and using many of the same source documents and studies. Both are due to be completed during Spring 2011.</p> <p>Local tips, transport information and bus services are the responsibility of the County Council and/ or the private sector. East Herts are pursuing Hertfordshire County Council with regards to their planned action to improve the ratings.</p>		
6	<p><i>Place Survey:</i> 21% of respondents do not feel safe after dark.</p> <p><i>Residents Survey:</i> 19% do not feel safe after dark.</p>	<p>In progress: Countywide Reassurance Working Group established. They have an action plan that addresses anti-social behaviour issues and perceptions. An East Hertfordshire Officer sits on this group. The Reassurance and confidence working group remit is to deliver the Safer Herts Campaign II. Their aim is to promote to the public that agencies work together to reduce crime and disorder, and that Hertfordshire is a safe place to live, work and visit. They intend on doing this through a large scale poster campaign on the back of buses and at train stations, in conjunction with positive press releases. The campaign will launch early summer.</p>	Head of Licensing and Community Safety	Increase by 2010 Place Survey

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	<i>Place Survey: 23% of East Hertfordshire residents reported that people using drugs or dealing drugs is a problem.</i>	Actioned: Please see Ref 7	Head of Licensing and Community Safety	Increase by 2010 Place Survey
8	<i>Place Survey: 28.8% of East Hertfordshire residents reported that drunk or rowdy behaviour is a problem.</i>	Actioned: Please see Ref 7	Head of Licensing and Community Safety	Increase by 2010 Place Survey
9	<i>Place Survey: The score for NI27 (Council and Police understanding anti-social behaviour concerns) is 23.1%. This ranks lower than the national average.</i>	Actioned: Please see Ref 7	Head of Licensing and Community Safety	Increase by 2010 Place Survey

b) Areas where activity could be considered in order to improve performanceEast Herts Council

Ref	Recommendation	Management Response	Responsibility	Timescale
10	<i>Residents Survey: The areas that residents stated were least important and least needs improving are listed buildings and conservation areas (5%), tackling climate change (4%), how well people from different backgrounds get on together (6%) and cultural facilities (6%).</i>	Postponed to be considered at a later date: The importance of these activities in terms of whether they feature as a priority, will be reviewed when all six Council Priorities are revisited from 2011.	Executive, with support from CMT	To be revisited in 2011
11	<i>Residents Survey: A significantly high proportion would</i>	In progress: Our customer service	Head of	Increase

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	<p><i>prefer to contact the Council by email (22%) compared with the 6% that currently do.</i></p> <p>Increase usability of email as a contact method</p>	Improvement plan has a clear strategy for improving electronic access to the council. Improvements will be rolled out and enhanced throughout the life of the C3W programme.	customer Service and New media	by 2011 Residents Survey
12	<p><i>Residents Survey: 41% were dissatisfied with the time take to deal with their complaint. 50% were dissatisfied with the way in which their complaint was managed. 49% were dissatisfied with how their complaint was handled overall. 57% were dissatisfied with the final outcome from their complaint.</i></p>	In progress: The recently agreed Compliments, Comments and Complaints policy clarifies the timescales and process for ensuring best outcomes for service users. Some staff training has been undertaken and the policy will be further embedded through the C3W process.	Head of customer Service and New media	Increase by 2011 Residents Survey
13	<p><i>Residents Survey: 24% of respondents say they receive only a limited amount of information from the Council and a further 9% stated that the Council does not tell them much about what it does.</i></p>	Actioned: Please see Ref 3	Head of Strategic Direction	Increase by 2011 Residents Survey
14	<p><i>The proportion of residents who agree that the Council does enough to enforce planning rules (35%) is roughly in balance with the proportion that disagree (31%). Residents significantly more likely to disagree that the Council does enough to ensure that planning rules are enforced are aged 60 – 74 or retired.</i></p>	Actioned: A new Planning Enforcement policy was recommended by the Executive on 13 October to Council to approve on 9 December 2009. It was implemented on 1 April 2010.	Head of Planning and Building Control	Increase by 2011 Residents Survey
15	<p><i>Residents Survey: 46% of respondents identified swimming pools, 34% parks and open spaces and 28% identified outdoor sports facilities as areas that need improving</i></p>	Actioned: Please see Ref 1 and 4	Head of Culture and community Head of Environmental Services	Increase by 2011 Residents Survey

East Hertfordshire

Ref	Recommendation	Management Response	Responsibility	Timescale
16	<i>Place Survey: Only 14% of residents feel well informed about what to do in a large scale emergency.</i>	<p>The local LSP was requested to consider possible actions for this issue in response to the information provided by the surveys. Acknowledging the severity of the economic climate, the partnership has declared that with resources being reduced and further under threat that it must focus its efforts on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the vulnerable and promoting economic wellbeing Wider community safety <p>The partnership has also commissioned officers to undertake an exercise of resource mapping so partners can better understand the extent of resources employed in different priorities and hopefully identify a small number of joint commissioning opportunities/ pilots to deliver better outcomes for less cost.</p>	LSP/ HCC	To be determined
17	<i>Place Survey: 58% of respondents felt that local public services were not doing enough to promote the interests of local residents and acting on the concerns of local residents</i>		LSP	To be determined
18	<i>Place Survey: Only 26% of respondents felt that older people in their local area were able to get the services and support they need to continue to live at home for as long as they want to.</i>		LSP/ HCC	To be determined
19	<i>Place Survey: 45% of respondents disagreed that parents take enough responsibility for the behaviour of their children.</i>		LSP/ DCTP	To be determined
20	<i>Place Survey and Residents' Survey: The following services have been identified as most important and most needing improvement:</i> <i>Affordable housing</i> <i>Clean Streets</i> <i>The level of crime</i> <i>The level of traffic congestion</i> <i>Public transport</i> <i>Road and Pavement Repairs (Residents Survey Only)</i>		LSP/ CDRP/ HCC	To be determined
21	<i>38% of respondents stated they would like to see more cycleways in East Herts. This is twice as high as in the 2007 residents' survey. The second most popular choice was cinemas (35%) and more events in public open space (32%).</i>		LSP	To be determined