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Jeff Hughes
*Head of Democratic and Legal
Support Services*

MEETING : COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
VENUE : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
DATE : TUESDAY 28 FEBRUARY, 2012
TIME : 7.00 PM

PLEASE NOTE TIME AND VENUE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillor G McAndrew (Chairman)
Councillors E Buckmaster, S Bull, T Herbert, Mrs D Hone, J Mayes,
P Moore, P Ruffles, N Symonds and C Woodward

Conservative Group Substitutes: Councillors N Poulton

(Note: Substitution arrangements must be notified by the absent Member to Democratic Services 24 hours before the meeting)

CONTACT OFFICER: Lorraine Blackburn
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only on day of meeting

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PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

1. A Member with a personal interest in any business of the Council who attends a meeting of the Authority at which the business is considered must, with certain specified exemptions (see section 5 below), disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest prior to the commencement of it being considered or when the interest becomes apparent.
2. Members should decide whether or not they have a personal interest in any matter under discussion at a meeting. If a Member decides they have a personal interest then they must also consider whether that personal interest is also prejudicial.
3. A personal interest is either an interest, as prescribed, that you must register under relevant regulations or it is an interest that is not registrable but where the well-being or financial position of you, members of your family, or people with whom you have a close association, is likely to be affected by the business of the Council more than it would affect the majority of inhabitants of the ward(s) affected by the decision.
4. Members with personal interests, having declared the nature of that personal interest, can remain in the meeting, speak and vote on the matter unless the personal interest is also a prejudicial interest.
5. An exemption to declaring a personal interest applies when the interest arises solely from a Member's membership of or position of general control or management on:
 - any other body to which they have been appointed or nominated by the authority
 - any other body exercising functions of a public nature (e.g another local authority)

In these exceptional cases, provided a Member does not have a prejudicial interest, they only need to declare their interest if they speak. If a Member does not want to speak to the meeting, they may still vote on the matter without making a declaration.

6. A personal interest will also be a prejudicial interest in a matter if all of the following conditions are met:
 - the matter does not fall within one of the exempt categories of decisions
 - the matter affects your financial interests or relates to a licensing or regulatory matter
 - a member of the public, who knows the relevant facts, would reasonably think your personal interest is so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

7. Exempt categories of decisions are:
 - setting council tax
 - any ceremonial honour given to Members
 - an allowance, payment or indemnity for Members
 - statutory sick pay
 - school meals or school transport and travelling expenses: if you are a parent or guardian of a child in full-time education or you are a parent governor, unless it relates particularly to the school your child attends
 - housing; if you hold a tenancy or lease with the Council, as long as the matter does not relate to your particular tenancy or lease.

8. If you have a prejudicial interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting, you must declare that interest and its nature as soon as the interest becomes apparent to you.

9. If you have declared a personal and prejudicial interest, you must leave the room, unless members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter, by statutory right or otherwise. If that is the case, you can also attend the meeting for that purpose. However, you must immediately leave the room once you have finished or when the meeting decides that you have finished (if that is earlier). You cannot remain in the public gallery to observe proceedings.

AGENDA

1. Minutes (Pages 7 - 20)

To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2011.

2. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence

3. Chairman's Announcements

4. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Member's Declaration of Interest and Party Whip arrangements.

5. Health Engagement Panel (Pages 21 - 26)

To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2011 and a verbal update from the Health Engagement Panel Chairman.

6. Annual Review of Leisure Contract - Year 3: Sport and Leisure Management Ltd (SLM) (Pages 27 - 58)

7. East Herts Housing Strategy 2008-2011 - Update and Action Plan; Draft Housing Strategy 2012- 2015 (Pages 59 - 136)

8. Community Safety Review: Report of the Task and Finish Group addressing the issue of reassurance

To follow

9. Ageing Well - how is East Herts working to make the district a good place to grow old in? (Pages 137 - 144)

10. Community Scrutiny: Corporate Health Check October to December 2011
(Pages 145 - 156)
11. Community Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 157 - 168)
12. Urgent Business

To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration and is not likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information.

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY
22 NOVEMBER 2011, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor G McAndrew (Chairman).
Councillors E Buckmaster, S Bull, T Herbert,
J Mayes, P Moore, P Ruffles, N Symonds
and C Woodward.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Dave Cooper | - Performance Officer |
| Marian Langley | - Scrutiny Officer |
| Peter Mannings | - Democratic Services Assistant |
| Marianne McWhinnie | - Community Projects Officer (Equalities) |
| Will O'Neill | - Head of Community and Cultural Services |
| Claire Pullen | - Community Planning Partnerships Manager |
| George A Robertson | - Director of Customer and Community Services |
| Brian Simmonds | - Head of Community Safety |

433 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor D Hone.

434 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked Councillor S Bull for standing in as Chairman for the 20 September 2011 meeting of the Committee.

The Chairman advised that he would be amending the running order so that Agenda item 9 – 2011/12 Service Plans would be dealt with after Agenda item 5 – Health Engagement Panel.

The Chairman advised Members of the good news that the Royal Society of Public Health Award had been awarded to the Authority.

435 MINUTES

In respect of Minute 300 – Minutes, the Director of Customer and Community Services advised that there were 70 apprenticeships registered at Hertford Regional College. Members were provided with a breakdown of this figure for the major towns in East Herts. Members were advised that these apprenticeships included cookery, carpentry and a technical apprenticeship at Hertford Theatre.

Also in respect of Minute 300 – Minutes, Councillor P Ruffles stated that the Micro Hydro Plan for Hertford Theatre should be kept in the spotlight now that it had been through Scrutiny. The Director agreed and referred to the Micro Hydro Plan as an exciting project for East Herts.

The Director advised that the Micro Hydro Plan would be reported to the next Environment Scrutiny Committee as part of the Climate Change Action Plan annual update.

He emphasised that the Authority would not lose sight of this project.

Councillor S Bull expressed concern that there had been no mention of Buntingford in respect of apprenticeships in East Herts. He referred to the excellent facilities at Freman College.

In respect of Minute 300 – Minutes, Councillor C Woodward referred to whether there had been any progress with enhancing disabled access to the swimming pool at Grange Paddocks. The Director advised that when the Authority had approved the works to Grange Paddocks, Members had focussed on enhancements to the gym and the changing rooms.

The Director advised that Sports and Leisure Management (SLM) had carried out an accessibility assessment and was working with disability and special needs groups. He undertook to raise the issue at his next meeting with SLM.

Councillor Woodward suggested that the Grange Paddocks pool was tired, beyond its time and in need of some tender loving care. The Director reiterated that Members had resolved to invest in the gym and the changing rooms on an invest to save basis.

In response to comments from Councillor N Symonds in respect of a reduction in free swimming provision and access for the elderly, the Director advised that SLM was consulting with those groups that did not currently use the pool.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

436 HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PANEL

The Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of Councillor D Hone, provided a summary of the work of the Panel and the

County Council Health Scrutiny Committee.

Members were advised that Councillor Hone had attended a meeting of the County Council Health Scrutiny Committee at the QE2 Hospital where Sarah Brierley, North Herts Hospitals Trust, had given a presentation in relation to the future of accident and emergency provision. There had also been focus groups at the Lister and QE2 hospitals on this subject.

The Committee was reminded of the 3 year award to the Authority from the Royal Society of Public Health. The Scrutiny Officer stated that Councillor Hone would be travelling to the House of Lords with Environmental Health Promotion Officer to be presented with the award on 29 November 2011. The award would be formally presented to Members at Council on 14 December 2011.

The Scrutiny Officer stated that the Health Scrutiny Committee had met on 29 October 2011 and had split into groups to scrutinise Quality Innovation Productivity Prevention (QIPP) with the 5 local trusts. Any resulting recommendations would be presented to the 13 December 2011 meeting of the Health Scrutiny Committee.

Members were advised of a Public Health Conference in Hertfordshire on 18 November 2011 at Campus West, Welwyn Garden City. The main emphasis of this event was Health and Wellbeing Boards. There had also been a number of local workshops that had been well attended.

Councillor E Buckmaster stated that he had attended a workshop at the QE2 Hospital with Councillor N Symonds. He stated that he had also attended a workshop at the Lister Hospital with Councillor L Haysey. He commented that the focus had been how to communicate service changes in Accident and Emergency at the Lister and QEII to the public. Councillor Buckmaster emphasised that there had been agreement that communication methods such as the internet and social media should be used as much as

possible to keep costs down.

The Committee was advised that local Councillors had a key role to play in acting as champions within communities when liaising with schools and community groups. One key issue of concern was transport between hospitals and how to access key transport links more generally.

Councillor Symonds stressed the importance of using appropriate methods of informing the public of changes to Health Services in East Herts. She stated that communication methods should vary for different groups of people. She also commented that there should be better synergy between housing providers and health service providers.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the update be noted.

437 2011/12 SERVICE PLANS - SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AND EXCEPTIONS REPORT

The Leader of the Council submitted a summary of the 2011/12 Service Plan actions relevant to Community Scrutiny Committee which had been achieved and details of those which had revised completion dates.

Members were advised that 4 actions had been achieved as well as 1 action from the 2010/11 Customer and Community Services Action Plan. Members were also advised that there was one action requiring a revised completion date in that the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service had a revised “go live” date of 5 December 2011.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the summary of progress against the 2011/12 Service Plan actions be noted; and

(B) the action requiring a revised completion date be noted.

438 UPDATE ON COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Community Planning and Partnerships Manager submitted a report updating Members on the community grants process, in particular, the range of grant “pots” and how they might be refocused to better achieve the Council’s corporate priorities.

Members were advised that an Officer review of grants had suggested the use of a single grants fund would simplify the decision making process. A more flexible approach would allow budgets to be allocated purely on the basis of demand.

Another proposal considered was that Officers could be granted delegated authority to authorise grants up to £2000. A smaller grants process with a lighter touch could be used so that grants of this size were allocated quickly. Members were advised that special one off criteria for grants could be put in place in relation to the 2012 Olympics and the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee.

In response to a query from Councillor E Buckmaster, the Community Planning and Partnerships Manager confirmed that if Officers were provided with more flexibility then any under spend could be used in future rather than being lost at the end of the year.

Councillor P Ruffles commented that a less bureaucratic approach should be adopted, in line with the County Council locality budgets. The Director of Customer and Community Services advised that, as this would require a policy change, a decision would have to be taken by the Executive or Council.

Councillor G McAndrew stated that a small working group could be set up to discuss Community Grants in more detail and bring back recommendations to the Community

Scrutiny Committee. Councillor C Woodward agreed that Officers should have more delegated authority to take decisions in respect of Community Grants.

Councillor T Herbert stated that if Members were to have more responsibility in relation to Community Grant allocations then appropriate guidance should be made available to Councillors.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) progress on community grants processes as detailed in Section 2.2 of the report now submitted be noted; and

(B) a short-life advisory working group of Members and lead Officers be set up to discuss Community Grants in more detail and bring back recommendations to the Community Scrutiny Committee.

439 EQUALITIES: DELIVERING BETTER SERVICES FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

The Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report updating Members on progress made since the last annual report was presented to Community Scrutiny Committee. The report also alerted Members to the evolving equalities legislation, particularly, Section 149 of The Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty which came into force in April 2011.

Members were referred to pages 34 – 36 of the report now submitted for the findings of the equality assessment programme. The Community Projects Officer (Equalities) stated that any subsequent changes to the Council's existing policies would be minor in nature.

The Equalities Officer advised that all previous equality issues such as race, gender or disability were now referred to as protected characteristics following changes to equalities legislation and the public sector equality

duty.

Councillor C Woodward referred to his concerns that, following the impending “go live” date for the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service, there could be issues with the service being “Stevenage-centric” and the equality of service provision suffering as a result.

The Director emphasised that this should not be an issue as the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service was not relocating to Stevenage and Officers from that Authority would be coming to East Herts. Members were advised that an equalities impact assessment would be carried out for the new shared service.

Councillor N Symonds expressed concerns that, despite the excellent efforts of the Officers based at Bishop’s Stortford, vulnerable clients were still falling through the net and ending up in court for relatively small amounts of debt.

The Director advised that if Members were aware of any vulnerable clients they should be reported to the team so that Officers could investigate. Councillor Symonds stated that she was in regular contact with the Head of Service and her team. The Director commented that by the time the courts and bailiffs had become involved, Officers would have already done all they could for those people in greatest need.

Councillor P Ruffles stated that the support offered by the East Herts Council Officers responsible for looking after vulnerable residents cheered him enormously. He thanked Officers for their enthusiasm for this important task.

Councillor P Moore expressed concerns that 16 to 17 year olds were receiving priority in terms of housing need when there were whole families in dire need of housing. The Director stated that he would seek a written response from the Housing Strategy and Policy Manager.

Members had a general discussion around Youth Councils across the District. The Committee was advised that the East Herts Youth Council had been disbanded but there was an active Youth Council in Bishop's Stortford. Councillor S Bull stated that Buntingford also had a very active Youth Council.

In response to a query from Councillor C Woodward in respect of recruitment, the Director advised that Manpower ensured that all appropriate standards were met and maintained in relation to equalities and recruitment at East Herts Council.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the summary of key findings from the Equalities Impact Assessment Work Programme for 2008 - 11, be noted so that the information gathered is used to prioritise future equality actions;

(B) the revision of the existing Corporate Equality Policy, Scheme and Action Plan in 2012/2013 be endorsed; and

(C) the changes in obligation to the Council arising from the new Public Sector Equality Duty that came into force in April 2011, be noted.

440 COMMUNITY SAFETY: A FOCUSSED REVIEW - TASK AND FINISH GROUP INTERIM REPORT

The Head of Community Safety and Health Services submitted a report to inform the Committee of the scope and progress on the review of Community Safety and also to invite the Committee to consider and comment on the early findings of the Task and Finish Group.

Members were advised that all of the projects funded via grants received this funding from the Community Safety Partnership. The recommendations were designed to be passed onto the Partnership in terms of how the reduced

funding was spent across the District.

Members were referred to page 60 of the report now submitted for a suggested order that could be applied to any reductions in funding. The Head of Community Safety and Health Services referred to the importance of diversionary activities and taxi marshals in preventing problems before they arose.

Councillor N Symonds commented that it was a lack of diversionary activities that had led to cars being overturned and disturbances around Halloween in Bishop's Stortford. The Head of Community Safety and Health Services highlighted the importance of match funding in maintaining the activities covered by Community Safety initiatives. He stated that Officers would welcome suggestions for alternative funding options.

Members were advised that the cost of a PCSO was £126,000 and the cost to East Herts Council was £45,000. Members were reminded of the fragility of this arrangement in that if one organisation in the Community Safety Partnership withdrew funding then a PCSO could be lost if the remaining organisations were unable to increase their funding offer.

The Committee was advised that grant funding was diminishing so partnership funded activities were under threat. Members were advised that a recruitment drive for Special Constables (who had the full powers of Police Officers but worked on a voluntary basis and were unpaid) might go some way to mitigate any reduction in PCSOs.

The Head of Community Safety and Health Services stated that the Life Project was difficult to maintain even with the support of funding from the Community Safety Partnership. Members were referred again to page 60 of the report now submitted for a suggested order of items Members could consider when making recommendations to the Community Safety Partnership.

In reference to CCTV Members were advised that, whilst there had been no firm considerations, the task and finish group asked scrutiny to support the principle of equity and parity in respect of CCTV funding/charging across the District introduced over a 2 to 3 year period. Councillor Symonds agreed that there should be equity and parity in CCTV provision for East Herts.

Councillor C Woodward commented that PCSOs had proved to be invaluable in intelligence gathering and working with young people. Councillor Woodward stressed that Special Constables could not be viewed as a replacement for PCSOs as they were not available at times during the day.

Councillor D Andrews commented that Special Constables should not be seen as a replacement for PCSOs as they only worked about 4 hours in a given week, although they did have the full powers of the regular police force. Councillor Andrews referred to the exclusively positive feedback he had received in relation to the activities of PCSOs in his ward.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the work undertaken and planned in respect of Community Safety be noted;

(B) the early findings of the Community Safety Task and Finish Group be noted;

(C) that the Executive be advised that any reduction in funding should be recommended to the Community Safety Partnership on the basis of the order of items detailed on page 60 of the report now submitted; and

(D) the Executive be advised that the Community Scrutiny Committee was of the view that the principle of equity and parity in respect of CCTV funding/charging across the District should be

applied and reached in a 2 to 3 year stepped process.

441 COMMUNITY SCRUTINY CORPORATE HEALTH CHECK REPORT AUGUST TO SEPTEMBER 2011

The Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report on the performance of key indicators relating to Community Scrutiny Committee during the period August to September 2011, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted.

The Director apologised that the data detailed in Essential Reference Paper 'B' in respect of swimming numbers was inaccurate and a revised version would be recirculated to Members as soon as possible.

Councillor N Symonds stated that she was glad to see that the performance status for the Revenues and Benefits service had returned to being green.

Members received the report.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

442 COMMUNITY SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered items for scrutiny during the civic year 2011/12.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that there were no new items to be added to the Committee's work programme. Members were advised that there would be a presentation to the next meeting of the Health Engagement Panel in respect of Mental Health Services in the East of the District.

Members were further advised that local Councillors might wish to consider participating in a guided tour of the East Herts Council leisure facilities to talk to users of the facilities and to see what was on offer for the residents of East Herts. An invitation could be sent to Members to

ensure that any visits took place prior to the next meeting of the Community Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman commented that Executive Members could be invited to attend a future Scrutiny Committee meeting to be scrutinised on issues that Members felt particularly strongly about. Members were advised that the slot occupied by the Sustainable Communities Strategy for the 28 February 2012 meeting could be used for a report relating to the Ageing Well Project. Following Members' agreement, the Scrutiny Officer undertook to extend an invitation to the Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support.

Members were advised that the suggestion to delay the Sustainable Communities Strategy to the 12 June 2012 meeting of the Committee was to allow for a complete refresh of the Strategy in line with the three new LSP priorities just agreed. Submitting a revised version to the 12 June 2012 meeting would allow Officers sufficient time to do justice to revising this important document.

The Committee approved the Work Programme as amended.

RESOLVED – that the work programme as amended be agreed.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

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| Chairman |
| Date |

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PANEL HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON MONDAY 12 DECEMBER
2011, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs D Hone (Chairman)
Councillors S Bull, K Crofton and N Symonds

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, L Haysey and
P Moore

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Simon Barfoot | - Environmental Health Promotion Officer |
| Lorraine Blackburn | - Committee Secretary |
| Marian Langley | - Scrutiny Officer |
| Will O'Neill | - Head of Community and Cultural Services |
| George A Robertson | - Director of Customer and Community Services |
| Paul Thomas | - Environmental Health Manager |

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Siobhan Nundram | - Herts Partnership Foundation Trust |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|

19 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors R Beeching and E Buckmaster.

20 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman stated that, with Members' consent, she would be changing the order of the agenda and would be taking agenda item 7 (Safeguarding Children Policy and Training programme) after agenda item 5 (HCC Health Scrutiny – feedback from Chairman). This was agreed.

The Chairman welcomed Siobhan Nundram of Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust who would be providing Members with a presentation on the transformation of the Mental Health Service.

The Chairman advised Members that she, along with Simon Barfoot and Paul Thomas had attended the House of Lords on 29 November to receive the Council's award for Health Promotion and Community Wellbeing partnership. It was noted that there would be a formal presentation of the award at Council on 14 December 2011.

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman declared a personal interest in the matter referred to at Minute 25 - Mental Health Services, by virtue of the fact that she was a Governor of Hertfordshire Partnership and Foundation Trust.

22 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Health Engagement Panel meeting held on 18 October 2011 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23 HCC HEALTH SCRUTINY - FEEDBACK FROM CHAIRMAN

The Chairman provided an update following the meeting of Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee on 19 October 2011 when the Committee had scrutinised QIPP (Quality Innovation Productivity Prevention). These comments would be presented to the next Health Scrutiny

Committee on 13 December, 2011.

It was noted that there would be an exhibition for the new QE II hospital at Hertford County Hospital on 13 December from 1-4pm.

24 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY AND TRAINING PROGRAMME

The Head of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report on the Council's role and duty in relation to safeguarding children and its duty in complying with the Children Act 2005 and supplementary guidance. It was noted that Hertfordshire County Council had established an independent Safeguarding Children Board for Hertfordshire (HSCB). The role of the Board was set out in the report now submitted. It was noted that the Council had adopted a new Policy on Safeguarding and continued to monitor and evaluate best practice through the County-wide Safeguarding Children Forum for District and Boroughs under Guidance from the Board. The main issues for consideration following a mid-term assessment were set out in the report now submitted.

Members received the report and endorsed the Policy on Safeguarding Children as set out in Essential Reference Paper "B".

RESOLVED – that the Policy on Safeguarding Children, as now submitted, be endorsed.

25 MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES - SPEAKER SIOBHAN NUNDRAM (HERTS PARTNERSHIP AND FOUNDATION TRUST)

The Chairman welcomed Siobhan Nundram from Herts Partnership and Foundation Trust who had been invited to provide Members with a presentation on the transformation of Mental Health Service provision and what was needed to bring about the changes proposed. The strategy aimed to make Mental Wellbeing "everybody's business".

The aspirations and the anticipated outcomes of the strategy

based on connecting with people, being active, taking notice, ongoing learning, and giving to the community were explained in terms of how this could improve the quality of life and development of individuals and its positive effects on the community. The strategy was aimed at making people become more independent and taking responsibility for their recovery and helping each other.

A Member expressed concern about previous attitudes to mental health and how individuals were grouped together with no apparent regard to the degree of their mental health needs. Ms Nundram explained what new approaches would be adopted including a range of new providers and choices of services, the use of Host Families and how these would work. Ms Nundram explained the role of the Employment Adviser in helping individuals recover, and become independent. Ms Nundram stressed the need to make sure that organisations (including employers) supported people with mental health issues. She explained how access to help could be found, how they were “categorised” and explained that their “pathway” in the system would now be tracked following an assessment of their needs.

Members received the presentation. The Chairman on behalf of Members thanked Ms Nundram for her presentation.

RESOLVED – that the presentation be received.

26 REVIEW OF PROGRESS MADE ON THE EAST HERTS
PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGY 2011/12 ACTION PLAN AND
PROPOSALS FOR THE 2012/13

The Executive Member for Housing and Health submitted a report reviewing the progress made on the East Herts Public Health Strategy 2011/12 Action Plan and on proposals for the 2012/13 Action Plan.

The Environmental Health Promotion Officer explained that the Action Plan for 2011/12 contained 45 projects which focused on key topic areas including:

- Smoking;

- Physical activity;
- Healthy eating;
- Obesity;
- Other health factors; and
- Powers of influence

It was noted that 35 of the 45 projects had been undertaken and that the remaining ones would be undertaken before the end of March 2012. An Interim Progress Report for 2011/12 attached to the report now submitted and as set out in Essential Reference Paper “B” provided further detail and explained the guiding principles of the strategy.

Members provided feedback on what other projects / issues might be included for inclusion in the 2012/13 Action Plan.

Members noted the progress for 2011/12, supported the projects out lined for inclusion in 2012/13 and agreed that other projects may be included in the Public Health Strategy Action Plan for 2012/13, subject to consultation.

RESOLVED – that (A) the progress made in implementing the Public Health Strategy’s Action Plan for 2011/12 be noted;

(B) the projects outlined in the report now submitted, be supported for inclusion in the Public Health Strategy Action Plan for 2012/13; and

(C) other projects may be included in the Public Health Strategy Action Plan for 2012/13 subject to consultation.

27 WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer submitted a report detailing the Panel’s Work Programme for 2011/12. She sought feedback on the timing in relation to inviting future speakers to the Health Engagement Panel including NHS Hertfordshire on their ‘Choose and Book’ scheme and from LINK/HealthWatch.

The Executive Member for Housing and Health said that she

had recently attended a conference on Health and Wellbeing and would be arranging for slides to be put on the intranet (Members' Training).

The Executive Member also talked about the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board which was now running in Hertfordshire. Districts/Boroughs were represented on it by Dorothy Thornhill, mayor of Watford Borough Council and Councillor Linda Needham, Leader of North Herts DC. She suggested that they might both be invited to the Health Engagement Panel in future to discuss the Board and its work.

The Scrutiny Officer provided an update on the Health and Social Care Bill which had just had its third reading in the House of Lords.

Members agreed the work programme and authorised the Scrutiny Officer to make any changes as necessary.

RESOLVED – that (A) the work programme be agreed; and

(B) the Scrutiny Officer be authorised to make any changes, additions or arrangements as necessary to the work programme.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

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| Chairman |
| Date |

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 28 FEBRUARY 2012

REPORT BY LEISURE SERVICES MANAGER

ANNUAL REVIEW OF LEISURE CONTRACT WITH SPORTS AND LEISURE MANGEMENT LTD (SLM)

WARD(S) AFFECTED: all

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To present the third annual review of the council's ten year leisure contract with Sport & Leisure Management Ltd (SLM) – Everyone Active.

| RECOMMENDATION FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (A) | To scrutinise and comment on the third year's performance by the council's leisure contractor Sport & Leisure Management Ltd (SLM) |

1.0 Background

- 1.1 On 1 January 2009, following a competitive tender process, the council entered in to a ten year fixed fee contract with the leisure provider SLM, trading as Everyone Active.
- 1.2 As part of the bidding process for the leisure contract, bidders submitted a variant bid to their base bids that showed indicative development proposals for investment in the council's facilities at Grange Paddocks and Hartham that would reduce ongoing revenue costs to the council.
- 1.3 After consideration by Community Scrutiny, the Executive on 5 May 2009 approved a capital investment of £3.58m for major refurbishment and development at Grange Paddocks and Hartham.
- 1.4 This third annual review covers two main elements:

- a) Performance in relation to the specification of the contract.
- b) Progress since completion of the major new developments at Grange Paddocks and Hartham.

1.5 To complement the report, SLM will make a presentation to the Committee on their perspective of the third year and second year since the completion of the new developments.

2.0 Report

Performance.

2.1 **Essential reference paper 'B'** 'Performance Review Information' sets out SLM's performance against the main elements identified in the contract. It identifies the indicators which the council requires monitoring information on and provides an assessment of current performance and commentary to provide context.

2.2 **Essential reference paper 'C'** 'Customer Experience Summary' presents the customer satisfaction findings in more detail with data gathered between 16th June and 18th July 2011 as the last customer survey, compared against the previous biannual survey. The information for the survey is collected using 'GovMetric', an electronic customer feedback system using touch screen panels placed in all the leisure facilities over a 4-week period. The customer feedback in more detail which underpins the summary is available at; <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/leisurecustomersurveys>

2.3 GovMetric feedback stations are in the process of being permanently installed and hard wired in at all sites, enabling users to feed back in a manner that is complementary to existing methods of feedback i.e. verbal, written and email. Customers will have the opportunity to leave a customer comment, the site Manager will receive this at the beginning of the following day and a monthly report of all comments will be produced. Customers will also have the opportunity to complete a questionnaire and three monthly summaries will be sent to site managers which will be collated and used to assist in gauging customer satisfaction/experience.

2.4 The overall quality of the service has maintained a 'Good' rating. The GovMetric user survey shows all five sites scoring 'Good'. All maintained an upper quartile score for customer satisfaction/experience against other SLM facilities.

- 2.5 65% of survey respondents that completed the Fitness statement section stated that they had been exercising regularly for more than 6 months, this would indicate that users are being retained in the facilities and value the affordable services offered by EHC and SLM Ltd.
- 2.6 35% of respondents that completed the Fitness statement section that stated they were either new to or had been exercising regularly for only 1 to 5 months, indicating that the message of affordable health and exercise promoted by the council and SLM Ltd through the new facilities is continuing to reaching those who have previously not been exercising.
- 2.7 Members are invited to consider performance and measurement of the contract in the context of the major development works that SLM embarked on in May 2009 and completed in early February 2010.
- 2.8 The medium term financial planning savings targets are being achieved and there have been no contract variations.
- 2.9 Throughput figures for both the gyms and swimming pools have achieved targets, with the exception of Under 16 swims; in all other areas, especially the gym targets have been exceeded.
- 2.10 Members are asked to note that the net cost/subsidy per visit for 2011 has reduced from a baseline established for 2009 of £7.28/annum to £0.32/annum for 2011 through a mixture of increase in throughput and a reduction in the fixed price management fee.
- 2.11 All sites are compliant with providing the Leisure Services Manager with monthly 'Customer Charters'. **Essential reference paper D** 'SLM Customer Comment summary sheet' shows an example which provides the number and type of comments received and recorded at site as well as a summary of the comments made by customers in the month and the action carried out as a result.
- 2.12 In addition to formal set monitoring arrangements the council's leisure services manager undertakes monthly-unannounced inspections noticing service delivery, marketing and health and safety. These inspections have shown a general increase in the quality of leisure service delivered across the three sections, the biggest improvement being in the Marketing area.

2.13 SLM hold Customer Forums at sites where customer representatives meet with the Managers to feedback on the centres performance, these include Football Forums, Gym Forums and Swimmers Forums.

2.14 The present contract management relationship is continuing to be professional, positive and problem solving in a partnership style that delivers optimum outcomes.

New developments

2.15 **Essential reference paper 'E'**

'Summary of Hartham & Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre development and improvements and the Capital Expenditure investment at Fanshawe Gym' This sets out the significantly improved facilities and services that are being delivered as an outcome of the council's £3.58m investment and additional SLM reinvestment and the benefits made to the leisure revenue medium term financial plan due to the EHC funded equipment replacement. Headlines include;

- Hartham Leisure Centre was fully re-opened to the public on 30th January 2010.
- Hartham Leisure Centre has benefited from further SLM investment in gym equipment due to the success of the gym and a reorganisation of existing equipment in response to customer comments to allow for greater customer enjoyment.
- Hartham Leisure Centre have reprogrammed the swim timetable to allow more public swim time and more effective school lesson usage as well as investing in a new pool inflatable to enhance public fun swims and pool parties.
- Hartham Leisure Centre are redeveloping the car park to the facility to provide 41 extra parking spaces for centre users and developing an appropriate parking management system
- Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre re-opened to the public on 6th February 2010.
- Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre has benefited from further SLM investment in gym equipment due to the success of the gym
- EHC has invested £400,000 on improvement works in and around Grange Paddocks including enhancing the riverside walk that links Grange Paddocks to the town centre, refurbished the largest car park with an environmentally sustainable permeable asphalt surface and new markings for 140 vehicles and installing a pedestrian/cycle footbridge.

- EHC funded gym equipment replacement up to the value of £113,000, generating a gross revenue saving of £154,700 over the remaining seven years of the contract.

2.16 **Essential reference paper 'F'** 'History & Summary of Presdales Recreation Grounds and building' sets out the Presdales Pavilion development that the council has undertaken through SLM, which has been particularly complex in its development.

Headlines;

- Developed good working relationships with sport clubs to deliver all year sporting activities
- Delivering good quality, fit for purpose changing facilities which lean to the potential for new club house facilities

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**

Background Papers

Community Scrutiny report:

22 April 2008

26 January 2009

26 January 2010

Executive reports:

20 August 2008

5 May 2009

24 November 2009

6 December 2011

Contact Member: Councillor Linda Haysey – Executive Member
Community Development, Leisure and Culture

Contact Officer: Mark Kingsland – Leisure Services Manager –
Contact tel Ext No 1508

Report Author: Mark Kingsland – Leisure Services Manager

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives <i>(delete as appropriate):</i></p> | <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>Consultation:</p> | <p>N/A</p> |
| <p>Legal:</p> | <p>N/A</p> |
| <p>Financial:</p> | <p>The combined financial revenue benefits of the ten year contract includes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Savings in revenue cost as a result of retendering the leisure contract £2.7m ● Savings in revenue cost as a result of investment to reduce management fee over life of the contract £3.77m ● Savings in revenue cost because of investment in gym equipment to reduce management fee by £154,700 over the last seven years of the contract, £22,100/annum. ● Total savings due to developments and capital investment is approximately £6.63m. |
| <p>Human Resource:</p> | <p>N/A</p> |
| <p>Risk Management:</p> | <p>N/A</p> |

Performance Review Information

| Main performance indicators | Frequency | Current performance | Target | Comment |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| QUEST Plus – Sport England continuous improvement tool - to help managers enhance, improve and continue to improve the quality of service to customers. | biennial | SLM to submit QUEST Plus application March 2012 | ‘Good’ banded result | This survey will be undertaken every two years and will enable the Council and SLM to encourage their ongoing development and delivery of industry standards and good practice within a customer focused management framework. |
| National Benchmarking Service - Sport England benchmarking service – an independent customer satisfaction survey | biennial | To be commissioned September 2012 | 75% benchmark score against national benchmarks | This survey will be undertaken every two years and will enable the Council and SLM to compare the service of each facility with similar facilities across the country. |
| Non user research – Residents’ Survey | biennial | East Herts residents identified leisure facilities as amongst some of their lowest priorities in need of improvement. Of the 1,184 respondents to the survey 38% said, they had used an EHC leisure centre in the last 12 months. | | A biennial Residents’ Survey has been undertaken by East Herts Council since 1993. The 2011 Residents’ Survey was reported to CMT in Jan 2012 and to Joint Scrutiny on 14 February 2012. Leisure facilities are now deemed to be amongst some of resident’s lowest priorities in need of improvement this may be a reflection of the significant investment made by the Council. Main reasons residents report for not having used the Councils leisure facilities are, use alternative facilities or do not wish to use any leisure facilities. |
| EHPI 1a % of customers satisfied with the service – all sites – Essential reference paper C presents the findings in more detail, category by category. | bi-annual | Fourth GovMetric six monthly surveys carried out Jun/Jul 2011 overall value for money. Nov/Dec 2010 76% Jun/Jul 2011 68% | ‘Good’ banded result | Latest figures for the GovMetric Jun/Jul 2011 score maintained as ‘Good’. |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EHPI 1b Overall Experience % of customers satisfied with the service – Leventhorpe | bi-annual | Nov/Dec 2010 74% Jun/Jul 2011 66% | Upper quartile against other SLM facilities | Latest figures for the GovMetric Jun/Jul 2011 score maintained as 'Good', in upper half against other SLM facilities in the South Eastern region. |
| Overall Experience EHPI 1c % of customers satisfied with the service – Hartham | bi-annual | Nov/Dec 2010 73% Jun/Jul 2011 73% | Upper quartile against other SLM facilities | Latest figures for the GovMetric Jun/Jul 2011 score maintained as 'Good', in upper half against other SLM facilities in the South Eastern region. |
| EHPI 1d Overall Experience % of customers satisfied with the service – Fanshawe | bi-annual | Nov/Dec 2010 79% Jun/Jul 2011 66% | Upper quartile against other SLM facilities | Latest figures for the GovMetric Jun/Jul 2011 score maintained as 'Good', in upper half against other SLM facilities in the South Eastern region. |
| EHPI 1e Overall Experience % of customers satisfied with the service – Ward Freman | bi-annual | Nov/Dec 2010 74% Jun/Jul 2011 59% | Upper quartile against other SLM facilities | Latest figures for the GovMetric Jun/Jul 2011 score dropped to 'Fair', in lower half against other SLM facilities in the South Eastern region. |
| EHPI 1f Overall Experience % of customers satisfied with the service – Grange Paddocks | bi-annual | Nov/Dec 2010 80% Jun/Jul 2011 76% | Upper quartile against other SLM facilities | Latest figures for the GovMetric Jun/Jul 2011 score dropped to 'Good', but in upper quartile against other SLM facilities. |
| EHPI 3a Usage: number of swims (under 16s) | quarterly / annually | Q4 2009/10 10,771 Q4 2010/11 11,723 Q1 2010/11 13,222 Q1 2011/12 12,501 Q2 2010/11 15,871 Q2 2011/12 15,600 Q3 2010/11 7,815 Q3 2011/12 7,715 | +1% per annum, 2010-2013 | Baseline established for 2009: 46,800 per annum. Target + 1% each year = 46,800+468+472= 47,740 Achieved 47,539 |
| EHPI 3b Usage: number of swims (16 – 60) | quarterly / annually | Q4 2009/10 19,386 Q4 2010/11 28,379 Q1 2010/11 42,591 Q1 2011/12 26,765 Q2 2010/11 29,120 Q2 2011/12 28,939 Q3 2010/11 19,353 Q3 2011/12 20,539 | +1% per annum, 2010-2013 | Baseline established for 2009; 70,317 per annum. Target + 1% each year = 71,020+710+717=72,447 Achieved 104,622 |
| EHPI 3c Usage: number of swims (60+) | quarterly / annually | Q4 2009/10 10,371 Q4 2010/11 6,366 Q1 2010/11 8,063 Q1 2011/12 5,442 Q2 2010/11 6,784 Q2 2011/12 6,121 Q3 2010/11 5,134 Q3 2011/12 5,513 | +1% per annum, 2010-2013 | Baseline established for 2009; 18,203 per annum. Target + 1% each year = 18,203+182+184= 18,569 |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | | Achieved 23,442 |
| EHPI4a Usage: Gym (16 – 60) | quarterly / annually | Q4 2009/10 30,451 Q4 2010/11 46,679 Q1 2010/11 39,786 Q1 2011/12 40,963 Q2 2010/11 39,090 Q2 2011/12 41,849 Q3 2010/11 36,793 Q3 2011/12 46,146 | +1% per annum, 2010-2013 | Baseline established for 2009; 74,403 per annum. Target + 1% each year = 74,403+744+751=75,147 Achieved 175,638 |
| EHPI4b Usage: Gym (60+) | quarterly / annually | Q4 2009/10 1,622 Q4 2010/11 4,295 Q1 2010/11 2,850 Q1 2011/12 3,758 Q2 2010/11 2,854 Q2 2011/12 4,008 Q3 2010/11 3,202 Q3 2011/12 4,230 | +1% per annum, 2010-2013 | Baseline for 2009; 5,840 per annum. Target + 1% each year = 5,840+58+59=5,957 Achieved 16,291 |
| EHPI2 Net cost/subsidy per visit | quarterly / annually | Q4 2009/10 £1.74* Q4 2010/11 £0.29 Q1 2010/11 £1.06* Q1 2011/12 £0.32 Q2 2010/11 £1.17* Q2 2011/12 £0.33 Q3 2010/11 £1.47 Q3 2011/12 £0.34 | -1% per annum, 2010-2013 | Baseline established for 2009; Net cost/subsidy per visit = £7.28 per annum. Target - 1% each year = £7.28 - £0.08 - £0.08 = £7.12 *allows for RPI of 4.6% 2011; Net cost/subsidy per visit = £0.32 per annum |
| Compliance with complaints procedure | ongoing | Monthly reports received by Leisure Services Manager | | Complaints are being monitored on a monthly basis and processed in accordance with the council's policy. |

Notes:

1. The contract is measured through continuous improvement targets.
2. Performance and other management and operational matters are monitored formally through monthly minuted meetings between client and contractor with quarterly strategic meetings at director level.
3. Monthly meetings are attended by EHC property and finance officers and where necessary the contractors property and finance colleagues.
4. In addition to formal set monitoring arrangements the council's leisure services manager undertakes monthly unannounced inspections picking up on service delivery, marketing and health and safety and other indicators.
5. Performance indicators relating to customer satisfaction are to be reported through the corporate management performance process, usage is already being reported through the corporate management performance process (as tracked by Covalent).
6. Reporting for the Leisure performance indicators is based on the calendar year i.e. from 1 January to 31 December; this will be coterminous with the contract start date.

Customer Experience Summary

| GovMetric summary showing customer experience levels in specific areas of service delivery 16 June 2011 to 18 July 2011 | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| | Customer satisfaction levels | | | | | |
| | Fanshawe | Grange Paddocks | Hartham | Leventhorpe | Ward Freman | Overall customer satisfaction at all pools |
| NPS Score | 32% | 41% | 34% | 14% | 28% | |
| Swimming lessons - overall experience of service | 72% | 73% | 76% | 77% | 67% | |
| Group Exercise | | 84% | 75% | | | |
| Fitness - overall experience | 59% | 65% | 64% | 56% | | |
| Reception Area - overall experience | 75% | 85% | 77% | 77% | 61% | |
| Cleanliness - overall experience | 56% | 71% | 72% | 53% | 48% | |
| | | | | | | |
| Overall experience | 66% | 76% | 73% | 66% | 59% | 68% |
| | | | | | | |
| | Excellent 80%+ | Good 65% - 79% | Fair 50% - 64% | Poor 40% - 49% | Very Poor Under 40% | |

SLM Customer Comment summary sheet

An example from Hartham Leisure Centre, which show the number and type of comments received and recorded at the site as well as a summary of the comments made by customers in the month and the action carried out as a result.

Customer Comments for November 2011

| | | | | |
|--------------------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| | Verbal | Written | Comment | E-mail |
| Number of comments | 82 | 2 | 10 | 6 |

So far this year you rated your experience as;

| Rating | % YTD this month | % YTD last month | % movement |
|-----------|------------------|------------------|------------|
| Excellent | 12 | 55 | - 40 |
| Very Good | 13 | 19 | - 6 |
| Good | 40 | 5 | + 35 |
| Average | 17 | 12 | + 5 |
| Poor | 8 | 18 | - 10 |

(Percentage of total completed responses from customer comment cards year to date)

The following is a summary of the comments you made this month and the action we have carried out as a result.

| You Said? | We Did! |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>“Your website is not very user friendly”</p> <p>“The car park is still very busy during peak times”</p> | <p>“Thank you for your feedback, your comments have been passed on to our IT department”</p> <p>“Thank you for your feedback, we understand that during peak periods the car park can become busy and we are looking into alternatives to diffuse the problem”</p> |

If you feel that we could improve our service or facility in any way, please either

- inform one of our colleagues,
- complete a comment card
- or send an e-mail to craigbrown@slm-ltd.co.uk

Thank you for your feedback, all comments are valuable to us. Customer comments assist us to continually improve and provide you with the best customer experience.

This information collated from completed customer comments cards, available in the

reception areas, via emails, letters and verbal comments. The LSM also receives the SLM Group Overview for comments. This information is available on site in more detail and is inspected by the LSM on his monthly site visits

Summary of Hartham & Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre development and improvements

The recent investment of over £156,000 by SLM Ltd in to the contract shows the commitment by SLM Ltd to continue the successful development of the two sites and build upon the success of the initial £3.58M investment. Gym membership has maintained over 6,000 members in 2011, reaching a seasonal high of 6,400 in the summer months, this continues to have a positive effect on the contractor's income. This high level of membership retention coupled with the reduced fixed management fee has also had positive effect on the Net cost/subsidy per visit rate dropping it from £7.28/annum in 2009, £1.36/annum in 2010 to £0.32/annum in 2011.

The facilities at Grange Paddocks and Hartham leisure centres now offer in addition to swimming;

East Herts Council original investment at Hartham

- spacious 85 station gym, improvements include,
 - Pulse Strength and Cardio equipment
 - Reaction trainer
 - PowerPlate vibration trainers
 - Concept II rowers
 - XT Cycle trainers
- Dryside male and female changing rooms
- air-conditioned studio for group exercise classes
- completely refurbished mixed Changing Village facilities
- new reception area and control entry system
- redecorated pool hall
- off site crèche facilities in partnership Montessori child care

- **NEW** items due to £116,000 SLM Ltd reinvestment
 - Pool fun inflatable
 - TRX suspension training zone
 - Kettlebell workshops
 - Stretch zones
 - Strength Zone relocated to ground floor
 - Redeveloped car parking

East Herts Council original investment at Grange Paddocks

- spacious 85 station gym, improvements include,
 - Pulse Strength and Cardio equipment
 - Reaction trainers
 - PowerPlate vibration trainers
 - XT Cycle trainers
 - free weights zone
 - Concept II rowers
 - Stretch zone
- completely refurbished dual use male and female changing rooms
- air-conditioned studio for group exercise classes
- reception area and control entry system
- crèche room

- **NEW** items due to £40,000 SLM Ltd reinvestment

- 10 new cardio stations; treadmills and x-trainers
- TRX suspension training zone
- Viper workshops

East Herts Council £84,000 capital investment at Fanshawe Gym

- **NEW** TechnoGym equipment including;
 - TechnoGym Element strength equipment including Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) equipment
 - TechnoGym Excite cardio equipment including IFI equipment
 - TechnoGym Kinesis One
- **NEW** Concept 2 rowers

East Herts Council £29,000 capital investment at Leventhorpe Gym planned for September 2012

Essential reference paper 'F'

History & Summary of Presdales Recreation Grounds and building

“To develop a sustainable community based facility that provides a safe, flexible, accessible environment that can provide enhanced opportunities for the broader community to satisfy a variety of needs.” is the overall vision for sport at the Presdales Recreational Ground project.

Since June 2010 EHC have been engaging in discussions with Bury Rangers FC (BRFC) and WCC, both community youth status clubs, to create either a CST or an IPS to manage the responsibility for the lease for the whole grounds. The lease would include all pitch and ground maintenance, gate opening, changing room & showers maintenance and cleaning and generating additional income to the site, which would be re-invested into providing additional/ improved site facilities and develop the adjoining clubhouse.

On 28th January 2011, EHC replaced old redundant pavilion as it had reached the end of its usable life and replaced the structure with a functional modular build changing facility with Capital funding. Officers also commenced discussions regarding the opportunity to transfer the management and maintenance of this community asset away from the existing leisure providers, SLM Ltd, to a Community Sport Trust (CST) or Industrial Provident Society (IPS), as a way of making better use of this valuable asset and enhancing sports provision in the future.

Through the investment at Presdales Recreation Ground these facilities now offer in addition to changing facilities for adults and junior football teams and officials, changing for girls to encourage the development of girl's football as well as cricket in the summer months

Cricket at Presdales

- Ongoing negotiations has resulted in the Council with Ware Cricket Club (WCC) developing the grounds for cricket use through out the summer months, cumulating in the granting of a lease for two cricket squares and an artificial cricket wicket.
- Artificial cricket strip installed February 2011 by Ware Cricket Club with funding from the ECB
- Two cricket squares to be constructed, April 2012, weather permitting.

Phase 2 Opportunity to develop club house

- The Phase 2 Club House lease has been agreed and signed, foundation pads will be constructed in Summer/Autumn 2012, Clubhouse construction to be developed end of 2012 with no further capital investment by the council.

Phase 3 Opportunity to further develop the Community Asset Transfer of the Presdales Recreational Ground.

- Negotiations are taking place to further develop this community asset and improve the use of the facility and grounds for the benefit of sporting community by creating a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) agreement with a newly formed Industrial and Provident Society (IPS).

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 28 FEBRUARY 2012

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

HOUSING STRATEGY 2008-2011 ACTION PLAN UPDATE AND DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY FOR 2012-2015

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- The report highlights successful performance on the Housing Strategy Action Plan 2008-2011. The report also presents to Members, for consideration and comment, the draft Housing Strategy for 2012-2015.

| <u>RECOMMENDATION FOR : COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u> | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (A) | Members note successful progress on the Housing Strategy Action Plan 2008-2011; and |
| (B) | consider and comment on the draft Housing Strategy for 2012 - 2015 so that officers can undertake consultation on the document with external partners and stakeholders. |

1.0 Background

1.1 The Council adopted the Housing Strategy for 2008-2011 in October 2008. The Housing Strategy for East Herts sets the direction for housing within the district from 2008 to 2011 whilst having regard to longer term housing challenges.

1.2 It was agreed at the Community Scrutiny meeting of 22 July 2008 and the Executive on 9 September 2008 that an annual report should be presented to Community Scrutiny Committee to monitor progress on the action plan.

1.3 The Strategic Housing Service, with the assistance of Planning Policy and Private Sector Housing, has drafted a Housing Strategy for the period from 2012 to 2015. This document will be subject to consultation by our external partners and stakeholders.

2.0 Report

2.1 The current Housing Strategy 2008-2011 was adopted by the Council on 1 October 2008. The aims and objectives of the Strategy are being delivered by officers of the Council, along with our partner agencies. The Housing Strategy Action Plan has been grouped into three Strategic Objectives. These Strategic Objectives are:

1. Maximise the delivery of a range of new affordable homes to meet diverse needs
2. Improve the condition of the housing stock both public and private
3. Building sustainable and thriving neighbourhoods and communities and ensure that vulnerable people are supported in the community.

2.2 The Strategy is a three year one, with the Action Plan being reviewed annually.

2.3 The Council and its partners have made significant progress on the actions in the plan. **Essential Reference Paper B** details progress on each action in the Housing Strategy Action Plan.

The Housing Strategy for 2012-2015

2.4 The Strategic Housing Service with assistance from Planning Policy and Private Sector Housing, has begun the process of developing the next Housing Strategy.

2.5 The Coalition Government has developed, consulted and put into law a number of changes to housing and social housing. The most significant documents are, the Localism Act, the governments Housing Strategy for England 'Laying the Foundations (2011) and the Welfare Reform Act. Not all of the changes in these documents are directly relevant to East Herts, however those that are will have a significant impact on the way housing is developed, allocated and managed in East Herts. The draft Housing Strategy references the key changes which will be subject to further consultation and discussion as they come into force.

- 2.6 The Localism Act gives local authorities greater freedom to set their own policies about who should qualify to go on the Housing Register for social housing in their area. This means that Councils can, if they wish, develop their own policies regarding who is eligible to join the Housing Register. Authorities are still obliged to ensure that social homes go to the most vulnerable in society and those who need them most. Under Homeless Legislation, Councils have a duty to house people who are eligible, in priority need and unintentionally homeless; and this duty will remain in place. The Localism Act lets local authorities meet their homelessness duty by providing good quality private rented homes, which under previous rules they were able to refuse.
- 2.7 The Localism Act has also introduced a number of changes to the planning system including at the national level replacing Planning Policy Statements (PPS) with a single and shortened National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and removing the regional tier of planning by abolishing regional spatial strategies such as the East of England Plan. At the local level, whilst the principles of the Local Development Framework (LDF) are being retained, it is being rebranded as the local plan.
- 2.8 With the reductions in spending by Central Government, the grant available for developing new affordable housing for the period 2011-15 is about 50% less than during the previous four year period. With the aim of continuing the development of new affordable homes, the government has developed a new rented product, known as 'Affordable Rent', whereby social housing providers charge higher rents, at up to 80% of market levels, and use the increased rental income to support additional borrowing to compensate for reduced grant.
- 2.9 In addition to being able to charge higher rents registered providers with homes in East Herts are able to offer Fixed Term Tenancies to applicants from the Council's Housing Register for five years, with tenancies of between two and five years only allocated in "exceptional circumstances". These tenancies are reviewed by the registered provider at the end of the fixed term and can be renewed and another fixed term offered if it is decided, within the registered provider's policies, that a household still requires an affordable rent home.
- 2.10 To encourage delivery of additional housing, the Government has

also introduced an incentive scheme called the New Homes Bonus. The Government will match the council tax raised for each new home for the first six years after that home is built. An additional amount is payable for every additional affordable home.

- 2.11 Welfare reforms have reduced the Housing Benefit awards available to private sector tenants, by changing the way the maximum amount of Housing Benefit payable is calculated and setting further caps on these amounts that affect high rent areas.
- 2.12 The Council agreed with the Homes and Communities Agency a Local Investment Plan (LIP) in 2011. The East Herts Local Investment plan (LIP) is intended to provide a framework that will be used to seek future HCA funding for primarily affordable housing in East Herts.
- 2.13 The LIP identifies the strategic context for investment and summarises the evidence base that will be used to direct investment from us and our partners including the HCA. The LIP was developed around four overarching 'Challenges'.
- 2.14 The challenges are:
- | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Challenge 1. | Maximise the delivery of a range of new affordable homes, whilst ensuring the best use of existing housing |
| Challenge 2. | Meeting the needs of a growing elderly population |
| Challenge 3. | Meeting the needs of vulnerable people and stronger communities |
| Challenge 4. | Economic Development, Employment and Skills |
- 2.15 It was agreed at Community Scrutiny on 25 January 2011 to use one, two and three of the four strategic challenges identified in the LIP in the development Housing Strategy and associated action plan to enable there to be a clear link between these strategic documents. A draft copy of the Housing Strategy 2012 - 2015 is at **Essential Reference Paper B**.
- 2.16 Any recommended amendments from Community Scrutiny will be incorporated into the draft document. The process of external consultation with partners and stakeholders will begin with a Housing Forum event on 7 March 2012 being chaired by Councillor Haysey. Following this, the document will be published on the

Council's website for wider consultation. An action plan will be agreed with Housing, Local Plans and Private Sector Housing to enable the Council to monitor progress on the key priorities under each of the three strategic priorities.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

Minutes of the Community Scrutiny Committee 22 July 2008.

Minutes of the Executive 9 September 2008

Minutes of Community Scrutiny 25 January 2011

Housing Strategy 2008-2011

Contact Member: Councillor Linda Haysey, Executive Member for Health Housing and Community Support

Contact Officer: Simon Drinkwater, Director of Neighbourhood Services - Ext No 1405
Claire Bennett, Manager Housing Services – Ext No 1603

Report Author: Claire Bennett, Manager Housing Services – Ext No 1603

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):</p> | <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> |
| <p>Consultation:</p> | <p>Extensive consultation undertaken in developing the Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2008-2011. Consultation of the Housing Strategy 2012-2015 will begin with a Housing Forum event for partners on 7 March 2012.</p> |
| <p>Legal:</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p>Financial:</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p>Human Resource:</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p>Risk Management:</p> | <p>None</p> |

East Herts Housing Strategy 2012 -2015



Version 2

15/2/2012

The Council has developed an Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit which is a framework for conducting a systematic review of service activities, policies and practices with regard to all aspects of equalities (i.e. gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion). This Strategy is subject to an Equality Impact Assessment which will be available separately once the Strategy has been agreed.

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Foreword from Councillor Linda Haysey, Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support

I am pleased to introduce this new Housing Strategy for East Herts which provides a plan of action over the next three years. It sets out how we will all work towards improving existing housing and build new additional homes.

The Council recognises that having good housing is at the heart of keeping our communities vibrant and sustainable. This strategy sets out how we will respond to the challenges we face in meeting housing need over the next three years.

This housing strategy can only be delivered in partnership with others and many different partners have a role to play in making this happen. I look forward to the next few years as the plans within this strategy are put into place.

Executive Summary

1.0 Introduction

Local authorities are required to have a Housing Strategy, which sets out “a vision for housing in its area” and “objectives and targets and policies” that explain how it will play a leading role to:

- assess and plan for current and future housing needs of the local population,
- make the best use of existing housing stock,
- plan and facilitate new supply,
- plan and commission housing support services which link homes to support and other services that people need to live in them, and
- have working partnerships that secure effective housing and neighbourhood management.

This Housing Strategy is an overarching strategy which sets out the Council’s priorities to meet local housing needs and aspirations thereby contributing to the overall long-term aim to improve the quality of life for all the residents of East Herts. These priorities are translated into a series of Strategic Objectives and Actions.

East Herts Council no longer owns any Council housing having transferred the homes to two housing associations, Riversmead and Stort Valley (now South Anglia) Housing Associations in 2002. However the Council still has the responsibility to be the strategic leader of housing in the district.

Government Policy

In May 2010, a government committed to lowering the national deficit came to power. Public spending was reduced including funding to local government - by 26% nationally over a two year period. The Formula Grant to East Herts was reduced in 2011/12 and will be reduced further in 2012/13. The Coalition Government has developed, consulted and put into law a number of changes to housing and social housing. These include the Welfare Reform Act, the Localism Act, the Energy Act and the Military Bill, which includes the military Covenant, and also the governments Housing Strategy for England ‘Laying the Foundations (2011)’. Not all of these changes are directly relevant to East Herts and a brief summary has been included in the Appendices. However those that do will have a significant impact on the way housing is developed, allocated and managed in East Herts. The Council will ensure it carries out targeted consultations on the changes that affect the way it allocates the affordable homes in the district to both the residents and partners affected.

Housing Strategy for England ‘Laying the Foundations’.

‘Government recognises that housing should provide a secure foundation for people’s lives: the ability to find the right home in the right place is vital for family life and for sustainable employment. The government identifies four main types of household: aspiring homeowners who are in the private rented sector, younger recent homebuyers who cannot ‘trade up’ to a

better home, older 'established homeowners' and 'lifelong renters' especially in the social sector.'

It introduces new approaches and interventions, including:

- A mortgage indemnity scheme for purchase of new build property
- Support for locally-led large scale development
- Further efforts on public sector land release
- Provision of development finance for stalled sites
- Further support for custom-build (self-build) housing
- The next steps for council housing finance reform
- Clearer intentions around reinvigorating the Right to Buy
- Clarity on guidance around allocation of social housing
- Support for investment in new private rented sector homes
- Additional financial support to tackle empty homes
- Consideration of ways to improve housing options for older people.

There are a number of consultations that the government will be issuing regarding these changes. The Strategy can be found on the Communities and Local Government website at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/housingstrategy2011>

Welfare reforms and Housing Benefit Changes

Welfare reforms have reduced the Housing Benefit awards available to private sector tenants, by changing the way the maximum amount of Housing Benefit payable is calculated and setting further caps on these amounts that affect high rent areas. There are plans to restrict awards to single private sector tenants aged 25 to 34, and to social housing tenants of working age living in a home larger than their household needs. There are further changes due in 2013 that will cap the total amount of benefits payable to claimants, Universal Credit, and bring the rate of increases in benefits into line with the Consumer Prices Index, a measure of inflation that has fallen well below rental inflation in recent years. These changes are likely to increase the demand for advice services and see a growth in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) in East Herts.

Funding for affordable housing development

The grant available for affordable housing development over the period 2011-15 is about 50% less than during the previous four year period. Aiming to sustain development despite this, the government developed a new tenure, known as 'Affordable Rent', whereby social housing providers charge higher rents, at up to 80% of market levels, and use the increased rental income to support additional borrowing to compensate for reduced grant. Grant will not be available for affordable housing developed as a condition of planning permission. New models of funding affordable housing development may emerge, with approaches relying on selling some homes on the open market to ensure viability.

Housing reforms

At the same time as reducing spending to housing-related areas, the government has announced and started implementing proposals that have given housing a new prominence on the political agenda. The Localism Act which became law in late 2011 makes provision for social housing providers to give new tenants fixed term tenancies that are subject to regular review. It outlines discretionary powers that will allow local housing authorities to exclude those with no statutory priority for social housing from applying for it and to offer private sector tenancies to homeless households. These provisions are intended to help ensure that affordable housing better meets need, but allow housing providers and local authorities to adopt solutions they consider will most effectively meet need in their localities. The government is currently consulting (until 30 March 2012) on a document called 'Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England'. The guidance consults on proposed new statutory measures to local housing authorities on the allocation of social housing. One of the key objectives of the paper is to change the current allocation of social housing. The government wants to free up the existing system and to give greater powers of determination to housing authorities, and to increase clarity and transparency around their allocation system.

Regulation of social housing

A final change in housing policy relates to the regulation of social housing. The Tenant Services Authority (TSA), created following a 2007 review, has regulated Housing Associations from December 2008 and Council housing from April 2010, emphasising customer-focused outcomes and introducing a model whereby social landlords agree "Local Offers" with tenants. The Localism Act abolishes the TSA, shifting its regulatory role to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), whilst altering that role so monitoring powers are deployed only where (risk of) serious failures affecting tenants are identified.

National and Local Planning

The Localism Act has introduced a number of changes to the planning system including at the national level replacing Planning Policy Statements (PPS) with a single and shortened National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and removing the regional tier of planning by abolishing regional spatial strategies such as the East of England Plan. At the local level, whilst the principles of the Local Development Framework (LDF) are being retained, it is being rebranded as the local plan. A new, albeit voluntary, tier of statutory planning has also been introduced at the parish level called neighbourhood planning. This enables town and parishes to prepare their own plan for their area setting out where new housing should be located. Another element of the Localism Act is the Community Right to Build (CRtB). This enables communities to directly retain the benefits of any development.

Notwithstanding the above, East Herts Council is currently progressing with its Core Strategy which will set the overarching principles for development in East Herts to 2031. This document will identify the broad locations for new housing and set out the Council's affordable housing policies.

To ensure that planning policies are based upon comprehensive and robust evidence the Council worked jointly with other neighbouring districts to carry out a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the London Commuter Belt (East)/M11 sub-region. SHMAs provide local authorities with information to develop a strategic approach to housing through consideration of housing need and demand in all housing sectors (owner occupied, private rented and affordable). It also considers the key drivers and relationships within the housing market. Preliminary work is being undertaken to refresh the SHMA to update it and take into account housing reforms.

New Homes Bonus

To encourage delivery of additional housing the Government has also introduced an incentive scheme called the New Homes Bonus. The Government will match the council tax raised for each new home for the first six years after that home is built. An additional amount is payable for every additional affordable home. The bonus also applies to empty properties bought back into use as well as Gypsy and Traveller plots. East Herts Council receives 80% of the New Homes Bonus (20% goes to Hertfordshire County Council) and of this, 25% is given to the relevant parish council. Receipts are calculated as of October. The premise of the New Homes Bonus is to ensure that the economic benefits of growth are returned to the communities where growth takes place.

Section 2 - East Herts in Context

The district of East Herts covers an area of 477 square kilometres (184 square miles) and comprises around one third of the area of the County of Hertfordshire. It is predominantly a rural district, with attractive towns and villages set in a rolling landscape.

East Herts has a dispersed settlement pattern that includes the five market towns of Bishop's Stortford, Buntingford, Hertford, Sawbridgeworth and Ware. Each of the towns provides a range of services to the surrounding rural area. There are also some hundred villages and hamlets of varying sizes.

East Herts has the most significant rural economic profile in the county. There are 433 holdings in East Herts in total occupying 34,647 hectares. This is significant in terms of farming, land and diversification alone. Many of these businesses have diversified and have a second income stream.

The district is heavily influenced by the presence of major settlements beyond its borders. The three New Towns of Stevenage, Harlow and Welwyn Garden City are located immediately on the East Herts district boundary, and there is pressure for expansion of these settlements. There are also substantial cross-boundary influences from Cambridgeshire to the north and Essex to the east.

Historical development of the transport network has resulted in the district being largely bypassed by strategic road and rail corridors; with the M11 and the West Anglia Main Line between London and Cambridge to the east; and the A1(M) and East Coast Main Line to the west. The M25 London Orbital Motorway lies further to the south. Within the district, the main road routes are the A10, which bisects the district roughly in half on a north-south axis; and the A414 in the south of the district, running in an east-west direction. The A120 also runs east-west from the A10 at Puckeridge to Bishop's Stortford and beyond, and the A602 links the A10 from Ware with the A1(M) in Stevenage. Stansted Airport, whilst outside the district, is immediately to the north-east of Bishop's Stortford and has strategic implications for the area.

Approximately the southern third of the district lies within the London Metropolitan Green Belt (17,530 hectares). The rural nature and scattered settlement pattern of the district in addition to high levels of affluence has resulted in high levels of car ownership with 66% of the working population traveling to work by car.



East Herts Population and Housing

There were a total of **58,148 dwellings registered for council tax purposes in East Herts at 1st April 2010¹**. The Office for National Statistics in 2011 records 87% of East Herts' dwellings as being owner occupied or privately rented compared to 82% for England. The social rented sector accounted for 13% of the housing compared to 18% for England.

East Herts generally provides an attractive residential environment and this creates a high level of demand for housing in the district. This demand is reflected in higher than average house prices for the region compared to the rest of the Eastern Region and a Council housing register that is increasing year on year and no significant 'difficult to let' problems. Average house prices are high and the result is that many people who grow up in the district and those needing to move into the area are unable to buy.

East Herts' private rented sector has traditionally been limited (7.2% recorded by 2001 Census) but is growing. This is consistent with the recognised national trend of more Buy To Let properties. Rent levels are high and market demand is strong. There is significant demand from company relocations and high earners on short-term contracts. Access to the sector for local people on lower incomes can therefore be difficult.

The district has witnessed significant population growth in recent years. Between 1981 and 2006 the population increased by 21% and is expected to increase from approximately 135,700 (55,000 households) in 2006 to 148,200 in 2021². Significantly 62% of this growth is anticipated to be aged over 65 years with population decreases in the 15-24 and 35-44 age groups³.

Figure 1: Population and household projections

| Population projections | 2001 | 2008 | % inc | 2012 | % inc | 2021 | % inc |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| East Herts | 128,900 | 135,700 | 5% | 139,000 | 2% | 148,200 | 7% |
| Hertfordshire | 1,034.0 | 1,083.9 | 5% | 1,118.7 | 2% | 1,203.4 | 7% |

Source: Census 2001, Office for National Statistics Sub-national 2008 population projections

| Household projections | 2001 | 2008 | 2013 | 2023 | 2033 |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| East Herts | 52,200 | 56,000 | 59,000 | 66,000 | 72,000 |
| Hertfordshire | 421,000 | 446,000 | 471,000 | 525,000 | 574,000 |

¹ HSSA return April 2010

² Office for National Statistics Sub-national 2008 population projections

³ Office for National Statistics Sub-national 2008 population projections

Source: Communities and Local Government household estimates and projections Table 406 and CLG 2008 based Sub-national Household projections.

By 2016 it is projected that in East Herts the number of married couple households will decrease whilst that of cohabiting couples and one person will increase⁴.

According to the 2001 Census the Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) population accounts for less than three percent of the population of East Herts and is made up of a mix of primarily Chinese and Indian. There has been a steady increase in the percentage of BME population in East Hertfordshire. In 2010 the Office for National Statistics reports that 14% of the population in East Herts were of an ethnic minority. The figures show a steady increase in White Other ethnic population in East Herts from 2.7% in the Census to 4.7% of total population in 2010. The Council is aware of this increase being primarily amongst the Polish and Portuguese communities in East Herts and has tailored a number of its services to meet the needs of this population primarily through its Community Team meeting with local community and faith leaders.

East Herts – The Economy

East Herts is a prosperous district with higher than average earnings and a low unemployment rate at 1.8% compared to 2.8% for the East of England and 3.5% for Great Britain⁵. Of the 354 districts in England, East Herts is ranked as the 18th most affluent/successful, although this disguises pockets of relative deprivation within the district⁶. Educational attainment is generally very high with nearly three quarters of pupils achieving five or more GCSE grades at A* to C⁷. There is a recognised need to ensure that the skills of the workforce are appropriate for the businesses in the district. It is therefore important to maximise opportunities for life-long learning through links with further education providers. This is of particular importance in the rural area where access to these facilities is limited.

The district has a sound economic base built on small and medium-sized firms including engineering, high-tech computer companies, brewing, printing, food processing and distribution, and Stansted Airport related service industries. Both local government and the pharmaceuticals industry are major employers in East Herts. There is also a small but significant presence of employment in the district's rural area. Given the district's proximity to London and transport links approximately 17% of the working population commute to and from the Capital⁸.

Like elsewhere, East Herts has felt the impact of the recession, but there is evidence of economic resilience in the district with the vast majority of businesses successfully continuing their trade. However, whilst the five town centres offer a range of high street and independent

⁴ Communities and Local Government household estimates and projections

⁵ National Statistics (NOMIS) November 2010

⁶ CLG (2008) Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007

⁷ East Herts Local Development Framework Core Strategy Consultation Document 2010

⁸ East Herts Local Development Framework Core Strategy Consultation Document 2010

shops and services, there is competition from neighbouring centres offering a greater retail choice.

East Herts - Safer Communities

East Herts has a relatively low crime rate and has no areas with severe or longstanding crime and disorder problems. Nevertheless, anti-social behaviour, crime and the fear of crime causes distress to individuals and is destructive to communities.

The Council as a member of the East Herts Community Safety Partnership identifies and implements effective initiatives. The partnership brings together key statutory and non-statutory agencies, including the police and social landlords, to identify and implement initiatives to improve the safety of the community. The East Herts Community Safety Plan sets out the priorities of the partnership and targets for reducing the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour in the district.

Current initiatives carried out between the Council and its partners include Visual Audits and Street Briefings, which are carried out with the significant housing associations as well as the Police and Council officers and concentrate resident consultation to improve neighbourhood areas by addressing the specific concerns of residents.

Section 3 The Vision for East Herts

The Council's corporate vision is:

To improve the quality of people's lives and preserve all that is best in East Herts.

The Council's Corporate Strategic Plan 2012-16 sets out the overall vision and direction for the council over the next four years. It highlights the high level priorities for the council and identifies the key outcomes that will be achieved. The plan forms the basis for the council's performance management activities and will drive the distribution of resources. The Council has adopted a new framework of priorities to ensure that it continues to provide high quality services and remain committed to the community it serves. As part of this the Council has reduced its priorities from six to three. They are:

- **People** – Opportunities for everyone to contribute to and access the council's services
- **Place** - Safe and Clean
- **Prosperity** – Improving the economic and social opportunities available to our communities

Service Plans are produced every year by Heads of Service, agreed by the council's elected members and set out what key actions need to be undertaken to deliver the outcomes contained in the Corporate Strategic Plan. These actions are linked to key performance indicators, so achievement can be measured and tracked. The Corporate Strategic Plan and Service Plans then feed into a four-year budget-planning model, which the council uses to plan its expenditure and make sure that financial resources are available to fund actions in priority areas. The Council's Corporate Strategic Plan 2012-16 can be found at:

[http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/media/pdf/4/7/Corporate Strategic Plan 2012-13 - 2015-16.pdf](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/media/pdf/4/7/Corporate_Strategic_Plan_2012-13_-_2015-16.pdf)

There are a number of other strategies and plans that have had a direct influence on the development of this strategy. They include the following:

a) The Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Development Framework

The vision for the District is set out in the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2024: Everyone Matters (SCS) and repeated in the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation document (2010). The SCS's vision for East Herts' future is to:

Create a thriving, fair and inclusive East Herts that safeguards and enhances our unique mix of rural and urban communities, where people choose to live, work and visit because:

- *It is safe, clean, green and well connected;*
- *Everyone matters and can take part in decisions that affect their lives;*
- *There are sustainable economic and social opportunities that improve quality of life and are available to all.*

During 2008 the Council undertook two rounds of consultation engagement on the East Herts Local Development Framework (LDF). Although not statutory requirement, this initial consultation forms part of continual and ongoing engagement of the community and stakeholders in the preparation of the Core Strategy. The first round of consultation during Winter/Spring 2008 was not specific to planning or the LDF. It involved asking residents what they liked and disliked about where they live and what they thought were the issues and opportunities facing East Herts.

| Like about East Herts | Dislike about East Herts | Issues & Opportunities |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Rural nature of the District | Conditions of roads and pavements | Maintaining quality of life |
| Historic character | Parking | Provision of infra-structure alongside new development |
| Safe | Noise & traffic from Stansted Airport | Location of new development |
| Good schools | Too many flats | Affordable housing |
| Location near to London | Lack of passenger transport, especially in rural areas | Local economy |
| Friendly people | | |

The Core Strategy has identified the key issues and options facing the five towns (Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, Sawbridgeworth, and Ware) and the villages (as a whole) by each of the SCS themes. From this the Core Strategy has developed an emerging LDF vision for each of the five towns and the villages which were subject to consultation during autumn 2010.

b) The Local Investment Plan

The Local Investment Plan (LIP) for East Herts sets out the principles and priorities for joint investment by East Herts Council (EHC) and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to deliver East Herts' overarching vision and related strategies for housing, regeneration and economic development. The plan identifies the strategic context for investment and summarises the evidence base that will be used to direct investment and determine the outputs and outcomes expected from HCA, the Council and wider stakeholders. The plan is not a standalone document and has been aligned with the Council's existing strategies particularly the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), The Housing Strategy and the Local Development Framework (LDF).

The objective of the Local Investment Plan (LIP) process is to maximise effectiveness and value for money from public and private investment by focusing on agreed local strategic priorities for the district as a whole.

The East Herts LDF, SCS and the Housing Strategy 2012-15 together provide a comprehensive picture of the vision for East Herts and the current and future challenges and how these can be met. The LIP has four thematic strategic objectives:

1. Maximise the delivery of a range of new affordable homes, including affordable, whilst ensuring the best use of existing housing
2. Meeting the needs of a growing elderly population
3. Meeting the needs of vulnerable people and stronger communities
4. Economic Development, Employment and Skills

c) Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

Hertfordshire has recently received approval from Communities and Local Government to establish a county-wide Local Enterprise partnership following its submission in August 2010. It is one of only 27 LEP proposals to have been so far agreed across the Country.

The proposal is based on an analysis which shows there is no overriding economic geography encompassing Hertfordshire. In the absence of such, the most practical and pragmatic approach is to build on the successes of the established county wide economic partnership, *Hertfordshire Works*, and form a LEP which is coterminous with the county boundaries. The proposal, which has been accepted, acknowledges that local economic geographies are dynamic and ever changing. The existing partnership, Hertfordshire Works, provides a sound basis to form a LEP and it is intended to establish a shadow LEP Board from the existing partnership.

Section 4 - Strategic Housing Objectives

The East Herts LDF, SCS and the LIP together provide a comprehensive picture of the vision for East Herts and the current and future challenges and how these can be met. The Council has identified three key strategic housing themes that crosscut the LDF, SCS, the LIP and this Housing Strategy. These are:

1. Maximise the delivery of a range of new affordable homes, including affordable, whilst ensuring the best use of existing housing
2. Meeting the needs of a growing elderly population
3. Meeting the needs of vulnerable people and stronger communities

Strategic Housing Objective 1: Maximise the delivery of new affordable homes, whilst ensuring the best use of existing housing

There is a significant affordability problem in the District. This is a result of many factors but predominantly due to high prices in comparison to income levels. This in turn is placing greater pressure on the existing affordable housing in the District. There is simply not enough affordable housing to meet the increasing need of the District's residents.

The Council and its partners must continually seek to secure opportunities for the development of new affordable housing, to maximise access to existing affordable housing through nomination agreements with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and to make effective use of existing affordable rented homes through management of the housing register.

What we know:

i) **Affordability:** One of the key issues facing the district is the affordability of housing; with the Herts Observatory recording East Herts had the 3rd highest ratio in Hertfordshire of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings in 2010. The lower quartile home cost 10.2 times more than the lower quartile earnings for a household in East Herts in 2010 compared to 7.7 for the Eastern Region and 6.7 for the Country⁹. This is in contrast to 2008 when house prices were 11 times more than lower quartile earnings. However despite this small drop housing in East Herts remains unaffordable to many households especially newly forming ones. The high cost of housing in East Herts is a significant issue in rural areas given the structural changes to the agricultural and rural economy in more recent years where house prices are higher and rural wages are lower.

Figure 2: House prices comparisons

| Property Type | Average Price Second Quarter 2011 Hertfordshire | Average Price Second Quarter 2011 East Herts |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Flats & Maisonettes | 182,925 | 187,180 |
| Detached | 578,603 | 525,496 |
| Semi-detached | 366,522 | 320,659 |
| Terraced | 243,581 | 242,406 |
| All Properties | 323,358 | 328,831 |
| Annual change in house price | -3.9% | -1.6% |
| Quarterly change in house price | +2.8% | +0.6% |

Source Herts Observatory 2012

Information suggests that even during the current economic climate that the East Herts housing market remains buoyant, house prices have not fallen significantly and affordability remains an issue.

In 2008 consultants started work on a joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) on behalf of the London Commuter belt (East/M11 Sub-region) including East Herts. The results and the final report were published in January 2010. The purpose of the SHMA is to assess current and future housing demand and housing need, and how the distribution of need and

⁹ CLG (2010) Housing Statistics , Table 576

demand varies across the district. It also considers future demographic trends and identifies the accommodation requirements of specific groups. The SHMA draws the following conclusions about the level of affordable housing provision, tenure split and housing size mix across East Herts:

- 55% - Market Housing Requirement
- 45% - Total Affordable Housing Requirement

Of which:

- 34% - Intermediate Affordable Housing Requirement
- 12% - Social Rented Affordable Housing Requirement

Please note: figures may not sum due to rounding

The SHMA study found that 75% of the affordable housing requirement for East Herts is for intermediate affordable housing, i.e. housing at prices above those for social rent but below market prices or rents, such as key worker housing. This finding effectively reverses the Council's current approach to tenure split that seeks 75% social rented and 25% intermediate affordable housing. This recommended tenure split is based on the theoretical modelling that underpins the SHMA which seeks to 'balance' the housing market; i.e. ensure that the availability of all housing (supply) meets both housing need and demand.

ii) Housing Register

At 1st April 2011 2,740 households were registered on our Housing Register. Numerically the greatest need is for smaller properties but when account is taken of social rented housing availability and the statutory preference categories for housing it is clear that there is a significant shortage of 2 and 3 bedroom properties. There is a particular pressure on meeting the transfer needs of current social tenants as their household size grows.

Since 2008 the Council has also managed the transfer applications from existing social tenants that require a move to more suitable accommodation. Strategically this allows the Council to understand the complete housing need picture. The Council operates a Choice Based Lettings Scheme 'HomeOption' which is administered by Locata, an outside agency. Homeseekers on the Housing Register can search for available vacant social homes across the district where the Council has nomination rights. Vacant properties are advertised every fortnight and applicants can 'express an interest' in them and use their Housing Register points to 'bid' for up to three suitable properties of their choice.

In March 2012 the Council moved away from paper based housing register applications and has developed with three other partners a joint on-line housing register application form with Locata. Aside from the clear benefits to the Council in-terms of administration of applications, applicants will be able to manage their housing register application process easily and effectively on the web based application. It will also allow more effective management and analysis of the strategic housing data held by the system.

iii) Homelessness

The Council's aim is to prevent homelessness and to respond to homelessness applications in accordance with statutory requirements, efficiently, effectively and fairly, helping homeless people to secure appropriate accommodation. The Council has a range of temporary accommodation options available to it, to try to best suit a households needs including accommodation for clients with mental health issues, experiencing domestic violence and a council owned hostel. The Council has recently remodeled its one remaining hostel into 11 units of high quality self contained accommodation. The Council successfully met the 2010 target for placing households in temporary accommodation a year early and has consistently kept the figure below the target of 33 households.

The Council has published its second Homeless and Homeless Prevention Strategy 2008-2013 in July 2008. The overall purpose of the Homeless and Prevention Strategy is to ensure that as a Council we address homelessness strategically by ensuring suitable accommodation, support and advice is available and accessible to all client groups and to encourage a multi-agency approach to preventing homelessness. The Council has range of options that it works with clients to ensure a best fit. The document can be found at: www.eastherts.gov.uk

iv) Stock Condition

There are nearly 50,000 homes in the private sector¹⁰. The condition of properties in the private sector is primarily the responsibility of its owners but the Council recognises limitations on some owners' ability to maintain, heat and improve their homes. The demographic trends in the district are particularly important for housing in the private sector as an ageing population is more at risk from excess cold, maybe less able to afford to maintain their homes and require greater assistance to do so.

A House Condition Survey was carried out in 2010. The Housing Strategy and Assistance Policy will be reviewed in the light of the findings. Some of the key findings are as follows:

- Decent Homes: The government defined a decent home as "one which is wind and weathertight, warm and has modern facilities", and established an aspirational Decent Home Standard, with targets for reducing the proportion of vulnerable households living in dwellings failing the standard.¹¹ The survey estimated that 49.2% of all dwellings are non-decent, and 3 in 5 in the rural south are non-decent. More than 75% of dwellings constructed prior to 1919 are non-decent. Nationally around 37% of all dwellings fail the standard. However, due to modelling for excess cold, the national figure is an underestimate. Ninety percent of non decent dwellings were due to category 1 hazards, i.e., significant hazards assessed using the statutory Housing Health and Safety Rating System. As a proportion of all dwellings, 45% failed due to a category 1 hazard, and nearly 1 in 6 were not in reasonable repair. The most common category 1 hazard, as expected, was excess cold. The prevalence of the hazard for falling on level surfaces was highest in rural areas, particularly the rural north, where 9.1% of hazards recorded were for falls on the level. Rates of non-decency in the private rented sector of 53.7% were slightly higher than for owner-occupied dwellings, whilst rates in the RSL

¹⁰ HSSA 2010

¹¹ ODPM. A Decent Home: the definition and guidance for implementation. Feb 2004, updated June 2006

- stock are lower still at 40.9% - a result of housing association's investment programme specifically to remedy non-decency. An estimated 4,800 vulnerable private sector households (43.1% of vulnerable private sector households) live in non-decent homes.
- Repair: in terms of repair, conditions are worse in the private sector, with average repair costs significantly higher in the private rented sector, particularly for required urgent repairs. Of all tenures, conditions are best in the RSL sector, significantly so for average repair costs. Levels of disrepair are significantly worse in the rural areas.
- Energy Efficiency: Overall energy efficiency of stock is better than average, with RSL stock performing better than other sectors. The average energy performance of the stock is still a long way short of that required to meet Government targets of domestic CO2 emissions and to future proof properties from the impact of fuel price rises. The survey indicated the need for continued investment to improve energy efficiency and affordable warmth to protect the vulnerable. The numbers in fuel poverty had increased since the last survey, largely as a result of increases in fuel tariffs. Despite availability of heavily subsidised energy efficiency measures, cavity wall insulation was found to be needed in over 40% of homes, and a similar proportion appeared to require loft insulation. 21.1% of homes were found to not have a cavity wall, therefore internal or external wall insulation should also be encouraged, and boiler replacements where appropriate.
- Disability: The survey revealed high numbers of disabled and elderly households, and considerable potential demand for Disabled Facilities Grants

What is happening?

a) Developing new affordable housing

The Coalition Government has introduced significant changes to the way in which affordable housing will be funded in the future. From April 2011, the level of grant available from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to build new affordable housing was significantly reduced. A number of our Registered Providers (RPs) now offer tenants a rent known as 'Affordable Rent' whereby rent levels are set up to a maximum of 80% of the local market rent. It is expected that this approach will generate an increased rental stream for RPs to fund new build developments, reducing the need for grant funding. The RPs that are operating in East Herts have different approaches to the introduction of affordable rents and differing implementation timings and policies. The Council disseminates the information it holds to residents to assist them make informed choices when bidding for housing under CBL.

However, this will also have a significant impact on affordability as many local residents may struggle to meet increased rental costs. It may also have an impact on the bidding profile from applicants on the housing register. We will therefore continue to work closely with RPs to ensure that new social rented housing remains affordable for local residents on our Housing register.

j) Delivering new affordable housing

In terms of developing new affordable housing the Council’s role is that of an ‘enabler’ which consists of identifying housing need and bringing together key partners to generate new opportunities for affordable housing development. The Council’s aim is to maximise and increase the amount of good quality affordable housing in the District, in the form of rented housing and low cost home ownership.

The Council’s 2007 Adopted Local Plan Policy HSG3 – Affordable Housing stipulates that on residential developments of 15 dwellings or more or on sites over 0.5 hectares in any of our six main settlements up to 40% affordable homes should be included. In our designated Category 1 and 2 Villages, Policy HSG3 requires up to 40% affordable homes to be built on sites proposing three or more dwellings or sites over 0.09 hectares. The Council’s ‘New Affordable Homes Commissioning Brief (2012)’ sets out East Herts Council’s requirements for the affordable housing element on new developments in East Herts District. A copy of the document is at Appendix 5. In order to go some way to meeting the identified need for affordable housing in East Herts, the Council requires up to 40% of the new properties built being affordable. Of the 40% affordable housing the Council requires:

- 75% of the properties to be rented;
- 25% of the properties to be intermediate housing this is primarily shared ownership.

Local Plan Policy HSG 6 expects that 15% of all new homes constructed will be to Lifetime Homes standards.

A total of 38 affordable homes were completed during the monitoring year which represents 13% of all completed dwellings in the District. On sites above the Adopted Local Plan affordable housing thresholds, 37% of completed dwellings were affordable.

Figure 3: Gross affordable home completions

| | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 |
|------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Gross Housing Completions all dwellings | 599 | 597 | 489 | 304 |
| Total gross affordable home completions | 177 | 145 | 142 | 38 |
| % of total gross completions | 30% | 24% | 29% | 13% |
| % of total net completions from eligible sites | 44% | 35% | 30% | 37% |

Source: Annual Monitoring Report 20010/11

In addition to delivery of these affordable units through the planning system, a further 22 affordable dwellings were delivered through a government backed scheme called HomeBuy Direct where buyers are assisted to purchase their homes using an equity loan.

ii) Size, type and tenure

In recent years, there has been a predominance of flatted-developments built in East Herts: 71% of gross completions in 2009/10 were flats. There are a number of reasons for this including high land values; the costs associated with developing town centre sites; the policy aim of prioritising Brownfield sites as opposed to Greenfield land; and the desire within the housing industry to match supply with the demand for smaller properties. However the Annual Monitoring Report for 2010/11 indicates that the type and size of dwellings completed during 2010/2011 is more balanced than in previous years.

Figure 4: Comparison of Housing Need – number of housing register applicants by property size needed

| | 01 April 2008 | | 01 April 2010 | | Difference 2008-2009 | |
|---------------|---------------|-----|---------------|--------|----------------------|--|
| | Number | % | Number | Number | Percentage | |
| One bedroom | 1,414 | 59% | 1,582 | +168 | +12% | |
| Two bedroom | 711 | 30% | 757 | +46 | +6% | |
| Three bedroom | 241 | 10% | 303 | +62 | +20% | |
| 4 or more | 33 | 1% | 57 | +24 | +73% | |
| Total | 2,399 | | 2,699 | +300 | +50% | |

Source: East Herts HSSA 2010

In addition the SHMA, based on demographic forecasts estimates the housing size mix to meet the needs of future households as follows:

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| One bedroom: | 15% |
| Two bedrooms: | 27% |
| Three bedrooms: | 41% |
| 4 or more bedrooms: | 17% |

However whilst the Council seeks to influence the size and type of market housing that gets built it is unable to dictate what should be built.

The SHMA modelling shows that in East Herts, there is a lack of housing that can be afforded by households earning between £20,000 and £35,000 per annum. Below £20,000, households may be eligible for housing benefits to subsidise their housing costs. This finding needs to be robustly discussed before the Council decides to amend any current planning policies.

iii) Affordability

The Council recognises that affordability is a key issue for the district especially amongst newly forming households. There is concern about some areas of the housing market, particularly the low percentage of first time buyers. According to the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML), mortgage lending in July 2011 fell by 6% compared to July 2010. The CML believes the housing market will remain subdued in 2011 due to uncertainty surrounding the economy and the ongoing mortgage rationing by lenders. The level of activity in the mortgage market is expected to drift lower over the coming months. Current constraints are a particular problem

for first-time buyers, especially those unable to provide a substantial deposit. The preference for low loan to value mortgages is therefore expected to continue to restrict first time buyers in the current financial environment. As a result of the recession and the adverse affect on the local economy and the housing market, a number of Local Authorities are trying to take a proactive approach in supporting the local area.

Rather than entering into the residential mortgage market ourselves the Council is exploring the possibility of entering into a partnership with residential mortgage lenders, with the remit of minimising the financial impact on ourselves, and at the same time taking advantage of the expertise already available from existing mortgage providers. In September 2009, Sector Treasury Services set up a pilot scheme to assess the viability of a new Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS), including the legal and accounting issues surrounding a financial indemnity of this nature. 11 Local Authorities initially sponsored the pilot scheme.

The scheme is aimed at first time buyers, providing help for potential buyers who can afford mortgage payments - but not the initial deposit – to get on to the property ladder. Under the scheme, each Local Authority are able to specify three qualifying criteria; the maximum level of indemnity, the maximum loan size (based on 95% of maximum property valuation) and the qualifying post codes. The scheme is standardised as much as possible. If a potential buyer meets the strict credit criteria applied by the lender, and meets the criteria set out by the Local Authority to qualify for a mortgage under the scheme, the Local Authority will provide a top-up indemnity to the value of the difference between the typical LTV (i.e. 75%) and a 95% LTV mortgage. The potential buyer will thereby obtain a 95% mortgage on similar terms as a 75% mortgage, but without the need to provide the substantial deposit usually required.

The Council's Executive has agreed that the Council provide £1m to support the LAMS scheme in East Herts and that the following parameters be set:

- a) The Scheme to apply to all post code areas within East Herts
- b) The maximum loan per property be set at £160,000

It is anticipated that this could assist a maximum of 32 households.

iv) Rural Affordable Housing

Almost 24% of the population of East Herts live in rural settlements.¹² Affordability in our rural communities is a significant issue given the structural changes to the agricultural and rural economy in more recent years where house prices are higher and rural wages are lower. As a result there is a lack of accommodation for newly forming households and many young people are leaving rural areas, with communities having an increasing proportion of retired people and wealthy commuters.

In order to address these issues the Local Plan Second Review 2007 includes a Village Development Strategy that apportions limited growth to the larger and more sustainable settlements, in tandem with lower thresholds for affordable housing provision. Rural Exceptions Affordable Housing for 100% affordable schemes may also be permitted. In

¹² East Herts Local Development Framework Core Strategy Consultation Document 2010

2010/11 53 additional dwellings were built in villages and rural areas, excluding the five towns.¹³

b) Making better use of existing housing both public and private

In addition to the provision of new affordable homes the Council wishes to make better use of existing housing to ensure we are effectively using what is already available.

i) Empty Homes

Long term empty homes in the private sector present a potential resource to the District. East Herts is fortunate that it has a relatively low number of long term empty homes. Figure 5 compares 2010 levels for East Herts with the total for England, and for the Eastern region.

Figure 5: Empty homes comparisons 2010

| | Total empties | Percent of stock | Private empty for more than 6 months |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| England | 662,105 | 2.88% | 285,808 |
| East of England | 55,810 | 2.20% | 25,906 |
| <i>East Herts</i> | 1,145 | 1.96% | 575 |

Source: CLG collation off Local Authority HSSA returns 2011

In 2010 the Council adopted its revised Empty Homes Strategy. A staged approach to tackling empty homes, from identification through prioritisation, encouragement with support and a range of incentives, through to enforcement where appropriate supports a target of bringing 10 empty homes back into use each year as a result of our action.

Private Lease Agreements Converting Empties (PLACE) is a scheme targeted at helping the owners of long term empty homes return their properties to use, to support homeless prevention. East Herts is working in partnership with Chelmsford, Epping Forest, Harlow, Hertsmere, Uttlesford, and Watford Councils and Pathmeads Housing Association. The scheme offers high level grant funding to repair properties and in return the housing association will lease the property for three years making it available to a household in housing need, generally below Local Housing Allowance levels. The scheme has recently been modified to provide more flexible funding options and to support the authorities funding some enforcement work where this is the most appropriate action.

A partnership for Empty Dwelling Management Orders and private sector leasing has also been negotiated by our Empty Homes Officer for East Herts and other neighbouring authorities.

¹³ Annual Monitoring Report 2009/10 – This figure excludes 2 dwellings built in the parish of Buntingford which includes the built-up area of the town itself.

ii) Underoccupation:

While tackling under-occupation may not increase the overall supply of housing it can have the effect of improving the match of the supply of homes available to those most in need. The Council is aware, based on information held and rolling audits by our two main stock transfer housing associations, that there is significant under-occupation in social housing. They have both recently revised their incentive schemes for encouraging and assisting tenants who wish to move to smaller accommodation. They both offer financial incentives but also practical assistance.

The Council also recognises its allocations policy as a method to give priority to those existing tenants wishing to move to smaller accommodation. The Councils Allocation Policy gives twenty points for every bedroom an existing transferring tenant is willing to give up to move to smaller accommodation. This is the same number of points as those that are given to applicants on the register that are lacking a bedroom for their household.

iii) Improving the quality of the existing housing stock

a) In the Private Sector:

- **Energy Efficiency:** Following a successful joint bid for £6.6 million of government funding, the ten district councils in Herts, together with five Essex local authorities, have been working together through the Herts and Essex Energy Partnership (HEEP) fuel poverty and carbon reduction scheme to deliver heavily discounted energy efficiency measures to help reduce their residents' fuel bills. As the scheme draws to a close, options are being appraised to prepare the participating authorities for the government's proposed Green Deal initiative. Home energy efficiency and available schemes are promoted through various means, such as targeted mail shots, use of thermal imaging, mail-outs to benefit recipients etc., advice, and cross referrals with partners such as the Home Improvement Agency. The Warm Homes Healthy People project in the first quarter of 2012 will include promotion and provision of measures to help households keep warm. An equality impact assessment has been carried out for the council's affordable warmth strategy. The strategy is due to be reviewed and updated in 2012. However, given the many important changes being proposed for the way energy efficiency measures will be funded nationally, this will be a light touch review pending greater certainty over future regimes.
- **Disrepair:** All requests from tenants to require landlords to improve the condition of their homes are investigated in accordance with the Council's enforcement policy, which advocates a staged approach, from advice through to enforcement as appropriate. Where enforcement action proves necessary, the Council will generally seek to recover costs associated with serving of notices and carrying out works in default. The Council has also helped fund essential works in owner occupied properties through its means tested Decent Home Grants. The Council has reduced its budget for these discretionary grants in order to prioritise use of dwindling resources. Their availability is under review, and currently is restricted to high risk cases or where some works are necessary alongside a Disabled Facilities Grant.

- Houses in Multiple Occupation: (HMOs) tend, locally and nationally, to contain some of the poorest housing, along with sharing of amenities, and the risk of harm to occupants in the case of fire is also higher. Therefore in addition to responding to complaints from tenants about their housing conditions, pro-active inspections are also carried out to properties known to be an HMO, and action taken according to assessed risk. When resources permit, contact is also made to properties thought likely to be an HMO. Certain larger HMOs are also required to be licensed, and conditions are generally attached to the licence to bring the property up to the required standard. The Council's HMO licensing fee is lower where the landlord pro-actively applies for a licence. Where the application is as a result of the Council's intervention, a higher fee is charged, reflecting the additional costs generally incurred in such cases.

Disability: The Council provides mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) for adaptations recommended by an Occupational Therapist from the County Council. The applicant may choose to engage the services of the Home Improvement Agency, run by the Papworth Trust and based in Bishop's Stortford, to act on their behalf to produce their plans, obtain builders estimates etc. This process not only ensures the property is suitable to meet the needs of the disabled person and any carer, but also gives an opportunity to consider what other services the household may require, such as help with minor repairs through its handyperson service, or works to improve the energy efficiency of their home.

b) In the Public Sector:

The housing stock transfer in March 2002, of some 6,500 homes to Riversmead and Stort Valley (now South Anglia) housing associations, enabled the necessary investment in former Council housing to take place, with a resultant overall improvement in property conditions. The two housing associations agreed undertakings to carry out repairs and improvements within certain timescales and have completed a detailed programme of work since the stock was sold nine years ago. Included in this programme were works to modernise the homes and also to improve their energy efficiency. The two housing associations own approximately 80% of the social housing in the district and aside from ad-hoc properties where they have been unable to gain access all their stock is at decent homes standard. This is at odds with the findings of the House Condition Survey mentioned above, which estimated that 40.9% of social housing failed the decent home standard. This anomaly may be due to grossing up from the survey sample selected, and modelling of the hazard for excess cold, the most common cause of failure of the standard, rather than the full HHSRS assessment completed for dwellings in the survey sample.

Key future priorities within this objective

- Optimise opportunities for increasing new affordable housing supply, particularly houses and family sized homes, and the range of affordable housing options through effective partnership working.
- Bring private sector homes back into use and use appropriate legislation

- Promote and assist our housing association partners to release larger homes that are under occupied
- Maximise funding opportunities for the delivery of new affordable housing.
- Achieve the right mix, tenure and proportion of affordable housing on new developments based on evidence of need.
- Offer advice and assistance on maintaining homes and accessing grants
- Regulate private rented sector housing via advice, inspection enforcement, and House in Multiple occupation (HMO) licensing
- Enable and encourage the provision of affordable warmth in private sector homes through advice, grants, discounted measures and partnership initiatives.
- Work with partners to meet identified rural affordable housing needs
- Work with partners at county council and housing registered providers to ensure supported accommodation is available for vulnerable people to meet identified needs.
- Run a Housing Forum at least 3 times a year and consult on proposed housing reforms
- Hold an annual Private Sector Landlord Forum
- Launch the East Herts Council backed mortgage indemnity scheme.
- Generate new affordable housing policies for inclusion within the East Herts Core Strategy to replace current policies in the Local Plan.

Strategic Housing Objective 2: Meeting the needs of a growing elderly population

In order to plan for the provision of new homes in the future we also need to understand what the population will be like in 2031, not just in terms of absolute numbers but how its age structure may differ from today. East Herts has an ageing population and it is projected that two thirds of the population growth anticipated in East Herts between 2006 and 2021 will be people aged over 65 years. This will have a significant impact on the provision of both housing and services, with accessibility and the suitability of houses being key factors.

What we know:

The population of East Herts is forecasted to increase to 148,200 by 2021 and 157,900 in 2031¹⁴. There is a forecasted growth of population in the over 65 age group such that this population is estimated to increase to 27,800 by 2021¹⁵. This is a 58% increase on the 2001 census count of 17,601. The number of residents over the age of 75 on the 2001 census was

¹⁴ Revised 2008 based Subnational population projections ONS published 2010

¹⁵ Revised 2008 based Subnational population projections ONS

7,985 and is forecast to increase to 14,000 by 2021¹⁶. This is an increase of 75%. East Herts Housing Stock Condition Survey 2010 found clear evidence of an increasing proportion of elderly people in East Herts, with 42.8% of households having at least one person over 60 years of age. Given the resource demands often associated with very elderly people these are significant figures. In addition the latter group are likely to have care and support needs, which will need to be met by new and existing housing provision.

Although many older people own their own homes, meeting the costs of heating and repairs may become increasingly difficult over time for people on fixed incomes. East Herts Housing Stock Condition Survey 2010 found that older person households were more likely to live in unfit housing (ie houses containing a significant hazard) and housing in a poor state of repair than any other household type and twice as likely to experience fuel poverty. Related to this is the tendency for older people to under-occupy their homes often remaining in a family home for many years after their children have left. This is a problem both for older homeowners and tenants struggling to cope financially, and for those on the housing register for affordable housing, which is in short supply. We believe, however, that the best way of tackling under occupation by older people is by developing appropriate and attractive housing alternatives for them with our RSL partners, and by offering help to minimise the logistical difficulties of moving to a new home. However it could also include other changes, which are not incentives, to current policies such as the eligibility for adaptations, for example for the removal of baths and replacement with walk in showers, when other more suitable stock is already available.

What is happening?

The Council recognises that housing has a key role to play in maintaining independent living for older people for as long as is feasible and in helping to prevent unnecessary admission to residential care or hospital. Hertfordshire County Council, as the lead strategic body for the care needs of vulnerable groups including the elderly, works with its partners in the public sector, private sector and housing associations to offer a wide choice of 'accommodation solutions' for elderly people they range from staying in their current home to residential care.

The Council and its partners can assist with a range of measures from low level interventions through the Disabled Facilities Grant, such as the provision of a community alarm, fall detectors or assistance with minor repairs, to higher level interventions such as Disable Facilities Grant to enable access into and around the dwelling and to use its facilities to interventions such as a transfer to more suitable independent housing or assistance in a sheltered or frail elderly scheme. There are a number of projects that the Council is either leading on or is a major partner to improve the available services and housing options for elderly people in East Herts.

i) Accommodation

Registered Social Landlord partners have carried out appraisals of all their older people's accommodation and have robust Asset Management Strategies in place. They are working closely with East Herts Council and Herts County Council with the overall objective to update the elderly housing provision to modern standards including extra care or flexi-care. The

¹⁶ Revised 2008 based Subnational population projections ONS

advantage of flexicare housing is that care staff are based in the building, or very close by, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Care is available in an emergency or for short periods, for instance, after a hospital stay.

Where this is not feasible alternative clients for the accommodation or site is being considered. Not all existing sheltered schemes are suitable for flexicare and where schemes are popular the RPs are, in consultation with existing residents, continuing to update facilities and the standard of accommodation. Projects that have been completed or are currently underway in the District include:

- Regeneration of a sheltered scheme at Bircherley Court in Hertford to provide modern accommodation with additional services and community provision which will enhance the quality of life of the residents. The scheme which was completed in two phases and provides 70 one and two bed flexible care homes. The work was funded by Riversmead Housing Association, the HCA and East Herts.
- The demolition and redevelopment of the existing buildings of Calton House and Calton Court and replacing them with a flexi-care older persons living complex that will assist and support residents to live independently. The complex will comprise 55 one and two bed flats, guest suite for visitors, communal lounge and laundry, 24 hour community alarm, security door entry system and new community facilities including a doctor's surgery.
- Decommissioning of an unpopular and unsuitable sheltered housing scheme in Bishop's Stortford and its redevelopment to provide family housing using the registered providers own resources.

Herts County Council is the main strategic body that is directing the provision of older persons supported housing across the County. They have published a strategy on their required future provision of older person supported accommodation entitled 'Flexicare Housing Hertfordshire'. This strategy details district by district their predicted requirements for older persons housing to 2020/21.

ii) First Contact

First Contact is an information, advice and support service in Hertfordshire. It enables older people to access a wide range of community activities and services in their local area. First Contact has 12 Community Agents working across areas within the county. They will visit residents in their own home and discuss what type of services might be of assistance. They can then put residents in touch directly with organisations that can provide the services needed or advise on services available locally including local social events and activities. From 2012 this is being wound down and HertsHelp is now providing the network service.

iii) Disabled Facilities Grants

These are mandatory grants to adapt homes of people with disabilities so that they may have safe access into and around their home and to use facilities within it, and are a priority within the private sector strategy.

With a relatively elderly demographic for the district, demand for assistance with adaptations is high, and the Council's budget goes beyond the level of government subsidy for this purpose in order to meet demand without needing to operate a waiting list, recognising the importance of this service to vulnerable residents. The government announced additional national funding for DFGs of which East Herts was allocated an additional £29,837 for 2011/12 bringing our government grant to £257,837. In addition the Council anticipates spending £450,000 in 2011/2012 of its own funds.

iv) Ageing Well in Herts

This is a project run by the County Council to develop a place based approach to ageing well which is being piloted in East Herts, Stevenage and St Albans. The project aims to agree a model for engaging older people in the work of the Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board and link it to district level older person forums and groups. The aim is to initially work with older people, in a specific locality within a district, to develop engagement structures with local public, voluntary and community sector services to help strengthen their preventative role and achieve a wider range of health and wellbeing outcomes.

Key future priorities within this objective

- Continue to work with our registered providers to assist in regenerating and making fit for purpose their sheltered housing stock
- To work with the County Council to identify opportunities within the district for flexi-care
- To continue to provide disabled facilities grants where appropriate to enable elderly persons to stay in their homes where reasonable to do so
- Continue with the Ageing Well initiative and monitor the outcomes

Strategic Housing Objective 3: Meeting the needs of vulnerable people and stronger communities

East Herts Council is committed to helping to create and maintain sustainable neighbourhoods and communities. Strong communities require effective approaches both in terms of policies to promote inclusiveness, assist the vulnerable, increase safety and the perception of safety and in ensuring the built environment and public space meet people's needs and aspirations.

The County Council's Adult Care Services has specific duties with regards to vulnerable adults and children. However as one of their key strategic partners we seek to work with them to develop future priorities for all the people in our local communities whether that be by directly providing accommodation or services, enabling or 'donating' an asset.

What we know:

Herts County Council's Accommodation Solutions Team is aiming to develop a longer term accommodation strategy for vulnerable clients. They are currently developing a template for individual District profiles (older persons, mental health, learning disability needs and population projections etc) so that data can be used for longer term planning. The districts are then to be consulted on the profiles and to work through any data irregularities. The aim of developing the District profiles is to provide an evidence base for a longer term commissioning strategy. The County Council's Commissioning teams are also involving the Hertfordshire heads of Housing in the recommissioning and shaping of accommodation based services including those for Offenders and floating support.

a) Physical and Sensory Disabilities

The 2001 Census reported that 24.6% of households in East Herts contained somebody with a long term limiting illness or disability, which equates to 12,827 households. The main implication for housing is the need to promote independent living, mobility, choice and control by people with disabilities and to secure access to mainstream housing provision. There is a need to work with affordable housing providers to deliver specialist housing schemes, lifetime homes and ensure the best use of adapted properties.

In order to meet demand for adaptations to enable disabled residents to remain safely in their own home the Council funds an adaptation programme in excess of the government funding limits. However the nature of a person's disability and their personal circumstances may mean that they require rehousing. The Papworth Trust's Move On service checks which properties become available to rent and meets with the Council's Housing Options Team and the County Council's Occupational Therapists to identify people with disabilities and match them to properties that are already adapted or are more suitable for adaptation works.

Since the adoption of the Local Plan in April 2007, most planning applications are considered by a dedicated occupational therapist employed by the County Council who works closely with the Papworth Housing Trust and East Herts Council, to assess the validity of the lifetime home provision. The Local Plan Policy HSG 6 expects that 15% of residential provision should be to lifetime home standard.

b) People with Learning disabilities

The identification of accommodation needs and support for this client group is part of Herts County Council's Adult Care Services remit. The main contribution that the housing enabling role can make is in facilitating appropriate supported living opportunities. We have two schemes one in Bishop's Stortford and another in Hertford where RPs have developed general needs accommodation and a number of the units have been set aside for 13 residents with learning disabilities who receive support from their social workers as and when required. These schemes have generated increased independence for the residents as well as freeing up the higher support accommodation they occupied previously.

Similar projects will be considered on other sites which come through the planning system.

c) Mental Health

In the housing context it is important to ensure that people with mental health issues are not placed in more restrictive environments than their needs or risk assessment indicate. The development of additional housing related support services, such as floating support, can enable more individuals to move into independent living thereby freeing up resources.

Current provision in East Herts includes supported short-term and long term accommodation, primarily in the Hertford area, and access to the County Council's floating support service in general needs accommodation. Herts County Council is currently developing a Mental Health Strategy. It is likely that the Strategy will identify a short fall in accommodation, particularly in the East and North of the District, and a need to develop a move on protocol from current accommodation based services to general needs accommodation with off site floating support. There are currently no specific accommodation requirements for East Herts developed by the County Council but East Herts is willing to work with the County Council and partner RPs to develop a nominations protocol for a number units of general needs accommodation with floating support, whether this be pepper potted across the district or a small group of flats.

d) Rough Sleepers

There is no evidence of significant levels of rough sleeping. A more prevalent occurrence is that of 'sofa surfing' where people move from one friend or relatives sofa to another.

Although the number of rough sleepers is small, the Council recognises that they are an extremely vulnerable group. It is essential that those who may wish to access housing and other services are provided with appropriate information, and that a wide range of organisations that come into contact with them can 'signpost' them to appropriate services.

More generally, the issue of rough sleeping emphasises the importance of improving access to general needs affordable accommodation and there being sufficient floating support to help people make a success of their tenancies.

e) Drug and Alcohol Misuse

Vale House Stabilisation Services continues to provide rehabilitation services for people in this client group. The Council has a re-housing protocol with Vale House to provide up to three units of general needs accommodation per annum for clients that have successfully completed their programme. There is also a specialised floating support service available.

f) Victims of Domestic Violence

The crime of domestic violence is one that crosses all social, geographical and cultural groups. Domestic violence is a significant cause of homelessness within East Herts. There have been some significant developments of housing services to help Tackle domestic violence, provided either by the Council or its partners:

- domestic violence is now a specific ground for repossession in the two stock transfer housing associations tenancy agreements
- a 'Sanctuary' scheme began in 2006 following a pilot period
- a floating support service shared with Broxbourne Council

- The 'Home Improvement Agency' scheme has been expanded to enable victims to receive improved help with home security through the Hertfordshire Home Safety and Security Scheme. The service provides home security checks and fitting of home security measures, free of charge, to actual or potential home burglary victims, and residents referred by the police service or victim support, as well as those aged over sixty, single parents, and vulnerable or housebound residents. Following a recent re-tendering exercise by the County Council it is expected that this aspect of the Home Improvements Agency's service will move to another agency although cross referrals between for example the Agency's handyperson service and the new Home Safety service are likely.

The Council has a valued relationship with Safer Places an independent charity which provides a comprehensive range of services to adults and children affected by domestic and sexual abuse. It is also a significant partner on the East Herts and Broxbourne Multi-Agency Referral (MARAC).

g) Offenders and people at risk of offending

The Council is a key partner on the Multi-Agency Protection Panel (MAPPA) whose membership includes local RSLs, the Probation Service Local Authorities and the Police. In addition the Probation Service is a valued member on the Council's Homelessness Strategy Group.

The County Council's Youth Inclusion Support Panel (YISP) have panel meeting where young people aged 8-16, who have been identified as at risk, by agencies such as schools or the Police, can appoint a YISP Worker to the young person and recommend a package of support for the family such as Parenting Classes and activities for the young person.

The County Council is leading an Offenders Project Group that aims review both the services and available accommodation across the County. The County Council are currently reviewing the accommodation and support, provided across the County, to this group and are in the process of tendering for a new contract(s).

h) Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

In line with the provisions of Circular 01/2006, an Accommodation Needs Assessment was carried out jointly in 2006 with four neighbouring authorities and the County Council. This study identified a need for 5 permanent pitches to be provided within East Herts by 2011.

This study and those covering the other authorities in the Eastern Region were used by EERA to inform the preparation of the RSS Single Issue Review. RSS Policies H3 and H4 were subsequently published by the previous Government in 2009. Given the recent revocation of the RSS and impending revision of Circular 01/2006, current Government advice on the quantification of future provision for the district is presently uncertain. However, it should be noted that four private pitches have been granted planning permission in 2008, equating to an increase of over 50% in the previous district-wide number of pitches. More recently, in December 2010, an additional six pitches have also been granted planning permission at High Cross. Furthermore, the matter of provision features within the current Core Strategy Issues

and Options consultation. The Council will fully consider the accommodation needs of both Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople throughout the LDF process, as appropriate.

In terms of location, the process will take into account the existing evidence base including, among other things, the report carried out by Scott Wilson on behalf of the Northern and Eastern Hertfordshire Partnership as Stage 2 of the Accommodation Assessment in 2007 (which sought to find suitable areas in which pitches could be provided to meet Gypsy and Traveller accommodation). Other key issues include land availability; sustainability criteria; the potential for inclusion within large-scale development opportunities to aid delivery; and planning permissions granted in the interim.

i) Rural communities

East Herts is a predominately rural district with over a hundred villages and hamlets. Approximately 30% (2001 Census) of the population live outside of the five main towns. Such a large and dispersed rural population has significant impacts on the provision of housing services. Also many rural properties are not very energy efficient and particularly for those without access to mains gas, fuel costs can be high.

In order to address these issues the Local Plan Second Review 2007 includes a Village Development strategy that apportions limited growth to the larger and more sustainable settlements, in tandem with lower thresholds for affordable housing provision. Rural Exceptions Affordable Housing for 100% affordable schemes may also be permitted.

j) Young Persons

The lack of any supported housing for Hertford and Ware's vulnerable young people is a major concern of the Council. Currently, homeless and vulnerable youngsters have to move into supported accommodation in either Stevenage or Broxbourne, or to the YMCA Project in Bishop's Stortford. However places are limited and often mean that a vulnerable young person is placed a considerable distance from family support which is exacerbated by limited public transport.

What is happening:

a) In the Communities

i) Building Sustainable Homes

Long-term we cannot afford to be building homes that have a negative impact on our climate and that are unable to adapt to changes in demographics and lifestyles.

Ensuring that a minimum of 15% of residential dwellings are built to lifetime homes standard will enable us to develop homes that are suitable for residents now but can be adapted with ease and at minimum cost to meet the changing requirements of our community in the future.

This will help to meet the needs of our future population by reducing the long-term cost of adaptations.

ii) Mobility and Choice

In March 2008, East Herts introduced a Choice Based Lettings Scheme called HomeOptions for people applying for social housing and for existing social tenants needing to transfer to another home. Applicants are required to register for accommodation and then bid for properties suitable to their needs. The main benefit for current and future social housing tenants is that the scheme enables them to register their interest for a home they want to live in rather than the Council choosing the property for them.

The Government's Localism Act puts a greater requirement on social landlords to sign –up to a national Homeswapper scheme to facilitate current social housing tenants to move due to family or work needs rather than through, what can be perceived, as a less efficient Council's housing register that may restrict moves across local authority boundaries.

iii) Safer Communities

East Herts has a relatively low crime rate and has no areas with severe or longstanding crime and disorder problems. Nevertheless, anti-social behaviour, crime and the fear of crime causes distress to individuals and is destructive to communities.

The Council as a member of the East Herts Community Safety Partnership identifies and implements effective initiatives. The partnership brings together key statutory and non-statutory agencies, including the police and social landlords, to identify and implement initiatives to improve the safety of the community. The East Herts Community Safety Plan sets out the priorities of the partnership and targets for reducing the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour in the district.

Current initiatives carried out between the Council and its partners include Visual Audits and Street Briefings, which are multi-agency and resident consultation on improving area and addressing concerns of residents in specific locations.

vi) Empty Homes

Empty homes can be unsightly and lead to problems with vandalism etc. The Council has done some excellent work to encourage owners to repair and bring these properties back into use. Consultation has revealed support for the Council to make greater use of enforcement powers for appropriate properties and to publicise that action, to encourage owners who are less willing to co-operate. Such actions will improve the sustainability of affected communities.

b) For Individual needs within the community

Communities are made up of individuals and the Council, along with its partners, needs to develop policies and practices that are accessible and effective to make a house a home. This is especially so for the more vulnerable members of our communities. Other projects and policies include:

i) Community Alarms

In East Herts Riversmead Housing Association give advice on and supply Community Alarms to any older or disabled member of the community.

A community alarm enables vulnerable people to stay in touch with an emergency control centre, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The community alarm service can be used by anyone who feels at risk in his or her home because of age, disability, illness or isolation.

ii) Disabled Facilities Grants

These are mandatory grants to adapt homes of people with disabilities so that they may have safe access into and around their home and to use facilities within it, and are a priority within the private sector strategy.

With a relatively elderly demographic for the district, demand for assistance with adaptations is high, and the Council's budget goes beyond the level of government subsidy for this purpose in order to meet demand without needing to operate a waiting list, recognising the importance of this service to vulnerable residents.

In recent years, the demand for the service to grant aid adaptations in properties owned by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) has greatly increased, and this, together with the removal of the means test for adaptations for families with disabled children, has significantly affected workload.

In addition to mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), the Council also offers discretionary means tested DFGs for larger schemes costing in excess of the statutory maximum grant, for certain non-mandatory adaptations such as adaptations to allow a disabled person to work at home, and to cover the cost of moving home where this would provide a better solution.

East Herts Council works in partnership with the County Council to deliver these grants. The County Council, as the Welfare Authority, are responsible for assessing what adaptations are necessary and appropriate, and East Herts Council is responsible for determining whether the recommended works are reasonable and practicable, and where eligible, to provide the Disabled Facilities Grant in accordance with the legislation. The County Council is re-organising its Occupational Therapy services, and is liaising with the district councils over potential process improvements.

iii) Home Improvement Agency

The Papworth Trust has operated a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) in East Herts since 2002. East Herts Council and Herts County Council's Adult Care Services and Supporting People are the main funders of the service, and are part of the agency's strategic development group. Residents benefit from a holistic range of services. In addition to traditional core HIA services of assisting applicants with disabled facilities grants and grants to repair their homes, the agency provides a handyperson and home security service, fire safety checks, and provides referrals to other services such as for home energy efficiency or dispersed alarms.

However, from April 2012 the HIA will no longer be funded by the County Council. The County Council will instead fund a new countywide Home Safety Service, focusing on home security, fire safety and falls prevention. Papworth however have increased resilience by expanding into other areas of Herts and Essex, and aim to continue to provide core and handyperson services in East Herts, using fee income from paid for services to support subsidised services for vulnerable households. The Council values the HIA services in support of vulnerable households, and therefore although funding is being reduced in 2012/13, the Council and HIA are together reviewing future service and funding options.

Recently Papworth has extended its services to include a gardening service. The agency also has secured funding for a First Stop representative, to provide enhanced case work support, discussing various issues related to independent living, ranging from retirement housing schemes, referrals for equity release, to financial and legal advice.

iv) Affordable Warmth

a) Strategy

The Council's affordable warmth strategy was revised in 2007, and includes a range of initiatives to help those households who struggle to keep their homes warm. Assistance is available to all households, with additional schemes, including referrals to national schemes and funding such as Warm Front, targeted to those most at risk from being cold at home. The Council's energy efficiency grants were replaced by the Herts Essex Energy Partnership, which offered a wide range of free and subsidised measures. Under the HEEP scheme, by December 2011 some 1778 measures had been installed in East Herts homes, supported by £413,210 from the scheme funds. This saves an estimated 42,352 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide emissions over the lifetime of the measures, at an average cost of just £9.75 per tonne saved.

The strategy aims to help elderly and vulnerable households, and can improve the health and well being of residents, with wide reaching impacts, such as for education, for example by enabling children to study more effectively at home. The strategy runs until 2012, and a review is necessary as the government's major changes to the way energy efficiency works are funded develop.

b) Warmer Homes, Healthy People

The County Council, in conjunction with the District Councils in Hertfordshire, the Primary Care Trust, Herts Community Foundation and other partners, successfully bid for Department of Health funds to protect vulnerable households and homeless persons from the risks of excess cold early in 2012. The project includes provision of money, benefits and energy advice, heaters, blankets, draught proofing etc, and is co-ordinated through the HertsHelp contact centre.

v) The Council's Housing Register Policy

At the time of writing this document The Government was consulting on new draft statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England. The new guidance is intended to assist authorities to take advantage of the provisions in the Localism Act 2011 which gives local authorities the freedom to manage their own waiting lists, and make it easier

for them to move existing social tenants to more suitable accommodation. It also encourages authorities to make use of the existing flexibilities within the allocations legislation.

Alongside the guidance, the Government is consulting on two sets of draft regulations relating to the Armed Forces. The regulations will ensure that former Service men and women who have urgent housing needs are given 'additional preference' (i.e. high priority) for social housing - so that they will be at or near the top of housing waiting lists; and that Service personnel who move from base-to-base do not lose their qualification rights.

The Council will be reviewing their current Housing Register and Allocations Policy following on from this consultation and the Localism Act coming into force later in 2012. Any changes we make will need to recognise the needs of the whole community and not just focus on specific client groups and proposed changes will be widely consulted on before agreed.

iv) Housing Advice and Options.

Since April 2005 the Council's housing advice, homelessness and housing register services have been brought together and are now provided by a new Housing Options Service based at both our Bishop's Stortford and Hertford offices.

The Council's Housing Option approach is prevention focussed and that relies heavily on the residents of East Herts being able to access timely, high quality advice and assistance to help them resolve their housing problems well before their situation reaches crisis point. The advice is free and includes the provision of specialist debt advice provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau from our Council offices two days a week. An integral part of this service is the assistance we provide to non-priority homeless households, such as single persons or couples, through our rent deposit scheme. Since the scheme began over 5 years ago we have housed on average over 30 households a year into suitable accommodation in the private sector. Many of these households had no priority for housing through the homeless legislation and would potentially wait a considerable time on our housing register. The majority were either homeless or would be shortly and a significant proportion had no fixed abode ie they were either sofa surfing between relatives and friend or were rough sleeping.

v) Young People

East Herts Council Executive has given its backing to a new scheme to build 24 supported flats for vulnerable young people aged 16 to 24 in Hertford. The flats are to be built on the Baker Street car park site. The new homes will provide accommodation, for up to two years, for local young people who have been forced to leave their family home or who are homeless after leaving care including two units of young parent accommodation. The scheme is currently waiting for planning permission.

The council will sell the land, currently valued at £300,000-£350,000, for a nominal amount to Aldwyck Housing Association which will build the flats. Aldwyck Housing Association will provide the capital needed to fund the building of the scheme. It is anticipated works will start on site in April 2012 and complete mid to late 2013. Running and maintenance costs of £160,000 per year will be funded by the Crouchfield Trust, a Herts County Council

administered trust fund designed to support vulnerable young people. This will eventually taper down to £100,000 per year with the balance made up by Hertfordshire County Council.

Key future priorities within this objective

- Continue to prevent homelessness through the provision of good quality advice, investigating and developing new solutions to housing need.
- Ensure a good quality homeless service is provided and that appropriate temporary accommodation is available.
- To develop and encourage our rent deposit scheme to facilitate access to the private rented sector.
- Work with supported accommodation providers to ensure timely and appropriate move on accommodation is available in the district.
- Continue to facilitate and make best use of the disabled facilities grant
- *neighbourhoods safer and feel safer – speak to Julie Community partnership plan?*
- Review allocation of social housing in response to legislation changes and best practice and monitor outcomes to ensure it is fair
- Work with our registered provide partners to prevent and identify suspected tenancy fraud
- Produce EIAs for Housing strategies and policies
- Review at least annually the Housing Service web pages to ensure all information is up to date, helpful and user friendly.
- Produce a Tenancy Strategy for the District
- Keep up to date existing re-housing protocols with external partners and ensure East Herts is represented at the development of new and revisions of existing protocols to the benefit of its residents.
- Review future HIA services and funding levels in conjunction with the HIA in the light of changing County Council services and reduced core funding

Section 5: Resources

The Council expects the provision of affordable housing to be funded from a range of sources, including:

- recycled grant funds held by RPs, grants recycled through the sale of shared ownership properties
- local authority funding, eg. cash receipts collected on an exceptional basis in lieu of affordable housing being provided on site
- developer contributions
- land valuations set at a realistic level to enable affordable housing to be provided
- grant funding where an exceptional case can be made to the HCA
- funds raised by RPs under the new affordable rent programme

East Herts Housing Capital Programme

In its enabling capacity the Council subsidises new affordable housing and has allocated £700,000 of capital funds for the development of affordable homes in the district in 2012/13. In addition following a full appraisal of options the Council has sold Thele House, which was once a Council run homeless hostel, and has agreed to invest the capital receipt of £530,000 in the development of future affordable housing in the district.

The Council continues to fund disabled adaptations through its Capital Programme, which in order to meet demand has for many years has exceeded the level of government funding for this purpose. The Council's capital programme for private sector Decent Homes grants has however been significantly reduced in the light of the current financial climate, which includes the cessation of Government private sector housing renewal funding.

New Homes Bonus

Introduced in April 2011, funding from the New Homes Bonus provides an incentive for local authorities to provide new homes. For each new housing unit delivered or empty property brought back to use, local authorities will receive the national average of Council Tax for that property per annum over a period of six years. On average, this will be approximately £1,?? per annum or £?,??? over six years. In addition, there will be an enhanced flat rate of £350 per annum payable over six years for each additional affordable home delivered, including market homes acquired to be used as affordable housing. Further information on the New Homes Bonus can be found at:

www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingsupply/newhomesbonus/

Section 6 - Monitoring the Strategy

The Council will agree when the Housing Strategy is to be reviewed. This will be at least annually. Monitoring and reporting progress on the Housing Strategy will primarily be through the Council's Executive and Scrutiny Committees.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England

This is a summary of the government's strategy for housing, published on 21 November 2011.

Development

- £400m investment in new development, supporting house builders in need of development finance including small and medium sized builders
- Mortgage indemnity scheme designed with the Home Builders Federation and Council of Mortgage Lenders to offer 95% loan to value mortgages for new build properties in England, to support 100,000 households
- Free up public sector land with "build now, pay later" deals for developers, releasing enough land to build 100,000 new homes and create up to 200,000 new jobs in the construction industry
- A new £500m Growing Places fund to support infrastructure
- £400m earmarked for FirstBuy, to help 10,500 first time buyers with the help of an equity loan up to 20%
- Consultation on plans to force local authorities to re-think section 106 agreements signed before April 2010, in areas where development is stalled
- A Custom Homes programme worth £30m to help individuals build their own homes, offering short-term project finance for independent projects
- Restatement of the government's commitment to the New Homes Bonus, community infrastructure levy and local business rate retention, the community right to build and simplification of the planning system through the National Planning Policy Framework

Social housing

- Councils granted financial responsibility for their own housing stock through reform of the Housing Revenue Account
- Reform of social housing management through the Localism Act, creating a sector which uses social housing as a "springboard" for social mobility
- Average new tenancies granted for five years, with tenancies of between two and five years allocated in "exceptional circumstances"
- New for-profit housing providers to offer social housing: "The regulator is in advanced discussions with a number of publicly quoted companies who wish to set up a social housing subsidiary"
- Right-to-buy owners will be offered a discount of as much as half the value of their homes. Homes sold through right-to-buy will be matched by new homes developed for social rent
- Introduction of HomeSwap Direct, a scheme to enable social tenants to manage moving house themselves, plus the creation of 12 "mobility vanguards" - areas in which £1m will be invested to investigate new methods of mobility
- Local authorities granted to the freedom to allocate stock in the way they see fit, including granting priority to working households

- Regulation of social housing will focus on "value for money", making boards accountable for how their organisations deliver the most from assets, such as increased specialisation or economies of scale
- Councils no longer obligated to have open waiting lists
- Social landlords to be given new powers to identify and recover properties that are being used fraudulently
- Housing providers can charge market rents from tenants earning "very high salaries"
- New measure to prevent people who already have a suitable home from seeking social housing
- Encouraging innovation and competition between landlords

Private rented sector

- An independent review of barriers to investment in the private rented sector
- New build-to-let models, where homes are built specifically for the private rental market, with funding from major investors
- Financial incentives for investment in private rent, such as major investors paying just 1% in stamp duty, and reform of real estate investment trusts
- Government will work with local authorities to "tackle the worst properties" – but no further detail on how this work will be carried out
- New factsheets to help private landlords understand the basic requirements of managing a property for rent

Empty homes

- £100m in funding to bring empty homes back into use, and a further £50m to tackle the worst concentrations of empty homes
- Consultation on an 'empty homes premium' added to council tax, payable if a home is left unattended for more than two years. Receipts from this additional tax used to bring homes back into use
- Government will encourage private landlords and housing providers to use funding attached to the Green Deal to renovate empty homes
- Changes to empty dwelling management orders to target long-term empty homes
- New Homes Bonus to be awarded to empty homes brought back into use

Vulnerable groups

- New deal for older people's housing – although no detail on the terms of this deal – and £1.5m invested in the FirstStop information service for housing options
- £51m invested in handyperson schemes for repairs and adaptations
- Work to be carried out with the financial services industry to create new equity release products for older people
- £400m allocated to homeless prevention
- A Ministerial Working Group has been created to address the causes of homelessness. It will also look at impact of criminalising squatting on the most vulnerable who squat rather than sleep rough
- £20m to implement the No Second Night Out programme across the country, and £10m to charity Crisis to support single homeless people
- Councils now able to discharge their duties to homeless people in the private rented sector

- Service personnel receive high priority for social housing, and will not lose their right to qualify for local housing despite moving from base to base during their careers
- Service personnel placed at the top of the list for all government-supported home ownership schemes
- Work with credit reference agencies to ensure service men and women are not disadvantaged by their prior living arrangements when securing a private mortgage

Design

- Grant communities a say over the design of new homes. Funding provided to the Design Council to support communities to shape development in their own areas
- All new homes will meet the Zero Carbon Homes standard from 2016
- Review of building regulations to improve energy efficiency and carbon emission standards for new buildings
- Commitment to the Green Deal to renovate existing homes and boost energy efficiency

The Energy Act

This is a brief summary of the changes to be brought about by the Energy Act:

The Energy Act 2011 made provisions for the development of a Green Deal and a new Energy Company Obligation (ECO) to replace the existing Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) and the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP), which will both expire in 2012. Consultation on the scheme ended in February 2012, and although the government aims to introduce the scheme in October 2012, this may change as important issues such as private funding still need to be arranged.

The flagship policy in the Act is the 'Green Deal', a scheme whereby householders, private landlords and businesses would be given finance upfront to make energy efficiency improvements, which would then be paid for by energy bill savings. It is envisaged that the funding will be provided by the private sector in the form of loans tied to the electricity meter not the householder. A charge will be included in fuel bills to meet the loan repayments. A "Golden Rule" will be introduced to ensure that eligible measures are cost neutral. This means that the savings on fuel bills will be equal to or greater than the loan repayment. This will be a market led initiative rather than the current energy supplier obligation to reduce CO2 emissions through target setting by Government.

The Energy Act also introduces a range of other provisions:

- establishes the Energy Company Obligation (ECO): a new obligation on energy companies to help certain groups of consumers, who need extra support, with saving energy.
- facilitates the roll-out of smart meters
- widens access to energy performance certificates
- makes information on energy bills clearer
- introduces measures designed to help improve energy security and to encourage low carbon generation

Appendix 2

Glossary

ACS: Adult Care Services.

Affordability: A measure of whether households can access and sustain the costs of private sector housing. There are two main types of affordability measure: mortgage and rental. Mortgage affordability assesses whether households would be eligible for a mortgage; rental affordability measures whether a household can afford private rental. Mortgage affordability is based on conditions set by mortgage lenders, usually 2.9 times a joint income or 3.5 times a single income. Rental affordability is defined as the rent being less than 25% of a household's gross income.

Affordable housing: This includes social rented and intermediate housing provided to specified eligible households whose needs cannot be met by the market. Affordable housing should cost less than similar sized housing on the open market and be available at a sub market price in perpetuity.

Affordable rent:

BME: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic/Black and Minority Ethnic: people who would not describe themselves as being of White British origin.

Brownfield land: Previously developed land including both vacant and derelict land.

CBL: Choice Based Lettings: the aim is to allow households on the housing register to make informed choices regarding their future homes. Homes are advertised to eligible households people on the housing register who bid for homes they would like to live in. East Herts participates in a sub-regional scheme called HomeOptions.

CLG: Department for Communities and Local Government.

Core Strategy: The strategic planning document in the East Herts Local Development Framework that sets the principles of development and identifies broad locations for growth.

Decent Home: one which is free from category 1 hazards (see HHSRS below), in reasonable repair, has reasonably modern facilities and provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

Dwelling: A self-contained unit of accommodation where all the rooms and facilities available for the use of the occupants are behind a front door.

Flexicare: Very Sheltered Housing: self-contained housing with care for older people requiring at least 4 hours care per day. Also known as Extra Care Housing

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS): the system used since 2006 for assessing house condition and enforcing housing standards, by evaluating potential harm from defined hazards. Councils have a duty to address high scoring or Category 1 hazards, and a power to deal with less significant or Category 2 hazards.

House in Multiple Occupation (HMO): a dwelling occupied by persons who do not form a single household, such as shared houses and bedsits. Larger HMOs with 3 or more storeys,

containing 5 or more persons in 2 or more households sharing facilities are required to be licensed.

Household: One person living alone or a group of people who have the address as their only or main residence and who either share one meal a day or share a living room.

Housing Associations: Independent not for profit organisations registered with and regulated by the Housing Corporation. Also known as Registered Social Landlords or RSLs, and Registered Providers (RPs)

HCA: Homes and Communities Agency (HCA): the single national housing and regeneration agency for England.

Housing need: The situation in which households lack their own housing or are living in housing which is inadequate or unsuitable and are unlikely to be able to meet their needs in the housing market without some assistance.

Housing Register: A database of all individuals or households who have applied to a local authority or RSL for a social tenancy or access to some other form of affordable housing.

HSSA: Housing Statistical Appendix: An annual return on housing each Local Authority is required to complete and return to Communities and Local Government.

Intermediate housing: A generic term for a number of different types of housing which lie between social rented housing and market housing in terms of costs to the householder. Shared equity, sub market rent and low cost homes for sale are examples of intermediate housing.

LDF: Local Development Framework: a portfolio of local development documents which collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the local planning authority's area. When adopted, the LDF will replace the East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007.

RSL or RP: Registered Social Landlord or Registered Provider: a landlord who has met HCA registration requirements – usually a housing association.

SCS: Sustainable Community Strategy prepared on behalf of the LSP the SCS sets out the vision for the area and agrees the priorities and mechanisms for delivering the vision.

Shared equity or ownership: A means of helping people into home ownership. The buyer purchases a share of their home, with the remaining share being held by another party, usually a housing association. The other party will redeem their share when the home is sold.

SHLAA: Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment; technical work that identifies deliverable sites that are available, suitable and achievable for housing.

SHMA: Strategic Housing Market Assessment; technical study that assesses housing need and demand.

Social rented housing: Decent homes provided to rent at below market cost for households in need by Local Authorities or Registered Providers (RPs).

Supporting People: Supporting People is a partnership programme that was set up in April 2003 to fund, commission and monitor the quality of existing housing-related support services for vulnerable adults now absorbed into Adult Care Services often now referred to as Housing Related Support.

Sustainable communities: Places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse need of existing and future residents, are sensitive to the environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe, inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.

Under-occupation: An under-occupied dwelling is one which exceeds the bedroom standard by two or more bedrooms.

APPENDIX 3

Consultations

East Herts Housing Forum's

The Council has in the past held annual Housing Conferences with its housing stakeholders however with the significant policy changes that are currently emerging this is not sufficiently frequent. It is intended that the Council will hold at least three Housing Forum's a year to consult on housing, housing policy and strategies with its wider stakeholders. The first Housing Forum was held on 8th March 2012 and the discussion topic was the Council's Housing Strategy. Future items for discussions will include the Council's Tenancy Strategy and amendments to the Council's Housing Register and Allocation Policy but it is the intention that members of the Forum will also have an input into future discussion topics. The Housing Forum is chaired by the Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support.

Private Sector Landlords Forum

Locally and nationally some of the worst housing is in the private rented sector, and the Council recognises the need to work proactively with landlords and letting agents to achieve improvements. The Council organises two private sector landlord forums each year. Topics have included the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation, tenancy deposit protection schemes, the Local Housing Allowance and fire safety. The forums have also contributed to the review of the Council's private sector housing enforcement policy, amenity standards, and housing strategies

Housing Association partners

Regular six weekly meetings are held with our stock transfer partners registered providers Riversmead and South Anglia Housing Associations.

Essential Reference Paper B Appendix 4

| Settlement (Existing No. of dwellings - 2001 Census) | Completions and Commitments | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Built 2001-2011 | Unallocated sites with permission* | Allocated sites with permission* | Allocated sites without permission | Total |
| Bishop's Stortford (14,249) | 1,402 | 132 | 130 | 3,586 | 5,250 |
| Buntingford (2,069) | 121 | 68 | 134 | 7 | 330 |
| Hertford (9,468) | 1,016 | 268 | 287 | 0 | 1,571 |
| Sawbridgeworth (3,421) | 142 | 43 | 95 | 80 | 360 |
| Ware (7,321) | 911 | 176 | 83 | 0 | 1,170 |
| Villages / Rural Area (16,794) | 1,104 | 194 | 185 | 30 | 1,513 |
| Total (53,313) | 4,696 | 881 | 914 | 3,703 | 10,194 |
| East of England Plan | East Herts Housing Requirement | | | | East Herts 'To-find' Range (2001-2031 figures minus 10,194) |
| | 2001-2011 | 2011-2021 | 2021-2031 | 2001-2031 | |
| 2008 Plan | 6,000 | 6,000 | 6,600 | 18,600 | 8,406 |
| 2010 Draft Review | 6,000 | 5,500 | 5,500 | 17,000 | 6,806 |

*includes sites where planning permission has been granted subject to the signing of a S106 agreement.

East Herts Housing Numbers – updated to 31st March 2011

Appendix 5

Draft New Affordable Homes Commissioning Brief – February 2012

Introduction

This brief sets out East Herts Council's requirements for the affordable housing element on new development in East Herts District.

It accompanies and should be read in conjunction with the Council's Affordable Housing and Lifetime Homes Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the Council's Housing Strategy and is underpinned by the Council's Housing Needs Survey 2004 (updated in 2005).

The New Affordable Homes Commissioning Brief provides easy reference for both public and private sector developers. The brief can also be reviewed on a more regular basis and amended as appropriate to ensure that it remains up-to-date.

Affordable Housing Requirement

In order to go some way to meeting the identified need for affordable housing in East Herts, the Council requires up to 40% of the new properties built being affordable.

In accordance with Policy HSG3 of the Local Plan Second Review, the 40% requirement applies:

- On sites proposing 15 or more dwelling, or over 0.5 hectares in the six main settlements of
 - Bishop's Stortford
 - Buntingford
 - Hertford
 - Sawbridgeworth
 - Stanstead Abbots and St Margaret's
 - Ware

- On sites proposing 3 or more dwellings or over 0.09 hectares in the Category 1 villages of:
 - Braughing
 - Hertford Heath
 - High Cross

- Hunsdon
 - Much Hadham
 - Puckeridge
 - Tewin
 - Walkern
 - Watton-at-Stone
- On sites proposing 3 or more dwellings or over 0.09 hectares in the Category 2 villages of:
 - Aston (excluding Aston End)
 - Bayford
 - Benington
 - Brickendon
 - Dane End
 - Datchworth
 - Furneux Pelham
 - Great Amwell
 - Hadham Ford
 - High Wych
 - Little Hadham
 - Standon
 - Stapleford
 - Thundridge
 - Wadesmill
 - Widford

Tenure Structure

The Housing Needs Survey 2004 identified the tenure structure which will best meet the need for affordable housing. Therefore, of the 40% affordable housing the Council requires:

- 75% of the properties to be rented;
- 25% of the properties to be intermediate housing that being:
 - Properties at flexible levels allowing for subsequent 100% ownership;

Size Standards

Of all the affordable housing the Council requires the following proportions of each size of property:

- 1/3 1 bedroom 2 person
- 1/3 2 bedroom 3 and 4 person (ideally 2 bedroom houses)
- 1/3 3 bedroom 4 and 5 person (ideally houses or ground floor flats)
- where need is established a 4 or 5 bedroom may be requested.

Affordable Rent

The Council recognises that Registered Providers need to let new properties at a rent of up to 80% of the local market rent to enable the development of future new affordable homes, where they have an agreed offer under the HCA's Affordable Homes Programme 2011-2015. The Council encourages, where it is possible, rent levels that are below 80% to maximise the affordability of the accommodation to applicants on our housing register.

Design and Quality Standards

The accommodation must meet the relevant Level of the Code for Sustainable Homes and the Homes and Communities Agency Standards such that it would attract the Homes and Communities Agency funding and any available other public subsidy such as East Herts District Council capital funding.

Space Standards

East Herts Council expects all general purpose accommodation to be built in accordance with the Homes and Communities Agency standards applicable at the time. As of March 2011 these were:

- 1 bed 2 person units – 45-50 square metres
- 2 bed 3 person units – 57-67 square metres
- 2 bed 4 person units – 67-75 square metres
- 3 bed 5 person units – 75 to 85 square metres

Rural Areas and Exception Sites

The Council covers a wide rural area and shared ownership properties in rural areas are covered by a Designated Protected Area legislation which retains shared ownership properties in perpetuity through allowing only 80% ownership of the property to be bought.

Rural Exception Sites provide 100% affordable housing and are developed in conjunction with Policy HSG5 of the Local Plan.

Special Needs Requirements

In accordance with our Housing Strategy and Herts County Council Supporting People Strategy it may be necessary to seek specific affordable housing provision for those with a special need. This may be wheelchair standard accommodation or supported housing for specific needs group. Provision will vary from site to site and additional grant may be made available to assist in the cost of provision, subject to evidence that such a subsidy is required.

If you have any queries about East Herts Council's New Affordable Homes Commissioning Brief please contact the Council's Housing Development Manager

Housing Strategy

Action Plan 2008-2011

| Theme | Outputs and targets | Lead | Progress | Target date | Key Partners |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strategic Objective 1 – Maximising the delivery of a range of new affordable homes to meet diverse needs | | | | | |
| <p>1. Increase supply of affordable housing including affordable rented housing and shared ownership</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the Affordable Homes Commissioning Brief - Work with Stansted Area Partnership to maximise provision of affordable homes in East Herts - Explore feasibility of East Herts Asset Managed land for developing affordable housing. - Ensure East Herts' contribution to the County Council's local LAA2 affordable housing target of 35%. - Carry out A Strategic Housing Market Assessment with partner Local Authorities. Review planning polices if required. Investigate and undertake, if considered necessary, work to refresh the SHMA. - Deliver 200 affordable homes on average over a five year rolling programmed subject to amendment of target following completion of SHMA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Herts Housing Services Stansted Area Partnership East Herts Housing Services County Council East Herts Housing Services and Planning Policy East Herts Housing Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be reviewed again to reflect the changes in the housing market, the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the Local Investment Plan. Post of Development Manager currently vacant. No current development projects suitable for the Stansted Area partnership local authorities. Uttlesford are project lead and currently considering winding project up. Reviewed as part of Community Scrutiny Report Jan 09. Option not supported at this time due to lack of suitable land. Herts County Council published figures show that East Herts provided 489 gross housing completions in 2009/10 of which 142 were affordable, which is 30% on sites eligible for affordable housing. However LAA 2 targets now abandoned by County. Strategic Housing Market Assessment completed January 2010 and report presented to the Local Development Framework Panel by the Consultants. In addition SHMA Viability Report, that considers the economics of housing development was published in August 2010. Planning policies under review. Number of new affordable homes delivered 2008/09 : 138 2009/2010 :185 2010/11: 60 including Homebuy (which is market housing purchased by housing associations for sale on shared ownership basis) . Figures collated by the East Herts Housing Development Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed & Ongoing Annual and Ongoing Completed and Ongoing Completed Completed and Ongoing Annual and Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Herts Housing Services, Development Control and Planning Policy, RSLs, HCA, TSA, Developers, other Local Authorities Broxbourne Borough Council, Brentwood Brorough Council, Epping Forest District Council, Harlow District Council, Uttlesford District Council |

| Theme | Outputs and targets | Lead | Progress | Target date | Key Partners |
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| 2. Maximise relet nominations from Registered Social Landlord partners | <p>- Write to all preferred partner RSLs regarding the need to return data to Housing Service regarding all lets.</p> <p>- Encourage all RSLs to be part of the Common Housing Register (CHR).</p> | <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> | <p>Both Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) housing associations and all significant stock holding RSLs in East Herts are part of the Council's Common Housing Register (CHR) and are putting all vacant properties through Choice Based Lettings (CBL).</p> <p>Currently consulting on a Memorandum of Understanding regarding operational practices and future development of the CHR and CBL. Will encourage all housing associations with stock in the district to sign up to the document and join the CHR.</p> | <p>Completed</p> <p>Mar-11</p> | East Herts Housing Services, RSLs |
| 3. Encourage the RSLs to contribute to the database of local affordable rented housing in the District to include details of any adaptations made | To make the best use of adapted stock in the district and to match adapted stock to housing register applicants needing adaptations. | | This is being achieved through CBL and the Housing Register. Housing associations advise the Housing Options Team of adapted properties as they become available and property is advertised to attract appropriate bids. Applicants requiring adaptations are identified at registration and details of requirements collected. Applicants then advised of suitable properties as they become available. | Completed and Ongoing | |
| 4. Monitor the impact of the Council's Local Plan Policies on the delivery of new affordable housing and take action as appropriate | - Relevant Core Indicators and key information monitored in the East Herts Annual Monitoring Report, with appropriate action guided by Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment | East Herts Planning Policy | A total of 200 (net) new properties, (304 gross) were completed in 2010/11 of which 38 were affordable. An additional 22 affordable homes were acquired from the private sector by RSLs outside of the planning system via Homebuy. | Annual and Ongoing | Herts County Council, East Herts Housing Services and Planning Policy |
| 5. Continue to negotiate on site provision of affordable housing by private developers as directed by planning policy | - Aim to deliver up to 40% affordable housing on eligible housing sites | East Herts Housing Services | Negotiating up to 40% affordable housing on eligible sites registered after policy adopted in April 07. Housing Development Manager monitors individual sites for out-turn percentage achieved. 37% achieved on eligible sites in 2010/11 as reported in the Council's Annual Monitoring Report. | Annual and Ongoing | East Herts Housing and Planning Policy, RSLs and Developers |
| 6. Continue to secure funding that provides the optimum mix of affordable housing in terms of type and tenure, in the right location | - Monitor Value for money of average unit cost, using internal and external public funds, of each affordable home developed by type, tenure and site. | East Herts Housing Services | Report detailing options in the current housing market discussed at January 2009 Executive meeting. The Council have produced a Local Investment Plan (LIP) with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to | Completed and Ongoing | East Herts Housing services and Planning Policy |

Take forward to new action plan

Take forward to new action plan

| Page 102 Theme | Outputs and targets | Lead | Progress | Target date | Key Partners |
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| | | | provide a framework that will be used to seek future HCA funding for primarily affordable housing in East Herts. The LIP identifies the strategic context for investment and summarises the evidence base that will be used to direct investment from us and our partners including the HCA to ensure we develop the right type of accommodation in the right locations. | | |

| Strategic Objective 2. Improve the condition of the housing stock both public and private | | | | | |
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| 7. Increase the number of properties made decent as a result of Council action which are occupied by vulnerable households. | <p>- Target Decent Home Grants (DHGs) to vulnerable households</p> <p>- Monitor the number of dwellings occupied by vulnerable households made decent with a grant, or by informal or formal action.</p> | <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> | <p>Monitoring is ongoing. In 2008/09 42 DHGs were completed of which 37 were for vulnerable households (88%). This compares with 28 DHGs completed in 2007/08 of which 24 were in a vulnerable group (85%). However this increase was unlikely to continue as a new scheme for heating & energy was introduced in 2009. The new HEEP scheme resulted in much higher numbers of household receiving measures, increasing numbers of homes made decent, and as a result, fewer Decent Home Grants were sought. Due to funding limitations and increasing demand for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, DHGs are now being limited.</p> <p>In 2008/09, 114 non decent homes were improved of which 43 were occupied by vulnerable households. In 2009/10, 29 Category 1 hazards were remedied, in 22 premises, and 45 dwellings occupied by vulnerable households received energy measures.</p> | <p>Annual and Ongoing</p> <p>Annual and Ongoing</p> | <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> |
| 8. Maintain take up of grants through publicity, leaflets, landlord forums | - Do a mail out with the Benefits Service to promote grants to vulnerable households at least once a year. | East Herts Housing Services | Grant leaflets regularly sent to benefit recipients plus targeted leafleting for insulation grants carried out through promotion scheme. In addition, energy advice promoted in 6,000 NI187 questionnaires sent, | Annual and Ongoing | East Herts Housing Services and Benefits Service |

| Theme | Outputs and targets | Lead | Progress | Target date | Key Partners |
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| | | | of which 3,000 were to housing and council tax benefit recipients. Those returned expressing an interest are offered bespoke energy advice. To end Aug 09, 30 were visited, and a further 190 contacted through HEEP scheme. Extensive publicity of HEEP scheme, through NI187 survey, Link magazine, newspaper articles, direct mailing and door knocking, landlord forum, and website. | | |
| 9. Continue to monitor Riversmead and South Anglia housing associations residual delivery of promises actions | <p>- Send request annually to Riversmead and South Anglia Housing Associations</p> <p>-RSLs and Council to report annual outcomes to Council</p> | East Herts Housing Services | <p>Regular annual reports presented to Community Scrutiny; last report July 2010</p> <p>Housing Service continue to monitor and audit residual Delivery of Promises with last report July 2010. Both South Anglia and Riversmead housing associations each gave presentations to Community Scrutiny Committee including individual question and answer sessions.</p> | <p>Completed and Ongoing</p> <p>Completed and Ongoing</p> | East Herts Housing Services, Riversmead and South Anglia Housing Associations |
| 10. Monitor local Registered Social Landlords delivery of decent homes | - Send request annually to all significant stock holding Housing Associations requesting information regarding Decent Homes | East Herts Housing Services | Both Riversmead and South Anglia report that all their stock is decent homes compliant. | Completed | East Herts Housing Services, RSLs |
| 11. Take action in accordance with the council's enforcement policy to remedy category 1 hazards where appropriate | <p>- Respond to request for service from housing complaints within one to three working days depending on risk</p> <p>- Monitor number of category one hazards removed</p> | <p>East Herts Housing services</p> <p>East Herts Housing services</p> | <p>95% of housing complaints responded to in 1-3 working days in 2008/09. 92% of housing complaints responded to in 1-3 working days in 2009/10.</p> <p>36 properties had Category 1 hazards removed through Decent Homes Grants in 2008/09, with a total of 50 hazards removed. Four properties had Category 1 hazards removed through informal or formal enforcement action, totaling 4 hazards. In 2009/10, 29 category 1 hazards were remedied, in 22 premises.</p> | <p>Annual and Ongoing</p> <p>Annual and Ongoing</p> | East Herts Housing Services |

| Theme | Outputs and targets | Lead | Progress | Target date | Key Partners |
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| <p>12. Provide guidance and advice to residents, tenants and landlords on their rights and responsibilities through a variety of media</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and expand information on Council's website - Give out at least 1,000 pieces of housing advice Hold at least one Private Sector Landlords Forum annually - Review existing leaflets and ensure up to date and comprehensive | <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> | <p>Housing advice information updated to include more information on debt, and mortgage arrears advice. Includes contact and website details of a wide range of external agencies, both local and national, providing free advice as well as the Council. The Housing Register Application form is now available on the Council's website for customers to download and complete. Energy efficiency advice updated.</p> <p>From April 09 to March 2010 1,045 pieces of housing advice given out, primarily by interview and telephone.</p> <p>Forum held on 25 March 2009, and 23 March 2010. Agenda items included Council's rent deposit scheme and discussion on Landlords Accreditation Scheme. Also changes to planning legislation for HMOs, housing benefit, Housing Fire Safety Guidance, House Condition survey. Next forum planned for February 2011.</p> <p>Housing Register and Allocation, and Homeless leaflet updated following review of policy and contact details of agencies. Housing Advice leaflet completed, distributed and put onto website. Provides comprehensive contact details of agencies providing free advice. Grants leaflet revised & contributed to review of County Councils DFG leaflet</p> | <p>Completed and Ongoing</p> <p>Annual and Ongoing</p> <p>Completed and Annual Ongoing</p> <p>Annual and Ongoing</p> | <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> |
| <p>13. Implement the Actions in the 2007 Affordable Warmth Strategy</p> | <p>Refer to Strategy for detailed Actions and monitoring schedule</p> | <p>East Herts Housing services</p> | <p>Three actions achieved from the Strategy include: 1) Links established with County Council and other partners to target fuel poor through development of referral scheme: 2) 93 households received free insulation measures resulting from ENACT mail out: 3) Increased the number of households receiving energy efficiency measures through Decent Homes Grants from 15 in 2007/08 to 21 in 2008/09. Referrals and measures through HEEP scheme increased.</p> | <p>Annual and Ongoing</p> | <p>East Herts Housing services</p> |

| Theme | Outputs and targets | Lead | Progress | Target date | Key Partners |
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| 14. Implement the actions in the Empty Homes Strategy | - Refer to Strategy for detailed actions and monitoring schedule: | East Herts Housing Services | Three actions directly relevant achieved from the Strategy include: 1) Completed first property on PLACE Scheme. Empty property renovated and tenant identified by Housing options Service. Rent just below 75% of Local Housing Allowance. 2) Web page available and reports received from members of the public 3) Publicity in LINK and press release taken up by Herts Observer leading to increased public awareness and additional properties reported as empty. Empty Homes Strategy reviewed and adopted in 2010. | Annual and Ongoing | |
| | - Aim to bring back into use 12 empty homes in the private sector each year | East Herts Housing Services | Achieved target of bringing back into use 12 homes in the private sector in 2008/09. Target in Empty Homes Strategy 2010 - 15 is to bring 10 empty private sector homes into use each year. This reflects greater emphasis in the new strategy on tackling longer term or problematic empty homes. This was achieved in 2009/10. | Annual and Ongoing | East Herts Housing Services |
| | - Monitor the annual number of returned empty homes providing accommodation for private sale, private rent, or social rent. | East Herts Housing Services | Ten homes were privately rented, 1 home was sold privately and 1 property was let on the Council's Private Leasing Scheme, through an RSL at below market rent. | Annual and Ongoing | East Herts Housing Services |
| 15. Inspect and initiate action to bring HMOs up to standard and issue license where appropriate | - Aim to inspect and initiate action on 10 HMOs per annum | East Herts Housing Services | 14 HMOs inspected with action initiated 2008/09. 22 in 2009/10. Likely to achieve target in 2010/11. | Annual and Ongoing | East Herts Housing Services |
| | - Aim to issue 10 licenses per annum | East Herts Housing Services | 13 HMO licences issued 2008/09. 20 in 2009/10. Fewer applications received in 2010/11, and emphasis now on securing compliance with conditions. | Annual and Ongoing | |
| 16. Undertake a house condition survey in 2009/10. | - Schedule contract to ensure that all funding spent 2008-2010 | East Herts Housing Services | Survey work started week beginning 18 May 2009 and finished mid September 09. Contract issued within budget. | Completed March 2010 | East Herts Housing services, contractor and potential partner LA |
| | - Aim for production of final report by end 2009/10 | East Herts Housing Services | Report presented by end of March 2010 and subsequently revised, and produced in 2010/11. | Completed March 2010 | |

| Name | Outputs and targets | Lead | Progress | Target date | Key Partners |
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| Theme | Outputs and targets | Lead | Progress | Target date | Key Partners |
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| Strategic Priority 3: Build sustainable and thriving neighbourhoods and communities and ensure that vulnerable people are supported in the community. | | | | | |
| 17. Promote community cohesion and support the local economy by providing housing that is affordable for local people. | ~ Monitor the mix of market and affordable housing in terms of type and tenure in sustainable locations | East Herts Housing Services | 1 bed affordable flat = 7; 2 bed affordable flat = 1; 2 bed affordable house = 10; 3 bed affordable house = 16; 4+ bed affordable house = 4; 1 bed market flat = 44; 2 bed market flat = 68; 3 bed market flat = 2; 4+ bed market flat = 1; 1 bed market house = 5; 2 bed market house = 37; 3 bed market house = 38; 4+ bed market house = 67; mobile dwelling = 3; unknown 1. | Annual and Ongoing | East Herts Housing Services, Development Control and Planning Policy, RSLs, HCA, TSA, Developers |
| 18. Ensure that housing policies and practices promote equalities and diversity | - Carry out Equality Impact Assessments on: Housing register and Allocations policy and Affordable Warmth Strategy | East Herts Housing Services | Equality Impact Assessment completed for Housing register and allocations policy and submitted to Community Projects Section. Action Plan developed. Revised guidance and matrix produced April 09 and data updated and revised into new matrix. Produced within target. | Mar-10 | East Herts Housing Services |
| | - Homeless and Homeless Prevention Strategy, Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy, | East Herts Housing Services | Enforcement Policy Equality Impact Assessment now due Mar 12. | Mar-11 | |
| | '- Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy and Housing Strategy | East Herts Housing Services | | Mar-12 | |
| | Through the LDF, seek to deliver Gypsy & Traveller pitches and Travelling Showperson plots. | East Herts Planning Policy | Consultants have completed a joint Gypsy and Traveller technical study to identify suitable broad locations. The Council will fully consider the accommodation needs of both Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople throughout the LDF process. | Completed and Ongoing | East Herts Planning Policy & Broxbourne BC (in respect of Travelling Showpeople) |
| 19. Encourage high quality of design and layout in new developments, including public health, crime prevention, community safety and energy and water efficiency, maintaining the attractiveness of East Herts as a residential environment | - Deliver high quality developments via effective implementation of the Local Plan Policies. Relevant Core Indicators and key information monitored in the East Herts Annual Monitoring Report | Planning Policy | Internal meeting May 09 to discuss effective quality design elements to be included in the Local Development Framework. Met with RSL partners and other housing stakeholders 9 September. Agenda included consultation on housing development in East Herts and the Local Development Framework. Progressing with drafting of design policies through preparation of LDF Core Strategy. | Completed and Ongoing | East Herts Housing Services, Planning Policy and Development Control |

| Theme | Outputs and targets | Lead | Progress | Target date | Key Partners |
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| <p>20. Contribute to partnership action on crime and anti-social behaviour as they relate to housing through the Community Safety Plan 2008-2011.</p> <p>The East Herts Community Safety Partnership has one priority for 2010-11; 'Keep crime levels low and improve public confidence through reassurance and crime prevention measures'.</p> | <p>Priorities and Actions from 2009-10 Action plan:</p> <p>1. Improve public confidence through reassurance messages and crime prevention measures . Action: Work with partners to devise reassurance schemes</p> <p>7. Raise awareness of domestic violence and reduce repeat incidents through a coordinated approach. Action: Raise awareness of domestic violence.</p> | <p>East Herts Community Safety</p> | <p>Two editions of Community Safety partnership newsletter published. Five partnership public meetings held Jan/Feb 2010 to improve public confidence. 15 problem solving meetings held including locality and street briefings. Halloween rock concert for secondary school age children took place 31/10/09. 200 young children attended this event and a significant decrease of 50% in respect of and reports of ASB/Criminal damage was recorded between 1600-0000hrs 31/10/09.</p> <p>Six forums of the East Herts and Broxbourne Domestic Violence Forum held annually. Mobile phones and wrist alarms issued for victims. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MMARAC) in place since January 2009, meetings held monthly, East Herts Housing Options Service attends.</p> <p>DV forum has created charity website. www.dv-advice.org.uk</p> | <p>Completed and ongoing</p> | <p>East Herts Community Safety, Housing Services, RSLs, statutory and voluntary services</p> |
| <p>21. Contribute to the improvement of public health and the reduction in health inequalities as they relate to housing through the East Herts Council Public Health Strategy 2008-2013.</p> | <p>- Refer to Strategy for detailed actions and monitoring schedule. Two key housing related actions are:</p> | <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> | <p>2008-09 Action Plan monitored through Health Engagement panel and Community Scrutiny Committee. Actions to date include increased publicity of Handyperson Scheme. Handyperson jobs completed increased as follows: 2006/07 233, plus 291 home security; 2007/08 236, plus 288 home security; 2008/09 252, plus 336 home security. Aim to approve 95% of Decent Homes Grants and Disabled facilities Grants within 7 weeks. Achieved 98% in 2008/09. Achieved 100% in 2009/10.</p> | <p>Completed and Ongoing</p> | <p>East Herts Housing Services, RSLs, statutory and voluntary services</p> |
| <p>22. Review Implementation of Choice Based Lettings and continue to review and develop service as best practice allows</p> | <p>- Review implementation of CBL to date</p> | <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> | <p>CBL reviewed with Key partners. Housing Register and Allocations Policy updated to incorporate review finding and agreed at Community Scrutiny and Executive October 08.</p> | <p>Completed</p> | <p>East Herts Housing Services, RSLs, Other Local Authorities in Home Options work group</p> |

| Theme | Outputs and targets | Lead | Progress | Target date | Key Partners |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to enhance the service by attendance at the Home Options project Review Group | Home Options work Group | Home Options Review Group attended by Senior Housing Options Officer. Currently developing a joint Housing Register application form. Senior Housing Options Officer working with East Herts IT Service to migrate our Housing Register database across to Locata. This will ensure smooth transition of information between the housing register and allocations process and allow a much wider analysis including collating data that is currently not available for our Equality Impact Assessments. | Completed and Ongoing | |
| 23. Maximise the opportunities to enhance and develop services to vulnerable residents of East Herts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the Community Alarm service with a view to re-provision - Ensure all partner agencies are aware of the referral route for the County Council's Supporting people Floating Support Service by requesting a presentation by SP at the Homeless Strategy Group and other forums - Ensure appropriate officer attendance at the Supporting People Commissioning Body and Programmed Development meetings. - Ensure adequate representation by East Herts at the County Council's Supporting people groups and working parties, including the Accommodation for Older Persons Review Group, the Move-On project and Accommodation Services for Young People Partnership Group. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Herts Housing Services East Herts Housing Services East Herts Housing Services East Herts Housing Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service reviewed with partners. New service provider started April 09. Transitional arrangements successful. Presentation on the Floating Support Service given to the Homeless Strategy Group partners by HYHG and Herts County Council November 2008. Copies of all documentation including referral documents circulated to all partners on the group. Supporting People service now part of HCC Adult Care Service (including grant) and Commissioning Body no longer exists. Herts County Council developing links to services at district level through Herts Heads of Housing and other project boards to be agreed. Housing Officer attends where relevant. Accommodation for Older Persons Review Group attended by Housing Strategy and Policy Manager. Other groups currently suspended by Herts County Council. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Completed Ongoing Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Herts Housing services, County Council, Voluntary and Statutory support agencies |

| Theme | Outputs and targets | Lead | Progress | Target date | Key Partners |
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| 24. Implement the actions in the Homeless and Homeless Prevention Strategy 2008-2013 | <p>- Refer to Strategy for detailed actions and monitoring schedule</p> <p>Report progress on action plan annually to Community Scrutiny.</p> | East Herts Housing Services | <p>Regular updates provided to external partners on the Homeless Strategy Group on progress of action plan. Actions achieved to date include bringing back in-house the management of the Council's Hostel Services. The Housing Options Service have supported an initiative developed by Herts Young Homeless Group, with 4 other LAs in the County and the County Council, to go into schools attended by East Herts children and raise awareness of the implications of homelessness. Aimed at 14 year olds. Funding for 2010/2011 agreed through LSP.</p> <p>Report on the progress of the Homeless and Homeless prevention Strategy presented to Community Scrutiny July 2010.</p> | Annual and Ongoing | East Herts Housing services, County Council, Voluntary and Statutory support agencies |
| 25. Work with health and care agencies to target vulnerable households in need of home improvements | Establish a referral network with Herts County Council, East Herts Council, Primary Care Trust and others for vulnerable households to receive energy efficiency measures, benefits advice and other services. For residents over 50 years old. | Herts County Council Housing Services | The County Council have invited expressions of interest for a managing agent to oversee the project for two years. A First Contact Signposting Assessment Form has been drafted and has been consulted on by all partners. Scheme recently launched. | Annual and Ongoing | East Herts Council, Herts County Council, Voluntary and Statutory support agencies |
| 26. Reduce levels of fuel poverty, particularly for vulnerable Groups. | Maximise the use of East Herts Council's share of the £6.6M London Commuter Belt funding to install fuel efficient measures in 340 homes per annum over two years. | East Herts Housing Services | Project launched 8 July 2009. First installations measures installed in August. Target number of measures achieved. Project across the 15 council districts currently under spent, but strong promotion in East Herts maximised share. | Annual 2009/10 & 2010/11 | LCB authorities, Communities & Local Government, EERA, Climate Energy (managing agents) |

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28 FEBRUARY 2012

CHAIRMAN OF COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

“AGEING WELL” – A SCRUTINY DISCUSSION WITH EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

WARD(S) AFFECTED: all

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report is intended to support the discussion with Executive member for health, housing and community support on the question “Ageing Well – how is East Herts working to make this a good district to grow older in?”

RECOMMENDATION FOR : COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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| | |
| (A) | that the themed questions form the basis of the scrutiny discussion with the Executive member; and |
| | |
| (B) | comments are passed to the Executive on the perceived strengths and challenges in the council’s forward thinking in respect of the ‘ageing well’ and ‘later life’ agenda. |

1.0 Background

1.1 At the last meeting of Community Scrutiny committee the issue of an ageing population generally and the demographic data for East Herts particularly were raised as a concern. Members agreed to initiate a discussion with the Executive on the topic - with a view to exploring the council’s readiness, resilience and sustainability in respect of the ‘ageing well’ and ‘later life’ agenda.

2.0 Report

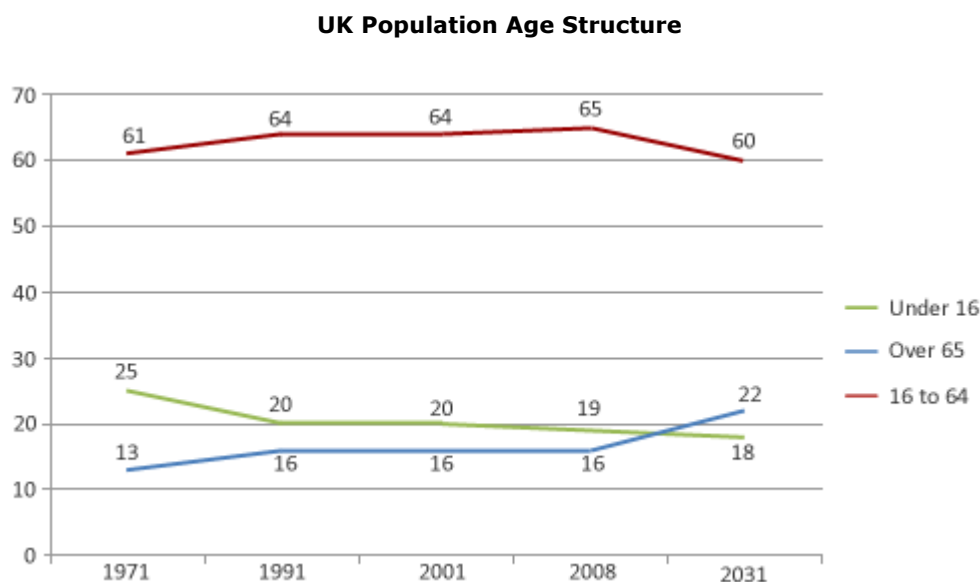
2.1 “Ageing Well – how is East Herts working to make this a good district to grow older in?” Why does this question need to be asked?

2.2 The Ageing Population – national overview

The UK population is forecast to grow from around 60 million in 2008 to 71.6 million in 2033. Part of this growth is being driven by an ageing population.

In December 2009 the Office for National Statistics reported that the proportion of the UK population aged under 16 had dropped from 25% in 1971 to 19% in 2008. At the same time, the proportion aged 65 and over had risen to 16% compared to 13% in 1971. This trend is projected to continue.

By 2031, 22% of the population will be aged 65 and over compared to 18% aged 16 or younger.



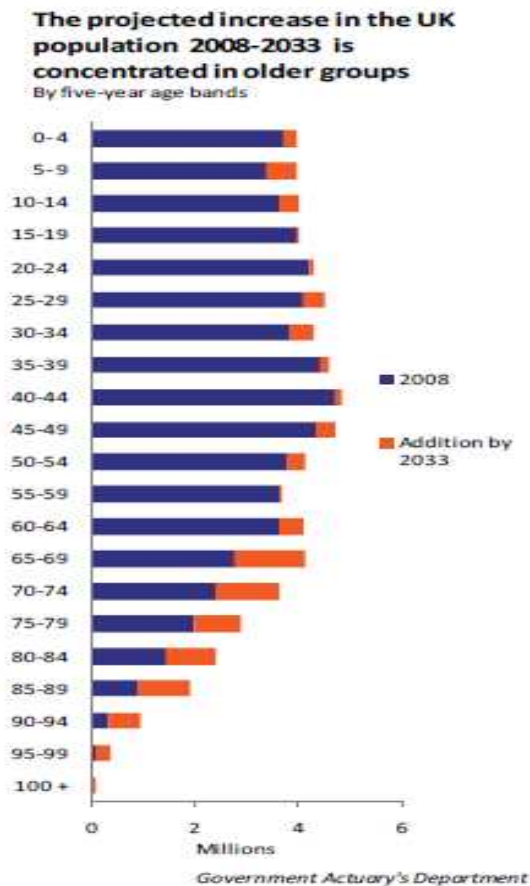
Source: Office for National Statistics; General Register Office for Scotland; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
Mid-year estimates for 1971 to 2008, 2008-based projections for 2031

The fastest increase has been in those aged 85 and over, the 'oldest old'.

- In 1983, there were just over 600,000 people in the UK aged 85 and over
- Since then, the numbers have more than doubled, reaching 1.3 million in 2008
- By 2033 the number of people aged 85 and over is projected to more than double again to reach 3.2 million, and to account for 5% of the total population

Ref: IGD <http://www.igd.com/index.asp?id=1&fid=1&sid=8&tid=30&cid=95>

2.3



State benefits and the NHS accounted for just under half of government expenditure in 2009/10. With much of this spending directed at elderly people, their growing number will present challenges for providers of these particular services as well as for the public finances as a whole.

Ref: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/key-issues-for-the-new-parliament/value-for-money-in-public-services/the-ageing-population/>

2.4 The Ageing Population – local perspective

As a district council, East Herts does not have responsibility or direct liability for state retirement pensions or NHS health care, however the 'strain' on broader public finances caused by increasing expenditure in these areas will have considerable impact on second and third tier authorities as resources are squeezed.

2.5 East Herts does have need to consider an ageing population in respect of

- Its universal services generally being age accessible and meeting the broader 'equalities' agenda
- Council Tax benefits

- Housing benefits
- Concessionary Travel (bus passes) – although administration passed to county council from 1 April 2011, East Herts has an ongoing liability for funding the scheme (was £790K in 2010/11)
- Parking and transport – the district is the parking authority, it contributes to community transport and seeks to influence the county council (as HCC is the local highways authority)
- Planning
- Public health – major changes in devolved responsibility due to come into force as part of the Health and Social Care Bill
- Community safety
- Parks, open spaces, leisure, arts
- ... this list is not exhaustive, all aspects of the council's work will potentially be affected by changes in local demographics and the authority will be operating under the wider Big Society, Localism and Wellbeing agenda set by central government.

2.6 When considering the council's readiness, resilience and sustainability in respect of the 'ageing well' and 'later life' agenda members need to be aware of the projected population figures for East Herts to get an understanding of the potential scale of impact.

| Age group | %age change in 2009-15 period | Estimated number of people (in 000s) in 2015 |
|-----------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 65-69 | 29.8% | 7.4 (up from 5.7) |
| 70-74 | 12.2% | 5.5 (up from 4.9) |
| 75-79 | 7.1% | 4.5 (up from 4.2) |
| 80-84 | 20.0% | 3.6 (up from 3.0) |
| 85-89 | 22.2% | 2.2 (up from 1.8) |
| 90+ | 55.6% | 1.4 (up from 0.9) |
| | | 24,600 residents aged 65 and over by 2015 (which would be 17.5% of the 141,800 population projected for EH at this date) Note: 65+ were only 13.0% of 136,400 in 2009 |

| Age group | %age change in 2009-15 period | Estimated number of people (in 000s) in 2015 |
|-----------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 45-49 | 0.7% | 11.8 (up from 11.1) |
| 50-54 | 1.9% | 11.1 (up from 9.2) |
| | | These groups represents the most numerous 'decade' in the 2015 projected population at 16.1% of total - is EH ready to manage as these 22,900 people reach 65+? |

Ref: data extracted from Office of National Statistics projected number of population and forecasted percentage change in East Herts for 2009-2015

2.7 With the scale of the ‘problem’ become clear and the concerns of scrutiny being voiced, the following themed questions were prepared in consultation with the Community Scrutiny chairman. These will be used to structure the discussion with Executive member for health, housing and community support (Cllr Linda Haysey).

2.8

| | THEME | Questions |
|---|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Strategy and Partnerships | What priority is EH giving to ‘age proof’ its own strategies, policies and services? |
| | | What responsibility do you feel EH has to work with its main contractors on the broader ‘later life’ agenda? |
| | <i>LSP = Local Strategic Partnership</i> | What role can EH play within the LSP to ensure the partnership actively engages in addressing the needs of the increasing older population? |
| | | |
| 2 | Achieving cost effective services | Given an uncertain economic future, how can the council and its partners best get to understand the needs and manage the expectations of an increasing number of older people across the district. |
| | | What work has been done on the medium term financial strategy to take into account the local population trends, demand forecast for services and any impact of an aging population on EH? |
| | | What plans does EH have to work with county and neighbouring authorities to develop co-ordinated strategies (on public transport, housing, leisure, health inequalities etc) to support independent living for a greater number of older people? |
| | | |
| 3 | ‘People’ | What thoughts do you have on the level/extent of involvement of older people in the design, commissioning, procurement and delivery of services in future? |
| | | What are the key contributions you think individual district councillors could make to the ‘later life’ agenda within their own ward? |
| | | What role do you foresee the district being able to play within the changing landscape of health and social care in the short, medium and longer term future – with particular reference to championing the needs of older EH residents? |
| | | |
| 4 | ‘Place’ | What is your vision for the development of “lifetime neighbourhoods” ** in EH? |
| | | What do you think are the greatest challenges around rural isolation (of older people) that the |

| | | |
|----------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | council needs to address or seek to influence? |
| 5 | 'Prosperity' | <p>Given an aging workforce and increase in state pension age, does EH have any plans to work with the local business community to promote flexible employment and training opportunities for older people to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help maintain their own financial independence? • continue to contribute to the economic viability of the district? |
| | | |

NOTE ** *the concept of a **Lifetime Neighbourhood** is one which offers everyone the best possible chance of health, wellbeing, and social, economic and civic engagement regardless of age. It provides the built environment, infrastructure, housing, services and shared social space that allow us to pursue our own ambitions for a high quality of life. It does not exclude us as we age, nor as we become frail or disabled.*

2.9 Members are asked to consider the report, engage in discussion with the Executive member and pass constructive comments onto the Executive on the perceived strengths and challenges in the council's forward thinking in respect of the 'ageing well' and 'later life' agenda.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'** which follows.

Background Papers

Four principles of good public scrutiny published by CfPS (Centre for Public Scrutiny) [click here for link to CfPS external site](#)

East Herts Council own current guidelines for selecting issues for review. A summary of this information is printed at the back of Essential Reference Paper B.

Contact Member: Cllr Graham McAndrew, Chairman: Community Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Lorna Georgiou, Performance and Improvement Co-ordinator and acting manager – Extn 2244

Report Author: Marian Langley, Scrutiny Officer – Extn 1612

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives</p> | <p>Effective use of the scrutiny process contributes to the Council's ability to meet two core objectives:</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>Leading the way, working together <i>Deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.</i></p> <p>In monitoring the performance of the council's services and action plans, the Committee is monitoring the Council's achievement of all of its corporate objectives.</p> <p>Any additional issues identified for scrutiny will relate to at least one of the Council's corporate objectives.</p> |
| <p>Consultation:</p> | <p>Potential topics for scrutiny are always invited from members of the public, the Executive and all Members.</p> |
| <p>Legal:</p> | <p>According to the Council's constitution, the scrutiny committees are responsible for the setting of their own work programme in consultation with the Executive and in doing so they shall take into account wishes of members on that committee who are not members of the largest political group on the Council.</p> |
| <p>Financial:</p> | <p>Any additional meetings and every task and finish group has resource needs linked to officer support activity and time for officers from the services to make the required input.</p> |
| <p>Human Resource:</p> | <p>none</p> |
| <p>Risk Management:</p> | <p>Matters which may benefit from scrutiny may be overlooked. The selection of inappropriate topics for review would risk inefficient use of resources. Where this involved partners, it could risk damaging the reputation of the council and relations with partners.</p> |

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY – 28 FEBRUARY 2012

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK – OCTOBER 2011 - DECEMBER 2011

WARD (S) AFFECTED: All

Purpose/Summary of Report:

- To report on the performance of the key indicators that relate to Community Scrutiny for the period October 2011 to December 2011.

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>RECOMMENDATION FOR SCRUTINY:</u> | |
| That: | |
| (A) | The reported performance be scrutinised and Executive be informed of any recommendations. |

1.0 Background

1.1 This is a performance report relevant to the Community Scrutiny terms of reference covering the period from October 2011 to December 2011.




1.2 The report contains a breakdown of the following information by each Corporate Priority:



- An overview of performance, in particular where there have been issues and remedial actions taken during the period. Should members want more detailed information on a specific month, they should refer to that month's Executive Corporate Healthcheck report available on the council website.

- The indicators where data is collected monthly, with performance for December 2011 presented in detail (the most up to date available) with previous months summarised in a trend chart.
- The indicators where data is collected quarterly, with performance for Quarter 3 presented in detail (the most up to date available) with previous quarters summarised in a trend chart.

1.3 All Councillors have access to Covalent (the council's performance management system), should they wish to interrogate the full range of performance indicators. The Performance Team is able to provide support and training on using the Covalent system if required.

1.4 **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** Shows the full set of performance indicators that are reported on a monthly, quarterly and yearly basis. The codes used in relation to performance indicator monitoring are as follows:

| Status | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|  | This PI is 6% or more off target. |
|  | This PI is 1-5% off target. |
|  | This PI is on target. |

| Short Term Trends | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
|  | The value of this PI has changed in the short term. |
|  | The value of this PI has not changed in the short term. |

2.0 Report – Indicators grouped by corporate priority

Promoting Prosperity and well-being, providing access and opportunities

Performance analysis

2.1 Performance for the following indicator was 'Green', which means that the target was either met or exceeded for December 2011:

- EHPI 129 - Response time to anti social behaviour (ASB) complaints made to East Herts Council.

2.2 The crime data below is publically available at www.police.uk so in line with the corporate healthcheck the data is also not reported in the Community Scrutiny healthcheck:

- NI 15 – Serious violent crime rate.
- NI 16 – Serious acquisitive crime rate.
- NI 20 – Assault with injury crime rate.

Please refer to **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** for full details.

Fit for purpose

Performance analysis

2.3 **NI 181 - Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events.** Performance is 'Red' for December 2011. The data extract for the period 5 December 2011 to 16 January 2012 is 11.44 days. Giving a cumulative position as 11.83 days. Caseload continues to rise and upgrading work for April changes has commenced.

Please refer to **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** for full details.

Leading the way, working together

Performance analysis

2.4 **EHPI 3a - Usage: number of swims (under 16).** Performance was 'Amber' for Quarter 3. Figures for Quarter 3 show the normal seasonal drop and are comparable with previous Quarter 3 figures for 2010/11, just falling short of the Quarter 3 2011/2012 target.

2.5 The following indicators were 'Green' meaning that the targets were either met or exceeded for December/Quarter 3:

- EHPI 3b - Usage: number of swims (16 – under 60 year olds).
- EHPI 3c - Usage: number of swims (60 year old +).
- EHPI 4a - Usage: Gym (16 – under 60 year olds).
- EHPI 4b - Usage: Gym (60 + year olds).

Please refer to **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** for full details.

3.0 Implications/Consultation

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers:

- February 2009 – May 2009 Community Scrutiny Corporate Healthcheck Appendix B - Complete list of Performance Indicators by Corporate Priority
- February 2009 – May 2009 Community Scrutiny Corporate Healthcheck Appendix C – report reading guidance notes
- February 2009 – May 2009 Community Scrutiny Corporate Healthcheck Appendix E – Performance indicator definitions

Contact Members: Councillor Linda Haysey - Executive member for Community Development, Leisure and Culture
Councillor Malcolm Alexander – Executive member for Community Safety and Protection.

Contact Officer and Report Author: (In terms of performance issues)

Karl Chui, Performance Monitoring Officer – ext 2243

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives:</p> | <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>Leading the way, working together <i>Deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.</i></p> |
| <p>Consultation:</p> | <p>Performance monitoring discussions have taken place between Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service.</p> |
| <p>Legal:</p> | <p>There are no legal implications.</p> |
| <p>Financial:</p> | <p>There are no financial implications.</p> |
| <p>Human Resource:</p> | <p>There are no Human Resource implications.</p> |
| <p>Risk Management:</p> | <p>There are no Risk implications.</p> |

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Community Scrutiny Corporate Healthcheck October - December 2011/12

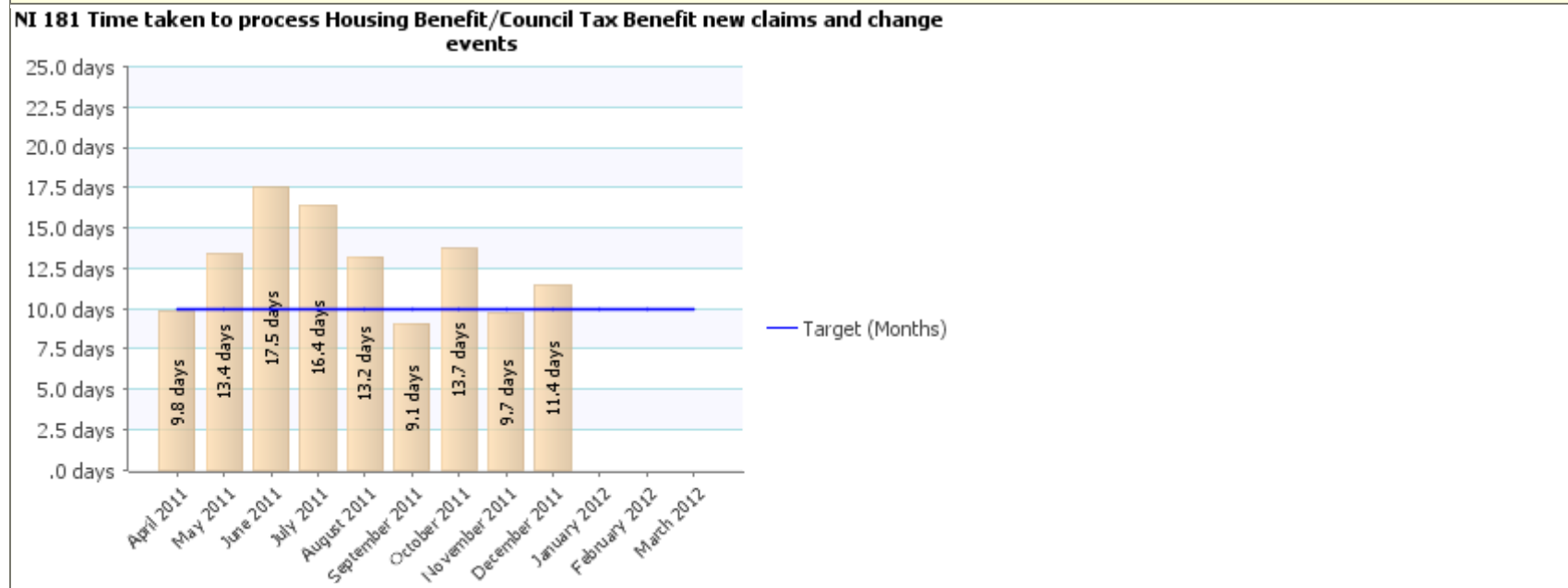


Traffic Light Red
Description Fit for purpose, services fit for you

Revenues and Benefits Services

| PI code | Short Name | Status | Current Value | Current target | Short term trend | Notes | Recommendations made during last Scrutiny meeting on 22 nd November 2011 |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NI 181 | Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events | | 11.4 days | 10.0 days | | The data extract for the period 5 December 2011 to 16 January 2012 is 11.44 days. Giving a cumulative position as 11.83 days. Caseload continues to rise and upgrading work for April changes has commenced. | None |

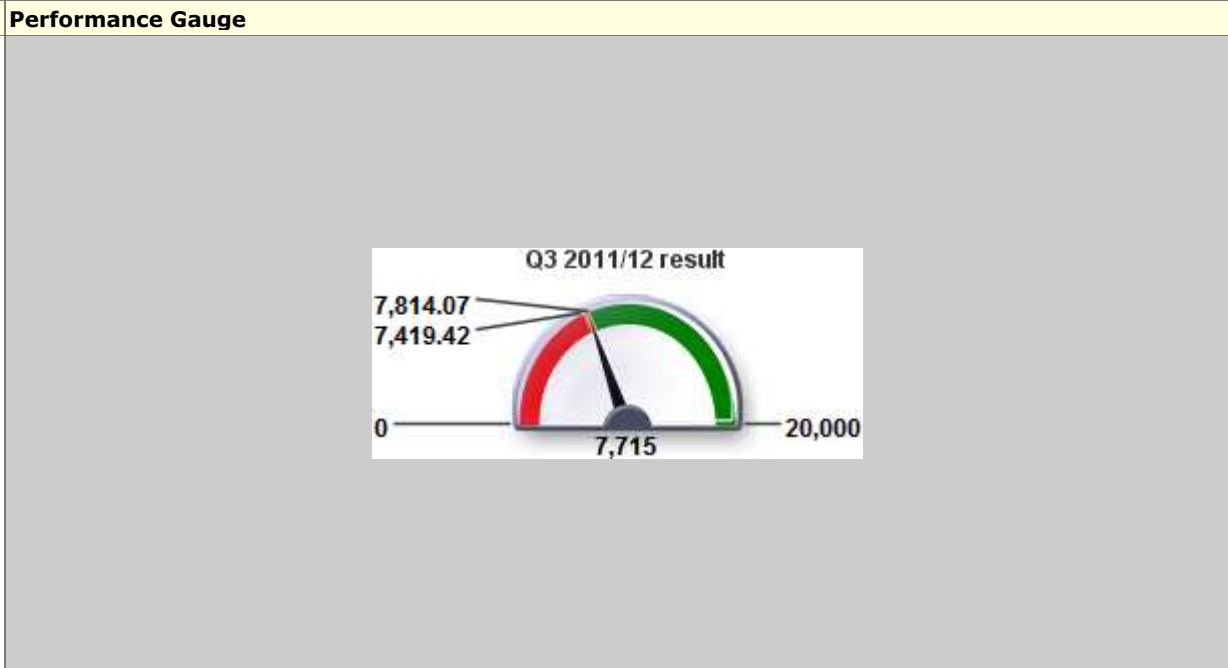
Trend Chart Performance Gauge



Traffic Light Amber
Description Leading the way, working together

Community and Cultural Services

| PI code | Short Name | Status | Current Value | Current target | Short term trend | Notes | Recommendations made during last Scrutiny meeting on 22 nd November 2011 |
|---------|-----------------------------------|--------|---------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EHP13a | Usage: number of swims (under 16) | | 7,715 | 7,893 | | Figures for 2011/2012 Quarter 3 show the normal seasonal drop and are comparable with previous Quarter 3 figures for 2010/11, just falling short of the Quarter 3 2011/2012 target. | None |

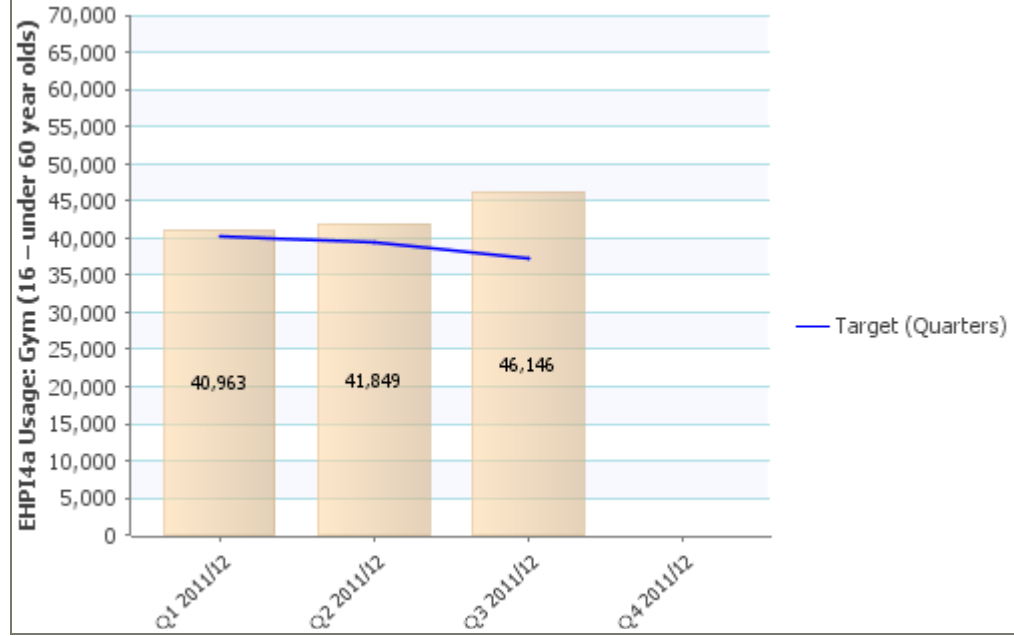


Traffic Light Green
Description Leading the way, working together

Community and Cultural Services

| PI code | Short Name | Status | Current Value | Current target | Short term trend | Notes | Recommendations made during last Scrutiny meeting on 22 nd November 2011 |
|---------|--------------------------------------|--------|---------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EHP14a | Usage: Gym (16 – under 60 year olds) | | 46,146 | 37,160 | | Figures for 2011/2012 Quarter 3 show continual strong growth bucking the trend of the normal seasonal drop. Throughput exceeds previous Quarter 3 figures for 2010/11 and the Quarter 3 2011/2012 target. | None |

Trend Chart

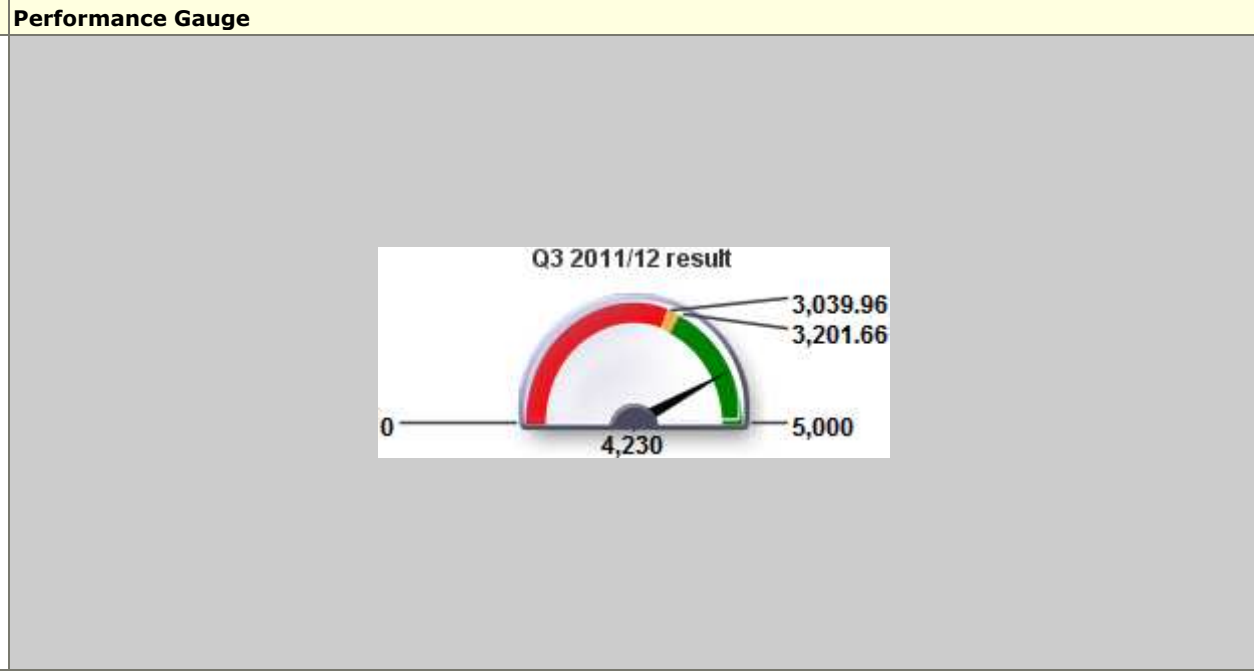


Performance Gauge



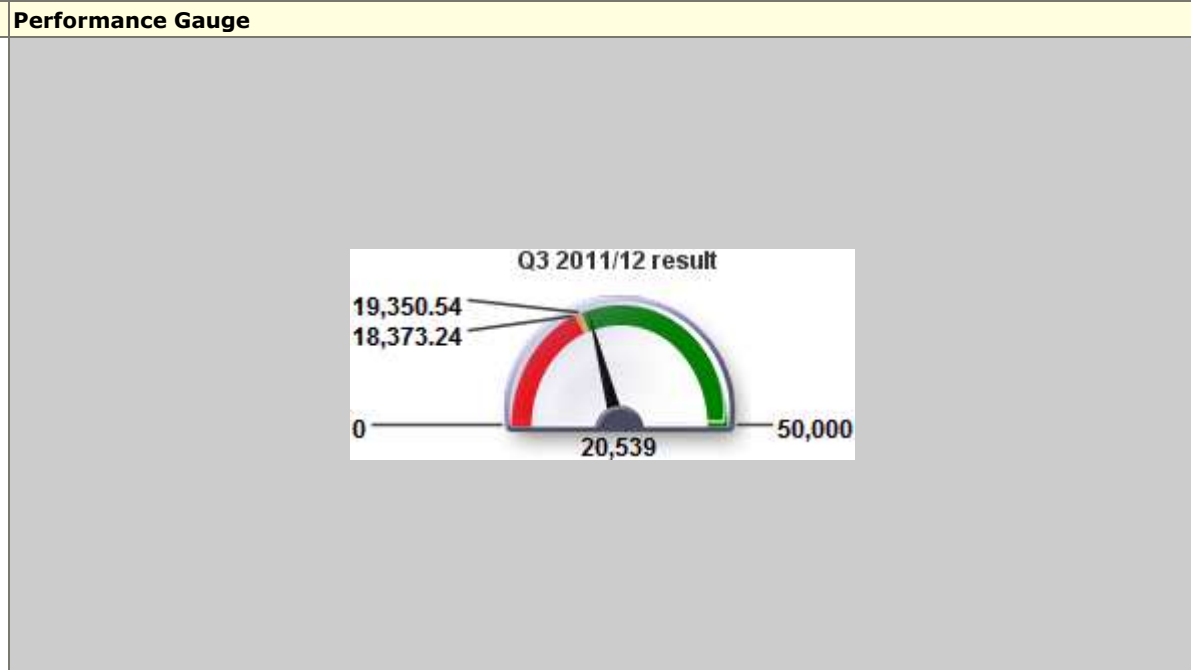
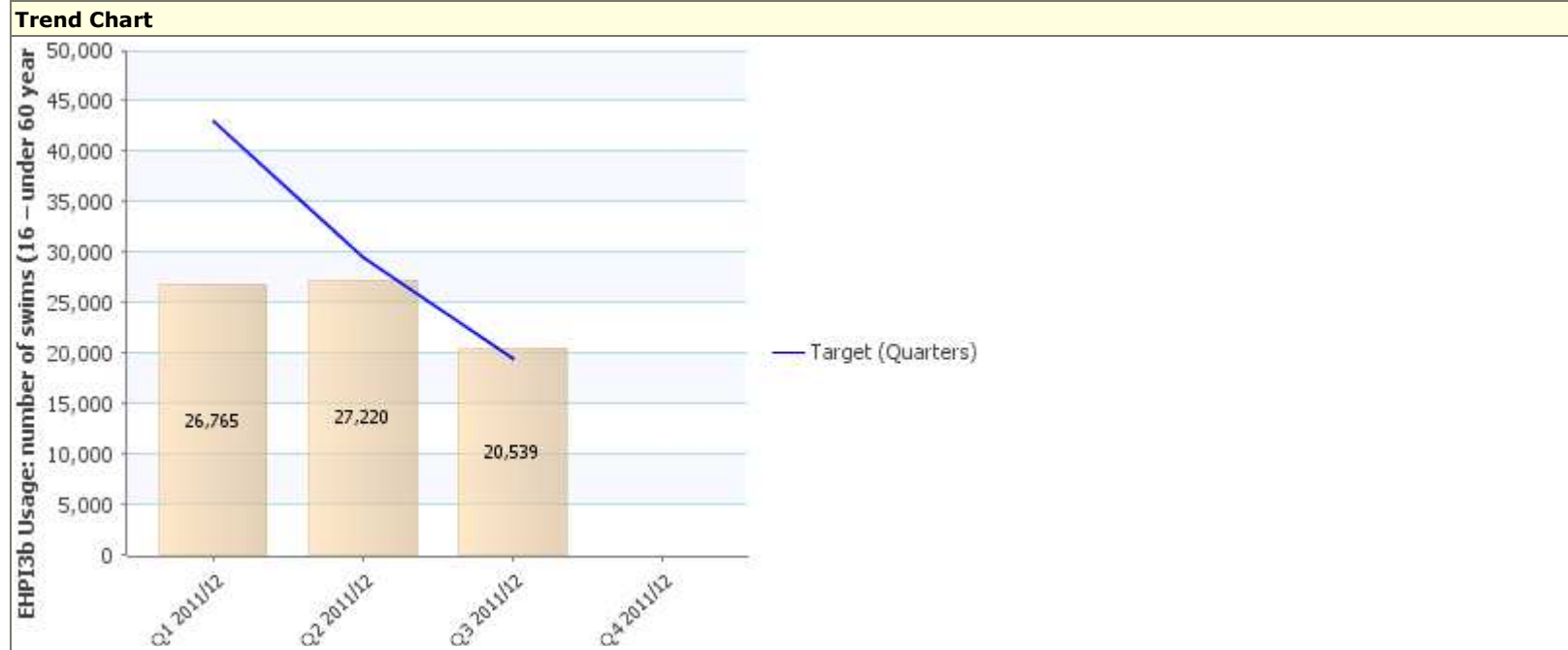
Community and Cultural Services

| PI code | Short Name | Status | Current Value | Current target | Short term trend | Notes | Recommendations made during last Scrutiny meeting on 22 nd November 2011 |
|---------|-----------------------------|--------|---------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EHP14b | Usage: Gym (60 + year olds) | | 4,230 | 3,234 | | Figures for 2011/2012 Quarter 3 show continual strong growth with no seasonal drop. Throughput exceeds previous Quarter 3 figures for 2010/11 and the Quarter 3 2011/2012 target. | None |



Community and Cultural Services

| PI code | Short Name | Status | Current Value | Current target | Short term trend | Notes | Recommendations made during last Scrutiny meeting on 22 nd November 2011 |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EHP13b | Usage: number of swims (16 - under 60 year olds) | | 20,539 | 19,546 | | Figures for 2011/2012 Quarter 3 show the normal seasonal drop and are comparable with previous Quarter 3 figures for 2010/11, achieving the Quarter 3 2011/2012 target. | None |



Community and Cultural Services

| PI code | Short Name | Status | Current Value | Current target | Short term trend | Notes | Recommendations made during last Scrutiny meeting on 22 nd November 2011 |
|---------|----------------------------------------|--------|---------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EHP13c | Usage: number of swims (60 year old +) | | 5,513 | 5,185 | | Figures for 2011/2012 Quarter 3 show the normal seasonal drop and are comparable with previous Quarter 3 figures for 2010/11, exceeding the Quarter 3 2011/2012 target. | None |

Trend Chart



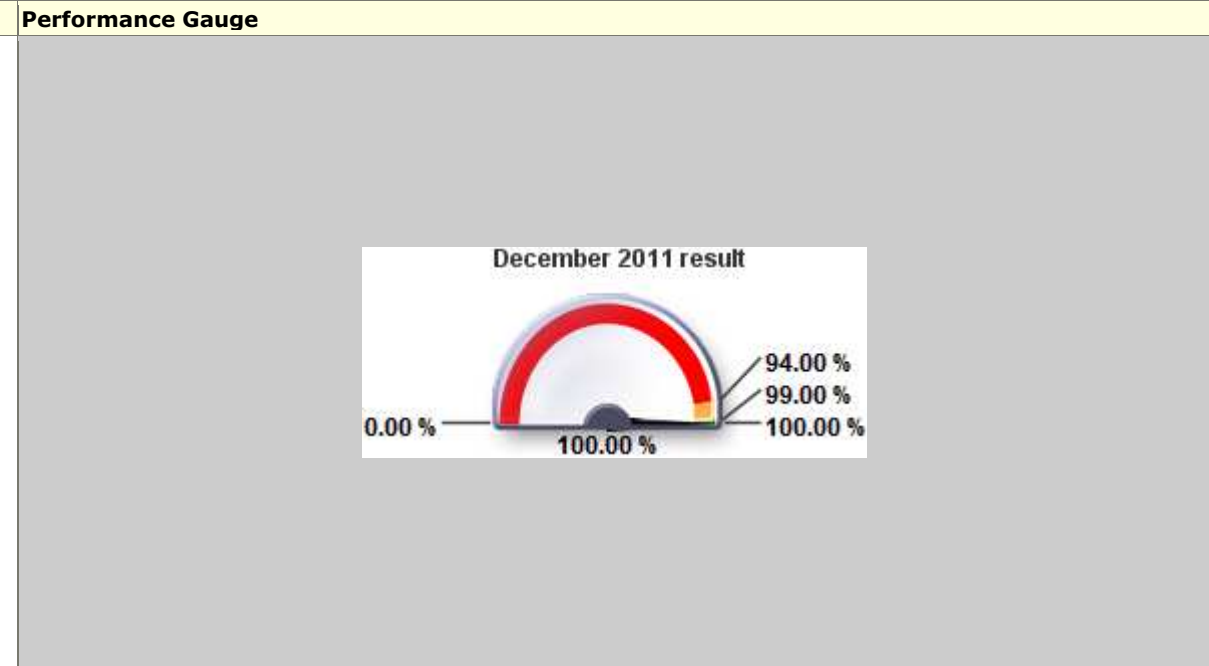
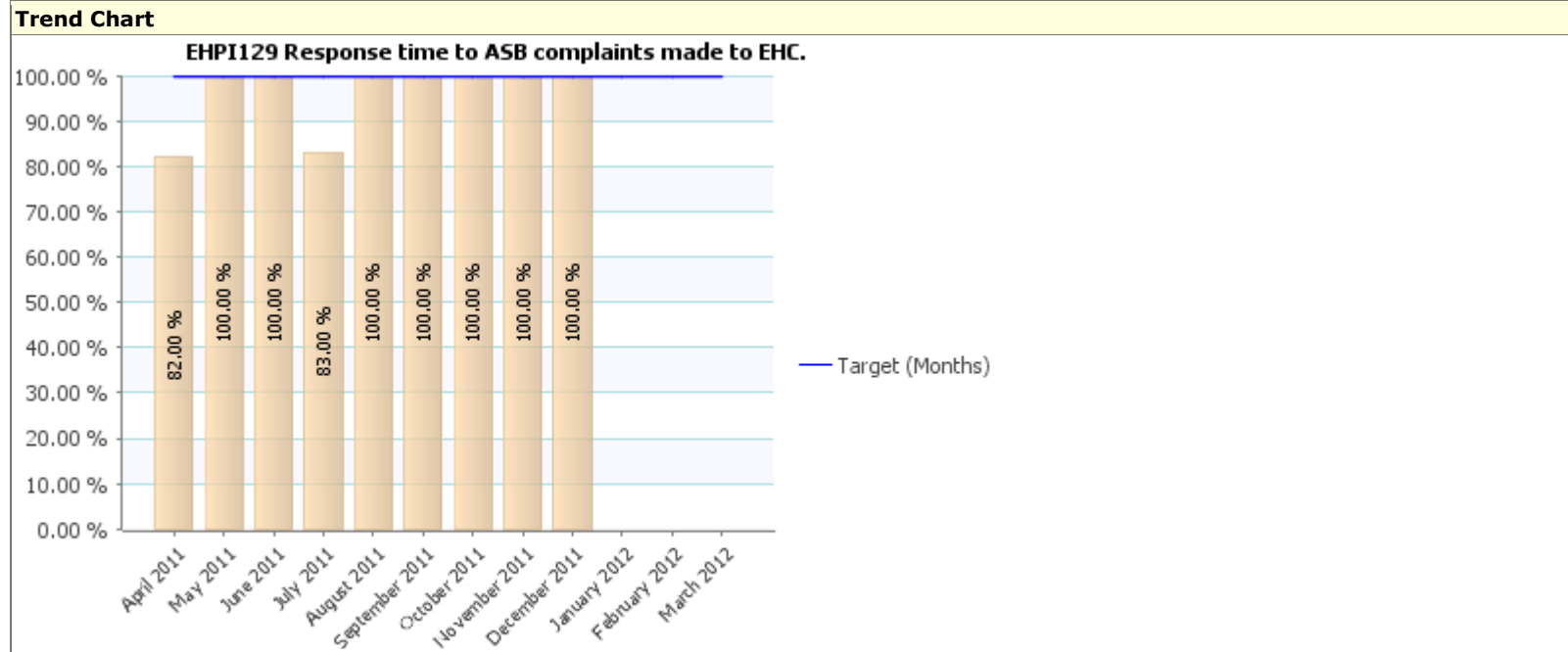
Performance Gauge



Traffic Light Green
Description Promoting prosperity & well being providing access&opportunities

Licensing and Community Safety

| PI code | Short Name | Status | Current Value | Current target | Short term trend | Notes | Recommendations made during last Scrutiny meeting on 22 nd November 2011 |
|---------|----------------------------------------------|--------|---------------|----------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EHPI129 | Response time to ASB complaints made to EHC. | | 100.00 % | 100.00 % | | There were 4 Anti Social Behaviour complaints made to the Anti Social Behaviour officer at East Herts Council, all of which were responded to within the minimum two working days. | None |



| PI Status | | Long Term Trends | | Short Term Trends | |
|-----------|-----------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | Alert | | Improving | | Improving |
| | Warning | | No Change | | No Change |
| | OK | | Getting Worse | | Getting Worse |
| | Unknown | | | | |
| | Data Only | | | | |

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28 FEBRUARY 2012

REPORT BY: CHAIRMAN OF COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

WARD(S) AFFECTED: none

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report is intended to support the Community Scrutiny Committee in reviewing and planning its future work programme.

| <u>RECOMMENDATION FOR : Community Scrutiny Committee</u> | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (A) | that the work programme shown in this report be reviewed and agreed, and |
| (B) | that the scrutiny officer be asked to make any changes, additions or arrangements as might be discussed in the meeting. |

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Items previously required, identified or suggested for the work programme are set out in **Essential Reference Paper B**.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 New topics will be added onto the draft agendas for 2012/13 following consultation with members in spring 2012 (17 and 24 April) as part of the scrutiny evaluation/planning workshops.
- 2.2 No new topics for scrutiny have been received from the public. An article explaining the role of scrutiny and inviting suggestions from residents has already been prepared for the spring 2012 'council tax' edition of LINK magazine.

- 2.3 The draft work programme and any new topic suggestions will all be subject to confirmation by the Community Scrutiny committee appointed for 2012/13 at their first meeting in the new civic year.
- 2.4 To support members in their consideration of housing related matters, in the reading of committee reports and in discussions with officers/partners a quick reference guide has been compiled of the frequently used abbreviations and acronyms. **Essential Reference Paper C** will be attached to the back of scrutiny work programme agenda and updated as new terminology appears and comes into common usage. Please let the Scrutiny Officer know of any items you think should be added to list.
- 3.0 Implications/Consultations
- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'** which follows.

Background Papers

Four principles of good public scrutiny published by CfPS (Centre for Public Scrutiny) [click here for link to CfPS external site](#)

East Herts Council own current guidelines for selecting issues for review. A summary of this information is printed at the back of Essential Reference Paper B.

Contact Member: Cllr Graham McAndrew, Chairman: Community Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Lorna Georgiou, Performance and Improvement Co-ordinator and acting manager – Extn 2244

Report Author: Marian Langley, Scrutiny Officer – Extn 1612

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives</p> | <p>Effective use of the scrutiny process contributes to the Council's ability to meet two core objectives:</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>Leading the way, working together <i>Deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.</i></p> <p>In monitoring the performance of the council's services and action plans, the Committee is monitoring the Council's achievement of all of its corporate objectives.</p> <p>Any additional issues identified for scrutiny will relate to at least one of the Council's corporate objectives.</p> |
| <p>Consultation:</p> | <p>Potential topics for scrutiny are always invited from members of the public, the Executive and all Members.</p> |
| <p>Legal:</p> | <p>According to the Council's constitution, the scrutiny committees are responsible for the setting of their own work programme in consultation with the Executive and in doing so they shall take into account wishes of members on that committee who are not members of the largest political group on the Council.</p> |
| <p>Financial:</p> | <p>Any additional meetings and every task and finish group has resource needs linked to officer support activity and time for officers from the services to make the required input.</p> |
| <p>Human Resource:</p> | <p>none</p> |
| <p>Risk Management:</p> | <p>Matters which may benefit from scrutiny may be overlooked. The selection of inappropriate topics for review would risk inefficient use of resources. Where this involved partners, it could risk damaging the reputation of the council and relations with partners.</p> |

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Community Scrutiny Committee work programme (provisional) 2012/13

Still to be scheduled (if needed): Implications of Localism Act (as major measures come into effect from April 2012)

| meeting | date | topic | Contact officer/lead | Next Exec |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| NEXT | CIVIC YEAR | | | |
| 1 in 12/13 | 12 June 2012 Report deadline 30 May | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from Health Engagement Panel • End of financial year annual report for Hertford Theatre • Service Plan monitoring Oct 2011 – March 2012 (Community only) • Healthcheck through to March 2012 (which includes relevant 2011/12 Out-turns and 2012/13 Targets) • Work Programme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman of the Panel • Director Customer and Community Services • Lead Officer – Corporate Planning • Lead Officer - Performance • Scrutiny Officer | 10 July 2012 7 Aug 2012 4 Sept 2012 |
| 2 in 12/13 | 28 Aug 2012 Report deadline 15 Aug | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from Health Eng Panel • TBC • TBC • Healthcheck through to June 2012 • Work Programme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman of the Panel • X • X • Lead Officer - Performance • Scrutiny Officer | 9 Oct 2012 6 Nov 2012 |
| Member consultation process | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2013/14 Proposed Service Options | | |
| 3 in 12/13 | 20 Nov 2012 Report deadline 7 Nov | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from Health Eng Panel • Community Grants review and Q1/Q2 allocation • TBC • Service plan monitoring Apr 2012 – Sept 2012 (Community only) • Healthcheck through to Sept 2012 • Work programme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman of the Panel • Community Engagement Manager/Grants officer • X • Lead Officer – Corporate Planning • Lead Officer - Performance • Scrutiny Officer | 4 Dec 2012 |

**Scrutiny work programme
Essential Reference Paper B**

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| JOINT SCRUTINY | XX Jan 2013 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2013/14 Budget items | | |
| JOINT SCRUTINY | XX Feb 2013 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2013/14 Service Plans • 2012/13 Estimates and 2013/14 Future targets | | |
| 4 in 12/13 | XX Feb/Mar 2013 Report deadline XX | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from Health Eng Panel • Leisure Contract – year 4 • TBC • Healthcheck through to Dec 2013 • Work programme 2013/14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman of the Panel • Invite SLM • X • Lead Officer - Performance • Scrutiny Officer | |

The four principles of good public scrutiny:

- *provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers*
- *enables the voice and concerns of the public and its communities*
- *is carried out by 'independent-minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny role*
- *drives improvement in public services*

Currently within East Herts Council, the criteria for selecting issues:

For the Scrutiny Committee to select an issue to review, it must meet all of the following criteria:

- Of local, and preferably current, concern
- Linked to the council's corporate objectives
- Capable of being influenced by this committee
- Of manageable scope – focused rather than too wide ranging
- Of sufficient scope to warrant a scrutiny review – not something that can be easily fixed by meeting with the service provider
- Not being scrutinised elsewhere (eg another Scrutiny Committee)

At the last scrutiny evaluation there was a feeling, in the light of the current economic climate and limited resources, that there should also be some consideration given to

- areas where significant costs might be incurred or could be saved
- minimising the level of risk associated with the topic/issue
- the length of time since the topic was last reviewed.

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Abbreviations & Acronyms which may be used in ‘housing’ related reports/discussions

| Version 1 | | Issued January 2012 |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Acronym | Meaning | Explanation |
| ACS | Adult Care Services (Herts CC) | Herts CC Dept dealing with adults with care needs/disabilities |
| ADHAC | Agricultural Dwelling-House Advisory Committee | Committee which meets to decide whether a dwelling is still required for an agricultural worker |
| AOT | Assertive Outreach Team (Community Mental Health Team) | |
| ASB | Anti-Social Behaviour | |
| BME | Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic/Black & Minority Ethnic | |
| BRMA | Broad Rental Market Area | Division of areas for Local Housing Allowance purposes - EH has 3 |
| CBL | Choice-Based Lettings | System of allowing Housing Register applicants to choose where to live |
| CB | Child Benefit | |
| CLG | Department for Communities & Local Government | |
| CMHT | Community Mental Health Team | Primary Care Trust team for people with mental health issues |
| CTC | Child Tax Credits | |
| CSF | Children, Schools & Families (Herts CC) | Herts CC Dept dealing with the needs of children & families |
| DLA | Disability Living Allowance | |
| DV | Domestic Violence | |
| ESA | Employment Support Allowance | Replaced Incapacity Benefit |
| HA | Housing Application | |
| HB | Housing Benefit | |
| HCA | Homes & Communities Agency | |
| HHSRS | Housing, Health & Safety Rating System | System that Environmental Health use to assess safety in the home |

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| HMO | House in Multiple Occupation | Shared accommodation - rooms let individually in one property |
| HPU | Homeless Persons Unit | Not used in East Herts, but some LAs still refer to temporary accommodation as such. |
| HR | Housing Register | |
| HSSA | Housing Statistical Appendix | Local Authority annual return on housing stock/numbers |
| HV | Home Visit | Carried out by Housing Options to verify applicant's details |
| IS | Income Support | |
| ISS | Independence Support Service | Herts CC Dept dealing with care leavers |
| JSA | Job Seeker's Allowance | Replaced Unemployment Benefit |
| LCHO | Low Cost Home Ownership | Shared equity, fixed equity and other home ownership options |
| LDF | Local Development Framework | Portfolio of local development documents for planning strategy for EH |
| LDT | Learning Disabilities Team | Primary Care Trust team for people with learning disabilities |
| LHA | Local Housing Allowance (Housing Benefit) | Set levels of HB payable for different sizes of properties with BRMAs |
| LSP (EHLSP) | (East Herts) Local Strategic Partnership | |
| MAPPA | Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement | Panel convened to deal with high risk members of the community, often ex-prisoners |
| MARAC | Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference | Panel convened to deal with domestic violence |
| NTA | Notice of Transfer Application | Housing Options send NTA to housing associations whose tenants have requested a transfer |
| NTQ | Notice to Quit | Issued by a private landlord |
| NOSP | Notice of Seeking Possession | Issued by a housing association/local authority |
| PPO | Persistent & Prolific Offender | |
| RDS | Rent Deposit Scheme | 'Housing Options' fund for helping homeless clients into private rented properties |
| RSL | Registered Social Landlord (no longer used) | Housing association |
| SCS | Sustainable Community Strategy | Prepared on behalf of LSP to set out vision & priorities for the |

**Community scrutiny work programme
Essential Reference Paper C**

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| | | area and mechanisms for delivery |
| SHLAA | Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment | Identification of deliverable sites available, suitable and achievable for housing |
| SHMA | Strategic Housing Market Assessment | Technical study that assesses housing need and demand |
| SP | Supporting People | Funding for providing support by housing providers for elderly and vulnerable tenants |
| TA | Temporary Accommodation | |
| WA | Women's Aid | Organisation providing advice and refuges for women escaping domestic violence - now called Safer Places |
| WTC | Working Tax Credit | |
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