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Jeff Hughes
*Head of Democratic and Legal
Support Services*

MEETING : COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
VENUE : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
DATE : TUESDAY 20 NOVEMBER, 2012
TIME : 7.00 PM

PLEASE NOTE TIME AND VENUE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillor G McAndrew (Chairman)
Councillors R Beeching, S Bull, T Herbert, Mrs D Hollebon, Mrs D Hone,
J Mayes, N Symonds, C Woodward and M Wood

Conservative Group Substitutes: Councillors N Poulton and C Rowley
Liberal Democrat Group Substitutes: Councillor J Wing

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

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DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

1. A Member, present at a meeting of the Authority, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Authority, with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in any matter to be considered or being considered at a meeting:
 - must not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting;
 - must not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;
 - must disclose the interest to the meeting, whether registered or not, subject to the provisions of section 32 of the Localism Act 2011;
 - if the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days;
 - must leave the room while any discussion or voting takes place.
2. A DPI is an interest of a Member or their partner (which means spouse or civil partner, a person with whom they are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom they are living as if they were civil partners) within the descriptions as defined in the Localism Act 2011.
3. The Authority may grant a Member dispensation, but only in limited circumstances, to enable him/her to participate and vote on a matter in which they have a DPI.

4. It is a criminal offence to:

- fail to disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest at a meeting if it is not on the register;
- fail to notify the Monitoring Officer, within 28 days, of a DPI that is not on the register that a Member disclosed to a meeting;
- participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which a Member has a DPI;
- knowingly or recklessly provide information that is false or misleading in notifying the Monitoring Officer of a DPI or in disclosing such interest to a meeting.

(Note: The criminal penalties available to a court are to impose a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale and disqualification from being a councillor for up to 5 years.)

AGENDA

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence

2. Minutes (Pages 7 - 16)

To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 August 2012

3. Chairman's Announcements

4. Declarations of Interest

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

5. Health and Wellbeing Panel (Pages 17 - 24)

To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2012 and a verbal update from the Health and Wellbeing Panel Chairman.

6. Consultation on possible revisions to East Herts Housing Register Policy (Pages 25 - 36)

7. Housing Strategic Tenancy Strategy 2012 - 2015 (Pages 37 - 56)

8. Review of Taxi Licensing Policy and Processes (Task and Finish report) (Pages 57 - 70)

9. East Herts Ageing Well - Review of Progress (Pages 71 - 80)

10. Community Grants Review of Applications Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 Allocation (Pages 81 - 92)

11. 2012/2013 Service Plans - Summary of Progress and Exceptions Report
(Pages 93 - 112)

12. Community Scrutiny Corporate Health Check July - September 2012
(Pages 113 - 134)

13. Work Programme (Pages 135 - 144)

14. 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
28 AUGUST 2012, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor G McAndrew (Chairman)
Councillors R Beeching, T Herbert,
Mrs D Hollebon, C Rowley, N Symonds, M
Wood and C Woodward

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors L Haysey and P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Claire Bennett	- Manager of Housing Services
Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Marianne McWhinnie	- Engagement and Partnership Officer
Paul Newman	- Licensing Manager
Will O'Neill	- Head of Communications, Engagement and Cultural Services
Emma Parlow	- Marketing and Audience Development Manager
Mekhola Ray	- Community Projects Team Manager
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
Brian Simmonds	- Head of

Rhys Thomas

Community Safety
and Health
Services
- Arts and
Entertainment
Programme
Director

267 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors S Bull and Mrs D Hone. It was noted that Councillor C Rowley was substituting for Councillor S Bull.

268 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2012, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

269 HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PANEL

Councillor N Symonds, Chairman of the Health Engagement Panel, provided a summary of the recent work the Panel,

The Committee received the report and noted the Minutes.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received; and

(B) the Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 19 June 2012, be noted.

270 HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PANEL: PROPOSED CHANGE OF NAME

Councillor N Symonds, the Chairman of Health, Engagement Panel submitted a report outlining a proposed name change for the Health Engagement Panel to one which would reflect the changing focus of its priorities and in order to reflect local and national health agendas and priorities. Councillor L Haysey, Executive Member for Health, Housing and

Community Support stated that a newly named “Health and Wellbeing Panel” would provide a broader basis on which to continue to develop the ongoing and strong work of the Panel.

The Committee supported the proposal to change the Panel’s name to the “Health and Wellbeing Panel”.

RESOLVED – that with immediate effect, the Health and Engagement Panel be renamed the “Health and Wellbeing Panel”.

271 EAST HERTS "AGEING WELL" - REVIEW OF PROGRESS

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report updating Members on the progress of the East Herts Ageing Well agenda following recommendations made by Community Scrutiny Committee on 28 February 2012, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted. The Engagement and Partnerships Team Leader summarised the recommendations and role of the Council in engaging with older people. It was noted that from research already undertaken by Members on the Working Group, there were 148 groups providing a range of services to older people, which the Council could use as the foundation of a database for future engagement and consultation.

In response to a query from Councillor G McAndrew and what steps the Council was taking to include the rural community, Councillor L Haysey explained that there would be an Ageing Well item on the Rural Conference agenda.

In response to a query from Councillor C Woodward regarding encouraging businesses to be “older people friendly”, the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services reminded Members that there were now no work age limitations in terms of economic activity.

The Chairman referred to the positive progress made in relation to age and well being and how this was becoming embedded within the community.

The Committee noted the progress made against the recommendations made at its meeting held on 28 February 2012, and agreed that the Executive be asked to support the ambitions set out in paragraph 2.9 of the report now submitted and that these be integrated into the strategic policy making of the Council, via the Equalities Impact Assessment.

RESOLVED – that (A) the progress made against the three recommendations made at the meeting of Community Scrutiny Committee held on 28 February 2012 be noted; and

(B) the Executive be requested to support the ambitions as detailed in paragraph 2.9 of the report now submitted, and that these be integrated into the strategic policy making of the Council, via the Equalities Impact Assessment.

272 HERTFORD THEATRE - ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report which provided an annual review of Hertford Theatre for the year 2011/12. The Head of Communications, Engagement and Cultural Services referred to the success of the Theatre and summarised the highlights of its first full year of trading from April 2011 to the end of March 2012, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted.

Councillor M Wood agreed that the report was a “good news” story but expressed concern regarding the deficit in relation to the Pantomime and sought assurances that this was being properly marketed. He referred to the total outturn and expenditure figures for 2011/12 and the net difference shown. The Head of Communications Engagement and Cultural Services stated that the Theatre was running ahead of its target in the ten-year Business Plan and over-performing against payback timeframes. He reminded Members of the Theatre’s new vision statement and that a new governance arrangement would be reviewed in a year’s time following a review of best practice. The Head of Communications, Engagement and Cultural Services advised Members that the

pantomime marketing budget was ring fenced.

In response to a query regarding apprenticeships by Councillor G McAndrew, the Head of Communications, Engagement and Cultural Services advised that this had been very successful and it was hoped that the skills of the technical apprentice could be retained in-house. The Theatre Director stated that he was keen on progressing apprenticeship schemes and referred to the successful use of the Theatre's 76 volunteers.

In response to a query regarding sharing acts with The Rhodes Arts Complex by Councillor G McAndrew, the Director of Hertford Theatre advised that both theatres were in constant dialogue on this issue adding that one such project would be the introduction of the Art Bus in October 2012.

In response to a query regarding the database of schools, and the Theatre becoming involved in GCSE and A-Level syllabi in terms of performances, the Director of Hertford Theatre advised that there were ongoing efforts to work with schools to co-ordinate on the curriculum.

In relation to marketing, the Marketing and Audience Development Manager provided a summary of the Theatre's "reach", its Facebook and Twitter activity, the emailing list, press database and ongoing work with schools and how this compared with the former Castle Hall.

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services referred to the team's efforts which had contributed to the success of Hertford Theatre over the last 18 months. He stated that the Theatre was a challenging business to run and referred to the many issues which had been overcome.

The Chairman, on behalf of Members thanked the Officers for their hard work in contributing to the success story.

The Committee noted the Annual Report on Hertford Theatre 2011/12 and thanked Officers for their hard work.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be noted; and

(B) Members' thanks to Officers and the staff team at the Theatre for their hard work be recorded.

273 REVIEW OF TAXI LICENSING IN EAST HERTS - INITIAL REPORT AND SCOPE

The Chairman of the Task and finish group submitted a report summarising the first stages of a review of Taxi Licensing in East Herts, the detail of which, was set out in the report now submitted.

In response to a query regarding consultation processes, the Head of Community Safety and Health Services stated that there was an active Taxi Driver Association which would be contacted and any independent taxi drivers would also be invited to future meetings.

In response to a query concerning "fly parking", the Head of Community Safety and Health Services stated that this was an issue which the Council would be reviewing.

The Committee noted the report and agreed the scope of the review.

RESOLVED – that (A) the scoping document for the review of Taxi Licensing in East Herts be agreed; and

(B) the Task and Finish Group report back to Community Scrutiny Committee in November, 2012.

274 HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2012 - 2015

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support Community submitted a report setting out the action plan for the Council's new Housing Strategy for 2012/15, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted. The Housing Services Manager referred Members to Essential Reference Paper "B" of the report now submitted, which set out the three key responsibilities for Housing Associations in relation to the Housing Strategy.

Councillor C Woodward referred to Objective 3 (Meeting the needs of vulnerable people and stronger communities) and suggested that the Council needed to impart a stronger emphasis on this issue, particularly in relation to the needs of the Armed Forces. The Housing Services Manager stated that the Council was aware of the needs of Armed Forces personnel and was doing all it could. Officers would continue to use their discretion in this capacity. She explained that without the force of legislation, the Council's role was limited.

Councillor G McAndrew empathised with personnel who left the force and were suddenly faced with the need to find a home, a job, doctors and schools. He stated that anything the Council could do to make things easier for Armed Forces personnel should be done. The Housing Services Manager added that the Forces' own housing advice was very good.

The Committee supported the Housing Strategy 2012/15 and Action Plan and requested that the Executive be asked to support the Action Plan alongside the main Housing Strategy document. Members also agreed that they be provided with an Annual Report on the progress of the Action Plan each September, or on whatever date was considered most expeditious.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Housing Strategy 2012/15 and Action Plan be supported together with Members' comments and the Executive be asked to support the Action Plan alongside the main Housing Strategy document; and

(B) Community Scrutiny Committee be provided with an Annual Report on the progress of the Action Plan each September, or on whatever date was considered to be most expeditious.

275 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR RIVERSMEAD AND SOUTH ANGLIA HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS 2011/12

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report on the progress made on the two

large scale voluntary transfer housing associations and the three undertakings which remained following the end of the Delivery of Promises Programme in 2007.

The Housing Services Manager expressed concern that there had been a lot of enquiries in relation to Right to Buy but virtually no sales, which was considered to be attributable to the cost of properties in the East Hertfordshire District. The Housing Services Manager also expressed concern at the slow down by the County Council, in processing requests for adaptations. She referred to recent re-structure at the County Council which had had a knock on effect.

Councillor C Woodward commented on the number of complaints he and other Councillors had received in relation to garages, their condition and lack of maintenance. He stated that Housing Associations should be requested to maintain them.

Councillor N Symonds referred to the slow down in processing requests for adaptations suggesting that this was possibly attributable to the shortage of Occupational Therapists available to carry out the formal assessment of need.

Councillor P Ruffles commented on the improvements over the last 10 years in terms of engagement with Housing Associations. He stated that the west of the District did not suffer to the same level in terms of garage issues. Members commented generally on the good rapport that existed with Housing Associations.

In response to a query from Councillor G McAndrew regarding under and over occupancy, the Housing Services Manager explained the "swap" procedure and the incentives on offer. She also referred to "Bedroom Tax" which would be introduced from October 2012.

Councillor M Wood suggested that in considering the issue of garages, there was a need to balance matters, adding that garages were an issue when the Council had responsibility for them.

The Committee noted the performance of Riversmead and South Anglia Housing Associations on the three remaining stock transfer undertakings for the year 2011/12 and asked Officers to pass on Members' concerns regarding the general maintenance of garages.

RESOLVED – that (A) the performance of Riversmead and South Anglia Housing Associations on the three remaining stock transfer undertakings for the year 2011/12 be noted; and

(B) Officers be requested to pass on Members' concerns regarding the general maintenance of garages.

276 COMMUNITY SCRUTINY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK
(APRIL - JUNE 2012)

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report on the performance of key indicators relating to Community Scrutiny Committee for the period April - June 2012.

Councillor N Symonds thanked Officers for taking the issue of housing benefits seriously.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the performance for the period April to June 2012 be noted.

277 WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer submitted a report outlining the future work of the Community Scrutiny Committee. She stated that the Annual Equalities Report should be deleted from the work programme and that a statement would be put in the Members' Information Bulletin. It was noted that in relation to an item proposed for March 2013 on the issue of "Crime and Disorder", Members would be advised of topical issues by the Head of Community Safety and Health Services, closer to the date of the Committee from which they could make a choice.

The Committee supported the updates.

RESOLVED – that the work programme, as amended,
be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm

Chairman
Date

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HEALTH AND WELLBEING PANEL
(FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE HEALTH
ENGAGEMENT PANEL) HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON TUESDAY 16 OCTOBER
2012, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor N Symonds (Chairman).
Councillors E Buckmaster, S Bull, P Moore
and P Ballam.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors M Carver, Mrs R Cheswright,
L Haysey, Mrs D Hollebon, G Lawrence,
J Mayes, G McAndrew, T Page, C Rowley,
P Ruffles, G Williamson, M Wood and
B Wrangles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Barfoot	- Environmental Health Promotion Officer
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Will O'Neill	- Head of Communications, Engagement and Cultural Services
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
Paul Thomas	- Environmental Health Manager

6 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Beeching, K Crofton and J Taylor. It was noted that Councillor P Ballam was substituting for Councillor K Crofton.

7 MINUTES – 19 JUNE 2012

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed the visiting public health representatives to the first meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Panel. She stated that Members and Officers were keen to ascertain how East Herts Council could work with these professionals to improve the health of the public of East Herts.

9 DISCUSSION REPORT – ROLE OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL IN THE NEW HEALTH "LANDSCAPE"

The Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Panel submitted a report offering Members the opportunity to meet health partners and discuss the reorganisation of health services and public health generally. The meeting also afforded the opportunity to consider the implementation of these changes locally and to examine ways of working together in the future to get the best outcomes for East Herts residents.

The Environmental Health Promotion Officer gave a presentation in respect of the East Herts Council Public Health Strategy and detailed the function of the Health and Wellbeing Panel. He stated that the purpose of this meeting was to ascertain how East Herts Council could assist the Health and Wellbeing Board, the future Health and Wellbeing Strategy, as well as setting out what the

Council could achieve from working with the Health Partners present at this meeting.

He advised that the East Herts Public Health Strategy had been approved in 2008. He set out the six priority elements of the Strategy and reminded Members that the former Health Engagement Panel had been set up to approve the aforementioned strategy.

The Environmental Health Promotion Officer concluded that East Herts Council was keen to work with the NHS, Hertfordshire County Council colleagues and other health partners to further develop the public health role of the District Authority. He also referred to the continuing importance of strong Member support and effective partnership working in East Herts.

Marc Davis, Director of Development for the Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust, stated that the East Herts area was very important to the core business of the trust. He hoped to make new contacts, understand the ambitions of partners and have ongoing discussions to support residents in taking advantage of opportunities for lifestyle changes.

David Brewer, Head of Engagement for East and North Herts NHS Trust, stated that the Trust was very interested in partnership working and he looked forward to understanding the needs and aspirations of communities in East Herts. Dr Shukur, Sue Beck, Dr Nicky Williams and Jim McManus introduced themselves and stated their enthusiasm for partnership working, building bridges and developing communication channels.

Jim McManus, Director of Public Health Hertfordshire, stated that he looked forward to renewing acquaintances in East Herts. He referred to a collective enthusiasm and 'hunger' amongst various agencies to improve the health of the population.

In response to a query from Councillor E Buckmaster

regarding the two recent planning applications for doctor's surgeries in Bishop's Stortford and the lack of a "joined up" approach, Dr Williams stated that primary care was covered by the Commissioning Board and the Care Commissioning Groups (CCGs) were expected to support the work of the Commissioning Board. Dr Williams emphasised the difficulties experienced in respect of securing new premises for doctors' surgeries.

Jim McManus advised that the Health and Social Care Act meant that the NHS Commissioning Board was required to act on public health advice. The role of the Health and Wellbeing Board was to seek to influence the decision making of the Commissioning Board. Members were advised that there were large numbers of GPs and hospital doctors who were keen to make a difference in East Herts.

Dr Steven Kite, a Member of East and North Herts CCG Board, commented that GP surgeries were owned and leased by GPs and there was very little reserve capacity. He stated that this shortfall must be built into planning decision making.

Councillor M Carver emphasised that Local Planning Authorities, in relation to the Local District Plan, were aware that a major part of the plan would relate to healthcare provision and discussions at meetings like this would assist Officers with developing the right overall plan. He stated that Planning policy was about getting the right service in the right place to meet the new needs.

In response to a query from Councillor S Bull, Dr Williams stated that patient transport used to be arranged locally by GPs and such provision was now arranged centrally and provided by the primary care trust. She referred to recent discussions at Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) level in respect of how patient transport should be coordinated, as there were no centralised access arrangements for patients. A mapping of existing services and voluntary schemes was currently underway.

David Brewer referred to volunteers who worked to transport patients via escorted car services. He commented that support for patients was fragmented and there was no holistic approach in East Herts. Marc Davis stated that, particularly for elderly patients, the journey to specialist hospitals in London represented a daunting prospect that was costly and could have a negative effect on patient health.

Councillor M Wood commented that GP surgeries in Bishop's Stortford had been strongly criticised in terms of appointment availability resulting in big queues for the Church Street Surgery Open Access Clinic. Dr Williams emphasised that East Herts had a lower level of health inequality funding when compared to places like Stevenage, where there was extra funding to combat health inequalities.

Dr Shukur also added insight on the health inequality funding enquiry whereby historical funding formulas for patient capacity at a particular surgery were not always compatible with current demographics. The funding was also linked to Health Inequality factors, which meant that East Herts tended not to attract a premium.

In response to a query from the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services, Jim McManus stated that East Herts Council could have a powerful lobbying voice for residents and that close cooperation with the CCGs and NHS Partners would ensure that all agencies and authorities worked together to ascertain where lobbying would be best directed.

Marc Davis commented on the major challenge faced by the Princess Alexandra Hospital in having to navigate two neighbouring counties with different Council systems.

Marc Davis also referred to the need to be aware that Accident and Emergency Staff were unable to think of such intricacies when treating patients. He stated

however, that other staff could ensure a better patient experience by encouraging the avoidance of consultant ward rounds when patients' meals were being served.

The Panel Chairman commented on what was being done by hospitals to meet the needs of the elderly, as part of the Ageing Well agenda. There followed a general discussion on this issue, in particular in respect of caring for people with dementia.

David Brewer highlighted the growing pressure for a multi agency strategy in respect of dementia. He also stated that the development of multi professional skills sets would avoid unnecessary hospital admissions. Councillor B Wrangles referred to the scaling back of services at the QE2 hospital and the risks to patients suffering cardiac emergencies at weekends.

David Brewer emphasised that there was a well developed business case for a 24 hour cardiac service by consolidating services at the Lister Hospital in Stevenage. He stated that this would result in improved health care cover and better patient experiences, for example in maternity care. He stressed that this was the only way to deliver improved outcomes at a reduced cost.

Councillor L Haysey commented that the East Herts Council leisure provider and the CCG could have a role to play in that funding could support patient recovery processes being run outdoors in our parks and open spaces.

Jim McManus stated that a wider systematic approach was required to support better lifestyle choices in terms of diet, lack of exercise, smoking, drinking to excess and weight control. He commented that this would also help keep older people healthy, as well as ensuring the built environment supported general health and wellbeing. He concluded that East Herts could act as a "beacon" area in terms of a blueprint for the future health of the population.

Councillor L Haysey commented that East Herts Council could assist in getting out positive messages via Link magazine, as well as the Authority's website, twitter, facebook and the links between East Herts Council and Parish and Town Councils.

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services stated that East Herts Council was very keen to secure optimum outcomes for the District's residents. Members and Officers were very pleased to meet the visiting health partners. He stated that East Herts Councillors had a local democratic mandate and the Authority was keen to play its part in supporting healthcare and promoting public health for the District's residents.

Members agreed that the visiting public health representatives should be invited back to a future meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Panel, perhaps in 6 months time.

RESOLVED – that the visiting public health representatives should be invited back to a future meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Panel in 6 months time.

10 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman submitted a report setting out the Health and Wellbeing Panel's future work programme for 2012/13, the detail of which was set out in Essential Reference Paper "B" to the report now submitted.

Members agreed that the visiting public health representatives should be invited back to a future meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Panel in 6 months time. The Scrutiny Officer advised that the newly appointed Chair of Health Watch Hertfordshire would be attending as a guest at the meeting of the Panel on 11 December 2012.

Members approved the Work Programme, as amended.

RESOLVED – that the Work Programme as amended, be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Chairman
Date

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20 NOVEMBER 2012

REPORT BY REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

CONSULTATION ON POSSIBLE REVISIONS TO EAST HERTS HOUSING REGISTER POLICY

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- The Housing Act 1996 states that all Local Authorities exercising a housing function must publish an Allocations Policy showing how homes will be allocated to applicants and prescribes certain categories of people who are to be given reasonable preference.
- The Localism Act 2011 sets out a number of key proposals which are relevant to housing, including changes to allocations, tenure reform and changes to homelessness legislation.
- The purpose of this report is to summarise these changes and how they might be implemented and to propose that the Council begins a consultation exercise with stakeholder housing partners and residents of East Herts.

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY: That:</u>	
(A)	Members comment on the report; and
(B)	indicate their preferred option, set out in more detail in Essential Reference Paper B, for inclusion within the draft East Herts Housing Register and Allocations Policy.

1.0 Background

1.1 The Housing Act 1996 states that all Local Authorities exercising housing function must publish an Allocations Policy showing how homes will be allocated to applicants and prescribes certain

categories of people who are to be eligible for an allocation and/or given reasonable preference.

- 1.2 The Localism Act 2011, which received Royal Assent in November 2011, sets out a number of key proposals which are relevant to housing, including changes to allocations, tenure reform and changes to homelessness legislation. The Localism Act proposes significant housing reform which the Government says is intended to make the system of allocating housing fairer and more effective and to make it easier for decisions to be taken locally.
- 1.3 Some sections of this Act have already come into force and others will do shortly. The Section on giving members of the Armed Forces additional preference for social housing is expected to come into force in December 2012.
- 1.4 The Government has also published in June 2012 an updated guidance document titled 'Allocation of Accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England'. Councils must have due regard to this document when drafting their Allocations Policy.
- 1.5 This report sets out the suggested policy issues and proposes a timetable for consulting on a new draft Allocations Policy for East Herts.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 The implementation of the Localism Act and the new Government allocations guidance document requires the Council to review its Allocations Policy. Any major change to the Council's Housing Register Allocations Policy triggers a requirement to consult. Although formally there is only a requirement to consult with Registered Providers in the district the statutory Code of Guidance issued by the Government recommends that the consultation process should involve local communities.
- 2.2 The current Housing Register and Allocations Policy was agreed and implemented in June 2010 following some minor amendments to Local Connection eligibility and the Homeless Policy. Following conversations with our stakeholders it is generally felt that our current policy works well, is well understood by our residents, houses those in need and is transparent. The Council has received very few complaints or review requests from residents

who have been unhappy with the process. The introduction of Choice Based Lettings in 2010 has also been very popular with residents and stakeholders alike. The intention is therefore not to radically change how or who we allocate homes to but ensure we meet our statutory requirements and amend the policy to recognise best practice.

- 2.3 The process of consultation began with a presentation at the Council's Housing Forum, chaired by Councillor Haysey, to Registered Providers and other housing stakeholders in July 2012.
 - 2.4 At **Essential Reference Paper "B"** is a document that was discussed at the Housing Forum and subsequently sent out to Registered Providers with homes in East Herts, other housing stakeholders such as the CAB and County, put into the Members Information Bulletin and also put onto the Council's website in August 2012. It summarises the policy changes that the local authority can implement and the possible implications, advantages and disadvantages. The document asked our stakeholders what factors they considered important in determining who should be able to register for housing and what criteria should be considered in assessing their priority once on the Housing Register.
 - 2.5 Following this on from this initial consultation and also feedback from members at Community Scrutiny the Housing Service will draft a revised Housing Register and Allocations Policy. The draft will also take into account the statutory changes required from the Localism Act, the revised Allocations Guidance document from the Government and best practice.
- 3.0 Implications/Consultations
 - 3.1 The draft document will be circulated to all Registered Providers, Members and other housing stakeholders and placed on the Council's website. Individual meetings will be held with the four main Registered Providers of South Anglia, Riversmead, Paradigm and Aldwyck Housing Associations.
 - 3.2 The proposed timetable for developing, agreeing and implementing the Policy is as follows:
 - Initial discussions with Community Scrutiny November 2012
 - Drafting of Housing Allocations Policy December to January 2013

- Draft policy circulated to individual Registered Providers, other stakeholders and Councillors January 2013
- Draft policy put on Council's website for consultation with a deadline of four weeks for comment in January 2013
- Discussions with individual Registered Providers, January and February 2013
- Comments incorporated into Housing Register and Allocations Policy and presented to Executive March 2013.
- Policy Adopted and implemented from April 2013

Background Papers

Localism Act 2011

'Allocation of Accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England', Communities and Local Government.

Contact Member: Councillor Linda Haysey, Executive Member for Health Housing and Community Support
Linda.haysey@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Simon Drinkwater, Director of Neighbourhood Services - Ext No 1405
Simon.drinkwater@eastherts.gov.uk

Claire Bennett, Manager Housing Services – Ext No 1603
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Report Author: Claire Bennett, Manager Housing Services – Ext No 1603
Claire.bennett@eastherts.gov.uk

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

<p>Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):</p>	<p>People This priority focuses on enhancing the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.</p> <p>Prosperity This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic and social opportunities.</p>
<p>Consultation:</p>	<p>The proposed timetable for developing, agreeing and implementing the Policy is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initial discussions with Community Scrutiny November 2012 ○ Drafting of Housing Allocations Policy December to January 2013 ○ Draft policy circulated to individual Registered Providers, other stakeholders and Councillors January 2013 ○ Draft policy put on Council's website for consultation with a deadline of 4 weeks for comment In January 2013 ○ Discussions with individual Registered Providers, January and February 2013 ○ Comments incorporated into Housing Register and Allocations Policy and presented to Executive March 2013. ○ Policy Adopted and implemented from April 2013
<p>Legal:</p>	<p>The Housing Act 1996 states that all Local Authorities exercising housing function must publish an Allocations Policy showing how homes will be allocated to applicants and prescribes certain categories of people who are to be eligible for an allocation and/or given reasonable preference.</p>
<p>Financial:</p>	<p>Maybe some small capital costs associated with implementing the changes onto the LOCATA on line application system and database. This will depend on the extent of the changes proposed to the policy. There</p>

	is a budget provision.
Human Resource:	<i>None</i>
Risk Management:	<i>None</i>

Considerations for Amendment to the Council’s Housing Register and Allocation Policy - Consultation

Following enactment of the Localism Act, East Herts Council now has more discretion over who may join the Housing Register and what priority they are given. In the next few months, members of the local community and other stakeholders will be asked what factors they consider important in determining who should be able to register for housing and what criteria should be considered in assessing their priority.

Their views and preferences will be taken into account in formulating our draft Housing Register and Allocations Policy. Due regard will also be given to the Government’s guidance document, ‘Allocation of Accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England’ which was published on 29 June 2012. This code of guidance is statutory advice as to the policies local authorities should adopt in allocating housing. The code of guidance builds on the flexibilities in the Localism Act and suggests greater freedoms and discretions for councils in deciding whom they might prioritise for affordable housing within the existing primary legislation. The Council will also have regards to its Tenancy Strategy once published and the published Housing and Homeless Strategies.

The Council is committed to the Choice Based Lettings Scheme (HomeOption) and will continue to allocate housing accommodation in this way. There are no current plans to alter the choices offered to those on the Housing Register.

Now	Future Options	Comments
<p><u>Eligibility and Qualification</u></p> <p>Currently the Council has an</p>	<p>The Government determines the type of person</p>	

<p>'open' common Housing Register (HR). The HR is open to all except those deemed to be ineligible by legislation, these include certain people subject to immigration control and those considered not to be suitable to be a tenant due to past behaviour e.g. rent arrears or anti-social behaviour.</p>	<p>that is not eligible for an allocation due to their immigration status. However it has removed the legislation regarding persons not being eligible due to unacceptable behaviour. The Government has introduced the concept of qualifying persons. These are qualification rules set locally regarding who can be made an allocation of accommodation. The examples offered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Only qualify for the HR if applicant is in a reasonable preference category i.e. no statutory need. <i>This would reduce the number of applicants on the HR however likely to significantly increase the number of reviews of the decision to either remove or exclude a household. We do not have an unmanageable number of applicants on the register and with on-line applications we may lose a lot of valuable data. Could change our working practices e.g. light check on point of entry to HR and fuller check prior to successful bid?</i> ○ Have the option to set residency qualification. <i>Currently we give additional points for local connection but can change this to qualification for the register. However this may just lead to increased homelessness and more households in temporary accommodation waiting to qualify for the HR. Need to be</i> 	
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	<p><i>mindful of what our neighbouring local authorities are doing and ensuring exemptions for Armed and Reserve Forces.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Income level bar. Needs to be a robust figure that is considered at entry to HR and also prior to an allocation. Could spend a lot of time checking wage slips and keeping up to date with applicants' circumstances? Currently give points for low income as well as applicants on benefits. Consider these could be different for those requiring general needs compared to sheltered accommodation.</i> ○ <i>Home owners would not qualify unless in exceptional circumstances. This is in our current policy except we ask for proof that home is on the market and either no equity or applying for sheltered accommodation.</i> ○ <i>Behaviour on a previous or current tenancy e.g. rent arrears or anti-social behaviour. This will need to be put in any new policy as been taken out of the governments statutory ineligibility rules.</i> 	
<p>Reasonable Preference categories When framing their allocation</p>	<p>The reasonable preference categories remain unchanged by government. However we can</p>	

<p>scheme to determine allocation priorities we must ensure that reasonable preference is given to the following categories of people:</p> <p>We do this by the award of points top recognise the need and the degree of need within each category.</p>	<p>give additional preference to particular descriptions of people who fall within the statutory reasonable preference categories. This is where the government would like LAs to consider giving additional priority to the former Armed and Reserve Forces or their bereaved spouses.</p> <p>We can also consider additional local priorities to determine relative priorities between applicants in the reasonable (or additional) preference categories or not. They suggest that some of the local priorities could be determined via the HR others could be part of a Local Lettings Plan.</p> <p>Examples they suggest include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Behaviour: priority to those that have been model tenants or have benefitted the community. Or take priority away if evidence of poor behaviour. <i>This is very woolly and difficult to put into a robust policy e.g. for how long and what sort of benefit to the community would qualify.</i> ○ Households affected by under occupation and Welfare Reform 2012. <i>Current policy gives the same number of points to those over crowded as to those under occupying. Is this sufficient or could we consider a different method?</i> ○ Members of the armed forces. <i>What sort of additional priority should we award and</i> 	
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	<p><i>in what circumstances e.g. honourable/dishonourable discharge, length of time since discharge?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Households in work or seeking work. <i>Currently CORE shows that approx 20% of households were in work that were housed in East Herts last year. Do we need to look at additional preference or is this sufficient? What would be the impact on Council’s homeless figures if we were to change the balance of the households we house and associated costs work load etc?</i> ○ Prospective fosters or adopters: <i>Not sure how much of a problem this is and would want some solid commitment to the scheme before an allocation could be made. Effect of Welfare 2012 needs to be considered if under-occupying.</i> 	
<p>Transfer Applicants Currently we have a common HR where applications from existing social tenants requiring a move are managed by the Council. Those freeing up accommodation in East Herts are given additional points on their application. Checks are made at point of entry to HR and also prior to an offer</p>	<p>We have the option to take transfer applicants that do not fall into a reasonable preference category off of the HR. The government suggest that this could be a way of allocating homes to low need households encouraging people to move for work This could also include under-occupying households not in a reasonable preference category. Government suggestions for how this group could be managed include administering a separate list with a quota of properties per annum. Or</p>	

<p>regarding arrears, behaviour etc. Management transfers are given high priority for a move. Under occupying applicants get points that reflect the number of bedrooms they are giving up. sty in existing social housing are managed</p>	<p>presumably they can be excluded completely and just directed to MX !</p> <p><i>Managing a separate list would obviously have additional resources implications. Difficult to know how many households currently on HR need to move just for work and of those of the number of working age that are unable to.</i></p>	
<p>Comments</p>		

We would like to know your opinions on these proposed changes to our existing allocations policy. Do you agree with them? If not, what alternative suggestions do you have which you would like us to take into account?

Please reply by 10 September 2012 to: -

Email; Claire.bennett@eastherts.gov.uk

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20 NOVEMBER 2012

REPORT BY REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

STRATEGIC TENANCY STRATEGY 2012 - 2015

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report presents to members the Council's the first draft Strategic Tenancy Strategy 2012-2015 for consideration and comment and seeks approval to release it for public consultation.
- Having a Tenancy Strategy is a legal requirement under the Localism Act. The Tenancy Strategy has been developed in the context of the new Affordable Rents regime and the new flexibilities available to Registered Providers to offer fixed term rather than lifetime tenancies.

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY: That:</u>	
(A)	Members review and comment on the draft Tenancy Strategy ;
(B)	The document be circulated for consultation with stakeholders; and
(C)	Comments from Community Scrutiny Committee and stakeholders be incorporated into the draft Tenancy Strategy for further consideration and approval by the Executive.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 sets out a number of key proposals which are relevant to housing, including changes to allocations, tenure reform and changes to homelessness legislation. The Act also places a duty on all Local Authorities to produce a Strategic

Tenancy Strategy setting out what individual Registered Providers (RPs) should take into account within their individual tenancy policies. The East Herts Tenancy Strategy also provides local guidance to RPs on the use of 'affordable rent' for affordable housing.

- 1.2 In the past Registered Providers (RPs) of housing, including housing associations and stock holding Local Authorities, have been required to let their rented homes with long-term security of tenure, at a rent level calculated according to a nationally prescribed formula often referred to as social or target rent.
- 1.3 A new form of rent level has been introduced known as Affordable Rent. Affordable rent levels are set at up to 80% of local market rents. The additional revenue raised from these increased rents is expected to be invested in new affordable housing. To access affordable housing grant from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Registered Providers are required to let the new grant funded homes at Affordable Rents. A proportion of existing homes are also expected to be converted to Affordable Rent when they are re-let, subject to a signed agreement with the HCA.
- 1.4 New flexibilities have also been introduced to enable RPs to offer fixed term tenancies rather than being required to give tenants lifetime security of tenure i.e. assured tenancies.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 The Strategic Tenancy Strategy has to set out the Council's expectations in terms of what RPs operating in their area must have regard to when developing their own Tenancy Policies relating to:
 - The kind of tenancies they grant
 - The circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind
 - Where they grant tenancies for a particular fixed term, the lengths of the term
 - The circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy when a fixed term comes to an end
- 2.2 The Tenancy Strategy cannot be too prescriptive as RPs only have to 'have regard to it, but there is a duty on Local Authorities to publish a Tenancy Strategy by January 2013. In addition many RPs operate in a number of Local Authority areas and will

therefore have a number of different published Tenancy Strategies that they will have to have regards to.

- 2.3 The main themes of the East Herts draft Tenancy Strategy are:
- 2.4 That Affordable Rents should be as affordable as possible to local people, taking into account developer viability, and that RPs should take affordability into account when deciding the rents levels (inclusive of service charges) to apply to particular properties and locations.
- 2.5 The Council would prefer that additional funds raised from introduction of Affordable Rents in East Herts are re-invested in new homes within the district.
- 2.6 The council would prefer the letting of at least 5 year tenancies, to promote settled life styles and lifetime tenancies to existing housing association tenants who transfer to alternative housing association accommodation or sheltered accommodation.
- 2.7 Where fixed term tenancies are used the statutory minimum of two years should only be used in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.8 When a fixed term tenancy comes to an end the council will expect that the tenancy will be renewed except in circumstances that have been clearly explained and published for tenants at the start of their tenancy.
- 2.9 Where a tenancy is not to be renewed, RPs should notify the Housing Options Service and provide advice and support to the tenant in finding alternative accommodation, which could be in the private sector for those tenants considered not to be vulnerable.
- 2.10 If existing social rent homes are converted to an Affordable Rent a mix of size, type, rent levels and tenure should be maintained across the District.
- 2.11 The council supports positive action taken by RPs to help tenants to move to smaller accommodation where they wish to or due to future changes in Local Housing Allowance eligibility.

- 2.12 The Council will expect to be consulted on when an RP is developing their individual Tenancy Policies if they have homes or are proposing to develop in East Herts.
- 2.13 A copy of the draft Tenancy Strategy is at **Essential Reference Paper “B”**.
- 3.0 Implications/Consultations
- 3.1 If approved for consultation the Strategy will be sent to key housing stakeholder organisations with the emphasis on Registered Providers with homes in the district. In addition the Strategy will be placed on the Council’s website to enable resident consultation although though there is no duty to do so.
- 3.2 The consultation period is expected to last three weeks beginning on 27 November 2012.
- 3.3 After the consultation period all comments and views will be incorporated to into the Tenancy Strategy and brought to the Executive Committee for consideration on 8th January 2013.

Background Papers
Localism Act 2011

Contact Member: Councillor Linda Haysey, Executive Member for Health Housing and Community Support
Linda.haysey@eastherts.gov.uk

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Simon.drinkwater@eastherts.gov.uk

Claire Bennett, Manager Housing Services – Ext No 1603
Claire.bennett@eastherts.gov.uk

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Claire.bennett@eastherts.gov.uk

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):	<p>People This priority focuses on enhancing the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.</p> <p>Prosperity This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic and social opportunities.</p>
Consultation:	<p>If approved for consultation the Strategy will be sent to key housing stakeholder organisations with the emphasis on Registered Providers with homes in the district. In addition the Strategy will be placed on the Council's website to enable resident consultation although there is no duty to do so.</p> <p>The consultation period is expected to last three weeks beginning on 27th November 2012.</p> <p>After the consultation period all comments and views will be incorporated into the Tenancy Strategy and brought to the Executive Committee for consideration on 8th January 2013.</p>
Legal:	All Local Authorities are required to have a Tenancy Strategy in place by January 2013.
Financial:	<i>None</i>
Human Resource:	<i>None</i>
Risk Management:	<i>None</i>

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East Herts Council

Draft Tenancy Strategy

2012-2015

I. Context

National housing policy.

The Localism Act sets out a number of key proposals which are relevant to housing, including changes to allocations, tenure reform and changes to homelessness legislation. The Localism Act requires local authorities to produce a Tenancy Strategy that sits alongside the Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy and Allocations Policy. The legislation requires the Strategy to cover:

- What kind of tenancies to offer
- Circumstances in which the landlord will grant a tenancy of a particular kind
- Where a tenancy is set for a term, the length of term
- Circumstances where the landlord will grant a further tenancy on the ending of the existing tenancy

The Localism Act places a specific duty on all local authorities to produce a Strategic Tenancy Strategy, setting out what individual registered housing providers should take into consideration within their individual tenancy policies. The Government has made it clear that it wants local authorities to have a degree of strategic influence over how registered providers implement these reforms.

Purpose of the local Tenancy Strategy

Under the Localism Act 2011, all local authorities have a duty to produce a Tenancy Strategy, setting out the objectives to be taken into consideration by individual registered providers as they make decisions about their own tenancy policies.

It is vital that when implementing these new flexibilities at a local level that registered providers first and foremost help the district to continue to meet housing need. With this in mind the purpose of this document is to provide appropriate and meaningful guidance at a strategic level to housing providers operating in the area.

This strategy sets out the matters that registered providers of affordable housing in the district must have regard to when they develop policies relating to:

- The kinds of tenancies they should grant
- The circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind
- Where they grant tenancies for set terms, the length that those terms will be
- The circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the ending of the existing tenancy

Additionally, this document provides contextual information on local housing markets and housing need across the district. This will further assist registered providers to understand the effects their policies may have and how they can best support the Council to achieve the following objectives:

- ensure local housing need continues to be met
- new tenancies remain sustainable to avoid homelessness occurring
- overall housing stock numbers do not diminish
- an appropriate choice of tenures at a range of rent levels are made available.

There are 10 different registered providers of approximately 7,800 rented affordable homes in the East Herts. Many registered providers work across a number of local authority areas and will need to consider a number of local authority tenancy strategies in developing their tenancy policies, they will also need to consider the implications of their tenancy policy on their overall business and development plans, including development contracts with the Homes and Communities Agency. Registered providers are obliged to give 'due regard' to the local authority's opinions when setting their own policies regarding all aspects of flexible tenure. The Localism Act does not require the same account to be taken of a local authority's view of their rent policies but, as this is integral to the Council's strategic housing role, this document does include reference to rents and affordability issues.

This tenancy strategy has been developed;

- To meet the requirements of Localism Act 2011
- In consultation with key local stakeholders including local registered providers of affordable housing.
- In consideration of the Council's Housing Strategy and Homeless & Homeless Prevention Strategy

Also as result of the Localism Act the Council is reviewing its Housing register and Allocations Policy. Once finalised this too needs to be considered alongside this Tenancy Strategy.

2. Housing Market Context

The full housing circumstances within the district can be found in other related documents, notably the Council's Local Investment Plan and Housing Strategy. However for the purpose of setting this document in context it is worth stating a few key factors regarding the demand for affordable housing.

Housing Register

As at November 2012 there were 2,936 Households on the Council's Housing Register. This is an increase since April 2011 when there were 2,699. The number of social homes that were available to the Council to offer to an applicant on the housing register in 2011/2012 was 588. This is an increase on previous years because due to a significant number of new affordable homes built in the district, 184 in 2011/2012, primarily obtained through planning obligations. On average for each property advertised through Choice Based Lettings (CBL) there are around 45 households bidding for each property.

Rents and affordability

a) Private Rents

Average private rents for the district are shown in the table below:

	1 bed flat	2 bed flat	2 bed house	3 bed house	4/4+ bed house
Average monthly rent (£)	625	850	900	1,150	1,450
Average weekly rent (£)	144	196	208	265	335

These figures have been calculated using a sample of advertised rents on RightMove for November 2012, from settlements across the district, and are therefore intended as a guide rather than as absolute levels.

b) Social Rents

Details of average social rents across the district are shown in the table below. Again the rent levels have been calculated by taking a sample of advertised vacant properties from April 2011 July 2011 and calculating the average rent for each property type. As with the private rent figures, this is intended as a guide.

	1 bed flat	2 bed flat	2 bed house	3 bed house	4/4+ bed house
Average monthly rent (£)	390	468	450	529	589
Average weekly rent (£)	90	108	104	122	136

c) Affordable Rents

As set out above, RPs receiving grant from the Homes and Communities Agency are now able to provide affordable housing at 'affordable rent' levels; which are capped at no more than 80% of market rent. The rent levels below are an average taken from properties advertised from August 2012 November 2012 and are intended as a guide.

	1 bed flat	2 bed flat	2 bed house	3 bed house	4/4+ bed house
Average monthly rent (£)	477	598	646	845	888
Average weekly rent (£)	110	138	149	195	205

It can be seen from these figures that there is a smaller difference in the rent levels between affordable rents and social rents for 1 bedroom properties but that this difference is much greater for 3 bed dwellings and larger. Therefore the delivery of new smaller affordable rented dwellings is not likely to create a significant affordability issue compared to the family homes. However, smaller properties do not create a significant 'head room' of additional revenue compared to larger homes for future development. With the various changes proposed through welfare reform the Council is anticipating an increased demand for smaller affordable homes.

3. Guidance for Registered providers

To help meet the housing needs of as many households as it can, the Council needs to make the best possible use of its affordable housing stock as well as increase overall stock. This

tenancy strategy has an important role in achieving these aims by providing guidance on the use of both fixed term tenancies and affordable rent.

a) Affordable Rent

Background

Affordable rent was introduced by the government in April 2011; it is rented housing where the rent is up to 80% of the local private market rent. This is typically higher (and cannot be lower) than the social rents that social landlords currently charge. Affordable rent is rebased each time a tenancy is issued or renewed, so will fluctuate in line with local private market rents. The 80% maximum must however be inclusive of all service charges and not exceed the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) cap for housing benefit, so households on lower incomes are still able to afford to live in these homes.

Affordable rent was introduced because higher rents will increase rental incomes and allow more investment by housing associations and other registered providers to deliver additional affordable housing in a time of constrained grant budgets. Funding raised from affordable rent cannot be ring fenced for local use, although use at a regional level is strongly encouraged by the HCA.

Affordable rent is expected to increasingly be used to provide new rented affordable housing. It will be used for all rented affordable homes that are built as part of the Homes and Community Agencies (HCA) development program (2011-15) as well as some new affordable homes built outside the programme, for example, where there is viability or funding issues. Some social rented homes will also be converted to an affordable rent when they become available to be re-let, this has been agreed by the HCA and is also designed to increase investment for more affordable homes.

RP's are also encouraged by the HCA to take a more proactive approach to managing their stock, including disposal of stock where this will bring funds to invest in new homes

The Council understands the need to accept an element of affordable rented housing locally to support future affordable housing development, particularly on schemes which rely upon HCA funding, but there is also a need to balance such provision with providing the best possible outcome for tenants.

The increased cost associated with affordable rent raises concerns about affordability, particularly in relation to tenancy sustainment and homelessness. The Council has concerns about setting affordable rent at the maximum Local Housing Allowance where this is close to 80% of private market rents. It is concerned with the potential impact of higher rents and benefits dependency, particularly for those who are looking to get back into work. The Council will continue to monitor housing need and promote the use of lower cost social rented housing where required and feasible. The Council has the added concern that the impact on affordability will be compounded with the introduction of the 'bedroom tax' in April 2013 and the benefit cap also in 2013.

A brief analysis of affordable rent has been undertaken to inform the development of this strategy and the findings show a relatively low financial impact on smaller housing (such 1 to 2 bedroom flats and houses) but a larger financial impact on larger family housing and a greater financial impact for all house types in some of the more expensive private market areas in East Herts. This is compounded by the fact that East Herts has three broad market areas for the calculation of LHA rates.

Rents for a three bed home in the last 6 months have varied from £150 per week to £240 in areas such as Ware which is at the 80% maximum affordable rent charge inclusive of service charges. Differing policies between registered providers about how they calculate their affordable rent levels and differing policies on which properties are let an affordable rent will have an impact on the ability of households of moving across the district or between registered providers therefore limiting their housing options.

Affordable Rent

When developing their tenancy policies the Council expects providers to have regard to the following;

- *The retention and development of social rent where feasible.*
- *To take into consideration the need for mixed and sustainable communities and to recognise the wide variance across the district in affordable rent properties for the same sized properties. This may include setting rents lower than 80% open market value where market rents are high.*
- *To be pro-active in both setting and re-evaluating their affordable rent levels so tenants in receipt of housing benefits can afford to reside in a property which is suitable for their needs.*
- *To advertise affordable rent vacancies through the Council's choice-based lettings system in the same way as social rent, to ensure fairness and transparency.*
- *All conversions from social rented properties to affordable rent properties at the point of re-let to be based on the agreed contract with the HCA and that those agreed numbers be shared with the Council in order for effective monitoring to take place.*
- *When converting social rented stock to affordable rent within the district to demonstrate a commitment to develop additional affordable housing within the district.*
- *The Council we will seek social rented homes on new developments where no HCA grant has been given, in line with identified needs, subject to the viability and the specific nature of the scheme.*
- *To provide excellent advice and assistance to ensure potential tenants are able to fully understand their housing options and whether affordable rent is an appropriate type of tenancy for them. This may include taking advice from the Council and other partner organisations for some specific vulnerable households.*

b) Flexible Tenure

Background

Historically social housing tenants have been offered an assured or secure tenancy, which granted them a home for life. Fixed term tenancies were introduced as part of the Localism Act with the aim to help registered providers offer more flexible tenancies to enable them to make the best use of their housing stock and to better meet local housing needs.

Registered providers are able to offer fixed term tenancies on a minimum fixed term of five years, however in exceptional circumstances flexible tenancies can be for as little as two years.

Social landlords will still be able to offer the types of tenancies they currently use, for example secure, assured, introductory and demoted tenancies. The new fixed term tenancies are in addition to those currently available and social landlords do not have to use them.

Existing secure and assured tenants cannot have their tenancies converted to a fixed term tenancy and many are offered special protections if they transfer to another home.

The Council accepts that the majority of RPs will want to take advantage of the new provision enabling fixed term tenancies to be issued. The Council also acknowledges that the decision to use fixed term tenancies and the length of the tenancies lies with the registered provider. However, the key to successful implementation of fixed term tenancies is close working between the Council and providers as well as clear and high quality housing advice and information services for tenants and potential tenants. This should start at the point of advertising the property to enable tenants to clearly understand how long a tenancy will be for and when a tenancy will and will not be renewed. Tenants should also have a clear and transparent process to appeal tenancy decisions, including a decision not to renew.

Offering of Fixed Term Tenancies

Where fixed term tenancies are issued, the Council suggests that the following basic principles are adopted as a minimum:

- A minimum of a five year fixed term tenancy for most households. There are some households for whom the Council would prefer a longer tenancy. Where a term of less than five years is proposed the Council expects providers to discuss this at the earliest opportunity as it will have implications for the Council's allocations policy.
- For fixed term tenancies to be re-issued at the end of the term unless there is a significant change of circumstance. The Council would like the opportunity to work with providers to establish the criteria they use to inform this decision.
- That fixed term tenancies are not used as a general management tool. The Council is of the view that there are other more suitable existing tools, such as introductory

tenancies, available to providers to manage the risk of future breaches of tenancy agreements.

- Clear and concise advice and information is provided to tenants at all stages. If a fixed term tenancy is issued, the Council expects that a full review will be undertaken prior to the beginning and end of the tenancy period.
- There are limited benefits for use of fixed term tenancies in older persons designated or supported housing where the majority of tenants remain often for the rest of their lives.

Ending or Renewing a Fixed Term Tenancy

Towards the end of a fixed term tenancy, there are a number of courses of action which providers can take:

1. To re-issued a new Fixed Term Tenancy; or
2. For the tenant to remain in the property but on new terms; or
3. To assist the tenant to find alternative (and more suitable) accommodation; or
4. Not offer any other form of tenancy

The Council recognises that there are a number of situations where it may not be appropriate to re-issue a further fixed term tenancy or it may be contrary to the aims of fixed term tenancies. These include where:

- The property is adapted and no-one residing at the property requires the adaptations
- The property is under-occupied by more than one bedroom
- The property is over-crowded
- The financial circumstances of the tenant have changed to such an extent that other housing options would be more appropriate.
- Breaches of tenancy or tenancy fraud are identified during the fixed term tenancy review process.
- The tenant and/or their advocate do not engage in the fixed term tenancy review process.
- The tenant comes into legal ownership of another home or property.
- The tenant's behaviour during the fixed term of the tenancy has been unacceptable for example sustained and documented anti-social behaviour.
- There is a strong need for the tenant to move to another location, for example to take up employment.

This list is not exhaustive, and there may be other circumstances where the re-issue of a tenancy would not be appropriate.

Where a Fixed Term Tenancy is coming to an end and a notice has been served, the Council expects providers to ensure that tenants receive housing options advice; either provided directly or coordinated via the Council's Housing Options Team. This will ensure that they are aware of the different housing options available to them given their particular circumstances and can access appropriate support.

Any decision to not renew a fixed term tenancy should take full account of the likelihood of re-housing. If RPs are not transferring a tenant to another property within their own stock, then the Council expects that a full consultation with the Council's housing options team will take place to ascertain whether suitable properties are available, what the likely re-housing time is, and other relevant factors.

Where a tenancy is not going to be renewed the Council expects the registered provider to consider the implications of their decision on the Council's homelessness duties and work closely with the tenant to explore real alternative housing options. Providers should take responsibility for providing advice and assistance to such tenants themselves and not excessively burden partners including housing advice and assistance agencies.

Mutual Exchanges

Mutual exchange is a useful tool which can help to make best use of a registered provider's affordable housing stock. The Council does not want the introduction of fixed term tenancies or affordable rent to impact on the effectiveness of mutual exchange. Although there are protections for existing tenants in certain circumstances these are not universal. The Council would like to encourage registered to set out in their tenancy policies the implications to a tenant's security of tenure if they mutually exchange their home and in general adopt policies which promote the continued use of mutual exchange for all tenants.

c) Needs of specific groups

There are some groups for which the type of tenancy they are issued will have more of an impact. The Council has set out below the groups for which it feels that special consideration would be beneficial and guidance on the types of tenancies that it would prefer providers to consider.

Families with children of school age or younger

The Council's preferred tenancy term is a minimum of a five year fixed term tenancy. Security and stability during a child's education is critical. Families also rely on nearby friends and relatives to provide care for their children. The Council expects that these factors should be considered by providers in reaching a decision about the use of fixed term tenancies for this household group.

Households with a disabled member or member with special needs

The Council's preferred tenancy terms are:

- For fixed term tenancies to be used where this will enable the best use of adapted stock
- A minimum ten year fixed term tenancy where it is likely that the disabled person will remain living in the property for some time and still require the adaptations

The Council recognises that in certain circumstances, where the applicant has life long conditions, an assured (lifetime) tenancy may be appropriate. Shorter tenancies may be deemed appropriate by providers and their health and care partners in some situations; for example where there is an adapted family home and the needs of the disabled child may change, or the child may move out.

Older people over the age of 60

At this stage the Council's preferred tenancy terms, are:

- A minimum of a five year fixed term tenancy for older people living in general needs accommodation
- Lifetime tenancies for older people living in sheltered housing (accommodation designated specifically for older people)

In deciding on the use of fixed term tenancies for this household group, or for accommodation that is specific to older people eg, sheltered, the Council would like providers to consider health and wellbeing, the role of friends and relatives in enabling independence, and the possibility that insecurity of tenure may add to someone's worries about their future.

The Council is particularly interested in working with providers to explore how under-occupation of family homes can be addressed; and this will be taken forward through our review of the East Herts Housing Register and Allocations Policy.

Other factors

The Council would also ask that RPs give special consideration to the following when developing their policies:

- Households in rural areas
- Single households under 35

The Council is aware that it currently has or expects to have problems in re-housing these households due to a lack of supply of suitable affordable housing. As the full impact of the Welfare Reform, the benefit cap and Universal Credit becomes known, there may be other groups who experience specific re-housing problems.

Tenancies

When developing their tenancy policies the Council expects registered providers to have regard to the following;

- *The use of introductory and probationary tenancies. The Council does not support the use of fixed term tenancies for management purposes.*
- *To offer lifetime tenancies for older people in designated or specialist housing.*
- *To use five years as the minimum term for all fixed term tenancies. In exceptional circumstances providers may set out shorter fixed term tenancies of a minimum of two years. Such exceptional circumstances should be set out and justified in the provider's tenancy policy. The Council expects registered providers to discuss schemes where tenancies of less than 5 years are being considered with the Housing Options Team individually.*
- *To reference their mutual exchange policy within their tenancy policy, clearly highlighting any impacts exchanging may have on security of tenure.*
- *To take into consideration recommendations from the Council and other partner organisations regarding the use of lifetime or longer term fixed tenancies for specific vulnerable households.*
- *To assess the housing options and appropriate type of tenancy for households which include a disabled member, to best meet the needs of the household as well as ensure the best use long term use of our limited accessible stock and aid and adaptation budgets.*
- *To clearly set the exact circumstances when a tenancy will and will not be renewed in their tenancy policy and clearly communicate this with tenant prior to them signing their tenancy agreement.*
- *That any decision not to renew a fixed term tenancy should take full account of the likelihood of rehousing in consultation with the Council's Housing Options Team to ascertain whether suitable properties are available, what the likely re-housing time is, and other relevant factors.*
- *To take into consideration the individual circumstances of household members before making a decision not to renew a tenancy. Providers should take into consideration recommendations from the Council and other partner organisations regarding the extension of tenancies for specific vulnerable households. Such circumstances may include;*
 - *ill health, disability or terminal illness*
 - *need for support*
 - *impacts on children, including their education*
 - *availability of suitable alternative accommodation within locality*
- *That tenants will be given at least six months notice if the provider is minded to end the tenancy, and that adequate reasons for the decision to end the tenancy are given along with information on the right to appeal the decision. The Council expects providers to;*
 - *provide excellent advice, information and assistance to assist such tenants' access alternative accommodation.*
 - *frame the appeals process in such a way to allow tenants to make an informed decision as to whether to submit an appeal, including how to seek independent advice and where necessary representation.*

4. Stock Disposals

There are two main areas for consideration relating to the disposal of Registered Provider properties; which properties are disposed of and where the income from the properties is reinvested.

The Homes and Community Agency acting as regulator for the sector require that registered providers consult with the Council prior to making an application to them for consent to dispose of property whether for an individual unit or as part of a general consent.

When responding to such consultation requests the Council will take into account:

- the reasons for the disposal,
- the type of unit,
- any implications to meet need if this type of unit is lost,
- the registered provider's subsequent plans for replacing the unit
- the information contained within the annual Disposal Proceeds Fund for the area

It is important that registered providers therefore maintain a dialogue with the Council about their development plans to ensure there is not a net loss of social housing locally.

Registered providers are reminded that the regulator requires that a print off of their Disposal Proceed Fund annual return should be copied to each local authority in which proceeds arose or were spent. The Council will expect in the first instance that any balances are directed to support local affordable housing schemes.

5. Monitoring

To assess the impact of this strategy with our registered providers the Council proposes to monitor the following indicators:

- Number of conversions
- Number of disposals
- Number of replacement AH units
- Levels of rents set by bedroom size
- Number of Affordable Rent tenancies
- Refusal rates and reason

Whilst there is no statutory requirement setting out timescales in which to review the strategy the Council will consider amongst other things the following indicators that may trigger a partial or full review of the strategy:

- Changes in patterns of homelessness
- Major affordability changes - local prices and local incomes
- Balance of tenures failing to meet local need
- Policy changes elsewhere which impact on this document

Glossary

Affordable Rent means rented housing let by a Registered Provider of social housing to households who are eligible for Social Rented housing at a rent of no more than 80% of the Local Market Rent, including service charges where applicable, and upon the approved Financial Terms at a fixed term tenancy for a period not less than that recommended by the social housing regulator currently the Tenant Services Authority (or its successor body) and with regard to any advice set out in the local Strategic Tenancy Policy adopted by the Council

Benefit Cap is a maximum allowance on the total amount of benefit a household is entitled to receive under the proposed new universal credit system to be introduced in April 2013 if they are not in receipt of certain exempt benefits such as Disability Living Allowance. At the time of publication of this document the benefit cap for single persons is £350 per week and for a family £500 per week.

Social Rent means housing let at a periodical rent due at intervals of a month or less without any fine deposit or premium which is let at or below Target Rent and is let on the Registered Provider's standard form of letting as an Assured Tenancy and upon the approved Financial Terms

Conversion is when a property is let at different terms and conditions to those it previously had i.e.: changed from a social rented property to an affordable rented property.

Fixed term tenancies are a new type of tenancy introduced under the Localism Act 2012 available for registered providers to use from the date of inception of the Act that has a specified term of not less than 5 years or 2 years in exceptional circumstances. Fixed term tenancies can be used for Affordable Rent or Social Rent properties.

Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) includes any successor body or agent exercising statutory powers for the provision of financial assistance to registered providers for the provision of Affordable Housing

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is the maximum amount of Housing Benefit payable by number of bedrooms in a property in a Local Authority Area. It is updated annually and is calculated using the 30th percentile of market rent for each property size in that local authority area.

Mutual Exchange is a facility that enables a tenant to exchange their property and tenancy with another of their own Registered Provider's tenants or with a tenant of a different Registered Provider.

Registered providers is the term used for housing associations or other private sector developers, local Councils etc who have registered to provide social housing with the Homes & Communities Agency.

Universal Credit is a new approach to welfare to be introduced under the Governments welfare reforms in 2013. It will be an integrated benefit in place of Income support, income-based job seekers allowance, income related employment and support allowance, housing benefit, child tax credit and working tax credit. Households in receipt of universal credit and not in receipt of specific exempt benefits will be subject to the benefit cap defined above.

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 20 NOVEMBER 2012

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF TASK AND FINISH GROUP

REVIEW OF TAXI LICENSING PROCESS IN EAST HERTS.

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report summarises the review, and presents draft recommendations for committee members' consideration and agreement.

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY:</u>	
(A)	The Committee considers and endorses the approach and findings of the Task and Finish Group
(B)	The Committee agrees to recommend to the Licensing Committee that a robust 'convictions policy' be introduced in relation to taxi licensing.
(C)	The Committee agrees to recommend to the Licensing Committee that some decision making relating to taxi licensing is devolved to designated officers in line with the terms set out in any agreed 'convictions policy' along the lines of the assessment grid set out in Essential Reference Paper B.
(D)	The Committee agrees to recommend that a progress report on the suggested actions listed in paragraph 2.8 is taken to Licensing Committee when the actions have been further evaluated.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 On 12 June 2012 Community Scrutiny Committee agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group to undertake a review of Taxi Licensing in East Herts.
- 1.2 The scope was discussed at a meeting of the Task and Finish Group on 1 August 2012, where the core questions of asking

whether the licensing process was effective, efficient and economic were agreed.

1.3 In proposing a scope the group considered;

- the current taxi licensing Policy and relevant appendices, and;
- the report to licensing Committee in September 2011, with summary of criminal convictions/offences that had been considered regarding taxi drivers and applicants 2007-2010, and;
- Press articles relating to taxi services in East Herts, and;
- Information about the current Law Commissioners consultation on Taxi Licensing.

The following were identified as desirable outcomes;

- Achieve further cost savings;
- Propose a convictions policy;
- Propose delegated powers in certain situations;
- Rebuild the reputation/image and public confidence in the service (including ideas for press releases, use of our own website and item in LINK magazine);
- Refresh the Taxi licensing policy in advance of a full review in 2014.

The meeting agreed that Licensing Manager would benchmark East Herts Taxi Licensing policy against other authorities and organisations, and obtain examples of best practice in taxi licensing and commonly used time limits in applicant and driver convictions policies.

Licensing Manager would also benchmark presence of a representative from Legal Services to advise Licensing Sub Committee, to ascertain common practice.

2.0 Report

2.1 The group met on 6 September 2012 and considered whether the process is **effective**, looking at;

- Convictions
- Complaints/compliance; and
- Standards

The group was to have considered evidence in person from the Police, however for operational reasons the Police could not attend, and they later provided evidence in writing, that contributed to the drafting of an example convictions policy.

In addition to the Taxi Licensing policy and appendices considered in the 1 August 2012 scoping meeting, the group also considered;

- A list of complaints about taxi drivers from 2011;
- Examples and summary of other authorities' and organisations' licensing and convictions policies arising from the benchmarking exercise conducted by Licensing Manager, and;
- summary of other authorities' practice on legal advice at sub-committee, and;
- Insurance industry standards on assessing risk from former drink-drivers

The following outcomes were agreed;

- Licensing Manager to consult with East Herts Risk Assurance Officer to see how much information is available from the insurance industry regarding risk from drivers convicted of driving offences, with respect to time lapsed;
- East Herts should develop a Convictions Policy based on 'industry' standards and best evidence (not Home Office Circular 13/1992), and amend Appendices C and D of the current East Herts taxi licensing policy accordingly;
- Undertake wider benchmarking for authorities who have already revised their (convictions) policy without reference to HO 13/1992.
- the Vehicle Standards in East Herts current policy (Appx B) to stand
- the Penalty Points System in East Herts current policy (Appx E) to stand – but consider renaming it.
- the system for dealing with complaints as currently used – to stand.

2.2 The group met again on 24 September 2012 and considered whether the process is **efficient**, looking at evidence in person from licensed taxi drivers.

The group considered evidence in person from representatives of the taxi trade.

The following outcomes were agreed;

- Licensing Manager to provide the budget book pages to show the figures behind the fees and charges cost recovery calculation;
- Scrutiny Officer to investigate Communications policy on use of the corporate logo, and;
- Scrutiny Officer to investigate cost of uniform items with Environmental Services Team Leader.

The group also agreed that the following matters should be explored further;

- Smartness – enforcement of existing standards to raise standards
- Points system – recommend renaming and re-launching it
- Vehicle standards – possibly more spot checks (and joint with other agencies)
- Smoking in taxis – possibility of more enforcement
- Idea of having ‘reps’ drivers to report in
- Redesign the driver badges;
- The possibility of a ‘gold standard’ accreditation scheme for taxi drivers that operate at the highest standards.

2.3 The group met again on 18 October 2012 and considered whether the process is **economic**, looking at;

- Costs of the process;
- Comparison with similar statutory processes in Development Control.

The group considered;

- evidence in person from Head of Development Control and Councillor Rutland-Barsby (Chairman Development Control Committee) about the Development Control decision making model, including the extent of delegated powers, and the relative costs of delegated decisions compared to committee decisions;
- The proposed increases in taxi fees and charges identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan;
- Costs of uniform items purchased by Environmental Services;
- The grid design of the Security Industry Authority convictions policy.

The group agreed that:

- The introduction of a convictions policy was good idea and that the group would recommend introduction;
- Members should determine where the 'bar' should be
- Some decisions to be devolved to officers once there was a framework to refer to;
- The Licensing Manager to identify the sections of existing policy that would need to be amended;
- Following changes, training needs to be re-considered;
- Updating of website and press releases to be discussed with Communications;
- The final report to be shared with the taxi representatives before publication.

2.4 The group met again on 1 November 2012 to produce a summary of actions and recommendations.

2.5 Based on current best practice, the key recommendation of the Task and Finish group is that East Herts should introduce a convictions policy (in relation to taxi licensing) and that a robust policy will allow for some decisions to be devolved to officers. At the heart of any policy would be an 'assessment grid' of offences/convictions against which a decision to grant, refuse or consider a taxi license application would be made.

2.6 A suggested model for such an 'assessment grid' is offered in **Essential Reference Paper B**. Members of the Task and Finish group had reference to convictions policies used by other authorities and two main industry documents:

- 'Insurance and Convictions' published in 2011 by Unlock in association with the ABI (Association of British Insurers) www.unlock.org.uk/pressmedia.aspx?id=50#iaa
- 'Get Licensed' – the SIA (Security Industry Authority) licensing criteria published March 2012 <http://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/Pages/publications.aspx?category=Licensing+Booklets>

2.6 Members of Community Scrutiny are asked to review and support the 'assessment grid' and commend it to the Licensing Committee for inclusion in any convictions policy.

2.7 A summary of the actions and recommendations of the Task and Finish group (in relation to taxi licensing) are set out below, cross referenced to the supporting evidence.

	evidence	purpose
Recommend the introduction of a convictions policy	Based on best practice, benchmarking and allied industry standards Written evidence and support from police Support from taxi driver reps	To make the process effective To safeguard residents and strengthen confidence in the system
Recommend that some decision making is devolved to officers	Already have a good example operating in Development Control – including calculation that decisions made by committee are 5 times the cost of devolved decision making. Benchmarking against other authorities	To make the process efficient and economic
Retain, unchanged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycle of CRB checks • Knowledge test arrangements • Complaints system • Reminder schedule to drivers • Vehicle standards (Appx B of current policy) 	Although some points were raised by drivers looking to make the process ‘easier’ – there was no evidence that any of these standards should be lowered/reduced	To maintain an effective and efficient process in which residents can have confidence
Retain, unchanged – but raise profile of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver dress code and driver code of conduct (Appx D of current policy) • Existing smoking 	Some concerns raised by driver reps although no formal complaints received	To generally raise and maintain standards

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rules Vehicle appearance standards (Appx B of current policy) 		
Retain, unchanged – but re name and re launch the ‘penalty points system’ (Appx E of current policy)	Feedback from driver reps	To retain an effective monitoring tool to maintain standards
Continue to have legal representation present when committee does meet	Benchmark from other Licensing Authorities	To maintain an effective and efficient decision making process in which residents can have confidence

2.8 Following the discussion session with driver representatives, there are four actions which the Task and Finish group are suggesting should be undertaken by officers.

action	purpose
To further evaluate the use of ‘uniform’ clothing with the wider driver group and with a view to possible sponsorship	To investigate whether there is wider support for the idea To evaluate the ‘economics’ of the idea
To further explore the idea of having a ‘gold standard’ driver scheme	To generally raise and maintain standards To set high local standards
To seek any future grants or sponsorship funding for In-Car security camera as opportunities arise	To promote community safety: for both passengers and drivers To evaluate the ‘economics’ of the idea
To continue to develop robust approaches to vehicle check joint operations with our partners	To promote community safety To ensure the process is as effective and efficient as possible

2.9 The Task and Finish group would like to thank all the people who contributed to the desk-based research and the evidence sessions. Their information and views have supported and underpinned the outcomes of this review.

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

Full notes of the task and finish group meetings are available on request.

Contact Member: Councillor Roger Beeching - Chairman 'Review of Taxi Licensing Process' Task and Finish Group

Contact Officer: Brian Simmonds – Head of Community Safety and Health Services
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Report Author: Paul Newman – Licensing Manager
paul.newman@eastherts.gov.uk

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives <i>(delete as appropriate):</i>	People This priority focuses on enhancing the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.
Consultation:	<i>No consultation has taken place in producing this report, consultation to take place has been identified in the scoping document attached as essential reference paper B</i>
Legal:	<i>This section should refer to any statutory requirements arising from the proposals.</i>
Financial:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The report presents a scope for a review of taxi licensing services, and one proposed outcome is to reduce the cost of the service.</i>
Human Resource:	<i>None.</i>
Risk Management:	<i>See report.</i>

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER “B”

Convictions Policy – suggestions regarding the levels at which the ‘bar’ might be set for taxi licensing.

Licensing Committee Members are asked to consider whether they wish to:

-move offences up or down the table
-shorten or lengthen the time periods in the tables.

Always refuse;

- Inclusion on Sexual Offences Register
- Information included at discretion of Chief Police Officer indicating a propensity to commit sexual offences.
- Violence: Murder; terrorist offences/ causing explosions; conspiracy or incitement to commit any of above.
- Drugs Alcohol: Treatment order not completed.

Very high risk

- Violence: Manslaughter; Grievous bodily harm; causing death by dangerous driving;
- Dishonesty: Burglary, Theft or similar resulting in a custodial sentence
- Driving offences: Driving while disqualified by a court order
- Drugs/Alcohol: Any sentence including drug or alcohol treatment order.

Convictions: Time since sentence spent	
Not spent	Refuse
0 – 10 years	Refuse
11 years or more.	Committee with starting point: refuse

Serious risk

- Offences involving drugs or alcohol: Drink Drive, importation, possession, use or supply of Class A or Class B drugs, importation or supply of class C drugs.

- Dishonesty: Burglary (non custodial sentence; theft, fraud, deception, perverting the course of justice, or similar sentenced with a fine, any theft of a vehicle or vehicle fuel, or dishonesty with vehicle or driver licence documentation.
- Violence/ public order: Actual bodily harm; any assault on a passenger; any assault in breach of position of care or trust; riot; banning order.
- Driving offences: Driving no insurance/ while unlicensed to drive (including driving a taxi while unlicensed as a taxi driver), illegal plying for hire, failing to stop after accident

Convictions: Time since sentence spent	
Not spent	Refuse
0 - 3 years	Refuse
4 - 7 years	Committee with starting point: refuse
8 - 11 years	Committee with starting point: grant
12 years or more:	Grant

Significant risk.

- Offences involving drugs or alcohol: Possession Class C drugs, drunk and disorderly.
- Dishonesty: Theft or similar sentenced with a Conditional Discharge, failing to give information about the driver of a vehicle, giving false or withholding relevant information from the Licensing Authority.
- Violence; Common assault, any offence not involving physical assault resulting in a hospital treatment order for the offender; affray, criminal damage, possession of offensive weapon, resisting arrest, obstruction of Police Officer.
- Driving offences: 9 DVLA driving licence points or more, failing to report an accident, parking on pedestrian crossing.

Convictions: Time since sentence spent DVLA Points; time since offence	
Not spent	Refuse
0 - 3 years	Committee with starting point: refuse
4 - 7 years	Committee with starting point: grant
8 years or more:	Grant

Identifiable risk.

- Violence: Threatening behaviour, causing harassment, alarm or distress, disorderly conduct.
- Dishonesty: Theft or similar dealt with by Fixed Penalty Notice or Police Caution.
- Driving offences; 4-8 DVLA points.

Convictions: Time since sentence spent DVLA Points; time since offence	
Not spent	Refuse
0 - 3 years	Committee with no starting point
4 years or more	Grant

Low risk – Always delegated decision to grant

Driving offences: 3 points or less.

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20 NOVEMBER 2012

REPORT BY COUNCILLOR LINDA HAYSEY, EXECUTIVE MEMBER
FOR HEALTH, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

EAST HERTS AGEING WELL – REVIEW OF PROGRESS

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This is a progress report on the recommendations made by the Community Scrutiny Committee Meeting of 28 February 2012 on the East Herts Ageing Well agenda and the subsequent meeting on 28 August 2012.

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY that:</u>	
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(A)	the Committee notes and supports the progress being made by the Members and Officers against the three recommendations made at the Community Scrutiny meeting on 28 February 2012 and a further recommendation from the subsequent meeting on 28 August 2012
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1.0 Background

1.1 On 28 February 2012, as part of the committee's initial discussion on Ageing Well, Community Scrutiny Committee resolved that:

(A) Corporate Management Team and Senior Officers be asked to look at best practice around the Ageing Well agenda and to report back to Community Scrutiny Committee on 28 August 2012 on what action the Council might take and the financial implications of such action;

(B) An informal Member Group of six be established to look at Members' role within respective wards; and

(C) The Council continue to work with its partners to establish where it can be of mutual help to one another.

1.2 At the Community Scrutiny meeting on 28 August 2012 a report was presented to Members updating them on one of the three original recommendations (recommendation B) resolved by the Committee on 28 February meeting. The other two recommendations (A and C) were, at the time, still work in progress.

2.0 Report

2.1 This report updates Members on recommendations A and C as resolved by the Community Scrutiny meeting on 28 February 2012.

2.2 Recommendation (A)

2.3 Through the existing Corporate Equalities Group, officers from all service departments are progressing the Ageing Well agenda in the following ways:

- i. It has been agreed that the current Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process should form the basis for developing the Ageing Well agenda and to support this the EIA template has been adjusted to highlight the work undertaken/ issues related to the Ageing Well agenda as **Essential Reference Paper “B”**.
- ii. All services will be carrying out EIA's in accordance with corporate process, to ensure council policies and services are accessible to an ageing population. If gaps in policies and services are identified through this process, officers will undertake targeted consultation with older people on those specific policies and services. This will be reported to Community Scrutiny at a later date.

2.4 It is noted that any proposal for new initiatives will need to be addressed through the usual service improvement processes and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) planning process.

2.5 Recommendation (C)

2.6 The Ageing Well agenda clearly sits within the context of the East Herts Local Strategic Partnership's (LSP) Sustainable Community

Strategy (2009-2024) and the Health and Well Being delivery theme group.

- 2.7 Cllr. Linda Haysey presented the Ageing Well report to the LSP Board on 3rd September 2012. All partners are supportive of the initiative and have indicated a willingness to take the agenda on board within their own organisation. Cllr. Haysey is now exploring partnerships working to address the gaps in current provision through intergenerational work and a Time Banking initiative.
- 2.8 In additions to the above, a report is scheduled to be presented to the Executive on 6 November 2012 as resolved by the last Community Scrutiny meeting on 28 August 2012.
- 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:

Contact Member: Name – Cllr Linda Haysey
Linda.haysey@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Will O'Neill – Head of communications, engagement and cultural services
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Report Author: Mekhola Ray, Engagement and Partnerships Team Leader
mekhola.ray@eastherts.gov.uk

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):	<p>People This priority focuses on enhancing the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.</p> <p>Place This priority focuses on the standard of the built environment and our neighbourhoods and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean.</p> <p>Prosperity This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic and social opportunities.</p>
Consultation:	<i>Addressed in 2.2.1.ii</i>
Legal:	<i>None</i>
Financial:	<i>Addresses in 2.2.2</i>
Human Resource:	None
Risk Management:	None

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Equalities Impact Assessment – Template

1	Identify the aims of the policy/service/function and how it is implemented.		
	Key questions	Answers / Notes	Actions required
1.1	What is the aim, objective or purpose of the policy/service/function?		
1.2	What outcomes do you want to achieve with this policy/service/function and for whom?		
1.3	Who defines or defined the policy/service/function?		
1.4	Who implements the policy/service/function?		
1.5	What factors or forces are at play that could contribute or detract from the outcomes identified earlier?		
1.6	Taking protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation), is there anything in the policy/service/function that could discriminate or disadvantage any of these groups?	Age Disability Gender Pregnancy/Maternity Marriage/Civil Partnership Race Religion/Belief Sexual Orientation	
2	Consideration of available data, research and information		
	Key questions	Answers / Notes	Actions required
2.1	What do you already know about who uses this policy/service/function?		
2.2	What additional information is needed to ensure that all protected characteristic group's needs are	Age Disability	

	taken into account?	Gender Pregnancy/Maternity Marriage/Civil Partnership Race Religion/Belief Sexual Orientation	
3	Formal consultation		
	Key questions	Answers / Notes	Actions required
3.1	Who do we need to consult with?		
3.2	What method/form of consultation can be used?		
4	Assessment of impact		
	Key questions	Answers / Notes	Actions required
4.1	Have you identified any differential impact and does this adversely affect any protected characteristic group's in the community?	Age Disability Gender Pregnancy/Maternity Marriage/Civil Partnership Race Religion/Belief Sexual Orientation	
4.2	If there is an adverse impact can it be avoided, can we make changes, can we lessen it etc?		
4.3	If there is nothing you can do, can the reasons be fairly justified?		

5	Consideration of the effect of proposed changes on other groups.		
	Key questions	Answers / Notes	Actions required
5.1	Do any of the changes in relation to the adverse impact have a further adverse affect on any other protected characteristic group?		
INTERNAL PROCESSES FOR THE ORGANISATION			
6	Making a decision in the light of data, alternatives and consultations		
	Key questions	Answers / Notes	Actions required
6.1	The organisations decision making process		
7	Monitor in the future and publication of results of such monitoring		
	Key questions	Answers / Notes	Actions required
7.1	What have we found out in completing this EqIA? What can we learn for the future?		
8	Publication of results of the impact assessment		
	Date		
	Lead Officer		

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20 NOVEMBER 2012

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

UPDATE ON COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAMME 2012

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This is a progress report on the Community Grants programme, following the amendments made to policy by the Executive on 10 January 2012.

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY: That:</u>	
(A)	the Committee notes and supports the progress being made by Officers to allocate grants according to the new policies

1.0 Background

1.1 Following recommendations made by Community Scrutiny Committee, the Executive resolved that the following would be created:

- A) a one-off Jubilee and Olympic Fund;
- B) a general community capital pot – rather than several separate Pots;
- C) a simpler application process for projects costing less than £2,000 – sign off still the responsibility of the Director.

1.2 It was also agreed that the scoring process for projects estimated to cost more than £2,000 would continue and that Officers would meet to review previously funded projects and report on a twice yearly basis to Community Scrutiny. This is the first of such reports.

- 1.3 As a result of these policy changes, the total community capital budget for 2012/13 is £198,600 including slippage.
- 1.4 The total revenue budget for 2012/13 is £49,390, including an additional amount of £10,000 from New Homes Bonus for Jubilee and Olympic celebrations.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 During the first two quarters of the financial year (1 April to 30 Sept), 104 capital and revenue grants were awarded, totalling £102,040, as shown in the table below.

Theme	No. of requests	No. of grants awarded	Total budget allocated
Summer Activities	26	25	£24,947
Olympic / Jubilee	74	67	£17,790
Community Capital Large & Small 1 st round - rural	20	8	£59,186
Councillor Engagement	7	4	£117
Performance for Excellence (Arts & Sports)	0	0	0
Total	127	104	£102,040

- 2.2 The next section of the report addresses each area of funding in more detail, including reasons why some applications are not successful.

2.3 **Summer Activities**

- 2.4 This grant pot is to provide activities for five to 19 olds and is administered in partnership with Broxbourne and East Herts Council for Voluntary Service (CVSBEH). This programme was oversubscribed; the total amount requested was £36,111 from a budget of £25,000.

- 2.5 Twenty-five grants were awarded, nine to first-time applicants. The table below shows a breakdown of successful applicants.

Type of organisation	No. receiving a grant
Organisations working with disability and vulnerable groups	5
Sports organisations	7
Holiday clubs	4
Art organisations	2
Theatre	2
Organisations specifically working with 12 to 19 year olds	2
Other	3
Total	25

- 2.6 One application was unsuccessful because Officers considered that it a weak bid for small numbers of participants and did not fit into the spirit of the programme. In order to keep to budget, the grant panel part-funded most applicants. One applicant turned down the offer of a grant because they considered they could not go ahead with the activity unless they were fully funded.
- 2.7 More than 2,980 different children and young people took part in these grant-funded activities. This is up from the 2,268 who attended in 2011.
- 2.8 A priority of the programme is to maintain a geographic balance of provision. See the breakdown below – some organisations cover multiple areas.

Villages	5
Bishops Stortford	5
Hertford	6
Ware	3
Sawbridgeworth	2
Buntingford	1
District-wide	4

- 2.9 Monitoring of the scheme showed that organisations providing sports activities exceeded their predicted target numbers of participants. For example Standon and Puckeridge Tennis Club predicted that 80 children and young people would attend – 132 attended taking part in a week of tennis on newly refurbished courts. Hertford Museum's Animal Roadshow had double the attendance they predicted. Holidays Clubs, Theatre groups, Arts

and teenage provision just missed their target.

2.10 Some feedback comments are listed below:

“I was able to continue working during the holidays knowing that my son was in a safe place and having fun. The staff were lovely, really friendly. He was a bit nervous at first but they were so friendly he soon settled.”

“They enjoyed the opportunity to explore new activities that they would not normally do at home. They liked mixing with other children and making new friends. It was a chance to have supervised play away from the home environment, “free” from mum and dad but still supervised, monitored and supported. It allowed them to develop a degree of independence and provided something to look forward to during the summer holidays.”

“About time Hornsmill got some attention for children. A fantastic service that brings the community together. A big thank you to the staff who are fantastic with the children and parents. My children are now 14 (twins), a few more excursions with this age group would be good. Once again, thanks.”

2.11 Following a meeting between the CVSBEH Officer and the Engagement and Partnerships (Grants) Officer and Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support, it was agreed that the programme would continue to encourage participation from a wider selection of voluntary and sports groups and encourage more voluntary organisations to deliver activities in partnership with schools and through Active East Herts (Community Sports Network).

2.12 **Jubilee and Olympics celebrations**

2.13 This was a very popular one off grant programme. It was more than three times oversubscribed its original budget of £6,400 and attracted many first-time applicants. The positive response resulted in New Homes Bonus money being used to top up the budget to £17,790.

2.14 Of the 67 grants awarded, 12 went to groups specifically supporting older people and vulnerable children, such as Childrens’ Integrated Play Schemes (CHIPS) and Over 60s Clubs. The grants were given towards the costs of organising events that would bring people together in a fun, friendly way, and contribute

to a sense of community and neighbourliness. The table shows a breakdown of successful applicants:

Type of organisation	No. receiving a grant
Residents groups	18
Parish council	12
Village hall/recreation committee	10
Charities	6
School partnerships	5
Older person's groups	5
Other	4
Friends of groups	3
Church	2
Business	2
Total	67

2.15 Applications that were unsuccessful were those where Officers considered that the grant would not make a significant difference and that the event would go ahead without a grant from this authority.

2.16 Most of the events organised were Jubilee themed. The breakdown geographically is as follows:

Villages	33
Bishops Stortford	11
Hertford	11
Ware	8
Sawbridgeworth	3
Buntingford	1
Total	67

2.17 If applicants achieved their estimated targets, it is possible that this grant programme reached 18,000 people in East Herts.

2.18 An evaluation of the programme resulted in positive feedback and the indication that many hundreds of volunteers organised the events. For example, Wodson Park Trust involved 90 volunteers from nine community groups and 12 volunteers from local charities to help put on its "have a go" event, which reportedly increased attendance at Active Senior classes and applications

from children to join the gymnastics club. Some feedback is listed below:

“...outdoor events like the old fashion sports and fun run attracted in excess of 60 competitors... The Come and Try it approach was particularly successful in the children and seniors section. One of the best things about the Family Fun Day was the number of people who said they didn't realise just how much happens at Wodson Park or who had never visited before.”

“It is easier to stop and talk to someone . . . when you know their name and have the shared experience of a party.”

“A real celebration that has produced friendships, social groups and support networks.”

2.19 **Community Capital (Large and Small)**

2.20 The first funding round in June was oversubscribed with requests totalling £114,928. Of the 20 applications, eight were successful and grants were awarded to village hall management committees and a parish council.

2.21 Of the remaining 12, ten applications were for projects in the towns and these, in line with the policy of priority to applicants in rural areas, were deferred until after the second funding round in October. Two applications were considered ineligible because they were already in receipt of a capital grant from the Council. In the past, applications have been unsuccessful for other reasons including:

- Project is outside the Council's funding criteria
- No evidence of need or community support/consultation
- Project is the responsibility of a statutory organisation
- Project has already started
- Project is to benefit a building for which the applicant does not have a long-term lease
- Free reserves are too large, no financial need demonstrated

2.22 Since 2010, successful applicants have been required to submit a monitoring form detailing the outcomes of the project. This information is regularly posted in the Members Bulletin. Some of the comments are as follows:

“My daughter enjoys the walk and wooden carvings. The whole area has been opened up, good for local children and the community.....” Quote from local resident on woodland access project in the Pines Woodland

“The viability of the hall has been maintained...school meals can continue; health and safety addressed.” Albury Village Hall

“The new fence completes our communal garden area. This enables children to play securely and safely from the road. Older and disabled residents benefit from good access via the path and can enjoy a newly installed garden bench. The new fence also improves the appearance of the area and matches the rest of the development.” Dixons Court Residents Association

“Members have found the introduction of this equipment to be of great value. The process of unrolling and re rolling heavy carpets has always been a problem due largely to the age and declining health of many members, and the weight of the carpets themselves. The equipment the Council have very kindly granted aid for has most certainly relieved this situation, and enable the strain to be taken by the equipment rather than the backs of members.” Hertford Heath Bowls Club

“This grant helped us replace a very old piece of play equipment..... To save money we had a working party of 10 people help remove the old equipment. I have seen grandparents, mums and dads chatting together while the children play, it has really brought the whole community together. The whole village is thrilled that this small rural community has the latest up to date play equipment.” - Bramfield Village Hall

“To be able to continue using the facilities - as the fencing was a health and safety risk. The provision of this grant enabled the club to secure funding from Sport England so that all the fencing could be replaced thus ensuring the club’s future for a long time.” Standon & Puckeridge Tennis Club

“The equipment and items purchased have been very useful and essential to the smooth running of Safety Net. We would have found it very difficult to accomplish certain tasks without this funding.” Safety Net, mental health charity

2.23 Payment of a large grant is subject to a site inspection on completion.

2.24 Applicants for capital grants tend to be submitted from the same organisations year after year, usually those that have premises, the required match funding and the skills and capacity among volunteers. The new application for projects under £2,000 has partially addressed this problem as the Council is able to fully fund the project. Both organisations that received a small capital grant had not applied to the Council in the recent past.

2.25 New this year is a condition that all grant applications are endorsed by the local Ward Councillor.

2.26 Councillor Engagement

2.27 This is a new pot that Members can use to engage with their residents and run public meetings to discuss local issues. For more details and Guidance Notes go to this link:

www.eastherts.gov.uk/councillorenagementgrants

2.28 To date, seven requests have been submitted and grants have been awarded for:

- Hire of a hall by Newton Residents Association in Bishops Stortford to discuss Circle Living's proposal to demolish garages on Trinity Way and build flats. 60 people attended. (Cllr Norma Symonds).
- Hire of a Watton at Stone Community Hall for a public meeting to discuss the planting of a Jubilee Wood by the Abel Smith Estate and interested volunteers. 50 people attended a meeting on 14 September. More details can be found on www.woodhallestate.co.uk (Cllr Nigel Poulton).
- Hire of Priory Charity for a meeting to discuss the future of the Musley School and to form a residents action group in order to create a community facility. (Cllr Malcolm Alexander).

2.29 Of the requests that have been submitted but did not receive an allocation, this was because either the request did not fit the funding criteria or the consultation had already happened.

2.30 This pot is proving difficult to spend. Members are encouraged to take advantage of the funding. If a grant is to be made for the hire of a hall or to pay for publicity, payment will be made directly to the supplier on submission of invoices. If a Councillor uses the

grant for refreshments for the meeting, this will be reimbursed to the individual via payroll.

2.31 General notes

2.32 Across the grants programme the Council is keen to award grants to a wide range of different groups, especially those that have not applied before. Members can help by:

- Encouraging groups to speak to Grants Officer, Community Engagement Team, before submitting an application;
- Advising that groups read the **Guidance Notes** before completing application and visit the advice page on the Council's webpage, <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=10146>;
- Advising that groups must be able to demonstrate need or community support for the project and explaining that the Council might be able to help with this through the Councillor Engagement Grant www.eastherts.gov.uk/councillorengagementgrants
- Referring groups to Council Officers or the CVSBEH if they need guidance on how to constitute themselves or need support on completing the application form
- Reminding groups that the budget for grants has reduced so they might wish to consider exploring other funding sources. Suggest that they visit Herts County Council's Funding Information Gateway on <http://www.hertsdirect.org/your-community/funding/>
- Referring volunteers on village hall management committee to the East Herts Village Hall Network, next meeting is Thursday, 10 January 2013 at Aston Village Hall, 1.30pm.
- Writing articles for newsletters or tweeting about the availability of grants

2.33 Members are asked to note the success of the community grants and the wide variety of applicants but also to note gaps in the type of groups that apply and to consider how they intend to spend their Councillor Engagement grant.

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

None.

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives <i>(delete as appropriate):</i>	<p>People This priority focuses on enhancing the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.</p> <p>Place This priority focuses on the standard of the built environment and our neighbourhoods and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean.</p> <p>Prosperity This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic and social opportunities.</p>
Consultation:	<i>None</i>
Legal:	<i>None</i>
Financial:	<i>Contained in the report</i>
Human Resource:	None
Risk Management:	None

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY – 20 NOVEMBER 2012

CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

2012/13 SERVICE PLANS – SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AND EXCEPTIONS REPORT

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report provides a mid-year summary of the council's achievements against its priorities for 2012/13 and details those service plan actions that are off target and have a revised completion date. This report also monitors the outstanding service plan actions from 2011/12, which are detailed in Essential Reference Paper "D".

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY: That:</u>	
(A)	The progress against the council's priorities and the revised completion dates against 2012/13 Service Plan actions and 2011/12 Service Plan actions be received; and
(B)	The Executive be advised of any recommendations.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The 2012/13 Service Plans were scrutinised by the joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees held on 14 February 2012 and approved by the Executive at its meeting on 6 March 2012.
- 1.2 Service plan reports are exception reports. To help focus scrutiny discussion officers have listed the actions that are either off target, have a revised completion date, been deleted or suspended.
- 1.3 This report covers the period 1 April to 30 September 2012 for the following services:
 - Community Engagement

- Community Safety and Health
- Economic Development
- Hertford Theatre
- Housing
- Revenues and Benefits

1.4 In addition, seven actions from the 2011/12 Revenues and Benefits and Health and Housing Service Plans had revised completion dates for after 31 March 2012 and these will form part of the 2012/13 monitoring process.

2.0 Report

2.1 In total, there are 45 actions in the 2012/13 Service Plans, of which:

22% (10) have already been achieved

67% (30) are on target

4% (2) are off target

2% (1) has had their completion date revised

4% (2) have been deleted because they are no longer appropriate. They were:

- 12-CSHS10 – Environment Agency Contract – Management of works required
- 12-ED01 – Review options for outsourcing markets

2.2 In total, there were seven actions from the 2011/12 Revenues and Benefits and Health and Housing Service Plans which were still outstanding, of which:

14% (1) has already been achieved

86% (6) are on target

- 2.3 An overview of all council achievements by Corporate Priority for 2012/13 are detailed in **Essential Reference Paper “B”** .
- 2.4 **Essential Reference Paper “C”** details 2012/13 Service Plan actions that are either off target and have had their completion dates revised. For ease of reference, these have been categorised by Corporate Priority. Full progress comments on all 2012/13 Service Plan actions can be accessed by referring to the Council’s performance management system, Covalent (www.covalentcpm.com/eastherts).
- 2.5 **Essential Reference Paper “D”** details the outstanding 2011/12 service plan actions. For ease of reference, these have been categorised by Corporate Priority based on the 2011/12 set.
- 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

2012/13 Service Plans report to Executive on 6 March 2012.

<http://online.eastherts.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=119&MId=1792&Ver=4>

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):	<p>People This priority focuses on enhancing the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.</p> <p>Place This priority focuses on the standard of the built environment and our neighbourhoods and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean.</p> <p>Prosperity This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic and social opportunities.</p>
Consultation:	There are no specific consultation implications arising directly from this report.
Legal:	There are no specific legal implications arising directly from this report.
Financial:	There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.
Human Resource:	There are no specific human resource implications arising directly from this report.
Risk Management:	There is a generic risk management implication arising from this report, in terms of not completing the actions from Service Plans would be likely to result in not achieving the Corporate Priorities and Objectives.

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Telling the Story – An overview of achievements by Corporate Priority up to 30 September 2012:

Please note only the objectives where there are achievements to report have been listed and where an achievement relates to a specific service plan action this has been referenced.

Priority: People	What we want to achieve	What we have done
	<p>Objective: Enhance our local community engagement by working together with our partners such as Parish and Town Councils, for the benefit of our communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided £17,790 in grants for 67 Jubilee Street parties. The grants were given towards the costs of organising events that would bring people together in a fun, friendly way, and contribute to a sense of community and neighbourliness. Groups ranged from community centres, residents’ associations, village hall committees and parish councils to groups. (12-CE03) • Welcomed the Olympic torch in East Herts, which came through Hertford, Ware and Bishop’s Stortford. (12-CE03) • Held a successful and well attended annual Parish conference in Much Hadham for all parishes. • Joined Twitter and re-launched our Facebook page with usage growing and member social media training delivered. Currently 1,330 followers on Twitter. (12-CE09)

Priority: People	What we want to achieve	What we have done
	<p>Objective: Maintain our core services to a good standard and ensure high satisfaction with the council as measured through the biennial Residents Survey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retained the Investors in People award (IiP) which recognises how the council helps staff to deliver improvements. During the four day assessment randomly selected staff were interviewed. The independent assessor found many areas of excellent practice and some areas where the council could do more and improve. An action plan has been drafted to address the areas for improvement. • Worked with the Community Voluntary Service to allocate £25,000 for fun free activities for children and young people aged between 5 -19. A total of 25 grants. For the first time, Hornsmill Community Centre in Hertford hosted two activities and Child UK run its popular Play and Teen Rangers scheme in local playing fields. Bedazzle Projects in Bishop's Stortford had a pop school for children with special needs. Towns and villages, including Standon and Puckeridge, Benington and Stanstead Abbots also received some of the funds. • Everyone Active, the organisation that manages East Herts Council's pools and gyms, won a top industry award. Voted by the residents who visit the leisure centres in East Herts and there other venues across the country. Everyone Active won the Leisure Operator of the Year award for the third year at the annual FLAME Awards, run by the Fitness Industry Association (FIA). • Installed a new Infreemation system to help us meet our target of delivering at least 85% Freedom of Information (FOI) requests within 20 days. This system makes the FOI process more accessible within the Council and helps to improve the overall management of requests. FOI performance exceeded 90% in 20 days in August 2012. (12-CPS03)

Priority: People	What we want to achieve	What we have done
	<p>Objective: Provide support for the vulnerable by working with our partners to increase the number of social and affordable homes, increasing the number of supported housing units and ensuring those in need access the benefits and support they are entitled to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joined an online system making it easier for households wishing to join the East Herts Council Housing Register to apply for accommodation to do so, to view their assessment in more detail and update changes. A link at HomeOption takes applicants straight to the online form. It also explains what information they will need in order to register and how to contact the Council if they want advice in completing the form. • Worked with Hertfordshire County Council, voluntary and community sector services to develop an integrated approach to engage more with older people forums to help strengthen their preventive role and achieve a wider range of health and wellbeing outcomes for this older community. • Allocated funding to Shopmobility, in partnership with Skill Ltd to help people with disabilities to continue to get around the town centres independently. According to the charity, Shopmobility boasts 471 registered members and over June and July this year, the service averaged 38 hires of electric scooters, manual and powered wheelchairs per week. All trips are free to registered members who come from Bishops Stortford and surrounding villages. • The council's Housing Strategy was agreed by Council on 26 September 2012 and is now published.

Priority: People	What we want to achieve	What we have done
	<p>Objective: Continue to review the council's assets and the best way to manage them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reviewed ownership and management arrangements for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ware Drill Hall – asset transferred to a community group ➤ Scotts Grotto – retained current arrangements with Ware Society as this was the best management option ➤ Hornsmill Community Centre – provided support
	<p>Objective: Ensure the sustainability of Hertford Theatre and explore possibilities for the theatre to be administered through a community trust.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hertford Theatre completed its first full year since re-opening (previously Castle Hall). The Theatre has quickly become a vibrant and successful artistic and community hub. Success against the business plan and its growing cultural offer was acknowledged by the council's Scrutiny Committee in August 2012.

Priority: People	What we want to achieve	What we have done
	<p>Objective: Reduce waste sent to landfill by increasing our recycling rate to more than 50%.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched SURGE – a promotion scheme designed to improve the amount of waste recycled and a decrease the amount sent to landfill, the campaign particularly targeted low performing areas based on the average amount recycled per round. The impact of the campaign will be measured in a number of ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in weights of recycling • Requests for additional containers. • Anecdotal information about the collection crews experiences and feedback from residents. <p>Recycling performance to date has increased slightly from 52.13% in August 2011 to 52.61% in August 2012.</p>
	<p>Objective: Reducing the carbon dioxide emissions from our own operations by 25% by 2020.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herts Sustainability Forum (HSF) has been established and has set up a Local Nature Partnership (LNP) which has been accredited by the Government. The HSF has also set up a Member working group to look at how to progress the Governments new framework for dealing with fuel poverty (known as the 'Green Deal'). Officers will report to East Herts Council's members once this work has been completed. The HSF is currently reviewing its priorities and has agreed to fund an awareness campaign covering a range of environmental matters. (12-ES17)

Priority: People	What we want to achieve	What we have done
	Objective: Sustain the percentage of residents who are satisfied with our parks and open spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raised awareness and use of open spaces by holding a 'Love Parks' week, at Southern Country Park which had an Olympics theme and 'Meet the Animals' events at Pishiobury Park. The Get Park Active events are designed to promote outdoor leisure and healthy lifestyles. These events attracted around 1000 visitors and positive feedback was received. Other activities have included 'The Big Dig' and a 'History Walk' with Friends of Pishiobury Park and Foxholes (Hertford) woodland walk. (12-ES05)

Priority: People	What we want to achieve	What we have done
	<p>Objective: Uphold the safety of our communities and seek to reduce the fear of crime by supporting neighbourhood policing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched Operation Panther to combat anti-social behaviour and criminal damage across the whole of the area. The special operation, aims to deter young people from engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour, initially just operated in Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth, Buntingford and the surrounding rural areas. It now covers the whole of East Herts. Working in partnership with the local police and housing associations the Council is able to take positive action against anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and repeat offenders. Since March 2012 181 young people have been given Operation Panther forms of which 150 young people have not come to the police attention again since receiving their first Operation Panther letter (82% success rate) and 31 young people are on their second letter. 5 young people have had home visits by their local officer where anti-social behaviour has been explained and diversionary activities offered. Overall anti social behaviour has reduced by -36.24% in East Herts in the last year (comparison between 1 April – 18 October 2011 against 1 April – 18 October 2012). • Contributed, as part of the East Herts Community Safety Partnership, to the hosting of FREE activities for young people aged 11-19 during the summer holidays. Since 2009, 3075 young people have attended these summer activities and just under 10% have achieved a accredited outcome from Youth Connexions and crime during these activities has fallen.

Priority: Prosperity	What we want to achieve	What we have done
	<p>Objective: Uphold the safety of our communities and seek to reduce the fear of crime by supporting neighbourhood policing (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued all our Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO) with bodycam. The bodycams will not be used as part of the ordinary parking management and enforcement process. Instead where there has been a verbal or physical attack on a CEO, footage may be used for evidential purposes and also where it may help in resolving a complaint from a member of the public. • Removed over 100 graffiti tags in Hertford in partnership with the Probation Service Community Payback scheme, whose teams have helped us remove the graffiti.
	<p>Objective: Continue the streamlining of back office functions in order to ensure an efficient and sustainable Council for the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved a senior management restructure of three full-time Directors and the deletion of the Chief Executive post, to provide a more streamlined corporate team. An existing Director post has been redesignated to include many of the Chief Executive's previous functions and therefore by combining the two roles will save more than £100,000 annually. • Took robust action against fraud and to date have prosecuted 7 people, issued 2 administration penalties and 22 cautions. This means that the council is recovering a combined total of Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit overpayments of £176,510.36 against these 31 sanctions, plus the Department of Work & Pensions are recovering a further £30,954.43 in related benefits overpaid to the joint prosecution cases.

Priority: Prosperity	What we want to achieve	What we have done
	<p>Objective: Develop a practicable and pragmatic Parking and Transport Strategy and action plan which delivers integrated and value for money policies in respect to car parking, walking, cycling routes and vital bus routes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave Apton Road car park a £100,000 makeover. The new design of the lower level makes it easier for motorists to circulate within the car park. The old surface, which was loose and prone to potholes, now has a smooth Tarmac topping, while new white lines clearly mark out the spaces and indicate entrance and exit routes. • Gave Hertford town centre car park a £600,000 revamp to make it more updated modern car park. Improvements included re-tiling, re-painting and the installation of anti-pigeon measures, as well as resurfacing. Also more spaces were created for blue badge holders. • Approved the district's first Parking and Transport Strategy on 4 July 2012. The strategy provides a position statement and a strategic framework to enable specific proposals to come forward later recognising the variety of transport and park challenges that the district is faced with. (12-CPS09) • Joined up with Sawbridgeworth Town Council to offer a free hour of parking, with the town council agreeing to underwrite the trial up to a maximum of £10,000. For an initial period of six months, until February 6 next year, motorists can park without charge for the first hour of their stay. In addition the cost of longer stays has been cut. It is hoped that this will encourage shoppers to the town and support local businesses.

Priority: Prosperity	What we want to achieve	What we have done
	<p>Objective: Increase the economic resilience of the market towns working with the local business community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarded Markets Team of the Year award by the National Association of British Markets (NAMBA). Over the past year the team have introduced a range of new systems for the markets in Stortford, Hertford and Ware, including trader incentives and farmers' market. • Supported the exploration of a combined scheme for time limited pedestrianisation of South Street/Potter Street and creation of Shared Space focused around the South Street/ Station in Bishop's Stortford. The proposals were put forward by the Bishop's Stortford 2020 Group, as it was felt they could bring a number of benefits to the town, such as, improved pedestrian environment, improved street scene and walking opportunities and regeneration of the area in particular retail and commercial facilities. It was agreed further consultation be undertaken before it is recommended for inclusion in the Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth Urban Transport Strategy.



2012/13 Service Planning Report (April- September 2012 progress)






People						
Maintain our core services to a good standard and ensure high satisfaction with the council as measured through the biennial Residents Survey.						
Action Code	Action Title	Action Description	Due Date	Expected Outcome Icon	Expected Outcome	Notes
12-CSHS05	Consider implications of Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) reviews, and implement any necessary changes to Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and HIA process.	Target: Provide an efficient and effective service to users following substantial process change. Outcome: Maintain good service provision. Critical Success Factors: Staff resources, HCC input and partners and Member collaboration. Environmental Impacts: None known	31-Dec-12		Action Off Target	April - September 2012. Since HCC have outsourced their role to Serco, referrals from HCC Occupational Therapists have all but dried up. Enquiries reveal that a substantial number of deserving cases are waiting to be sent to us to be dealt with, concerns have been raised about the difficult position this will leave us in when the 'bubble bursts' and we are likely to be overwhelmed with work for our limited resources. There is a reputational risk for us. Matter is to be raised at a much higher level.
Place						
Ensure the sustainability of Hertford Theatre and explore possibilities for the theatre to be administered through a community trust.						
12-HT03	Develop improved business processes for the theatre that will facilitate better and easier customer access and operational efficiencies.	Target: Improved business processes Outcome: easier access/ on line booking and operational efficiencies Critical Success Factors: ICT capacity and support Environmental Impacts: n/a	01-Jul-2012		Action Off Target	April to October 2012. New business manager in place on line booking with seat choosing facility installed.
Prosperity						
Continue the streamlining of back office functions in order to ensure an efficient and sustainable Council for the future.						
12-RB05	Deliver Excellent Customer Service	Target: Recommend a customer charter to the Joint Committee by October 2013. Outcome: Customer satisfaction levels sustained. Critical Success Factors: Smooth assimilation into shared service. Environmental Impacts: None.	31-Mar-2013		Revised Completion Date	April- September 2012. Work has not yet commenced as the target date is now 31 October 2013 and not 31 March 2013.

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Fit for purpose, fit for you

Action Code	Action Title	Action Description	Due Date	Expected Outcome Icon	Expected Outcome	Notes
By 2013 - Reduce the revenue burden to the taxpayer by completing our review of working arrangements and oversee the development of a single site for back office functions and service administration.						
11-HH07	Identify and implement opportunities presented by changes in local and central govt. i.e. Forthcoming changes in Health legislation and devolution of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), maximising reasonable cost recovery, reducing workload through improved use of IT,	<p>Target: Deliver core services whilst meeting Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) challenges.</p> <p>Outcome: Sustained service delivery and reduced overhead costs.</p> <p>Critical Success Factors: Partner engagement and acceptance.</p> <p>Environmental Impacts: Improved use of IT should reduce paper and travel.</p>	31-Mar-2013		Action On Target	April - September 2012. Health Engagement Panel reformed as Health and Wellbeing Panel. Workshops and training for Members and officers taking place. Relationships with partners have been developed. New strategy now being drafted. MTFP savings on target. Software improvements are being developed for implementation in 2013.
11-HH08	Reduce costs or improve VFM by identifying and implementing an improved structure for Environmental Health and Licensing and Community Safety services to meet the challenges of the MTFP.	<p>Target: Identify improved streamlined structure and implement by 2013.</p> <p>Outcome: Reduced overhead costs.</p> <p>Critical Success Factors: Outcome of BPI process, director's review, staff engagement and contribution.</p> <p>Environmental Impacts: Possible reduced travel.</p>	31-Mar-2013		Action On Target	April - September 2012. Numerous alternative structures explored, substantial help provided by senior managers as well as by peers in other Local Authorities. Suggested roles and job descriptions are being costed to ensure the reductions required by the MTFP are met. Once this is complete, the suggested structure can be taken through HR processes as a proposal.

Action Code	Action Title	Action Description	Due Date	Expected Outcome Icon	Expected Outcome	Notes
Promoting prosperity and wellbeing; providing access and opportunities						
By 2016 - Manage the environmental health of East Herts.						
11-HH03	Implemented an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Hertford.	Target: AQMA declared and action plan produced. (This related to Gascoyne Way. In 2011/12, likely to need to either extend this one or create a new one for the Tesco Area.) Outcome: Improved air quality in AQMA area of Hertford. Critical Success Factors: Adequate resources. Ability to influence reduction in traffic through the area. Environmental Impacts: Mitigation - aiming to reduce pollutants from traffic and CO2.	31-Mar-2013		Action On Target	April - September 2012. AQMA extension has now been declared. Press releases being prepared. All that remains for this action to be completed is for the action plan to be finalised as it now needs to encompass this new area. Most actions are outside of the control of this authority, transport being the major cause of pollution. Our schools project, a work in progress, is an innovative method of delivering reductions. As a nearby major employer East Herts Council has recently adopted a cycle to work scheme and is rolling out home & remote working for it's own staff. We have also adopted a staff car share scheme alongside Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).
11-HH04	Develop a strategy for implementing the Green Deal in 2013.	Target: Keep abreast of guidance, indentify partners and local authority role. Outcome: Strategy developed to benefit residents. Critical Success Factors: Adequate resources and cooperation of partners. Environmental Impacts: Increased carbon reduction.	31-Mar-2013		Action On Target	April - September 2012. 'Final' Guidance on the Green Deal was released by the govt late summer 2012, following this the Herts Sustainability Forum has commissioned a consulting company to provide costed options profiles against potential uptake - due November. Officers have met Essex County Council and Essex districts as well as a number of private sector providers to explore development opportunities in partnership.
By 2015 - Support the homeless and ensure those in need access the benefit they						
11-RB02	Roll out Capita products.	Target: Increase capacity and range of service delivery options for customers. Outcome: Increased capacity, performance levels improved, reduction in manual process, reduction in prep time for staff working remotely. Critical Success Factors: Roll out and take up achieved, roll out by Capita, training etc. Environmental Impacts: Opportunities to reduce paper flow and possible reduction in staff travel due to increased remote / onsite working.	31-Mar-2013		Action On Target	April - September 2012. Still awaiting roll out due to self service pressures.
Shaping now, shaping the future						
By 2015 - Increase the number of social and affordable homes delivered through innovative mechanisms in addition to traditional solutions.						
11-HH01	Ensure development of supported young persons accommodation.	Target: Commence building in July 2011, complete and occupy by March 2012. Outcome: Provision of approx 20 units of supported accommodation for young people. Critical Success Factors: Cooperation of partners, including RSL, Crouchfield Trust and Adult Car	31-Mar-2013		Action On Target	April - September 2012. Work commenced on site in April 2012. Anticipate completion in Autumn 2013. 14 2 bedroom self contained flats will be built and this will accommodate 28 single homeless young people. Support and training will be provided for reside
11-HH11	Review the Housing Strategy.	Target: Obtain Council approval to a revised strategy. Outcome: Strategy in place. Critical Success Factors: Adequate sources and support from the Councils partners. Environmental Impacts: No direct inputs.	29-Jun-2012		Action Achieved	April - September 2012. The strategy was agreed by Council on 26 September 2012 and is now published.

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY – 20 NOVEMBER 2012

REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK – JULY 2012 - SEPTEMBER 2012

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 July 2012 to September 2012.

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:</u>	
That	
(A)	the reported performance for the period July 2012 to September 2012 be received; and
(B)	the Executive be advised of any further recommendations.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This is a performance report relevant to Community Scrutiny's terms of reference covering the period July 2012 to September 2012.
- 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 September 2012 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 2 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 are 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 and quarterly basis. Essential Reference Paper B has been sorted by status e.g. all performance indicators that are ‘red’ are listed first etc.

Essential Reference Paper ‘C’ Shows the list of Unit Cost performance indicators that are specific to Community Scrutiny committee.

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

People

Performance analysis

2.1 **EHPI 3a – Usage: number of swims (under 16).** Performance was ‘Red’ for quarter two. Figures for quarter two in 2012/13 show that there has been a decline in throughput for this period when a comparison is made against 2011/12, although throughput did increase against the previous quarter in line with seasonal trends. The service is monitoring the continuing decline and is actively in

discussion with SLM on ways to improve throughput for this age group.

2.2 **NI 181 - Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events.** Performance was 'Red' for September 2012. Performance for September was 21.98 days against a target of 10 days. This was a slight improvement in performance when compared to the previous month. Cumulative average performance is 17.48 days.

2.3 Performance for the following indicators were 'Green', which means that the targets were either met or exceeded for September/Quarter 2 2012, they were:

- EHPI 129 – Response time to anti social behaviour (ASB) complaints made to East Herts Council.
- EHPI 1c - % of customers satisfied with the service – Hartham
- EHPI 1e - % of customers satisfied with the service – Buntingford
- 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.

UNIT COST INDICATORS

2.4 Each year the council publishes unit cost information as soon as it becomes available. Environment Scrutiny are asked to note the 2011/12 Unit Cost outturns detailed in **Essential Reference Paper 'C'**. These indicators are used by officers as a tool to help identify possible service efficiencies.

CONCLUSION

2.5 In conclusion Members are asked to:

- a) Note the performance indicator analysis for the period July 2012 to September 2012 in **Essential Reference Paper 'B and C'**.
- b) Agree the recommendations at the start of this report.

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:

- 2011/12 Estimates and Future Targets Report – Executive 6 March 2012.
- Should members require any guidance notes or Performance Indicator definitions please contact a member of the Performance team in the contacts listed below.

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: Simon Chancellor – Head of Finance and Performance
Contact Tel Ext No 2050
Simon.chancellor@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author: Karl Chui – Performance Monitoring Officer
Contact Tel Ext No 2243
karl.chui@eastherts.gov.uk

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives:	People <i>This priority focuses on enhancing the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.</i>
Consultation:	Performance monitoring discussions have taken place between Directors and Heads of Service.
Legal:	There are no legal implications.
Financial:	There are no financial implications.
Human Resource:	There are no Human Resource implications.
Risk Management:	There are no Risk implications.

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Community Scrutiny Corporate Healthcheck July to September 2012/13

Traffic Light Red
Description People

Community and Cultural Services

PI code	Short Name	Status	Current Value	Current target	Short term trend	Notes	Recommendations made during last Scrutiny meeting on 28 August 2012.
EHP13a	Usage: number of swims (under 16)		13,879	17,319		Figures for quarter two in 2012/13 show that there has been a decline in throughput for this period when a comparison is made against 2011/12, although throughput did increase against the previous quarter in line with seasonal trends. The service is monitoring the continuing decline and is actively in discussion with SLM on ways to improve throughput for this age group.	None

Trend Chart



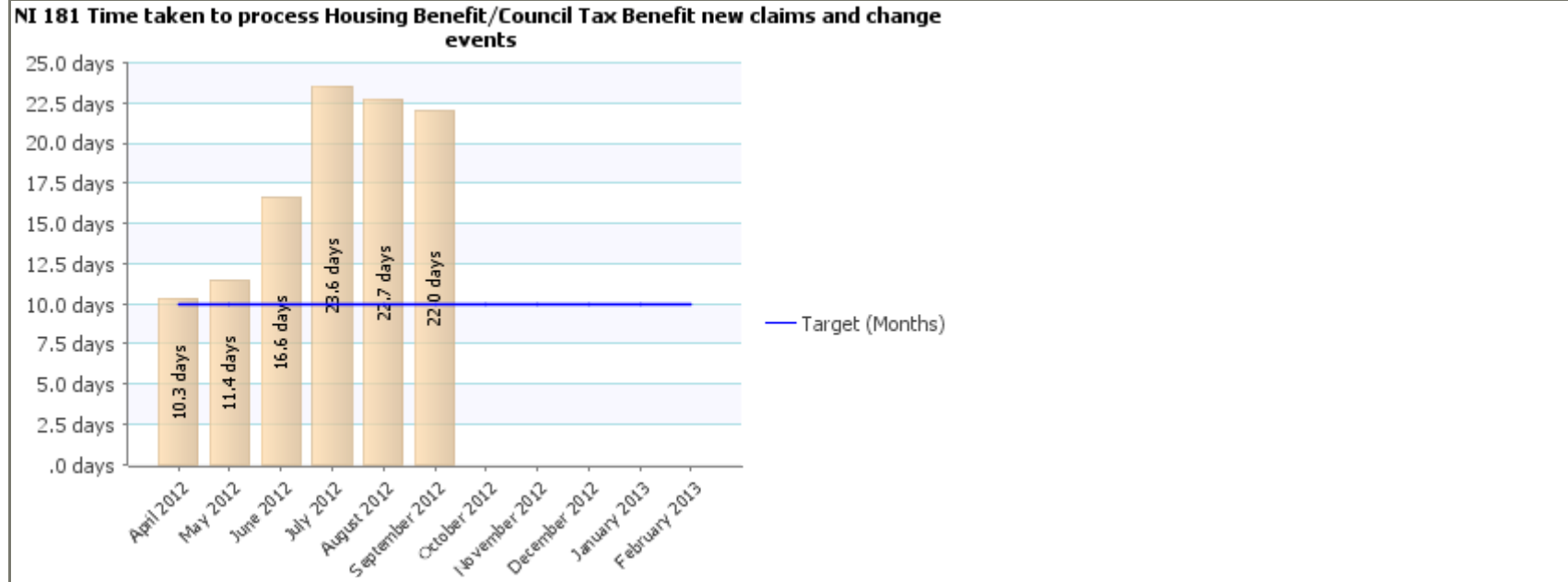
Performance Gauge



Revenues and Benefits Services

PI code	Short Name	Status	Current Value	Current target	Short term trend	Notes	Recommendations made during last Scrutiny meeting on 28 August 2012.
NI 181	Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events		22.0 days	10.0 days		Performance was 'Red' for September 2012. Performance for September was 21.98 days against a target of 10 days. This was a slight improvement in performance when compared to the previous month. Cumulative performance is 17.48 days.	None

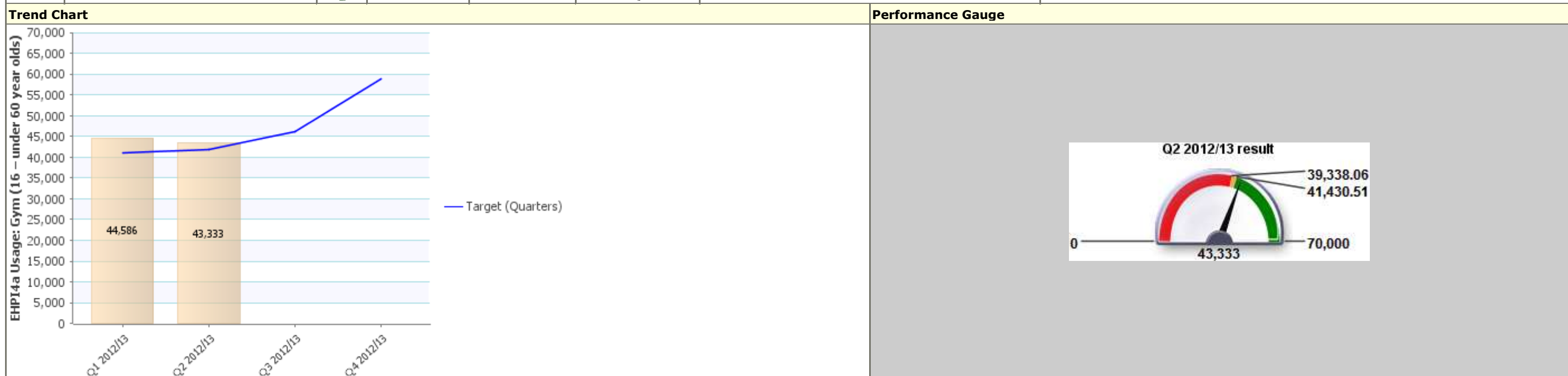
Trend Chart **Performance Gauge**

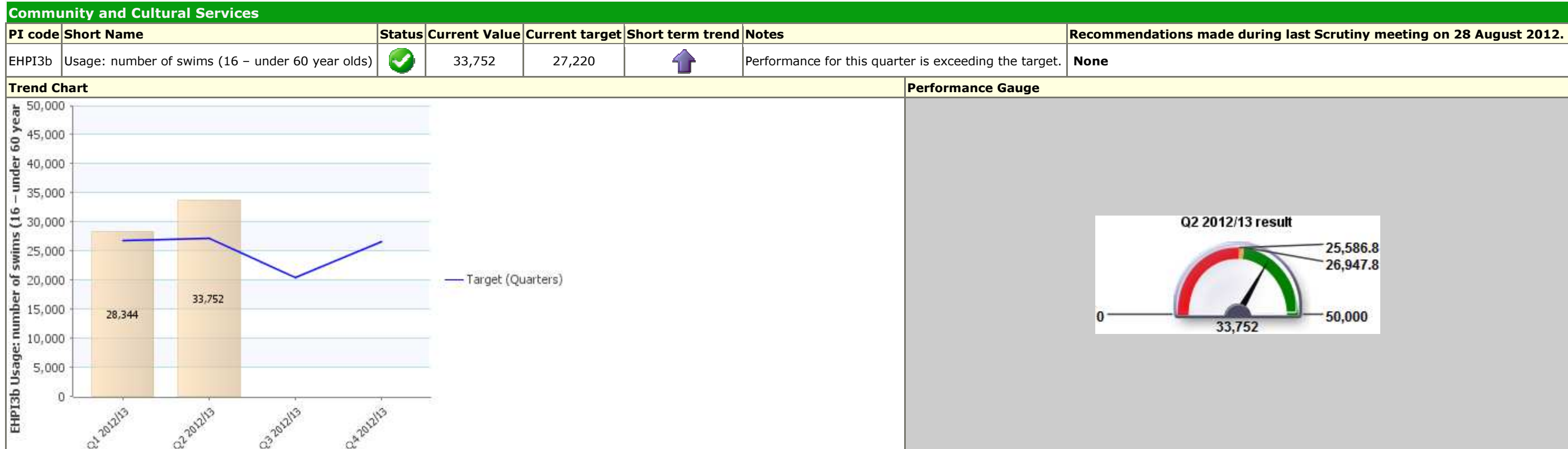
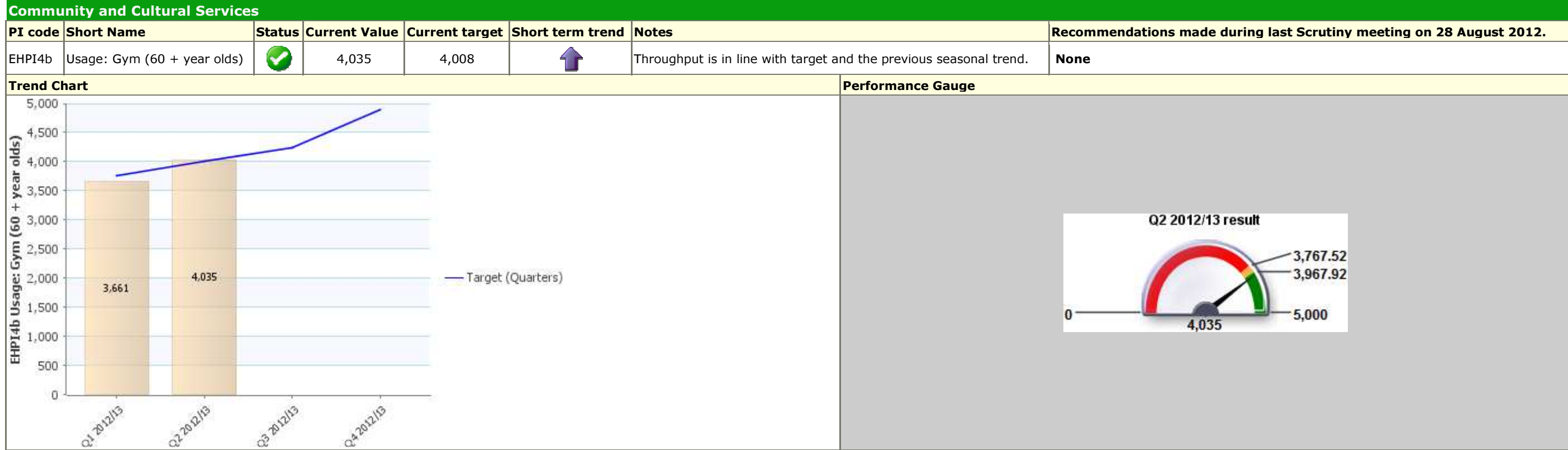


Traffic Light Green
Description People

Community and Cultural Services

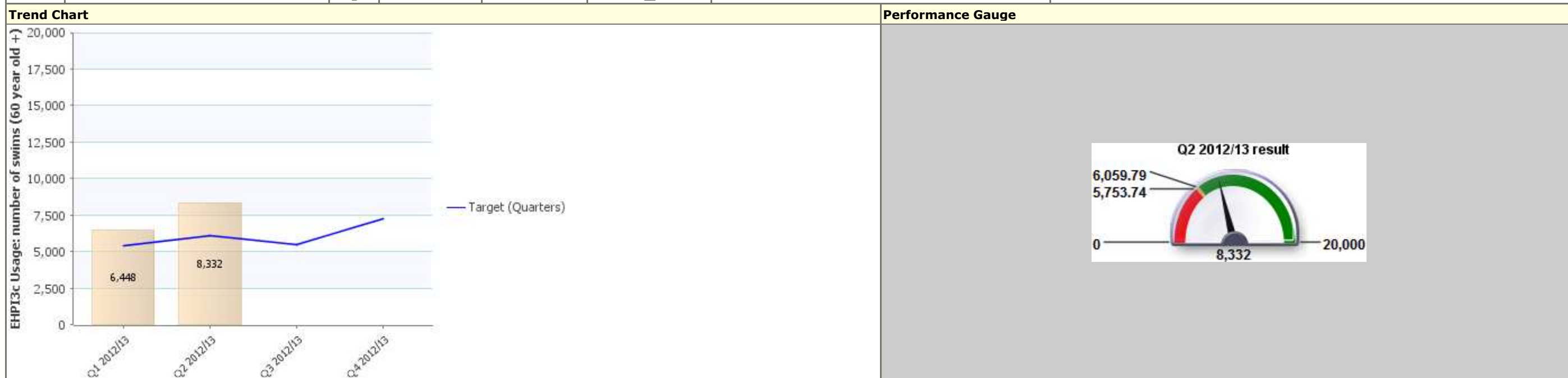
PI code	Short Name	Status	Current Value	Current target	Short term trend	Notes	Recommendations made during last Scrutiny meeting on 28 August 2012.
EHP14a	Usage: Gym (16 - under 60 year olds)	✓	43,333	41,849	↓	Performance for this quarter is exceeding the target.	None





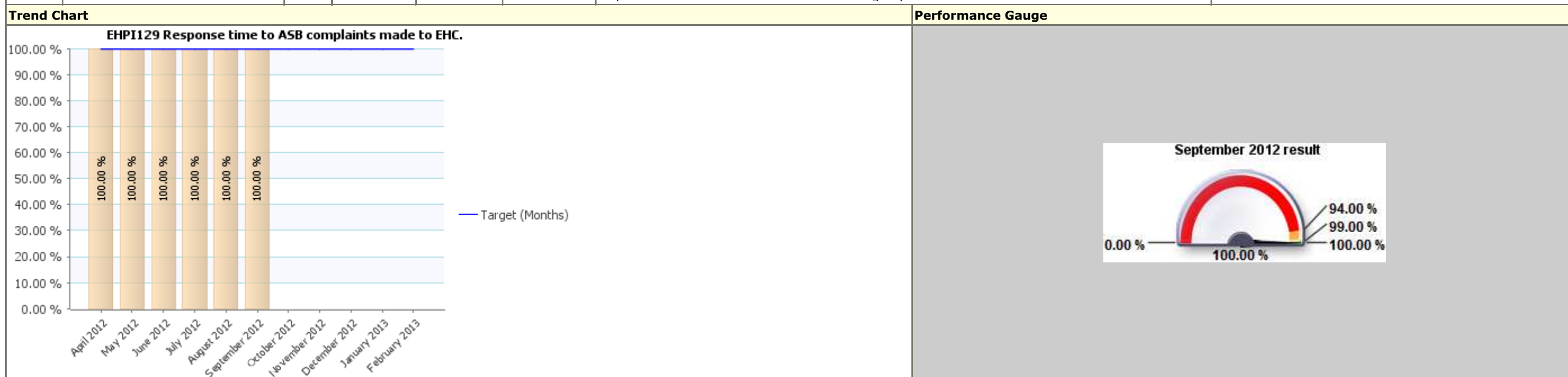
Community and Cultural Services












PI code	Short Name	Status	Current Value	Current target	Short term trend	Notes	Recommendations made during last Scrutiny meeting on 28 August 2012.
EHPI3c	Usage: number of swims (60 year old +)		8,332	6,121		Performance for this quarter is exceeding the target.	None



Licensing and Community Safety

PI code	Short Name	Status	Current Value	Current target	Short term trend	Notes	Recommendations made during last Scrutiny meeting on 28 August 2012.
EHPI129	Response time to ASB complaints made to EHC.		100.00 %	100.00 %		September 2012 There were four complaints made to the ASB officer at EHC, 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				

Community Scrutiny Unit Cost indicators

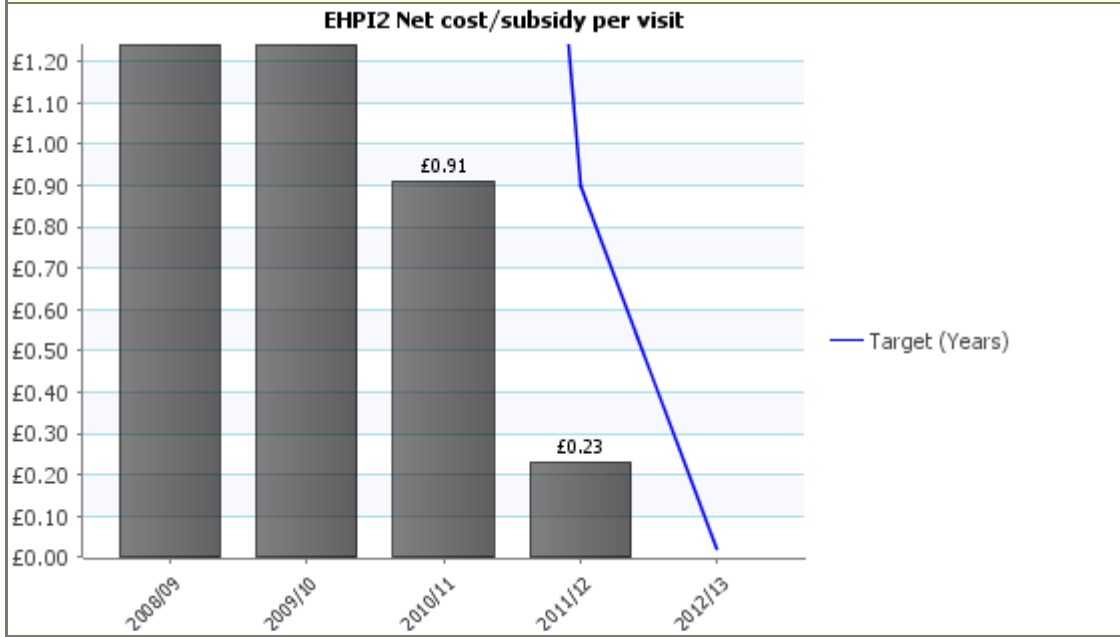


Traffic Light Green
Description Leading the way, working together

Community and Cultural Services

PI code	Short Name	Current Value	Short term trend	Notes
EHP12	Net cost/subsidy per visit	£0.23	↑	12 monthly management fee (incl RPIX) divided by total visits for the 12 month period, April 2011 - Mar 2012, equals cost per user subsidy; $\pounds 108,370 / 475,277 = \pounds 0.23$. The revised targets are £0.02 for 2012/13, £0.16 for 2013/14 and £0.47 for 2014/15.

Trend Chart

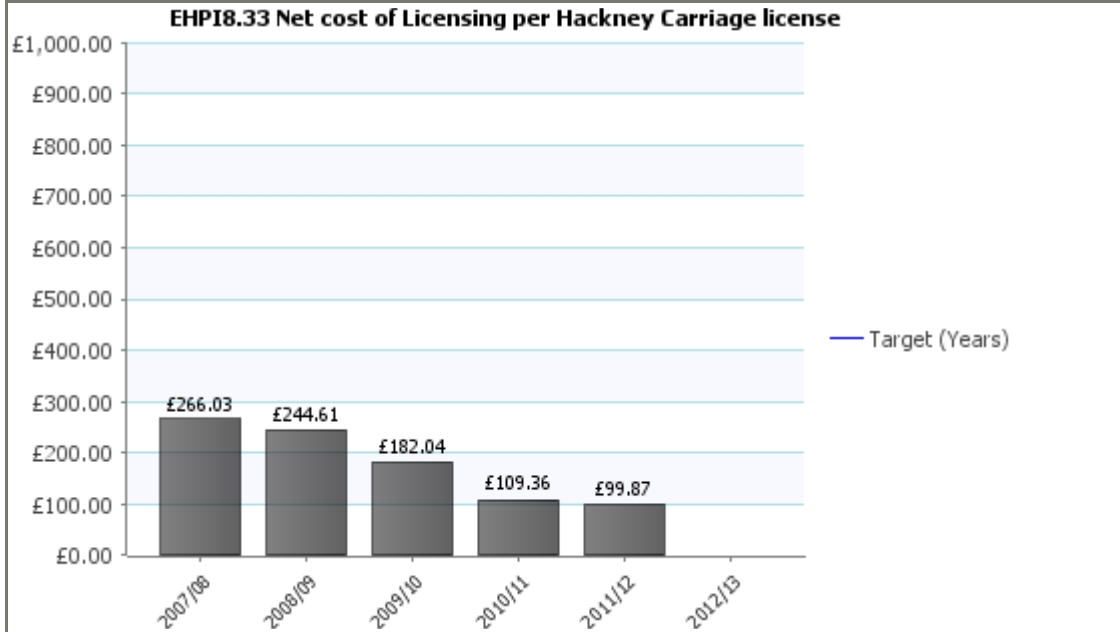


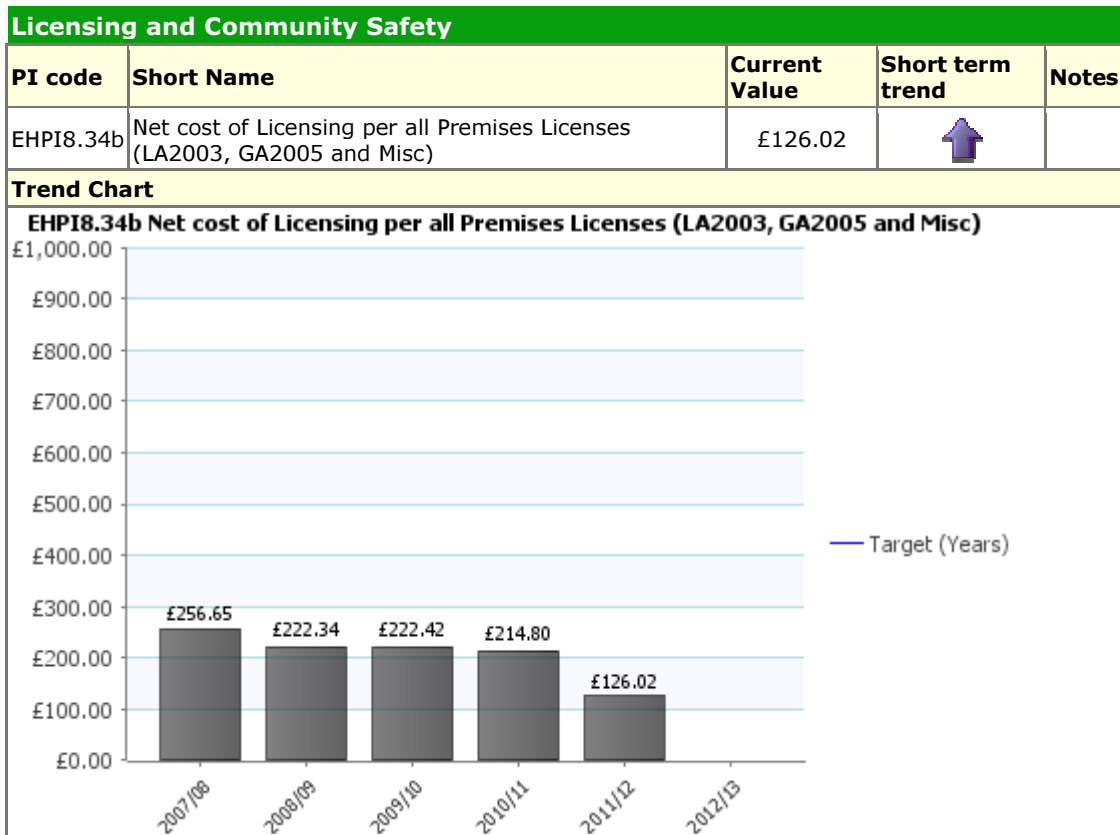
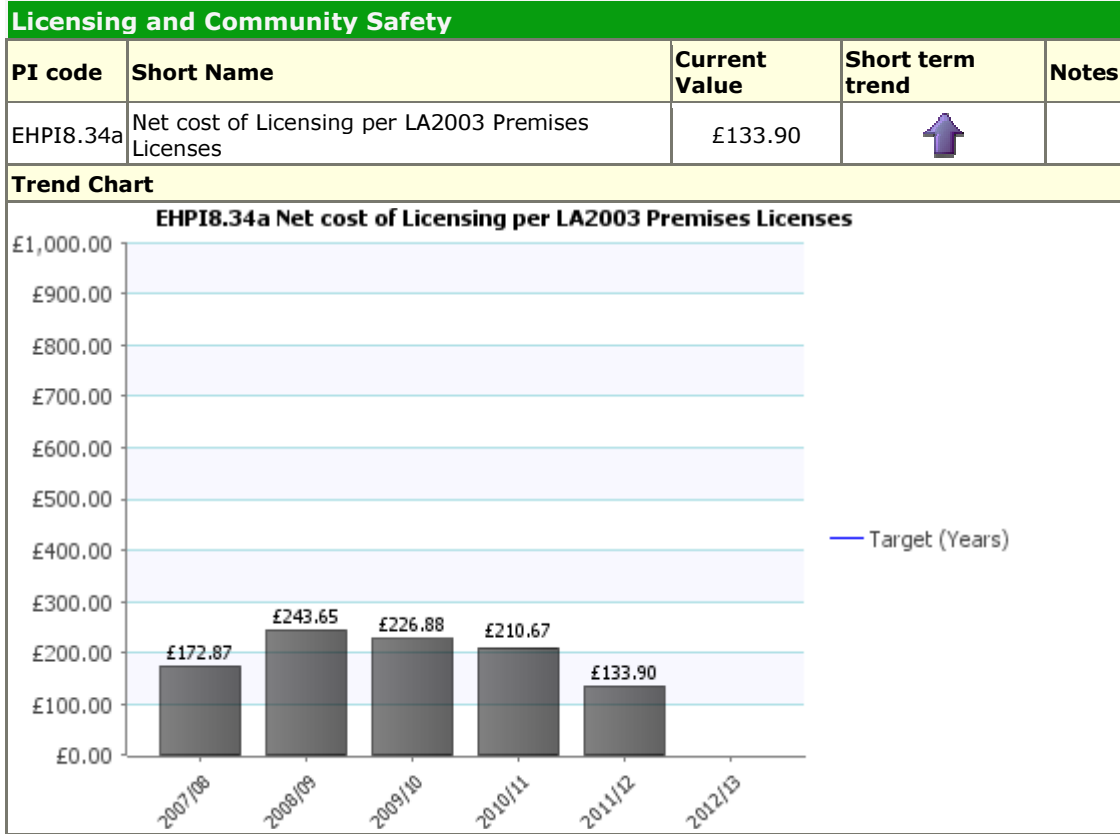
Traffic Light Data Only
Description Fit for purpose, services fit for you

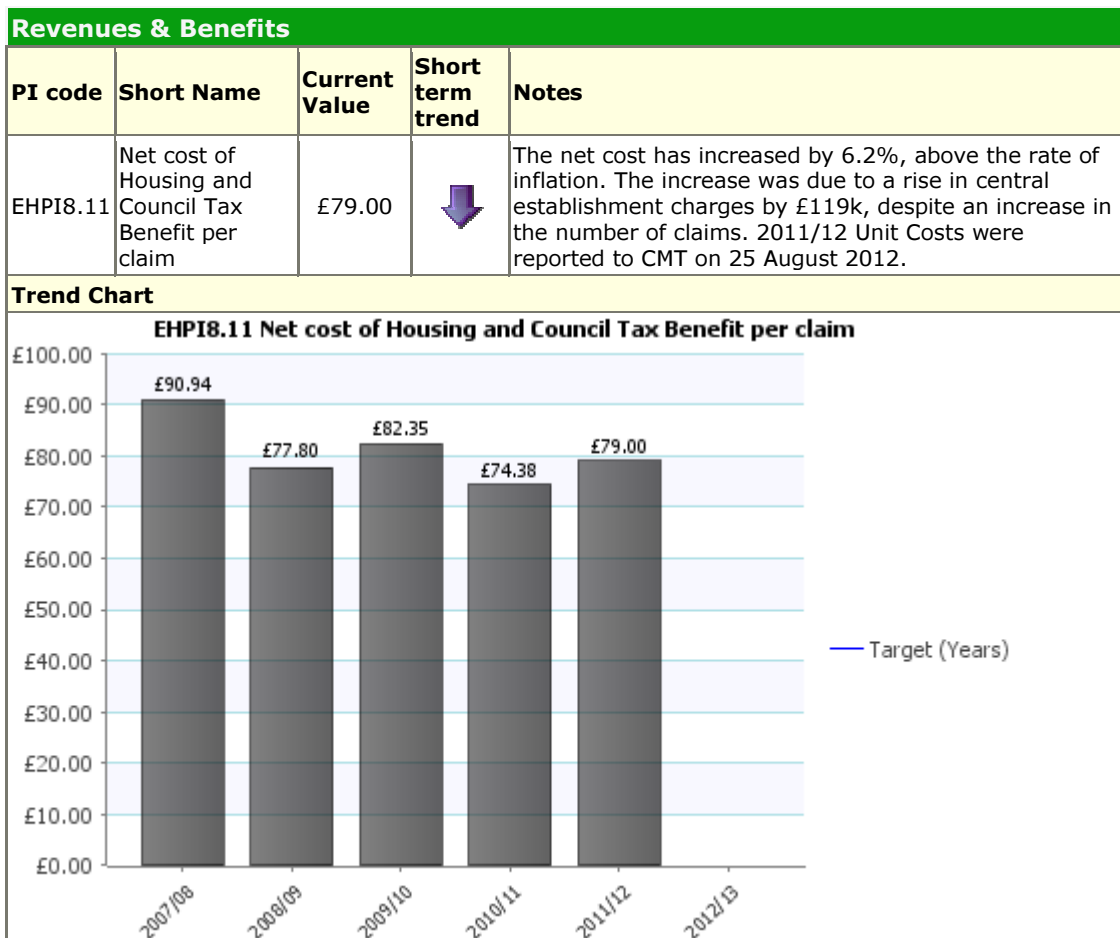
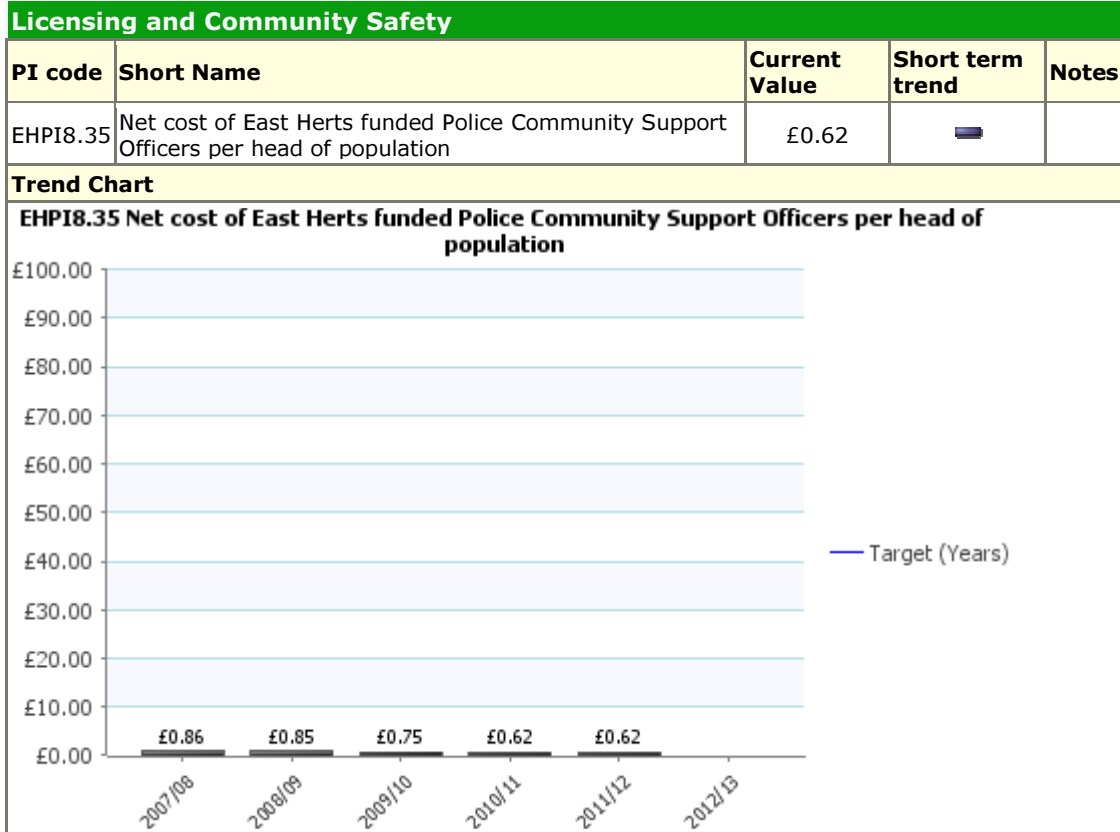
Licensing and Community Safety

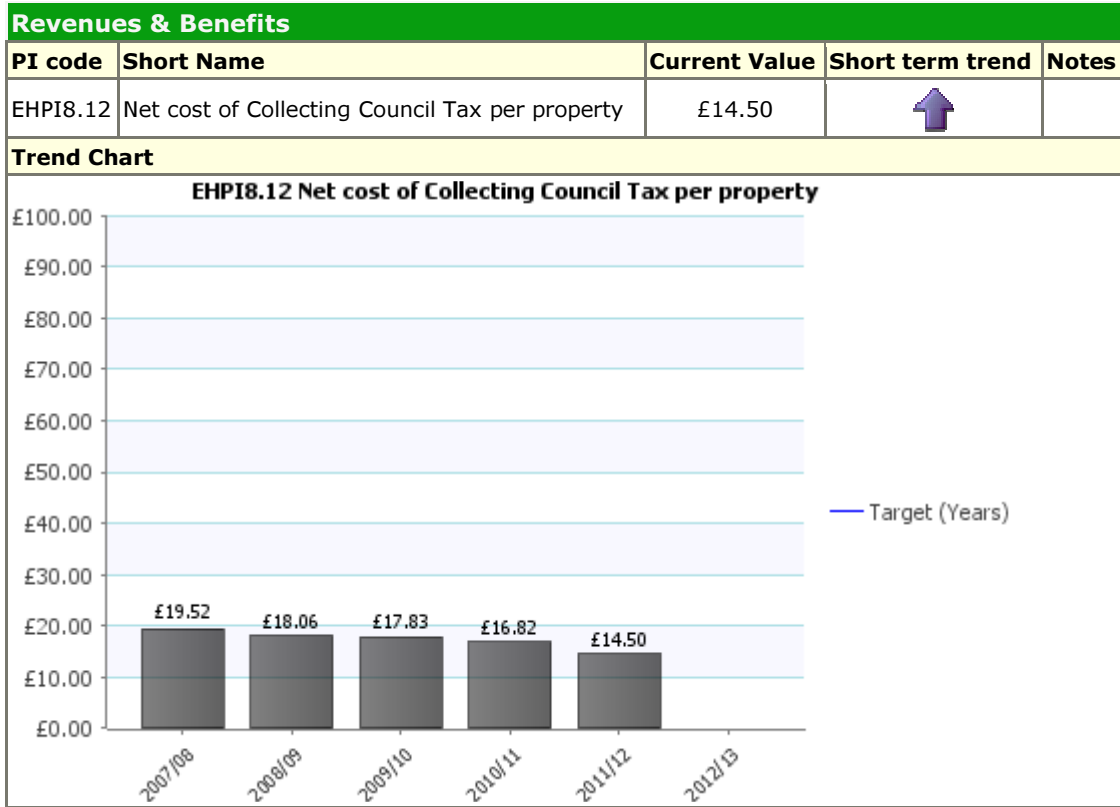
PI code	Short Name	Current Value	Short term trend	Notes
EHPI8.33	Net cost of Licensing per Hackney Carriage license	£99.87	↑	

Trend Chart







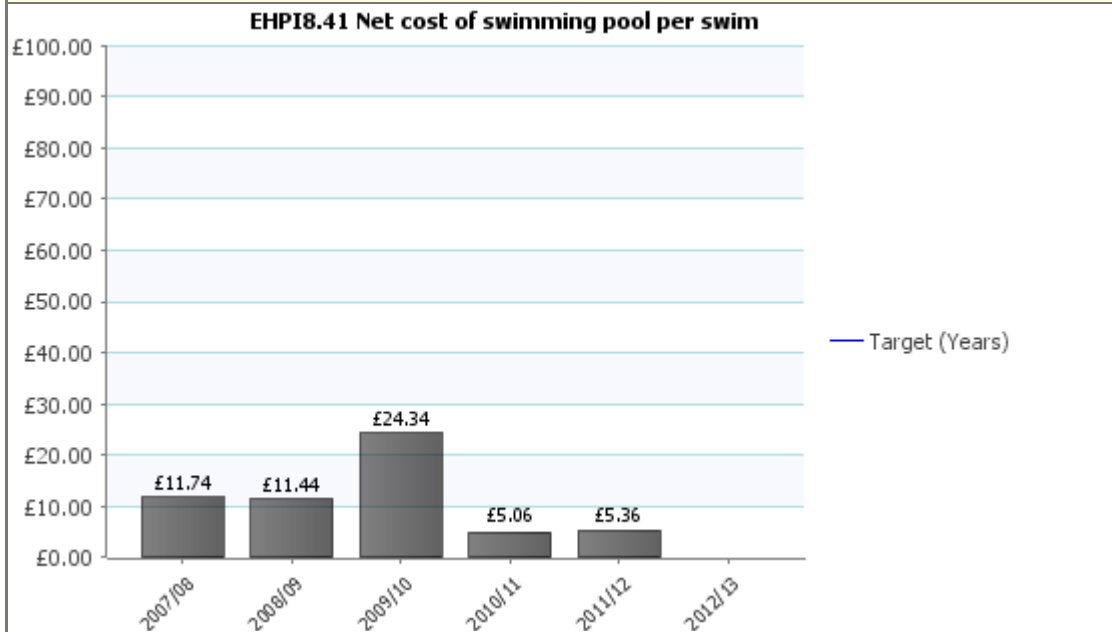


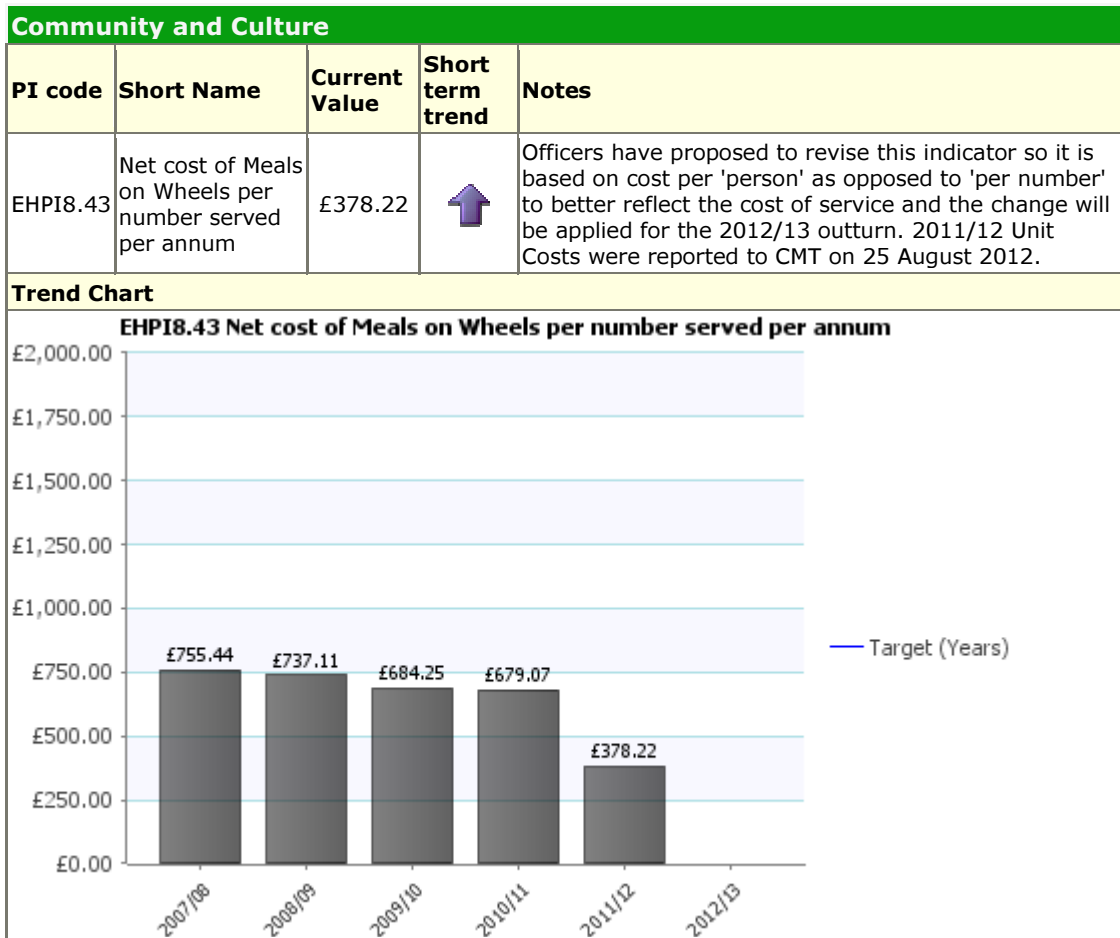
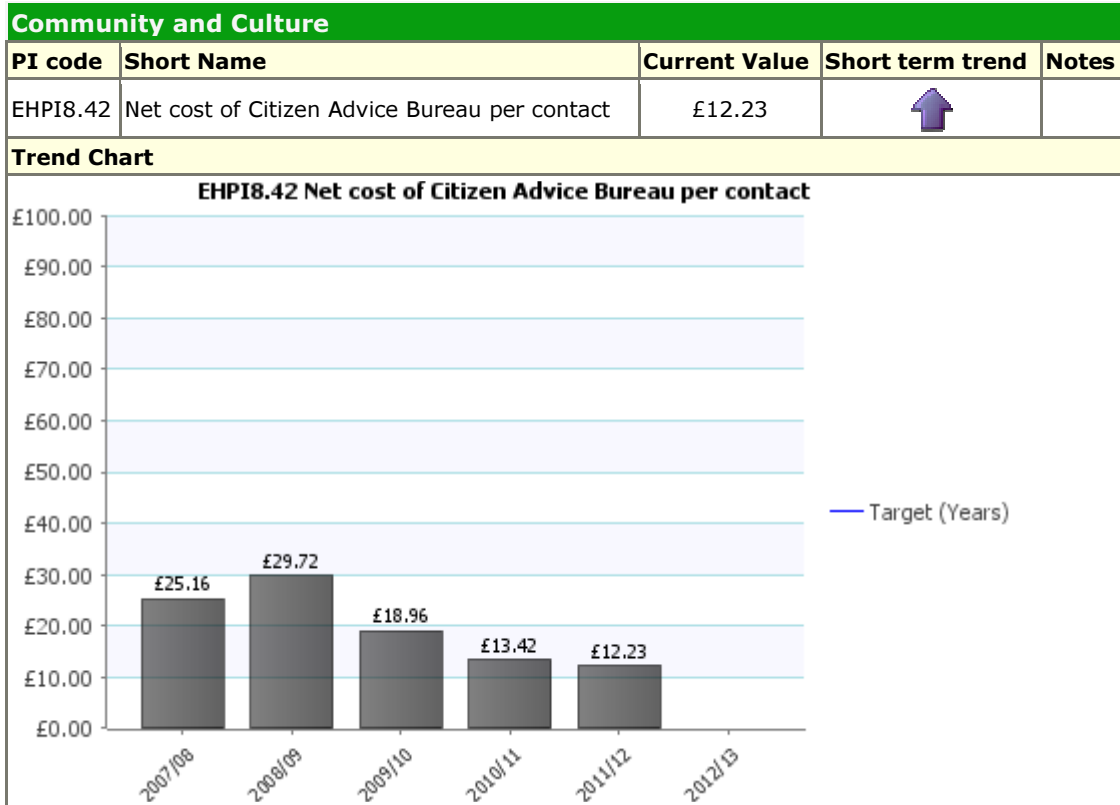
Traffic Light Data Only
Description Promoting prosperity & well being providing access&opportunities

Community and Culture

PI code	Short Name	Current Value	Short term trend	Notes
EHP18.41	Net cost of swimming pool per swim	£5.36	↓	The net cost has increased by 5.9%, above the rate of inflation. The net cost of service shows a marginal increase due to the Leisure Contract as the actual inflation indexation varied from forecast, as reported in the February 2012 Healthcheck. However there has also been a significant drop in the number of swims (13,000) compared to the previous year which would also account for the increase in the unit cost. This again is due to the prevailing economic climate. Officers have proposed to revise this indicator as it is now outdated. This is due to the change in delivery of leisure across the district and that a significant proportion of the leisure business now relates to gym usage. Officers recommend that this measure is changed to provide a better reflection of the cost of service and usage in preparation for the reporting of the 2012/13 outturn. 2011/12 Unit Costs were reported to CMT on 25 August 2012.

Trend Chart

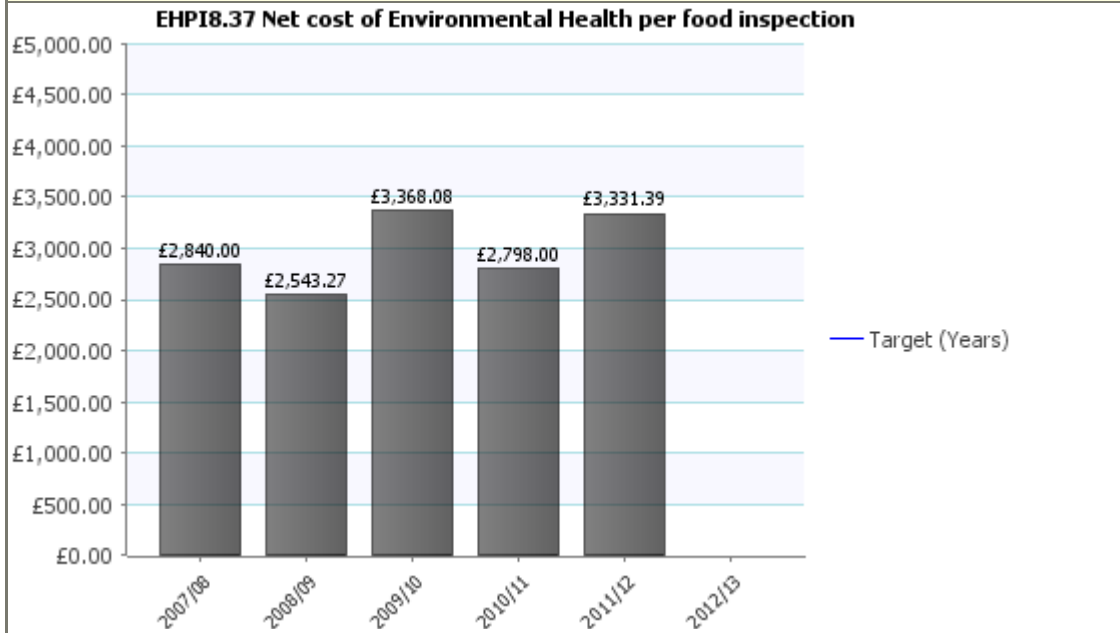


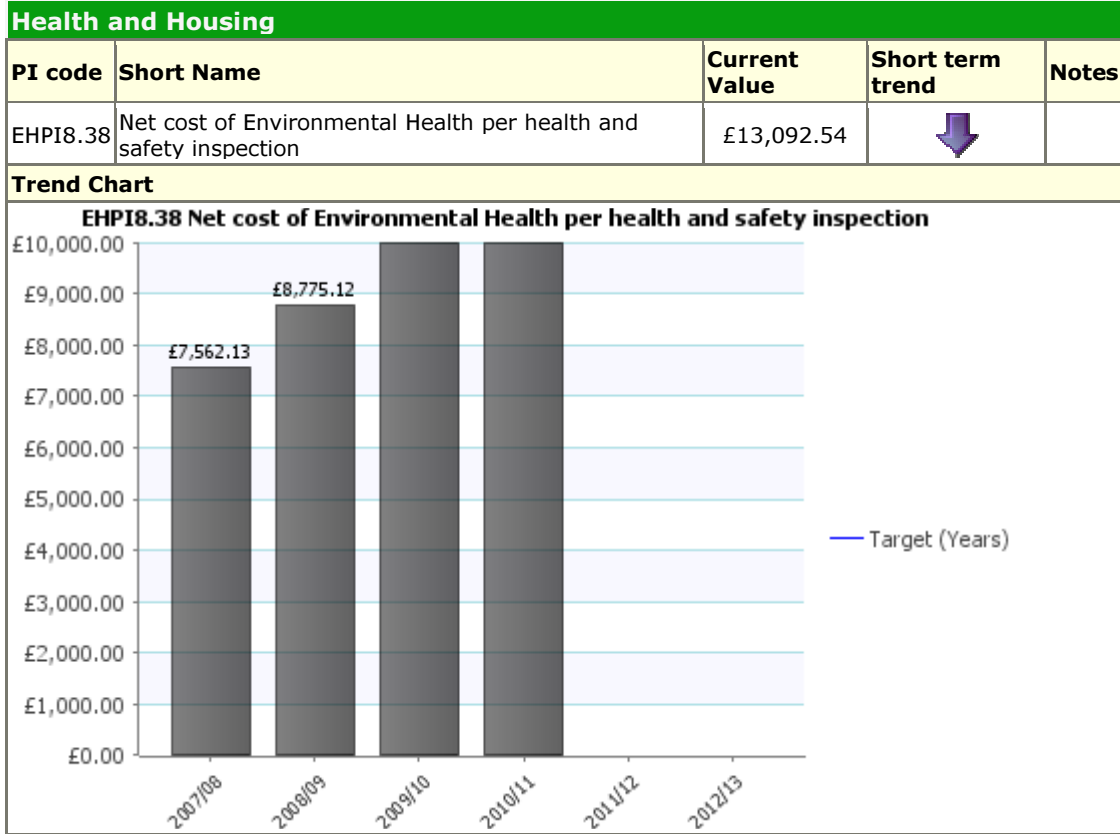


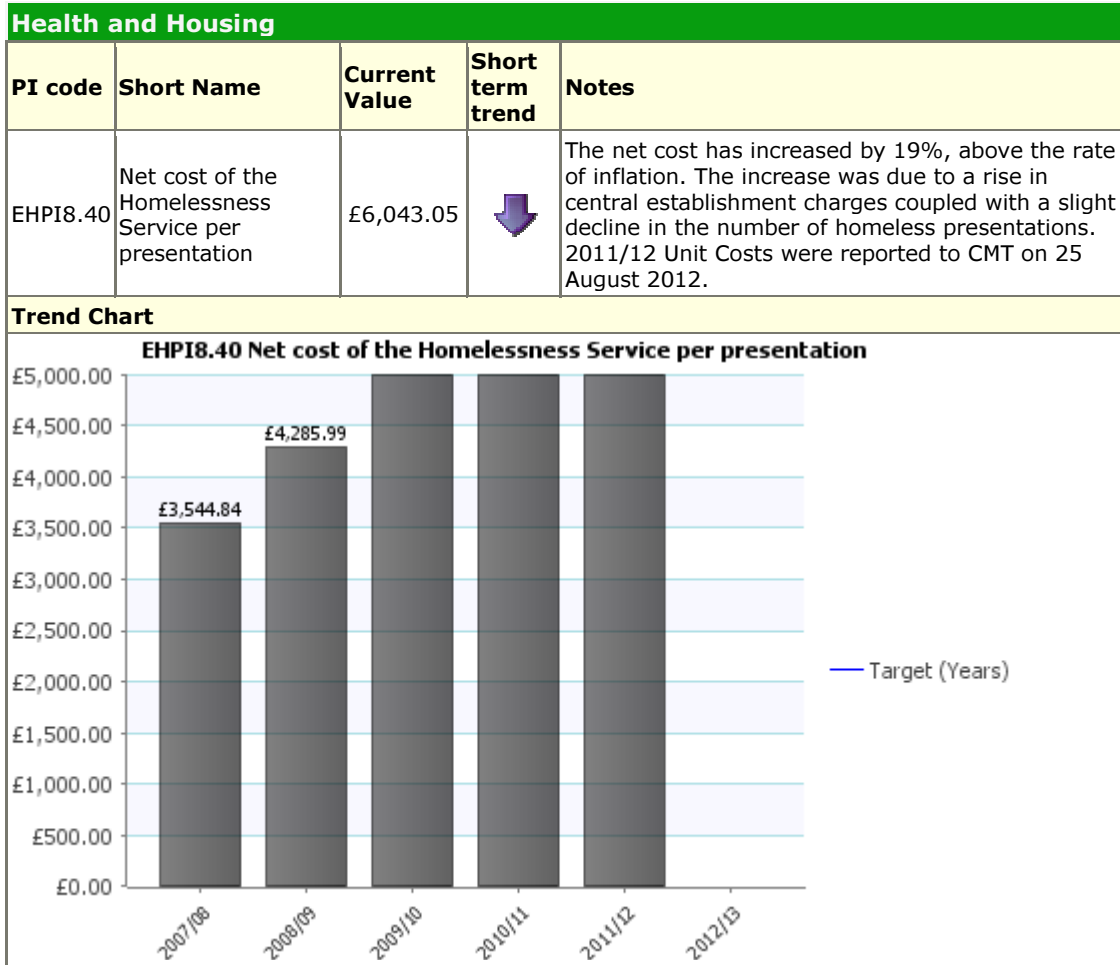
Health and Housing












PI code	Short Name	Current Value	Short term trend	Notes
EHP18.37	Net cost of Environmental Health per food inspection	£3,331.39	↓	The net cost has increased by 19.1%, above the rate of inflation. The increase was largely due to the fact that the number of food inspections have declined by 116 (23%). The decline in food inspections, particularly medium risk premises, are because the inspections take place every 18 months. This means one year the Council will inspect around 400 and then the following year around 500, then 400, 500 etc. Given 2011/12 saw a dip in inspections, the increase in the unit cost was inevitable. 2011/12 Unit Costs were reported to CMT on 25 August 2012.

Trend Chart







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: 20 NOVEMBER 2012

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF COMMUNITY SCRUTINY

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

WARD(S) AFFECTED: *none*

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To review and determine the Community Scrutiny Committee's future work programme

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR DECISION:</u> that the work programme detailed in this report be agreed
--

1.0 Background

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

2.0 Report

2.1 An article explaining the role of scrutiny and inviting suggestions from residents was published in the spring 2012 'council tax' edition of LINK magazine. No new topics for scrutiny have been received from the public to date.

2.2 The timing of some housing related reports coming to this committee had to be rescheduled to fit with external pressures such as public/partner consultation periods.

2.3 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** is attached to this report and will be updated

as new terminology appears and comes into common usage. Please let the Scrutiny Officer know of any terms you think should be corrected or added to the list.

- 2.4 This committee has the responsibility to receive a Crime and Disorder report at least once per year. The first election for a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) will have been held by the time of this committee meeting. The new post holder will now have to translate his/her manifesto into actions for 2013/14 onwards. By the time of this committee's next meeting on 12 March 2013 the plans and supporting budget for the coming year will be clearer. It is suggested that an agenda item discussing the plans and potential impact on community safety in the district be included on the agenda. Members are asked to confirm whether they would also like to extend an invitation to Cllr Alexander to join the March meeting in his capacity as East Herts representative on the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) - which is the scrutiny body overseeing the PCC.
- 2.5 Members are asked to indicate what focus they wish to have for scrutiny when the leisure contractor (SLM) attends in March 2013. If any specific information is required by the committee as part of the scrutiny process, a briefing paper needs to be sent in advance to allow SLM time to prepare their presentation.
- 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 - None

Contact Member: Cllr Graham McAndrew – Chairman Community Scrutiny Committee
graham.mcandrew@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Jeff Hughes – Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services
Extn 2170
jeff.hughes@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author: Marian Langley – Scrutiny Officer
marian.langley@eastherts.gov.uk

Community Scrutiny Committee work programme 2012/13

meeting	date	topic	Contact officer/lead	Next Exec
THIS	CIVIC YEAR			
Member information	Prob on line during Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2013/14 Proposed Service Options 		
JOINT SCRUTINY	15 Jan 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2013/14 Budget items 		
JOINT SCRUTINY	12 Feb 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2013/14 Service Plans • 2012/13 Estimates and 2013/14 Future targets 		
Meeting 4/4 in 2012/13	12 Mar 2013 Report deadline 27 Feb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from Health Eng Panel • Leisure Contract – year 4 • Draft (revised) EH Housing Register Policy • CRIME & DISORDER report (TBC)** • Healthcheck through to Dec 2013 • Work programme 2013/14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman of the Panel • Invite SLM • Housing Services Manager • X • Lead Officer - Performance • Scrutiny Officer 	4 June 2013
2013/14	CIVIC YEAR			
Meeting 1/4 in 2013/14	25 June 2013 Report deadline 12 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from Health Eng Panel • Community Grants review of applications and Q3/Q4 allocation • <i>vacancy</i> • Healthcheck through to Mar 2013 (which includes relevant 2012/13 Out-turns and Targets) • Work programme 2013/14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman of the Panel • Community Engagement Manager/Grants officer • X • Lead Officer - Performance • Scrutiny Officer 	2 July 2013 6 Aug 2013 3 Sept 2013

** This committee has a duty to receive a Crime and Disorder report at least once per year.

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***

Community Scrutiny	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To develop policy options and to review performance and scrutinise the policies of the Council relating to Licensing, Environmental Health, Crime and Disorder Reduction, Emergency Planning, Community Development, young people, Leisure, sport, arts, markets, diversity, grants, frontline Councillor engagement, Community Voice, valuing people, housing strategy, private sector housing, disabled facility grants, houses in multiple occupation, housing options, community meals, citizens' advice, benefits, Local Strategic Partnership and health scrutiny. 2. To make recommendations to the Executive on matters within the remit of the Committee. 3. To take evidence from interested groups and individuals and make recommendations to the Executive and Council for policy change and review the performance of outside bodies on matters within the remit of the Committee. 4. To consider issues referred by the Executive, or members of the Committee and where the views of outsiders may contribute, take evidence and report to the Executive and Council on matters within the remit of the Committee. 5. To consider any item referred to the Committee by any Member of the Council who is not a member of this Committee and decide whether that item should be pursued on matters within the remit of the Committee. 6. To appoint annually Standing Panels as may be determined which shall be given a brief to consider a specified service area relating to matters within the remit of the Committee and report back to the Committee on a regular basis as determined by the Committee. 7. To consider any item in the Forward Plan, within the remit of the Committee, to be considered by the Executive (except items of urgent business) before the item is considered by the Executive if requested by the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee. The relevant report to the Executive will be made available to the scrutiny committee. 8. To consider matters referred to the Committee by the Executive/Portfolio Holder on matters within the remit of the Committee and refer the matter to the Executive following consideration of the matter
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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

<p>Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):</p>	<p>People This priority focuses on enhancing the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.</p> <p>Place This priority focuses on the standard of the built environment and our neighbourhoods and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean.</p> <p>Prosperity This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic and social opportunities.</p> <p>Effective use of the scrutiny process contributes to the Council's ability to meet one or more of its 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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Abbreviations & Acronyms which may be used in ‘housing’ related reports/discussions

Version 1		Version as at 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

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**

		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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