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Jeff Hughes
Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services

MEETING	:	COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
VENUE	:	COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
DATE	:	TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER, 2015
TIME	:	7.00 PM

PLEASE NOTE TIME AND VENUE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE: (ONE VACANCY)

Councillor Mrs D Hollebon (Chairman)
Councillors G Cutting, J Goodeve, R Henson, J Jones, D Oldridge, M Pope, R Standley and K Warnell

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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.)

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AGENDA

1. Apologies

   To receive apologies for absence

2. Minutes (Pages 7 - 16)

   To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2015

3. Chairman's Announcements

4. Declarations of Interest

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

5. 2015/16 Service Plan and Key Projects Monitoring Report (Pages 17 - 26)

6. Community Scrutiny Corporate Healthcheck Report - August to September 2015 (Pages 27 - 62)

7. East Herts Leisure Strategy (Pages 63 - 74)

8. Registered Housing Providers - Repair Services (Pages 75 - 82)

9. The Draft Housing and Health Strategy 2016 - 2021 (Pages 83 - 126)

10. Review of Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan (Pages 127 - 144)

11. Community Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 145 - 158)

12. Urgent Business

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

involve the disclosure of exempt information.

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2015, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs D Hollebon (Chairman)
Councillors G Cutting, R Henson, J Jones, A McNeece, D Oldridge, M Pope and R Standley

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors A Alder, M Allen, D Andrews and P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	-	Democratic Services Officer
Simon Drinkwater	-	Acting Chief Executive/Director of Neighbourhood Services
Philip Gregory	-	Head of Strategic Finance
Marian Langley	-	Scrutiny Officer
Will O'Neill	-	Head of Communications, Engagement and Cultural Services
Ceri Pettit	-	Corporate Planning and Performance Manager
Ben Wood	-	Head of Business Development
Ben Cannell	-	Front of House Manager
Rhys Thomas	-	Arts and Entertainment Programme

Director

275 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors J Goodeve and K Warnell.

276 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 June be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

277 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR RIVERSMEAD AND CIRCLE AND SOUTH ANGLIA HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS 2014/15

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing submitted a report on the progress made by the two large scale voluntary transfer housing associations on the three remaining undertakings which remained following the end of the Delivery of Promises Programme in 2007.

The Manager, Housing Services explained that there were three indicators which the Council continued to monitor, Nomination Percentages, spend on Aids and Adaptations and the number of Right to Buy sales under the Clawback Agreement. Of particular concern was the fact that Riversmead Housing Association had not met its target spend for Aids and Adaptations on their tenants' homes. They stated that this was a result of a re-structure and gave an assurance that this would be monitored much more closely in future by their Senior Management Team on a monthly basis. An update was provided on the low level of Right to Buy sales which had been affected negatively by the Government's cap on the discounts which could be applied.

In response to a query from Councillor M Pope regarding missed targets on aids and adaptions, the Manager, Housing Services explained the role of the County Council and previous difficulties that had been experienced in making Occupational Therapist referrals, which could have impacted

on the aids and adaptations target, although there was an element of self-referral in relation to smaller adaptations. Assurances had been given by Riversmead that no one had been refused an aid or adaptation. Members were reminded that over the past seven years Riversmead HA had consistently overspent on its aids and adaptations target.

In response to a query from Councillor D Oldridge, the Manger, Housing Services explained that no penalties or claw backs had been imposed within the contract.

In response to a query from Councillor D Andrews regarding references to “centralised” and loss of “key personnel”, Members were advised that both Housing Associations had centralised a lot of their key functions and this had needed time to “bed” in

Councillor A McNeece referred to his difficulties in contacting Riversmead HA by telephone, adding that this might be the reason targets were not being met as people could not get through. The Manager, Housing Services stated that this issue had been raised at a quarterly meeting with the Associations. They had advised that more staff had been employed but that this had taken time to be effective. She commented that both HAs were keen to promote “walk abouts” within their areas with local Councillors and they could provide dates when these were scheduled to take place.

Councillor D Andrews expressed his frustration at trying to engage with the Housing Associations. The Manager, Housing Services advised that quarterly meetings were held with both housing associations and that all Councillors were invited to attend (with the meetings chaired by Councillor Buckmaster).

In response to a query from Councillor M Pope regarding Right to Buy and the Government’s stance on capping and what the Council could do, the Manager, Housing Services explained that letter drops by the Government had taken place and both the Council and Housing Associations had advertised, but that the central issue was high property values in the District.

In response to a query from Councillor A McNeece, the Manager, Housing Services provided a definition of "Affordable Housing" adding that this was an issue addressed in the Council's Local Plan. The Chairman suggested that the Member might wish to discuss the issue further with the Officer, outside of the meeting.

In response to a query by Councillor D Andrews, the Manager, Housing Services explained that no "void" properties targets were included in the Stock Transfer Contract. The Chairman advised that she and the Acting Chief Executive and Director would be meeting with Housing Associations shortly and would discuss performance and report back to Members in November 2015.

Members supported a suggestion that the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing be advised that both Housing Association targets should be monitored more closely and that communication links, allowing better access by the public be put in place. This was supported.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the performance of both Riversmead and Circle South Anglia Housing Associations on the three remaining stock transfer undertakings for the year 2014/15 be noted; and

(B) the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing be advised that targets should be monitored more closely and that communication links, allowing better access by the public, be put in place.

278 HERTFORD THEATRE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2014/15

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing submitted a report detailing the fifth annual report for Hertford Theatre.

The Head of Communications, Engagement and Cultural Services explained the main elements of the report concluding

that the figures showed that this was another successful story of continued business growth. He referred to the mid-term potential alternative governance options, the detail of which was set out in the report. It was noted that from April 2016, the theatre would be open on Sundays as well.

The Director of Hertford Theatre provided a summary of the report in terms of his vision to consolidate the Theatre's position as an arts venue both locally and further afield to expose the theatre's work and further increase audiences. He explained that the Arts Council had granted the Theatre a "Producers Fellowship" to develop a greater understanding of services to all audiences across the District. The Director commented on other challenges in terms of audience inclusivity and referred to a planned performance of "Welcome to Biscuit Land" by a performer living with Tourette's Syndrome and of proposals to introduce "relaxed" cinema performances for people suffering with autism and other challenging conditions.

Councillor J Jones congratulated both the Director of Hertford Theatre and the Head of Communications, Engagement and Cultural Services for the excellent figures achieved and of the growing popularity of the Theatre. He hoped that Buntingford could benefit from satellite links to the Theatre and to performances.

Councillor D Oldridge referred to the "patchy" figures achieved in the cinema and queried what could be done to maximise attendance. The Director stated that although there was a large choice of films, Members needed to have regard to the fact that the Theatre was one of the largest independent cinemas in the country with a 408 seat auditorium. He stated that the pricing policy was constantly reviewed and competitive and that the pricing for Saturday mornings had been reduced to appeal to a family audience.

Councillor M Pope thanked the Officers for the detailed report and asked whether benchmarking and comparative figures could be included in future reports. This was supported. In response to a further question in relation to negative feedback about the cooling systems and technical equipment, the

Director provided an update on recent work undertaken to address this.

The Chairman praised the work of the volunteers. The Front of House Manager explained that the Theatre had a fantastic team of 70 at the moment which was sufficient to deliver the current programme.

Councillor D Oldridge referred to wheel chair access to the stage and back stage and queried what could be done to rectify this. The Director explained that the Theatre was fully wheel chair accessible for people coming to watch shows but back stage remained a problem. He summarised the difficulties and that an audit had revealed that the costs would be “astronomical” to reconfigure what was currently there in terms of the differing floor levels and the narrowness of the corridors.

In response to a query from Councillor M Pope regarding the marketing strategy, the Marketing Manager explained that the Theatre had a structured and collaborative approach to marketing to achieve good value for money and was making increasing use of online media.

The Chairman, on behalf of Members, thanked the Director and his team at Hertford Theatre for another successful update and looked forward to next year’s report.

The Committee received the report.

> RESOLVED – that (A) the Annual Report for Hertford Theatre for the year 2014/15 be received;
>
> (B) the cohort of volunteers be congratulated and thanked for their contribution to the success of the venue; and
>
> (C) benchmarking and comparative data on discrete strands of the business be included in future reports.

279 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES CALCULATIONS AND LEVELS

The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services submitted a report providing Members with an opportunity to review the current level of fees and charges within the remit of Community Scrutiny Committee. The Head of Strategic Finance explained the key principles on which fees and types of charges were set and of the three types of charges levied.

The Head of Strategic Finance reminded Members that the MTFP had been set based on an increase of 2.5% for fees and charges but this figure was an overall percentage, not necessarily levied on every fee/charge. Heads of Service were currently drafting their budgets and any comments would be fed back to relevant Officers for further review by the joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees in 2016. He stated that Corporate Business Scrutiny and Environment Scrutiny Committees had already reviewed their Fees and Charges and that Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee had requested more detail in respect of usage data against the fees and charges where the Authority had discretion.

In response to a query from Councillor R Standley regarding the costs associated with dispensations for builders and what was charged when parking outside of a home being worked on, the Head of Strategic Finance explained that this was within the remit of Environment Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor G Cutting referred to the need to include comparative data, e.g. listing the number of dog breeding establishments in order to make an informed judgement. The Head of Strategic Finance commented that Corporate Business Scrutiny had asked for information on volumes, whether a charge was statutory, full cost recovery or whether the Council had full discretion.

In response to a query by Councillor D Oldridge, the Head of Strategic Finance explained that customer satisfaction data would be included in future Service Plans.

The Committee agreed the report and supported the

suggestion made at Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee regarding the inclusion of information about usage date (volumes) and comparative figures on fees and charges within the remit of Community Scrutiny Committee where the Authority had discretion.

RESOLVED – that the report be approved and that information about usage data (volumes) and comparative figures on fees and charges within the remit of Community Scrutiny Committee, be included in future reports where the Authority has discretion.

280 COMMUNITY SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (SEPTEMBER 2015)

The Chairman submitted a report setting out the proposed work programme for the 2015-16 civic year.

The Scrutiny Officer commented that a request had been submitted regarding the development of a new Leisure Strategy for the Authority for consideration by Members at its meeting on 17 November 2015. She explained that this would be a large piece of work which would also encompass the Health and Wellbeing Strategy adding that the request was for an initial report to come to Members in November, which would request that a Task and Finish Group be established to work out the detail. This was supported.

The Scrutiny Officer referred to the need to identify a “Crime and Disorder” item for inclusion on the agenda for the meeting on 15 March 2016. “Rural Crime Trends in East Herts” had been identified as a suitable item for scrutiny given the changing pattern of rural crime discussed recently at a meeting of the Community Safety Partnership. This was supported.

In response to a query from Councillor A McNeece the Scrutiny Officer stated that the review would focus on rural crime, this would not include incidents such as cyber-crime as this was not location specific.

The Committee approved the report, as amended.

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

281 COMMUNITY SCRUTINY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK REPORT - APRIL TO JULY 2015

The Director of Finance and Support Services submitted a report on the performance of key indicators for Community Scrutiny Committee for the period April to July 2015.

The Corporate Planning and Performance Manager provided a summary of the report highlighting those which were on target or exceeded their target (3); those which were off target (2) and why and including indicators (17) which identified trends.
The Corporate Planning and Performance Manager explained how Heads of Service would be managing declining trends. She explained that going forward, it was proposed that targets be profiled and why this was necessary in terms of recognising peaks in service demand.

In response to a query regarding EHPI 181 (Time taken to process Housing Benefit, new claims and change events) and meeting targets, the Corporate Planning and Performance Manager explained that new profiled targets would be introduced with immediate effect.

In response to a query from Councillor A Alder regarding the age group of cohorts presenting themselves as homeless, the Acting Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhood Services undertook to provide a written response.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the Executive be advised that Community Scrutiny Committee noted the performance for the period April to July 2015.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm

Chairman .....

Date .....

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

2015/16 SERVICE PLAN AND KEY PROJECTS MONITORING REPORT

WARD(S) AFFECTED: NONE

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This exception report provides a mid-year summary of the council's achievements against its priorities for 2015/16 and key projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: **That:**	
(A)	**Members support and note the reported performance for the period April 2015 to September 2015; and**

1.0 Background

1.1 In 2011/12 the council agreed its overall priorities for improving the district around the themes of:

- People
- Place
- Prosperity

1.2 These priorities formed the basis of the Council's Corporate Plan for 2015/16. Departments within the council produced a service plan to demonstrate what actions will be delivered to help meet those priorities. These were agreed by the Executive in March 2015 and progress is reported to the relevant Scrutiny Committees.

1.3 The Council's service planning framework is one of a number of processes where project related activity is identified. Previous years has seen all service plan activity monitored on a six monthly

basis regardless of whether they are project related or more reflective of day to day service activity.

1.4 From 2016/17 onwards the finance and business planning process will result in a forward plan of activity and deliverables over the next 4 years, as opposed to one year. Much of this will be project based. Therefore this year's monitoring process has been amended to reflect this future direction.

1.5 Scrutiny committees will continue to receive their six monthly monitoring reports. However the focus will be on the delivery of projects captured in the service plans relevant to the committees' terms of reference. This will enable members to focus on strategic areas of importance to the council.

1.6 This report covers the period 1 April to 30 September 2015 for the following services:

- Communication, Engagement and Culture
- Community Safety and Health
- Business Development (Economic Development)
- Environmental Services (in relation to leisure only)
- Housing
- Revenues and Benefits Shared Service

1.7 There are no outstanding actions from previous years that need to be reported.

2.0 Report

2.1 In total there are 34 actions in the service plans detailed in paragraph 1.6, of which:

Number of Actions	**Status**
15% (5)	Have already been achieved
73% (25)	Are on target
6% (2)	Are off target
3% (1)	Have been proposed for deletion

3% (1)	Have been proposed for suspension

2.3 The two actions that are off target are:

- **15 – CSH06 – Efficiency – Provide an effective service in dealing with requests for service about Licensed premises, antisocial behaviour and issues dealt with by Environmental Health**. The target is not expected to be met due to resource and capacity pressures on the service. Processes are being reviewed to improve the rate of response including the introduction of new software.
- **15 – HS01 – Facilitate, support and maximise the provision of additional, appropriate affordable housing in association with developers, registered providers and the Homes and Communities Agency**. It is not certain that the objective will be met this year as the number of new affordable homes is heavily dependent on the number of new developments coming forward, the amount of affordable housing negotiated under Section 106 obligations and the timetable/ planned completion dates of the developers building on the site.

2.8 All Councillors have access to Covalent (the council's performance management system), should they wish to interrogate the full progress comments on all 2015/16 Service Plan actions. The Performance Team are able to provide support and training on using the Covalent system if required.

2.9 For 2015/16 there are 33 corporate projects of which 10 are included in the service plans detailed in paragraph 1.6. The status of these project actions are:

Number of Actions	**Status**
10% (1)	Has already been achieved
70% (7)	Are on target
10% (1)	Are off target
10% (1)	Have been proposed for deletion

2.10 Full details on the status of these projects are detailed in **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**.

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'**.

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IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives *(delete as appropriate):*	***People*** This priority focuses on enhancing the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable. ***Place*** This priority focuses on the standard of the built environment and our neighbourhoods and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean. ***Prosperity*** This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic and social opportunities.
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.
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	A number of the council's service plan actions do support/contribute to the health and wellbeing agenda. Any relevant project actions that are either 'off target', 'have a revised completion date' or are proposed for 'deletion or suspension' are highlighted in the report along with a current service update.

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2015/16 Key Corporate Project Actions

Action Code	Action Title	Action Description	Due Date	Expected Outcome Icon	Expected Outcome	Progress commentary April - September 2015
Business Development (Economic Development)						
15-ED01	Delivery of a new Eastern Plateau Rural Development Programme (RDPE).	**Target:** Spend and output targets agreed with Defra by 27th February 2015. Delivery programme to commence from this date. **Outcome:** Increased business growth and competitiveness. Key delivery outputs for the life of the programme will include - Micro, small and farm diversification businesses supported - 250. Jobs created - 94. **Critical Success Factors:** Effective management and project facilitation. **Environmental Impacts:** Neutral.	31-Mar-16		Action On Target	The contract with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) has been signed by East Herts Council. There are several projects in the pipeline that are likely to move forward to the application stage. The delivery team is in place and the Local Action Group (LAG) that oversees the programme has met on three occasions.
15-ED04	Submission to Defra to enable East Herts Council to become a Food and Farming Local Development Order Pathfinder	**Target:** Identify barriers to SME growth in the rural economy. **Outcome:** The project will identify practices in the planning system that represent barriers to SME growth. The project will be used nationally to support changes in approach that will help facilitate growth. **Critical Success Factors:** Identification of three or four farm businesses will need to participate in the project. **Environmental Impacts:** Positive.	23-Jan-16		Action To Be Deleted	The submission made to Defra was rejected.
Communications, Engagement and Culture						
15-CEC05	Explore opportunities to meet excess demand for Hertford Theatre studio space in other locations.	**Target:** To have analysed opportunities for meeting unmet demand for studio and other space. **Outcome:** Unmet demand for space and classes met. **Critical Success Factors:** Available alternative spaces and funding. **Environmental Impacts:** May involve some improvements to existing buildings	01-Mar-16		Action On Target	Opportunities are being explored with draft business plan in place.
15-CEC07	Submit an application to Sport England for Sport Activate project funds and if successful then start to deliver the programme.	**Target:** Deliver in accordance with agreed programme. **Outcome:** Improved community health and well-being. Targets for participation and longer term outcomes to be determined during application process. **Critical Success Factors:** Success of bid to Sport England. **Environmental Impacts:** N/A.	01-Mar-16		Action On Target	The bid was successful so delivery is now under way.
15-CEC03	Develop the 'Timebanking' volunteering project that was successfully trialled in Buntingford to the rest of the district.	**Target:** Extend timebanking from Buntingford across the district. **Outcome:** Increase in social capital. **Critical Success Factors:** Voluntary effort and funding. **Environmental Impacts:** N/A	01-Mar-16		Action On Target	Project is progressing well with launches in Sawbridgeworth and Ware.

Action Code	Action Title	Action Description	Due Date	Expected Outcome Icon	Expected Outcome	Progress commentary April - September 2015
Community Safety and Health						
15-CSH06	Efficiency - Provide an effective service in dealing with requests for service about Licensed premises, antisocial behaviour and issues dealt with by Environmental Health.	**Target:** Respond to these complainants within three working days of receipt and inform enquirer of outcome in every case. **Outcome:** Effective support and intervention. **Critical Success Factors:** Workload together with partners support and response. **Environmental Impacts:** Likely impact on visual street scene, reduced littering and noise nuisance. Likely reduction in risk to public health and safety.	31-Mar-16		Action Off Target	The target is not expected to be met due to resource and capacity pressures on the service. Processes are being reviewed to improve the rate of response including the introduction of new software.
15-CSH07	Air Quality Grant Project - Deliver an air quality management project with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), using Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) grant monies - Hertford Air Quality Subway Project	**Target:** Work with HCC to deliver air quality projects financed by DEFRA. **Outcome:** Improve air quality for residents. **Critical Success Factors:** Staff resources. HCC cooperation. Unknown staff workload i.e. flooding. **Environmental Impacts:** Improve air quality for residents and cleaning of subways.	31-Mar-16		Action Achieved	Project completed at 2 sites.
Housing Services						
15-HS02	Procure and implement a new Choice Based Lettings Contract	**Target**: New contract in place by July 2015 and system implemented by February 2016 **Outcome**: New Choice Based Letting Contract let and CBL system implemented following end of current contract June 2015. New specification to include increased functionality for managing data protection and better data reporting. **Critical Success Factors**: Procurement of contract according to timetable; Agreement between Consortium Partners during the procurement process; Current incumbent agrees to extend current contract at an acceptable cost whilst procurement takes place; Suitable contractors tender for the service; cost, time and expertise to migrate of current data from current incumbent to new incumbent; willingness to provide timely assistance from current incumbent if not successful with new contract procurement process; unknown actual costs for set-up and on going revenue implications of new contract; possible training and transference of expertise from current system to new system for Housing Team and RP partners. **Environmental Impacts:** Limited. Some travelling by car between LA Consortium member's offices.	28-Feb-16		Action On Target	Contract was awarded in August 2015 to the current incumbent following a full procurement exercise. Contract due to be signed in October 2015 with implementation timetable for software enhancements to meet specification to be before end of March 2016. As the current incumbent was successful there is no data migration or training requirements so limited impact on service provision to customers.
Environmental Services and Leisure						
15-ES05	Develop full business case for redevelopment of the Hartham Pavilion at Hartham Common.	**Target**: Business case submitted to Corporate Management Team. **Outcome**: Clear demonstration of the costs, savings and non-financial benefits of improving the facility including the re-provision of public toilets within the Pavilion building. **Critical Success Factors:** Staff resources; support from leisure contractor; Funding approved. **Environmental Impacts**: None.	31-Mar-16		Action On Target	Reviewing architect draft issue #1 start date liable to slip into 2016

Action Code	Action Title	Action Description	Due Date	Expected Outcome Icon	Expected Outcome	Progress commentary April - September 2015
Revenues and Benefits Services						
15-RB02	To continue channel shift to self service options for customers and to explore further self service facilities for future development	**Target**: To enable customers to resolve a small range of basic queries themselves. **Outcome**: Customer satisfaction levels maintained at April -Nov 2014 levels. **Critical Success Factors**: Stable workloads and staff resources. **Environmental Impacts**: None.	31-Mar-16		Action On Target	Further self serve products to be launched shortly and new options being explored.

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY – 17 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK – AUGUST 2015 TO SEPTEMBER 2015

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 August 2015 to September 2015.
- Community Scrutiny has 22 indicators in its performance monitoring basket. Four of these are either on target or exceeding their targets and one performance indicator was just off target. The remaining 17 performance indicators are trend only.
- Overall for the short term trend nine indicators out of the 22 performance indicators in Community Scrutiny's basket are showing an improvement when performance is compared to the previous period. Three indicators have maintained the same level of performance and 10 have declined.

RECOMMENDATION FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:	
That:	
(A)	**Members note and support the reported performance for the period August 2015 to September 2015.**

1.0 Background

1.1 The Council uses performance indicators and targets to help monitor progress against key objectives, understand how it is impacting upon the lives of residents and help inform decisions about directing resources to areas of need. East Herts Council's performance management framework was reviewed by Members in 2013 to make

it more streamlined and more closely aligned with the objectives and priorities set out in the Corporate Plan. In 2015/16 there are 73 performance indicators, of which 22 are monitored within the year by Community Scrutiny Committee.

1.2 The report contains a breakdown of the following information by each service area:

- An overview of performance, in particular where there have been issues and remedial actions taken during the period.
- The indicators where data is collected monthly, with performance for September 2015 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 or quarterly basis to this committee.
Essential Reference Paper 'C' Provides guidance notes and definitions for the performance indicators relating to Community Scrutiny Committee.

2.0 Performance analysis

2.1 SHORT TERM TREND ANALYSIS

Table one shows current performance for measures where there is a target together with movement since the last reported period. Two indicators are showing an improvement/increase. Two indicators have maintained the same level of performance and one indicator shows a decline.

Table One:

Performance Indicator Short Name	Performance Status (RAG)	Movement since last reported
EHPI 11.2 – Number of producers at Hertford farmers market	**Green**	**Improved**
EHPI 181 – Time taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and change events.	**Green**	**Improved**
EHPI 129 – Response time to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) complaints made to EHC	**Green**	**Stayed the same**
EHPI 11.1 – Rental income from market traders.	**Green**	**Declined**
EHPI 2.12 – Service requests: environmental health	**Amber**	**Stayed the same**

2.2 TREND ONLY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Table two contains a summary of movement since each measure was last reported.

Table Two:

Indicator (Trend only)
There has been a gradual decrease in **EHPI 10.1** (Council tax support caseload) between August to September.
There has been a gradual decrease in **EHPI 10.3** (Housing benefit

caseload) between August to September.
There has been a slight decrease in **EHPI 151** (Number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation) at the end of Quarter 2.
There has been an increase in **EHPI 152** (The number of applicants accepted as owed the main homelessness duty to secure accommodation) for Quarter 2.
There has been an increase in **EHPI 153** (Number of applicants that presented to the council as homeless) for Quarter 2.
There have been no formal warnings issued to drivers and operators by the Licensing team between August to September for **EHPI 3.1**. This includes matters like - failure to produce documents, parking issues and driver conduct.
There has a slight increase in taxi licensing matters taken forward to the Licensing Sub Committee between August to September for **EHPI 3.2**.
There has been a gradual increase in **EHPI 3.3** (Number of events notified to the Safety Advisory Group by event organisers) between August to September.
There has been a slight decrease in **EHPI 3.4** (The number of visits by Licensing Enforcement officers to Licensed premises) between August to September.
There has been an increase in **EHPI 3.5** (The number of applications received by the Licensing team in respect of Licensed premises) between August to September.
There were no applications for **EHPI 3.6** (The number of these applications that have received representations against them) in September.
There has been a slight increase in licensing applications taken forward to Licensing Sub Committee for **EHPI 3.7** between August to September.
There has been an increase in **EHPI 3a** (Usage: number of swims (under 16)) for Quarter 2.
There has been a decrease in **EHPI 3b** (Usage: number of swims (16 – under 60 year olds)) for Quarter 2.
There has been a decrease in **EHPI 3c** (Usage: number of swims (60 year old +)) for Quarter 2.

There has been a decrease in **EHPI 4a** (Usage: Gym (16 – under 60 year olds)) for Quarter 2.
There has been an increase in **EHPI 4b** (Usage: Gym (60 + year olds)) for Quarter 2.

2.3 **Long term trend analysis (current value compared to the average performance for the last 12 months or last 4 quarters)**

Table three:

Service and Indicator	Commentary
Environment Services	
EHPI 3c – Usage: number of swims (60 + years old)	The long term trend compares current performance against the average over the last four quarters and therefore takes account of the good performance that occurred in Quarter 4 for 2014/15 and Quarter 1 for 2015/16. Swimming is declining nationally, however August 2015 was a particularly low month this year which attributed to the declining trend.
EHPI 4a – Usage: Gym (16 – under 60 year olds)	Long term trend is lower as it compares current performance against the average of the last four quarters and throughput was higher in the last quarter of the year. The increase in SLMs membership in the last quarter had a positive impact to throughput in Quarter 2. Throughput is still performing well against the previous 4 year average.
EHPI 4b – Usage: Gym (60 + year olds)	Long term trend is lower as it compares current performance against the average of the last four quarters and throughput was higher in the last quarter of the year. The increase in SLMs membership in the last quarter had a positive impact to throughput in Quarter 2. Throughput is still performing well against the previous 4 year average.
Shared Revenue and Benefits Services	
EHPI 10.1 – Council Tax	The service is aware of the gradual decreasing

Support caseload and **EHPI 10.3** – Housing benefit caseload	caseload numbers and predicts this reduction in people claiming housing benefit and council tax support will continue (along with national trends) until further welfare reform changes are made. It is important to note however that the decreasing numbers of people in receipt of housing benefit or council tax support has not directly corresponded with a reduction in overall volume of work as the service is seeing increasing complexity within individual cases. No further action required at this stage.
Housing Services	
EHPI 151 – Number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter	The council owned temporary accommodation (hostel) remains full with 12 households with the average length of stay for those with a homeless duty before moving onto a housing association tenancy is 12 weeks. There is no clear cause to the higher number and is just subject to when households are ready to move onto a housing association tenancy.
EHPI 152 – The number of applicants accepted as owed the main homelessness duty to secure accommodation.	The number of homeless acceptances was only one off compared to the same period last year. The primary reason for homelessness is due to the end of a private sector assured short hold tenancy because the landlord requires the property back. Work is underway to profile homelessness presentations, results of this and how it might explain performance will be available from Quarter 3.

2.4 The seven new indicators introduced in 2015/16 listed below do not have a full year of past data for a long term trend analysis to be generated and are currently for information only. The indicators are:

- EHPI 3.1 - The number of formal warnings issued to drivers and operators by the Licensing team.
- EHPI 3.2 - The number of taxi licensing matters taken forward to the Licensing Sub Committee.
- EHPI 3.3 – Number of events notified to the Safety Advisory Group by event organisers.
- EHPI 3.4 – The number of visits by Licensing Enforcement officers to licensed premises'.

- EHPI 3.5 – Number of applications received by the licensing team in respect of licensed premises.
- EHPI 3.6 – The number of these applications that have received representations against them.
- EHPI 3.7 – Number of these applications that are taken forward to Licensing Sub Committee.

Potential issues in future

2.5 **EHPI 2.12 – Service requests: environmental health**. Performance was 'Amber' for September 2015; however the value is only 1% below target. Processes are being reviewed to improve the rate of response including the introduction of new software

Please refer to **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** for the full performance indicator analysis.

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:

2014/15 Performance Indicators Estimates and Future Targets Report – Executive 3 March 2015

Contact Members: Councillor G Williamson – Executive Member for Finance and Support Services
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Councillor G McAndrew – Executive Member for Environment and the Public Space
Graham.mcandrew@eastherts.gov.uk

Councillor G Jones – Executive Member for Economic Development
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Councillor E Buckmaster – Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing
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Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives:	***People – Fair and accessible services for those that use them and opportunities for everyone to contribute*** *This priority focuses on delivering strong services and seeking to enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing, particularly for those who are vulnerable.* ***Prosperity – Improving the economic and social opportunities available to our communities*** *This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic opportunities and delivering cost effective services.*
Consultation:	Performance monitoring discussions have taken place between Directors and Heads of Service.
Legal:	There are no legal implications arising from the report.
Financial:	Financial discussions have taken place between Directors and Heads of Service and any implications have been highlighted in the report.
Human Resource:	There are no human resource implications arising from the report.
Risk Management:	By not having effective performance management arrangements in place puts the Council at risk of not being clear whether it's priorities and objectives are being met and if there are any service delivery issues, that could impact on their delivery. The Corporate Healthcheck report is one tool designed to help mitigate against this risk. Effective performance management arrangements help to support transparency and increase local accountability.
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	A number of the council's performance indicators do support/contribute to the health and wellbeing agenda. Any relevant indicators that are 'Red' rated are highlighted in the report and mitigating actions will be taken.

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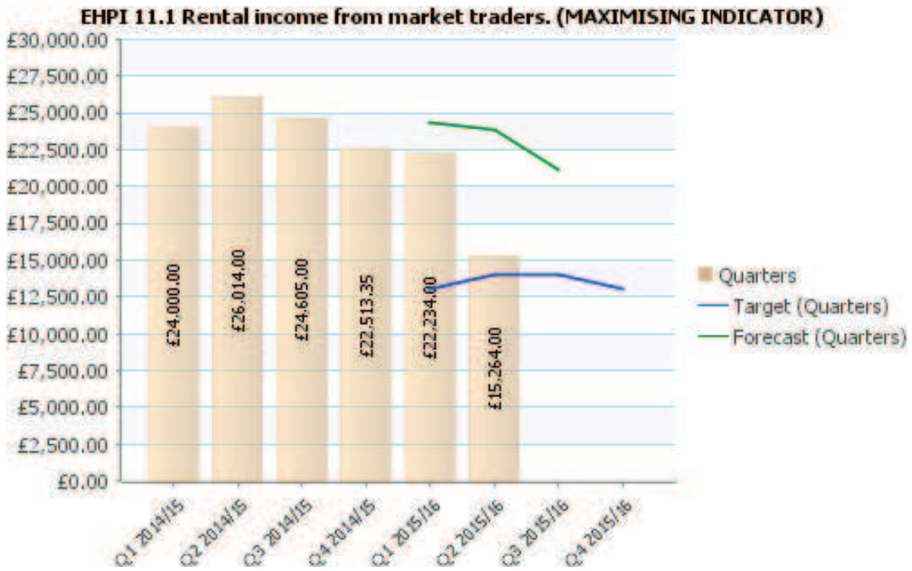
Community Scrutiny Healthcheck 2015/16 – July to September 2015 / Quarter 2

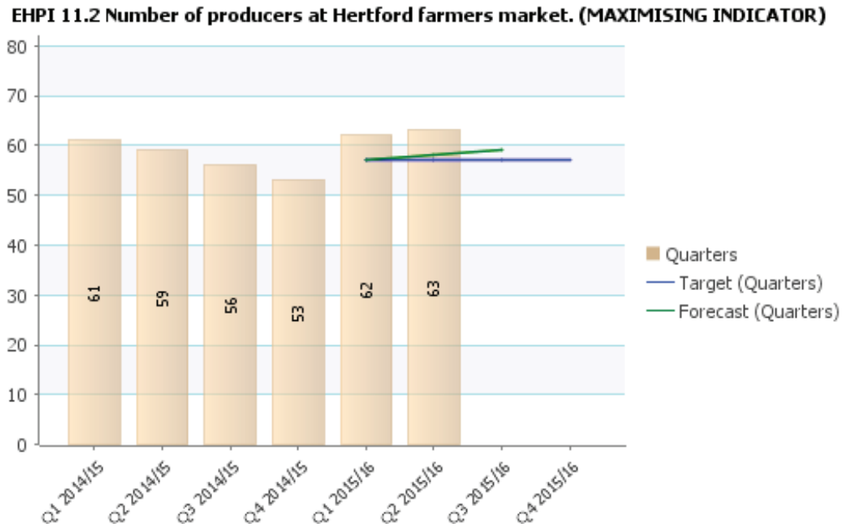
Directorate Customer and Community Services
Service Area Business Development

PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 11.1 Rental income from market traders. (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)



Managed By	Paul Pullin; Benjamin Wood
Short Term Trend Arrow	
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	
Traffic Light Icon	
Current Value	£15,264.00
Current Target	£14,000.00
Notes & History Latest Note	Bishop's Stortford Market is now operated by Bishop's Stortford Town Council under tendered contract arrangements. Income from this market will no longer be reported as part of this indicator. Quarter 1 in 2015/16 was the last period this income was included hence the decline in the short term trend. Income from Bishops Stortford market will be subject to separate reporting mechanisms including monitoring of the contract. Income from Hertford and Ware markets is slightly above target for this period and breaks down as follows - Hertford £12,161.40, Ware £3,102.90.
Management Response / Action	The long term trend compares current performance against the average over the last four quarters and therefore takes account of the income we received for Bishop's Stortford in 2014/15. The long term trend will continue to show a decline for several quarters until we move to a period whereby past data does not include Bishop's Stortford. No further management response required at this stage.

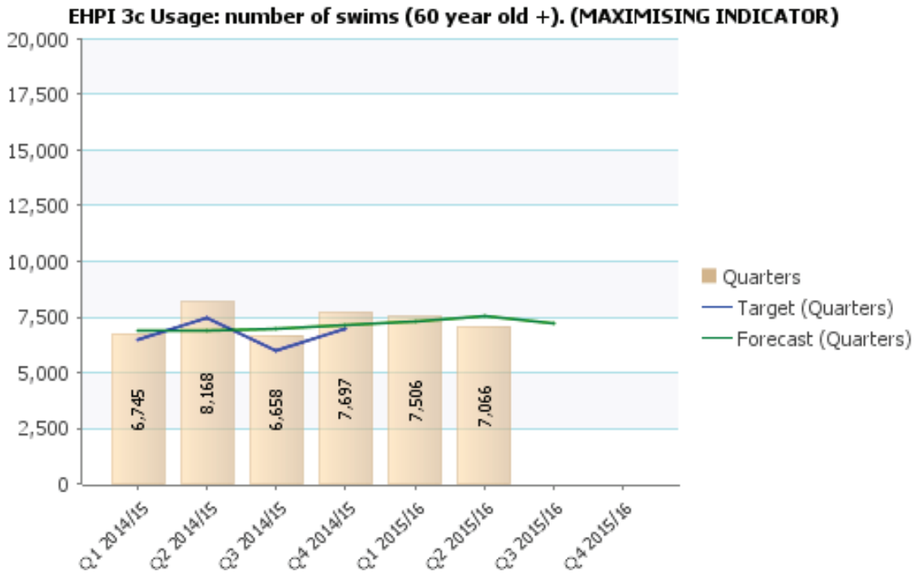
PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 11.2 Number of producers at Hertford farmers market. (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)



Managed By	Paul Pullin; Benjamin Wood
Short Term Trend Arrow	
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	
Traffic Light Icon	
Current Value	63
Current Target	57
Notes & History Latest Note	The number of producers at Hertford Farmers market continues to conform to profile (slightly increased from previous quarters) representing almost full capacity to the pitch space available for stalls.
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

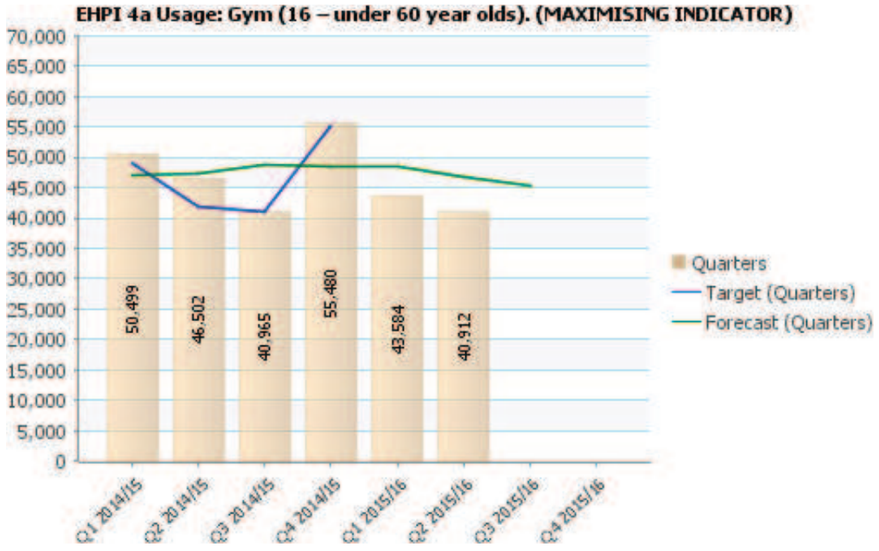
Directorate Customer and Community Services
Service Area Environmental Services and Leisure

PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 3c Usage: number of swims (60 year old +). (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)



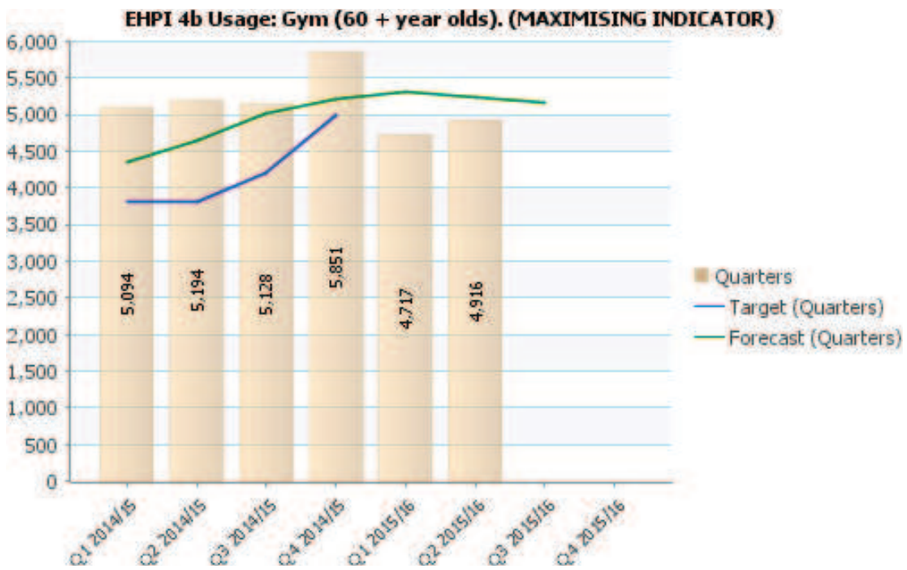
Managed By	Cliff Cardoza;
Short Term Trend Arrow	
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	
Traffic Light Icon	N/A - Trend only indicator
Current Value	7,066
Current Target	N/A - Trend only indicator
Notes & History Latest Note	Swim usage is following normal trend patterns but throughput is below service expectations. Swimming is declining nationally however August 2015 was particularly low month this year.
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 4a Usage: Gym (16 – under 60 year olds). (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)



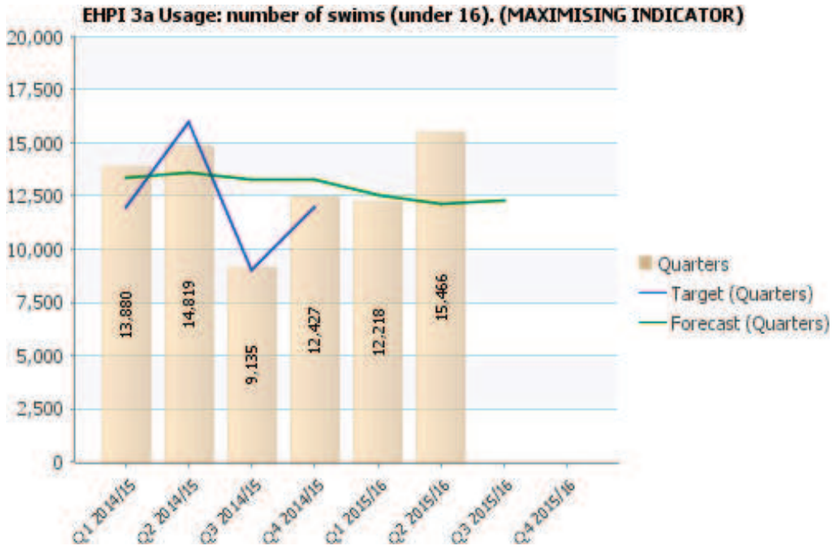
Managed By	Cliff Cardoza;
Short Term Trend Arrow	↓
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	↓
Traffic Light Icon	N/A - Trend only indicator
Current Value	40,912
Current Target	Trend only indicator
Notes & History Latest Note	Throughput figures for this age group are following normal trends, although down on previous year they are still above the 4 year average.
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 4b Usage: Gym (60 + year olds). (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)



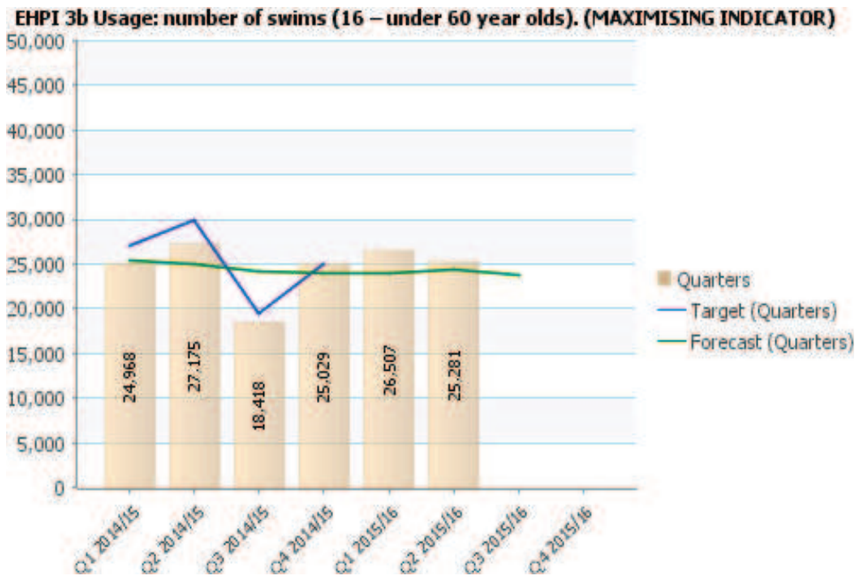
Managed By	Cliff Cardoza;
Short Term Trend Arrow	↑
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	↓
Traffic Light Icon	N/A - Trend only indicator
Current Value	4,916
Current Target	N/A - Trend only indicator
Notes & History Latest Note	Throughput is following normal trends and performing well against the previous 4 year average.
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 3a Usage: number of swims (under 16). (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)



Managed By	Cliff Cardoza;
Short Term Trend Arrow	
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	
Traffic Light Icon	N/A - Trend only indicator
Current Value	15,466
Current Target	N/A - Trend only indicator
Notes & History Latest Note	Swim usage is following normal trend patterns and in line with service expectations. The long term trend compares current performance against the average over the last four quarters and therefore takes account of the good performance that occurred in that period.
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

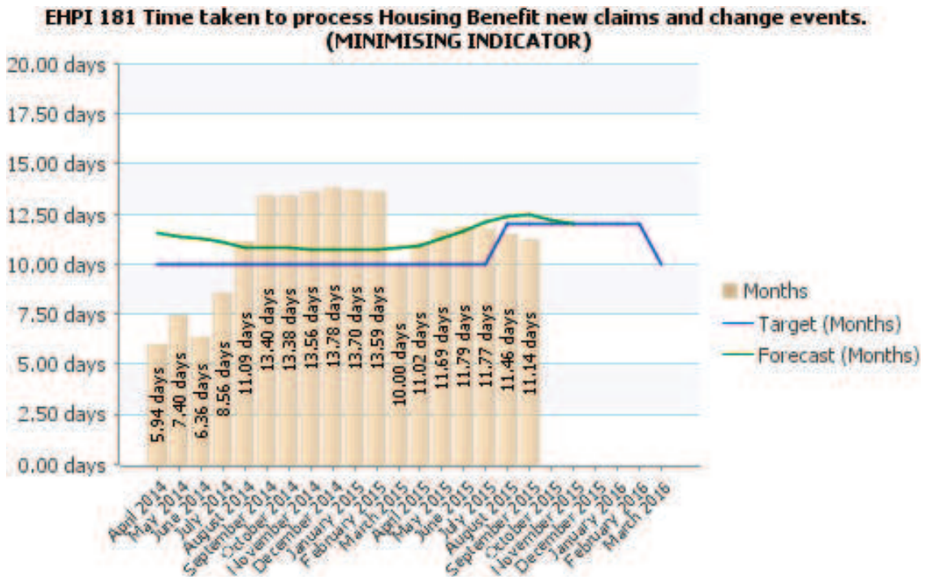
PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 3b Usage: number of swims (16 – under 60 year olds). (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)



Managed By	Cliff Cardoza;
Short Term Trend Arrow	
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	
Traffic Light Icon	N/A - Trend only indicator
Current Value	25,281
Current Target	N/A - Trend only indicator
Notes & History Latest Note	Swim usage is following normal trend patterns but is down on service expectations. August 2015 appears to have been a poor month for this swimming age group compared to previous years and this has depressed the quarterly total. To be raised with the leisure provider and a future programme to be agreed to prevent further drops in this age category.
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

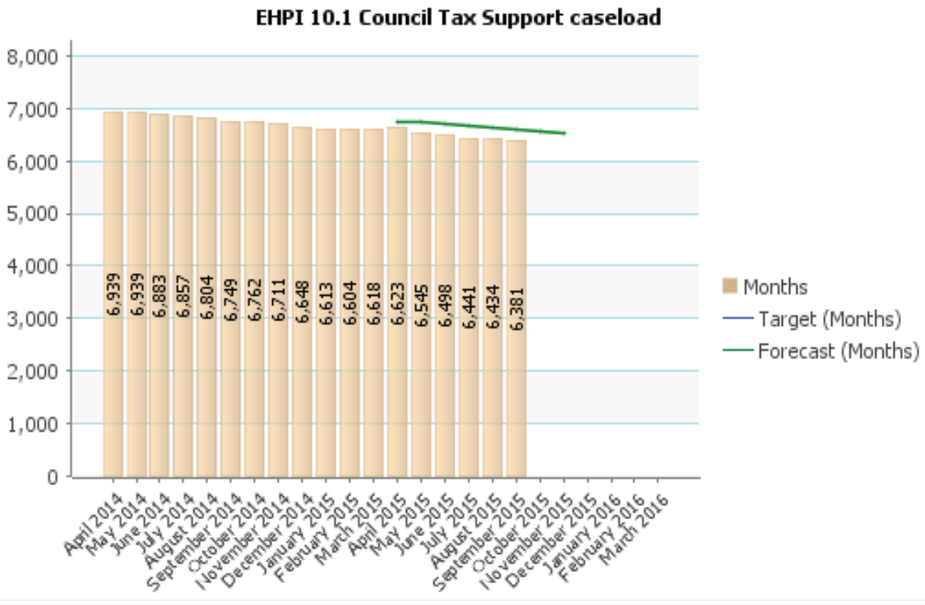
Directorate Finance and Support Services
Service Area Revenues and Benefits

PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 181 Time taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and change events. (MINIMISING INDICATOR)



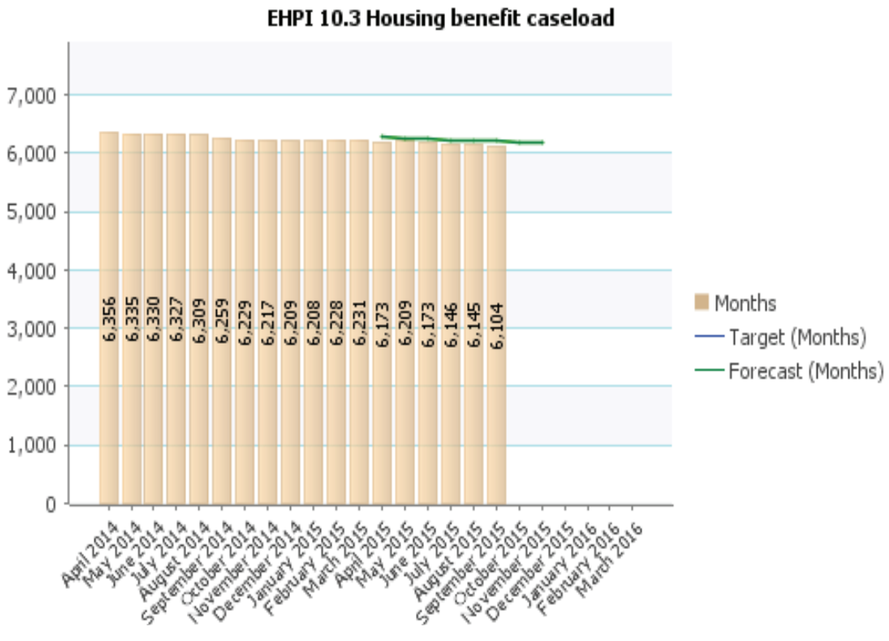
Managed By	Su Tarran; Adele Taylor
Short Term Trend Arrow	
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	
Traffic Light Icon	
Current Value	11.14 days
Current Target	12.00 days
Notes & History Latest Note	Performance for the period of 4 August 2015 to 8 September 2015 is 9.67 days, bringing the cumulative down to 11.14 days
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 10.1 Council Tax Support caseload



Managed By	Su Tarran; Adele Taylor
Short Term Trend Arrow	
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	
Traffic Light Icon	Trend only indicator
Current Value	6,381
Current Target	Trend only indicator
Notes & History Latest Note	The service is expecting a steady decline until central government strategies are applied
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

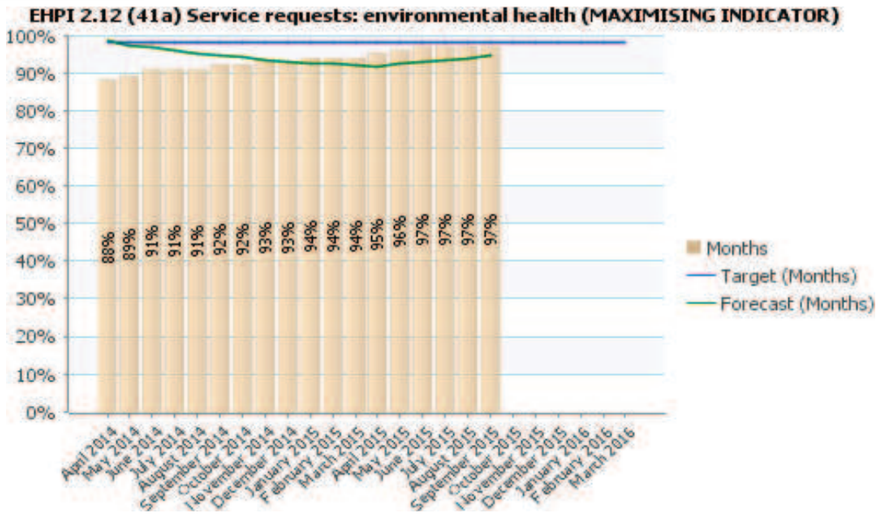
PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 10.3 Housing benefit caseload



Managed By	Su Tarran; Adele Taylor
Short Term Trend Arrow	
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	
Traffic Light Icon	Trend only indicator
Current Value	6,104
Current Target	Trend only indicator
Notes & History Latest Note	The service is expecting a steady decline until central government strategies are applied
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

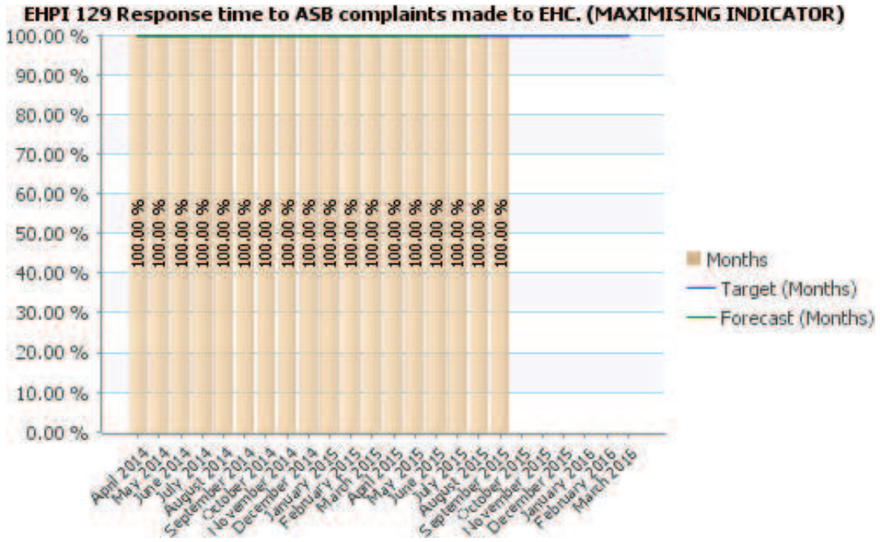
Directorate Neighbourhood Services
Service Area Community Safety and Health

PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 2.12 (41a) Service requests: environmental health (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)

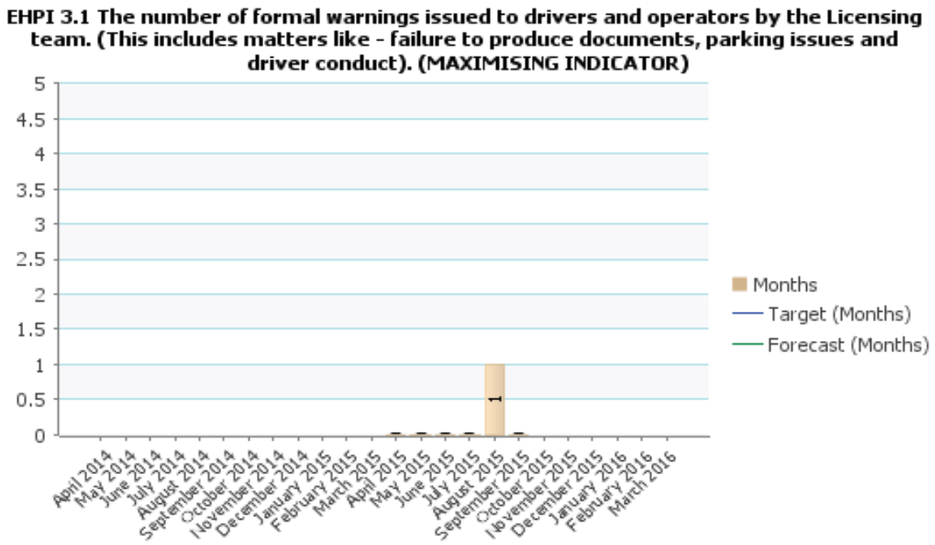


Managed By	Simon Drinkwater; Brian Simmonds
Short Term Trend Arrow	
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	
Traffic Light Icon	
Current Value	97%
Current Target	98%
Notes & History Latest Note	97% of environmental health service requests responded to within target times. This equates to 60 service requests missing their first responses since April 2015. 280 service requests have been received this month. 1727 service requests have been received since April 2015. This represents a 0% decrease in number of service requests from this time last year.
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

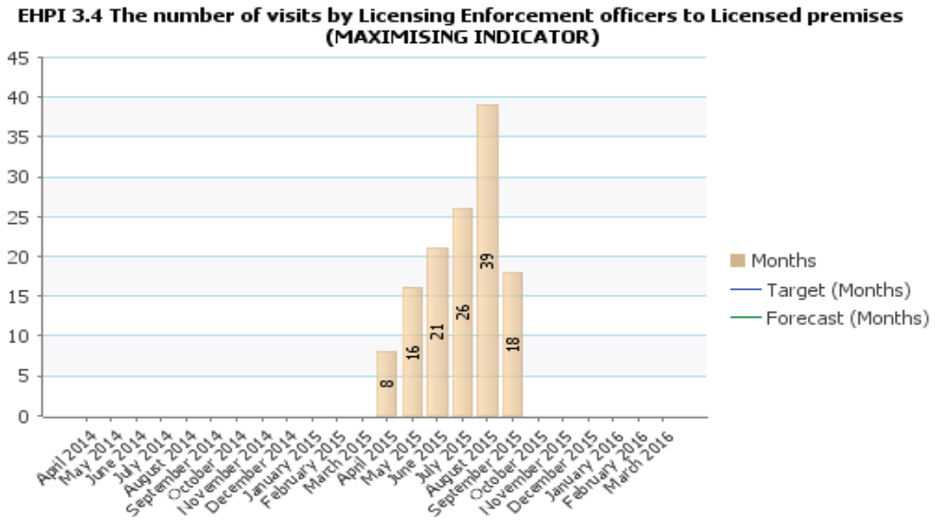
PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 129 Response time to ASB complaints made to EHC. (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)	**Managed By**	Simon Drinkwater; Brian Simmonds
		Short Term Trend Arrow	
		Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	
		Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	100.00 %
		Current Target	100.00 %
		Notes & History Latest Note	Performance on target. There were five complaints made to the Community Safety Team at East Herts Council all of which were responded to within the minimum of two working days, therefore meeting the 100% target.
		Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.



PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 3.1 The number of formal warnings issued to drivers and operators by the Licensing team. (This includes matters like - failure to produce documents, parking issues and driver conduct). (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)	**Managed By**	Brian Simmonds
		Short Term Trend Arrow	
		Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	New indicator therefore more data is required before long term trend can be analysed.
		Traffic Light Icon	N/A - Trend only indicator
		Current Value	0
		Current Target	N/A - Trend only indicator
		Notes & History Latest Note	No warnings issued, some complaints are still ongoing but will probably be dealt with by way of warning letters.
		Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

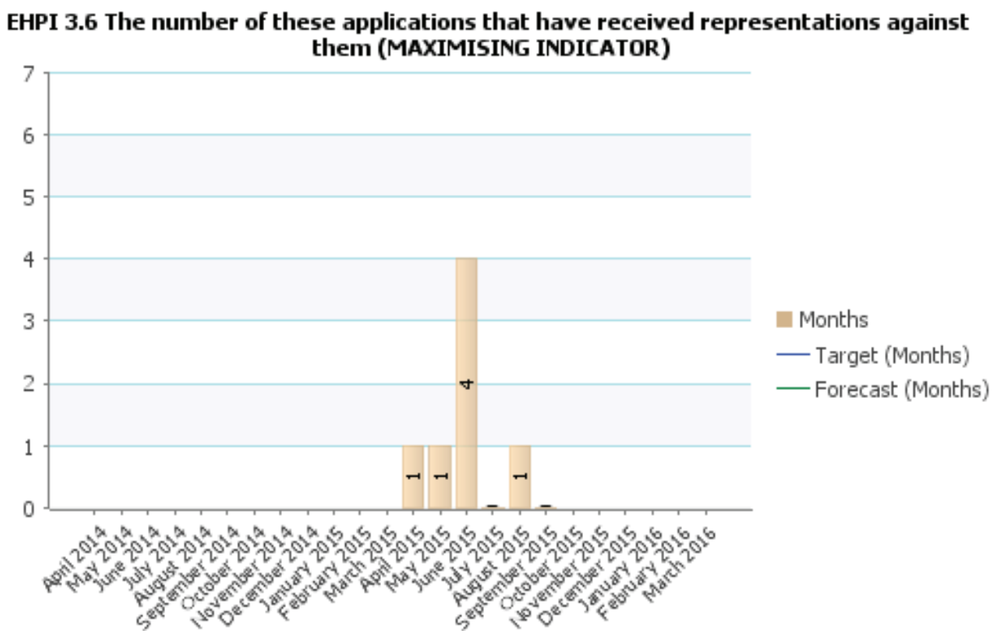


PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 3.4 The number of visits by Licensing Enforcement officers to Licensed premises (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)



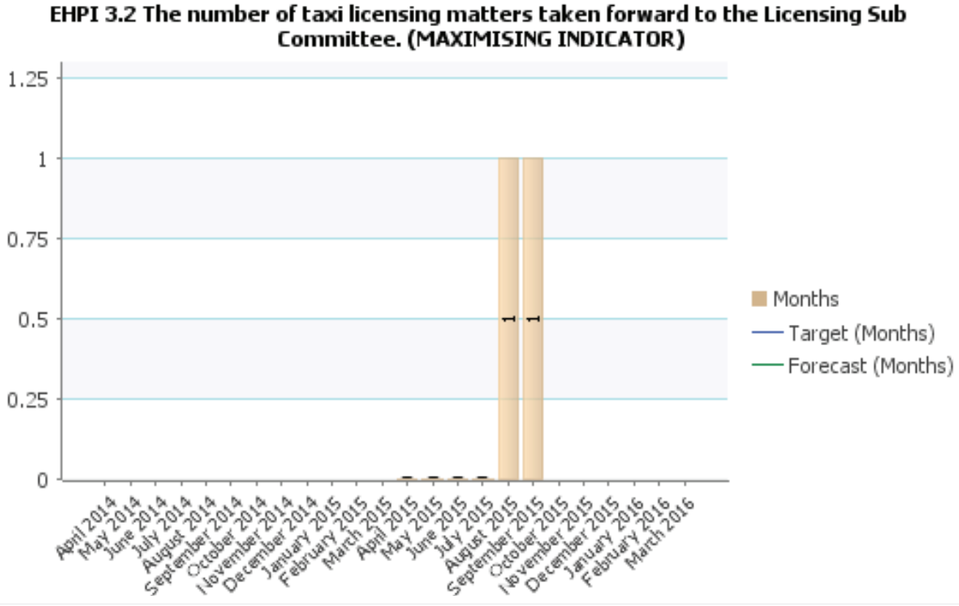
Managed By	Brian Simmonds
Short Term Trend Arrow	↓
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	New indicator therefore more data is required before long term trend can be analysed.
Traffic Light Icon	N/A - Trend only indicator
Current Value	18
Current Target	N/A - Trend only indicator
Notes & History Latest Note	Fewer routine visits due to staff leave. Complaint led visits were the priority.
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 3.6 The number of these applications that have received representations against them (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)



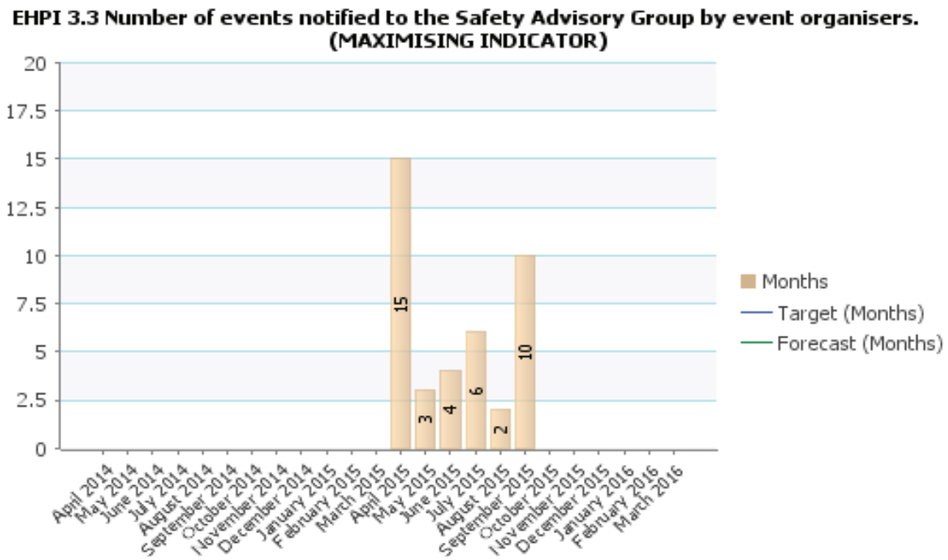
Managed By	Brian Simmonds
Short Term Trend Arrow	↓
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	New indicator therefore more data is required before long term trend can be analysed.
Traffic Light Icon	N/A - Trend only indicator
Current Value	0
Current Target	N/A - Trend only indicator
Notes & History Latest Note	No applications were made in September 2015.
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 3.2 The number of taxi licensing matters taken forward to the Licensing Sub Committee. (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)



Managed By	Brian Simmonds
Short Term Trend Arrow	
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	New indicator therefore more data is required before long term trend can be analysed.
Traffic Light Icon	N/A - Trend only indicator
Current Value	1
Current Target	N/A - Trend only indicator
Notes & History Latest Note	1 applicant with offending history, policy requires sub committee
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

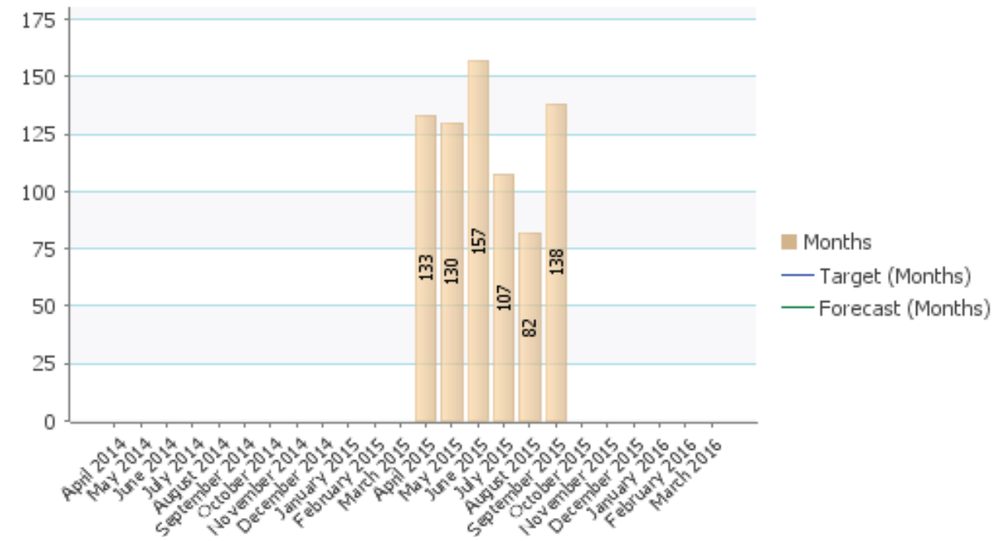
PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 3.3 Number of events notified to the Safety Advisory Group by event organisers. (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)



Managed By	Brian Simmonds
Short Term Trend Arrow	
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	New indicator therefore more data is required before long term trend can be analysed.
Traffic Light Icon	N/A - Trend only indicator
Current Value	10
Current Target	N/A - Trend only indicator
Notes & History Latest Note	Increase of 3 events from the same time period last year.
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 3.5 The number of applications received by the Licensing team in respect of Licensed premises (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)

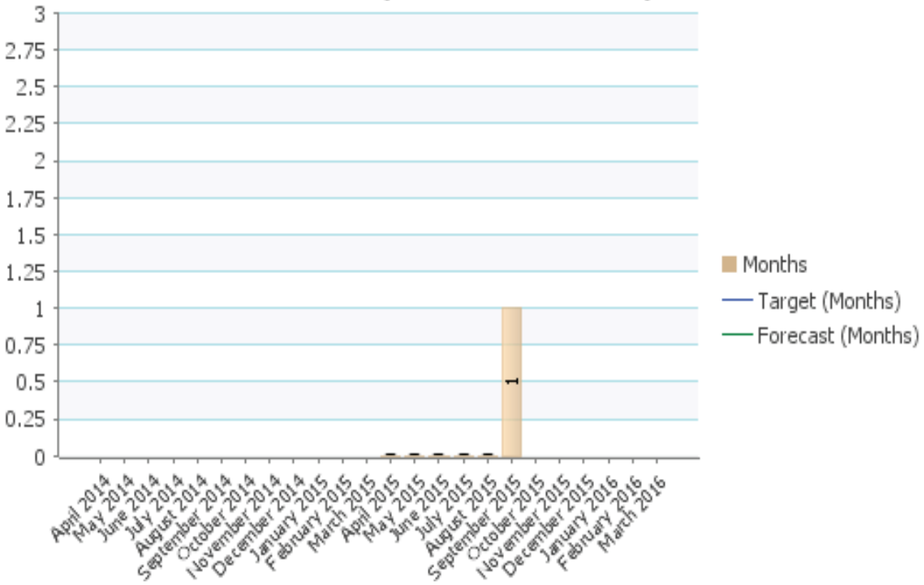
EHPI 3.5 The number of applications received by the Licensing team in respect of Licensed premises (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)



Managed By	Brian Simmonds
Short Term Trend Arrow	↑
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	New indicator therefore more data is required before long term trend can be analysed.
Traffic Light Icon	N/A - Trend only indicator
Current Value	138
Current Target	N/A - Trend only indicator
Notes & History Latest Note	Increase in TENs applications since last month and amendments to premises Licence have appear to explain the increase
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 3.7 The number of these applications that are taken forward to Licensing Sub Committee (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)

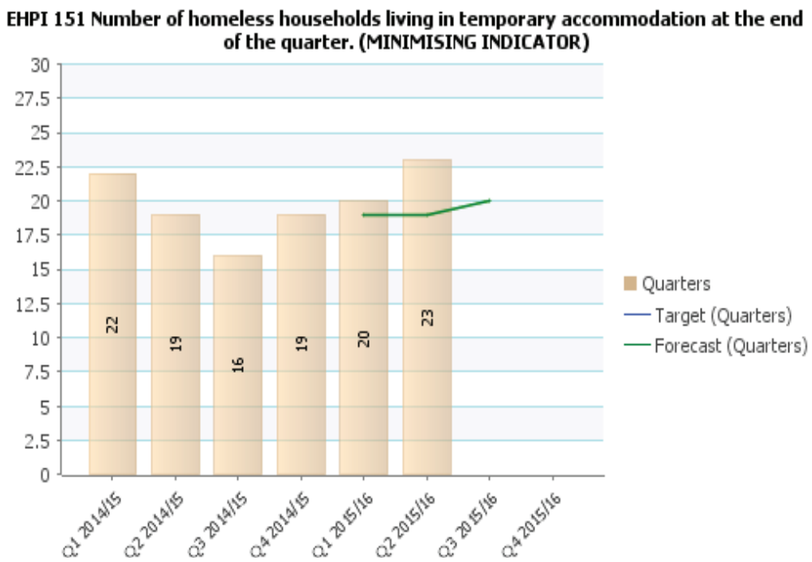
EHPI 3.7 The number of these applications that are taken forward to Licensing Sub Committee (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)



Managed By	Brian Simmonds
Short Term Trend Arrow	↑
Long Term Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	New indicator therefore more data is required before long term trend can be analysed.
Traffic Light Icon	N/A - Trend only indicator
Current Value	1
Current Target	N/A - Trend only indicator
Notes & History Latest Note	One licensing application was taken forward to Licensing Sub Committee.
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

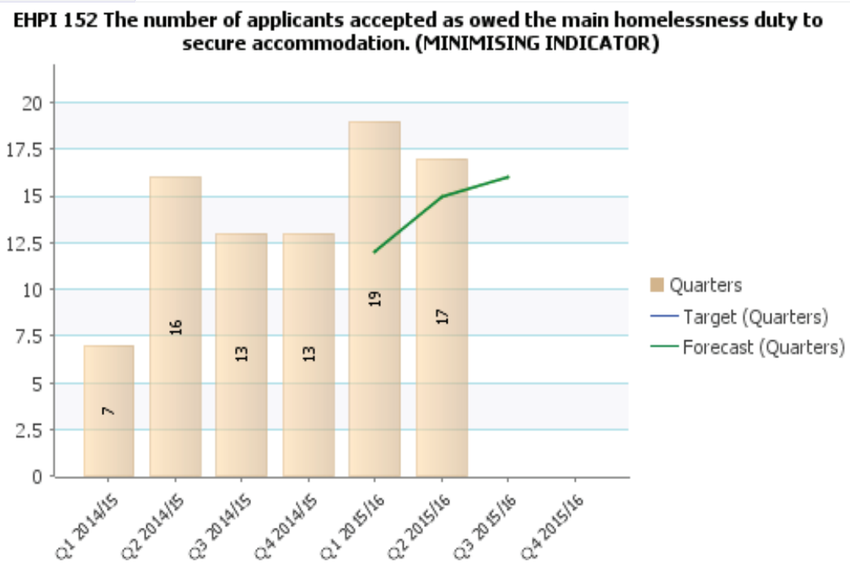
Directorate Neighbourhood Services
Service Area Housing

PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 151 Number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter. (MINIMISING INDICATOR)



Managed By	Simon Drinkwater
Short Term Trend Arrow	
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	
Traffic Light Icon	N/A - Trend only indicator
Current Value	23
Current Target	N/A - Trend only indicator
Notes & History Latest Note	At end of September 2015 there were 23 households in temporary accommodation. The council owned temporary accommodation (hostel) remains full with 12 households. The average length of stay for those with a homeless duty before moving onto a housing association tenancy is 12 weeks. Four households were in B&B waiting for accommodation in the council's hostel. Six households were in temporary supported accommodation and one household was in a long-term private sector leased property.
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

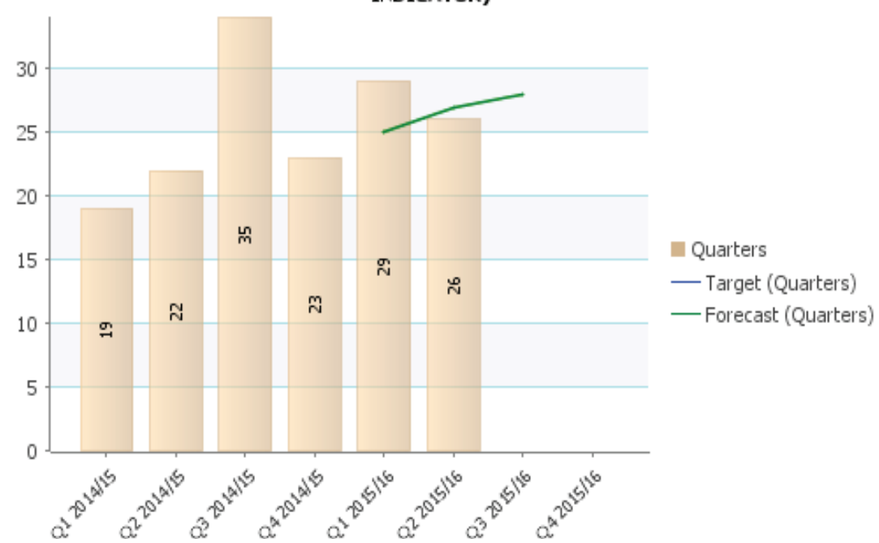
PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 152 The number of applicants accepted as owed the main homelessness duty to secure accommodation. (MINIMISING INDICATOR)



Managed By	Simon Drinkwater
Short Term Trend Arrow	
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	
Traffic Light Icon	N/A - Trend only indicator
Current Value	17
Current Target	N/A - Trend only indicator
Notes & History Latest Note	The number of homeless acceptances in the 2nd quarter was 17 compared with 16 for the 2nd quarter 2014/15. The cumulative total is 36 households compared to 23 households for the first two quarters of 2014/15. The primary reason for homelessness remains the end of a private sector assured short hold tenancy because the landlord requires the property back.
Management Response / Action	Work is underway to profile homelessness presentations, results of this and how it might explain performance will be available from Quarter 3.

PI Code & Short Name	EHPI 153 Number of applicants that presented to the council as homeless. (MINIMISING INDICATOR)

EHPI 153 Number of applicants that presented to the council as homeless. (MINIMISING INDICATOR)



Managed By	Simon Drinkwater
Short Term Trend Arrow	
Long Term Trend Arrow /Forecast line	
Traffic Light Icon	N/A - Trend only indicator
Current Value	26
Current Target	N/A - Trend only indicator
Notes & History Latest Note	The second quarter recorded 26 households as presenting as homeless compared to 22 for the same quarter 2014/15. The cumulative total for 2015/16 is 55 compared to 41 for the same two quarters in 2014/15. The primary reasons remains the end of an assured short hold tenancy in the private sector where the landlord wants the property back to either sell or re-let at a higher rent.
Management Response / Action	No further management response required at this stage.

PI Status	
	Alert
	Warning
	OK

Long Term Trends	
	Improving
	No Change
	Getting Worse

Short Term Trends	
	Improving
	No Change
	Getting Worse

For information only: Performance Indicator Guidance

EHPI 3a – Usage: number of swims (under 16)
PI Definition
Total number at all pools
Data Source
Community and Cultural Services
Other Guidance
SLM – Sport & Leisure Management Ltd – contact made through the Leisure Services Manager.

EHPI 3b – Usage: number of swims (16 – under 60 year olds)
PI Definition
Total number at all pools
Data Source

Community and Cultural Services
Other Guidance
SLM – Sport & Leisure Management Ltd – contact made through the Leisure Services Manager.

EHPI 3c – Usage: number of swims (60 year old +)
PI Definition
Total number at all pools
Data Source
Community and Cultural Services
Other Guidance
SLM – Sport & Leisure Management Ltd – contact made through the Leisure Services Manager.

EHPI 4a – Usage: Gym (16 – under 60 year olds)
PI Definition
Total number from; Fanshawe, Grange Paddocks, Hartham & Leventhorpe

Data Source
Community and Cultural Services
Other Guidance
SLM – Sport & Leisure Management Ltd – contact made through the Leisure Services Manager.

EHPI 4b – Usage: Gym (60 + year olds)
PI Definition
Total number from; Fanshawe, Grange Paddocks, Hartham & Leventhorpe
Data Source
Community and Cultural Services
Other Guidance
SLM – Sport & Leisure Management Ltd – contact made through the Leisure Services Manager.

EHPI 129 – Response time to Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) complaints made to East Herts Council (EHC).
PI Definition
Number of ASB complaints made or referred to EHC ASB Officer that have response within two

working days (in line with minimum standards) from the total number of complaints received.
Data Source
Licensing and Community Safety
Other Guidance
Full details of minimum standards for ASB can be found on EHC website.

EHPI 181 – Time taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and change events
PI Definition
The average time taken in calendar days to process all new claims and change events in Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Benefit (CTB) **New Claims**: Any new claim to HB/CTB **Change Event**: Notification of a change of circumstances which requires a decision to be made by the local authority but excluding automatic up-rating and annual council tax increases, batch changes to Council Tax liability, and revisions to earlier decisions, e.g. following an accuracy and/or management check or appeal/reconsideration/revision. **Time taken to process**: The time elapsed between receipt of claim or notification of change event and a decision being recorded. The day on which the claim is received is counted as Day 1. **Decision**: As defined in HB and CTB regulations

Date of receipt: Date that notification of the claim or change event was received by the authority. Either from the customer, Jobcentre Plus or The Pensions, Disability and Carers Service or other third party.

Good performance
Good performance is typified by a lower average number of calendar days taken to process new claims and change events

Data Source
Revenues and Benefits Services
Other Guidance
None.

EHPI 10.1 – Council Tax Support caseload.
PI Definition
This indicator will measure the total number of recipients of Council Tax Support with live claims on a particular date.
Data Source
Revenues and Benefits

Other Guidance
Data extracted from Capita System

EHPI 10.3 – Housing Benefit caseload.
PI Definition
This indicator will measure the total number of recipients of Housing Benefit with live claims on a particular date.
Data Source
Revenues and Benefits
Other Guidance
Calculated trend reports stats 121 and stats 122 produced as part of the Single Housing Benefits Extract (SHBE) programme to PTO.

EHPI 11.1 – Rental Income from Traders.
PI Definition
Rental income from traders. The markets that will be included are: • Hertford Saturday

- Bishops Stortford Saturday
- Bishops Stortford Thursday
- Ware Tuesday
- Plus individual pitch hires in the towns on non-market days

Data Source
Economic Development
Other Guidance
None

EHPI 11.2 – Number of Producers at Hertford Farmers Market.
PI Definition
This indicator monitors the total number of producers at Hertford Farmers Market.
Data Source
Economic Development
Other Guidance
None

EHPI 151 – Number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter. (MINIMISING INDICATOR)
PI Definition
Total number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation, provided by the council, on the last day of the quarter as reported to Communities and Local Government on the P1E form.
Data Source
Housing
Other Guidance
Number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation provided by the council at the end of the quarter.

EHPI 152 – The number of applicants accepted as owed the main homelessness duty to secure accommodation. (MINIMISING INDICATOR)
PI Definition
Figure as reported to Communities and Local Government on the P1E form.

Data Source
Housing
Other Guidance
The number of applicants found to be eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need i.e. applicants accepted as owed the main homelessness duty to secure accommodation duty (under Section 193(2)) during the quarter.

EHPI 153 – Number of applicants that presented to the council as homeless. (MINIMISING INDICATOR)
PI Definition
Figure as reported to Communities and Local Government on the P1E form.
Data Source
Housing
Other Guidance

Total number of applicants that presented to the council as homeless for whom a decision was made during the quarter where: - the council had reason to believe the applicant was, or may have been, homeless, or threatened with homelessness (in accordance with Section 183) and - as a result, the council made inquiries under Section 184. Irrespective of the outcome of the decision.

EHPI 2.12 (41a) – Service requests: environmental health (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)
PI Definition
Formal requests of Environmental Health services as recorded on Idox.
Data Source
Community Safety and Health

EHPI 3.1 – The number of formal warnings issued to drivers and operators by the Licensing team. (This includes matters like - failure to produce documents, parking issues and driver conduct). (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)
PI Definition

Number of matters which are recorded on computer records.
Data Source
Community Safety and Health

EHPI 3.2 – The number of taxi licensing matters taken forward to the Licensing Sub Committee. (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)
PI Definition
This PI is being reviewed by the service.
Data Source
Community Safety and Health

EHPI 3.3 – Number of events notified to the Safety Advisory Group by event organisers. (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)
PI Definition

Number of events notified to safety advisory group by way of an event notification form.
Data Source
Community Safety and Health

EHPI 3.4 – The number of visits by Licensing Enforcement officers to Licensed premises (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)
PI Definition
Number of recorded visits to licensed premises.
Data Source
Community Safety and Health

EHPI 3.5 – The number of applications received by the Licensing team in respect of Licensed premises (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)
PI Definition

Number of formal applications recorded on licensing systems.
Data Source
Community Safety and Health

EHPI 3.6 – The number of these applications that have received representations against them (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)
PI Definition
This PI is being reviewed by the service.
Data Source
Community Safety and Health

EHPI 3.7 – The number of these applications that are taken forward to Licensing Sub Committee (MAXIMISING INDICATOR)
PI Definition
This PI is being reviewed by the service.

Data Source
Community Safety and Health

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT BY HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

EAST HERTS LEISURE STRATEGY

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report is concerned with the development of a proposed Leisure Strategy. It recommends that the committee establishes a Task and Finish Group to assist officers in the development of the Leisure Strategy. A suggested draft terms of reference is outlined in Essential Reference Paper A.

- This report outlines a number of risks and identifies a series of key issues which need to be taken into account in planning for the future of leisure provision in East Herts.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **That:**	
(A)	**A Task and Finish group be established to advise Officers in the development of a leisure strategy which will determine the future of leisure facility provision and services over the next 10 years.**

1.0 Background

1.1 The Environmental and Leisure Services Plan for 2015/16 contains an action requested by the Executive to 'Develop a Strategy for the Council's Leisure Services'. This is needed in order to:

a) address the public health issues identified in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy through leisure and recreation;

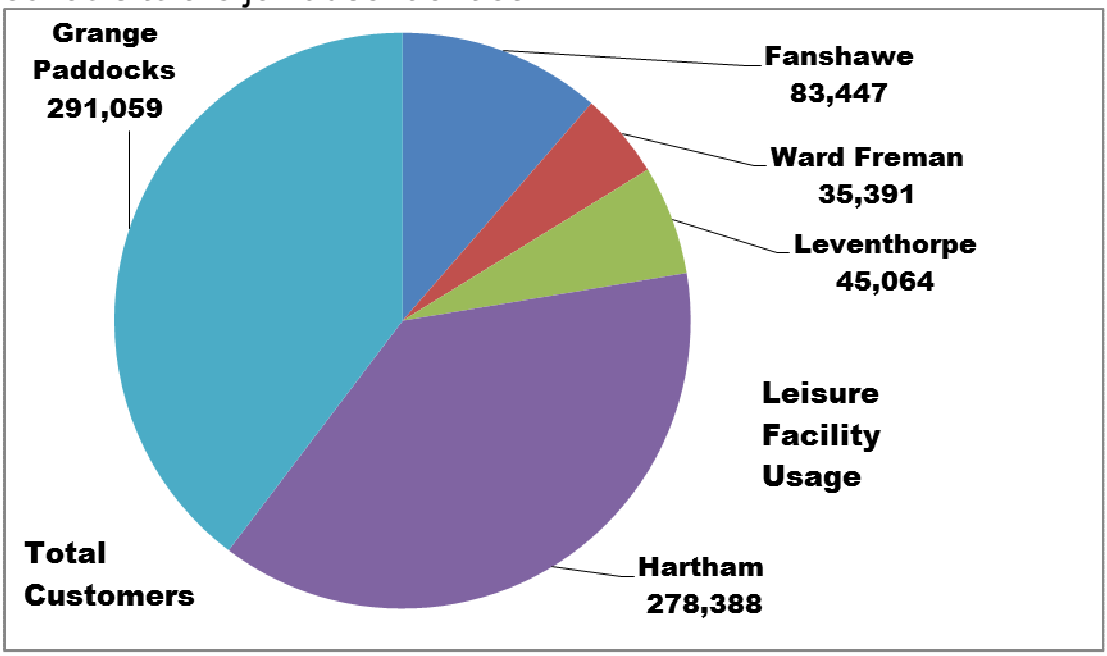
b) develop a direction of travel and longer term strategic plan for the management and operation of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities;

c) improve the long term financial sustainability of the service in the context of increasing financial pressures on local government; and

d) optimise the opportunities to work with local communities and partners involved in sport, recreation and health.

1.2 The Council provides 5 leisure centres, one in each of the main towns. These are operated under a fully outsourced contract. The contact was let in January 2008 for a period of 10 years to Sports and Leisure Management Ltd (SLM) trading as 'Everyone Active'. The financial turnover of the contract is £4.1 million. The Council retains responsibility for the replacement of major plant and significant building works. SLM is responsible for all aspects of the day to day running of the facilities including promotion of services and customer contact. All income is retained by the contractor, which is equally responsible for all running costs. The Council pays a management fee of circa £230,000 per annum. This varies from year to year and represents the Council's subsidy to bring the contract into a breakeven position. Three of the five facilities are provided in partnership with local schools through joint use arrangements. The leisure centres attracted 733,350 customer visits in 2014/15 as shown in the chart below.

1.3 The overall net cost of leisure services to the council is £849,200 including all service costs, football provision and contributions from schools to the joint use facilities.



2.0 Report

2.1 Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

The situation analysis is outlined below and identifies where Leisure Services in East Herts stands on four key strategic areas. Its purpose is to better inform decision making.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• Leisure Management Contract Payments Declining • Overall Customer satisfaction good • Good data about customers (Mosaic) • Maintaining participation (bucking national trend) • Excellent' independent assessment scores at Grange Paddocks and Hartham • British Standard ISO 14001 and 18001 attained. • 45% of income from Leisure Memberships	• Facilities built in 1970's – ageing • Short term planning history • Changing leisure trends • Energy Management • Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Leisure Contract not aligned • Little information about Non-users • Long term financing of joint use sites. • Car parking at 'peak' times • Limited facility mix • Specific customer concerns e.g. changing rooms
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Population growth (Particularly Bishops Stortford) • Partnership Arrangements • Energy management investments • Development of the facility mix to increase participation. • Development of health improvement interventions. • Combined indoor/outdoor health promotions. • Income generation to make self-financing contract.	• Grange Paddocks LC demand pressures from increased population • Changes to safeguarding regulations and best practice. • All facilities due for major refit in medium term. • Potential loss of members as facilities dilapidate • Competition from rival providers • School funding risk • Pressure on public expenditure

Risks

2.2 The above analysis enables a number of key risks to be identified. These are considered to be as follows:

2.3 Most of the facilities were constructed in the 1970's. There is currently no long term plan for their strategic management, development or replacement. The Leisure Strategy would address

this issue through the work of the Task and Finish Group. However the group would need to consider carefully the quantity, quality and business case for the present mix of facilities compared with other options.

2.4 Leisure trends have changed significantly since facilities were built 40 years ago. There are a range of opportunities to develop services which meet current demand. However, if the opportunities are not grasped there is a risk of managing a widening gap created through evolving participation trends and facilities which have limited capacity to meet additional demand.

2.5 Increasing car ownership has changed the catchment population for facilities since the 1970's. This has the impact of increasing the potential catchment population for attractive facilities but it also means that people will exercise consumer choice in some instances by-pass older facilities. There is also a consequential impact on car parking provision.

2.6 A key risk for the Council lies in the loss of people paying a direct debit for membership of the facilities. 45% of income is now derived from this source and is primarily associated with gym usage. Membership income is significant because it is more reliable than that associated with casual use which is variable and primarily associated with swimming. However, this means that the facilities compete directly with private sector operations. If the standard of facilities declines, members can migrate swiftly to alternative facilities with a consequential impact on the business model. Increasing costs and declining income could pose a serious threat to the Council and its ability to let a financially sustainable contract.

2.7 It is important that long term objectives are determined well in advance of a new leisure management contract being let. Inserting new clauses into a contract once it has been let is expensive because the Council will be in a poor negotiating. To mitigate this risk the Council needs to have considered carefully what it wishes to achieve and how this might be developed through a new contract and in the context of a facility review.

2.8 There are a range of management models available to local authorities for the operation of leisure facilities and the council has a duty to consider alternatives. If the Council chooses to develop an alternative management model then the failure of that model to sustain a successful business can become a major risk in terms of

financial loss and reputational damage. The Council will therefore need to evaluate options carefully.

2.7 From a health perspective those people who take no exercise are of greatest concern. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy identified that:

- 41% of adults in East Herts are physically inactive.
- 11.3% of children in their first years at secondary school are obese.
- 21.4% of adults are obese

2.8 If the council develops health/leisure initiatives without good data and information it is unlikely to be able to make the best use of resources or target these in the most effective ways.

2.9 Leisure Centres and swimming pools are particularly heavy consumers of power in the form of gas and electricity. The East Herts facilities use 6.6 Million Kilowatt Hours (Kwh) of gas and 1.4 Million Kwh of electricity at a total cost of £337,500 in 2013. This is paid by the contractor but is a key element in the contract management fee paid by the Council. The above energy costs represent a high level of expenditure and are significantly higher than comparable modern facilities.

2.10 There are a range of interventions which have been employed to reduce the carbon footprint of leisure sites however there is a significant gap in terms of current and optimal performance. Interventions such as Combined Heat and Power (CHP), Solar Panels and Ground Source Heating together with improvements to buildings and the mechanical and electrical equipment could generate significant savings however this requires a long term commitment and a shared approach to investment and risk.

2.11 The Council has commissioned energy management consultants to advice on possible interventions. The information from the consultants will feed into the deliberations of the Task and Finish Group.

3.0 Key Issues

3.1 The overriding issue for the facilities is one of age. All were constructed in the 1970's with the exception of Hartham which started as an outdoor pool 10 years earlier. The effect of 'no change' will be that costs increase incrementally over time accompanied by occasional sharp rises as the facilities become

more exposed to competitive pressures, utility costs, plant failure and maintenance costs.

3.2 There are some significant problems particularly in relation to Grange Paddocks. The swimming pool was constructed as a community facility when the population of Bishops Stortford was approaching 20,000. In a few years the catchment population will be in the order of 60,000. This does not include significant developments planned in the Stansted Mountfitchet area which are likely to increase demand for swimming at Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre owing to proximity, drive times and lack of swimming facilities in that town.

3.3 Although the overall customer satisfaction at Grange Paddocks is good a more detailed analysis shows that a range of users are less satisfied with changing accommodation. The changing rooms form part of the original building and have been refurbished but struggle to meet demand particularly at peak times owing to its size layout and design in the context of school, club and gym usage.

3.4 The growth of competitive swimming since the 1970's is an example of gap between current provision and leisure demand. For most public pools, swimming club usage is a major income generator however at Grange Paddocks it is marginal. This occurs because the swimming club has outgrown the existing facilities and now uses a range of pools for training and competitions.

3.5 A strength of East Herts is the availability of swimming facilities. Maintaining 5 pools has been a significant achievement which few other authorities of the same size can equal. However the pools are traditional in their design. P arents and children are more attracted to facilities which are a visitor destination in themselves where swimming is learned not just through lessons but also through play activity.

3.6 Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre is built on a flood plain and as a consequence, significant changes to the leisure facilities are problematic in terms of environmental and planning constraints. Hartham Leisure Centre has similar constraints but does not have the same growth in catchment population. These two facilities account for 80% of customers.

3.7 The mix of facilities provided by the authority does not make the best use of fixed costs. Most authorities manage sports halls, all weather areas and a mix of other facilities alongside swimming

pools because the fixed costs associated with pool operations can also be used to run additional services and these facilities appeal to a broader section of the local community. For example a single receptionist can process badminton bookings as well as swimming booking particularly as gym access is highly automated.

3.8 The age of the facilities is becoming more challenging. For example the Council is currently replacing the Air handling Unit at Hartham Leisure Centre this will cost in the order of £130,000 and will require a closure of the pool for 1 month. As the facilities age there is an increased probability of closure to accommodate the replacement of plant or structural repairs.

3.9 The water quality at Grange Paddocks and Hartham swimming pools while acceptable in terms of customer safety is not optimal by current design standards. Water clarity is lower than in modern designs and chemical smells are more prevalent. This occurs because the design of the pool tank is dated and the latest plant equipment cannot perform optimally owing to the basic design of the pool tanks. The pools do not incorporate the latest technology in terms of disinfection systems.

3.10 The pool halls at Hartham and Fanshawe are in need of refurbishment and improvements to insulation would assist with running costs.

3.11 There are a number of partnership opportunities which should be explored in order to determine whether there is potential to develop long term management and funding arrangements to support initiatives aimed at improving health and increasing participation.

Task and Finish Group

3.12 It is suggested that the route forward is as follows:

a) The Task and Finish Group meets monthly from January to June to consider key aspects including direction of travel, key challenges and the options available to address these.

b) A progress report or draft Leisure Strategy is presented to the Community Scrutiny Committee in June 2016 subject to the views of the Task and Finish Group.

c) A report is subsequently submitted to the Executive based on the draft Leisure Strategy.

4.0 Implications/Consultations

There are no specific consultations in relation to this report. The service is currently conducting a Non User Survey and an Exit Survey has recently been undertaken to establish the views of customers. This information will considered by the Task and Finish Group.

Background Papers

None

Contact Member: Eric Buckmaster – Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing
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Contact Officer: Cliff Cardoza – Head of Environmental Services and Leisure.

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Report Author: Joe Liggett – Leisure Services Development Manager
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IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives *(delete as appropriate):*	***People* – Fair and accessible services for those that use them and opportunities for everyone to contribute** This priority focuses on delivering strong services and seeking to enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing, particularly for those who are vulnerable.
Consultation:	None
Legal:	. *None*
Financial:	The report proposes that a Task and Finish Group is set up to assist officers in the development of a Leisure Strategy. There are considered to be no additional expenditure implications from this report.
Human Resource:	There are none
Risk Management:	The key risks are identified within the report.
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	The report is based on developing foundations which will enable a sustainable approach to be taken to the development of leisure and leisure facilities. It aims to link the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Leisure Strategy and objectives within the leisure management contract.

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Essential Reference Paper B

Draft Terms of Reference

The suggested terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group are as follows:

a) Inform the development of a long-term strategic plan for the management of the Council's leisure facilities including those in joint use.

b) Identify ways in which leisure provision can support the Council's Health and Wellbeing objectives through leisure contract management arrangements, indoor facility management and outdoor recreation.

c) To appraise a range of strategic options and sub-options for the development of leisure facilities and consider how these impact on long term financial sustainability.

d) Examine use service, customer and technical data together with other information to support conclusions.

e) Take evidence and examples of best practice from local organisations, professionals, existing contractors and officers as required.

f) Review the assessment of supply and demand for facilities across the district.

Subject to the views of the Task and Finish Group once established an anticipated timescale for the review will be 6 months. A progress report will be submitted to the June meeting of the Community Scrutiny Committee.

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

REPORT ON MEETINGS WITH REGISTERED PROVIDERS WITH HOUSING STOCK IN THE DISTRICT

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To report back to the Committee following a series of meetings with registered providers with housing stock in the district following the concerns raised by Members about repair services.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE That:	
(A)	**the repairs services provided by registered providers with significant housing stock in the District continue to be monitored.**

1.0 Background

1.1 At its meeting on 11 March 2014 the Committee resolved that: Members' frustration and concerns of scrutiny be conveyed to the Registered Providers in respect of their repairs service and these concerns should be expressed through direct meetings between representative Councillors, the Director of Neighbourhood Services and their Chief Officers.

2.0 Report

2.1 A series of visits to the registered providers with a significant number of properties in the district has been undertaken. The results are set out in the report.

3.0 Aldwyck Housing Group

3.1 Repairs services are provided by Connect Property Services.

Connect Property Services was established as a wholly owned subsidiary of Aldwyck Housing Group in September 2010. Connect offers an integrated repairs and maintenance service to local authorities, social housing providers and private clients across the southeast of England. Their experience includes working with a diverse range of client groups such as general needs, younger persons, frail elderly and other vulnerable groups.

3.2 Vulnerable tenants receive additional support depending on the tenants needs. Repairs are prioritised:

P1 – emergency response within 24 hours which would include making a property safe.
P5 – response within 5 days for standard repairs
P20 – routine repairs.

3.3 The performance indicators for Aldwyck are set out below

- 99% of repairs completed within target timescales
- 98% of repairs fixed at first visit
- 86% of customers satisfied with their last repair

4.0 Circle Anglia Housing

4.1 There have been a number of meetings with Circle Anglia. The concerns raised by Members were discussed. A list of particular cases which had been identified by Members where repairs had not been completed was presented. The repairs on the list have now been resolved. Various issues were identified such as a lack of surveyor capacity to evaluate more complex repairs. There were also issues about lack of resources and slow responses in some cases.

4.2 Circle Housing South Anglia is currently delivering improvements in respect of its repair service delivered " in house" by Circle Housing Property Services. Their priority is to address the following areas:

- Ensure repairs are completed on time
- Reduce the use of subcontractors
- Enhance customer satisfaction
- Improve staff morale
- Further improve performance and first time completions.

4.3 An improvement plan has delivered a reduction in the level of

overdue jobs and an improved approach to contract management to monitor performance and service delivery. Progress in this priority service continues to be monitored by Executive Members, Senior Officers at South Anglia and by members of Circle Housing South Anglia board.

4.4 Circle is experiencing increasing customer satisfaction in respect of both landlord and repair service. As at 30 September 2015, 85 % of customers were satisfied with last repair (against a target 90%); and 84% of emergency and urgent repairs were completed within timescales (against a target of 95%).

4.5 Circle is also seeing improvements in void performance; supported by strong internal controls with subcontracts including pre and post inspections and regular contractual meetings to monitor performance to minimise any potential negative impact for perspective customers and wider stakeholders; with a strengthened approach to performance management with improved accountability and responsibilities for Circle Housing front line teams.

4.6 Vulnerable tenants receive a priority service under the policy operated by Circle Anglia.

5.0 Orbit East

5.1 Orbit has a relatively small number of properties in the district. No particular problems relating to the repairs service have been identified. Complaints are at a low level.

5.2 The performance indicators for Orbit are set out below.

- 82% of customers satisfied with the overall service
- 79% of jobs completed on first visit
- 93% of customers provided with an appointment

6.0 Paradigm Housing Group

6.1 Paradigm gave a demonstration of their call centre and an explanation of their policies and approach. Tenant satisfaction is high with good response rates and a low level of complaints. They have an in-house repairs service.

6.2 Paradigm's performance indicators for customer services and repairs are set out below.

- 96% of emergency (within 24 hours) repairs completed in target time
- 78% of routine (within 15 days) repairs completed in target time
- 22.6 days- average time taken to complete repair (urgent + routine
- 82.5% % of repairs completed first time
- 100% of gas safety certificates in date
- 4.5% of missed appointments
- 76.5% customer satisfaction with repairs

7.0 Riversmead Housing Association

7.1 Riversmead explained their approach and policy framework. They explained their centralised call centre in Hertford which serves the whole of Network. At the time of the visit it seemed to be working well. However, since that date Members have expressed concerns about call centre performance resulting in long waiting times for calls to be answered and calls being abandoned.

7.2 The call centre at Riversmead has been affected by staff turnover. New members of staff have now been recruited and trained. The response times should therefore improve.

7.3 The actual repairs service is effective with most repairs carried out in accordance with their policy within a reasonable time to an acceptable standard.

7.4 Average re-let time for September was 26.25 days with a year to date figure of 27.9 days. Repairs completed was 95.7% and year to date 97.6%.

8.0 Implications/Consultations

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

Background Papers
Performance indicators supplied by the registered providers.

Contact Member: Councillor Eric Buckmaster- Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing
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Contact Officer: Simon Drinkwater- Director of Neighbourhood Services
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Report Author: Simon Drinkwater

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IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives *(delete as appropriate):*	***People* – Fair and accessible services for those that use them and opportunities for everyone to contribute** This priority focuses on delivering strong services and seeking to enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing, particularly for those who are vulnerable.
Consultation:	There has been no consultation.
Legal:	There are no specific legal implications.
Financial:	There are no financial implications.
Human Resource:	There are effects on human resources.
Risk Management:	Poor quality repair services have an impact on the quality of life for tenants.
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	Poor quality repair services have an impact on the quality of life for tenants. Tenants wellbeing is enhanced by prompt and effective repairs.

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF COMMUNITY SCRUTINY

THE DRAFT HOUSING AND HEALTH STRATEGY 2016-2021

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To report to Members the draft Housing and Health Strategy 2016-2021 for their comments prior to public consultation.

RECOMMENDATION FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE That:	
(A)	**the draft Housing and Health Strategy 2016-21 be supported for the purpose of public consultation.**

1.0 Background

1.1 The current Housing Strategy concludes in 2016 and therefore a review and drafting has taken place of a new Housing and Health Strategy 2016-2021.

1.2 The draft Housing and Health Strategy 2016-21 is not a statutory document but it is a strategy which sets out the current position, issues and tasks for the Council in delivering a sustainable housing offer to residents.

1.3 The draft Housing and Health Strategy 2016-21 covers all aspects of Housing and will be subject to public consultation for a 12 week period before going to Executive and Full Council for endorsement.

1.4 The draft Housing and Health Strategy 2016-21 has been prepared as a light touch document as there are many changes taking place in the housing sector at this time which may need to be inserted as they go through ministerial processes.

2.0 Report

2.1 The draft Housing and Health Strategy 2016-21 contains a Vision, Objectives, Strategic Objectives, Short-term tasks and timescales.

2.2 The Vision is set out below:

- 'To work in partnership to plan for, make best use of and facilitate housing supply and to support and sustain residents in appropriate housing'

2.3 There are 4 key objectives that the Strategy seeks to deliver as set out below:

- Objective 1: Enable affordable housing delivery through partnership working and maximising suitably located and constructed development opportunities, whilst ensuring the best use of the existing stock.
- Objective 2: Focus on meeting the housing needs of active and frail older persons.
- Objective 3: Work to meet the needs of vulnerable people in the housing market
- Objective 4: Seek to support rural communities in meeting their local housing needs.

2.4 Objective 1. This explores the housing market in East Herts and uses some of the information provided by the District Wide Housing Needs Survey. The focus is on continuing to provide an availability of good quality affordable homes across all tenures.

2.5 Objective 2. This highlights a sector of the community who are growing and have specific housing requirements. Older people and older frail people are seeking smaller units with support as and when required. There is a need through the Strategy to focus on this sector and what can be achieved by the Council with partners in delivering an attractive downsizing offer.

2.6 Objective 3. There are vulnerable people in the East Herts area who need support through finding a home, sustaining a tenancy

and accessing any support services they require. They are not a large group but they are need of support and signposting in sustaining a home. There are many excellent projects and service providing this support in the District.

2.7 Objective 4. East Herts has a large rural hinterland and is the largest rural area in Hertfordshire. Residents want to stay in their local area but offer cannot find across the tenures a suitable property which results in out migration. East Herts Council supports the Neighbourhood Planning Process and this looks in some detail at housing requirements. Parish Housing Needs Survey are also an option which can be used to provide local information and evidence.

2.8 The intended timetable for consultation for the draft Housing and Health Strategy 2016-2021 is set out below:

17 November – Scrutiny Committee

20 November- start public consultation period

12 February – end of public consultation period

8 March – Housing and Health Strategy to Executive

18 May- Housing and Health Strategy to Council.

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'**.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 Members provide any comments and amendments and agree that the draft Housing and Health Strategy 2016-21 can go forward for public consultation.

Background Papers – None

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IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives *(delete as appropriate):*	***People* – Fair and accessible services for those that use them and opportunities for everyone to contribute** This priority focuses on delivering strong services and seeking to enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing, particularly for those who are vulnerable. ***Place* – Safe and Clean** This priority focuses on sustainability, the built environment and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean. ***Prosperity* – Improving the economic and social opportunities available to our communities** This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic opportunities and delivering cost effective services.
Consultation:	*Internal only.*
Legal:	*None for the Council*
Financial:	*None for the Council*
Human Resource:	*None for the Council*
Risk Management:	*None*
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	This Strategy is a Housing and Health Strategy and looks at the impact of housing on health and well being issues.

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Essential Reference Paper “B”

East Herts Housing and Health Strategy

2016- 2021

Foreword

Councillor Eric Buckmaster, Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support

I am pleased to introduce this new Housing Strategy for East Herts which provides the strategic direction for housing services. It outlines the key priorities for the Council moving forward.

The Housing agenda is an area of highly challenging work in a climate of growing housing needs through changing demographics, affordability issues and difficult personal situations for residents who require support. The Council recognises all these issues and works with partners across the District to provide suitable housing options for residents to have a home.

This Strategy deals with the topics under the Housing agenda of homelessness, the private sector, empty homes, new affordable housing, managing the allocation of properties and providing support and accommodation for those vulnerable groups of older persons or with physical and mental health issues.

This Strategy although not a statutory requirement is a key document for the Council to set out its position in a transparent and open manner and I see it as a key Strategy to deliver district wide.

The new title of the strategy reflects the major and integral role that housing plays in promoting health and wellbeing.

Introduction

This document is not a statutory requirement but is an important public document which allows East Herts to set out its position and direction of travel on key housing issues.

The Housing Strategy is a strategic document which has underneath it daughter documents including details on specialist aspects of housing. These documents are:

- The Homelessness Review and Strategy 2013-2018
- The Tenancy Strategy
- The Empty Homes Strategy
- The Housing Register and Allocations Policy
- It also sits alongside and supports other key strategies such as the Council's Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

The Housing Strategy is a key document which covers all aspects of housing including the Vision, Strategy and Objectives to be taken forward by East Herts Council.

Review of National Policy

Name	Key Information
Care Act 2014	This imposes a duty on County Councils to ensure well being, including suitability of living accommodation, and a duty on the District Council to co-operate.
Housing and Health Memorandum of Understanding	In December 2014 a national Housing and Health Memorandum of Understanding to support joint action on improving health through the home was agreed between the Local Government Association, Public Health England, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and others, to work together with the basic principle that 'everyone should have a home in which to start well, live well, and age well'. It recognises that key features of a home include that it should be warm, affordable to heat, free from hazards, and is accessible, with support available if

	needed. It acknowledges that the right home environment can improve health and wellbeing and prevent ill-health, enable people to manage their health and care needs, and allow people to remain in their home as long as they want to. Housing can contribute to delayed/reduced care interventions, timely discharge and reduced hospital re-admission, and rapid recovery.
Deregulation Act 2015	From October 2015 there are new restrictions on the circumstances in which a private landlord can seek possession of their rental property. A notice seeking possession (known as a section 21 notice) cannot be given in relation to an Assured Shorthold Tenancy within six months of the date of service of an Improvement Notice. This is intended to reduce incidences or fear of retaliatory eviction if the tenant makes a complaint about housing conditions. It may lead to an increase in the number of requests to the Council's Environmental Health Service to investigate housing complaints, and may increase pressure for a prompt housing assessment and prompt enforcement action.
Housing and Planning Bill 2015	This Bill is passing through the stages of Parliament and may be subject to change but at the time of publication included: Starter Homes and a duty to promote the supply, Self Build, Rogue Landlords and Letting Agents, Right to Buy on a Voluntary Basis and High Income Social Tenants on a Mandatory Rent.
Welfare and Work Bill 2015	Welfare Reforms have restricted the amount of Housing Benefit that can be payable to private sector tenants have implemented a new rate for those under 35. Social tenants of working age have seen the implementation of the 'under occupying' reforms and the Council is awaiting the introduction of Universal Credit in the District in. These reforms have increased advice sought by residents and a limitation on stock which is available to them.

Code for Sustainable Homes	This is being phased out as the drive to Energy Efficiency is covered by improved Building Regulations.
Green Deal and Renewable Heat Incentive	Green Deal has ended, and Renewable Heat Incentive is under review, with doubt over its future.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)	The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF requires that every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing needs of an area.
Planning policy for travellers sites (August 2015)	This guidance, to be read in conjunction with the NPPF, sets the planning policy context for the provision of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople both through local plans and through the planning application process.

Review of Local Policy Position

Name	**Key Information**
District Plan	East Herts is progressing with its District Plan which will set the framework for guiding development in East Herts until 2031. The document will identify locations for new housing and set out the Council's policies on Affordable Housing, , Housing for Older and Vulnerable People, and Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling People.
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2015	The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has two objectives: to identify the functional Housing Market Area (HMA) and to establish the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing (both market and affordable). The SHMA addresses the needs for all types of housing, including private rented sector, people wishing to build

	their own home, family housing, housing for older people and households with specific needs. It also considers they key drivers and relationships within the housing market..
Housing Needs Survey (2015)	East Herts has carried out a Housing Needs Survey to provide supporting evidence for this Strategy and help to identify the key trends, needs and aspirations of the local community in progressing affordable housing in the District.
Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment (2014)	The Assessment was carried out to provide evidence of need to underpin the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople pitch and plot allocations, respectively, in the emerging District Plan to 2031.
Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment Update (2015)	The update to the previous Assessment is currently being carried out to provide evidence of need to underpin the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople pitch and plot allocations, respectively, in the emerging District Plan to 2031 in light of the changes in the Planning policy for traveller sites revision, August 2015 and to align the evidence base with the publication of the SHMA.
Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Identification of Potential Sites Study (2014)	This study was undertaken to seek to identify potential locations to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the emerging District Plan to 2031 that are identified in the Accommodation Needs Assessment.
Health and Well Being – Housing Health Cost Calculator (HHCC)	Housing is one of the major wider determinants of health and wellbeing, and our efforts to improve housing condition support the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-18. The impacts that housing can have on health and wellbeing are recognised by the Housing Act 2004, particularly through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), by which housing of all tenures is

	assessed for the likelihood and severity of harm arising from a range of hazards, such as excess cold, falls, dampness, and fire. Options ranging from advice and assistance through to enforcement are available to the Council to tackle housing hazards. The Council has a duty to take action to remedy significant (Category 1) hazards, and a power to tackle less significant (Category 2) hazards. The Council, along with other District Councils in Hertfordshire, is inputting data about its interventions to tackle housing hazards under the HHSRS, onto Housing Health Cost Calculator software produced by the Building Research Establishment, to estimate the savings to the NHS and society of our work to remedy housing hazards and thus reduce likelihood of harm.
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)	The Herts JSNA summarises health data from which decisions about local health priorities and funding are made, so it is important that data on the housing impacts on the health of our residents is included. [1] The above HHCC data will be collated by the participating district councils in Herts to inform the Herts Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) of the impacts of housing on health, and the value of the councils' housing interventions. A Health Impact Assessment planned as part of a stock modelling project will further inform the JSNA.
Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regs 2015	From October 2015, the government has introduced Regulations to increase provision of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in the private rented housing sector. A working smoke alarm is required on each storey with living accommodation. The regulations do not apply to licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation, but do change licence conditions requiring Carbon Monoxide alarms where there is a solid fuel burning appliance in a living room.

[1] http://jsna.hertslis.org/

	If the Council has reasonable grounds to believe there is a contravention, the council must within 21 days serve a remedial notice giving 28 days to comply, then must do work in any default, and may issue a civil penalty of up to £5000. In order to impose such charges, and hence recover its enforcement costs, a priority for the Council is to publish a statement of principles. Although risks from fire and carbon monoxide can also be addressed, as with other common housing hazards, through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), the Regulations contain an imperative for swift enforcement action without the need to assess the relative likelihood of harm. The most common hazards in the home are excess cold and falls, yet these Regulations could divert limited enforcement resources to tackling the hazards from fire and carbon monoxide. The council is liaising with the Herts Fire and Rescue Service over joint publicity, and the Fire Service has a supply of free alarms for landlords.
Disabled Facilities Grant	District Councils have a statutory responsibility for Disabled Facilities Grants. Until April 2015, East Herts Council received government funding towards expenditure on mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). From April 2015, funding for Disabled Facilities Grants transferred to the Better Care Fund, which is paid to County, rather than District Councils. The Government's 2013 Spending Review created this single pooled budget to incentivise innovation and integration across the NHS and Local Government, 'to deliver better outcomes and greater efficiencies through more integrated services for older and disabled people'.[2] District Councils are therefore working with Herts County Council to ensure Better Care Fund plans make adequate provision to meet local needs and statutory obligations for Disabled Facilities Grants. The March 2015 austerity Budget announced that the

[2] HM Treasury. Spending Round. June 2013. Page 35

	government is exploring *whether* improving housing can help people with care needs stay in their homes longer and reduce costs to the NHS.[3] Therefore to ensure future funding, rather than merely deliver housing improvements and adaptations, there will also be a need for District Councils to refer to the body of evidence on the impacts of housing on health, and to demonstrate how such interventions contribute to NHS and Social Care performance outcomes.
Green Deal and Renewal Heat Incentive	In July 2015 the government announced it was ending funding for its Green Deal household energy efficiency programme, following low take up. Although the scheme was unpopular, the absence as yet of a replacement scheme raises concerns about cutting carbon emissions and fuel poverty. Feed in tariffs to encourage uptake of renewable electricity-generating technologies are also being cut. Some major locally active companies have already gone into liquidation. These moves are likely to cause a further reduction in take up of domestic energy efficiency measures. Excess cold is the most commonly occurring serious housing hazard. The Council therefore continues to offer grants towards the cost of installing certain energy efficiency measures.

[3] HM Treasury. Budget 2015. March 2015. Page 30

East Herts Context

The District consists of the 5 market towns of Bishop's Stortford, Buntingford, Hertford, Sawbridgeworth and Ware. There is also a significant rural hinterland with many villages and hamlets.

The District covers an area of 477 square kilometres and comprises around one third of the area of the county of Hertfordshire.

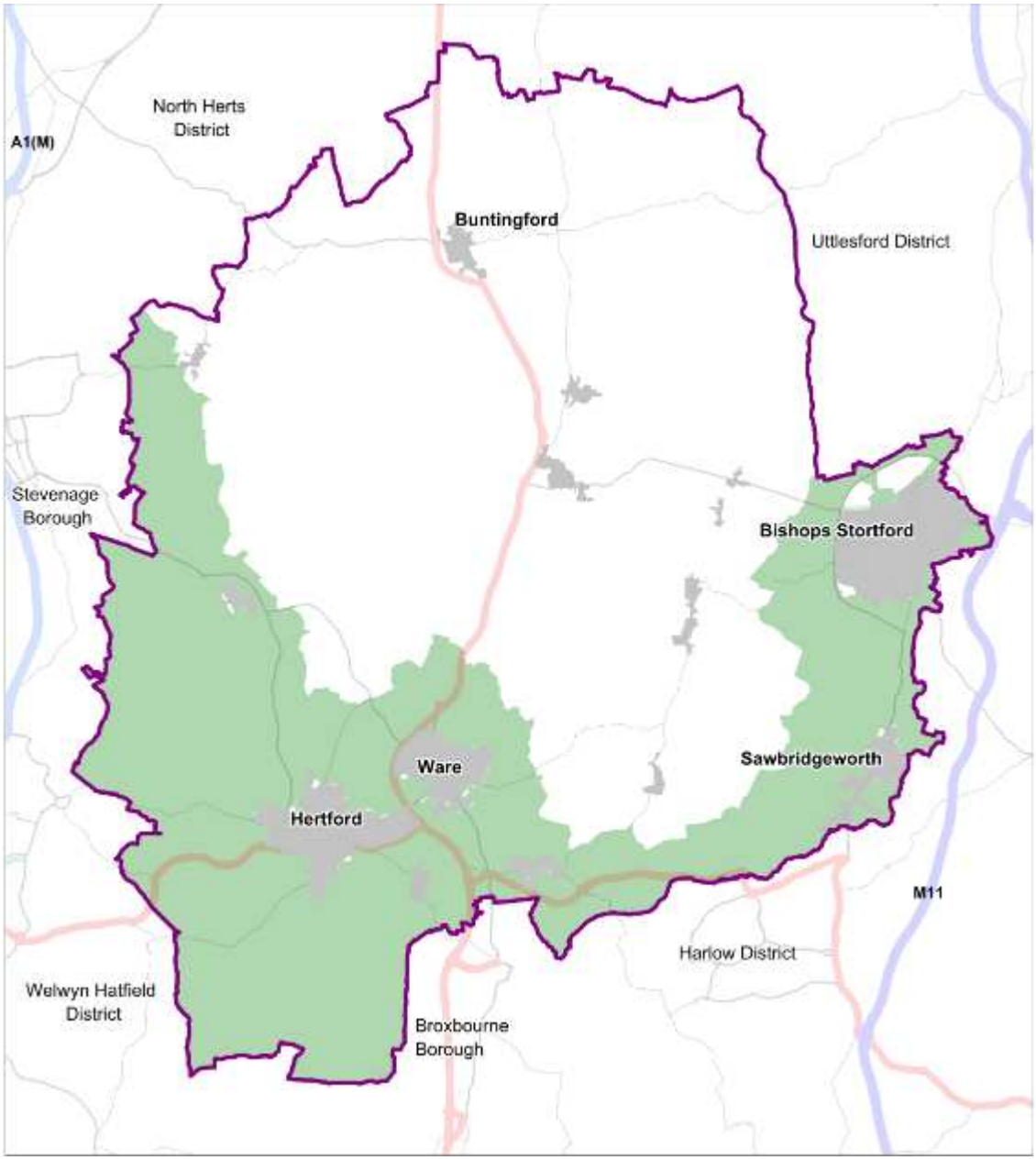
The District is heavily influenced by the major settlements beyond its borders. The towns of Stevenage, Harlow and Welwyn Garden City are directly on the borders and there are also significant influences of East to West.

Residents in East Herts enjoy one of the highest qualities of life in rural Britain. In particular residents in East Herts enjoy a good level of health and life expectancy.

East Herts is an attractive place to live, which is reflected in high house prices. There is a pressing need for more affordable housing in the District. Achieving housing development that responds to local needs, whilst recognising the environmental and other constraints in East Herts, is a significant challenge. It is also necessary to recognise the specific accommodation and housing needs of different groups in the local community.

East Herts has an ageing population. Meeting the varying needs of older people will be a challenge, whilst ensuring the district remains attractive and accessible to young people.

Figure 1: East Hertfordshire District



Vision

The Council aims to ensure that a sustainable housing offer is available to residents through working with partner organisations in the development and management of housing stock and the provision of advice, support and help..

'To work in partnership to plan for, make best use of and facilitate housing supply and to support and sustain residents in appropriate housing.'

Objectives:

1. Enable affordable housing delivery through partnership working and maximising suitably located and constructed development opportunities, whilst ensuring the best use of existing stock.
2. Focus on meeting the housing needs of active and frail older persons.
3. Work to meet the needs of vulnerable people in the housing market.
4. Seek to support rural communities in meeting their local housing needs.

Objective 1:

Enable affordable housing delivery through partnership working and maximising suitably located and constructed development opportunities, whilst ensuring the best use of the existing stock

Current position

The Council does not own any housing stock as the housing was transferred to the Registered Providers of Riversmead and Circle Housing South Anglia in 2002. Since this transfer the Council has secured affordable housing delivery through planning obligations and working in partnership with Registered Providers on land opportunities. The delivery profile has been strong to date as outlined below:

Information from the Annual Monitoring Reports of East Herts Council

Year	**2006/ 07**	**2007/ 08**	**2008/ 09**	**2009/ 10**	**2010/ 11**	**2011/ 12**	**2012/ 13**	**2013/ 14**	**2014/ 15**
Gross Affordable Housing Completions	191	177	145	142	38	166	196	68	126

Housing for rent via a Registered Provider is allocated through the Housing Needs Register and the Choice Based Lettings system. As of September 2015, 2096 applicants were on the Housing Needs Register.

The Council works hard to ensure a strong delivery pipeline of affordable housing through its planning policies and relationships with Registered Providers. Nationally, the Government introduced a new rent regime in 2004 which introduced affordable rents to replace social rents. Affordable rents are rents for affordable housing charged at a maximum of 80% of open market rent of that locality. In East Herts this rent level has been introduced on new build properties and on properties receiving a new tenant by Registered Providers who own the affordable homes in the District. These higher rent levels may lead to less mobility through the stock due to tenants wishing to retain historic social rent levels and affordability issues for both working and non-working residents.

The Council seeks to prevent homelessness and consistently has a low figure and works at an early stage to prevent homelessness. The Council uses a range of

temporary accommodation options including accommodation for clients with mental health issues and a council owned hostel.

Stock Condition

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

Good quality information on the condition of housing stock is essential to inform policy decisions on reducing fuel poverty, carbon emissions, health inequalities or promoting health and wellbeing.

The Council commissioned a House Condition Survey which was carried out in 2010. This estimated that 49% of all dwellings failed the government's aspirational Decent Home Standard, which defines a decent home as "one which is wind and weather tight, warm and has modern facilities".[4]

Rates of non-decency were found to be slightly higher in the privately rented sector than for owner-occupied dwellings, with social housing faring best.

Similarly, costs of necessary repairs were estimated to be highest for the privately rented sector, and lowest for social housing.

The 2010 survey found overall energy efficiency of stock to be better than the national average, but with considerable potential to reduce CO2 emissions and fuel poverty.

With high costs of owner-occupation and limited availability of social housing, the demand for privately rented housing is increasing.

A stock modelling project is proposed for 2015/16, to gather additional information regarding the condition of private sector housing in the district. This will provide modelled data on key housing indicators including significant hazards, fuel poverty, disrepair and energy efficiency, upon which further strategic decisions can be made.

This will encompass a Health Impact Assessment, which will be used to inform the Herts Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) as to the impacts of housing on the health and wellbeing of residents, and the needs for investment in housing.

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

Disrepair and enforcement

All requests from tenants to require landlords to improve the condition of their homes are investigated in accordance with the Council's enforcement policy, which advocates a staged approach, from advice through to enforcement as appropriate. Where enforcement action proves necessary, the Council will generally seek to recover costs associated with serving of notices and carrying out works in default.

Disrepair and assistance

The Council has also helped fund essential works in owner occupied properties through its means tested Decent Home Grants. The Council has reduced its budget for these discretionary grants in order to prioritise use of dwindling resources. Their availability is under review, and currently is restricted to high risk cases or where some works are necessary alongside a Disabled Facilities Grant. The review will also enable funding for capital works under the dementia project, and expansion of energy efficiency grants in the light of the changes to government incentives to be considered.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Houses in Multiple Occupation, (HMOs) tend, locally and nationally, to contain some of the poorest housing, along with sharing of amenities, and the risk of harm to occupants in the case of fire is also higher. Therefore in addition to responding to complaints from tenants about their housing conditions, pro-active inspections are also carried out to properties known to be an HMO, and action taken according to assessed risk. When resources permit, contact is also made to properties thought likely to be an HMO.

Certain larger HMOs are also required to be licensed, and conditions are generally attached to the licence to bring the property up to the required standard. The Council's HMO licensing fee is lower where the landlord pro-actively applies for a licence. Where the application is as a result of the Council's intervention, a higher fee is charged, reflecting the additional costs generally incurred in such cases.

Affordability

East Herts is a high value and high demand area for market and affordable housing. The average house prices in the District are around 25% higher than the national average. In the five year period 2009-2014, the average property price in East Herts increased by around 20%. In East Herts the average house price is around £325,000 according to the National Housing Federation, just over 13 times the

average income for the District. This puts pressure on stock availability and turnover of all tenures.

To access parts of the housing market there is a need to have savings or earning that allow financial criteria to be met to access housing. In the District there is a huge salary spectrum, 21.4% of households earn below £20,000 well below the national average of £27,000 (HNS, 2015).

Shared Ownership properties provide an opportunity to access market housing but the affordability of this is also related to location and size of property. The HNS showed that 25.2% of concealed households have no savings and 90.9% have less than £25,000 which is a barrier to moving out. Households have a low level of funds available to pay rent or mortgage per month with 48.4% willing to pay between £451 and £550pcm (HNS, 2015). This does restrict the housing market available to them significantly.

The rental market is a key tenure of both private rent and affordable rent for residents and there is a good range of stock sizes and locations. The private rental sector is experiencing pressure as demand grows from those who wish to be flexible with their living arrangements and who do not have the funds to access for sale/shared ownership properties. Rental rates are increasing in both the private and affordable sector. In the social housing sector, affordable rent is up to 80% of open market rent and this can be an issue in high price areas for prospective tenants. In private rent there is an increase in the number of households who do not require housing benefit and therefore there is a falling number of landlords willing to accept households in receipt of housing benefit which puts pressure on the Housing Service to provide support.

Empty Homes

Long term empty homes in the private sector present a potential resource to the District. East Herts is fortunate that it has a relatively low number of long term empty homes. Figure 5 compares 2014 levels for East Herts with the total for England, and for Hertfordshire.

Figure 5: Empty homes comparisons 2014

	Total empties	Percent of stock	Private empty for more than 6 months

England	610,123	2.64%	194,093
Hertfordshire	8,151	1.73%	1,929
East Herts	1,130	1.92%	356

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants

In 2010 the Council adopted its revised Empty Homes Strategy (due for revision again in 2015). A staged approach to tackling empty homes, from identification through prioritisation, encouragement with support and a range of incentives, through to enforcement where appropriate supports a target of bringing 10 empty homes back into use each year as a result of our action.

East Herts is working in partnership with Chelmsford, Epping Forest, Harlow, Hertsmere and Uttlesford Councils to deliver Private Lease Agreements Converting Empties (PLACE), a scheme targeted at helping the owners of long term empty homes return their properties to use. The scheme offers significant grant or loan funding to convert and/or repair properties and bring them into residential use. Grants are only available where the property is made available to a Housing Association for a three year period following repair.

Whilst the total number of privately owned long term empty properties in the district has fallen to just over 60% of the number in 2010 there remain approximately 60 properties that have been empty for 10 years or more. Changes to the PLACE scheme makes funding available for certain empty property enforcement work where this is the most appropriate action however there remains a significant resource requirement for these cases.

Better Business for All

The Better Regulation Delivery Office, part of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, has developed a Regulators Code which came into effect in April 2014, and a Better Business for All tool-kit, both placing emphasis on supporting business growth through effective regulation, and following the principles of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006. The Enterprise Bill, if enacted, will extend the obligation, by requiring an annual report on regulators' performance in relation to business growth.

The Council is active in the Herts Better Business for All partnership and Regulators Forum, and those enforcing legislation to improve standards of housing in East Herts have participated in awareness training organised by the partnership.

The Herts Forum and the Herts Public Health Board recognised the potential benefits of cross agency working to tackle poor housing. The Council is involved in a

multi- agency working group, being set up to develop a rogue landlord project for participating Herts authorities, subject to confirmation of funding.

Key Strategic Priorities, Task and Timeframe

Strategic Priorities

- Achieve the right mix, tenure and proportion of affordable housing on new developments based on need.
- Maximise funding opportunities for the delivery of new affordable housing.
- Raise standards in the private sector, particularly in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)
-

Short term Task and Timeframe

- Utilise and disseminate the information to partners contained within in the Housing Needs Survey by September 2016.
- Commit to projects which ensure best value spending of commuted sums on affordable housing in the District by December 2016.
- For the Council to be involved in a multi- agency working group, being set up to develop a rogue landlord project for participating Herts authorities, subject to confirmation of funding by July 2016.
- To commission and facilitate a stock modelling survey and provide key health data to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, by December 2016.

Objective 2: Focus on meeting the housing needs of active and frail older persons.

Current Position:

The District Housing Needs Survey 2015 asked a series of questions to understand physical or mental health issues and long term illness and their impact on housing needs.

The key findings were that 16.5% of households contain somebody with a disability/limiting long term illness. The main demographic affected were over 65 years old and the main issue being around walking/mobility issues.

The East Herts population is forecast to increase with a particularly significant increase in persons over 65 years old and also 75 years old. There is also forecast a growth within the working population age group.

These demographic changes have an impact on the size and tenure of properties required. The increase in older persons will impact on both the need for suitable market and affordable sheltered and supported accommodation.

Draft District Plan Position

The NPPF requires local planning authorities to plan for a mix of housing to meet the needs of different groups in the community, including the specific accommodation needs of older and vulnerable people.

It is important that the Council, working with partners such as the County Council, Registered Providers, health care agencies and developers, seeks to plan for increasing housing choices in terms of specialised accommodation, and appropriate dwellings that are in locations close to sustainable transport options and other key local services. In addition, offering attractive alternative housing choices for older people will assist in freeing-up family sized homes that are currently under-occupied.

Accommodation for older people is moving towards more flexible forms of living and support which seek to maintain independence. There are several options where residents can enjoy their own self-contained home within a site offering extra facilities. These include retirement homes, and ‘extra care’ or ‘flexicare’ housing, where varying levels of care and support are provided within the home.

The emerging District Plan contains a policy on ‘Housing for Older and Vulnerable People’ (Policy HOU6). In light of the recently agreed SHMA (2015)

and the Housing Needs Survey (2015), further information on the requirements of older people will need to be reflected in the next draft of the District Plan.

County Council Position via Accommodation Boards

The County Council operate Accommodation Boards in conjunction with District Councils and Registered Providers. Recently, the Accommodation Boards have been rejuvenated and East Herts Council are engaging with the County Council in very early discussions on the capacity for future provision for a range of clients groups, one of which is Older Persons.

The County Council estimates that the ageing demographics will result in a demand for nursing homes which will exceed current supply and that this will lead to a need to provide at home support in increasing numbers. The County Council continues to support the development of flexicare schemes in the County. Currently, East Herts has a popular scheme at Calton Court, Hertford. The flexicare model is very popular with residents but can be difficult to manage and implement due to the varying entry levels of needs for residents to make the model viable.

Housing Needs Survey

. The Housing Needs Survey asked older people aged 65 and over whether they were planning a move within the next 3 years and their future housing requirements. 32.8% of households would be seeking a bungalow, 22% a flat/maisonette and 16.3% supported housing. 63.8% of households would require owner occupier whiles 32.1% would be seeking Registered Provider rented accommodation. This indicates a huge demand for smaller accessible units as a high number of respondents had walking difficulties. Sheltered Accommodation was indicated as preference for supported accommodation needs, closely followed by independent accommodation with visiting support. The need for Extra Care housing was also expressed by respondents particularly those of 75 years and above.

Traditionally, Sheltered Accommodation has been for those over 55 years old but the trends appear to be that as we experience an aging population 55 years old is not an age when residents seek sheltered accommodation but prefer to remain in the family home with support. The models of accommodation for older people are being updated as there is a demand for a quality downsizing independent living offer for the active older person. Frail older persons seek out Extra Care facilities which provide specialist accommodation and support

services and the District does have existing excellent schemes but is aware that there is a growing market as people understand the concept.

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)

East Herts Council has a statutory responsibility to provide Disabled Facilities Grants to enable those with a disability to safely access their home and the facilities within it. Eligibility is governed by legislation. [5] The Council is obliged to consult with Herts County Council as to the necessary and appropriate works in each case. These grants have long been a priority within the Council's housing strategy, yet in recent years there has been a drop in the number of referrals for DFG from the County Council, despite an ageing demographic. The Council is working together with the County Council and other District Councils to improve the local arrangements for such grants.

Services are available through the Council's Building Control service and through the Papworth Trust Home Improvement Agency, to assist the applicant with plans, estimates and supervision of works.

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

Herts Healthy Homes

A free information and support service helps vulnerable residents in Herts stay healthy and safe at home. With a focus on keeping warm, the project was expanded to also cover referrals and advice on other services. It provides home visits to give advice and practical support on energy efficiency, advice on bills and budgeting, fire safety and home security checks, provision of draught-proofing and emergency heaters, and information on insulation grants available from East Herts Council.[6]

Operated through the County's HertsHelp call centre, it is well placed to identify residents who would benefit from East Herts' new Dementia Friendly Homes project.

[5] Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996

[6] Herts Healthy Homes. www.hertsdirect.org/hertshelp

Dementia Friendly Homes Project

The number of people estimated to have dementia in East Herts in 2012 was over 1500. This is expected to rise to over 2000 by 2020.

East Herts Council in partnership with Crossroads Care Hertfordshire North successfully bid for funds from Hertfordshire Healthy Homes Local Initiatives Fund 2015/16 to develop an innovative project to provide practical actions to help individuals live well with dementia in their home. The project also receives Public Health funding from East Herts Council.

The project supports East Herts health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-18 priorities for promoting positive health and wellbeing life quality for all, and to Hertfordshire's Public Health Strategy priorities for longer, healthier lives, and specific priorities under Hertfordshire's Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy 2013-16 for improving mental health and emotional wellbeing, living well with dementia, and enhancing quality of life for people with long term conditions, and for supporting carers.

A checklist of available measures has been developed, and if the household agrees, the project co-ordinator arranges their installation. The impacts of the service will be evaluated with a view to its future development and delivery.

Key Strategic Priorities, Task and Timeframe

Strategic Priorities

-To work with the County Council and Registered Providers to identify opportunities within the district for flexi-care schemes.

- Continue with the Ageing Well Initiative and monitor the outcomes.

- To work with the Dementia Friendly Programme to mainstream the principles into East Herts accommodation.

- To undertake a strategic review with partners of all Older Persons accommodation provided in the District.

Short-term tasks and timeframe

- To engage with the County Council and Registered Providers to seek opportunities for flexi-care opportunities in the eastern side of the District by March 2016.

- To work with Registered Provider partners to implement the Dementia Friendly Programme in their organisations by December 2016.
- To prepare a database of older persons scheme information for the provision in the District and have an information booklet for residents by December 2016.
- To support Planning Policy in looking at the implications of an older population in the District and the impact on type, tenure and location of housing requirements through the District Plan process by April 2016.
- To continue to support Crossroads Care to develop and deliver the Dementia Friendly Homes project to 200 residents, and to evaluate the scheme by end March 2017.

Objective 3: Work to meet the needs of vulnerable people in the housing market.

Current Position:

In East Herts there is a range of supported housing provision or signposting facilities to services for a number of client groups including young people, those with mental health issues, drug and alcohol issues, learning disabilities and experiencing domestic violence.

The Council will support the County Council through participating in Strategic Partnership Accommodation Board. The Council are awaiting the market position statements on the client groups being produced by the County Council to inform the conversation around future provision.

Care Act 2014

The Care Act 2014 and its associated statutory guidance impose a duty on County Councils to ensure well-being, including suitability of living accommodation, and a duty on the District Council to co-operate. The guidance recognises that housing or suitable living accommodation is a place which is safe, healthy, and 'suitable for the needs of a person, so as to contribute to promoting physical and emotional health and wellbeing and social connections – a healthy home would be dry, warm and insulated and a safe home would meet particular needs, e.g., of an older person.' [7]Suitable housing is explicitly listed in the Care Act's definition of wellbeing, and the statutory guidance states that Local Authorities should consider the central role of housing within integration, with associated formal arrangements with housing and other partner organisations.

Thus working with the County Council to develop effective partnerships for appropriately assessing and addressing housing impacts on wellbeing will be a priority within this strategy

Homelessness Data

Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Act 2002 place statutory duties on local housing authorities to provide assistance to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Authorities must consider all applications from people seeking accommodation or assistance in obtaining accommodation. A main homelessness duty is owed where the authority is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a priority need group.

[7] Department of Health. Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014. October 2014

Where a main duty is owed, the authority must ensure that suitable accommodation is available for the applicant and his or her household until a settled home becomes available for them. Where households are found to be intentionally homeless or not in priority need, the authority must make an assessment of their housing needs and provide advice and assistance to help them find accommodation for themselves.

Where the applicant is found to be intentionally homeless but falls in a priority need category the authority must also ensure that accommodation is available for long enough to give the applicant a reasonable opportunity to find a home.

The table below shows the number of homelessness presentations and acceptances over the last 3 years for East Herts.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Homeless applications	93	99	79	69	99
Homeless Acceptances	39	40	35	33	49
Percentage of acceptances against applications	42%	40%	44%	48%	49%

The Council has a Homeless Review and Strategy 2013-2018 in place which provides greater detail on the responsibilities and processes in place in East Herts.

Temporary Accommodation

Under Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996 local authorities are obliged to provide temporary accommodation for homeless households who have no other home in which they can reasonably be expected to live.

The Council will continue to monitor the use of temporary accommodation and the use of bed and breakfast. The Council have low numbers of clients needing to use temporary accommodation but has seen an increase in larger family groups requiring assistance. This increase has put pressure on the Council's own Hostel accommodation and the Housing Team look at all the options to ensure that length of stay and cost implications are minimised.

Rough Sleepers

The Communities and Local Government office has issued guidance that says Local

Authorities should use local intelligence from partner agencies about the extent of rough sleeping in its area. Where this indicates that there are more than 10 rough sleepers in an area on any one night then they should carry out a full official count. The Council has monitored annually, since 2004, the number of rough sleepers in one particular week . The last count was November 2014 and four rough sleepers were identified in one night in one week. The Council recognises that there are not many housing options for this client group other than the private sector and has therefore consistently targeted its Rent Deposit Scheme at non-priority homeless people to prevent rough sleeping.

County Council Position via Accommodation Boards

The County Council works with the District Council and partners to look at specific vulnerable groups through Accommodation Boards. These groups include learning disability,physical disability, mental health, aspergers and Housing Related Support.

The District supports these groups through partnership working and looking at housing needs of residents. Often, the key issue is the revenue support required for these groups to provide support and care within the accommodation. The physical housing stock is often suitable for a majority of vulnerable users apart from those that require adaptions such as wheelchair accessible , wetrooms or stairlifts.

Young Persons

The District works with Aldwyck Housing Association with their Young Person's Scheme at Rose Court, Hertford and with the YMCA in Bishops Stortford. They both provide a flexible accommodation model providing self contained units with support services to enable young people to move on into a tenancy which they can sustain. These are important services as young people find it increasingly difficult to begin and sustain a home in the property market with high deposits and rents required.

Gypsy and Travellers

Local authorities have a legal responsibility to plan for the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community. Section 225 of the Housing Act 2004 requires local authorities to consider Gypsy and Traveller sites as part of their Accommodation Assessments and to prepare strategies to meet those needs. In March 2012 the Government, in tandem with the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), issued its 'Planning policy for traveller sites' (PPTS) document, which set the overarching policy context for the provision of traveller accommodation (to include both Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling

Showpeople). This guidance was subsequently superseded by revised version of 'Planning policy for traveller sites', which was issued by the Government in August 2015.

The Planning policy for traveller sites guidance requires local planning authorities to "make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning" (paragraph 4) and that local planning authorities, in producing their Local Plan, should *[inter alia]* "identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets" and "identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15" (paragraph 10). Thus, an onus is placed on the Council to demonstrate that it can both quantify what the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be for the Plan period and identify locations in which that need can be met, in the same way that it has a duty to meet general housing needs.

The East Herts Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment (ANA), April 2014, produced by ORS on behalf of the Council, identified the accommodation needs of the district to 2031. At the time of writing this Strategy, the ANA is in the process of being updated to take into account the provisions of the revised 'Planning policy for traveller sites' Government guidance and to align timelines with the SHMA. Therefore, it should be understood that the following information regarding projected need may be subject to change following reporting of the ANA update in due course. The table below (taken from Figure 9 of the 2014 ANA) illustrates the requirement for additional pitch provision across the Plan period for Gypsies and Travellers as understood at that time:

Extra Pitch Provision in East Hertfordshire in 5 Year Periods

	2013-2018	**2018-2023**	**2023-2028**	**2029-2031**	**Total**
Total	7	1	2	2	**12**

For Travelling Showpeople, the table below (taken from Figure 11 of the 2014 ANA) illustrates the findings of the study in relation to the requirement for extra plot provision across the Plan period:

Extra Plot Provision in East Hertfordshire in 5 Year Periods

	2013-2018	**2018-2023**	**2023-2028**	**2029-2031**	**Total**
Total	1	1	2	1	**5**

As stated above, these figures are potentially subject to revision as part of the Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment Update, which is currently underway.

Following on from the 2014 ANA, Peter Brett Associates (PBA) completed the East Herts Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Identification of Potential

Sites Study, October 2014, (IOPS) aimed at the identification of potential locations where Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs might be met, through the provisions of draft District Plan Policy HOU7.

In this context it is important to note that, from both the NPPF and PPTS perspective, the Council must demonstrate a five year land supply of pitches and plots through the identification of 'specific deliverable sites' to meet its needs. Beyond the first five years, it has to identify 'a supply of specific developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15'. Identified sites need to be available, suitable, and developable (i.e. viable and deliverable).

As the findings of the IOPS have concluded that it is not possible to identify a sufficient five year land supply in locations beyond the Green Belt, a Joint Member/Officer Working Group has been established to consider how the Council can meet its requirements through other limited options. Recommendations of the Working Group will be brought forward through the District Plan process via the District Planning Executive Panel's consideration of, currently draft, Policy HOU7 'Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople', in due course.

Caravan sites

Caravans include mobile homes and park homes and the types of site include permanent residential sites, and touring and holiday sites.

East Herts has 9 mobile home sites currently listed on the public register.

To run a caravan site a licence is required and this is issued by Environmental Health.

Standard Conditions are attached to a licence to help protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents and visitors. Conditions cover a variety of issues, for example, the number and positioning of the mobile units, safe access around the sites including roads and pathway construction, fire safety, and the supply and maintenance of utilities and equipment on site.

New legislation relating to Mobile Homes came into force in 2013 (Mobile Homes Act 2013) which brings the mobile homes sites licensing regime more closely in line with other local authority licensing processes. The changes address the concerns highlighted in the Communities and Local Government select committee report following an inquiry into the industry.

The Act provides opportunity to raise standards where needed and encourages site owners to offer a more professional service. It removes the opportunity for blocking sales and allows the Council to take effective enforcement action against those operators who fail to comply with their licence obligations.

The changes also allow the Council to charge a licensing fee for ‘relevant protected sites’. Before doing so, the Council must publish a fees policy and this is planned to take place during the Council’s annual fees and charges review.

Key Strategic Priorities, Task and Timeframe

Strategic Priorities

-To engage with private landlords with the aim of increasing the availability of privately rented homes for households in housing need.

-To work with the Accommodation Boards to undertake a strategic review of Vulnerable Peoples Needs in the District

- To ensure that our Temporary Accommodation offer is fit for purpose.

Short-term Tasks and Timeframes

- To have a specific Officer in the Housing Team to deal with private rent sector and have networks in place to aid those in housing need by December 2016.
- Undertake a review of temporary accommodation provision in the District by December 2016.
- To review the effectiveness of the referral and move-on process with the Young Persons Project and the YMCA by July 2016.
- To publish a fees policy for relevant protected caravan sites by December 2016.

Objective 4: Seek to support rural communities in meeting their local housing needs.

Current Position:

Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood Planning was introduced by the Government through the Localism Act 2011 and on the 6 April 2012 the Town and Country Planning England Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 came into force.

Neighbourhood Planning gives communities the right to shape development through the production of Neighbourhood Development Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders. Neighbourhood Development Plans can set out a vision for an area and planning policies for the use and development of land.

Neighbourhood Planning has been progressed by a number of areas in the District and they are at various stages. One of the first stages to neighbourhood planning is to apply for area designation, the following areas are undertaking the Neighbourhood Planning process:

- Hertford Heath
- Brickendon Liberty Parish
- Buntingford Area
- Bishop's Stortford Central, South and All Saints and part of Thorley
- Walkern
- Standon
- Braughing
- Eastwick and Gilston and Hunsdon Parishes
- Much Hadham
- Sawbridgeworth

Those who have adopted plans are:

- Bishop's Stortford Silverleys and Meads Wards

Neighbourhood Planning is a key way for rural communities to identify and meet their local housing needs. It is a community based plan that can help to look at the size, tenure and potential locations of new developments in the parish or village.

Parish Housing Needs Surveys

The Council supports the Rural Enabler based at the Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire. The Rural Enabler can help Parishes to identify current and concealed housing needs in the parish through a Parish Housing Needs Survey.

Parish Housing Needs Surveys can provide key information on who in the Parish is seeking a move within the Parish or who would like to return to the Parish.

Rural Exception Sites

An exception site is one that would not usually secure planning permission for housing. It is important that rural exception affordable housing schemes are needs led, the starting point being that a need for affordable housing exists in the parish, rather than the availability of a particular site.

The ability of the proposed scheme to meet identified local affordable housing needs must be clearly demonstrated. This will be assessed using the Council's Housing Register and other available up-to-date housing needs assessments.

Localism will have an increasingly important influence on the shape of smaller rural settlements and the balance of rural housing stock. Parish Councils will be encouraged to identify sites in Neighbourhood Plans suitable for community-led affordable housing, including rural exception affordable housing sites.

Policy HSG5 (Rural Exceptions Affordable Housing) in 2007 Local Plan sets out the current policy position. The emerging District Plan contains a revised policy (Policy HOU4) which includes a criterion to ensure that housing permitted through this policy remains 'affordable' in perpetuity,

Key Strategic Priorities, Tasks and Timeframes

Strategic Priorities

- to work with Parishes to identify local housing needs through Neighbourhood Plans and Parish Housing Needs Surveys.
- to ensure that any potential Exception Sites are delivered in partnership with all interested stakeholders.

Short-term Tasks and Timeframes

- to engage with a Parish on carrying out at least one Parish Housing Needs Survey by December 2016.
- To provide information as requested to aid with Neighbourhood Planning as an ongoing initiative.

Monitoring

This Strategy will be monitored through an annual update to the East Herts Council Scrutiny Committee where the progress on short-term tasks will be reported and new tasks and timeframes set out.

Summary

This Strategy documents sets out the current policy position at national and local level on aspects of housing tenures and their delivery in the District. The Strategy is a strategic document which signposts to daughter documents with greater detail. The key aspects to note are the Strategic Objectives, Strategic Priorities, Short-term Tasks and Timeframes which are summarised in the table below:

Strategic Objective 1: Enable affordable housing delivery through partnership working and maximising suitably located and constructed development opportunities, whilst ensuring the best use of existing stock.	
Strategic Priorities	**Short-term tasks and timeframes**
Achieve the right mix, tenure and proportion of affordable housing on new developments based on need. Maximise funding opportunities for the delivery of new affordable housing. Raise standards in the private sector, particularly in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)	Utilise and disseminate the information to partners contained within the Housing Needs Survey by September 2016. Commit to projects which ensure best value spending of commuted sums on affordable housing in the District by December 2016. For the Council to be involved in a multi-agency working group being set up to develop a rogue landlord project for participating Herts authorities, subject to confirmation of funding by July 2016To commission and facilitate a stock modelling survey and provide key health data to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, by December 2016.
Strategic Objective 2: Focus on meeting the housing needs of active	

and frail older persons.	
Strategic Priorities	**Short-term tasks and timeframes**
To work with the County Council and Registered Providers to identify opportunities within the district for flexi-care schemes. Continue with the Ageing Well Initiative and monitor the outcomes. To work with the Dementia Friendly Programme to mainstream the principles into East Herts accommodation. To undertake a strategic review with partners of all Older Persons accommodation in the District.	To engage with the County Council and Registered Providers to seek opportunities for flexi-care opportunities in the eastern side of the District by March 2016. To work with Registered Provider partners to implement the Dementia Friendly Programme in their organisations by December 2016. To prepare a database of older persons scheme information for the provision in the District and have an information booklet for residents by December 2016. To support Planning Policy in looking at the implications of an older population in the District and the impact on type, tenure and location of housing requirements through the Local Plan process by Spring 2016. To continue to support Crossroads Care to develop and deliver the Dementia Friendly Homes project to 200 residents, and to evaluate the scheme by end March 2017.
Strategic Objectives 3: Work to meet the needs of vulnerable people in the housing market.	
Strategic Priorities	**Short-term tasks and timeframes**
To engage with private landlords with the aim of increasing the availability of privately rented homes for households in housing need. To work with the Accommodation Boards	To have a specific Officer in the Housing Team to deal with private rent sector and have networks in place to aid those in housing need by December 2016. Undertake a review of temporary accommodation provision in the District by 2016. To review the referral and move-on process with the Young Persons Project and the YMCA to

to undertake a strategic review of Vulnerable Peoples Needs in the District	ensure it is working effectively by July 2016. To publish a fees policy for relevant protected caravan sites by December 2016.
Strategic Objective 4: Seek to support rural communities in meeting their local housing needs.	
Strategic Priorities	**Short-term tasks and timeframes**
To work with Parishes to identify local housing needs through Neighbourhood Plans and Parish Housing Needs Surveys. To ensure that any potential Exception Sites are delivered in partnership with all interested stakeholders.	To engage with a Parish on carrying out at least one Parish Housing Needs Survey by December 2016. To provide information as requested to aid with Neighbourhood Planning as an ongoing initiative.

Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT BY COUNCILLOR E BUCKMASTER, EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To seek comments on the proposed options for change to the Empty Homes Strategy for 2015-2020, the resource implications and the proposed Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: That:	
(A)	**the proposed change in approach for prioritising and filtering empty properties for action be supported; and**
(B)	**Members advise on the level of action and commensurate resource to be included in the strategy.**

1 Background

Previous Empty Homes Strategy

1.1 The Council's Empty Homes Strategy approved in 2007 and revised in 2010 is based on a 5 step approach to tackling empty homes.

1.2 The main change in the 2010 strategy was to recognise the need to put particular emphasis on empty properties that have been left empty for the longest time, are particularly detrimental to their locality and/or those that could alleviate particular housing need. Changing the aim from the 2007 strategy of

"To maximise the number of empty homes brought back into use."

To the revised aim:

> "To bring empty homes back into use and tackle those that are long term, are problematic or could meet specific housing need."

With 6 supporting objectives.

Targets

1.3 Targets were set for the Empty Homes Officer to bring Empty Homes back into use in accordance with the previously used Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI 64). Whilst this is no longer a national indicator it has been retained as a local indicator and is defined as:

> "Number of non-local authority-owned vacant dwellings returned to occupation or demolished during the financial year as a direct result of action by the local authority."

1.4 The target was previously set at 12 but was reduced to 10 with the expectation that from the year 2010/2011 two of these properties will have been longer term or problematic empty homes.

1.5 The target has been met or exceeded in each year although getting accurate information on this is very time consuming as many owners are reluctant to engage with us and may not inform us when the property is occupied.

Resources

1.6 East Herts Council has had a dedicated Empty Homes Officer (0.5 FTE) in post since November 2004.

1.7 Between 2010 and 2012 the PLACE project was able to fund additional support to the Authorities involved and each benefited from work to better manage the available data and ensure that initial letters were sent to the owners of empty properties.

1.8 From August 2014 the Council has also employed an Empty Homes Assistant (0.2 FTE) on a two year fixed term contract.

1.9 The Empty Homes Assistant was intended to, and has focused on the identification and initial stages of the process, freeing up some time for the Empty Homes Officer to initiate enforcement action. Due to the increased number of empty properties requiring intervention under the current

strategy, only limited capacity has been released for enforcement action and systems/other enhancements e.g., website.

Driver for Change

1.10 Whilst the target has been met or exceeded each year, this is becoming more challenging as previous action and support has left a core of less cooperative owners requiring more concentrated action. With increasing numbers of empty properties requiring the initial letters and subsequent follow up, the time available to focus on any enforcement is diminished.

1.11 Empty properties other than those coded as long term empty are no longer being investigated. This leads to the possibility of other empty properties (including those that are uninhabitable, where the owner is in care or where the property is empty awaiting probate) remaining empty for longer with consequent deterioration in their condition.

1.12 Opportunities exist to improve information use (e.g., through better liaison with Councillors and town/parish councils) and processes (eg supporting linkages with Council Tax) but these require further commitment and investment.

1.13 Enforcement action in the form of Compulsory Purchase has been recently authorised for one property and remains to be taken forward.

2 Report

Data and numbers of Empty Homes

2.1 Since September 2009 the Council has had a specific module within the Environmental Health Database system to help manage empty homes work. To date over 1700 Empty Homes worksheets have been created and there are currently just over 500 active cases.

2.2 Much of the initial data comes via monthly reports from our Council Tax system and much work has been done to enable less manual input of this data.

2.3 In the Strategy 2010-2015 the number of Long Term Empty Homes in East Herts (those remaining empty for over 6 months) was given as 627. This was based on figures published from the Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA) return for 2008. The HSSA return no longer includes these empty homes figures and the prime source of comparable data across the country is the Council Tax Base (CTB) return.

2.4 The key published empty homes figure based on data from the CTB return October 2014 gives our number of Long Term Empty Homes as 377 however, this is based on a subset of the total number of empty homes and does not include, for example, those left empty by people in care homes or those empty awaiting probate. Taking the data from 2014, a more comparable figure to that used previously would show that in October 2014 there were approximately 534 long term empty properties.

2.5 In the Strategy for 2010 to 2015 it was stated that

"a significant number of properties can remain empty for up to two years before being brought back into use"

Taking figures for the years from 1/10/2011 to 30/9/2013 the following information was extracted.

Total new long term empty properties from Council Tax			617
Properties no longer empty after (from initial date empty)			
	0 months	13	
	0 – 6 months	51	
	6 -12 months	217	
	12-18 months	132	
	18 – 24 months	62	
Properties remaining empty after 24 months			142

There has been a big increase from 617 properties becoming long term empty in 2011-13 to 1031 in 2013-15.

Internal Systems Change

2.6 During 2016, Environmental Health will be moving to a new system for work/data management. This system does not have a dedicated empty homes module although work is currently ongoing to mitigate the negative impact of this and to determine an improved capture of empty homes data.

Legislative Change

2.7 New Homes Bonus, aimed at incentivising the building of new residential property in a Local Authority area and recognising the benefit of bringing empty homes back into use, was introduced in 2011 with the first payments made in the 2012/13 financial year using the Council Tax Base figures to determine the change in number of dwellings between October 2010 and October 2011.

2.8 Changes have also been implemented to the Council Tax exemptions and discounts available for certain empty homes. Previously properties that were empty and substantially unfurnished could be exempt from Council Tax for up to 6 months and those that were empty requiring major repair work or undergoing structural alterations could be exempt for 12 months. Since 2013 East Herts has taken advantage of the flexibility to change these exemptions and these now qualify for discounts of 50% for 6 months and 12 months respectively. Properties empty for more than 6 months (not requiring major works) and second homes are now charged at the full amount.

2.9 Taken together, these changes have taken away much of the incentive for owners to inform the Council Tax department that homes remain empty. Internally they drive a focus on reducing those shown as long term empty.

2.10 Proposals for Strategy 2015-2020

2.10.1 Maintain an approach based on encouragement of the owners of empty properties to bring them back into use voluntarily with our support if required. Allow for sufficient resource to be focused on enforcement for the longer term or other problematic properties. Through publicity, give greater awareness to others that action may be taken.

2.10.2 As indicated in the Review of Empty Homes Strategy Action Plan **Essential Reference Paper "B"** the suggestion is also to reduce the number of objectives from 6 to 4.

2.10.3 Limit the time spent on properties empty for less than two years where there have no complaints or requests for action, with no engagement with the owner following the initial two-letter process. Follow these up after two years with a visit to assess the level of impact on their neighbourhood.

2.10.4 Generate a manageable target list of properties for focused action based on an annual process of prioritisation. The inputs to this process will be all properties with complaints and those that have been empty for at least two years.

2.10.5 Prioritisation scoring will include:

- Length of time empty
- Number/spread of complaints received
- Property condition and its visual and physical impact on the neighbourhood
- Property location

- Level of debt owed to the council
- Level of formal action previous undertaken
- Likelihood of return to use without our intervention
- Strategic value, e.g., meeting local housing need.

2.10.6 The Empty Homes Officer will then focus on the properties on the target list making renewed efforts to contact the owners and initiating the process towards enforcement action as necessary.

2.10.7 This change of emphasis is shown in the change in the approach diagram used. See diagram showing this change attached at **Essential Reference Paper "C".**

2.10.8 With the increased focus on enforcement the revised strategy will include an appendix giving the options appraisal criteria that will be applied to those properties identified for enforcement and in particular those that are in the process of Compulsory purchase. This will help determine whether the Council will immediately sell the property on acquisition, will retain the property within its portfolio or some other outcome e.g., refurbish/redevelop the property then sell. This will be based on the established options appraisal used by the Property and Estates Manager for commercial property decisions.

2.10.8.1 Continue to work with the PLACE Consortium to deliver funding to support the reuse of empty properties ensuring that the offer remains supportive of our overall housing strategy.

2.10.9 Develop a package of information for members and encourage them to provide local information on the empty homes in their wards.

2.10.10 Improve the Empty Homes information on our web site and develop a simple suite of web forms to allow owners and others provide information to us through this channel.

2.10.11 Work with Council Tax colleagues to deliver a more effective process for communicating our findings on properties back into their systems.

2.10.12 Include properties empty with other Council Tax exemptions or discounts eg long term probate cases.

2.11 Resource and Target Implications

2.11.1 With the current resource level and the implementation of the new process for initial investigation and prioritisation it is anticipated that a target of 10 properties returned to use each year with two enforcement

cases formally initiated can be achieved with a slight risk to this in the year 2015/16 as the new Environmental Health system is implemented.

2.11.2 Work on the website, member involvement and developments e.g., to the PLACE project may be further delayed.

NB. Formal initiation of an enforcement case will be the point at which formal approval to proceed is received for an Empty Dwelling Management Order, Compulsory Purchase Order or Enforced Sale to recover a Council debt.

2.11.3 To increase the number of properties actively targeted would require additional resource.

An additional Empty Homes Officer (0.5 FTE) and an increase in the Assistant Empty Homes officer from 0.2 to 0.4 FTE would allow the target to be increased to 14 properties brought back to use each year with up to 4 enforcement cases formally initiated.

The Empty Homes Assistant post has enabled some enforcement action and a greater level of contact with empty homes owners. It is therefore recommended that the post be made permanent.

3 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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IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives *(delete as appropriate):*	***Place* – Safe and Clean** This priority focuses on sustainability, the built environment and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean. ***Prosperity* – Improving the economic and social opportunities available to our communities** This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic opportunities and delivering cost effective services.
Consultation:	*Consultation will be undertaken on preparation of the Strategy*
Legal:	*The changes to increase the use of enforcement will bring legal implications which will be addressed when the Strategy is brought for approval*
Financial:	*Financial implications will be addressed when the Strategy is brought for approval*
Human Resource:	*The report highlights options for increased activity with additional resources, full implications will be addressed when the Strategy is brought for approval*
Risk Management:	*Risk Management implications will be addressed when the Strategy is brought for approval*
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	

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Review of Empty Homes Strategy – Action Plan

Objective 1 –	**Ensure the availability and effective use of information on empty homes within the district.** Through the maintenance of a database of all empty homes using information from Council Tax and other areas of the Council, supported by information from owners and other individuals.			
Action		Outcome	Responsible Officer (Supported by)	Date
1.1	Finalise export/Input reports and process to ensure Council Tax information is efficiently transferred to the Empty Homes Module and populate this system with current empty homes.	Initial population of the new empty homes Module in the Environmental Health system.	Empty Homes Officer, Licensing & Business Support Officer	30/6/10
1.2	Update the Empty Homes module at least twice each year with information from Council Tax.	Regularly updated information.	Empty Homes Officer, Licensing & Business Support Officer	Ongoing

Review Comments

Despite setbacks the import of information from Academy into M3 has now been resolved with a monthly report from Academy input to M3 generating new worksheets and allowing properties no longer recorded as empty to be identified.

The impending change of systems within Environmental Health means that this work needs to be repeated to ensure the same facility is available in the new system

Proposed Objective

Objective 1 –	**Ensure the availability and effective use of information on empty homes within the district.** Through the maintenance of a database of all empty homes using information from Council Tax and other areas of the Council, supported by information from owners and other individuals.			
Action		Outcome(s)	Responsible Officer (Supported by)	Date
1.1	Work to develop processes and formats to support empty homes work in Uniform (New Environmental Health System)	Process to auto input information from Academy (Council Tax) to Uniform. Uniform customised to support Empty Homes Work	Empty Homes Officer, (Empty Homes Assistant, Uniform Project Officer, IT, Revenues Systems Support)	July 2016

1.2	Develop process and systems to allow Councillors to receive information on empty properties in their wards	Ward lists can be prepared for interested Councillors	Empty Homes Officer, (Uniform Project Officer)	Jan 2017

Objective 2 –	**Maintain effective partnership working within the Council and with external partners.** Effectively using Council resources in identification and investigation of empty homes, and in prioritising for action if required. Working with external partners to support empty homes activities.			
Action		Outcome (Comments)	Responsible Officer (Supported by)	Date
2.1	Discuss priority properties with officers from other service areas developing joint action plans where appropriate.	Agreed plans of action to progress specific properties.	Empty Homes Officer	Ongoing
2.2	Develop process for sharing of information to allow targeting of action on areas of high housing demand.	Appropriate targets for action on empty properties in areas of high housing demand.	Empty Homes Officer, Housing Strategy and Policy Officer, Housing Development Officer	31/12/10

Review Comments

Good relationships established with individuals in some departments. Individual properties worked on in an ad hoc basis.

As the total district has high demand for housing 2.2 has not proved an effective objective. In future it is planned that the Housing Development Officer will be involved in the annual prioritization exercise

Proposed Objective

Objective 2 –	**Maintain effective partnership working within the Council and with external partners.** Effectively using Council resources in identification and investigation of empty homes, and in prioritising for action if required. Working with external partners to support empty homes activities.			
Action		Outcome (Comments)	Responsible Officer (Supported by)	Date
2.1	Involve other departments in annual prioritisation exercise and mid year reviews (including Planning, Building Control, Council Tax, Housing, Estates)	Manageable list of targeted properties far action each year	Empty Homes Officer, (representatives from other departments)	Feb each year

2.2	Identify and build relationships with external partners developing specific projects where appropriate. (eg Fire, Police, Herts County Council, RSL's)	Key Contacts identified and discussions held with 3 external organisations	Empty Homes Officer,	July 2017

Objective 3 -	**Raise the awareness of empty homes in East Herts and encourage action to bring them back into use.** Effectively publicising the opportunities there are to help bring empty properties back into use for the owners and for those affected by an empty property in their locality. Encourage owners to take up the opportunities.			
Action		Outcome (Comments)	Responsible Officer (Supported by)	Date
3.1	Maintain empty homes web pages, review pages and links at least annually.	Access for members of the public to understand East Herts approach and report empty properties.	Empty Homes Officer (web officer)	Ongoing
3.2	Provide annual newsletters to the owners of empty homes with current news and information to further encourage action.	Provide information to owners and continue to encourage reuse.	Empty Homes Officer	Annually
3.3	Publicise empty homes activities through internal and local press.	Increased awareness of the empty homes issues and activity in East Herts.	Empty Homes Officer, Communications	Ongoing

Review Comments

Web pages maintained annually but no further development achieved.

Newsletters not sent due to work load and issues with the accuracy of information on database. In future communication to existing known empty homes owners can be directed through letters at least annually after the prioritisation process.

Some publicity achieved including a small feature in local press

Proposed Objective

Objective 3 -	**Raise the awareness of empty homes in Easts and encourage action to bring them back into use.** Effectively publicising the opportunities there are to help bring empty properties back into use for the owners and for those affected by an empty property in their locality. Encourage owners to take up the opportunities.			
Action		Outcome (Comments)	Responsible Officer (Supported by)	Date

3.1	Refresh empty homes web site to include simple suite of web forms to allow information to be received	Improved information including PLACE scheme. Contact made by owners and complainants through webforms	Empty Homes Assistant, (Empty Homes Officer, web team)	Ongoing
3.3	Publicise empty homes activities through internal and local press. Including publicity of enforcement action.	Increased awareness of the empty homes issues and activity in East Herts.	Empty Homes Assistant, (Communications)	Ongoing

Objective 4 –	**Enhance the character of the local community through improvement and reuse of empty homes.** Prioritise for action those empty homes that are problems in their local neighbourhoods and those that could alleviate particular housing need.			
Action		Outcome (Comments)	Responsible Officer (Supported by)	Date
4.1	Risk assess all properties that receive complaints and produce a prioritised list for action.	Action targeted on problematic empty properties.	Empty Homes Officer	Ongoing
4.2	Identify those properties known to have been empty for the longest time and prioritise for investigation.	Longest term empty properties investigated and additional problematic empties identified.	Empty Homes Officer	Ongoing

Review Comments

Properties with complaints have been visited and risk assessed however, this has not helped with prioritisation due to the large number of long term empty properties with no assessment

Proposed Objective

This objective will be removed with prioritisation forming a central part of the revised approach

Objective 5 –	**Take enforcement action where appropriate and where resources permit.** Where a property is prioritised for action and the owner refuses to bring the property into use, undertake the most appropriate enforcement action for that situation.			
Action		Outcome (Comments)	Responsible Officer (Supported by)	Date
5.1	Develop procedure to be followed for Enforced Sale.	Documented procedure available to allow correct and consistent processes to be followed.	Empty Homes Officer	31/3/11
5.2	Initiate appropriate enforcement action on at least one property per year.	Bring empty property back into use and maintain a credible threat of enforcement action.	Empty Homes Officer	Ongoing

Review Comments

Writing of specific procedures delayed due to changes and potential changes in legislation and changing priorities giving CPO procedure priority over enforced sale. CPO Procedure now being completed as work on initial CPO progresses

Enforcement action limited by resource availability and through owners taking action once threatened with enforcement.

Proposed Objective

Objective 4 –	**Take enforcement action where appropriate and where resources permit.** Where a property is prioritised for action and the owner refuses to bring the property into use, undertake the most appropriate enforcement action for that situation.			
Action		Outcome (Comments)	Responsible Officer (Supported by)	Date
5.1	Develop procedures for Empty Homes enforcement to include CPO, EDMO and Enforced Sale.	Documented procedures to allow consistent processes to be followed.	Empty Homes Officer	Jan 2018
5.2	Initiate appropriate enforcement action on at least two properties per year. (With additional resources this could be increased to 4 per year)	Bring empty property back into use and maintain a credible threat of enforcement action.	Empty Homes Officer	Ongoing

Objective 6 –	**Develop opportunities to bring back homes in partnership with Registered Social Landlords where this supports the overall housing strategy.** Develop general schemes with partner RSL's which can be offered to the owners of empty homes. Work with RSL's on individual cases where this could provide the most effective use of the property.			
Action		Outcome (Comments)	Responsible Officer (Supported by)	Date
6.1	Develop existing schemes as necessary to maximise benefit.	Support for bringing empty homes into use.	Empty Homes Officer	Ongoing
6.2	Aim to bring at least two properties back into use each year through partnership activity.	Empty property brought back into use and available for Housing Options Clients.	Empty Homes Officer	Ongoing

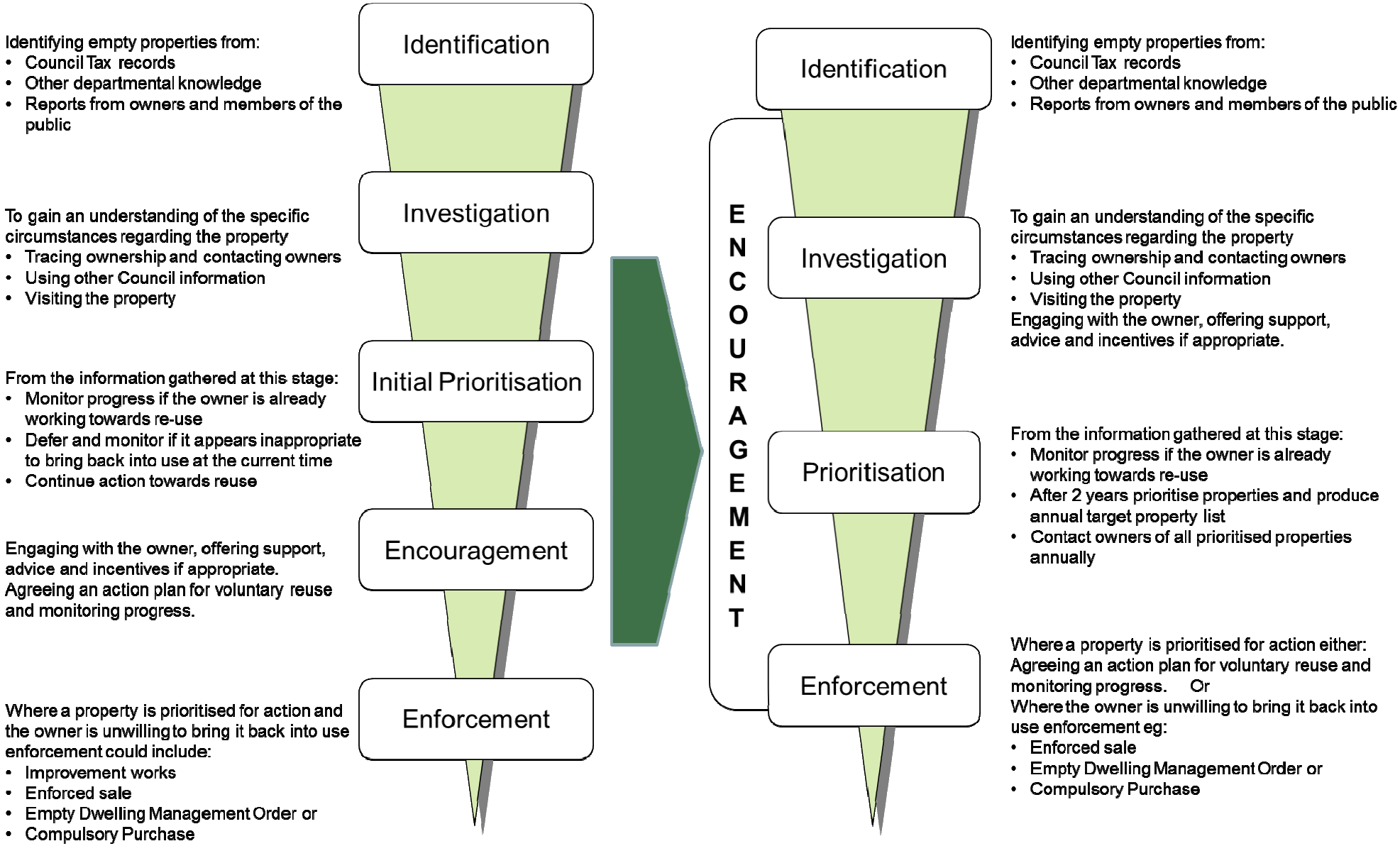
Review Comments

Further changes to the PLACE Scheme has allowed the scheme to include the offer of grants and loans and have been formalised in the new PLACE Consortium Agreement however currently members are not able to offer grants pending a decision to continue with this part of the offer and if so there will be the need to undertake a procurement process to engage (or reengage a partner).

There is growing interest in the PLACE loans although none have yet progressed to approval in East Herts

Proposed Objective

This objective will not be continued although through objective 2 we will continue to take opportunities to work with other partners and we will continue as a member of the PLACE consortium seeking further developments in the scheme as appropriate to meet our housing needs


Identification
Identifying empty properties from:
• Council Tax records
• Other departmental knowledge
• Reports from owners and members of the public
Investigation
To gain an understanding of the specific circumstances regarding the property
• Tracing ownership and contacting owners
• Using other Council information
• Visiting the property
Initial Prioritisation
From the information gathered at this stage:
• Monitor progress if the owner is already working towards re-use
• Defer and monitor if it appears inappropriate to bring back into use at the current time
• Continue action towards reuse
Encouragement
Engaging with the owner, offering support, advice and incentives if appropriate. Agreeing an action plan for voluntary reuse and monitoring progress.
Enforcement
Where a property is prioritised for action and the owner is unwilling to bring it back into use enforcement could include:
• Improvement works
• Enforced sale
• Empty Dwelling Management Order or
• Compulsory Purchase
ENCOURAGEMENT
Identification
Identifying empty properties from:
• Council Tax records
• Other departmental knowledge
• Reports from owners and members of the public
Investigation
To gain an understanding of the specific circumstances regarding the property
• Tracing ownership and contacting owners
• Using other Council information
• Visiting the property
Engaging with the owner, offering support, advice and incentives if appropriate.
Prioritisation
From the information gathered at this stage:
• Monitor progress if the owner is already working towards re-use
• After 2 years prioritise properties and produce annual target property list
• Contact owners of all prioritised properties annually
Enforcement
Where a property is prioritised for action either:
Agreeing an action plan for voluntary reuse and monitoring progress. Or
Where the owner is unwilling to bring it back into use enforcement eg:
• Enforced sale
• Empty Dwelling Management Order or
• Compulsory Purchase

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 17 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF COMMUNITY SCRUTINY

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

WARD(S) AFFECTED: *none*

Purpose/Summary of Report

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

RECOMMENDATION FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINGY COMMITTEE:	
That:	
(A)	**the work programme shown 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"**.

1.2 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.

2.0 Report

2.1 The draft work plan for future meetings of Community Scrutiny Committee is shown in **Essential Reference Paper "B"**. The timing of some items shown may have to change depending on availability of essential data (eg from central government).

2.2 A new request has been put forward to Community Scrutiny for a report on 'Markets' to come to the committee meeting on 15 March 2016. This topic was one which members had expressed an interest in when discussing the 2015/16 scrutiny work programme at the start of the year.

2.3 An audit of 'markets' is due to be conducted by the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS). Their work will run from December 2015 to January 2016. The audit will cover the markets operated by East Herts (Hertford, Ware and Hertford Farmers Market) as well as markets licensed by us – Car Boot sales and other commercial markets. It will also cover the contract monitoring of Bishop's Stortford market, the operation of which has been outsourced to Bishop's Stortford Town Council.

2.4 The scope of the audit will cover

- Markets policy
- Trader regulations
- Charging policy
- Licensing procedures and systems
- Payment systems
- Security
- Performance management
- Outsourcing issues

2.5 A report detailing the outcome of the audit and setting out a draft action plan based on the findings will be ready to bring to members for scrutiny in March 2016. Members are asked if they will accept this additional report onto that agenda.

2.6 Members are asked whether there is any additional topic they wish to put forward for inclusion on any future agenda.

2.7 Members are also asked whether they wish to extend an invitation to one or more of the Executive members to attend a particular meeting or for a specific agenda item.

2.8 Within the terms of the Police and Justice Act 2006, Community Scrutiny is designated the crime and disorder committee for this authority. The Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009, states that *"a crime and disorder committee shall meet to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions as the committee*

considers appropriate but no less than once in every twelve month period".

2.9 No qualifying item is scheduled as yet for next year (2016/17).

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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IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (2015/16 wording)	***People*** **– Fair and accessible services for those that use them and opportunities for everyone to contribute.** This priority focuses on enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable. ***Place*** **– Safe and Clean.** This priority focuses on the standards of the built environment and our neighbourhoods and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean. ***Prosperity*** **– Improving the economic and social opportunities available to our communities** This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic opportunities. Effective use of the scrutiny process contributes to the Council's ability to meet one or more of its corporate objectives.
Consultation:	Potential topics for scrutiny are always invited from the Executive and all Members and the public are asked through an annual item in the 'council tax' edition of LINK magazine which is delivered to every household. Members of each scrutiny committee are consulted at every meeting as their work programme is a standing item on the agenda.
Legal:	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.
Financial:	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.
Human Resource:	none
Risk Management:	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.
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	The broad remit of scrutiny is to review topics which are of concern to the public, many of which have an indirect impact on the general wellbeing of residents of East Herts. The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee is set up to specifically focus in on issues and topics which have a direct and

	immediate impact on the health and wellbeing of all those who live, work or study in the district.

Community Scrutiny Committee work programme 2015/16 and 2016/17 (DRAFT)

2015/16	CIVIC YEAR			
meeting	**date**	**topic**	**Contact officer/lead**	**Next Exec**
JOINT SCRUTINY	19 Jan 2016	**BUDGET Report(s)**		
JOINT SCRUTINY	09 Feb 2016	2016/17 Service Plans 2015/16 Performance Indicator Estimates and 2016/17 Future targets		
Meeting 4/4 in 2015/16	15 Mar 2016 Report deadline 2 Mar	Leisure Contract – year 7	Head of Service and lead officer + SLM	5 April 2016 7 June 2016 TBC
		Crime trends in rural East Herts (**crime and disorder item for 2015/16)**	Head of Service, lead officer and external partners	
		Outcome of the audit on Markets and resulting action plan	NEW REQUEST: TBC	
		Healthcheck through to Jan 2016	Lead Officer - Performance	
		Work programme – planning for 2016/17	Scrutiny Officer	

2016/17	CIVIC YEAR			
meeting	**date**	**topic**	**Contact officer/lead**	**Next Exec**
Meeting 1/4 in 2016/17	28 June 2016 TBC	Work programme 2016/17 – discussion with new committee	Scrutiny Officer	5 July 2016 2 Aug 2016 6 Sept 2016 TBC
		Community Grants review of 2015/16 applications and allocation	Community Engagement Manager/Grants officer	
		FINAL report back from Leisure Strategy task and finish group **TBC**	T&F Chairman and Lead Officer	
		Service Plan monitoring – Oct 2015 to March 2016 (Community only)	Lead Officer – Corporate Planning	
		Healthcheck through to Mar 2016 (which includes relevant 2015/16 Out-turns and Targets)	Lead Officer - Performance	

Meeting 2/4 in 2016/17	27 Sept 2016 TBC	Hertford Theatre (end of financial year report)	Head of Service and Theatre team	4 Oct 2016 1 Nov 2016 TBC
		Housing stock transfer – residual undertakings annual statement	Housing Services Manager (Claire Bennett)	
		?		
		?		
		Work programme	Scrutiny Officer	
		Healthcheck through to **xx** 2016	Lead Officer - Performance	

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	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, 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.

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

Version 3		**Revised April 2015**
Acronym	**Meaning**	**Explanation**
ACS	Adult Care Services (Herts CC) **(no longer used)** **Now Health and Community services**	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
CAB	Citizens Advice Bureau	
CBL	Choice-Based Lettings	System of allowing Housing Register applicants to choose where to live
CB	Child Benefit	
CD	Community Development	
CLG (DCLG)	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 – now replaced by Personal Independence Payments (PIP) for adults over 16 years	
DV	Domestic Violence	
EHCAS	East Herts Citizens Advice Service	Local CAB service
EHRC	Equalities and Human Rights Commission	

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	List of applicants asking for social housing, usually prioritised by housing need.
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 when the landlord requires the property back from the tenants. Gives two months notice.
NOSP	Notice of Seeking Possession	Issued by a housing association/local authority when the landlord requires the property back.
PIP	Personal Independence Payments	Replaces DLA for adults over 16 years
PPO	Persistent & Prolific Offender	
RDS	Rent Deposit Scheme	'Housing Options' fund for helping homeless clients into private rented properties generally in the form of a loan.
RP(s)	Registered Provider(s)	Replaces RSL (below)
RSL(s)	Registered Social Landlord(s) **(no longer used)**	Housing Association
SCS	Sustainable Community Strategy	Prepared on behalf of LSP to set out vision & priorities for the 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 future housing demand across all tenures.
SP	Supporting People	Funding for providing support by housing providers for elderly and vulnerable tenants
TA	Temporary Accommodation	Generally provided by local authorities for households that are homeless.
WA	Women's Aid	Organisation providing advice and refuges for women escaping domestic violence .
WTC	Working Tax Credit	

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