



James Ellis  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

**MEETING** : OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
**VENUE** : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD  
**DATE** : TUESDAY 5 MARCH 2024  
**TIME** : 7.00 PM

**PLEASE NOTE TIME AND VENUE**

This meeting will be live streamed on the Council's You Tube page:  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/EastHertsDistrict>

**MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

Councillor David Andrews (Chairman)  
Councillors P Boylan, E Buckmaster, R Carter, N Clements, N Cox,  
C Horner (Vice-Chairman), G McAndrew, S Nicholls, C Redfern,  
M Swainston, J Thomas, G Williams and D Woollcombe

**Substitutes**

Conservative Group: Councillors A Holt and G Williamson  
Green Group: Councillor V Burt, V Smith and S Watson  
Labour: Councillor D Jacobs  
Liberal Democrat Group: Councillors S Marlow and R Townsend

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

**CONTACT OFFICER: PETER MANNINGS**  
**01279 502174**  
[PETER.MANNINGS@EASTHERTS.GOV.UK](mailto:PETER.MANNINGS@EASTHERTS.GOV.UK)

## **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

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.

## **Public Attendance**

East Herts Council welcomes public attendance at its meetings and meetings will continue to be live streamed and webcasted. For further information, please email [democraticservices@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@eastherts.gov.uk) or call the Council on 01279 655261 and ask to speak to Democratic Services.

The Council operates a paperless policy in respect of agendas at committee meetings and the Council will no longer be providing spare copies of Agendas for the Public at Committee Meetings. The mod.gov app is available to download for free from app stores for electronic devices. You can use the mod.gov app to access, annotate and keep all committee paperwork on your mobile device.

Visit <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/article/35542/Political-Structure> for details.

### **Audio/Visual Recording of meetings**

Everyone is welcome to record meetings of the Council and its Committees using whatever, non-disruptive, methods you think are suitable, which may include social media of any kind, such as tweeting, blogging or Facebook. However, oral reporting or commentary is prohibited. If you have any questions about this please contact Democratic Services (members of the press should contact the Press Office). Please note that the Chairman of the meeting has the discretion to halt any recording for a number of reasons, including disruption caused by the filming or the nature of the business being conducted. Anyone filming a meeting should focus only on those actively participating and be sensitive to the rights of minors, vulnerable adults and those members of the public who have not consented to being filmed.

## AGENDA

### 1. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

### 2. Minutes - 16 January 2024 (Pages 5 - 21)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2024.

### 3. Chairman's Announcements

### 4. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Members' Declarations of Interest.

### 5. UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update (Pages 22 - 51)

### 6. Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Draft Work Programme (Pages 52 - 75)

### 7. Urgent Items

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.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY 16  
JANUARY 2024, AT 7.00 PM

---

PRESENT: Councillor D Andrews (Chairman)  
Councillors E Buckmaster, R Carter,  
N Clements, A Holt, C Horner,  
G McAndrew, S Nicholls, C Redfern,  
M Swainston, J Thomas, S Watson,  
G Williams and D Woollcombe

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors B Crystall, A Daar, S Hopewell  
and T Hoskin

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Barfoot	- Healthy Lifestyles Programme Officer
James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Paul Thomas-Jones	- Service Manager – Environmental Health

282 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors P Boylan and N Cox. It was noted that Councillors A Holt and S Watson were substituting for Councillors Boylan and Cox.

283 MINUTES - 30 NOVEMBER 2023

The Minutes of the meeting were submitted. Councillor Nicholls suggested that there should be an amendment to delete the following from paragraph 29 of Minute 240 (Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract Service Design). She suggested that the paragraph should be replaced as follows:

Delete "She expressed a concern about a 30% reduction in litter bins outside of town centres".

Replace with "She said that a resident had expressed a concern about a 30% reduction in litter bins outside of town centres". This amendment was supported.

Councillor Buckmaster proposed and Councillor Watson seconded, a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2023, as amended, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2023, as amended, be confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

284 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

285 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

286 DRAFT - THRIVING TOGETHER 2024 - 2027 - A NEW HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN FOR EAST HERTS

The Executive Member for Wellbeing submitted a report in respect of Thriving Together 2024 – 2027, which was the new health and wellbeing plan for East Herts. She set out the background to the paper and summarised the draft work that had already begun in respect of the Health and Wellbeing Plan, including the work of partners in wider health and wellbeing services and ways to include residents.

The Executive Member for Wellbeing said that a helpful approach for residents would be to have this document as a broad mission statement and then have an action plan as a live document which would be monitored and updated on a more regular basis. She said that the Healthy Lifestyles Programme Officer had run a survey for residents that had been broadly advertised and a good number of responses had been received.

The Executive Member for Wellbeing summarised the broadly positive feedback and said that respondents had been given the option to receive further updates or to become part of a wider community group. She said that the report summarised some of the suggested changes and there had been a small focus group prior to Christmas with a few of the residents who had expressed an interest in being more involved.

The Executive Member for Wellbeing said that a number of further edits had been made following the focus group and she welcomed any comments or questions from Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Buckmaster acknowledged the amount of work and expertise that had gone into the report. He emphasised the importance of the document being easily understood and that there should be an associated “live” action plan document. He talked about ensuring enough flexibility so that various agencies and communities were able to engage with the plan.

Councillor Buckmaster said that the council should make sure that there was a measurable baseline. He referred to the social and community benefits deriving from council services such as Hertford Theatre and the leisure centres. He talked about the council’s cultural strategy and taking culture to the community if residents were unable to attend a theatre. He referred to the previous Forever Active programme from a few years ago and said that every councillor had a part to



play in ensuring that the council reached out to as many people as possible.

Councillor Nicholls said that this work was important in tackling loneliness and issues related to mental and physical health in local communities. She referred in particular, to pre-empting the need for adult care as a way of tackling the consequences of neglecting mental and physical health. She welcomed the inclusion of arts and creativity in the health and wellbeing plan and talked about the provision of services in rural communities.

Councillor Carter mentioned that she had noticed that respondents were perhaps weighted to the older age group, and she felt that this should be looked at going forward in the next stage of the process.

In reply to a question from Councillor Andrews regarding when the detailed action plan flowing from the Thriving Together document would be drawn up, the Executive Member for Wellbeing said that the action plan drafting process had commenced. She talked about the timelines for achieving actions and emphasised the importance of ensuring there were defined measures in the new Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Councillor Buckmaster said that there had been some public health funding that had come into the council which had helped with the work of healthy hubs in signposting. He stressed the importance of investing in prevention in respect of ill health such as type 2 diabetes and obesity. He referred to the importance of

funding coming down to county and district councils from the health system as this would save the health service money.

The Executive Member for Wellbeing made a number of comments in response to the thoughts expressed by the Committee. In particular, in response to Councillor Carter's observation about the need to engagement with young people, the Executive Member told members that while the council had relatively few direct links with young people, Officers would work through partners, notably Active in the Community (a sports development agency funded by the council), the Defra-funded Breathe Clean project with schools and as part of the council-funded diversionary activities for young people during school holidays.

Councillor Nicholls proposed and Councillor Swainston seconded, a motion that the revised Thriving Together health and wellbeing plan for 2024 - 2027, had been considered, with any comments provided to the Executive Member for Wellbeing for consideration prior to presentation of the plan to the Executive.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – having considered the revised Thriving Together health and wellbeing plan for 2024 - 2027, our comments be provided to the Executive Member for Wellbeing for consideration prior to presentation of the plan to the Executive.

## 287 EAST HERTS AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability submitted a report that presented to members the final draft version of the Air Quality Action Plan for East Hertfordshire following public and stakeholder consultation. He commented on the linkages between improving air quality and improving health outcomes.

Members were referred to the data regarding air quality within the three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability said that since September, an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for East Herts had been produced and this could be seen at Appendix A.

A public and stakeholder consultation exercise had been undertaken and the analysis of this consultation was attached at Appendix B. The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability said that within the three AQMAs, the main contributing factor was vehicles and diesel cars were the main source of air pollution.

Members were advised that the action plan needed to be an active and evolving document throughout the next five years. There had been a 6-week consultation period which was in line with the DEFRA code of practice and there had been 189 responses of which 182 had been from the public and seven from statutory consultees.

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability said that several changes had been made following the consultation responses. He said that the Council had tempered the language which was used in the AQAP regarding Ultra Low Emission Zones (ULEZ) from exploring implementation to exploring the potential pros and cons of this.

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability concluded that the draft AQAP focussed on making best use of the council's limited resources and tried to target the actions which could have the most significant impact on the three AQMAs. He said that the council would continue to work with key partners to undertake as wide a range of activities as was possible to improve air quality. Members were reminded that lots of the options for controlling and influencing air quality lay outside of the control of the council.

Councillor Buckmaster referred to the complexity of the issue of air quality. He commented on the statutory duties of East Herts Council regarding monitoring and action plans and Hertfordshire County Council in terms of the public health focus.

Councillor Buckmaster said that discussions between the two councils should continue and there was a Hertfordshire County Council seminar in Stevenage planned for 29 February, which was for county and district members to attend. He said that this was nearly fully subscribed but was a good forum to have. He emphasised the importance of common branding in terms of joined up thinking.

Councillor Buckmaster said that jointly across the county and the district, members and officers should consider what the vital outcomes were in terms of output. He talked about getting people to change behaviours in terms of anti-idling and wood burning stoves. He said that county council members had access to budgets for interventions to try to influence behaviour.

Councillor Buckmaster said that there should be a forum where all members could work together and there were also Section 106 agreements from housing developments which provided funding sources. He talked about the available funding being used to make it easier for people to walk to school by introducing drop kerbs and pedestrian crossings in the right places.

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability emphasised the importance of measurement in terms of the cause and effect of initiatives. He said that the action plan had to include a heightened level of measurement. He talked about the option of having real time air quality measurement for Bishop's Stortford, Hertford and Sawbridgeworth.

Councillor Clements commented that there had been no responses from local MPs in the area. He referred to the importance of public behaviour and talked about the need for action from central government and the local MPs to raise the profile of issues such as moving away from diesel vehicles.

Councillor Horner emphasised the importance of overcoming scepticism from the public and getting them to embrace and buy into the action plan and the agenda in respect of air quality. He talked about “on demand” public transport and school travel plans in AQMA areas. He referred to the matrix of journeys through the Hockerill junction to schools across the whole of Bishop’s Stortford.

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability talked about the importance of joined up thinking to ensure the best possible outcomes. He said that this would go some way to help reduce the scepticism or cynicism.

Councillor Nicholls talked about reductions in pollution following the introduction of road safety measures such as default 20 mph speed limits. She referred to measures introduced in Edinburgh, London, Paris and Wales.

Councillor McAndrew said that another good thing to include would be the secondment of an officer to Uttlesford District Council to assist them with their Taxi Licensing Policy. He talked about the work being undertaken with the 10 district councils in Hertfordshire regarding taxi licensing policies resembling the policies in place at East Herts.

Councillor Buckmaster said that whilst NOx levels were coming down to 2030 as more people used electric vehicles, particulates and carbon emissions would not change. He said that the action plan would have to adapt over time due to the difficulties in measurement.

He made the point about the stress caused by congestion and the emphasis on the huge difference that could be made by getting rid of diesel cars and diesel commercial vehicles.

Councillor McAndrew talked about the inclusion of numbers of electric vehicles in the report and he said the new legislation regarding electric vehicles should also be in the report. Councillor Andrews talked about the impact of HGVs and drastic action that might need to be taken regarding how towns in East Herts would cope with them.

Councillor Watson commented on whether there would be sufficient monitoring of PM2.5 pollution and also monitoring of different traffic flows and changes to traffic patterns which might cause new areas of concern. Councillor Andrews talked about the importance of raising awareness of the need for behaviour change in the public domain about air quality as part of the action plan.

Councillor Carter asked if real time pollution data could also be included on information made available to the public in respect of air quality. She asked for and was given some clarity regarding the pollution figures for the West Street/Gascoyne Way junction in Hertford.

Councillor Thomas asked about what more could be done beyond involving trading standards to ensure compliance in respect of the burning of domestic fuels. He also commented on buses moving up Welwyn Road with vehicle exhaust being emitted at head height of children using the pavement.

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability talked about the work taking place in respect of the regulations regarding the burning of solid fuels. He referred to the 'Clear the Air' campaign. Councillor Buckmaster said that particulates from fossil fuel burning at home was far greater than the emissions from transport. He referred to 24 January 2024 as being a clean air night.

Councillor Swainston asked if there was any data from the NHS in respect of respiratory illness that could be incorporated into the action plan as a way of getting more people engaged. Councillor Williams mentioned the exploration of on street bike parking being expanded for people coming to work in town centres.

The Head of Housing and Health confirmed, following an enquiry from Councillor Holt, that the action plan would always be looked at and refined and updated online. Councillor Buckmaster commented on housing growth and the impact in terms of HGVs and extensive road works. He referred to the M11 roadworks and housing developments in the Gilston area and Ware north and east and other housing development in Hertford.

Councillor McAndrew made a number of observations in respect of Appendix I and the need for what he believed could be more ambitious timelines, in respect of the following:

- Exploring emissions-based parking charges
- Explore last mile delivery,



- Install additional anti idling guidance,
- Review effectiveness of travel plans for schools and businesses,
- Continued adherence to sustainability SPD and air quality neutral policies. Parking SPD and District Plan review,
- Create sustainable design and construction codes,
- Support expansion of Herts Lynx,
- Potential implementation on foot streets in central Hertford,
- Develop personalised travel planning for residents,
- Active travel campaign (working with schools and businesses),
- Create East Herts Council workplace travel plans for staff,

Councillor McAndrew mentioned that HCCSP (Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership) had two 2 relevant strategic action plans regarding behaviour change and sustainable transport.

Councillor Andrews talked about ensuring that policies were not anti-car as people would always need cars. He talked about the importance of challenging perceptions and educating people in the use of hybrid vehicles. The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability said that the focus would not be anti-car and the focus would be on ensuring that opportunities to not use cars were taken.

Councillor Nicholls said that people were on board with the messages in respect of seeing less traffic in their area. She said that she believed one of the worst

places for pollution was inside the vehicle. She mentioned the importance of roadside messaging and behaviour change.

Councillor Andrews mentioned the importance of latching on to messages being put out by organisations to encourage deliveries being brought together. He referred to the collection of goods from central locations such as lockers at supermarkets.

Councillor McAndrew emphasised the importance of adequate resources being made available to move this action plan forwards.

Councillor Nicholls proposed and Councillor McAndrew seconded, a motion that Overview and Scrutiny have considered the draft Air Quality Action Plan and Members' comments be passed to the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability for consideration, prior to presentation of the Air Quality Action Plan to the Executive.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – having considered the draft Air Quality Action Plan, Members' comments be passed to the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability for consideration, prior to presentation of the Air Quality Action Plan to the Executive.

The Democratic Services Officer submitted the work programme report and sought Members' comments on items for inclusion in the draft work programme of proposed scrutiny topics.

Members were advised that the report set out what had happened pre-Christmas in terms of updates on the work programme. It was noted that the Executive had suggested that Overview and Scrutiny Committee might wish to review the Anti-Racism Charter.

The Democratic Services Officer said that, pending further information from the Head of Housing and Health in terms of a reporting update, this had been provisionally booked in for the 5 March meeting.

Members were reminded that the March meeting had quite a few topics scheduled so the Committee might want to re-consider the topics for that meeting. The Democratic Services Officer reminded Members that as the Committee dates for 2024/25 had now been agreed, Members were invited to consider what scrutiny topics they might wish to review and include on the work programme.

The Democratic Services Officer said that that any proposals for scrutiny should be completed using the proposal form available in the TEAMS area. Members views were sought on the work programme and whether they wished to make any changes, in particular whether a bulletin was required in respect of the East Herts Markets and the Anti-Racism Charter.

Members were also asked if they wanted to delay the consideration of the Development Management and Community Forums to 2025.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services asked for clarity from Members as to whether they wished to receive bulletin updates in respect of the Anti-Racism Charter and the East Herts Markets. Members confirmed that they would like a bulletin on both of these topics. The Committee also said that they would like the Development Management and Community Forums topic delayed until mid-2025.

Councillor Woollcombe proposed and Councillor Watson seconded, a motion that, subject to the above changes, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme in Appendix 1 (programme of proposed scrutiny topics) as amended, be agreed. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that, subject to the above changes the work programme in Appendix 1 (programme of proposed scrutiny topics) as amended, be agreed.

289 URGENT ITEMS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.56 pm

Chairman .....

Date .....

# Agenda Item 5

## East Herts Council Report

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 5 March 2024

**Report by:** Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward, Executive Member for Planning and Growth,

Councillor Tim Hoskin, Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability,

Councillor Alex Daar, Executive Member for Communities

**Report title:** Update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund

**Ward(s) affected:** All

#### Summary

- This report updates Members on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which is now approaching the final 12 months of delivery, having officially begun 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 and needing to conclude by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

- (A) That Committee Members review progress to date.
- (B) That Committee Members make any suggestions for the lead Executive Members' consideration regarding investment and allocation of UKSPF resources in 2024/25.

#### 1.0 Proposals

1.1 This paper updates Councillors on progress towards delivering East Herts' share of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural Prosperity Fund. This covers progress towards delivering the:

- East Herts Cultural Strategy
- East Herts Climate Change Strategy
- Town and village centre improvements
- Business support.

## 2.0 Background

### Reminder of the scheme

2.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) was first referenced in 2016/17 as the domestic alternative to EU structural funding which the UK had access to whilst still members. Full details were not released until February 2022 as part of the Levelling Up White Paper (which recently became the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act of 2023). UKSPF has been provided as part of an overall package of £4.8bn Levelling Up funding available to local areas. Funding follows a "delivery geography" which is essentially a district/ borough. Each area gets an individual allocation from the total fund of 2.6bn over three years from 2022/23 to 2024/25. East Herts allocation is £1,773,136. This has been supplemented by a further £472,841 from the Rural Prosperity Fund (RPF), also within the overall Levelling Up pot. The latter can only be directed towards "rural" areas or businesses (ie. Defined as any settlement with a population of less than 30,000). The funding profile is as follows:

<b>UKSPF</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>
Revenue (£)	193,668	374,424	902,061
Capital (£)	21,518	55,948	225,515
Total allocation (£)	215,186	430,373	1,127,577
<b>RPF</b>			

Capital (£)	0	118,210	354,630
<u>Total</u>	215,186	548,583	1,482,207
<u>Grand total</u>	£2,245,976		

2.2 The national scheme has three overall investment priorities as follows. For each priority there are a specific set of suggested interventions, outputs and outcome measures against which the fund is expected to deliver.

- Community and place
- Local business
- People and skills

2.3 A key point to note is that UKSPF is money for the 'place' as opposed to money for the lead authority. East Herts essentially needs to be facilitating the process of spending rather than using the funds to deliver its core priorities or statutory functions.

2.4 Overall project management and accountability for the UKSPF sits within the Economic Development Team (part of the Communications, Strategy and Policy Service). The sponsor is Ben Wood, Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy and the Project Manager is Hilary Marsh, Economic Development Contract Officer. There are separate project leads for each of the different strand areas including Jonathan Geall (Head of Housing and Health) for the Cultural Strategy and Climate Change Strategy respectively, Andrew Figgis (Joint Economic Development Officer) and Chris Smith (Economic



Development Manager) for town centres and business support strands.

- 2.5 Despite the scheme officially starting on 1 April 2022, the amounts were not confirmed by government until December 2022 with the grant funding agreement being signed in March 2023 (this was the same for all areas nationally). The net result was that all areas have been asked to deliver a three year programme in two years with the majority of the 2022/23 funding being rolled into 2023/24.
- 2.6 East Herts submitted its “investment plan” outlining its proposed projects to central government on August 31<sup>st</sup> 2022. After this was approved a paper was taken to Executive on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and [Council on the 18<sup>th</sup> January](#) 2023, where Council approved priority areas for spending. These were based on:
  - 2.7 **The Cultural Strategy 2021 – 2025**, adopted by Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021, following consultation and engagement with the public and many partners in the voluntary sector. There is a multi-agency steering group overseeing delivery of the strategy composed of 12 different organisations. The strategy was developed on the basis that there would be limited resources to deliver so the UKSPF enables the group to accelerate many of the objectives, which fit neatly under the “Communities and Place” investment priority of the UKSPF. Wider details on the Cultural Strategy can be found here: [East Herts Cultural Strategy \(2021 to 2025\) | East Herts District Council](#)
  - 2.8 **The Climate Change Strategy 2022 - 2026**, adopted by Council on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022 which sets out a range of objectives working alongside partners and stakeholders to achieve net zero carbon by 2030. This has been developed through partnership working via the East Herts Environmental and

Climate Forum and has been shared with the public for consultation. Many of the objectives align with the “Communities and Place” investment priority of the UKSPF. More details can be found here: [Climate Change Strategy 2022-2026 | East Herts District Council](#)

- 2.9 **Town and village centres**, looking at projects and interventions to bring more footfall and investment into areas and act as a catalyst for collaboration between businesses and stakeholders. Projects need to align with the “Communities and Place” investment priority of the UKSPF. This is also an opportunity for investment to be directed towards some of the smaller towns and villages in the district.
  
- 2.10 **Business support** schemes to support start up and ‘second stage’ growth phases of businesses. Some of these schemes would be through the Herts Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and some would be delivered locally, building on our previously successful ERDF and new premises grant schemes. This would align with the “Local Business” theme of the UKSPF.
  
- 2.11 It was recognised that within these overall proposals, nothing has been allocated for the “people and skills” theme of the UKSPF. Guidance has made it clear that no spending should be allocated to this theme until year three (2024/25) as legacy EU structural funding is still supporting skills based projects in the UK until the end of 2023/24. There was no large appetite from Council in January 2023 to allocate funds to skills projects however a sum of £30,000 has been ‘held back’ pending proposals coming forward for year 3. In addition, there was also a request from the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town to jointly fund a sustainable transport project for which a further £20,000 was held back, again pending further details on delivery. These are currently under review.

2.12 The following table gives an indication of how the amounts have been allocated over the three year programme following the Council decision in January 2023.

<b>Strand</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>2022/3</b>	<b>2023/4</b>	<b>2024/5</b>	
Cultural Strategy related activities (up to £290k allocated by Council)	45,000	95,000	150,000	290,000
Climate Change Strategy related activities (up to £566,000 allocated by Council)	15,000	110,000	441,000	566,000
Town centre improvement activities (up to £630,000 from UKSPF and £236,421 from RPF allocated by Council)	101,586	151,383	535,087	788,056
Business Support (up to £287,000 from UKSPF and £236,421 from RPF allocated by Council)	45,000	175,000	261,000	481,000
Skills & transport projects (tbc)	0	0	50,000	50,000
Admin Support	8,600	17,200	45,120	70,920
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	215,186	548,583	1,482,207	2,245,976
<b>Amount available</b>	215,186	548,583	1,482,207	2,245,976

2.13 Dialogue with the Executive Members of the Joint Administration has indicated that these allocations will remain in place however some of the projects and priorities within the overall themes will be reviewed to reflect a change of priorities since the election in May of last year.

## Progress to date – 2022/23 Projects

- 2.14 As per paragraph 2.5 above, Council was asked to agree funding for specific projects for the 2022/23 year in January of 2023. For years 2023/24 and 2024/25 however these decisions were delegated to the relevant Head of Service in consultation with the relevant Executive Member reflecting the fact there would be more time to develop actions and projects. An update on the actions and projects for 2022/23 can be found below:

Project	Brief description of project
<i>Cultural Strategy Related projects</i>	
Asset mapping - £15,000	Maintenance of a digital asset register of cultural opportunities to enable delivery of the cultural strategy. See 2.17
Theatre Listening Project - £15,000	Delivery of the 'Building a Common Framework for Schools' programme (focusing on using drama as a tool for change and mitigating mental health challenges for young people). This project has been supplemented with additional funding from the Arts Council, bringing investment in the project to around £40,000. The project began in the summer of 2023 and is due to conclude in autumn 2024.
Herts Inclusive Theatre Project - £6,862	Herts Inclusive Theatre (HIT) to focus on Power Up (East Herts) project, delivering drama workshops for young people with

Project	Brief description of project
	learning disabilities. Grant awarded to HIT in May 2023 and project being delivered through St. Elizabeth's and Grove Cottage. See (2.20)
East Herts Pride event - £7,688	Grant was awarded to Stort Pride organisers. See (2.18)
Digital Inclusion Project - £8,000	Focused support for older people with accessing the internet safely. Grant awarded to Age UK in March to deliver across the district in workshops and drop in sessions. See (2.21)
<i>Climate Change related projects</i>	
LCWIP - £15,000	Creation of a local cycling and walking infrastructure plan (LCWIP) which is an element of the Climate Change Strategy, the council's emerging Air Quality Action Plan and any transport interventions outlined by the County Council in LTP4/5. Grant awarded to HCC as contribution towards the overall costs (circa £45,000) in May 2023. Delivery is on-going and with completion expected in Spring 2024
<i>Town centre related projects</i>	

Project	Brief description of project
Sawbridgeworth Jubilee Gardens - £50,000	This is the land adjacent to Bell Street car park owned by East Herts and the project will involve landscaping and change of use to create more community space. A public consultation has been undertaken and design work commissioned by the Town Council who would lead on this project, work expected to start by April, with £50,000 match funded by the Town Council.
Bishop's Stortford VMS - £37,500	Bishop's Stortford town centre parking virtual signage (VMS). This system was jointly funded through UKSPF and the Bishop's Stortford BID and is now operational, having launched just before Christmas in 2023. HCC will maintain the system going forward.
Monitoring of footfall and perception surveys - £14,800	Software and manual surveys to support measurement and collection of data to track improvements against UKSPF measures. The data will be used to measure improvement in several UKSPF projects. We have previously bought into a provider called HUQ along with a consortium of other authorities. It was decided to roll over this contract in May
<i>Business support related projects</i>	

Project	Brief description of project
Business grants (new premises) - £29,000	<p>Match funded grants for new businesses to open new premises or expand existing premises. This follows on from a previous scheme which proved to be very popular. 13 businesses awarded grants. The following businesses opened in 2023 and were awarded £3k each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highway Cycles Stortford</li> <li>• Hertford Cake Company</li> <li>• Choice Physio (Sawbridgeworth)</li> <li>• Moko SKN (Ware)</li> <li>• Attend to IT (Buntingford)</li> <li>• The Dog House (Sawbridgeworth)</li> <li>• Full of Beans (Sawbridgeworth)</li> <li>• The Phone Surgery Hertford</li> <li>• Upcycle Antics</li> </ul> <p>A further 4 are based in the Launchpad and have been awarded £1k each.</p>
Film and creative industry inward investment - £10,000	<p>LEP led initiative to support inward investment around the film industry and related supply chain. Grant award provided to LEP in March. 8 of 10 districts are contributing to this initiative.</p>

**Cultural Strategy – update:**

2.15 Council allocated up to £290,000 for delivery of this strand. Decisions on awarding specific amounts were delegated to the Head of Housing and Health acting in consultation with the Executive Member for Wellbeing. In some cases these have

followed on from the Council decision to award specific amounts in January 2023.

- 2.16 The Cultural Strategy Steering Group has continued to meet regularly to refine delivery details. The Steering Group itself has no decision-making powers to award funds but are well placed to advise given their central role in developing the Cultural Strategy. The outputs and outcomes this strand are required to deliver are set out in Appendix A. Progress on priorities and projects agreed at Council in January is as follows:
- 2.17 Asset Mapping: As per (2.14) a three year contract is in place with the Community Alliance to deliver this following a tender exercise. This is for £35,000 in total made up of £15,000 for 2022/23 then £10,000 per year thereafter. We are one year into the contract and reviewing progress with the Community Alliance. This was identified by the Cultural Strategy Steering Group as key piece of enabling works to deliver the strategy by keeping a database of all existing cultural assets in the district which can be used as the basis for any promotion. The tool is not yet ready to launch but this is expected to happen in early 2024/25. We are currently in dialogue with the Community Alliance regarding progress to date before agreeing the next phase of investment.
- 2.18 Pride: as per paragraph 2.14, the organisers of the Bishop's Stortford Pride, now set up as a charity, have been awarded a grant to continue the event and expand it across the district. £7,688 was awarded to run the 2023 event (from the 2022/23 allocation) with an expectation of a similar amount for 2024 subject to agreeing deliverables. The event took place over 28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2023, focused on bringing together the LGBTQ+ community, friends and family to celebrate the existence of LGBTQ+ people from Bishop's Stortford and the surrounding areas. Organisations/businesses given space included The



Little Arts Workshop, Mind network, West Essex Maternity Voice Partnership, Bishops Stortford Women's Rugby Club, Dragonfly wellness, Harlow Pride, Ware base Proud Parents group for LGBTQ+ families, Herts Police – LGBTQ+ liaison officers and Herts Fire service. Performing organisations included the Pantasy Steel Pan drum band, Immi Davis (young musical artist), Adam All Drag King, Grace Savage (UK beatbox champion) and Trina Read (local singer/songwriter). When the event started in 2021, 80 people attended. At the 2023 event over 400 people did so and the intention is to continue this growth in 2024.

- 2.19 Young Curators project. This is a continuation of a previous project delivered by South Mill Arts which encourages young people with an interest in history to develop skill in curation, working with artefacts and museum professionals to deliver exhibits. Deliverables are currently being negotiated with South Mill Arts and the cost will be around £,7500 for 2024/25.
- 2.20 Inclusive Theatre: as per paragraph 2.14, Herts Inclusive Theatre are delivering the Power Up project and have been awarded £6,862 from the 2022/23 fund to deliver the project. To date, 20 people have been engaged with (not including their support workers/ carers) across 4 venues in the district.
- 2.21 Digital Inclusion Project: as per paragraph 2.14, a grant has been awarded to deliver this project from the 2022/23 allocation. This may be renewed for 2024/25 subject to a review of outcomes with Age UK Hertfordshire. The aim is to ensure older residents have the necessary digital skills to benefit from the local arts and cultural offer which is typically publicised, and sometimes accessed, online. Since April last year 37 people have been directly supported over 118 sessions with 12 devices being distributed.

- 2.22 Arts Showcase: this project will see a month long programme of arts and cultural activities in the district; the exact dates are yet to be determined although it is anticipated that it'll take place in September/October this year.
- 2.23 The overall goals of the Arts Showcase project are to provide and promote engagement opportunities for residents and further growth the district's arts and cultural sector. Showcasing the East Herts arts offering will combine exhibitions, performances, workshops and the like across the district. Organisations across the district will host both professional and non-professional art works and events which explore themes of health, wellbeing and environmental sustainability.
- 2.24 The budget assigned to the Arts Showcase is a maximum of £100,000. Work is already underway on the key elements of this project, this being:
- a cross-party member reference group to consider and provide suggestions to the Executive Member for Communities on the overall scope and direction of the project
  - an invitation to arts and cultural organisation to (a) provide / promote their activities as part of the Arts Showcase and (b) apply for small grants, this being a route via which smaller, new entrants to the cultural scene can participate in and benefit from the project
  - the use of UKSPF resources to support the establishment of an Arts Showcase group or board and, more specifically, building capacity within the group/board to cover, among other things, fund-raising, marketing and the like so as to put the Arts Showcase of a firmer footing that can enable it run on an annual basis with the minimum of financial support from the council.

- 2.25 Cultural Activities Small grants; a pot of £20,000 in 2023/24 and same again for 2024/25. It is worth noting that the Cultural Strategy has strong alignment with the council's existing community grants programme. Over the past few years, the total grant pot available has been reduced in order to meet budget pressures. The funds allocated to the Cultural Strategy – particularly those elements where community groups can bid for funds – can act to supplement some of these reductions and offer community groups further opportunities for obtaining support.
- 2.26 A refreshed community grants programme, aligned with the UKPSF, was approved by Council on the [18<sup>th</sup> October 2023](#) and was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> November. This also streamlines the application process for community groups, meaning the same application form is used regardless of whether you are applying for a community grant or a cultural activities or environmental sustainability grant funded by the UKSPF. The grant application deadline was 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 and was well subscribed. Assessment of bids is due to conclude at the end of February.

### **Climate change – update**

- 2.27 Council allocated up to £566,000 for this strand. Delegated authority for spending individual amounts rests with the Head of Housing and Health acting in consultation with the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability. The outputs and outcomes which the funds are designed to deliver can be found at Appendix A.
- 2.28 An update on progress and amounts allocated can be found below:
- 2.29 Climate Change and Sustainability Project Officers: Two officers have been appointed on fixed term contracts until 31<sup>st</sup>

March 2025. The total cost, including employer oncosts and some use of funds for temporary support prior to them starting, is £140,000.

- 2.30 The environmental sustainability grant scheme launched on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 alongside community grant scheme. The focus was on carbon reduction matters in line with the UKSPF outputs and outcomes. In total, £20,000 is available for 2023/24 with the same for 2024/25. The application window closed on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024; applications are being assessed.
- 2.31 Community buildings retrofit. The council is working with, town and parish councils and the East Herts Village Hall Network which is support by Community Development Action (CDA). An allocation of £100,000 is being made available for (a) decarbonisation plans for community buildings and (b) contributions to works identified in the plans.
- 2.32 Retrofit show homes. This is project is based on initial ideas to fund Passivhaus/energy efficient new build as it is recognised that improving existing homes in the district is a major priority. Officers have engaged a local housing association to add UKSPF to the association's existing energy efficiency upgrade programme to deliver (a) a fully retrofitted home, including replacement of the heating system with a renewable system, bringing the home up to an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of A and (b) an 'initial steps' show home that will bring the property up from an EPC D or E rating to an EPC C. A total of £200,000 has been allocated to this project.
- 2.33 Allied to the above, a further £40,000 has been allocated to working with town and parish councils and local climate change groups to develop a network of 'energy hubs' across the district. This project will see the different councils and groups becoming centres of local advice and expertise. The funding will support physical hubs, mobile hubs and materials

and virtual web-based information. Work is well underway and is being promoted and monitored through the East Herts Environmental and Climate Forum.

- 2.34 Tree planting/ greening. This project will be delivered during the 2024 planting season. The proposal is to 'stretch' the funding with match-funding from partners, including housing associations and town and parish councils. Discussions are underway with partners.

### **Town and village centre improvements - progress and next steps**

- 2.35 Council allocated up to £866,421 from the UKSPF and RPF to be directed towards town and village centre improvements. The decision to award the individual grants is delegated to the Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth. This constitutes the largest share of the fund and was done on so on the basis that physical projects would have the most impact in terms of outcomes and outputs in the communities and place theme. These can be found in Appendix A.
- 2.36 It was also recognised that this amount is not enough to undertake any large-scale capital projects, however would be enough to support smaller, lower profile projects around the district. For this reason, projects from all towns and villages were invited to submit expressions of interest.
- 2.37 Throughout February – June 2023, the economic development team contacted all thirty-seven parish councils as well as the five town councils to discuss potential projects. This process included:
- Initial emails to all parish clerks and Council Leaders

- Follow up phone conversations for those parishes expressing an interest
- Face to face meetings on site to discuss potential projects and test feasibility of using UKSPF/ RPF to support
- Invitation of expressions of interest from parishes/ towns setting out how projects will deliver stated outputs/ outcomes and delivery mechanisms
- Follow up emails and phone calls to any parishes who did not respond
- Follow up meetings and discussions to refine expressions of interest

2.38 The economic development team had responses from fourteen parishes over this period along with all five towns. From this process, a “long list” of projects was produced. This list was shared with all District Council members on July 24<sup>th</sup> 2023.

2.39 Projects have only been taken forward for consideration if:

- It will deliver key outputs/ outcomes required from the UKSPF (i.e.
- There is a clear need for the project/ there is evidence of local support (eg. This could come from local consultation exercises or parish council minutes in which it was supported)
- There is some form of match funding available (ie. The UKSPF is leveraging additional investment from other sources). For small parishes this might not need to be cash but can be ‘in kind’ support (such as free materials and labour)
- The project has been properly scoped (eg. Quotes for works or services have been obtained)
- The likelihood of delivery is strong (i.e. We think the funds will be spent by 31 March 2025)

- 2.40 There is also a desire by the Executive Member for Planning and Growth to ensure a fair allocation across towns and villages. A guideline figure of up to £50,000 for our larger towns (Hertford and Bishop's Stortford), up to £100,000 for our smaller towns (Ware, Buntingford and Sawbridgeworth) and the remaining £450,000 across the villages has been in place. This has not necessarily been a hard limit but has been useful in terms of ensuring fairness and transparency in decision making to date. It is also a recognition that many of the smaller settlements in East Herts can be overlooked in terms of investment and that grants should be directed towards projects in these areas if possible.
- 2.41 A total of 49 expressions of interest were submitted over this period (collectively from 8 parishes and the 5 towns). To date, 11 of these have been approved, as follows:
- 2.42 Improvement to Albury Parish Council village hall. This includes replacing the patio area (along with awnings and security lights) which increase the hall's usability for events, improve the public realm and increase footfall. The total cost of the project is £25,000 with £19,997 of that coming from the UKSPF/ RPF. This project is now complete.
- 2.43 Improvement to facilities and security at Albury Football Club, enabling more use (including by the local primary school). Total cost of the project was £18,717 with £10,717 of that coming from the UKSPF/ RPF. This project is now complete.
- 2.44 Improvements to Hertford Heath village green. This includes installation of mains power to support more events, dropped kerb and a new mesh path. This will improve the public realm, increase footfall and allow safe access to the green for wheelchairs, pushchairs and the like. The total cost of the project will be £25,000 with £18,000 of this coming from the UKSPF/ RPF. This project is in progress.

- 2.45 Creation of a picnic area (including buddy benches, additional furniture and clearing) in the Stanstead Abbotts Meadow area, enabling more use by families and visitors. Total cost of the project was £14,810 with £9,810 coming from the UKSPF/ RPF. This project is complete.
- 2.46 Installation of power sources to street furniture in Bishop's Stortford to support the market and other events. Total cost of the project is just over £27,000 with a £13,564 from the UKPSF and joint match funding from the BID and Town Council covering the remaining 50%. This project is awaiting approval from HCC who own the street furniture.
- 2.47 Various improvements to Hunsdon including 'greening' of street furniture. Total cost estimated at £30,000 with £23,000 being provided through the UKSPF. Remaining amount is in kind support (labour and materials) from Hunsdon Parish Council. This project is in progress.
- 2.48 Little Berkhamstead village hall energy efficiency improvements including insulation, replacement windows and redecoration. This will make the facility usable during colder months for more community events. The Parish Council have secured grant funding nationally for this works with £9,157 being provided from the UKSPF. This project is complete.
- 2.49 Various small scale works including refurbishment and renewal of village landmarks, footpaths and map signboards to link the 8 hamlets in Little Hadham. £13,200 coming from the UKSPF. This project is in progress.
- 2.50 Datchworth village centre improvements – agreed in principle however details currently being negotiated with the parish council following a change of membership in May. £15,000



- 2.51 A contribution of £100,000 to Ware Town Council as part of their plans to convert the public WCs at the Priory into a community led café (total cost estimated at £250,000). This will create new commercial space with Ware Town Centre. Details are currently being finalised with Ware Town Council.
- 2.52 A contribution of £45,000 towards the completion of the Sawbridgeworth Memorial Hall. The total project is £425,000 with the remainder of the funds already raised. The planned extension of the Hall is now able to proceed.
- 2.53 It is important to note that all parishes requesting support have received funding for at least one of their projects. Please note the above is in addition to the VMS for Bishop's Stortford (£37,500) and Jubilee Gardens project in Sawbridgeworth (£50,000) which was agreed as part of the 2022/23 allocation.
- 2.54 Several other projects have been agreed in principle including Hertford (a contribution towards the installation of VMS) and Buntingford (improvements to the high street). At the time of writing however delivery details and final amounts had not been agreed.
- 2.55 When projects for these two towns have been agreed, all villages and towns who have asked for UKSPF funding will have received part of the district's UKSPF and RPF allocation, ensuring a degree of fairness in the decision making process. It is also estimated that there will be circa £250,000 available in 2024/25 for one larger capital project to be undertaken. Options are currently being discussed with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.

**Business Support programmes and grants:**

- 2.56 Council allocated up to £523,421 from the UKSPF and RPF to be directed towards business support. The decision to award

the individual grants is delegated to the Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth. The outcomes and outputs can be found at **Appendix A**.

- 2.57 The delivery approach in this theme is a mix of externally commissioned projects through the Herts LEP and 'in house' grant delivery. The LEP projects are based on previous schemes with a good track record of delivery in the county. A menu of options was provided to district councils at the outset of the UKSPF and districts opted to invest more into projects they deemed of relevance for their local area. The projects and spending amounts that East Herts Council agreed to in January 2023 can be found below:
- 2.58 £30,000 to Herts Growth Hub for 2023/24 with a further £30,000 for 2024/25. A contract has been signed with the Herts LEP to deliver additional support to East Herts businesses, focusing on second stage growth and expansion. This is part of a wider contract that all districts have signed up to. Details can be found [here](#). Since the extra investment was provided 2,301 businesses from the district have contacted the hub so far. Of these, 91 were provided with over 6 hours worth of support. In addition the Growth Hub exhibited at the Bishop's Stortford Means Business event last year and regularly run events and support sessions from the Council's Launchpad.
- 2.59 £30,000 to Start up and Get Enterprising for 2023/24 and a further £30,000 for 2024/25. A contract has been signed with the Herts LEP to deliver additional support to East Herts businesses at the start up stage. This is part of a wider contract that eight districts have signed up to. More details can be found [here](#). 139 residents from the district have been in touch since this additional service started, 4 of whom have

started up businesses resulting in 9 additional jobs being created.

- 2.60 £10,000 to the Herts film office for 2023/24 with a further £10,000 for 2024/25. A contract has been signed with the Herts LEP to support inward investment connected to film and media in East Herts. This is part of a wider contract that eight districts have signed up to. To date, the office has made eight referrals to private premises in the district as possible filming locations.
- 2.61 With regards to the in-house grant schemes; we currently have two in operation.
- 2.62 The new premises grant scheme replicates the former scheme of the same name, encouraging new businesses to open premises or existing businesses to expand their premises in the district. This proved to be highly successful in the past, helping to provide business owners with an incentive to take on vacant premises. Grant amounts are up to £5,000 and must be match funded by the business. This scheme [launched in February 2023](#) with an invitation for individuals to get in touch if they think they are eligible. The grant is given on a first come, first serve basis and demand is always high given the strong business startup rates in the district.
- 2.63 As per (2.14), 13 grants were given out as part of the 2022/23 allocation. A further £25,000 has been earmarked until the end of 2023/24 and this will be allocated in March. A similar amount will be available in 2024/25.
- 2.64 The new products and services grant was also launched in February 2023 and closed at the end of October. Businesses can apply for support to develop new products or services (eg. purchasing new equipment, developing new products or

expanding their infrastructure) or entering new markets (post Brexit). These grants will be larger in size with expected values of between £10,000 - £50,000, much of which is likely to be capital. All applicants will be required to provide match funding (50%).

2.65 Although it may seem counter-intuitive, allocating the larger grant can be challenging. As with previous schemes businesses have strong interest in “free” money but are often not able to demonstrate a direct link to an outcome (eg. An increase in the number of jobs/ increased commercial floorspace brought back into use). With higher grant amounts we also require additional checks and re-assurances (eg. That new equipment won’t be purchased using the grant and then re-sold some months later and that companies are financially viable). As a consequence, this grant programme is “facilitated” meaning we provide hands on support through the economic development service to work with businesses on managing their expectations. Put another way, we will not allow a business to make an application if it does not meet our criteria. Moreover, business that have only recently set up or in their startup phase will not be eligible. For that reason, only a light touch ‘expression of interest’ form was available on our website when the scheme launched last year. All contacts were followed up through a further conversation between the business and the Economic and Business Development Manager, specifically testing out what key outcomes and outputs the proposal could deliver, based on the following scoring matrix:

<b>Outcomes (70% overall)</b>	<b>% weighting</b>
Number of commercial buildings developed or improved (numerical value)	15

Amount of commercial buildings developed or improved (m <sup>2</sup> )	55
Number of rehabilitated premises (numerical value)	15
Number of businesses engaged in new markets (numerical value)	15

<b>Outputs (30% overall)</b>	<b>% weighting</b>
Jobs created (numerical value)	40
Jobs safeguarded (numerical value)	10
Increased amount of investment (£)	20
Number of businesses introducing new products to the firm (numerical value)	5
Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes (numerical value)	5
Number of new to market products (numerical value)	10
Number of businesses engaged in new markets (numerical value)	5
Number of businesses increasing their export capability (numerical value)	5

2.66 Expressions of interest geared towards creation of jobs and/ or creation of commercial space score the most highly as they are deemed to generate the most return to the East Herts economy of the grant investment.

- 2.67 At the closing date we had well over 100 expressions of interest. Many of these scored zero/ very low or were at the startup phase and were discounted immediately. Any expressions of interest scoring less than 35% were also discounted leaving 8 current grants which will be further explored by inviting the businesses to submit a full application.
- 2.68 This year's available fund of £84,000 could support the majority of these subject to application assessment and the usual financial checks on the business. The Executive Member for Planning and Growth will be provided with an assessed shortlist of successful applications in March of this year.
- 2.69 Following approval of this initial round of grants, further communication on publicising the scheme will be undertaken. Expressions of interest will open again in April for the 2024/25 year, where £203,000 of grant support is available. The webpage advertising this scheme can be found [here](#).
- 2.70 Priorities for 2024/25**
- 2.71 As we move into the final 12 months of the UKSPF and RPF schemes, our priorities will be to ensure that the grants and contracts given out deliver the outcomes and outputs specified. All recipients of funding are required to sign a grant funding agreement (or equivalent for a contract) which includes submission of evaluation data. This data will be publicised to promote the various projects taking place across the district. A further report detailing the outcomes and legacy of the UKSPF and RPF will be provided to Committee Members when it closes.

Background papers, appendices and other relevant material  
**Appendix A – Outputs and outcomes**

**Paper to Council January 2023:** [Agenda item - East Herts UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural Prosperity Fund - East Herts District Council](#)

**Contact Members:** Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward, Executive Member for Planning and Growth,

Councillor Tim Hoskin, Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability,

Councillor Alex Daar, Executive Member for Communities

**Report Author:** Benjamin Wood, Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy, Tel: 07519 293733.  
[benjamin.wood@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:benjamin.wood@eastherts.gov.uk)

## Appendix A – Outcomes and Outputs

The UKSPF has a wide suite of outputs and outcomes which can be used to measure progress towards meeting Levelling Up objectives: [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: outputs and outcomes definitions \(2\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-outputs-and-outcomes-definitions)

The following outcomes and outputs are the measures which were selected by East Herts as part of its Investment Plan submission to DLUHC in August 2022, and subsequently approved by Council in January 2023.

There is no expectation that individual projects have to impact all indicators or that some are given more weight than others. When grant funding agreements or contracts are signed, each organisation undertaking delivery will be required to set out which outcomes and outputs they will be focused on and their projected targets.

We are required to submit a six monthly return to DLUHC on outcomes and outputs to check progress.

### Cultural Strategy

Outputs
Number of neighbourhood improvements undertaken (numerical value)
Number of facilities supported/created (numerical value)
Number of local events or activities supported (numerical value)
Number of Tourism, Culture or heritage assets created or improved (numerical value)
Number of events/participatory programmes (numerical value)
Number of volunteering opportunities supported (numerical value)



Levels of participation in sports and recreational activities at facilities that have benefitted from funding (based on registered players/teams) (% increase)

<b>Outcomes</b>
Increased footfall (% increase)
Increased visitor numbers (% increase)
Improved perception of facilities/amenities (% increase)
Increased users of facilities/amenities (% increase)
Improved engagement numbers (% increase)
Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support (numerical value)
Volunteering numbers as a result of support (numerical value)
Number of new or improved community facilities as a result of support (numerical value)

### **Climate change strategy**

<b>Outputs</b>
Number of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed (numerical value)
Amount of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed (m2)
Number of decarbonisation plans developed (numerical value)
Number of trees planted (numerical value)
Number of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed (numerical value)
Amount of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed (m2)
Number of decarbonisation plans developed (numerical value)

<b>Outcomes</b>
Increased amount of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed (% increase)
Greenhouse gas reductions (% decrease in Tonnes of Co2e)
Increased take up of energy efficiency measures (% increase)

### Town and Village Centre Improvements

<b>Outputs</b>
Number of rehabilitated premises (numerical value)
Amount of rehabilitated land (m2)
Amount of public realm created or improved (m2)
Number of local events or activities supported (numerical value)
Amount of new or improved cycleways or paths (m2)
Number of Tourism, Culture or heritage assets created or improved (numerical value)
Levels of participation in sports and recreational activities at facilities that have benefitted from funding (based on registered players/teams) (% increase)

<b>Outcomes</b>
Increased footfall (% increase)
Increased visitor numbers (% increase)
Improved perception of facilities/amenities (% increase)
Increased users of facilities/amenities (% increase)
Improved perception of facility/infrastructure project (% increase)
Increased use of cycleways or paths (% increase)
Number of new or improved community facilities as a result of support (numerical value)

## Local Business

<b>Outcomes</b>
Number of commercial buildings developed or improved (numerical value)
Amount of commercial buildings developed or improved (m2)
Number of businesses engaged in new markets (numerical value)

<b>Outputs</b>
Jobs created (numerical value)
Jobs safeguarded (numerical value)
Number of new businesses created (numerical value)
Reduced vacancy rates (% decrease)
Increase in visitor spending (% increase)
Increased amount of investment (£)
Number of businesses introducing new products to the firm (numerical value)
Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes (numerical value)
Number of new to market products (numerical value)
Number of businesses adopting new or improved products or services (numerical value)
Number of businesses engaged in new markets (numerical value)
Number of early stage firms which increase their revenue following support (numerical value)
Number of businesses increasing their export capability (numerical value)

# Agenda Item 6

## East Herts Council Report

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** Tuesday 5 March 2024

**Report by:** Scrutiny Officer

**Report title:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Draft Work Programme

**Ward(s) affected:** (All Wards);

### Summary

- This report considers topics for inclusion in the Committee's Draft Work Programme. By establishing a work programme of topics for scrutiny Members are better able to plan their future workload, with an agenda which is focussed, maximising the efficacy of the scrutiny process by taking a longer term, strategic view of the issues facing the council.
- A suggested list of topics is detailed in **Appendix 1**

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- (A) Members' views are sought on whether they wish to scrutinise further, the use of herbicides in the District (particularly the use of Glyphosate) following a request from the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability and to provide guidance in terms of a reporting timeframe for inclusion in the civic year.**
- (B) Members' views are sought on whether the Council might wish to explore further how it can improve the delivery of its services using smart devices and influencing social**

**change digitally.**

**(C) A workshop be arranged to discuss potential scrutiny topics for inclusion in the 2024/25 civic year.**

**(D) The update be noted; and**

**(E) The work Programme at Appendix 1 be agreed.**

## **1.0 Background**

1.1 **Appendix 1** sets out the Draft Work Programme which may be reviewed at any time.

1.2 A key function of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to hold the Executive to account for its decisions, to review existing policies and consider proposals for new policies. In doing so, it will act as the Executive's critical friend in the process. The principle power of scrutiny is to influence policies and decisions made by the Council. Its aim should be to achieve positive outcomes for local people by undertaking a thorough targeted examination of the council's services and procedures and make recommendations for improvement.

1.3 It has no formal powers to make changes but where a recommendation is made to the Executive, the Executive is required to respond to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if it decides not to accept a recommendation and the rationale for that decision. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) recommends that the Executive has to respond to any recommendation within two months.

## **2.0 Update**

2.1 Topics for scrutiny are detailed in **Appendix 1**.

- Potential dates to visit some of the district's playgrounds have been forwarded to the Councillors who have expressed a wish to be involved in this topic. Officers are awaiting a response.
- Neighbourhood Policing – at the time of publishing the agenda, 14 Parish Councils have advised the Scrutiny Officer that they do not fund a PCSO. Buntingford Town Council have advised that they have funded a PCSO since 2018 and for the period 2024 have agreed to contribute £4516 a quarter. They have a Service Level Agreement in place but do not monitor performance. Information will be provided as and when received.
- At the request of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Bulletin Summaries have already been circulated on a number of topics and these are attached as a reminder at **Appendix 2**. More recently one was circulated on the issue of Smart Devices and how this could be used to provide better services. Members' views are sought on whether they wish to explore this topic further and add it to their future work programme.
- Summary Bulletins are awaited from Head of Services on Climate Change – Carbon Neutrality, East Herts Run Markets (part of a larger piece of work being progressed) and the Anti-Racism Charter.
- Information is still awaited from two Registered Social landlords on the questions posed by Members. The Scrutiny Officer continues to send out reminders.
- Members' views are sought on whether they wish to scrutinise further the use of herbicides in the District (particularly the use of Glyphosate) which has been raised by Councillor Tim Hoskin, Executive Members for

Environmental Sustainability. Should Members wish to progress this topic, guidance is sought on the reporting timeframe so that this can be programmed for the civic year.

- Members' will be aware that the Executive will be considering the Award of a Waste Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract at its meeting on 9 July 2024. A report will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 11 June 2024.
- The administration will be presenting their Corporate Plan to Council on 28 February 2024 which will help Members populate the work programme based on the Council's priorities. Prior to that the All-Member Briefing on 22 February will also provide a summary on the Corporate Plan.
- Members might also wish to hold a workshop to develop future topics for scrutiny for the civic year 2024/25.

### **3.0 Reason(s)**

- 3.1 Members are welcome to submit a scrutiny proposal at any time. This form is available in the Microsoft Teams channel and provides Officers with sufficient information to assess if it is appropriate for scrutiny and to ensure that specific questions are addressed. A Scrutiny Flowchart is also available which explains the processes involved in submitting a Scrutiny Proposal Form. The Scrutiny Officer will then liaise with Officers and the Chairman to consider the best way forward to address the subject and complete the scoping document.

## **4.0 Options**

4.1 The work programme will be kept under review by the Committee throughout the coming year.

## **5.0 Risks**

5.1 The establishment of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee is enshrined in the Local Government Act 2000 (Section 9). The 2000 Act obliges local authorities to adopt political management systems with a separate Executive. Various sub sections of the 2000 Act set out the powers and duties for Overview and Scrutiny Committee including the right to investigate and make recommendations on anything which is the responsibility of the Executive. Legislative provisions can also be found in the Localism Act 2011 (Schedule 2) with options to retain or re-adopt a “committee system” Section 9B.

5.2 Potential risks arise for the council if policies and strategies are developed and / or enacted without sufficient scrutiny. Approval of an updated work programme contributes to the mitigation of risk (and Call-Ins) by ensuring key activities of the council are scrutinised.

## **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

### **Community Safety**

No

### **Data Protection**

No

### **Equalities**

No



## **Environmental Sustainability**

Yes - the proposed Work Programme envisages the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receiving reports on the progress of the council's environmental strategies.

## **Financial**

No

## **Health and Safety**

No

## **Human Resources**

No

## **Human Rights**

No

## **Legal**

Yes - scrutiny is enshrined in statute (the Local Government Act 2000 as amended by the Localism Act 2011)

## **Specific Wards**

No

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

7.1 **Appendix 1** Summary of Topics

7.2 Summary Bulletins

**Contact Member:** Councillor David Andrews, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Contact Officer:** James Ellis, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Tel: 01279 502170.  
[james.ellis@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:james.ellis@eastherts.gov.uk)

**Report Author:** Lorraine Blackburn, Scrutiny Officer, Tel: 01279 502172. [lorraine.blackburn@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:lorraine.blackburn@eastherts.gov.uk)

### Programme of Proposed Scrutiny Topics

Topic	Corporate Objectives (SEED)	Questions/concerns	Scrutiny Approach (Bulletin, Report, rapid review or task and finish group)	Background Notes / Officers' comments	Reporting timeframe to
UK Share Prosperity Fund	Enablement	Levelling up – how the UKSPF is being used.		Report to Members  Update – All Members received a briefing on 7 December 2023	5 March 2024
Access to parks for disabled children and equipment provided	Enablement	Concerns about disabled access to Council parks, lack of facilities for disabled children	Site Visit	Officers have provided Councillors with potential dates in January 2024. Awaiting an update	5 March 2024
Award of Waste, Recycling and street cleansing contract	Sustainability	Award of Contract	Report	The report to seeks to award the contract for Waste, Recycling and Street cleansing to the preferred bidder.	11 June 2024
Development Management and Community Forums	Enablement	Questions about how the Development Management and Community Forums can impact positively in the engagement process with both residents and developers	Report	Members agreed on 16 January 2024 to receive an update on progress to their June 2025 meeting.	June (and not later than November 2025)
Social Housing Providers	Sustainability and enablement	Quality of housing stock, complaints, response times to repairs. Performance and KPIs Steps being taken to achieve carbon neutrality. Member engagement	To be determined	A request for information was forwarded to three social housing providers October 2023. Despite reminders only one has provided information. Reminders sent	To be determined

Topic	Corporate Objectives (SEED)	Questions/concerns	Scrutiny Approach (Bulletin, Report, rapid review or task and finish group)	Background Notes / Officers' comments	Reporting timeframe to
Climate Change – Carbon Neutrality	Sustainability	Support to residents and businesses? Changing residents' behaviour to achieve reductions in emissions. Will council achieve its goals?		Summary bulletin to be provided by relevant Head of Service. Information awaited. Reminder sent	
Policing	Enablement	Neighbourhood Policing – pressure to contribute from Police to cost of PCSOs.	Background overview	11 Parish and one Town Council has responded. See report for further detail.	To be determined
East Herts Run Markets	Sustainability	Hire of stalls, issues faced, support to markets		Subject currently part of a larger piece of work under review. When available Members will be updated	Summary Bulletin to be provided by Head of Service
Anti- racism Charter	Sustainability			Approach from Executive to review the charter before presentation to Executive and Council	Summary Bulletin to be provided by Head of service
Exploration of the use of herbicides in the District	Sustainability	How the use of herbicides can be minimised / eliminated (particularly Glyphosate)	Background overview	Issue raised by a resident. Officers seeking Members thoughts on whether they might wish to scrutinise this issue further.	To be determined
Pedestrian Safety	Sustainability			Chairman and Vice Chairman to liaise at a further date with Cllr Carter on what further action (as the scrutiny proposer), she may wish to see taken.	

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Bulletin Summary – Smart Devices and improvement to Council services

**Overview:** At the work programme workshop at the start of the civic year, Members asked “How could the internet improve service delivery and reduce costs”. Dr Catherine Howe from the CfGS (<https://www.curiouscatherine.info/publications/>) who has published a number of papers in relation to transformational social and digital change, was approached by the Scrutiny Officer to seek her advice on how the Council could actively influence social change digitally to improve the delivery of its services. To date, no response has been received so the Scrutiny Officer has conducted her own research and pulled out some points that may be of interest to Members to scrutinise further.

The following information is what other councils are doing to influence social change digitally.

**A summary of the key issues:** Members asked “How could the internet improve service delivery and reduce costs”.

#### **Summary of observations:**

According to the Government Office for Science, “The Internet of Things” describes a world in which everyday objects are connected via sensors to a network that can share data to improve individuals’ lives and enable goods to be produced more imaginatively, services to be provided more effectively and scarce resources used more sparingly.

The IoT says this transformative approach is about technologies “which could allow billions of everyday objects to communicate with each other .. has the potential to have a greater impact on society than the first digital revolution”.

Cheap sensors mean that almost any object can be made “smart” providing councils with data on air quality temperature, noise footfall etc. With applied analytics, physical assets can be managed such as bins, streetlights and roads more efficiently and delivered more targeted or new services provided.

The following is a look at some of the approaches taken by Councils nationally:

**Milton Keynes: smarter streets** – have installed parking sensors that aim to improve parking infrastructure and provide real-time information on the availability of parking spaces across the city, which drivers can access and reserve via a smartphone app (this it is said, reduces congestion and means people are less likely to park illegally). The council also uses the data on average parking time to fine-tune parking restrictions. E.g. the sensors revealed that an average stay in the train station drop off zone was 16 minutes so the wait limited was shifted up to 20 minutes.

**Milton Keynes** - has also installed sensors in large recycling bins that let the council know when they are full. The council then only sends out collection crews when necessary (and this provides direct savings from not having to buy additional vehicles).

**Glasgow “Future City Programme”** – Smart street lights can record air quality, noise and movement. E.g. if the light senses a cyclist approaching they automatically adjust their brightness from 40% to 100%. At other times the streets lights are dimmer, saving energy. Glasgow’s integrated operations centre works with the community safety team that monitors the city’s CCTV that monitors traffic lights and cameras which can detect unusual activity. The downside of this is more public surveillance which in the South East was challenged by the City of London which felt that this breached people’s privacy.

**Impact on the NHS – low cost** - wearable devices and telehealth (remotely delivered health services) could reduce the need for face to face appointments and allow people to return home sooner from

hospital. Some companies are working on pill bottles that can notify healthcare professionals if a patient forgets to take their medication (helping people with dementia to remain at home longer).

**Middlesbrough Council** – is offering more support to residents when it comes to digital independent living with a range of smart devices.

**Camden Council** - successfully piloted helpful care technology from Oysta to allow residents to return from hospital three days faster on average and be fully supported to recover at home.

**Transport** – sensors around bus stops can detect the number of people nearby allowing councils to gauge transport demands and perhaps develop an on-demand services, and greater flexibility and reactivity in relation to scheduled bus services.

**In Glasgow**, data collected by people who walk or cycle is used to identify the most common routes around the city and barriers that discourage people from cycling. This information is used to influence future spending on cycling in the city and determine what measures are needed to address safety and accessibility.

Evidence from research comments that public consent for the roll out of sensors as well as transparency around how this will be used is vital to avoid potential privacy challenges.

**Bristol** - In 2013 and 2014 funding from Building Digital UK's Super Connected Cities Programme Bristol funding was used to establish multiple communications technologies to enable smart city research, development and innovation. Technology companies, research organisations and small businesses will be able to use council owned fibre optics network, the University of Bristol's Supercomputer and sensor technology to trial innovative solutions to urban problems from driverless cars to monitoring energy usage.

**Officers' Comments / Observations:**

As can be expected, there is a wealth of information on the internet and examples from other councils about how they have used the technology. Should Members wish to explore the topic further, the Scrutiny Officer has detailed sources below that were relied on to produce this paper which in turn provide the links to other sources.

## **Scrutiny Officer**

### **Ext 2172**

Sources of Information:

[Local councils turn to IoT to improve their services \(government-transformation.com\)](#)

[How the internet of things could revolutionise council services | Public Leaders Network | The Guardian](#)

[Council highlights its new support service for smart and digital assistive tech devices - AT Today - Assistive Technology](#)

[The Internet of Things: making the most of the Second Digital Revolution \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Bristol is Open](#)



## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Bulletin Summary – Digital Innovation Zone

**Overview:** Following a workshop on 27 July 2023, Members raised the issue of the Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ) and sought background summary information on its role and how the Essex DIZ connects with local businesses and residents to share the benefits of digital investment and how this benefits the council and residents.

#### **The DIZ Vision:**

*“to be the best connected place of its type in the UK. A place of innovation and inclusion. A place where the benefits of digital investment are harnessed, maximised and shared across residents, commuters, businesses and borders”.*

As a partnership it attempts to answer how economic prosperity can be future proofed, how it can better use its assets to lever in additional investment from the private sector and / or government to go “further, faster” and work better together to deliver more public services in a joined-up way that costs less and provides more.

#### **Partners:**

The DIZ is comprised of an Executive Board, an Advisory Board and the DIZ team.

The **Executive Board** is comprised of the funding local authorities including East Herts DC alongside Broxbourne Borough Council, Epping District Council, Harlow Council, Uttlesford District Council, Essex County Council and Hertfordshire County Council.

The **Advisory Board** is a more flexible, place-based and evolving community of interested organisations from across and beyond the DIZ which includes representatives from the health, voluntary and community, higher and further education sectors. The private sector is also represented by global companies such as CGI and Microsoft and local SMEs such as Insight MCL (from East Herts).

#### **Support:**

The strategy shapes the work of the DIZ over the short and long term and is supported by the various organisations (list above) working in partnership.

A key role of the DIZ is to examine programmes and projects that have been successfully tested or been applied in “smart cities” to assess their benefit to a particular area (i.e. a mixture of small urban market towns and rural surroundings that reflects the economic and social makeup of the rest of the UK).

Collaborative working is critical to the successful delivery of the DIZ work programme and is facilitated through both the Advisory board monthly meetings with focused presentations on key digital issues and shared events with key speakers on specifically digital related topics to inform and consult with local organisations affected by a specific topic. A list of Executive reports from earlier seminars are available [here](#) for Members’ further information.

The ongoing DIZ work programme is shaped by the Executive Board and delivered by the DIZ Team (DIZ Director and Programme Manager). Progress is reported monthly to the Executive Board and annually to the wider community through its Annual Progress Reports (all available on the DIZ website at <https://diz.org.uk/diz-resources/>)

Some key achievements and highlights from the ongoing work programme include:

- Delivery of a £1.7m DCMS funded project to deliver ultrafast fibre connectivity to 74 GP surgeries. This included 13 GPs in East Herts with over 29km of fibre infrastructure built in the district; this has both underpinned the move to digital healthcare delivery during COVID and provided the foundations to explore future healthcare innovation.
- Collaborative procurement by all DIZ districts of a town centre footfall system to enable detailed analysis of shopping and visiting patterns across all DIZ town centres
- Delivery of a series of Smart Place Seminars on key digital issues including infrastructure, health and social care, digital skills, digital inclusion, digital sustainability and the potential of 5G connectivity. These were open to local businesses and residents.
- DIZ was recognised by Digital Leaders in their annual #DL100 Awards as the 'Cross-Sector Collaboration of the Year'.
- Establishment of a 'Digital Sustainability Special Interest Group' which is exploring how digital can '#domoregood' environmentally as well as reducing the negative impacts of increasingly digital service delivery by local authorities and the wider public sector.
- Continued liaison with health partners to evaluate the impact of the GP fibre project and to explore opportunities to use that connectivity to bring benefits for residents.
- Collaborative work across administrative boundaries to develop funding bids and project proposals for digital innovation across 'the place' e.g. DSIT 5G Innovation Regions
- Collaborative work to explore the potential for public sector assets to be made available to support the deployment and densification of telecoms infrastructure eg. 5G small cell units.
- Comprehensive digital 'horizon scanning' through the weekly DIZ newsletter to raise awareness of key digital issues, events, articles and resources – available to all members

The Lead Member for East Herts Council is Councillor Glover-Ward.

### **Officers' observations / comments**

If Members need further information, please let me know in advance of the next meeting of O&S Committee on 7 November 2023 when this can be discussed in the context of the Work Programme. (Please note that Digital exclusion (literacy) is being progressed as a separate topic).

Officer: [Lorraine.blackburn@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Lorraine.blackburn@eastherts.gov.uk)

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Bulletin Summary – Information Governance and Data Protection Annual Review

**Overview** - To provide an update on the:

- Access to Information (ATI) Policy;
- Data Breach (DB) Policy;
- Data Retention (DR) Policy;
- Data Protection (DP) Policy; and
- Surveillance Technologies (ST) Policy

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S) at its meeting on 7 November 2023 agreed to receive a bulletin summary rather than a report, given the minor changes to the information governance and data protection policies.

The Council is required to have appropriate information governance and data protection policies in place to demonstrate its accountability under the UK GDPR and Access to Information legislation. The ATI, DB and DR policies were approved by Executive in 2021 and reviewed in 2022 with an update report taken to O&S on 21 May 2023.

The DP and ST policies were approved by Executive in 2022 and have been reviewed, alongside the policies above, as part of the annual policy review.

Some policies required minor changes and these have been set out below, apart from these amendments, the policies remain fit for purpose in all other regards.

The ATI Policy has been further summarised to make the policy more succinct and has been updated to reflect that the Council will consider contractual obligations when deciding whether to release information.

The DB Policy has had no changes made.

The DR Policy has had no changes made.

The DP Policy has been amended to reflect that all staff, and not only line managers, are responsible for ensuring that supplier data protection measures are to the same standard as is set out in the policy. It has also been updated to reference the Council's updated ICT User Policy.

The ST Register has been reviewed to update existing and note new surveillance assets. The ST Policy has had no other changes made.

### **Officers' observations / comments**

It is important that the council continues to operate in accordance with information governance and data protection legislation to ensure that it can effectively manage financial and reputational risks associated with non-compliance with this legislation. Not regularly reporting on the council's information governance and data protection compliance would risk it slipping out of the consciousness of Members.

### **How the key issues could be approached / resolved /**

To annually review these policies so that they do not become out of date and place the council in a position where it was potentially not meeting its legal obligations.

Contact: Tyron Suddes, Information Governance and Data Protection Manager and Data Protection Officer

[Tyron.suddes@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Tyron.suddes@eastherts.gov.uk)

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Bulletin Summary – IT Cyber Security**

**Overview:** *At* Members request the following is a summary bulletin which explains in generic terms, the health of East Herts IT systems including an explanation of the questions posed below:

1. *Why it's important especially in the public sector (eg prevention, detection and responding) and the consequences of Cyber attacks*

Public sector organizations are attractive targets for cyberattacks due to the sensitive data they hold. These attacks can disrupt essential services, expose citizen information, and damage public trust. Robust cybersecurity measures are crucial for prevention, detection, and response to cyberattacks.

2. *Types of Cyber Threats (Malware, Ransomware and Phishing)*

Cyber threats are malicious attempts to gain unauthorised access to computer systems or networks. They can be carried out by individuals, groups, or even nation-states. Cyber threats can be used to steal data, disrupt operations, or even cause physical damage. There are many different types of cyber threats, but some of the most common include malware, ransomware, and phishing.

Malware is any software that is designed to harm a computer system. It can include viruses, worms, trojans, spyware, and ransomware. Malware can be spread through email attachments, malicious websites, or infected USB drives. Once malware is on a computer system, it can steal data, encrypt files, or damage the system. Ransomware is a type of malware that encrypts a victim's files and then demands a ransom payment in exchange for the decryption key. Ransomware attacks can be devastating for businesses and individuals, as they can lead to the loss of important data and financial losses.

Phishing is a type of social engineering attack that attempts to trick users into revealing sensitive information, such as passwords or credit card numbers. Phishing attacks are often carried out through email, but they can also be carried out through text messages or social media. Phishing attacks can be very convincing, and even experienced users can fall victim to them.

3. *The critical components of Cyber Strategy. (eg Risk Assessment, Security Policies and procedures, Network and End Point Security, Access*

## *controls. Data Encryption, Incident Response Plan and Third Party Risk Management*

A successful cyber strategy comprises of several essential components, including:

- Governance: Establishing clear roles and responsibilities for cybersecurity and developing and implementing policies and procedures.
- Risk management: Identifying and assessing cybersecurity risks and developing and implementing plans to mitigate those risks.
- Security awareness and training: Ensuring that employees are aware of cybersecurity risks and know how to protect their systems and data.
- Technical controls: Implementing technical security controls, such as firewalls, intrusion detection systems, and encryption.
- Incident response: Having a plan in place for responding to and recovering from cyber incidents.

It is important to remember that a cyber strategy is not a one-size-fits-all solution. The specific components of a cyber strategy will vary depending on the size and complexity of the organization, as well as the industry in which it operates.

### *4. The Role of the Information, Governance and Protection Manager?*

The Information, Governance and Protection Manager doesn't sit within the ICT shared services, so it would need to be answered by James Ellis. In East Herts, the post sits under him.

### *5. What funding is available and is value for money achieved?*

It is important to note that the funding for cyber security comes from the existing ICT budget.

### *6. How often health checks/progress reports are undertaken?*

Yearly. We are currently participating in the pilot program run by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) aimed at achieving the National Cyber Security Centre's (NCSC) Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) accreditation. This accreditation is set to become the standard for cyber security within the Local Government. Additionally, we are also actively working towards obtaining the National Cyber Security Centre's Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation.

### *7. How are employees trained?*

All employees are required to complete an annual mandatory e-learning course.

**Matt Canterford, Head of IT**

**Tackling Digital Exclusion and Literacy in the District – response from the Head of Service (HCC) Step2Skills (Adult Care Services) to the questions posed:**

The following information is extracted from research commissioned by Step2Skills in the summer 2022 and carried out by the Learning and Work Institute (LW&I).

- ***what statistics / demographics are available which explain how this affects the District and Hertfordshire residents'?***

The OECD's adult skills survey showed that around one in four working-age adults in England had low literacy and/or numeracy. Research shows that levels of illiteracy and innumeracy have increased in England over the past two decades, which is showing an opposite trend to other OECD countries except the USA.

The results in Hertfordshire County Council are consistent with the overall national picture with around 169,517 (22.9%) people having low essential skills. Of these, 89% (150,502) are aged 25-64, with 26% (39,298) of these out of work. Some 11% (19,015) are 16-24, with 79% (14,944) of these being qualified to level 2 or below.

In Hertfordshire, Stevenage (25.6%) and Hertsmere (24.1%) have the highest proportion of people with low essential skills, while North Hertfordshire (22.4%) and St Albans (22.5%) have the lowest. East Herts is slightly above average with 23.2% (21,586 residents). Note that the LW&I's data refers to 'essential skills' as opposed to literacy and numeracy because more detailed information at local level is not available. However, it is a known fact in the sector that most people with low essential skills are likely to struggle with both literacy and numeracy, and often with digital skills too.

A further breakdown at ward level has been made available to us which shows that the highest proportion of people with low essential skills in East Herts are found in Much Hadham with 27.6% (483), Hertford Heath with 27.1% (551), Hunsdon 26% (465) as well as Hertford Sele with 26.3% and 921 individuals. The lowest proportion can be found in Ware Chadwell with 20.5% (414), Puckeridge with 21.9% (370) and Stanstead Abbots with 21.7% (443). It is also worth noting that the number of residents with low skills in the following wards is quite high: Hertford Castle with 22.1% (1255), Hertford Bengeo with 22.4% (1044).

From a different research, it has been estimated by the ONS and the Department for Education that 49% of the working age population have maths/numeracy skills below level 2. If extrapolated based on the last census, this means around 370,000 Herts residents aged 16-64 have low numeracy skills – which corresponds to around 46,000 in East Herts.

From Herts Insights and the last census, it is also worth noting that only 2.7% of East Herts district households have no one with English as a first language (which is lower than the Herts average with 4.3%).

- **Are there any particular social or cultural groups are affected by literacy issues e.g. gender, ethnicity?**  
data is not available at district/ward level. However, it is known that :-
- literacy/numeracy problems tend to be a 'generational problem' i.e. if parents do not value literacy/numeracy and do not encourage children to value those skills, children are more likely to have lower education attainment at school and this will often translate into poor literacy/numeracy skills.



The DfE has been reporting for a number of years that boys' attainment, particularly White British, are lower than girls' attainment. Low SATs and GCSE attainment is often associated with low interest and/or poor attendance in education, but also in low levels of literacy. Those young people who have come through the education system with low levels of attainments are often now parents of a new generation of children.

- Low levels of essential skills (literacy/numeracy/digital) often correlate with high levels of deprivation. It is true that East Herts is really low on the Multiple Index of Deprivation. However, some wards should still be targeted for literacy/numeracy tuition, for example Hertford Sele.
- From Step2Skills' experience, unemployed women aged 20-40 with younger children and who live in more deprived areas are more likely to have low/no literacy/numeracy/digital skills.
- Over 50% of adults in UK prisons are considered functionally illiterate, having a major impact on rehabilitation and recidivism. Data published by the Ministry of Justice claims that 57% of adults in prison in the UK have a reading level below that of an average 11 year old. Therefore offenders, ex-offenders, people with drugs/alcohol addictions and the homeless or those at risk of homelessness should remain one of our key targets.
- It is estimated that 10% of the population is likely to show dyslexic tendencies – which means that around 9,400 working age residents in East Herts may have struggled and still struggle with literacy due to diagnosed or undiagnosed dyslexia.
- Literacy difficulties should not be confused with being unable to speak or read or write in English. However, it is true that people with limited English skills struggle in similar way to access information, secure jobs, etc. Dedicated provision for people whose English is not their first language (ESOL) is available in Herts. Those learners with good literacy skills in their own language are more likely to pick up English quicker than those with low level of education from their home country.
- People on low paid jobs, insecure jobs or unemployed are more likely to have lower literacy/numeracy skills
- Most adults with limited literacy skills do not engage easily with education, and certainly not with literacy or numeracy programmes. Embarrassment for not being able to read once an adult often compounds the problem of not being able to read the information made available to them.
- People with diagnosed learning difficulties are more likely to struggle with literacy than those without.

- ***Where can those struggling get help and how this can be provided?***

[Step2Skills](#) and our delivery partners have been promoting literacy, numeracy and digital skills programmes across Hertfordshire for more than a decade under the banner of Adult Community Learning. Though some programmes may not appear to be about literacy (e.g. crochet lessons, mindfulness), basic literacy, numeracy and digital skills are embedded in all Step2Skills adult community learning intervention funded by the DfE for Education. Some programmes are aimed specifically at parents/grandparents/carers to support their child in English/maths on Key Stage 1. All adult community learning programmes also aim to raise aspirations and re-connect adults gradually with learning and they support and encourage them to take on dedicated English/maths qualifications up to level 2 for their own personal and career aims.

Some Step2Skills provision is delivered by the Step2Skills in house delivery team. The team delivers where there is a demand, which includes online delivery. In East Herts, engagement with residents has been challenging but adult community learning numbers have doubled since academic year 2020/21 from 85 learners to 156 in 2021/22 and 150 in 2022/23. Delivery has taken place in various venues over the years including Bengoe, Hertford Castle, Hertford Sele, Bishops Stortford All Saints. Other Step2Skills-funded provision is delivery by trusted education partners across the county.

Colleges also offer provision but it tends to be GCSEs, which is often unattractive for adult learners unless they need a GCSE English/maths to apply for a higher level course or an apprenticeship.

- **How does the County Council explain and using what medium, “How to get help” if literacy is an issue.**

Communication to residents about the help available if they have a literacy issue and which medium is used is via social media, leaflets, website, posters etc. Step2Skills use newsletters, posters in local venues (community centres, libraries, GPs, district councils etc), social media, mailing lists, leaflets and sending direct information to partners and those that wish to promote adult learning to their client groups. We rely on partners to work with their local community and the residents they serve to encourage or support residents to make contact with us. We ensure our written materials are presented in plain language and learners are directed to make an enquiry on the website or contact the office. Partnership is key to reach those target groups as they do not engage easily with services and certainly not with learning. Those residents are more likely to engage if they are introduced gently to learning – this is often achieved with the support of local charities, but also through collaboration with district councils (particularly housing teams), job centres, housing associations, schools, children centres etc.

- **What roles do schools play (if any) in explaining how, where and what help can be provided?**

Schools and children centres, as well as key staff district council staff members, play a huge role in encouraging and supporting adults with barriers to learning in considering a return to adult education. Parents are more likely to engage with learning literacy/numeracy if someone they trust (e.g. their child’s teacher, a dedicated worker in a children centre) encourages them to take part in learning. They are more likely also to take part if the provision is delivered on the schools’ premises (or venues that are really close to schools) and within school time (so parents can learn whilst children are at school). However, with the current budget restrictions in the public sector, the commitment from schools and children centres to engage parents in their own education journey has dwindled over the past years.

In addition to the more traditional adult education provision highlighted above, it is also worth mentioning that Step2Skills also offers employment support interventions to people with more complex and multiple barriers to employment – many of whom have literacy difficulties. The employment support intervention is based on a coaching model, i.e. not group education but individualised and person-centred support. This type of intervention includes where necessary support with literacy in the form of help with writing CVs, applying for jobs, referring people to other skills provision in the county, support with the benefit system etc. This type of support has been offered for a number of years with funding from the European Social Investment fund, funding which you may know is coming to an end in December 2023 and has been *in part* replaced by UK Shared Prosperity Fund Allocations given to Herts District Councils. Most Herts Districts, but not East Herts, agreed in autumn 2022 to work in partnership with the LEP and HCC/Step2Skills to continue to provide some of that intensive coaching intervention (roughly equates to ¼ of what we used to be able to provide with ESIF). This means that unfortunately, unless Step2Skills find new sources of funding in the future, we are unlikely to be able to automatically accept referrals for intensive coaching support for East Herts residents.

Should you need further information please contact [Chantal.Lommel@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Chantal.Lommel@hertfordshire.gov.uk) **Head of Service (HCC) Step2Skills (Adult Care Services)**

