

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12 JUNE 2012

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

2011/12 END OF YEAR SERVICE PLANNING REPORT

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report provides a summary of 2011/12 Service Plan actions that have been achieved and details those that require a revised completion date.

RECOMMENDATION FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

That:

(A)	the revised completion dates against 2011/12 Service Plan actions be received; and
(B)	the Executive be advised of any recommendations.

1.0 Background

1.1 The 2011/12 Service Plans were scrutinised by the joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees held on 15 February 2011 and approved by the Executive at its meeting on 8 March 2011. Community Scrutiny received a report detailing progress as at the end of September 2011 at its meeting on 22 November 2011. This report details progress as at the end of March 2012 for the following services:

- Community and Cultural Services
- Health and Housing
- Licensing and Community Safety
- Revenues and Benefits

1.2 The Corporate Management Team (CMT) is pleased to commend

the progress against service plans to Members. While there are some actions in the service plans which have required changes to their timetable, CMT congratulates Heads of Service and staff for delivering well, particularly in the context of the difficult times of 2011/12. C3W, shared services, staffing restructure, delivering efficiencies and severe recruitment constraints have made the operating environment extremely challenging for Heads of Service, managers and staff across the organisation.

- 1.3 Going forward this is the last time the monitoring of service plan actions will be presented in this format. For 2012/13 a different approach to reporting on service plan achievements will be adopted. However the report will always highlight revised completion dates and actions that have been deferred.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 In total, there are 29 actions in the 2011/12 Service Plans relevant to Community Scrutiny Committee, of which:

76% (22) actions have been achieved

10% (3) on target

14% (4) actions have had their completion date revised as set out in **Essential Reference Paper “B”**)

- 2.2 An overview of the achievements by Corporate Priority can be summarised as follows:-

Promoting prosperity and well being; providing access and opportunities. *Enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.*

7 actions have been achieved

2 actions are on target

2 actions have had their completion dates revised as set out in **Essential Reference Paper “B”**.

Some of the key achievements were:

- New standards for caravan sites have been approved by Members. A caravan inspection plan has been agreed and work has started on improving the conditions of the mobile home sites in East Herts. *(Reported to Community Scrutiny Committee on 22 November 2011)*
- With the exception of one or two applications that are not yet Citrix compliant, the rollout of home, remote and flexible working for staff in Revenues and Benefits has been completed in accordance with the Changing the Way We Work agenda. *(Reported to Community Scrutiny Committee on 22 November 2011)*
- 1,810 energy efficiencies measures were completed in East Herts to help reduce the risk of fuel poverty before the Herts Essex Energy Partnership Fuel Poverty and Carbon Reduction scheme finished on 31 March 2012.
- East Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council have joined forces to provide housing benefit, council tax, business rates and benefit fraud investigations, providing savings for both councils.
- Performance in Revenues and Benefits has been maintained despite increase caseload and workload. For example Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events were processed within 10.3 days, against a target of 10 days in 2011/12.

Fit for purpose, services fit for you. *Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.*

6 actions have been achieved

1 action is on target

1 action has had its completion date revised as set out in **Essential Reference Paper “B”**.

Some of the key achievements were:

- A balanced and diverse programme of arts and entertainment has been delivered at Hertford Theatre, in accordance with the agreed invest – to – save business plan. In a report

presented to Community Scrutiny in June 2012, it was reported that Hertford Theatre had exceeded its financial targets since its opening in December 2010 in regard to show programme income, hire income and booking income.

- A review of Community Safety was undertaken and reported to Community Scrutiny Committee on 22 November 2011 and 28 February 2012 and then the Community Safety Partnership Board. The review provided the partnership with a steer on the activities that it should prioritise in light of resources reducing and identified the need to launch a positive marketing campaign to illustrate what a safe place East Herts was to live and work in and to continue to work with partners to deliver focussed information relating to community safety.

Shaping now, shaping the future. *Safeguard and enhance our unique mix of rural and urban communities, ensuring sustainable, economic and social opportunities including the continuation of effective development control and other measures.*

6 actions have been achieved

1 action has had its completion date revised as set out in **Essential Reference Paper “B”**.

Some of the key achievements were:

- The House Condition Survey identified an increase in non-decent homes due to a new rating system since the previous survey, but improved energy efficiency – the Assistance Policy is being revised in light of the survey findings and changes in demand etc. *(Reported to Community Scrutiny Committee on 22 November 2011)*
- The Council has successfully delivered the Rural Business Development Programme.
- The Council has made good progress in achieving the Council’s target for affordable housing with 132 affordable homes delivered in 2011/12, compared to 64 in 2010/11.
- The LOCATA system in Housing was upgraded to include an on-line housing application process to help improve customer

service and service efficiency and increase the number on on-line housing applications.

Leading the way, working together. *Deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.*

3 actions have been achieved

The key achievements were:

- The Community and Public Engagement task and finish group submitted a further report updating Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee on progress on implementing the recommendations from the review. All recommendations are now complete and the group will reconvene later in 2012 to review the public response and wider feedback on the new A5 format for Link magazine and to look at the Council's social media activities.
- Officers successfully supported East Herts Local Strategic Partnership in reviewing its priorities which resulted in three priority outcomes – Community safety, promoting economic well being and supporting the vulnerable being agreed. Working groups supporting the original themes have been brought together and three priority partnership actions have been agreed for each priority theme.
- The Council's community grants process, administered by the Community Projects Team, underwent an internal review in July 2011 to look at how they might be improved or streamlined. A report was submitted to the C3W Programme Board on 12 July 2011 which contained ten improvement options. Community Scrutiny Committee received a further report on 22 November 2011 providing members with an update on the community grants process and to provide a steer on how a range of grant "pots" could be refocused to better achieve the Council's corporate priorities.

2.3 **Essential Reference Paper "B"** details those 2011/12 Service Plan actions that have had their completion dates revised, have been deferred/suspended or have not provided an update. For ease of reference, these have been categorised by Corporate

Priority. Full progress comments on all 2011/12 Service Plan actions can be accessed by referring to the Council's performance management system, Covalent (www.covalentcpm.com/eastherts).

- 2.3 Community Scrutiny committee are requested to note the achievements against the 2011/12 service plan actions and agree the recommendation at the front of this report.
- 2.4 2011/12 actions that are still active will be reported as part of the 2012/13 service plan monitoring reports.
- 3.0 Implications/Consultations
- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

2011/12 Service Plans report to Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee on 15 February 2011.

2011/12 Service Plans summary of progress and exceptions report to Community Scrutiny on 22 November 2011.

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