

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'B'

East Herts Council Corporate Strategic Plan 2014/15 – 2017/18

	Page Number
1. Introduction	2
2. East Herts Council – Context and Summary	3
3. Organisation and Culture – Here to Help You	5
4. Delivering Your Priorities	7
5. Measuring Success – How we plan and manage what we do	10

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1. Introduction

This is East Herts' Corporate Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018.

East Herts is 'Here to Help' you with good quality services focused on the areas that you've said are important to you.

The weekly waste and recycling collections are probably the most visible and well-known of the services we provide. But this is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of what we do.

Residents and businesses want quick and easy access to a broad range of support and advice from planning applications to housing benefit. We're also beginning to play a bigger role in working with local health services to improve facilities for residents.

At the same time local government faces ever increasing challenges and demands requiring more efficiencies and cuts. We know that local authorities will be facing further significant reductions in the funding we receive from central Government.

So we'll need to become more creative and innovative around the way we use our resources.

Our financial ethos is about getting the best from the income that we receive so that we can generate the greatest overall benefit for our residents. For example we'll be looking at ways to improve returns on our investment portfolio through longer-term projects.

Your councillors have been developing their leadership skills so that they are better placed to take on a more central role in improving the communities where we live.

Working together we will continue to shape East Herts and deliver better outcomes for everyone.

Councillor Anthony Jackson

Leader of the Council

George A Robertson

***Chief Executive and Director
of Customer & Community
Services***

2. East Herts Council in Context and Summary

Our Vision:

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

Our Strategic Priorities:

East Herts Council is here to help you. We are committed to the communities we serve and delivering good quality services that reflect local priorities and resources. In pursuit of that vision your elected councillors have identified three **PRIORITIES** to provide focus in those endeavours.

They are:

People – Fair and accessible services for those that use them and opportunities for everyone to contribute

Place – Safe and Clean

Prosperity – Improving the economic and social opportunities available to our communities

The relevance of our priorities has been tested through regular formal and informal consultation with local residents, businesses and partners. Importantly, our priorities are informed by the vision and priority themes of the East Herts Local Strategic Partnership, which brings together the views and talents of a wide range of groups and organisations.

The council's District Plan provides the framework to shape the district's built environment. It supports the council's and the Local Strategic Partnership priorities, whilst at the same time balancing the many external pressures that impact on the plan.

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'B'

The Council's Developing Roles: Here to help you

Supporting residents and communities to get the best access to the services and advice that they need means the council's role is much more than a service provider.

We realise that *how* we will make a difference to the communities we serve, will be by fulfilling a mix of any of the five main roles we have identified:

Community Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• inspiring and coordinating others' efforts with us and whichever partners can best help; helping communities to achieve their local ambitions
Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• actively engaging with others and jointly committing time, money, intelligence and resources
Service Provider / Commissioner / Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensuring the delivery of good quality services that reflect local priorities and resources; having responsibility and resources for consistent delivery will provide the bedrock for an organisation that continues to be here to help you
Influencer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• lobbying, listening, communicating and campaigning
Enabler	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• making connections and removing barriers

3. Organisation and Culture - Here to Help You

Our organisation:

We are 'Here to help you' our residents and to make a difference. We want to deliver the outcomes that local residents and communities want, so we will always endeavour to:

- Provide efficient and joined-up services, easily accessible to you the customer
- Be a gateway for access. If you need help and don't know who to ask, we will try to help you or put you in touch with someone else who can
- Provide excellent customer service ensuring that our customers get the services or support they need whether provided directly by us or through our partners
- Work in partnership with others across the district through the East Herts Local Strategic Partnership
- Create an environment where communities feel empowered and supported to provide their own solutions

Our Culture:

Our culture focuses on the ethos of being 'Here to help you'. This lies at the root of our organisational values and behaviours demonstrated by the actions of councillors and staff.

The councillors' roles:

Your local councillors are elected to make council policy, take up issues and represent their ward and district communities. The role of councillors has been changing, with more emphasis placed on greater community engagement and stronger local advocacy. We see our councillors being **Strong Community Leaders** who:

- Are in touch with their local community
- Understand what the local issues are
- Support and champion their local issues by seeking to balance conflicting needs or providing the conduit to get things delivered, without losing sight of the strategic context of the district as a whole.

Every district councillor plays a role in ensuring this plan is delivered, whether they are an Executive, scrutiny or regulatory committee member and of course as an elected ward member.

Democratic Representation and Decision Making

East Herts has 50 councillors representing 30 wards and each councillor serves for four years. Following the district council elections in May 2011 and four by-elections in 2013 the breakdown of the political representation is:

Conservative: 45

Independent: 3

Liberal Democrat: 2

The council operates a Leader and Executive model, with key executive decisions taken by an Executive of seven councillors with decisions and other issues reviewed by three scrutiny committees. Separate committees undertake other specific functions, for example, in relation to Planning and Licensing. Full details of the council's decision making process are available at: www.eastherts.gov.uk.

Our People:

The council knows that its most important asset is its people. Our workforce planning has a central role in delivering improved services and has been developed to:

- Help colleagues meet customer and service needs and continue to develop the skills required to deliver them
- Support the council's integrated service and financial planning framework
- Support colleagues to be flexible and resilient; able to respond to service changes and developments
- Support management information

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'B'

4. Delivering Your Priorities

The priorities and objectives recognise the challenges faced by residents and the council. They reflect the high level outcomes we and our partners want to deliver for the district and its residents.

<i>People</i> – Fair and accessible services for those that use them and opportunities for everyone to contribute	
This priority focuses on delivering strong services and seeking to enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing, particularly for those who are vulnerable.	
Therefore we want to:	Our role will be as a:
Reduce health inequalities, for example, by addressing obesity, smoking and physical inactivity	Community Leader, Influencer, Partner and Enabler
Reduce fuel poverty	Community Leader, Influencer, Partner and Enabler
Increase community engagement	Community Leader, Partner and Enabler
Deliver strong and relevant services	Provider/Commissioner /Manager
Improve outcomes for vulnerable families and individuals	Community Leader, Influencer, Partner and Provider / Commissioner / Manager

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'B'

Place – Safe and Clean	
This priority focuses on sustainability, the built environment and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean.	
Therefore we want to:	Our role will be as a:
Reduce residual waste and increase our recycling rate	Community Leader, Influencer and Provider / Commissioner / Manager
Reduce the carbon dioxide emissions from our own operations by 25% by 2020 and work with partners to reduce the emissions of households and businesses	Community Leader, Influencer and Provider / Commissioner / Manager
Maintain our clean streets and reduce litter	Community Leader and Provider / Commissioner / Manager
Maintain our parks, play areas and open spaces in good order	Community Leader, Partner and Provider / Commissioner / Manager
Reduce anti social behaviour and the fear of crime	Community Leader, Partner and Enabler
Ensure future development best meets the need of the district and its residents	Community Leader, Influencer and Provider / Commissioner / Manager

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'B'

***Prosperity* – Improving the economic and social opportunities available to our communities**

This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic opportunities and delivering cost effective services.

Therefore we want to:	Our role will be as a:
Deliver value for money and reduce our reliance on central government funding	Partner and Provider / Commissioner / Manager
Enhance the economic well being of East Herts	Community Leader, Influencer and Enabler
Deliver sustainable rural business growth	Community Leader, Influencer and Enabler
Protect the environment	Community Leader, Influencer and Provider / Commissioner / Manager

5. Measuring Success – a golden thread – How we plan, manage and deliver what we do

- **East Herts Local Strategic Partnership** developed and agreed a Sustainable Community Strategy as the overarching partnership plan for East Herts. Informed by the community it serves, it articulates shared aims and aspirations for the district. For 2012/13 East Herts Local Strategic Partnership reviewed and revised its priorities to three priority outcomes –

- community safety
- promoting economic well being
- supporting the vulnerable

Working groups supporting the original themes have been brought together and partnership actions have been agreed for each priority theme.

- **East Herts Council's Corporate Strategic Plan** (this plan) sets out the overall vision and direction for the council. Refreshed annually it looks forward over the next four years and links to the shared priorities of the Local Strategic Partnership. The Strategic Plan highlights the high level priorities for the council and identifies some of the key outcomes that will to be achieved. The plan sets the direction for the organisation and forms the basis for the council's performance management activities and steers the distribution of resources.
- **Service Plans** are produced every year by Heads of Service, agreed by the council's elected members. They set out what key development type actions need to be undertaken to deliver the outcomes contained in the Corporate Strategic Plan. These actions are linked to key performance indicators, so achievement can be measured and tracked.
- The **Medium Term Financial Plan** considers the resources needed to deliver the council's priorities and ambitions. Development of service plans and a challenge process with elected members feeds into a four-year budget-planning model. The council uses the model to plan its expenditure

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'B'

and make sure that financial resources are available to fund actions in priority areas.

- The **People Strategy** is the council's framework for the delivery of people management, ensuring the council has a high quality workforce delivering good quality services. The strategy contains seven key people objectives, which are aligned to the council's priorities. They are:

- Organisational development
- Learning and development
- Resourcing
- Equality and diversity
- Employee relations and reward
- Health and safety
- HR and payroll service

Overarching these is the organisation's commitment to the 'Here to Help' ethos and behaviours.

- **Performance and Development Reviews** set out individual's personal objectives that a member of staff needs to achieve to deliver their Service Plan and which contribute to the achievement of the council's priorities. This process helps ensure every member of staff has the opportunity to develop their learning and personal development plan.
- The **Performance Management Framework** delivers timely monitoring of the council's priorities and delivery of outcomes. Financial and performance information and analysis is made available in the form of a regular **Corporate Healthcheck** and half yearly **Service Plan Monitoring Reports**. They are considered both by the **Corporate Management Team** and reported formally to the council's **Executive Committee** and **Scrutiny Committees**. Scrutiny meetings are open to all and we strongly encourage the public to attend.

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'B'

East Herts Performance Management Framework:

