

Telling the Story – An overview of some achievements by Corporate Priority up to 31 March 2014:

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

Priority: People	What we want to achieve	What we have done
	<p>Objective: Reduce fuel poverty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered options for a partnership model to support the introduction of the Green Deal in 2013. However, national uptake of Green Deal (GD) scheme remains very low, so developing a Hertfordshire option is not considered viable at this stage. A working group will review the Green Deal scheme in the next year. In interim, East Herts Insulation Grants will be re-launched in October 2013. (13-CSHS04)
	<p>Objective: Increase community engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked in partnership with Inspirational Arts and the Hertfordshire Music Service to give young performers the opportunity to step into the limelight with the 3music project. Over the years 3Music has successfully acted as a starting block for many young performers seeking a career in the theatre and music industry. • Held 3rd annual Community Sports Awards event to recognise local sporting talent and celebrate achievements of East Herts Schools in Herts School & Youth Games - 16 awards were presented in 9 categories with individuals winning Sports Performer of the Year (over & under 18), Volunteer of the Year (over & under 18), Coach of the

		<p>Year (over & under 18) and Service to Sport Award and clubs winning Sporting Achievement of the Year and Club of the Year. Award winners came from across the district - Bishops Stortford Canoe Club winning Coach of the Year and Bury Rangers FC winning Club of the Year and individual performers in swimming, cycling, badminton and canoeing coming from Hertford, Ware, Great Amwell and Bishops Stortford. There was good press coverage of the Awards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised all councillor role descriptions to highlight the requirements of community engagement as well as providing a programme of support to help members respond to this increasing role (13-DLSS02) and three community engagement grants have been allocated to councillors to date to support public engagement meetings within their constituency.
	<p>Objective: Deliver strong and relevant services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertook our biennial residents' survey which showed 70% of residents were satisfied with the way the Council runs things. This is an increase of 19% when comparison is made to the 2011 level of 51%. (2013 and 2011 Residents Survey) Approved a plan for East Herts Council to join forces with Stevenage Borough Council to provide ICT, Business Improvement, Print and Design Services in partnership. The plan was also approved by the Executive at Stevenage. As well as delivering financial savings, the shared service will strengthen resilience and improve the efficiency of the services we provide to our customers. (13-HR02 and 13-ICT01) Continued to explore a range of shared service provision with other councils by jointly procuring a new cleaning contract with Stevenage and North Herts Council so that we can improve the level of

cleanliness in council offices within the budget we have and now share a Payroll and HR system with Stevenage Council, to improve resilience. (13-FMEM02 and 13-HR04)

- Monitoring arrangements for the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) are well-embedded through the Director of Financial Support Services, the Manager of Corporate Risk (Audit Champion) and Audit Committee with regular reporting arrangements. Savings envisaged of £9.3k from the original SIAS budget for 2013/ 14. (13-CRP01)
- Transferred to a new payroll system that is shared with Stevenage Borough Council to ensure RTI compliant and to improve resilience and informal sharing between East Herts and Stevenage Borough Council's payroll services. (13-HR04)
- Strengthened the Council's anti-fraud arrangements by reviewing all fraud awareness information and policies, to ensure strong corporate governance. (13-CRP01)
- Scrutiny committees reviewed the council's basket of performance indicators to ensure they were fit for purpose and supported the council's priorities. The review resulted in a number of indicators being deleted and new measures being introduced, such as amended performance indicators to support the shared service revenue and benefits service. (13-FSSP02 and 13-RB02)
- Enhanced the information publication and freedom of information self-service by the establishment of an East Herts Council information 'Home Page' with self-service links. Over the last year (1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014), there have been 4953 visits to individual FOI case records/responses published on the council website, from visitors

		<p>outside of the council network, covering 1467 case records (obviously, some cases have had more visits than others). The online "Make an FOI Request" e-form has seen 43 visits. There have been 144 visits to the council Publication Scheme, and 785 visits to the Spending Disclosure. Although visits to these self-service links does not mean that an FOI request was avoided in its own right, it does demonstrate how effectively the Council is ensuring information is accessible and transparent. (13-IPCS03)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched an online permit renewal system. Residents in controlled permit zones are no longer required to visit Council Offices in normal opening hours to purchase their permits. Since the facility went 'live' on 13 November 2013, the Council has have issued 648 renewal letters and in that same period 302 permit holders have used the online renewals facility. This would indicate a take-up rate of approx. 47%.(13-IPCS08) • Developed a customer charter for the joint revenues and benefits service. The charter sets out the aims for the service in relation to behaviours, performance and working with customers. It was presented and agreed by the Joint Members Board in October 2013.(13-RB01)
	<p>Objective: Improve outcomes for vulnerable families and individuals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced the amount of time it takes to process new housing benefit claims or change of events from 18 days to 9 days by investing more resources to support the growing demand of the benefits service. • Contributed, as part of the East Herts Local Strategic Partnership to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Jointly funding a new time banking scheme in Buntingford in

partnership with Hertfordshire County Council. The scheme is run by the North Herts Centre for Voluntary Service. Participants who sign up are able to donate time towards helping others in any way they feel they are able. In return they receive an equivalent amount of time back from somebody helping them. The scheme is aimed at engaging some of the most vulnerable members of society, but is open to anybody to join in.

- Helped a group of widows and widowers aged 70 plus develop their cooking skills and to reduce social isolation that is increasing in this age group. A seven week course held at Dixon Place sheltered housing, facilitated a supportive atmosphere for people to develop their cooking skills, consider portion size, increase their confidence and build friendships.
- Developed a three-year agreement which will provide East Herts Citizens Advice Service with £129,000 on an annual basis, subject to a yearly review. This will help to ensure a wide range of support on many issues affecting people's lives continues to be provided, specifically housing debt, benefits and housing advice.
- Built a young persons supported accommodation in Hertford. The new accommodation will provide 14 flats to support up to 28 East Herts residents aged 16 - 24 that are in housing need. In addition residents will also receive training and support whilst living there. The accommodation opened on 18 October 2013. (13-HO1)
- Agreed a new Homeless Review and Strategy at full Council on 11 December 2013. The strategy is now published and its purpose is to address homelessness by ensuring suitable accommodation, support

		<p>and advice is available and accessible to all client groups and to encourage a multi-agency approach to preventing homelessness. The Council's Housing Options approach is prevention focussed and relies heavily on the residents of East Herts being able to access timely, high quality advice and assistance to help them resolve their housing problems well before their situation reaches crisis point and homelessness. There has been a reduction in the number of homelessness presentations (30%) and acceptances (17%) over the last 3 years for East Herts which is indicative of an effective preventative Housing Options Service.(13-H02)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financially supported through the discretionary grants programme 134 voluntary and community organisation and youth athletes. 68 grants were awarded to small voluntary and community organisations ranging from grass roots groups to parish councils and health and social care charities. More than 2,000 individuals benefitted from this pot alone. Of the projects funded, 43% supported older or vulnerable people, combatting loneliness and helping them live more fulfilling and independent lives. Additional monies were awarded to organisations to improve well-loved community assets such as village halls, sports pavilions and play areas and to arts and sports organisations and other groups to deliver activities for young people over the summer holidays. This helped organisations to improve their cultural offer, thus improving diversity and access.
	<p>Objective: Reduce health inequalities, for example, by addressing obesity, smoking and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased the overall number of swimmers accessing the Council's pools by 2.2% when compared to performance in the previous year. This is due to a successful promotion of junior swims by SLM and their investment in equipment (inflatables) to encourage junior fun swims as

	physical inactivity	<p>well as adding several additional fun swim sessions aimed at younger swimmers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raised awareness of the dangers and social impact of tobacco to young people as part of an East Herts Council project to reduce smoking. The campaign is set to be rolled out to schools across Hertfordshire from the Autumn term in 2014. As part of the campaign students will be able to use an interactive website to watch films about the exploitation of children in tobacco plantations, see how friends and family can be affected by smoking related illness and take part in a range of activities designed to encourage a smoke-free life.
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Priority: Place	What we want to achieve	What we have done
	<p>Objective: 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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced measures and changes to ensure the Council is on target to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from its own buildings and the services it provides. Changes that have been introduced include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pool covers at Fanshawe and Ward Freeman leisure centres as well as motion sensor lighting to reduce lighting use and energy-efficiency glazing has been installed at Grange Paddocks to reduce heating costs. ➤ Solar reflective blinds in the council's Wallfields offices in Hertford. ➤ Sensor-controlled lighting and new glazing at Hertford Theatre. ➤ Newer more efficient vehicles as part of the waste contract and the rescheduling of collection rounds to maximise efficiency by using mapping software <p>All these initiatives have contributed to a 13% reduction in CO2 emissions since 2009. (13-ES17)</p> • Put forward plans for a small scale micro hydro scheme that would harness the power of one of the weirs close to Hertford Theatre to generate electricity for use by the Theatre. The local community were invited to see the plans, for which planning permission has not yet been sought, at an afternoon exhibition in January 2014. A planning application is expected to go forward in summer 2014.

Objective: Maintain our clean streets and reduce litter

- Continued to maintain clean streets with the level of detritus being reduced by 2% when comparison is made with the level last year and met cleanliness targets for graffiti and flyposting.
- Supported litter picking campaigns across the district to help improve environment cleanliness, encourage as many people as possible to pick up litter and promote policies that will stop people littering. For example:
 - Ware Beavers took part in a litter pick in Ware and the Council provided each Beaver with a litter picking set.
 - Staff from Hanbury Manor Hotel and Country Club in Ware walked along the River Lea towpath from Ware to St Margarets.
- Worked with local housing associations and the Dogs Trust to provide free micro chipping as part of a campaign associated with a national drive to encourage responsible pet ownership. Micro chipping pets ensures they can be reunited with owners quickly should they stray and helps reduce kennelling and re-homing costs. During the campaigns 148 dogs were 'chipped'. From 2016 it will be a legal requirement for owners to have their dogs micro chipped.
- Won the silver footprint RSPCA award, which is a national scheme that recognises local authorities that have clear procedures and policy on stray dogs. Up to end of March 2014 the council received 326 reports of stray dogs (both lost and found). 114 were collected by the Council of which 70 were reunited with their owners. The remainder were rehomed. (13-ES12).

	<p>Objective: Maintain our parks, play areas and open spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulted on the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy for the next five years, to ensure that our green spaces, parks and playgrounds continue to be looked after. Consultation was held with 30 external stakeholders and 42 other interest groups. Responses and comments were integrated into the strategy and it was approved at the Executive on 1st October 2013. (13-ES16) • Hartham Common joined a national scheme - the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge - to provide a permanent legacy of the Diamond Jubilee 2012 and the London 2012 Olympics. The green space is one of 2,012 sports pitches, woodlands, play areas, gardens and parks across Britain joining the challenge which has committed to ensuring these sites are preserved for the future. • Raised awareness and use of open spaces by holding a 'Love Parks' week, at Southern Country Park and Pishiobury Park. The Get Park Active events are designed to promote outdoor leisure and healthy lifestyles. (13-ES15) • Retained our two 'green flags' for The Ridgeway in Hertford (for the fifth year running) and Southern Country Park in Bishop's Stortford (for the sixth year running).
	<p>Objective: Reduce anti social behaviour and the fear of crime</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched 'Who should I call?' leaflet in partnership with Hertfordshire Police and Hertfordshire County Council. It lists the most common subjects that people are unsure about from potholes and street lights to anti-social behaviour and includes telephone, website and Twitter contact details. • Grant funded 20 projects in partnership with CVS to provide summer

		<p>activities for young people. The activities ranged from outdoor games and sports, holiday play schemes, gardening for people with learning difficulties, dance, drama and podcasting activities to den building, educational events, fun days and trips out. For the first time, we were able to expand our popular Play Ranger project into Sawbridgeworth and Bishop's Stortford. In 2013, more than 2,800 children and young people took part. This is slightly lower than the participation level in 2012 of 2,980 children and young people. The reduction is due to fewer providers putting forward high volume programmes in 2013.</p>
	<p>Objective: Ensure future development meets the need of the district and its residents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased the percentage of major, minor and other planning applications that have been processed within the agreed timescales. For example the processing of minor applications has increased by 3%, when compared to performance in 2012/13. • Agreed proposals for up to 2,200 homes and related infrastructure, known as Bishop's Stortford North, to go-ahead. As part of the proposals developers will contribute £53.8m to new infrastructure in the area which includes £30m towards primary and secondary school provision, £3m for sports facilities and £2m for community buildings.
	<p>Objective: Reduce residual waste and increase our recycling rate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched SPARC to remove cardboard from the organic waste stream due to the changes in standards applied to compost and provide residents with more recycling opportunities with the introduction of the blue lidded bin for cardboard, glass, plastics, cans and tins. Recycling tonnages are up with 49% of waste recycled or composed an increase of 1.5% on the previous year. The recent Residents survey shows an increase in public satisfaction with waste and recycling services from 77% in 2011 to 80% in 2013.

Priority: Prosperity	What we want to achieve	What we have done
	<p>Objective: Deliver value for money</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced the total number of sickness absence days per FTE staff in post by 0.37 days from 6.26 days in 2012/13 to 5.89 days in 2013/14. • As a result of identifying further efficiency savings, agreed to a reduction of 1% in its council tax for 2013/14. The reduced council tax requirement is due in part to changes in the Government's funding regime. In addition, changes in the benefits system have resulted in a change to the way the tax base is calculated. • Took robust action against fraud and during 2013/14 have prosecuted 11 people, issued 31 administration penalties and 17 cautions. This means that the council is recovering a combined total of Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit/Support overpayments of £278,673.81 against these 59 sanctions and other overpayments determined as fraudulent. A further £35,854.48 in overpayments of Department for Work & Pensions benefits was also identified.
	<p>Objective: Enhance the economic well being of East Herts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributed, as part of the East Herts Local Strategic Partnership to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of a Work Club. Hertford Fire and Rescue Service in partnership with Jobcentre Plus formed a work club at their Hertford based head quarters to help support the Get East Herts Working Initiative. Championed and awarded funding by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), the scheme is aimed at helping people who are looking for work who do not have access to IT facilities at

		<p>home, get online and find employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported the Love Your Local Market initiative by showcasing locally grown produce regularly available at Hertford's markets in May 2013. • Made additional short stay parking available at Gascoyne Way car park in Hertford on Saturdays, making visits to the Town easier. All four levels of the car park will give customers the option of parking for 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 hours on Saturday. The change comes in response to public feedback, backed up by the Council's own findings, that the bottom two floors are sometimes unable to meet short stay parking demand on Saturdays.
	<p>Objective: Deliver sustainable rural business growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided free advice for rural businesses through a scheme set up by East and North Herts Councils.
	<p>Objective: Protect the environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated a habitat restoration project to protect the wet grassland and botanical species at Thorley Wash Nature Reserve (a Site of Special Scientific Interest). The project was awarded money from a number of agencies, including £64,288.80 from the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), managed by East Herts Council. Funding was also secured from Growth Area Funding via Harlow Council, the Environment Agency, and the Highways Department of Hertfordshire County Council.