

Essential Reference Paper “B”

Telling the Story – An overview of achievements by Corporate Priority up to 31 March 2015:

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. Text in blue shows the new achievements that have been added since the last monitoring report.

Priority: People	What we want to achieve	What we have done
	Objective: Improve the health and well-being of our residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Published our Health and Wellbeing Strategy which sets out our plans for combining our resources and skills to promote healthier lifestyles in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), NHS Trusts, volunteer organisations and others.• Been recognised by The Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) for our strong commitment to public health and achievements in health promotion strategy and initiatives designed to maximise public health opportunities.• Welcomed the first UK Womens International cycling tour through East Herts. The race made its way through the district on the fourth stage of the tour, which started in Cheshunt and finished in Welwyn Garden City. Cyclists passed through Hertford Heath, Hertford town centre before continuing through Wadesmill, Standon, Buntingford and Cottered.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented '3G' all weather football pitches at Hartham Common as part of a hybrid solution implemented. There is a strong demand for football pitches in the Hertford area and proposals were developed to convert the little used tennis courts to three all weather 'astroturf' five-a-side pitches. These can be used all year round and when weather conditions prevent the use of traditional pitches. Following consultation with residents it was decided to install two pitches and retain one tennis court to allow the continuation of a 'pay and play' facility at Hartham. The scheme will also generate additional income for the council which helps to keep the cost of leisure services down. (14-ES02).
	<p>Objective: Reduce fuel poverty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched a revised Home Insulation Grant scheme, offering 50% contributions towards certain insulation measures. However some free schemes became available and were therefore promoted instead. As a result just 5 East Herts funded grants were required, at a budget cost of £665. The measures they funded represent a total annual saving of 4 tonnes CO2 per year, and estimated total energy savings of £974 per year. Such initiatives offer a real help to the estimated 7.5% of households in East Herts estimated to be in fuel poverty. Insulation schemes were widely promoted through our website and other publicity, such as a "bin hanger" card to all East Herts households on the wheeled bin collection. This promoted assistance through East Herts and Herts Healthy Homes schemes. The council is currently exploring the potential for expanding the East Herts Home Energy grants scheme to encompass a wider range of home energy efficiency measures, which are excluded from the nationally available schemes. (14-CSH04)

	<p>Objective: Increase community engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As at 31 March 2015 we had awarded £147,379 in both revenue and capital grants to 126 different voluntary/community groups and young people, including charities and parish councils. This included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Summer Activities – Our summer activities grants programme for 2014 was very well received and more than 2,004 children and young people attended the various activities, compared to 2,886 last year. 68% came from the 5 to 11 age category and events included Summer Archery, Flying Circus at Courtyard Arts, Tennis coaching, community picnic and Pop School. Participation figures fluctuate from year to year and is dependent on a combination of factors such as level of interest by parents/children, weather, effectiveness of individual marketing and accuracy of reporting by project organisers. However overall attendance figures (new and repeat participants) have increased. 7,607 total attendances over all activities were reported in 2014 compared to 5,664 in 2013. ➤ Community Activity Grants – Held 6 funding rounds and awarded 63 grants to health and social care charities, older peoples’ groups, youth, sports and other leisure clubs. Later in the year, the criteria was relaxed, and the funding was opened to village halls, parish councils and young athletes. This grant fund has been used to support, among others, a Parkinson’s support group, a WWI Remembrance event, community events organised by a new residents association, a canal boat trip for senior citizens and to support Carer’s in Herts with their launch of discount passports for unpaid carers. Grants were also awarded
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to support grass root community and voluntary groups with their running costs. One of the highlights of the year was supporting the local Alzheimer's Society, an Ageing Well partner, to set up a new Dementia Café in Bishop's Stortford to meet unmet demand.

➤ **Community Capital Grants** – In the 2014/15 financial year, a total of 26 capital grants were awarded for community-led projects to improve well used facilities or services. A total allocation of £88,989. For example, we helped Bishop's Stortford Rugby Club replace its roof in anticipation of the many extra visitors around the Rugby World Cup this summer; provided Buntingford Cougars with portable goals to support their coaching sessions and Hailey Day Centre with a kitchen upgrade to they could continue to provide hot, healthy meals to frail elderly.

➤ **Performance to Excellence Grants** – Awarded 21 grants to young people (11 to 18 years old resident in the district) who were achieving excellence in their chosen sport. This fund was oversubscribed and we used some of the Community Activities Grants Budget to cover these requests.

- Held the fourth annual Community Sports Awards. This annual event, funded by East Herts Council aims to celebrate achievements and contributions to sport as well as inspiring our local sporting talent to go on and reach their full potential. 19 awards were presented in total across 9 categories.
- Held our annual rural parish conference where up to 46 parish councils attended. The event provides a popular forum for engaging with parish

		<p>councils on rural issues with particular interest this year on the information that the CVS presented on the community car scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jointly organised with Community Development Action (CDA) for Hertfordshire with support from various voluntary and community groups, a conference for more than 50 volunteers who give up their time to run village halls and community buildings. The event gave attendees the opportunity to discuss common problems, learn from each other and share their experience so that they can maximize the potential of halls for the benefit of their local communities. • Successfully delivered a member training and development programme for all elected members to help them in fulfilling their community engagement role. (14-DLSS02) • Successfully implemented Individual Electoral Registration (IER). IER has been rolled out across the country to help modernise the way people register to vote and to help tackle electoral fraud. (14-DLSS01) • Supported National Voter Registration Day by encouraging residents across the district to register to vote tomorrow by getting their names on the voting register. Young people in particular were encouraged to get involved and vote for who they want to represent them.
	<p>Objective: Deliver strong and relevant services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the Ageing Well project helped older residents in the district to stay fit, active and independent by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Launching concessionary Fitsteps dance classes in Bishop's Stortford and Ware. The classes are aimed at older residents (60 years plus) so that they can reap the many health benefits that regular physical activity brings. Fitsteps is a national fitness

programme which was created following the popularity of the TV programme, Strictly Come Dancing. The Bishop's Stortford class varied in numbers between two to eight residents at each session. The number of residents attending the Ware class varied from 20 to as high as 40 at each session. Due to its success the initial pilot was extended with reduced funding and will run independently from January 2015.

- Supporting a grant from the LSP Health and Wellbeing Group to the Herts Sport Partnership to provide 'Fellas Fitness'. The initiative is aimed at older men to help build and maintain their fitness levels, whilst at the same time providing an opportunity to meet and interact with other members of their local community.
- Working in partnership with Active East Herts, Riversmead Housing Association and Wodson Park Sports Centre to run chair based exercise classes for residents aged between 68-89 years of age at Carlton Court in Hertford. The pilot scheme works on posture, balance and strength with a variety of movements including foot pumping, gentle stretching and squats all designed to help improve flexibility and circulation. Weekly sessions began in May 2014 and will continue monthly until the end of the year. (14-CEC03)

- Became a partner in a Shared Anti-Fraud Service for non-benefit and corporate fraud with Broxbourne Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, North Herts District Council and Stevenage Borough Council. The shared service will provide a fraud prevention, detection and investigation service and will

		<p>enable the council to meet its duties in relation to safeguarding of public funds, minimising the loss to fraud so that councils can spend the maximum possible on delivering local services. The new venture brings many benefits to all Hertfordshire's residents not least of all using shared intelligence between the partners to target fraudulent activity across the whole county. It is anticipated that the new service will go live on 4 April 2015. (14-CRP01).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed a new Customer Services Strategy for 2015 – 2020 at full Council on 4 March 2015. The purpose of the strategy is to deliver customer focused services, by understanding their preferences now and what the demands will be in the future across all services. The Council may then need to reshape services. During 2015/16 an action plan supporting the delivery of the strategy will be delivered and started.
	<p>Objective: Improve outcomes for vulnerable families and individuals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under took a housing survey consultation so we can have a clear understanding of the housing requirements in the district. All councils are required by central government to carry out a housing survey every few years. The results of the survey help us develop our housing strategy and planning policies. 25% of residents (from a sample of 9,000) took part in the survey and the results are due to be published in June 2015. (14-H04). • Maintained the average time taken to process new housing benefit claims or change of events at 10 days, by continuing to invest more resources in the service in response to increasing complexity of cases. The increasing complexity comes from on-going changes by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to the benefits framework

		and their increasing use of real time information e.g. in respect of earnings, private pensions etc. These all impact on entitlement to Housing Benefit and can be complex for our customers to understand and track. Cases often require increased interventions and reassessments during the year as a consequence. The overall volume of work has increased by in excess of 3% when compared to last year.
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Priority: Place	What we want to achieve	What we have done
	Objective: Reduce residual waste and increase our recycling rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced the use of compostable caddy liners in kitchen caddies that can be disposed of in the brown bin. Residents told us that composting food waste was messy without them, and therefore made it more difficult. Nearly a third of waste put in the black bin for landfill is food, and we wanted to make it easier and encourage residents to put it in their brown bin for composting. Currently the recycling rate is 51% as at February 2015 which is 2% higher than the same period last year and more than 16% higher than in 2008/09.
	Objective: Reduce the carbon dioxide emissions from our own operations by 25% by 2020 and work with partners to reduce the emissions of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed carbon reduction target of 25% by 2020, from the baseline year of 2009. Up to 2013/14 there has been a reduction of 17% in total CO₂ emissions, from the council's operations. This was a 2% improvement in 2013/14 when compared with the previous year. The waste collection contract had delivered considerable ongoing CO₂ savings and the total reduction in carbon emissions achieved since

	households and businesses	2008/09 to date is 27%.
	Objective: Maintain our clean streets and reduce litter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An effective stray dog services is essential to ensuring dog fouling is kept to a minimum through education and responsible dog ownership. Therefore the council was pleased to win the RSPCA Gold Footprint award. This certification is given for the quality of stray dog services, housing, contingency planning and animal welfare principles. Last year the council achieved a silver footprint and the year before that, a bronze. The council also scored top marks for its consistent promotion of responsible dog ownership, including micro-chipping, which becomes compulsory for all dogs in Britain from June 2016. In 2014/15 the council picked up 117 stray dogs compared with 114 in the previous year.
	Objective: Maintain our parks, play areas and open spaces in good order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrated Love Parks Week, by holding two free fun activities at Southern Country Park in Bishop's Stortford and Pishiobury Park in Sawbridgeworth. Activities at Southern County Park ranged from the popular annual dog show to a fitness activity trail, orienteering and making wooden medallions with the Friends group. At Pishiobury Park visitors could meet the Longhorn cattle and join a guided bug hunt. The council also teamed up with the Dogs Trust to offer free dog micro-chipping on the day. Retained our two Green Flags for The Ridgeway in Hertford (for the sixth year running) and Southern Country Park in Bishop's Stortford (for the seventh year running).

	<p>Objective: Reduce anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributed, as part of the East Herts Community Safety Partnership to the reduction of recorded crime and anti-social behaviour across the district. Anti-social behaviour has reduced by 26% from 3,280 incidences in 2012/13 to 2,423 incidences in 2014/15.
	<p>Objective: Ensure future development best meets the need of the district and its residents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation responses on the District Plan have been reported back to District Plan Panel along with supporting and technical evidence. This will inform the production of the next stage in the District Plan. (14-PBC02) Brought forward the development at Bishop's Stortford North (permission now granted) whilst seeking to resist what we consider are unsustainable development proposals coming forward in advance of the District Plan (Buntingford). (14-PBC01) Approved a small development of sustainable homes in an East Herts village. The homes are expected to become the biggest group of naturally ventilated homes in the UK, serving as a working model for buildings elsewhere in the country. They will also exceed the highest ranking in the Code for Sustainable Homes, which measures new homes performance in categories such as energy efficiency, water use and health and well-being.

Priority: Prosperity	What we want to achieve	What we have done
	<p>Objective: Deliver value for money and reduce our reliance on central government funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installed a new seating and auditorium floor at Hertford Theatre to provide a better customer experience. (14-CEC04) • Implemented remote working procedures in the Area Environmental Inspection Team. This allows inspectors to receive service requests and customer enquiries remotely in the district enabling jobs to be visited more quickly and some actions to be undertaken while on site. (14-ES20) • East Herts has considered how to make best use of its resources and through Audit Committee agreed a framework that allows wider options in terms of investing its money. This includes being able to make use of Property Funds. It is anticipated that the increased income from these investments will be able to close gaps in the financial model in future years as an alternative to having to look to make further savings. <i>Two property funds have been identified and agreed and the Council is currently on the waiting list to be able to place our money with them. This is anticipated to happen during the 2nd quarter of 2015/16.</i> • Corporate Management Team (CMT) considered and agreed a new senior management structure that focussed resources in a different way. This included the investment in a new Head of Business Development, the remit of which includes considering improved ways of working, a more commercial approach to delivering Council

Services and working alongside service areas to consider future efficiency savings. Further investment has also been made in other areas including Procurement resource to enable wider working with our suppliers to encourage greater competition in the market.

- Continued to implement our 'Here to Help' organisational development programme. Following on from the success of staff workshops in 2014 where ideas and suggestions were put forward to help improve what we do and how we do it. A number of projects were rolled out from June 2014, for example, to help improve the telephone system and review the council's performance development review scheme. In addition staff were involved in developing behaviours for our three core organisational values:

- Here to Help
- We work together to support each other
- We aim high to make a difference

In February 2015, all employees attended bite size training sessions to share the success of the programme a year on; to look at what tools are available to support change, share our service successes and what 'we achieved together' and build on our successes to encourage the development of improvement ideas.

- For the second year running, the council has undertaken a "Budget Challenge" to consider our allocation of resources, and in particular highlight those areas where there have been underspends in prior years, to free up resource to reallocate to other priority areas.
- Undertaken very detailed income modelling against all of our major sources of income, and used the implications of this work to assist our

		<p>medium term financial decision making. By doing more detailed and robust modelling, we were able to close the expected budget gap within our financial plan in future years. (14-FSSP04)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to work with North Herts District Council (NHDC) on producing an outline business case to evaluate the possibility of a joint Waste Collection and Street Cleansing contract and assess the implications to both authorities in improving the cost effectiveness of these services. The outline business case is due to be presented to members in Spring 2015. • Taken robust action against fraud and during 2014/15 have prosecuted 5 people, issued 5 administration penalties and 2 cautions. This means that the council is recovering a combined total of Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit/Support overpayments £425,340.81 against these 12 sanctions and other overpayments determined as fraudulent. A further £6,109.54 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"> • Celebrated ‘Love Your Local Market’ week by holding a special market where locally made ice-cream, meats and games, cheeses, pickles, sausages alongside the weekly fishmonger and greengrocer could be enjoyed. The council also provided spaces free of the usual rental charge, to encourage and support as many small businesses to take part. • Following extensive public consultation agreed to implement free short stay parking (30 minutes) for visitors to East Herts Council car parks in Bishop's Stortford, Hertford and Ware. As part of the council’s ambition to increase the vibrancy of the district's town centres, 30 minutes free

		<p>parking has been introduced in most car parks, adding to the free bays on street and increasing availability and convenience. Visitors needing to park for more than half an hour will receive more parking time for the same price.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported ‘Small Business Saturday’ – a national day held annually on the first Saturday of December – by allowing free parking all day in East Herts car parks in Bishop’s Stortford and Hertford to encourage shoppers. Market traders in the two towns also received a reduced rent. • Held our first urban conference. The event brought together town, district and county councillors, town clerks and chief officers to discuss how best to tackle issues in our urban areas. Discussion topics included the best ways to communicate with town residents, night time economy, sustainable community transport and leisure and cultural provision. • Contributed to an East Herts Local Strategic Partnership project called “Get East Herts Working” to help people between the ages of 25 – 49 who were looking for work. Led by Jobcentreplus participants were able to take part in activities such as facilitated work clubs in Bishop’s Stortford, Hertford and Ware, recruitment events and work placements. The project was a success and supported 2,471 participants, against an original target of 500. Of those that participated 44% of attendees were recorded as coming off active benefits at the end of the project.
	<p>Objective: Deliver sustainable rural</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful in securing an offer of £1.8m from the Rural Payments Agency for a further RDP programme across East Herts, Uttlesford,

	business growth	Epping Forest and North Herts. It will support the development of rural businesses and East Herts Council are the lead agency.
	Objective: Protect the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produced a new Buildings at Risk register. Farm buildings, thatched cottages and traditional stone walls whose future is at risk are among the historic structures that have been listed, along with milestones, bridges, churches and many other distinctive features of the built landscape. To compile the register, the council carried out a survey using Historic England's checklist of criteria. Buildings are usually at risk of loss due to neglect, decay and inappropriate development. In addition to the register owners of such building could qualify for a special grant towards repairs and maintenance.