

REVIEW OF LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY 2009

ACTION PLAN PROGRESS - OCTOBER 2010

REF	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PARTNERS INVOLVED	LEAD EHC OFFICER	COMPLETED BY
1	Work with Circle Anglia housing association to understand land management issues	Better understanding of respective responsibilities for land management. Able to address residents misunderstanding about the reasons for different maintenance specifications Improved co-ordination in the design of future specifications.	Circle Anglia HA	Cliff Cardoza / Martin Shrosbree	Oct 2009

Progress to date:

Issues addressed on an ad-hoc basis.

See also Action 2 progress.

Circle Anglia currently re-tendering their maintenance services.

REF	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PARTNERS INVOLVED	LEAD EHC OFFICER	COMPLETED BY
2	Work with main housing associations to jointly identify public areas which are unsightly and share inspection data	Target problem areas which may be having an impact on public perceptions	Riversmead HA Circle Anglia HA	Nick Kirby	Ongoing

Progress to date:

Worked with Riversmead Housing Association to share performance data and planning to share digital maps. Provided details of grounds maintenance contract to help tenants understand the standards and manage expectations. EHC Officers have worked with Area Housing Officers to improve understanding of the quality of maintenance and the methods used to monitor the contract. Currently considering whether EHC may take on grounds maintenance of new housing areas.

Joint inspections carried out with Housing Officers to identify unsightly areas and estate maintenance issues.

Examples include:

North Park Avenue, Bishop's Stortford (Circle Anglia Housing Association)
Pinehurst (Riversmead Housing Association)

Removal work on Riversmead Housing Association at cost.

Responsibilities identified for respective bodies and cleaned up housing areas with identified problems. Both Housing Associations have taken action for areas within their responsibility.

REF	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PARTNERS INVOLVED	LEAD EHC OFFICER	COMPLETED BY
3	Continue to work with Town Councils to identify opportunities for visual improvements and potential external funding sources	Develop a joint understanding of the issues of concern in Town Centres and work with Town Councils to address them, within existing resources	Town Councils	Trevor Watkins / Ian Sharratt	Ongoing

Progress to date:

Worked with Hertford Town Council by providing landscape advice on town centre improvements and programme to re-paint town centre litter bins.

Bedding in town centres has been reviewed and this allowed additional improvements to planting in Bishop's Stortford (new containers at the Causeway) and Ware (raised beds at Amwell End and the Memorial Gardens).

Currently working with Sawbridgeworth Town Council on development plans for Vantorts Open Space and Hertford Town Council on the future maintenance of the Castle Grounds.

Further discussions with Town Councils are planned.

REF	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PARTNERS INVOLVED	LEAD EHC OFFICER	COMPLETED BY
4	Continue to work with and develop relationships with local 'Britain in Bloom' groups to improve soft landscaping and utilise external funding sources.	Improve visual amenity from a horticultural perspective through working with the voluntary sector and at no additional cost to the Council	Local voluntary sector groups	Ian Sharratt	Ongoing

Progress to date:

Worked with Ware In Bloom Group on a range of landscape improvements to the town utilising volunteers and external funding sources. These have included new bedding on roundabout at Baldock Street. Assisted with the Ware in Bloom application (they achieved a 'Silver Gilt' Award in 2009 and a Gold Award in 2010). Rebuilt plinth and replaced the historical interpretation board at Buryfields with external funding.

Consulted with Hertford Civic Society in the development of Hartham Common draft management plan.

Worked with the Guides to provide bedding displays at Hertford Castle and Waytemore Castle as part of their Centenary celebrations.

REF	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PARTNERS INVOLVED	LEAD EHC OFFICER	COMPLETED BY
5	Implement bi-annual Town Centre surveys to identify maintenance issues which impact significantly on the visual amenity and advise partners of these	Ensure partners are aware of how they can improve visual amenity in town centres through initiatives or regular maintenance. Note that EHC will not be taking responsibility for directly addressing third party maintenance issues on behalf of residents.	All partners	Nick Kirby	October 2009

Progress to date:

Surveys of Bishop's Stortford, Buntingford, Ware, Hertford, and Sawbridgeworth Town Centres have been conducted. Issues identified have been addressed or passed to partners. Worked with the Police, Herts County Council and community groups at Buntingford in support of the Community Pride week. The survey work informed community litter picking, graffiti removal and repairs. Surveys of Hertford, Ware and Sawbridgeworth planned for September, October and November.

REF	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PARTNERS INVOLVED	LEAD EHC OFFICER	COMPLETED BY
6	Work with the voluntary sector, Town Councils and Herts Highways to improve the quality of shrub beds and planters in town centre highway verges	Raise standards of soft landscaping in town centres.	Voluntary groups (e.g. 'In Bloom'; residents associations 'friends of' groups; Town Councils; Herts Highways	Ian Sharratt	Ongoing

Progress to date:

EHC's Grounds Maintenance Contractor has completed a 'shrub bed manual' that helps to forward plan maintenance and gives the Council better information to help with the winter planting programme. This will help with the filling of gaps in shrub beds on EHC open spaces and public highways (subject to Herts Highways approval).

Programme of improvements to sponsored roundabouts in towns completed for 2009/10. Improvements include re-planting of sites at Gascoyne Way, Hertford; St James Way, Bishop's Stortford; Baldock Street, Ware; Haddam Road, Bishop's Stortford.

7	Adopt pilot arrangements for undertaking graffiti removal from Highways maintained street furniture, subject to agreement of charges with Herts Highways.	Continue with successful joint working pilot scheme aimed at speeding up the removal of graffiti,	Herts Highways	Trevor Watkins	Dec 2009
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Progress to date:

Graffiti removal arrangements for highways street furniture have been confirmed and reported to the Highways Joint Member Panel. EHC contractors and Area Inspectors removing graffiti as appropriate.

REF	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PARTNERS INVOLVED	LEAD EHC OFFICER	COMPLETED BY
8	<p>Work with Herts Highways and the Herts Waste Partnership to either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) commission ENCAMS to conduct further LEQSE surveys; OR b) Train local authority staff to develop and conduct our own equivalent <p>The above subject to identifying suitable funding sources and agreement of criteria with partners</p>	Ongoing LEQSE surveys (or local equivalent) to track improvement in local environmental standards.	Herts Highways All Hertfordshire District via Herts Waste Partnership	Cliff Cardoza / Trevor Watkins/ Nick Kirby	March 2010

Progress to date:

Highways Joint Member Panel considered this issue and agreed to consider a further report detailing the benefits of the LEQSE in the Autumn. The Hertfordshire Waste Partnership has considered a joint approach but rejected on the grounds of cost. By this time it should be clear whether the new Government will retain this as a standard.

Update: In the current financial climate it is not proposed to implement LEQSE. It is unlikely that there will be future Government funding for this scheme and the costs remain prohibitive. The Council will continue to maintain and improve upon its own inspection regime.

The new Refuse, Recycling and Street Cleansing contract requires the contractor to implement 'handheld' IT technology which will improve the amount and quality of inspection data available. Officers will work with the new contractor to seek to agree the capture of information about issues outside the contract.

REF	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PARTNERS INVOLVED	LEAD EHC OFFICER	COMPLETED BY
9	Work with Hertfordshire Highways to develop the role of the Highways Joint Member Panel to address highways related issues which impact upon environmental quality	Address and improve performance against LEQSE, within available resources.	Herts Highways; HJMP	Cliff Cardoza	Ongoing

Progress to date:

Worked with Herts Highways to arrange for gating of Netherfield Lane to prevent fly tipping and undertake a major clear up exercise; undertaking graffiti removal on highways street furniture.

County wide protocols for addressing fly tipping are currently being considered through the Herts Waste Partnership.

A joint approach has been developed between Hertfordshire Highways and district councils on the deployment of resources in severe weather (primarily heavy snow fall / ice on highways). This has included live communication systems; a review of gritting locations and the protocols for sharing resources following heavy snow. Maps of primary and secondary gritting locations were recently circulated via the Members Information Bulletin. Officers are satisfied that the approach and contact arrangements are reasonable in the context of the resources available and the infrequency of severe weather in this part of the country.

An agreement has been reached with Herts Highways on a contribution to the cost of weed spraying of public highways and this service will now continue next year.

REF	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PARTNERS INVOLVED	LEAD EHC OFFICER	COMPLETED BY
10	Extend existing officer liaison meeting with Herts Highways to address local environmental quality issues	Ongoing framework in place to jointly address issues in partnership	Herts Highways	Cliff Cardoza	Sept 2009

Progress to date:

Quarterly meetings were being undertaken with Highways District Manager, but have lapsed following the appointment of a new post holder and due to high workloads of respective staff. This approach will be revisited over the winter months.

11	Work with Telecoms providers to develop partnership for addressing graffiti on their street furniture.	Improve the speed of response for removing graffiti from street furniture	BT Virgin Media	Trevor Watkins	Dec 2009
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Progress to date:

Agreements signed with BT and Virgin Media who are funding EHC to paint out graffiti from their boxes and providing paint. EHC contractor staff have been trained in this task. EHC Inspection staff also supplied with graffiti wipes which have proved effective in removing much of the graffiti from these boxes.

REF	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PARTNERS INVOLVED	LEAD EHC OFFICER	COMPLETED BY
12	Review how policies and procedures can be amended to encourage the designing out of litter traps in the street scene as part of major new developments	Reduce litter traps – ease of cleaning.	All partners involved in planning development and streetscene design and maintenance	Cliff Cardoza / Kevin Steptoe	April 2010

Progress to date:

Landscape Officer advises Planning Officers on major developments and is consulting with Waste Services Team as required. Further work to be undertaken to provide Planning Officers with guidance note on design issues that that can impact on street cleansing operations.

Working with property owners and Probation Service on a pilot of Community Payback Scheme in Hertford. This involves adult offenders undertaking graffiti and litter removal at targeted locations. Examples of locations include Millmead Way; Fountain Drive and Hartham Canoe Club.

13	Review the maintenance and cleaning of recycling banks	Improve the standard of presentation		Trevor Watkins	March 2010
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Progress to date:

A small programme of refurbishment has been carried out to improve the worst banks. However, further maintenance was suspended pending a Council decision whether to withdraw the banks service as part of Medium Term Financial Plan options for 2011/12. The Council has now decided to cease bank provision for glass, can and plastic banks next year. Maintenance arrangements are currently being reviewed and discussions will take place with the new street cleansing contractor, when appointed, on how this impacts upon the new contract.

REF	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PARTNERS INVOLVED	LEAD EHC OFFICER	COMPLETED BY
14	Improve cleaning and maintenance of EHC litter and dog bins	Make a contribution to improving the quality of street furniture		Trevor Watkins	Commenced
<p>Progress to date: Painting and refurbishment has been undertaken in a number of locations. New Refuse, Recycling and Street Cleansing contract will require bin washing twice per annum.</p>					
15	Obtain and circulate guidance from Environment Agency / British Waterways on ownership and responsibility for litter removal on watercourses and bank side maintenance	Raise awareness about the responsibilities of different land owners and agencies for watercourse maintenance	Environment Agency / British Waterways	Trevor Watkins	Oct 2009
<p>Progress to date: Guidance obtained and circulated to front line staff.</p>					
16	Investigate the potential for using a 'community pay back' scheme to engage young offenders in remedial works (e.g. painting out graffiti)	Raise public awareness about environmental crime and the commitment of the Council to tackle it.		Trevor Watkins	June 2010
<p>Progress to date: Working with the Police and Probation Service on a trial to remove graffiti from key locations in Hertford utilising external funding. See Action 12.</p>					

REF	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PARTNERS INVOLVED	LEAD EHC OFFICER	COMPLETED BY
17	Develop Council wide protocol for dealing with customer enquiries that need to be referred to other agencies	Streamline and improve information to customers allowing them to access the correct agency as quickly as possible	All Council services dealing with 'environmental' enquiries	Cliff Cardoza / Neil Sloper	Dec 2009
<p>Progress to date: Meeting of officers held to establish the approach taken to route customers to the correct agency. The Head of Customer Services is planning to review service standards as part of a review of the Customer Services Strategy during 2010 (subject to funding approval). Protocols will be considered as part of this process.</p>					
18	Facilitate the development of a corporate record of partner contact details which is easily accessible and updatable	Streamline and improve information to customers allowing them to access the correct agency as quickly as possible		Cliff Cardoza / Neil Sloper	Dec 2009
<p>Progress to date: As part of the development of the Council's Web facilities, partners details will be included on the Intranet telephone directory. Templates are currently being designed and will be available by July .</p>					
19	Improve Council Web Site by adding more detail about the responsibilities of partner agencies	Raise public awareness about who to contact on specific issues		Neil Sloper	Dec 2009
<p>Progress to date: Having investigated this matter in more detail it has been determined that there are risks in adding too much detail about partners responsibilities to East Herts web pages. It is the Council's policy is to provide links rather than partners information to ensure that it is always up to date. Basic information about the services provided by partners is contained on the web site. This is being reviewed on a rolling basis as part of "Changing the Way We Work" Project, which involves a review of customer service processes for each Council service area.</p>					

REF	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PARTNERS INVOLVED	LEAD EHC OFFICER	COMPLETED BY
20	Improve Council Web Site by adding links to partners websites / contact detail which are easy to find	Help residents to make contact with the correct agency as quickly as possible. Reduce avoidable calls / correspondence to EHC. Improve performance against NI 14		Neil Sloper	Dec 2009

Progress to date: See 19. above

21	Support the highways authority by providing information about breaches of protocols on use of A boards in Town Centres.	Share information with Herts Highways which may help them ensure compliance. (Note EHC will not be taking responsibility for the management of this activity or directly dealing with complaints on behalf of residents).	Herts Highways	Nick Kirby	Sept 2009
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Progress to date:

Achieved – breaches of protocols in Hertford and Bishop's Stortford are reported to Herts Highways by Area Inspectors when identified. This has been incorporated into Town Centre Surveys.

REF	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PARTNERS INVOLVED	LEAD EHC OFFICER	COMPLETED BY
22	Support the highways authority by providing regular information about larger gaps in shrub beds on highways verges	Ensure that Herts Highways are made aware of problem locations. Jointly evaluate the amenity benefits and cost implications.	Herts Highways	Nick Kirby / Ian Sharratt	Ongoing
<p>Progress to date: Achieved – See 6. Above.</p>					
23	Promote details of partners responsibilities and contact details at road shows and other outlets	Raise public awareness about who to contact on specific issues		Trevor Watkins / Nick Kirby	Ongoing
<p>Progress to date: Last series of Road Shows in 2009 focussed on ARC and ‘Love Food, Hate Waste’ Campaign to encourage food waste minimisation. Staff were briefed to give advice on the responsibilities of partners and how to contact them.</p> <p>Partners responsibilities were also promoted at the public consultation event at King George Road and during ‘Love Parks Week’</p>					

REF	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PARTNERS INVOLVED	LEAD EHC OFFICER	COMPLETED BY
24	Review the Council's approach to undertaking enforcement action against private land owners and partners that fail to work in partnership to address their statutory obligations with respect to litter.	Determine whether more can be done to encourage private land owners to address litter problems that are significantly impacting on public amenity.		Trevor Watkins / Nick Kirby	Dec 2009

Progress to date:

Officers have reviewed whether Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act with respect to litter clearance. However, this was not found to provide any additional benefits to the powers available within the Environmental Protection Act (i.e. litter clearing notices). In practice, warnings of the application of enforcement action have been sufficient to persuade land owners to comply in most cases. Service processes have been amended to ensure better use is made of warning letters when problems are identified.

A new combined post of Dog Control / Enviro-crime officer has been appointed.

Other actions to improve Environmental Quality

Developed and worked with 'Friends of Southern Country Park' Group to raise public awareness of the park and carry out a range of tasks e.g. woodland thinning; improved access points; repaired fencing; helped install Orienteering 'control points'; installing footpaths. Worked with CMS to develop 'Friends of Group' at Pishiobury Park and to encourage joint working between the two groups. Thinning of vegetation at the entrance to Pishiobury Park to allow easy of viewing by the police and discourage anti-social behaviour.

Worked with Police to remove fly tips from the open space at King George Road and carry out enforcement where necessary. Also worked with the Police to produce signs and leaflets to discourage Anti-social behaviour and car

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	<p>crime at Pishiobury Park.</p> <p>Worked with the Groundwork Trust to undertake a programme of improvements at The Firs to thin out vegetation and improve overgrown areas.</p> <p>Anti dog fouling campaign was launched this summer and included media and promotion, targeted patrols, information packs supplied to partners, improved information on the Council's website. A report was submitted to agree the approach to raise awareness about dog fouling through stencils on footpaths, stickers on lampposts and signs on bins advising litter bins can be used for dog waste. These have now been implemented.</p> <p>The Service has been working with the Police, Environment Agency and other partners through a Hertfordshire wide Anti-Fly tipping Action Group (Situational Crime Prevention Project). This includes a range of initiatives including a joint approach to publicity, intelligence sharing, and crime prevention.</p> <p>Several joint enforcement actions (vehicle stop and search) have been undertaken with partners.</p> <p>A new mini mechanical sweeper has been introduced by the Street Cleansing Contractor to improve pavement sweeping of town centres and pedestrian areas.</p> <p>As part of the development of the new contract, all street cleansing schedules were reviewed and cleaning frequencies amended so that they better reflect needs.</p>				

Abbreviations:

Herts Highways –Highways Department of Hertfordshire County Council

LEQSE – LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY SURVEY OF ENGLAND – National surveys conducted by ENCAMS (Keep Britain Tidy) in 2006/7

HJMP – Highways Joint Member Panel – a joint Councillor advisory body to address local highways management issues with representation from East Herts Council and Hertfordshire County Council.

NI14 – National Performance Indicated measuring avoidable and unavoidable contact with the objective of improving access to services for customer and council efficiency.