

# At the end of March 2020 the Council had

10,328 followers  
 2,532 followers  
 1,561 followers  
 796 followers  
 network 1,815 subscribers  
 2,390

# Annual Report for 2019/20

**264**
  
 households prevented
 from becoming homeless

over
 **520**
  
 participants in
 Social Prescribing scheme

**Top 5 pages:**

1. Home page - 92,292 views
2. Object, Comment or View a planning application or decision - 58,047 views
3. Planning and Building landing page - 26,094 views
4. Council Tax landing page - 25,646 views
5. Contact us - 22,097 views

  
**767,179**
  
 page views

**292**
  
 new affordable homes
 delivered

**13.08kg**
  
 less waste produced per
 household than last year

**12,787**
  
 customer visits
 to our reception

**55,841**
  
 telephone calls
 handled by
 Customer Services

Online forms submitted via website

**13,249\***

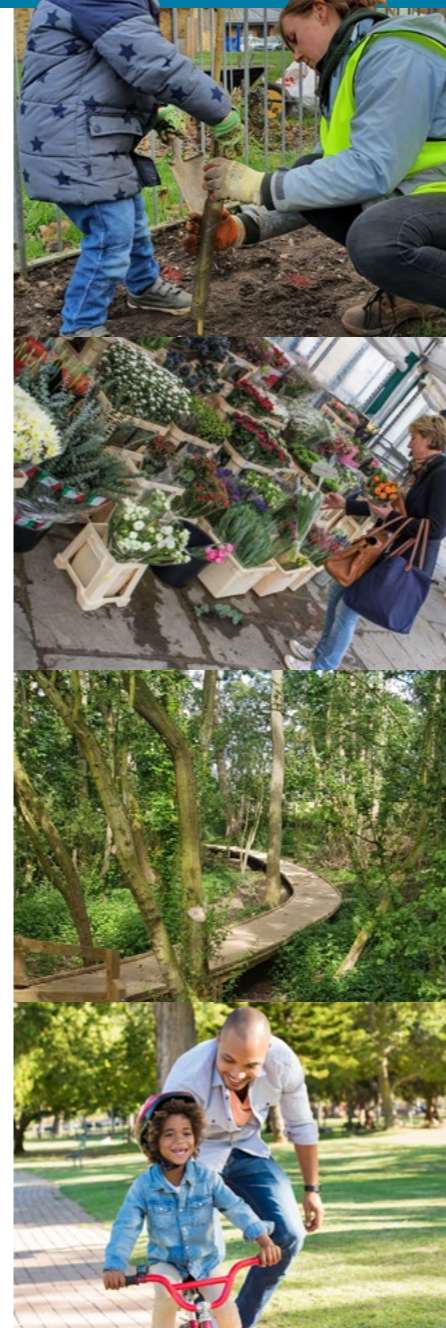
General Enquiry form	<b>5,380</b>
Request a replacement bin	<b>2,275</b>
Single Person Discount	<b>627</b>
Bulky Waste form	<b>626</b>
Report flytipping	<b>366</b>

**SUBMIT**

**2,435**
  
 planning applications
 submitted

**774**
  
 enforcement
 cases raised

**57**
  
 businesses using
 Launchpad



## Message from the Leader of the Council Cllr Linda Haysey



2019/20 was an extremely busy and productive year for East Herts. The examples here are a small selection of the work we have undertaken over the past year to make sure our services are vibrant and designed to enable and support our communities. While the impact of the Coronavirus currently dominates our thoughts, our commitment to our communities remains stronger than ever. We will continue to work with our partners so that that everyone in East Herts can receive support when they need it. We will also continue to move forward with our commitments to providing much needed housing and infrastructure for the district whilst doing all we can to support businesses and town centres to succeed

**Cllr Linda Haysey**  
Leader

### Some quotes from our customers:

"Great response in tricky times thank you"

Waste and recycling

"The staff are friendly and understanding and worked with me to resolve my problems"

"Very quick and helpful!"

"Very helpful staff" Change of circumstances

"Very helpful lady in reception" Penalty charges

"The responses to my questions were all answered by return. I could not wish for a better service. Thank you."

Other services

\* Between 1 October 2019 – 31 March 2020

@Eastherts

EastHertsDC

easthertscouncil

[www.eastherts.gov.uk](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk)



01279 655261



## Improving and sustaining our environment

**Climate Change declaration:** In July 2019, members voted in a motion that set out the council's commitment to tackling climate change. This focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and planning for the unavoidable local impacts of climate change in East Herts.

**Charging points for e-vehicles:** the council is committed to improving air quality and tackling air pollution, particularly at Hockerill Junction in Bishop's Stortford. The council has declared this an Air Quality Management Area to co-ordinate everyone's efforts on tackling the issue. In June 2019, four new charging points for electric vehicles were installed in East Herts Council's car park on The Causeway, Bishop's Stortford. Following a DEFRA grant, the council invested in faster chargers which can reduce the time it takes to recharge electric vehicles. Residents of Bishop's Stortford are now able to charge their electric vehicles, free of charge - we hope this encourages more people to consider switching to electric vehicles in the future.

**E-Car Club:** in June 2019 the council launched an electric car club, offering a convenient alternative to running a car while helping to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality. This provides an excellent opportunity for people to trial electric vehicles before making their own move to one. The council, in conjunction with E Car Club, deployed three new vehicles at the council's Wallfields offices in Hertford and two at The Causeway Car Park in Bishop's Stortford. Many people don't need a car every day but would like to have access to a vehicle at weekends or evenings. E-car club allows our residents to enjoy the benefits of having a car, without the running and repair expense.

**Environment and Climate Forum:** In January 2020 more than 120 people took part in the council's climate change event, exploring the challenge of becoming a carbon-neutral district. Residents, local groups, businesses and councillors came together to take the next steps in achieving our carbon-neutral goal. The topics explored at the workshops at the forum included transport, waste and recycling, planning and development, energy, and biodiversity and agriculture. The forum demonstrates our commitment to ensuring our residents, people working in academia, business and retailers to join us on our eco-journey.

## Supporting and enabling our communities:

**Chatter Tables:** Organised by East Herts Council in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, our Chatter Tables, which launched in June, have provided many residents with a friendly opportunity to spend some time with other people while enjoying a drink and a cake.

**Hartham Play Area:** Hertford Playground Alliance (HPA) raised an impressive £28,505 through their crowdfunding mission to improve Hartham Common play area. In addition, McMullen's put £5,000 towards the crowdfunded project. Further funds from East Herts Council enabled HPA to purchase a double bird's nest tower, including climbing tunnels, climbing bridges, a net chimney, climbing wall, multiple rope ladders, a bird's nest seat and stainless steel slide, which will allow children to get a bird's eye view across the wider Common. This crowdfunder project for a bespoke piece of equipment is running alongside East Herts Council's wider project to redevelop the rest of the play area at Hartham.

**Community grants:** for the first time this year, individuals, as well as fledgling groups without a constitution, were eligible for a small grant from East Herts Council, to help turn their dream community project into reality. Another first was a pot of £10,000 to support organisations who are proposing to fund-raise online via a new Hertfordshire Crowdfunding platform. The projects were designed to create stronger, more connected communities, leading to improved health and wellbeing. This provided an exciting opportunity for start-up groups and individuals to apply for small amounts towards new community projects.

**Support for victims of domestic abuse:** a ground-breaking domestic abuse service launched in East Herts in February 2020 based on the Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) model, this initiative is now available in East Herts to help domestic abuse victims across the district. The service offers one-to-one support for victims, survivors and their families by working co-operatively with partners, including East Herts Council, police, various housing associations and children's services.

## Supporting healthy lifestyles:

**Investment in our leisure facilities:** In January 2020 the council awarded a new leisure contract for its pools and gyms to Everyone Active. The council is also planning to invest £33 million to improve the facilities at Grange Paddocks, Hartham and Ward Freman. These projects aim to support the Council's vision for leisure across East Herts by providing attractive facilities available to the whole community and contributing fully to the health and wellbeing objectives of the Council. Grange Paddocks construction work has begun and we anticipate will be completed in Summer 2021.

**Award-winning Public Health projects:** a ground-breaking project to help people in East Herts out of loneliness, anxiety and isolation scooped Hertfordshire County Council's Dr Joan Crawley Award 2019 for Public Health Excellence. The highly respected recognition was presented to Kathrine Foy for the Social Prescribing Service (SPS). Both the SPS and Forever Active East Herts - two East Herts Council projects - won a Public Health Excellence Award. The primary aim of the SPS is to help vulnerable, lonely, isolated, anxious residents to connect with others and support them to improve their wellbeing, self-confidence and happiness. Forever Active East Herts (FAEH) improved the health and wellbeing of residents aged 50+ through subsidised classes of gentle activity, with a focus on getting fitter while socialising and making friends.

**Healthy Hubs:** in March 2020, the council launched its new Healthy Hubs, which offer information and group sessions on a wide range of topics, including stopping smoking, nutrition advice and opportunities to be more physically active; mental health; specific wellbeing support; referrals to training and skills opportunities with local providers.

## Creating vibrant places and supporting the local economy

**Ware Launchpad:** following the success of East Herts' Launchpad business centre in Bishop's Stortford, July 2019 saw the opening of our second facility based on the Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) model, this initiative is now available in East Herts to help domestic abuse victims across the district. The new centre is designed specifically to offer start-ups and small businesses in Ware, and the surrounding areas, a place to work, collaborate and network from.

**Hertford Theatre development funding:** an additional £6.4m for the Hertford Theatre expansion was agreed at Full Council in October 2019. This extra money forms part of the overall budget to deliver the exciting plans for redevelopment, which include three new cinema screens, more seating in the main auditorium and a new 150-seat studio, riverside café-bar and additional space for community hire.

**Old River Lane development:** a vibrant arts centre with cinema and performance space, alongside a multi-storey car park and an attractive public square are set to transform part of Bishop's Stortford as the Old River Lane (ORL) scheme moves forward. The site will also see a mixed development of around 150 new homes alongside retail and commercial space. The scheme is supported by a £9.6m injection Local Growth Fund investment from Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), made up of a £6m grant and £3.6m interest-free loan. Among the many exciting features in the arts centre will be a 544-seater theatre with state of the art staging system, a four-screen cinema and visual art displays. There will also be an extensive space that can be hired for community and private events, and a small new woodland area.

**Charter for the Gilston area:** in February 2020 the council published a draft Charter for the Gilston Area - part of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town - setting out guidance on how masterplans for the villages and the important network of green spaces that will surround them should be approached when they come forward as planning applications. It also provides guidance on how the council will involve developers, landowners, parish councils, community groups and others in the planning process, which establishes a consistent approach to the production of masterplans in the Gilston Area.

In January 2019, **Harlow and Gilston Garden Town** was allocated £580,000 from the Government ahead of its official launch later this year. Designated a Garden Town in 2017, the investment will help deliver Harlow and Gilston's vision to create a joyful place to live with sociable streets, green spaces, high quality homes, new jobs and fast, high quality, affordable public transport. The project will see regeneration of the Town Centre, a network of attractive walking and cycling routes, a new high-spec rapid bus system and a series of new communities between now and 2033. The investment was granted by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, The Harlow and Gilston development is one of 21 Garden Town projects across the country to benefit from the £8m funding pot.