

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 7 JUNE 2011

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

7. 2010/11 END OF YEAR SERVICE PLANNING REPORT

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

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**Purpose/Summary of Report:**

- This report provides a summary of 2010/11 Service Plan actions relevant to Environment Scrutiny Committee that have been achieved and details of those that require a revised completion date.

<b><u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DECISION:</u></b> that	
(A)	The summary of achievements against 2010/11 Service Plan actions be received and the Executive be advised of any recommendations; and
(B)	Actions requiring revised completion dates be noted.

1.0 Background

1.1 At the meeting on 16 November 2010, Environment Scrutiny Committee received a report detailing progress as at the end of September 2010. This report details progress as at the end of March 2011 for the following services:

- Environmental Services
- Planning and Building Control

2.0 Report

2.1 In total, there are 29 2010/11 Service Plan actions relevant to Environment Scrutiny Committee, of which:

73% (21) have been achieved

7% (2) are on target

3% (1) project has been cancelled

3% (1) project has been suspended

14% (4) have had their completion dates revised.

2.2 An overview of the achievements by Corporate Priority can be summarised as follows:-

**Promoting prosperity and well being; providing access and opportunities.** *Enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.*

5 actions have been achieved

1 action is on target

3 actions have had their completion dates revised (detailed in Essential Reference Paper "B").

Some of the key achievements included:

- A programme to promote and encourage the use of parks and open spaces was completed, with a range of activities including Love Parks week (encouraging awareness and use of open spaces) being well attended. Public consultation events at King George Recreation Ground (Ware), Hartham and Bentley Road (Hertford) and Vantorts (Sawbridgeworth) have been successful in obtaining residents' views on how these sites should be improved and developed. Overall satisfaction with parks and open spaces will be monitored through the Council's Residents Survey (next one due to take place in 2011), however feedback from surveys undertaken, although not statistically significant, showed the following results for sites which have undergone recent development:
  - Pishiobury Park – 73% of respondents said their overall impression of the park was "excellent", with 27% saying it was "very good" or "good", i.e. 100% satisfied.
  - Southern Country Park – 55% of respondents said their overall impression of the park was "excellent", with 35% saying it was "very good" or "good", i.e. 90% satisfied.

- Vantorts open space is due to be improved in 2011 and consultation feedback for this site reflected this, focussed on the future needs of residents and young people. However, a question about the overall opinion of East Herts Council parks and playgrounds showed that 81% felt they were fair to very good.
- A feasibility study to identify and develop potential income generation opportunities from parks and open spaces was completed. Limited opportunities were identified and a small income generated from rental for events.
- A programme to discourage dog fouling in public open spaces was developed. The anti-dog fouling campaign commenced in the summer, including publicity in Link, on the website and press releases. A non-key decision report agreed the proposals for additional dog fouling signs and early morning enforcement patrols were undertaken. Information packs were sent to Parish and Town Councils and progress was reported to Environment Scrutiny Committee. The campaign aimed to raise public awareness, influence behaviour and encourage residents to report fouling problems and perpetrators so that more targeted enforcement could be undertaken. There has been an increase in reports, but this is what was expected – it is intended to make residents more aware and to report problems to the Council. Reducing reports is a longer term objective that will come with changing behaviour.
- A lease transferring control of Waterford Heath from the land owner to Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust was signed and a draft Management Plan produced.

**Fit for purpose, services fit for you.** *Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.*

4 actions have been achieved

1 action has had its completion date revised (detailed in Essential Reference Paper “B”).

Some of the key achievements included:

- Waste Services web pages were reviewed and improved to make them more accessible to residents.
- A Planning Enforcement Policy was agreed and implemented, providing clarity for customers in relation to service provision and timescales.

**Pride in East Herts.** *Improve standards of the neighbourhood and environmental management in our towns and villages.*

3 actions have been achieved

The achievements were:

- Progress with implementation of the action plan following the Environmental Quality Review was reported to Environment Scrutiny Committee in March, with a number of projects being successfully implemented, which will reduce the Council's carbon emissions in the long term.
- The Council is continuing to work with the Probation Service on the Community Payback Scheme for the removal of graffiti by offenders.
- Revised arrangements were implemented for animal control and environmental crime, e.g. an anti-dog fouling campaign was implemented, relationships were developed with additional animal rescue centres, the speed of response for re-homing of stray dogs was improved and the cost of kennelling was reduced.

**Caring about what's built (and) where.** *Care for and improve our natural and built environment.*

7 actions have been achieved

1 action is on target

1 project has been cancelled

1 project has been suspended

Some of the key achievements included:

- Environment Scrutiny Committee in November supported a proposal (which was approved by the Executive on 1 December) to install a micro hydro generation scheme at Castle Weir, Hertford and the tender process is now underway.
- A new refuse, recycling and street cleansing contract was awarded to Veolia Environmental Services, which will result in savings of approximately £1.5m per annum and includes new recycling services, i.e. mixed plastics.
- East Herts worked with partners to develop a new joint consortium contract for the sale of recyclable materials, generating future savings of £1.26m per annum across Hertfordshire and a joint contract has been procured for textile banks, generating future savings of £1.42m per annum across Hertfordshire. Recycling performance in 2010/11 (48.29%) has improved from 41.24% in 2009/10.
- A new fee structure was introduced for Building Control, enabling individual fee quotes to be provided and a more responsive service for the customer.

The cancelled project was the implementation of a charge to customers for wheeled bin delivery, as the Council decided to suspend charging arrangements.

The suspended project was the feasibility study to evaluate the costs and benefits of food waste collections from schools – this is pending the Government's review of current waste legislation, as this may impact upon the collection of schools' waste in the future.

**Shaping now, shaping the future.** *Safeguard and enhance our unique mix of rural and urban communities, ensuring sustainable, economic and social opportunities including the continuation of effective development control and other measures.*

2 actions have been achieved

The achievements were:

- Local Development Documents have been prepared; however, the requirement for the agreement of GO East to the revised Local Development Framework has changed as a result of decisions of the new Government from May 2010.

The Council's Local Development Framework establishes what impact on the environment of development in the future is acceptable and sets out broad criteria against which future development proposals will be judged.

- Consultation on the Core Strategy commenced in September 2010 – this is the first stage of implementation of the Core Strategy as part of the Local Development Framework. The Strategy sets out a broad framework for the future of the district – the spatial implementation of aspirations of the Council and other public service providers.

2.3 Essential Reference Paper “B” details those 2010/11 Service Plan actions that have had their completion dates revised. For ease of reference, these have been categorised by Corporate Priority. Full progress comments on all 2010/11 Service Plan actions can be accessed by referring to the Council's performance management system, Covalent ([www.covalentcpm.com/eastherts](http://www.covalentcpm.com/eastherts)).

2.4 All outstanding 2010/11 Service Plan actions will be monitored alongside the 2011/12 Service Plan actions.

### 3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within Essential Reference Paper “A”.

### Background Papers

2010/11 Service Plans report to joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees 16 February 2010.

2010/11 Service Plans report to the Executive 9 March 2010.

2010/11 Service Plans summary of progress and exceptions report to Environment Scrutiny Committee 16 November 2010.

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## ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

<p>Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):</p>	<p><b>Promoting prosperity and well-being; providing access and opportunities</b> <i>Enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.</i></p> <p><b>Fit for purpose, services fit for you</b> <i>Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.</i></p> <p><b>Pride in East Herts</b> <i>Improving standards of the built neighbourhood and environmental management in our towns and villages.</i></p> <p><b>Shaping now, shaping the future</b> <i>Safeguard and enhance our unique mix of rural and urban communities, ensuring sustainable, economic and social opportunities including the continuation of effective development control and other measures.</i></p> <p><b>Leading the way, working together</b> <i>Deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.</i></p>
<p>Consultation:</p>	<p>There are no specific consultation implications arising directly from this report.</p>
<p>Legal:</p>	<p>There are no specific legal implications arising directly from this report.</p>
<p>Financial:</p>	<p>There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.</p>
<p>Human Resource:</p>	<p>There are no specific human resource implications arising directly from this report.</p>
<p>Risk Management:</p>	<p>There is a generic risk management implication arising from this report, in terms of not completing the actions from Service Plans would be likely to result in not achieving the Corporate Priorities and Objectives.</p>