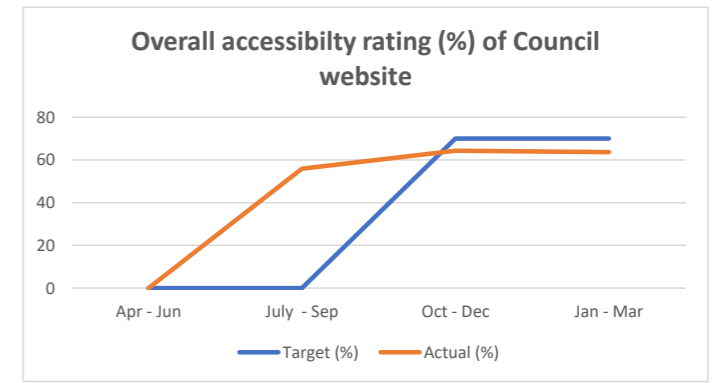
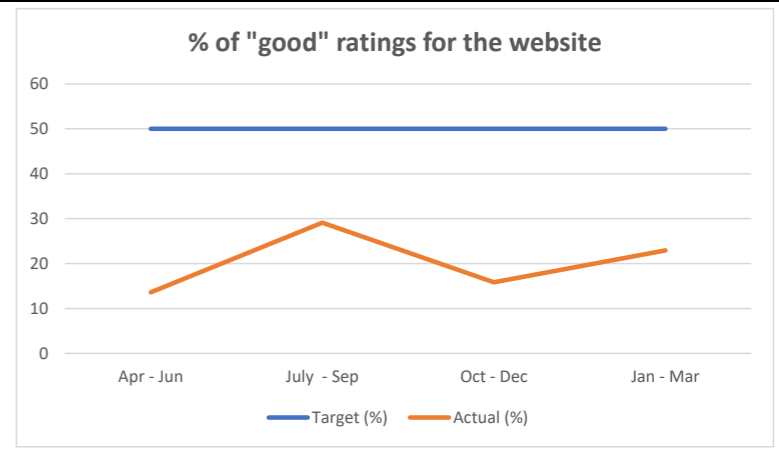


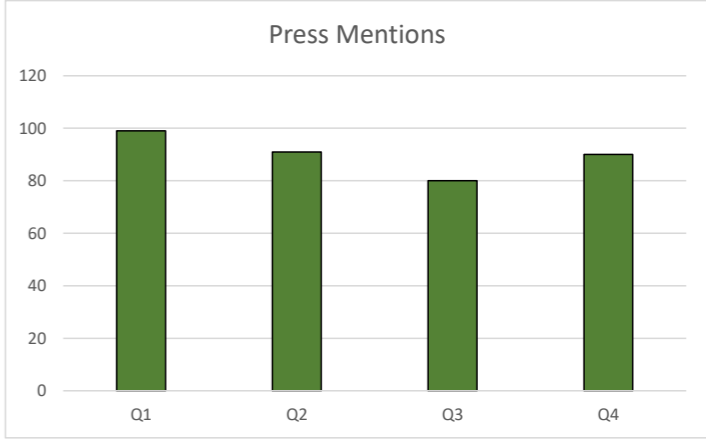
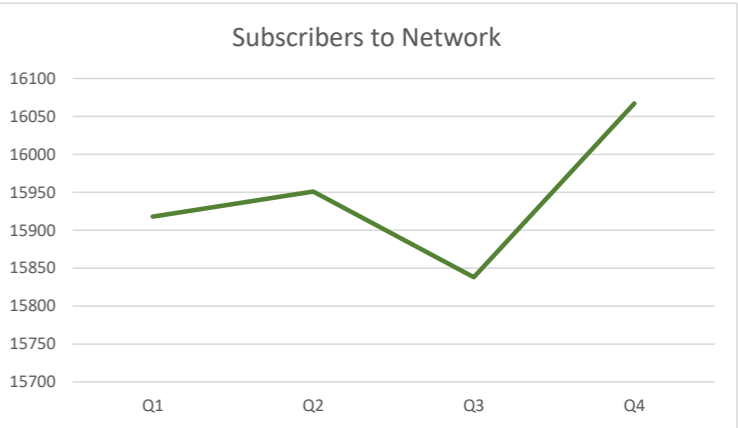
# LEAF - ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024 - 25



## Listening, Open and Transparent

	Objective	Actions	Measure	Update for 2024/25	
				Progress	measure/ results
1	Listen and be open and transparent in decision making and actions. We will prioritise improved consultation, engagement and conversations with our communities	Publish the Listening Council Strategy	N/A		Listening Council Strategy was adopted by Executive in July 2024 after consultation with stakeholders. It sets out the principles for all consultation and engagement, including prioritising face to face engagement
		Publish a Forward Plan of Consultations	N/A		Due to the infrequent nature of consultations, a forward plan for 2024/25 only had two items on it (with a recent addition in regards to the District Plan Vision consultation planned for summer 2025 and the ORL masterplanning exercise June/ July 2025. We are piloting the using of a tool called Engage HQ as platform to host all consultations going forward.
		Undertake key consultations this year on the ORL Public Space and Parking Strategy	N/A		Both consultations undertaken. Each involved face to face sessions as well as online surveys to align with Listening Council principles. With ORL this was on market stalls attended by Members and officers as well as pro-active surveys of younger people undertaken by a third party company. We had 730 online responses and almost 300 via face to face. These designs will now feed into the planning application for the overall site. For parking this was roadshow/ workshops in 6 towns across the district. This resulted in 60 attendees across the five events and over 1600 online responses. The responses helped inform the Parking Strategy which was adopted by Council in early 2025. For partnership based consultations there were 900 responses to the LCWIP - Local Walking & Cycling Infrastructure Plan from East Herts residents, the highest of any district. For the LNRS (Local Nature Recovery Strategy) more than 1/4 of all respondents across Hertfordshire were from East Herts.
2	Ensure information on our website is as up to date as possible	Undertake review of web content	Govmetric rating for web pages - aim to reach 50% "good" rating		Overall ratings are well below target and have been for the past three years. Such low numbers of feedback make it challenging to draw any conclusions about issues or take any remedial action. Over 2024/25, we received just 268 ratings on our webpages, a drop from several thousand up and during Covid. Often there is no additional information given on why we receive a poor rating, free text comments are usually in regard to a service received rather than about website feedback. Eg. the parking pages often receive negative ratings with associated comments about why we haven't cancelled a PCN. We have tried various ways to increase engagement including changing the position, shape and colouring of the govmetric widget. We have also trialled just using it on specific pages (eg. positive things like giving out grants) and more challenging pages (eg. increases to charges) to see if feedback aligns in any way to content tone. However, the sample sizes have never been enough to draw any conclusions. As a consequence we intend to decommission govmetric as move to a new platform called EngageHQ which will enable to us manage consultations more effectively and seek feedback via this route.
			Maintain accessibility standards (against WCAG 2.2 standards)		Our accessibility monitoring tool provides regular feedback on the website. The new tool (Monsido) was launched in late 2024 hence there is no earlier comparative data. Our score is lower than expected due to the number of pdf documents that are on the website and this tends to be a format which does not meet accessibility standards, which are often judged by availability of alternative text for images, captions for videos, colour schemes and keyboard use. The web team works with service areas to minimise the amount of low accessibility rated content on the website. Feedback from the monitoring tool is also shared with Webcurl, who host the website, too address any obvious fixes. We have set a target of 70% for 2025/26 which will require further removal of pdf documents



3	<b>Provide full and timely advertising for all major council decisions</b>	Keep forward plan up to date and ensure it is published	N/A	All committee items regularly published on modgov and forward plan. The Council's Leadership Team review the committee programme on a fortnightly basis to assist Members with ensuring forthcoming decisions are published											
<p>Review of Cinders (BEAM panto) included digital marketing (eg. 129 posts across X/ Meta/ Insta and 59 videos) and print marketing including 19 adverts in local publications, train billboard at Hertford North and bus backs for 2 weeks. Paid digital adverts had a reach of 234,914. With print adverts it is hard to quantify the reach. Overall the panto made a net profit of £41k</p> <p>FACEBOOK Over the last year we've had 13.4 thousand content interactions (70% up from the previous year) an increase of 861 followers (5.4%) and 5.7 thousand link clicks. The top social content is as follows: changes to bin collections (227k interactions) solar together (101k interactions - please note this included paid for ads) UKSPF, maison de scarlett promotion (36.9k) 2 posts on christmas waste collections (19.2k/ 16.8k)</p> <p>INSTAGRAM 12.8k content interactions (up 50.3%) 814 follows (up 11.4%) 5.6k link clicks (down 2.6%)</p> <p>top content mirrored that of facebook</p>															
						4	<b>Evaluate the impact of our communications and understand how we can do better</b>	Review reach and impressions from all campaigns to see how we can target communications more effectively in future	Reach on social media						
<p>Over the year we had 26 number of media enquiries, 360 mentions in the press and 64 number of press releases issued, our overall press score remains above 0. Even when titles of articles appear as though they are negative the majority of coverage is neutral or positive.</p>															
								Keep press favourability score above 0		<p>Press Mentions</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Press Mentions</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Quarter</th> <th>Press Mentions</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Q1</td> <td>100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q2</td> <td>90</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q3</td> <td>80</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q4</td> <td>90</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Quarter	Press Mentions	Q1	100
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Q2	90														
Q3	80														
Q4	90														
<p>We started the year with 15,918 number of subscribers and finished with 16,067. Average open rate of 54% per newsletter with a total of 11,120 link clicks across the articles. We moved over to a new system which cleared out a lot of disengaged contacts, with the new email marketing system we are able to start building up our subscriber rate even more and target them better. our top network campaigns of 2024 are as follows: BEAM opening Bin Collections Hertford Town Council Support For Rivers Council Budget VE Day Street Party Application Gilston Planning Permission What goes in my bins AiEH Listings Statement of Persons Nominated New Bin Collection Service</p>															
								Increase subscribers to Network by 10%		<p>Subscribers to Network</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Subscribers to Network</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Quarter</th> <th>Subscribers to Network</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Q1</td> <td>15918</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q2</td> <td>15950</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q3</td> <td>15850</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q4</td> <td>16067</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Quarter	Subscribers to Network	Q1	15918
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5	Encourage residents to use our digital communication channels, so those who are not digitally able, can contact us by phone or in person	Maintain a front of house offer for residents who most need assistance	Number of people visiting reception	Receptions continue to be open between 10 - 2 at Wallfields on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and Jackson Square (Navigation House) on Wednesdays and Fridays. Over 2024/25 we had 1840 visitors. This compares to 3331 in 2023/24 and 3641 in 2022/23. We are seeing fewer people visit which we assume means more residents are able to transact with us online. However, those that do come and see us often need more support and assistance, mostly in relation to council tax, benefits and housing. The only exception would be for residents who visit to obtain parking vouchers, most of whom are seeking hard copy permits as they provide a level of flexibility for visitors that cannot be obtained through the parking system, permitsmarti	
		Encourage more digital take up of services	Increase proportion of digital contacts	The proportion of contacts via digital means has slowly increased since we introduced a new CRM in East Herts in late 2023. Prior to that it was less than 30% however it now averages close to 50%. Telephony remains the contact channel of choice with only 3 months (October, November and December 2024) where digital contacts exceeded telephony contacts. Over the year, customer services received 48,888 phone calls and 47,576 digital contacts. There were 1300 appointments booked (which consists of licencing interviews, planning, housing or benefit "call backs"), slightly more than last year (1041)	
			Increase % of residents who have online accounts for council tax	The % of households who have online council tax accounts has been steadily increasing over recent years due to campaigns within the Revenues and Benefits Service to encourage people to sign up	
			Increase % of businesses that have online NNDR accounts	The rate of take up of online business rates is significantly lower than for council tax. Numbers are slowly increasing however often businesses do not see this a priority.	
6	Engage with residents at community forum events to enhance planning outcomes at strategic sites	Run community forums	N/A	Community Forums set up and running for the Gilston Area and Stortford Fields. During 2024, four Community Forums have been held for the Gilston Area and two for Stortford Fields. The Forums have been well received with topics for the Forums identified through the issues and matters being raised by residents. They are well attended and supported by officers and relevant stakeholders including applicants	

Environmentally Focused				
	Objective	Actions	Measure	Update for 2024/25
				Progress and measure/ results
<u>7</u>	Update the council's parking strategy to encourage sustainable travel	Develop a new strategy and consult on it	N/A	A new strategy was drafted and consultation took place over Autumn 2024. This involved an online survey and workshops in Ware, Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, Sawbridgeworth, Buntingford and Stansted Abbots. The strategy was discussed at Overview and Scrutiny in January 2025 and adopted by Council in February. The strategy focuses on encouraging greener types of travel, fairer and more consistent charging and active travel.
<u>8</u>	Develop and implement our new Air Quality Action Plan to cut pollution and improve health.	Develop and implement new strategy	Reduction in NO2 levels across the 3 AQMAs in East Hertfordshire	The East Herts Air Quality Action plan has been approved by DEFRA and formally adopted by the council. Work with partner agencies (eg HCC) already underway. Historic data can found in our air quality webpage: <a href="https://easthertsairquality.co.uk/">https://easthertsairquality.co.uk/</a> and in the 2024 report: <a href="https://easthertsairquality.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2024-Air-Quality-Annual-Status-Report.pdf">https://easthertsairquality.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2024-Air-Quality-Annual-Status-Report.pdf</a>
<u>9</u>	Roll out more EV chargers in urban and rural locations across the district.	Procure partner to install further EV chargers		Ambitious tender launched in November 2025 to find a partner to install ev chargers in the council's car parks across the district. Award to be let early in 2025/26.
<u>10</u>	Reduce carbon emissions from homes and businesses by creating "Energy Hubs" in towns and parishes that offer information on grants and other support to help residents save money and cut carbon.	Run energy hub events	Number of events	17 Energy Hub events have taken place over the year with over 1,000 residents taking part. The Hubs have been instrumental in driving uptake of retrofit grants and schemes. They have helped East Herts consistently lead across the county in levels of engagement and participation, including: securing the most participation in teh county on consultation on the Local Cycling and Infrastructure Plan . Securing significant uptake of the Home Upgrade Grant. Encouraging over 200 residents and businesses to invest £2.2 million in solar panels through the Solar Together bulk purchasing scheme, installing 2,100 solar panels and saving 175,000kg CO2 to date.
<u>11</u>	Encourage residents to play their part in supporting local wildlife and improving our natural environment.	Encourage tree planting	Increase number of new trees planted in the district	In total, 11.24k trees were planted over the year. Big tree give away - 578 residents took part so engagement remains high. Great example of collaboration and co-ordination between County, East Herts and contractor teams. Have also undertaken a partnership with the County Council to plant trees in urban locations with a focus on air quality zone and flood prone areas with a projection of saving of 1000 CO2e annually
Acting with the Community				
	Objective	Actions	Measure	Update for 2024/25
				Progress and measure/ results
<u>12</u>	Consult with communities to review and refresh our Local Plan, prioritising improved sustainability standards.	Publish a new Local Development Scheme	N/A	A new Local Development Scheme (LDS) was agreed by the Council in October 2024. The LDS sets out the timetable for production of the new District Plan.It is anticipated that formal plan-making will comence in early 2026.
		Undertake a Call for Sites	N/A	A Call for Sites ran from the 5 July to 30 September 2024. Over 280 sites were submitted, including for housing and employment and nature recovery/BNG. A report was considered by the Executive in February 2025 which provided a summary of the sites and set out the next steps in relation to their assessment. Sites visits are currently being undertaken by the Planning Policy Team.

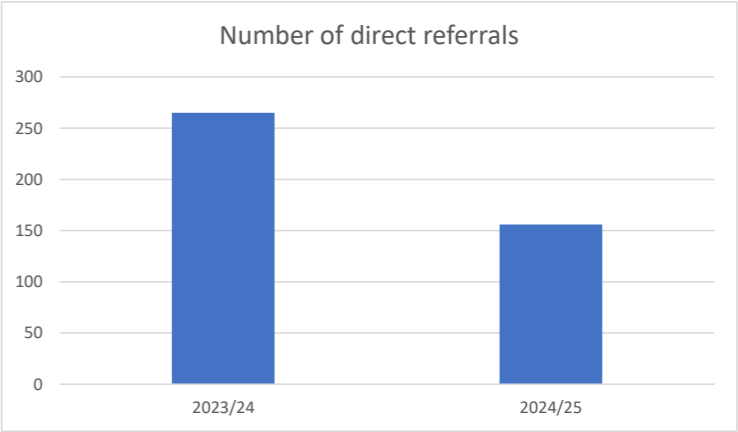
		Collaborate with stakeholders on a Vision for the new District Plan	N/A	A Strategic Vision has been produced to chart a clear and ambitious course for the District's future which will serve as the golden thread for the new District Plan, informing policies and decision-making that will shape East Herts in the years to come. It comes at a crucial time as East Herts faces significant growth pressure. The Vision will guide the Council as it seeks to balance development against protecting the District's unique character and ensuring a high quality of life for residents. Stakeholder and community engagement on the Vision will take place between 5 June and 18 July 2025. This will include a series of in-person events across the District.																																					
13	Help create thriving high streets, by encouraging local markets, and by delivering grants to support local businesses and enhance town and village centres.	Increase number of new traders on the charter and farmer's markets in Ware and Hertford	Number of traders	Temporary markets manager employed between September 2024 - March 2025 to assist with marketing and bring in new traders. In the Hertford Commercial market we now have 17 traders licensed with an additional 1 pending, an increase of 4 from last year. In the Ware Commercial market there are 6 traders licensed with a further 2 in process of getting a licence (2 more in total than last year). The Hertford Farmers market has 4 traders.																																					
		Provide grants to businesses to encourage job growth and increased amount of commercial floorspace	Number and value of grants given out	14 new premises grants were given out over 2024/25, totalling £42,000. These went to a mixture of businesses across the 5 towns but also smaller industrial parks in Tewin and Aston. The grants have supported businesses open up new premises or expand, helping create employment and economic growth in the district. In addition we also gave out 5 large grants to businesses, totalling over £200,000 of investment. This included Honrbeck in Hertford to help export sustainable materials for street lighting and signage; UKPN in Much Hadham, towards developing new products for energy management on large sites; Skill at Arms in Sawbridgeworth) towards costs of refurbishing and fitting out old, disused agricultural barns into new commercial office space; the Black Horse Pub in Brent Pelham towards creating 6 accommodation units/ rooms on site to help diversify income and Air Energy in Hertford towards expanding on site manufacturing and distribution capacity for air compressors and heating systems. The grant funding has leveraged over £750k of private sector investment in the district and helped these businesses accelerate growth, bringing more employment to East Herts.																																					
14	Actively encourage more communities to create or update their Neighbourhood Plans.	Support production on neighbourhood plans	N/A	Neighbourhood Plans continue to be prepared and updated across the District. Support provided by the Planning Policy Team at key stages. Executive agreed the Hertford Castle Plus Neighbourhood Area Designation on 9 July 2024. Walkern Neighbourhood Plan First revision was adopted by the Council on 24 July 2024. An Examination on the Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Neighbourhood Plan is due to commence shortly.																																					
15	Prioritise actions that can provide Housing which is truly affordable.		N/A	Negotiated innovative rent reduction scheme with Paradigm Housing. First tranche of scheme resulted in 4no. four bedroom houses having their rents reduced and capped at the three bedroom local housing allowance, meaning the rents are just 57% of market rents. Discussions now underway with Paradigm and other housing associations about lowering the rents for more properties.																																					
16	Work with partners to help make town centres more attractive, safer and easier to navigate.	Support town and village centre improvements with UKSPF funding to increase footfall	Number and value of grants delivered to town and village centres	11 grants were given out over the 2024/25 year totalling around £450,000 for town centres. These went to Ware as a contribution to the new public toilets refurbishment, Buntingford to refurbish the public toilets, Sawbridgeworth to support refurbishment costs of the Memorial Hall, Datchworth for outdoor play equipment, Watton-at-Stone for improvements to the Lammas common area, Cottered and Throcking to help refurbish the pavillion, Buntingford High Street for improvement works, Castle Park/ mound improvements in Bishop's Stortford and artwork in the Northgate End Car Park. Funds also supported rangers in Bishop's Stortford through the BID and costs of the market manager in Hertford and Ware. Over the course of the UKSPF project, 14 towns and parishes benefitted from grant funding which was usually matched by the town or parish council, creating or improving over 1000 sqm of community space. In addition £52,000 also funded 17 village hall decarbonisation plans and 150 small to large energy saving and warmth improvement initiatives in 10 village halls																																					
		Deliver new contract for street cleansing and waste collections in the district	% of collections emptied on the scheduled day	Work was undertaken throughout 2024/25 in preparation for the new waste contract which went live on 6th May, 2025. Performance against the key metrics of missed bin collections and street cleansing quality was maintained throughout 2024/24 under FCC																																					
			Percentage of Contract Officer street inspections graded B and above	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Apr-24</th> <th>May-24</th> <th>Jun-24</th> <th>Jul-24</th> <th>Aug-24</th> <th>Sep-24</th> <th>Oct-24</th> <th>Nov-24</th> <th>Dec-24</th> <th>Jan-25</th> <th>Feb-25</th> <th>Mar-25</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>% of collections emptied on the scheduled day</td> <td>99.9</td> <td>99.9</td> <td>99.9</td> <td>99.9</td> <td>99.9</td> <td>99.9</td> <td>99.9</td> <td>99.9</td> <td>99.9</td> <td>99.9</td> <td>99.9</td> <td>99.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Percentage of Contract Officer street inspections graded B and above</td> <td>92.8</td> <td>95.2</td> <td>95.8</td> <td>94.3</td> <td>91.2</td> <td>92.6</td> <td>92.9</td> <td>95.0</td> <td>98.1</td> <td>97.3</td> <td>94.0</td> <td>88.5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	% of collections emptied on the scheduled day	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.9	Percentage of Contract Officer street inspections graded B and above	92.8	95.2	95.8	94.3	91.2	92.6	92.9	95.0	98.1	97.3
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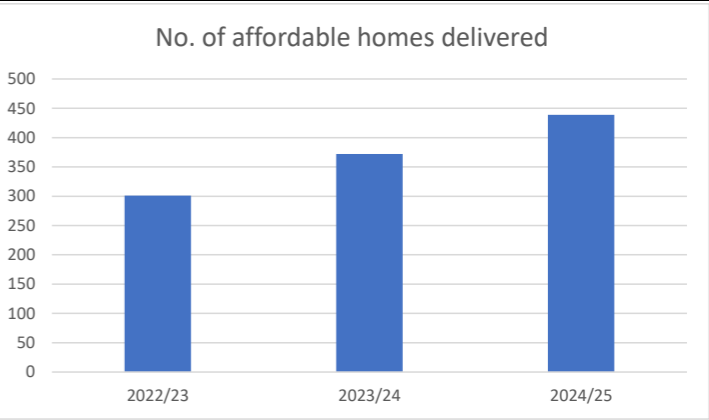
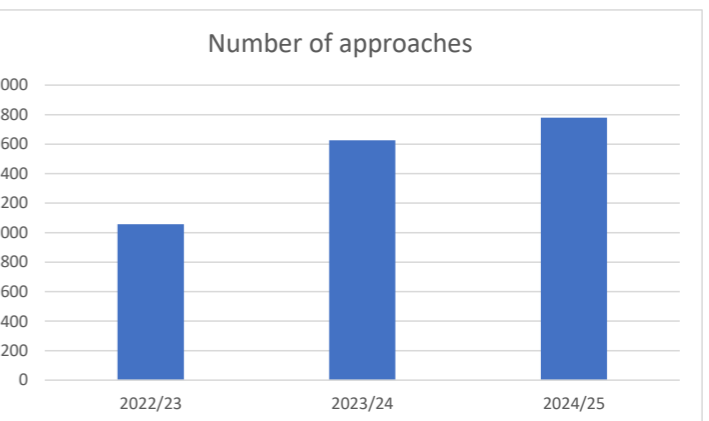
17	Support voluntary sector groups to continue their work support the whole community		N/A	We continue to provide grant support for Citizens Advice, Community Alliance Broxbourne and East Herts and Active in the Community (who provide sports development across the district). Also, we provided 15 community grants of up to £3,000 each to community groups for activities including mental health support, older people's physical health initiatives and community gardening.
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**Fair and Inclusive**

	Objective	Actions	Measure	Update for 2024/25 Progress and measure/ results
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18	Deliver the Cultural Strategy, with support for new events such as Pride, Herts inclusive Theatre and the East Herts Arts Showcase	Open BEAM Theatre	N/A	In August 2024, East Herts Council opened up BEAM Theatre, following a three year redevelopment “growth and legacy” project at a cost of £30m. BEAM is a hugely ambitious expansion of the single stage facility which previously sat on the site (having closed in 2021). The council's primary aims were to: Reach beyond the traditional 'theatre crowd' and attract more diverse audiences, creating a social and community space welcoming to all; drive the local economy, encouraging visitors to the district, generating employment and boosting business in surrounding areas; Achieve high building sustainability performance standards. On the opening weekend of August last year, BEAM welcomed 2,300 visitors and £30,000 in ticket sales. In terms of the economic impact BEAM has raised the profile of Hertford as a centre for culture and arts, but it is also attracting additional visitors to the town who will be spending in the local economy. It has also served as a venue for other events such as “Generation Hertford”, connecting over 800 year 10 & year 13 students with 35 local employers offering non university routes to employment, and business networking events. BEAM is also part of a net zero carbon pilot scheme to become the country's first net zero theatre.
		Run the Arts in East Herts programme	Number of volunteers	The appetite for the Arts in East Herts Showcase from the cultural sector and residents was enough for us to run a 2 month programme, where we were able to offer participatory events every single day for the full two months, adding up to well over 300 individual events over September and October 2024. This included over 50 individual artists and groups, with 20 of these supported by grants from the council. Participation was phenomenal. Over 5,400 individuals attended the various taster sessions, artist-in-residence events and classes with more forming the audiences at various shows and exhibitions, giving a final estimate of 7,000+ beneficiaries. Perhaps the most amazing outcome of all was that over 1,700 people reported that they were engaging with the organisations and their chosen cultural activities for the first time ever. Of these, just over 500 people have gone to sign up for further sessions, demonstrating that running taster events really worked in drawing in completely new audiences. Furthermore, the showcase provided 213 volunteering opportunities for people to make connections, build their CVs or simply give back to their communities.

19	Deliver our Thriving Together Plan to promote physical exercise, healthy lifestyles and other measures that boost community wellbeing.	Promote the Healthy Hub	Number of events delivered/ referrals made	<p>Between April and October 2024, the Healthy Hub East Herts (HHEH) continued its successful outreach approach using East Herts Libraries. Of 638 overall interactions, 196 interactions took place at Hertford, Sawbridgeworth, Bishop's Stortford, Ware and Buntingford Libraries. At the HHEH venue in Fore Street, Hertford 346 lite-contact awareness raising conversations took place with 218 attendances at the HHEH Art Group and 112 slow cooker course attendees This same period saw 174 telephone conversations, enabling the HHEH team to support residents with a variety of healthy lifestyle issues. For the entire period of 1st April 2024 until 31st March 2025, 156 direct referrals were received from a variety of external and internal council team routes including follow on referrals to financial support, digital skills training and a further 200 slow cooker course attendees for Q3 2024 and Q4 2025. 66 residents contacted the HHEH support team directly via email for help with health, social and wellbeing concerns. Please note that the staffing and delivery arrangements changed from October 2024 due to a member of staff leaving, with no library engagement taking place and a volunteer provider arrangement put in place to cover an interim phase until 31st March 2025. As a consequence the number of referrals was less than the previous year</p>	 <table border="1"> <caption>Number of direct referrals</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Number of direct referrals</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2023/24</td> <td>265</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2024/25</td> <td>156</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Number of direct referrals	2023/24	265	2024/25	156
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<u>20</u>	<b>Improve our Council Tax Support scheme to make it fairer, simpler and more transparent.</b>	Review the Working Age Council Tax Support Scheme to produce a status and income banded scheme	N/A	The scheme was reviewed over the 24/25 year with a view to making it fairer and simpler. Proposals are going to Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2025																																			
<u>21</u>	<b>Support those facing homelessness or recovering from it, and include them in consultations and community activities</b>	Continue to ensure developers build affordable homes	Number of affordable homes delivered	<p>439 affordable homes delivered over the year which is a big increase on previous years. This breaks down into 295 affordable rented, 102 shared ownership, 26 social rented and 16 intermediate. The council seeks to ensure up to 35% affordable housing is delivered on sites proposing 11 to 14 dwellings, and up to 40% affordable housing on sites proposing 15 or more dwellings.</p> <p>Overall, 31.16% of homes delivered in 2024/25 were affordable tenures.</p> <p>The proportion of affordable completions has increased by around 4% compared with the previous year.</p> <p>Please note the figures above relate to planning permissions granted. The Housing team count the number of affordable dwellings which come to market for rent or sale and can be found in this table. There is always a lag in the permissions given to the time they make it to market hence the numbers are smaller</p>																																			
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2020/21	89	15	135	239																																			
<b>All</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>1363</b>																																			
				<p><b>Number of approaches</b></p> 																																			
<u>22</u>	<b>Explore replacing a "strong leader and cabinet" system with a committee system.</b>		N/A	The Member Constitution Review Group have met four times to look at different governance systems, including contact with Spelthorne about their system. Since this priority was agreed, the government's re-organisation plans have been released. In May 2025 Council will consider a paper which postpones any changes in light of these developments.																																			

<p><u>23</u></p>	<p><b>Maintain and improve council services while making them more cost efficient through the “Transforming East Herts” programme</b></p>		<p>Savings delivered</p>	<p>As of May 2025, the transformation programme has achieved substantial progress across a range of strategic and tactical initiatives, delivering meaningful change and improving the way we serve our communities.</p> <p>The Customer Relationship Management (CRM) programme has delivered a suite of integrated solutions to modernise service delivery and strengthen resident engagement. This includes the successful launch of the new waste services through the CRM system, supported by the integration of Echo and GovDelivery to automate customer updates and improve communication. The Customer Services team has been upskilled to manage service requests through the new platform, enabling a more efficient, consistent, and customer-focused approach. A major milestone within the CRM programme has been the launch of East Herts Your Voice, our new customer engagement platform powered by Engagement HQ. This platform represents a transformational shift in how we engage with residents, enabling transparent, inclusive, and accessible two-way conversations that will inform future service design and decision-making. In addition, Customer Experience Reviews have commenced, with a pilot focused on parking services to help shape improvements based on real customer insight.</p> <p>Alongside the CRM programme, the Revenues and Benefits improvement programme is progressing through four key workstreams. These include a review of the Council Tax Reduction scheme, enhancements to council tax collection activities, the development of a digital self-service toolkit, and a full service restructure to increase responsiveness and effectiveness.</p> <p>The Digital Workplace programme continues to enhance internal capabilities. Phase Two has delivered enhanced intranet features to improve collaboration and access to information, while Phase Three, focused on SharePoint migration, is currently in the planning and concept development stage.</p> <p>The corporate restructure, led by HR, is aligning our organisational design with future service models, ensuring teams are structured to deliver more flexible and effective support.</p> <p>Tactical projects are also delivering results. The leasing of Wallfields to High Oak has begun generating rental income, directly supporting our financial targets. Meanwhile, forward-looking initiatives such as Cloud Financials and the Cloud 9 application are progressing through early-stage scoping and business case development under the new governance model.</p> <p>The transformation programme delivered £206,000 in savings in time for the 2025 to 2026 financial year, reflecting a strong return on investment and a clear commitment to delivering high-quality, modern, and efficient public services.</p>
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