

SCS theme updates September 2011

The structure and reporting procedures of the LSP are under review. Consequently, the SCS summary for the September meeting of the LSP board is focussed on the main changes to each theme.

1. ENVIRONMENT EAST HERTS

- Work on individual actions continues to proceed. In particular, officers have been able to continue the Herts and Essex Energy Partnership project (HEEP scheme) - (Ambitions 1.1/1.3 refer) for the time being, through the use of Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) funding for domestic insulation measures, although the HEEP will cease in due course. Fresh partnership options with other local authorities are being investigated in an attempt to develop new initiatives replace the HEEP.
- Members of the Herts Climate Change Partnership (which is a sub group of Herts Forward) have agreed to merge with the Hertfordshire Environmental Forum in order to progress a more effective county wide approach to climate change risk and adaptation reporting (Ambition 1.1 refers). The first meeting of the new member level body will be in late September 2011. It is expected that this new group will agree a methodology on risk and adaptation reporting in due course.
- A number of homes in the District have been looking to switch to the use of biomass heating to replace reliance on oil. The installation of new biomass boilers has been limited in part due to the lack of a local biomass supply. However, it is pleasing to report that a local wood fuel network to coordinate the supply and sale of local wood chip and wood pellets is in the process of being established by a private operator (Ambition 1.2 refers).
- Work with local community groups interested in progressing climate change activities is progressing well (Ambition 1.2 refers). Since last November the East Herts Greener Communities network has met 8 times. The Group is working on a second East Herts Environment and Film Festival which is to be held on Saturday 19th November 2011, at Hertford Theatre.
- A detailed report setting out the options for establishing an East Herts Car Share Scheme (Ambition 1.2 refers) was agreed by the East Herts Programme Board on 16th August 2011. The scheme is expected to commence in October 2011 and will coordinate car sharing opportunities within East Herts Council and jointly with HCC. A number of other organisations across Hertfordshire are also members of the scheme.

2. EAST HERTS PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Ambition 2.1 - Keep crime levels low and reassure the public that East Herts is one of the safest places to live and work (From April 2011 the actions will be modified to reflect the 2011-12 priorities and action plan).

The community safety review has started. Part of the review involves a slot at the Rural Conference. Consultation with councillors and the public is also being planned.

The Partnership website is still up and running. Crime prevention advice is ongoing. Partnership communications group only meets when required, but continues to compile press releases, spread crime prevention advice and publicise initiatives from Joint Action Group (JAG), virtually (via email).

Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Case Review Group meetings, problem solving meetings (including locality and street briefings) have taken place.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Minimum standards agreed for the partnership and endorsed by Board. Police and Housing Associations have agreed to the standards and shall now operate within them. Standards are available to view on the East Herts website.

Summer activities for 11-19 year olds over 5 weeks this summer is taking place.

Ambition 2.2 - Strengthen social cohesion and empower communities by encouraging volunteering and working in partnership with the voluntary sector and in the design and delivery of public services

East Herts and Broxbourne Furniture Re-Use Project

All start up funding and partnerships are in place and the scheme is ready to launch subject to planning consent from East Herts Council for project accommodation in Hoe Lane, Ware.

Village Hall Broadband Project

11 Installations completed at:

Seth Ward Community Centre in Buntingford; Hunsdon Village Hall; Little Berkhamstead Village Hall; Tewin Sports Community Pavilion; Sawbridgeworth Memorial Hall; Hertford Heath Village Hall; Walkern Sports & Community Centre; Tonwell Village Hall; Thundridge Village Hall; Place House Hall in Ware; Bayford Village Hall

Most venues now have Plusnet ADSL (broadband over a telephone wire), two have business cable broadband provided by Virgin Media, two have a standard BT home hub and telephone line installation and one has a radio mast with fast broadband provided by a local company, Flying Moth Ltd.

East Herts 'Stronger Communities Fund'

Partnership panel drawn from Theme group members allocated all funds to 34 local community organisations. Full review and monitor of the fund was the subject of a presentation to the East Herts LSP Board in June 2011. Request made for follow on PRG funding to repeat the scheme due to massive demand and diversity of funding projects.

East Herts Minority Ethnic Forum

The forum has met 3 times over a period of almost one year now. A planning group is now developing a survey about Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) needs, predominantly in Bishop Stortford to encourage focus for the forum. To help undertake the tasks involved, a Community Development Officer has been employed directly by Council for Voluntary Services, Broxbourne & East Herts (CVSBEH) to continue with these activities.

Portuguese Community – Work with the Portuguese community has led to the establishment of the first Portuguese community group in the district of East Herts.

Muslim Women's Association – Involving Women from Uganda, Sudan and Egypt who are all Muslim and living in East Herts. An open day is also planned. It is hoped that the group will also feel able to provide representation on the East Herts BME Forum.

Bishop Stortford Festival – CVSBEH facilitated participation in the Bishop Stortford Festival held in June 2010, which included dance and music from natives of Venezuela, Portugal, Poland, Lithuania and Ghana. Funding to support these performances was received from South Anglia Housing.

Ambition 2.3 - Engage with young people to achieve the five outcomes of Every Child Matters: staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and making an economic contribution

The LSP action to engage with young people is being progressed through the 11 – 19 youth sub group which involves representatives from the county Youth Work team, the voluntary sector and an extended schools co-ordinator. The group is developing a youth strategy for the district. The first priority for the group is to consider what can be done to improve communication and opportunities for decision making for young people in the district.

Citizenship and Local Democracy Programme

The council has decided to move away from a full day youth conference and towards more targeted curriculum specific sessions on citizenship and local democracy delivered in local schools. A pilot programme has been developed whereby the Leader of the council will visit Presdales school on five occasions for a one hour session on "How the council works" from October to January 2012. Each session will target year 8 pupils and include an interactive element.

Community Facilities Contribution

Since 2005 council officers have been aware that Section 106 community facilities contribution would become available when the TXU Mead Lane development in Hertford was completed. The agreement was for “The provision of a sum of £52000 as a contribution towards improved community facilities.” The developer paid the index linked sum of £59k over to the council in 2010. The S106 agreement was open ended and did not stipulate where the contribution should be spent. The planning officer responsible for the agreement did expect that the improved community facilities would be located “within Hertford”.

Extensive investigations have so far failed to identify an appropriate beneficiary. The 11 – 19 youth sub group was asked to contribute ideas as to how the funding should be allocated. A provisional shortlist has been compiled of three potential centres in Hertford which focus on youth activities. A final decision will be made by members of East Herts Executive Committee.

Ambition 2.6 – Ensure quality of life for older people by addressing gaps in service provision and improving access to services

The Resource Mapping exercise suggests that the LSP should look at how to increase volunteering capacity to provide additional support for vulnerable people, including the elderly, and exploring existing examples and models to develop.

3. HOUSING EAST HERTS

Ambition 3.1 - Meet the housing need and aspirations of the existing and future residents of East Herts

Number of new affordable homes delivered April 09 to March 2010 – 185.
Number of new affordable homes delivered April 10 to March 2011 – 64.
This is considerably lower than in previous years and reflects the current economic climate for new private housing development. However there were 75 new affordable homes granted planning permission, as part of new private developments, from April 2010 to March 2011. The majority of which are on site with anticipated completion during 2011-2012. In addition from April 2011 to date there have been 134 new affordable homes granted planning permission again as part of larger private developments. We continue to negotiate from a starting position of 40% affordable homes all private developments. In addition our two stock transfer Registered Housing Providers have submitted a bid programme to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for capital grant to develop affordable homes on their existing under used asset sites. They have been successful in proving value for money and their 4 year programmes of providing approximately 100 new homes has been agreed.

Aldwyck housing association's bid to the Homes and Communities Agency for capital grant to assist with the building of a young persons project in Hertford was rejected by the HCA and alternative sources of funding need to be discussed with Aldwyck to enable the project to proceed in its current proposal. The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Strategic Housing have a meeting with Aldwyck in early September to see if this project can proceed with Aldwyck.

£5,000 of Performance Reward Grant (PRG) funding has been received to enable the Council to continue to fund Herts Young Homeless Group (HYHG) going into East Herts Secondary schools and providing workshops on the realities of youth homelessness as part of the Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum. HYHG presented details of the project to the LSP in June 2011. The project has funds to continue until March 2012 when it will be reviewed by all the Hertfordshire partner agencies that contribute to the project.

4. CHARACTER (BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT)

Ambition 4.1 - Ensure that development is sustainable and that proposals continue to meet high standards of design that reflect local distinctiveness

Ambition 4.2- Continue to conserve and enhance the district's built and natural historic environment

Action 1: Re-commence production of Conservation Area Character Statements, to achieve full coverage of District's 42 Conservation Areas.

The programme for producing Conservation Area Character Statements is well underway. Draft statements have been completed for Hunsdon, Standon & Puckeridge, Widford, Watton-at Stone and Much Hadham. Bishop's Stortford is nearing completion with a draft Statement anticipated autumn 2011. Work is ongoing in respect of Buntingford and Sawbridgeworth.

Action 2: Complete a Hertfordshire-wide Green Infrastructure Framework, leading to a Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Land Use Consultants, working on behalf of a network of stakeholders including Hertfordshire County Council and East Herts Council, have now completed both the Hertfordshire Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan (March 2011) and the East Herts Green Infrastructure Plan (March 2011). Both studies are to be recommended to the East Herts Council's Executive-September 2011 as technical studies, forming part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts Local Development Framework (LDF); as a basis for informing future Development Control decisions concerning development and green infrastructure; and as a basis for green infrastructure planning in the District.

New initiatives include:

- 1) The County-wide Green Infrastructure Partnership applying for Government Programme of Development (POD) funding for a number of County-wide projects. If successful, these will be of benefit to East Herts, as many are cross-boundary in nature;
- 2) At the suggestion of East Herts Council, the HCC County-wide Partnership lead has sought and gained support from leading stakeholders, to prepare a bid seeking Government funding for a new Government initiative for National Improvement Areas. The bid will be progressed when more details are issued by the Government.

5. ECONOMY, SKILLS AND PROSPERITY

As advised in previous updates and discussed at Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) leads meetings there is a need to review some of the ambitions and actions that are currently reported as part of the Sustainable Community Strategy. A reduction in the current ambitions from seven ambitions to five is advised.

- Provide support to rural businesses including initiatives that will help develop a low carbon economy.
- Develop a business engagement programme to include a series of visits to local businesses and their representative organisations. (Action = Explore local options for enterprise and start up support and generic business advice in the light of the cessation of Business Link in November 2011).
- Ensure East Herts benefits from initiatives developed through the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) especially in relation to inward investment, business support, the skills agenda, cross boundary infrastructure issues and rural issues. East Herts Council to act as facilitator between LEP and LSP.
- Herts Regional College to lead coordination and monitoring the contribution of East Herts partners to the skills agenda including courses and services targeted at the most vulnerable.
- Continue to help local business take advantage of opportunities available as a result of the 2012 Games and help to ensure a tangible local legacy remains in the district once the event is over.

The consolidation means that the two ambitions have been combined with existing ambitions to provide more focus.

6. EAST HERTS ON THE MOVE

New transitional support for rural community transport

In March 2011 the Under Secretary of State announced an additional £10m of funding for community transport. Aware that that many authorities are making difficult decisions regarding bus services, £10m of transitional support was made available to local authorities to encourage the development of community transport in their areas via a similar mechanism to the rural bus subsidy grant formula. The additional funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) is exceptional i.e. one off funding for 2011/12 to help 'pump-prime' community transport in their areas. Hertfordshire's share of the one-off fund was £133,729, received in March 2011.

Hertfordshire County Council decided to allocate funding to areas that did not have strong community transport base which included East Herts. Funding of £70k has been allocated to Bishop's Stortford Mini Bus Trust and Sawbridgeworth Town Council to develop a community transport scheme. The funding is to provide vehicles and contribute to operating costs in the area(s) chosen.

Community Transport – DfT guidance

The DfT also issued revised guidance to local authorities – both rural and urban – on community transport. One of the key points made in the guidance is the need to work in partnership.

1.6 Community transport can provide efficient and effective transport solutions of both a general and specialised nature including services tailored to meet the needs of groups and individuals. We strongly encourage Local Authorities to form partnerships with the voluntary and community sector when developing local transport solutions.

(Community Transport: Guidance for Local Authorities. March 2011)

A further review of the council's bus subsidy contributions will take place in the near future with a view to directing efficiencies towards the development of community transport in the district.

LSP Resource Mapping

The importance of transport for residents and potential gains resulting from partnership working has been acknowledged in the Interim Report on LSP Resource Mapping. Under "Changing the way the partnership uses its resources," community transport was identified as one of the "specific work streams to consider."

"Again cited frequently in interviews and at the workshop, the potential impact and efficiency gains to be had from LSP partners working collectively

on issues of access and community transport are believed by some partners to be significant” and “collaboration and shared effort amongst LSP partner organisations and with more involvement from new or existing community and voluntary groups, efficiencies could be found and the outcomes improved.”

2.4.3 “Community transport and/or developing outreach capacity.” Interim Report on East Herts Resource Mapping.

The three priorities for the consultants to consider for further work will be the night time economy, supporting older people and complex families. The board may wish to consider asking the consultants to gather data and produce a resource mapping spreadsheet on transport with data provided by partner organisations.

East Herts Parking and Transport Strategy

A Member Task and Finish Group has been established to guide the study to its conclusion and a first draft will be considered by the Council’s Environment Scrutiny Committee on 15 November 2011. Formal adoption of the Strategy is expected to take place at full Council on 4 July 2012.

Although the Strategy will major on areas for which East Herts has direct responsibility, i.e. parking, it is recognised that transport and parking are inextricably linked; therefore transport in all its forms, including community transport, will be addressed.

7. EAST HERTS HEALTH, WELLBEING AND PLAY

Since the SCS was produced in 2009 linking the LSP themes together with wider Council objectives and strategic focus there has been definite visible progress against the actions to improve healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities. Under the direction of the LSP Health and Wellbeing Partnership and its members who link to committed organisations with health objectives the key targets of smoking, physical activity and obesity, with its intrinsic links to healthy eating **have continued to be addressed.**

The contribution of the East Herts Public Health Strategy and its clear focus on public health has meant a number of projects and initiatives with internal council and external agency colleagues have centred on the themes of smoking, physical activity and obesity. The 4th 2011/12 East Herts Public Health Action Plan, now underway, continues to build on these key achievements, projects focusing on the key elements of smoking, physical activity and obesity. With the 2011 East Herts Local Authority profile citing obesity levels for children of 15.9% in year 6 and 21.4% of adults being obese and 19.0% of adults smoking with 164 deaths each year as a result, these important factors as well as physical activity levels for children and adults require increased resources and partnership teamwork to keep these vital healthy lifestyle determinants improving.

In an increasingly pressured cost environment it is essential that all agencies increasingly work together to improve healthy lifestyle outcomes and impact on health inequalities for all East Herts residents and their communities **including an emphasis on the older people within the district.**

Ambition 7.2 - Encourage healthier lifestyles and reduce health inequalities

Olympic Agenda

An East Herts Olympic Group has been set up to explore how the district can benefit from the 2012 Olympics. The group first met in July. The group is led by Cllr Linda Haysey, Executive member for health, housing and community support. Members include representatives from Herts Sports Partnership, Herts Ready for Winners and Everyone Active, the council's leisure contractor.

Few, if any, additional resources or funding are available. Therefore the emphasis will be on rebadging existing activities. There is considerable interest in which route the Olympic torch will take through Hertfordshire. The next meeting of the group will take place on 30th September.

Ambition 7.4 - Develop and support accessible leisure, sports arts and cultural facilities throughout the district including those offered at smaller community centres

Inspired Facilities

Sport England has launched a £50million programme to refurbish and improve up to 1000 community sports clubs. The Inspired Facilities fund is part of the Olympic Places People Play legacy programme. Investment will be available to breathe new life into tired facilities that can be unattractive to sports participants, expensive to run and difficult to maintain, putting these clubs right back at the heart of their local communities. There will also be money available to convert existing buildings into venues that are suitable for grassroots sport.

Typical investments might be:

- A sprung floor that converts an unused hall into a local multi-sport facility
- New changing rooms, so away teams no longer need to change in the car park
- New floodlights that mean a facility can be used for many more hours of the day.

At least £35 million of the funding will go to community and voluntary organisations, through grants of between £20,000 and £50,000. The remaining money will be open to a wider group of organisations, including councils and schools, with grants of up to £150,000 available. This has to be matched, £1 for £1.

New Homes Bonus and Community Infrastructure Levy

A report was made to council's Local Development Framework Executive Panel on 7 July 2011 in which it was confirmed that the New Homes Bonus provisional allocations for East Herts Council are:

- Year 1 (2011): £415,263
- Total payment over 6 years: £2,491,578

According to the Living Places website, "Local authorities and their communities will have the freedom to spend New Homes Bonus revenues according to local wishes, which may include on culture and sporting facilities and services to support new developments."

<http://living-places.org.uk/culture-and-sport-planning-toolkit/funding-and-delivery/sources-of-funding/new-homes-bonus.html>

8. GREEN EAST HERTS

Ambition 8.2 - Increase the levels of recycling and composting in the district, whilst reducing the amount of waste being generated

It is now over a year since ARC (alternate refuse and recycling) was implemented in East Herts and time to assess the impact the change in service has made to how much is recycled in the district.

For the year 2010/11 (our year starts in April) **48.29%** of the waste placed out via the kerbside boxes and the recycling centres has been recycled. At the same time last year, just before ARC began, **38.12%** of waste was recycled.

Monitoring the amount of waste that gets sent to landfill is also very important. Because of this the Council aims to send no more than **595kg** of waste per property, for the year to landfill. **472kg** of waste per property was sent in the year 2010/11 which means that this target was achieved.

Ambition 8.3 - Enhance air quality in the district

- Work with local community groups interested in progressing climate change activities is progressing well (Ambition 8.3 refers) and since last November the East Herts Greener Communities network has met 8 times to progress projects.
- A detailed report setting out the options for establishing an East Herts Car Share Scheme (Ambition 8.3 refers) was agreed by the East Herts Programme Board on 16th August 2011. The scheme is expected to commence in October 2011 and will coordinate car sharing opportunities within East Herts Council and jointly with HCC. A number of other organisations across Hertfordshire are also members of the scheme.