

Hertfordshire 2021:

A Brighter Future

Developing this strategy

Hertfordshire Forward began the development of the new Sustainable Community Strategy by drawing on a wide range of sources to build a detailed evidence base for Hertfordshire. While not claiming to be a comprehensive profile of Hertfordshire, it helped identify a number of key issues for the county, both on a county-wide and more local basis. It also provided the starting point for stakeholders to explore those key issues to 2021 at a series of workshops Hertfordshire Forward held around the county. These workshops were held alongside a series of one-to-one scoping sessions with partner organisations and further workshops with groups ranging from local councillors to youth advocates.

This development work culminated in a draft Sustainable Community Strategy which was published for consultation on 30 November 2007 (a period which closed on 26 March 2008). Over 55 separate organisations responded – this feedback was collated, analysed and taken into account when producing this final strategy.

Our county

When Hertfordshire Forward asked people who live and work in Hertfordshire what the best things about Hertfordshire are, they said:

- It has a good quality of life
- Benefits from being close to London
- It is a prosperous, affluent county
- It is a good place for families
- It has good services
- It is a green county
- It is a safe county

However they also told us there a number of problems too:

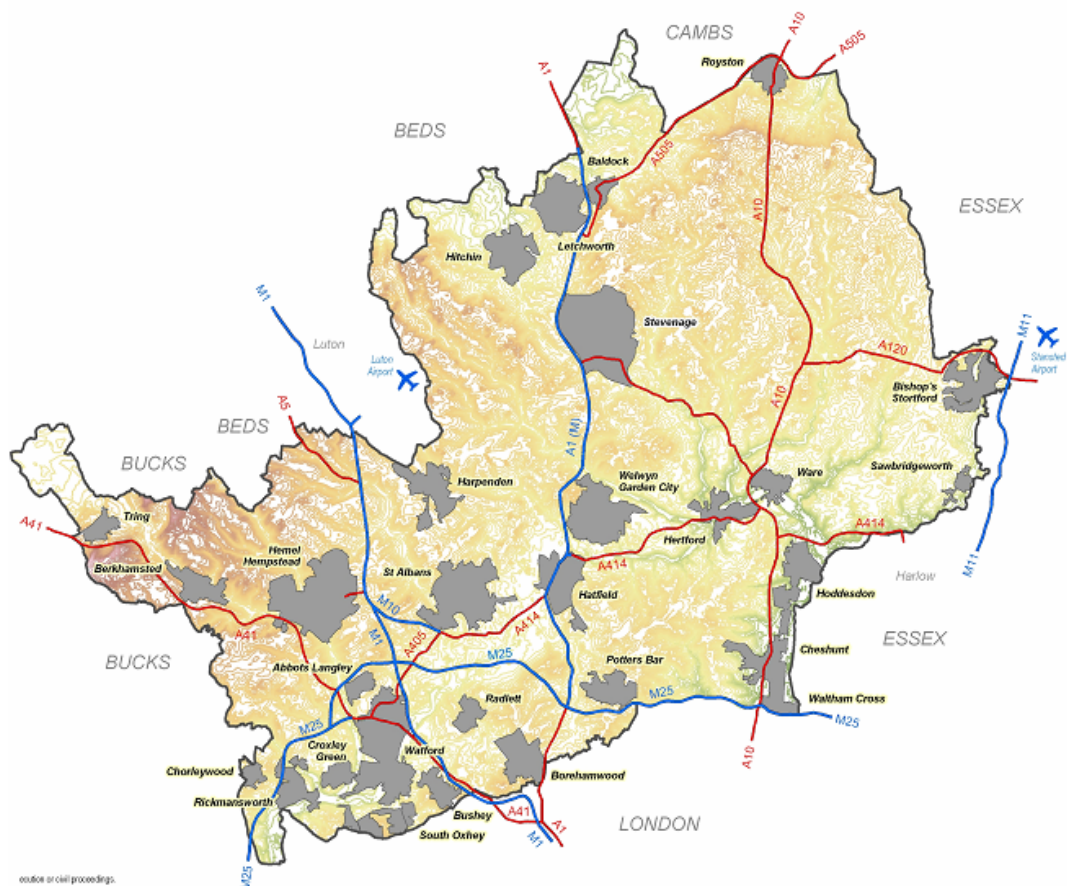
- Traffic congestion is bad
- The cost of housing is high
- There is disadvantage here, despite the overall affluence
- People are getting older and living longer (which is great), but that does increase the pressure on our services
- We know lots more houses have to be built – this needs to be managed effectively

So despite this overall picture of Hertfordshire being a good place to live, there are some significant areas of growing concern which need to be tackled so that everyone can benefit from our success and ensure that the county continues to thrive in future.

Hertfordshire stretches from Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire in the north to the outskirts of London in the south. It borders Buckinghamshire in the west and Essex in the east and is one of six counties in the East of England. There are no major cities or towns, but it is the second most densely populated county in England, with a mix of new towns, market towns and rural villages. This gives much of Hertfordshire a semi-urban feel without the problems associated with large cities.

Proximity to London is double-edged, with some concerns over urban growth out of London, but the capital provides many employment and leisure opportunities enjoyed by Hertfordshire people. Managing that relationship is critical as the challenges of growth emerge.

The county enjoys a high quality environment, including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the west and north, river valleys in the south and a concentration of nationally important woodlands in the south-east. Historic buildings and landscapes make a significant contribution to the county's character.



Hertfordshire is a prosperous place with a population of just over one million. The high standards of living and low levels of unemployment, coupled with a rich mix of rural and urban environments add to the attraction of living in the county.

Our residents are generally well-educated, well-paid, healthy and live in safe communities. Nevertheless this prosperity masks areas of relative deprivation, disadvantage and social exclusion - all stakeholders in the county are passionate about addressing such gaps, ensuring the most vulnerable in society are not overlooked and everyone is able to enjoy a good quality of life. For that reason, our overarching and cross-cutting vision about tackling vulnerability and ensuring cohesive communities is what underpins our strategy and the themes below.

The following pages expand on this story of Hertfordshire, showing a successful county, but one facing fresh challenges and where there is a need for continued ambition.

Our community strategy has identified the following as key areas of concern for improvement:

- **Jobs, Prosperity and Skills**
- **Safer and Stronger Communities**
- **Children and Young People**
- **An Ageing Population**
- **Health and Wellbeing**
- **Housing, Affordable Housing and Quality Neighbourhoods**
- **Transport and Access**
- **Sustaining Hertfordshire's Unique Character and Quality of Life**
- **Promoting Sustainable Development**

Jobs, Prosperity and Skills

Hertfordshire is a prosperous county, a major driving force behind the regional economy and one of the most productive in the UK. Our economy is built upon several sectors, including financial and business services, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, electronics, IT and the creative cultural industries of film, media and tourism. Our workforce is also highly skilled and well paid; the number of employees with high qualifications is well above the national average, as are average earnings, with many working in London, a top ten world city. Enterprise performance is strong in Hertfordshire with high business start-up rates and a high number of businesses entering and leaving the market is a healthy sign.

However it is important for us to not become complacent. The above masks a number of growing challenges which need to be addressed if Hertfordshire's economy is to remain competitive in the global context, most notably in the development of a skilled workforce competitive on a global stage. Despite the overall affluence we enjoy, there are pockets of high unemployment (for example in Broxbourne). Notwithstanding the high levels of skills amongst our workforce, there are as many residents with little or no formal qualifications as there are with undergraduate degrees and people in Broxbourne and Stevenage are amongst the lowest skilled in the region. With a national decline in the number of unskilled jobs available, it is crucial we ensure that there is a close match between local employer needs and the skills of Hertfordshire's workforce. For instance many of those employed in Stevenage do not live in the town itself while the skills base in Borehamwood that developed to support its manufacturing industry is now in low demand due to the rise in low skilled, low paid service jobs in the area. Moreover it is important that everyone is able to participate in the success of Hertfordshire's economy, by providing employment, formal and informal learning opportunities and encouraging an entrepreneurial culture for young people, young offenders, older people and vulnerable groups.

At the same time there is a recognised need for greater resilience to emergencies and business change. The regeneration of the Maylands business park following the Buncefield explosion is significant to the economy at district, county and regional levels and the depot itself has a strategic significance at a national level. Of significance on an international scale, the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics Games provides a unique opportunity to heighten public interest and demand for sport, to motivate people to build activity into their daily lives, with all the associated health benefits this would bring. It will place greater demands on our workforce and partners will need to help ensure a sufficiently and appropriately skilled workforce.

It is also important to recognise that Hertfordshire exists within a global economy: the so-called "credit crunch" has led to a prediction that economic growth in the UK will slow from 2008. Concerns about this being the case locally, and indications of slight rises in unemployment suggest more challenging conditions for sustaining our relative prosperity lie ahead. We also

know that, notwithstanding global conditions, the government expects the county to create a further 68,000 new jobs by 2021. Whatever these jobs may be, we need to ensure they are filled by local people, and compliment Hertfordshire's existing dynamic and innovative knowledge based economy. However Hertfordshire employers face difficult competition with London directly to the south of the county attracting many of our more skilled staff to higher wages and opportunities.

Despite the above, confidence for Hertfordshire's future remains upbeat, given our economy is now more mixed and knowledge based than it has been in past. It is clear however that maintaining and supporting the strength of our economic base is essential if we want to continue enjoying a good quality of life, and we must not be complacent about the challenges ahead for doing so.

Long Term Objectives (2008-2021)

- **Support the growth and retention of existing businesses and encourage high value inward investment**
- **Ensure the skills of the workforce meet the demands of employers**
- **Provide opportunities for everyone to share in our prosperity**
- **Encourage lifelong learning and an entrepreneurial culture**

Short Term Actions (2008-2011)

- Encourage people to start and sustain their own businesses, particularly:
 - People living in Stevenage and Broxbourne
 - People from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities
 - People over 50
 - Women
- Support the regeneration of Maylands Avenue Business Park following the Buncefield explosion
- Encourage businesses to develop plans for surviving an emergency and build resilience to respond to economic change in order to help safeguard the jobs of people working in Hertfordshire
- Increase targeted learning provision and opportunities for adults to improve their employability:
 - Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and especially ESOL (English as a Second Language) including white migrant workers
 - Lone parents
 - People with no or low qualifications
 - Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) up to age 24
 - Incapacity Benefit claimants
 - Women

- Support more lone parents and people off incapacity benefit and into work, particularly in:
 - Broxbourne
 - Stevenage
- Get more young people into education, employment and training, particularly:
 - 16-18 year olds in Stevenage
 - 16-18 year olds in Welwyn Garden City
 - 16-18 year olds in Hatfield
 - 16-18 year olds in Waltham Cross
 - 16-18 year olds in Borehamwood
 - 16-18 year olds in Hemel Hempstead
 - 16-18 year olds in Watford
 - Young offenders
- Support those at risk of offending into employment and seek to ensure ex-offenders (including young offenders) have employment opportunities to support rehabilitation
- Increase vocational and 'citizenship skills' training among young people that is relevant to the county and regional job market
- Maximise opportunities arising from the 2012 Olympics, such as securing investment for the Olympic facilities to be hosted in the county and securing the economic legacy of the games

Safer and Stronger Communities

Overall Hertfordshire is a safe place to live with one of the lowest crime rates in the country and community safety is vital for the future prosperity of Hertfordshire. However we face a number of challenges both now and in the future.

Perceptions of crime, anti-social behaviour and drug dealing are higher than would be expected given the county's relatively safe nature. Low level crime such as vandalism and graffiti leaves many people feeling unsafe while anti-social behaviour in our communities including that related to alcohol and the night time economy is also a strong concern for many of our residents. In addition over 25% of all violent crime in the county is domestic in nature and affects a wide range of people across community, class and other boundaries, including children, where often the impact in terms of child protection and care arrangements can be highly detrimental to their wellbeing. We need to better support the victims through co-ordinated multi-agency actions.

Estimates suggest East Herts, Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield have the highest levels of binge-drinkers in the county while the majority of our most prolific persistent offenders are drug users. Priority and prolific offenders need to be targeted, small numbers of individuals who have a disproportionate impact on crime levels, with a focus on early and speedy rehabilitation, breaking cycles of crime, supporting and preventing those at risk of offending along with their families. We need to reduce drug and alcohol abuse through not only effective policing but also expanded rehabilitation facilities. Tackling problems at their source will pay dividends in overall crime and disorder reduction.

The biggest contribution to reducing crime is to have strong supportive communities. Although our communities and neighbourhoods are places where most people consider they get along well with one another, if we do not help build community cohesion there is the potential for this to unravel in future. Despite the county's affluence and the fact that most enjoy a good quality of life, this is not the case for some of the most vulnerable in society. Disparities in wealth - the gap between the so called 'haves' and the 'have nots' is an important issue and we need to ensure such people have access to good opportunities and do not feel marginalised.

At 11.1%, the proportion of ethnic minority residents in Hertfordshire is lower than the national average and is concentrated particularly in Watford and Hitchin. However a major issue we face over the forthcoming years is the growth in housing and thus new people and new communities. Nationally we are seeing large numbers of economic migrants arriving in the country and a higher than average proportion settle in Hertfordshire. The number of gypsies and Irish travellers is also set to increase. Whilst this adds to the diversity of the county we recognise the need to maintain and build community cohesion. It is vital that local communities, especially the vulnerable, are able to directly influence the level of service provision being delivered in their locality and feel able to affect decision making in their local area.

It is for all bodies to play their part in developing cohesive communities to ensure alternatives to crime and disorder are readily available. This includes our vibrant voluntary and community sector which supports a sense of character and pride in our places underpinned by diverse cultural activity. Volunteering is very important and in the cultural sector volunteers are the key to a thriving range of arts organisations, sports delivery and museums across the county.

Long Term Objectives (2008-2021)

- **Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in our neighbourhoods and town centres**
- **Reduce the fear of crime**
- **Develop cohesive communities**
- **Enable and support a vibrant voluntary and community sector and a range of diverse cultural activities which meets the needs of local people**
- **Encourage communities and individuals to have a greater voice and participate in local decision making**

Short Term Actions (2008-2011)

- Reduce alcohol related crime and disorder in our town centres (especially Watford and Stevenage) and other hotspots
- Reduce drug and alcohol abuse through effective policing and expanded rehabilitation facilities to address addiction, particularly:
 - alcohol abuse in East Herts, Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield
 - and smaller local hotspots
- Reduce anti-social behaviour and disorder in our neighbourhoods and town centres through co-ordinated action led by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs)
- Reduce the fear of crime, particularly with regards to anti-social behaviour and drugs dealing
- Increase confidence in the Police and Criminal Justice System in the County
- Reduce repeat domestic violence and better support the victims of domestic violence through co-ordinated multi-agency actions
- Encourage more cohesive communities
- Increase the levels of volunteering
- Increase numbers of people who feel they are able to affect decision making in their local area, especially vulnerable people (including children)

Children and Young People

Most Hertfordshire children do well at school, where high standards and continuing improvement draw people to the county as a place to raise their families. Our young people also benefit from a secure path into adulthood: we have the second highest proportion of young people in education, employment or training in the country.

Despite this high quality environment, however, there is still a significant gap between outcomes for vulnerable children and young people and those for most in the county. At school, children from some Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups, those with disabilities and those in care achieve less than most. Boys achieve less well than girls at GCSE. Children in some districts achieve less well than children overall, often as a result of economic disadvantage. The same groups of children and young people are also less likely to move easily into employment.

Some problems affect children and young people generally. They are far more likely to be both the victims and perpetrators of crime and anti-social behaviour than the rest of the population. They are increasingly overweight and obese.

We want to bring about a dramatic improvement in outcomes for vulnerable groups, and to motivate and inspire all children and young people so that they participate fully in society and enjoy the benefits of living in Hertfordshire. We subscribe to the principles in the Government's Children's Plan, and believe they will serve us well in tackling these issues. In particular, we will focus on services that are built around children and parents rather than according to professional boundaries, and that can provide early support to prevent problems becoming worse than they need to be.

Long Term Objectives (2008-2021)

- **Narrow the gaps between vulnerable children and all children in Hertfordshire whilst improving outcomes for all**
- **All children and young people in Hertfordshire remain safe in an ever-changing world**
- **Ensure that children and young people are ready to succeed, particularly as they move into primary school, secondary school, further study and work**
- **Provide high quality information and support to parents**
- **Ensure all children and young people have access to high quality facilities and a range of positive activities to develop personal and social skills, promote wellbeing and reduce behaviour that puts them at risk;**
- **Ensure children and young people have a healthy weight**
- **Eradicate child poverty**

- **Significantly reduce the number of young offenders and young people who are victims of crime**

Short Term Actions (2008-2011)

- Children and young people are safe from abuse and neglect
- Children and young people achieve their full potential whilst in and moving on from care
- Children and young people are confident to respond to bullying
- Children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health is well supported
- Children and young people have a healthy weight
- Vulnerable under fives are well prepared for life
- Vulnerable children and young people achieve as well as others
- Children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities are empowered to reach their full potential
- Young people get a wide range of opportunities to learn
- Children and young people make a positive contribution to decisions about services

An Ageing Population

To take Hertfordshire forward in the future we need to plan our approach to what is already on the horizon – including the fact that the population group predicted to rise most is the older population. Life expectancy in Hertfordshire is above the national average and people continue to live longer, testament to the high standards of living and good quality of life our residents enjoy. As people live longer it means both the number and proportion of older people is set to increase over the coming years – by 2025 the number of people aged 75 and over is expected to increase from 82,000 to 116,000. This increase will not be evenly spread across the county and while Welwyn Hatfield can expect to see a 20% rise in the number of over-75s, East Herts and North Herts can expect increases of around 60% suggesting we need locally tailored responses to the challenges such changes bring.

Older people and their role in our communities need to be recognised and valued, ensuring they have the opportunity to share their own lives and help shape the communities in which they live. Older people are not a homogenous group and targeted approaches are therefore required. Older people will need to have the opportunity to work and enjoy lifelong learning, to volunteer, to be physically active and have access to and enjoy leisure and cultural pursuits in the community. Colleges and other education providers will widen opportunities for older learners and engage older people in volunteering. Vital to addressing the future challenges of an ageing population is the extent to which those currently approaching or over 50 make lifestyle changes that will affect their healthy life expectancy before they reach the age of 75 or over.

An increased amount of support will be needed from both the health and social care sectors to support these growing numbers. New levels of service provision will be required and communities will need to adapt to these changing demographics, not least in supporting the high number of people over 75 living alone. Of these almost 60% have a limiting long-term illness and it is predicted that the number of older people who have dementia will rise by 15-25% over the coming decade. Older people will need to be supported in their homes, utilising technological advances that support independence. They should have opportunities to remain independent within their communities with access to the required care if and when needed and the role of carers is therefore vital and needs to be properly valued.

Long Term Objectives (2008-2021)

- **Focus on the prevention of illnesses**
- **Help older people maintain their independence**
- **Ensure older people have the opportunities to be active members of our communities**

Short Term Actions (2008-2011)

- Strengthen intermediate care provision

- Support independent living for older people
- Increase physical activity amongst older people
- Ensure older people have opportunities to work, volunteer and learn

Health and Wellbeing

The health of Hertfordshire residents is generally good but we need to address disparity in experience between different sectors of the community and to address areas where there are key gaps in support. For example life expectancy in Dacorum or East Hertfordshire is higher than in Stevenage. This is an issue replicated at a smaller scale with a 6.2 year gap in the life expectancy between the healthiest and least healthy wards in St Albans.

The health and wellbeing concerns for the future relate to what we do now to help people adopt lifestyles that keep them fit and well. Seven out of ten premature deaths are caused by cancer, stroke and heart disease – it is estimated 2,000 lives per year could be saved if we could curtail these. Smoking rates vary from around 10-15% (generally in the more affluent areas) to parts of the county where more than 30% of the adult population smoke. Smoking is the single greatest cause of premature illness and early death, killing at least 1,580 people per year, and this impact is felt most in areas such as Broxbourne, Stevenage and Three Rivers.

Encouraging people to be active is an important way to prevent illness in later life, and many people in Hertfordshire are not sufficiently active. The percentage of people participating in regular exercise compared to the national average is higher for St Albans and East Hertfordshire and low in Stevenage, Welwyn Hatfield and Broxbourne. In fact in Broxbourne levels of participation in sport or active recreation are among the very lowest in the country. Sport, active recreation, culture and leisure services will be crucial in addressing these issues. In addition, approximately one in five boys and girls starting school in Hertfordshire is overweight or obese. This varies across Hertfordshire with the highest female rates found in Broxbourne, Hertsmere and Watford and the highest male rates found in Hertsmere, Watford and Welwyn Hatfield. If current trends continue, at least one third of adults, one fifth of boys and one third of girls will be obese by 2021. Also of concern is the sexual health of young people in Hertfordshire and we need to take action that includes extending access to Chlamydia screening.

Hertfordshire has a high number of people with learning disabilities whose health and social care needs are increasing. As the population is set to grow between now and 2021 it is vital to ensure our health and social care sectors are organised appropriately to support the needs of our population. A key challenge is to consider what care can be best delivered at home, in the community or in our hospitals and the role of carers is crucial. Different groups and communities often have different health needs. Almost half of respondents to a North and East Hertfordshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment reported their household contained at least one member with a long-term health problem. Various ethnic groups have distinct health needs which require targeted approaches. All groups would benefit from wider access to information on services available and self-help options.

Long Term Objectives (2008-2021)

- **Improve the health and wellbeing of all our residents in the 20% most deprived wards**
- **Reduce the mortality rate difference between deprived and non-deprived areas**
- **Improve life chances and access to healthcare for all, especially those in areas of deprivation and those with learning disabilities**

Short Term Actions (2008-2011)

- Increase levels of physical activity across all ages, particularly in:
 - Broxbourne
 - Stevenage
 - Watford
- Reduce smoking in areas of deprivation, particularly:
 - Broxbourne
 - Stevenage
 - certain areas in Three Rivers
- Reduce obesity in areas of deprivation, particularly in:
 - Broxbourne
 - Stevenage
 - Watford
- Improve the sexual health of young people
- Give greater support to carers

Housing, Affordable Housing and Quality Neighbourhoods

Hertfordshire is an attractive place to live and work, and consequently house prices are considerably higher than the national average (in October – December of 2006 it was £275,130, compared with a UK average of £207,572).

Although a national issue, the particularly high house prices in Hertfordshire make it difficult to encourage ‘key workers’ (such as social workers, firefighters, teachers and police officers) to settle in the county. Almost one in five firms say attracting staff to the region hinders growth and providing affordable housing is clearly a key factor in addressing this problem. Poor affordability also makes it harder for young people to move into their own accommodation and access the housing market, potentially to the detriment of young families and Hertfordshire as a whole. Young people can feel forced to look outside the county and commute long distances to work in Hertfordshire, or to move away entirely.

In Hertfordshire each year there are more applications for council or other social housing than there are vacancies. It is not just age that is a factor in having affordability problems, generally the average house is less affordable for women than men. Interviews with migrant workers confirm that rental prices are a key concern for many migrants living within Hertfordshire with survey results suggesting that approximately half of migrants’ monthly gross income will go on rent. It is important therefore that the organisations concerned work together to reduce the risk of the most vulnerable in society becoming homeless.

While 83,200 new houses are to be built by 2021, simply increasing supply will not be enough. Public sector organisations and their partners have a vital role in ensuring innovative solutions to problems of housing affordability and neighbourhood design and ensuring new areas of housing are designed in a way that is safe and supports community cohesion and today’s lifestyles. This will be especially challenging in the context of a softening housing market nationally, and indications that new housing developments are being put on hold due to uncertainties in the credit market.

Long Term Objectives (2008-2021)

- **Ensure partners work together to understand housing needs and market demands in the county**
- **Ensure we have an appropriate mix of housing provision to support those needs and demands, especially relating to:**
 - **Key workers**
 - **Other key occupational groups**
 - **Migrant workers**
 - **Preventing homelessness**

- **Ensure a minimum of 35% new housing will be affordable and that this is sensibly integrated with private (i.e. full cost) housing**

Short Term Actions (2008-2011)

- Produce a joint strategic housing needs assessment for Hertfordshire
- Ensure innovative approaches to mixed tenures and supporting the entry of new households into the housing market are pursued
- Increase the number of net additional homes provided per year
- Increase the number of affordable homes delivered

Transport and Access

As businesses have confirmed, good transport links within and through the county are essential to Hertfordshire's economy. There are several major transport routes running through the county, with more than 4 million car journeys everyday and over 70,000 'knowledge workers' commuting into London everyday. By 2011 it is predicted that around 124,500 people will be commuting into and 167,600 commuting out of Hertfordshire. Five main railway lines provide good access to London and the rest of the country, and the new Eurostar terminal at St. Pancras will put Hertfordshire within hours of Paris, Brussels and Central Europe and Stansted, Luton and Heathrow airports are all close.

This means Hertfordshire is well connected both nationally and internationally, but also brings with it a number of challenges which need to be overcome. Traffic flows in the county are 35% higher than the national average. Congestion is seen by local people as one of the biggest issues facing Hertfordshire and something which has got worse in recent years. Car ownership is high (with East Herts, Three Rivers and St. Albans amongst the highest in the country) and as a consequence car reliance is heavy – Hertfordshire residents travel 65% further by car than the UK average and two thirds of people use it as the main mode of travel to work, creating an exceptionally busy road network particularly during rush hour. Moreover, 44% of journey to work trips and 40% of all trips by Hertfordshire residents are less than 3 miles in length. In addition, given Hertfordshire's transport network is based largely on routes in and out of London, moving across the county is more problematic with east-to-west travel in particular need of improvement.

Finally, the volume of traffic on our roads is predicted to increase even further between now and 2021. This is independent of the additional housing that is planned – which will put even more pressure on our existing transport infrastructure. It is important in this context that we maintain and improve access to facilities such as schools and hospitals, as well as open spaces. Our residents often express their concern at the condition of our roads and pavements – it is equally important in the above context that we use our resources wisely to ensure we deal with worn out roads and pavements.

Despite our reliance on the car, in 2005 13% of households did not have a car meaning public transport is an important part of many people's lives, especially for those in rural locations. Residents in rural parts of the county, particularly East and North Herts, find access to many services difficult or impossible. If we are to reduce reliance on the car what is needed is a step-change in public transport provision, quality and reliability.

Although numbers are falling, people continue to be killed or seriously injured on the county's roads each year. These incidents also add to congestion on our roads and even small road traffic collisions can produce disruption - there is a need to continue partnership working to reduce both.

Long Term Objectives (2008-2021)

- **Reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of alternatives to the car**
- **Improve access to services, including education and health, no matter where you live**
- **Bring about a step change in the provision, quality and use of public transport in Hertfordshire**
- **Improve the reliability of journey times and improve East to West travel**
- **Improve access to the countryside, open spaces and cultural activities for recreation and health**
- **Ensure effective long term management and maintenance of the transport network**
- **Improve road safety**

Short Term Actions (2008-2011)

- Tackle the worst congestion hot spots
- Explore an innovative approach to all public transport modes in Hertfordshire with Government and public transport providers
- Improve accessibility for disadvantaged groups (including rural residents), through enhancing travel choice. eg;
 - Increasing the % of bus services running on time
 - Improving access to hospitals
- Promote walking, cycling and other sustainable transport through travel plans by:
 - implementing business travel plans for major employers;
 - initiating a programme of residential and station travel plans;
 - ensuring that the majority of schools have a travel plan
- Carry out further study into East to West travel options
- Maintain the footways and roads of the county in a safe condition, making best use of existing resources
- Reduce road casualties

Sustaining Hertfordshire's Unique Character & Quality of Life

When we ask people what makes Hertfordshire special, the unique blend of over 25 distinct villages and towns, open space and our rural landscape come high on the list. Proximity to London, the strong economy, high standards of public services, shopping, leisure and cultural opportunities are also cited. It not only makes Hertfordshire a great place for families and a great location for business but helps build community cohesion. However, that character and uniqueness is potentially under threat from changes in society and significant growth that could see increasing urbanisation and coalescence.

A key challenge for the future is to safeguard and strengthen those elements of Hertfordshire that we value most in the face of increasing pressure for change. In 2021 Hertfordshire should be a place where people can embrace residential and commercial developments whilst valuing its historic character, rural landscape and sense of place. This will ensure Hertfordshire remains an attractive place for people (especially families) to live, visit, learn and work, offering the best quality of life in the country.

Long Term Objectives (2008-2021)

- **Avoid coalescence between our communities by protecting our greenbelt wherever possible, and enhancing our urban fringe and open spaces**
- **Support the management of our land, particularly the historic built and natural landscape, as well as local agriculture, which protects our biodiversity, wildlife, and natural resources**
- **Enhance the quality and distinctiveness of our town centres and their range of local facilities and ensuring our villages remain vibrant**
- **Improve the efficiency, standard and connectivity of public services in Hertfordshire**
- **Secure more investment and funding into Hertfordshire for our public services**

Short Term Actions (2008-2011)

- Ensure the principles of maintaining the character and individuality of our communities and avoiding coalescence is reflected in regional and local planning policies
- Ensure that new neighbourhoods and town centres have a clear sense of place in which safe and sustainable lifestyles are 'designed in' and crime and anti-social behaviour is 'designed out'
- Develop a strategy for the future management of our countryside, in the context of additional development in Hertfordshire Perhaps need to include a national indicator here to support this, e.g. improve local biodiversity through active management of local sites
- Improve street and environmental cleanliness

- Explore opportunities for joint working across the public sector to improve efficiency and customer service
- Lobby Government for a fairer share of national resources for public services in Hertfordshire

Promoting Sustainable Development

By 2021 a minimum of 83,200 further new homes and 68,000 new jobs are required to be created in Hertfordshire under the East of England Plan. This will put immense pressure on our transport infrastructure and local services such as schools, hospitals and leisure facilities. It also threatens our environment and the availability of natural resources such as water.

We need to take action to develop a more sustainable approach to future development and how we live and use resources in Hertfordshire in order to make a meaningful contribution to the global challenge of climate change.

Already Hertfordshire uses 35 times the amount of resources that the county's relative size warrants - 150% higher than the global average. We create 8.5m tonnes of carbon emissions and 538,000 tonnes of household waste a year. The rising cost of waste disposal, the scarcity of waste disposal sites, and statutory carbon reduction targets will present key challenges for the future.

Long Term Objectives (2008-2021)

- **Ensure sustainability principles are central to future planning and decision making in Hertfordshire**
- **Ensure the development of properly planned sustainable communities with the necessary social, economic, environmental and transportation infrastructure in place**
- **Meet all national and EU targets relating to waste and recycling, minimising waste volumes and ensuring the provision of a range of waste processing facilities to deal with the county's waste locally**
- **Meet the Government's targets for reducing Hertfordshire's carbon emissions**

Short Term Actions (2008-2011)

- Draw up an Infrastructure and Investment Strategy to ensure the timely delivery of facilities to support future development of housing and jobs in the county.
- Ensure all new development is built to the principles set out in the Hertfordshire Sustainable Development Guide ("Building Futures"), including coping with water scarcity, energy efficiency and maintaining green spaces and encouraging biodiversity
- Make recycling and composting opportunities easier and consistent for residents across Hertfordshire, and agreeing where and how to provide new waste processing facilities.
- Reduce the % of municipal waste landfilled
- Develop a Climate Change Strategy for Hertfordshire and reduce CO2 emissions

Next Steps

It is important to bear in mind that this document is **not** a fully worked out business plan, which sets out our objectives, corresponding delivery plans and budget requirements. It is instead an overarching strategy which will galvanise the actions, plans and strategies of our partners in Hertfordshire, ensuring we are all working together to address the big priorities articulated here.

The strategy underpins the county's Local Area Agreement (LAA) which will run from June 2008-2011. This is the short-term delivery vehicle for the strategy and is a three year contract between central government and partners in Hertfordshire. The LAA's performance will be reviewed every year and both the Sustainable Community Strategy and the LAA will be updated to reflect changing priorities where appropriate. We recognise the Sustainable Community Strategy sets out an ambitious agenda for improvement over the forthcoming years and are keen to work with partners over 2008-09 to ensure we develop meaningful actions and measures which can be built into the LAA.

How will we monitor progress and how do we know if we have been successful?

Each of the themes has associated long term objectives and short term actions. For each of these actions the relevant theme partnerships (responsible for delivery) are in the process of developing SMART performance indicators which will enable us to measure our short term progress.

For longer term progress we will use the Place Survey and Quality of Life report to measure what impact our actions are having on the county and its resident.

The Hertfordshire Forward Core Group are responsible for performance managing the strategy, and will monitor progress at its quarterly meetings. The strategy and LAA will also be 'refreshed' on an annual basis.



Who are Hertfordshire Forward?

Hertfordshire Forward is a partnership which brings together all the key agencies in the county which have an interest in improving the quality of life and wellbeing of local people. Its 'Core Group' has led on the production of this strategy, which is designed to address the big strategic challenges faced by the county between now and 2021. Its members are:

- Robert Gordon, Chairman of Hertfordshire Forward and Leader of Hertfordshire County Council;
- Ann Jansz, Chief Executive of Stevenage CVS, on behalf of Herts CVS group/Hertfordshire Infrastructure Consortium;
- Caroline Tapster, Chief Executive, Hertfordshire County Council;
- Frank Whiteley, Chief Constable, Hertfordshire Constabulary;
- Peter Ollis, Chief Executive, Stevenage Borough Council (Safer & Stronger)
- John Harris, Director of Children, Schools & Families, Hertfordshire County Council;
- Paul Grace, Chairman, Hertfordshire Institute of Directors;
- Cllr Tony Jackson, Chairman, East Herts Local Strategic Partnership;
- Liam Sammon, Executive Director, Herts Learning & Skills Council;
- Dr. Stephen Boffey, Dean and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Regional Affairs), University of Hertfordshire;
- Jane Halpin, Director of Public Health, Hertfordshire PCTs;
- Cllr. F. John Smith, Leader, North Herts District Council;
- Cllr. Dorothy Thornhill, Deputy Representative, Herts Leaders Group;
- Anne Walker, Chief Executive of Hertfordshire PCTs;
- Mark Dawe, Principal of Oaklands College;
- Stuart Nagler, Chair of the Hertfordshire Police Authority;
- Adam Wood, Chief Executive of Hertfordshire Prosperity Ltd;

Website: www.hertslink.org/hertfordshireforward