

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CAPITAL STRATEGY 2002/03 ONWARDS – CONTEXT SHEET

About Hertfordshire

The county of Hertfordshire covers 634 square miles and with its population of over 1 million is the most densely populated county in England. 87% of residents live in communities with 3,000 or more people. Non-white ethnic groups made up 4% of the population in 1991. There is no single urban focus within Hertfordshire but there a number of major urban centres within the county, and a significant commuter traffic with London and other neighbouring towns like Harlow and Luton.

Hertfordshire has a greater length of motorways than any other county and traffic flows on principal roads are 35% above the national average.

Following the decline of the defence industry, the economy has been reshaped with many large pharmaceuticals, telecommunications and retail/ leisure companies now based in the County. Overall, unemployment in the County stands at 1.3% and the numbers of long term unemployed continues to decline, however, there remain several areas in the North, South West and South East of the county which score very low on national deprivation indices.

A 25% increase in those aged 80 or over is expected in the period up to 2008, The number of households is also expected to rise by over 20% by 2021, with the growth in the number of single person households.

About the County Council

Partnerships – Over the last 10 years the Council has pursued an outsourcing strategy to achieve value for money and a wide range of services are now provided by the private sector including residential care, home care, highways, grounds maintenance, property, Information Technology and financial services. We also fund 1,500 voluntary organisations to provide a range of services to our communities at an annual cost of £5m.

Technology – In the field of electronic service delivery, most staff have access to a computer, e-mail and the council's intranet. All councillors are online with published email addresses. Our HertsDirect website (soon to become a Community Portal) provides public access to information about our own services and those of other agencies and is being developed to offer a range of interactive services including payment, bookings, ordering and consultation. This council is working toward full implementation of electronic government by 2005 via its Implementing Electronic Government Strategy.

People – The council employs 24,000 full and part time staff. A key issue at present is the difficulty of recruiting and retaining key workers such as teachers and social workers given the high costs of living in the county. To improve recruitment and retention a recruitment centre has been established in partnership with Manpower plc to source all our staffing requirements.

Assets – A summary of the council’s property assets is set out below:

Service	Number of assets	Value (£m)	Estimated Maintenance Backlog (£m)
Children, Schools & Families	1,027	1,246	99.4
Adult Care	246	83	5.8
Environment	397	29	0.7
Community Information	60	27	1.9
Fire & Rescue	94	40	2.1
Other	246	59	8.9
TOTAL	2,070	1,484	118.8

The council is also responsible for 4,620 kilometres of principal and other roads with a valuation on a historic cost basis of £142 billion.

Capital Programme summary -

£'000	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
Adult Care	3,013	1,523	1,088
Children, Schools & Families	39,731	34,026	35,334
Community Information	863	612	1,472
Protection – Fire & Rescue	2,655	4,034	529
Environment	27,620	26,609	24,975
Corporate Services	3,488	2,532	1,414
Resources to be allocated		1,500	2,500
	77,370	70,836	67,312
Financed by:			
Borrowing approvals	23,370	22,472	17,854
Grants	13,465	11,710	17,786
Capital receipts	27,719	24,059	19,171
Direct revenue contributions	9,430	9,430	9,430
Reserves	1,359	1,149	1,086
Capital payback	2,027	2,016	1,985
	77,370	70,836	67,312