

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CABINET
MONDAY 28 APRIL 2003 AT 2.00 P. M.**

Agenda Item No.

3

WATFORD COMMUNITY PLAN

Report of the Chief Executive

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1. Purpose of report

To present to Cabinet the Watford Community Plan, with amendments as identified in the Plan text, produced by the Watford Local Strategic Partnership, of which HCC is a member. The Cabinet may wish to consider this report and endorse this first Watford Community Plan (copy attached).

2. Summary

Watford's Community Plan is a three year strategy spanning April 2003 – March 2006. Ten key themes are identified in the plan:

- Valuing different cultures and building stronger communities in Watford
- A cleaner, greener, less congested Watford
- Making Watford a nicer place to visit and enjoy
- Providing affordable quality homes
- Making Watford a better place to work and do business
- Helping people in Watford to be healthier
- A vibrant, family friendly Town Centre
- A safer Watford
- Promoting learning opportunities for all residents
- Investing in Watford's young people

3. Conclusion

That the Cabinet consider endorsing the Watford Community Plan.

4. Background

Watford's Community Plan is a three-year strategy, spanning April 2003 – March 2006 (Draft attached as an Appendix: following consultation with HCC officers, the final draft has a number of amendments which are highlighted in the Plan. These have been communicated to Watford Council). Watford Borough Council endorsed the Plan in its current form at its Full Cabinet meeting on 26th March 2003. The Plan will continue to be updated and reviewed before ready for print and launch later in the year.

The Plan has been developed over the last ten months through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). When the LSP Member Board and LSP Steering Group next meet in May 2003, terms of reference, membership, structure and process for the LSP are on the agenda for discussion. The vision and themes outlined in the Plan were identified through various local consultations over recent years. Each theme is led and has been developed by the organisation that is responsible for and can have the greatest impact on an area of work.

Hertfordshire County Council are leading on two of the ten themes: Promoting learning opportunities for all residents; and investing in Watford's young people.

Key Themes of Community Plan

Watford's Community Plan – sets out a vision for Watford and how the partnership will work together to deliver it. The focus of the Plan is on the needs and priorities of the people and communities of Watford, and the key challenges facing the town. For HCC, contributions to each theme are drawn from its current priorities and strategies, given as appropriate in local context. The key themes, lead partners on each and a flavour of the targets are given below.

Valuing different cultures and building stronger communities in Watford – led by Watford Council for Voluntary Services

- Work to reduce racial tension and conflict through joint working, involving community and faith leaders.
- Hertfordshire County Council, Adult Care Services revised eligibility criteria for implementing 8 national standards for older people from 1 April 2003 will ensure a consistent assessment of needs for all.

A cleaner, greener, less congested Watford – led by Watford Council

- Ensure that 20% of household waste is recycled or composted by 2003/4 and 30% by 2005/6.
- Achieve a 10% increase in use of local bus services by 2005/6.
- Introduce safer routes to school schemes to all secondary schools by 2016.
- Ensure that 80% of future housing development is accommodated on previously developed land.

Making Watford a nicer place to visit and enjoy – led by Watford Council

- Relocation of the Museum to provide a modern Heritage Centre and potentially a visitor information point integrated with Watford Library by 2005.

Providing affordable quality homes – led by Watford Council

- Increase the supply of affordable accommodation - both temporary and permanent. We are working on plans, which should deliver more than 140 affordable properties in 2002/3 and more than 60 in 2003/4.
- Work with Registered Social Landlords and the voluntary sector to increase the provision of temporary hostel accommodation.
- Develop a comprehensive range of information services to prevent homelessness

Making Watford a better place to work and do business – led by Watford Enterprise Agency and Watford & West Herts Chamber of Commerce and Industry

- Maximise local training schemes post Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) with 45 residents being helped into employment within 3 years
- 200 people will have received advice and guidance within 3 years.
- 30 people will have received qualifications within 3 years.
- Watford Enterprise Agency to increase its number of business clients across South West Herts from the current 900 clients to 1,500 by the end of 2003 and to 1,800 by the end of 2004.

Helping people in Watford to be healthier – led by Watford & Three Rivers Primary Care Trust

- Reduce by 15% the number of accidents to the elderly in Care and Residential Homes by 2006.
- Reduce the rate of teenage conceptions by 50% among the under 18s by 2010 and to have established a downward trend in the rate of under 16s conceptions by 2010.

- Prepare an ethnic minority health strategy in consultation with residents, local groups and relevant national organisations by November, 2003.
- Support of voluntary and community groups with HIMP funding from the PCT will ensure community involvement in improving health.

A vibrant, family friendly Town Centre – led by Watford Town Centre Partnership

- Introduce Police Community Support Officers into the town centre by 2003.
- Increase the number of businesses actively involved in ShopSafe and PubWatch by 2004.

A safer Watford – led by Watford Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary

- Reduce and prevent crimes against the person – Targets to be set from 2003/04.
- Tackle anti-social behaviour and criminal damage – Targets to be set from 2003/04
- Reduce the number of thefts from vehicles and theft of vehicles by 2% per year until 2005.
- Reduce the number of burglaries by 8% year on year and 10% y-o-y for repeat victims.
- Reduce crimes involving drugs and alcohol – Increase the number of offenders dealt with in respect of class A drugs (from baseline to be established 2002/03). Increase the percentage of people arrested and referred for treatment (from baseline to be established 2002/03).

Promoting learning opportunities for all residents - led by HCC

- Promote on line lifelong learning in Watford through:-
- Opening of 30 new UK on-line learning centres in February 2003
- Expansion of access in libraries and other local authority sites, including family centres and education support centres.
- Promote pathways in learning through joint initiatives involving Connexions, Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) workers, and other providers.
- Work with disadvantaged and hard to reach groups to design appropriate opportunities that meet their needs and help them into a job.

Investing in Watford's young people - led by HCC

- Increase the number of childcare places for 0 to 2 year olds.

- Increase the number of parenting support operators.
- Ensure that 100% of permanently excluded children receive full time education.
- Increase school links to local employers to address future needs of business.

LSP Structure

Local Strategic Partnership Members Group

Elected Members from HCC, WBC, non executive members from other partner organisations - first met in November '02.

LSP Officer Steering Group

Officers – including: Watford Council, Watford and Three Rivers Primary Care Trust, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Hertfordshire Police Authority, Watford Council for Voluntary Service, Watford & West Herts Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Watford Enterprise Agency, Town Partnership, Watford Learning Partnership, Westfield Community Technology College, Watford Grammar School for Boys (*representing all Watford Schools), West Herts College, Arriva, Housing Regeneration Initiative, Resident Representative.

The LSP has approved the document and partners are currently in the process of confirming their support. Responsibility for delivering the Community Plan lies with all the organisations involved in the Partnership.

Key Themed Areas x 10

Named theme leads liase with officer representatives of relevant partners and are working on drawing up action plans and work programmes that will be used to monitor progress.

Public consultation

Previous consultation undertaken by members of the partnership identified the key theme areas for the Plan which along with specific targets have been tested with local residents (via Watford's Citizens' Panel) and with community organisations (via a community event held

on 8th March 2003). The key priorities identified during the community consultation event will form the basis of a summary Community Plan which will be sent to all Watford residents.

Many of the targets and objectives in the draft Plan are derived from statutory plans, which the Watford Council and its partners have to implement. Work is currently taking place on how targets and objectives are monitored and reviewed.

HCC internal consultation

The latest draft of the Plan as at 13 March 2003 has been commented on by all receiving officers with additions and amendments track changed (see attached draft Plan) and returned to Watford Council. Some gaps remain (notably Fire and Rescue Services) although Watford Council's approach to further input is open and ongoing. Any later amendments or additions will not make any substantial or contentious change to the document.