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Welcome to Welwyn Hatfield's first Community Plan.

This Plan has been developed over the last 18 months in partnership with our communities to improve quality of life in Welwyn Hatfield. Many individuals, groups and organisations have been consulted on what matters to them in Welwyn Hatfield and the Plan contains the key priorities of local people for the next 3 years.

The 'we' used in this plan refers to the 'Alliance' which is the name we have given to our Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) who will be taking forward the Community Plan in Welwyn Hatfield. Members of the Alliance include key public sector organisations, businesses, community groups and voluntary groups in Welwyn Hatfield who have come together around a shared vision for the District.

This plan is not cast in stone - it is a living document. To ensure it continues to meet your priorities we will be listening to your views, reviewing the plan and reporting back to you each year.

It's your community – be part of it.

By Chair of the Welwyn Hatfield Alliance

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Profile of Welwyn Hatfield

Welwyn Hatfield covers an area of almost 50 square miles of mid Hertfordshire. It is just over 20 miles north of Central London with excellent transport links.

The District - population 97,000 - is a mix of well planned urban and unspoiled rural areas, offering woods, lakes, golf courses and cycle ways as well as many leisure facilities and a stately home lived in by Queen Elizabeth I.

Welwyn Garden City, an example of modern town planning and landscaping was built according to the vision of Sir Ebenezer Howard, founder of the Garden City movement.

Hatfield was developed as a modern new town around the aircraft industry. It is now undergoing major regeneration and redevelopment and has become a key location for new businesses and industry, including the University of Hertfordshire.

People living in Welwyn Hatfield generally enjoy a good quality of life with rising prosperity, low unemployment and low levels of crime. However, there

is a high level of fear about crime and a few significant pockets of need where people and communities are unable to enjoy the same quality of life as others.

The Welwyn Hatfield Alliance will build on the many strengths of the District without being complacent about the challenges it faces.

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Why do we need a Community Plan?

Many of the issues facing local communities today, such as community safety, health and the environment, can only be tackled effectively if public, private and voluntary sector organisations work together.

The Local Government Act 2000 recognises this and asks local organisations to work together in a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to produce a Community Plan to improve the quality of life for their area.

Working together enables organisations to maximise their combined effort, avoid duplication and to make the greatest impact on our communities. It enables partnerships to develop solutions to problems that single agencies cannot solve.

Who are the Welwyn Hatfield Alliance?

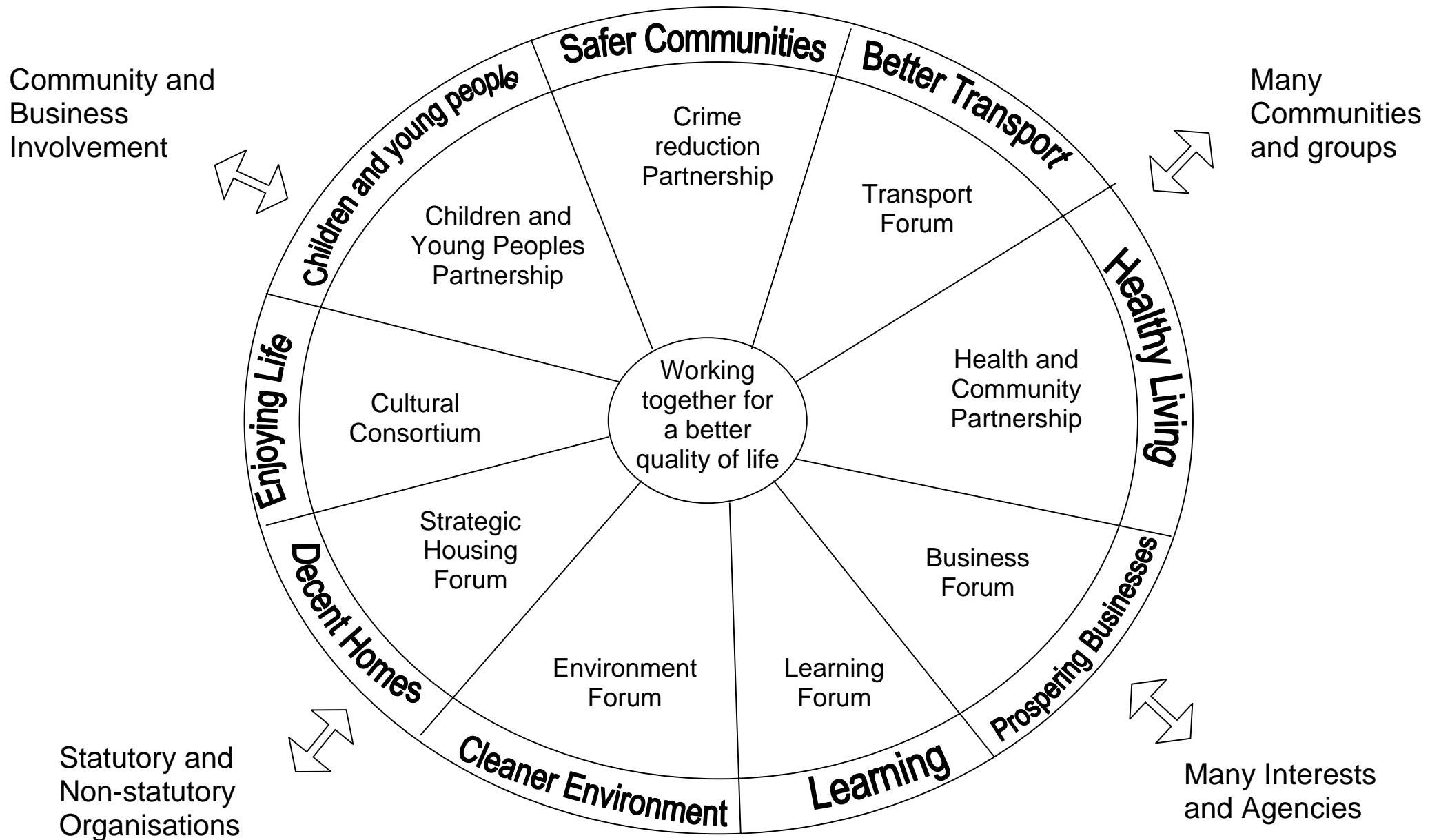
The Welwyn Hatfield Alliance is the name we have given to our Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). Members of the Alliance include key public sector organisations, businesses, community groups and voluntary groups in Welwyn Hatfield who have come together around a shared vision, to improve the quality of life for all in Welwyn Hatfield.

This has been translated into a ten-year vision for Welwyn Hatfield to be a place ***'where people work together to promote vibrant, healthy, safe and tolerant communities and a pleasant sustainable environment'***.

The Alliance aims to improve local services and involve many more of the local communities in decisions affecting their everyday lives.

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The Welwyn Hatfield Alliance



The People of Welwyn Hatfield

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Our Community Plan

Over the last twelve months, we have been asking those who live and work in Welwyn Hatfield what their priorities are for improving quality of life in the District. From this, nine Key Issues have been developed to help us achieve our vision:

- Making our communities safer
- Developing children's and young people's potential
- Improving transport systems
- Enhancing healthy living
- Providing decent homes for all
- Improving the environment
- Helping businesses prosper
- Encouraging learning throughout life
- Helping people enjoy life in Welwyn Hatfield

This Plan contains shared goals for each Key Issue for the next three years and nine Lead Partnerships, one for each Key Issue, have been tasked with developing and delivering actions for these goals.

The Alliance cannot do all the things it would like in one go, so it has focused on the things you have said are most important.

It is not just about looking into the future, it is also about making a difference now by building on existing achievements and celebrating things that we are proud of.

This plan has strong links with the 'Herts Together' initiative – the community plan for Hertfordshire – and is supported by the plans and strategies of other agencies that are delivering their own actions in the area.

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Cross cutting areas

We have identified six important areas that 'cut across' our nine Key Issues and will contribute towards a fairer more sustainable society. These will need to be addressed by our Lead Partnership action plans. They are:

- Social Inclusion
- Older People
- Black and Minority Ethnic Groups
- Rural Issues
- People with Disabilities

- Sustainable Communities

The Alliance recognise the diverse range of needs in our communities and want to make sure people have access to greater opportunities and choice to help them participate fully in their community and society in general.

We will work hard to ensure everyone receives better and fairer access to services and are treated equally and respectfully.

Each of the Lead Partnerships will address this in their detailed action plans. Some of the core values we have adopted are to:

- Involve the community, particularly socially excluded people, in decisions that affect their daily lives
- Improve the provision, access and co-ordination of services
- Raise awareness and remove barriers such as language, physical access, special needs and cost
- Encourage greater participation in opportunities available
- Improve information available on activities and services

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Social Inclusion

Social Inclusion is about people's prospects, networks and life chances. Social exclusion is often a result of a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health, poverty and family breakdown. We will ensure that social inclusion is addressed throughout our action plans.

Older People

People are now living longer and older people make up a growing proportion of our population. Addressing their particular needs is of growing importance to the Alliance.

We want to enable all older people to contribute fully, actively and independently to the community, ensuring a high quality of services and opportunities are available and accessible to them.

Black and Minority Ethnic Groups

Ethnic minorities are often the most deprived in our society and have poor expectations of public services, facing barriers such as language and discrimination. We will continue to build relationships and communicate with ethnic minority communities to raise awareness of their needs and ensure these are identified and addressed.

Rural Issues

People living in rural areas sometimes have different needs to those in town centres. There tends to be fewer job opportunities, facilities and services and more pressing travel needs. We want people living in rural areas to feel fully involved in developing their community, safeguarding its valued features and

shaping decisions that affect them. We will ensure we consider and address how our work is likely to impact on rural areas.

People with disabilities

Disabled people can face discrimination and exclusion in a number of ways such as employment, access to services, education, transport and housing. We want our district to be a place where all disabled people can participate fully as equal citizens. We will promote better understanding of disability issues and support will support and help disabled people in achieving equal rights.

Sustainable Communities

Sustainable communities are those which meet the diverse needs of existing and future generations for homes, jobs and social and cultural growth, without depletion of the earth's resources.

We want our communities to be attractive, safe places to live where people can live wholesome and prosperous lives.

Many components of sustainability have been built into this plan, including community involvement and improved transport services, enhancing environmental awareness, helping businesses prosper and promoting cultural and learning opportunities.

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Making a difference

Service improvement and community involvement are our core aims. That will mean leading as well as listening! The Alliance wants to make local services better by not just talking about improvements but making them happen too. We will strive to continually get a better balance between inclusivity and getting things done, so we can respond more often on time to your aspirations.

Working Together

Some partners, particularly those with statutory responsibilities, have a critical role in helping the Alliance to achieve its goals. However, there are many, many more people and organisations – too many to list – who will play a vital part in turning this plan into reality. The Alliance will work with these and invite many other partners to join the partnership to help deliver the Community Plan. These include agencies such as:

- Community Development Agency
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Welwyn Hatfield Access Group
- Finesse Leisure Trust
- Faith & community groups
- Age Concern
- Business Link
- Groundwork
- Connexions

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Goals, actions and targets

The Alliance high level *shared goals* are “single clear goals that many different players on the same team can kick into – from anywhere”. These are things identified by partners as a shared priority, possibly a gap in services or a wider *wicked issue* that no single agency can solve working on their own. These *whole community goals* are set out in this plan within nine ‘key issues’ you have identified for the area.

Nine *Lead Partnerships* have been tasked with developing, delivering and monitoring our day-to-day work programme. Detailed action plans will be constantly updated on our website - www.welwynhatfieldalliance.org.uk - and in our Policy Document for you to view.

Resources

Alliance partners already spend significant amounts of money delivering services in Welwyn Hatfield. This plan involves a change in behaviours for all those working as part of the Alliance, shaping spending plans and re-aligning service delivery to reflect its agreed shared goals.

By pooling resources and working together we hope to achieve more effective delivery, improved co-ordination and more ‘streamlined’ services to reduce duplication between key agencies.

It will also explore and identify new external funding sources and support community and voluntary groups by sharing information and linking them into a wider network of opportunities.

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Measuring impact

Ultimately the only real proof of improvement is you experiencing it and to ensure we keep pace with your changing priorities, we will continue to listen to your views and will regularly review our day-to-day actions.

Throughout the year and particularly in March 2005, we would like to hear your views on whether you think there has been any improvement and what you would like us to concentrate on next. Feedback methods are set out at the back of this plan along with a feedback form.

The Alliance Executive Board will review progress quarterly. Each year in July we will review completely our short-term priorities and produce a simple brochure setting out how we have done against our targets.

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Introduction to the Key Issues

The next section of this plan sets out our shared goals for each of the Key Issues. Detailed action plans are being produced by our Lead Partnerships setting out specific actions that we will take to improve things over the next 12 months. You can view these on our website - www.welwynhatfieldalliance.org.uk - or in hard copy upon request so that you can judge for yourself how we are doing. These actions and targets will be available to view from September 2004.

Making our communities safer

You told us...

Community Safety was the top priority for many of you and the perception was that the Alliance is not very successful in this area.

You told us that you would particularly like to see drugs and alcohol and anti-social behaviour tackled.

Our aim...

We want Welwyn Hatfield to be a safe place to live, work and visit. Crime and fear of crime can have a detrimental effect on quality of life.

Levels of community safety can be influenced by a number of factors such as the appearance of an area, social circumstances and building designs.

We want our communities to live in confidence and feel happy to leave their homes to take part in activities that draw them together.

Our aim is to help everyone to be safe and feel safe in Welwyn Hatfield through crime reduction, crime prevention and safety and education.

Over the coming year, we will focus our work on:

1. Reduce drug abuse and drug-related crime
2. Reduce anti-social behaviour, nuisance and vandalism, including alcohol related problems
3. Increase community involvement

This is a three-year plan. At the end of years one and two we will re-visit our goals to ensure we continue to focus on the most important things. We will take account of new problems and priorities when considering the following possible new goals:

1. Reduce deaths and injuries from fires and accidents
2. Reduce burglary and robbery in Welwyn Hatfield
3. Work with partners to reduce deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents
4. Reduce deliberate fires
5. Reduce theft of and from vehicles

Improving the environment

You told us...

Improving the environment is something you think we are doing well at.

However, it is still a high priority, particularly the maintenance and appearance of the district and its town centres.

Our aim...

We want Welwyn Hatfield to remain a pleasant place to live and work.

Many factors have an impact on the environment such as businesses, crime, housing and community involvement.

We aim to involve all members of the community in the sustainable development of our district, through improvements to the built environment, and through the protection, maintenance and enhancement of the natural environment.

Over the coming year, we will focus our work on:

1. Bring all interests together in an effective Environment Forum to identify and understand sustainable environmental action
2. Engage and educate the community on environmental issues

This is a three-year plan. At the end of years one and two we will re-visit our goals to ensure we continue to focus on the most important things. We will take account of new problems and priorities when considering the following possible new goals:

1. Reduce Littering and improve cleanliness
2. Foster civic pride locally
3. Gain a better understanding of community priorities
4. Work for better management and protection of open spaces
5. Work for a cleaner less polluted environment
6. Protect wildlife and natural habitats
7. Encourage recycling and protect natural resources for future generations

Developing children's and young people's potential

You told us...

'Developing children's and young people's potential' is an area you think we could do better at.

You told us we should develop more informal meeting places, help develop our children's and young people's talents and abilities, and promote active lifestyles.

Direct consultation with young people has reflected the same issues for what matters most to them.

Our aim...

With the proportion of children and young people in the district higher than the national average, we must ensure that we respect their rights, entitlements and needs as they develop into tomorrow's adults.

A whole host of issues affect them including their safety, health, transport and learning.

Many local clubs and organisations provide a wide range of programmes and activities, but there is still much to do.

Our aim is to ensure all children and young people have access to the services they need, taking account of their wishes and actively involving them in local decision-making.

Over the coming year, we will focus our work on:

1. Develop and support projects to keep children and young people safe and healthy
2. Create more places to go and constructive activities for children and young people

This is a three-year plan. At the end of years one and two we will re-visit our goals to ensure we continue to focus on the most important things. We will take account of new problems and priorities when considering the following possible new goals:

1. Develop the talents and abilities of children and young people
2. Reduce teenage conceptions and improve the support and advice available to parents and carers
3. Promote greater community involvement, e.g. walking bus for children
4. Promote the development of 'whole persons', body, mind and spirit
5. Improve information for children and young people
6. Enable children and young people to rely on themselves to get around
7. Enable young people to get involved in decision-making

Providing Decent Homes for All

You told us...

'Providing decent homes for all' is something that you think we are doing well, and you would like us to continue to include this as a priority.

The areas that you would like us to focus on are private sector property standards, and providing more affordable housing for local people.

Our aim...

With our close proximity to London, Welwyn Hatfield is characterised by high property prices. This affects many local people, and forces many of them to move and live out of the area.

We aim to provide a wide range of high quality housing services in Welwyn Hatfield, and to improve access to housing where affordable homes are out of reach (inc. supported housing for local people).

Providing 'Decent Homes' can be influenced by safer communities, healthy living, and a cleaner environment.

Over the coming year, we will focus our work on:

1. Managing the supply of affordable homes (inc. key worker housing)
2. Tackling homelessness more effectively through better preventative work with our partners

This is a three-year plan. At the end of years one and two we will re-visit our goals to ensure we continue to focus on the most important things. We will take account of new problems and priorities when considering the following possible new goals:

1. Providing sustainable and affordable homes for local people
2. Promoting physical improvements across all local housing tenures
3. Encouraging and providing a wide range of local housing social care and support services
4. Giving local people reasonable choice and preference about where and what they live in
5. Working with our partners to create safer places to live and work in vibrant and balanced communities
6. Seeking to develop good neighbour relations between students and local residents

Enhancing healthy living

You told us...

Health is an area that you think we could improve, particularly in modernising and improving the quality and efficiency of local health care services and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Our aim...

We want Welwyn Hatfield to be a healthier place for everyone.

Good health is more than just the treatment and prevention of illness. It is about people living longer and enjoying a greater feeling of well being throughout their lives.

Many different factors can influence people's health such as housing conditions, active lifestyles and social circumstances.

Our aim is to address health problems and inequalities within the local community and to help people live independent, healthy lives.

Over the coming year, we will focus our work on:

1. Promote health improvement and tackle inequalities in health
2. Engage key partners in the delivery of the local Health Improvement and Modernisation Programme

This is a three-year plan. At the end of years one and two we will re-visit our goals to ensure we continue to focus on the most important things. We will take account of new problems and priorities when considering the following possible new goals:

1. Improve the uptake of benefits and concessions to vulnerable people
2. Improve the quality, accessibility and efficiency of local health care services
3. Tackle drug and alcohol misuse
4. Tackle childhood obesity
5. Promote healthy and independent living for older people
6. Improve the health and well being of children, families and young people
7. Promote mental well being
8. Help patients and the public to engage with health care services
9. Take action to increase the future supply of nursing home capacity
10. Improve dementia care

Helping Businesses Prosper

You told us...

You think we are doing well at helping businesses to prosper in Welwyn Hatfield, and you would like us to continue our work in this area.

Your priority for this issue is to maintain the competitiveness of our district and increase vocational training opportunities.

Our aim...

We want to ensure that the district remains attractive to businesses.

The needs of business are currently being addressed within a network of partnerships. Our aim is to develop the Business Forum from a consultative Forum to one which can lead in developing plans to address business needs.

The re-development of the Hatfield Aerodrome site, Hatfield Town Centre, and part of Welwyn Garden City Town Centre provide major opportunities for the continued revitalisation of the district.

Our aim is to promote the development of our town centres and rural areas, maintain a prosperous local economy, reduce deprivation and stimulate enterprise.

Over the coming year, we will focus our work on:

1. Develop an effective Business Forum in Welwyn Hatfield
2. Work together to increase vocational training opportunities

This is a three-year plan. At the end of years one and two we will re-visit our goals to ensure we continue to focus on the most important things. We will take account of new problems and priorities when considering the following possible new goals:

1. Support the regeneration of Hatfield and WGC Town Centres
2. Attract and support small and medium sized businesses
3. Promote attractive and thriving town and local centres
4. Encourage business premises of the right type and quality in appropriate locations
5. Maintain an efficient local labour market

Encouraging Learning Throughout Life

You told us...

You think we are doing fairly well in encouraging learning throughout life.

You would particularly like us to work together to remove barriers to learning and engage employers in developing skills in the workplace.

Our aim...

We want to enhance the cultural well being, social life and economic prosperity of Welwyn Hatfield.

The role of arts, heritage and sport all play a significant part in lifelong learning, which builds people's skills and confidence, promoting opportunities for individuals and benefiting local businesses

Our aim is to increase access to and participation in post 16 and lifelong learning for individuals and communities.

Over the coming year, we will focus our work on:

1. Remove barriers to learning
2. Encourage employers to promote learning in the workplace

This is a three-year plan. At the end of years one and two we will re-visit our goals to ensure we continue to focus on the most important things. We will take account of new problems and priorities when considering the following possible new goals:

1. Increase participation in core skills training
2. Improve learning opportunities for older people and people with disabilities
3. Promote a more positive perception of learning
4. Improve learning opportunities for other target groups e.g. minority ethnic groups
5. Increase education and training for the unemployed
6. Develop more opportunities for informal learning
7. Increase on line learning in neighbourhood settings
8. Increase demand for learning and improve pupil achievement

Improving Transport Systems

You told us...

Transport is important to you and is an area you think we could improve on.

Your top priority is for us to work better in unison to identify local transport systems that meet a wider range of local needs, particularly for rural areas and young people.

Our aim...

We want a transportation system that meets the needs of Welwyn Hatfield communities and allows access for all to everyday facilities.

The centralisation of many services into the town centres has meant that access to rural parts of Welwyn Hatfield has become more important. The increased amount of traffic and congestion can have a real effect on people's quality of life as well as on the environment.

We aim to work towards a sustainable transportation system, which is safe, efficient and affordable.

Over the coming year, we will focus our work on:

1. Bring all interests together in an effective Transport Forum for Welwyn Hatfield
2. Communicate travel information more effectively

This is a three-year plan. At the end of years one and two we will re-visit our goals to ensure we continue to focus on the most important things. We will take account of new problems and priorities when considering the following possible new goals:

1. Improve the transport infrastructure for evening and rural needs
2. Support and contribute to the development of the Mid Herts Area Plan in Welwyn Hatfield
3. Improve safety when travelling
4. Minimise the environmental impact of transportation
5. Promote transport systems that supports business

Helping People to Enjoy Life

You told us...

Enhancing leisure and cultural experiences in Welwyn Hatfield is something you think we are doing fairly well.

Developing areas for play, arts and sport are the issues that matter most to you, as well as better information and helping people to develop personal skills and self-confidence.

Our aim...

Leisure and cultural activities are essential ingredients to lively and vibrant communities and have a huge impact on quality of life, enhancing people's physical and mental well being.

Welwyn Hatfield has many lively, flourishing clubs and an excellent range of facilities in and around the area.

Our aim is to enhance everyone's leisure experience by ensuring equal access, encouraging participation and involvement and promoting regeneration through leisure and cultural businesses.

Over the coming year, we will focus our work on:

1. Develop specific sports and arts activities
2. Increase awareness of opportunities to take part in cultural activities

This is a three-year plan. At the end of years one and two we will re-visit our goals to ensure we continue to focus on the most important things. We will take account of new problems and priorities when considering the following possible new goals:

1. Help people develop personal skills and self confidence
2. Explore potential for a leisure discount scheme for residents and visitors, piloting with people with disabilities, black and minority ethnic groups
3. Develop a cultural career programme with recognised qualifications and work placement schemes
4. Develop an effective and sustainable communication framework for cultural activities
5. Promote a positive and vibrant community spirit
6. Establish an older people's forum
7. Promote Welwyn Hatfield to students, visitors and residents

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It's your community – be part of it

Copies of the full policy document which includes our action plans and monitoring framework are available on our website www.welwynhatfieldalliance.org.uk or on request to the Alliance Co-ordinator.

You can comment upon and influence the work of the Alliance in a number of ways:

- Complete the freepost form at the back of this brochure
- Visit our website and complete the online questionnaire
- Request a workshop for your community group
- Email or post your comments to the below address
- Become a member of the Wider Alliance
- Sign up to our monthly newsletter
- Join one of the lead partnerships

To find out more about any of the above, please contact the Alliance Co-ordinator:

Partnerships Team
Welwyn Hatfield Council
Campus West
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
Herts AL8 6BX

Tel. 01707 357113
Email: alliance@welhat.gov.uk
Website: www.welwynhatfieldalliance.org.uk

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Please use this section to tell us over this year, but particularly in March 2005, if you have noticed any improvement and what you would like us to concentrate on next.

This will form part of our systematic evaluation of the impact we are, or are not, making and help us to re-prioritise our efforts in our second and third years.

Name:
Address:
Email:

What do you think of this Plan?

Draft Community Plan May 2004

How well do you think we are currently doing at achieving our shared goals?

Looking at the list of possible new goals for years two and three, what should be our top priorities?

What else do you think needs improving in Welwyn Hatfield?

What do you like about Welwyn Hatfield?

What one thing would make your life better?

I am interested in finding out how I / my organisation can get involved

I would like to be kept informed on the work of the Alliance

I would like to receive more information about the Alliance and Community Plan

BACK COVER

Large print and different languages

Welwyn Hatfield Alliance, c/o Partnerships Team, Welwyn Hatfield Council,
Campus West, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL8 6BX