

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE 11 JANUARY 2000

NOTE: Full copies of the reports mentioned below have been sent to all members of the Environment Committee and other members who have requested it. Any queries on this report to: Joan Blake, Room 222, County Secretary's Department, County Hall, Hertford. (Tel: 01992 555560)

1 A PROSPECTUS FOR HERTFORDSHIRE'S RAIL NETWORK - CONSULTATION

The County Council's first Rail Prospectus was published in 1997 in an effort to communicate its aspirations for the county's rail network to the rail industry in general, and in particular to those companies bidding for franchises to run Hertfordshire's passenger services.

Since publication, a number of significant changes have occurred within the transport industry and local government, notably the Integrated Transport White Paper, Local Transport Plans, the establishment of the Shadow Strategic Rail Authority (SSRA) and Railtrack's major route strategies

During the autumn of 1999, in an attempt to stimulate strategic planning and major investment, the SSRA announced it would offer the opportunity for existing franchisees to begin renegotiation of their franchises, with the implication of much longer periods of tenure and the expectation of significant capital investment in an integrated transport network. All three franchises announced in the first tranche of renegotiations (Great North Eastern Railway, Connex South Central and Chiltern) have an impact on Hertfordshire.

In light of the above changes and developments, it is timely that the content of the Prospectus be reviewed and a fresh statement made of the County Council's aspirations for the rail network.

The Local Transport Panel met in November 1999 and agreed the need for an updated Prospectus. They felt in particular that:

- overcrowding should be reduced, with the aim of providing seats for all passengers;
- security should be improved in station car parks; accessibility to stations should be improved for pedestrians, cyclists and buses;
- promotion and operation of a safe railway system was essential.

The Committee have approved the revised draft entitled "A Prospectus for Hertfordshire's Rail Network" and authorised the Director of Environment to consult with district and borough councils, the rail industry and representatives of rail users. They have asked that their views be reported to the committee prior to approval and publication of the final version of the Prospectus.

2 REVIEW OF THE GREEN COUNTY HERTFORDSHIRE STRATEGY

The Green County Hertfordshire Strategy was adopted by the County Council in November 1996, containing a vision for a more sustainable future for the county and outlining how the County Council intended to work toward that vision. That Strategy is now being reviewed and expanded in scope to define sustainability for the whole of the public sector in Hertfordshire.

The new Strategy will consist of a set of sustainability principles, applicable to all public sector organisations in Hertfordshire and processes for the implementation and monitoring of those principles.

The committee, in welcoming both the expansion of the strategy and the review itself, are appreciative of the opportunity to work in partnership with a wider range of organisations. They have now agreed a response to the Hertfordshire Environmental Forum reflecting the County Council's views on the sustainability principles.

In addition, they agreed that work should continue on the Green County Strategy, the Environmental Pledge and Local Agenda 21 community grants.

**Jane Pitman
Chairman
County Hall
Hertford**

11 January 2000