

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MONDAY 10 MAY 2004 AT 2.00 P.M.

COUNTY COUNCIL

TUESDAY 18 MAY 2004 AT 10.30 A.M.

(please retain for County Council meeting)

Agenda item no.

Cabinet

3

County Council

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HERTS TOGETHER - THE COUNTYWIDE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive

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1. Purpose of report

To present to Cabinet and County Council the Countywide Community Strategy **(to follow)**.

2. Summary

- The County Council is required by the Local Government Act 2000 to prepare, in consultation with stakeholders, a County Strategy which indicates how it intends to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the County.
- Herts Together is the Countywide strategic partnership comprising some 50 organisations including the PCTs, Police Authority, all the district councils, the ten LSPs and the voluntary sector which has prepared the draft Strategy.
- The draft strategy draws on the results of a series of themed meetings, the countywide issues highlighted by the local LSPs and the priorities of the countywide partnerships such as the Hertfordshire Prosperity Forum and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. It seeks to add value to the work of the local LSPs and not duplicate what is more appropriately done at local level.
- The BVPP Panel has considered the draft and its views incorporated in a revised strategy. The extent to which community strategies are linked to the BVPP and the way in which each local

authority discharges its community leadership role through its strategic partnership will be important in future CPA assessments.

3. Conclusion

Cabinet is invited to recommend the adoption of the County Strategy to the County Council.

4 Background

4.1 Herts Together is a wide partnership of around 50 organisations drawn from all sectors across Hertfordshire and including the district councils, local LSP's, countywide partnerships, representatives from the voluntary and community sector, the PCT's and the Police Authority. It aims to function as a voice for Hertfordshire on issues of common concern to the partners and seeks to act at a strategic level and not duplicate activity more properly carried out at a local level. It is chaired by Michael Janes, as the Executive Members for Partnerships.

4.2 Herts Together's first task has been to produce the Hertfordshire Community Strategy. This it has developed through a smaller core group, chaired by Michael Janes, comprising representatives from each Local Strategic Partnership, the Chairman of each county-wide theme lead organisation and representation from the voluntary and community sector. This group will now take on the formal role as the Herts Together Board.

5. The Plan's Themes

5.1 At its first meeting in October 2001, Herts Together identified a number of themes to guide its work. These have been explored at a series of themed meetings involving key stakeholders and the outcomes have helped inform this draft community strategy. The themes, their key priorities and the lead countywide partnerships are:

5.2 Investing in Children and Young People

- Increase education and learning opportunities and improve achievement
 - Help children stay out of trouble and stay safe
 - Reduce health inequalities and promote healthy lifestyles
 - Increase access to play and leisure opportunities
- (Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership)

5.3 Promoting Healthy Communities

- Reducing inequalities in health and improve life expectancy
 - Reduce key risk behaviours
 - Improve the health and social care of the most vulnerable groups
 - Working with partners to tackle the key root causes of ill health
- (Strategic Health Authority, PCTs and Herts Partnership Trust)

- 5.4 Creating Safe Communities
- Tackle anti-social behaviour
 - Anti-social behaviour fuelled by alcohol misuse
 - Protect vulnerable people from becoming victims of crime
 - Reduce the number of people becoming victims of domestic violence
 - Reduce drug misuse among young people
(Crime Reduction Partnerships)
- 5.5 Building a Prosperous Inclusive Society
- Growing a world class Hertfordshire
 - Developing businesses
 - Developing people
 - Developing communities
 - Integrating economic and environmental goals
(Hertfordshire Prosperity Forum)
- 5.6 Maintaining a Sustainable Environment
- Protect and enhance the environment, to improve the quality of life for all
 - Provide more affordable housing
 - Provide appropriate transport infrastructure and encourage more sustainable modes of transport
 - Protect and conserve the natural resources especially with regard to water and energy consumption
 - Recognise the potential implications of climate change for the environment and service provision in Hertfordshire
 - Reduce waste consumption and encourage reuse and recycling of materials
(Hertfordshire Environmental Forum)
- 5.7 To ensure that Herts Together remains strategic and focussed on countywide issues, each district LSP was asked to identify the main issues that had arisen from their LSP that had a county significance. These issues are reflected within the Plan. Examples are affordable housing, traffic congestion, protecting green spaces. However the manner in which Herts Together tackles these issues will be complementary to local actions and will be led by the countywide partnership.
- 5.8 Work on mapping the district-based community plan themes and those of Herts Together shows that there is very little discrepancy between them. Differences mainly reflect particular district priorities e.g. Watford's priority to create a lively, family-friendly town centre.

6 Consultation

- 6.1 The five Herts Together themes were developed through consultation with countywide stakeholders and drew on the County Council's consultation work with its citizen panel. As the content of the countywide strategy has been developed from previously identified priorities agreed by multi-agency partnerships on which there has been robust consultation, there has not been a further detailed public consultation programme. The public has had an opportunity to comment on the strategy through the Herts Direct newspaper and the web site. The draft strategy has also been considered by all 50 constituent organisations, the major county partnerships and the ten LSPs and made available on district council web sites. The consultation period closed on 16 April and the theme leads and the Herts Together working group have considered the comments received and agreed amendments to the draft strategy.

7. The role of the County Council

- 7.1 While Herts Together is a "partnership of partnerships", HCC is the body with statutory responsibility for producing this Strategy. The draft strategy has been circulated to all Members and presentations have been made to departmental Boards. It has been considered by the Best Value Performance Plan Panel at its meeting on 2 April 2004 to assess how well it reflects the priorities in the BVPP in those areas of the Community Plan for which it has primary responsibility for service delivery. The views of the Panel were:
- that the vision should be broader and more inclusive,
 - that more reference should be made to services for older people,
 - that more specific reference to particular actions be deleted
 - that clarity is needed on how objectives are being measured.
- 7.2 The Panel also requested changes to the format and to the individual themes. Members noted the links between the Herts Together themes and the promises in the BVPP and asked that the table showing these links be included in the BVPP and attached to this report. The Panel will see the revised strategy at its meeting on 7 May.
- 7.3 The next CPA will involve an assessment of the extent to which local authorities use the community plan and the strategic partnership to deliver their community leadership responsibilities. The Herts Together community strategy sits above the BVPP as a significant document in the organisation and as an excellent authority, it is one of our major plans.

8. Implementation and Review

- 8.1 The final plan will go before full Council on 18 May and then to Herts Together for adoption on 27 May. A formal launch will take place in

September. Work on the action plan will begin in June and be completed by December.

9. Financial Implications

9.1 The cost of producing the strategy will be met from existing resources.

Background Papers

Herts Together draft Community Strategy: Consultation draft - March 2004

Notes of the Herts Together Working Group, 11 December 2003

Notes of Herts Together Working Group, 29 January 2004

Notes of Herts Together Working Group, 26 February 2004

Report to BVPP Panel, 2 April 2004

Notes of Herts Together Working Group, 20 April 2004