

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
9 JUNE 2015**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

12

TITLE OF REPORT : MONITORING REPORT ON PROJECTS IN THE PRIORITIES FOR THE DISTRICT 2014/15

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR JULIAN CUNNINGHAM

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This monitoring report provides an update on the delivery of the projects identified in the Priorities for the District 2014/15.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That delivery against the key projects stated in the Priorities for the District 2014/15 be noted and commented on by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To enable achievements against the Priorities for the District 2014/15 to be considered.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There are no alternative options as this is a monitoring report.

5. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 5.1 No external consultation has been undertaken in the preparation of this report. Members will, however, be aware that reports were taken to Overview & Scrutiny (18 March 2014), Cabinet (25 March 2014) and Council (9 April 2014) on the Priorities for the District 2014/15.

6 FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan


7. BACKGROUND

7.1 This report provides details on the status of the various projects identified in the Priorities for the District 2014/15. It does not include any projects initiated after the document was agreed and is not a full report on all of the projects that the Council is undertaking. A full copy of this document is available via the following internet link. <http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/northherts-cms/files/nhdcprioritiesdistrict2014-15.pdf>


7.2 This is the first year of the new priorities that were agreed at the Council meeting on 5 September 2013. The Priorities for the District 2014/15 was approved at the Council meeting on 9th April 2014 and this contained a number of high level actions against each Priority.

7.3 The Priorities for 2016/17 and beyond will be presented to the June 2015 Cabinet meeting and will be referred to the July meeting of Full Council.

7.4 This report summarises the status of each of the high level actions in the Priorities for the District 2014/15. Overall, good progress has been made. The following symbols have been used to summarise progress.


Project completed 

Project not due for completion in 2014/15 


Project behind original due date 






8. PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH







8.1 The Council has committed to promote sustainable growth. This encompasses employment, housing, leisure and the infrastructure to support the growth and the Council needs to encourage an environment in which businesses and people can flourish. The following specific projects were identified in the Priorities for the District.









8.2 **The publication of a revised timetable (Local Development Scheme) for the preparation of a Local Plan. [Original due date – 31 July 2015]** As the Committee will be aware, there was a delay from the original Local Plan timetable following the lack of certainty over the new level of need arising from Luton or the timetable for when such certainty will arise. The new timetable was agreed when the Local Development Scheme (LDS) was agreed at Full Council on 4 September 2014. The Local Plan Preferred Options was approved for consultation purposes in November 2014. The continued development of the Local Plan remains a key project for 2015/16. 






8.3 **Provision of an Economic Development Officer. [Original due date 31 March 2015]** Consultation on the draft Economic Development Strategy for the District concluded on 31 March 2015. Further targeted consultation on the Strategy is planned to continue until the summer of 2015, meeting with representative groups and business forums and culminating in a workshop. This will lead to a final strategy being presented to Cabinet in September 2015 and the development of an Action Plan to form the basis of a job description for an Economic Development Officer to be appointed.

The anticipated date for appointment of an Economic Development Officer is December 2015. 

- 8.4 **Disposal of surplus Council Land. [Original due date 31 December 2015]** The sale of land at Lloyd Way Kimpton to Croudace Homes is almost complete and will be developed to provide new homes as well as generating a Capital sum to fund future projects. Negotiations are continuing on the Lumen Road site which is subject to ground investigations, but a 10 % deposit has been received. The site at Yeomanry Drive, Baldock, will be remarketed shortly. The disposal of surplus Council land continues as a key project in 2015/16.
- 8.5 **Regeneration of John Barker Place. [Original due date 31 July 2017]** The second phase of the project is due to commence shortly, including temporary relocation of the multi use games area (MUGA) and commencement of the new affordable homes and shops. The construction contract is being run by North Herts Homes (NHH) with the Council in a supporting role. This scheme continues to be a key project for 2015/16 and the estimated completion date remains 31 July 2017. 
- 8.6 **Apprenticeship and intern roles.[Original due date 31 March 2015]** The Human Resources Team maintain a rolling list of apprentice and intern appointments to date. A regular view of the budget is undertaken and the original funding will have been used over 4 years. Regular updates are provided to the HR Portfolio Holder and group leaders and there have been presentations by the apprentices to Senior Management Group, Senior Management Team and Joint Staff Consultative Committee. The Council continues to consider apprenticeship and intern roles as and when a suitable opportunity arises. 
- 8.7 **Churchgate [Original due date 31 March 2015]** Procurement advice was obtained on the Council's ability to enter an exclusivity agreement and Council agreed in November 2014 to discontinue its previous development approach for the area based on the Churchgate Planning brief and instead instructed officers to look for alternative approaches for a smaller scheme in the short term. Discussions are ongoing with an interested party. This continues to be a key project for 15/16. 
- 8.8 **WORKING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES**
The Council continues to work with local communities. The team of Community Development officers work with many groups and organisations across the District to promote community participation.
- 8.9 **North Hertfordshire Museum and Community Facility [Original due date June 2013]** Regular information notes to Area Committees and periodic reports to Overview & Scrutiny and Council to report on significant issues have been submitted for decision where appropriate. The building works have been completed and the building handed back by the contractor. The fit out of the museum has commenced. The scheduled date for the public opening of the museum is the Autumn 2015. 
- 8.10 **Bancroft Recreation Ground.** Following the unsuccessful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a lottery grant for refurbishment, the original project halted. Cabinet considered a report at its December 2014 meeting and the development of a "splash park" for the summer of 2016 is underway.
- 8.11 **Baldock Town Hall. [Original due date August 2015]** The Town Hall is now known as the Baldock Arts and Heritage centre. Liaison continues with the Baldock Town Hall Group for the drawdown of capital for essential works as per the conditions agreed by Cabinet. The priority works were originally due to be completed in early August 2015 but a revised timetable for the outstanding priority tasks to be completed by end of December 2015 has been agreed. This will be formalised by a variation to the original lease agreement. 

- 8.12 **Westmill Community Centre. [Original due date 31 July 2015]** Work has commenced on the building of the new community centre. The need to complete some legal formalities with NHH has led to a delay in the start on site. As the construction contract is being run by NHH the Council are working to their timetable. The revised completion date is February 2016.
- 8.13 **Bush Springs, Baldock – play area refurbishment [Original due date 28 February 2015]** Consultation with local residents and seeking external grant funding ,extended the time frame for the project. Work has now commenced and the facilities will be available before the start of the summer school holidays. 
- 8.14 **Community Events on Council land. [Original due date 31 October 2015]** Support was provided to facilitate a number of community events on Council land such as World War One commemoration events, the open air cinema event and the travelling fun fair in Baldock. A number of family events have been organised by Groundwork Hertfordshire in Howard Park & Gardens. 
- 8.15 **Rural Capital Funding. [Original due date 30 April 2015]** Grants totalling £50,000 were awarded to improve community and village halls. The projects approved for funding were:
- St Ippolyts Parish Hall – building enhancements & new heating system.
 - Peter's Green Village Hall – building enhancements including refurbishment of hall floor.
 - Willian Village Hall – new roof including insulation.
 - Knebworth Village Hall – building enhancements & new heating system.
 - Graveley Village Hall – replacement windows and doors.
 - Kimpton Memorial Hall – building refurbishment & replacement windows.
 - Breachwood Green Village Hall –toilet and kitchen facility improvements
 - Kelshall village hall – new hall floor and wall insulation
- The delivery of these projects and completion of the agreed improvements will be monitored by the Council. 
- 8.16 **Undertake a Citizens Panel exercise.** A Citizens Panel exercise was undertaken to obtain views on service provision, levels and satisfaction. The outcomes from this survey have been put onto the website. 
- 8.17 **LIVING WITHIN OUR MEANS**
The Council aims to be able to stand on its own with little or no direct government assistance and keep Council Tax as low as possible without impacting on frontline services. The Council's will use all available resources such as people, knowledge, investments and land and buildings to fulfil this aim.
- 8.18 **Energy Audits [Original due date 31 March 2015]** The review of the energy audits, alongside the condition surveys of our buildings, was completed. Works to reduce energy consumption, where these have a proven payback, have commenced. Some examples of planned work include solar panels, LED lighting and lighting sensors (passive infra-red) and boiler upgrades at the various locations. Looking further ahead similar measures will be incorporated into the District Council Office refurbishment and explored for the Leisure Centres 
- 8.19 **Refurbishment of the District Council Offices [Due date 30 November 2016].** A project plan for the refurbishment and modernisation of the Council Offices has been agreed. Dependent on the procurement exercise, it is likely that the works will commence in June 2016 for completion by end of November 2016. 

- 8.20 **Building Control Partnership arrangement [Original due date 31 May 2015]** Currently seven Hertfordshire District and Borough Councils are interested in pursuing a collaborative working arrangement for their building control services. Cabinet reviewed the draft Business Case in March 2015 and approved continuation to a full financial case. Delays have been caused through the number of authorities that have been involved in the process and obtaining approvals via their Committee structures. 
- 8.21 **Senior Management Group Project – Land & Buildings [Original due date 31 October 2014]** The Council is working with the East of England Local Government Association on a Locality Review that will assist in ensuring we maximise the returns from our property assets. This will be achieved through amongst other areas the identification of any new assets, exploring marriage values and the extent to which any value can be enhanced through works up to and including outline planning permission. An Initial review of Royston has been undertaken with a further review of Letchworth Garden City now being undertaken. A workshop to review outcomes from both reviews will be held in July 2015. 
- 8.22 **Senior Management Group Project - New Ways of Working & Office Accommodation [Original due date 31 October 2014]** Staff considered and submitted new ways of working ideas. A Shared Anti Fraud Service with other Hertfordshire authorities managed by the Shared Internal Audit Service has been established. 
- 8.23 **Senior Management Group – Channel Migration [Original due date 31 October 2014]** The following areas are being developed linked to this project:
- Develop a range of mobile APP solutions
 - Develop e-billing options
 - Broaden the use of text alerts to residents
 - Scope the project of "tell us once" for data sharing 
- 8.24 **Senior Management Group – Review of Parking Services. [Original due date 31 October 2014]** Work will continue to determine projects from this in depth review of parking services. The Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group on Parking undertaken in 2014/15 has been referred to the Project Team following consideration by Cabinet. 
- 8.25 **Crematorium at Wilbury Hills cemetery** A report was taken to Cabinet in September 2014 that outlined further information in respect of NHDC's legal capacity to provide and operate a crematorium. Later in 2015/16 work will continue to develop the North Herts Crematorium business case and structural arrangements for future implementation. 
- 8.26 **Careline [Original due date 30 June 2015]** . Hertfordshire County Council have appointed Careline to be the sole provider of community alarms across Hertfordshire from 1 April 2015. Careline has substantially increased its client base as a result and equipment and clients have transferred smoothly from the existing providers. 
- 8.27 **Value for money review of Electoral Services [Original due date 30 April 2015]** This review is to ensure that Electoral Services continues to provide value for money. The review is complete and will be reported to Corporate Board in June 2015. 

- 8.28 **Northern Transfer Station. [Original due date September 2017]** Further consideration of this needs to be undertaken in conjunction with the County Council and it will be linked to the review of the waste and street cleansing contract. 
- 8.29 **Bury Mead site and residual waste [Original due date October 2014]** The site was closed for residents to dispose of household waste, enabling it to continue to be used as a waste transfer station by the new contractor. 
- 8.30 **New Waste Contracts (agreement to joint procurement) [Original due date 31 March 2015]** Work has commenced on the scope of the new waste, recycling and street cleansing contract. The current contract is being extended to 2018 in order to harmonise end dates at NHDC and EHDC. A report on the potential for a business case to be developed for joint working was taken to December Cabinet. A further report outlining the strategic case for developing a joint waste contract with East Herts Council will be taken to the June 2015 Cabinet meeting. 
- 8.31 **Negotiation of Lease terms. [Original due date 31 March 2015]** Work has continued on reviewing and renewing the lease agreements for a number of Community Centres and an update report is to be taken to Cabinet. The lease agreement for the Jackmans Community Centre has been completed. 
- 8.32 **Payroll [30 September 2014]** The provision of the payroll service from 1 April 2014 was transferred to Serco. A report specifically on this project was considered by the December 2014 meeting of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. 

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no legal implications arising from this monitoring report.
- 9.2 Overview and Scrutiny's terms of reference include "to review performance against the Council's agreed priorities and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or service areas".

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The actions identified were resourced through the corporate business planning process cycle for 2014/15 that was undertaken in 2013/14. A number of these projects formed part of the Council's capital programme for 2014/15.
- 10.2 The Council continues to face difficult resourcing and spending decisions in view of the reduction in government support in future years and the availability of funding will impact on the projects that can be undertaken.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 As key projects for the Council, where relevant, each project has its own project risk log that is maintained by the Project Manager and reviewed by the Project Board. Some high value/cross cutting projects are considered as Top Risks for the Council and these have been monitored throughout 2014/15 by the Finance Audit and Risk Committee

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of its functions, give **due regard** to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2 By reporting delivery against the Priorities for the District 2014/15 this provides a means to monitor whether the council are meeting the stated outcomes of the district priorities, its targets or delivering accessible and appropriate services to the community to meet different people's needs. This assists the Council to fulfil a number of it's obligations arising from the Public Sector Equality Duty.

13 SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 As the recommendations made in this report do not constitute a public service contract, the measurement of 'social value' as required by the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 need not be applied, although equalities implications and opportunities are identified in the relevant section at paragraphs 12.
- 13.2 Where the key projects referred to in this report relate to the award of a public service contract, 'social value' will be captured and reported in accordance with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.

14 HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are no additional human resource implications arising from this monitoring report. The resources needed to deliver projects should be considered through the Corporate Business Planning process.

15. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 15.1 Fiona Timms
Performance & Risk Manager
01462 474251
Fiona.timms@north-herts.gov.uk

Contributors
Norma Atlay
Strategic Director of Finance, Policy & Governance

Andrew Cavanagh
Head of Finance Performance & Asset Management

Andy Godman
Head of Housing & Public Protection

Anthony Roche
Acting Corporate Legal Manager and Monitoring Officer

Sarah Dobor
Communications Manager

Ian Fullstone
Head of Development and Building Control

Vaughan Watson
Head of Leisure & Environmental Services

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 Projects listed in the Priorities for the District 2014/15 available on the Council's website. This does not include key projects that have been initiated since the document was approved.

<http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/aksnherts/images/att7815.doc>

16.2 Key actions recorded on Covalent, the Council's Performance & Risk software.