

# Better Places to Live

Action plans to underpin the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA  
(April 10 - December 10)

A key aim of the BPL Partnership as stated in its terms of reference is to identify and agree common definitions of The Housing, Affordable Housing and Quality Neighbourhoods and Sustaining Hertfordshire's Unique Character and Quality of Life Objectives in the Herts Forward Sustainable Community Strategy in order to clarify what success would look like.

The BPL partnership is the only strategic body in Hertfordshire bringing together key representatives from the:-

1. Chair of the Chief Executives of the Residential Social Landlord's in Hertfordshire Group
2. Chair of Herts Planning Officer Group
3. Chair of Herts Heads of Housing Group
4. LCBSR<sup>1</sup> Housing Group
5. Hertfordshire County Council – Land Management Unit (and joint funders of CMS<sup>2</sup>/HBRC<sup>3</sup>)
6. Groundwork
7. Citizen Focus and Crime Reduction
8. HACO<sup>4</sup>
9. HEF<sup>5</sup>
10. Chair of Street Scene Partnership
11. Environment Agency

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<sup>1</sup> London Commuter Belt Sub Region

<sup>2</sup> Countryside Management Unit

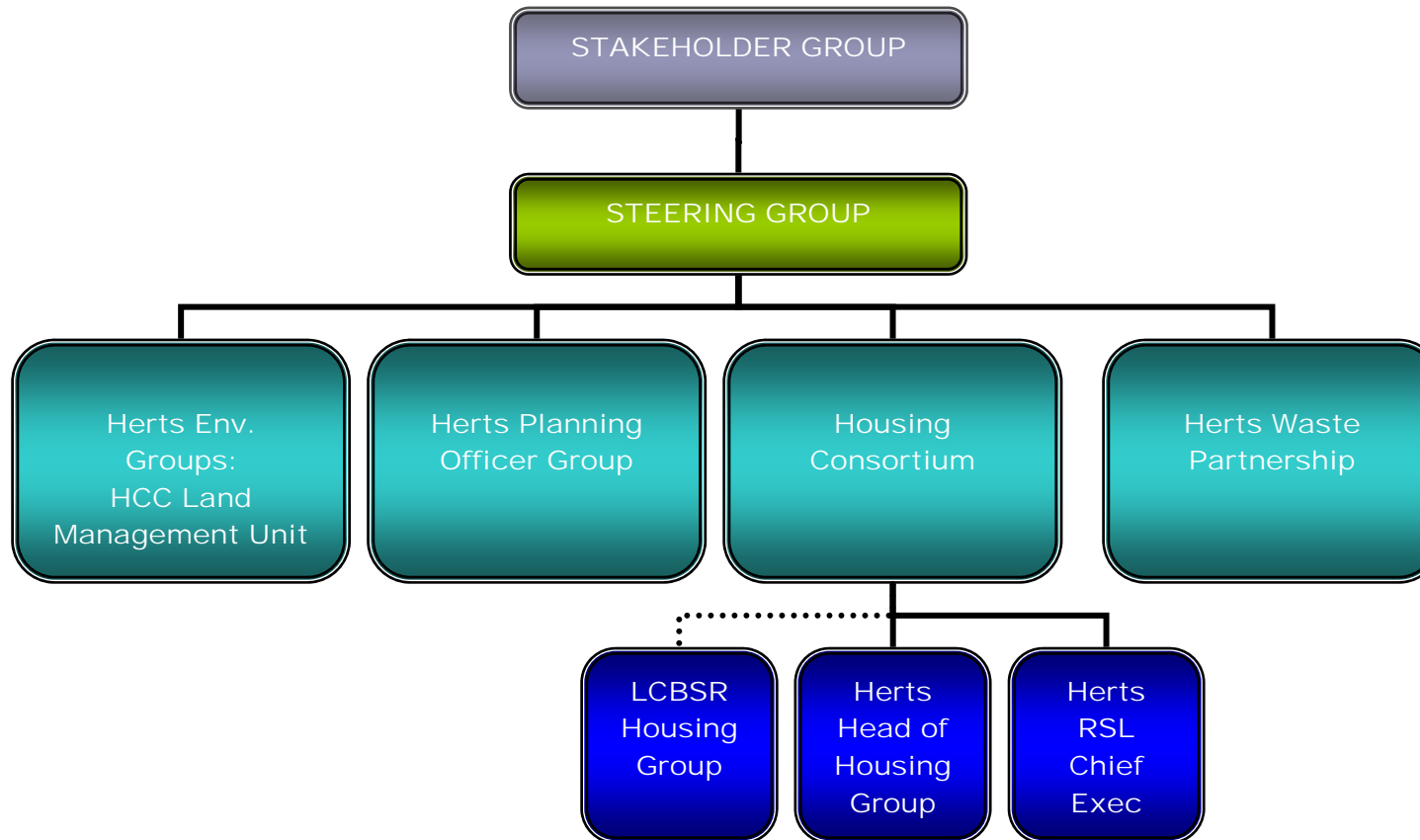
<sup>3</sup> Hertfordshire Biological Record Centre

<sup>4</sup> Hertfordshire Association of Cultural Officers

<sup>5</sup> Hertfordshire Environment Forum

By bringing together the representatives of the respective partnerships a coordinated approach can be developed to address the shared goals and to tackle the conflicting issues.

**Governance and Delivery:**



## **Risk:**

### Strategic Risks:

1. Individual stakeholders/ partner organisations disengage from BPL partnership as they feel it is adding insufficient value. Consequence: The capacity and reputation of the Steering Group is diminished resulting in reduced ability to deliver the work programme and be the forum for collective discussions on strategic housing, development and quality of life issues facing Hertfordshire.
2. Challenging conditions resulting in failure to deliver Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Area Agreement (LAA) priorities. Consequence: Work programme of BPL is not delivered resulting in poor reputation of partnership and lack of better outcomes for local people.
3. Recession restricts housing development. Consequence: LAA<sup>6</sup> targets on housing growth not met.
4. Housing affordability remains a barrier for people moving to Hertfordshire, people living independently and social housing provision. Consequence: Demand exceeds supply for housing provision and key workers are unable to move to Herts reducing the capacity of key services (police, health, social care, education, fire and rescue) Public sector cuts
5. The delivery of the action plan is dependent on public sector (Central Government) investment. Assumptions of maintaining the current level of service is dependent on the level of funds at 2009-10 levels.

### Review:

The action plan will be reviewed regularly every year to monitor progress and performance, the next review and refresh of the action plan is scheduled for 2010-2011. The partnership will review set targets at intervals to monitor performance and flag up any areas of concern.

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<sup>6</sup> Local Area Agreement

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Better Places to Live</b>
<b>Priority 1</b>	<b>Ensure partners work together to understand housing needs and market demands in the county</b>
<b>Priority Lead</b>	Richard Protheroe and Andrew Weaver
<b>Short term action</b>	<b>Produce a joint strategic housing needs assessment for Hertfordshire</b>

<b>The story behind the baseline</b>
<p>Hertfordshire authorities have worked together to ensure future growth will be managed in a coordinated and effective way. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LDF's continue to identify land supply in Hertfordshire</li> <li>• The Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Investment study</li> <li>• The drafting of the new Economic Development Strategy which outlines Hertfordshire's intention for a thriving economy with the creation of new jobs.</li> <li>• The low carbon economy study</li> <li>• The Sustainable Development Guide</li> <li>• The emerging new Transport Vision</li> </ul> <p>There are a number of partnerships that have a key role in bringing forward housing and ensuring sustainable development in Hertfordshire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hertfordshire Infrastructure &amp; Planning Partnership</li> <li>• Hertfordshire Works</li> <li>• Climate Change Partnership</li> <li>• Transport Access and Sustainable Development Partnership</li> <li>• Hertfordshire Housing Consortium</li> <li>• Registered Social Landlord Group</li> </ul> <p>This range of partnerships operate at both the strategic policy level, ensuring effective interface at countywide, regional and sub-regional level (e.g. HIPP with EEDA / EERA on RSS review; HHC with the London Commuter Belt Housing Sub-region), and also at the local delivery level in Districts.</p>
<b>How will we know if we have improved?</b>
<p>NI155 Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)  NI158 % of non decent council homes  NI141 % of vulnerable people achieving independent living (HCOP- LAA target)  NI159 Supply of ready to develop housing sites  NI156 Number of households living in temporary accommodation</p>

## Action Plan for: 1

The following key actions will make the greatest contribution to improving performance against this priority in 2009/10. Please note these do not represent **all** actions taking place to improve this priority outcome, but the 8 actions that will have most impact.

No	Actions	Milestones / Timescales for Delivery	Lead Agency	Lead Officer / Agency	How will we monitor progress
1.1	<p>Complete or update and signed off robust and comprehensive Strategic Housing Market Assessment Projects in accordance with the Communities and Local Government Strategic Housing Market Assessments: Practice Guidance (Aug 2007):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Essex/M11/East Herts/Broxbourne</li> <li>➤ North Herts/Stevenage</li> <li>➤ West Herts.</li> </ul> <p>Recommendations and summary work - SHMA analysis</p>	<p>Completed Completed May 2010</p> <p>July 2010</p>	Herts Planning Officer Group	Chair of LCBSR Housing Group/Chair of Herts Planning Officer Group	<p>Formal sign off of SHMAs by Las</p> <p>Summary paper</p>
1.2	Undertake analysis of social housing stock balance, turnover and waiting list demand to identify gaps in stock and the type and size of units required to address current shortfalls and future needs. Develop a data set to analyse key trends in local housing markets including the monitoring of changing housing costs and income levels across the county.	June 2010	HHC	Chair of Herts Heads of Housing Group	To be reported quarterly to BPL Steering Group
1.3	Develop a joint approach to the commissioning of housing needs studies/strategic housing market assessments across Hertfordshire with a common approach agreed by April 2010.	September 2010	Herts Planning Officer Group	Chair of Herts Planning Officer Group/Chair of Herts Heads of Housing Group/Chair of LCBSR Housing Group	To be reported to BPL Steering Group in March 2010

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Better Places to Live</b>
<b>Priority 2</b>	<b>Ensure we have an appropriate mix of housing provision to support those need and demands, especially relating to: key workers, other key occupational groups, migrant workers, preventing homelessness</b>
<b>Priority Lead</b>	Richard Protheroe and Andrew Weaver
<b>Short term action</b>	<b>Ensure innovative approaches to mixed tenures and supporting the entry of new households into the housing market are pursued</b>

<b>The story behind the baseline</b>
<p>All LCBSR and HHC partners are aware of the challenges Herts LAs face in addressing the key issue of providing the large number of affordable homes that are needed. With an ageing population, migration into the county and smaller households, the need for housing in the county continues to grow. At the same time house prices are still high and mortgage lenders are increasingly cautious so the provision of affordable housing is vital in helping those priced out of the open market onto the property ladder.</p> <p>The Better Places to Live Partnership through the Hertfordshire Local Authorities have used and are planning to use some of their assets/resources to stimulate local housing markets and key schemes in Hertfordshire are taking off. In addition the Partnership has examples of key housing related projects/ schemes /initiatives from both LAs and RSLs that have helped to demonstrate improved outcomes for the people of Hertfordshire.</p>
<b>How will we know if we have improved?</b>
<p>NI160 Local Authority tenants satisfaction with landlord services  NI158 % of non decent council homes</p>

## Action Plan for: 2

The following key actions will make the greatest contribution to improving performance against this priority in 2009/10. Please note these do not represent **all** actions taking place to improve this priority outcome, but the 8 actions that will have most impact.

No	Actions	Milestones / Timescales for Delivery	Lead Agency	Lead Officer / Agency	How will we monitor progress
2.1	Develop a database of information on planned or new housing schemes, including unit mixes, dwelling sizes for different tenures, scheme costs and grant requirements. Analysis/assessment of the supply of housing in relation to the range, quality and spatial distribution of new schemes.	October 2010	HHC	Chair of Herts Heads of Housing Group/Chair of LCBSR Housing Group	To reported quarterly to LCBSR Steering Group
2.2	Develop a countywide approach to site appraisal including the development and utilisation of key social indicators when planning new developments across Hertfordshire (Cost benefit analysis of public sector owned sites to identify housing and social benefits). This will help to determine the appropriate mix for potential new sites, taking into account existing local stock mix, so that housing in local areas become more balanced and sustainable.	October 2010	HHC & BPL Steering Group	Chair of Herts Heads of Housing Group/Chair of LCBSR Housing Group	Approach to be formally agreed by BPL Steering Group

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Better Places to Live</b>
<b>Priority 3</b>	<b>Ensure a minimum of 35% new housing will be affordable and that this is sensible integrated with private (i.e. full cost) housing</b>
<b>Priority Lead</b>	Richard Protheroe and Andrew Weaver
<b>Short term action</b>	<b>Increase the number of net additional homes provided per year Increase the number of affordable home delivered</b>

<b>The story behind the baseline</b>
<p>Hertfordshire has traditionally had a very buoyant housing market and Local Authorities have not needed to directly intervene in the market to bring forward housing development. Hertfordshire's local authorities have a good track record in meeting the county's housing targets in the past.</p> <p>Between 1991 – 2009, 65,500 new dwellings were built in Hertfordshire against a target of 65,000. The average annual number of new dwellings built between 1991 – 2009 were 3,642, exceeding the target of 3,250 per annum.</p> <p>All local authorities in Hertfordshire now have an affordable housing policy, which has been evidenced in the BPL Position Statement. In Hertfordshire the number of affordable housing delivered between 2001 -2008 was 8020, which was 31% of all total dwellings completed. This was the highest percentage of affordable housing built in the region.</p>
<b>How will we know if we have improved?</b>
<p>NI154 Net Additional homes provided  NI175 Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling (TASD LAA target)  NI159 Supply of ready to develop housing sites  NI187 Tackling fuel poverty - %of people receiving income based benefits in homes with a low energy efficiency rating  NI157 Processing of planning applications</p>

### Action Plan for: 3

The following key actions will make the greatest contribution to improving performance against this priority in 2009/10. Please note these do not represent **all** actions taking place to improve this priority outcome, but the 7 actions that will have most impact.

No	Actions	Milestones / Timescales for Delivery	Lead Agency	Lead Officer / Agency	How will we monitor progress
3.1	<p>Increase the number of net additional homes provided per year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Districts to produce Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments to inform LDF processes</li> <li>• Engage with HCA on a County/Strategic Housing Market area basis to seek to unblock the housing market in the most significant areas of market failure</li> <li>• Engage with the house building industry to identify barriers to delivery.</li> <li>• Explore the establishment of a Herts joint delivery unit combining planning and housing</li> </ul>	September 2010	HTCOA/ <sup>7</sup> HIPP <sup>8</sup>	<p>Chair of HIPP/HCTOA</p> <p>Chair of Herts Heads of Housing Group/Chair of LCBSR Housing Group</p>	Regular updates to BPL Steering Group
3.2	<p>Build relationships with the Homes and Communities Agency, particularly in relation to CME.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to joint analysis of market conditions and delivery of homes through continuous market engagement</li> <li>• Share information on development of Single Conversation processes across Hertfordshire at appropriate grouping levels including input of key RSL partners</li> <li>• Ensure effective dialogue is established and maintained with the HCA following the HCA restructure</li> </ul>	March 2011	LCBSR Housing Group	Chair of LCBSR Housing Group	Regular updates to BPL Steering Group

<sup>7</sup> Hertfordshire Technical Chief Officers Association

<sup>8</sup> Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Planning Partnership

No	Actions	Milestones / Timescales for Delivery	Lead Agency	Lead Officer / Agency	How will we monitor progress
3.3	Develop a supply chain of both windfall and public sector land that could be used to deliver affordable housing schemes. Prioritise sites within Hertfordshire and develop a risk/decisions matrix to highlight issues that need to be overcome.	March 2010 & ongoing	HHC/ Herts Planning Officers Group	Chair of Herts Heads of Housing Group/Chair of Herts Planning Officers Group	Reported quarterly
3.4	LA's and RSL's to clarify the resources that are available locally and identifying the resources they predict will be made available over a 3-5 year period	March 2010 & ongoing	HHC	Chair of RSL CEO Group	Reported annually

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Better Places to Live</b>
<b>Priority 4</b>	<b>Avoid coalescence between our communities by protecting our greenbelt wherever possible, and enhancing our urban fringe and open spaces</b>
<b>Priority Lead</b>	Rob Rees
<b>Short term action</b>	<b>Ensure the principles of maintaining the character and individuality of our communities and avoiding coalescence is reflected in regional and local planning policies</b>

<b>The story behind the baseline</b>
<p>Green Flag and Green Pennant Awards for 2009 were announced in July, and Hertfordshire achieved 28 awards this year. The Green Flag Award is the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales, with Green Pennant being a similar award for sites managed by voluntary and community groups, both recognise and reward the best green spaces in the country.</p> <p>The exceptional totals mean that Hertfordshire has achieved 32% of the Green Flag awards, and 40% of the total of just 5 Green Pennant sites in the East of England.</p>
<b>How will we know if we have improved?</b>
<p>NI5 Overall satisfaction with the local area  NI170 Previously derelict land that has been vacant for more than 5 years</p>

#### Action Plan for: 4

The following key actions will make the greatest contribution to improving performance against this priority in 2009/10. Please note these do not represent **all** actions taking place to improve this priority outcome, but the 3 actions that will have most impact.

No	Actions	Milestones / Timescales for Delivery	Lead Agency	Lead Officer / Agency	How will we monitor progress
4.1	Build on the Green Flag success of 2009 and devise and agree a new programme and targets to sustain and increase numbers of accredited Greenspaces.	Target agreed Feb 2010  July 2010	CMS <sup>9</sup> / HACO	Rob Rees	Reporting to Better Places Steering Group and monitoring of Award announcements in July 2010
4.2	Linked to Hertfordshire's Green Flag success in 2009, work with Parish and Town Councils and community groups to increase numbers of Green Pennant accredited sites.	August 2010	CMS	Rob Rees	Reporting to Better Places Steering Group
4.3	Prepare, launch and disseminate a Green Infrastructure Framework and Green Infrastructure Prospectus for Hertfordshire. On target for 4 <sup>th</sup> November 2009.  Work with districts to produce green infrastructure plans.	Launched date 4 November 2009  December 2010	HCC <sup>10</sup> / Environment agency	Rob Rees	Devise programme to monitor uptake and application of Framework.

<sup>9</sup> Countryside Management Service

<sup>10</sup> Hertfordshire County Council

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Better Places to Live</b>
<b>Priority 5</b>	<b>Support the management of our land, particularly the historic built and natural landscape, as well as local agriculture, which protects our biodiversity, wildlife, and natural resources</b>
<b>Priority Lead</b>	Rob Rees and Duncan Jones
<b>Short term action</b>	<b>Develop a Strategy for the future management of our countryside, in the context of additional development in Hertfordshire</b> <b>Improve street and environmental cleanliness</b>

<b>The story behind the baseline</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NI 197 has been defined as: Improved Local Biodiversity – the proportion of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented.”</li> <li>• Positive Conservation Management has been defined as: Management that contributes to maintaining or enhancing the features of interest for which a site has been selected. This should be shown through evidence of appropriate management activities in the last five years.</li> <li>• Hertfordshire scoring methodology: Following Defra Guidance (December 2008), as well as agreed protocols amongst other Local Site Partnerships in the Region (in line with DEFRA guidance), the scoring system for Hertfordshire was agreed in early 2009.</li> <li>• Total Number of candidate Local Sites for NI197 (after exemptions) (March 2009) = 1760</li> <li>• Total Number of Local Sites known to be under positive management (March 2009) = 347 (19.72%)</li> </ul>
<b>How will we know if we have improved?</b>
NI197 Improved local biodiversity – proportion of local sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented NI195 Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting) NI189 Flood and Coastal Erosion risk management

## Action Plan for: 5

The following key actions will make the greatest contribution to improving performance against this priority in 2009/10. Please note these do not represent **all** actions taking place to improve this priority outcome, but the 5 actions that will have most impact.

No	Actions	Milestones / Timescales for Delivery	Lead Agency	Lead Officer / Agency	How will we monitor progress
5.1	Prepare, launch and disseminate a Green Infrastructure Framework and Green Infrastructure Prospectus for Hertfordshire. Development of GI plans.	Launched 4 November 2009 March 2011	HCC	Rob Rees	Monitoring via LDF process
5.2	Agree a target and devise a programme to increase the % of land in Hertfordshire covered by agri-environment scheme agreements.	Devise baseline and agree target by May 2010	HCC	Rob Rees	Quarterly reporting to Better Places Steering Group.
5.3	Increase by 5% per annum, the proportion of Local Sites (Wildlife Sites) where positive management has been or is being implemented.	Annual reporting in April, subject to timely provision of data by national agencies	LSP (Local Sites Partnership)	Rob Rees	Regular updates from Wildlife Sites Partnership to Better Places Steering Group and as part of annual reporting of NI197
5.4	Work through the embryonic group – NETSWA, to develop capacity and coordinate an effective approach to Flood Risk Management in Hertfordshire.	Agree group work programme priorities by July 2010	HCC / EA / Hertsmere Borough Council	Rob Rees & Graham Cowell	Annual reporting to Better Places Steering Group and as part of reporting NI189
5.5	Develop the findings from the Peer review for NI195 across authorities in Hertfordshire. Actions to be established – 2010/11.	Agree group work programme priorities	Waste Partnership	Duncan Jones	Report to Waste Partnership

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Better Places to Live</b>
<b>Priority 6</b>	<b>Enhance the quality and distinctiveness of our town centres and their range of local facilities and ensuring our villages remain vibrant</b>
<b>Priority Lead</b>	David Scholes
<b>Short term action</b>	<b>Ensure that new neighbourhoods and town centres have a clear sense of place in which safe and sustainable lifestyles are 'designed in' and crime and anti-social behaviour is 'designed out'</b>

<b>The story behind the baseline</b>
<p>Local Development Frameworks are folders of local development documents that outlines how planning will be managed in the areas. District Councils in Hertfordshire are at various stages of the drafting of these LDF's.</p> <p>Designing high quality and safe development is an important aspect of the sustainability agenda, creating places where people want to live, work and enjoy in the knowledge that they can do so safely.</p> <p>Places which are designed to be safe and secure in the first instance create financial savings to the occupier in terms of not needing to make costly alterations to improve safety and security.</p> <p>Principles of crime prevention and community safety that should be considered as part of the design process are covered in the Building Futures Program. It is important to note that no universal solution can deal with every problem.</p>
<b>How will we know if we have improved?</b>
<p>In light of the various stages of the development of the LDF's, BPL and HIPP will monitor the progress of this target.</p>

## Action Plan for: 6

The following key actions will make the greatest contribution to improving performance against this priority in 2009/10. Please note these do not represent **all** actions taking place to improve this priority outcome, but the 1 action that will have most impact.

No	Actions	Milestones / Timescales for Delivery	Lead Agency	Lead Officer / Agency	How will we monitor progress
6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include policies within LDF documents that provide specific guidance on best practice including: (1)urban design and character and morphology, (2)historic environment (3) access including reducing reliance on the car), (4) provision and/or retention of facilities, (5) designing out crime</li> <li>• Ensure that the Police Architectural liaison service are fully engaged with LDF policy preparation and significant development schemes</li> </ul>	Ongoing	HTCOA/HIPP	David Scholes	BPL and HIPP
		Ongoing	Constabulary	Ian Potter	