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This Annual Report for 2016/17 gives a summary of what Hertfordshire County Council has done during the year and how we have managed your money.

Once again, the County Council has done its best to manage increased demand and reduced resources with minimal impact on the services we provide. We have made it our priority to be innovative in the way we deliver services, find further efficiencies, intervene early to prevent problems before they arise and work more closely with our partners and our communities.

Hertfordshire’s schools continue to be highly rated and high achieving, with 93% of schools rated as good or outstanding in their most recent Ofsted inspection and GCSE results in summer 2016 being in the top 15% nationally. Our libraries also continue to be vibrant community assets, such as the brand new state-of-the-art Hemel Hempstead Library that opened in January 2017.

We are proud to have improved and maintained our green spaces and that our recycling rate is well above the England average.

The number of children needing to be in care is the lowest it’s been since 2008 and the number of young people not in education, employment or training is at a record low. We have also been successful in securing external funding to improve our services, such as to help boost skills for residents and safeguard vulnerable families.

Nevertheless, the Council continues to face challenges and we recognise improvements can always be made, for example, to reduce the delays in getting people out of hospital due to social care and to improve the educational attainment for pupils from vulnerable groups. We must also continue to make changes in order to find further savings within a context of reduced resources and rising demographic and service demands.

Our approach over the next few years will be to focus more on prevention and influencing our residents in a way that helps improve lives and prevent, reduce or delay demands on public services. We think we are well placed to continue working with our partners and local communities to ensure Hertfordshire continues to be the County of Opportunity.
Hertfordshire County Council seeks to demonstrate that it is a leading council through the quality of services it provides and the way they are delivered, reflecting the following values and behaviours:

- **Being citizen focused** – making a positive difference in Hertfordshire
- **Making sure every penny counts** – responding to the need to restrain public spending
- **Acting with integrity** – committing to acting in an open, honest and ethical way
- **Getting things right** – continuing to improve and learn from experience
- **Continuing to innovate** – embracing change through being creative

Hertfordshire County Council’s [Corporate Plan](#) for 2013-17 set out the following vision for the county:

> “We want Hertfordshire to remain a county where people have the opportunity to live healthy, fulfilling lives in thriving, prosperous communities”.

This report will summarise the Council’s key achievements in delivering the final year of this plan, according to the four key themes it identified:

- **Opportunity to Thrive**
- **Opportunity to Prosper**
- **Opportunity to be Healthy and Safe**
- **Opportunity to Take Part**
Opportunity to Thrive

The County Council’s Corporate Plan states:

“We want every Hertfordshire resident to have the opportunity to maximise their potential and live full lives as confident citizens. We also want everyone to have the opportunity to live in communities where the value of Hertfordshire’s clean and green environment is respected”.

Notable developments in 2016/17 include:

- 85.6% of two year olds eligible for free early education had either taken up their entitlement or accessed a children’s centre, up from 79% last year.

- Over 500 children have accessed 30 hours free childcare in Hertfordshire as part of a national trial of the entitlement. Hertfordshire County Council were the first local authority in the country to be accredited for 30 hours eligibility checks.

- 93% of children’s centre staff are trained in breastfeeding support as part of UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative and Hertfordshire have now been assessed and awarded stage 3 accreditation for working collaboratively with colleagues in health visiting. Between October and December 2016, 51.1% of Hertfordshire infants were breastfed, up from 44.9% in the same period in 2015.

- Hertfordshire County Council ran 49 parenting courses for parents of 911 children, with 80% of parents completing the courses. Improvements were measured in: emotion, play, empathy, control, discipline, pressure, self-acceptance and learning.

- Enabled 96% of Hertfordshire applicants to get a reception place at their preferred school and 94% to get a secondary school place at their preferred school.
1039 young people aged between 16-17 years took part in the National Citizen Service last year, which helps them to build skills for work, life and the transition into adulthood. Key groups continue to be targeted, such as those in receipt of free school meals, children looked after, those known to Intensive Family Support and Targeted Youth Support.

2016/17 saw the establishment of a fourth delivery team for the Prince’s Trust Team Programme, which allows young people aged 16-25 not in education, employment or training to complete a Prince’s Trust Award and Certificate in Employment, Teamwork and Community Skills. Across the four teams, 145 young people joined the programme with over 80% achieving their qualification.

As part of the Inspiring Libraries strategy, the brand new state-of-the-art Hemel Hempstead Library opened in January 2017 and Watford Central Library completed a major refurbishment in October 2016. Both libraries offer CreatorSpace facilities offering library users the opportunity to explore a range of new technologies in a safe and supportive environment.

“The Prince’s Trust course was a lifeline for me. I now feel confident when I say I have a future, and the future I have is a bright one.”
‘Shared Heritage – the future of Hertfordshire’s Past,’ the Council’s new strategy for Heritage Services, was published in June 2016. It sets out the vision and direction for thriving and sustainable archives, local studies and museums development services over the next ten years.

The number of parks in Hertfordshire now flying the nationally recognised “Green Flag Award” for excellence has reached another milestone: 50 parks received awards, up from just 5 in 2006.

The Countryside Management Service, in partnership with East Herts Council and Bishop’s Stortford Town Council, secured £250,000 National Lottery funding for the planning phase of the re-development of Castle Park in Bishop’s Stortford. This exciting new £2 million park will celebrate heritage, enhance biodiversity and engage the local community.

The Access & Rights of Way Service has continued to work with the Countryside Management Service, Parish Councils and small local contractors to improve the Right of Way network across Hertfordshire.

New paths have been created at Panshanger Country Park and the Tyttenhanger estate to contribute towards sustainable transport options, healthy living choices, reduced carbon emissions, cleaner air and improved quality of life.

Hertfordshire County Council has continued to manage flood risk by completing flood mitigation feasibility work in Redbourn and Welwyn and completing Surface Water Management Plans for North Hertfordshire and Dacorum. Furthermore, the Marshmoor Lane/Foxes Lane watercourse re-instatement and flood risk mitigation scheme was completed to improve accessibility for residents.
Spotlight on…Waste and Recycling

- The Council has diverted 72% of all waste received at its 17 Household Waste Recycling Centres from disposal such as landfill sites during 2016/17.
- The Local Authority Collected Waste Statistics final figures for 2015/16 show that Hertfordshire’s recycling rate of 50.4% is well above the England average of 43.0%. It is anticipated that the final figures for 2016/17 will be around 53%.
- In 2016/17, the county’s Household Waste Recycling Centres experienced unprecedented demand, with a total annual footfall of almost 2.5 million, this compares to nearer 2.3 million in 2015/16.
- In partnership with the Council’s service provider Amey, the Household Waste Recycling Centres have benefited from the provision of additional signage, cones, barriers and other equipment to improve cleanliness and accessibility.
- As lead authority in a partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, Hertfordshire was successful in a bid for Government funding to host ten local electrical reuse and recycling events. Residents were encouraged to bring any old household electrical goods with a plug or batteries, with suitable items being donated to local charities which provide electrical items at reduced prices to people on low incomes.

Opportunity to Prosper

The County Council's Corporate Plan states:

“We want Hertfordshire’s economy to be strong, with resilient and successful businesses that offer employment opportunities to residents, helping them to maintain a high standard of living”.

Notable developments in 2016/17 include:

- 3.26% of young people aged 16-18 were not in education, employment or training (NEET) – a record low rate for Hertfordshire.
- The Council created the Hertfordshire Apprentice Alliance to enable a joint approach to managing the apprentice levy across public and voluntary organisations.
- In January 2017, YC Hertfordshire secured funding from The Careers & Enterprise Company to set up an exciting new employer mentoring programme for young people in Hertfordshire. It aims to support students who are about to start their GCSEs, but are at risk of disengaging and/or underachieving in their studies. So far, 21 local employers
HAFLS provided education and learning to 7,000 adults in Hertfordshire aged between 16 and 102 years old in the last academic year (between August 2015 and July 2016). Programmes vary from English, maths, digital skills, health and wellbeing matters, skills for work, confidence building etc.

93% of HAFLS learners completed their course; 89% achieved a qualification; 86% reported improved self-confidence; 15% have moved into employment within three months of completing their programme and a further 35% moved into volunteering or further adult education.

The Big Lottery Fund and the European Social Fund have granted Hertfordshire County Council £5.5 million to help boost skills for residents from October 2016 to December 2019. This forms part of the Building Better Opportunities programme to tackle the root causes of poverty and unemployment, such as physical and mental health issues, homelessness, addiction and more.

As part of their Community Engagement Plan, the Council’s waste service provider Amey have embraced its ‘Virtual School’, providing opportunities for looked after children and care leavers with work experience placements at Hertfordshire Waste Recycling Centres.

The Council has entered into a further seven Primary Authority Partnerships with businesses or other organisations over the past year, taking the total to 267 organisations. These partnerships help organisations to grow and receive regulatory support from Trading Standards and Fire Safety, reducing the burden of regulation and increasing compliance levels across the county. Our joint Trading Standards and Fire Safety Primary Authority team won the Government’s Regulatory Delivery ‘Primary Authority Team of the Year’ award for their work.

The County Council continues to play a leading role in the Better Business for All programme by working with partners from across the local government community, the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the Hertfordshire Growth Hub to support our business community, to provide a fair and level regulatory playing field and embed an approach to regulation which fosters growth and prosperity.

The County Council is a key partner of Stevenage First which has created ambitious plans for the transformation of Central Stevenage. The first development phase, known as SG1, is being progressed and will deliver a new retail and leisure offer, new homes and a new hub for public sector service provision including a new library.

The Council has been rolling out superfast broadband via a scheme known as Connected Counties. Coverage has now reached 95% of premises with firm plans for 97% by June 2018.
- Hertfordshire County Council teamed up with Macmillan Cancer Support to form a new partnership to provide specialist welfare benefits advice for people living with and beyond cancer in Hertfordshire.

### Spotlight on… Hertfordshire’s Road Network

- Hertfordshire has one of the busiest road networks in the country, with almost double the national average volume of Heavy Goods Vehicles on our A-Roads. Despite this, Hertfordshire has met its road condition targets set in 2011.
- The Council has been recognised for its continued improvements in highways asset management through achieving Level 3 status within the Department for Transport’s Maintenance Incentive Scheme and we are a finalist within the Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation Awards for our approach to street lighting.
- It also successfully met the challenge of the Government’s pot hole scheme by patching roads with a total area equivalent to the size of 3 football pitches.
- A £3m Highways Restoration project improved the serviceability of the network by delivering an intensive programme of routine maintenance such as sign cleaning and repair, road marking refurbishment, vegetation clearance and drainage work.

### £3 million Highways Restoration Project

- Cleaned 86,000 road signs
- Cleared 14 miles of ditches
- Trimmed 94 miles of hedges
- Dug out 2,300 roadside drains
- Refreshed 559 miles of white lines & markings
• Public consultation took place on the Council’s Transport Vision for 2050 document in autumn 2016, highlighting the key policy changes being proposed together with the emerging major scheme proposals to improve transport in Hertfordshire.

• The Council successfully bid for £401,000 of Government funding to deliver sustainable transport measures across the county, including cycling measures in Stevenage, a pilot shuttle bus linking stations in St Albans, and a project to professionally wrap two subways in Hertford with local children’s artwork.

• A range of new technologies have been introduced for bus travel in the county. This includes a new SaverCard smart card for children aged between 11-18 years to tap into buses with a 50% discount fare, real-time information currently on 85% of bus display screens, and new web browser software on the county’s 25 bus kiosks to give residents a better experience in finding bus information.

• The interim Rail Strategy was adopted, setting out the Council’s aspirations for improving rail services for Hertfordshire residents and businesses.

• Hertfordshire County Council were rated as a Glassdoor ‘top five best councils to work for’ employer.

Opportunity to be Healthy and Safe

The County Council’s Corporate Plan states:

“We want Hertfordshire residents to have the opportunity to live as healthy lives as possible and to live safely in their communities. With responsibility for public health returning to local government, we want all services to work together to improve the overall health and wellbeing of people in Hertfordshire”.

Notable developments in 2016/17 include:

• The ‘reducing the number of children looked after’ strategy has seen the number of children in care reduce from 1,009 in March 2016 to 910 in March 2017, the lowest number since 2008.

• The number of referrals to children’s social care has reduced by 5% compared with last year as more families are supported through Early Help. The number of children subject to child protection plans has reduced by 49% since January 2015 and the number of children looked after has reduced by 13% to 910 since January 2015.

• The percentage of children leaving care through an adoption or Special Guardianship Order (SGO) has increased considerably from 13.9% in 2015/16 to 22.7% in 2016/17. There were 89 adoptions (a 37% increase) and 69 SGOs (a 25% increase) during the year.
Thirteen new ‘Carer Practitioner’ posts were created to champion the needs of carers and provide a practice lead for the operational social work teams. Carers in Hertfordshire, Crossroads and a variety of other more specialist voluntary sector organisations have also continued to be commissioned to deliver carers support in the community. The Council’s ‘we care about carers’ campaign, which aimed to raise awareness of the support available to unpaid carers and encourage them to apply for a carers assessment, won Silver at the UK Public Sector Communications Awards 2016.
Spotlight on… Health and Social Care Integration

Hertfordshire County Council has worked closely with health partners, integrating its services in a range of areas:

- Hertfordshire’s multi-agency Rapid Response teams work in collaboration to respond swiftly to older people at risk of being admitted to hospital in the near future. The St Albans and Harpenden Rapid Response team has recently been shortlisted for a national Health Service Journal Value in Healthcare Award.

- The Multi-Specialty Team approach was rolled out to all of west Hertfordshire during spring 2016. The team is made up of a number of health and social care professionals and seeks to provide co-ordinated, personalised care planning for people with multiple health and social care needs.

- The Council’s Care Homes Vanguard programme, delivered in partnership with the East and North Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Hertfordshire Care Providers Association, aims to prevent people needing to attend Accident and Emergency. The project has resulted in a 45% reduction in A&E attendances from participating Care Homes and is a finalist in the Health Service Journal “Value in Healthcare” awards.

- A new Specialist Care at Home Model has been launched, which works with people with a much wider range of needs to help them remain independent and in their own home. This has helped the Council to keep the rate of ‘delayed transfers of care’ attributable to social care in Hertfordshire below the East of England average.

- Nevertheless, there were still 57,195 total days of ‘delayed transfers of care’ out of hospitals this year - where the hospital and Council could not find appropriate services to help people leave hospital safely. The Council will work to reduce this by working with the

“Training gained through the Complex Care Premium allows us to act more effectively as a preventative source. With their new training staff can identify potential risks earlier and flag them up with doctors and prevent residents’ conditions worsening.”
NHS to target new services to help people to transfer smoothly and appropriately through the health and care system. The numbers of people who needed help from the council to leave hospital safely went up by 4% between 2015/16 and 2016/17.

- Over 3,000 visits to vulnerable residents were undertaken in 2016/17 as part of Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service’s Home Safety Service, providing physical and practical advice on staying safe and independent. A Safe and Well project was also developed in partnership with Public Health to discuss wider issues at home visits, including social isolation, nutrition, warm homes and falls prevention, signposting to specialist support where needed.

- Through collaboration with the East of England Ambulance Service and the Hertfordshire Constabulary, Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service were able to offer assistance in gaining entry into 145 properties in 2016/17 in relation to medical emergencies. They also provided emergency medical assistance on 114 occasions during 2016/17 as part of their co-responding initiatives, designed to provide emergency response to cardiac arrest/Red one calls.

- Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has worked with partners to implement an emergency response service for all ‘concern for welfare’ communications from a user’s home address as part of their telecare services.

- A new Health and Wellbeing Strategy and a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Strategy for Hertfordshire were launched in 2016, the latter as part of a wider improvement programme to tackle domestic abuse.

- At least 27 schools - more than 7000 children - are participating in the Daily Mile, which involves school children running outside for fifteen minutes during every school day. A further 28 schools have pledged to set up the Daily Mile.

- A Hertfordshire pilot of Girls Active is currently running in ten secondary schools with the aims of improving levels of physical activity and emotional wellbeing, which both tend to decline during teenage years.
• The Council invested in a nationwide HIV home sampling service to help reduce the number of people diagnosed late with HIV. The service allows those at higher-risk to order a free self-sampling kit from a secure website: [www.freetesting.hiv](http://www.freetesting.hiv). In 2016, 979 home sampling kits were requested by Hertfordshire residents, of those, 526 were returned to be tested.

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**Spotlight on… Award Winning Public Health Campaigns**

• ‘**Love your bump**’ is a campaign to encourage pregnant smokers and their families to quit smoking. It was developed with midwives and pregnant smokers to make sure the right messages were communicated in an honest and non-judgemental way.

• The campaign won two awards - the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) award for Campaign of the Year, with the judging panel praising it as “a template for others to follow”, and the Comms2Point0 award for best low cost campaign.

• According to NHS data, there were 1007 babies born to Hertfordshire mums who smoke in 2014/15, however the latest data saw this figure drop to 870.

• The Council’s sexual health campaign **#GetChecked** won the ‘best use of evaluation of research’ award at the UK Public Sector Communications Awards 2016.

• The campaign used a range of eye-catching online materials through websites, social media advertising and mobile phone advertising to encourage men to think about their sexual health. This resulted in over 13,000 people visiting the website, which contains sexual health information and links to local service.

• The ‘Year of Mental Health Campaign’ came to an end in July 2016. In total, over 510 pledges to improve the lives of people with mental health problems were made across Hertfordshire; 12 mental health focused events were held; and 53 new partnerships were made with mental health focused organisations.

• More than 250 Volunteer Health Walks Leaders led 3,200 walks across the county attracting over 54,000 attendances, making [Hertfordshire Health Walks](http://www.hertfordshirehealthwalks.org) the largest accredited scheme in England.
Spotlight on… Road Safety

- Hertfordshire’s Road Safety Partnership managed two rounds of funding applications on behalf of the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Road Safety Fund to prevent collisions and casualties, and address community concerns. A total of 114 bids were received and projects have been delivered across the county.
- The Road Safety in Schools team have delivered dozens of initiatives to encourage children to walk, cycle or scoot safely to school.
- The Cycle Training team has secured Government funding to offer Bikeability training for children and adults for the next three years.
- The Road Safety team coordinated and delivered the Learn 2 Live young driver initiative to over 6,000 new or potential drivers. The initiative won a prestigious award at the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport national ceremony.
- The Road Safety team are also amongst the first in the country to begin using virtual and augmented reality to provide vulnerable road users with hazard perception and additional training in a safe and cost effective way.
- The Access & Rights of Way Service has worked with partners to deliver safety improvements to the Rights of Way network, such as a new roadside verge improvement scheme at Pirton.

Hertfordshire Trading Standards made over 500 home visits last year to offer advice and support to victims of mass marketing scams. The team installed over 30 call blockers that have blocked well over 20,000 scam phone calls.

Following an investigation and numerous raids, nearly 27,000 counterfeit DVDs and CDs were seized by trading standards officers and the offender has been ordered by the Court to pay a £60,000 Confiscation Order.

Opportunity to be Take Part

The County Council’s Corporate Plan states:

“We want to enable all Hertfordshire residents to make a more active contribution to their local areas, working with elected representatives and other community activists to tackle local issues and ensure that council services are more responsive to their priorities and ambitions.”
Notable developments in 2016/17 include:

- The Council launched its adult care **Strategic Co-production Board**, working with people who use care services and their carers to help us improve and shape adult care now and in the future. The Board is the first of its kind in the country and has equal representation from service users, carers, community organisations and council management board members.

- The Hertfordshire **Young Commissioner** program has recruited and trained 60 young people to influence the outcomes of services that affect them, introducing a new perspective previously underutilised in commissioning services.

**Spotlight on… Our ‘Community First’ Approach**

Communities are incredibly resourceful, providing vital support for some of Hertfordshire’s most vulnerable residents. Often this support is more appropriate than ‘formal’ health and social care which is why staff are encouraged to think ‘Community First’ when finding support for people. This year the Council has:

- Re-designed its Community Dementia Support services, investing an additional £250,000 (total of £1.4m) to support an extra c1,500 people a month, whilst developing a preventative model that is unique to each district and individual.
- Held a series of ‘Community Conversations’, bringing together over 40 organisations in each district/borough to encourage ‘social action’ and understand the strengths of our local communities.
- Supported 3,600 people to leave hospital quickly through its Hospital Discharge Service to prevent 85% being readmitted within a month.
- Worked with 1,200 people who needed to find support through its Community Navigators and answered over 46,000 calls to Herts Help from people wanting to access services and support in their community.
- Provided 1:1 outreach support to 758 people through a new commissioned service for adults with complex needs. The service is delivered by a partnership of Turning Point, Herts Mind Network and Herts Young Homeless.

- A new email update service, **‘Update Me’**, has been developed to allow residents to sign up to receive email updates on a variety of different topics. The ‘Have Your Say’ topic alerts residents to consultation and engagement activity taking place across the Council and other local partners.
Spotlight on… Enabling Residents to Have Their Say

Given that the Council provides services for the public, on behalf of the public and using public money, it is committed to engaging with local people directly about key issues and decisions to be made:

A number of **consultations** took place throughout the year, including initiatives to inform the Council’s budget and determine key priorities. Results of these activities, which included an online survey, a discussion event with community leaders and consultation with businesses, are available on our [website](#).

The Citizens Panel was re-launched and a new [website](#) developed.

- A range of activities were delivered as part of **Local Democracy Week** 2016 (10-16 October) in order to raise awareness about local democracy. These included visits by Councillors to schools in their division, a series of short films released on our social media pages, a Councillor briefing for Council staff about being a Councillor, their role and responsibilities, and a debate event held for local school children in the council chamber at County Hall, hosted by the Chairman of the Council.

- Councillors allocate funding from their **locality budgets** to support a wide range of groups and small organisations to deliver worthwhile projects, from the refurbishment of village halls to the purchase of community defibrillators. In 2016/17, each County Councillor had a budget of £5,000. A total of 892 grants totalling nearly £500,000 were approved by Councillors through the scheme. Each County Councillor is also able to nominate £90,000 of **highways works**.

- Chorleywood and Redbourn Libraries are now operating successfully as Community Libraries, managed as a partnership between the Library Service and the local community and supervised by local volunteers.
• The **Year of Volunteering** was launched in May 2016 – a year-long campaign to promote the benefits of volunteering and to celebrate the contribution of those who volunteer already.

• On Wednesday 19 October, County Hall welcomed a number of the county’s army of volunteers to celebrate their achievements in a Volunteer Awards event. Winner and runners up for six different categories were presented with trophies and certificates to thank them for their contribution to Hertfordshire communities.

• 600 people were supported to engage in volunteering through the #TeamHerts Volunteering project, delivered by a partnership led by North Hertfordshire Centre for Voluntary Service.

• Countryside Management Service collected the 8th annual overall “Excellence in Volunteer Management” Award in June 2016 and were re-accredited the national Investing in Volunteers Standard in 2017. A number of well received events for volunteers were hosted to share in their success.

• Countryside Management Services and Rights of Way Service have worked together to develop a range of new volunteering opportunities for communities to get involved in improving the Rights of Way network.
During 2016/17 the Council has continued to respond to the financial challenges of meeting increasing demand with reducing resources, meeting the needs of Hertfordshire residents and businesses, and investing in innovative projects to secure future service delivery. The following section summarises the Council’s spending and funding for the year.

The images below show the cost of delivering services for the financial year April 2016 to March 2017 compared to budget, and how these are funded by taxpayers. They include spending on day to day items, such as salaries, premises costs and supplies & services.
Despite the reductions in grants faced, the Council has been able to manage within the budget available. Adult Care services within Health and Community Services have faced increased demand from the growing numbers of elderly and vulnerable clients, resulting in a spend £6.8m above budget. An action programme was implemented early in the year to address these financial pressures, whilst ensuring that vulnerable people received the services they need. Other services spent below budget, partly to offset the additional social care spend and also through the early implementation of savings built into the 2017/18 budget. This reflects the authority’s continuing drive to address the funding gap that arises from growing demands on our services and reduced government funding.

The Council is also continuing to invest in its infrastructure, including a programme of schools expansion to meet growth in pupil numbers, and in maintenance of the county’s road network. This has been funded from government grants and other contributions, capital receipts from the sale of other assets, and some revenue budget and reserves. Some borrowing is required, but this is being met from the Council’s own balances, and there has been no new external long term borrowing in 2016/17.

*Includes £9.2m spend by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on schemes undertaken by other organisations within Hertfordshire: this spend is included in the annual accounts, as the Council is the Accountable Body for the LEP.
The Council produces a full Statement of Accounts which shows the authority’s financial position, prepared in accordance with international accounting standards and statutory requirements. These include a number of non-cash adjustments that do not need to be funded from Council Tax or other sources. At the time of publication, the Statement of Accounts is subject to external audit opinion. The unaudited accounts and previous years’ audited accounts are available online.

Our Commitment to Equalities

Hertfordshire County Council is committed to achieving diversity and equality of opportunity both as a large employer and as a provider of services. It has a public duty to promote equality and to combat the unfair discrimination that still exists in society.

The Council recognises, respects and celebrates the fact that its staff and the people it serves are all very different, whether this is in their ethnic background, family setting, gender, religion and belief or other factors. It believes that diversity drives innovation, a culture of fairness and respect and equality of opportunity for all.

It demonstrates its commitment to tackling inequality and promoting diversity in everything it does. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, it publishes evidence of the impact of its policies and practices on people with protected characteristics as well as the objectives it has set to continue this work.

The Council’s full commitment to equality and diversity is detailed on its website. This includes its new Equality Strategy 2016-20, which was agreed this year and which sets out the key issues the Council will address, how it will meet its legal requirements and how it will measure its success.
As Hertfordshire’s population ages, a higher number of people who are older and frailer need our support. Furthermore, more young adults with complex disabilities are reaching adulthood and rightly have high expectations to lead fulfilling lives with the care and support that assists them to do so. In Hertfordshire, the additional cost of social needs as a result of demographic changes is £8.1m per year.

In addition, the continuing projected increase in Hertfordshire’s population of under 19 year olds is putting additional pressure on school places as well as additional support for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities and specialist services support for adolescents on the edge of care.

The scale of housing growth that the County now needs to plan for is very significant. From a County Council perspective there is a need to ensure this growth is effectively managed and appropriate infrastructure is provided. At the same time, it will be important to exploit opportunities to use the Council’s buying power and land to help address the county’s housing and service needs.

While good progress has been made to reduce spend, the Council continues to face financial pressures. We must continue to provide high quality services within a context of reduced resources and increased pressure to spend due to inflation (including increases to the National Living Wage), the county’s growing population and the cost of meeting the many needs of Hertfordshire’s residents.

Given the scale of the challenge, the Council will continue to identify and deliver key transformation work focused on finding efficiencies and making changes to the way it delivers services. It will also focus on the development of prevention strategies to influence residents’ behaviour in a way that helps prevent, reduce or delay demands on public services.

It will also be important that the public sector across Hertfordshire works together to provide effective collective leadership to address the key challenges and opportunities facing the county.
Some of the other potential challenges and opportunities the County Council faces in the coming year and beyond include:

- It will respond to the requirements of the Government’s Green Paper ‘Schools that Work for Everyone’ and thus to the changes this may bring to its role in supporting education services. One of the biggest challenges in Hertfordshire continues to be narrowing the attainment gap between pupils from vulnerable groups and all pupils and their engagement with education, employment and training.

- It will work more closely than ever with its health partners in Hertfordshire and West Essex on the Sustainability and Transformation Plan. Together they will continue to design new patient pathways to support growing need and complexity, improve health through prevention and meet financial challenges.

- The adult social care workforce is ageing, with 26% aged over 55. To continue to meet the social care needs of the adult population, around 1,000 people will need to join the workforce each year just to replace those leaving, with a further 1,000 required to meet additional needs and expand the sector.

- The Police and Crime Act completed the government’s agenda for police reform and the Police and Crime Commissioner is now examining the case for taking over governance of the Fire and Rescue Service.

- Hertfordshire will ‘go live’ as part of the East Coast and Hertfordshire Control Room Consortium Project in 2017. This will enhance resilience, support and capacity for all
services involved and will provide significant benefits to the mobilising capabilities of the Hertfordshire Fire Control room.

- Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service will take delivery of a new Aerial Ladder Platform in June 2017. At 45 metres, the vehicle’s ladder will be the tallest in the UK Fire and Rescue Service and will enhance and complement existing preparedness.

- The Council will respond to any changes resulting from the vote to leave the European Union.

- A full Draft Local Transport Plan will be published for consultation in the autumn 2017, with a view to Local Transport Plan 4 being adopted early in 2018.

- 2017/18 will see the start of a series of major highways projects, including:
  - A120 Little Hadham Bypass
  - Improvements to A602 between Stevenage and Ware, which will start after major refurbishment works to the A10 Kingsmead Viaduct have completed
  - LED Phase 4, which will result in all the remaining street lights, bar a few heritage lights, being converted to LED and CMS technology

- With the help of countywide multi-modal transport model COMET, the Council will develop a transport strategy for the A414 corridor, which is expected to experience the pressures of an additional 50,000 homes within a 5 mile radius over the next 15 years.

- The Council will be seeking local rail improvements by actively engaging with Thameslink regarding its consultations on the 2018 timetable and concerns about the reliability of its service, as well as consultations on improvements to the East Coast main line and the East Midlands franchise, and protecting Hertfordshire’s interests in longer-term improvements including Crossrail 2, four-tracking of the West Anglia line, High Speed 2 and East West Rail. We will also continue to engage with Transport for London regarding the delivery of the extension of the Metropolitan tube line to Watford.
• In autumn 2017 the draft London Plan will be published for public consultation. The Plan will have major implications for the future of the county and a full consultation response will be made.

• The Rights of Way Improvement Plan strategy is undergoing its ten year review and the Council is working with the Herts Local Access Forum and all key stakeholders to refresh, update and refocus this strategic plan and the ten district-based lists and maps to meet the desires and demands of users.

• Work is underway to assess how fit for purpose the existing Household Waste Recycling Centre network is in coping with increasing demand and housing growth. This will need to explore how investment in larger ‘super-sites’ could provide a network that is better suited to service provision in the long term.

• In the meantime, new technology installed at the Household Waste Recycling Centres includes Automatic Number Plate Recognition to better monitor usage and Web and CCTV cameras which will enable residents to check most of the 17 sites to see how busy they are before leaving home.

• Three purpose built Re-Use Centres run by specialist retail operator(s) are proposed for development, which will include collecting suitable items for repair and sale across the entire Hertfordshire Waste Recycling Centre network. If planning permission is successfully achieved, the new re-use centres could be operational in late autumn.

Finally, from 2017 to 2021, The County Council’s vision for Hertfordshire will be outlined in a new Corporate Plan. This is due to be launched in July 2017.