

A photograph of a woman with long brown hair smiling and holding a young child with curly blonde hair. They are in a library or bookstore, with bookshelves and colorful storage bins visible in the background. The woman is wearing a grey sweater and the child is wearing a grey dress with a red bow. The child is pointing towards the camera.

Annual Report 2021-2022

Hertfordshire County Council



Hertfordshire

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Nearly a year on from launching our new vision, to create a Cleaner, Greener and Healthier Hertfordshire, we have much to be proud of despite the challenges we face.

Global events, soaring inflation, a cost-of-living crisis and increased demand on our services have created some tough financial pressures for us as a council. However we are still committed to delivering real results for Hertfordshire across our four strategic priorities and this report will show how we are already making progress against our ambitions.

Recently, we welcomed an independent peer team from the Local Government Association, to review how we operate as a council. We were pleased to hear they felt that we are a well-run council that works hard to provide good services with councillors and staff who are very proud of what we do. At the same time, the LGA's review reinforced our view that, given the challenges we face, we have some difficult decisions to make in the year ahead.

We know our residents are relying on our services more than ever before and we want to show them that we are here for them offering the vital support the most vulnerable in our county need working closely with our partners.

With our 8,000 strong team all working towards our vision using our new set of values to guide them, we are in a really good place to prioritise what matters most to our residents and make our intentions a reality.

Foreword



Hertfordshire is a unique and valuable county of opportunity, and we are proud to present some real-life examples of how we are ensuring our people thrive, our planet is protected and our places prosper in our Annual Report 2021-22."

Richard Roberts
Leader

Owen Mapley
Chief Executive

Our vision

Hertfordshire has long been the county of opportunity, recognised as a great place to live, work, learn and do business.

Hertfordshire will continue to be the county of opportunity for all, a place where our people thrive, our places prosper, and our planet is protected. To achieve this, our vision is to create a Cleaner, Greener and Healthier Hertfordshire.



Our vision is outlined in our Corporate Plan, which was launched earlier in 2022. This centres around the following four priorities:

- **A cleaner and greener environment**
- **Healthy and fulfilling lives for our residents**
- **Sustainable, responsible growth in our county**
- **Providing excellent services for all**

Hear more about our key priorities in this [video message from Cllr Richard Roberts](#), Leader of Hertfordshire County Council.

Further detail about our key goals and vision is outlined in the [Corporate Plan](#).

Each year, our Annual Report outlines our progress against our key priorities.

We know we cannot achieve our vision alone – we must all work together to achieve this bright future for our county. By harnessing the resilience and strength of Hertfordshire’s people, places and businesses, and working closely with our local partners, together we can create a more inclusive and productive county, where everyone, regardless of their circumstances, has the opportunity to succeed.

We are **one team**

Our vision is to
create a cleaner,
greener and healthier
Hertfordshire



To achieve our
vision, we have
four priorities

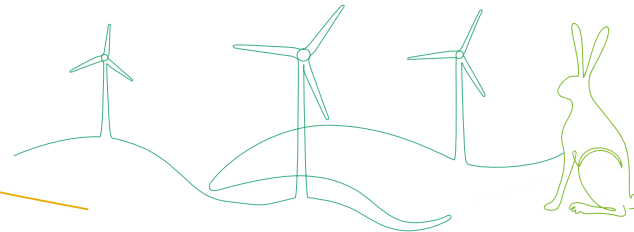
1 A cleaner
and greener
environment



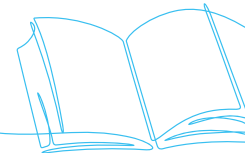
2 Healthy and
fulfilling lives
for our residents



3 Sustainable,
responsible growth
in our county

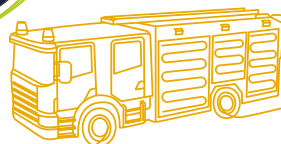


4 Excellent
council services
for all



We
RISE
to the challenge

We improve
Residents' lives
We work with
Integrity
We act
Sustainably
We champion
Equality &
Fairness



Scan to view our
Corporate Plan

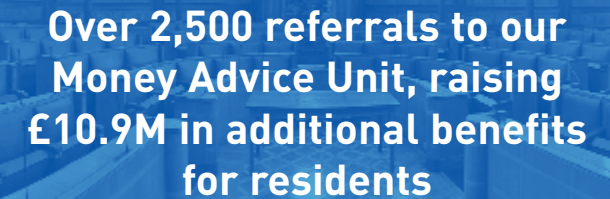
It's a big task but our
values remind us that in
everything we do:

Across our priorities, we deliver
over 500 services each day
to keep the county running

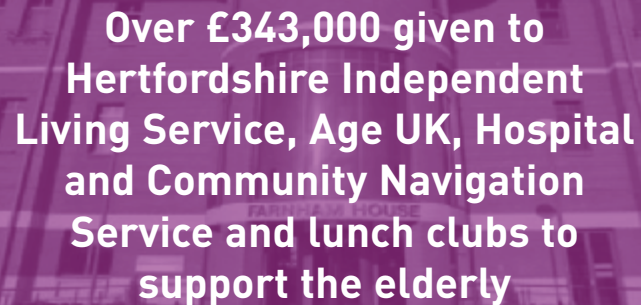


Cost of living

The following infographic demonstrates some of the support for increased cost-of-living was provided to residents over the summer of 2022.



Over 2,500 referrals to our Money Advice Unit, raising £10.9M in additional benefits for residents



Over £343,000 given to Hertfordshire Independent Living Service, Age UK, Hospital and Community Navigation Service and lunch clubs to support the elderly



More than 81,000 enquiries dealt with by HertsHelp



£120,000 donated to food banks



£172,000 spent on food and other essentials through Citizens Advice Bureaus

Further information on support for residents to help with cost of living can be found through www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/costofliving and www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hereforyou

Over 57,000 places booked on HAPpy holiday camps

£2.3M allocated to the Building Life Chances project

£765,000 spent on the Crisis Intervention Service

Over £12M in support from the Household Support Fund from Oct 21 - Sep 22

33,000 Free School Meal vouchers allocated

A cleaner and greener environment

Protecting and improving our environment is integral to Hertfordshire's long-term prosperity. We are taking care of our environment through the following objectives:

- Environmental leadership
- Accessible and biodiverse green spaces
- Inspire a sustainable county
- Minimise waste

We declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and since then we have prepared our [Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy](#) and [Action Plan](#) to deliver on its ambitions. This includes plans for our operations to become carbon neutral and send no waste to landfill by 2030. A revised and updated Sustainable Hertfordshire strategy was approved by our Cabinet in July 2022.

Emphasis is now moving from raising awareness to focusing and embedding key activities, to ensure that our 'business as usual' work is made as sustainable as possible.

We are working with the county's district and borough councils and the [Local Enterprise Partnership](#) via the [Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership](#) to deliver environmental action across Hertfordshire. We are also playing an active role in the East of England Climate Change Forum, which is chaired by the Leader of the County Council. The forum is working to understand the current progress, strengths, areas for improvement and barriers to delivery in achieving climate action targets across the region.



Your Tree, Our Future campaign

Earlier in 2022 as part of the Your Tree, Our Future campaign, we began work with district council partners to provide more than 100,000 trees for residents, businesses and community groups to plant across Hertfordshire over the next four years. As part of this project, 46,910 trees have been claimed this year, with the estimated total carbon removal over the lifetime of the trees to be 89,086 tonnes.

This campaign supports our plan to help plant 1.8 million trees by 2030 as outlined in our new [Tree and Woodland Strategy](#). We will be giving away another 30,000 trees each year for the next three years and a [waiting list](#) has been set up for residents that wish to be notified when new stock is available.



YOUR TREE OUR FUTURE

100,000 Trees for Hertfordshire

The Cole Green Way

In the last year, the Cole Green Way – once the railway line between Welwyn Garden City and Hertford – has benefitted from a major makeover, thanks to funding from Sustrans, central government, and the County Council. The improvements align with our [Active Travel Strategy](#), which aims to encourage walking and cycling to improve health and the environment, reduce congestion and boost the economy. A plan setting out how the Cole Green Way might best be

improved was developed by our Countryside and Rights of Way service, with extensive engagement with communities and users.

The value of the Cole Green Way as a corridor for wildlife has been recognised, and focused thinning work has prompted trees to regenerate. The three miles of the route owned by the County Council have been improved with new drainage and resurfacing. Improved wayfinding signage provides routes for all year-round active travel, with more attractive routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, whilst maintaining the route's rural character.



Inspiring cleaner, greener schools in Hertfordshire

School buildings accounted for around 50% of our emissions as a council in 2018-19. Investing in our school buildings is therefore critical to meeting our target to be carbon neutral by 2030. To ensure our schools are meeting net zero targets and enhancing biodiversity, throughout 2021-22 we have achieved a great deal in terms of how we design new school buildings and implement decarbonisation measures in our existing schools.

We have been successful in securing a number of funding bids in the last year. To improve schools and to support our net zero targets, we have delivered 87 projects at school sites, at a cost of £8m through a successful Salix funding bid. We are undertaking feasibility for the delivery of a sustainable retrofit programme at up to 8 school sites, which includes further funding from Salix, alongside Repairs and Maintenance and County Council funding. We have secured over £250,000 to enable the development of heat decarbonisation plans for over 300 schools in Hertfordshire. Along with providing powerful environmental learning opportunities for staff and pupils, these achievements are vital to enabling a Cleaner, Greener and Healthier Hertfordshire.



Minimising waste

While also supporting residents to reduce what they throw away, we are helping to develop more sustainable solutions for dealing with waste as part of our commitment to become carbon neutral and send nothing to landfill by 2030. Following a successful procurement process at the start of 2022, contracts have been awarded to four different suppliers for 10-year contracts - with an option to extend for 5 years - starting in April 2024.

Under these new long-term contracts, non-landfill solutions have been secured with enough capacity to manage all of our residual waste. As we work to deliver an improved waste transfer station network across Hertfordshire, these contracts will allow for clearer financial planning and strengthen our statutory function as Hertfordshire's waste disposal authority. Whilst the contracts permit emergency landfill use when all other options are unavailable, the award of these contracts will, subject to the delivery of separate waste shredding proposals, significantly advance our ambition for zero waste to landfill.



Healthy and fulfilling lives for our residents

By ensuring healthy and fulfilling lives for our residents, Hertfordshire will continue to prosper. To do this, we have five aims:

- Support to live independently
- Every child to have the best start in life
- Everyone kept safe from harm
- Inclusive and safe communities
- Opportunity to live life well

[Hertfordshire and west Essex](#) became one of the first 18 Integrated Care Systems across the country in May 2020. This last year, a new NHS Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board took on responsibility for managing the NHS budget and planning the provision of health services in Hertfordshire and west Essex. The Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Partnership, chaired by the Leader of the County Council, has been established to develop the overall direction and strategy for the Integrated Care System. It is working to develop an integrated care strategy by December 2022, which will set out how the system will work together to meet the health and wellbeing needs of our local population.



This year we published our new [Public Health Strategy 2022-25](#) which outlines how our Public Health Service contributes to achieving a Cleaner, Greener and Healthier Hertfordshire.

Adult Care Services also developed our Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-2025 in response to the new duties placed on local authorities by the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act. In Children's Services, we have succeeded in reducing and stabilising our numbers of children in need, children subject to child protection plans and our children looked after following significant increases during 2021 and early 2022. Our continued support through early family help and our nationally recognised Family Safeguarding model have helped to achieve this.

Our Community Protection Directorate works closely with partners across Hertfordshire to ensure residents are safe from harm, allowing our diverse communities to prosper. This summer, Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service had its busiest two months in many years due to extreme levels of heat, with record numbers of emergency calls and a "Major Incident" declared.

Supporting homeless adults in Hertfordshire

Earlier this year, we became one of 15 organisations working on a new pilot service to help homeless adults with multiple support needs. This project brings together workers from mental health, domestic abuse, and drug and alcohol services to form a multi-disciplinary team, which is embedded in every district homelessness service. This recognises that people facing homelessness often require support in different areas of their life and prevents service users having to repeatedly share their traumatic experiences with different services to access the support they need. This multi-disciplinary pilot will be funded by Adult Care Services until March 2023, with future funding determined by an evaluation report which will be shared with partners in health, housing and probation services.

This approach is a key part of our [Hertfordshire Supporting Adults with Complex Needs Strategy](#). The council provides an annual budget of more than £4.7m to fund 45 homeless support services

across the county. 'Making Every Adult Matter' principles are embedded in this pilot service, helping organisations work together to use a flexible, person-led approach to support an individual through their unstable housing situation until they can manage independently. Partnerships that implement these principles have reported an average of 23% reduction in wider service use costs and a 44% improvement in service user wellbeing.



Foster carer recruitment and strategy

Together with local partners, we have the collective responsibility to provide the best possible care and support for children and young people who are 'looked after' or are over the age of 18 and are qualifying or former relevant care leavers. An area of strategic focus is ensuring good levels of recruitment and retention of foster carers. A range of actions are planned to support this, such as the council's application to become a Fostering Friendly Employer, reviewing internal processes for how children are matched to foster carers and delivering a new project around emergency foster carers. Over the last year, the key ambitions of the council's 'One Team' Fostering Strategy were delivered, such as:

- A review of fostering service processes, including helping to reduce the time to follow up enquiries from new carers
- Engagement with foster carers has strengthened governance structures through co-design, delivery and the monitoring of outcomes
- Whilst the number of in-house foster carers recruited reduced slightly in 2021-22 at 41, this was still the second highest number in a financial year over the last five years, showing that this increase in recruitment has been largely maintained.

"We help keep siblings together"

Jack and Andy, Hertfordshire foster carers

Recruiting NOW for foster carers in your area

Text **FOSTERING** to **62277** to find out more

FOSTERWITHUS
www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/fostering
@hertfordshirefostering @HCCFosterAdopt

In partnership with
Stonewall Hertfordshire

Keeping residents safe from harm and exploitation

A key part of supporting residents to live healthy, fulfilling lives is working with partners to protect all residents from abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation. One area of this is the work of Trading Standards to combat rogue trading, of which elderly and vulnerable residents are often the target. In the last financial year, interventions in cases involving rogue traders saw on average £6,000 per case prevented from being handed over to criminals with almost £200,000 being saved.

One of our criminal investigations was heard in Crown Court and resulted in convictions against two doorstep criminals for coercive conduct and fraudulent roofing work in Stevenage. Working with partners such as the police, Trading Standards intervened to ensure the victim did not lose their money, and the suspects were arrested. Trading Standards took on the investigation and supported the victim in finding a reputable trader to fix the damage; showing how effective partnership working can help to mitigate harm and deliver effective enforcement action.



Support from Covid Marshals during the pandemic

The Covid Marshal scheme has been pivotal to promoting Covid-safe measures in Hertfordshire in the last year. This has included measures such as deploying Covid Marshals in high footfall locations, public engagement at local events, and interaction with local businesses, communities, and less represented groups. The Marshals helped to support the Covid Vaccination programme by working with the police to deter Anti-Vax activity and have worked to provide an operational tool to optimise winter preparedness and response. Following an online public survey open in February 2022, out of 334 responses to the survey, 92% of respondents were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with Covid Marshals in their area.

Between September 2021 and October 2022, Covid Marshals visited a total of 52,645 business premises. To support the “living safely with Covid” stage of the pandemic, Marshals have assisted with engagement with local businesses and assessing Covid safety measures. Through eye-catching window stickers, this Covid Aware scheme has helped to assure residents that we are doing all we can to live safely with Covid.



**COVID
AWARE SCHEME**

**PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY &
SUPPORTING CUSTOMER SAFETY**

**Ongoing monitoring
for COVID-19 controls**



**Please scan for more information,
alternatively visit:**

www.hertfordshirelep.com/business/better-business-for-all/covid-aware-scheme/



Better Business for All
A local partnership between Businesses and
Regulatory Services to promote growth



Hertfordshire

Tackling Food Insecurity

Food insecurity negatively impacts a person's physical and mental health and can lead to wider health and income inequalities. This last year we carried out a [Food Poverty Needs Assessment](#), which was published in November 2021. From this assessment, it was found that 1 in 10 Hertfordshire residents were at high risk for food insecurity. Following on from this, we have begun a programme of work that aims to reduce health inequalities by increasing access to good quality food for Hertfordshire residents experiencing food insecurity



As a result of this review:

- A new cross-agency Hertfordshire Food Steering Group has been established to provide leadership on food insecurity in the county
- The Hertfordshire Food Alliance has been formed to bring together local organisations and community groups to address the root causes of food insecurity
- A Food Insecurity Action Plan is being developed to enable cross-sector agreement on prevention, crisis and immediate provision
- The Hertfordshire Food Aid Network was launched in April 2022 with the core purpose of bringing foodbanks and food aid providers together to share good practice and develop joint solutions. Some achievements of this include increasing the number of food support entries on the Herts Directory from 3 to 41, to help promote available help to residents. We are also supporting the development of training that BeeZee Bodies will deliver in 2023, to offer support on basic nutrition information and cooking on a budget.

Sustainable, responsible growth in our county

Our ambition is to ensure that growth in Hertfordshire benefits all of our residents. To achieve this, we will be both community and economy focused, working with partners across Hertfordshire to implement solutions that will benefit our county for years to come. We are driven by the following ambitions:

- Infrastructure that meets the needs of our communities
- Well-designed communities
- Strong economy
- Employment opportunities for all

Established since 2018, the [Hertfordshire Growth Board](#) is chaired by the Leader of the County Council and is made up of the 10 district and borough councils, the Independent Chair of the NHS Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Systems, a Director from Homes England, and the Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Board is working together to deliver an ambitious growth agenda to support a thriving economy with affordable housing, a sustainable transport network, superfast broadband coverage as well as excellent schools and healthcare facilities.

Through partnerships such as the [Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Development Board](#) established in 2021, we are encouraging new development to use sustainable transport options. We are in the early stages of developing the [Hertfordshire Essex Rapid Transit](#) project to provide east-west services through the county and on to Harlow and Stansted Airport. We are also working with the [Local Enterprise Partnership](#) and districts to facilitate economic opportunities.



Stevenage life sciences

Landmark agreement signed for new Baldock neighbourhoods

Earlier this year, the County Council signed a landmark agreement with Urban&Civic, the UK's leading master developer, for the proposed new neighbourhoods to the north and east of Baldock.

Developing over the next 20 years, this new vision for Baldock will be delivered in a measured way, creating sustainable and thriving communities, while respecting the

existing environment and complementing this historic town.

Using land owned by the council, the scheme plans to create:

- Up to 3,300 new homes to accommodate the county's population growth, including affordable homes as part of an inclusive urban extension to Baldock
- Around 600,000sq ft of new employment space
- A new secondary school and two primary schools
- Cycling and walking routes linked to the town centre and the railway station, as well as investment in bus stops and routes, providing a boost for sustainable transport throughout Baldock



A120 Little Hadham Bypass and Flood Alleviation Scheme

The new A120 Little Hadham Bypass and Flood Alleviation Scheme opened to traffic in December 2021. As well as alleviating congestion along the route at the Little Hadham traffic lights, the 3.9km bypass scheme has provided more reliable journey times and improved flood defences, thanks to new road embankments installed along the River Ash and Albury Tributary. This has improved road safety and helped businesses, while providing more reliable travel times to Stansted Airport which benefits the county's economy. The scheme was a

journey of discovery in many ways, with the project team not only uncovering a Roman archaeological settlement, but also a rare Hertfordshire Puddingstone, dating back to prehistoric times. The stone now takes pride of place in the village of Little Hadham.

The opening of the bypass will create a cleaner, greener and more pleasant environment for the village, as well as improving the road network in the area, better connecting our people to the places they live, work and learn.



Broxbourne Nursing Home

Broxbourne Nursing Home was officially opened in July 2022. It is wholly owned by the County Council and managed by Gold Care Homes and has been built with sustainability and innovation at the heart of it. The innovative and modern layout consists of well thought out communal areas, as well as smaller areas which are defined as 'households', in which residents can gather in smaller groups to dine together, watch TV and generally build a sense of community.

Sustainability and environmental credentials were important to the design process from the outset. The building was designed to include a large expanse of green roof, which is seeded with wildflowers to attract insects and birds to the local area. There are many solar panels on the back of the building that help with energy production. The New River runs along the side of the nursing home, so the gardens and balconies overlook the wider local habitats. This means that residents can sit and enjoy the local wildlife too. [A video of the opening of Broxbourne nursing home, with an introduction from Cllr Richard Roberts, Leader of the County Council, can be found here.](#)



HertsLynx bus service

HertsLynx, Hertfordshire's new on-demand bus service, was launched in September 2021. Demand Responsive Transport uses technology to group passengers together who are travelling in a similar direction at a similar time. This fully flexible service offers passengers shorter wait times, shorter walking distances to pick up locations and shorter average journey times to key

destinations. Passengers can book journeys via the HertsLynx app, booking website or via the call centre.

HertsLynx is designed to serve residents in zones covering villages in north and east Hertfordshire, as well as providing transport links to fixed destinations in: Stevenage, Letchworth, Hitchin, Baldock, Royston

and Bishop's Stortford. The service is improving connections between rural areas and town centres, and expanding access to employment, education, healthcare and shopping. Concessionary Pass holders are eligible for free travel and SaverCards are accepted, offering half price travel to 11 – 25-year-olds who have purchased the pass.





Excellent council services for all

The previous sections have set out how we are looking to deliver our vision of a Cleaner, Greener and Healthier Hertfordshire. In delivering on our commitments, we will adopt and demonstrate the following principles:

- Collaborative leadership
- Citizen focus
- Embrace diversity
- Modern and innovative
- Investing in our staff

Earlier this year, we introduced new organisational values for the council. Shaped in consultation with our staff, these values underpin our culture as an organisation and how we will work and behave in achieving our goals. 'We RISE to the challenge' is the overarching message which connects these values:

- **We improve Residents' lives:** we put our residents at the heart of all we do
- **We work with Integrity:** we say what we do, and we do what we say
- **We act Sustainably:** we consider the impact of our actions on future generations
- **We champion Equality and fairness:** we're all equal and we treat everyone fairly.



Homes for Ukraine scheme

Over the last year, Hertfordshire has seen a huge influx of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in the county. This has resulted in new services being set up from scratch at significant pace.

In March 2022, the UK government launched the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, where people can register to be a sponsor and have a guest(s) from Ukraine come to live in their home for at least six months. Since the scheme launched, 1,000 sponsors have come forward in Hertfordshire, already welcoming over 1,600 arrivals from Ukraine. This is the largest number of arrivals in the eastern region, and one of the largest number of arrivals into a UK county.

We have worked collaboratively with our district and borough council colleagues and partners, including from the voluntary sector, to support this work. Our Adult Care Services, for instance, have supported the wellbeing of sponsors and Ukrainian nationals who have come to Hertfordshire. This has included securing funding to set up Flourish, a refugee wellbeing support service for all refugees and asylum seekers over 18 in Hertfordshire. Children's Services have carried out hundreds of safeguarding and welfare visits to sponsors, and ensured that the majority of Ukrainian children have been offered a school place within the published national timeframe of 15 school days from application. [Further information on Ukraine support in Hertfordshire, including guidance for sponsors, can be found on our website.](#)



Healthy Little Summer Trips campaign

We aim to deliver citizen-focused services, with regular engagement and participation. One big campaign this year was Healthy Little Trips, which was launched at the start of the 2022 summer school holidays. This campaign encouraged local, active journeys, while highlighting free and low-cost family-friendly activities in Hertfordshire. These activities were recommended by residents and County Council employees. Our [Fifty Thrifty Adventures to have in Hertfordshire this summer](#) blog had 4,524 visits from 22 July to 31 August, and 3,837 visitors clicked on or downloaded the interactive fifty thrifty guide.



Embracing diversity and inclusion

This year we ran an internal [Disability at Work campaign](#) as part of 2022 National Inclusion Week to help raise awareness of the experiences of staff who have a disability. This campaign was shortlisted for the PRCA (Public Relations and Communications Association) 2022 Awards.

Following this activity, the percentage of colleagues completing their disability indicator (marking yes or no to having a disability) rose to 96.9%, the highest this figure has ever been recorded. The percentage of colleagues completing their disability category (disclosing what their disability is) also rose by 11.4%.



- Earlier this year, the Central Digital and Data Office audited and praised Hertfordshire.gov.uk for having a “high standard of accessibility”.
- Arlesdene Nursery and Pre-School in Cheshunt was recognised as the first early years setting in the UK to achieve a National Autistic Society Inclusion Award. This award recognises educational settings providing enriched education, care, and expertise to support children who may be diagnosed as autistic.
- In Adult Care Services, we plan and deliver [co-production](#) through a set of dedicated boards (or committees) to encourage residents to have their say on services. This year we ran monthly virtual ‘Coffee mornings’ to give professionals and members of the public an opportunity to meet and find out more about co-production. Training has enabled people with lived experience to take on roles such as ‘Co-chair’ of the boards or help influence projects related to services, such as the refresh of the [Carers Strategy](#).

Encouraging innovation through our Inspiring Libraries strategy

Our new 10-year strategy [Inspiring Libraries: My Place 2022-23](#) was published this year. This ambitious new 10-year strategy will build on the progress of the original Inspiring Libraries strategy and existing innovative technology such as [Creatorspace](#), while also addressing the emerging needs of our residents following the disruption caused by the pandemic.

While being a resource for communities to come together and facilitate access to culture and technology, some key ambitions of how libraries in Hertfordshire will build upon their modern offer include:

- Provide self-service access to our libraries outside core opening hours using swipe card technology
- Extend our online offer, ensuring it can be accessed any time, from anywhere on any device
- Provide digital devices for loan in addition to 1:1 and group support
- Develop and expand our CreatorSpaces and CreatorSpace Out of the Box programme.



Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service 100% apprenticeship pass rate

This year, our Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service continued to uphold its 100% apprenticeship pass rate, with a further 65 apprentices successfully completing the End Point Assessment as part of the Level 3 Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship

Standard since April 2021. This means that Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service remains one of the only Fire and Rescue Service in the country to have a 100% success rate in this apprenticeship. As a result, the service has now been

asked by other Fire and Rescue Services within the Eastern Region to support the implementation of the Apprenticeship Programme in their own services.



Our finances

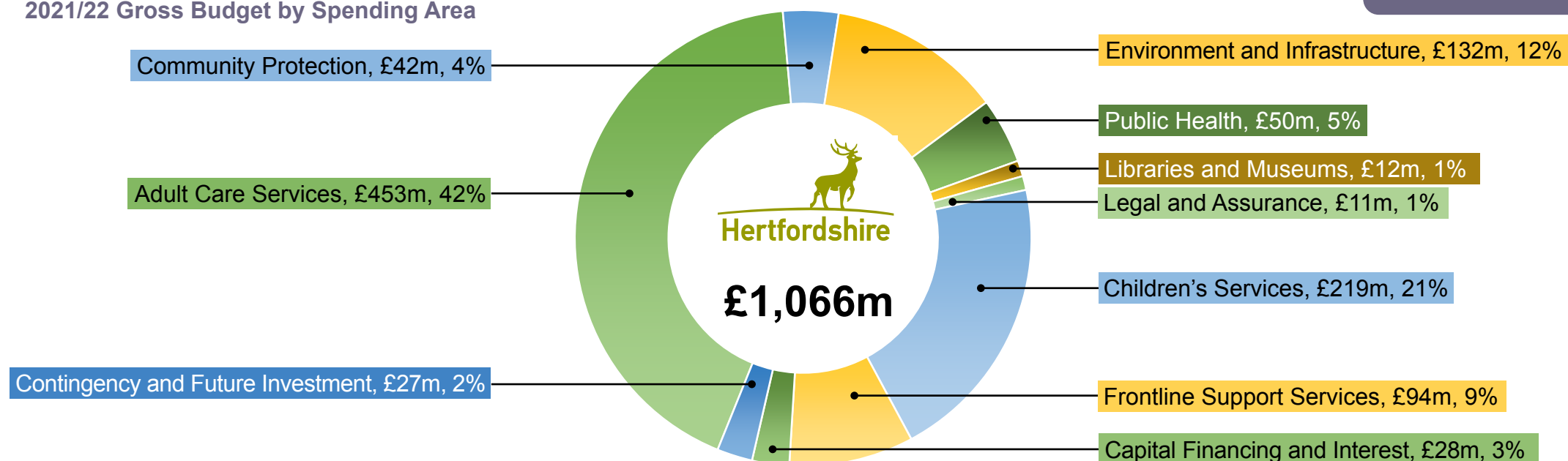
As a council, in the last year we faced significant financial pressures from the continued impact of the pandemic on services, in particular, but not exclusively, for social care. Despite this we responded to these issues, the pandemic and the cost-of-living challenges and managed our budget within the funding available.

This strong financial management has meant the council has been able to continue to support the most vulnerable in our communities. Covid recovery schemes have now been replaced by targeted support for residents impacted the most by the increased cost-of-living. In summary, there are four main funds being used to support residents going forward, totalling over £17m:

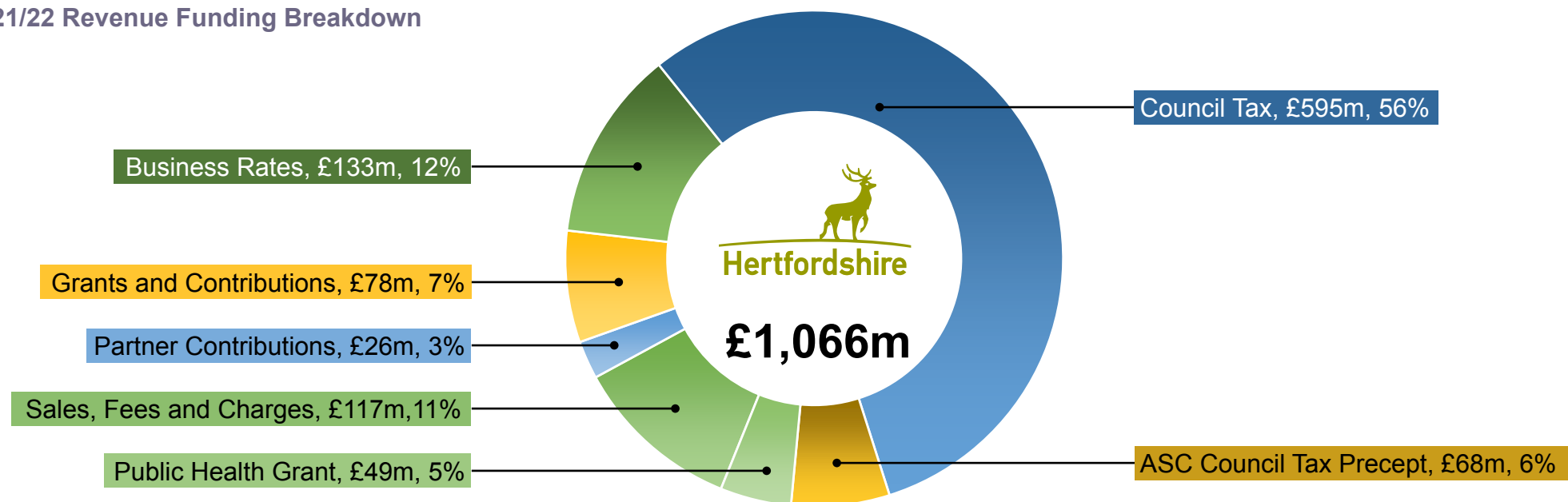
- **Household Support Fund (£12m grant)** - This includes support for families with children eligible for free school meals (including supermarket vouchers during school holidays), Pensioners and Emergency response, food banks and other direct support.
- **Happy Programme (£2.9m)** - The Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAPpy) will be available during the Easter, Summer and Winter holidays for the next 3 years. Holiday camps are free to children and young people eligible for benefit-related Free School Meals (FSM), each day they attend includes a hot meal.
- **Building Life Chances (£2.3m)** - This is part of the Covid recovery strategy response to the economic impact of the pandemic but projects are also relevant to the cost-of-living response.
- **Coming Back Stronger (£0.7m)** - The Coming Back Stronger programme of activities works with schools to support children's social, emotional and mental health needs and to support vulnerable learners.

During the year, the council also set the budget and Integrated Plan for 2022/23 and beyond. This included new investment to help support the new Corporate Plan.

2021/22 Gross Budget by Spending Area

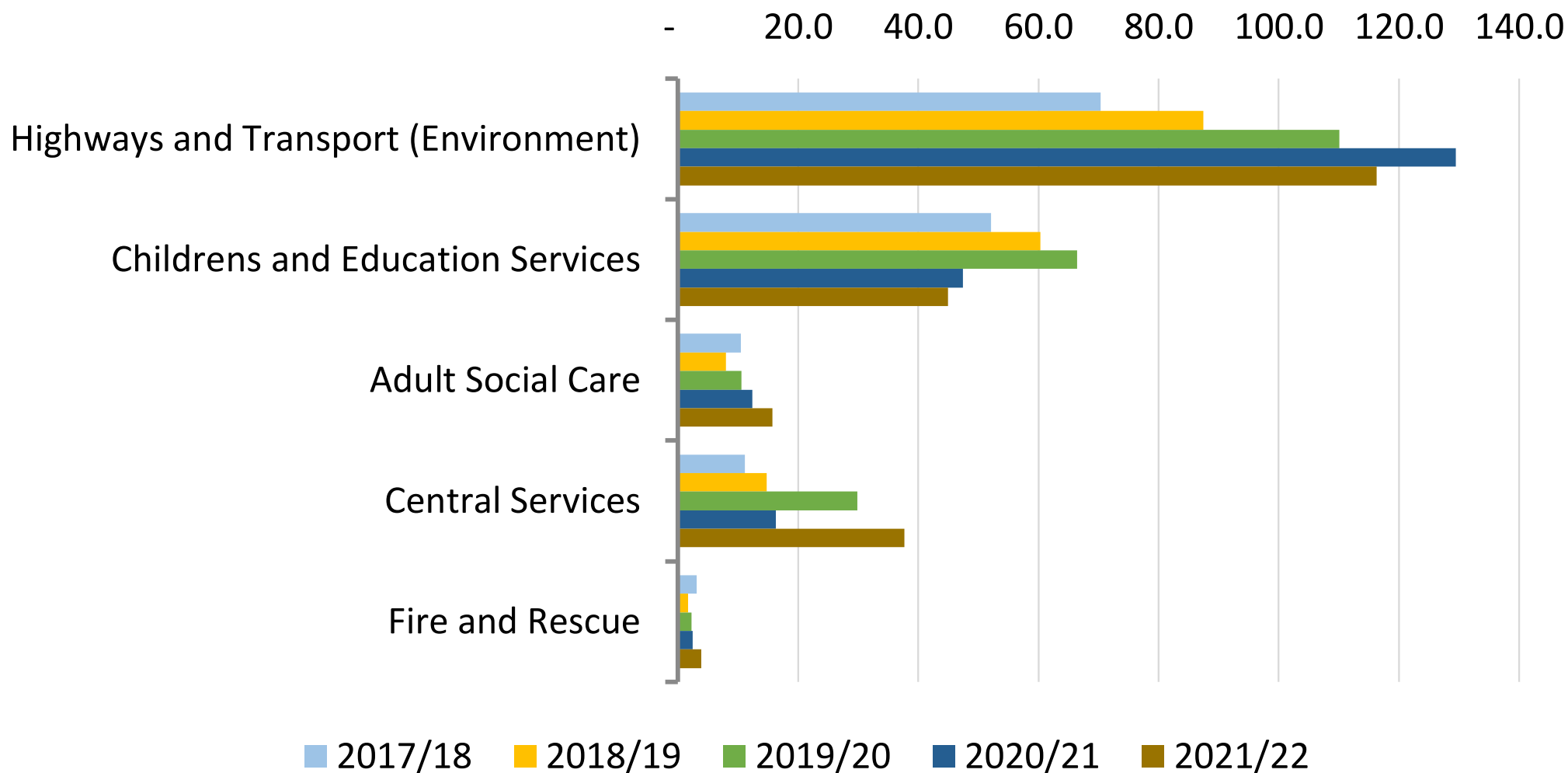


2021/22 Revenue Funding Breakdown



The capital programme for the year 2021-22 saw investment of £219m in the infrastructure of the county, with substantial investment on highways and schools expansion.

Capital Investment (£m)





The year ahead

At the time of writing, the county council finds itself in the middle of a perfect storm of rising prices, a cost of living crisis, globally significant events and increased demand for our services.

The scale of this challenge cannot be underestimated. Further savings will have to be made to bridge next year's funding gap.

In October 2022, the council participated in a Local Government Association 'Corporate Peer Challenge', which saw an independent team of councillors and senior officers from other local authorities review how we operate as a council. Alongside acknowledging we are a well-run council that works hard to provide good services, the review highlighted where we could make improvements and changes. It reinforced our view that, given the current financial climate, will have some difficult decisions to make in the year ahead. An action plan will be developed and progressed in the coming year in response to the findings of this review.

As we look forward, our services continue to face various challenges and opportunities:

- **Adult Care Services** will continue to work hard to support and sustain a vibrant care workforce in Hertfordshire and work closely with partners such as the NHS to continue to support people to live independently at home for as long as possible.



- **Children Services** will continue to focus on supporting children and young people through our Families First, Family Safeguarding, Specialist Adolescent Service Hertfordshire, and 0-25 Together Service for children with disabilities. To ensure children are looked after and cared for to the highest standard, our priority will be to recruit up to 60 additional Hertfordshire foster carers next year, alongside plans to scale up our own in-house residential provision to support vulnerable young people in Hertfordshire. We aim to expand apprenticeship and work opportunities for those leaving our care to ensure they get the right opportunities to thrive into adulthood.
- **Community Protection** will complete the major undertakings set out in our [Integrated Risk Management Plan](#) and commence work on the production of its successor – the Community Risk Management Plan, which will identify foreseeable fire and rescue-related risk and assess how we will manage those risks.
- **Environment and Transport** will prioritise the delivery of the Sustainable Hertfordshire Action Plan as well as other projects such as active travel, 20mph zones, climate adaptation, the Bus Services Implementation Plan Bid and the Public Sector Decarbonising Programme.
- **Sustainable Growth** will prioritise the delivery of our key sustainability ambitions for the next few years and support the delivery of high quality placemaking around the county, ensuring the infrastructure that new and existing communities need is secured.
- **Public Health** will work to prioritise resources to optimise its impact on reducing health inequalities.
- **Resources** will continue to support the organisation to deliver its wider objectives alongside recruiting, retaining and supporting its valuable workforce and helping to manage the financial challenges the council faces.





Creating a cleaner, greener,
healthier Hertfordshire

Thanks to all colleagues, residents and organisations who feature in this publication.