

welcome

Welcome to the second issue of the Hertfordshire Prosperity newsletter. This electronic newsletter aims to keep you updated with the work of Hertfordshire Prosperity and its partners.

Hertfordshire Prosperity generates leadership, confidence and integration to encourage the growth of Hertfordshire's economy, with membership drawn from a range of agencies throughout the county.

Four issues of the newsletter are produced annually and will include general news, updates on key projects, a quarterly profile of a partner and much more.

If you would like to contribute a story to the next issue due out in November, please email it to victoriac@exemplas.com

Click on the links below to access each story.

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LEA 2004

The Local Economy Assessment (LEA) for 2004 is due to be published on the Hertfordshire Observatory in early October. Seen as an authoritative source of data by Government Office, the LEA is essential to many bidders for funding.

The way it has been produced this year differs slightly from previous issues as it has been decided to produce more of the LEA in-house through contributions from Hertfordshire Prosperity partners including LSC, UoH, HCC, Hertford Regional College and Business Link Hertfordshire. A Steering Group representing the HP partnership was established in the year and they appointed John Wright from Hertford Regional College as Project Manager in March. Cambridge Econometrics is undertaking economic forecasting and analysis.

To view the LEA when it comes online in October, go to www.hertsobservatory.org. Paper copies can be obtained from Adam Wood at Hertfordshire Prosperity on 01727 813560 or adamw@exemplas.com



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Partner Profile - Herts CVS Group

The third, or not for profit sector, is a small, yet significant, contributor to the local economy and is a major driver in promoting the concept that economic well-being is enjoyed by all in the county on an inclusive basis.

Herts CVS Group is the key partner representing the third sector in the county and is made up of a partnership of nine district-based Councils for Voluntary Service and the county level Rural Community Council, CDA for Herts.

The role Herts CVS plays is to provide a unique link between grassroots and decision makers and to be a trusted source of information, advice and support to voluntary and community groups. Recent estimates indicate that there are 8,000 such groups of all sizes throughout Hertfordshire, with over 1,600 members of a CVS.

Many services are provided including information through newsletters, training provision, organising networking events, equipment hire, printing and specific advice on funding and governance. The CVS' role of representation, links it with a number of groups and partnerships, including Herts Together, Hertfordshire

Prosperity, Herts Rural Forum and Early Years Partnerships, to name but a few.

Using the strengths of local knowledge and expertise in working with "hard to reach groups," Herts CVS plays a key role in supporting new initiatives and developing joint working. It also ensures that plans are structured to provide opportunities for the voluntary and community sector.

Herts CVS works alongside Hertfordshire Prosperity and others to prepare plans for Investing in Communities, North Herts College in establishing the Professional Development Centre, and Business Link in promoting greater understanding and skills for the social enterprise agenda. It is providing input for the Hertfordshire Economic Development Strategy for Goal 5: Social Inclusion, in its role as strategic local lead. On a regional level, it helps provide a broad participation aspect to the regional economy.

For further information on the work of Herts CVS, please contact either Ann Jansz at Stevenage CVS (e-mail: ann@stevenagecvs.solis.co.uk – Tel: 01438 353951) or Mark Mitchell at Dacorum CVS (e-mail: mark.dcv@classmail.co.uk – Tel: 01442 253935).



StAR for local post-16 learning

Hertfordshire is a prosperous county with low unemployment and deprivation and has a strong entrepreneurial culture. A major reason for this success, is the skill levels of the county's workforce.

To help retain, and in some cases improve upon, these skills levels, Herts LSC is working to ensure that publicly funded learning is highly effective.

To do this, Herts LSC is undertaking a Strategic Area Review (StAR) as part of the government's strategy for post-16 learning, published in 2002. The review will look at the effectiveness of current provision and make recommendations for the future. It will include the contribution made by apprenticeships and other work-based learning, school sixth forms, further education colleges and adult learning initiatives.

The purpose of the review is to undertake a fundamental examination of learning provision against:

- The priorities of learners, employers and local communities;

- The need to drive up quality, increase success rates and improve cost effectiveness; and
- The volume and type of education and training needed to meet the LSC's national targets

The StAR consultation will be published in mid November 2004 with the closing date for replies 31 January 2005. More information can be found at www.lsc.gov.uk/herts (then select Strategic Area Review).



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RES and HEDS

The East of England Development Agency (EEDA) is in the process of drawing up a new regional economic strategy (RES). The latest draft, *Progressing a Shared Vision*, was published in May, and the final strategy is due out by the end of this year.

The draft strategy sets out eight broad regional goals:

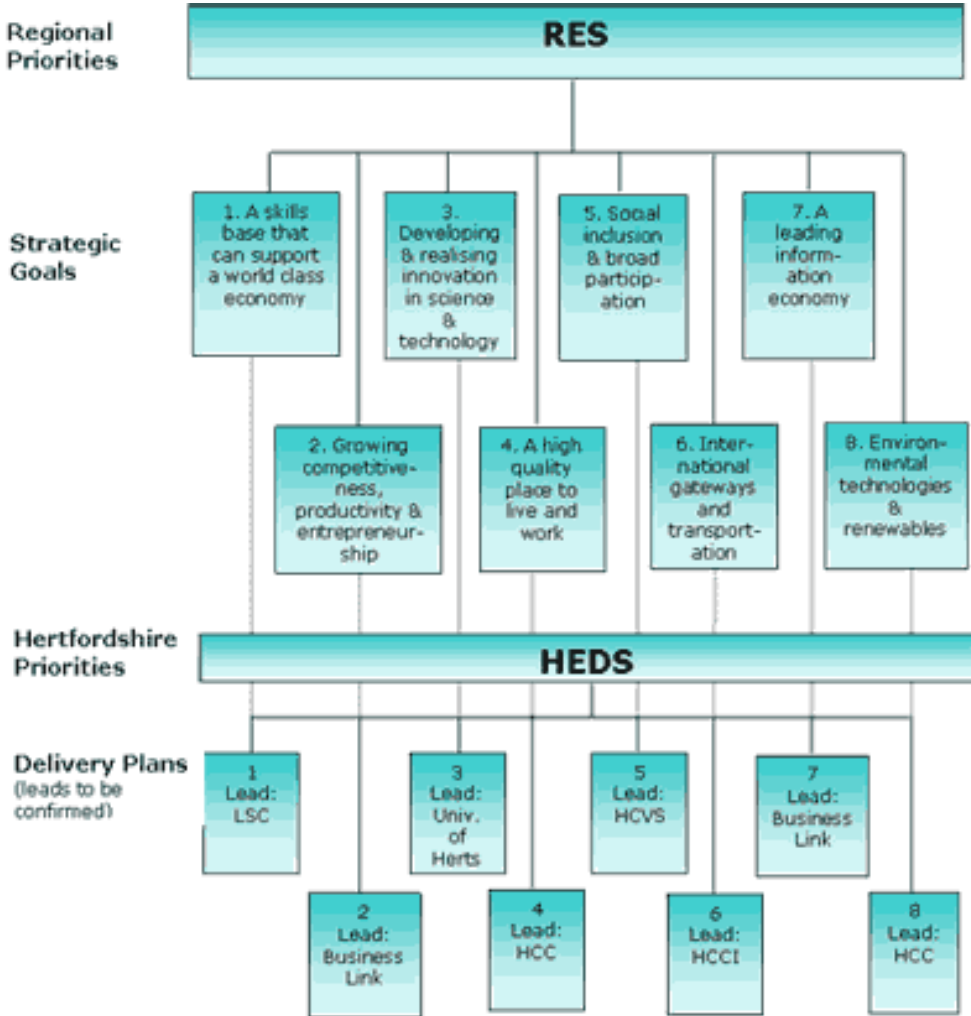
1. A skills base that can support a world-class economy;
2. Growing competitiveness, productivity and entrepreneurship;
3. Global leadership in developing and realising innovation in science, technology and research;
4. High quality places to work and live
5. Social inclusion and broad participation in the regional economy
6. Making the most from the development of international gateways and national and regional transport corridors
7. A leading information society
8. An exemplar in environmental technologies and the efficient use of resources

These, in turn, are broken down into more detailed regional priorities and regional actions.

The RES forms the basis of the new Hertfordshire Economic Development Strategy (HEDS), currently being developed by HP and its partners. The new HEDS will be very closely aligned with the regional strategy, while maintaining a strong local flavour. The strategy will set out a local baseline or starting point, identify local actions, and set local targets and outputs. HEDS will have a five year life, but will be reinforced by an annual plan that sets out the detailed activities and resources of the partnership each year.

The new HEDS is currently being drafted. An outline draft will be circulated to partners in October and be gradually fleshed out and refined over the next three months, in consultation with partners and organisations across the county. The aim is to have a finalised strategy by January 2005.

Contact: Adam Wood on 01727 813560 or adamw@exemplas.com



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Investing in Communities

Investing in Communities (IiC) is a major new regional programme, funded through EEDA's single programme funds, that will encourage a holistic partnership approach to tackling regeneration and renewal in deprived communities in the East of England.

Using EEDA funding of £230 million over 10 years, the main objectives of IiC are:

- To improve economic performance in deprived areas;
- To improve the employment opportunities of disadvantaged groups;
- To address social exclusion and inequalities in the region;
- To build capacity and leadership in the community and voluntary sectors;
- To improve support for social enterprises and to make social enterprises better businesses;
- To harness mainstream funding in delivering the outcomes of the programme.

The programme will be targeted primarily at areas and neighbourhoods within the 10% most deprived wards in the region. It will also address the needs of market towns and rural communities, pockets of deprivation and communities of interest.

Hertfordshire is the first area in the region to be awarded funding under the LiC programme. Understanding Hertfordshire Communities is a programme of capacity building and mapping & research activities designed to pave the way for future LiC programmes and projects in the county. It aims to learn from what we have already done, develop links between local projects and broader strategic aims, and strengthen relationships with communities and sectors.

In year 1, the programme will:

- Appoint a Community Liaison & Development Manager to identify and promote the linkages between strategies and local projects, work with key funding stakeholders to help them redirect mainstream funding towards new social inclusion activities, and work with local communities, LSPs and local stakeholders to identify and develop new projects.
- Appoint a Programme Co-ordinator to provide support for the Community Liaison and Development Manager, and to carry out the day-to-day management of the programme.
- Develop voluntary & community sector business skills.
- Develop a market towns common approach.
- Research pockets of deprivation.
- Research new town needs.

Contact: Adam Wood on 01727 813560 or adamw@exemplas.com



EEDA's Review of Sub-Regional Partnerships

EEDA published a consultation paper for a review of its work with sub-

regional partnerships in April 2004. This review was intended to initiate a debate on how EEDA can work more effectively with Sub-Regional Economic Partnerships (SREPs), as part of a wider review of partnership arrangements with sister organisations. This recognises that the contribution of partner organisations, both regionally and sub-regionally, is crucial to the East of England's success. HP is the SREP for Hertfordshire, and there are a further eight SREPs across the region.

As a result of the review, and subsequent consultation, EEDA proposes the following activities involving EEDA staff and SREP representatives:

- Development of a common Service Level Agreement to define the core SREP roles and standards;
- Development of criteria for business planning 2005/06;
- Assessment and development of delivery management arrangements.

It is proposed that these are taken forward by 'task and finish' groups over the next six months.

Contact: Neil Hayes on 01223 484532 or neilhayes@eeda.org.uk



Access Guide and Audit Pack

In response to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), the Disability Employer Outreach Service (DEOS) at Exemplas has produced a guide to removing barriers to access. The guide is aimed primarily at local businesses, but it is equally applicable to public and not-for-profit sector organisations. The guide is available at £50 per copy inclusive of VAT and postage with discounts available for multiple copies.

Although the DDA became law in 1996, from October 2004 service providers will have to make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of their premises to overcome physical barriers to access.

Contact: Patrick McGeough on 01727 813811 or patrickm@exemplas.com



Hertfordshire Disability Awards

To mark the introduction of the full act, the Hertfordshire Disability Awards are being held on the evening of Friday 1st October.

Although disability awards have been held before, most focus solely on access for disabled people and they tend to be open to businesses in one particular town. The Hertfordshire Disability Awards will go much further than that, by looking at how organisations employ disabled people and how they provide access to products and services – not just in terms of physical access but through policies and procedures and staff attitude towards disabled people as customers and employees.

Contact: Patrick McGeough on 01727 813811 or patrickm@exemplas.com



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Project Progress

Hertfordshire Prosperity supports a number of core and rural projects throughout the county with funding from the East of England Development Agency (EEDA). Here you will find an outline of how those projects are progressing.

BME Business

The ERainbow project ensures direct engagement with the BME community via their voluntary and community organisations. During phase two, the ERainbow project has focused on forming strategic partnerships with other Hertfordshire minority voluntary projects such as Hertfordshire Race Equality Council and Hertfordshire County Consortium (BME). A range of new publicity material has been produced to increase awareness of the ERainbow project. The website has also been overhauled to make it compliant with legislative requirements. It can be viewed at www.erainbow.org

Project contact: Moreen Pascal on 01727 813551 or moreenp@exemplas.com



The first ERainbow conference

The "Share and Succeed" project works with Hertfordshire's ethnic minority business community to increase take up of mainstream business support services. Business network events and business workshops have been throughout the county, with several new innovative business programmes being delivered this autumn: Business Peer Group learning networks, Access to Finance and High Growth Support.

Project contact: Amrit Maan on 01727 813689 or amritm@exemplas.com

Small Retail Support Project

This project enables WENTA to further develop and expand its range of professional advisory services into the local community across South and West Hertfordshire, by providing professional advice and support to small, out of town centre, retailers in the county whose prosperity and development has suffered due to town centre development and out of town shopping centre development.

It also aims to provide professional advice to local authorities on the future development of their community shopping parades and to provide further opportunities to small retailers and their staff to access business skills training, particularly from under privileged and ethnic minority groups.

Project contact: Norman Ewing on 0870 870 0891 or normanewing@wenta.co.uk

The Key Fund (Phase 2)

Although Hertfordshire has one of the lowest employment rates in the country, some people such as lone parents, people living in rural

areas or those with housing issues can be at a disadvantage when it comes to gaining employment. To help address this, the Key Fund is a grant open to all Hertfordshire voluntary organisations and community groups that are looking for funding for projects to help disadvantaged people get back into employment.

The purpose of the Key Fund is to provide small, grants to Hertfordshire based organisations. In its first phase of operation from 2001 to 2003, this project made 145 grants and received 206 applications.

Eight grants have already been made in the second phase – Viewpoint, Ethnic Minorities Careers Agency, St Raphael Ladies Auxiliary Society, Watersmeet Trust Ltd, Sound Base Studios Trust, Apsley Paper Trail, Worldshapers and SLSCO. These eight grants add up to a total of nearly £60,000.

Project contact: Tony Gilbert on 01707 251351 or info@hertscf.org.uk

Film Multiplier Study

The UK Film Council and a group of National and Regional Screen and Development Agencies have commissioned a study of the economic impact of the UK screen industries, focussing on the economic multipliers of the various screen industries.

The film and media industry has a significant role to play in the overall success of the county's economy, and this study will help to measure that success within a regional and national framework.

Project contact: Katie Huane on 01223 200837 or katiehuane@eeda.org.uk

Film Champion for Herts

South Hertfordshire is an internationally renowned centre for high quality, technically demanding feature film production and this project enhances the level of support offered to film and television production in Hertfordshire.

Jess Lewington, Screen East's Head of Locations, and her team are offering a dedicated location finding service, and working to establish contacts with senior film executives to promote the Hertfordshire studio cluster as a film location for Warner Brothers, Studio Consulting, Leavesden Studios, Elstree Studios, BBC Elstree and other smaller studio complexes. For more details log-on to the website at www.screeneast.co.uk

Project contact: Jess Lewington on 01923 495051 or

Inward Investment Business Support Services – Hertfordshire Future

During the first quarter, Hertfordshire Future met with 47 established foreign businesses in the county, resulting in 22 requests for additional information and 16 follow-up actions, ranging from breaking into new overseas markets to workforce skills shortfall analyses. During the same period 185 commercial property searches were made on behalf of potential investors.

Epros GmbH is in the process of establishing a subsidiary company SewerTech Limited, a pipeline repair service in the UK and in July, made a direct approach to Hertfordshire Future to make a property search. Following this, the company was provided with details of HF services as well as details of local service charges, business rates, general county information. Arrangements were made for them to meet with two companies keen to sub-let redundant space. Hertfordshire was in competition with the High Wycombe area where commercial property rates are significantly lower. However, the company eventually decided on office/warehouse premises of 2,000 ft² in Porters Wood, St Albans, due in part to the level of service provided by Hertfordshire Future. HF has since provided contact details of local solicitors and accountants and will be meeting with them to discuss recruitment and other issues.

Project contact: Robin Marriott on 01727 813708 or robinm@exemplas.com

Get Fit for BIDS

Centered on Maylands Estate in Hemel Hempstead and Pin Green Estate in Stevenage, this project's aim is to raise the profile of the areas and seek solutions to issues raised by businesses themselves on security and image/identity. This will show how a small investment can make an impact on an area and help to protect local jobs and aid inward investment activity for the future.

Project contact: Chris Haynes on 01442 867805 or chris.j.haynes@dacorum.gov.uk

Rural-funded projects

Active Parishes (2)

The Active Parishes 2 project, which is managed by the Community Development Agency Hertfordshire (CDAH), aims to mainstream and develop the original pilot project, which is currently running solely in East Hertfordshire. The rural team are working to expand on the pilot

to develop community capacity building and training opportunities to rural community groups and individuals across the county.

Project contact: Herbert Dzapata on 01707 695517 or [cda.herbert@lycos.co.uk](mailto:herbert@lycos.co.uk)

WayMark Herts

This is a continuation of an EEDA funded project that was instigated in 2001 to create county level rural hubs in each of the six counties of the eastern region. There is currently a plethora of support measures available to rural businesses but they often fail to benefit from these because they are unaware of help available. The website is at www.waymark-herts.org.

Project contact: Peter Homer on 01727 737724 or peter@waymark-herts.org

Grown in Herts

Managed as part of a wider rural development programme by East Hertfordshire District Council, this project is trying to increase the demand for local produce by riding on the back of ongoing food outlets such as markets, themed markets and farmers markets by raising awareness.

The main beneficiaries are small farmers looking to diversify, small holders and small producers in cottage industries. Grown in Herts are also developing their existing website that ties tourism and local food products together, promoting Hertfordshire as a desirable place to visit. The website can be accessed at www.growninherts.org.uk

Project contact: Carole Skidmore on 01992 531610 or carole.skidmore@eastherts.gov.uk

Village Links

Dacorum Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) has identified that 20% of the population live outside the main towns of Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring. These residents often experience difficulties accessing services. To address these issues, the bureau is providing an advice line and CAB adviser one day a week on a rota basis in the villages of Markyate, Little Gaddesden, Kings Langley and Bovington.

Project contact: Patricia Vadaszffy on 01442 213368

Market Towns Tourism

Aimed at promoting market town based rural tourism across Hertfordshire, particularly targeting groups that do not traditionally access the countryside.

Co-ordinated by Mark Mitchell, Dacorum CVS, under the following themes, Promotion and Marketing in Tring, School Peer to Peer Tourism Promotion, Tring Transport and Tourism Forum and county wide themed leaflets under the Enjoy!banner. These themes combine in the promotion of visiting Hertfordshire and raising awareness of the county's attractions.

Project contact: Mark Mitchell on 01442 253935 or mark.dcv@classmail.co.uk

Rural Economy Study (Phase 2)

Stage 1 study of Hertfordshire Rural Economy identified a number of economic issues concerning access to public /community services, including affordable housing, transport, self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Stage 2 is examining the responses to some of the issues in stage 1 and will provide a foundation of intelligence for all organisations involved in economic and community development. It will do this by encouraging sustainable growth of the rural economy by supporting and developing competitive rural business and tourism activity, by supporting rural research and addressing the narrow economic base of rural areas through diversification and enterprise development.

Project contact: John Pryor on 01992 556217 or john.pryor@hertscc.gov.uk



Herts Rural Form partners visit local lavender fields



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