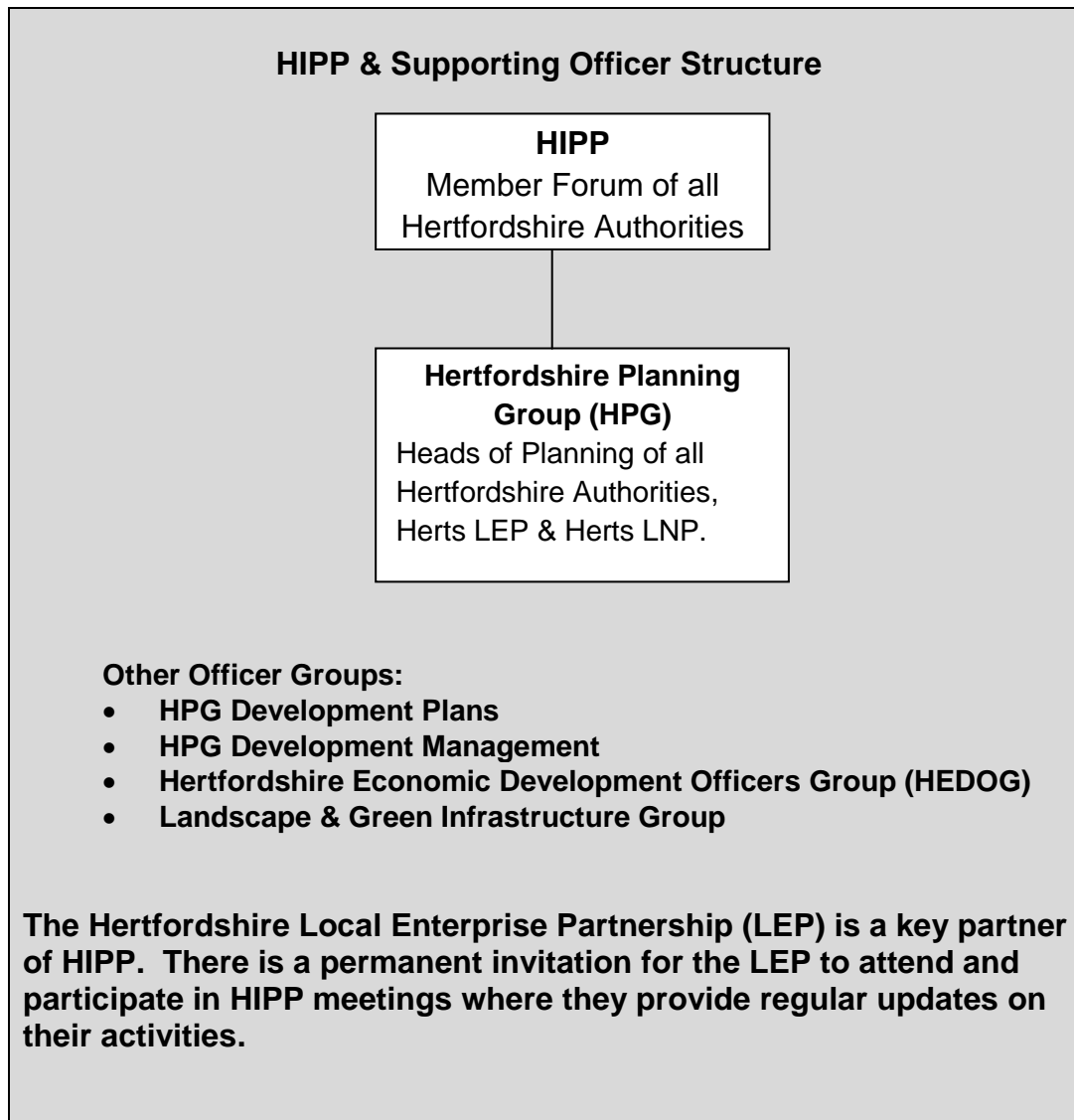


# HERTFORDSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REVIEW 2015/16



## Key Officials 2015/16

HIPP Chair:	Cllr Mandy Perkins (Welwyn Hatfield B.C.)
HIPP Vice Chair:	Cllr Derrick Ashley (Hertfordshire C.C.)
HPG Chair (Officer Group):	Jane Custance (Watford B.C.)

## Key Achievements

- ❖ Proactively engaged with the Greater London Authority and other councils in the East and South East with regard to the review of the London Plan and responding to the growth needs of the Wider South East.
- ❖ Oversaw the development of map based information reflecting a range of evidence based material to support Strategic Planning and Local Plan work.
- ❖ Supported and commented on Hertfordshire County Council's Transport Vision and Rail Strategy.
- ❖ Affordable Housing Viability Consultants Framework developed by Hertsmere Borough Council for use by all Hertfordshire Districts.
- ❖ Agreed funding for research into viability and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and to address concerns that conventional viability consultants seem to lean towards supporting developer's business models and calculations.
- ❖ Undertook a review of Housing & Population projections and working within the Wider South East with a view to commissioning a technical consultant to review population and household projections.
- ❖ Progressed a Water & Drainage Infrastructure project that will seek to tackle water supply deficits and waste water capacity issues.
- ❖ Sought to improve engagement with the health sector through a joint workshop that made recommendations for ensuring good working relationships are established and sustained.
- ❖ Worked with the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership in the delivery of key strategic infrastructure.
- ❖ Took a lead role in the Local Transport Body and enhanced engagement with strategic transport infrastructure providers.
- ❖ Promoted sustainability and good design by facilitating presentations by Building Futures and Design South East.
- ❖ Alerted Hertfordshire MPs to the considerable level of infrastructure investment required to support growth and the competition for resources from other regions.
- ❖ Submitted joint responses to the Department of Communities & Local Government (DCLG) on the CIL review; proposed changes to national Planning policy; the New Homes Bonus Technical Consultation; and the technical consultation on the implementation of planning changes.
- ❖ Worked with local educational institutes with a view to improving professional and apprenticeship training opportunities for planning staff.
- ❖ Identified and implemented opportunities for joint training provision across the county.
- ❖ Lobbied for the localisation of planning fees.

## **SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2015/16**

### **Duty to Cooperate**

The duty to cooperate was a major priority for HIPP and was a regular feature at HIPP meetings during the year. The main focus for HIPP related to working with other authorities across the Wider South East to engage with the Greater London Authority on its Review of the London Plan.

### **Strategic Planning Framework (SPF)**

HIPP worked to develop a Strategic Planning Framework for Hertfordshire and each HIPP Member authority was asked to identify their top ten strategic planning issues; the key strategic issues of their neighbours that impinge on them; and their view of Hertfordshire and the sub region in 20 years time. This information was collated and included in a report to HIPP. It is intended to take this forward with a single issue facilitated event or meeting. Work on the SPF is currently paused due to other events including a county devolution meeting held in early 2016.

### **Future Arrangements for the Review of the London Plan/Engagement with London & the Wider South East**

HIPP has taken a proactive role in terms of engaging with the Greater London Authority (GLA) and other authorities in the East and South East in respect of the review of the London Plan and responding to the growth needs of the wider South East. Following attendance at a Wider South East Summit, hosted by the GLA in March 2015, Hertfordshire Councils participated in a series of roundtable meetings for authorities in the East of England. These dealt mainly with procedural matters and how arrangements for engagement across the Wider South East (WSE) might best be organised. A second WSE summit was hosted by the GLA in December 2015 and discussed a programme for the review of the London Plan. Early priorities for collaboration and joint action are to centre around:

- Preparation and timing for the full review of the London Plan;
- Common understanding of data/evidence base;
- Addressing barriers to housing delivery; and
- Making the case for strategic infrastructure investment.

A political steering group was established which comprises five members each from the East, South East and London. This includes Cllr Linda Haysey a HIPP Member from East Herts who is a Conservative appointment on the group. Cllr John Gardner a HIPP Member from Stevenage Borough Council is a substitute for the Labour Group. The first meeting of the steering group was held on 10 March and discussed officer support and working arrangements; the programme for the review of the London Plan; barriers to housing delivery and strategic infrastructure. It is proposed that the group will meet with the new London Mayor in July 2016.

An East of England Growth and Infrastructure Group was also established which is made up of the elected Members from the East of England that are on the WSE Political Steering, plus their substitutes and the two East of England lead chief executives. Consequently, it includes Cllr. Linda Haysey (East Herts), Cllr John Gardner (Stevenage) and John Wood (HCC Chief Executive). The purpose of the group is to:

- Discuss strategic issues pertinent to the East of England relevant to the WSE collaborative effort;
- Provide leadership and direction to the East of England element of the WSE collaboration work programme;
- Oversee the activities of the East of England SSPOLG; and
- Act as a conduit between the WSE political steering group and the wider membership of the East of England LGA.

The first meeting of the Group was held on 24 February 2016 and they discussed the draft agenda and terms of reference for the WSE Political Steering Group. The Group also agreed that the LEP Chairs will be invited to meet with them in the autumn with the aim of working together to shape future engagement with London and the South East.

The East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) is providing a significant level of support for these arrangements. In addition, an officer group comprising representatives from London and the Wider South East and a separate group representing just the East exist to support this process. Both groups include representatives of the Hertfordshire Planning Group.

The East of England Officer group, called the East of England Strategic Spatial Planning Officer Liaison Group (EE SSPOLG) is developing a full Technical Work Programme that will include timelines and costings. A fund of £100,000 has been approved to support this work. The technical work will involve a range of work streams covering housing, transport and economic growth projections. It is suggested that a planning/economic growth professional be seconded from a member council, using some of the proposed £100,000 funding, to direct and oversee the work on behalf of the East of England.

## **Strategic Planning & Delivery of Growth**

### **Map Based Strategic Planning Evidence Base**

A series of map information showing a range of evidence based material is maintained in order to support strategic planning work. This includes information on proposed housing developments; where people are employed; forecast employment growth; journey to work trip origins and destinations; and road transport hotspots. HIPP authorities have worked, and will continue to work, in partnership to populate the supporting databases. The data and maps will provide an input into the Strategic Planning Framework and the Districts' Local Plan work.

### **Transport Strategies**

Hertfordshire County Council progressed work during the year on developing a Transport Vision for the County. A workshop was held with the business sector as well as a range of 1:1 meetings with Districts and reports to HIPP.

The consultation for the Phase 2 transport vision work was completed in summer 2015. The study outlined options for future packages of major transport schemes/interventions. Further stakeholder consultation is to take place in Summer 2016 with the production of the final transport vision scheduled for December 2016.

A rail strategy is also being developed which will be able to support lobbying for infrastructure investment. A presentation on the Rail Strategy was made to the July HIPP meeting and HIPP suggested a series of improvements to be included in the final strategy.

The County Council are also leading on developing a series of Growth & Transport Plans and a presentation was given to the March HIPP meeting. This is a new approach, replacing the previous urban focused transport plans. The new system better reflects the growth agenda and would be evidence led, based on broad travel patterns and would seek to maximise funding opportunities. The aim is to produce the first one, for the M1/M25/A41, during the 2016/17 financial year.

### **Affordable Housing Viability**

HIPP have recognised the need to provide adequate affordable housing through planning gain and recognised how this is being challenged by developers. Hertsmere Borough Council led on this work and a Consultants Framework for Affordable Housing Viability work, that can be used by all Hertfordshire authorities, has now been introduced.

Further work is also being led by Hertfordshire County Council in respect of research into viability and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This is in response to concerns that infrastructure requirements are being rejected by developers because of viability arguments and that assessments of viability by the conventional consultancies seem to lean more towards supporting developer's business models and value calculations. The proposal is to fund a study of the viability issues in the county, to be undertaken by a specialist who is independent of the main group of consultancies. The work is to be progressed during 2016/17 and there will be workshops and/or presentations for Members and Officers.

### **Population & Household Projections**

In March 2015 some concern was expressed at HIPP regarding the new ONS household projections that, due to assumptions related to household sizes, had in some cases indicated a small growth in population but a large increase in projected households. Officers were asked to investigate further and more detailed analysis was undertaken and reported back to HIPP in March 2016. It was noted that the GLA are developing further trend-based demographic modelling work to support the Review of the London Plan. The model will potentially be made available on an open-source basis giving an opportunity to scrutinise it and consider a variation of a range of assumptions. The GLA have offered to present the model to consultants undertaking SHMAs in the Wider South East.

As referred to earlier in respect of the Review of the London Plan and Wider South East engagement a number of priority areas for collaboration have been identified. This includes achieving a common understanding of the data/evidence base and it is proposed to commission a technical consultant to review population and household projections in the Wider South East.

## **Strategic Infrastructure**

### **Water & Drainage Infrastructure**

HIPP agreed to progress a joint project to identify the water infrastructure needs of Hertfordshire to 2050. The HIPP authorities will work with the Environment Agency, Hertfordshire LEP and the water companies. The project aims to look beyond the county boundary and attempts are to be made to identify other regional alliances to enable it to be extended into a major regional initiative.

The infrastructure project will seek to tackle water supply deficits and waste water capacity issues. The project has support from the water companies.

At its October 2015 meeting HIPP received an update on the project and were informed that consultants had been appointed and that work had commenced. The meeting was advised that Phase 1 of the study should be completed by the end of May 2016 and this will include assembling background information; modelling planned growth; assessing reasonable infrastructure options for water supply and waste water treatment; a critical assessment of the infrastructure planning and investment process. The precise nature of the stage 2 work will be decided after the completion of Phase 1. Options for Phase 2 outputs include modelling at a finer level of detail, including the local level; smaller specific sub-area based studies; and exploration of a wide range of options for strategic packages of interventions for each scenario modelled

### **Health Infrastructure Planning**

HIPP has previously received reports referring to the difficulties in engaging with the health sector in order to identify their infrastructure needs. In response a joint workshop, involving health providers and local planning authorities, was held in June 2015.

The workshop saw a total of 33 Hertfordshire health professionals and local authority planners (representing all ten Districts/Boroughs and the County Council) come together to survey the relationship between spatial and health infrastructure planning in the county. The aim now is to ensure that good working relationships are established and sustained. This includes preparing a list of key contacts in each organisation and exploring the potential for this group to meet on a regular basis, with options for smaller groups based around the CCG boundaries. A further progress report to HIPP, with NHS/Clinical Commissioning Groups attending, is proposed for 2016/17.

### **Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)**

HIPP and its officer groups work closely with Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership who is a key partner and delivers on a range of infrastructure activities in the county. The LEP regularly attend both HIPP and officer group meetings and an update from them is a standing item on HIPP agendas.

The LEP have progressed a number of projects around the following growth areas: A1(M); M1/M25 and M11/A10. Funding of £1.8million for regeneration at Stevenage has been secured. The LEP are also contributing about one third of the cost of developing the Hatfield Renewal Framework; and are funding projects at Watford

Health Campus and Watford Business Park. The LEP are partly or wholly funding infrastructure related projects for the A602; A120; Croxley; A10 transport modelling; a Transport package (including Hatfield Station); Maylands Transport Modelling; Stevenage Station Master Planning; Stevenage Transport Modelling and Stevenage Utilities.

### **Local Transport Body**

The Chair of HIPP represents the organisation on the Board of the Local Transport Body (LTB).

The LTB has proved a useful forum to engage with major transport infrastructure providers including Highways England and Network Rail who have attended and presented at meetings. As a consequence the LTB, and therefore HIPP, have been able to engage in constructive discussions relating to implications of the Henley Review for rail investment in Hertfordshire and also the East-West Rail Corridor Study. Updates have also been received on the major transport schemes in the county, including the Croxley Rail Link, proposals for the improvement of junction 25 of the M25; the early study work being carried out on what options might be available to improve junctions 21A, 22 and 23 of the M 25; and Cross Rail 2.

### **Sustainability in design and construction**

#### **Building Futures**

The October 2015 meeting of HIPP received an update on the Building Futures project and a presentation, referred to elsewhere in this report, was also made at the December 2015 meeting. Building Futures is a design review service delivered by Hertfordshire County Council and available to Hertfordshire Districts at a cost of £2,500 p.a. During the year the Sustainable Design Toolkit was further enhanced.

#### **Promoting Good Design**

In addition to the Building Futures presentation to the HIPP meeting Design South East also outlined details of their services to the December 2015 HIPP meeting.

### **Lobbying Activity**

A key area of activity for HIPP relates to lobbying. This includes responding to government consultations and where it has done this it has concentrated on the more strategic level issues and also copied Hertfordshire MPs into its responses. HIPP responses to government consultations have, therefore, been in addition to the more detailed responses submitted by individual HIPP member authorities.

#### **Infrastructure Funding for Growth**

In December 2015 HIPP wrote to all Hertfordshire MPs to alert them to the considerable level of infrastructure investment that is required in order for Hertfordshire to adequately respond to the growth challenges and opportunities that exist across the wider region. HIPP referred to the work it was progressing with the Greater London Authority and other authorities in the East and South East. It stressed that for Hertfordshire to meet its own objectively assessed housing needs

and, if necessary, any unmet needs of neighbouring areas including London, a significant increase in infrastructure funding was required. HIPP especially expressed concern given the competition for resources from other regions, in particular the North.

### **DCLG CIL Review**

HIPP responded to the government consultation on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and particularly concern that the cumulative effect of successive amendments to the CIL regulations had significantly widened the infrastructure gap by reducing the contribution CIL is able to make to funding. HIPP supported proposals to enable borrowing against CIL receipts providing appropriate safeguards are in place; stressed the need to provide greater scope to apply CIL across administrative boundaries; called for relief for self build homes to be removed; that relief for starter homes should not be introduced; proposed that S106 pooling should be removed; called for the simplification and streamlining of regulatory requirements; and, given the numerous amendments to the CIL regulations, that a composite version of the regulations should be introduced along with more guidance on how CIL revenue can be spent.

### **Proposed changes to National Planning Policy**

In February 2016 HIPP responded to the DCLG consultation on proposed changes to national planning policy. HIPP stated that it welcomed measures aimed at helping local authorities to increase the provision of homes that are built in appropriate locations to meet local needs and that are part of sustainable communities that provide jobs as well as housing. It did however express some concerns about some of the changes which could have a negative impact on delivery.

HIPP expressed concern about the proposed change to the definition of affordable homes to include a wider range of low cost home ownership options as this could reduce the number of homes available for rent. HIPP also commented that it should be the responsibility of the individual local planning authority to determine the local split between affordable rented housing, intermediate products and starter homes. It also supported, in principle, proposals to increase densities around commuter hubs and the development of brownfield land and small sites. However, it felt that local authorities should determine what is appropriate given local circumstances. In addition, HIPP stated that the provision of land for starter homes should not be at the detriment of employment and referred to the changes to permitted development which had significantly reduced the stock of employment land.

### **New Homes Bonus Technical Consultation**

HIPP commented on the New Homes Bonus Technical Consultation and in particular the proposal to withhold the Bonus from areas where an authority does not have a Local Plan in place. It stated that this was a rather crude measure that ignored the variety of reasons that a Local Plan may not be in place and that it would act as a disincentive to growth. Similarly, HIPP objected to the suggestion that the bonus should be abated where planning permission had been only granted on appeal. This ignored that there may be very good reasons to have issued a refusal and it could penalise local authorities for exercising their statutory planning functions. HIPP also commented on the overly complicated proposal to only make payments above a baseline representing deadweight.



## **Technical Consultation on the Implementation of Planning Changes**

At its March meeting HIPP agreed to comment on the DCLG's Technical Consultation on implementation of planning changes which sought to implement the planning provisions in the Housing and Planning Bill, and some other planning measures. HIPP expressed some specific strategic concerns relating to proposals to extend the possible scope of DCLG's intervention in local plan making; the proposed introduction of approved providers to validate planning applications; and the limited nature of provisions related to the local setting of planning fees.

## **Implementation & Monitoring**

### **Recruitment & Retention of Planning Staff**

HIPP Members have noted the difficulty in recruiting to planning posts and in 2014/15 agreed to approach the University of Hertfordshire to run a planning course for the county. The aim was to provide a long term solution to the problem by establishing a supply chain of experienced staff. A major issue was that the Hertfordshire courses were not accredited by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) who had a moratorium in place on accrediting further courses in order to protect existing planning schools. Both HIPP and the officer group (HPG) wrote to the RTPI asking it to lift the moratorium. During the current year the moratorium has been lifted and the RTPI appointed a dialogue member to work with the University through the accreditation process. The situation continues to be monitored.

HIPP are also participating in an East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) initiative to address the problem of recruitment of planners and work is ongoing with regard to investigating opportunities to develop planning apprenticeships.

In addition, opportunities to share resources are investigated and, for example, Welwyn Hatfield and Hertsmere currently share a Conservation officer post as do Watford and Three Rivers

### **Joint Training Initiatives**

HIPP authorities worked together to share costs, deliver joint training initiatives and offer available places on internal courses. This has provided advantages from economies of scale and other cost savings. This included jointly commissioning Anglia Ruskin University to deliver a programme of Development Management seminars during the year.

### **Localisation of Planning Fees**

HIPP have been active in calling for the localisation of planning fees in order that planning services can be adequately resourced. In January 2016 it received a report set out the background to this, including details of previous lobbying by the Local Government Association and others to promote giving local planning authorities control over the setting of planning application fees. HIPP incorporated their comments in support of the localisation of planning fees within their consultation response on the technical consultation on the Implementation of Planning Changes (see above under lobbying activity).

## **HIPP Work Programme**

The HIPP Work Programme has been developed to guide and manage the activities of HIPP and the associated officer implementation groups. It is now established as a standing information item on all HIPP meeting agendas.

### **HIPP AGENDA Items 2015/16**

#### **4 June 2015**

- Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair of HIPP
- HIPP Terms of Reference
- HIPP Annual Review 2014/15
- Report on the Wider South East Summit
- Hertfordshire LEP Update
- Transport
- HIPP Forward Programme

#### **Information Item:**

- HIPP Work Programme

#### **30 July 2015**

- Rail Strategy Presentation
- Report on GLA Roundtable Meeting
- Duty to Cooperate – Strategic Planning Framework Progress
- LTB/A1 Consortium meetings
- Hertfordshire LEP Update
- HIPP Forward Programme

#### **Information Items:**

- HIPP Work Programme
- Report on Planning & Health Workshop
- Hertfordshire Forward – Report of Conference

#### **7 October 2015**

- Transport Vision
- Water Study Update
- Building Futures Update
- Publication of HIPP Minutes
- Report on GLA Roundtable Meetings
- Hertfordshire LEP Update
- HIPP Forward Programme

#### **Information Item:**

- HIPP Work Programme

#### **8 December 2015**

- Design South East Presentation
- Building Futures Presentation
- Second Wider South East Summit
- Duty to Co-operate – Strategic Planning Framework Progress
- Transport, including an update on the Local Transport Body

- Hertfordshire LEP Update
- HIPP Forward Programme
- DCLG CIL Review Questionnaire

Information Items:

- HIPP Work Programme
- Planning & Health

**26 January 2016**

- Proposals for research into viability and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Localisation of Planning Fees
- Recruitment & Retention of Planners
- Report on Second Wider South East Summit
- Transport, including an update on the Local Transport Body
- Hertfordshire LEP Update
- Strategic Planning Framework
- HIPP Forward Programme
- Government Consultation on changes to NPPF
- New Homes Bonus Technical Consultation

Information Items:

- HIPP Work Programme

**24 March 2016**

- COMET Transport Model & Growth and Transport Plans
- Transport Strategy
- Transport, including an update on the Local Transport Body
- London Plan/Wider South East Engagement
- Strategic Planning Framework
- Population & Household Projections
- Hertfordshire LEP Update
- Technical Consultation on Implementing Planning Changes
- HIPP Forward Programme

Information Item:

- HIPP Work Programme

**Presentations**

Several presentations were made to HIPP during the year and the main ones are detailed below:

**Rail Strategy**

A presentation on the County's Draft Rail Strategy was given to HIPP in July 2015 and followed a series of workshops attended by Hertfordshire Local Authorities. The Strategy is to enable lobbying for improvements and identifies priorities line by line. HIPP contributed a series of improvements to be incorporated within the final strategy.

## **Transport Vision**

At the October HIPP Meeting a presentation was given on the Stage 2 work of the Transport Vision for the County. This was out to stakeholder consultation until the end of November.

## **Water Study Update & Drainage Infrastructure Project**

At its October 2015 meeting HIPP received an update on the Water Study and Drainage Infrastructure Project and were informed that consultants had been appointed and that work had commenced. The meeting was advised that Phase 1 of the study should be completed by the end of May.

The project objectives were discussed at the meeting. Further information is provided under the 'Strategic Infrastructure' section of this report.

## **Design South East**

Chris Lamb of Design South East (DSE) gave one of two presentations to the December 2015 meeting, the other was by Rachael Donovan of Building Futures which is referred to below. He explained that DSE started in Kent and now works across the East, South East and London. They are a charity and are independent and provide design review and support that is delivered locally. DSE broker better design between developers, planners and communities. They have a small team of six but have access, through a design panel of about a hundred, to a range of expertise. DSE offer a range of services including design review; working with authorities to help them set up their own review arrangements; providing design advice to officers; brokering dialogue with communities; and offering training. Chris Lamb also outlined a series of examples of work undertaken.

## **Building Futures**

Rachael Donovan stated that she had given an update to HIPP about 18 months previous and John Rumble had reported on the biennial Awards event at the last meeting. Building Futures is a design review service delivered by Hertfordshire County Council and available to Hertfordshire authorities at a cost of £2,500 p.a. This is operated along the same lines as DSE and reviews are generally paid for by developers.

Members were advised that during the current year there had been an emphasis on developing the toolkit and keeping knowledge up to date and relevant. Building Futures operate a design review service and must cover their costs. The cost for the awards event is covered by sponsorship including from Warner Brothers, Herts LEP, the Green Triangle and Willmott Dixon.

Building Futures operate a toolkit and technical module in house. They also operate two websites, one is publicly accessible and the other is an intranet which holds technical resources that are only available to subscribing authorities.

## **COMET Transport Model & Growth and Transport Plans**

Sue Jackson of Hertfordshire County Council gave a presentation that provided an update on the development of the county wide COMET transport model. This was a highways model covering A, B and C roads and it was complemented by a separate public transport model. It was confirmed that the model extended beyond the

Hertfordshire boundary. A lot of data had been collected to support the development of the model, including mobile phone records. Over the next few years it was proposed to further enhance the model.

The model assumed growth of 77,836 new dwellings between 2014 and 2031 and job growth of 70,000 over the same period. Some of the initial findings of the model were illustrated including details of junction delays and hot spots. The model could run various scenarios and options to test the impact of developments and Districts could directly commission work to support their own Local Plan development. The initial results would be discussed at the next HPG Development Plans Group in April 2016.

Simon Willison of AECOM also gave a presentation on Growth & Transport Plans. He outlined the previous approach to urban transport planning and stated that the new system better reflected the growth agenda and was not constrained to urban areas. He added that the new plans would be evidence led, based on broad travel patterns and would seek to maximise funding opportunities.

The programme of developing the plans was outlined and the aim is to produce the first one, for the M1/M25/A41, during the 2016/17 financial year. There would be a partnership approach and a Member Steering Group would be established for each plan and would include Parish, Town Council, District and County Council Members.

HPG/DSW  
28 June 2016