



**WATFORD  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

# **COUNCIL MEETING**

**13 March 2018**

**7.30 pm**

**Town Hall, Watford**

## **Contact**

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**Publication date: 5 March 2018**

5 March 2018

Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the Borough of Watford to be held on Tuesday, 13 March 2018 starting at 7.30 pm at the Town Hall, Watford to take into consideration and determine upon the following subjects, namely: -

**1. Apologies for Absence**

**2. Disclosure of Interests**

**3. Minutes**

The [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 30 January 2018 to be submitted and signed.

**4. Official Announcements**

**5. Mayor's Report (Pages 6 - 10)**

Report of the Mayor

**6. Questions by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 10.0**

**7. Questions by Members of the Public under Council Procedure Rule 11.0**

**8. Petitions presented under Council Procedure Rule 12.0**

**9. Business especially brought forward by the Chairman or the Head of Paid Service which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered as a matter of urgency.**

**10. Review of Corporate Plan 2020: revised for 2018/19 (Pages 11 - 79)**

Report of Managing Director attached

Minutes of 5 March Cabinet to follow

**11. South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan (Pages 80 - 89)**

Report of Deputy Managing Director attached

Minutes of 5 March Cabinet to follow

**12. Motions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13.0**

1. The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Matt Turmaine and seconded by Councillor Ahsan Khan

*“This council recognises that the benefits system in the UK needs reform to help people into work and to ensure that there is an appropriate safety net for those who are unable to work or meet the minimum cost of housing and feeding themselves.*

*The Universal Credit system was originally designed to help this process through rolling up a series of benefits into a single, simple to manage payment.*

*However, this council recognises that the rollout of Universal Credit so far has left many recipients in or at risk of debt, rent arrears, physical and mental health illness as a result of lower benefits payments than under the previous regime, the six-week waiting time for payment and until recently, the cost of telephoning the UC helpline.*

*This council notes that the rollout of UC to new claimants has been halted as of January 2018 and recognises that this presents a perfect opportunity to increase the volume of those calling for a re-think.*

*Therefore, we resolve that the elected mayor of the council will write, on behalf of members, to the secretary of state for work and pensions to request:*

- *An extension of the halt to new claimants to review the practice of UC rollout.*
- *A review of UC in order to fix the complications introduced by communication resources and delays in payment.*
- *A level of support for people currently on UC who are unable to meet their financial commitments that goes beyond the current modest loan payment scheme.”*

2. The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Asif Khan and seconded by Councillor Nigel Bell

*“This council recognises that the Met Line Extension is a vital development for Watford, Hertfordshire and London.*

*This council also recognises that negotiations between the Department for*

*Transport and the Mayor of London are currently stalled and it is vital that they conclude with a positive outcome for the Met Line extension.*

*The council resolves to work with the Secretary of State for Transport and the Mayor of London to come to a workable agreement for the benefit of all parties involved.”*

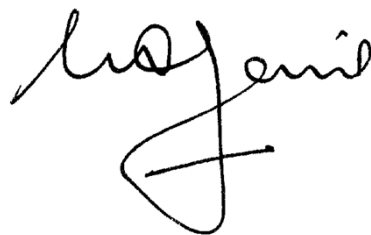
3. The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Iain Sharpe and seconded by Councillor Mark Watkin

*“This Council regrets the decision by the Mayor of London to withdraw his backing for the Metropolitan Line Extension unless ‘all additional potential cost overruns’ are underwritten.*

*Council notes that the project has secured a further £73m from the government to bridge the funding gap indicated by TfL in order to enable delivery. Council also notes the additional potential to develop land worth up to £40m.*

*Given the total funding from partners includes £45m contingency funding, Council is shocked that the Mayor of London is set to withdraw support for this essential infrastructure project that benefits both Hertfordshire and London, especially after his stated wish to run commuter services from outside the GLA area, and the desire to work with areas outside the capital, expressed in the London Plan.*

*Council therefore reaffirms its support for the MLX project and urges the London Mayor to rethink his stance and, continues to support the efforts of Hertfordshire County Council, the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Watford Borough Council to secure the delivery of the MLX scheme.”*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Manny Lewis', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Manny Lewis, Managing Director**

### Elected Mayor's Report – March 2018

As this is my last Mayor's report I am going to use it as an opportunity to put on public record what I believe to be the current state of play with regards to the town and the council and perhaps, more importantly, for a new Mayor outline the current challenges that we face .

Watford is in fact a medium size town and a small district council but we think big. The late Graham Taylor once said to me, whilst discussing the club's aspiration to the premiership "The problem is one of size Dorothy we are a Championship town". My response – "I know Graham but we aspire to the Premier League!"

That is almost our mantra now from a town that was ill at ease with itself and certainly the butt of negative comment and jokes to one where in our last residents' survey 80% of respondents said they were proud of Watford and 84% think that people from different backgrounds get on well together.

That has been quite a journey. We certainly do punch above our weight and try to live up to our town's motto of Audentior or most recently translated into English - Be Bold!

Our recent local government peer challenge recognised that "Watford Borough Council is a high performing, bold and progressive council with a lot of ambition for the future."

It is essential to have a shared vision for the town and the role of Mayor is to be the person who has the democratic right to articulate that vision and be the glue that binds people together to achieve it.

But on its own this is not enough; a Mayor and council also need to actually deliver the goods. Which is why we were particularly pleased that between 77-84% of our resident responders agreed that the council is making Watford a better place to live, are satisfied with the way the council runs things, believe that we provide value for money and are working to make Watford economically successful.

The tension between all these things is a constant challenge. This is most acutely shown in the demonstrable need to provide homes of all types and tenures and our residents legitimate concerns about congestion, parking and quality of life issues leading to an opposition to development.

As I am regularly saying to residents " If you want to live somewhere where parking is free and there is no congestion then you probably wouldn't want to live there". All

popular places grapple with these issues. I would much rather be the Mayor of a town that is surviving and thriving not one that is declining and dying!

One thing we are not is a dormitory town. Which is why our focus has, in recent years, been on the economic prosperity of the town and the importance of local jobs. You only have to stand at Watford junction at 8:30am to see that the flow of people is 50-50. This is an achievement I am proud of and one we must strive to retain. Therefore losing employment land to housing is something that we need to keep track of although it is getting increasingly difficult to prevent such loss; especially with the government's change in policy to allow conversion from offices to residential without planning permission. Jobs are important in a sustainable town.

That is why we have good networks with our business community from our developer forum to our Big Business Connect and several others. It has taken years to convince the business community that we are a town that welcomes them and with a council that will work to overcome their issues and challenges. This work has been ably led by a Managing Director with the requisite skills not usually found in the Head of Paid Service of a district council. Businesses can pick and choose where they go so we were delighted when TJX, having realised their need to move to larger premises, having looked all over the country, decided to stay in Watford. Their new, prestigious European headquarters is being built now- providing many jobs and hopefully an iconic building visible as soon as you walk out of the station.

It must be said as a matter for the public record that I am grateful for the magnificent work of all our staff. Also those of our partner organisations and of course our voluntary sector. Attracting and retaining good staff will always be a challenge for those of us on the outskirts of London. Our capital city can and does offer higher wages and incentives and with our excellent transport links into London it is easy to live here and work in London. Thus our hospital, police and ourselves have to offer something else to attract and retain good people which being part of a smaller, well-motivated, aspirational team can do.

Our recent Investors in People, where we got the Gold level award, reported "This is without doubt a progressive and bold organisation, staff are responsive and receptive to change, and they are supported in many ways to give their very best. They punch well above their weight and staff recognise what a great place it is to work." A comment that is a credit to everyone who works for us.

**Our future challenges as I see them are these.**

**Meeting our housing targets.**

These we predict will double using the new government methodology of assessing housing need. We will struggle to meet them and we are deeply concerned about the impact on our town. This will be impossible without the right infrastructure which not only includes public transport but doctors and schools. Which is what is so frustrating and short sighted about the Mayor of London's recent announcement that Transport for London will not support the Metropolitan Line Extension (MLX). This is after the previous Mayor's agreement, many years' work, significant government funding and private sector support.

The most recent statements from government give me no hope that the situation to improve. It seems that government policy is designed to protect the green belt at all costs and push even higher densities on to towns like ours. We are already facing regular speculative developments of 20 plus storeys of tower blocks which we are powerless to refuse, under the current regime. So its town cramming for us whilst preserving the views of those who live in the countryside. There has to be a middle way. Not all green belt is the Snowdonia National Park!

To enable us to move forward we need to work with our neighbours and consider new settlements of significant numbers of homes, in order for them to be sustainable and attract funding for infrastructure. These settlements will also no doubt be controversial too.

The really serious challenge, however, is the provision of social affordable and supported housing. As housing becomes increasingly expensive those on low wages are struggling the most. The details of why our country is in this lamentable state is well documented but I predict it will remain a number one issue for the town despite our own efforts to build and support such housing it is nowhere near enough.

**Maintaining community cohesion.**

There is no doubt that our population is growing and we will soon hit 100,000 population. It is also a changing population. We are a truly multi-cultural town with residents of many faiths and of none, of Watford and of the world.

We are a younger than average population, a "brighter" than average population (based on measured qualifications.) We are clearly seeing a movement of people

who are “Down from London” (the DFL’s as they have been called) and we have seen a significant number of Eastern Europeans move to Watford. We are positive about this and indeed our major institutions would not function without such people. But community cohesion is, and will always be, a priority for any Mayor. It is so easy to disturb that equilibrium which we currently enjoy and we want to maintain. Our residents play a great part in this and I thank them for their positivity and generous spirit.

Due to our urban setting, our mixed demographic and our proximity to London, crime and anti- social behaviour will always be an item on the agenda. We have spent many years getting us from being labelled “Ibiza on acid” to the proud purple flag town we are now. This has meant real partnership working not just talking the talk but very definitely making change happen. Our relationship with the Police Chief Inspectors of Watford past and present have been crucial in making these changes. As has the support from the Police and Crime Commissioner who recognises Watford’s unique position within the county. Ensuring that residents feel that if they report things something will be done is crucial to maintaining trust and good order between us all. Bad things happen in any town but its how we respond to it that matters .The Mayor’s job is to ensure we don’t lose focus on what matters to residents and that things get done.

### **Keep getting the basics right**

Our residents deserve and pay for good public services. Clean streets, quality public spaces and excellent parks are what residents tell us matter. That is why we have been open minded about who delivers a service (in house \outsourced\shared with neighbouring councils) we have focussed on outcomes which matter to people not who provides it. Regular engagement with residents and listening to them has shown that people appreciate such services, it makes them feel better about where they live and about the council.

This is also why we have our Watford 2020 programme to make sure we are living up to the expectations that people have of how we should deliver our services. We should be using new technology to make things better for our residents. We now have an ambitious programme that will really move us into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Funding pressures in the future.**

Leaving the worst till last - the money! I hope that no council member is under any illusion that we have had some lean years. It is acknowledged that local government has taken the biggest hit under the Austerity years. Government funding is set to



reduce to nil next year. New Homes Bonus is uncertain and the transfer of business rates to the sector is untried and unpredictable. We are no nearer knowing what this change next year will mean for us specifically. We live in uncertain times but this council is in a good place compared to many.

We have already taken tough decisions and changed the way we do business. We have become more efficient in the use of our resources, and more commercial in our dealings with others. BUT because we took the decision to become self-sustaining several years ago, by being far-sighted and shrewd, we have avoided many damaging cuts to services, though we recognise that if you have been made redundant this is indeed damaging to you personally. We have also laid the foundations for future financial dividends of which a Mayor in the future will be grateful. The Health Campus project is an example of this.

I instigated the Mayor's Report, Mayor's question time and the regular production of our magazine "About Watford" in order to be more accountable to Councillors and to the public. This is an area I think can be modernised and improved upon.

I passionately believe in truly local government and our ability to transform the places and the lives of people living in our town. In retirement at the House of Lords I will continue to fight for the independence of local government and a decentralisation of power. Be assured councillors I will be a loud and proud ambassador for our sector and a staunch critic of those in government who still see us as the child in the parent-child relationship we have currently. The times they are a-changing with the current challenges in society local government is part of the solution but we need to be left alone to get on with it!

# Agenda Item 10

## PART A

**Report to:** Cabinet  
**Date of meeting:** 5 March 2018  
**Report of:** Managing Director  
**Title:** Review of Corporate Plan 2020: revised for 2018/19

### 1.0 **Summary**

- 1.1 The council's Corporate Plan sets out the direction for the council and how it will achieve its ambitions, vision and priorities. From the Corporate Plan we develop our service plans, work programmes for our section and teams and individual staff objectives (as currently identified within PDRs).
- 1.2 Underpinning the Corporate Plan are a number of areas, all of which are considered in the shaping of the council's programme of work. These comprise:
- The Elected Mayor's manifesto and ambitions
  - Our vision, priorities, values and supporting themes
  - What we know about our borough and feedback from our residents
  - For this year, feedback from our recent Corporate Peer Challenge
  - A review of last's years Plan
  - Our challenges and opportunities
  - The council's budget
- 1.3 This year's plan represents continuity from previous years and is particularly informed by our Watford 2020 transformation programme. Whilst we have taken forward areas of work from last year's Plan, a number of new areas have been identified for delivery by 2020 when we would expect to undertake a fundamental review of our corporate planning framework (i.e. our vision, priorities and ambitions).
- 1.4 The draft Corporate Plan is attached at Appendix A and is presented for consideration and approval.

## 2.0 Risks

### 2.1

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (Treat, tolerate, terminate, transfer)	Risk Rating (the combination of severity and likelihood)
<p>The council's corporate plan and its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) fail to work together to achieve outcomes identified within the plan. Failure to link the two effectively might result in insufficient financial resourcing for areas of work identified or failure to meet financial targets.</p>	<p>Insufficient financial resourcing for areas of work identified or failure to meet financial targets.</p>	<p>Clear direction in place from Mayor and Cabinet on future priorities.</p> <p>Robust discussions and challenge on both the MTFS and Corporate Plan.</p>	<p>Treat</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Failure of the organisation taking ownership of corporate planning framework</p>	<p>Poor commitment to delivery and targets not achieved. Potential for slippage.</p>	<p>Robust project and programme management and strong governance of projects and programmes.</p>	<p>Treat</p>	<p>4</p>

		<p>Clear service plans and objective setting for teams and individual staff.</p> <p>Communication with staff through internal communication channels.</p> <p>'At a glance' Corporate Plan developed so work to be delivered is clear.</p> <p>Regular monitoring through Leadership Team and Portfolio Holders.</p>		
Failure to understand the inter-dependencies between projects and highlighting where resources from other parts of the organisation	<p>Area of work / project / programme not delivered on time.</p> <p>Potential impact on costs due to delays</p>	Robust project and programme management and strong governance of projects and programmes.	Treat	4

are required to successfully deliver an area of work / project / programme				
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3.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To note the revised draft Corporate Plan 2020 and propose any amendments and recommend it to Council (Appendix A).
- 3.2 To note that the work programme within the plan will underpin service plans and staff’s individual work programmes as set out in their annual performance development reviews.
- 3.3 To note the work programme set out in the plan will be monitored through the year.

**Contact Officer:**

For further information on this report please contact: Kathryn Robson  
 telephone extension: 8077 e-mail: [kathryn.robson@watford.gov.uk](mailto:kathryn.robson@watford.gov.uk)

**Report approved by:**

Manny Lewis, Managing Director

#### 4.0 **Detailed Proposal**

As part of its business planning cycle, the council undertakes an annual review of its corporate planning framework (its vision, priorities and values) and its Corporate Plan. Through this process the organisation reviews and agrees what is important for the town and the council over the medium term and where it should focus resources to deliver good quality services to our community and real improvements to the borough.

The Corporate Plan is, therefore, the council's key planning document, which underpins its programme of work and by which it can measure its achievements. From the Plan the council develops its service plans which, in turn, inform the work programme of each team within the council and the individual objectives of each member of staff, identified through our annual performance development review (PDR) process.

#### 4.1 **Corporate Plan 2020 – reviewed for 2018/19**

4.1.1 The council reviewed its vision, priorities and values in 2016 in order to provide the organisation with the direction and corporate framework needed to 2020. Whilst these remain the key building blocks for our corporate planning and priority setting, the organisation does undertake an annual review of the Corporate Plan to ensure it continues to reflect:

- The Elected Mayor's manifesto and ambitions
- Our vision, priorities, values and supporting themes
- What we know about our borough and feedback from our residents
- For this year, feedback from our recent Corporate Peer Challenge
- A review of last's years Plan - what has been achieved (and can, therefore, be removed from the corporate work programme), work that is still in progress and needs to be carried forward (with appropriate updates to reflect the milestones achieved during the past 12 months) and new areas of work, based on the emerging challenges and opportunities for the council to include in the revised corporate work programme
- Our challenges and opportunities
- The council's budget

4.1.2 Over the last year, the council has successfully taken forward its Watford 2020 transformation programme. Highlights of this include the delivery of the three key supporting strategies: ICT, People and Commercial and the completion of the organisation-wide Service Innovations which, by working with staff from across service areas has helped identify where the council can do things more efficiently and effectively. This work will continue in 2018/19 and is expected to continue to deliver the level of transformation and innovation the organisation requires to meet its 2020 challenges and opportunities.

4.1.3 The borough's housing challenges are also highlighted in the Corporate Plan

and remain a central focus for the council as we seek to find effective solutions to meeting the government target for new homes and securing a range of housing solutions, including affordable housing, for our residents and communities.

## **4.2 Delivery and monitoring**

4.2.1 To support the delivery of the Corporate Plan, the council has established a range of governance and reporting fora. Major projects are reported to Programme Management Board (PMB) and Watford 2020 related projects to the Watford 2020 Programme Board. Digital related initiatives are reported to the Digital Watford Board and the Finance Review Board provides additional scrutiny and strategic direction for the council's finances.

From 2018/19, those projects and areas of work not identified as either PMB or Watford 2020 projects, will be monitored through quarterly updates to a panel chaired by the Deputy Managing Director and supported by the Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications. This is to ensure the rigour applied to making sure of the successful delivery of these projects areas is consistent with that of our major and Watford 2020 projects.

## **5.0 Implications**

### **5.1 Financial**

5.1.1 The importance of securing the council's financial future is a priority within the Corporate Plan and work to achieve this is outlined under this priority, including the embedding and delivery of the council's agreed Commercial Strategy. The council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, supports the synergy between its financial and corporate planning and identifies how the council will make sure it links its financial decisions to the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

### **5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)**

5.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the Corporate Plan is one of the policy framework documents listed in the constitution that has to be approved by Council. The current plan will be presented to Council in March.

### **5.3 Equalities**

5.3.1 The Corporate Plan is informed by the Watford context, including an understanding of the demographic make-up of the borough's community and feedback from local people on the issues that are important to them. An overall equality impact analysis has been undertaken on the Corporate Plan (Appendix B) and impact analyses will be undertaken on specific projects/programmes where relevant.

5.4

**Staffing**

5.4.1

The Corporate Plan is a key document for staff and provides an important part of the council's performance framework. An 'at a glance guide' to the delivery element of the Plan was produced last year and this was well received by staff as it made very clear what the council was committed to delivering and by when. This will be continued for 2018/19.

Individual staff objectives are set from service plans, which are informed by the Corporate Plan. In this way, staff can see the link between their own work and the wider corporate work programme.

**Appendices**

Appendix A - draft Corporate Plan 2020

Appendix B – Equality Impact Analysis





MAKING  
**WATFORD**  
BOLD & PROGRESSIVE

# Watford Borough Council's Corporate Plan to 2020

2018/19

<b>Author</b>	Kathryn Robson
<b>Version number</b>	V0.6
<b>Document</b>	Corporate Plan 2018-2020
<b>Issue date</b>	12 January 2018
<b>Approval date</b>	
<b>For internal /external publication</b>	Internal + external

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
V0.1 & V0.2	January 2018	Working versions
V0.3	12 January 2018	To Leadership Team
V0.4	29 January 2018	To PHs
V0.5	13 February 2018	To Leadership Team
V0.6	19 February 2018	To Cabinet



## Our Corporate Plan

Welcome to our Corporate Plan for 2018-2020.

This will be the last Plan that champions my ambitions for the borough and the council and which I will recommend to Council for setting our direction to 2020.

I feel confident that we are in a good position to continue to deliver on our 'bold' and 'progressive' vision, priorities and values. Our Corporate Peer Challenge (see page 9) was an outstanding endorsement of my time as Elected Mayor and a real tribute to the hard work and commitment that has been shown by councillors, staff and our partners during my sixteen years in office.

I was particularly keen for an independent assessment of the council during my last year as Elected Mayor. Whilst we can feel proud of what we have achieved as a council, we can never be complacent and having independent verification that we are amongst the best performing district authorities in the country has been extremely reassuring and means I can pass on a strong legacy to my successor.

It is also vitally important that we listen to the communities we serve. As Elected Mayor not every decision you take will be popular with everyone but the important thing for me is to have always kept the best interest of the town and our residents at the heart of decision making. Our recent Community Survey showed that residents do, overall, have confidence in the council and what we are trying to achieve for the borough. They clearly have concerns over some issues and it is important that we listen to what people are telling us.

My time as Elected Mayor has been one of unprecedented change for local government. I would put the massive cuts in the funding from government and the national crisis in housing as two of the biggest challenges we face. This Plan sets out how we are addressing both these areas and finding solutions that are innovative and will achieve positive outcomes for our residents and the council.

So, whilst I can feel proud of what has been achieved since I came to office in 2002, there is still a lot to be done. It will be for the next Elected Mayor of Watford to steer the council, and its plans, to ensure that it continues to successfully serve our borough and its residents.

As ever, if you have any comments on the Corporate Plan, our plans, major projects or the Council, then email me on [themayor@watford.gov.uk](mailto:themayor@watford.gov.uk) or call 01923 226400 and ask for the Mayor's office.

**Baroness Dorothy Thornhill MBE**

**Elected Mayor of Watford**

# Shaping our Corporate Plan

## Foreword

Our Corporate Plan sets out our ambitions for Watford and how we will deliver these commitments by 2020. It is underpinned by the elected Mayor's priorities for the town during her fourth term in office, as well as our corporate vision, values and objectives as well as. 2018 marks the final year of Baroness Dorothy Thornhill's time as elected Mayor of the town and, in May, we will welcome a new elected Mayor. Part of their role during their first year will be to review this Plan and work with us to reconfirm our priorities and corporate programme of work.

For next year (2018/19), we have agreed an overall direction for the council based on our corporate vision and our drive to be a 'bold' and 'progressive organisation that delivers outstanding services and positive outcomes for our residents and town. This Plan has been developed through:

- Reviewing last year's Plan – including our achievements and those areas of work still to be completed
- Identifying new and emerging projects that support our vision and deliver our priorities including those set out by our elected Mayor
- Considering feedback from our local community about what is important to them and the town
- Reflecting on what we know about Watford and its population so that we can feel confident that our Plan is forward thinking and working towards a successful and sustainable future for the borough
- Building on the feedback from our Corporate Peer Challenge

Through our planning across the organisation we remain committed to some key principles in shaping what we do. These are important as they ensure we effectively manage our challenges and maximise opportunities as they arise. We need to:

- focus on ensuring our residents and customers are at the heart of what we do
- improve access to our services by delivering more digitally and online
- be more commercial and entrepreneurial to meet our financial challenges and opportunities
- retain our ambitious approach as we cannot afford to scale back our ambition for the borough and the council.
- be more creative, innovative and resilient if we want to continue to be successful as we go forward
- retain the drive and commitment of our staff and members that was recognised through our Corporate Peer Challenge in 2017

# Part One

## The council's Vision, Priorities and Values

### OUR VISION: To create a bold and progressive future for Watford

Our vision reflects our approach to the current challenges and opportunities facing the council and the town as a place to live, work, visit and study. We want to champion our town so that it is a place where all our communities thrive and prosper, benefitting from strong economic growth and good quality local services and facilities. This will require the council to be innovative, explore new ways of working and champion initiatives that will transform the town and the organisation. More of the same isn't going to secure the future we want for Watford, which is why **bold** and **progressive** lie at the heart of our ambitions.

### OUR FIVE PRIORITIES:

Supporting this vision, the council has five priority areas of work. Our priorities are critical to the Council achieving successful outcomes for its ambitions for the town.

1. Identify ways to manage the borough's housing needs
2. Champion smart growth and economic prosperity
3. Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities
4. Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community
5. Secure our own financial future

In addition, our core, day to day business underpins everything we do and all of our work and effort contribute to our success. In particular, we recognise the importance of three core objectives which at all times makes us a more effective organisation, in touch with our residents and delivering in the areas and in a way that they expect. These are:

- Effective two-way engagement and communication
- Sound management and high performance
- Improving the town's environment.

### OUR VALUES:

Our revised corporate values reflect the behaviour we expect our staff to demonstrate in their work and clearly establish how they contribute to delivering our new vision.

1. **BOLD:** We work as a team and we make things happen
2. **PROGRESSIVE:** We are ambitious, we are innovative and we are welcoming

Our values focus on taking forward our corporate agenda. We also believe it is important to be fair, to behave with integrity and be inclusive in how we deliver services..

We strive towards a **DYNAMIC CULTURE**, that is :

**Ambitious** - having a “can-do” attitude to making things happen. Challenging ourselves to deliver excellent services and inspiring others to deliver results in a business-like way

**Innovative** – embracing creative and entrepreneurial approaches and championing new ways of working that will transform Watford and deliver our ambitions

**Welcoming** – engaging our residents and partners and providing an excellent customer experience

**Empowering** - enabling our staff to take ownership and be accountable for their own performance, actions and decisions. Valuing diversity and listening to and understanding the views of others

**and**

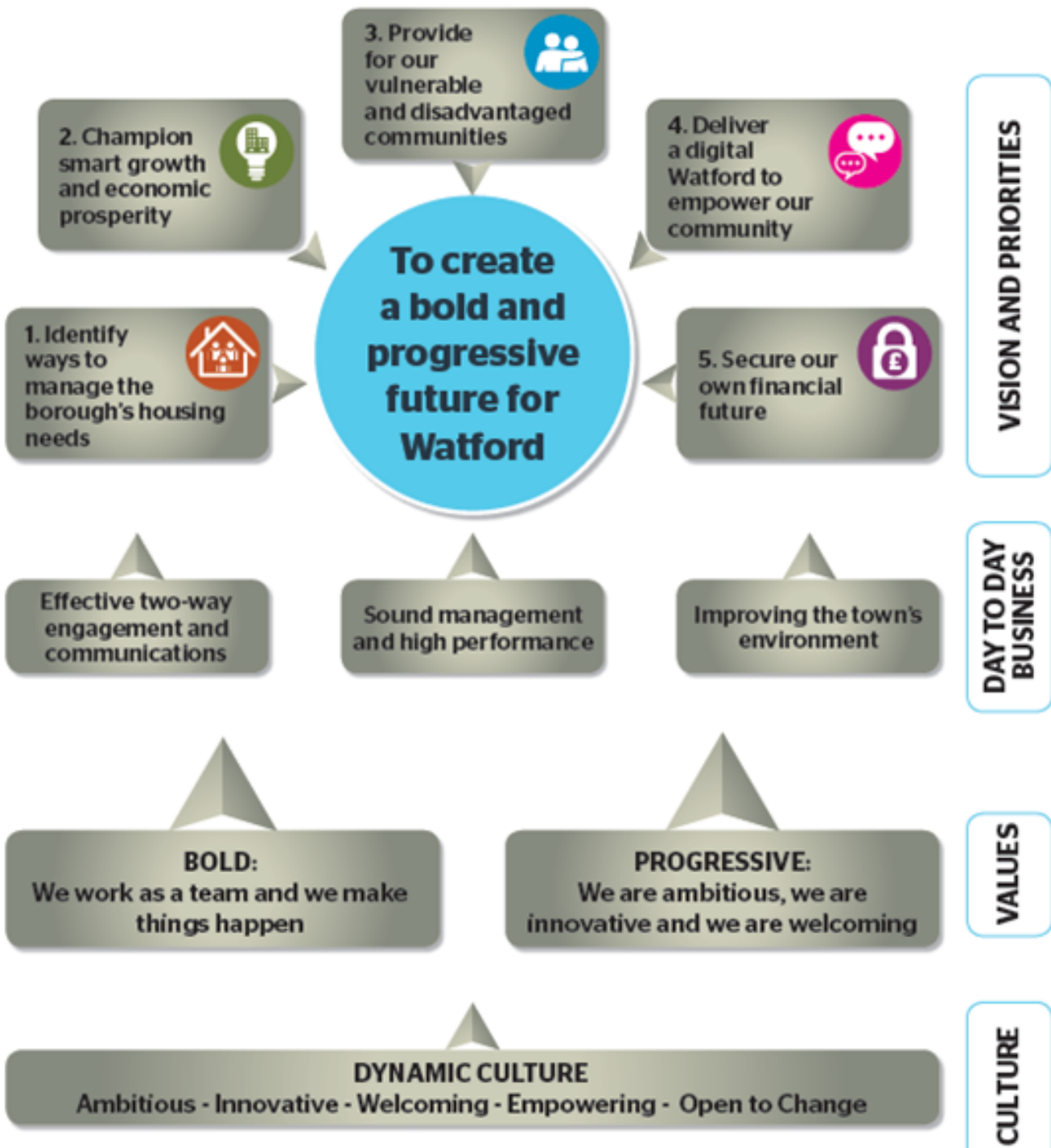
**Open to Change** - being adaptable and agile in order to support the needs of the business – working collaboratively and supporting colleagues

## OUR CORPORATE FRAMEWORK

Our corporate framework shows how our vision, priorities, values and culture work together, along with the Elected Mayor's priorities, to achieve our ambition.

# OUR CORPORATE FRAMEWORK

Our corporate framework shows how our vision, values and culture work together, along with the Elected Mayor's priorities, to achieve our ambition.



# Part Two

## Watford today

Watford is a place to be proud of, and as a council, we plan to keep it that way. We value our clean streets, well-kept parks, and places for children to play, the vibrant high street and diverse range of activities and facilities across our borough. We have a diverse and cohesive community who add to the vibrancy of our town and our residents are generally satisfied with the council and their local services. Understanding our town and our community helps us to identify what shapes Watford and the challenges and opportunities we face as a council to champion our town.



**Population: 96,800** over an area of **8.5 sq. miles**

Young population: average age **36.46** years

Diverse population: **38% BME**

### 39,031 households

Average household size: **2.48** people

High proportion of single person households: **31%**

High number of households in rental accommodation: **37%**



**High growth in house prices and demand:**

Most in demand place to live on the tube map (2015)



**Voted 9<sup>th</sup> happiest place to live in the country (2015)**

**11 Green Flag award winning parks – the highest in Hertfordshire with 3 new awarded in 2017**



**Career Builders:** Singles and couples in their 20s and 30s progressing in their field of work from commutable properties – most common MOSAIC group: **12%**



**5<sup>th</sup> best connected borough in UK - M1, M25, West Coast Mainline, Overground, Underground**

Direct services to London Euston in **16** mins



**5,700** active businesses    **93,000** jobs

Low unemployment / high level of qualifications

**48%** of Watford employment is in Knowledge Sectors

**11%** self-employment rate

**77%** of residents are satisfied with the way Watford BC runs things & **74%** of residents are satisfied with Watford as a place to live things well (Community Survey 2017)



# Our residents' priorities

Understanding our residents views on the town, their neighbourhoods and the council is an important part of our corporate planning. Whilst we can identify what we think are the priorities for Watford, we need to ensure that these resonate with our communities and are delivering the improvements and quality of services local people expect.

Our regular Community Survey is one way we test what we are doing and our future plans. The Community Survey 2017 received over 1,100 responses, which indicates the level of interest our residents have in the town and its future.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY 2017: HEADLINE RESULTS

### Views on the council

- 77% of respondents are satisfied with the way the council runs things
- 80% agree the council is working to make Watford a better place to live
- 82% think we provide value for money and the same percentage are satisfied with the way we spend our proportion of your council tax
- 85% agree we are working to make Watford economically successful

### Top council services

These are the services that local residents think we do really well:

- Waste and recycling
- Parks and open spaces
- Sports and leisure facilities

### Views on Watford

- 74% of respondents are satisfied with Watford as a place to live
- 80% are proud to be a Watford resident
- 84% think that where they live people from different backgrounds get on well together
- 91% agree Watford is a safe town

### Top five things that respondents said make somewhere a good place to live

- Feeling safe in my home and the local area
- Good quality hospital and health services
- Cleanliness and tidiness of the town

- Good access to public transport
- Rubbish collected on a regular and reliable basis

**Where we need to do even better**

- Ensuring that new homes are supported by good infrastructure such as school places, GP surgeries, better transport links
- Keep local people informed about decisions
- Provide more opportunities for people to find out what is going on and share their views
- Explaining why well-planned growth is important to the town
- Explaining housing targets and the need for new homes

**Priorities for the borough**

The survey also asked people about their priorities for the borough. The top choices were:

Priority	% response
<b>Ensuring a vibrant and prosperous local economy that offers a range of jobs and opportunities for local people</b>	48.5%
<b>Keeping the town clean and our streets free from litter</b>	38.6%
<b>Working with community safety partners to tackle issues and make Watford even safer for our communities</b>	38.0%
<b>Creating a well-connected borough with good infrastructure such as better transport links</b>	37.4%
<b>Supporting our more vulnerable residents so that they can live independent lives</b>	35.5%
<b>Protecting and enhancing our parks and open spaces</b>	31.5%
<b>Helping to provide a range of new homes that meet local needs, including more affordable homes</b>	30.2%

Total responses: 1,095

Residents were also able to provide their views on other priority areas for Watford not identified within the answer choices. Of the comments received, the most commonly cited issues were parking and congestion.

Set out in this plan are the ways we are addressing these resident priorities through our programme of work. Over the next 12 months, we will continue to engage with our communities to keep them informed of how this Plan is delivering solutions to those areas they have identified as important.

# Our Corporate Peer Challenge feedback

In September 2017, the council underwent a Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge. This is local government's equivalent of Ofsted for schools or Care Quality Commission inspections of hospitals and care homes and was carried out by a team of independent assessors from local government.

The team spent three days in Watford meeting our councillors, council staff, many of the council's key partners like the police and our business community and even found time to pop along to one of our meetings with local residents.

The good news for Watford was that we received outstanding feedback from the assessment. It was a very strong endorsement of how the leadership and vision of the Elected Mayor have steered the council over the past 16 years. The team saw that the council's work to keep Watford a prosperous and thriving borough was, in comparison to many areas, achieving real results in the town and that we are a council who keeps its promises and delivers.

The team was also extremely impressed with our staff and the commitment and enthusiasm they demonstrated to excellent service delivery.

The overall feedback included:

- We have a strong legacy
- There is a great partnership in place between the Elected Mayor and Managing Director
- The council punches above its weight
- We are a self-aware council that understands our borough
- We have achieved a lot and should be proud
- We have impressive plans and ambitions for the future
- There are good partnerships in place
- We live up to our 'Bold and Progressive' vision
- Staff seem to like it here!

Whilst the team were very positive about the council, there were areas that they recommended we ensure are addressed. We need to:

- keep up the pace and rigor
- ensure we have the right capacity and skills to deliver ambitions and provide resilience
- articulate our vision more to residents, commuters, businesses and some partners
- be more outward looking - shout and share about our success
- ensure the visibility of leadership on internal transformation
- create a roadmap for post May 2018
- decide what culture we want for 2020

The specific recommendations from the Peer Challenge are set out below as is the action we will take within this corporate plan to address them:

1. Develop capacity and skills to deliver and sustain your ambitious programme to keep pace and rigour

**Action:** *the council, as part of its 2020 transformation programme is setting out the objective to work through a Programme Management Office framework. This may be by establishing a resourced new centralised function or expanding the devolved approach currently in place.*

2. Develop communications strategies to articulate vision to residents, commuters, businesses and partners

**Action:** the council has procured a specialist communications adviser to support its public relations, communications and engagement agenda. The Cultural Leaders Group, working with the Watford BID (Business Improvement District), has also procured a partner to develop a clear brand strategy for the Town which will engage all residents in the vision for the Town's future.

3. Prioritise visibility of leadership on internal transformation

**Action:** the Council's Leadership Team has signed off the key deliverables and agreed to act as lead sponsors for the programme and will lead jointly the all staff engagement process

4. Integrate transformation, commercialisation, Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), people and digital strategies etc. into one coherent whole = holistic council-wide change programme

**Action:** the council's Leadership Team has agreed to produce a clear integrated roadmap for transformation with the MTFS underpinning it.

5. Consider the council's role in owning management and delivery of housing supply

**Action:** the council is reviewing its housing supply delivery in the light of the Transport for London decision not to proceed with the Metropolitan Line Extension. This review will be part of Local Plan Part 3 which the political executive will sign off following a range of discussions.. The procured communications adviser is tasked with providing a narrative for engagement on housing with the community and in partnership with Watford community housing.

6. Create a roadmap for post May 2018 and future proof key strategies e.g. finance, asset management

**Action:** this Corporate Plan along with the 2020 programme provides the roadmap for Watford's priorities and objectives post May 18. Any major changes from a new Mayor will be considered at the first Council meeting in June.

7. Build on the willingness of partners to develop the future Watford agenda

**Action:** Discussions have taken place with the Local Strategic Partnership and the big business community on sharing the community leadership roles and a plan is under development for joint promotion of the Watford ambition – this will be reflected in the branding strategy and business partnership on economic growth projects.

8. Be more outward looking - shout and share your success

**Action:** the Built Environment Communications Group is advising on a publicity / PR plan, the council has submitted its achievements for peer group recognition (such as the MJ awards) and has agreed to share its successes working with the LGA.

9. Decide what culture you want for 2020 and beyond

**Action:** this Corporate Plan sets out the dynamic corporate culture required over the medium term (see p6 above)

# Part Three

## How we will deliver our priorities



### 1. Identify ways to manage the borough's housing needs



#### Challenges

Watford is a popular place to live. Its location close to London, great road and rail links, good schools and employment opportunities have seen demand for homes in the town increase over recent years. However, it has also meant rising house prices and rental costs, which has put strain on affordability for local people. It can also mean issues in the rental sector as some landlords can charge higher and higher rents without necessarily maintaining or improving the standards of these homes.

The national housing crisis means that government has reviewed housing requirements. Places like Watford that are popular and have high housing costs are being asked to deliver an even greater number of new homes over the next decade. Through our Local Plan we are working to understand what these targets mean for Watford and how we can deliver the new homes Watford needs in a way that is best for the town. We want new housing to be supported by good quality infrastructure such as better transport links, schools, doctors' surgeries and neighbourhood shops and facilities. These are areas where we have to work closely with partners such as Hertfordshire County Council and health providers.

As demand and housing costs rise, we expect the numbers of people presenting at the council with housing issues to increase. From April 2018, the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 changes how local authorities manage homelessness. Watford is well-prepared for what is one of the biggest changes to homelessness legislation in recent years and will be monitoring the overall impact over the next twelve months.

### Opportunities

We have already started some innovative work to tackle the supply of housing available, particularly both affordable housing and additional temporary accommodation for those in urgent need. This includes:

- setting up a joint venture with Watford Community Housing (called Hart Homes) to deliver new affordable homes. The first of these will be ready in 2018 with 76 temporary homes becoming available for local people
- working with developers delivering our major projects to accommodate affordable housing within the residential elements of the schemes (Watford Riverwell's first residential zone will deliver 29 affordable homes, Ascot Road 170)
- negotiating with developers on other key sites to ensure either the delivery of affordable homes or a sufficient commuted sum. This is money which developers will be expected to pay for sites which, whilst they are delivering new homes, might not be providing the size and type of homes needed to meet the borough's housing needs (e.g. studio apartments rather than family-sized apartments). These commuted sums will allow us to deliver appropriate affordable homes on other sites
- being robust with developers to also ensure schemes are high quality and create vibrant and successful communities
- working with neighbouring authorities to identify where we can work co-operate to build new homes to meet housing demand

### Highlights of what we have achieved so far:

- 346 homes delivered (2016-17)
- Supply of sites for 5.7 years identified
- 'Skyline – Watford's Approach to Taller Buildings' approved to set out where we would consider applications for taller buildings, including design criteria; tall buildings are now modelled on our townscape to understand how they might impact the surrounding area and environment
- Joint Venture Companies with Watford Community Housing established and first project to deliver temporary accommodation and new homes progressed (Tolpits Lane) by Hart Homes
- Modular construction to deliver cost effective temporary accommodation (Balmoral Road)
- Proposals for the first homes on major project areas coming forward including:
  - Watford Riverwell
    - Planning permission achieved for first homes at Woodlands (95 homes including 29 affordable homes that will be delivered by Watford Community Housing)
    - Planning application submitted for Waterside, which will deliver 408 new homes
    - An agreement with Mayfield Villages, a specialist retirement village developer and operator, to deliver the first of its kind retirement village accommodating 250 residents

- Western Gateway
  - Planning permission achieved for new homes as part of the redevelopment of Ascot Road with 485 new homes, 170 of which are affordable
- Clarendon Road
  - Whilst remaining predominantly a primary location for office space, incorporating a limited amount of residential within new schemes is providing a catalyst for much needed upgrading and improvement of the Clarendon Road offer. One approved scheme, will provide 154 new homes and up to £6million for the council to invest in affordable housing across the borough

- Developed and approved a planning policy statement on affordable housing and commuted sums

- Passed the NPSS (National Practitioner Support Service) Peer Review Challenge, which shows our frontline housing and homelessness services are effectively managing and preventing homelessness and saw the number of households in temporary accommodation fall for the first time in recent years

#### **We will continue to deliver this priority by:**

- Supporting the delivery of the target of 577 new homes per annum
- Delivering a review of our Local Plan to reflect the borough's needs and to identify the necessary infrastructure for growth so that our communities remain sustainable and supported by good quality facilities, services and transport links
- Supporting new housing development at Watford Junction
- Working with Watford Community Housing and Hart Homes to build new homes for social rent
- Completing the first new homes and temporary accommodation (including 40 homes at Tolpits Lane) delivered through the Hart Homes Joint Venture and explore further opportunities
- Completing the delivery of the modular homes at Balmoral Road
- Continuing to secure new homes, including affordable homes as part of the town's major projects as well as on other potential sites
- Meeting the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 new Housing Service delivery model
- Working with our partners to deliver projects to improve housing through the delivery of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy

## 2. Champion smart growth and economic prosperity



Watford has been extremely successful in building a strong local economy. By being forward-thinking and having the right plans in place, we have secured local employment, retained businesses and remain an attractive place for investment. We have also ensured that the growth continues to provide some really positive outcomes for the town (such as intu's new regional shopping centre, which will house the town's first IMAX cinema) and generated money to support local services. The latter has become more significant as we look for ways to bridge our funding gap and protect services that we know are valued by residents.

Over the last twelve months, we have seen the real benefits of our proactive approach to smart growth, with developments coming forward across the borough including in Clarendon Road. Focusing well-planned growth here has, for example, delivered new employment opportunities and homes as well as a new primary school (St John's) and improved street scene.

The council plays its part through its own investment in the town, such as the improvements to Cassiobury Park (in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund), which opened in 2017 and our other parks and open spaces (with a record number of Green Flags achieved in 2017). We are continuing this investment through projects such as the refurbishment and improvement of Watford Museum (also in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund), a state of the art activity and community hub in Oxhey Park and public realm upgrades in the town centre. The latter will enhance the area around the new intu centre, reducing vehicles, improving pedestrian and cyclist safety and the overall quality of the environment.

Critical to achieving this priority is also securing the right partnerships to take forward the major projects that will transform the borough such as intu, Western Gateway, Watford Business Park and Watford Riverwell.

Even with so much achieved, we know the town cannot stand still if it wants to remain successful and prosperous. As a council we want to shape our town positively for the future, which is why having a robust, evidence-based and ambitious Local Plan is so important. Over the next two years, we will review our Local Plan so that it clearly sets out our commitment to well-planned and managed growth – without this we would be at risk of poor quality, unplanned developments and unchecked back filling. This is what is happening in some other areas. But we know smart growth also means addressing issues such as congestion and parking, which are important to local people so securing the right infrastructure to support growth is vitally important.

### **Our challenges**

- Managing the impact of the cancellation of the Metropolitan Line Extension (MLX) on the town's future infrastructure and our major projects
- Competing demands for land within the borough – particularly between housing and commercial land
- Limited land for any new housing / new business / industrial space
- Making sure the necessary infrastructure (roads, schools, public transport) is in place so that new homes are supported by the facilities and activities important to building strong, sustainable communities
- High use of car rather than other forms of more sustainable transport such as buses, cycles or even walking, which would help tackle both congestion and parking issues
- Shortage of fit for purpose office and light industrial accommodation
- Ensuring the quality of the design of new developments so that they enhance the town's overall environment and promote the wellbeing of residents
- Ensuring sufficiently skilled local labour force to meet needs of local employers and businesses



### Our opportunities

- Reviewing our Local Plan to provide a robust framework for managing successful growth including an alternative transport solution for the MLX
- Championing inward investment in Watford – particularly where it provides the infrastructure to support smart growth
- Maintaining the strong linkage between our strategic development sites and sustainable transport opportunities such as public transport, cycling, car sharing / car clubs
- Building strong local partnerships with our major business and cultural leaders to promote Watford as a great place to do business and to find a skilled and enthusiastic workforce
- Exploring ways to reduce reliance on the car and promote more sustainable methods of transport
- Investing in a family friendly and successful town – our parks, town centre, community events

**Smart growth** is a better way to build and maintain our towns and cities. It encourages a mix of building types and uses, diverse housing and transportation options, development within existing neighborhoods, and strong community engagement. It aims to support local economies and protects the environment through a focus on cycling, walking and public transport rather than the car. Our Local Plan has, at its heart, the positive outcomes that can be achieved through smart growth.

### Highlights of what we have achieved so far:

- Trade City Watford opened at Watford Riverwell securing 12 new industrial units and more than 70,000 sq ft of commercial space
- Planning achieved for Woodlands (Riverwell) residential zone with 95 new homes including 29 affordable homes
- Planning application submitted for Waterside (Riverwell) residential zone (408 new homes) and for Mayfield Retirement Village (250 homes) – a ground breaking new style of retirement accommodation and a first for Watford and the UK
- Design work started on the ‘northern zone’ of Watford Riverwell, which will create new public spaces and community facilities at the heart of the scheme
- Agreement for a two form entry primary school on site to provide much needed school places for west Watford
- Planning achieved for the 4.4 acres Ascot Road site, achieving a landmark development for our Western Gateway – the 24 storey building will deliver 485 new homes (including 170 affordable homes), new retail space and over 50 permanent new jobs
- Transformation of Clendon Road underway and already seeing positive outcomes achieved through our new approach to the area including:
  - New international HQ building for TJX Europe will provide a landmark building for the Watford Junction end of Clendon Road – 12 storey office block, high level footbridge to link offices and public real improvements plus securing 3,000 jobs in Watford

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gresham House granted permission for redevelopment to provide B1 office accommodation, coffee bar and 59 homes, around 20 of which will be affordable</li> <li>○ New primary school (St John's) with roof top play area under construction</li> <li>○ A further landmark building comprising mixed office and residential in an iconic 23-storey building at the town centre end of Clarendon Road has been approved – creating 11.180 square metres of Class B1 office space for around 1,000 jobs, 154 new homes, café, gym and rooftop café plus providing a minimum of £1.4million commuted sum for affordable homes in the borough</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● £200million upgrade of Charter Place by intu plus refurbishment of current centre progressing successfully with opening of initial phase on target for autumn 2018, over 2,500 permanent jobs anticipated when the new centre is complete</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High Street improvements and upgrade initiated to deliver a smarter, more pedestrian friendly town centre with less vehicle intrusion and associated pollution to complement the intu refurbishment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cassiobury Park 'Parks for People' completed; bandstand relocated to the park, new visitor hub building and refurbished paddling pools opened for summer 2017</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fourth year of our successful Big Events programme delivered generating vibrancy and footfall in the top of the town and now with the added events in Cassiobury Park to enrich the programme and offer for local residents</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Achieved 11 Green Flags for our parks and opens spaces (three new ones awarded for 2017) – this is the highest number for any district in Hertfordshire</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Installed electric car charging points at 15 locations across the borough</li> </ul>

<p><b>We will continue to deliver this priority by:</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Delivering the next phase of our Local Plan including submission to the planning inspectorate</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Progressing investment in major projects, infrastructure and public realm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Town Hall and Town Hall square development</li> <li>○ Watford Riverwell: completion of first residential zones at Woodside and Waterside, approving and delivering the 'norther zone' masterplan, car park strategy for Watford General Hospital</li> <li>○ Watford Junction: first phase planning applications</li> <li>○ Clarendon Road: new office and residential construction progressing, school completion, public realm enhancements</li> <li>○ Zone A development agreement in place and vacant possession achieved, Watford Business Park</li> <li>○ intu completion including aligning leases across both sites and delivering High Street improvements</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- Working in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council on tackling congestion and promoting more sustainable methods of transport including:
  - improving cycling lanes
  - promoting cycle hire
  - promoting car clubs
  - improving walking routes
  - extending electric charging points network
  - safeguarding the MLX route for an alternative transport solution
- Exploring alternatives for people to get into and around Watford including:
  - 'Hop on / hop off' bus to link the town
  - Working with schools to encourage alternatives to the school run
  - Considering a short-distance park and ride for specific events such as football matches
  - Investing in way finding to better link communities
- Working in partnership to deliver our Economic Growth Delivery Plan and providing the strategic lead for:
  - Renewed inward investment and business retention strategy in place
  - Support to Skills brokerage and sector skills development
  - Growing Watford's knowledge economy especially the digital economy
  - Establishing a new engagement forum with SMEs
  - Supporting business to business relations through a Watford directory of business services
- Delivering the next phase of Sports Facilities Strategy
  - Woodside: masterplan approved
  - Oxhey Park activity and community hub
  - Cassiobury Site (Fullerians) investment
  - Cassiobury Croquet Club improvements
- Developing a River Colne improvement strategy to enhance the river and its surrounds as a green asset for Watford
- Developing a new Cultural Plan for Watford and a Town-wide brand strategy
- renew outdoor market livery
- Taking forward Watford Museum Heritage Lottery Fund improvement project
- Review our town centre planning policies to ensure all parts of the high street remain vibrant and sustainable and tackle long term voids

### 3. Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities



We are fortunate in Watford that the majority of our population enjoy a high standard of wellbeing and healthy lives and are able to access help when they may need it. We recognise that this is not the case for everyone and people's circumstances can change. We need to understand where these pressure points are for our town, and for individuals, and ensure that we are working with our partners to minimise the issues vulnerability can bring. Through our commitment to equalities and diversity, we will ensure that changes to service delivery as well as our strategies and policies take into account the impact on our community as part of our decision-making process.

#### Our challenges

- Harnessing prosperity to benefit all our citizens
- Changing demographics and emerging communities, including a high proportion of young people and families as well as a growing older population
- Impact of cuts and changes to benefits and other support
- Pockets of deprivation and health inequalities within the borough
- Changing and reducing services provided by other agencies such as health and social care

#### Our opportunities

- Targeting our support to those most in need
- Building on successful projects to date, such as the Street Improvement Project and Herts Healthy Homes project, and accessing funding through use of data and intelligence for targeted projects
- Working with partners, such as the police and health, to understand vulnerabilities and our emerging communities

#### Highlights of what we have achieved so far:

- Secured free adventurous play all year round championed through our two outstanding adventurous playgrounds at Harebreaks and Harwoods and an Easter and Summer holiday activities programme
- Supported by the Community Sport Activation Fund, delivered an exciting range of sports activities to get people in central Watford more active and seen 3,500 local people get involved
- Children's weight and eating habits tackled through our 'Fit 4 Fun' programme run through our local schools
- Free swim and gym scheme for 8-15 year olds during the Easter and summer holidays offered through our two leisure centres
- Through our Street Improvement Programme made a real difference to Cassio Road and its residents by working with our partners to address some of the issues that can impact on the quality of life of an area, including fly tipping, empty properties
- Achieved our best ever results for the time taken to deal with both new benefit claims and ones where people's circumstances have changed – this means people in need are getting the money they need even sooner

- Published our Equalities statement to confirm our commitment to championing equalities across our service areas and the town
- Working in partnership with 'New Hope' – annual rough sleeper count reduced from 13 to 6 over a 12 month period. Watford BC securing a government grant of £330k to support rough sleeper intervention

**We will continue to deliver this priority by:**

- Promoting Watford as a dementia friendly town
- Explore ways to welcome people new to living in Watford including a 'buddy scheme' and welcome pack
- Working with partners to provide solutions for rough sleeping
- Implement the approved recommendations from the Tackling Loneliness Task Group
- Review our pilot Street Improvement Programme and decide on our approach for future projects
- Exploring options for a new cemetery in Watford to meet the needs of our residents
- Reviewing our three year Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework to ensure it continues to promote the wellbeing of our town and our residents
- Providing the strategic lead for promoting economic equality through our Economic Development Growth Plan
- Working with our partners to deliver projects to improve health conditions in the borough including through the Warmer Homes project
- Reviewing our council tax reduction scheme
- Working with partners to understand our community and the issues that are affecting our vulnerable and disadvantaged residents so we can ensure local services are targeted effectively
- Developing a corporate approach to mental health issues in the borough

## Our Watford 2020 transformation programme



*Watford in 2020 will be a **customer-focussed, digitally-enabled, commercially-minded** council*

The Watford 2020 programme is driving the transformation we know we need to meet the challenges, and opportunities, of the future. It recognises that we cannot be the 'bold and progressive', forward looking organisation we want to be without fundamental change and that this needs to cut across everything we do. Whilst we are looking to transform as a council, we remain committed to keeping our residents and customers at the heart of what we do and to continue to deliver the high quality services they value. However, we recognise their needs and expectations are changing, which is why a major part of the programme has been our 'Service Innovations'. These have looked at how we do things from a customer perspective to see where we could improve and work in a smarter, more joined up way. Through the findings from the 'Service Innovations', we will be able to develop a new operating model that will deliver a customer focussed, digitally enabled and more commercial council.

Watford 2020 will enable delivery of all of the corporate priorities but will particularly help to achieve:

- **Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community** (improving our digital offer to customers – residents and businesses with online services and self-serve channels)
- **Secure our own financial future** (the programme has a £1m savings target by 2020 and key commercial income targets, particularly through property investment)

During 2017/18 we laid the groundwork for the programme, achieving a number of key milestones that have set us up for delivery in 2018/19.

## 4. Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community



### Our challenges

- Speed and complexity of some of our processes and transactions
- Customer expectations on how they access our services
- Current workforce skills in the digital arena
- Speed of technological change
- Not all residents and businesses have online or digital skills or experience
- Key strategies need to align to ensure we have the right building blocks in place for digital transformation

### Opportunities

- Harnessing the potential of our new website to improve customer experience, engagement with our community and to reduce costs where appropriate
- Potential of the Internet of Things (IoT) to deliver digital solutions within Watford that will help us make the most of real time information and data
- High level of take up of new technologies and social media in Watford – our population is digital ready

### Highlights of what we have achieved so far:

- Our Watford 2020 programme sets out how we plan to transform the council and our customers' experience through better use of technology and being more innovative in our digital thinking and ways of working.

Highlights for 2017/18 include:

- **Service Innovations:** High-level design – completed
- **Supporting strategies** - completed
  - People Strategy
  - Commercial Strategy
  - IT Strategy
- **Enabling projects** – completed
  - Refurbished Customer Service Centre to improve the face to face customer experience of visiting the Town Hall through:
    - Queue management system which is improving people's waiting experience
    - Redesigned, more customer-friendly reception area
    - 'Meet and Greet' role to provide greater support for customers
  - Procured a new Customer Relationship Management system which will be critical to implementing better customer services and greater opportunities for people to self-serve and access the council at a time and place that suits them
  - Completed the installation of wi-fi across council buildings

- Implemented our own LoRaWAN across the borough to support the Internet of Things (IoT) to do things differently and more efficiently
- Delivered free Wi-Fi to our town centre, which has attracted over 50,000 registered users
- Developed a medium term ICT strategy that will see increased deployment of cloud based applications, unified communications and support flexible and remote working
- Provided more services online so people have more options on how, and when, they interact with us, such as:
  - waste and street care issues can now be easily reported using a new online reporting tool
  - council tax and business rates are easy to pay with a new online payment tool and residents can sign up for paperless billing
  - parking services such as applying for visitor permits and appealing parking fines can now be done directly through our website with licensing, building control and planning services to follow shortly
- Opened up communications and engagement channels with the introduction of the Govdelivery electronic newsletter to our residents and conducted a Community Survey with our residents, achieving over 1,100 responses

#### **We will continue to deliver this priority by:**

- As part of our Watford 2020 programme:
  - Deliver the next phase of the programme including the implementation of the new operating model for the council
  - Explore innovative ways of using the Internet of Things

## **5. Secure our own financial future**



All of the work in this Corporate Plan is dependent on the council getting its finances right and securing a sound financial base. This has never been more challenging with the Council facing the loss of around £2.5million revenue support grant by 2020 and a total saving requirement of £3million. However, this also brings the drive to innovate and look for ways to do things differently that will deliver savings or generate additional income. It also provides the council with the opportunity to establish a sound financial basis into the future, which is not dependent on changes in government priorities or policy. We also recognise that supporting our local businesses to thrive is critical to ensuring both a healthy economy and to securing business rate growth, which will form a key part of our future finances.



### **Our challenges**

- Loss of revenue support grant by 2020
- Savings or additional income of £3million needed to 'balance the books' by 2020
- Need to finance our ambitions as well as business as usual
- Growing population means an increasing demand for our services

### **Our opportunities**

- Access funding streams and external funding to support our ambitions
- Use our property assets to increase our income
- Identify the right commercial opportunities to explore
- Work with other organisations (both private and public sector) to deliver services and, potentially, raise income
- Provide stimulus to the economy in terms of business growth and more jobs through our approach to smart growth, which helps support the council's finances too
- Achieve returns on our capital investment to enable us to re-invest in our town
- Greater financial security as we are now less dependent on government decisions and policies affecting our budget, which helps our long-term planning for the council and the town

### **Highlights of what we have achieved so far:**

- Watford Commercial Services Limited established as our own trading company
- As part of our Watford 2020 programme:
  - Agreed a Commercial Strategy to provide a robust framework for deciding on which commercial proposals present the right opportunities for Watford
- Medium Term Financial Strategy agreed that aligns both our revenue and capital budgets to our ambitions in this Plan and ensures we are in a strong financial position by 2020
- Engaged a private sector partner to manage our commercial property portfolio to ensure we are maximising the income we receive
- Achieved a successful retender of our leisure centre management contract to manage our two outstanding leisure facilities and procured both an excellent provider and a substantial increase on our annual management fee
- Maintained excellent provision and value for money in the areas local people tell us are important - our parks, street cleansing, refuse collection, leisure centres, art and culture and events and will continue to do so
- HLF funding of nearly £5million leveraged in the last three years through our own investment and commitment to improve important facilities such as Cassiobury Park and Watford Museum

- Reviewed how we use the Town Hall complex and rented out empty office space to other organisations
- Launched a major project that will transform the Town Hall complex, allowing further sharing of accommodation with other organisations (including the Police) that will upgrade the current complex and secure additional rental income

**We will continue to deliver this priority by:**

- Approving the detailed plan to Secure £1million savings through our Watford 2020 programme
- Procuring a Commercial Adviser to evaluate and provide support to new income generating initiatives
- Managing our property portfolio to stimulate growth, generate returns and meet changing service needs
- Ensuring our contracts are delivering value for money and high quality services through robust tendering and procurement processes and on-going review including: waste collection, street care, parks and open spaces, Watford Colosseum
- Capturing returns on investment from our major projects and joint ventures

# Part Four

## Underpinning themes

Whilst this Corporate Plan focuses on our priorities and the areas of work that will drive delivery, there are some important foundations that ensure our success and also build our effectiveness as an organisation. These are the themes that underpin the organisation and reflect our continuing commitment to being a quality council, achieving high performance across all we do.

### Effective two-way engagement and communications

Our local community and residents are the heart of the town. We want them to feel confident that they are kept well-informed about all that is going on in the town and that their voice can be heard on issues that matter to them. Whatever we do must be underpinned by effective and relevant communication and be responsive to how people want to engage with us, whether this be through meetings, consultation, our website or social media. At the same time we need to keep up to date with the way new technology is rapidly changing how people choose to communicate – our local population is relatively young and many are early adopters of new technologies. Our challenge is to keep up with them whilst still responding to those with more traditional ways of staying in touch.

- Actions:**
- we will take forward specific initiatives to consult our community post the Mayoral elections to review the town's progress and help shape future priorities and decision making
  - we will build a new approach to two way engagement with our residents through the use of social media and other channels so they better understand the council's vision for the town and can make a greater contribution to local issues, policy development and service improvement
  - we will review our communications strategy to ensure it is innovative and matching the best practice both within the public and private sector
  - we will proactively share Watford's successes

### Sound management and high performance

Successful delivery of our ambitions relies on making sure we have the best people, systems, processes and management arrangements in place to deliver efficient, high quality services that represent real value for money to the community.

Our vision challenges us to continually improve and ensure we are amongst the top performing councils across all the services we deliver – whether we do these ourselves or through effective partnerships. This means we need to set ourselves targets that really stretch what we do and how we work and look to the best authorities for our benchmark. We need to embed a culture of 'delivery' through sound programme and project management and rapidly identify and address any areas where there is a risk of slippage.

Our support services like IT, HR and Finance continue to be the essential building blocks for our success. IT remains critical for all that we do and whilst real step change has begun, we need to ensure IT continues to improve and that we have the right strategy in place to make the most of the opportunities it offers. We want our staff and elected members to be equipped with the best IT solutions available, including making sure our critical business applications are up to date and that we modernise where better solutions present themselves.

Talented, well skilled staff are vital if we are to achieve what we have set out in this Corporate Plan. We want to retain and grow our own talent where possible but when we do recruit we want to make sure we attract the best from elsewhere. We will work with our HR team on embedding a culture where strong performance and delivery are recognised, people are encouraged to be innovative and strive to make a real contribution to the Council and the town.

- Actions:**
- we will implement:
    - the recommendations of the Corporate Peer Challenge
    - Year 1 of our People Strategy
    - Year 1 of our IT Strategy
  - We will strengthen our project and programme management to ensure our plans and ambitions are delivered on time and within budget
  - we will review our key performance indicators to ensure they are measuring what is important and being used to improve decision- making
  - we will keep our services under review to continuously examine the best way to deliver them, whether in house or externalised

### Improving the town's environment

An attractive, well maintained environment is fundamental to our town and, we know, is really important to local people. We will ensure that the refuse, recycling and street cleaning service remains high quality and we will identify pockets where a focused, partnership approach to bring the neighbourhood up to a higher standard would be beneficial. This is part of our continuing commitment to enhancing the public realm including building on the successful improvements to the top of the town, which have seen this area revitalised, with work planned for the civic area outside of the library and Town Hall.

- Actions:**
- we will maintain excellent relationships with delivery partners such as Veolia
  - we will continuously enhance the quality of our environment and monitor and tackle environmental hotspots as they occur
  - we will continue to protect our heritage and conserve the town's history

### Our finances

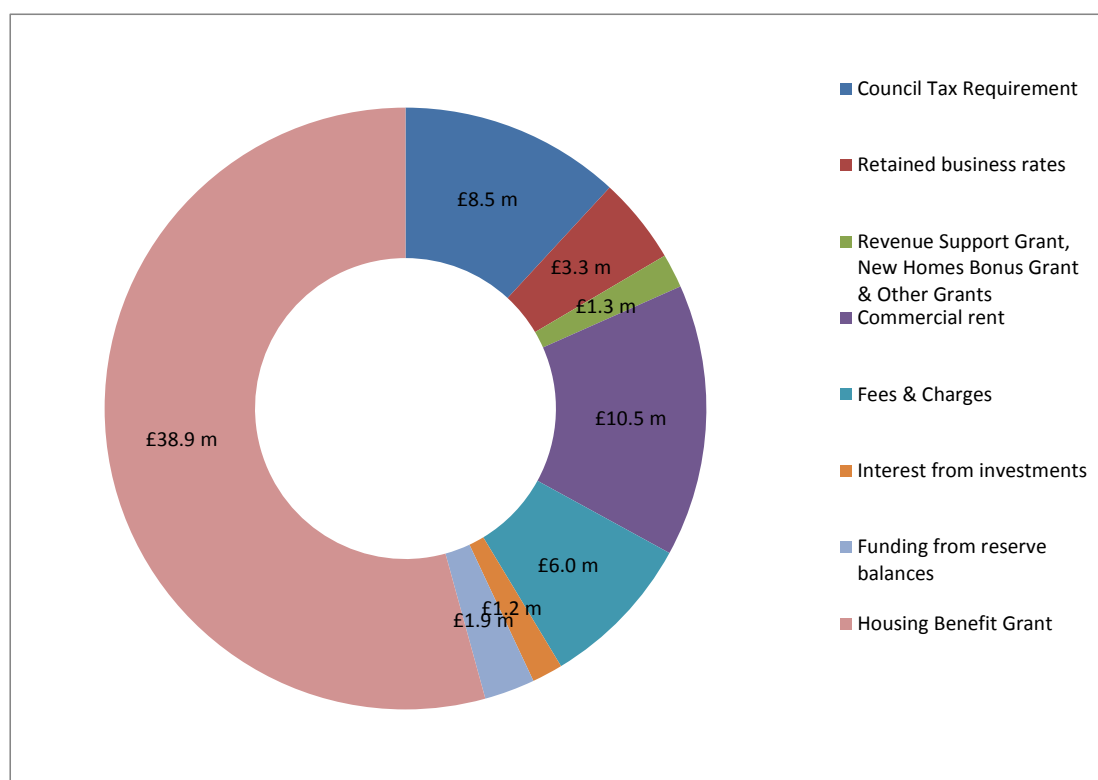
Our finances are perhaps the most critical building block for our plans. We need our finances to not only support our day to day activities and provide our services (through our revenue budget) but also to deliver the major, transformational projects that make such a difference to our town and local neighbourhoods (through our capital budget).

Our Medium Term Financial Strategy includes a three year forecast that sets out our budget and looks at factors likely to impact on our expenditure.

For 2018/19, the strategy shows that our gross budget is **£71.6 million** with a net budget requirement of **£13.520million**.

There are a number of ways this is funded:

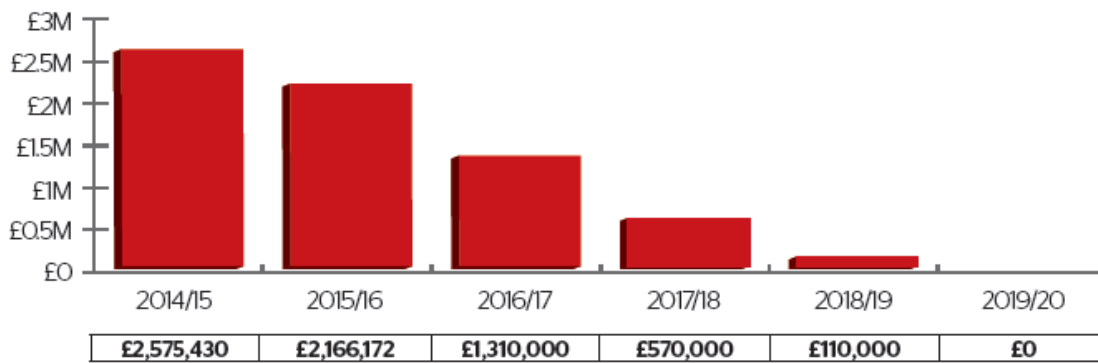
- Council Tax requirement
- Retained Business Rates
- Revenue Support Grant (but reducing to zero by 2019/20), New Homes Bonus Grant & other grants
- Commercial rent
- Fees & Charges
- Funding from reserve balances
- Interest
- Housing Benefit Grant – this is money that comes directly from government to be administered by the council to support those in need of housing benefit. It is not council money that we can spend in any other way



*Watford BC's funding 2018/19: by different funding sources- the largest amount of money we receive is for Housing Benefit which we are responsible for allocating to our residents in need of this financial support*

### **Changes to government funding**

In terms of the Revenue Support Grant, this is the grant councils receive from government to help support the cost of the services they deliver. The government has reduced this funding year on year until it reaches zero in 2019/20. What this means is shown in the chart below – indicating a reduction of £2,575,430 by 2020. It also means the percentage of our funding stream dependent on council tax increases from 60% in 2017/18 to 69% in 2020/21.



As set out in this Plan, this presents a significant challenge for Watford – in percentage terms it is around 16% less budget to spend by 2020 compared with 2014/15. Implementing our Medium Term Financial Strategy, which sets out how we will bridge this gap, will be a major area of focus for the Council to 2020. Our goal is to ensure we maintain the quality of the services that are important to our residents whilst still being able to innovate where this delivers improvements or in response to new opportunities.

### Use of reserves

With the savings we need to make over the next year (and following two years), it is not always easy to be exact as to the timing and the final sums that will be achieved. In view of this, the Council is allowed to, and will, make prudent use of some of its reserves to ‘smooth’ the delivery of the savings. Obviously using reserves to support the revenue deficit is not sustainable in the longer term and, therefore, this means that savings and efficiencies will still need to be made. It does, however, ensure that the Council is able to set a balanced budget whilst the organisation undertakes the work necessary to achieve a permanently secure financial footing. Our Medium Term Financial Strategy has allowed for the use of £1.3m of reserves in the next financial year.

### Council tax

As a result of the on-going reduction in government funding, council tax is now, by far, the major source of funding for the Council.

The government has built into our finances an assumption that we will raise council tax, and most councils are doing so. However, the proportion of council tax that comes to Watford Borough Council is extremely small – around £260 a year for someone living in a Band D property. Most goes to Hertfordshire County Council (including an additional charge to support the County’s adult social care budget) and a small amount to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire.

Watford had managed to freeze its element of council tax for 7 years up to 2017/18 but faced with a significant funding gap a continued freeze is not sustainable. Increasing the council tax by 2.99% generates additional income of £250,000. For 2018/19 Watford’s element of council tax will increase by £7.62 to £262.46 for a Band D property, which is less than a 15p a week.

### Business rates

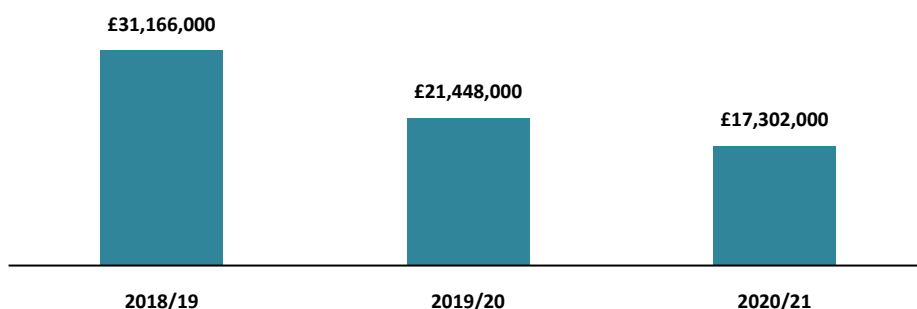
Whilst the Council collects business rates it cannot keep all the money it collects. This has to be shared with the county council, the Police and Crime Commissioner and government to fund services. There is an element of risk involved in the Business Rates scheme, which is designed to incentivise Councils to promote business growth within their areas. The Council expects its share of business rates to be £3.332 million in 2018/19.

## Capital spending

The Council's plans are supported by its Capital Investment Programme, which is used to acquire or create new assets, or enhance existing ones. Capital Investment may be paid for by capital resources (which are restricted to this kind of use) or borrowing, or any spare money available from revenue budgets (unfortunately WBC does not have any such spare money!). Even if there is pressure on the revenue budget, councils are not allowed to use capital resources to support revenue spending on day to day activities and service delivery, they have to be used to either acquire or create new assets or to enhance an existing ones.

The capital budget for the next three years is:

To be updated



There is a huge amount of capital investment in Watford over the next few years and the Council is committed to use its own capital budgets, seeking investment from central government and other third parties, and borrowing to the benefit of its residents. Below are some of the major projects and areas of work we have identified for capital expenditure in 2018/19..

### **Oxhey Park leisure and community hub**

an exciting new centre dedicated to cycling, skate boarding and scooting, incorporating a café, community room and play area

£3,750,000

### **Garston Park Improvements**

continuing to upgrade the town's facilities for sports and leisure

£250,000

### **River Colne project**

Improving and enhancing one of Watford's two major rivers running through our borough

£100,000

### **Watford Museum HLF improvement project**

a partnership with Heritage Lottery Fund to upgrade and enhance the home of Watford's history and heritage

£425,000

### **Watford Riverwell**

this will help support the first six phases of residential development to deliver new homes and a new multi-storey car park for the hospital. This investment will generate a return back to the council to support front line services.

£10,930,713

**Modular Housing**

providing additional temporary accommodation in the borough

£2,000,000

**High street improvements**

scheme to improve the road and public space between Clarendon Road and St Mary's Church

£250,000

**Town Hall Redevelopment**

Construction of a multi storey office block and raised deck car park with associated highways alterations

£2,310,000



# Part Five

## Monitoring the Plan

Ensuring we deliver our Corporate Plan is critical to our success as an organisation and builds our residents confidence that we keep our promises.

We ensure delivery is on track through:

- Making sure all our Corporate Plan areas of work are reflected in service plans, work programmes and individual performance development review objectives, building the 'golden thread' through the organisation
- Identifying the key milestones for our work and holding ourselves to account for delivery – this will include regular updates to our Cabinet, Programme Management Board and Leadership Team
- Establishing a robust set of performance measures that are regularly monitored by Leadership Team, Portfolio Holders and our Scrutiny Committees. These measures extend to our outsourced services
- Providing challenge and assurance through robust governance including: Programme Management Board for our major projects, Property Investment Board for our property related work, Finance Review Board for our finances and Digital Watford Board for our 2020 transformation agenda



## How do I find out more?

[www.watford.gov.uk/councilplan](http://www.watford.gov.uk/councilplan)

## Corporate Plan: Year 1 Deliverables

Deliverable	Lead Area	Identify ways to manage the borough's housing needs	Champion smart growth and economic prosperity	Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities	Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community	Secure our own financial future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the delivery of the target of 577 new homes per annum</li> </ul>	Place Shaping & Corporate Performance: Housing	✓	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivering a review of our Local Plan to reflect the borough's housing needs and to identify the necessary infrastructure for growth so that our communities remain sustainable and supported by good quality facilities, services and transport links</li> </ul>	Place Shaping & Corporate Performance: Planning Policy	✓	✓			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completing the first new homes and temporary accommodation (including 40 homes at Tolpits Lane) delivered through the Hart Homes Joint Venture and explore further opportunities</li> </ul>	Community & Environmental Services: Housing	✓	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completing the delivery of the modular temporary accommodation at Balmoral Road</li> </ul>	Place Shaping & Corporate Performance: Property	✓	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing to secure new homes, including affordable homes as part of the town's major projects as well as on other potential sites</li> </ul>	Place Shaping & Corporate Performance: Development Management	✓	✓	✓		

Deliverable	Lead Area	Identify ways to manage the borough's housing needs	Champion smart growth and economic prosperity	Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities	Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community	Secure our own financial future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 new Housing Service delivery model</li> </ul>	Place Shaping & Corporate Performance: Housing			✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with our partners to deliver projects to improve housing through the delivery of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy</li> </ul>	Community & Environmental Services: Environmental Health	✓	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivering the next phase of our Local Plan including submission to the planning inspectorate</li> </ul>	Place Shaping & Corporate Performance: Planning Policy	✓	✓			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progressing investment in major projects, infrastructure and public realm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town Hall and Town Hall square development</li> <li>Watford Riverwell: completion of first residential zones at Woodside and Waterside, approving and delivering the 'norther zone' masterplan, car park strategy for Watford General Hospital</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Place Shaping & Corporate Performance		✓			✓

Deliverable	Lead Area	Identify ways to manage the borough's housing needs	Champion smart growth and economic prosperity	Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities	Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community	Secure our own financial future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Watford Junction: first phase planning applications including infrastructure improvement plan</li> <li>○ Clarendon Road: new office and residential construction progressing, school completion, public realm enhancements</li> <li>○ Watford Business Park, including Zone A venture partner, achieved</li> <li>○ intu completion including aligning leases across both sites and delivering High Street improvements</li> </ul>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Working in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council on tackling congestion and promoting more sustainable methods of transport including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ improving cycling lanes</li> <li>○ promoting cycle hire</li> <li>○ promoting car clubs</li> <li>○ improving walking routes</li> <li>○ extending electric charging points network</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Place Shaping & Corporate Performance: Transport & Infrastructure		✓			

Deliverable	Lead Area	Identify ways to manage the borough's housing needs	Champion smart growth and economic prosperity	Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities	Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community	Secure our own financial future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring alternatives for people to get into and around Watford including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 'Hop on / hop off' bus to link the town</li> <li>○ Working with schools to encourage alternatives to the school run</li> <li>○ Considering a short-distance park and ride for specific events such as football matches</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Place Shaping & Corporate Performance: Transport & Infrastructure		✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working in partnership to deliver our Economic Growth Delivery Plan and providing the strategic lead for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Inward investment and business retention</li> <li>○ Skills brokerage and sector skills development</li> <li>○ Growing Watford's knowledge economy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Corporate Strategy & Communications: Economic Development		✓	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering the next phase of Sports Facilities Strategy               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Woodside: masterplan approved</li> <li>○ Oxhey Park project</li> <li>○ Cassiobury Site (Fullerians)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Community & Environmental Services: Parks & Projects		✓	✓		

Deliverable	Lead Area	Identify ways to manage the borough's housing needs	Champion smart growth and economic prosperity	Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities	Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community	Secure our own financial future
investment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cassiobury Croquet Club improvements</li> </ul>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a River Colne improvement strategy to enhance the river and its surrounds as a green asset for Watford</li> </ul>	Community & Environmental Services: Parks & Projects		✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a new Cultural Plan for Watford</li> </ul>	Community & Environmental Services: Culture & Events		✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determining investment options for New Watford Market and renew outdoor market livery</li> </ul>	Community & Place Shaping & Corporate Performance: Property		✓			✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking forward Watford Museum Heritage Lottery Fund improvement project</li> </ul>	Community & Environmental Services: Culture & Events		✓			✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting Watford as a dementia friendly town</li> </ul>	Community & Environmental Services:			✓		

Deliverable	Lead Area	Identify ways to manage the borough's housing needs	Champion smart growth and economic prosperity	Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities	Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community	Secure our own financial future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore ways to welcome people new to living in Watford including a 'buddy scheme' and welcome pack</li> </ul>	Corporate Strategy & Communications: Corporate Strategy			✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with partners to tackle rough sleepers</li> </ul>	Community & Environmental Services: Community Safety			✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review our pilot Street Improvement Programme and decide on our approach for future projects</li> </ul>	Community & Environmental Services: Environmental Health		✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertaking a review of our community assets to ensure they are being best used to help our third sector support our communities, including our more vulnerable residents</li> </ul>	Community & Environmental Services: Leisure & Community			✓		✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exploring options for a new cemetery in Watford to meet the needs of our residents</li> </ul>	Environmental Services: Parks & Projects		✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewing our three year Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework to ensure it continues to promote the wellbeing of our town and our residents</li> </ul>	Community & Environmental Services: Leisure & Community			✓		✓

Deliverable	Lead Area	Identify ways to manage the borough's housing needs	Champion smart growth and economic prosperity	Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities	Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community	Secure our own financial future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing the strategic lead for promoting economic equality through our Economic Development Growth Plan</li> </ul>	Corporate Strategy & Communications: Economic Development		✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with our partners to deliver projects to improve health conditions in the borough including through the delivery of the Warmer Homesproject</li> </ul>	Community & Environmental Services: Environmental Health	✓		✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewing our council tax reduction scheme</li> </ul>	Revenues & Benefits: Revenues			✓		✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with partners to understand our community and the issues that are affecting our vulnerable and disadvantaged residents so we can ensure local services are targeted effectively</li> </ul>	Corporate Strategy & Communications: Corporate Strategy			✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a corporate approach to mental health issues in the borough</li> </ul>	Environmental Services: Environmental Health			✓		



Deliverable	Lead Area	Identify ways to manage the borough's housing needs	Champion smart growth and economic prosperity	Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities	Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community	Secure our own financial future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of our Watford 2020 programme:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver the next phase of the programme including the implementation of the new operating model for the council</li> <li>Explore innovative ways of using the Internet of Things</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Service Transformation: Watford 2020				✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Securing £1million savings through our Watford 2020 programme</li> </ul>	Service Transformation: Watford 2020					✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing our property portfolio to stimulate growth, generate returns and meet changing service needs</li> </ul>	Place Shaping & Corporate Performance: Property					✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring our contracts are delivering value for money and high quality services through robust tendering and procurement processes and on-going review including: waste collection, street care, parks and open spaces, Watford Colosseum</li> </ul>	Democracy & Governance: Procurement					✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capturing returns on investment from our major projects and joint ventures</li> </ul>	Finance					✓



## Underpinning themes

Deliverable	Lead Area	Effective two-way engagement and communications	Sound management and high performance	Improving the town's environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take forward specific initiatives to consult our community post the Mayoral elections to review the town's progress and help shape future priorities and decision making</li> </ul>	Corporate Strategy & Communications: Communications	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build a new approach to two way engagement with our residents through the use of social media and other channels so they better understand the council's vision for the town and can make a greater contribution to local issues, policy development and service improvement</li> </ul>	Corporate Strategy & Communications: Communications	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review our communications strategy to ensure it is innovative and matching the best practice both within the public and private sector</li> </ul>	Corporate Strategy & Communications: Communications	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proactively share Watford's successes</li> </ul>	Corporate Strategy & Communications: Communications	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the recommendations of the Corporate Peer Challenge</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Corporate Strategy & Communications: Corporate Strategy		✓	

Deliverable	Lead Area	Effective two-way engagement and communications	Sound management and high performance	Improving the town's environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Year 1 of our People Strategy</li> </ul>	Human Resources		✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Year 1 of our IT Strategy</li> </ul>	Service Transformation		✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen our project and programme management to ensure our plans and ambitions are delivered on time and within budget</li> </ul>	Corporate Strategy & Communications: PMO		✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review our key performance indicators to ensure they are measuring what is important and being used to improve decision- making</li> </ul>	Service Transformation Watford 2020 / Corporate Strategy & Communications: Performance		✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining excellent relationships with delivery partners such as Veolia</li> </ul>	Community & Environmental Services: Environmental Services			✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuously enhance the quality of our environment and monitor and tackle environmental hotspots as they occur</li> </ul>	Community & Environmental Services: Environmental Services			

Deliverable	Lead Area	Effective two-way engagement and communications	Sound management and high performance	Improving the town's environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to protect our heritage and conserve the town's history</li> </ul>				✓



# Equality Impact Analysis

<b>Title of policy, function or service</b>	Corporate Plan 2020 (2018/19 update)
<b>Lead officer</b>	Manny Lewis – Managing Director
<b>Person completing the EIA</b>	Kathryn Robson
<b>Type of policy, function or service:</b>	Existing (reviewed) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New/Proposed
<b>Version</b>	v.01- 22 February 2018

## **1. Background**

### **Corporate Plan 2020: update 2018/19**

Each year, the council undertakes a corporate planning process in order to review and agree the organisation's strategic direction in the medium-term and to detail how it hopes to achieve its vision and priorities over the next four to five years. This is then articulated through the council's Corporate Plan and through service plans, which in turn help inform team work programmes and individual objectives for each staff member, identified through their annual performance development reviews. In line with good practice, the council adopts a medium-term perspective to corporate planning and ensures that the process is informed and influenced by a number of key drivers. These include: resident and community consultation and feedback, an analysis and understanding of the local area, external issues (such as government requirements and legislation) and financial resources, including capital investment. The ultimate aim of effective corporate planning is to make sure the organisation is clear about what it has promised to deliver, has a shared understanding of what work needs to be completed in the short and medium-term, the milestones that will measure progress and the outcomes that will measure its success.

The council's Corporate Plan, therefore, sets out the direction for the council to 2020. It is our key improvement and planning document, which identifies where we are focusing our efforts and resources both over the next year and for the medium term. The Corporate Plan is the highest level document that covers the whole of the council's work.

It links with other council strategies and plans, such as the Local Plan, Sports Facilities Strategy as well as our transformational Watford 2020 programme and is reviewed and updated annually to reflect any changes to the national, regional or local environment.

As our key strategic planning document, the plan's impact on the town and community is fundamental to ensuring it also provides effective linkage to the council's commitment to equalities and diversity and that it meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

## **2. Focus of the Equality Impact Analysis**

This EIA, therefore, considers the potential equality related impacts, both positive and negative of the Corporate Plan 2020 – update for 2018/19 - on the people in the groups or with the characteristics protected in the Equalities Act 2010, should Council approve the plan in March 2018.

These are:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender Reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race
6. Religion or belief
7. Sex (gender)
8. Sexual Orientation
9. Marriage and Civil Partnership.

### 3. What we know about the Watford population

#### Population

The current population of Watford is 96,800 (mid 2017 estimate) and is estimated to grow by 16% by 2026. Population growth estimates stated that they expected Watford to reach 100,000 by the end of 2017. In terms of gender breakdown, there are estimated to be fractionally more female than male residents but the difference is not significant.

The population density for Watford is circa 4,500 people per square kilometre. This makes it the most densely populated district area in England and Wales. However, in comparison with some metropolitan boroughs, particularly those in and around the outskirts of London, the density is relatively low.

#### Ward level populations

Mid 2016 year population estimates show Central has the highest population of any ward in Watford and Tudor the lowest at 6,059.

	<b>2016</b>
Callowland	7,983
Central	9,101
Holywell	8,716
Leggatts	7,910
Meriden	7,870
Nascot	8,721
Oxhey	6,949
Park	8,464
St anborough	7,645
Tudor	6,944
Vicarage	8,986
Woodside	7,484

*This is ONS experimental data (Ward Level Mid-Year Population Estimates (experimental), Mid-2016)*

#### Population projections

The ONS interim 2014-based subnational population projections are an indication of the future trends in population to 2024.

- Watford's population is projected to be 109,600 by 2022 with the population reaching 100,000 in 2017 (we will know if this was accurate with the release of 2017 population estimates)



- The bulk of the estimated 14.8% increase for Watford over the ten years from 2014 to 2024 is expected to stem from natural change of 8.8% (more births than deaths), net migration within the UK of 5.2% and net international migration of 0.7%. The level of natural change can be attributed to the relatively young age structure of the current population, with a high proportion of child bearing age.

### **Households**

The average household size in Watford is currently 2.45. This is average for the region.

### **Number of households**

The ONS data, based on the census, says that there were 36,681 households in Watford at the time of the Census; as of 31 January 2017 the figure was 39,052.

### **Household size**

The 2014 projections estimate that, between 2014 and 2039:

- Watford's average household size will decrease from 2.45 to 2.33
- Hertfordshire's average household size will decrease from 2.42 to 2.29
- England's average household size will decrease from 2.35 to 2.21

### **Household Composition**

From the 2014 projections, one person households see the biggest increase in household growth in Watford, representing 44% of the total household growth.

However, households with dependent children see the next biggest rise, with 35% of household growth; couples with other adults make up 9%; other (multi-person adult) households make up 7% and couple households (without children or other adults) make up the remaining 6% of all estimated growth.

### **Ethnicity**

Watford has a very diverse population, more so than the rest of Hertfordshire.

For Watford, the Census 2011 shows the following breakdown in terms of ethnicity: White British (61.9%), White other (7.7%), Pakistani (6.7%), British Indian (5.5%) and British other Asian 4.4%). Census information is now nearly 10 years old and it is likely that the ethnic profile of the borough has changed during this time. For example, it would not have captured the more recent EU arrivals to the borough (EU2 countries – Romania and Bulgaria, who were given residency rights in 2014). We know from other data such as National Insurance Registration that Watford has experienced a relatively high increase in nationals from the EU2 countries applying for National Insurance registrations as Watford residents. This follows a period of a high number from EU8 countries (including Poland, Latvia, Lithuania) who were given freedom of movement to the UK from 2004. Throughout the period the arrival of new residents from south Asia (e.g. Pakistan / India) has remained relatively constant.

Other data sources, including a school language survey on the languages spoken by Watford school children at home, endorse the National Insurance findings with English still the predominant language (at around 60%) followed by (in order of selection): Urdu, Polish, Tamil, Pahari, Gujarati, Portuguese, Romanian and Hindi.

From our assessment of our 74,522 electorate (i.e. those aged over 18 and registered to vote) the following main ethnicity groups have been identified.

- British – 61,399
- Polish – 1,791
- Romanian – 1,612
- Rep of Ireland – 1,389
- Indian – 1,079

- Portuguese – 758
- Italian – 747

### Age

The largest populations by age band in Watford are:

- 25-44 (31,700)
- 45-59 (18,100)

The numbers in each successive age-band fall progressively until there are estimated to be 6,000 who are 75+. We know that around 74,000 residents are of voting age in Watford and that the borough has a younger profile than the rest of England and Wales.



### Disability / Health

Around 85% of the population of Watford state that they have ‘good health’ and just under 14% record a disability. We do not have details as to what these disabilities are but they will include a wide range of physical and mental health disabilities or impairment.

The 2016 NHS Health Profile’s summary conclusion is that the health of people in Watford is ‘varied’ compared with the England average. About 14% (2,700) of children live in low income families. Life expectancy for both men and women is similar to the England average (which is an improvement on previous years when men’s was lower).

The profile also shows that physically active adults has remained stable since 2016 at 54.4%, compared to the England average of 57%. There has been a very small increase from 58.9% to 60% in the percentage of adults classified as overweight or obese in Watford, although significantly better than the England average of 64.8%. Also remaining consistent is the percentage of obese children in Year 6 (aged 10-11) at 16%, significantly better than the England average, which is 19.8%.

### Religion / belief

The religious breakdown in the Census 2011 of the main religions in Watford was: Christian (54.1%), Muslim (9.8%), Hindu (4.8%), with no religion stated at 21.4%.

### **Sexual orientation / Transgender**

Watford has no specific data on the transgender community within the borough

### **Education and skills**

A skilled workforce supports the economic development and employment aspirations for Watford. There has been a mostly increasing trend in Watford over the last few years. Watford's working age population has the third highest percentage (43.7%) in Hertfordshire of those with qualifications at NVQ 4 and above (St. Albans is the highest with 62% and East Herts second highest with 44.2%); this is also higher than both the 40.4% average in Hertfordshire and the England average of 34.2%. There are fewer people with no qualifications and significantly more people with Level 4/5 qualifications (degree level).

63.6% of Watford young people achieved 5 A\*-C including English & Maths at the end of key stage 4. This is the better than the England average of 57.8%.

### **Homelessness**

Whilst this is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, the council recognises that the particular circumstances of people without their own home might be a factor in their taking an active role in our community. We currently have 24 statutory homeless (December 2017) and 188 households in temporary accommodation (December 2017).

### **Deprivation**

The English Indices of Deprivation 2015 was published by the Government in September 2015, and updates the previous 2010 Indices, published in March 2011.

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015 uses 37 separate indicators, grouped into seven domains (three of which contain sub-domains); the domains are Income; Employment; Health and Disability; Education, Skills and Training; Crime; Barriers to Housing and Services; and Living Environment. In addition to the domains and their sub-domains there are two supplementary income deprivation Indices: Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) and Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI).

In the IMD 2015, Watford is ranked 189 out of 326 authorities, putting it in the 6<sup>th</sup> decile nationally. This means that, overall, Watford is less deprived than half the authorities in England.

Watford is the third most deprived authority in Hertfordshire. (Stevenage and Broxbourne are the most deprived.) However, three Hertfordshire authorities are among the 10% least deprived authorities in England (Three Rivers, East Herts and St Albans).

Overall, Watford is not an area with significant deprivation issues and the majority of the LSOAs within the town are in the bottom 50% of LSOAs nationally for deprivation; the borough's position has improved relative to that of 2010.

The combined deprivation index, which weights income and employment more heavily than the other domains, obscures the more deprived areas in Watford, which are affected by crime, living environment deprivation and education, skills and training deprivation in particular. This is, at least in part, because income and employment deprivation are less of an issue for Watford.

The ten most deprived LSOAs in Watford, as ranked in the IMD 2010, are as follows:

Watford rank	Ward	LSOA code	Hertfordshire		England	
			Rank	Decile in Herts (1st = most deprived)	Rank	Decile (1st = most deprived)
1 (2)	Central	E01023860	5 (5)	1st (1st)	5005 (7683)	2nd (3rd)
2 (1)	Meriden	E01023876	19 (7)	1st (1st)	7590 (7539)	3rd (3rd)
3 (5)	Holywell	E01023865	22 (32)	1st (1st)	7800 (9818)	3rd (4th)
4 (7)	Holywell	E01023866	30 (40)	1st (1st)	9203 (10445)	3rd (4th)
5 (4)	Stanborough	E01023891	31 (21)	1st (1st)	9377 (9075)	3rd (3rd)
6 (11)	Meriden	E01023873	33 (57)	1st (1st)	9628 (11634)	3rd (4th)
7 (9)	Woodside	E01023906	41 (46)	1st (1st)	10062 (10768)	4th (4th)
8 (3)	Central	E01023861	45 (15)	1st (1st)	10469 (8354)	4th (3rd)
9 (8)	Central	E01023859	47 (45)	1st (1st)	10609 (10705)	4th (4th)
10 (6)	Oxhey	E01023883	49 (34)	1st (1st)	10710 (10014)	4th (4th)

### MOSAIC profile

Our MOSAIC profiling of the borough enhances our understanding of our population and provides valuable context for our decision-making as well as underpinning our communications and engagement.

MOSAIC GROUP	Group/Type Name	MOSAIC DESCRIPTION	Number of households in Watford	Watford Percentage	UK Percentage
1 J40	Career Builders	Singles and couples in their 20s and 30s progressing in their field of work from commutable properties	4508	11.69%	1.59%
2 J44	Flexible Workforce	Young renters ready to move to follow worthwhile incomes from service sector jobs	3123	8.10%	1.26%
3 D14	Cafés and Catchments	Affluent families with growing children living in upmarket housing in city environs	2837	7.35%	1.31%
4 I36	Cultural Comfort	Thriving families with good incomes in multi-cultural urban communities	2794	7.24%	1.37%
5 H35	Primary Ambitions	Forward-thinking younger families who sought affordable homes in good suburbs which they may now be out-growing	2391	6.20%	1.96%

*Watford's MOSAIC profile (2016)*

## 4. What local people have said is important to them

Our regular Community Survey is one way we test what we are doing and our future plans. The Community Survey 2017 received over 1,100 responses, which indicates the level of interest our residents have in the town and its future.

### COMMUNITY SURVEY 2017: HEADLINE RESULTS

#### Views on the council

- 77% of respondents are satisfied with the way the council runs things
- 80% agree the council is working to make Watford a better place to live
- 82% think we provide value for money and the same percentage are satisfied with the way we spend our proportion of your council tax
- 85% agree we are working to make Watford economically successful

#### Top council services

These are the services that local residents think we do really well:

- Waste and recycling
- Parks and open spaces
- Sports and leisure facilities

#### Views on Watford

- 74% of respondents are satisfied with Watford as a place to live
- 80% are proud to be a Watford resident
- 84% think that where they live people from different backgrounds get on well together
- 91% agree Watford is a safe town

#### Top five things that respondents said make somewhere a good place to live

- Feeling safe in my home and the local area
- Good quality hospital and health services
- Cleanliness and tidiness of the town
- Good access to public transport
- Rubbish collected on a regular and reliable basis

### Where we need to do even better

- Ensuring that new homes are supported by good infrastructure such as school places, GP surgeries, better transport links
- Keep local people informed about decisions
- Provide more opportunities for people to find out what is going on and share their views
- Explaining why well-planned growth is important to the town
- Explaining housing targets and the need for new homes

### Priorities for the borough

The survey also asked people about their priorities for the borough.

The top choices were:

<b>Ensuring a vibrant and prosperous local economy that offers a range of jobs and opportunities for local people</b>	48.5%
<b>Keeping the town clean and our streets free from litter</b>	38.6%
<b>Working with community safety partners to tackle issues and make Watford even safer for our communities</b>	38.0%
<b>Creating a well-connected borough with good infrastructure such as better transport links</b>	37.4%
<b>Supporting our more vulnerable residents so that they can live independent lives</b>	35.5%
<b>Protecting and enhancing our parks and open spaces</b>	31.5%
<b>Helping to provide a range of new homes that meet local needs, including more affordable homes</b>	30.2%

*Total responses: 1,095*

Residents were also able to provide their views on other priority areas for Watford not identified within the answer choices. Of the comments received, the most commonly cited issues were parking and congestion.

## 5. How will the council ensure equality is promoted through the Corporate Plan 2020

Under the Equality Act 2010, three areas need to be considered when analysing the equality impact of the Corporate Plan:

1. **eliminate** discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
2. **advance** equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it
3. **foster** good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not

Watford's vision is: **To create a bold and progressive future for Watford**

To deliver this vision it has 5 agreed priorities:

1. Identify ways to manage the borough's housing needs
2. Champion smart growth and economic prosperity
3. Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities
4. Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community
5. Secure our own financial future

These are then underpinned by areas which we believe are well embedded in Watford and which we would want to see maintained: high performance and sound management, effective two-way communications and engagement and improving the town's environment.

Through the Corporate Plan, specific projects and areas of work are identified that set the corporate work programme and demonstrate how we will deliver against the 5 priority areas and the vision to 2020.

All of the priorities, and the work set out to deliver them, impact on our communities to some extent. Indeed, the underlying driver for the plan is to ensure we are working in a way that benefits all our communities; we seek to identify where the council can contribute to improving the borough and its own services and make a difference to issues that matter to local people.

### **EIA commitment**

As part of its commitment to the Equality Act 2010, Watford BC expects EIAs to be undertaken on all new strategies and policies and where a strategy or policy has been reviewed and significantly revised. Therefore, there are a number of areas of work identified in the Corporate Plan programme where separate EIAs will be carried out. The councils Corporate Equalities Working Group oversees this area of activity to ensure EIAs are undertaken and equalities impacts considered.

How our priorities will support our public sector equalities duties under the Equality Act 2010 is described below, with some of the individual projects /areas of work identified:

### **1. Identify ways to manage the borough's housing needs**

This priority looks to address the significant issues arising from the growing demand for homes in Watford, including affordable homes. Many of those needing permanent accommodation are young people and people with families and so we need to understand the impact of our housing policies in terms of the age profile of both people presenting themselves in housing need and, more generally, on the types of home needed in the borough to meet the requirements of its population – particularly given that we know that we have a younger population than many areas and high numbers of children under 5. However, we also know that our population is aging, with people living longer and this also impacts on housing requirements.

Another area where we understand that our profile means we require focus is private rented accommodation, where an extremely high proportion of our residents live. Whilst this is the right solution for many local people we know that the role of the private landlord in the town is critical to our communities and population. A significant amount of the rental sector is accessed by those aged 20 -35 years and so the work we do with the town's landlords has an important impact on this age group.

Therefore, through our Corporate Plan we seek to address both the supply and demand for housing within our borough, including affordable housing. Through our major projects we have already achieved significant progress towards meeting housing targets – indeed in 2017 we have facilitated the delivery of Watford's first purpose built retirement community through Watford Riverwell.

### **2. Champion smart growth and economic prosperity**

Ensuring the town remains prosperous is a key priority for the council. A prosperous economy provides jobs for those of working age across a range of occupations. Planning for smart growth means that issues such as transport and other infrastructure (e.g. schools) are considered as plans take shape for the borough. Areas like good public transport links are important to all the community but particularly for those too young to drive or with a disability or age-related impairment that means driving is not an option.

Our Local Plan provides the spatial planning for the borough and identifies how land is used, determining what will be built where. It provides the framework for development in the borough and has to be underpinned by a sound evidence base, including an understanding of our local communities and its various needs. A separate EIA is undertaken on the Local Plan to ensure it is meeting the council's equality duties and our own equality objectives. Other key strategies will also be expected to undertake robust EIAs to be presented to our members

### **3. Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities**

This priority recognises that whilst most people who live in the borough enjoy a good quality of life and are able to make the most of what the town offers, we do need to understand where others might need some extra help or support. As a district council not responsible for some of the major 'support' service areas such as adult social care and children's services, we work with our partners to ensure these services are meeting the needs of our residents and we ensure those services we are responsible for are responsive to our communities. This covers areas such as our public health work, providing health and fitness opportunities across the town and free activities for our children and young people. For 2018/19 we have added our commitment to becoming a dementia friendly town as well as developing our own mental health strategy for Watford. It also acknowledges that we need to make sure we understand who makes up our communities given that we know we have a growing and



often transient population. This ensures our services are focused on local need and that we can support our partners in their work with up to date information and Watford based profiles. It also informs our work on a welcome pack and ambassadors for new residents – one way we can maintain our strong and cohesive community.

#### **4. Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community**

We know that the way people receive information and prefer to engage with organisations whether they are in the public or private sector is changing. For many younger people, even email is outdated and they prefer social networks and mobile apps. But there are still significant parts of our communities that prefer more traditional types of communication and engagement including face to face conversations and meetings.

Through our Watford 2020 programme, our aim is to empower local people and communities, to improve their lives, make things easier and quicker, and to give them access to things they might not have been able to take advantage of before. Our drive to digital is to provide the online and digital opportunities for those who want them – more often our younger population and those of working age – whilst retaining other channels to meet the needs of people who are not so digitally aware or skilled.

#### **5. Secure our own financial future**

Whilst this priority focuses on making sure the council has well-thought and tested financial plans in place to ensure it has a secure future financially following the ending of government funding by 2020, it also challenges us to make sure our services can meet increasing demand and to be more innovative in the way we do things. We need to ensure that as we take this forward, we keep in mind the impact of our financial decisions on our communities.

### **A. Positive impacts**

#### **Potential positive effects**

The work programme articulated in the council's Corporate Plan 2020 is designed to improve the town and the quality of life of our residents. Through all the priorities identified for the council, there are areas of work and projects that will require additional consideration in terms of the council's equality duty and this will be delivered through a programme of equality impact analyses.

Some of the positive impacts include:

- All equality groups should benefit from activities to strengthen the local economy through attracting and supporting local businesses, which supports job opportunities and ensures local businesses thrive
- The work to deliver new homes will have a positive impact on young adults and families. Work to increase the number of affordable homes will have a positive impact on many BME groups in the town as there is a higher rate of people in social housing from a BME background compared to the Watford population overall
- The Green Spaces Strategy and related projects, including Oxhey Park and Woodside, will provide a positive impact for families in particular, although not exclusively as other protected characteristics benefit from the town's green spaces

- The council is currently reviewing its community assets to ascertain usage and determine a strategy for the future. It is anticipated that this review will highlight how the council can work more effectively with the community to make best use of its assets which should deliver an overall positive effect on communities
- The review of how we address mental health issues and the commitment to a dementia friendly town will impact positively on those with either mental health issues or age-related issues such as dementia
- All equality groups should benefit from our work with partners to understand our community and the issues that are affecting our vulnerable and disadvantaged residents. This will help us target our services effectively and ensure our partners, including Hertfordshire County Council, are also addressing issues where there is most need (social care, children's services, youth)
- Fostering good relations within the community will be achieved through a number of our areas of work including the Green Spaces Strategy and the Sports Development Framework.

The plan highlights the importance of equalities to the organisation (see priority 4). This commitment will ensure that, where appropriate, the equalities impact of new policies and strategies and changes to service provision are considered in advance of decision making through the equality impact analysis process. This is monitored through the Corporate Equalities Working Group.

**Recommendation 1: Ensure EIAs are undertaken on all relevant Corporate Plan areas of work (to both ensure the delivery of positive benefits and to mitigate potential negative impacts – see below).**

**Recommendation 2: Continue to build a comprehensive picture of the Watford community through feedback from consultations and updating the Watford context on a regular basis.**

**Recommendation 3: Ensure consultation and engagement continues to collect relevant equalities data so that there is an understanding of who is accessing facilities and services and understanding is built in relation to the views of our communities**

## **B. Negative impacts**

### **Potential negative effects**

These would arise if equalities and the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are not considered through the delivery of the corporate work programme.

The main ways of mitigating these potential negative effects:

- Training and communication – an online training programme is offered to all staff; this addresses both the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the council's own commitment to equalities and diversity. Face to face training is provided for staff who have regular interactions with the public and for councillors.
- Corporate Equalities Working Group – provides critical friend support for EIAs and advice on equalities overall

- Leadership Team receives reports on equalities to inform of progress and any issues
- Committee reports – the guidance to members has been revised to ensure members are fully informed of any equalities implications of any decisions they are required to make
- Our website has a Browsealoud facility which translates information into a range of languages and provides audio services too

**Recommendation 4: Ensure staff and members undertake the mandatory online equalities training and appropriate staff undertake face to face training**

**Recommendation 5: The need to conduct EIAs has been outlined in Recommendation 1 above – the council needs to ensure staff are confident to undertake robust EIAs and it is recommended that additional training be undertaken to support staff in this area**

**Recommendation 6: Ensure the council’s project and programme management frameworks identify equalities as an area for consideration to highlight where necessary**

**Recommendation 7: Develop an ‘at a glance’ guide to the Corporate Plan to make the messages clear and the commitments in terms of what will be delivered**

**Recommendation 8: Promote the council’s website Browsealoud facility both internally and externally**

## **6. Overall conclusion**

### **Meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty**

This EIA has taken into account the council’s public sector equality duty under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 and is intended to assist the council in meeting its duty.

The information within this report and an assessment of both the positive and negative impacts together indicate that the Corporate Plan will, overall, deliver positive impacts for the Watford community.

This is because, through the corporate work programme, it seeks to improve the town and services and facilities available to local people. The council’s commitment to equalities is identified within this corporate work programme and, through this commitment, it demonstrates its expectation that equalities is considered and addressed as part of its delivery.

EIAs are expected on individual projects and areas of work where equality issues will be considered and impacts identified.

## Summary of potential positive impacts and ways in which they can be ensured

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
Delivery of the corporate work programme will deliver a range of benefits across all equality groups.	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build a comprehensive picture of the Watford community through feedback from consultations and updating the Watford context on a regular basis</li> <li>• Embed understanding of equalities and impact on those with protected characteristics of new policies, plans and changes to service delivery</li> <li>• Ensure EIAs are carried out and are effective and support decision making</li> <li>• Work with outsourced service providers to ensure equalities duty is understood, embedded and reflected in service delivery (including equality monitoring where appropriate)</li> <li>• Continue to identify equality issues within committee reports and highlight where EIAs have been completed</li> </ul>
Through consultation and engagement encourage feedback from our communities to understand take up of facilities and services and overall satisfaction with the town and council	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure consultations seek feedback from our communities in terms of their demographics and protected characteristics, where relevant</li> <li>• Ensure feedback is considered in decision making where relevant and appropriate</li> </ul>

## Summary of potential negative impacts and ways in which they can be removed or mitigated

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to mitigate the negative impact
Potential if individual areas of work do not fully consider equality impacts as part of planning and delivery	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective training</li> <li>• Corporate Equality Working Group to provide leadership and direction</li> </ul>
Potential negative impacts for some equality groups from the work programme – as yet not identified	All (potentially)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build a comprehensive picture of the Watford community through feedback from consultations and updating the Watford context on a regular basis</li> <li>• Embed understanding of equalities and impact on those with protected characteristics of new policies, plans and changes to service delivery</li> <li>• Ensure EIAs are carried out and are effective and support decision making</li> <li>• Work with outsourced service providers to ensure equalities duty is understood, embedded and reflected in service delivery (including equality monitoring where appropriate)</li> </ul>

**This EIA has been developed by:**

**Kathryn Robson**

..... **Date .....22.02.18**

Part A

**Report to:** Cabinet  
**Date of meeting:** 5 March 2018  
**Report of:** Deputy Managing Director  
**Title:** South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan

**1.0 Summary**

1.1 Delivering more homes to meet growing need has become a key issue for Government. Recent Government announcements indicate that the Duty to Co-operate is going to be strengthened in favour of more formalised joint spatial planning among local authorities. At a Leader, Portfolio Holder and Senior Officer meeting in January 2018 the principle of supporting the preparation of a South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan was agreed. This report outlines the issues, benefits and implications of preparing such a plan and seeks authority to progress such a plan including the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding as the next step in the process, to be followed by a Statement of Common Ground.

**2.0 Risks**

2.1

<b>Nature of Risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Suggested Control Measures</b>	<b>Response</b> <i>(Treat, tolerate, terminate, transfer)</i>	<b>Risk Rating</b> (the combination of severity and likelihood)
Changing Government legislation	New national policy could require additional work or change of focus	Adapt plan and evidence studies to reflect changes in national policy	Treat	8
Changing local	Could	Effective	Tolerate	8

politics	undermine progress on joint plan	involvement of members from all authorities and strong leadership		
Staff changes	Currently all authorities are experiencing staff moving on which could delay progress on the SW Herts work programme	A knowledge bank will be shared across the five authorities to support the delivery of the SW Herts Joint Plan and provide resource resilience	Treat	8
Resource reduction	All Councils are having to find solutions to resource reduction	More efficient use of existing resources across the authorities and bids for external funding	Tolerate	12
Brexit	Brexit could affect multiple issues including demographic, investment and policy.	Given the timescales for Brexit and uncertainties a number of scenarios would need to be tested as part of the plan making process.	Tolerate	12



### 3.0 **Recommendations**

To recommend to Council :

1. To agree to work with the other South West Herts Authorities (Three Rivers, Dacorum, Hertsmere and St.Albans Councils) to prepare a Joint Strategic Plan. Details of working arrangements and governance structures will be included in a Memorandum of Understanding which is currently being worked on. A timetable and the relationship with individual local plans will be set out in a Statement of Common Ground, to be agreed by all partners.
  
2. To agree to progress a Memorandum of Understanding as the framework for governing future joint working arrangements and for the final terms of the Memorandum of Understanding to be delegated to the Deputy Managing Director for agreement.
  
3. To agree to officers progressing work on the joint plan and to note that this will come back to Council for final approval.
  
4. To note the support of Hertfordshire County Council and the Hertfordshire LEP for this process.

#### **Contact Officer:**

For further information on this report please contact: Ian Dunsford, Planning Policy Section Head

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**Report approved by:** Nick Fenwick, Deputy Managing Director

### 4.0 **Detailed proposal**

- 4.1 South West Hertfordshire faces significant strategic challenges in accommodating the required new homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure over the next fifteen years and beyond. The five local authorities which make up this area – Dacorum, Hertsmere, Three Rivers, St Albans and Watford – continue to experience an acute shortage of new and affordable housing and beyond existing built up areas, are almost entirely designated as Green Belt land.
  
- 4.2 In recent years it has become increasingly evident that the scale of growth Government is expecting local authorities to deliver is of such a scale that it cannot be delivered sustainably by individual local authorities working in isolation. Neighbouring

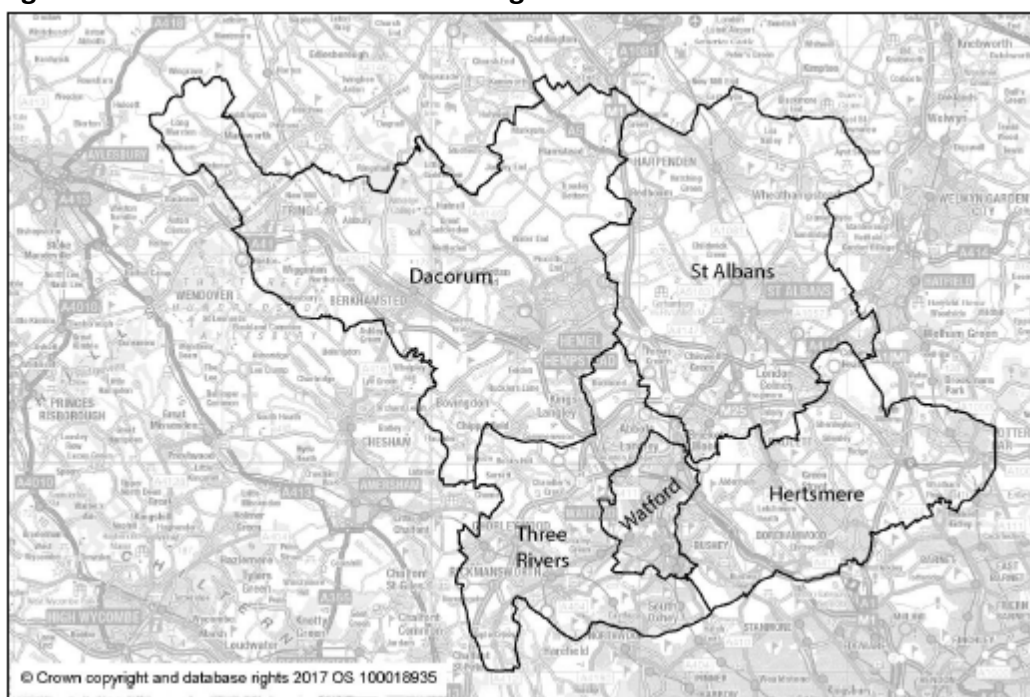
authorities are therefore increasingly being encouraged to work together to provide the high quality homes, jobs and infrastructure where people want to live their lives. The opportunity to agree new arrangements for strategic planning across the area is particularly timely as all five SW Herts authorities are now at a similar stage in the plan making process.

4.3 Following a meeting on the 23 January 2018 attended by Leaders, Portfolio Holders and Senior Officers from Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans, Three Rivers, Watford Councils and Hertfordshire County Council, it was agreed to progress work towards a joint strategic plan for South West Herts. As such an undertaking is of such a strategic scale, this report seeks support from members to proceed with the preparation of a South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan and for governance arrangements to be put in place to enable this work to move forwards.

4.4 Dacorum, Hertsmere, Three Rivers and Watford Councils have been working together as an informal planning group since 2014, when a Strategic Housing Market Assessment and an Economy Study were jointly commissioned to inform the Local Plan reviews. Further joint technical work, including a Retail and Leisure Study and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, is underway. Since November 2017, St Albans Council has formal Member agreement to move forward with joint work on this SW Herts geography (see Figure 1 below).

All five authorities have already been working as a group with Hertfordshire County Council on transport matters, including the SW Herts Growth and Transport Plan.

4.5 **Fig.1 South West Hertfordshire Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Area**



- 4.6 **The Duty to Co-operate**  
The duty to cooperate was created in the Localism Act 2011. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.
- 4.7 Whilst the duty to cooperate is not a duty to agree local planning authorities are required to make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters before they submit their Local Plans for examination.
- 4.8 Local planning authorities must demonstrate how they have complied with the duty at the independent examination of their Local Plans. If a local planning authority cannot demonstrate that it has complied with the duty then the Local Plan will not be able to proceed further in examination. This has already been a stumbling block at examination for a number of local plans in recent years including Castlepoint in Essex and St Albans.
- 4.9 In February 2017 the Housing White Paper: 'Fixing our broken housing market' proposed a new spatial local plan based on effective joint working as part of the new Housing Delivery Test. To strengthen the duty to co-operate, a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) would also be required. The clear expectation from Government is that these would be prepared on Housing Market Area geographies i.e. involving the authorities shown in Figure 1 above.
- 4.10 The Government's "Right Homes in Right Places" published in November 2017 proposes two new tests of soundness for local plans including:
- a) plans should be prepared based on a strategy informed by agreements over the wider area, and*
  - b) plans should be based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities, which are evidenced in the statement of common ground.*
- 4.11 With the Government driving for a step change in housing delivery these proposals are highly likely to be implemented in 2018 with the publication of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which is expected by the end of March. These new soundness tests will effectively mean that local planning authorities will need to change the way they work together on strategic and cross boundary matters for their plans to be found 'sound'.
- 4.12 At the same time the Government is offering resources to local authorities to support wider area based plans. A SW Herts bid for £220,000 has been submitted to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to support the development of a joint plan. It is understood that further funding opportunities will be announced.
- 4.13 **Examples of Joint Planning**  
Following the demise of the old county structure plans and the regional spatial

strategies, it has become evident that many key planning and infrastructure issues extend beyond individual borough and district boundaries. Consequently there are a number of cases where authorities are working together on strategic planning matters. Some partnerships of local authorities have taken a non-statutory approach to preparing infrastructure frameworks and plans. Areas that have been doing this include West Sussex and Greater Brighton and South Essex. Such plans are useful for bringing infrastructure providers together and helping co-ordinate growth. However as they are non-statutory they only have of limited weight when guiding the preparation of individual Local Plans and strategic development proposals. As a result of this limitation, a number of authorities are now working together to prepare statutory Spatial / Strategic Plans. Examples include Greater Exeter, Oxfordshire and Greater Manchester.

4.14 The closest example of what is being considered for SW Herts is a statutory document akin to the emerging West of England Joint Spatial Plan which covers Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire. The emerging plan contains 7 high level policies and 12 area policies which sets the broad direction and strategic approach for development across the whole area. This is then supported by detailed policies in each authority's local plan. These two levels of plans are being prepared in tandem.

#### 4.15 **Role of Hertfordshire County Council and the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)**

Both the County and the LEP have an important role in helping to deliver a new joint plan; the County from its perspective as a major service provider, funding partner and land owner and the LEP as a key business and funding partner. County Councils are identified as participants in the Duty to Co-operate. LEPs have a less formal requirement but it is generally considered best practice to work closely with the LEP. As a result both organizations would be invited to be signatures of the MOU and SoCG. However the joint plan would only need to be approved by district and borough authorities.

#### 4.16 **Benefits**

A statutory joint plan has a number of significant benefits, the first is that it provides a more effective way of place shaping, by providing a bigger canvas to direct development to the right areas that deliver growth and that are, or can be, supported by the right infrastructure.

4.17 Second joint planning brings with it increased funding opportunities and secures wider support from Government and other agencies such as Homes England (formerly Homes and Communities Agency) and the LEP. Joint plans are increasingly favoured by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (i.e. Housing Infrastructure Fund and Planning Delivery Fund). There is also greater potential for a bespoke housing deal to deliver strategic infrastructure where significant growth is proposed.

- 4.18 Third a joint plan can help local authorities to manage their housing delivery more effectively. Currently the Government is proposing to allow 5 year housing land supply and the new Housing Delivery Test to be managed across strategic areas where there is a joint plan in place. This could be particularly useful where very complex and large scale developments are being progressed with significantly longer lead-in times i.e. houses can typically be delivered faster than an apartment scheme.
- 4.19 Fourth joint planning can provide a more robust and coherent basis for negotiating with others. In the SW Herts case, by working together we would be in a stronger position when dealing with the Greater London Authority to ensure that there are greater mutual benefits arising from London's growth, and to the north, how we work with the Cambridge- Milton Keynes-Oxford Growth corridor where one million new homes are proposed and being supported by Government.
- 4.20 Fifth, by having a joint plan in place it would address the duty to co-operate and help to deliver technically sound and legally compliant local plans.
- 4.21 **Risks**
- The primary risk is for one of the partners to break away from the arrangement. To reduce the risk of this occurring, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would establish the governance and ambitions for the new plan. It would also increase the likelihood of that authority, in particular, failing to meet the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate and the possibility of the Secretary of State intervening in the Local Plan process.
- 4.22 The preparation of a MOU would be followed by the authorities agreeing a Statement of Common Ground which would identify the key cross boundary issues. This SoCG is expected to be a new statutory requirement, to be introduced by the new NPPF.
- 4.23 Resource availability and changes in staffing would be a risk to the plan's preparation as resources would need to be committed from all participating authorities. To address this, a skills bank would be prepared and specific officers would be expected to work with Officers of all other member authorities of the joint plan as appropriate.
- 4.24 The risk of programme slippage significantly increases when multiple parties are involved. To address this, a governance structure will be included in the Memorandum of Understanding. A standard project planning approach will be put in place across the participating authorities.
- 4.25 **Budget**
- In terms of budgets, it is estimated that the combined cost across South West Herts for a joint plan would be £400,000 over a three year period. A number of funding sources are available and a joint bid to the MHCLG Joint Working Fund has been submitted for £242,000 covering the period to the end of the 2018/2019 financial year. This would provide additional resources including two temporary specialists. The outcome of this process is due before the end of February 2018 with the initial tranche of c£15,000

being made available before the end of the current financial year and the balance due at the start of 2018/19. Alternative funding from the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) may also be available if the MHCLG grants are not awarded.

4.26 It is considered that the new strategic plan making requirement can be contained within the existing local plans budget for 2018/19 £6,000 per authority. Autumn 2018 would provide the opportunity to review the budgets for the local plan as the progress of the Local and Strategic Plan will be clearer in timescales and cost of preparation.

4.27 In 2019/20 and 2020/21 it is anticipated that a further £150,000 would be required across the two years to cover public consultations, legal and consultancy advice and the examination. This would equate to c£15,000 per annum per authority. Ideally we would want to keep the two specialists in post during 2019/20.

4.28 In terms of financial risk c £40,000 is considered acceptable across the five authorities. Autumn 2018 would provide the opportunity to review the budgets for each authority to cover any additional expenditure that may arise.

4.29 Subject to the successful award of funding, the recent 20% increase in planning fees could be used to meet the additional cost along with a further bid to government or/and EELGA. Therefore a growth bid is unlikely to be required for Watford.

4.30 **Next Steps**

The first step to embark on a South West Herts Joint Plan is for all the authorities to agree a Memorandum of Understanding. The next step will be to progress a Statement of Common Ground. This document will identify the relevant cross-boundary strategic priorities and will also be expected to set out how growth will be distributed across the area and what key supporting infrastructure will be required. The five South West Herts authorities and Hertfordshire County Council will be the signatories. During the time the Statement of Common Ground is being drafted, a new timetable for the plan's preparation will be drafted and officers will be working to progress the evidence to support the new plan.

4.31 **Retention of Sovereignty**

A new joint strategic plan would need to be agreed individually by all authorities. Members would be consulted as the plan progressed at each stage through a series of workshops and broader consultation events. Each authority would continue to maintain its own Local Development Scheme, setting out arrangements for both the preparation of its own Local Plan documents, as well as the agreed timescales for the Joint Strategic Plan.

4.32 Both the Submission and Adoption joint plan documents would need to be approved by each Council.

4.33 In addition to the joint plan, each authority will progress their own local plans to

address local issues and provide site allocations.

- 4.34 Whilst an adopted joint plan will form part of the development plan for the district/borough, local development management committees would retain sovereignty when it came to determining planning applications in their area.

## 5.0 **Implications**

### 5.1 **Financial**

- 5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that funding for 2018/19 has been applied for from the MHCLG and if this is not successful then alternative funding may be available from EELGA. Funding for future years may be through additional grant applications or can be included in the annual budget setting process.

### 5.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

- 5.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 give the power for two or more local planning authorities to agree to prepare one or more joint development documents. Under the constitution any decision to agree to make a joint development plan must be agreed by Council.

### 5.3 **Equalities/Human Rights**

- 5.3.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken as the plan progresses, alongside a health impact assessment and a sustainability appraisal. As part of this work there will be a consideration of the impact of the plan on Human Rights including an assessment of how proposals would outweigh any detriment to them.

### 5.4 **Staffing**

- 5.4.1 Two additional staff are being proposed for two years to be funded from the Planning Delivery Grant. These would be based in Dacorum but would work across SW Herts.

### 5.5 **Accommodation**

- 5.5.1 No additional requirements identified.

### 5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

- 5.6.1 N/A

### 5.7 **Sustainability**

- 5.7.1 The plan would be subject to a full Sustainability Appraisal that complies with national guidance and legislation.

**Background Papers**

West of England Joint Spatial Plan 2016

Fixing the Broken Housing Market 2017

Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places: Consultation Proposals 2017

**File Reference**

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