



CHAMPIONING WATFORD
- a great town for everyone

Watford Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2019/2020

Foreword

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome you to my first Corporate Plan for Watford Borough Council as Elected Mayor. It is an incredible honour to have been elected Mayor of a forward thinking, bold and progressive council. Watford Borough Council has a proud reputation of delivering first class services and strives for the best for our residents. I hope that you will agree with me that this is reflected in this plan. In the coming years, I want to continue to build on that record whilst helping to guide this council through new challenges and opportunities.

It is an exciting year ahead for Watford Borough Council but also a challenging one. We have been asked by central government to triple the rate at which we build new homes. Although we welcome the fact that more and more people are choosing to make Watford their home, this clearly comes with its challenges. We need to make sure we manage that growth. That means getting the right homes in the right places for those who need them the most. I am really pleased that we are due to be delivering new council homes via Hart Homes, our joint venture with Watford Community Housing. These new homes will be for people currently living in temporary accommodation and will mean that some of the most vulnerable people in Watford will have a permanent roof over their heads.

I am also keen to make sure that Watford is a more sustainable town. The increase in growth in Watford will inevitably put strain on our town's infrastructure and it is important that we improve our transport infrastructure. In 2019 I will be delivering new rapid transport schemes in Watford, including a new cycle hire scheme and on demand bus services. Not only that, we will be working on the new Watford Junction Masterplan, which will help to improve the entrance to the town and provide better station facilities for the 9 million people who pass through this station every year.

It is so important the Watford Borough Council continues to support and listen to our community. That means regularly engaging with residents, listening to their views and celebrating the diverse and welcoming place that Watford is. I am really pleased that in my first few months of being Mayor we are already working to make Watford a more Dementia Friendly Town. We have held a Forum and set up a new Action Group and over the coming year we will be working with organisations and individuals across the town to see how we can support people living with Dementia and their carers.

If you have any comments on the Corporate Plan, our plans, major projects or the council, then email me on themayor@watford.gov.uk or call 01923 226400 and ask for the Mayor's office.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Peter Taylor – Elected Mayor of Watford

Shaping our Corporate Plan

Background

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 as well as our corporate vision, values and objectives.

For 2019/20 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 the commitments we made in last year's Plan – including our achievements and those areas of work still to be completed
- identifying new and emerging projects and areas of work that support our ambitions 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

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 allow the town's success to recede
- 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

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 FOUR PRIORITIES:

Over the last year, we have reviewed our four priorities, which will ensure we remain focused on what is important to our town and residents and where we know we need to direct our resources, such as staff time and budgets.

In 2018, Watford elected a new mayor, Peter Taylor, and so this review included making sure our priorities aligned with the commitments within his manifesto.

Our priorities are, therefore, to:

Manage the
borough's
housing
needs

Enable a
thriving local
economy

Enable a
sustainable
town and
council

Celebrate
and support
our
communities

In addition, our core, day to day business underpins everything we do, and all of our work and effort contribute to our success along with our major projects and the work outlined in this plan. In particular, we recognise the importance of two 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

OUR VALUES

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

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 CULTURE

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

How our vision, priorities, values and culture work together, along with the Elected Mayor's priorities, to achieve our ambition. Below is an overview of our corporate framework.

OUR VISION

To create a bold and progressive future for Watford

OUR PRIORITIES

Manage the borough's housing needs

Enable a thriving local economy

Enable a sustainable town and council

Celebrate and support our communities

OUR DAY TO DAY BUSINESS

Effective two-way engagement and communication

Sound management and high performance

OUR VALUES

BOLD

We work as a team and make things happen

PROGRESSIVE

We are ambitious, we are innovative and we are welcoming

OUR CULTURE

Ambitious

Innovative

Welcoming

Empowering

Open to change

Watford today

Watford is a successful town, 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: 96,700 over an area of **8.5 sq. miles**

Young population: average age **36.46** years

Diverse population: **38%** BME

39,793 households

Average household size: **2.48** people

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

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



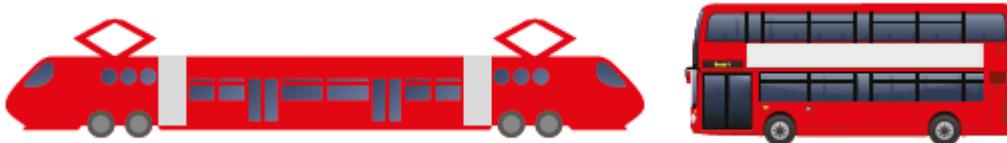
High growth in house prices and demand:

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

12 Green Flag award winning parks – the highest in Hertfordshire with one new award in 2018



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



5th best connected borough in UK - M1, M25, West Coast Mainline, Overground, Underground

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



5,840 active businesses

99,000 jobs

Low unemployment / high level of qualifications

9% self-employment rate

£640 resident full-time weekly wage

£580 workplace weekly wage

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

The council today

Our finances

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 2019/20** includes a three year forecast that sets out our budget and looks at factors likely to impact on our expenditure.

For 2019/20 our budget is:

Gross budget: **£74.3 million**

Net budget: **£12.696 million**

Our Cabinet

The Cabinet makes decisions which are in line with the Council's overall policies and Budget. It is chaired by the Mayor and includes the Portfolio Holders appointed by him

Our staff

229 members of staff

January 2019



Our councillors

37 councillors

**Liberal Democrat – 26 councillors +
Directly Elected Mayor**

Labour – 10 councillors

Elected Mayor of Watford, Peter Taylor



Provides political direction for the council.

Responsibilities include:

- strategic partnerships
- external relationships

Deputy Mayor, Councillor Karen Collett



Portfolio Holder for Community

Councillor Stephen Bolton



Councillor Stephen Johnson

Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property



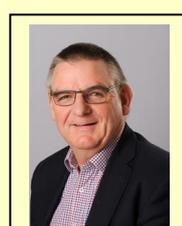
Councillor Iain Sharpe

Portfolio Holder for Regeneration & Development



Councillor Mark Watkin

Portfolio Holder for Resources & Customer Service



Councillor Tim Williams

Portfolio Holder for Client Services



How we will deliver our priorities

PRIORITY 1: Manage the borough's housing needs

Why housing is a priority

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 significantly 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.

At the same time, the country is experiencing a national housing crisis because other areas have not been building new homes at the rate that is needed. As part of its approach to tackling the crisis, government has set housing targets for every local authority in the country. Watford is being asked to deliver a greater number of new homes over the next decade than many areas that have a lot more space that is suitable for new homes. 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.

What we are doing to achieve this priority

We have already started 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. This has already delivered 76 temporary homes for local people and 17 social rented family homes are planned on Radlett Road
- working with developers on our major projects to shape how new homes are delivered within the schemes, including affordable housing (Watford Riverwell's first residential zone will deliver 29 affordable homes in 2019, Watford Junction will deliver 3,000 new homes overall, with a target of 35% affordable)
- negotiating with developers on other key sites to ensure either the delivery of affordable homes or a sufficient commuted sum. 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

Manage the borough's housing needs:

OUR PLANS FOR 2019/20

CP1	Set the strategic direction for housing in the borough by developing and delivering a new Housing & Homelessness Strategy
CP2	Develop a Housing Growth Strategy to meet growing needs through a positive managed, sustainable approach
CP3	Develop a revised Affordable Housing Policy for Watford
CP4	Manage <u>our</u> assets to deliver new homes including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social rented homes on identified sites• Watford Riverwell• Hart Homes• Ascot Road• Watford Junction• Garage sites• Commuted sums

PRIORITY 2: Enable a thriving local economy

Why the economy is a priority

A successful local economy is critical to all our plans for Watford. It underpins our ambitions for Watford and is vital for local jobs and keeping the town vibrant. Over the last ten years, the council has been an important catalyst for economic growth, which has attracted new businesses, built the right environment for our current businesses to thrive and secured job opportunities. We recognise that we cannot take this success for granted and so need to plan for future prosperity, continuing to make sure that Watford is 'open for business'.

What we are doing to achieve this priority

- secured new employment space across our major project areas including Trade City at Watford Riverwell, new industrial units in Watford Business Park, new office accommodation at Watford Junction
- supported the transformation of Clarendon Road which will deliver:
 - A new international HQ building for TJX Europe which will provide a landmark building for the Watford Junction end of Clarendon Road – 12 storey office block, high level footbridge to link offices and public realm improvements plus securing 3,000 jobs in Watford – work on site started in 2018
 - The redevelopment of Gresham House which will provide B1 office accommodation, a coffee bar and 59 homes, around 20 of which will be affordable
 - A new primary school (St John's) with roof top play area – opened 2018
 - A further landmark building comprising mixed office and residential in an iconic 23-storey building at the town centre end of Clarendon Road 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 £1.4 million commuted sum for affordable homes in the borough – work on site will start in 2019
- delivered an outstanding refurbishment of the High Street to complement the redevelopment of the intu centre, which opened in 2018. This has created a more attractive, pedestrian friendly town centre and supported a range of new shops and restaurants for residents and visitors to enjoy

- Developed and agreed a new Cultural Strategy for Watford
- Invested in a new approach to marketing Watford to raise people’s awareness of its outstanding offer for business and for visitors

Enable a thriving economy:

OUR PLANS FOR 2019/20

CP5	Take forward commercial development to enhance the quality and range of business premises within the borough
CP6	Progress the development and transformation of Watford Junction
CP7	Develop a new vision for Watford town centre to ensure it remains attractive and welcoming to all
CP8	Deliver Clarendon Road improvements Phase 2 & 3
CP9	Take forward the recommendations of the Cultural Strategy for Watford with our partners to enhance the town’s cultural offer and boost its impact on our economy and on the vibrancy of the town
CP10	Take forward the recommendations of the Destination Management Plan for Watford, including establishing a Destination Management Service
CP11	Take forward the Inward Investment Strategy for Watford to retain and attract business to the town
CP12	Undertake effective networking to drive business to business growth
CP13	Support a digital community so that our businesses and residents can make the most of new technologies and opportunities

PRIORITY 3: Enable a sustainable town and council

Why sustainability is a priority

We want to ensure that we put in place the right foundations to ensure both our town and the council can continue to flourish in the future.

For our town, this means exploring ways we can protect and enhance our local environment, reducing our environmental impact through practical measures. These include: offering alternatives to the car to get around the borough, increasing recycling and reducing waste and enhancing our parks and open spaces.

For the council it means securing our financial future so that we can protect services and deliver on our promises to our residents. This has never been more challenging with the council facing the loss of around £2.5 million revenue support grant by 2020 and a total saving requirement of £3 million. 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 are also committed to making sure we equip our staff with the skills and resources they need to perform to a high standard and to play their part in delivering this plan and our ambitions.

What we are doing to achieve this priority

In our town

We are exploring an exciting range of new transport options for Watford. These will lessen people's reliance on the car, reduce traffic congestion and improve the health and well-being of our local communities. This includes an 'on-demand bus' and a bike hire scheme – similar to the ones found in London and other towns around the country. Our plans also include an innovative transport app, which will let people find the best choice for their journey quickly and simply.

We are continuing to deliver outstanding leisure facilities in our parks and open spaces. Our plans for Oxhey Activity Park, an exciting skateboarding, cycling and BMX facility, have been approved and work will start on site this year, with an opening date set for spring 2020. We have also started planning significant improvements to Woodside Recreation Ground, which has great potential as a great venue for a range of leisure activities and facilities for people of all ages and interests.

What we are doing to achieve this priority

In the council

We recognise that, in order to achieve on our ambitions for Watford and deliver on our promises, we need to make sure that the council remains a high performing organisation that has a sound grip on its budgets, is planning effectively for the future and has a committed and motivated workforce that is making the most of technological advancements to enhance our customer experience.

We have tackled our financial challenges through a considered but bold approach, looking to reduce the cost of our services through improved use of technology, exploring commercial opportunities and ensuring we are making the most of our property portfolio so that we are achieving the best returns possible.

Our **Property Investment Board (PIB)** champions our approach to property investment and applies the appropriate scrutiny and due diligence to opportunities as they arise.

The success of PIB in diversifying the council's portfolio and responding quickly to opportunities was a factor behind the council's recent acquisition of Croxley Park. This was a major property deal which not only secures the council an annual income of circa £1.5 million but also enables us to secure local jobs and encourage greater investment to the area.

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 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 the priority: **Enable a sustainable town and council** - the programme has a £1 million 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 by 2020.

Enable a sustainable town and council:

OUR PLANS FOR 2019/20

Enable a sustainable town and council:

OUR PLANS FOR 2019/20

CP14	<p>Deliver the Sustainable Transport programme to offer alternative and innovative ways for people to get into and around Watford</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bike share• Demand responsive transport: including on demand bus service• Electric charging points network: extending the town's network• Post MLX transport solutions: safeguarding the route for alternative transport uses• Cycle hub refurbishment• Review of 20 mph zones; extension of zones across the town• Parking sensors• Transport app
CP15	<p>Improve the sustainable transport links across the town</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting car clubs town wide• Improving walking routes• Improving cycle lanes and cycle networks
CP16	<p>Review environmental services delivery model with Veolia</p>
CP17	<p>Deliver the next phase of the Sports Facilities Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oxhey Activity Park and community hub: completion and opening• Woodside: masterplan approved• Cassiobury Croquet Club improvements
CP18	<p>Develop a River Colne improvement strategy to enhance the river and its surrounds as a green asset for Watford</p>
CP19	<p>Ensure our Watford 2020 programme delivers the identified £1 million saving / income generation</p>
CP20	<p>Take forward the council's Commercial Strategy and commercial proposals</p>

Enable a sustainable town and council:

OUR PLANS FOR 2019/20

CP21	Manage our property portfolio to stimulate growth, generate returns and meet changing service needs
CP22	Develop an Investment Strategy to support the council secure its financial future
CP23	Deliver our People Strategy so that our staff development meets our ambitions

PRIORITY 4: Celebrate and support our communities

Why our communities are a priority

Our communities are what makes Watford the vibrant and welcoming place it is. We are fortunate that, whether they are made up of residents, businesses, schools or local organisations and groups, Watford's communities work together to really make a difference in the town. This is not something that we take for granted and so recognise that the council has a role to play in doing what we can to support what our communities are trying to achieve.

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.

What we are doing to achieve this priority

Since coming into office in May 2018, Elected Mayor, Peter Taylor, has championed a number of community-related initiatives. He has launched the town's commitment to becoming more dementia friendly; this will be taken forward by the key partners working in this area, with the support of the council and leadership of the Mayor. He has also set up a Town Centre Task Group, which will focus on how all key partners can join forces to tackle issues and build the town centre's reputation as a great place to visit and enjoy.

We are also committed to working with our sports community to build on the exceptional range of sports and leisure facilities we have in Watford and that play such an important part in local people's health and wellbeing. Our revised Sports Development Framework sets out how we will do this.

We will continue to support our more vulnerable residents by taking steps to ensure they claim the benefits they are entitled to and are exploring options for new cemetery provision, which we know is an important facility for many of our communities.

Celebrate and support our communities:

OUR PLANS FOR 2019/20

CP24	Make our town centre safer and even more welcoming for those who live, work and visit
CP25	Undertake a review of the role of the third sector
CP26	Work with partners and our communities to make Watford more dementia friendly
CP27	Explore options to meet the needs of our residents for cemetery provision
CP28	Deliver the Sports Development Framework action plan to engage local people in healthy sports and leisure activities
CP29	Review and refresh the Big Events programme to ensure it remains vibrant and appealing
CP30	Make it easier for our communities to access and claim benefits to which they are entitled
CP31	Consider proposals for the council tax scheme and the impact of Universal Credit

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