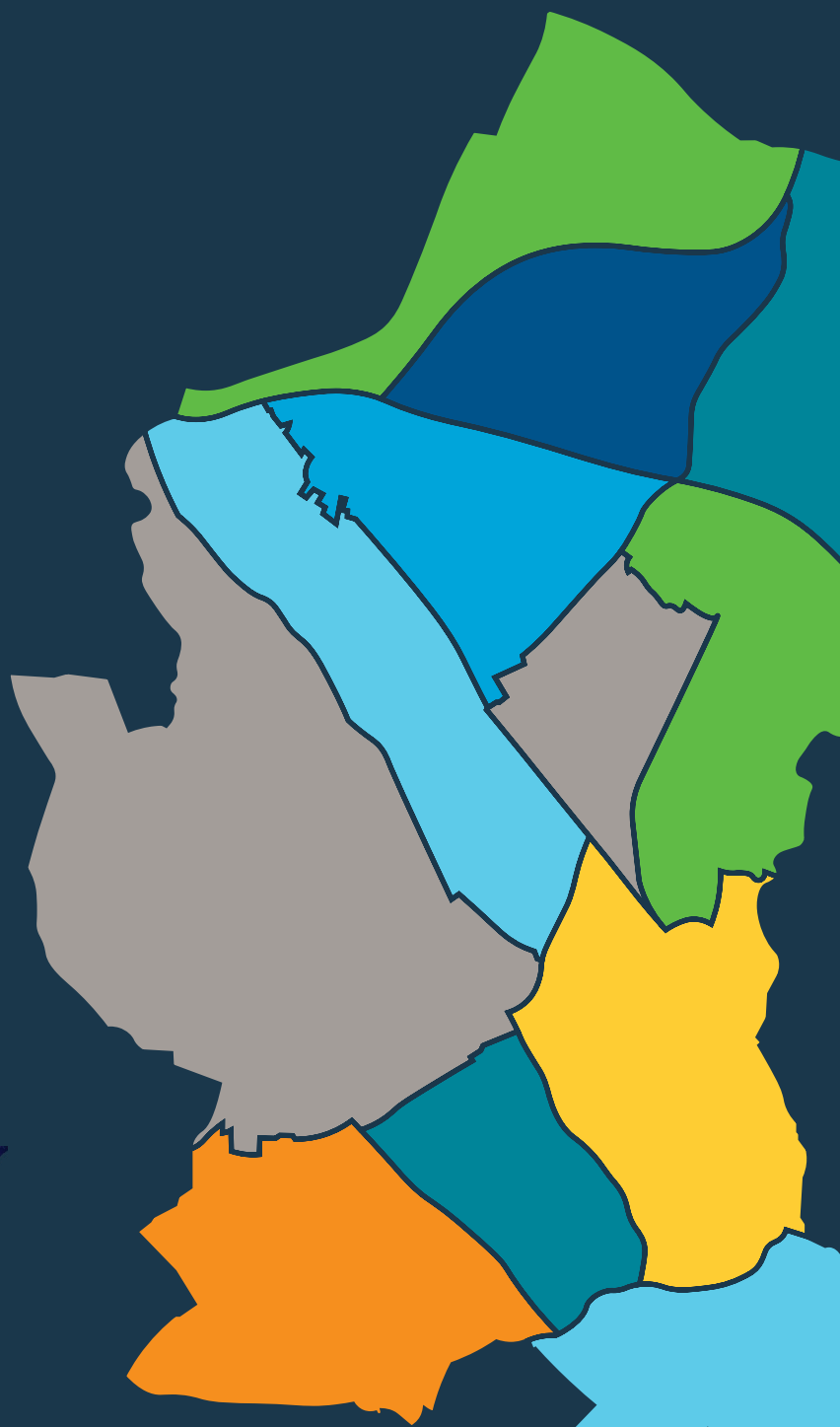


**CHAMPIONING WATFORD**  
**a great town for everyone**

# **WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN**

**2020**



**WATFORD  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**



**Peter Taylor,  
Elected  
Mayor of  
Watford**

## FOREWORD

*Over the last year we have made real progress in delivering many of the commitments set out in our last corporate plan.*

*When I became elected Mayor in 2018, I committed to looking at ways to make it easier and more environmentally friendly to get around the town. Since this time, the issue of the environment has moved up the international and national agenda and made tackling climate change an even more pressing issue. We declared Climate Change Emergency last year with the commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030 and my sustainable transport initiative is a fundamental part of our sustainability plans.*

*I am delighted that we have achieved a number of the sustainable transport commitments I promised for 2019/20:*



**TravelWatford transport app** - allowing you to get around Watford 'your way' and make greener choices on how you travel



**Bike share scheme** - we have partnered with Beryl Bikes to bring you 200 pedal bikes and 100 electric bikes (summer 2020), which will be located in over 70 bays across the town



**Demand responsive bus** - ArrivaClick is providing seven fifteen-seater buses, which will provide a flexible service across the town – not following a fixed route at fixed times but responding to passenger needs



**Electric vehicle charging points** - we have delivered more points across the borough, making Watford the most electric car friendly borough in Hertfordshire



**A new home for cycling in Watford** - we have supported Watford Cycle Hub by funding a new Hub building, which will allow it to continue its excellent work in promoting cycling as a way to keep fit and healthy.

*Our investment in the town's outstanding parks and open spaces has continued and I am looking forward to the opening of the new Oxhey Activity Park in the summer, which will give our families and young people an outstanding facility for skate boarding, BMX and mountain biking as well as a new café and community hub for Oxhey Park. Our plans to upgrade Woodside are well underway too, we will have more news in 2020, the River Colne improvement programme is also making great strides in opening up what is a wonderful, natural asset in the town.*

*As well as our major improvement project, we are also making sure that the local parks that mean so much to their residents also receive investment. For 2020, Garston Park, Meriden Park and Lea Farm rec will all be upgraded.*

*We have also continued to tackle the financial challenges we face at a time of ongoing government cuts to the council's budget. Putting these cuts into context shows the impact they have had.*

*We have lost around £4million a year since 2010 or 70% of our budget. This has challenged us to find new ways to finance what we do so we can continue to deliver quality services and facilities that help make Watford a great place to live, work and do business. Over the last two years, we have achieved a further £1million savings through our Watford 2020 transformation programme, which focused on changing the way we do things so that we have found savings without cutting services or activities that we know are vital to local people.*

*One of our greatest challenges remains responding the national housing crisis. For the most vulnerable, we have secured funding to help tackle rough sleeping and we are building new family, council homes which will be for Watford families. Whilst it is great that Watford is such a popular place to live - we are the happiest place in the East of England - and I fully appreciate we do need new homes, we must make sure they are supported by important facilities like schools and GP surgeries.*

*It is so important the Watford Borough Council continues to support and listen to our communities. 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 two years we have established Watford as a Dementia Friendly Town. It shows me that when we act together we can make a real difference.*

*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.*



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 over the next year. It is underpinned by the Elected Mayor's priorities for the town as well as our corporate vision, values and objectives.

As we plan for the future, we remain committed to ensuring we:



**Focus on ensuring our residents and customers are at the heart of what we do**



**Retain the drive and commitment of our staff and members**



**Be more creative, innovative and resilient if we want to continue to be successful as we go forward**



**Retain our ambitious approach as we cannot afford to allow the town's success to recede**



**Be more commercial and entrepreneurial to meet our financial challenges and opportunities**



**Improve access to our services by delivering more digitally and online**

# 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:

Our four priorities that we have identified to deliver our vision are:



Manage the  
borough's  
housing  
needs



Enable a  
thriving  
local  
economy



Enable a  
sustainable  
town and  
council



Celebrate  
and support  
our  
communities

Whilst this plan sets out the headlines projects, initiatives and areas of work that will deliver our vision and priorities, we know that our day to day business is just as important and underpins everything we do. This contributes to our success along with the work in this plan and combined they make us a successful organisation that continues to deliver for our residents and communities.

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 new vision.

**BOLD:** We work as a team and we make things happen

**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

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

# Our Corporate Framework

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 FOUR 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 | Open to change | Welcoming | Empowering

# 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 lively 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 champion our town.

## POPULATION

# 96,600

Over an area of 8.5 sq. miles

## YOUNG POPULATION

# 36.46

Is the average age

## DIVERSE POPULATION

# 38%

BME (ethnic minority)



## HOUSEHOLDS

# 40,625

## 2.48

Average household size

## 31%

High proportion of single person households

## 37%

High number of households in rental accommodation

## Happiest place in Hertfordshire and East of England

(ONS research 2019)

## AWARD WINNING

12 Green Flag award winning parks - the highest in Hertfordshire

## HIGH GROWTH IN HOUSE PRICES AND DEMAND

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

## 5<sup>th</sup>

Best connected borough in UK - M1, M25, West Coast Mainline, Overground, Underground direct services to London Euston in 16 mins

## 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%

## ACTIVE BUSINESSES

# 5,900

## JOBS

# 113,000

Low unemployment / high level of qualifications

## 9%

self-employment rate

## £663.60

resident full-time weekly wage

## £618.50

workplace weekly wage

## Community Survey 2017

# 77%

of residents are satisfied with Watford as a place to live

# 74%

of residents are satisfied with the way Watford BC runs things



# 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).

### Budget

Our **Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21** includes a three year forecast that sets out our budget and looks at factors likely to impact on our expenditure.

For 2020/21 our budget is:

**Gross budget: £76.1 Million**

**Net budget: £15.8 Million**

### Our staff

220 members of staff (January 2019)

### 37 councillors

**Liberal Democrat:**

26 councillors + Directly Elected Mayor

**Labour:**

10 councillors



**Peter Taylor**

**Elected Mayor of Watford**

Provides political direction for the council.

**Responsibilities include:**  
strategic partnerships & external relationships

## 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.



**Karen Collett**

**Deputy Mayor, Councillor**

Portfolio Holder for  
Community



**Mark Watkin**

**Councillor**

Portfolio Holder for Resources  
& Customer Service



**Iain Sharpe**

**Councillor**

Portfolio Holder for  
Regeneration & Development



**Stephen Johnson**

**Councillor**

Portfolio Holder for Housing  
& Property



**Tim Williams**

**Councillor**

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.

The national housing crisis means that places like Watford that are popular and somewhere people are choosing to live are being asked by government to deliver an even greater number of new homes, currently 14,000 by 2036. 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 - making sure we have the right homes in the right places. We are ensuring new housing is supported by good quality infrastructure such as better transport links, schools, doctors' surgeries and neighbourhood shops and facilities. At the same time we are delivering homes for those families in Watford in most need, by increasing the supply of affordable homes, which reduces the number of families who are currently living in temporary accommodation. We are doing this in a number of ways including building new homes ourselves or working with partners to do so. We also ensure developments provide the right amount of affordable housing or, if it is better for our housing needs, ask developers to contribute sufficient money (through commuted sums) to provide the homes we need elsewhere.

### Our plans for 2020/21

- CP1** Set the strategic direction for housing in the borough by developing and delivering a new Housing Strategy
- CP2** Working with our neighbouring authorities on the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan to identify how the councils can support each other to deliver the new homes needed in this part of the county
- CP3** Actively engage with the Hertfordshire Growth Board to support the vision of 100,000 new homes across the county by 2031
- CP4** Manage our assets to deliver new homes, ensuring there is a good mix of housing including affordable homes:
  - Social rented homes on identified sites
  - Watford Riverwell
  - Town Centre North - Cultural Hub
  - 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'.

### Our plans for 2020/21

- CP5** Work with Hertfordshire County Council, district partners and Hertfordshire LEP on the delivery of the vision of the Hertfordshire Growth Board ensuring that Watford is effectively represented and contributes to shaping the future of the county
- CP6** Finalise and submit the Local Plan to provide a robust framework for the future spatial planning of the borough
- CP7** Deliver an Economic Growth Strategy for Watford to bring together the council's ambitions for local prosperity and business growth
- CP 8** Take forward our plans for the north of the town centre including exploring the creation of a High Street North - Cultural Hub and the overall regeneration of the area
- CP8** Progress the development and transformation of Watford Junction
- CP9** Deliver the upgrade to the Watford Junction forecourt to provide an attractive and welcoming gateway to the town
- CP10** Support the delivery of Building 1 at Croxley Park
- CP11** Support the delivery of a new multi storey car park for Watford General Hospital and West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust's future plans through Watford Riverwell
- CP12** Deliver Clarendon Road improvements Phase 3
- CP13** Deliver St Albans Road improvements to support the regeneration of the area
- CP14** Deliver the first phase of improvement for Watford Business Park (planning application approval + start on site) to provide c85,000sq ft of new industrial accommodation
- CP15** Take forward an agreed programme of improvements to Watford Market
- CP16** Secure the long-term future for Watford Colosseum through:
  - › A successful procurement of new management arrangements
  - › A planned programme of refurbishment

### 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. This is why we declared climate change emergency in 2019, committing us to being carbon neutral by 2030.

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 will build on the successful outcomes of our two year transformation programme that has made us more customer-focused, digitally-enabled and commercially-minded to ensure we remain a high performing council that is delivering high quality outcomes for our communities.

## Our plans for 2020/21

- CP17** Deliver the council's agreed Sustainability Strategy to support its climate change emergency commitment
- CP18** Continue to explore and deliver sustainable transport programme to offer alternative and innovative ways for people to get into and around Watford:
  - Post MLX transport solutions: safeguarding the route for alternative transport uses
  - Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) including recommendations for quiet routes
  - Progress Watford's ambition to be a Sustainable Travel Town
- CP19** Explore the delivery of a low carbon transport hub for Watford town centre
- CP20** Implement the new waste and recycling service, working with residents to increase the borough's recycling rates
- CP21** Deliver the next phase of the Sports Facilities Strategy
  - Oxhey Activity Park and community hub: completion and opening
  - Woodside Sports Village: masterplan approved

**PRIORITY 3:**

- CP22** Take forward the River Colne restoration strategy to enhance the river and its surrounds as a green and community asset for Watford
- CP23** Pursue ways the council can be more commercial to help offset cuts to its budget and to allow it to continue to deliver high quality services and projects to enhance the town and quality of life of its residents
- CP24** Embed and build on the transformation and improvement delivered by Watford 2020, ensuring benefits are realised and momentum continues
- CP25** Continue to manage our property portfolio to stimulate growth, generate returns and meet changing service needs
- CP26** Rollout of our business intelligence platform to provide immediate access to information to support decision-making
- CP27** Review the findings of our staff survey and use to build on our dynamic and forward thinking culture

**PRIORITY 4:**  
**Celebrate &**  
**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 the council has a role to play in doing what we can to support our communities flourish.

We are also fortunate that the majority of our population enjoys 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.

### Our plans for 2020/21

- CP28** Make our town centre safer and even more welcoming for those who live, work and visit including identifying ways to harness people's willingness to help
- CP29** Work with our partners (including New Hope and Watford Community Housing) to provide housing solutions for our most vulnerable residents with the most complex needs

## PRIORITY 4:

- CP30** Identify the best future for our community assets and work with our current groups and organisations on their long-term accommodation needs
- CP31** Contribute to Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020 so that Watford's cultural offer is well represented
- CP32** Explore options to meet the needs of our residents for cemetery provision
- CP33** Deliver the Sports Development Framework action plan to engage local people in healthy sports and leisure activities
- CP34** Deliver a new website design that makes it easier for people to access our services and find out more about the council and our services
- CP35** Undertake a Community Survey, using a wide range of engagement channels, to test our residents view of the council and the town
- CP36** Make it easier for our communities to access and claim benefits to which they are entitled

## Success & confidence

# 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.



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 Teams



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 and Finance Review Board for our finances

## How do I find out more?

**For more info visit:**  
[www.watford.gov.uk/councilplan](http://www.watford.gov.uk/councilplan)



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