

Hertsmere Borough Council

Corporate Plan

2023/24

Foreword

The Hertsmere Vision was approved by the council in November 2021 and sets out our high-level aspirations for the future of our borough.

This is the second Corporate Plan produced since then and sets out how we will work towards implementing the position statements and commitments which sit underneath that overall vision. We have identified key areas of work that will be undertaken during the year ahead and also articulated what success will look like so that we know we are heading in the right direction.

Whilst for the purposes of this document, projects and work areas have been allocated into one of the six position statements, we recognise that some will support us more widely to achieve our vision.

Performance against the plan will be monitored through departmental service plans and regular performance reporting. The plan will be updated each financial year through to 2027 and alongside that we will publish an Annual Review to provide a full overview of progress.

Position Statement 1: HERTSMERE HAS A STRONG IDENTITY

“We are a place where the diverse and distinctive nature of our people, towns and countryside are celebrated. We ensure our unique assets provide maximum benefit.”

Commitments:

- 1.1 Maximise our location
- 1.2 Celebrate our heritage and identities
- 1.3 Know our place is our people
- 1.4 Encourage vibrant and thriving town centres
- 1.5 Protect our precious green environment

Situated in the South West of Hertfordshire, Hertsmere is made up of a number of distinctive settlements each with their own characteristics and as confirmed by the 2021 census, increasingly diverse populations. We are committed to celebrating that diversity whilst also recognising that there are many things that bring us together. Our role as a centre for film and television is something we are very proud of and continue to build on. We will provide opportunities to encourage residents to celebrate our heritage, both at a national and local level. Our award-winning parks and open spaces are important to us and our residents and we will continue to invest in new facilities. We will also work towards ensuring our town centres remain a key part of local life, a draw to residents and visitors alike.

What will we do?

- Develop and publish a Creative Strategy for Hertsmere, building on our existing film and television heritage and providing future direction for the sector in its broadest sense.
- Work with our partners to raise the profile of the borough as a centre for film and television heritage.
- Support our community to celebrate its heritage through the Coronation Small Grants Scheme and other grants to the voluntary sector.
- Review our approach to Equalities and Diversity in the light of the 2021 census and continue to support local events that celebrate our diversity e.g. Herts Pride and Black History Month.
- Establish a Town Centre Partnership for Borehamwood and improve the public realm as part of a wider capital investment plan.
- Continue with the programme of capital improvements to our parks.

What will success look like?

- A Creative Strategy is in place that supports all areas of our community to engage with the creative sector including voluntary organisations and local businesses; that grows local skills and increases participation
- We attract additional inward investment into the creative sector, both from the UK and internationally
- We have an up to date picture of who makes up our community and our diversity is celebrated through local events
- A Town Centre Partnership for Borehamwood is established and capital investment sees improvements in the public realm
- There are continued improvements to our local parks in line with our programme of capital investment

Related documents

Asset Management Plan, Capital Strategy, Economic Development Strategy

Position Statement 2:

HERTSMERE DRIVES SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

“We are a place actively planning for a better and more resilient future. Growth is carefully considered to provide places where residents are in close proximity of jobs, daily amenities and recreation opportunities.”

Commitments:

- 2.1 Secure the right growth in the right place
- 2.2 Promote mixed-use and efficient development
- 2.3 Make it easy to move
- 2.4 Create places for all
- 2.5 Value infrastructure first

Hertsmere is a desirable place to live, work and study and our new Local Plan will shape our borough for at least the next 15 years so that this remains the case. By planning for growth locally, we can ensure that we deliver the homes we need, alongside the necessary infrastructure including adequate health provision, support for a variety of transport options, telecommunications, jobs and services to support growth in a way that’s appropriate for us. We will work to move the local plan towards adoption, listening to the comments of local residents and following key milestones. We also recognise our position as a part of South West Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire as a whole and will continue to work in partnership with our neighbouring authorities so that our voice is heard.

What will we do?

- Progress work on the new Local Plan which will set out the Council’s growth strategy for the next 15 years.
- Continue to develop an evidence base to identify appropriate sites for development particularly in brownfield locations.
- Bring forward supplementary planning guidance around sustainable design and transport linked to new developments including car parking, electric vehicle charging and cycling infrastructure.
- Bring forward a pipeline of Hertsmere housing schemes which aim to include family housing units, some of which are accessible for families with specific needs and build on our partnership with Watford Community Housing Trust to manage this stock
- Continue to engage with Herts Growth Board and support the implementation of the South West Hertfordshire JSP Action Plan in line with agreed milestones

What will success look like?

- An updated draft local plan will be produced
- An increase in local affordable housing supply, with a focus on accessibility
- Engagement with partner authorities ensures Hertsmere’s input in the future plans for the development of the wider county

Related documents

SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan, Economic Development Strategy

Position Statement 3:

HERTSMERE IS ENTERPRISING

“We are a place increasing prosperity by being creative, innovative and investable. We support our people to access new opportunities.”

Commitments:

- 3.1 Capitalise on our creative industries
- 3.2 Grow an innovative and resilient economy
- 3.3 Support big and small business
- 3.4 Help our future workforce match our economy
- 3.5 Target the investment we want

We are committed to shaping and driving forward the borough’s economic growth and are working to support local businesses. We have invested in the future of the Council owned Elstree Studios and this, coupled with UK Shared Prosperity Funding will allow us to continue to demonstrate our success in this area. On the ground, will continue to work with local employers and businesses to grow our local directory, address local skills needs, grow connections and ensure that relevant safety and regulatory standards are met through training and enforcement.

What will we do?

- Continue to engage with and support local businesses through a range of activities and initiatives including
 - A business survey to understand barriers to growth
 - Jobs fairs and recruitment events targeted at specific groups including school leavers, ex-offenders and veterans
 - The Hertsmere Works business directory
 - Networking opportunities for local businesses including linking into the wider Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce events
 - Business engagement and training initiatives
- Work with partners across Hertfordshire to develop a Hertsmere Screen Tourism Offer as part of our wider commitment to developing the local creative sector.
- Secure employment and skills plans from new developments in line with planning policy, linking local people to job opportunities.
- Support the work of the Herts Growth Hub and the Local Enterprise Partnership using UK Shared Prosperity Funding
- Support local businesses to develop systems for effective and ongoing infection control, helping to protect staff and customers post-covid
- Introduce charged for re-inspection under the Food Safety ‘Scores on the doors’ scheme, allowing businesses to quickly improve their rating within the current 3 month restricted period, raising standards and supporting growth.

What will success look like?

- An established Screen Tourism offer, allowing us to maximise opportunities generated by local investment in the sector,
- A vibrant and growing local economy with businesses who are able to recruit locally wherever possible and a population with the right skills to meet their needs
- A strong infrastructure for infection control within local businesses and at events

Related documents - SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan, Economic Development Strategy

Position Statement 4: HERTSMERE TAKES CLIMATE ACTION

"We are a place acting on our pledge to face the climate emergency. Everything we do is focused on delivering a greener, sustainable and more resilient future."

Commitments:

- 4.1 Increase biodiversity and ecology
- 4.2 Green our infrastructure
- 4.3 Recycle our resources
- 4.4 Accelerate towards net zero
- 4.5 Seek a cleaner and greener construction industry

We declared a climate emergency in 2019 and are serious about our pledge to move to net-zero carbon emissions no later than 2050. We have adopted a Climate Change Strategy with an action plan which sets out how we will deliver against this commitment and support our stakeholders to play their part. We will continue to work with our residents to maintain and improve our recycling rates. We recognise the importance of sustainable transport options to supporting climate action and will encourage the use of a range of travel and transport choices to reduce environmental impact and improve health and well-being. Our commitment to reducing our impact on the environment is carried through all policies and we will work to develop greener infrastructure where possible.

What will we do?

- Retain and embed hybrid working practices, reducing emissions from staff travel
- Continue to implement the climate change and sustainability strategy:
 - Implement a prioritised programme of carbon reduction across our property portfolio using new technology including the installation of solar panels at Elstree Studios and air source heat pumps at both the Studios and Civic Offices
 - Increase the number of electric car charge points across the borough
 - Extend the current green cycle transport scheme in Borehamwood
 - Engage in countywide projects to raise awareness of climate change
 - Support residents and businesses to access central government funding for energy efficiency measures
- Utilise carbon offset Section 106 funding to improve local play areas
- Adopt and implement the Biodiversity Net Gain Supplementary Planning Guidance which ensures investment and improvements to green spaces.
- Work to improve air quality locally by implementing the Air Quality Action Plan
- Continue our programme of awareness raising around household waste and recycling.

What will success look like?

- Reduction in our carbon emissions in line with targets set
- Increased awareness of climate change and potential for action within local residents and businesses
- Improved opportunities to utilise greener transport options for staff and residents

Related documents

Climate Change Strategy, Air Quality Action Plan, Asset Management Plan, Waste and Recycling Strategy

Position Statement 5:

HERTSMERE IS INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE

“We are a place where communities are proud to say where they are from. Our communities feel safe, secure, healthy and happy.”

Commitments:

- 5.1 Champion social justice
- 5.2 Keep residents safe
- 5.3 Improve mental health and physical wellbeing
- 5.4 Support inclusive communities
- 5.5 Create affordable communities

We are committed to ensuring that everyone living in Hertsmer has the opportunity to live a fulfilling life and work closely with our partners to deliver a range of services, policies and support across the borough to this end. We remain committed to ensuring the safety of our residents through our work on licensing, regulation and community safety and will continue to promote a range of health and wellbeing initiatives both for residents and our own staff, particularly in the light of current cost of living challenges. We will support policies to enable a range of affordable housing options and continue to develop initiatives to prevent and support those experiencing the threat of homelessness.

What will we do?

- Provide a range of financial support to the voluntary sector including long term revenue support for key organisations such as Citizens Advice, the Hertsmer Community Lottery and Community Grants
- Coordinate a range of local support for residents reflecting the current cost of living including the provision of projects to address food poverty and financial insecurity
- Implement the updated Community Safety Plan which reflects local priorities identified through consultation with residents and partners and continue to work with Hertfordshire Constabulary to ensure residents feel safe
- Reinvigorate and review Public Space Protection Orders to keep our residents safe.
- Develop a new Physical Activity and Wellbeing Strategy which focuses on improving the health of local people following the pandemic
- Continue to lead Hertsmer Together, the Local Strategic Partnership for Hertsmer and support them to implement the new Community Strategy for Hertsmer
- Further develop the provision of affordable and social housing schemes to support those in housing need or at risk of homelessness including through our joint venture Hertsmer Living Limited which will give us 100% nomination rights, supporting people on the housing waiting list into secure accommodation.

What will success look like?

- Residents feel safe as measured by the residents' survey
- Residents have continued access to a range of health and wellbeing services, including cost of living support
- We have maximised opportunities to reduce homelessness

Related documents

Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Community Strategy, Voluntary Sector Funding Policy, Licensing Policy, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Position Statement 6:

HERTSMERE IS OPEN AND COLLABORATIVE

"We are a place that values partnerships and relationships. We recognise that things work better when we share ambitions and work together to overcome challenges in partnership with others."

Commitments:

- 6.1 Lead with purpose
- 6.2 Maintain relationships
- 6.3 Act with integrity
- 6.4 Communicate regularly and honestly
- 6.5 Embrace and champion change

We are committed to ensuring the quality of life of those living and working across the borough and work closely in partnership with organisations from across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors to ensure we deliver services and initiatives in a targeted and financially prudent way. We will continue to keep our residents informed using a range of channels and listen when you respond to us. We will utilise new communication technologies whilst remaining accessible to all stakeholders. We recognise that the world has changed as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic and will work to respond in a positive way, leading wherever we can to ensure the best for our borough.

What will we do?

- Contribute to key partnerships:
 - At a county level: e.g. Hertfordshire Growth Board, SW Herts Joint Strategic Planning Group, Herts Health Protection Board, Local Resilience Forum, Safety Advisory Group
 - At a strategic local level: e.g. Hertsmere Together, Community Safety Partnership
 - In specific service areas: e.g. Landlord Forums, Food Poverty Alliance, Joint Agency Group, Multi-Agency Risk Reduction Group
- Carry out a Residents Survey to better understand the views of our residents
- Continue to support and deliver services in partnership with local voluntary organisations including Healthy Hubs and our local Museums.
- Work with residents to understand community needs around the future of Oakmere Community Centre and Aycliffe Pavilion
- Keep residents informed through a range of public information campaigns including on Voter ID ahead of elections in May 2023.
- Ensure meetings remain open and accessible by using webcasts and hybrid technology wherever possible

What will success look like?

- Hertsmere plays a key leadership role in partnerships at all levels
- Residents feel informed
- The views of local residents are embedded within service development

Related documents

Community Strategy, Residents Survey, Community Safety Partnership Plan, SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Hertsmere Vaccination Plan

OPERATIONAL FOCUS

This is an additional heading to capture any work streams/projects which relate specifically to improving the operational ability of the council to achieve the vision.

We know that we need to lead by example and have therefore included in the main section of this plan a range of internally focused activities that put our own organisation at the centre of achieving our commitments. In addition, there are also a number of operationally focused activities that will enable us to deliver high-quality services across both statutory and non-statutory areas.

What will we do?

- Continue with the upgrade to the Civic Offices and Depot to support the move to hybrid working and increase rental income by leasing additional space to partner agencies
- Continue to identify opportunities for revenue generation using our property portfolio
- Implement the Workforce Strategy 2023-26, recognising the challenges currently faced by the organisation particularly relating to recruitment and retention
- Support managers and staff with the implementation of a new Performance Management System for council staff which links into the Appraisal Process
- Move towards using cloud technologies including a cloud hosted finance system
- Continue with the implement the paper-light project to digitise council records
- Implement Social Value measures into our procurement processes allowing us to ensure those we work with make a greater impact in our communities

What will success look like?

- Civic Office reconfiguration project completed
- Opportunities for enhanced income streams considered and implemented in line with our Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Paper-light project implemented
- Workforce Strategy for 2023-26 agreed and implemented and impacts begin to be seen on staff wellbeing, recruitment and retention
- Able to capture the added social value provided by contractors and how our procurement impacts on the Hertsmere Vision

Related documents

Workforce Strategy 2022-25, Financial Strategy, ICT Strategy

Performance Management

We are committed to ensuring that we deliver the Hertsmere Vision whilst also maintaining high-quality service delivery to local residents and businesses. In order to ensure that we are delivering these aims, we will continue to monitor our performance both against this plan and across our services areas. We have therefore reviewed our performance management arrangements as follows:

Performance Indicators (PIs):

- All PIs will be reviewed and updated to ensure that they are representative of the commitments in the Vision and that they remain reflective of all service areas
- The Quality Service Indicator set monitors the performance of our main public-facing service areas and will be considered by the cross-party Executive Performance Management Panel and by the Executive on a quarterly basis
- The Key Performance Indicator set contains more detailed service level information and will be considered on an exception only basis by the Executive Performance Management Panel each quarter
- The full indicator set will be considered quarterly at Chief Officer Board

Annual Review

- Considered at Executive and Full Council in June each year

Corporate Plan

- Reviewed by Senior Managers, Chief Officer Board and Executive annually for the life of the Hertsmere Vision. The Plan will be considered by Scrutiny Committee before approval at Executive.

Service Plans

- All departments are required to produce a Service Plan and these will be closely monitored by Service Heads and Directors.