

East Herts: A Place to Grow
Corporate Plan Refresh for 2021/ 2022

The Council's Corporate Plan (2020/21 – 2023/24) was agreed in January 2020 and sets out a range of actions and objectives against 4 overall, 'SEED' priorities. Whilst the aspirations in that plan are still relevant Covid-19 has changed local, national and global priorities for public service delivery and impacted how and where East Herts Council is deploying its resources. This refreshed plan outlines amended objectives for the 2021/ 2022 year which better reflect the needs of the district in this context.

Each of the 'one page plans' for the 4 themes have been updated. New priorities have been included where relevant and actions which have either been completed or are now less relevant compared to one year ago have been removed. Please note that for each theme there is a wider set of actions and measures which sit underneath the one page plan.

Sustainability at the heart of everything we do 2021/ 2022

The council's work towards achieving its nine commitments for tackling climate change has continued at pace in 2020/21. For example, over the last 12 months, we have developed a carbon assessment tool to assess the carbon footprint of council projects, adopted a new Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document to guide new development and switched our electricity contract to 100% renewable energy sources.

Work in 2021/22 will focus on further encouraging residents and partners to make sustainable choices and working with other Hertfordshire authorities to deliver larger, multi-agency projects. Notably, we aim to promote higher energy efficiency in housing roll-out the installation of more e-vehicle chargers and provide more information to facilitate positive behaviour change.

Strategy/ objectives	Actions/ key projects	Who	When
1. We will make changes to how the council manages its own premises, people and services	1a. Train council staff and councillors on carbon neutrality and sustainability	David Thorogood	30/09/21
	1b. Complete redevelopment of Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre, Bishop's Stortford and in doing so reduce the building's carbon emissions by at least 18%, that is, 93 tonnes of CO ₂	Jess Khanom-Metaman	31/10/21
	1c. Reduce the number of fossil-fuelled vehicles in the council's fleet	Jonathan Geall	31/03/22
2. We will use our regulatory powers to promote action by others	2a. Implement the council's new Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document	Sara Saunders	30/06/21
	2b. Facilitate moves toward more e-taxis in the district	David Thorogood	31/12/21
	2c. Encourage the building of additional energy efficient properties in the private and affordable housing sectors	Jonathan Geall	31/03/22
	3a. Update council's sustainability website including the provision of a numerical tracker of the council's progress towards its target to be carbon neutral by 2030	Linda Meehan	30/09/21
3. We will influence and encourage others to be more environmentally sustainable	3b. Run a food waste minimisation publicity campaign	Jess Khanom-Metaman	30/09/21
	3c. Work with partners to install e-vehicle chargers in more locations in East Herts	David Thorogood	31/03/22

Enabling our communities 2021/ 2022

Over the past 12 months we have kept up momentum on delivery of our capital programme where possible and within covid-19 guidelines, demonstrating on-going commitment to the wellbeing of our communities. However we have also seen increasing demand for important services such as housing and benefits advice and support. Social isolation has increasingly become a challenge for many individuals due to restrictions on movement. As we move towards recovery from the economic and social impact of Covid-19 it is paramount no one in East Herts is left behind.

Over 2021/22 we will focusing on continuing to deliver our capital programme, services to our most vulnerable residents and supporting partners with Covid recovery efforts. Other key activities will include delivery of our new Cultural Strategy and developing a new Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

Strategy/ objectives	Actions/ key projects	Who	When
1. We will invest in our places	1a. Complete refurbishment of Hartham Leisure Centre	Jess Khanom	1/9/22
	1b. Deliver £20m investment in Hertford Theatre	Jess Khanom	1/8/23
	1c. Deliver the Castle Park project	Ian Sharratt	30/3/23
	1d. Deliver the Cultural Strategy	Nick Phipps	TBC
2. We will ensure all voices in the community are heard	2a. Grow our digital communications channels (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Linked in)	Communications Manager	31/3/22
	2b. Implement a new Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy	Corinne Crosbourne	28/7/21
3. We will support our vulnerable residents	3a. Relaunch the East Herts Healthy Hub to promote easier access to health and wellbeing advice and support	Simon Barfoot	30/6/21
	3b. Provide specialist support to those facing or recovering from homelessness	Claire Bennett	31/3/22
4. Keeping communities safe	4a. Support roll out of testing and vaccination centres	Geoff Hayden	31/3/22
	4b. Support national and county led campaigns on vaccine roll out and vaccine hesitancy	Communications Manager	31/3/22
	4b. Provide regulatory advice and support to businesses for safe re-opening	Paul Thomas-Jones	21/6/21
	4c. Provision of Covid marshals in town centres, neighbourhood shopping centres and green spaces	Ben Wood	30/6/21

Encouraging economic growth 2021/ 2022

There has been a substantial shift in priorities around this theme over the past 12 months. The focus of our activity has been around business survival as oppose to supporting growth with over £30m awarded in grants and £18m in reliefs between May 2021 and April 2021. Our High Streets are under enormous pressure to recover and remain relevant and with changing patterns of workplace distribution we will face additional pressure on viability of commercial development. However this may also bring opportunities for the district and our housing delivery rate of 104% over the past three years against District Plan targets give us reason to be optimistic.

Over 2021/22 we will continue to focus on delivery of major projects such as Old River Lane and our European Funded Launchpad 2 business support programme. Working in partnership with the County Council, Town Councils, police and businesses will be an important means of ensuring residents feel comfortable and confident when visiting their town centres. Continuing to work with developers on delivery of growth sites across the district and supporting communities with neighbourhood planning will be key to ensuring East Herts remains a vibrant place to live.

Strategy/ objectives	Action/ key projects	Who	When
1. We will develop new sources of income	1a. Deliver the Millstream Property Investment Ltd's Business Plan	Jonathan Geall	31/3/22
	1b. Grow the East Herts Lottery to bring in more resources for local good causes	Claire Pullen	31/3/22
2. We will support businesses and town centres with post Covid recovery	2a. Deliver the ERDF Launchpad 2 project	Chris Smith	31/3/23
	2b. Work in partnership to support recovery of town centres and deploy 'Welcome Back' funding	Andrew Figgis	31/3/22
	2c. Deliver the Jobsmart employment support programme	Ben Wood	31/3/22
	2d. Continue to support administration of businesses grants	Su Tarran	31/3/22
3. We will create viable places	3a. Support the Herts Growth Board with presenting a case for additional infrastructure investment in Hertfordshire	Richard Cassidy	31/3/22
	3b. Complete construction of the multi-story car park on the Old River Lane site	Rob Mayo	31/12/21
	3c. Deliver an SPD and Masterplan for the Old River Lane site	Sara Saunders	31/12/21
	3d. Delivery of the strategic sites allocated in the District Plan in accordance with the housing trajectory.	Sara Saunders	31/3/22

Digital by default 2021/ 2022

Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our main reception areas were closed and residents were encouraged to contact us by telephone, email or via the website. The availability of more customer service staff (following face 2 face closure) has resulted in more telephone calls being answered and an overall improvement of the service. The changes in working practice have, on the whole, been a positive experience for our customers and has enabled us to embrace digital technology through the provision of grant claim forms on the website, appointment booking, webchat and ‘call back’ software. This has enabled businesses across the District to access much needed support grants almost solely through digital means and helped manage customer contact demand. We will build on this impetus to further enhance the digital offer to residents, businesses, employees and members.

The Council has also effectively continued to deliver services with staff working remotely and our emerging agile working project will maximise opportunities arising from this global change in the workplace.

Strategy/ objectives	Action/ key projects	Who	When
1. We will improve the customer experience for those who use council services	1a. Undertake a transformation programme to make it easier for our customers to interact with us (including Implement new online and telephony payments software and a customer relationship management system)	Steven Linnett	TBC
	1b. Implement self-service reception and increase range of digital channels available	Ben Wood	30/6/21
2. We will work with partners to ensure our communities are digitally enabled	2a. Ensure fibre to the premise (FTTP) is provided on all new developments	George Pavey	31/3/22
	2b. Support joint delivery of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town as a fully sustainable and digital ‘place’	Jenny Pierce	31/3/22
	2c. Support the Digital Innovation Zone to lobby for investment in our towns and villages	Helen Standen	31/3/22
3. Implement agile working across the organisation	3a. Agree an agile working policy with staff	Simon O’Hear	21/7/21
	3b. Agree a business case for creating modern workspaces	Geoff Hayden	TBC