



## **Introduction**

Since our Corporate Strategy was first published in 2019 we have all experienced unprecedented change and challenge. In particular, as well as maintaining our critical services, Waverley Borough Council has done an amazing job in responding to the coronavirus pandemic, supporting the vulnerable in our community and helping local businesses, alongside the NHS, the emergency services and other councils.

Despite facing further uncertainty, we felt that now was a good time to review our objectives as a council and to reflect on the work and measures we have put in place to ensure the continued delivery of our services. Some of these measures have created new opportunities to work in different and more agile ways.

We are facing huge uncertainties such as the effects on the UK and Waverley in particular of the finalisation of Brexit at the end of this year; the likelihood of a second peak in coronavirus and the possibility that Waverley may cease to exist as a council after 2022. Our revised Strategy needs to consider how this Council will respond to these uncertainties in order to protect service delivery and the interests of our residents.

## **Financial Management**

Before coronavirus, we were facing a large financial challenge due to cuts in government funding. Through careful financial management we put measures in place through our Medium Term Financial Plan to secure continued service delivery and to respond to the emergency of climate change. However, as a result of the pandemic we are now facing further financial challenges and the likelihood that the local economy and employment will be impacted by recession. We have maintained ambitious objectives in our revised strategy; however, we recognise that these will need to be affordable so our plans will be costed carefully to secure our desired outcomes. We will maximise the use of our assets and work imaginatively to source income, including grants and other funding, whilst protecting those on low incomes.

## **Devolution**

Central Government is about to publish its proposals on devolution which may well result in wholesale changes for local government across the country. Surrey County Council have indicated that they would like to become one large unitary authority, doing away with all the district and borough councils. Waverley Borough Council has passed a resolution in favour of a more localist approach and against a large single-county unitary. We want a solution that is in the best interests of Waverley's residents as we value the importance of delivering services locally and on a scale where knowledge of community matters. We will therefore be working collaboratively

with other Surrey councils to secure the best outcome for our residents both financially and in terms of locally focused services.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

This strategy recognises that the impact of the pandemic may well last for some time and will continue to have an effect on the health and wellbeing of our residents, many of whom are elderly. We will continue to work closely with our partners in the NHS, emergency services, the voluntary sector and other councils to protect and support our residents. We will also make the most of the opportunities arising from the pandemic such as new ways of working including downsizing our accommodation needs.

### **Climate Emergency**

In September 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency with an aim to becoming carbon-neutral by 2030, provided we receive appropriate Government support to do so. Our determination to take urgent action to reduce carbon emissions and conserve biodiversity is embedded in our Corporate Strategy and continues to be an overarching aim. The climate impact of some of our decisions in the coming months and years may not be evident immediately but we are confident that our Climate Emergency Action Plan will ultimately produce beneficial results for our communities. This is not something we can do alone and we will be working with the local community, parish and town councils and all other relevant agencies to support making the entire area carbon-neutral by 2030 – as well as encouraging residents to do their bit to help create a greener, more sustainable and environmentally-friendly borough.

Achieving the target will require additional powers, funding and other resources from central government, so the council will be seeking opportunities to make the case for these to local MPs, Ministers and government agencies.

### **Our commitment**

Despite the uncertainties facing us in the coming years we will work hard to support our communities to withstand the economic and social pressures facing us by delivering services which are more resilient, accessible and ultimately stronger as a result of our experiences in the last year. In order to realise our vision and objectives a Corporate Strategy Action Plan will demonstrate the progress made and the outcomes achieved.

### **Our Vision**

Waverley Borough Council is an authority which promotes and sustains:

- open, democratic and participative governance
- a financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and resilient services fit for the future
- the value and worth of all residents, with opportunities for all, regardless of income, wealth, age, disability, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation
- high quality public services accessible for all, including sports, leisure, arts, culture and open spaces

- a thriving local economy, supporting local businesses and employment
- housing to buy and to rent, for those at all income levels
- responsible planning and development, supporting local communities with neighbourhood planning and engagement in planning policy
- a sense of responsibility for our environment, promoting biodiversity, championing the green economy and protecting our planet.
- the health and wellbeing of our communities

Through our 5 year Corporate Strategy we will:

1. use our powers and resources to protect the health of all our residents, especially our vulnerable residents, during the coronavirus pandemic, to support the capacity of the NHS, and to mitigate the negative effects of the consequent recession
2. develop a more open, inclusive approach to communications and decision-making.
3. support the financial sustainability of the Council by reviewing the Medium Term Financial Plan, including a robust commercial strategy, and lobbying central government to achieve a fair, future-proofed financial settlement
4. protect, support and empower our communities by continuing to work collaboratively with neighbouring councils and towns and parishes to create the best possible governance structure to meet local need.
5. attract and support new business and employment opportunities focusing on economic, social and environmental outcomes
6. support affordable access to sports and leisure facilities, open spaces and recreational areas
7. deliver improvements to services across the borough, focusing on health inequalities ensuring that no area is disadvantaged
8. support an increasing number of young people into employment through Waverley Training Services and apprenticeships
9. work to maximise the availability of housing that meets the needs of local people at all income levels and which is sustainable and energy efficient.
10. ensure, as a housing landlord, that all our tenants have a safe, warm, high quality, energy efficient and affordable home
11. take steps towards our aim of becoming a net zero-carbon council by 2030, encouraging carbon reduction and the promotion of biodiversity and sustainable homes, businesses and transport across the borough
12. promote reduction and re-use as well as recycling
13. work with partners to promote a pedestrian-friendly and cycle-friendly transport network, taking action on air quality issues, especially those caused by vehicle emissions, and encouraging zero-carbon buses and taxis
14. work to ensure that our local plan and neighbourhood plans are consistent with meeting local needs and protecting the Green Belt; an increased focus on engaging with government to promote rebalancing the planning system in favour of localism

15. use the Community Infrastructure Levy fairly and transparently to meet local community infrastructure needs taking into account the government's new proposals.
16. improve and develop engagement with all stakeholders to better control crime and anti-social behaviour
17. issue approval for the Dunsfold new Garden Village Masterplan and joint Design Quality Charter
18. work with Crest Nicholson (developer) and Surrey County Council (owner) to achieve the best possible outcomes for residents from the Brightwells regeneration scheme
19. work with partners to ensure the environmental stewardship of our open spaces are of the highest quality including the promotion of biodiversity, rewilding and the phasing out of pesticide use other than in exceptional and defined circumstances
20. ensure we have robust business continuity plans in place to meet future emergencies and challenges to our ability to deliver services
21. support the most vulnerable in our communities, particularly those experiencing social isolation, and loneliness
22. ensure we have an ICT strategy that supports the effective delivery of all council services as well as being responsive to public demand for the online provision of selected services.
23. achieve a successful transition to paperless council agendas by the end of 2022.