

Corporate Strategy 2020-25

Introduction by Leader and Deputy Leader

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 health and emergency services and other councils.

Despite facing further uncertainty, we felt that now is 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 and 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

At the time of reviewing our strategy the Government's proposals on devolution were unknown. However, should proposals be forthcoming we would 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 do not consider one single authority covering the whole of Surrey's 1.2 million inhabitants, such as the scheme suggested by Surrey County Council, is the best option for residents. Waverley Borough Council passed a resolution in favour of a more localist approach and against such a large unitary authority and 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. Through the work we have done on understanding health

inequalities we know we can make a positive impact on the wider determinants of health such as housing, employment and lifestyle choices. Health outcomes vary widely throughout the borough and it is ever more important that we continue to work closely with our partners in the health and social care services, neighbouring councils, emergency services, cultural and leisure providers and the voluntary and faith sectors to protect and support our residents to live long and healthy lives.

Climate Emergency

In September 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency with an aim to becoming a carbon-neutral council by 2030, within the financial and other constraints laid upon us. 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 Carbon Neutrality 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.

Signed

Leader

Deputy Leader

Vision

Our vision is that Waverley will be environmentally, economically and financially sustainable with healthy, inclusive communities and housing available for all who need it.

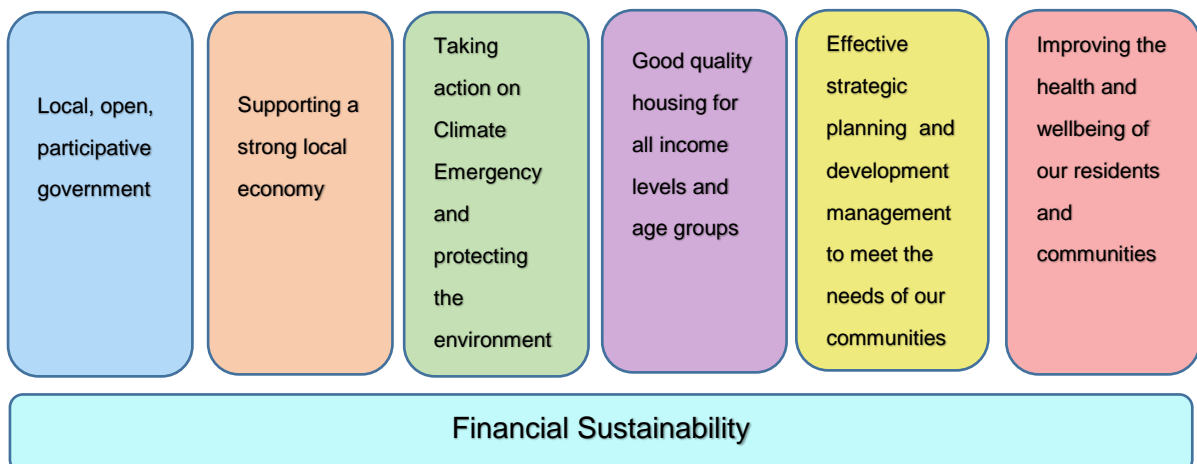
We will promote:

- open, democratic and participative governance
- the value and worth of all residents, with opportunities for all, regardless of race, age, disability, religion, gender or sexual orientation, income or wealth
- high quality public services accessible for all
- a financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and resilient services fit for the future
- a strong, resilient local economy, supporting local businesses and employment
- housing to buy and to rent, for those at all income levels
- effective strategic planning and development management which supports the planning and infrastructure needs of local communities
- a sense of responsibility by all for our environment, promoting biodiversity, championing the green economy and protecting our planet
- the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Our strategic priorities:

- ✓ Local, open, participative government
- ✓ Supporting a strong, resilient local economy
- ✓ Taking action on Climate Emergency and protecting the environment
- ✓ Good quality housing for all income levels and age groups
- ✓ Effective strategic planning and development management to meet the needs of our communities
- ✓ Improving the health and wellbeing of our residents and communities

(for illustrative purposes only)



We cannot achieve our priorities without a sound financial future achieved by careful budgeting and a robust Medium Term Financial Plan. This will depend on making significant savings in expenditure in the next few years as well as securing new income, funding and grant opportunities.

We will deliver savings through a major change programme in the next three years as well as implementing robust Commercial and Investment Strategies. However, central government has a vital role to play in providing financial certainty for local government and we will be lobbying them to secure a fair and future proofed financial settlement.

Local, open, participative government

We are committed to an open, inclusive approach to communications and decision-making.

We will achieve this by:

- ✓ continuing to ensure easy access to council meetings either on-line or in person with opportunities for public speaking;
- ✓ encouraging participation in local democracy by everyone in the community including local forums to consider current issues.

A strong, resilient local economy

We will support new and existing businesses and seek to attract new enterprises and employment opportunities focusing on economic, social and environmental outcomes.

We will achieve this by:

- ✓ implementing Waverley's Economic Development Strategy 2018-32 and the Economic Development COVID-19 Action Plan 2020/21
- ✓ actively engaging and supporting local businesses, both large and small to understand business needs
- ✓ working with partners such as the Enterprise M3 Local Economic Partnership to promote the borough to new businesses and to identify sources of funding and support.

Climate Emergency and the environment

Our aim is to become a net zero-carbon council by 2030, encouraging carbon reduction and the promotion of biodiversity and sustainable homes, businesses and transport across the borough.

We will achieve this by:

- ✓ implementing Waverley's Carbon Neutrality Action Plan
- ✓ promoting reduction and re-use as well as recycling so as to achieve our targets on household waste and recycling

- ✓ promoting 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
- ✓ working 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
- ✓ making Waverley Borough Council a zero carbon organisation, including the offices and other assets, by working with staff and partners to implement carbon reduction schemes and other projects.

Good quality housing for all income levels and age groups

We will optimise the availability of housing that meets the needs of local people at all income levels and which is sustainable and energy efficient.

We will achieve this by:

- ✓ delivering Waverley's new Housing Strategy to ensure homes are the right homes in the right places and that they are truly affordable for those who need them
- ✓ preventing homelessness and meeting housing needs, including needs for supported accommodation and housing for older people
- ✓ working in partnership with social housing providers to deliver good quality homes, building and managing communities which are sustainable in the long term
- ✓ continuing to secure affordable housing on new developments in line with planning policy and ensuring developers meet their planning obligations.

We aim to be the best council landlord in the South East and to be acknowledged so by our tenants.

We will achieve this by:

- ✓ ensuring all our tenants have a safe, warm, high quality, energy efficient and affordable home
- ✓ providing services and support that our tenants need
- ✓ ensuring all new homes on council land achieve energy efficiency level A
- ✓ ensuring the service is financially robust to support improvements to our homes and the building of new homes

Effective strategic planning and Development Management to meet the needs of our communities

Our aim is to ensure that our Local Plan and neighbourhood plans are consistent with meeting local needs and protecting the natural environment.

We will achieve this by:

- ✓ delivering Local Plan Part 2 by December 2021

- ✓ supporting the production of Neighbourhood Plans which are consistent with local needs
- ✓ engaging with central government to influence the outcome of the 'Planning for the Future' proposals to safeguard good development in the borough
- ✓ spending the Community Infrastructure Levy fairly and transparently to deliver the strategic and local community infrastructure necessary to support growth

Major Projects

We will continue to work with Crest Nicholson and Surrey County Council to achieve the best possible outcomes for residents from the Brightwells regeneration scheme and we will support Dunsfold Aerodrome Ltd to deliver Dunsfold Park Garden Village.

Health and wellbeing of our residents

We will use our power and resources to protect the health and wellbeing of all our residents, especially our vulnerable residents, during the coronavirus pandemic and afterwards, to support the capacity of our health services and to mitigate the negative effects of the recession.

We will achieve this by:

- ✓ having robust business continuity plans in place to meet future emergencies and challenges to our ability to deliver services
- ✓ working closely with the Local Resilience Forum

Through the wide variety of services we provide we will seek to reduce health inequalities and support our communities by

- ✓ supporting affordable access to cultural, sports and leisure facilities, open spaces and recreational areas
- ✓ delivering improvements to services across the borough, focusing on health inequalities and where need is greatest
- ✓ continuing to support and work in partnership with our community stakeholders, voluntary and faith organisations to provide vital services to our most vulnerable residents
- ✓ working closely with Health, hospitals and general practitioners, social care and neighbouring councils through the partnerships already in existence to achieve a more joined up approach for the whole borough to improve the health and wellbeing of all our residents
- ✓ using our strategic housing and landlord role to provide healthy homes and to support and guide social housing providers in improving resident wellbeing
- ✓ supporting the most vulnerable in our communities, particularly those experiencing social isolation, loneliness and poor mental health
- ✓ paying benefits quickly and efficiently, in accordance with targets, to support those on low incomes
- ✓ supporting an increasing number of young people into employment through Waverley Training Services and apprenticeships

- ✓ improving and developing engagement through the Safer Waverley Partnership with all stakeholders to better control crime and anti-social behaviour

New Ways of Working

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, we have had to adopt new agile ways of working which has brought a number of benefits.

We have been able to conduct our council meetings on-line whilst continuing to web cast them and we have enabled all our staff to work effectively from home. We will continue to embrace new technology to increase working efficiency through the delivery of our ICT Strategy. As part of this strategy we have formed a new centralised customer service team which will improve our capacity to respond to customers quickly and efficiently. Through our enhanced use of technology we can also reduce our reliance on paper by largely phasing out printed agendas and reports by December 2022, continuing and enhancing suitable arrangements where appropriate. This will support our cost reduction and climate and sustainability strategy but will be dependant on the control of the Covid virus and resumption of "live" meetings.

We will also continue to explore shared opportunities with other local authorities to work at scale where there are benefits to be achieved for our residents.

In order to meet changing circumstances we will embrace new ways of working whilst maintaining standards, improving public participation and caring for our staff.