

Harlow Council: Working Together for Harlow Corporate Plan 2020-2021

HARLOW



Harlow Council
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Harlow
Council
Working together for Harlow

Leader of the Council



'I am proud to introduce this updated corporate plan – working together for Harlow 2020 to 2021. This plan sets out our vision, priorities and goals over the next three years to continue making Harlow a great place to live, bring up families, work and visit. This plan also looks at what we have already done and what we will build on in future years.

Harlow Council continues to, not only deliver a wide range of services to residents, but also continue to improve them and enhance what we do for Harlow. We are not stretching our financial resources and we are doing all this by living within our means. We are reinvesting money into things that are important to our town. We are keeping tight control of how we finance services at a time when the future of local government finance remains uncertain.

HTS, our Local Authority Trading Company, continues to be a real success story. Once again profits made by HTS have been returned to the council for us to reinvest in our town. The performance of the range of services HTS provides for Harlow continues to be consistently high and by working with us they are keeping Harlow well maintained.

The future is positive for Harlow and, as the community leader, we are making sure our town is ready to benefit from the opportunities that Public Health England, the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town and the Harlow Enterprise Zone will all bring.

Harlow has a bright future to look forward to and we will play our part in delivering that, but we also have an important day-to-day role to do and that is to continue being an effective and responsive council. We will not be complacent. We are determined to keep improving, keep doing things differently and better and do what is right for the people and businesses of Harlow.

Our decisions will be driven by a set of values and priorities that has fairness and equality at the heart of everything. Harlow is a great place. We are determined that it will remain a great place, and it will continue to be a town for all.

Mark Ingall
Leader of the Council

Chief Executive



Our staff are at the heart of everything we do, and I want to pay tribute to them for the work they do to provide our services and deliver our corporate plan. Our most important assets are our people and the partnership work that takes place with Councillors, HTS, contractors, local organisations and volunteers so we can provide the very best services for Harlow.

We are winning awards for our work – seven awards over the last year, including five national awards and I hope many more awards are to come. We can be proud of our achievements and the difference we are making to our town.

The pressure on councils to do more with less resources remains. In Harlow, we are not letting this stop our ambitions and we continue to set those ambitions out in our corporate plan. We continue to look at ways we can enhance our services without cutting what we do or cutting jobs. This is the very opposite to what many other councils are having to do.

This corporate plan also outlines what we continue to do to provide new opportunities for the Harlow community. We are making a strong argument for government investment which could make a big difference to our town's regeneration. Harlow continues to be talked about in the right places and it is still seen as a key focal point for regeneration and investment in the London-Stansted-Cambridge corridor. The Enterprise Zone is creating jobs and new business opportunities. The first phase of Harlow Science Park is complete and the relocation of Public Health England to Harlow with the creation of up to 3,000 new jobs. Work continues with our neighbouring councils on the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town which we all agree must benefit and regenerate Harlow.

All this work is in addition to the range of services we continue to provide to local people every day. But it is not all about frontline services. There are many members of staff working away in the background who provide vital help and support to enable our frontline services to do their job. This is a corporate plan which can only be delivered by everyone working together and we all have our individual roles to play.

It makes me proud that we continue to work hard with the aim at all times to improve Harlow for all.

Brian Keane
Chief Executive of the Council

Council Values

The Council strives to be an organisation where people make things happen and promote excellence, good customer service and continuous improvement. We want to ensure that all staff are consistently aware of how their role contributes to the achievement of corporate priorities and principles, are clear about what is expected and share the Council's values. The Council is committed to promoting equality, challenging discrimination and developing community cohesion.

The Council's values are:

- Integrity** Clear, meaningful and honest two way communication with staff, customers and partners.
- Value People** Treating everyone fairly, equally and with mutual respect. Investing in staff, recognising individual and team contributions to achieve success.
- Inspirational** Support and encourage accountability, creativity and innovation amongst our staff, key stakeholders and partners.

Council Priorities

Five priorities and three principles have been identified for the next three years.

-  More and Better Housing
-  Regeneration and a Thriving Economy
-  Wellbeing and Social Inclusion
-  A Clean and Green Environment
-  Successful Children and Young People

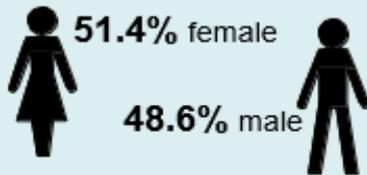
Council Principles

- Being the Community Leader**
- Sound Resource Management**
- Equalities and Fairness**

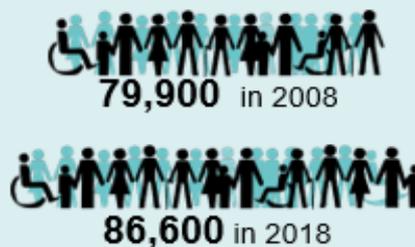
These are described in more depth on the subsequent pages of the Corporate Plan.

Harlow in Numbers

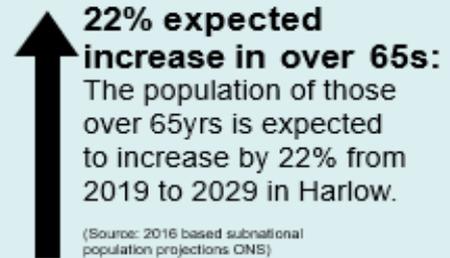
Our Community:



(Source: NOMIS December 2019)



(Source: NOMIS December 2019)



(Source: 2016 based subnational population projections ONS)

Housing:



(Source: Local Authority Housing Statistics Department for Communities and Local Government updated May 2019.)



(Source: England.shelter.org.uk Jan. 19)

2,463 new homes built from 2011/12 - 2018/19

(Source: Harlow Council Planning Services December 2019)



(Source: Hometrack December 2019)

Local Economy:

Number of enterprises
2019 = 3,010
2018 = 2,875
increase of 135 enterprises between 2018 and 2019

(Source: NOMIS December 2019)



Environment:



48% of land is green space and 52% is all other land (including built development and residential gardens.)

(Source: Harlow Local Development Plan, Pre-Submission Publication, May 2018)

The Council:

Harlow Council has **415 employees**
(Updated December 2019)



Harlow Council has **33 Councillor Seats**

- Labour: 20
- Conservative: 13



Annual Budget (NET) 2018/2019 **£10.899 million** March 2019

Corporate Achievements for 2019/20

Being the Community Leader

- Successfully shortlisted for the next stage of the bidding process for the Central Government's £1 billion Future High Streets Fund. The Council also received an invitation from Central Government to bid for up to £25m under the Towns Fund to develop separate regeneration plans for the Town.
- In July, Councillors declared a climate emergency committing the Council to a number of actions and targets to improve the quality of life in the Town. Two of those targets were achieved early - 'elimination of single use plastics' and 'tree planting'.
- Continue to lobby Central Government and work with other Councils on use of permitted developments.
- The streetlight agreement with the Essex County Council extended.
- The third annual Town Centre Awards held in September to celebrate local businesses and the people working in the Town Centre. An outstanding 3,400 public votes were cast for the awards.
- Supported a local artist to create a display of handmade poppies to remember and honour local soldiers. Nearly 4,000 poppies (made of wool and recycled plastic bottles) were on display outside the Civic Centre.

More and Better Housing

- Maintained Decent Homes standards and undertook improvements to over 8,000 properties, continuing to raise house standards.
- Overall tenant and leaseholder satisfaction has increased.
- Continued reduction in numbers identified as suffering from fuel poverty.
- Enhanced the support and advice services processes to the Welfare Reform changes by providing support, information, and advice, managing the impact on rent collection and arrears recovery.
- Achieved a national accreditation award for the Careline scheme which offers security to the most vulnerable residents.
- Reduction of 75% in the number of people sleeping rough in the town and an increase to 229 homelessness preventions helping to sustain people in their homes.
- Raised standards in quality of temporary accommodation provision together with a reduction in numbers.

Regeneration and a Thriving Economy

- The first phase of Harlow Science Park was completed in December with the unveiling of Harlow's 100th sculpture in the grounds of the park.
- More Article 4 directions introduced to reduce the number of permitted developments around the Town.
- Three successful 'makers markets' held in Market Square to provide local makers, bakers and creators a place to sell their handmade products.
- In October, the Council supported the opening of Harlow College and Public Health England (PHE) new Construction Skills Centre. This purpose-built centre will provide training for adults interested in working in construction, with the aim of creating a team of site-ready, local construction workers for the PHE construction and sites across Essex.

Successful Children and Young People

- The sixth annual Harlow Educational Progress Awards held in December, recognise the achievements of over 80 young people and children who go to school in Harlow.
- The annual Crucial crew event was attended by over 1,000 children and young people at the Latton Bush Centre.
- A special project to engage children and young people with the First World War. Run by the Council, 'Harlow Poppy Rocks' saw 129 hand painted rocks hidden around the Town to remember those who lost their lives in WW1 and on D-Day.
- A number of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) learning sessions for local children and families, following the Council's commitment in its 2019/2020 budget.

Wellbeing & Social Inclusion

- Around 20,000 people attended the annual bonfire night display in the Town Park.
- The Council's Carnival returned in June with a parade, followed by the 'End of Carnival Show' Show in the Market Square. Both events were part of a big weekend of events centred around the Market Square. In October, the 'End of Show' Show was awarded with a Heart 4 Harlow award.
- The new inclusive Town Park playground, which caters for all ages and abilities, has proved a huge hit since it opened in August 2019. In July, the playground was awarded 'gold standard status' for its accessibility.
- Town Centre Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) came into effect in August 2019, following public consultation. The orders ban cycling through the Town Centre, ball games (excluding table tennis in Market Square) and drinking alcohol in public to protect Town Centre users and businesses.
- Town's local sporting heroes and heroines were celebrated through the Harlow Sports Awards. A record 250 public nominations were received.

A Clean and Green Environment

- Over 1,900 residents collected 400 bags of litter from the Town's streets and parks as the Council held its annual 'spring clean' between 22 March and 23 April 2019. The campaign has been shortlisted for a Keep Britain Tidy Network Award.
- The Town Park and Parndon Wood Nature Reserve have both successfully retained their Green Flag awards.
- Pets' Corner was inducted into TripAdvisor's Hall of Fame.
- The plant a tree for Harlow scheme was launched as part of the Council pledge to plant 1,000 trees and hedgerows in the next year. The target was reached in one day when over 100 residents joined the Council to plant 1,000 trees.
- In October, the Town Park was voted one of the top ten favourite parks in the UK following a public vote.
- The Council's restoration of the historic Oakwood Pond received a Harlow Architectural Design Award in October. Stage one of the improvements to another pond, Netteswell Pond was also completed.

Sound Resource Management

- For 2019/20, the Council is on track to achieve a strong performance for the collection of Council Tax, Rent Rates, Business Rates and Service Charges. In 2018/19 the performance of these key performance indicator were; 99.13% (rent collection), 99.28% (collection of leasehold service charges), 95.0% (Council Tax) and 97.4% (Business Rates).
- The Council's Local Authority Trading Company (HTS Property & Environment Ltd) achieved an overall success rate of 100% against the full suite of Major and Minor Key Performance Indicators that govern the contract. The Company also achieved a pre-tax profit margin of 5% as at November 2019.
- Taking into consideration the budgets which are not controllable by services, the Council overall forecast underspend was 3.09% at the end of 2018/19.

Equalities and Fairness

- The Council is committed to doing what it can to combat slavery and prevent human trafficking within the business and supply chain.
- The Council is a Disability Confident Committed employer.
- The Council has been a Living Wage employer since 2013. The voluntary living wage rate is paid to everyone aged 18 and older.
- The Council has hosted a number of celebration and memorial days, including the Holocaust Memorial Day Service, celebrated LGBTQ and raising the Rainbow flag.
- The Council created a Religious Diversity Working Party, comprising of three Councillors and representatives from different religious groups within Harlow, to promote and celebrate religious cohesion in the community. Using funding from the Heritage Lottery, the Council built a learning centre at Pets Corner, which included an area for sensory equipment.

Our Vision: Working Together for Harlow

Being the Community Leader



“The Council continues to take a leading role in promoting Harlow as a great place to live and work, and to champion the need for new infrastructure to enable Harlow to thrive.

This administration has worked to secure funding from the Government for a much needed new hospital for the town, which will meet the needs of residents and support the excellent staff who work at Princess Alexandra Hospital.

The Council has implemented a number of schemes to address the parking issues throughout Harlow. The first of these schemes have already been completed and additional schemes will be completed over the coming years.

We have taken the lead role in tackling Climate Change in Harlow and have declared a Climate Emergency as part of our commitment to reduce the Council’s impact on the climate. This includes holding ‘community tree planting days’ to improve the environment and make Harlow an even better place to live and work.”

Councillor Mark Ingall - Leader of Council

Our goals for the next three years:

- Promote the needs of Harlow.
- Maintain the Council’s role as the recognised community leader.
- Deliver much needed housing at truly affordable rents on long term secure tenancies.
- Improve opportunities for Harlow residents to participate in local democracy and decision making.
- Improve communication with the public through the Community Engagement Strategy.
- Increase transparency through Joint Finance Performance Reports (JFPR), the Procurement Strategy, Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).
Ensure the Council’s procurement framework supports ethical businesses.

We will achieve our goals by:

- Continue to lobby Essex County Council and Central Government for key infrastructure improvements for Harlow.
- Continue to lobby Central Government to relocate Princess Alexandra Hospital in order to meet the needs of a growing population and increasing demand.
- Continue to promote the local pride in Harlow onto the regional and national stage as a great place to live, shop, work, visit and do business.
- Promote Harlow’s community cultural and sporting events, attractions and facilities for residents and visitors to experience, including a range of places for visitors to stay.
- Continue to review, update and publish the Council’s transparency and performance data on its website. Ensure the Council’s compliance with the Freedom of Information (FOI), General Data Protection Regulations and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and to ensure that its constitution remains compliant.
- Continue to lobby Central Government with regards to the Council keeping control of its Local Plan.
- To complete scheduled Police Fire and Crime Commissioner and Local Elections in May 2020 unchallenged.
- To make changes to the electoral canvas as required by Government under electoral law.

More and Better Housing



“The last year has seen a continued strong performance from Housing Services, against an outline of national, regional and local challenges having to be faced with reduced resources.

Housing remains a top priority for me and the administration, recognising the need for effective partnership working to deliver on our priorities. My top priorities include; more and better housing with housing that is genuinely affordable, tackling homelessness, helping to improve choices for those in housing need, increasing the range and type of Supported Housing, improving residents’ health and wellbeing and the raising of housing standards.

Working in partnership with our local housing agencies, we have received additional grant funding for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping. The Supported Housing service continues to be nationally recognised, being accredited by Telecare Services Association (TSA). This, together with strong performance for repairs, income management, and empty properties management means your Housing Service continues to be well regarded nationally, regionally and locally.

The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan continues to outline the short, medium and long term ambition of the service together with the resources available.”

Councillor Mark Wilkinson – Portfolio Holder for Housing

Our goals for the next three years:

- Invest in the housing stock.
- Delivering the house building programme with a wider choice of housing types of all tenures which include affordable, social rented and council housing.
- Work towards improving choices for those in housing need.
- Increase the range and type of Supported Housing.
- Tackle homelessness by implementing the Homelessness Strategy.
- Encourage and facilitate effective tenant and leaseholder engagement.

We will achieve our goals by:

- Continue to provide resources to the Housing Investment Programme (HIP) and other Asset Management priorities.
- Maintaining the housing stock and raising housing standards.
- Prioritising energy efficiency schemes and fire safety programmes.
- Implementing a house building programme.
- Delivering the Supported Housing plan.
- Working in partnership with local agencies to implement the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan.
- Working with Tenant and Leaseholder representatives as part of the Housing Regulatory requirements to continue to improve performance.

Regeneration and a Thriving Economy (Economic Growth)



“Harlow New Town was built around principles of sustainable communities, with its green spaces a fundamental part of the design. We remain committed to these principles with high quality jobs for local people and reinvigorating Harlow as a great place to live and work.

We will continue to focus on attracting inward investment, providing high quality jobs and lobbying to ensure we have the right infrastructure in place to enable sustainable growth. Our Economic Development Strategy builds on our success of the past five years setting out our strategy to continue and build on the successes in terms of business, jobs, place and people. Harlow has a bright future and the Council will play a full and active role in bringing this about, by ensuring that the town is a place where businesses choose to invest.

The town’s growth potential has been recognised by Government and has led to several key investments and opportunities. The Town is home to the Harlow Enterprise Zone. In addition to this, the relocation Public Health England to Harlow with the creation of its national public health science hub, will catalyse significant growth in the district – bringing in new employees, residents and wider supply chain opportunities.

We want Harlow to be an excellent place to do business. This will be achieved with the right infrastructure, a highly skilled workforce that meets the needs and expectations of existing and potential employers in the Town and employment opportunities for Harlow people that pay a decent wage.”

Councillor Tony Durcan – Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth

Our goals for the next three years:

- Address the challenges and opportunities as set out in the Economic Development Strategy.
- Lead on the delivery of the Enterprise Zone (EZ).
- Work with Public Health England and occupiers of the EZ to deliver real benefits for local residents and businesses from those developments.
- Work with the Government and other partners to ensure we address growth in an inclusive, creative and cohesive way.
- Work with partners to ensure the successful delivery of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.
- Promote Harlow as an attractive, green and sustainable location for businesses.
- Increase investment in the infrastructure required for Harlow’s economic and housing growth.
- Work in partnership to increase adult skills levels.
- Work to ensure the numbers of successful businesses increase.

We will achieve our goals by:

- Progressing our dialogue with Government and Essex County Council to ensure that Harlow’s needs and opportunities, as identified in our economic development and regeneration strategies, continue to be raised and addressed in the light of the Industrial Strategy, and that investment is leveraged.
- Ensuring we have a town centre which supports wider economic growth in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town providing shops, services and homes, and a diverse mix of commercial activity in the town centre.
- Continuing to lead the Harlow Enterprise Zone Board and, with our development partners, to progress the building of the Science Park and attract target sector businesses.
- Working in partnership with Public Health England to deliver real benefits for local people and businesses, including addressing employment, skills development and supply chain opportunities.
- Continuing to develop ‘Discover Harlow’ a new place based marketing campaign for Harlow.
- Continuing to support business sectors e.g. M11 Health Enterprise Forum, the Manufacturing and Engineering Forum and the Harlow & District Chamber of Commerce and to encourage them all to have the wellbeing of the environment at its heart.
- Continue to lead on Harlow’s Skills Forum.
- Promote a greener way of working to local businesses.
- Working as active partners in the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium.

Regeneration and a Thriving Economy (Regeneration)



“Harlow is a place of fantastic opportunity with new investment, new jobs, new housing and new facilities. It needs to grasp these opportunities and think confidently about the future. Harlow stands at the threshold of a sizable opportunity and the Council and its partners have been working hard for some years to bring forward key projects. These projects will be the building blocks that support regeneration to realise these opportunities and help us to shape a successful future for Harlow, its businesses and residents, present and future.”

Regeneration of the Town Centre must remain one of our highest priorities and our vision is for Harlow Town Centre is for it to become “A successful and sustainable destination, serving as the commercial and leisure centre for the existing town of Harlow and the planned Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.”

A successful and sustainable Harlow Town Centre is one that offers; a strong and thriving mix of shops, leisure opportunities and services, high quality and innovative office and employment space, engaging civic and public uses, a thriving evening economy and cultural offer and a range of homes that support a mixed and balanced community.

We must continue to press for the investment we need to make a real difference to our community. The Council will actively pursue funding opportunities for regeneration and will do all that we can to encourage investment in the Town, the regeneration of the Town Centre and our local neighbourhoods.

As a former New Town, we know that there can be negative perceptions of Harlow. That's why it is so important that we must work in partnership to tell the fantastic story of the place we know Harlow to be.”

Councillor John Strachan – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration

Our goals for the next three years:

- Drive forward the regeneration of the Town Centre. A healthy Town Centre is fundamental to Harlow's role as a growing sub regional centre and the success of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.
- Help to deliver a unified town centre which re-balances the northern and southern area and repurposes the areas of the town centre that may be in decline.
- A town centre which supports wider economic growth in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town providing shops, services and homes, and a diverse mix of commercial activity in the Town Centre.
- A strong retail, leisure and cultural offer which appeals to Harlow's catchment and enables a 24/7 destination.
- Redevelop the land formerly occupied by Lister House Health Centre.
- Deliver more housing of all tenures to maximise the opportunity for new Council homes, social rented homes and other forms of truly affordable housing.
- Deliver a number of neighbourhood hatches regeneration schemes.
- Work with partners to ensure the successful delivery of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

We will achieve our goals by:

- Working with partners to drive forward the regeneration of the Town Centre, including a submission for the Future High Street Fund.
- Producing a Masterplan for the whole Town Centre in keeping with the vision to provide a framework and site guidance for regeneration and development.
- Continuing to develop and deliver the programme for the neighbourhood regeneration schemes, including Perry Road (former Lister House site) and a programme of housing site developments.
- Working in partnership with Public Health England to deliver real benefits for local people and businesses, including addressing employment, skills development and supply chain opportunities.
- Develop a new Regeneration Strategy for Harlow.
- Developing a new Housing Strategy for Harlow.

Wellbeing and Social Inclusion



“Harlow is an enterprising Town with a proud history of promoting fairness and equality. However, health inequalities and deprivation exist within some sections of our community. Promoting the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities is fundamental to the work of local government. We will continue to work with a wide range of partners to tackle health inequality and offer opportunities for our residents to enjoy the many benefits of healthy living regardless of age or physical ability.

The restoration of the Town Park with its gardens, paddling pools, Pets Corner, outdoor gym, inclusive and sensory playground, Men’s Shed and many other facilities, provide a glorious location for the residents of Harlow to spend their recreation time, whilst improving their health and wellbeing. We will do all we can to ensure that Pets Corner and the Town Park is accessible to all members of the community.

Harlow also has a world class collection of public art throughout the Town which can be freely enjoyed by all and an active cultural community with many groups performing dance, music theatre and more. There is evidence that active involvement in such creative activities provides a wide range of benefits, including the promotion of wellbeing, quality of life, health and social capital. It is therefore important that we continue to build on and promote our cultural heritage.

The Council continues to work hard to tackle anti-social behaviour acknowledging that the challenges are many, not least the limitations faced by Local Government in the face of central government legislation. Our Community Safety Team will continue to work with our partners to do all we can to have a significant effect on how safe people feel and therefore reduce the fear of crime.”

Councillor Eugenie Harvey – Portfolio Holder for Community & Wellbeing

Our goals for the next three years:

- Achieve the key ambitions of the Harlow Health and Wellbeing Strategy Healthy Harlow and associated action plans.
- Embed public health and wellbeing to deliver a coordinated approach to addressing the wider determinants of health in Harlow.
- Play a leading role in tackling the underlying root causes of poor health and the issues that affect wellbeing.
- Work collaboratively with the wider partners to deliver Health and Wellbeing in Harlow.
- Continue to work with partners to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse.
- Enhance and celebrate the Town’s cultural and heritage offering through a collaborative approach with local and regional stakeholders considering in particular opportunities for the Playhouse.
- Implement the recommendations from the review of paddling pools, ensuring that the improved facilities are accessible and inclusive and can be safely enjoyed by all residents.

We will achieve our goals by:

- Delivering the actions contained within the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2028.
- Monitoring health and wellbeing outcomes and initiatives with reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Continuing to celebrate success in the annual Active Harlow Awards to recognise local sporting talent in the Harlow area.
- Ensure that our facilities are accessible and inclusive to all sections of the community.
- Continuing to develop the Harlow Museum service, achieving an outreach service with local schools, ensuring that young people grow up aware of the historical significance of their own Town.
- Work with Public Health England to develop a Community Liaison Group.
- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour by undertaking targeted work on priority local community safety issues, including emerging trends by working with partners from the Safer Harlow Partnership.
- Work with partners to deal with identifying and addressing the impact of permitted development accommodation in the town.
- Developing a Cultural Strategy for Harlow.
- Implement/approval of the Playhouse Business Plan.
- Undertake a review of M&E services at the Playhouse.

A Clean and Green Environment



“The principles of the original Master Plan for the New Town prepared by Sir Frederick Gibberd in 1947 have given Harlow its unique character. The Town was built around a series of neighbourhoods, separated by large areas of natural and semi-natural open spaces, now known as Green Wedges. These principles will continue to shape Harlow’s Development Plans.

Just under half of all the land in Harlow is open space – a mix of designated Green Wedge, Green Belt and other informal open spaces. The Local Plan, now at the main modifications stage, provides for such assets to be protected against the threat of unwarranted intrusion and inappropriate development for the benefit of both current and future generations, whilst supporting other key Council priorities. We will continue to support it through the process to adoption during 2020.

I know from talking to residents; and from previous budget consultations that keeping our streets and public places clean and tidy and looking after our parks and open spaces remain high priorities for Harlow residents. Improvements in the maintenance of our green spaces and the high standards of street cleansing have been sustained. We will be piloting a “Green Ranger” scheme to bring the service into closer contact with the public, improve direct feed-back from residents and move towards public satisfaction surveys as our measurement of success. I look forward to continuing to work proactively with HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd to continue the improvement of our green spaces and streets.

The Town Park has always been very important to residents and I am pleased that we will be able to take forward the improvements from its restoration by providing for professional gardeners to work alongside the volunteer community and increased the professional client resources so that we can move ahead with my plans to improve the street environment where people live. It was fitting that the Oakwood Pond Restoration Scheme won a design award in its own right as another valuable natural asset to be enjoyed by all.

I also look forward to the adoption of the new Local Development Plan for Harlow followed by the Town Centre Area Action Plan and especially the opportunities for transformative improvements in the realm of Public Transportation. These important strategic documents set out the land use policies and objectives of the Council in pursuit of the regeneration of Harlow.”

Councillor Danny Purton – Portfolio Holder for Environment

Our goals for the next three years:

- Sustain the cleanliness of the Town and the maintenance of open spaces.
- Progress the neighbourhood improvement programme.
- Minimise domestic waste and maximise reuse and recycling.
- Invest in un-adopted roads and pavements.
- Continue to address parking issues Town wide
- Support Harlow’s Local Plan through the examination process to adoption.
- Complete the Town Centre Area Action Plan (TCAAP).
- Advance the regeneration of Harlow via the Local Plan and the Harlow and Garden Town initiative.
- Seek improvements in public transport to encourage sustainable journeys.
- Improve flood defence capability.
- Continue to maintain building control standards.
- Continue to promote and support the Keep Britain Tidy Spring Clean Campaign 2020/2021.

We will achieve our goals by:

- Continuing to promote and enhance residents’ participation in the wider waste minimisation and recycling issues by working with Essex Waste Management Partnership to deliver a communications campaign emphasising the importance of proper use of the full range of waste and recycling services available.
- Working with Essex County Council to improve its highways inspection regime to ensure problems are identified sooner to minimise trips and slips.
- Supporting the Local Plan through the examination process and ensure the planning applications are processed accordingly.
- Working with Local and Regional Partners and National Government through the Garden Town Board.
- Working with Local Transport Operators to improve reliability and standards.
- Working with the Essex Flood Defence Board to identify and address land drainage issues in a sustainable way including the enhancements to valuable water features.
- Working with Veolia to ensure a smooth roll-out of a new contract with enhancement to the domestic waste collection service.
- Working with Essex County Council and Harlow residents to improve the Town street scene.
- Continuing to work with North Essex Parking Partnership on parking issues raised by residents.
- Submitting relevant developments for recognition under the Local Authority Building Control Awards scheme.
- Continue to promote and support the Keep Britain Tidy Spring Clean Campaign 2020/2021.

Successful Children and Young People



“The Council works to support the children and young people of Harlow in a wide range of ways, recognising that their happy and healthy development is inextricably linked to the future success of our town.

We continue to implement a school readiness programme to help ensure that every child gets the best educational start in life. The Educational Progress Awards attract more entries with every year and has now been moved the Playhouse to accommodate the growing audience of proud families, carers and teachers. The Awards aim to recognise and reward young people who have made significant progress in their education and recognise the contribution they have made to their schools and the community. Through the Sports Awards, we recognise young people who are achieving in a wide range of sports and disciplines as well as playing vital supporting roles through volunteering their time to their clubs.

The Youth Council offers young people the chance to develop a wide range of skills, interact with the Towns’ decision makers and have their opinions heard. We must work hard to attract more young people to take up the opportunity of joining the Youth Council, ensuring we are fostering tomorrow’s leaders today.

We want Harlow to be a great place to grow up, with children getting the best start in life, being protected from harm, being healthy, happy and ready to learn as they start school, enjoying school and achieving their academic and social potential. Children and young people should have access to a range of activities to enable them to make a positive contribution to their communities and to realise their potential and talent.”

Councillor Eugenie Harvey – Portfolio Holder for Community & Wellbeing

Our goals for the next three years:

- Help to improve outcomes for Harlow’s children and young people.
- Support young people to be more involved in decision making.
- Work with partners to support families with complex needs.
- Safeguard children and young people.
- Work with partners to develop opportunities for learning beyond school age, providing a mix of further and higher education suited to the needs of residents and employers.

We will achieve our goals by:

- Encouraging young people to become more engaged with the Youth Council.
- Continuing to work with partners to improve the educational attainment of Harlow’s young people.
- Ensuring Harlow’s Educational Attainment Awards continue.
- Continuing to support officers to attend a range of multi-agency partnership meetings that promote the health, safety and wellbeing of all Harlow children.
- Continuing to support the delivery of the short break and respite services for children and young people with disabilities and their families.
- Engaging with local partners in the public and private sector with a view to identifying the opportunities available to both young people and adults and tackling the barriers to their engagement in learning.
- With our partners, support learners to make better choices about the courses they study – informed about the availability of relevant employment opportunities.
- Provide a number of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths activities providing the opportunity for Harlow’s young people to engage in these subjects so that they are well placed to take up opportunities presented by PHE and other employers based at the Enterprise Zone.

Sound Resource Management



“The Council’s financial position has and continues to be very good. Financial information is published regularly and features as part of the Council’s commitment to conducting its business in an open and transparent way. External assessments of the Council’s financial position remains good with unqualified accounts and an unqualified Value for Money judgement being presented by its external and independent auditors BDO LLP.

Although the future funding arrangements for local authorities remains extremely uncertain Harlow Council has ensured that over the past ten years of austerity no services have been cut or stopped despite the significant (over 50%) reductions in funding it has received from central government.

This is an incredible achievement and one which I am proud of, but it is likely to make further savings very difficult to achieve in the future.”

Councillor Mike Danvers – Portfolio Holder for Resources

Our goals for the next three years:

- Ensure the Council is economic, efficient and effective.
- Get the best from the resources available.

We will achieve our goals by:

- Continuing to roll out innovative technologies to improve efficiency.
- Continuing to deliver financial and other services through our own in house provision and not have reliance on third party and private sector intervention.
- Continue to seek new and innovative ways to secure alternative sources of funding to meet projected budget shortfalls and protect services wherever possible.
- Engage with Government consultations to influence the outcome of spending and funding reviews that are likely to be conducted and will have an impact on the long term funding arrangements for Harlow Council.
- Ensure the Council’s non-housing asset holdings are fit for purpose and are generating the best return possible to help support the Council’s wider service delivery agenda.

Equalities and Fairness



“Harlow is a town that is proud of its diversity and long history of promoting fairness. The Council is committed to improving the outcomes for all and preventing any form of discrimination. The Council has implemented and proudly supported a number of schemes to achieve these aims, including helping with the Men’s Shed Project which aims to reduce loneliness and isolation amongst men.

The Playhouse continues to host a wide range of events which cover issues such as mental health and has hosted a number of ‘pay what you can events’ ensuring that the Playhouse is accessible to all.

We continue to ensure that the Council meets all its legal duties, regarding equality and diversity. All Officers have undertaken equality training, which has further strengthened the Council’s commitment to equality, diversity and fairness.”

Councillor Lanie Shears – Portfolio Holder for Equalities and Diversity

Our goals for the next three years:

- Ensure the Council’s decision making is open, transparent and fair and takes into account the diversity of the Town, ensuring equalities are incorporated.
- Develop and promote the diversity of Harlow.
- Support the citizen of Harlow to actively contribute and benefit from all that Harlow has to offer by fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those that do not.
- Work with residents and businesses to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Increase public confidence in how we tackle domestic abuse.
- Enhance the quality of life and care for people with a learning disability, autism and/or mental health issues.
- Safeguarding adults whose circumstances make them vulnerable, protecting them from avoidable harm and acting in their best interests where they lack capacity.

We will achieve our goals by:

- Implement and review the Corporate Equalities Action Plan in consultation with representatives from the people with protected characteristics.
- Publish information relating to people who share a protected characteristic who are employees and people affected by the Council’s policies and procedures.
- Work in partnership with the Health and Wellbeing Board to identify gaps and target interventions to combat loneliness and isolation of older people.
- Continue to develop and support the Men’s Shed project.
- Implement recommendations of the Religious Diversity Working Party.
- Maintaining equality training and awareness for all Officers and Councillors.
- Continue to ensure the Council’s Procurement Strategy reflects its values of ‘Fairness and Equality’ and complies with the general equality duty in its timing and undertaking of procurement, including where the public function is carried out by a third party.
- Implement a programme to address harassment and victimisation.
- Continue to encourage staff to participate in the Council’s volunteering scheme.
- In conjunction with Essex County Council further develop the ‘time credit’ scheme to promote volunteering amongst Harlow’s residents.

Performance

To ensure the Council remains on target, it is essential to monitor the progress of our priorities and goals. This is done by monitoring performance indicators relating to areas such as waste management, services for planning, benefits and housing. We regularly compare our performance against other councils, celebrate areas of good performance and provide challenge to areas where we are not performing so well.

The Council publishes a statement of its performance each quarter. These reports include information on the milestones, performance indicators and the Council's finances. Performance reports are presented to Cabinet and when agreed are published here.

<http://www.harlow.gov.uk/performance-reports>