

Harlow Council
Corporate Strategy 2021- 2023

FOREWARD



I am delighted to introduce Harlow Council's new Corporate Strategy. This strategy sets out our vision for Harlow and provides a clear policy framework for how it will be realised. Our vision for Harlow is to be the best town in the country, to live, to work and to raise a family.

Our vision is one in which our town centre is regenerated making it a fun and vibrant place to spend your leisure time. Harlow will become a shopping destination with a diverse range of retailers. A town centre with high quality restaurants to suit a wide variety of tastes as well as becoming a centre of entertainment which is accessible to people of all age groups and backgrounds. We will regenerate our town's estates by ensuring the environment is well cared for and that local amenities such as our parks, playing fields, paddling pools and playgrounds are maintained to a high standard.

Our Council will be a council that promotes community cohesion and works with Harlow's fantastic volunteers, charitable bodies and faith groups to ensure that no one is left behind. Our Council will seek to support the most vulnerable in our society and will work to ensure that the "levelling up" agenda is applied to the benefit of all, so that every resident in our town has a stake in its future prosperity.

We will be an efficient Council that works with and supports local businesses. Protecting and investing in our much loved discretionary services will be at the heart of this Council's mission, because we recognise the vital part they play in the quality and standard of resident's living.

Our ambitious council house building programme will deliver a greater number of council homes. Creating homes that will give more of our residents a personal stake in our town. Greater numbers of council homes will also help to support those who are amongst the lowest paid in our society. Our commitment to Harlow North and the Harlow Gilston Garden Town partnership will ensure that not only are there more homes for the people of Harlow but that they are also in the right place; supported by adequate and sustainable transport infrastructure and local amenities.

This Council will never pursue an agenda of overdevelopment. Whilst this Council recognises the need for more homes, new housing should not infringe upon residents' standard of living. With this in mind, it will be this Council's policy to ensure that development to the South and West of Harlow are opposed and that the impact of any further development to the East of Old Harlow is limited.

The vision and ambitions I have outlined will be achieved through an overarching 'vision statement' supported by 'four key strategic themes'. Harlow is a great place to live and work. This Council will be the main engine for making it an even better place to be; but above all else it will be a council that is there to serve and support the people of Harlow.

Councillor Russell Perrin
Leader of Harlow Council

INTRODUCTION

Our Strategy is a central component of the Council's business planning; and is underpinned by the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and other strategic and operational activities such as service and team planning, Personal Performance Plans (PPPs), governance, and performance management.

The Strategy is for 3 years and will be reviewed and updated in the municipal year 2023-24.

The Council's Cabinet Members and their portfolio responsibilities are set out in the subsequent pages below.

This connected Strategy ensures that everyone in the Council is working towards the same strategic ambitions and that our key strategic themes are achieved. This will be accomplished through the Council's 'delivery plan' for the current financial year (2021/22) and next financial year (2022/23).

To ensure the Council remains on target, its progress against our strategic ambitions will be monitored through the Council's Performance Management Framework, which sets out the mechanisms and the range of tool utilised by Officers and Councillors in gathering and reporting the Council's quarterly performance on service milestones, key performance indicators and the Council's finances.

The Council publishes a statement of its performance each quarter. These reports are presented to Cabinet and when agreed are published here <http://www.harlow.gov.uk/performance-reports>

OUR VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to position the Council to be a vehicle to “extend opportunity and prosperity to all.” Now is the time for joint working and seizing opportunities that will build a lasting legacy of growth, inward investment and shared prosperity for Harlow.

This ambition will be achieved through our four key strategic themes that will guide the focus of this Strategy. These are:

1. Economic Growth

Harlow sits at the heart of the UK Innovation Corridor reaching from London to Cambridge. The Corridor provides the potential for Harlow’s sustained economic growth and future opportunity for increased investment in its infrastructure and take the Town towards a better future post COVID-19. The Council will work with central and local government to pursue the Levelling Up agenda to help enhance local economic growth.

We will position Harlow as a regional centre for arts and culture and unlock the potential of our Local Authority Trading Company to bring greater return for residents.

Through our regeneration programme and the opportunities from economic growth, we will make Harlow a Town fit for the future. The prosperity of the Town will also see our residents developing the skills required to secure employment, accessing good quality housing as part of sustainable and social provision. The regeneration of our Town Centre will further enhance our growth ambitions and create opportunities to welcome business expansion

2. Social Cohesion

Our aim for social cohesion is to have a framework of strategies that builds on our community’s resilience, promotes the health and wellbeing of residents and improves the experience, wellbeing, financial resilience and social mobility of working families.

As a priority, we are determined to deliver a joined up, wrap-around approach that opens the potential to even higher levels of social and economic wellbeing. We will do this by:

- a) Targeting residents who need greater support to realise their life ambition;
- b) Through the ‘Essex Plan for Working Families’ gaining a better insight of the challenges faced by working families in Harlow and the support they need.
- c) Working with community leaders, employers, health and care authorities and professionals, police and criminal justice organisations, faith and charitable groups.

- d) Promoting the benefits of inclusion by building on existing networks with a renewed focus on engagement to strengthen the bond between the Council and each part of the community that makes Harlow a great place to live.

We will do this through an enhanced commitment to promote and deliver tangible actions that increases inclusion and boost community engagement. We will reduce anti-social behaviour and the influence of gangs; support our local Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority communities to thrive and work with local our health professionals and authorities to address the impact of long COVID.

3. Safeguarding the Environment

The safeguarding our Town's environment for future generations has never had a greater imperative. Our aim is to improve the cleanliness of the Town and identify practical measures that will enhance our Town.

We will promote green enterprise and technological innovation, enhance our existing environment and support the use of more renewable energy sources. Through the opportunities of the Garden Town, ensure the full benefits of the development around our Town are realised by residents including taking forward changes in our environment and sustainable transport.

The Council aim is to significantly reduce its carbon footprint and achieve the government's targets for Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Council's target for Net Zero is 10 years (2040) before the government's commitment. Through our new Carbon Reduction Plan (April 2021 – March 2026), we will further deliver carbon savings from our operations in that period and begin the critical work required to meet Net Zero by 2040.

4. An Efficient Council

Our aim is to establish the foundations for a sustainable future for the Council, where we focus on what matters most to our residents and adds most value to their lives. However, the challenges of managing the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the already significant constraints on our finances, means we need to ensure the services we provide are efficient and affordable. We will do this by:

- a) Maximising operational efficiency by transforming Council services to meet modern ways of working;
- b) Ensuring clear service priorities that are aligned with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- c) Taking a more commercial approach to increase income yield from specific regeneration opportunities in the years to come;

- d) Increasing the income yield from financial investments as part of a prudent treasury management approach, including, challenging existing cost estimates and unavoidable cost increases;
- e) Reducing the reliance on government grants for the funding of ongoing services;
and
- f) Maximising operational efficiency through the transformation of Council services to meet modern ways of working.

COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS RESILIENCE



“The pandemic has tested the resilience of our community. Residents continue to show a great deal of courage and a determination to support those most vulnerable to the virus. There have been many personal sacrifices that mean a focus on an economic and social recovery is crucial as we cautiously look forward to our post-COVID future.

The local economy is the beating heart of growth and the rising levels of productivity in the East of England. It is our plan to accelerate and to promote innovation, attract new businesses and do everything possible to work with Essex County Council and the Government to address local labour market challenges.

A strong local economy empowers our community and delivers greater shared prosperity, but we must not be complacent about the human cost of the pandemic. Through renewed community leadership, our administration will build a social and economic recovery built around supporting equal life chances and access to opportunities, no matter your age, race, sexual orientation, faith, ability or background, is the key.

Nobody in our community should be left behind as a result of the pandemic. Our administration wants to ensure that Harlow residents can access the benefits of future business growth by acquiring the new skills employers need or supporting individuals to successfully start a business of their own. We will seek to attract support to make this happen through upskilling and reskilling opportunities.

Our focus on community and business resilience will enhance inclusion by focusing on a community agenda that promotes social inclusion and fully embraces the rich diversity in the Town’s population. The route to a better future is about enhancing opportunity, and we plan to build on the successful community response delivered during the lockdowns. This will lay the foundations for future years that ensures everyone benefits from the recovery.

To achieve this vision, we will look to boost community engagement, invest in innovative voluntary projects, steer young people away from the vicious cycle of crime, support our most vulnerable residents, make our streets safer, encourage and support the performing arts, address wellbeing challenges and promote the value of working together to address the social and economic challenges our town must confront to build a better tomorrow.

It is a privilege to lead the Town’s post-COVID reconstruction. Our administration recognises the responsibility entrusted in us to deliver for Harlow at a time of crisis. We will move forward in earnest to deliver on the people’s priorities.”

Councillor Joel Charles
Deputy Leader of the Council
Portfolio Holder for Community and Business Resilience

Strategic Ambitions for Community Resilience

At the heart of our policy agenda is a determination to promote social inclusion, the need to respond to the challenges faced by our community during the pandemic and a commitment to build a future post-COVID that delivers more opportunities for all residents to succeed.

Set out below are the short, medium and long-term ambitions envisaged to achieve our aspirations for Community Resilience.

Short-term Ambitions	Medium-term Ambitions	Long-term Ambitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the town through the initial post-COVID recovery, working closely with community leaders to co-create a response. • Support the town's voluntary and charitable groups to thrive. • Provide community leadership to address immediate COVID-19 related public health challenges. • Tackle anti-social behaviour in all its forms in partnership with the police and criminal justice partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed a focus on social inclusion across all activities in Harlow Council. • Continue to promote safeguarding best practice to ensure vulnerable groups in our community receive the right support. • Enhance the capability of the council to engage more with the community through more proactive consultation methods. • Support the development of more opportunities for residents to learn, earn and start a family in Harlow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to guarantee the financial security of the council's non-statutory community services. • Adopt a more targeted approach to supporting the most vulnerable in our community by using council funding to scale up interventions that address wider health and wellbeing challenges. • Position the HTS Group as a leading provider of public sector services (responding to housing need and the regeneration agenda) in Harlow and the wider East of England.

Strategic Outcomes for Community Resilience

The following Strategies will support the delivery and outcomes of our strategic aspirations Community Resilience. These are:

- **Community Resilience Strategy:** A single strategic focus to promote and actively enhance social inclusion, by working with community leaders, including the local charitable sector, faith groups and residents' associations to confront exclusion and provide opportunities for all.
- **Health and Wellbeing Strategy:** Work with the Princess Alexandra Hospital, the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and other health and care professionals to address gaps in public health provision and raise awareness through prevention campaigns.

- **Community Safety Strategy:** Tackle the root causes of anti-social behaviour and crime by working with local policing leads and criminal justice partners to support rehabilitation initiatives. We will also address issues impacting on the safety of the Town's streets by working more closely with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex.
- **Community Engagement:** Improved two-way conversation between the Council and residents to help shape the development of community services, allowing people to take a more direct role in the decision making process.

Strategic Ambitions for Business Resilience

Set out below are the short, medium and long-term ambitions envisaged to achieve our aspirations for Business Resilience.

Short-term Ambitions	Medium-term Ambitions	Long-term Ambitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the immediate economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are understood and addressed to support the recovery. • Work with partners at a county and national level to support the implementation of a youth employment and skills plan e.g. Kick Start • Continue to attract businesses in the target sectors of advanced manufacturing, life sciences, MedTech, digital and ICT to the Harlow Innovation Park. • Work with local businesses to ensure there is a strengthened and one single organisation that is empowered to represent their best interests. • Ensure Phase 1 of the Innovation Park is operating near to / at full capacity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a refreshed Economic Development Strategy to chart the course to maximise economic recovery and the benefits from investment over the medium to long-term • Ensure that increased numbers of innovative businesses are attracted to the Harlow Innovation Park and other business centres in the town. • Ensure the Government investment programmes that support economic recovery and levelling up are secured for Harlow. • Ensure economic recovery is supported through actively encouraging local anchor institutions to open opportunities for local procurement, supply chain development, employment and education/skills opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Harlow is perceived as the successful centre of economic growth within west Essex and eastern Hertfordshire. • Work to ensure the supply of space for business expansion opportunities in Harlow and the wider Garden Town to support economic growth. • Collaborate further with Essex County Council and the Government to raise awareness of local labour market challenges in Harlow and close gaps in the market.

Strategic Outcomes for Business Resilience

The following strategic outcomes have been identified for Business Resilience. These are:

- Harlow to become an economic powerhouse in the East of England and as part of the UK Innovation Corridor, which enables SME's to grow and attract anchor institutions and organisations to further boost the local economy, creating more jobs, opportunities and prosperity.
- New opportunities for high-skilled, long-term jobs, apprenticeships, and training increased through the productivity and outputs of Harlow's local economy – providing more routes for residents to achieve their career ambitions.
- Reduction in youth unemployment.
- Rising levels of working age adults accessing education and skills opportunities to reskill or upskill.
- Increased education and skills training opportunities aligned to local employment and business.
- Increased numbers of businesses and start-ups engaged in business and innovation support programmes.
- Ensure that resident wages reach above national average levels.
- Increased numbers of successful inward investments to Harlow.
- Increased numbers of businesses in Harlow.
- A thriving local labour market that offers high quality jobs.
- Increased supply chain, employment and procurement opportunities with local anchor institutions.
- Increase the value of the visitor economy through supporting the arts, culture, heritage and visitor attractions sector.
- **HTS Group Commercial Strategy:** Create a new vision for the HTS Group to become one of the largest providers of public services in the East of England by reimagining the direction of the Group to achieve a greater return to the taxpayer.

As part of the overall vision, the community and business portfolio contributes to our strategic themes 'economic growth' and social cohesion'. If the Council is to deliver further access to opportunities and routes to increased prosperity it will be important to:

- a) Enhance social inclusion as a mechanism within the community to begin making better progress to transform community engagement, so that better communication is in place to guide residents and families towards support that could be potentially life changing.
- b) Focus our work programme on business resilience, including the promotion of digital innovation and inclusion, up-skilling, sustainability and celebrating the Town's creative and cultural heritage.

STRATEGIC GROWTH



“Harlow has expanded considerably since it was initially developed as a New Town in 1947. In spite of this expansion, Harlow now has two key challenges to overcome: first, it does not have the critical mass to fulfil its vision and ambitions, to attract the investment and the amenities it wants to achieve its economic growth potential, and second; some areas of the Town require regeneration. All of which are a result of age, the economic downturn, a lack of funding, the COVID pandemic and changes in permitted development.

Key to our strategic growth ambitions are measures that bring opportunities for new and existing residents. We are currently taking steps to realise our aspirations through the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, the Local Plan and sustainable transport infrastructure, all of which will aid our strategic growth.

Looking forward, we are excited with our plans for our Town Plan, the creation of a Community Infrastructure Levy plus a host of other regeneration initiatives that will further aid growth and prosperity in Harlow. These opportunities will stimulate the critical mass and infrastructure required to deliver and support existing and new communities in a sustainable way.”

Councillor Michael Hardware
Portfolio Holder for Strategic Growth

Strategic Ambitions

Set out below are the short, medium and long term ambitions envisaged to achieve our aspirations for Strategic Growth.

Short-term Ambitions	Medium-term Ambitions	Long-term Ambitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities for innovative service provision on a business case basis. • Develop a new governance process for the Harlow & Gilston Garden Town to speed up delivery. • Support the development and implementation of the new M11 junction 7a. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable the broader regeneration of the existing Town • Increase local engagement in the planning process, ensuring greater openness and transparency. • Integrate the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town into Harlow to ensure a cohesive and inclusive community. • Create a Rolling Infrastructure Fund to help deliver investment in Harlow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop schemes for new Sustainable Transport Corridors and Road improvement. • Facilitate modal shift to sustainable transport modes through investment and support of low and no carbon travel options.

Strategic Outcomes

The following strategic outcomes have been identified for Strategic Growth. These are:

- Review of the Local Development Plan (Local Plan) policies and objectives completed to ensure they are up to date.
- Deliver the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town programme in conjunction with Garden Town neighbours.
- Create a Community Infrastructure Levy to deliver further infrastructure support for the Town.
- A planning process, which is transparent and actively engages residents, encouraging them to participate both at a high level, when policies are being written, and when applications have been submitted.
- Ensure Harlow both old and new has the latest digital infrastructure and is future proofed to accommodate technological developments around the corner.
- The creation of effective Sustainable Transport Corridors, including supporting a fast and affordable rails links to London and other regional hubs.
- Implement a Strategic Infrastructure programme to support the growth of the Town e.g. The River Stort Crossings and Sustainable Transport Corridors.

The Portfolio for strategic growth will be integral to the delivery of three of the four Strategic Themes. Our strategic ambitions will ensure our strategic themes are delivered so that new and existing communities will be able to thrive in the new sustainable Harlow of the future. Harlow is at the heart of the UK Innovation Corridor. This will ensure Harlow's sustainable strategic economic growth and further opportunities for future and sustained investment.

HOUSING



“The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a direct economic and social impact on people’s lives and future prosperity. The Council’s focus in this strategy will therefore be on establishing a strong recovery for Housing Services tackling housing need, providing support for tenants/leaseholders and re-establishing the delivery of the Housing Investment Programme (HIP) to keep our stock to the highest quality, safe, and improving housing conditions. The Council will work with its partner Harlow Trading Service (HTS) Housing & Regeneration Ltd, the private sector and registered social landlords to pursue this aim.

The Council continues to receive additional government grant to help and support those who find themselves sleeping rough with our Partner “Streets2Homes”. Together we are finding more settled housing solutions. We will continue to support tenants and leaseholders in financial difficulties with help and access to Government support.

The Council has a principle role in all this through its substantial proportion of the housing stock. We are determined that our homes are safe and well maintained. We want everyone to have a home they can afford and, where they wish, to raise a family in neighbourhoods where there is social cohesion and community wellbeing.

We have an ambition to build more council homes. We want all of our homes to be sustainable and affordable to heat, meeting the latest building standards. To achieve all this we will talk to our tenants, leaseholders and residents, to explain what we are doing and why. We will find out more about the people who live in our properties so that our services meet their needs. This is an ambitious plan, but we have the drive and ambition to see it delivered.”

Councillor Simon Carter
Portfolio Holder for Housing

Strategic Ambitions

Set out below are the short, medium and long term ambitions envisaged to achieve our aspirations for Housing.

Short-term Ambitions	Medium-term Ambitions	Long-term Ambitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify preliminary council owned sites for all tenures appropriate for new housebuilding.• Identify housing needs to inform the type of housing that would be required for new housebuilding.• Improve the cleanliness of the communal areas in flat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In conjunction with Regeneration develop a house building plan for identified council owned sites.• Continue to tackle poverty and inequality by delivering housing strategies.• Deliver plans and strategies for affordable housing. This	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All neighbourhoods to be desirable places in which to live with homes that are safe, secure, and appropriate for people at different points in their lives.• Ensure future housing plans and strategies are aligned to the new national Housing White Paper.

Short-term Ambitions	Medium-term Ambitions	Long-term Ambitions
<p>blocks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the customer experience with the Council's repairs service • Continue to make the best use of and invest in our homes, tackling local priorities, prioritising energy efficiency schemes that can make a difference in tackling climate change and fuel poverty in line with the Government's Green Paper. • Enable an improved conversation between the Council and tenants/leaseholders to help shape the continued development of housing services, allowing people to take a more active role in policy making. • Tackling homelessness, by providing more choices for those in housing need increasing the promotion of wider housing options and use of the private sector. • Ensure homes are decent, compliant, safe, affordable, and accessible to promote good physical and mental health and wellbeing and which are fit for the future. 	<p>will include carbon reduction methods such as new boilers, roof installations (retrofitting).</p>	

Strategic Outcomes

The following Strategies will support the delivery and outcomes of our strategic aspirations for Housing. These are:

- **Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy.** Work with residents and deliver services in an open, transparent, and accountable way.
- **Allocations and Homelessness Strategies.** Ensure actions plans are delivered, prioritised, and focussed to meet local housing need.
- **Affordable Housing Strategy.** Grow by building new council homes that are affordable and meet local housing need. More residents in their own home whether its Council or private.
- **Sub Regional Strategy.** Play a leading and influential role regionally and nationally within the housing sector. Actively seek partnership opportunities with other housing providers.
- **Housing Regulatory Plan.** Invest in and deliver good housing regulatory governance, improving services.
- **Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.** Invest in securing and keeping the best talent in housing services. Use housing assets effectively and support sound financial health and sustainability.
- Focus on **Supported Housing Service** to ensure a “needs led“ service taking advantage of any changes to the Social Care legislation and associated funding.

Good quality affordable housing of all tenures that is appropriate for people at different points in their lives is a cornerstone of a successful and growing Town. The Housing Portfolio contributes to a number of the key strategic themes as part of the overall vision of this administration to level up the Town.

REGENERATION



“Sir Frederick Gibberd’s foresight in the form of the masterplan for Harlow New Town in 1947, envisaged the Town “*as an organism which would go on changing and being rebuilt as the needs of people altered*”. Now, 74 years on we have reached the great rebuilding stage and will rise to the occasion.

The Portfolio will begin a programme of regeneration and renewal not seen since the Town was built. Embedding the Gibberd principles will unleash the potential of our great Town to spread opportunity and prosperity to all.

The scale of the task cannot be underestimated. However, our programme will ensure that Harlow is truly fit for the future. Opportunity and prosperity will be reflected across all areas of the Town and resident’s lives. Harlow’s renewal will be kick started with a radical and transformational programme in delivering residents priorities.

Our programme will not only ensure that Harlow truly is fit for the future, but that opportunity and prosperity are reflected no matter which street corner you stand on and no matter where you look from your window. Harlow truly will be one of the best towns in Britain and that journey will be kick-started with radically transformational regeneration and renewal delivering on the people’s priorities.”

Councillor Dan Swords
Portfolio Holder for Regeneration

Strategic Ambitions

Set out below are the short, medium and long term ambitions envisaged to achieve our aspirations for Regeneration.

Short-term Ambitions	Medium-term Ambitions	Long-term Ambitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conjunction with Housing develop a housing building plan for identified council owned sites. • Develop a Neighbourhood Renewal Plan. • Ensure all external communication activities are targeted to reflect the ambitions from the Corporate Strategy. • Bring forward a Town Centre Master Plan to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a successful Joint Venture(s) partnership(s) to rebuild the Town Centre as part of the new master plan for Harlow • Roll out a once-in-a-generation programme of Neighborhood Renewal for key infrastructure such as our estates, hatches, neighborhood centers, leisure, and cultural assets. • Ensuring the medium to long term viability of key 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a new wave of high-quality Council homes to ensure we meet the local housing needs. • Ensure all growth is in line with our ambitious Town Plan for Harlow for the next 30 years.

Short-term Ambitions	Medium-term Ambitions	Long-term Ambitions
<p>provide an effective planning framework.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the commercial element of Building Control. • Establish a new build growth plan for the Innovation Park and the Enterprise Zones. 	<p>employment areas in the Town.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a fully independent and interconnected cycle track network. • Work with non-Council owned community assets to regenerate their sites leveraging outside investment to level up non-Council owned assets. • Ensure the delivery of regeneration is in line with the sustainable growth of Harlow. • Reform the Planning service to encourage greater regeneration of the Town, e.g. 'one stop shop'. 	

Strategic Outcomes

- Harlow town centre will be thriving as one of the best places in the country to enjoy high-end retail, leisure, hospitality, arts and culture including a night-time economy and an excellent quality of environment and public realm with people travelling to the town centre from other areas in the region to enjoy its offerings.
- Harlow's neighbourhoods will be injected with a new lease of life to mirror the anticipated quality of development and life envisaged for the wider Harlow & Gilston Garden Town and absolutely in accordance with the Gibberd principles, restoring pride in all corners of the existing town boundary.
- The Town will be interconnected with a cycle track network independent from the road.
- Residents in the Town will benefit from a renewed sense of pride in the appearance and function of the town centre, hatches, neighbourhood centres and estates.
- All stakeholders and growth partners will share and deliver an ambitious, holistic vision for Harlow.
- More Harlow residents will have their own home whether Council or privately owned.

- Harlow's Innovation Park and Enterprise Zones will be occupied and thriving with industry-leading businesses supported in first class environment and infrastructure.

Our ambition to achieve this regeneration will ensure this Portfolio will contribute to the significant progress in achieving our key strategic themes, all of which will provide opportunities that will help deliver sustainable, inclusive growth and prosperity for Harlow.

FINANCE



“Finance features at the heart of the development and delivery of this ambitious Corporate Strategy and its underpinning core themes of opportunity and prosperity. This delivery involves the reprioritisation of both the financial and human resources across the organisation.

Resources are and will continue to be scarce. It will be a key challenge to maximise our resources through innovative and new ways of working both internally, and with partners – in both the public and private sectors. Finance will work closely with other portfolios to explore and develop commercialisation opportunities to create new revenue streams.

Development of the Council’s workforce is critical to support the ever changing skill requirements that will facilitate our ambitions. Harlow needs a Council that is fit for the future. The Council will meet resident’s needs, using skills and expertise from within and outside of the Council. These skills and expertise will provide the necessary support as we venture into new delivery models and funding arrangements.

We will undertake a full review of the Council owned property portfolio to ensure that revenue generating opportunities are not missed. These measures are consistent with the aim of this Council to reduce both the burden of and reliance on local taxation, but not at the risk of devaluing or undermining our much loved discretionary services.”

Councillor James Leppard
Portfolio Holder for Finance

Strategic Ambitions

Set out below are the short, medium and long term ambitions envisaged to achieve our aspirations for Finance.

Short-term Ambitions	Medium-term Ambitions	Long-term Ambitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a financially efficient, low tax Authority that maximises revenue generating opportunities and efficiencies gains; delivers value for money and protects its discretionary services. • Develop a property portfolio management strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A workforce that is agile and has skills required to drive forward services. • Review the Treasury Management Strategy. • Develop financial models to support the regeneration programme. • Develop a Risk Management Strategy. • Develop an IT Strategy that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A financially sound Council. • Update the Councils’ Asset Management Plan

Short-term Ambitions	Medium-term Ambitions	Long-term Ambitions
	meets the future needs of residents and the Council.	

Strategic Outcomes

- Deliver a sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy which protects discretionary services and reduces the local taxation burden in real terms. Any reduction in local taxation will not be made at the cost of discretionary services.
- The Council's Accommodation Review completed. The Strategy and Action Plan implemented
- A robust approach to risk and adoption of a Risk Management Strategy.
- A new IT Strategy and Action Plan to meet the future needs of our residents and staff.
- Asset Management Plan updated to drive a five year capital investment programme.
- A financial framework and package that supports the Administration's regeneration objectives.

The Finance Portfolio contributes to the achievement of three of the key strategic themes. Our ambition to be a low tax authority impacts directly on the economic wellbeing of our residents. Our strategic ambition will make the Council more efficient and more able to serve the Town.

GOVERNANCE



“Governance features at the heart of the development and delivery of this ambitious Corporate Strategy and its underpinning core themes of opportunity and prosperity. This delivery involves the reprioritisation of human resources across the organisation.

It will be a key challenge of this Portfolio to explore innovative and new ways of working. We will endeavour to explore commercial opportunities that support our key strategic themes. This development of the Council’s workforce is critical to support the ever changing skill requirements that facilitates our ambitions.

It will also be a priority of this Administration to improve voters engagement in the democratic process.

Local businesses will be supported, developed and promoted through innovative procurement strategies

Climate change is one of the most significant threats facing the world. One of the largest factors contributing to climate change is man-made emissions, especially those relating to the use of non-sustainable power sources. The Council recognises that action must be taken quickly in order to prevent climate change from causing irreversible damage to the planet.

One of our key strategic ambition for this Portfolio is to step up this Council’s plan to get to Net Zero and show civic leadership in tackling climate change. This is critical if we are to safeguard the environment and to ensure Harlow is a Town fit for the future.

Councillor Alastair Gunn
Portfolio Holder for Governance

Strategic Ambitions

Set out below are the short, medium and long term ambitions envisaged to achieve our aspirations for Finance and Governance.

Short-term Ambitions	Medium-term Ambitions	Long-term Ambitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Authority that values its staff and ensures that they are able to deliver future services that meet the changing needs of the Town. Ensure, as far as we are able to do so under law that procurement activities provide equality of opportunity for local business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a people centred approach to services for residents and business based on customer insight and associated demand. Develop a Commercial Strategy. Develop a Strategy & Action Plan for the outcomes of the Accommodation Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reform Election cycle. Meet target of net zero emissions from Council operations in advance of the Government target of 2050.

Short-term Ambitions	Medium-term Ambitions	Long-term Ambitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop opportunities to increase greater democratic engagement • Explore opportunities for shared service provision on a business case basis. • Ensure existing and new contracts deliver for the people of Harlow. • Ensure the Council's Constitution enables it to deliver the priorities of the Administration in both an efficient, but democratically fair manner. • The Equality, Diversity Inclusivity Policy is embedded in the Council's functions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all procurement activities support the Council's Carbon Reduction Plan. • Identify ways in which parking provision can be enhanced to prevent inappropriate use of green spaces and access difficulties. 	

Strategic Outcomes

- A longer term organisational People and Resource Plan developed to support an agile workforce.
- A Customer Services Strategy and Action Plan that responds to changing customer demands.
- The procurement of goods, works and services are open, fair, ethical, lawful, and transparent, which benefits local businesses.
- Opportunities improved for residents to participate in local democracy and decision making. Improved democratic equality through the electoral services review process.
- Implementation of the Equality and Diversity Action Plan and processes.
- Activities that contributes to the Carbon Reduction Plan are reflected across the Council.
- An effective way developed to measure the Council's carbon footprint, which includes targets that are evidenced based and a new carbon management plan to achieve Net Zero.

- Programme delivered for the installation of electric vehicle charging points across Harlow.
- Deliver year-on-year improvements in the Council's recycling rates; and the operations for refuse collection.

The Governance Portfolio contributes to the achievement of a number of our key strategic themes. Our procurement policies will provide economic opportunities for SMEs in the Town. Residents will have good customer experiences and the opportunity to put their views to the Council; as well as those residents in the greatest need to interact with the Council regardless of their backgrounds. These ambitions will support the Council and the Town for the future.

ENVIRONMENT



“Within and beyond the challenges posed by the urgent need to respond to climate change is an opportunity to enhance Harlow’s environment. Addressing the downward trend in the cleanliness of the Town and its street scene by reinvigorating the Town’s green and open spaces through a new approach to promote biodiversity. We can once more make Harlow a place that people are proud to live in and be the best place to start and bring up a family.”

Councillor Nicky Purse
Portfolio Holder for Environment

Strategic Ambitions

Set out below are the short, medium and long term ambitions envisaged to achieve our aspirations for Environment.

Short-term Ambitions	Medium-term Ambitions	Long-term Ambitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustain and improve cleanliness of the Town with the maintenance and protection of open spaces• Improve Harlow’s bio-diversity through an active tree planting programme and creation of a variety of wildlife habitats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop an overarching Climate Change Strategy for Harlow which will support residents and businesses to make informed choices about actions which will reduce carbon emissions.• Review the Tree Maintenance Policy• A survey of the Council’s Trees undertaken using GIS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop new a proactive strategy to prevent littering

Strategic Outcomes

- The Council’s ‘community leadership’ role will be strengthened through the production of a Climate Change Strategy for Harlow.
- Continue to exceed Keep Britain Tidy standards in the maintenance of the Town’s environment.
- Bio-diversity improved through a programme of tree planting and a variety of habitats.
- Policy for Tree Maintenance developed.
- Programme developed for Tree maintenance.

The ambitions and outcomes outlined here will be the primary mechanism for the Council delivering against its Strategic Theme of 'Safeguarding the Environment'. Harlow's natural environment is highly regarded by residents as one of the town's core assets and the Council will work to protect and enhance this. Also, this will contribute significantly to the theme of developing a 'Town for the Future'. Attracting the right investment to Harlow will to a large extent be dependent upon the town providing an attractive environment for residents, businesses and visitors.