

# CORPORATE PLAN

# 2022 : 2027



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# Foreword

by Cllr  
Chris White,  
Leader



Our new Council leadership team has been designed with the future in mind. We want to create the best environment we can to provide an outstanding customer experience for residents and streamline and modernise Council operations, so they are as efficient and cost effective as possible.



The Council has moved swiftly to take a local lead on tackling the Climate Emergency and to address the shortage of social housing by building more homes for people on our housing register. These, together with our desire to support local businesses and communities as they emerge from the ravages of the pandemic, and the replacement of aging facilities across the District, remain our priorities.

Coronavirus has had devastating social and economic impact and there remains much uncertainty. We have had to make tough choices about our spending and how we operate so that we address the huge hole in our finances left in the aftermath of the pandemic, and continued cuts from government. A large part of the Council's work this year will be about filling our budget gap and reshaping our services for the digital age.

The Council's new structure will help us to weather the storms ahead and refocus our activities to put residents and their needs front and central in our service provision.

Our new Council leadership team has been designed with the future in mind. We want to create the best environment we can to provide an outstanding customer experience for residents and streamline and modernise Council operations, so they are as efficient and cost effective as possible.

## Combat the climate emergency

The Council's **Sustainability and Climate Crisis Strategy**, developed with Sustainable St Albans, St Albans Friends of the Earth and a range of other environmental groups, sets out the actions we will take locally to make the Council's, and the community's, carbon emissions net zero by 2030.



Our developing Local Plan – the blueprint for what can be built how and where for the next two decades - presents opportunities to hardwire sustainability into local development activities so that inevitable growth can be managed effectively.

Much can be achieved through encouragement, leadership and partnership. Our work must dovetail with that of the County Council to take advantage of developing public transport infrastructure and to ensure highways can be improved to make travel easier for pedestrians and cyclists.

## Deliver more social housing



Our beautiful surroundings and location mean there is high demand for housing in the District. Many local people find they cannot afford to buy or rent here.

The Council is building new homes for social rent, but more are needed. Such housing is delivered in various ways: through the planning system, through Council-owned housing, and through partnerships using direct investment and joint ventures. The principal demand in the District is for three-bedroom homes.

New housing schemes will need to involve a mix of housing to provide Council income or profits from sale, and social housing and rules for the percentage of social housing need to be flexible to deal with individual circumstances. But in general, projects controlled by the Council should involve 40% social housing, measured by projected value. An exception to this would be where housing is being provided to fund investment in community facilities, where a greater proportion of homes may be needed for sale.

We are also closely monitoring turnaround times for dealing with empty Council-owned properties so families in need can be housed more quickly. And we need to prioritise the climate emergency when it comes to ensuring that homes are warm, dry and energy efficient.

## Enhance local business



Covid-19 has taken its toll on businesses, but this is not their only challenge. Speak to any local business owner locally and the high cost of housing, staff and skills shortages, the inequitable business rates system, and the loss of office accommodation are likely to come up in conversation.

While some of these things require Government action at a national level, we can play our part locally. There is a need for new plans, for example in the areas of street markets, city centre vision, cultural strategy and visitor destination management. We will continue to work with our partners on these. The museum service is a unique cornerstone for the active promotion of the City and District providing rich cultural opportunities throughout the year for local people and visitors alike and supporting city centre vibrancy. Above all we need to ensure that we continue to listen to business and work with our partners to address their needs.

## Support our communities

We continue to work with town and parish councils to consider further devolution of community assets so we can achieve the best outcomes for local people.



Communities depend on facilities. Huge improvements have been made to local leisure, and cultural facilities in recent years, and in 2021 we opened the new Harpenden Leisure Centre and a beautiful new theatre - The Eric Morecambe Centre. We are now turning our attention to overhauling some of our community centres. Our work to develop a new community centre to replace the Marlborough Pavilion in the Sopwell area is due to be completed as I write this foreword, and Fleetville Community Centre is being planned.

The Council's own commercial and development operations will continue to be our primary means of delivering many of our social housing and community facility improvements. Such operations will also generate investment income to fund more housing locally, especially much needed social rented homes, and to regenerate Council assets to support future retail, commercial, cultural and community needs.



# Foreword by Amanda Foley, Chief Executive



Photo: Stephanie Belton

The pandemic has challenged us all severely. Yet it has also provided an opportunity to rethink the way we do things and to seize the moment for transformational change.

We are making major changes to the way we work to become a more adaptable council; better able to respond to financial pressures, shifting expectations and the pace of change, and constantly learning and innovating. Our new operating model has been designed to tackle these challenges

Our digital transformation has already accelerated beyond anything we could have anticipated two years ago, and our drive to create an increasingly modern and efficient council is firmly underway.

My role, as Chief Executive, is to ensure the Council is ready for whatever lies ahead. Our 'Building our Future' programme has, at its heart, the provision of a great customer experience for our residents, delivering high quality local services and developing high performing teams.

Many of our staff live locally and have a strong sense of service and connection with the District and a high degree of engagement. Caring for our community, working together, and developing confident people is at the heart of our values and behaviours, which are underpinned by being customer driven and trusted as individuals and as an organisation.

Recovery from the pandemic is still an important focus for us currently. Many local people and business have been hit hard over recent years and continue to need our support.

Our strong partnerships are a distinctive feature of the way we work and are helping us to build capacity to deliver in challenging circumstances. With our partner councils, we are playing a central role in the future growth of Hertfordshire and working hard to deliver on our climate change objectives. Locally, we have strong community cohesion and a sense of place, with very high levels of educational attainment, civic pride and community engagement. People expect quality in their public services, and this is what we want to provide.

# The Council's vision and priorities

**Our overarching vision is to develop and sustain a vibrant economy; a thriving community; a great place to live and work; and a cost-effective Council.**

**Outside the Covid-19 response, our four key priorities, designed to deliver a viable, happy, inclusive and sustainable community, are to:**



**Combat the climate emergency**



**Deliver more social housing**



**Enhance local business**



**Develop community facilities**

# The Context of Our Work: The District In Numbers

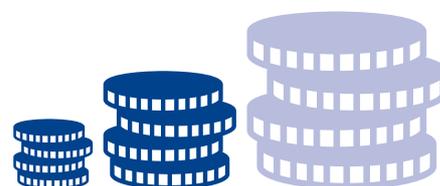
## District

Population	<b>148,200</b>
Size	<b>16,121 hectares</b>
Houses (and other dwellings)	<b>62,365</b>
Band D Council Tax properties	<b>16,437</b>
Businesses	<b>8,000</b>
Employment rate	<b>80,000 economically active people</b> (Jan 2021-Dec 2021)
Workplace earnings	<b>£33,774</b> (lowest in Herts)
Resident earnings	<b>£45,727</b> (highest in Herts)
Average salary – men	<b>£40,064</b>
Average salary – women	<b>£29,115</b>
Residents with HND, degree (NVQ 4) or above	<b>60,200</b>
MPs	<b>2</b>

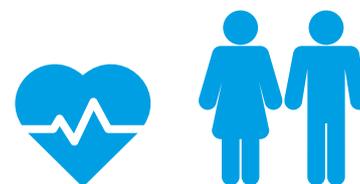


## Council

Net Expenditure	<b>£17.5m</b>
Housing Revenue Account	<b>£30.3m</b>
Business Rates Retained	<b>£2.3m</b>
Council Staff	<b>382</b>



# The Context of Our Work: The District In Numbers



## Public health

Life expectancy at birth

Male	<b>81.8</b> England average: 79.4
Female	<b>85.4</b> England average: 83.1
GP practices	<b>12</b>
Hospital	<b>1</b>

## Planning and housing

Average house price	<b>£585,000</b>
Greenbelt	<b>82%</b>
Annual Planning and Building Control Applications	<b>5,137</b>
Additional dwellings per year estimated required	<b>892</b>
Houses built per year	<b>397</b>
Council owned and managed dwellings	<b>4,943</b>



## Democracy and customer services

Wards	<b>20</b>
Elected members	<b>56</b>
Parish councils	<b>8</b>
Town council	<b>1</b>
Councillor meetings per year	<b>c. 88</b>

Over **102,678** calls received by our Customer Service Centre every year.



# The Context of Our Work: The District In Numbers

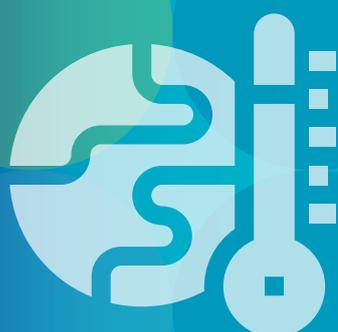


## Community, leisure and sport

Libraries	6
Primary Schools	10
Secondary Schools	11
Further Education Colleges	1
Managed Parks and Open Spaces	111
Leisure Centres and Sports Facilities	24
Cemeteries	3
Museums	2
Heritage Sites	+700 (3 managed by Council)
Charter Market	1
Visitors to St. Albans per Year	c. 1,217,000 trips
CCTV monitoring and control centres	1
Recycling rate - measured by weight	c. 62%



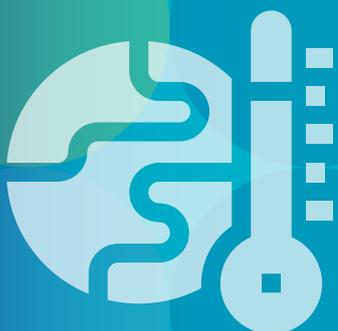
# Combat the climate emergency: Priority Projects 2022/23



Project	Directorate Lead	Lead Councillor	Timescales
Take forward the <a href="#">Sustainability and Climate Crisis Strategy and Action Plan</a> Themes: governance and leadership; energy use; transport and air quality; waste; nature and food; water and climate change adaptation	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Policy Committee	As specified in the Action Plan
Progress the new Local Plan	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Policy Committee	Local Plan Regulation 18 public consultation in 2022/2023 (TBC)
Adopt an energy strategy for Council housing stock using Government grant funding and funding from the Housing Revenue Account	Community and Place Delivery Directorate	Chair of Housing and Inclusion Committee	Strategy to take effect in 2022/23
Publication of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Policy Committee	Summer 2022
Implement a new operating model for the Council which supports the delivery of a more sustainable organisation, using digital technologies to support a more flexible and mobile workforce; reduced and better use of Council office space; and the continuing development of online services for residents (includes implementation of the Council's 'Digital and ICT Strategy' and 'Customer Engagement Strategy')	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Vice Chair of Policy Committee	Phased implementation as part of the Council's Building Our Future programme

# Combat the climate emergency: Priority Projects 2022/23

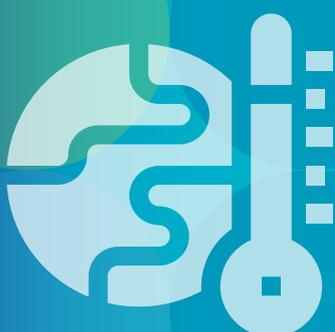
Project	Directorate Lead	Lead Councillor	Timescales
Progress the River Ver and Verulamium Lakes development Project	Community & Place Delivery Directorate	Chair of Public Realm Committee	<p><b>Outline timeframe:</b></p> <p>Complete outline designs – April 2022</p> <p>Public consultation of detailed designs – May 2022</p> <p>Planning application submission – June 2022</p> <p>Procurement of construction contract – August/September 2022</p>
<p>Progress the installation of solar PV panels on additional Council buildings. Options to consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sandridge Gate Business Centre</li> <li>• Russell Avenue Car Park</li> <li>• Drovers Way Car Park</li> </ul>	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Policy Committee	March 2023



# Combat the climate emergency: other key background work in 2022/23

(in addition to core business)

Item	Department / Team Leading	Lead Councillor	Timing
Lead initiatives to reduce the impact of aircraft pollution and noise arising from proposals to expand Luton Airport capacity	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Policy Committee	Work to continue during the year
Implement 'Towards a Wilder St Albans' project - with Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust	Community & Place Delivery Directorate	Chair of Policy Committee	Work to continue during the year
Improve the energy efficiency of Council office buildings informed by the outcomes of energy audits and solar panel feasibility studies	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Policy Committee	Work to continue during the year
Implement a new Parking Strategy and low emissions zones as part of becoming a Greener Parking Authority	Community & Place Delivery Directorate	Chair of Policy Committee	Parking Strategy to be considered in June 2022 by Public Realm Committee



# Deliver more social housing: Priority Projects 2022/23



Item	Department / Team Leading	Lead Councillor	Timing
Complete the social housing development of 6x2-bedroom flats and 6x3-bedroom houses at The Hedges site, Woollam Crescent, St Albans	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Housing and Inclusion Committee /Chair of Regeneration and Business Committee	Expected completion March 2023
Complete the social housing development of two 4-bedroom houses, eleven 3-bedroom houses, and one 2-bedroom bungalow at the former King Offa site, St Albans	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Housing and Inclusion Committee /Chair of Regeneration and Business Committee	Expected completion March 2023
Housing Asset Upgrades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Grade A boilers in 280 properties</li> <li>• New windows and doors in 100 properties</li> <li>• New bathrooms and kitchens in 180 properties</li> <li>• Loft insulation, solar panels and cavity wall insulation in 150 properties identified from the Council's stock condition survey and energy pilot studies</li> </ul>	Community and Place Delivery Directorate	Chair of Housing and Inclusion Committee	Delivery during 2022/23
Complete development at the St Albans City Centre Opportunity Site (CCOS) South <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 33 apartments for social rent</li> <li>• 60 apartments for sale</li> <li>• 6,064 sq metres of office space</li> <li>• 100 car parking spaces</li> </ul>	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Regeneration and Business Committee	Expected completion October 2022

# Deliver more social housing: Priority Projects 2022/23



Item	Department / Team Leading	Lead Councillor	Timing
Progress feasibility study on 3 sites for future social housing development	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Housing and Inclusion Committee / Chair of Regeneration and Business Committee	April 2022
Continue to progress the redevelopment of Ridgeview in London Colney to provide a phase 2 development of 24 market rent apartments	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Regeneration and Business Committee	RIBA stage 2 concept design completed March 2023
Progress the development of Harpenden Public Halls to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 social rent apartments</li> <li>• 16 apartments for sale</li> <li>• 300 sq metres of commercial space</li> <li>• 26 car parking spaces</li> </ul>	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Regeneration and Business Committee	RIBA stage 4 technical design completed by September 2022

# Deliver more social housing: other key background work in 2022/23

(in addition to core business)



Item	Department / Team Leading	Lead Councillor	Timing
Develop new Housing Strategy	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Housing and Inclusion Committee	June 2022
Consider and plan for major national revision of 'Decent Homes Standard'	Community & Place Delivery Directorate	Chair of Housing and Inclusion Committee	March 2023
Support redevelopment of Martin House, Upper Lattimore Road, St Albans to deliver new supported accommodation and community hub	Community & Place Delivery Directorate	Chair of Housing and Inclusion Committee	March 2023

# Enhance local business: Priority Projects 2022/23



Item	Department / Team Leading	Lead Councillor	Timing
Develop a new economic development and regeneration strategy	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Vice Chair of Regeneration and Business Committee	Expected completion September 2022
Implement measures and actions in the Council's Litter Management Strategy	Community & Place Delivery Directorate	Chair of Public Realm Committee	In 2022: review implementation of Litter Strategy to date, create and execute an action plan of outstanding actions (to include parks and green spaces)
Progress development at the St Albans City Centre Opportunity Site (CCOS) North (subject to planning approval)	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Regeneration and Business Committee	RIBA stage 2 concept design completed by March 2023

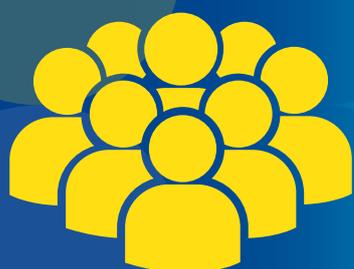
# Enhance local business: other key background work in 2022/23

(in addition to core business)

Item	Department / Team Leading	Lead Councillor	Timing
Update property investment strategy	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Regeneration and Business	February 2023
Continued campaign work with the Herts Waste Partnership and evidence-based enforcement action and use of Fixed Penalty notices to discourage fly-tipping	Community & Place Delivery Directorate	Chair of Public Realm Committee	March 2023



# Support our communities: Priority Projects 2022/23

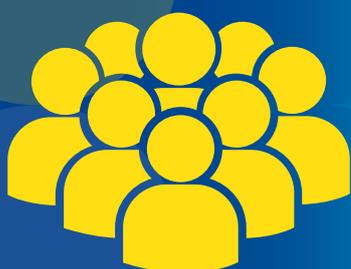


Item	Department / Team Leading	Lead Councillor	Timing
Progress the redevelopment of Fleetville Community Centre for anticipated delivery in November 2023	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Regeneration and Business Committee	RIBA stage 4 technical design completed by September 2022
Progress the redevelopment of the pavilion at Abbey View Sports Complex	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Public Realm Committee	RIBA Stage 1 feasibility study completed by December 2022
Complete the procurement of the leisure management contract with the aim of achieving an outcome which maintains high quality, popular leisure facilities which generate income for the Council	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Public Realm Committee	By November 2022
Implementation of the Review of the Future Operation of the St Albans Charter Market and development of a ten-year business plan for the Markets Service post pandemic recovery with a view to reaching break even by end of 2022/23	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Vice Chair of Regeneration and Business Committee	Break even by March 2023
Explore feasibility and funding options for providing a new skateboard park in St Albans	Strategy, Policy & Transformation Directorate	Chair of Public Realm Committee	Report back to Public Realm Committee June 2022

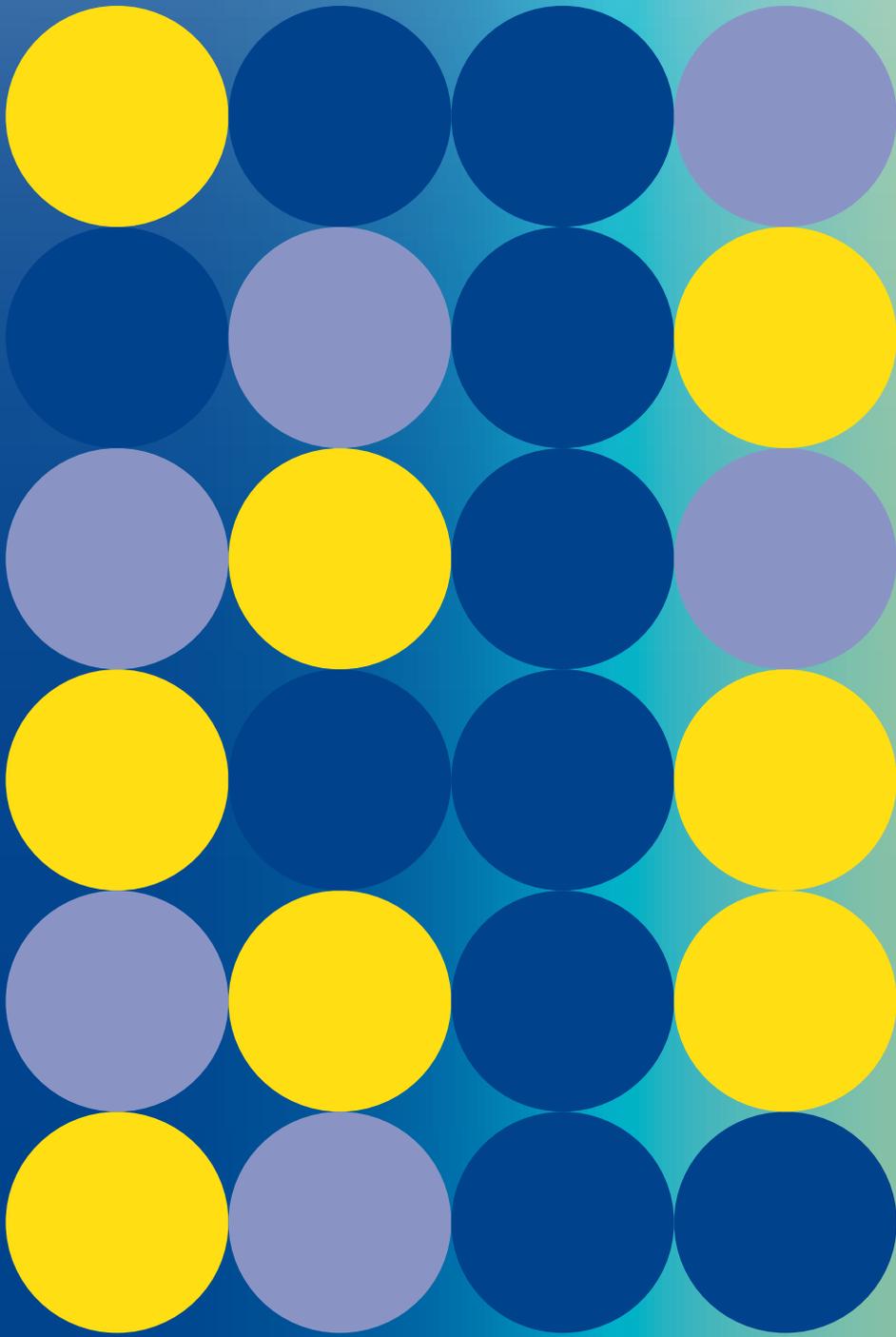
# Support our communities: other key background work in 2022/23

(in addition to core business)

Item	Department / Team Leading	Lead Councillor	Timing
Pandemic recovery – communications, grants, environmental health and economic development activities	All Directorates	Leader/Chair of the Policy Committee	Work to continue during the year
Develop a Women and Girls Safety Strategy through new White Ribbon Group	Community & Place Shaping Delivery	Chair of Housing and Inclusion	September 2022
Implementation of actions set out in new Customer Engagement Strategy	Customer, Business & Corporate Support Directorate	Vice Chair of Policy Committee	Starting February 2022
Support organisational redesign as part of implementation of new operating model linked to the Council's Building Our Future programme	Customer, Business & Corporate Support Directorate	Vice Chair of Policy Committee	Starting January 2022 – phased implementation
Develop new People Strategy (driving employee engagement, productivity, and retention)	Customer, Business & Corporate Support Directorate	Vice Chair of Policy Committee	June 2022
Complete work on Community Governance Review	Customer, Business & Corporate Support Directorate	Vice Chair of Policy Committee	January 2022 -January 2023







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