



St Albans City and District Council

Corporate Plan 2019-2025

Note: This Corporate Plan was agreed by Council at its meeting on 26 February 2020, subject to the identification of a number of additional delivery dates. Officers are working on these currently.

Eventually, this document will be published in designed format.

Foreword by Cllr Chris White, Leader

The Council's four key areas are:

- The climate emergency
- The shortage of social housing
- Improved community facilities
- Creating a business friendly Council

Some of the tasks ahead of us are challenging, especially in relation to the climate emergency and the emerging technologies it demands, such as electric cars. Few of these solutions are significantly free of charge and so, as ever in local government, we will need to look at new funding sources and make tough choices about what we currently spend and how we operate.

However, we are also seeking cultural change in how we do business. The City and District is not an island. It is, of course, unique in Hertfordshire but then so are all the other districts in their different and important ways. For that reason we will work closely with other districts to co-operate on projects and planning of mutual interest and to learn from them as they hopefully learn from us.

Further we will work with the County Council so that we co-operate rather than compete: the public expect there to be a professional relationship between Councils and with other public agencies.

This corporate plan sets out to show how we can deliver these objectives and this cultural transformation as well as our determination to monitor and improve performance.

I welcome feedback so that we can build on these ideas in future years.

As the Leader of an administration forming a Cabinet part way through 2019, and wanting to set out our stall for that period as well as the next, this Corporate Plan starts in 2019.

Chris White

Foreword by Amanda Foley, Chief Executive

As Chief Executive, my role is to ensure the Council is ready for the challenges ahead. Customer focus, developing our workforce and digital transformation – these remain the key building blocks for our future development, and for tackling the areas of focus outlined by Cllr Chris White in his Leader's foreword

Caring for our community, working together, and developing confident people are at the heart of our values and behaviours. These themes are helping us to develop our services to become the trusted and customer driven Council we aspire to be. The outcomes we are working to achieve are: a vibrant economy; a thriving community; a great place to live and work; and a cost-effective Council.

However, we will not be able to do these things successfully acting alone. Effective partnerships lie at the heart of successful delivery. It is partnership working that is helping us to build the capacity needed to be truly transformational. We are stronger together than separately; this is why I am particularly delighted to welcome NHS services to join us at the Civic Centre, with a new Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) funded Healthy Hub alongside. These, and other partner services in the heart of our City and District – including the Police, Communities First and Citizens Advice St Albans – provide a central focus for community service provision. Such proximity means we will be able to refer people in need much more effectively, and we are able to offer a better level of service overall. It also means public services can save money by being smarter about sharing resources.

Our MyStAlbans District digital account, launched in 2018, now has over 17,000 subscribers. This self-service digital platform gives residents instant access to a growing number of Council services. In 2020 we will launch our self-service portal for businesses too. We will also be launching a new website.

Such digital advances mean we have better management information to help us target improvements. But they will also help us to make the biggest transformation of all – that needed to tackle climate issues locally. Our work with partners will continue to be really important.

Amanda Foley, Chief Executive

[Infographics will be updated as appropriate, based on updated information]

District

Population **147,400**

Size in square miles **62.2**

Number of houses (and other dwellings) **62,556**

Band D Council Tax **13,537** properties (average rate **£1,772.80**)

Number of businesses **9,895**

Employment rate **78%** (national average 75%)

2 MPs

Average household income **£37,688** (national average £29,661)

56.5% of residents with HND, degree (NVQ 4) or above (national average 39.3%)

Public health

Life expectancy at birth Male **81.7** Female **84.7**

1 Clinical Commissioning Group covering

13 GP practices

1 hospital

Planning and housing

Average house price **£585,100** (national £311,100)

82% Greenbelt

c.5,500 planning and building control applications received each year

913 additional dwellings per year estimated required

Around **360** houses built per year

4,800 Council owned and managed dwellings

Democracy and customer services

20 wards and **58** elected members

8 Parish Councils plus **1** Town Council (Harpenden)

270 member meetings per year

Over **130,000** calls received by the Customer Service Centre every year

Community, leisure and sport

24 community centres

6 libraries

53 primary schools, **12** secondary schools, **1** FE college

443.5 hectares of managed parks and open spaces

24 leisure centres and sports facilities

3 cemeteries

2 museums and **3** heritage sites

1 Charter Market

2,058,000 visitors to St Albans (2017)

The Council

Income

Council Tax **£11m**

Revenue Support Grant **£0m**

Expenditure

General Fund **£14.8m**

Housing Revenue Account **£28.3m**

Business Rates collected (2019/20): **£60.6m**

Business Rates retained (2019/20): **£2.5m**

Council staff **328** (Full Time Equivalent)

Parking and environment

1,525,650 visitors to District car parks in 2017/18 (**5,700** spaces in car parks)

4,504 on-street parking spaces

1 CCTV monitoring and control centre

50,200 tonnes of refuse, recycling, food waste and green waste collected (2018/19)

The Council's vision and priorities

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

Our four priorities are set out below:

Managing the climate emergency

Why an emergency?

A growing number of people acknowledge that there is a crisis in the world's climate.

Many of the key decisions which can combat global warming, the pressure on resources and the consequences of fast and ever-growing industrialisation have to be taken at international level.

This Council supports those initiatives.

But without action at local level, international efforts are going to be undermined: the environment is both global and local.

These local actions must include work on energy use and production; continuous reduction in waste coupled with further increases in reuse and sustainable recycling; the avoidance of single use plastic; improvements in air quality; reductions in vehicle emissions facilitated by a switch to electric and hydrogen vehicles - the list is literally endless.

What we are doing to achieve this priority

We are talking to Sustainable St Albans, St Albans Friends of the Earth and a range of environmental groups – their wisdom and insight are vital to the success of this plan. We wish to turn this dialogue into a permanent part of the Council's decision-making mechanism.

We are also talking to our neighbouring local authorities about sustainable growth, and to the County Council about ways in which highways can be improved to make travel easier for pedestrians and cyclists.

We are working on plans to make the Council's carbon emissions net zero by 2030. We will be talking to companies and other councils about how we can best accelerate the quantity of electric charging points both in public car parks and on the street. Further work is being done to ensure that there is an increasing number of electric taxis – working with the private sector and using the Council's borrowing powers where appropriate and manageable. We will also be talking to bus companies about reducing the level of diesel pollution and how their fleet can move over to electric or hydrogen.

There has long been talk of whether or not St Peter's Street in St Albans could be further pedestrianised. We are asking the County Council in the first instance to allow car free days on Sundays and to accelerate the full pedestrianisation of Market Place.

20 mph zones are popular but take too long to install. There is a case to develop a comprehensive plan with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) for key District urban areas, that include schools and nurseries, to be 20mph restricted traffic control. Again we are talking to the County Council about how this could be brought into effect.

At the same time, we need to ensure that the perpetual irritations experienced by residents and businesses are dealt with – for example damaged street furniture, fly-tipping and idling vehicle engines.

Our built environment – both public and private – needs to respond to this emergency. We are exploring whether Council buildings and property, including Council homes where appropriate, can be used to generate energy, through solar panels. We are also keen to encourage home insulation.

We are developing our Community Viewpoint panel, accessible through the MyStAlbans District account, as a way to involve more local people in reviewing future activities.

Much can be achieved through encouragement and leadership. The Council's own offices are lit up at night: this will end. And local businesses are increasingly aware of the public interest in avoiding plastics, paper cups and other waste. We aim to encourage businesses to respond more rapidly to public demands for reusable and environmentally sustainable products.

Last but not least, there is the question of waste. Recycling rates need continuously to be increased, and to this end we need to find ways of improving recycling in flats. We also need to support our businesses with their trade waste strategy, using the Council's purchasing power where needed to achieve economies of scale.

We will:

Measure	Delivery Target / Timeframe	Department(s)
Develop a comprehensive plan with the County Council for measures to reduce congestion and encourage walking and cycling, including the pedestrianisation of Market Place and a significant increase in 20 mph zones.	Initiate in 2020. Delivery will be negotiated with the County Council.	Planning and Building Control Community Services
Establish a Citizens' Assembly to drive forward the climate emergency policies of this Council.	Establish a Citizens' Assembly for this purpose in 2020/21.	Community Services Chief Exec and Policy
Negotiate with the County Council for new ways of managing grass verges and trees alongside highways.	Initiate by September 2020. Discussion and activities linked to operation and success of revised HCC Agency Agreement activity.	Community Services
Work to introduce anti-idling zones with a programme of effective enforcement.	On-street awareness raising campaign to take place outside schools (Q1 and Q3 2020/21). Implement programme of enforcement from April 2021, subject to budget approval.	Community Services
Develop plans for a significant increase in off-street and on-street	Initiate April 2020. Develop evidence-based strategic	Community Services

electric charging points and for the introduction of electric taxis.	<p>approach to expansion of electric vehicle charging points. Proposals to include introduction of a voluntary electric taxi service by September 2020. Outline cost proposals for July 2020.</p> <p>Implementation of additional on-street and off-street charging points from July 2021, subject to budget approval.</p>	Commercial and Development
Develop a plan for greater use of solar panels on Council-owned property and support businesses looking to develop solar or other renewable assets.	Plan to be developed during 2021/22.	<p>Housing</p> <p>Commercial and Development</p>
Ensure that the Council itself goes plastic free and that its office buildings and Council-sponsored developments are more energy efficient, including renewable heat schemes.	<p>Office plastics campaign initiated in 2019/20. Continues in 2020/21 with Sustainability Champions.</p> <p>Energy efficiency measures considered as schemes arise or development work is required.</p>	<p>Commercial and Development</p> <p>Community Services</p> <p>Housing</p>
Introduce a paperless strategy for Council transactions and internal operations.	<p>Strategy approved by Cabinet in October 2019.</p> <p>Remove remaining paper forms for payroll and creditor payments by March 2021.</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p> <p>Finance and Legal</p>
Introduce a scheme by which businesses are encouraged and rewarded for reducing single-use plastics.	Explore opportunities in 2020/21 with a view to implementing a scheme with partners in 2021/22 (budget dependent).	<p>Chief Exec and Policy</p> <p>Community Services</p>
Establish a business partnership to reduce the cost of trade waste.	<p>Officers to work with BID to explore feasibility of extending current BID area trade waste (subsidised costs) scheme (Q2, 2020/21).</p> <p>Aim for any business partnership established to take effect from April 2021.</p>	Community Services

Greatly increase the quantity of tree cover in the District.	By the end of 2019/20 consult on and publish a new Tree Strategy which involves the public suggesting new planting locations.	Planning and Building Control Community Services
Develop a public realm improvement scheme, so that damaged bins and benches can be repaired or replaced more quickly and efficiently, and flowers and sustainable shrubs are planted where appropriate.	Review and disseminate existing method statement for replacement of on-street litter bins (September 2020). Improvement scheme will include bins, benches and planters. Set of proposals and standards in place by September 2020. Subject to future funding, installation of planters/ replacement of benches. Work with partners, including the BID, as appropriate.	Community Services Planning and Building Control
Develop a scheme for 'rewilding' parts of Council land to increase biodiversity.	Establish and publicise a representative or exemplar rewilding scheme (Q1, 2020/21).	Community Services
Work with other councils, farmers and the police to reduce fly-tipping.	Continue effective partnership working with Police and other agencies through 'Barn' meetings.	Community Services
Develop a plan for improved home insulation for both Council-owned and other properties.	Plan to be developed during 2020/21.	Housing Commercial and Development
Develop a plan for increasing recycling rates in flats.	Cost of plan development (in partnership with Veolia) included in current contract scope. Target implementation date: September 2020.	Community Services
Take forward with partners the project to revitalise the River Ver, including Verulamium Park Lakes.	Environment Agency officers working from Council offices. Monthly project team meetings. 3 Senior Stakeholder meetings in the year.	Community Services

	Regular resident engagement meetings (Verulamium Park Consultative Forum).	
Actively support our Global Green champions: the Building Research; Establishment, Rothamsted Research and the University of Hertfordshire.	Continue work to actively support the Green Triangle during 2020/21.	Chief Executive and Policy Community Services
Create a comprehensive litter strategy.	Cost of strategy development (in partnership with Veolia) included in current contract scope. Target implementation date: October 2020.	Community Services
Lead initiatives to reduce the impact of aircraft pollution and noise arising from proposals to expand Luton Airport capacity.	During 2020/21 we will work with local community groups in responding to plans to expand Luton and Heathrow Airports. During 2020/21 we will seek air quality and aircraft noise monitoring on the boundary with the District.	Planning and Building Control
Reduce pollution from car emissions around schools by implementing car exclusion and no car idling zones.	On-street awareness-raising campaign outside schools (Q1 and Q3, 2020/21). Review and update previous work (including Bureau Veritas reports) and present proposals for a Clean Air Zone by October 2020.	Community Services

Priority projects for 2019/20

Priority Projects and Targets	Lead Portfolio	Lead Department
<p>Improve Council houses and flats in order to reduce significantly energy use and CO₂ emissions, providing better homes and lower energy bills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade A boilers in 338 properties; • Windows and doors in 50 properties; • Bathrooms and Kitchens in 100 properties. 	Housing, Inclusion and Protection	Housing
Establish a Climate Crisis Response Working Group to consider what action is needed locally to respond to the Climate Emergency and develop a plan of action for 2020 and beyond (by March 2020).	Climate and Environment	Community Services

For all Council events from 2019/20 (including Food and Drink 'Festival' 2019, Christmas Programme 2019, Housing Tenants Open Day 2019, Flourishing Lives (older people's day) 2019) put in place new measures to avoid use of plastics and maximise recycling.	Climate and Environment	Community Services, Housing.
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Priority Projects for 2020/2021

Priority Projects and Targets	Lead Portfolio	Lead Department
Continue to improve Council houses and flats in order to reduce significantly energy use and CO ² emissions, providing better homes and lower energy bills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade A boilers in 300 properties; • Windows and doors in 100 properties; • Bathrooms and Kitchens in 40 properties. 	Housing, Inclusion and Protection	Housing
Take forward the Climate Crisis Response action plan, developing proposals and funding plans, and actioning Year 1 measures.	Climate and Environment	Community Services
Progress the River Ver and Verulamium Lakes Project.	Community, Leisure and Sport	Community Services
Progress the development of a new Mausoleum at the London Road cemetery.	Climate and Environment	Community Services
Continue digital transformation – investment in ICT Infrastructure, IT Equipment, document management system, and digital meeting capability to underpin Council digital transformation.	Resources	Corporate Services

Increase the quantity and quality of social housing

The District is in danger of becoming unsustainable as more and more young people leave the area because they cannot afford to buy or rent, while others are discouraged from settling here.

We own substantial properties and some of these can be redeveloped to provide social housing. But the Council – not least to help deliver the housing numbers imposed upon the area by central government – will need to become a large-scale developer in our own right. Social housing as default should be our aim.

In relation to existing stock, we need to up our game when it comes to repairs and communications with Council tenants. And we need to prioritise the climate emergency when it comes to ensuring that homes are warm, dry and energy efficient.

We also need to find a more effective means of adapting properties for people with disabilities.

What we are doing to achieve this priority

We are talking to other councils which have created development companies to see what models are appropriate for St Albans District.

We are also closely monitoring the new repairs contract to ensure that there is a better deal for the maintenance of our buildings, especially for tenants and leaseholders. In particular we are focussing on the number of voids (empty homes) as a key indicator of the effectiveness of the repairs system, since some voids are due solely to the fact that repairs are outstanding.

We are reviewing the issue of flexible tenancies and the quantity of temporary accommodation used.

We will:

Measure	Delivery Target / Timeframe	Department(s)
Create a fully worked out and costed plan for the Council to become a developer in its own right.	Plan to be developed during 2020/21.	Commercial and Development
Progress the City Centre development opportunity sites to ensure that the number of social housing units is maximised, and to provide work-live units as a new form of housing.	See 'Priority Projects' below. Completion anticipated by 31 January 2023.	Commercial and Development
Progress the delivery of social housing on other Council owned land.	For current programme see 'Priority Projects' below.	Housing
Bring the number of voids down to under 1% of stock and ensure working practices are in place to maintain voids at under 1% of stock.	Target date: 31 March 2021. Linked to contract KPI schedule.	Housing
Work with key contractors to deliver a high percentage of repairs completed at first visit and implement a customer satisfaction tool for tenants' feedback.	Target date: 31 March 2021. Linked to contract KPI schedule. Customer satisfaction tool implemented in November 2019.	Housing

Work with the County Council to join the existing partnership providing adaptations to homes occupied by people with disabilities.	To review during 2021.	Housing
Progress the current sheltered housing redevelopment programme.	For current programme see 'Priority Projects' below.	Housing
Progress improvements programme in Council houses and flats.	For current programme see 'Priority Projects' below.	Housing

Priority Projects for 2019/20

Priority Projects and Targets	Lead Portfolio	Lead Department
Progress the sheltered housing redevelopment programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Betty Entwistle House (renamed Eywood House) – 40 flexi-care apartments for rent and shared ownership - completion in 2019; Linley Court (renamed Hawking's House) – 28 social rent housing apartments - due for completion in January 2020; Wavell House (renamed Warner House) – 24 apartments for the over 55s - due for completion in summer 2020; Mereden Court – refurbishment of building into 18 new social rent apartments – due for completion in summer 2020. 	Housing, Inclusion and Protection	Housing
Progress the development of the St Albans City Centre Opportunity Site (CCOS) South (details under 2020/21 below).	Property, Commercial and Development	Commercial & Development
Progress the development of the St Albans City Centre Opportunity Site (CCOS) North (details under 2020/21 below).	Property, Commercial and Development	Commercial & Development
Progress the redevelopment of Ridgeview in London Colney (details under 2020/21 below).	Property, Commercial and Development	Commercial & Development

Priority Projects for 2020/2021

Priority Projects and Targets	Lead Portfolio	Lead Department
<p>Continue to progress a high-quality development at the St Albans City Centre Opportunity Site (CCOS) South which will provide the Council with a good annual income (subject to planning approval):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34 affordable/social apartments • 64 apartments for sale • 50,000 sq feet of office space • 121 car parking spaces 	Property, Commercial and Development	Commercial & Development
<p>Continue to progress a high-quality development at the St Albans City Centre Opportunity Site (CCOS) North which will provide the Council with a good annual income (subject to planning approval):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 affordable/social apartments • 38 apartments for sale • 50,000 sq feet of office space • 360 car parking spaces 	Property, Commercial and Development	Commercial & Development
<p>Progress the sheltered housing redevelopment programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wavell House (renamed Warner House) – 24 apartments for the over 55s -due for completion in summer 2020; • Mereden Court – refurbishment of building into 18 new social rent apartments – due for completion in summer 2020. 	Housing, Inclusion and Protection	Housing
<p>Progress affordable housing on Council owned land:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holyrood Crescent garage site – development of 2 two-bedroom houses on former garage site - due for completion in November 2020; • Noke Shot garage site – development of mixed tenure site including 4 three-bedroom houses for social rent - estimated completion in March 2022; • The Hedges mobile home site – redevelopment of former temporary accommodation site for social housing - estimated completion August 2021. 	Housing, Inclusion and Protection	Housing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> King Offa and Norman Close mobile home site – redevelopment for social housing -estimated completion March 2022. 		
<p>Continue to progress the redevelopment of Ridgeview in London Colney to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26 apartments for use as temporary accommodation for homeless people including families (to help achieve the aim of not putting homeless families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation outside the District); 19 private rental homes. 	Property, Commercial and Development	Commercial & Development
<p>Progress the development of Noke Shot in Harpenden to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 three-bedroom affordable houses; 4 three-bedroom houses for sale, and 2 two-bedroom bungalows for sale. 	Property, Commercial and Development	Commercial & Development
<p>Progress the development of land at Leyland Avenue in St Albans to provide 7 three-bedroom houses for sale.</p>	Property, Commercial and Development	Commercial & Development
<p>Progress the development of Harpenden Public Halls to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14 affordable apartments; 19 apartments for sale; 734 sq metres of office space; 60 car parking spaces. 	Property, Commercial and Development	Commercial & Development

Support our communities

A district is only the sum of its parts. Some of those parts are large and world famous. Other are less well known but have important identities for those who live and work in them. And the larger communities subdivide into smaller ones: Marshalswick, Fleetville, Southdown and Batford are just as much communities as St Albans City and Harpenden.

All communities have strengths, and all have problems. These problems may have lots in common, but issues are solved on the ground, by involving local people in decision making.

What we are doing to achieve this priority

One essential activity is to establish an up-to-date Local Plan. This is currently with the inspector and there will be an examination in public in the coming months: it will be a year or more before the Council has a chance of formally adopting it.

There are also neighbourhood plans, either in the pipeline or agreed in some parishes. There is, however, as yet nothing for any part of St Albans City. We will be encouraging the development of a neighbourhood plan for the St Peter's Street area, with the involvement of BID (Business Improvement District).

Communities also depend on facilities. While there have been significant construction works for leisure and museum facilities in the city centre and in Harpenden, less work has been done on community halls and similar facilities elsewhere. We are therefore pressing ahead with plans for community facilities in Sopwell and will be reviewing the state of other assets which have come to the end of their useful life or require investment.

We will work with Parish Councils and Harpenden Town Council to ensure that we achieve the best outcomes for the local communities they serve. We will consider further devolution of community assets where that makes mutual sense.

We will also use our business, tourism and culture strategy to support independent local businesses and identify new cultural events.

We will:

Measure	Delivery Target / Timeframe	Department(s)
Continue to work with Citizens Advice and Communities 1 st .	Continuing work currently underway. Quarterly senior stakeholder meetings. Reports through Cabinet and Grants Panel.	Community Services Corporate Services Chief Exec and Policy
Set out the totals of voluntary sector funding to be proposed for the three years from 2021/22, in March/April 2020, to help with forward planning for funded bodies.	Report to March 2020 Cabinet Meeting.	Community Services
Progress the Local Plan	In line with the Planning Inspectorate's timescales.	Planning and Building Control
Protect the Green Belt, the District's environment and green spaces.	Linked to Local Plan Development – see above.	Planning and Building Control

Develop firm plans for the Marlborough Pavilion in the Cottonmill area of St Albans so that it can become a community hub, while providing a better use for the land at Leyland Avenue (the former Sopwell Youth Club).	Build seven three-bed family homes at Leyland Avenue (the former Sopwell Youth Club) by 31 March 2021. Complete RIBA stage 3 detailed design and planning permission for Marlborough Pavilion by the 31 March 2021.	Commercial and Development Community Services
Review other assets, such as Clarence Park Pavilion and Fleetville Community Centre, to assess what works need to be done to bring them back into peak condition.	Investment and opportunities strategy and plan completed on Council assets by 30 Sep 2020.	Commercial and Development Community Services
Seek new sources of external funding for all the assets and work with community groups to help them seek new funds.	During 2020/21 develop a funding opportunities action plan for each community facility in partnership with community groups.	Commercial and Development Community Services
Support work on a neighbourhood plan for central St Albans (focussing on the BID area).	During 2020/21, give advice and signpost new information to groups looking to set up a neighbourhood forum to produce a Neighbourhood Plan.	Planning and Building Control
Give longer leases/licences on assets like the Jubilee Centre to enable local groups to bid for a wider range of outside funding.	Investment and opportunities strategy and plan completed on Council assets by 30 Sep 2020.	Commercial and Development
Engage with St Albans City Football Club to help it find a new stadium.	During 2020/21 initiate discussion with the club on feasibility of options.	Commercial and Development
Work with businesses and business groups to develop new cultural events.	Initiated 2019. Continues in 2020.	Community Services
Examine the scope for improved transport on Sundays to	In 2020/21, scope opportunities to continue	Planning and Building Control

improve interconnectivity, especially to the villages.	and where possible improve services. Explore costs of a community or social based Sunday bus scheme.	
Progress Harpenden Leisure and Cultural Facilities redevelopment.	Completion due 2021.	Commercial and Development
Develop a new plan to address rough sleeping in the District.	New Homelessness Strategy in place during 2021.	Housing
Work with local agencies and support groups to support troubled families, and provide strong safe-guarding of vulnerable residents, including victims of domestic violence and radicalisation.	Work to continue in 2020/21 in line with the Community Safety Partnership's agreed strategy, and our continued partnerships in these areas.	Chief Executive and Policy
Encourage rail use in preference to car use, act as a champion for commuters, improve local rail services and ensure station improvements meet the increase in passenger numbers.	Further engagement with GTR in 2020/21. Continue to support Abbey Flyer.	Chief Exec and Policy Community Services Planning and Building Control
Conduct rolling reviews of Controlled Parking Zones to assess residents' views.	Initiated in 2019. Continues into 2020/21.	Community Services

Priority Projects for 2019/20

Priority Projects and Targets	Lead Portfolio	Lead Department
Progress the Local Plan for adoption following inspection in January/February 2020. Continue to liaise with neighbouring authorities in line with our duty to cooperate over strategic planning.	Planning	Planning and Building Control

Progress development of Harpenden leisure and cultural facilities - due to open in early 2021.	Property, Commercial and Development	Commercial and Development
Progress the business plan for the regeneration of Marlborough Pavilion and ensure a viable planning application is submitted.	Property, Commercial and Development	Commercial and Development

Priority Projects for 2020/2021

Priority Projects and Targets	Lead Portfolio	Lead Department
Continue to progress development of Harpenden leisure and cultural facilities - due to open in early 2021.	Property, Commercial and Development	Commercial and Development
Continue to progress the redevelopment of Marlborough Pavilion in St Albans with new community and leisure facilities.	Property, Commercial and Development	Commercial and Development
Progress play areas including at Verulamium Park and Clarence Park.	Community, Leisure and Sport	Community Services

Be a business friendly Council

There are significant challenges for the District as the relationship of the UK with the European Union changes. There may be pressure on employment should large numbers of EU nationals decide not to stay, or whole businesses relocate.

These add to the normal challenges that the area faces, like the high cost of housing, skills shortages, the unfair and damaging business rates system, the lack of superfast broadband in some areas, and the loss of office accommodation due to permitted development rules.

Many of these can be dealt with only by the Government nationally.

But the Council can help. It can, for instance, recognise more effectively the importance of the visitor economy – both tourism and the night-time economy – by making sure that there is more than minimal funding for tourism.

What we are doing to achieve this priority

We are continuing to lobby government and parliament about the iniquities of the business rates system for all businesses. We are also looking at affordable ways of alleviating the problem at local level.

The Christmas market in 2018 was not a success. We are working with partners and stakeholders on a programme of pre-Christmas celebrations that attract footfall for our local businesses, and which wash their faces financially, as well as enhancing the programme of street festivals and community events.

We are looking at ways the St Albans Museum + Gallery can become a success in revenue terms.

We are completely reviewing the visitor economy strategy so that it promotes the District and its component parts while connecting together the various facilities offered by the Council and the private sector.

Above all we need to ensure that we are listening to business and that means creating a meaningful forum for dialogue.

We will:

Measure	Delivery Target / Timeframe	Department(s)
Review the mechanisms by which local businesses can influence the Council.	Summer 2020.	Chief Exec and Policy
Set up a local economy summit to consider the impact of Brexit, responsiveness of the Council to business needs, skills gap and local planning system.	First summit undertaken in October 2019. Further summit planned for 2020/21.	Chief Exec and Policy
Develop a strategy for helping to protect pubs and retail from the effects of business rates	Working with business representatives, make businesses aware of how to appeal Valuation Office assessments (October 2020). Consider having a local discretionary relief for 2022/23 or grants direct to businesses (June 2021).	Finance and Legal Chief Exec and Policy
Review the visitor economy strategy and funding	Strategy developed during 2020 in partnership with the BID and other partners.	Chief Exec and Policy
Maintain the engagement with government and parliament about the need to reform business rates	Review proposals by Government (and industries and think tanks) (September 2020). Lobby government on changes to rates regime (September 2020 or earlier if opinions invited).	Finance and Legal Chief Exec and Policy

Halve the current revenue losses faced by St Albans Museum + Gallery, with a view to breakeven by the end 2020/21	Breakeven by 31 March 2021. See 'Priority Projects' below.	Commercial and Development
Develop a new Christmas programme in St Albans and support a varied event programme for cultural events	<p>Continue close liaison between Council and BID activities.</p> <p>Explore opportunities for Council to deliver BID-funded events, via a formal Service Level Agreement arrangement.</p> <p>Effective use of additional funding for Council's Lights Switch-On/Christmas Cracker event.</p> <p>Outline programme developed by June 2020 for full implementation by October 2020.</p>	Community Services
Finalise the plans for south of St Peter's Street so that the loss of office space is replaced, and performing arts facilities are enhanced	Complete review as part of the City Vision Project.	Commercial and Development
Implement service reviews and new digital technologies	See 'Priority Projects' below.	Corporate Services
Progress the Hertfordshire IQ enviro-tech enterprise zone	<p>In 2020/21 seek funding opportunities for infrastructure.</p> <p>In 2020/21 set up initiatives to encourage the use of public transport.</p>	Planning and Building Control

Priority Projects for 2019/20

Priority Projects and Targets	Lead Portfolio	Lead Department
Support delivery of the Enviro Tech Enterprise Zone in partnership with Dacorum Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Local	Climate and Environment	Planning and Building Control

Enterprise Partnership and the relevant landowners, delivering 8,000 to 12,000 new jobs by 2042.		
Implement digital technologies to transform services for customers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overhaul the Council's website to ensure it better meets the needs of the community including being smartphone friendly. Extend and promote the services available through the 'MyStAlbans' account to improve access to services. 	Resources	Corporate Services
Undertake services reviews of at least 3 key areas to understand, set and meet customer expectations, increase productivity and embed our new organisational behaviours.	Resources	Corporate Services
Bring car park management and parking enforcement in house (October 2019).	Climate and Environment	Community Services
Hold the first of a series of Business Summits for local businesses in Autumn 2019.	Business, Culture and Tourism	Chief Exec and Policy

Priority Projects for 2020/2021

Priority Projects and Targets	Lead Portfolio	Lead Department
Achieve break-even against budget at St Albans Museum + Gallery by the end 2020/21.	Community, Leisure and Sport	Commercial and Development
Produce a 5-year Destination Management Plan.	Business, Culture and Tourism	Chief Exec and Policy
Delivery of an enhanced city centre and community focused Christmas programme.	Business, Culture and Tourism	Community Services
Delivery of a strong programme for the Herts Year of Culture working with the private sector.	Business, Culture and Tourism	Community Services
Review of current marketing of cultural assets, destination management and street scene.	Business, Culture and Tourism	Community Services and Chief Executive and Policy

Monitoring performance

A great deal that the Council does is 'business as usual' – processing planning applications; collecting waste; providing parking permits; dealing with housing repairs; sweeping the streets; and much more.

Traditionally the Council has looked at a very narrow range of measures and has therefore missed the fact that in some areas performance needs to be improved.

We will expand the range of Key Performance Indicators that the Cabinet looks at and publish them: we will put in place action plans for areas which are falling behind and encourage the Council's scrutiny process to examine these and hold us to account.