

2023 EDITION

# COUNCIL PLAN

2020 - 2025





Residents gathered outside Guildhall Winchester for the Proclamation of King Charles III on Sunday 11 September 2022.

# WELCOME

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In 2020, the city council agreed a plan to take us through to 2025 with five priority areas:

- Tackling the climate emergency
- Living well
- Homes for all
- Vibrant local economy
- Your services, your voice

Since then, we have delivered robust progress across all these areas. Our latest Residents' Survey shows that these remain the priorities most local people want us to focus on.

Within these priorities, recent events require us to give special focus to a few areas:

- We are all facing economic uncertainty and rising prices at levels not seen since the early 1990s. This is badly affecting many local people, particularly those whose financial position is most stretched, along with local businesses and the council itself. We will be taking action on the cost of living.
- Climate change is hitting us harder, sooner than expected – with flash flooding, extreme temperatures and water shortages affecting our health, our homes and businesses, chalk streams and rivers and the unique countryside that make our district so special. We have to go greener, faster. This plan sets out how.

- The Winchester district is a special place, but we cannot be complacent. Expectations from local residents are rightly high. We face higher levels of anti-social behaviour and vandalism. We will invest in our public space and work hard with partners to deliver the pride in place that our city and district deserve.
- Finally, we can't do this on our own. The council performs best when it recognises and listens to the diverse interests, needs and wishes of different people in our community. We need to listen better and work alongside the people and businesses of the Winchester district in tackling the challenges we face.

We have been careful to put the council on a sound financial footing, but new economic pressures mean we will still face hard choices. Although the plan runs until 2025, we will continue to listen and adjust over the lifetime of the plan. The following pages lay out how we will make these choices, reflect the input you give us and deliver against our priorities and make a real difference to the lives of our residents, the strength of our businesses and the quality of our environment.



**Cllr Martin Tod**  
Leader of Winchester  
City Council

# HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS

Our communities drive everything we do, and we are committed to delivering the best customer service possible. Our values drive the way we work and help us achieve this.

## INNOVATION

We are innovative -  
challenging the status quo

## INTEGRITY

We act with integrity -  
always honest, open and fair

## ADAPTABILITY

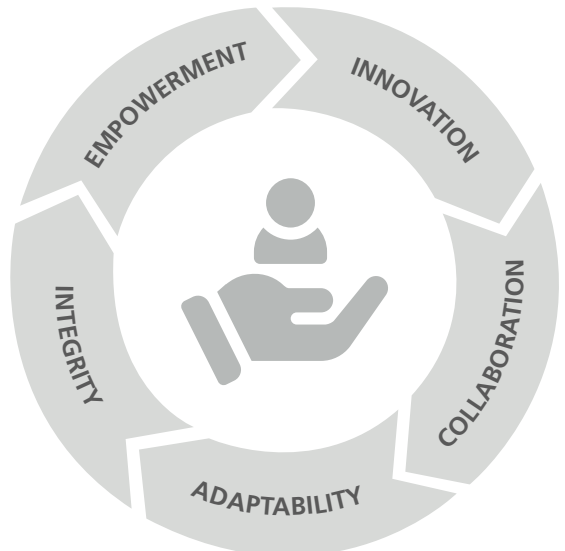
We are adaptable -  
embracing change

## COLLABORATION

We are collaborative -  
working with others to get the  
best results

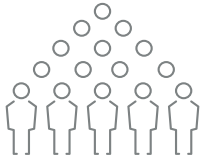
## EMPOWERMENT

We are empowering -  
enabling communities and our  
team to take action



# WINCHESTER DISTRICT IN NUMBERS

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**127,500**  
population



**78.0%**  
of residents aged  
16-64 in employment



District covers  
**250**  
square miles



**2**  
universities located  
in the city



**48.6%**  
of residents aged  
16-64 qualified to  
NVQ4 and above



**34.2%**  
reduction in WCC carbon  
to 2020



**2,491**  
planning applications  
determined in 2021/22



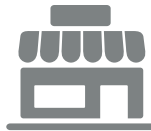
**80,000**  
bins emptied  
each week



**56,322**  
homes



Over  
**5,000**  
council houses



**8,165**  
businesses



**2,266**  
listed buildings



# THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

Your council is working hard to continue to deliver the support that residents need while making sure that we invest in our district and our services to ensure we keep things working well.

We're taking a hard look at how we will manage the impact of rising interest rates and high inflation. Our efforts are, as ever, all about focusing on what we can do to support our community, while being realistic about what we can and cannot achieve in the medium term.

This plan sets out the challenges faced by the Winchester district, how we will respond to them and the principles which underpin our work.

The main challenges are:

- The climate emergency and the pressing need to reduce the Winchester district's carbon footprint
- Economic uncertainty and the rise in the cost of living
- Continuing to improve our services while balancing a reduced council budget
- The high costs of buying and renting a home
- Poor air quality in parts of the district
- Inequality within our district and its effects on mental and physical wellbeing
- Poor provision of public transport and safe walking and cycling routes across the district
- Responding to the diverse experiences, needs and views of everyone in our community, and making sure all voices are heard

# OUR RESOURCES

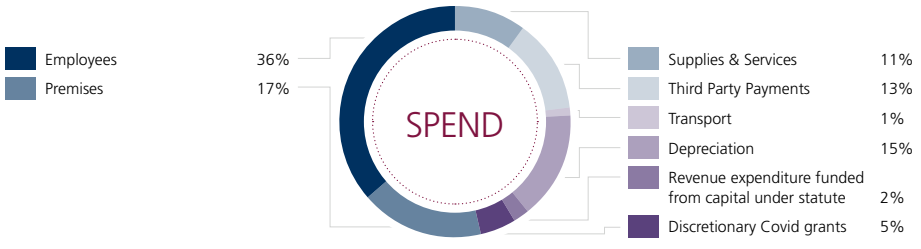
The council spends over £31m on delivering services to all residents and businesses in the district, funded by £17m from Council Tax, business rates and other Government funding and £14m from fees and charges.

In addition, we have a separate Housing Revenue Account, delivering a further £28m of housing services to council tenants and leaseholders, funded from housing rents and service charges.

The charts below show how this money is spent.

## HOW THE COUNCIL SPENT MONEY TO PROVIDE SERVICES

(excluding valuation adjustments and welfare transfer payments)



The recent increase in inflation, energy costs and interest rates will increase our service costs by a further £3m next year. There is no increase in Government funding anticipated to help us cover this, so despite the 2% increase in Council Tax we will be working through some testing financial challenges. We'll be exploring reducing service costs and increasing charges to make sure we can balance our budget. A Transformation Challenge programme is underway to work out exactly how we address this, focussing on best use of assets, income generation and transforming services to reduce overall operating costs.

"Your council is working hard to continue delivery of the support that residents need, while investing in our district and our services to ensure we keep things working well. We want to maintain and enhance what makes this such a great place to live and work.

We're not the only council taking a hard look at ways we can manage the impact of rising interest rates and high inflation, and our efforts are, as ever, all about focusing on what we can do to support our community at this time, whilst being realistic about what we can and cannot achieve in the medium term."



**Cllr Margot Power**  
Cabinet Member for Finance and Value

# YOUR COUNCIL PLAN

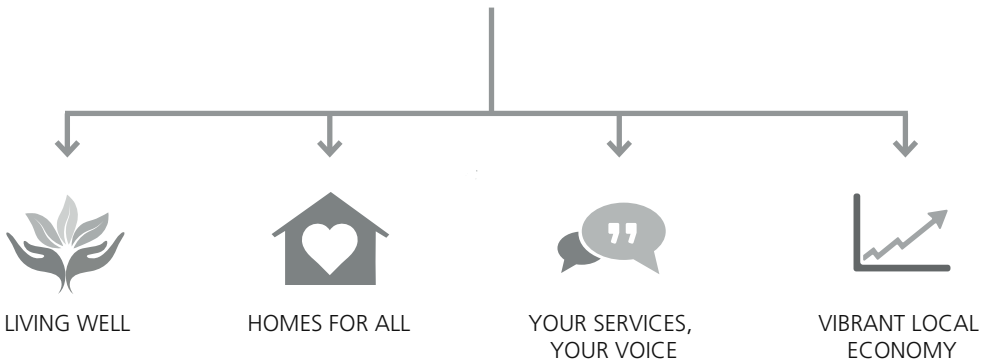
This Council Plan is a high level document covering the period 2020 to 2025. It sets out what the council wants to achieve and informs other strategies and plans including the Local Plan and individual service plans.

The Council Plan was updated in December 2022.

## OUR PRIORITIES



TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND  
CREATING A GREENER DISTRICT



AND, ENHANCED FOCUS ON:

<b>COST OF LIVING</b>	<b>GREENER FASTER</b>
<b>PRIDE IN PLACE</b>	<b>LISTENING BETTER</b>



# CLIMATE CHANGE

We are using our recently published 'Roadmap to Carbon Neutrality' to accelerate and scale-up our Carbon Neutrality Action Plan and guide our priority to go greener, faster. The principles behind our plan underpin all activities of the council and are reflected in all its strategic aims and policies – including this Council Plan.

There are four main areas of activity:



## OUR VISION FOR A CLIMATE RESILIENT DISTRICT

1. | Changed lifestyles with local people, organisations and businesses enabled to share their ideas and work together to create a carbon neutral future
2. | The air is clean to breathe
3. | The natural and built environment is protected, maintained, sustained and enhanced
4. | People can move around the place easily and prefer to travel on foot, by bike and using public transport
5. | The district is broadly self-sufficient in renewable energy
6. | Homes and businesses have measures in place to protect against extreme climate events

# TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND CREATING A **GREENER DISTRICT**

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Dealing with the climate crisis and reaching carbon neutrality is the city council's overarching priority. Recent extreme weather events have demonstrated urgent action is needed to avoid catastrophic climate change and the associated nature crisis. We all need to play our part in tackling this challenge and hand our district to our children and grandchildren in a better state than it is now.

## **WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE:**

- Winchester City Council to be carbon neutral by 2024
- The Winchester district to be carbon neutral by 2030
- Reduced energy demand and an increase in local renewable energy
- Highly insulated homes with low energy bills
- Homes and businesses protected against extreme climate events
- Reduced levels of waste and increased recycling, exceeding national targets
- Cleaner air than national targets
- Everything most residents need in reach by foot, bike or public transport
- Our district's natural habitats are safeguarded and enhanced

## **HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS?**

- Working with and enabling businesses, organisations and residents to deliver a clear plan to net zero guided by the Carbon Neutrality Roadmap for the district.
- Retrofit our own council homes and work with others on schemes to provide insulation, energy efficient heating and home renewable energy to private homes
- Build our own buildings to the highest possible environmental standards
- Promote recycling and increase what can be recycled, including food waste
- Switch council vehicles to low and zero-carbon fuels
- Continue working with Hampshire County Council to deliver the City of Winchester Movement Strategy and prioritise walking, cycling and public transport throughout the district
- Deliver the Air Quality Management Action Plan



- Agree a local plan which delivers low carbon homes, increased biodiversity and 20 minute neighbourhoods
- Continue to roll out our Biodiversity Action Plan

## WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED SO FAR?

- Reduced city council emissions by 34%
- Started the council home retrofit programme
- Secured funding for and promoted the Warmer Homes programme
- Produced a draft Local Plan including the highest possible energy LETI standards for homes and the promotion of increased biodiversity and sustainable travel
- 3,362 tonnes of glass recycled from doorsteps (2021/22) and over half a million tetrapaks collected from bring sites
- Installed 58 electric vehicle charging points
- Increased annual recycling rates from 36.1% to 40.5% giving us one of the top 20 increases in recycling rates across England in 2020/21.
- Development of a new Park & Ride providing 287 parking spaces and featuring 399 roof mounted photovoltaic solar panels and 16 electric vehicle charging points
- Installed 1,411 solar panels throughout the district since 2020
- Delivered an increase in areas managed for biodiversity including new open space and wildlife verges



“We have to go greener, faster - concentrating on the actions that will give the biggest carbon reductions and make most difference in protecting against the impact of climate change.”



**Cllr Kelsie Learney**  
Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency

# LIVING WELL

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We want all residents to live healthy and fulfilled lives, to feel safe and secure in their neighbourhood, and enjoy the recreational and cultural opportunities that the district offers. We want to ensure the district offers the right facilities to support good physical and mental health for all ages and abilities.

## WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE:

- Support for those most affected by the cost of living
- Reduced health inequalities, tackling the environmental, financial and housing problems that most affect those with the biggest health challenges
- Attractive public spaces where people feel safe and secure
- Well-used and maintained public facilities and green spaces with space to play
- A wide range of physical and cultural activities for all ages and abilities
- Increased opportunities for active travel
- Close work with local charities and voluntary organisations helping those most in need

## HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS?

- Focus on the most disadvantaged areas, communities and groups, supporting a greater diversity of residents
- Support residents in need through our Cost of Living response and investment in council tax hardship grants
- Work closely with the police and other partners to address anti-social behaviour and improve community safety
- Invest in improved cleaning and maintenance of our city and market towns – and in improving outdoor areas and facilities for our council estates
- Partner with the new NHS local bodies to address the health and well-being needs of priority communities and priority populations
- Offering and supporting a wide range of inclusive and accessible activities across the district including investment in our leisure centres, sports grounds, parks and play areas
- Make it more attractive to use active travel, with new cycle and walkways and secure bike parking

- Develop Local Plan policies that promote healthy lifestyles in healthy surroundings: giving access to green spaces, protecting countryside and controlling urban development

## WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED SO FAR?

- Introduced a £200,000 emergency package of measures to help residents most affected by the significant rise in cost of living
- Worked closely with the police to target bike theft, graffiti and vandalism – including investment in secure bike parking and refurbishment of problem areas
- Welcomed over 1 million visitors to Winchester Sport & Leisure Park since it opened in 2021
- Refurbished and reopened the Meadowside Leisure Centre in October 2021
- Continued to improve our open spaces and parks, including the refurbishment of Abbey Gardens play area and investment in a new pavilion at King George V playing fields
- Developed Local Plan policies that enable healthy lifestyles in healthy surroundings with improved air quality, open spaces, and development of 'brownfield sites' with accessibility to local facilities and services
- Introduced extra CCTV and tougher sanctions to tackle fly-tipping
- Worked closely with Winchester City of Sanctuary to support refugees and asylum seekers arriving in the district, including 206 families fleeing the war in Ukraine



"After the challenges of the pandemic and its aftermath, we now face the challenge of the cost of living crisis. Whatever the future holds, we will work hard to ensure our district remains a great place to live and to support those in greatest need."



**Cllr Jackie Porter**

Cabinet Member for Place and The Local Plan

# HOMES FOR ALL

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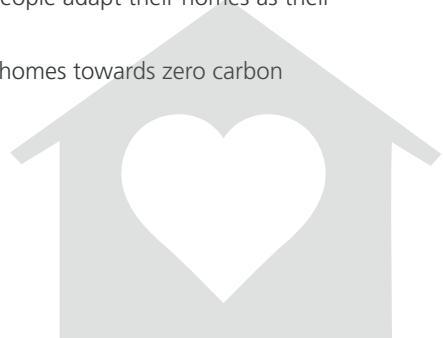
Housing in our district is expensive and young people and families often struggle to find and retain suitable accommodation they can afford, particularly at a time when costs are rising steeply. We are focused on providing homes for all in the Winchester district – homes that are affordable, sustainable, with low energy usage and low bills, and built in the right areas for our changing communities.

## WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE:

- More young people and families living and working in our district
- All homes to be energy efficient and affordable to run
- Diverse, healthy and cohesive communities - not just homes
- Increasing the availability of housing for young people and key workers
- Support to help people stay in their homes
- No-one sleeping rough, except by choice

## HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS?

- Building significantly more homes ourselves, with a target to build 1,000 new homes by 2030
- Strengthening our Local Plan to ensure the right mix of homes is built for all sectors of our society, including young people
- Creating a new Winchester Housing Company to address the limited supply of affordable private rented housing
- Providing support for our homeless and most vulnerable people by working directly and in partnership with the voluntary sector
- Helping vulnerable residents struggling with the rising cost of living to stay in their homes
- Using targeted Disability Facilities Grants to help people adapt their homes as their needs change
- Moving the energy efficiency of new and existing homes towards zero carbon





## WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED SO FAR?

- Built 112 new homes in Stanmore and Kings Worthy, with another 129 under construction in Winnall and Whiteley
- Put in place strong policies in our draft Local Plan to ensure the right mix of homes, with a new minimum requirement of affordable homes that developers have to achieve
- Introduced higher energy efficiency standards for new council homes and energy efficiency improvements for our existing council homes through our £15.7m Retrofit programme
- Secured funding from the government's Sustainable Warmth funding competition to help residents reduce their energy bills and carbon footprints
- Continued support for our homeless and most vulnerable people through direct work, partnerships with and funding for the voluntary sector, such as The Beacon, Two Saints and Trinity
- Grant funded £75k Trinity Centre project to support new 12 bed 'housing first' project to help homeless people get their lives back on track



"Knowing you have a safe and secure place to call home is fundamental. We're working hard to make this a reality for as many local people as possible. In difficult times when people fear the threat of homelessness, we will also work tirelessly to help people stay in their homes."



**Cllr Paula Ferguson**

Cabinet Member for Community and Housing

# VIBRANT LOCAL ECONOMY

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Our urban and rural areas are home to a host of successful businesses and enterprises. Following the pandemic, employment levels remain high but fresh challenges now face our business community.

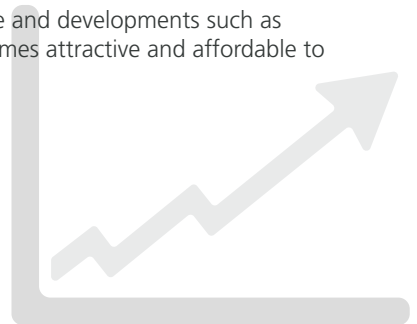
The changing face of the high street, increasing costs, labour shortages and tackling climate change are forcing businesses to quickly adapt.

## WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE:

- A stronger, greener, more sustainable local economy
- New and renovated offices and workspaces to meet changing business needs in areas with sustainable transport links
- More young people choosing to live and work in the district
- Our city, market towns and rural areas all have a distinctive and competitive offer
- Existing businesses are supported and new and relocating businesses attracted

## HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS?

- Implement our Green Economic Development Strategy to deliver green growth
- Take action to attract investment to:
  - Tackle run-down and derelict areas
  - Create new cultural and creative spaces
  - Support new business and create new jobs
- Work with partners to promote and develop our unique cultural, heritage and natural environment assets
- Work with businesses, local universities and colleges to position Winchester as a centre for digital, creative and knowledge based industries
- Use Local Plan policies, our own housing programme and developments such as Central Winchester Regeneration to help provide homes attractive and affordable to younger workers
- Increase the attractiveness of all our high streets
- Provide tailored, sector specific business support



- Promote independent businesses and encourage start-ups
- Work with partners to help disadvantaged groups including the homeless and refugees access work

## WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED SO FAR?

- Commenced the first two year action plan for the Green Economic Development Strategy
- Offered free business support to help businesses cut costs and carbon
- Delivered new industrial units in Bishop's Waltham
- Promoted and supported events and festivals such as Hat Fair, the Wickham Festival, Lights in the City, Christmas in Winchester – as well as Jubilee events across the district
- Created new pedestrian areas and outdoor seating
- Supported Hampshire Cultural Trust's new 878AD attraction
- Employed a Street Scene Manager to improve the appearance of our city centre and market towns
- Included policies in the draft local plan to promote sustainable growth and support town and local centres



"Our city and market town high streets continue to outperform many other areas, but the national situation is still really challenging for many businesses across the district.

We are determined to maintain our healthy local economy by providing support where we can and focussing on sustainable growth through our Green Economic Development Strategy."



**Cllr Lucille Thompson**  
Cabinet Member for Business and Culture

# YOUR SERVICES, YOUR VOICE

We will continue to provide high quality, good value, resilient services that are continuously improving to address the changing needs and expectations of residents, tenants, visitors, businesses and not-for-profit organisations across our district – and are accessible to all whatever their circumstances.

We will give all our residents the opportunity to make their voice heard and be able to understand how the council makes its decisions.

## WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE:

- An open, transparent, inclusive and enabling council
- Improved satisfaction for our services
- Good value compared to other similar authorities
- Continuous improvement in cost-effectiveness
- High accessibility and usage of our services
- Constructive and effective partnerships across the district
- A balanced budget and stable council finances



## HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS?

- Continuously improving processes that:
  - Involve the public, businesses, stakeholders and ward councillors earlier in the design, deliberation and decision-making process
  - Effectively respond to and learn from complaints and feedback to drive service improvement
  - Embed effective partnership working with the community, voluntary groups and organisations, local businesses, our suppliers and other public bodies
  - Cut cost and focus spending where it makes the biggest difference

“We want to make sure that everyone everywhere in the district - from every background, income or life circumstance - has their voice heard, considered and acted upon.”



**Cllr Kathleen Becker**

Cabinet Member for Inclusion and Engagement

- Successfully establish a new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Forum
- Transparent and publicly visible performance measures which drive improved satisfaction and performance
- More effective use of technology to make it simpler and easier to deal with the council and its delivery partners while reducing cost
- Focus on accessibility and inclusiveness to ensure our decision-making and services are accessible to and usable by all
- A wider diversity of residents and businesses involved in ensuring our services work for all
- Investing in our staff and making the most of their skills and talents
- Keeping Council Tax increases below inflation

## WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED SO FAR?

- Broadcasted all our public meetings and made recordings available online
- Introduced public questions to Full Council meetings
- Kept our services working during the pandemic
- Achieved one of the fastest growing recycling rates in the country, while reducing the number of missed bins to less than 0.1% of collections per week
- Award-winning consultation on our Local Plan
- Over 1,000 responses to our Station Approach consultation
- Made it possible to complete all customer transactions online
- Introduced a new Customer Charter and simplified our complaints policy



"We are working to continuously improve our services – collecting bins, maintaining parks, tackling fly tipping – listening to residents' suggestions and complaints and making it easier to report problems and use our services online and offline."



**Cllr Russell Gordon-Smith**  
Cabinet Member for Service Quality

