Horsham District Council

Corporate Plan

2019-2023

Introduction

Welcome to Horsham District Council's Corporate Plan which sets out our ambitions for the District for 2019-2023, together with what we will do to achieve them.

Horsham District is consistently recognised as one of the best places to live in the UK and we intend to enhance that reputation.

The Plan provides a focus for our activities explaining how we will prioritise our resources and continue to deliver high quality, easily accessible and value for money services to the people living and working in our District over the next five years.

We will measure our performance each year against five goals:

1. A great place to live

Continue creating well balanced communities that meet residents' needs.

2. A thriving economy

Work to increase economic growth and create new local jobs.

3. A strong, safe and healthy community

Ensure Horsham District remains one of the best places in Sussex to live.

4. A cared for environment

Prioritise the protection of our environment as we move to a low carbon future.

5. A modern and flexible council

Make it easy for our residents to access the services that they need.

1. A great place to live

Horsham District is a highly desirable place to live and offers exceptional quality of life to its residents. The District contains characterful settlements such as Horsham Town and the market towns of Billingshurst, Henfield, Pulborough, Steyning and Storrington. Its beautiful countryside stretches from the South Downs National Park to the High Weald and Surrey Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and surrounds our many picturesque rural villages.

The District benefits from low unemployment with residents able to work locally or use good public transport links to London, Gatwick and the south coast.

Horsham District is proactive in providing for the housing needs of its communities. We are committed to creating new homes of all types, from those needing their first home, to those who need specialist accommodation to meet their specific needs.

Where growth is planned, it is designed to fit into the area in a way which protects the character of the District ensuring it remains an attractive place to visit. Development will be environmentally friendly with new local facilities and services provided, forming new communities which residents can feel proud of.

The District has a proud cultural heritage and an energetic arts and entertainment scene, with events and festivals planned throughout the year. There are many opportunities for people to participate in a wide range of sports and leisure activities.

Consistently recognised as one of the UK's most desirable places to live, the District has a great deal to offer those who live, visit or work here.

What does success look like?

1. We will plan for communities where people can work, live and prosper. New homes will meet the needs of a full range of households in a low carbon world.
2. We will provide culture, sports and leisure opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.
3. Both our built and natural environments are highly valued and will be well managed to keep our District an attractive place to live.
4. New development should sit well with the natural environment and be recognised for its quality by the local community and through industry awards.

What we will do

What does success look like?	Activities and projects
1.1 We will plan for communities where people can work, live and prosper. New homes will meet the needs of a full range of households in a low carbon world.	1.1.1 Prepare a revised Local Plan which engages with the public and brings forward the proposals and policies which ensure we have enough homes of the right type to meet future demand and enable existing businesses to grow, new businesses to relocate and provides a range of new employment opportunites. Our revised Local Plan will aim to promote healthy, vibrant town and village centres, deliver facilities and identify the infrastructure necessary to support growth in a way that protects the overall character of the District.
	1.1.2 Work with central government and key partners to identify the strategic infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development.
	1.1.3 Continue to support local communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans for their areas. Ensure that Neighbourhood Planning contributes to the District's housing requirements and adds value to quality development in local areas, whilst taking account of local community views.
	1.1.4 Provide new community facilities that can be used by all residents. Improved facilities will be provided at new community centres in Highwood, West of Horsham and at Kilnwood Vale.
	1.1.5 Prepare a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan that identifies improvements for future investment in the short, medium and long term.
	1.1.6 Prepare planning guidance to ensure car parking spaces in new developments are well designed and fit for the future.
	1.1.7 Work with partners to increase the number of electric vehicle charging points across the District to promote the use of more environmentally friendly vehicles.
1.2 We will provide culture, sports and leisure opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.	1.2.1 Develop a district-wide culture strategy, building on the success of the Year of Culture 2019 and support the cultural legacy created by the many events which took place across the District.
	1.2.2 Maintain our high standard of sport and leisure facilities.
1.3 Both our built and natural environments are highly valued and will be well managed to keep our District an attractive place to live.	1.3.1 Enhance public space in Horsham Town Centre, particularly Horsham Park. Review Southwater Country Park, Chesworth Farm, Owlbeech & Leechpool Woods, Sandgate Park and Henfield Commons to ensure everyone can use and enjoy these sites.
1.4 New development should sit well with the natural environment and be recognised for its quality by the local community and through industry awards.	1.4.1 Prepare a new District-wide Design Guide to improve the quality of development locally.
	1.4.2 Prioritise environmentally sound policies that enhance biodiversity alongside new development.

2. A thriving economy

Horsham District will be open for business, making it the perfect choice for new investment and growth.

There is huge potential for us to strengthen our local economy which will have many benefits for the growing population. Our priority is to build on achievements to date and consolidate the steady growth of our thriving market towns and rural communities, while preserving the natural beauty and heritage of our District.

We will work to retain existing businesses and facilitate new companies moving to the District bringing continued prosperity across the District and to our residents.

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What does success look like?

1. Increased economic growth making Horsham District a location of choice for business and providing local jobs.
2. Towns and villages are lively and welcoming.
3. Tourism's contribution to the economy, employment and quality of life is maximised.
4. Residents have access to a wide range of local employment opportunities.

What we will do

What does success look like?	Activities and projects
2.1 Increased economic growth making Horsham District a location of choice for business and providing local jobs.	2.1.1 Identify and promote more employment sites for new and expanding businesses in the District.
	2.1.2 Work with Legal and General to deliver a high quality employment offer at North Horsham and with public sector partners to ensure business opportunities are created on other sites.
	2.1.3 Work with Network Rail to encourage new railway stations to be built close to our employment sites.
	2.1.4 Work with other councils in West Sussex to roll out superfast broadband across our District and into the rural areas.
	2.1.5 Support businesses through advice and guidance on regulation and legislation that promotes best practice and improvement whilst implementing regulation in a fair and equitable manner.
2.2 Towns and villages are lively and welcoming	2.2.1 Support market towns, high streets and villages to thrive by encouraging new businesses and enterprises, including from leisure and tourism.
	2.2.2 Promote a comprehensive calendar of events to attract people into our town centres.
	2.2.3 Implement the Town Centre Vision for Horsham.
	2.2.4 Support Horsham businesses with their plans for designating the Town Centre as a Business Improvement District (BID). This will allow them to raise a levy through non-domestic rates funding additional services or improvements within the BID area.
	2.2.5 Improve the car parks in Horsham and continue to enhance rural car parking to improve access to our town and village centres.
2.3 Tourism's contribution to the economy, employment and quality of life is maximised	2.3.1 Develop the District's identity as an appealing destination for visitors.
	2.3.2 Launch a new tourism website to better promote what the District has to offer and provide a single point of information for visitors.
	2.3.3 Enhance our culture, leisure and heritage facilities to attract visitors and to support the local economy.
2.4 Residents have access to a wide range of local employment opportunities	2.4.1 Use the planning process to provide opportunities for people moving to new developments to access employment opportunities.
	2.4.2 Work closely with our businesses to create suitable employment opportunities for people who find it hard to get into work.
	2.4.3 Work with our schools and colleges to help get their students ready for work and to offer training courses that help.
	2.4.4 As a Council, recruit our workforce and buy goods and services from our local communities whenever we can.

3. A strong, safe and healthy community

High quality public green spaces, excellent schools and good transport links all help to make Horsham District one of the best places to live. The overall crime rate is one of the lowest in West Sussex.

We all want our neighbourhoods to be safe and enjoyable places to live in the UK. The Council brings together many agencies to tackle the causes of crime and disorder and improve the quality of life in our local communities.

Our Community Link team provides technology-enabled care to help residents feel safe and live independent lives for as long as possible.

We offer a free, friendly and impartial service to help residents find support to improve their fitness through regular exercise and coping with stress or dealing with addiction.

We are committed to building new affordable homes on Council owned land and working with partners to ensure we increase the supply of affordable homes. This will also help to ensure that homelessness remains low and rough sleeping reduces.

What does success look like?

1. Continue to be the safest district in West Sussex.
2. We will increase the supply of affordable homes and reduce rough sleeping.
3. Residents, including those in need, enjoy improved levels of health and wellbeing.
4. An empowered and independent voluntary sector that has the capacity to tackle local priorities.

What we will do

What does success look like?	Activities and projects
3.1 Continue to be the safest district in West Sussex.	3.1.1 Create a new 'Horsham District Safe and Well Partnership' to work together to address issues such as violent crime and support for young people in the district.
	3.1.2 Address anti-social behaviour within our communities, focusing particularly on the most vulnerable to ensure they are appropriately supported.
	3.1.3 Work with Parish and Neighbourhood Councils to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour through the Neighbourhood Warden programme.
	3.1.4 Use regulatory powers to maintain the safety standards of premises and taxis.
	3.1.5 Work with event organisers to make events as safe and as well organised as possible.
3.2 We will increase the supply of affordable homes and reduce rough sleeping.	3.2.1 Work with partner organisations to minimise rough sleeping and prevent homelessness.
	3.2.2 Use our affordable housing company to build affordable homes in areas of high demand.
	3.2.3 Work with our local Registered Providers to help them increase the supply of affordable homes.
3.3 Residents, including those in need, enjoy improved levels of health and wellbeing.	3.3.1 Expand our Community Link service to support vulnerable people and help them live independently.
	3.3.2 Help people to adapt their homes so they can continue to live independently.
	3.3.3 Encourage participation in sport.
	3.3.4 Deliver targeted health initiatives to help people lose weight, stop smoking and become more active.
	3.3.5 Support our partners to ensure that all residents can access basic health facilities such as GP surgeries.
3.4 An empowered and independent voluntary sector that has the capacity to tackle local priorities.	3.4.1 Support the voluntary sector with grants that help them reach more people.
	3.4.2 Launch and promote our Council lottery to raise funds for local good causes.
	3.4.3 Promote opportunities for volunteering and increase the number of volunteers in the District.

4. A cared for environment

Horsham District is fortunate to have such a high quality natural environment. Warnings from scientists on the challenges facing our planet should not be underestimated and caring for it has never been as important. We are committed to showing leadership, working with partners and residents to undertake local action on the environment which is ambitious but achievable. In doing so we will work to protect our natural environment for future generations.

We have already built a strong track record on environmental issues. Modernising our approach to waste collection has produced the highest recycling rate in Sussex. Improving the energy efficiency of our buildings and increasing the biodiversity of our parks and countryside has significantly reduced the Council's carbon footprint.

We will build on this approach to produce a practical and measurable plan so that we move towards becoming a carbon neutral organisation.

We will work with partners, business, landowners and residents to help develop a practical carbon reduction plan for the District.

What does success look like?

1. Prioritised protection of the environment and increased biodiversity.
2. Improved award-winning parks and open spaces.
3. Minimise waste and increase re-use and recycling.

What we will do

What does success look like?	Activities and projects	
4.1 Prioritised protection of the environment and increased biodiversity.	4.1.1	Undertake a carbon audit to understand the Council's current carbon footprint.
	4.1.2	Produce an action plan to move towards a carbon neutral organisation.
	4.1.3	Work with partners towards becoming a carbon neutral District.
	4.1.4	Continue to work with residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.
	4.1.5	Continue to work to reduce fuel poverty.
	4.1.6	Investigate working with landowners and partners to develop a plan to improve the ecology and biodiversity of the District.
	4.1.7	Work with our communities and partners to monitor air quality and target improvement of our air quality management areas.
	4.1.8	Improve the ecology, wildlife and biodiversity of our parks, open spaces and countryside.
	4.1.9	Embed biodiversity into our planning policies for a sustainable built environment which delivers net biodiversity gains and protects the natural environment.
	4.1.10	Work in partnership with local communities, parish and neighbourhood councils to promote Adopt a Street to help provide clean and tidy environments.
	4.1.11	Invest in our enforcement programme to reduce fly-tipping and other environmental crimes.
	4.1.12	Protect our trees and ancient woodland and work with Sussex Wildlife Trust to review our natural environment and how we can enhance it.
4.2 Improved award-winning parks and open spaces.	4.2.1	Prepare management plans to guide investment in our parks and open spaces.
	4.2.2	Promote our parks and open spaces as great places to visit.
	4.2.3	Inspire the next generation to enjoy our open spaces by providing new and exciting play areas and opportunities for play.
4.3 Minimise waste, increase re-use and recycling.	4.3.1	Increase recycling rates to above 55%.
	4.3.2	Work with other West Sussex councils to develop a strategy for dealing with food waste.
	4.3.3	Continue to develop our existing re-use service.
	4.3.4	Investigate the introduction of kerbside collection of textiles and electrical goods.

5. A modern and flexible council

Technology is advancing and with over 90% of residents now online, the way we interact with people is changing. They expect to contact us in a way that is convenient for them. As funding from central Government reduces, we must find innovative ways to serve the needs of our customers.

Automating the simpler customer interactions not only allows the Council to extend the hours that these services are available, but releases expert staff to deal with more complex enquiries personally.

It is essential that our workforce has the skills to use technology effectively to respond to our customers' needs. Working as part of a team, collaborating with a range of partner organisations will help scarce resources stretch further.

It is important to us that we can recruit and retain skilled employees. Investing in training and development and giving staff the authority to make decisions improves both our customers' experience and staff morale.

What does success look like?

1. People and businesses can deal with us online when they choose to.
2. People with more complex enquiries can talk to someone to help them find solutions.
3. The Council continues to provide quality, value for money services that people need throughout the 2020s.
4. The Council attracts local people to work for us and motivates them to stay.

What we will do

What does success look like?	Activities and projects
5.1 People and businesses can deal with us online when they choose to.	5.1.1 Ensure digital technology strategy is up-to-date, efficient and effective.
	5.1.2 Enhance our online services and make them more accessible through cloud technology.
	5.1.3 Use technology to make it easier for our residents to report problems to us including missed bin collections and overflowing dog bins.
5.2 People with more complex enquiries can talk to someone to help them find solutions.	5.2.1 Hold surgeries for people facing housing difficulties so we can support them to prevent them from becoming homeless.
	5.2.2 Provide face-to-face support to people claiming benefits.
	5.2.3 Make appointments and telephone contacts available for people who have fallen behind with their Council Tax, business rates or other bills so that we can try to find a solution.
	5.2.4 Liaise with Parish and Neighbourhood Councils to explore new ways to promote joint working and greater mutual understanding of issues.
5.3 The Council continues to provide the quality, value for money services that people need throughout the 2020s.	5.3.1 Improve our website to transact with customers online, making our services available to people when it's most convenient to them.
	5.3.2 Make our computer systems easier to use, through artificial intelligence and voice recognition where appropriate so that our services are more effective and efficient.
	5.3.3 Encourage electronic payment using cards or direct debits to reduce how much it costs us to collect money.
	5.3.4 Continue to manage our finances prudently and identify new sources of revenue to balance our budgets as funding from central government reduces.
5.4 The Council attracts local people to work for us and motivates them to stay.	5.4.1 Offer apprenticeships to local people wanting to start a career in local government, introduce the Local Government Association's graduate scheme, and work with local schools to encourage young people to join us.
	5.4.2 Offer retraining to attract people back into the workforce or to change career, especially in those professions which are hard to recruit locally.
	5.4.3 Develop a workforce plan to ensure we have the skills we need to deliver the services our residents need in the future.

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District
Council