

Woking Borough Council
Woking for All

2025-2028

Shaping the *future*
of our borough



Towards a sustainable tomorrow



**Cllr Anne-Marie
Barker**

Leader of the Council
and elected member
for Goldsworth Park.

I am proud to share our new Woking for All Strategy - the framework that guides our actions, defines our priorities and strengthens our commitment to residents.

It is essential that we clarify our goals and focus on what truly matters for Woking's long-term future. Our priority is to deliver core services for the wellbeing of our community whilst improving the way the Council operates through the effective and sustainable use of resources.

As we now move towards being a leaner, more efficient Council we must be focused and realistic in our actions. Prioritising what is important, alongside delivering our Improvement and Recovery Plan, we can give the Council the foundation for future progress.

This strategy will not only guide our work but also reinforce our commitment to transparency and collaboration. Through effective partnerships, we can better deliver on our objectives and adapt as our needs evolve.

We recognise that a successful council is one that is clear on its purpose and steadfast in delivering it. The Woking for All Strategy embodies that vision.

Together we can build a stronger Woking for all.

A renewed commitment



Richard Carr

Chief Executive

The Woking for All Strategy is designed to clearly communicate this council's aims to our community. It outlines our core priorities and objectives which we intend to achieve, based on guiding principles that reflect our commitment to accountability, transparency, and focused service delivery.

It is more than a strategic document—it serves as a foundation for our work, giving accountability to our residents, clarity to staff and guidance to partners.

By refining our ambitions, we can deliver meaningful, long-term outcomes. We are committed to focusing on what is essential, both for today and for the future, as we strengthen the core services we provide and improve our internal processes.

Our goals are not just for the year ahead - they reflect a forward-looking approach that supports our Improvement and Recovery Plan and aligns with our responsibility to deliver efficient, effective statutory services. This strategy will guide our collaborations with partners, enabling us to explore innovative models for delivering sustainable results.

Through this strategy, we are creating a roadmap that emphasises accountability, pragmatism and service that reflect our community's needs.

I look forward to achieving a positive future for all.

Vision and mission

In February 2024, the Council adopted a Vision and Mission Statement designed to provide staff, residents, and partners with a clear understanding of the council's direction of travel. The Vision was developed through a series of workshops with the Executive, wider Members, Corporate Leadership Team, Commissioners, and staff.

The aspiration for the Council, known as our Vision, and how we will achieve this, our Mission, have been developed to work hand in hand with this Strategy to develop a 'golden thread' which will drive service planning and staff performance development reviews.

Our vision

"A financially and environmentally sustainable council delivering services that residents value in every part of the borough."

Mission statement

A trusted and transparent council that:

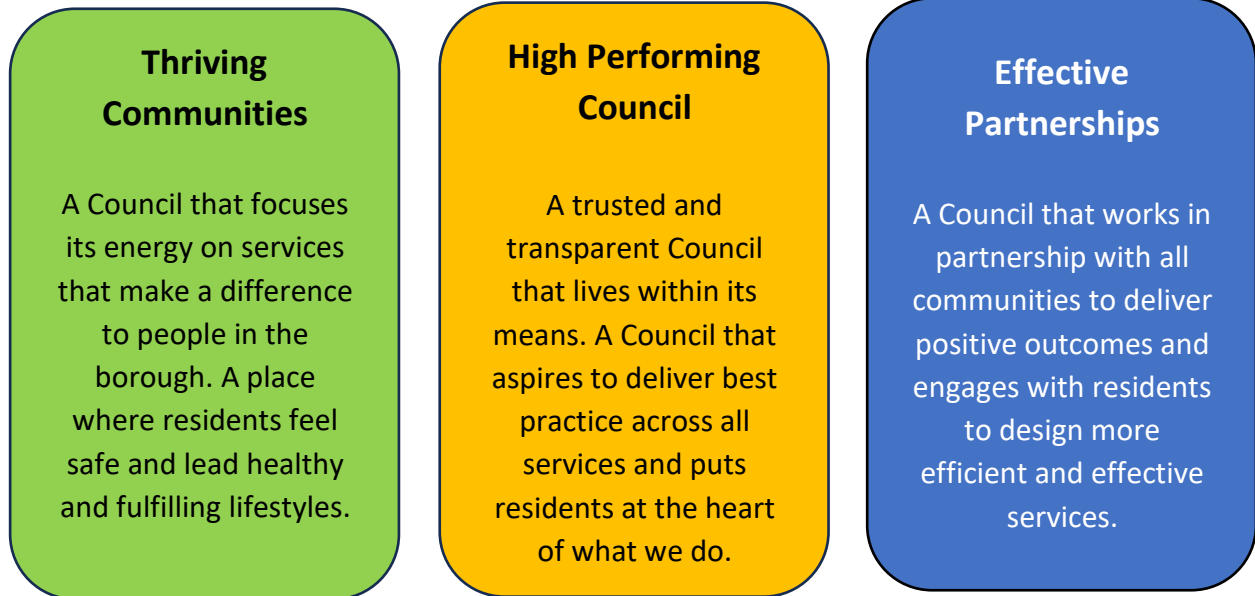
- Lives within its means.
- Focuses its energy on services that make a difference to people in the borough.
- Works in partnership with all communities to deliver positive outcomes.
- Continually engages with residents to design more efficient and effective services.
- Invests in talent to deliver for Woking's future.

Improvement and Recovery Plan

The Woking for All Strategy is the Council's corporate plan and is underpinned by and reflects the Improvement and Recovery Plan developed in response to Government intervention. The Strategy also takes account of the Council's statutory and legal responsibilities.

Woking For All

This strategy is built around three core themes: **Thriving Communities**, **High Performing Council**, and **Effective Partnerships**.



How this strategy is structured

Each theme is made up of three core priorities, underneath which sit clearly defined objectives. The Strategy is structured to outline how each individual objective will be met, what the outcomes will be for residents and the Council, and what the success measures are for each objective. This will ensure that performance can be measured and reported.

Sitting below this Strategy is a Medium-Term Financial Strategy, a suite of strategic and directorate plans, and a corporate performance management system. All of these elements combine to define our approach to the delivery of integrated service and financial planning.

Duration of the strategy

This is a three-year strategy running to the end of the 2027/28 financial year, which is aligned to the life of the Council’s Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The Strategy will be refreshed regularly to ensure that it always remains current and is representative of the voice of residents and communities so that we can measure and report on our performance.

Woking for All on a page

Thriving Communities	High Performing Council	Effective Partnerships
<p>High quality homes for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Invest in our Council homes to ensure they are safe and well-maintained in a way that is financially sustainable and responsive to tenants. (pg. 7) ➤ Working to prevent homelessness and address its root causes. (pg. 8) <p>Health and wellbeing for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support our most vulnerable residents to access key services, as cost effectively as possible, and in conjunction with partners. (pg. 9) <p>Safe, attractive. and greener communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promote sustainability and continue to invest in green spaces and clean streets. (pg. 10) 	<p>A culture of continuous improvement across all services and functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop the systems, processes, and culture that enables the Council to meet its Best Value duty. (pg. 11) ➤ Ensure effective governance to enable rounded decision-making, based on a proper understanding of options and their consequences (including financial, legal and risks) which are tested through appropriate scrutiny. (pg. 12) <p>A modern employer with a high performing workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff are developed and supported to deliver high performing and cost-effective services. (pg. 13) <p>A financially responsible council with sustainable and affordable plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Effective financial management and planning. (pg. 14) ➤ Effective use of our estate to deliver maximum value for money and support place-shaping responsibilities. (pg. 15) ➤ Effective approach to the commissioning, procurement, and contract-management of organisations that supply goods and services. (pg. 16) ➤ Effectively manage the relationship with the Council’s wholly owned companies in a way that ensures the public interest is protected. (pg. 17) ➤ Tackle the legacy issues confronting the Council rigorously, to best protect the public interest. (pg. 18) 	<p>Working with partners to deliver community priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensuring residents continue to benefit from a range of leisure, cultural, and community facilities across the borough, including through unlocking the contribution of voluntary and community groups. (pg.19) <p>A strong and sustainable economy with an enabling infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Responsible planning and development to support local place-shaping and the delivery of well-designed homes of all tenures. (pg. 20) <p>Informed and consulted residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reach out and listen to our communities and act on their feedback. (pg. 21)

Thriving Communities

A Council that focuses its energy on services that make a difference to people in the borough. A place where residents feel safe and lead healthy and fulfilling lifestyles.

Our priority

High quality homes for all.

Our objective

Invest in our Council homes to ensure they are safe and well-maintained in a way that is financially sustainable and responsive to tenants.

We will achieve this through

- Delivering fire safety remedial works and management actions.
- Completing stock condition surveys to inform the medium-term investment strategy for the council's housing stock.
- Delivering prioritised improvements to Council homes through the implementation of capital investment plans.
- Implementing a comprehensive Housing Improvement Programme that aims to improve systems, data, and processes across the service.
- Developing and implementing a Sheerwater strategy to refurbish retained homes within the regeneration area.
- Setting a sustainable Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30-year business plan.

Outcomes

- Safer homes through compliance with fire risk assessment recommendations.
- Completion of key work to the fabric of homes, upgraded heating systems, kitchens, and bathrooms.
- Clear strategy enabling prioritisation of effort and associated works.
- Internal resources upskilled/qualified.
- HRA business plan to allow sustainable investment in the housing stock.

Success measures

- Compliance with Decent Homes Standard.
 - Improved tenant satisfaction measures as part of an annual survey.
 - Approved action plan that ensures adequate resources (staff, skills, and ICT systems).
 - A viable 30-year HRA business plan approved.
 - Reduction in Sheerwater void rental losses.
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Thriving Communities

A Council that focuses its energy on services that make a difference to people in the borough. A place where residents feel safe and lead healthy and fulfilling lifestyles.

Our priority

High quality homes for all.

Our objective

Working to prevent homelessness and address its root causes.

We will achieve this through

- Delivery of the Bed and Breakfast Elimination Plan.
- Retaining and refurbishing approx. 100 homes in the Sheerwater Regeneration area, making use of the Government's Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF).
- Reducing the time it takes to re-let Council homes to minimise voids.
- Taking account of the Borough's housing needs through the Local Plan review.

Outcomes

- Homeless households will spend shorter time in emergency accommodation.
- Reduction in families being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation.
- Reduction in bed and breakfast dependency and associated costs.
- Council owned housing stock being used as effectively as possible.
- Additional affordable housing unlocked through the review of the Local Plan and effective partnerships.

Success measures

- No families with children in bed & breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks.
 - Long term empty homes in Sheerwater are brought back into use and available to households in need.
 - Occupation of at least 13 additional temporary accommodation units through the use of the Government's LAHF grant.
 - Reduction in the average number of days taken to re-let properties.
 - Increased delivery of affordable housing.
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Thriving Communities

A Council that focuses its energy on services that make a difference to people in the borough. A place where residents feel safe and lead healthy and fulfilling lifestyles.

Our priority

Health and wellbeing for all.

Our objective

Support our most vulnerable residents to access key services, as cost effectively as possible, and in conjunction with partners.

We will achieve this through

- Ensuring that Careline and Community Meals discretionary services operate on a self-funding basis.
- Working with the North West Surrey Alliance to develop and strengthen the support available to vulnerable people in Woking neighbourhoods.
- Adapting properties through the Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) scheme.
- Working with the voluntary sector and sign-posting support provided by partners to maintain and/or expand services available to residents.

Outcomes

- Elderly and vulnerable residents supported to be independent in their own homes, reducing the need for care.
- Wrap-around support provided to vulnerable residents in 'Woking Neighbourhoods' through the North West Surrey Alliance.
- DFG adaptations enabling residents to remain as independent as possible.

Success measures

- Accurate financial information to evidence discretionary services covering costs.
 - KPI's and outcomes produced by the North West Surrey Alliance to demonstrate partnership effectiveness.
 - Home adaption targets are met.
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Thriving Communities

A Council that focuses its energy on services that make a difference to people in the borough. A place where residents feel safe and lead healthy and fulfilling lifestyles.

Our priority

Safe, attractive, and greener communities.

Our objective

Promote sustainability and continue to invest in green spaces and clean streets.

We will achieve this through

- Implementing and promoting the 2024 Climate Change Strategy.
- Mobilising and embedding the new grounds maintenance and street cleaning contract.
- Implementing improvements to parks and play areas with the use of UK Shared Prosperity Funding.
- Working with voluntary and community groups through the Community Asset Transfer process to explore opportunities for external investment in sports fields and green spaces.

Outcomes

- Better informed staff and residents in relation to climate change.
- Delivering value for money through the new grounds maintenance contract.
- Attractive, safe, clean, and well maintained parks and play areas.
- Outdoor recreation to support health and wellbeing for residents.
- Investment in sports fields/green spaces maximised to maintain standards whilst reducing costs to the Council.

Success measures

- Reduction in the Council's carbon footprint.
 - Mobilisation of grounds maintenance contract in March 2025.
 - Detailed monitoring of the contract against predefined performance indicators.
 - Extended life expectancy of refurbished play areas/features across the borough.
 - Sports fields and green spaces continue to be fit for purpose and remain well used by community groups across the borough.
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High Performing Council

A trusted and transparent Council that lives within its means. A Council that aspires to deliver best practice across all services and puts residents at the heart of what we do.

Our priority

A culture of continuous improvement across all services and functions.

Our objective

Develop the systems, processes, and culture that enables the Council to meet its Best Value duty.

We will achieve this through

- Developing an Organisational Development plan to equip the Council with the skills and culture to discharge its Best Value obligations.
- Upgrading the Council's housing systems to deliver service improvements.
- Implementation of a Property Management system.
- Launching a new and more accessible Council website.
- Rollout of new contact centre technology to improve the customer experience.
- Upgrading the Council's primary finance system.

Outcomes

- A responsive, customer focussed organisation.
- Implementation of improved systems across several directorates.
- Website upgrade enabling customers to self-serve effectively.
- Improved budget monitoring, accountability, and transparency.
- Council systems better integrated.

Success measures

- Improved data quality across systems to enable better performance management.
 - Reduction of officer time spent on tasks that can be automated via system enhancement.
 - Increased numbers of residents and businesses completing online transactions through self-service.
 - Improved resident/staff satisfaction.
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High Performing Council

A trusted and transparent Council that lives within its means. A Council that aspires to deliver best practice across all services and puts residents at the heart of what we do.

Our priority

A culture of continuous improvement across all services and functions.

Our objective

Ensure effective governance to enable rounded decision-making, based on a proper understanding of options and their consequences (including financial, legal and risks) which are tested through appropriate scrutiny.

We will achieve this through

- Strengthening the performance of Council’s wholly owned companies through more effective governance of the relationship with the companies.
- Embedding a new and enhanced committee reporting template.
- Strengthening the Forward Plan process.
- Strengthening the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny arrangements.

Outcomes

- Effective oversight applied to the management of Council companies.
- Stronger alignment between the companies to the Council’s priorities.
- Members presented with clear advice and guidance, including the full implications of proposed decisions.
- An Overview and Scrutiny function that adds value and strengthens the Council’s decision-making process.
- A well planned/considered Forward Plan.

Success measures

- Company business cases approved by the Council and Government.
 - Clear decisions relating to the future of wholly owned companies.
 - Members feel sufficiently informed in their decision-making.
 - An Overview and Scrutiny function that is valued by Members and is compliant with statutory guidance.
 - A forward plan that effectively represents the pipeline of planned council activity.
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High Performing Council

A trusted and transparent Council that lives within its means. A Council that aspires to deliver best practice across all services and puts residents at the heart of what we do.

Our priority

A modern employer with a high performing workforce.

Our objective

Staff are developed and supported to deliver high performing and cost-effective services.

We will achieve this through

- Developing a pay and progression strategy to ensure staff are rewarded.
- Developing a strategy and action plan for equalities, diversity, and inclusion.
- Reviewing and updating the Council's recruitment and retention strategy.

Outcomes

- Council services are provided by a knowledgeable and skilled workforce.
- Equalities, diversity, and inclusion considerations are evident as part of Council decision-making processes.
- Employees are engaged and motivated.
- Processes are consistent and transparent.

Success measures

- Positive employee survey results.
 - Change programmes create efficiencies and improvements across the Council.
 - Survey results indicate employees feel the organisation is fair and diverse.
 - The strategies are developed and agreed.
 - Employment terms have been reviewed.
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High Performing Council

A trusted and transparent Council that lives within its means. A Council that aspires to deliver best practice across all services and puts residents at the heart of what we do.

Our priority

A financially responsible council with sustainable and affordable plans.

Our objective

Effective financial management and planning.

We will achieve this through

- Creating a finance section that has the right skills and capacity in place.
- Finalising historic accounts to meet statutory reporting requirements and return to the statutory timetable for 2025/26.
- Delivery of a balanced Medium Term Financial Strategy with clearly identified savings and mitigations to close budget gaps.
- Developing and implementing a debt reduction strategy.
- Identifying a Council-wide financial envelope which is not dependent on commercial activity.

Outcomes

- Training and support for budget holders.
- Improved financial transparency and decision-making.
- Better skills internally to plan and deliver the MTFs and assess financial proposals.
- Enhanced budget management and forecasting.
- Enhanced accountability and transparency in the use of public funds.

Success measures

- Use of financial forecast to inform robust strategic decision-making.
 - Councillors and officers recognising the Council's duty in all financial business and using public resources responsibly.
 - A 'right sized' budget for the Council focused on delivering to citizens.
 - A balanced Housing Revenue Account and a sustainable Housing service.
 - Implementation and use of robust financial, budgeting, and accounting systems.
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High Performing Council

A trusted and transparent Council that lives within its means. A Council that aspires to deliver best practice across all services and puts residents at the heart of what we do.

Our priority

A financially responsible Council with sustainable and affordable plans.

Our objective

Effective use of our estate to deliver maximum value for money and support the council's place-shaping responsibilities.

We will achieve this through

- Implementation of an asset review and subsequent rationalisation plan.
- Addressing energy management issues to reduce consumption and costs.
- Developing and implementing a Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) that supports the Council's strategic priorities and place-shaping agenda.
- Creation and delivery of a robust maintenance capital works programme.

Outcomes

- A clear strategy that enables the prioritisation of effort and works.
- A SAMP that will manage the pipeline of asset disposals over a defined period and level out Council assets verses debt.
- An approach to link estate management and place-shaping through the Local Plan.
- Implementation of capital works to increase income where appropriate.

Success measures

- Streamlined, effective maintenance planning and escalation process implemented.
 - Achieving annual disposal targets and meeting criteria set out by Commissioners.
 - Development/adoption of a capital works programme based on condition surveys.
 - Reduction in administrative overheads.
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High Performing Council

A trusted and transparent Council that lives within its means. A Council that aspires to deliver best practice across all services and puts residents at the heart of what we do.

Our priority

A financially responsible Council with sustainable and affordable plans.

Our objective

Effective approach to the commissioning, procurement, and contract management of organisations that supply goods and services to the council.

We will achieve this through

- Reviewing and enhancing procurement and contract management processes.
- Ensuring the Council is compliant with the Procurement Act 2023 requirements.
- Developing and adopting a Commercial Strategy.

Outcomes

- Assurance that the Council is achieving Best Value in relation to procurement.
- Contract Standing Orders updated to reflect new requirements.
- Training provided to staff based on specific requirements.
- Corporate Contract Register fully up to date to drive management information.
- Pipeline of procurement/contract activity.
- Clarity around the approach and implementation of commercial activity across the Council.

Success measures

- New Contract Standing Orders adopted.
 - Ongoing review of procurement and contract savings opportunities.
 - New procurement and contract management frameworks developed.
 - Savings delivered via procurement activity.
 - Improved Government Commercial Assessment Framework score.
 - Fewer direct awards/exemptions issued due to greater rigour around processes.
 - The adoption of an updated commercial framework that reflects best practice and takes account of planned procurement and contract management improvements.
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High Performing Council

A trusted and transparent Council that lives within its means. A Council that aspires to deliver best practice across all services and puts residents at the heart of what we do.

Our priority

A financially responsible Council with sustainable and affordable plans.

Our objective

Effectively manage the relationship with the council's wholly owned companies in a way that ensures the public interest is protected.

We will achieve this through

- Delivery of full business cases for Council wholly owned companies in order to support the Council's strategic priorities.
- Undertaking an assessment of company compliance with the Company Governance Framework.

Outcomes

- Review the future of the Council's companies in order to best protect the public purse, reduce debt, and meet the Council's strategic objectives.
- Ensure value for money in relation to investment and disinvestment decisions.
- Ensuring robust and effective commercial governance is in place and fit for purpose.

Success measures

- Reduction in Council exposure to risk associated with companies.
 - Consistent quality of business cases and commercial decision-making.
 - Clear assessment of the viability of wholly owned companies to inform clear decision-making and next steps.
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High Performing Council

A trusted and transparent Council that lives within its means. A Council that aspires to deliver best practice across all services and puts residents at the heart of what we do.

Our priority

A financially responsible Council with sustainable and affordable plans.

Our objective

Tackle the legacy issues confronting the Council rigorously, to best protect the public interest.

We will achieve this through

- Reviewing historic charges to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to ensure they are fair and legitimate, including costs relating to the Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme, and taking corrective action where necessary.
- Development of a response to the publication of the Grant Thornton Value for Money Review.

Outcomes

- Tenant rents used correctly/effectively.
- Clarity and assurance around the HRA ringfence arrangements.
- Clearly defined next steps and actions in relation to the Grant Thornton review i.e. historic loan arrangements and associated decisions/governance.

Success measures

- A HRA that is clear and transparent with all subsidies removed.
 - Increased confidence in the Council dealing with legacy issues and meeting expectations of Government and Commissioners.
 - Successfully extracting the Council from legacy arrangements where possible.
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Effective Partnerships

A Council that works in partnership with all communities to deliver positive outcomes and engages with residents to design more efficient and effective services.

Our priority

Working with partners to deliver community priorities.

Our objective

Ensuring residents continue to benefit from a range of leisure, cultural and community facilities across the borough, including through unlocking the contribution of voluntary and community groups.

We will achieve this through

- Procuring a new leisure contractor to effectively run our leisure centres.
- Working with partners to support the sustainability of community arts and culture venues.
- Delivering the Community Asset Transfer Scheme to safeguard valued community assets such as centres for the community and pavilions.

Outcomes

- Leisure operator mobilised successfully to deliver sustainable leisure services.
- Residents are engaged and have access to leisure, arts, and cultural activities.
- Community assets remain available to resident groups and residents.

Success measures

- New leisure contract commences at the end of 2025 in line with programme.
 - Management fee increasingly covers costs.
 - Centres for the community and pavilions successfully transferred to groups.
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Effective Partnerships

A Council that works in partnership with all communities to deliver positive outcomes and engages with residents to design more efficient and effective services.

Our priority

A strong and sustainable economy with an enabling infrastructure.

Our objective

Responsible planning and development to support local place-shaping and the delivery of well-designed homes of all tenures.

We will achieve this through

- Adopting a sound Local Plan that facilitates the delivery of the spatial objectives of the Corporate Plan.
- Working with partners to develop proposals for Sheerwater redevelopment.
- Adopting a Design Code to steer high quality place-making.
- Implementing a new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule and associated projects list.
- Increasing Member knowledge and awareness of statutory responsibilities in bringing forward a new Local Plan.

Outcomes

- A Local Plan that defines the place we want Woking to be - adequate homes and opportunities for a vibrant economy.
- Investment in the local area and new homes built and occupied.
- Realisation of capital receipts to support the Council's housing stock.
- Certainty for residents around plans for new development and infrastructure.
- CIL information available to partners.

Success measures

- New homes delivered and sale of land completed in line with timeframe.
 - New Local Plan consultation stages delivered in line with project plan.
 - The Council passes gateway assessments set by the Planning Inspectorate.
 - Delivery of the infrastructure identified.
 - Delivery of Members training programme.
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Effective Partnerships

A Council that works in partnership with all communities to deliver positive outcomes and engages with residents to design more efficient and effective services.

Our priority

Informed and consulted residents.

Our objective

Reach out and listen to our communities and act on their feedback.

We will achieve this through

- Developing a tenant engagement strategy that builds on the results of our tenant satisfaction survey.
- Consult and engage residents, partners, and businesses in relation to the development of the new Local Plan.
- Maximise opportunities for co-designing services with residents.

Outcomes

- Tenant satisfaction survey provides a platform to take forward suggestions and benchmark progress.
- Increased future engagement.
- Residents, partners, and businesses given the opportunity to engage in the shaping of their communities.
- Revamped website developed taking account of resident feedback and usage.

Success measures

- Completion and adoption of a resident engagement strategy.
 - Follow-up survey to evidence improved outcomes.
 - Evidence of a high number of responses to statutory Local Plan engagement.
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