

Hart District Council

Corporate Plan

2012 - 15



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Introduction

This Corporate Plan sets out how Hart District Council intends to play its role in improving, sustaining and promoting the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the communities in Hart District over the next three years. It replaces the previous Corporate Plan, which covered the period 2007 - 2011.

The plan complements the Sustainable Community Strategy for the district, produced by the Hart Local Strategic Partnership, which draws together all the major public agencies and other interested parties to work together for the good of the district. It fully supports the Vision and Strategic Priorities of the Partnership, and sets out the role the council will play in delivering those priorities.

The plan also provides a context for a family of more detailed Council strategies and plans designed to tackle particular issues and needs in the district, such as the form and location of future development, the provision of affordable housing, the council's environmental and sustainability objectives, and so on. It helps to set direction for those strategies and ensure they are properly co-ordinated.

Context

Hart is a small district council serving a mixed urban and rural area of north-east Hampshire. Hart is officially the least deprived local government area in the entire UK (see Appendix), with a very high quality of life as measured by a range of indicators such as income, employment levels, standards of educational achievement, crime statistics, levels of benefit dependency, housing conditions, public health, and environmental standards.

That is not to say there is no deprivation; for significant numbers of people life is difficult. The Council therefore sees its primary responsibility as doing what it can to protect and enhance the district's advantages while helping those who, through vulnerability or low incomes, find it hard to help themselves.

Hart faces both challenges and opportunities for the future. Although for a long time the average age of the district's population has been relatively young, the proportion of older people is growing. One challenge will be to cope with this - to develop the facilities and services older people require, on a scale not previously needed in Hart. Another challenge is the rate of housing development; the high quality of life in the district means that many people want to live here - which amongst other things has the effect of driving up housing prices, making it harder for the young and the less affluent to find homes. Meeting their needs will require further housing development to take place, putting infrastructure under strain and encroaching on the very landscapes and townscapes which make the district so attractive. And some of that infrastructure is already in need of upgrading or renewal. A

third challenge will be finding the resources to do that.

Meeting these - and other - challenges will not be easy. For several years the council has faced severe financial constraints, which it has responded to actively; the last Corporate Plan was focused on identifying and concentrating resources on its key priorities, whilst radically reforming the way it provided services, to gain maximum benefit from the resources it has. These measures have meant that the Council has protected and in some cases enhanced the range of services it provides to the public, while at the same time improving the quality, performance and reliability of those services. Today the council is in the bottom quartile of council spending, while its services are in the upper middle quartile of performance.

Those changes have come about from a radical transformation of the council's internal organisation and service delivery. The majority of the council's services are now provided in partnership, either with its neighbouring councils or with private companies. In the last 3 years the council's net budget has fallen by 15% in cash terms, 22% if allowance is made for inflation. Its staff headcount has fallen by more than half in the last 5 years. Yet it is now serving its public better, and more reliably, than it was before, as evidenced by its steadily improving performance indicators.

For the future, the financial outlook is very uncertain, but there are good grounds for optimism. The council's revenue resources appear to be stabilising and even increasing modestly, while there is very significant potential for using the ongoing pressure for housing development in the district to generate capital resources for investment in community infrastructure.

This new Corporate Plan builds on the success of the last one. The emphasis now is less on turning the council itself around and much more on identifying how the council can help the district face up to and tackle the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Hart Sustainable Community Strategy

The Sustainable Community Strategy was prepared by the Hart Local Strategic Partnership, which draws together the principal public sector and other service providers in the district to produce a shared Vision and Strategic Priorities for the district.

The Sustainable Community Strategy's Vision for the district is:

To improve, sustain and promote the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the communities in Hart district.

Under the Vision, the strategy sets out six Strategic Priorities. These are:

1. An environmentally conscious community and a sustainable district.
2. Affordable, safe, well maintained sustainable housing.

3. One of the safest districts in the south east.
4. A beacon of good health.
5. A diversified and balanced economy.
6. A sustainable and accessible transport system.

Each of the partners in the LSP have committed themselves to working towards these strategic priorities. The council's Corporate Plan is likewise aimed at contributing towards the achievement of the Strategic Priorities over the next three years.

The LSP is currently reviewing its activities, and this may result in some changes to the Community Strategy during 2012. It is unlikely however that these changes will be very significant.

Corporate Plan Key Themes

During the life of the Corporate Plan, the council's work towards achieving the Strategic Priorities will be based around four key themes.

These Key Themes are:

1. **Working for high quality development and infrastructure**, including:
 - Welcoming high quality development in sustainable locations
 - Managing development to sustain the district's high quality of life
 - Regenerating town and village centres where necessary to maintain prosperity
 - Protecting and enhancing high quality townscape, landscape and biodiversity
2. **Working with communities**, including:
 - Recognising that different communities have different needs
 - Recognising that issues are often best addressed at the local level
 - Working with town and parish councils
 - Tailoring public services to meet individual needs, particularly for the most vulnerable and supporting early intervention
3. **Working in partnership for a high quality of life**, including:
 - Continuing and developing our existing partnerships to maintain and improve Quality of Life
 - Working to harness the talents of everyone for the good of the community
 - Supporting the development of the voluntary and community sectors
4. **Maintaining front line services and improving efficiency**, including
 - Sustaining our current service levels, costs and standards of performance, consistent with financial constraints
 - Continuing to improve our efficiency
 - Ensuring the council has the skills necessary to meet future needs
 - Holding ourselves accountable to the public we serve

Values

Most of this Plan talks about what the council wants to do. This part talks about how it wants to do it. The council wants to be an organisation that cares about the people it serves, and treats them fairly and with respect.

In everything it does the council will try to live up to its Values of being:-

Efficient - using the public resources it controls as effectively as possible

Communicative and Consultative - keeping people informed about what it is doing and listening to their responses

Honest, with Integrity - telling the truth, admitting its mistakes, and informing people of their rights

Open and Transparent - welcoming comment and criticism, and constantly looking for opportunities to improve

We will encourage staff and councillors to observe these values in their work

Corporate Plan Implementation Programme

The Implementation Programme develops the Key Themes into practical actions over the life of the Corporate Plan.

The Implementation Programme is set out in the following pages.

It will be reviewed every year and amended to respond to changing circumstances.

	ACTION	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS	RESPONSIBILITY
Corporate Plan Key Theme I – Working for High Quality Development & Infrastructure				
I. Welcoming high quality development in sustainable locations	A. Complete and implement Local Development Framework (LDF): a) Core Strategy adoption in Implementation b) Pre-Submission consultation c) Examination and adoption	2013 June/July 2012 2013		Head of Planning
	B. Urban Characterisation Design Study : a) Consultation b) Adoption	Summer 2012 2013		Head of Planning
	C. Co-operate with parish councils in producing parish/neighbourhood visions/plans:- a) Respond to requests from parish councils wanting to continue development of parish plans b) Develop a suggested methodology for producing neighbourhood plans following implementation of Localism Act c) Provide appropriate support to parishes or communities wanting to prepare Neighbourhood Plans	Ongoing Summer 2012 Ongoing		Head of Planning
	D. Secure implementation of the Fleet Vision a) Conduct feasibility study for Civic Hub b) Agree disposal of Civic Offices, etc, site c) Development of Civic Hub, new Civic Offices, etc d) Develop Housing scheme on part of Church Road car park e) Promote housing development elsewhere in town centre	2012/13 2012/13 2013 onwards 2012/13 2012 onwards		Chief Executive/ Head of Planning
	E. Work with parish councils in developing affordable housing in rural areas	Ongoing		Head of Housing

	F. Identify potential development opportunities and encourage/facilitate developer interest in implementation	Ongoing		Head of Planning
2. Managing development to sustain the district's high quality of life	<p>A. Improving local infrastructure for the good of the whole community:-</p> <p>a) Develop and implement Infrastructure Plan as part of LDF, in conjunction with other public service providers</p> <p>b) Identify, quantify and provide evidence base for infrastructure development needs/opportunities for HDC services</p> <p>c) Work with developers to maximise developer contributions</p> <p>d) Ensure developer contributions are used effectively and efficiently</p> <p>e) Influence other public sector providers to ensure infrastructure needs are identified and met</p> <p>f) Implement a Charging Policy for the Community Infrastructure Level (CIL)</p>	<p>Summer 2012</p> <p>Summer 2012</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Summer 2012</p> <p>Summer 2012</p>		Head of Planning

	<p>B. Securing a range of housing to meet the needs of local people</p> <p>a) Identify and prioritise categories of housing need and develop initiatives to meet that need</p> <p>b) Work with developers to maximise affordable housing gain from development sites</p> <p>c) Develop a robust methodology for calculating developer contributions where on-site affordable housing provision is not practically possible</p> <p>d) Work with parish councils in developing affordable housing in rural areas (see above)</p> <p>e) Work with housing providers to develop a scheme to encourage under occupiers to move to smaller homes</p> <p>f) Identify gypsy/traveller housing needs</p> <p>g) Take steps to meet gypsy/traveller housing needs</p>	<p>31 March 2012</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>31 March 2012</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>31 March 2012</p> <p>31 March 2012</p> <p>On-going</p>		<p>Head of Housing</p>
	<p>C. Mixing housing types to create a high quality residential environment</p> <p>a) Work to secure mixed housing forms of development</p> <p>b) Secure developer contributions in land/housing in preference to financial contributions</p> <p>c) Identify and evaluate potential alternative uses for the Heathlands hostel</p>	<p>On going</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>June 2013</p>		<p>Head of Housing/ Head of Planning Head of Housing/ Head of Planning Head of Housing</p>
<p>3. Regenerating town and village centres where necessary to maintain prosperity</p>	<p>A. Secure implementation of the Fleet Vision, including replacement of Harlington Centre/Fleet Library – See above</p>	<p>2012 onwards</p>		<p>Head of Planning</p>
	<p>B. Develop and pursue a village centre enhancement scheme for Hook in partnership with the parish council and in conjunction with the NE Hook development proposals</p>	<p>2012 onwards</p>		<p>Head of Planning</p>

	C. Consider a town centre enhancement scheme for Blackwater in conjunction with the town council	2012 onwards		Head of Planning
	D. Regeneration of area round Fleet station, including additional parking provision	2012 onwards		Head of Planning
	E. Identify, promote and facilitate regeneration opportunities in other town and village centres	2012 onwards		Head of Planning
4. Protecting and enhancing high quality townscape, landscape and biodiversity	A. Complete Fleet Pond Restoration Plan:- a) Stage 2 – Visitor Enhancements b) Stage 3 – Pond Depth Works	2012/13 2013/14		Head of Leisure
	B. Maintain support to countryside management projects at Odiham Common, Hazeley Heath, Hartley Wintney Commons, Dilly Lane and Elvetham Heath	Ongoing		Head of Leisure
	C. Continue development of Edenbrook Country Park: a) Complete Visitor Requirement Plan b) Transition from Developer	Dec 2012 June 2013		Head of Leisure
	D. Develop a network of green spaces	Ongoing		Head of Leisure
	E. Complete Conservation Area Reviews Programme	Summer 2012		Head of Planning
Corporate Plan Key Theme 2 – Working with communities:				
I. Recognising that different communities have different needs	A. Developing council policies and strategies that are sensitive to the different needs/views of different communities	Ongoing		All
	B. Support town and parish council roles as “voice” of local communities	Ongoing		All
	C. Support town and parish councils in developing long term plans for their communities and in parish/neighbourhood planning (see Key Theme 1 above)	Ongoing		Head of Planning

	D. Encouraging the development of community and voluntary sector initiatives aimed at providing public benefit	Ongoing		All
	E. Supporting businesses in complying with health and safety and other legislation	2012/13		Env. Health Manager
2. Recognising that issues are often best addressed at the local level	A. Supporting principles of subsidiarity for decision making	Ongoing		All
	B. Delegating additional functions by agreement to town and parish councils or community groups	Ongoing		Chief Executive/ Corporate Director
	C. Continuing and improving liaison/co-ordination with town and parish councils	Ongoing		Chief Executive/ Corporate Director
	D. Work with Parish Councils to develop local area parking strategies, including Fleet, Hook and Odiham	Spring 2013		Head of Env & Tech Services
3. Working with town and parish councils	A. To develop a vision for their communities and help them plan for the future	Ongoing		Head of Planning
	B. To secure the public services they need: a) Work with Parish and Town Councils to deliver the "snow plan" and flooding plans when bad weather occurs b) Undertake feedback sessions with parish and town councils to ensure that new ways of working on street cleaning, grounds maintenance and waste are meeting local needs c) Work to ensure parish level leisure provision is adequately supported by developer contributions d) Work to ensure collaborative provision of the dog warden service to effectively deal with dog fouling in parish owned recreational land e) Work to ensure the needs of an ageing population are recognised and catered for at local level (See Key Theme 3 below)	Winter 2011		Head of Env & Tech Services
		Spring 2012		Head of Env & Tech Services
		Ongoing		Head of Leisure
		Spring 2012		Env Health Manager
		Ongoing		Corporate Director

	C. To build the high quality environment and living standards they want	Ongoing		Head of Planning
	D. Bringing sports clubs and parish councils together to participate in events in conjunction with the 2012 Olympics and their legacy	Jan 2012 onwards		Head of Leisure
4. Tailoring public services to meet individual needs, particularly for the most vulnerable and supporting early intervention	A. Development and Implementation of Older Persons strategy (See Key Theme 3 below)	March 2012		Corporate Director
	B. Develop and implement drug alcohol awareness early intervention education programme	March 2012		Community Safety Mgr
	C. Undertake a range of intervention projects aimed at reducing anti social behaviours including CREW (crime reduction and environment , LIFE (local intervention and fire education), Thinksafe and the Youth Café	On going		Community Safety Mgr
	D. Further develop the family intervention project	Dec 2011		Head of Housing
	E. Support the HNC in the delivery of the Early Intervention Domestic Violence Family Support package "Taking Steps" through funding via the LSP and improved links with early intervention officer	On going		Community Safety Mgr
	F. Publicise assisted collection scheme for refuse service to ensure it is taken up by all who need it	Spring 2011		Head of Env & Tech Services
	G. Deliver the Homelessness Prevention Strategy	On-going		Head of Housing
	H. Ensure on-going provision for Disabled Facilities Grants	December 2011		Head of Housing
	I. Develop projects to continue to reduce fuel poverty	On-going		Head of Housing
	J. Work with Supporting People to ensure the continuing provision of housing support services	On-going		Head of Housing

Corporate Plan Key Theme 3 – Working in Partnership for a high Quality of Life:

I. Continuing and developing our existing partnerships to maintain and improve Quality of Life, particularly:-	A. Through the Climate Change Panel and the Hart Greening Partnership , keeping our environment attractive and tackling climate change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Deliver the Climate Change Action Plan b) Ensure that the Council continues to reduce its energy consumption across all its sites c) Produce a green Travel Plan for Staff d) Deliver a programme of education about recycling 	Ongoing Ongoing	Spring 2012 Spring 2012	Corporate Director/ Head of Env & Technical Services
	B. Through the Hart Health and Wellbeing Partnership , keeping our residents healthy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify key Health issues in the District and develop actions to address them : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Continue and improve Healthy Workplace Awards ii. Promote active leisure and sport opportunities to encourage healthy living amongst adults and children iii. Undertake smoking cessation programmes (especially targeting smoking in pregnancy) iv. Provide education to all age groups about the dangers of excessive drinking b) Ensure that the Hart Health and Well Being Partnership has strong links with the Hampshire Health and Well Being Board, especially in relation to Public Health c) Work with both GP consortia in the District to keep abreast of changes to the provision of clinical health services, communicating information to residents where appropriate. 	Ongoing		Env Health Manager
		Ongoing		Corporate Director
		Ongoing		Corporate Director

	<p>C. Working with Hampshire County Council, the local Children's Partnership and other agencies, supporting the maintenance of our high standards of educational achievement</p> <p>a) Developing with Hampshire County Council a long term vision for the development of the district's primary and secondary schools, linked to new housing development</p> <p>b) Developing a robust methodology for securing developer contributions towards educational provision.</p>	<p>By summer 2012</p> <p>By summer 2012</p>		<p>Head of Planning</p> <p>Head of Planning</p>
	<p>D. Through the Hart Community Safety Partnership, maintaining Hart's status as the safest district in Hampshire, including:-</p> <p>a) Renewing the council's CCTV system</p> <p>b) Continuing to support the Community Safety Partnerships as the primary community safety forum in the district</p> <p>c) Maintaining support for the CSPs drive to tackle anti-social behaviour</p> <p>d) Working with schools and the voluntary sector to meet the needs of vulnerable young people</p> <p>e) To develop sporting activities to prevent anti social behaviour</p>	<p>Autumn 2012</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 2012</p>		<p>Corporate Director</p> <p>Corporate Director</p> <p>Community Safety Mgr</p> <p>Community Safety Mgr</p> <p>Head of Leisure</p>

	<p>E. By Developing a district-wide Older Persons Network, developing a local and sustainable response to the needs of an ageing population in the district:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Establishing a District Wide Network consisting of parish councils and other agencies that promote and provide services for older people b) Work with the County Council to improve the Community Meals Service and increase the number of Hart residents who use the service c) Work with the voluntary sector to provide a social and well being support service to complement the Community meals service d) Work with the County Council to deliver the Village Agent scheme in one village in the District e) Develop a directory of services available for Older people 	<p>April 2012</p> <p>April 2013</p> <p>Spring 2012</p> <p>Spring 2012</p> <p>April 2012</p>		Corporate Director
	<p>F. By supporting the Economic Prosperity Partnership, and the Enterprise M3 LEP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continuing to promote the Economic Prosperity Partnership as a forum for dialogue with businesses within the district b) Providing financial and staff support to the Enterprise M3 LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) c) Ensuring consultation takes place with the business community across the whole range of relevant council services 	Ongoing		Chief Executive/ Head of Planning
	G. By Rejuvenating the Hart Housing Partnership	Spring 2012		Head of Housing
2. Working to	A. Relaunching the Hart Strategic Partnership	Spring 2012		Corporate Director

harness the talents of everyone for the good of the community	B. Continue to support a range of partnership working:- a) Community safety b) Environment/Greening Hart c) Affordable Housing d) Economic Prosperity Group and Local Enterprise Partnership e) Children's Partnership f) Health & Wellbeing g) Older Persons Network (to be established – see above)	Ongoing		All
3. Developing the voluntary and community sectors	A. Develop a new policy for awarding grants to voluntary organisations, aimed at maximising outcomes for the District	Spring 2012		Corporate Director
	B. Work with the HNC to develop their Step Up Programme – in terms of providing accommodation for training and work experience placements	Ongoing		Corporate Director
	C. Review scope of HDC support for youth work following county council budget changes	Spring 2012		Corporate Director
	D. Continuing support for the Citizen's Advice Bureau, Hart Voluntary Action and the Hart Neighbourhood Centre	Ongoing		Corporate Director
Corporate Plan Key Theme 4 – Maintaining frontline services and improving efficiency:				
I. Sustaining our current service levels, costs and standards of performance, consistent with financial constraints	A. Maintain low cost basis of refuse service whilst increasing recycling and reducing missed bins	Ongoing		Head of Env & Tech Services
	B. Improve the cost effectiveness of Leisure Centres whilst maintaining service levels	Ongoing		Head of Leisure
	C. Improve cost of planning per head	Ongoing		Head of Planning
	D. Provide efficient and effective regulation across the District in Environmental Health and Licensing	Ongoing		Env Health Manager

	E. Provision of an affordable pest control service for residents across the District	Ongoing		Env Health Manager
2. Continuing to improve our efficiency	A. Further develop the newly centralised administration unit, creating service improvements through new and innovative working practices	Ongoing		Business Support Manager
	B. Develop business case for additional services to be provided by the contact centre	April 2012		Corporate Director
	C. Fully optimise financial management system, including full use of internet banking and maximising suppliers using BACS	April 2012		Corporate Director
	D. Finalise and commence implementation of IT strategy	Spring 2012		Chief Executive
	E. Renegotiate Revs and Bens contract, releasing efficiencies through closer working with other councils with Capita contracts, and in light of national moves to Universal Credit	April 2012		Corporate Director
	F. Pursue opportunities to replace Hart Leisure Centre	2012/13		Head of Leisure/ Head of Planning
	G. Consider future options for management of leisure centres, in conjunction with possible replacement of Hart Leisure Centre	Spring/Summer 2012		Head of Leisure
	H. Develop proposals to relocate council offices, in conjunction with Fleet Vision proposals (See Key Theme I above)	See above		
	I. Review Highways and related Agency arrangements	By end 2012		Corporate Director
3. Ensuring the council has the skills necessary to meet future needs	A. Review and take action to correct any deficiencies in employee skills needed, particularly in relation to:- a) Capital project development/management b) Negotiations with developers c) Land and property development opportunities d) IT/web development	As needs arise		Chief Executive/ Corporate Director

	B. In conjunction with Capita deliver training sessions for all staff to ensure that the Organisation Values are embedded in their daily work	April 2012		Chief Executive/ Corporate Director
4. Holding ourselves accountable to the public we serve	A. Improving the Complaints system and maintaining a high standard of responsiveness to the Local Government Ombudsman service	Ongoing		Corporate Director
	B. Continuing to support Local Democracy Week and working with schools to promote civic awareness	Ongoing		Chief Executive/ Corporate Director
	C. Remodelling the council's web and other internet services to provide better access and improved communication with the public	2012/13		Chief Executive
	D. Continuing to issue Hart News, Hart Parish Link, and Hart Life to inform the public of council issues, activities and services	Ongoing		Chief Executive/ Corporate Director

Appendix

Statistical Sources

Deprivation

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) periodically produce the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, which give an indication of the relative levels of deprivation across a number of statistical measures by local authority areas.

Over recent years Hart has featured at the very bottom (ie least deprived end) of this list; in the most recent (2010) list, for example, it was ranked 326th out of 326.

Further details of this, including an explanation of how the Indices are prepared, can be found on the Hampshire County Council and DCLG websites. At the time of writing the relevant web links were:-

http://www3.hants.gov.uk/2010_indices_of_deprivation_compressed.pdf

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/indices2010>