

EAST HAMPSHIRE COUNCIL STRATEGY 2024-28

Making a big difference



Contents

Our strategic approach	Page 3
What we are aiming to achieve	Page 4
Working with you	Page 5
Strategic themes	
An environmentally sustainable district and council	Page 7-9
Economic growth and prosperity	Page 10-13
Developing thriving communities	Page 14-16
A modern and efficient council	Page 17-19

FOREWORD

Our strategic approach



Cllr Richard Millard

Leader of the Council
East Hampshire District Council

This strategy describes the difference we want to make to the residents, businesses and visitors of East Hampshire, as well as to the built and natural environments that make the place we live and work in.

Since our last plan, much has been achieved. Here are just some of those achievements: We have supported our most vulnerable residents, helped 650 young people with mental health issues, supported 870 people through the cost-of-living crisis. We have built a new, clearer and easier to use website, given out £14.5m in community grants, promoted schemes for climate action in communities. Supported our businesses to survive and recover from the Covid crisis. We've set a net zero target, planted 73,000 trees and moved to a much greener headquarters. Built two new leisure centres and refurbished another.

Now we want to go further.

We should acknowledge, that life has not been easy for many of our residents and businesses, the early 2020s saw a number of unprecedented issues that impacted many of our people; a global pandemic, a cost-of-living crisis, continued climate change, the insecurity of war in Europe, an ageing population, emerging technologies, rising costs, increasing needs and diminishing funds and so, this is a strategy to meet these challenges.

MAKING A BIG DIFFERENCE

What we are aiming to achieve?

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



First and foremost, we want to be an environmentally sustainable district and council.

We declared a climate emergency in 2019 and we have worked hard since then to transform our own buildings and ways of working.

Now we need to re-double our efforts to ensure we are a net zero Council by 2035 and to inspire and enable others to do the same. To enable a net zero East Hampshire by 2050, so that everyone in the area is engaged in doing what they can to address the climate crisis.

Producing less carbon, reducing our waste and recycling more.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY



We want economic growth and prosperity.

So that we can attract the investment necessary to create an environment in which everyone can contribute and create a good quality of life across our District.

With people in good jobs, with affordable housing and fast digital connections, using the Council's assets as a stimulus to drive these outcomes.

THRIVING COMMUNITIES



We will nurture and develop thriving communities.

The spirit of community in East Hampshire has always been strong, and during the pandemic we discovered a depth of commitment and connection that was genuinely inspiring.

We want to build on that and to work with communities to ensure they have greater participation and ownership of community assets.

MODERN AND EFFICIENT COUNCIL



We will be a modern and efficient council.

Our transformation programme has already delivered huge benefits and we have taken care to build in the capability to continue our transformation journey.

So now we can go further to make it easier for you to get things done, making sure every penny is spent wisely, moving money away from administration and toward services that you value.

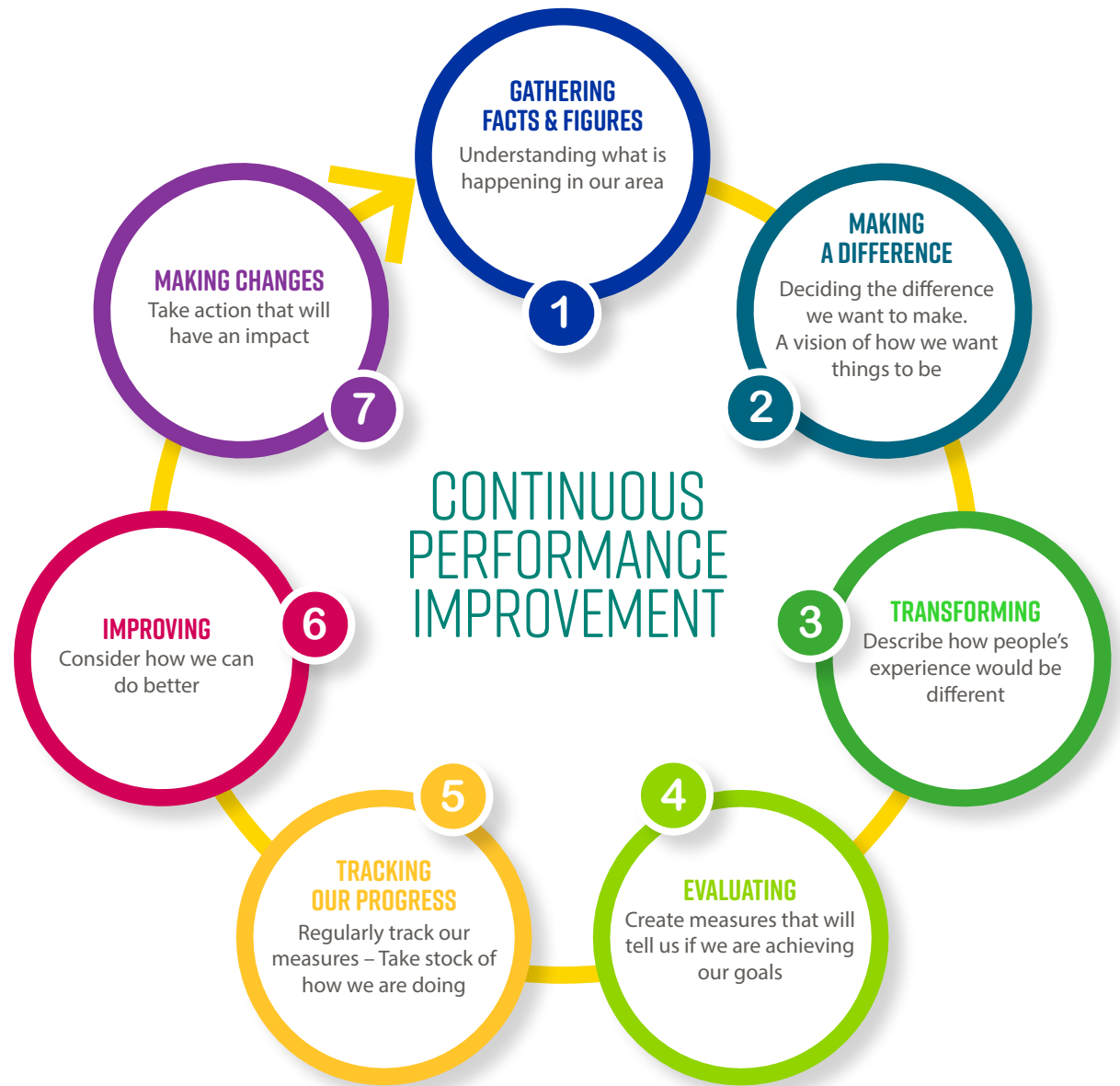
STRATEGIC DELIVERY

How we will deliver it

The aims set out here will drive activity across the whole council. In some areas sub-strategies have been developed which contain further detail on our approach in specific areas. The precise details of the things we will do will be set out in workplans which will be published annually.

We will monitor and track all our targets by using our **performance improvement cycle**. We have created measures that tell us whether we are achieving our aims, and we check on these at regular intervals. Depending on our progress, we'll ensure we take action to accelerate what is going well and correct anything that isn't. All the time we try and learn from best practices elsewhere.

We recognise that in setting out to achieve these things, we are not working alone, much of this will be work we do with our partners, community and voluntary services, the business community, the Police, the NHS and the County Council and we are engaged with them to make sure our activities are complimentary and co-ordinated.



STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

Working with you

We understand the aspirations of our people and communities. Through the feedback we receive in the consultations we carry out (especially our recent, comprehensive, residents' survey), the conversations we have every day with our customers and from the complaints we collect when people are not happy.

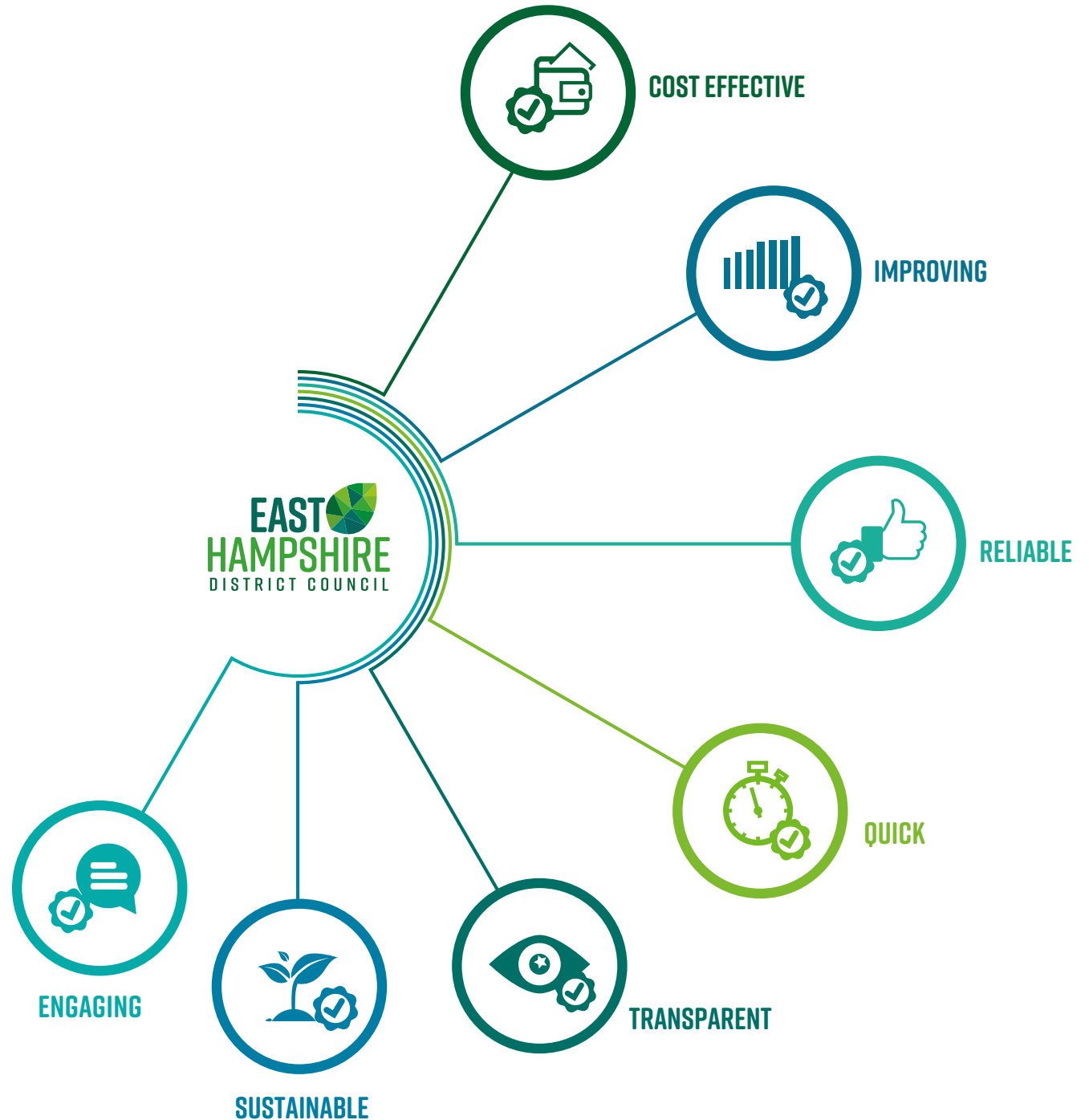
We know that people want to live, work and visit an area which is **cleaner, safer, greener, healthier, happier, wealthier** and where those things are shared by all.

We also know that to achieve this we need a council that is **modern, cost-effective, accurate, quick, transparent, accessible, reliable, accountable, engaging, affordable** and able to **deliver continuous improvement** in all its activities.

The more useful question is about how to make these things happen.

So, the majority of our engagement will be in the creation; determining which actions will be the most effective and how what we do blends with what partners and the community can also do.

We aim therefore, to engage regularly to co-produce a set of actions, captured as workplans that will be co-ordinated with others and likely to make a real difference.





An environmentally sustainable district and Council

The situation

Climate change remains as urgent an issue as it was when we declared a climate emergency in 2019, and since then we have worked tirelessly to do all we can to reduce the threat to our planet.

We have taken steps to ensure that we fully understand the picture in East Hampshire and to identify where change is most needed. We understand that the most carbon is produced by transport, domestic and agricultural sectors.

We also know that the areas of council activity that has the highest carbon emissions are in our approach to waste, in our leisure provision and in the electricity use from our headquarters.

What did we achieve under the last plan?

We have already moved our offices to new premises, and in so doing we are working towards reducing our carbon emissions from our offices compared to our old offices (Penns Place) by 75%.

We have installed 331 solar panels and nine batteries, introduced six EV charging points and facilities for cyclists and created the basis for a paperless working environment.

Across the district we have taken steps to enable the community to change; created a £250,000 Community Climate Action Fund, provided funding towards two Solar PV schemes in two East Hampshire schools, developed the 'Grow Up' initiative – our rural programme – providing a fresh approach to community and economic development with a focus on the environment.

And provided interest free loans to reduce emissions from domestic energy.

But we can and we must do more.



DIRECT

What ***we can do*** to achieve our operational net zero target and support reductions of emissions across the district (e.g. making our buildings more efficient)

INFLUENCE & PARTNERSHIPS

What our ***partners and stakeholders can do*** to reduce emissions. Partnership working, including planning and transport

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

What ***we can do to influence and support communities*** to reduce emissions - inspiring action and leading by example



Our aims and targets 2024-28

We want to achieve five things:



1. To work towards being a net zero council by 2035 and a net zero district by 2050



2. Support communities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen community climate resilience



3. Help to create the infrastructure that allows the reduction of greenhouse gas from transport in East Hampshire



4. Help and support the community to reduce energy consumption from the built environment, increase renewable energy generation and storage



5. Help to develop a conserved and enhanced natural environment.



Our priorities

Our approach starts with us.

We want to set an example that inspires others and shows the way. We will give priority to work that contributes the most to the outcomes we want to enable. By the end of 2024 we will develop our roadmap to get to net zero by 2035. We will begin to reduce the carbon footprint of our leisure facilities and our property estate using timelines set out in the roadmap. We will ensure climate considerations are embedded in all key decisions. We will continue to eliminate the use of paper in our own offices, with 100% internal digital communication by the end of 2024. We will work with our staff to develop greater active travel and less business travel, targeting year on year improvements.

As we work to get our own house in order we will continue to encourage, incentivise and enable residents, businesses and community groups to deliver a net zero district by 2050. We will take action in our three biggest carbon producing areas: In our waste services, we will run a 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' campaign in 2024, and track the outcomes quarterly. We will introduce a food waste recycling scheme from 2026. We will review our waste fleet vehicles. We will also ensure that sustainability considerations are built into all the relevant council policies and plans. We will develop and adopt our greenest Local Plan that will guide planning decisions across the

area as quickly as we can. We will make sure that sustainability is a consideration in all the goods and services we procure by the end of 2024.

We will actively engage with the community and with our wider stakeholders to encourage the development of initiatives that enable climate action and build climate resilience. We will focus on where the council can bring together the movers and shakers in key areas and help them to vision the future, co-ordinate activity, understand the areas where not enough is being done and provide the know-how and seed funding to get new or enhanced initiatives up and running. These key areas will be focused on where we can have the biggest impact on reducing carbon emissions.

Themes will include building community action and resilience, working with our already effective climate action groups. Encouraging active travel based on local cycle, walking and infrastructure plans and tapping into the local knowledge and relationships of willing town and parish councils to target a reduction in CO2 from transport, and improve air quality. A third key area will be energy, both the amount that is used and its source, with a focus on renewable sources, sharing the lessons of our own experience and helping residents and businesses make changes that are both good for the planet and their costs.

Through the combination of these initiatives, we would expect to see a steady progression towards net zero and greater resilience across the council and district. The road map will set out how quickly we expect this to happen within our own services and further details can be found in the sub-strategies.

SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

For more detail on any aspect of this objective please see:

- Climate and Environment Strategy 24-29
- Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy
- Change and Performance Directorate Transformation Plan
- East Hampshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- East Hampshire Local Plan, current and emerging



Economic growth and prosperity

The situation

East Hampshire is already a flourishing district. Unemployment levels are low, wages relatively high, and home ownership levels are above average. Despite these successes, there remain pockets of the district that are relatively deprived with a need to boost job numbers and business productivity. More people travel out of the district (25 thousand, compared to 15 thousand commuting in), with clear implications for the local economy.

We are also aware, having listened to them, about the issues holding the business community back from further growth; a shortage of land, people with the right skills and lack of capital investment linked to poor physical and digital connectivity.

Overall, we are clear that proactive investment in economic growth & regeneration will reduce demand for public services later down the line.

What did we achieve under the last plan?

Delivering key projects demonstrates to the wider business community that we are serious about creating an environment for growth.

We led the development of Ordnance Business Park, Liphook, in partnership with EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership, delivering 60 new jobs, 20,000 sq ft of much needed business floorspace and over £200k p.a. in rental income that was reinvested in local economic development.

We distributed £46M in business grants during Covid-19 and nearly £200k in grants from the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

We worked with partners to deliver improved pedestrian and cycle access to and from Alton station which serves as a key gateway into the town and to the South Downs National Park.

During this time, we established our 'Invest for Growth' Regeneration & Economy Investment Framework which enables the Council to acquire, develop, dispose and promote the development of land and property for the purposes of enabling regeneration and economic development within the district.



Our aims and targets 2024-28

We want to:



1. Invest in the local economy, starting with our own assets by drafting masterplans for their efficient long-term use including new commercial space as well as new and affordable homes.



2. The economy of the area to grow, and grow sustainably, so that we will see increased number of quality jobs, higher earnings and productivity levels, increased housing provision as well as a reduction in carbon emissions.



3. To make it easier for business to start or move here, and to expand, so we will set up a gateway to key Council services to help businesses navigate local government processes.



4. To advocate for our residents & businesses, so they benefit from investment in digital connectivity by our public and private sector partners who are aiming to bring gigabit capable broadband to 95% of properties.



Our approach and priorities

We are committed to promoting development and investment in East Hampshire, starting with assets in our ownership and using our influence to facilitate development on strategic sites outside of council control. We know that we are partly dependant on the actions of others to make this a reality, and so we want to ensure that we can attract the investors, business, builders, developers and infrastructure providers to help create the environment we want. We believe that the best way to do this is to continue to deliver specific projects that enhance the potential of the area, starting with key strategic locations including:

- **Penns Place, Petersfield - progressing with other key landowners to establish a shared future vision for the site**
- **Petersfield Festival Hall - liaising with key landowners towards delivering a shared future vision for this site in the heart of Petersfield**
- **Whitehill & Bordon - partnership working to deliver the new town centre facilities**
- **Alton town centre - liaising with key landowners towards delivering a shared future vision for the town centre**

We will facilitate high quality, sustainable development at key strategic housing and employment sites in Whitehill & Bordon, Alton and the Southern parishes.

Our work to create a modern and efficient council will ensure that all services in the Council, (within legal and ethical parameters), play their part in boosting growth with a clear 'Business Gateway' for business and investment enquiries and a seamless response from the relevant parts of the Council by 2025.

We will deliver externally funded skills programmes to incentivise apprenticeships and recruitment of those seeking work. As part of this we will bring together skills providers and businesses to consider future needs with a view to ensuring the availability of people with the relevant skills, especially those in priority sectors - advanced manufacturing, engineering, technical, scientific and green industries. Our aim is to reach out and support 70 people into work or training each year.

We will ensure that the needs of our businesses and residents are communicated to our public and private sector partners, so they benefit from planned investment in gigabit capable broadband and the move to digital landlines, especially in our market towns and rural areas.

We are clear that there is a link between economic growth and demand for public services. By boosting the prosperity of the local area, we will reduce the numbers of people in need or in difficulty, and therefore reduce demand for costly and distressing crisis services.

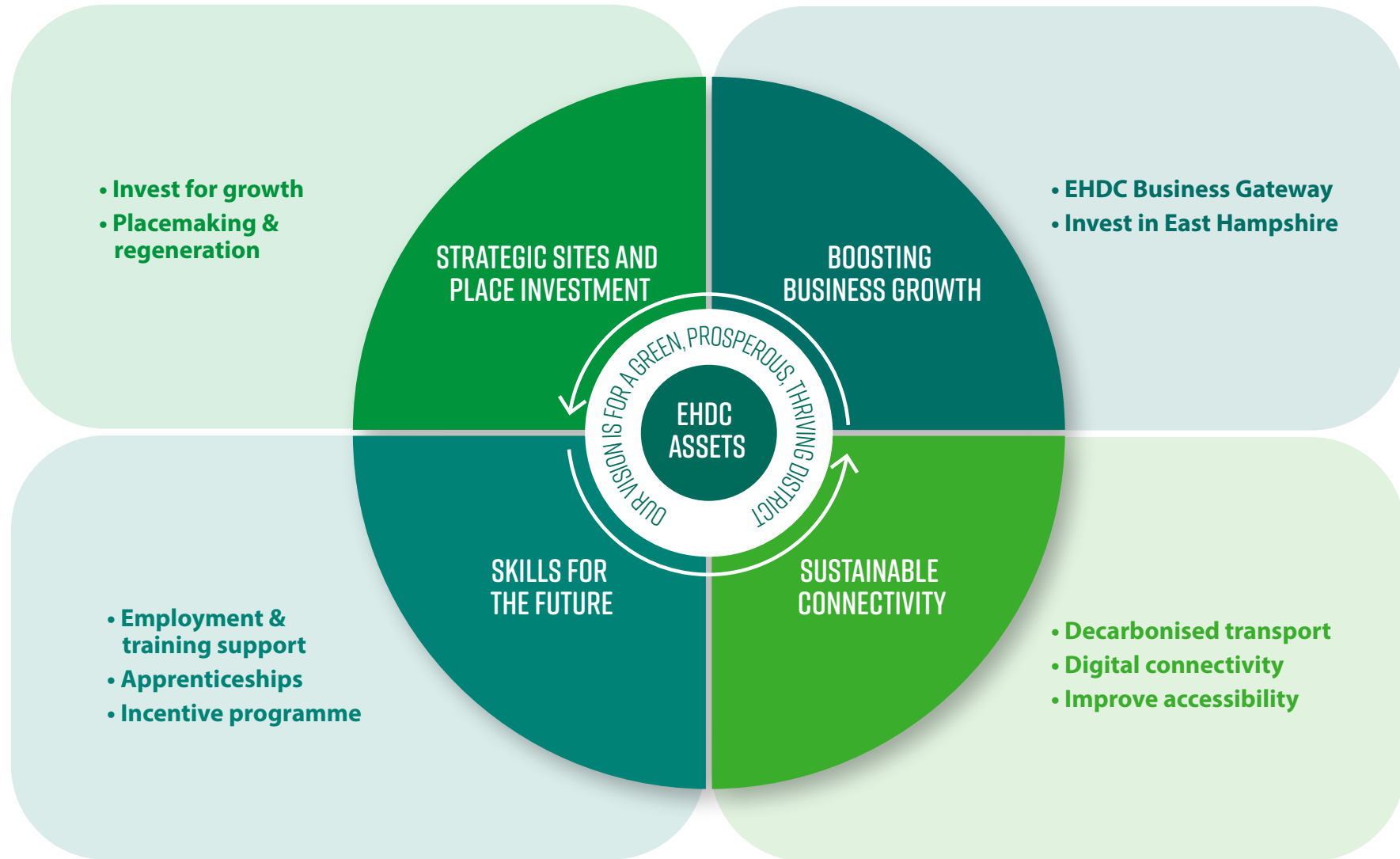
SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

For more detail and context please read these strategies:

- **Regeneration and Economy Strategy 2024-29**
- **Invest for Growth: The Regeneration and Economy Investment Framework**
- **'Enhance East Hants' –Place Making Strategy 2019-36**
- **Affordable Housing Strategy 2022-25**
- **East Hampshire Growth Prospectus**
- **East Hampshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan**
- **East Hampshire Local Plan, current and emerging**
- **Climate and Environment Strategy 24-29**



Our approach and priorities





Developing thriving communities

The situation

Many of the challenges we face in our communities, stem from the characteristics and relative prosperity of our economy. We are a predominantly rural district, with 57% of the district situated within the South Downs National Park. This brings with it challenges with regards to digital exclusion and rural isolation.

Life expectancy in East Hampshire is higher than the average in England but this also means that we must deal with the needs associated with an ageing population, with 24.5% of residents aged 65+ compared to 18.6% national average, and this figure is expected to increase significantly by 2029.

House ownership and house prices are both high, and this presents issues with regard to available homes and affordable housing, with relatively small numbers of homeless people and people in temporary accommodation. This relative prosperity is not uniform; there are some pockets of high deprivation within wards, with particularly high areas in Whitehill Chase, Alton Eastbrooke and Alton Wooteys.

What did we achieve under the last plan?

Over the last four years, there have been significant investments into projects that met the needs identified in the Welfare and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2024. We have supported the delivery of 17 projects with specific focus on improving the welfare and wellbeing of residents, including a Youth Mental Health Worker a Debt Advice Worker at Citizens Advice, an Outdoor and Active Project Officer at Queen Elizabeth Country Park.

We have supported community initiatives to increase inclusivity such as staffing the Family Support Team, supporting Age Concern to provide information and connections for older people in East Hampshire.

Our Councillor Community Grant scheme enables Councillors to support voluntary and not-for-profit organisations within their wards. Safe, secure and affordable homes have a direct impact on people's health and happiness. Each year since 2015 we have prevented over 600 households from becoming homeless totalling over 5,000 families who were supported through early interventions

All this activity has helped to develop vibrant and active communities, with high numbers of people involved in voluntary activity, and active town and parish councils. 75% of adults in the district are physically active (better than the national average of 67%). 50% children and young people in the district are physically active (better than the national average of 47%).

We can and will do more, but we have built an excellent platform for our next steps.



Our aims and targets 2024-28

Working with our partners, we want to:



1. Ensure that the basic needs of income, activity, housing and social connection are available for all our residents.



2. Increase the ability of all our citizens to lead active, healthy, fulfilling, and long lives, benefitting from and contributing to a sense of community.



3. Prevent people in our communities from experiencing crisis or difficulty.



4. Help people to feel a greater sense of belonging and agency in the place they live.



5. Increase the capability and resilience of local communities, so they can do more for themselves.



Our approach and priorities

Prevention

We will work to ensure that we prevent people getting into difficulties by delivering 'better places'.

This starts with our economic growth plan, ensuring that people have the skills and jobs they need. We will work with partners in the NHS to make sure that people are supported to live healthily, and we will continue to develop sports and leisure opportunities for all, that can also be accessed through social prescribing by health professionals.

Our intention is to make sure that adequate housing is available for those who need it, so that we increase the number of early interventions for those facing homelessness and as a result see fewer households having to move into emergency temporary accommodation each year.

We want people to feel safe in our district and we will monitor this through the residents' survey.

Early intervention

We will work to make help available to people so that situations can be resolved without deterioration into persistent difficulties. We will do this by continually improving information advice and guidance, and by using data to understand where problems may be arising.

We will ensure the Council is accessible through digital channels for the vast majority, but also through face-to-face video links in local community facilities. We will pro-actively target funding to organisations that can help deliver greater inclusivity, active lifestyles, and social connection.

Working in partnership with private developers and other housing providers in the district, and using our influence as a local authority, we will work to bridge the gap between the supply and demand for high-quality homes and affordable housing options.

We want to influence the decisions our partners make, to ensure the housing needs of our district are met and our residents' best interests are kept at the heart of planning.

We will use our influence to increase the number of affordable homes, reduce housing costs, improve physical or social infrastructure and shorten the housing development cycle so homes are ready for people to move into more quickly.

Asset-based community development

We will help local communities to map the physical, social, and natural assets they have, making a tool available for doing this by 2025.

For places that are willing and able, we will work to devolve assets and responsibilities to towns and parishes, based on area wide 'deals' that clearly identify and deliver the advantage in terms of both cost and outcomes, of the assets being held locally.

We aim to work with localities to develop the approach in 2025 and to have the first of these deals in place by 2026.

SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Further details of these plans can be found in these sub-strategies:

- Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2019-2024 and Action Plan
- Welfare & Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2029 and Action Plan
- Community Development Strategy *(Currently in development)*
- Affordable Housing Strategy 2022-25
- East Hampshire Local Plan, current and emerging



A modern and efficient council

The situation

In recent years people have experienced a technological revolution that has entirely changed the way in which the public interact with organisations, the way people bank, shop, book and interact have all changed to be unrecognisable from the systems we used just over a decade ago. This is now what people expect, and artificial intelligence has the potential to produce a new wave of change.

In recognition of this, the council has been through a transformation programme, Shaping East Hampshire's Future, that has had the aim of reducing costs whilst simultaneously creating an organisation capable of delivering a modern customer experience.

A review of all services revealed scope for cost reduction, opportunities to improve the customer journey, the potential for greater staff collaboration and for better data to help drive improvement.

Considering the future funding of the Council, it is clear that services have benefitted from the surplus generated by our ownership of a commercial property portfolio, although lately we have seen a change in market conditions that is making income from commercial property less dependable.

What did we achieve under the last plan?

Almost £1m has been permanently removed from the cost base of the council.

All services have gone through a period of radical redesign and plans have been established to implement new online processes that will make it much easier for customers to access services, complete procedures and get things done 24/7/365.

We have brought our IT function back in house, giving ourselves much more control over our own systems which now align with each other and can be configured by us.

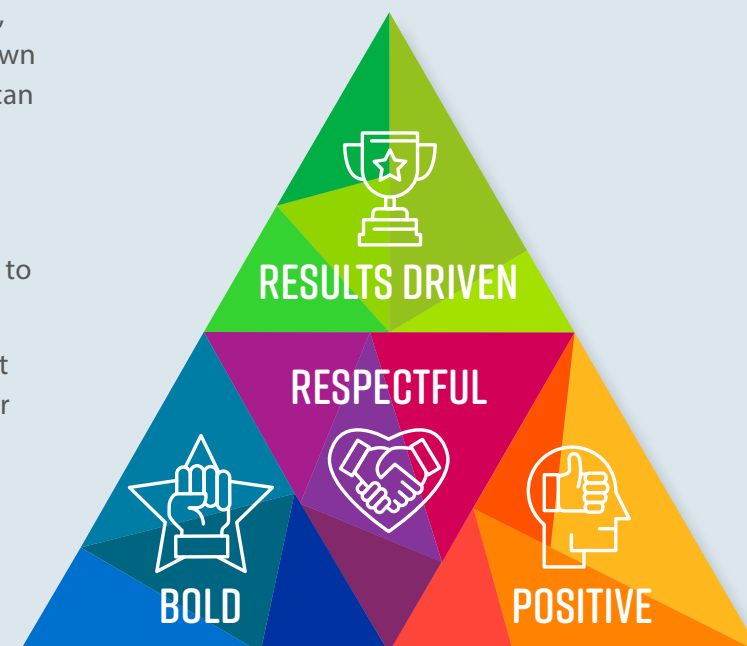
We have established a case management team which will provide a single front door and consistent customer journey for people unable to complete transactions online.

We have designed a performance improvement system that prompts us to take action to deliver improvements.

We have established a set of values for all staff to live by; to be bold, respectful, positive, and driven by results.

We have created a leaner staffing structure and equipped senior leaders in the Council with the capability to deliver transformation into the future.

Everything is now in place for the Council to reap the benefits of the work it has done.





Our aims and targets 2024-28

We will:



1. Make it far easier for our residents and businesses to get things done. We expect to see increased use of online systems, decreased processing times and higher satisfaction amongst customers.



2. Raise standards of service delivery through strengthened performance improvement arrangements at all levels of the organisation by September 2024.



3. Develop a culture for the Council, based on high challenge and high support, in which we set ambitious targets for ourselves and support employees to meet them.



4. Focus our resources on priority areas and continually challenge any inefficiency within the system through the annual budget cycle.



5. Continue to reduce costs, year on year, to respond to all potential scenarios in an uncertain future for local government funding.



Our approach and priorities

We will introduce, in phases, revised online processes for all major customer interactions with the Council.

These will be accessed through our website, will feature clearer information to help customers, and will enable them to carry out transactions online with regular automated updates on the progress of applications and enquiries. The first new processes will be live in the autumn of 2024 with the completion of the first suite of processes by 2025. Thereafter these processes will continue to be revised and improved through customer feedback.

We will develop and refine our approach to case management so that all customer interaction that is not online is channelled through them.

We will develop 'triggers' that indicate the need for specialist input from senior staff. The case management team will, by 2025, also incorporate internal enquiries.

We will introduce performance scorecards at the corporate, directorate, team and individual level. Tracking performance and acting to deliver continuous improvement.

We will reconfigure our internal systems so that staff can collaborate together, and managers will be in control, able to manage budgets, recruit staff and manage performance through systems that are always available.

We will introduce a suite of training and assessment interventions to develop the East Hants manager, to raise standards, deliver consistency and create the culture we want.

We will take action to reduce our costs to ensure we deliver our medium-term financial strategy, following the themes of the transformation programme, eliminating demand that comes from any system failures or that can be prevented through early intervention.

SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

For more detail and context please read these strategies:

- Performance Improvement Strategy *(Currently in development)*
- Directorate Transformation Plans
- Shaping East Hampshire's Future Programme Plan
- Customer Strategy *(Currently in development)*
- Workforce Strategy *(Currently in development)*



EHDC Council Strategy 2024-28

This strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis or sooner following significant change to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.