



# COUNCIL STRATEGY 2017 – 2020

REFRESH FEBRUARY 2018



## Our Vision

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The overarching vision of Winchester City Council is to combine a blend of innovation, aspiration and pragmatism when delivering local services, looking beyond the traditional ways of doing things.

We are committed to:

- Making the district a premier business location
- Developing quality housing with a balanced range of tenures
- Protecting and enhancing our unique environment
- Delivering services that encourage residents to lead healthy and fulfilling lives

The outcome of our combined aims will be a district where everyone enjoys the opportunities and quality of life that come from living in the Winchester district.



## About this strategy document

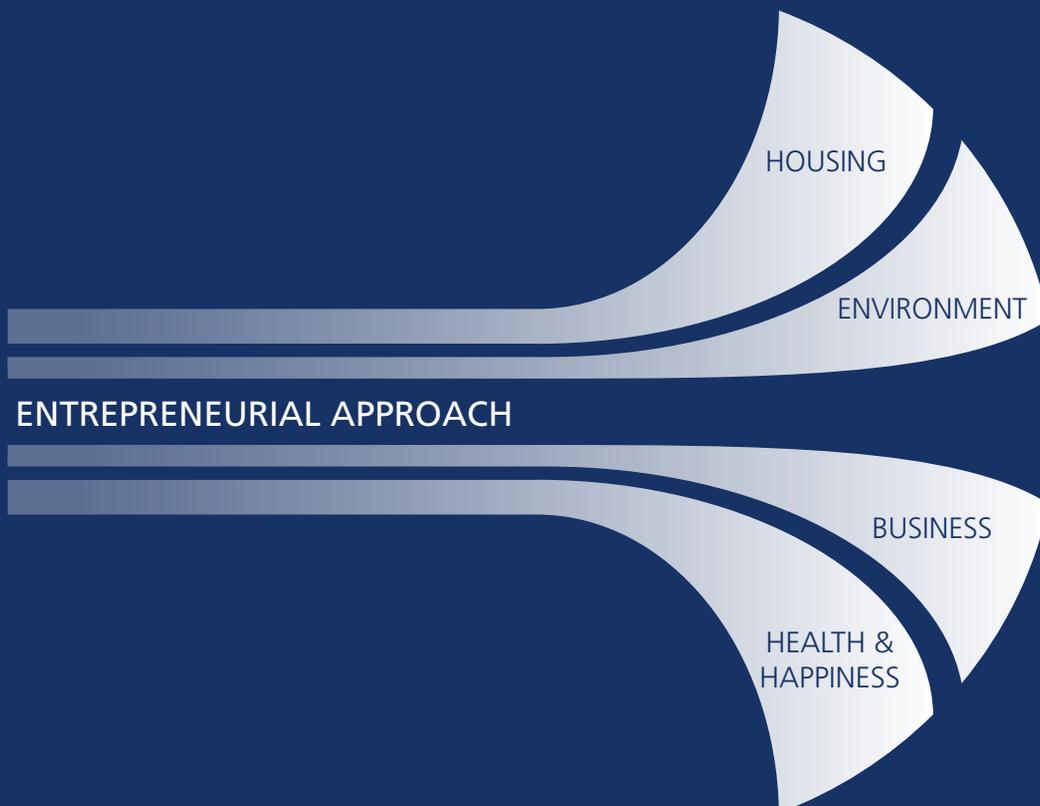
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This report outlines how the Council will deliver its vision up until 31 March 2020. We face many challenges, and our strategy sets out the key outcomes and core principles which underpin our work. Initially adopted in February 2017, this refresh of the strategy was endorsed by the Council on 22 February 2018. It will continue to evolve over the course of the next two years.



## A blueprint for Winchester's future

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## Introduction

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Winchester City Council manages a wide variety of services. We have responsibility for planning, housing, waste collection, council tax and business rates collection, leisure services, tourism, benefits administration and many more services.

This strategy is focused on the key outcomes that we want to achieve in the coming years in a way that is consistent across our aims. We want this to be an ambitious and challenging strategy, and one that reflects what our residents and local businesses demand of us.

There have been a number of major changes to how we will continue to provide services in the future. The government has set out some new and evolving policies in the past three years including:

- Financial reforms: the potential to retain and grow business rates
- Housing reform: funding and financial challenges to how we provide housing for residents
- Welfare reforms: impact of the roll-out of universal credit and housing benefit reforms
- Planning policy changes: how this will impact our local planning services

There are of course other opportunities, uncertainties and risks associated with Brexit to be considered as well.



Bonfire night in Winchester



Nepalese dancing at Party in the Park



Guildhall music event

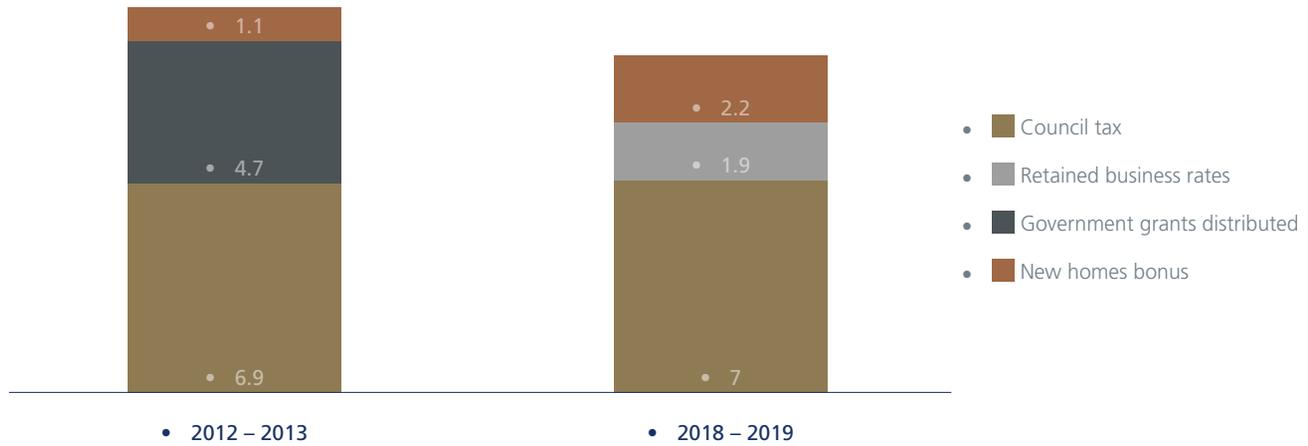


Farmland near Sparsholt

# Financial challenge

How we are financed and the role of government has fundamentally changed over this decade

## Changes in Council funding 2012 – 2019 (£m)



- By 2019 we will cease to receive any core government grant. Our financial future relies upon council tax from residents, a small share of business rates from businesses in our district, new homes bonus incentive from government (though no forecast can be made on this beyond 2020), and fees and charges we raise locally for services.
- For us to maintain or even grow our excellent services and deliver our strategy, we need to balance these pressures on our funding and make sure we are able to grow these income streams as well as seek to obtain new sources of income. As well as setting out what we want to achieve for the district, our council strategy also sets out how we aim to be financially resilient when facing these challenges.
- To deliver the strategy we also have a significant capital programme. We are planning some major schemes for a new leisure centre, regeneration and building new homes; these need to be affordable so that we do not put undue additional financial burdens on our residents and businesses.



The Guildhall in Winchester

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# One

## Winchester district will be a premier business location

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### Why?

The district is an attractive place to do business. We know that we have great transport links and low unemployment levels. It is vital to us that we help support business growth and success by enabling the supply of new office and employment space, and increase job opportunities to match our growing population. Our funding will become more reliant on business rates paid across the district.

The Council will need to help drive growth in business rates in order to secure its financial future.

### We will

- Promote a sustainable economy by enabling major regeneration schemes
- Prioritise support for the knowledge-based, creative and tourism sectors
- Utilise our environment to drive business growth and create employment opportunities
- Develop new employment opportunities across the district
- Work with strategic partners to deliver critical infrastructure projects across the district
- Be innovative by exploring opportunities to generate additional revenue and maximise key income streams.



Whiteley is a great retail destination in our district.



The thriving Square



Tourism conference

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## Two

### Delivering quality housing options

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#### Why?

We believe that it is vital that our residents have access to quality housing options and we recognise the importance of having the right mix of housing within the district. We know that housing is expensive here and we want to be active in helping to provide different options for our residents, and at the same time ensure that we increase the supply and quality of housing that we control (currently over 6,000 properties).



Building homes at Abbots Barton

#### We will

- Deliver good housing stock condition and energy performance for Council-owned dwellings that meet the decent homes standard
- Respond to the need to provide more affordable housing in the district
- Drive down homelessness across the district and support partner agencies in the drive for an improved life for those in need
- Provide good access to affordable housing options across a range of tenures, including affordable and sub-market rent (within local housing allowance rates), shared ownership, student housing etc.
- Be proactive in our tenant engagement, achieving effective representation and insight across all tenant and customer groups
- Restrict permitted development rights in Winchester so that new houses in multiple occupation require planning permission
- Support residents to buy their own homes.



Award-winning new homes at Symonds Close, Winchester

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## Three

### Improve the health and happiness of our community

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#### Why?

We know that people's health is key to enjoying a high quality of life. We want to focus on reducing inequalities and improving our community's health and happiness, particularly through sport and other types of activity. We also want to retain festivals and programmes of events that take place across the district and provide a sense of cultural vibrancy.

#### We will

- Work with partners to reduce health inequalities in the district and promote good mental and physical well-being
- Provide new leisure facilities in Winchester that meet the needs of a broad cross-section of our communities for now and the future
- Encourage volunteering to support and extend local services
- Support the delivery of a programme of festivals and events across the district.
- Provide support to residents who are affected by changes to welfare reform and universal credit
- Work with partners to achieve significant and sustained change for vulnerable families with multiple, complex and persistent problems.



A variety of public recreation facilities in Stanmore



Young cyclists enjoyed taking part in the annual Winchester Criterium.

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## Four

### Improving the quality of the district's environment

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#### Why?

We provide services in a fantastic and diverse location. We want to keep the district's environmental character but also find ways of improving the quality of the environment to benefit as many people as we can. We expect the district's population to increase by 3% by 2020 and we want to ensure people can continue to expect a clean and safe environment to live and work in, as well as be able to enjoy our beautiful countryside and rural landscape.

#### We will

- Protect, enhance and respect the district's rich heritage and landscape while allowing appropriate development to take place
- Enable our historic environment to evolve over time, with due regard for the landscape character
- By working with our partners and using powers available to us, make Winchester a safe and pleasant place to live, work and visit
- Protect, enhance and increase the use of open spaces in both the towns and more rural areas of the district
- Work to change attitudes to waste, fly-tipping and littering and significantly improve recycling levels
- Work with strategic partners to continue to develop flood resilience measures to protect our communities
- Improve the environment and reduce harmful emissions through holistic transport planning.



Monitoring air quality in town centre hot spots



The North Pond near Bishop's Waltham



The Winchester district features a mix of urban character and rural charm.

## How we will deliver the strategy – core principles

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The core principles below will be fundamental to our operating model in the future. They underpin a number of our supporting strategies such as the workforce strategy.

### Insight

We want to engage better with our residents and businesses, to really understand their needs and how they can utilise our services to drive change across the district.

### Innovation

We want to use the best that the public and private sector offer to explore new ways of providing services across the district.

### Improvement

We will focus our services on improving standards so that they meet the expectations of our customers and reflect changes over the coming three years.

### Investment

We will use our resources to invest in our services to improve them, but also to take advantage of commercial opportunities where they arise to help secure our financial future.

### Inspiration

We want our staff to be inspired and motivated to work for the Council and engage with our residents, acting in a manner which is consultative, considerate and courageous to deliver the strategy.

## Delivering the council strategy

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**The Council will adopt an entrepreneurial approach to achieving all the outcomes in this strategy.**

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## **What do we mean by an entrepreneurial approach?**

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Significant challenges face the public sector. To ensure that Winchester district continues to thrive requires different ways of thinking and new approaches to achieving the same, or more with less. Traditional methods of tackling this problem (such as salami slicing council budgets) are no longer an option if we want to maintain excellent services for our residents, businesses and visitors. This is why Winchester City Council is adopting an entrepreneurial approach to how it delivers its services and secures its medium-term financial strategy.

## **In working entrepreneurially, we aim to exhibit the following behaviours**

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- Adopt an imaginative and innovative mind-set towards using our resources
- Clearly understand the needs of our residents, businesses and visitors, and design our services to meet these needs
- Maintain an open mind when exploring new models for service delivery and provide options for the Council to consider in order to secure the best opportunities for the district
- When exploring new opportunities, adopt an agile approach which allows us to rapidly review and learn from experience to ensure the best result
- Actively look for ways to work with partners – public, private and voluntary sector – to secure the best value for money for taxpayers

The Council's risk management strategy was approved in 2017 and set out a new risk appetite which is more aspirational but also more pragmatic.



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