

Chesterfield Borough Council – Council Plan 2023 - 2027

Chesterfield Borough is a great place to live, work, visit and invest. We want all our communities to share in the benefits of Chesterfield's success, enjoying healthy and active lives. The Council Plan helps us to effectively invest and deploy our time, resources and energy to support key services and work with residents, partners and businesses to ensure that everyone in the borough can achieve their full potential.

During the course of our last Council Plan (2019 – 2023) we experienced increased public demand for services, more complex needs, a global pandemic and significant restraint on public service expenditure. We responded positively to these challenges with greater efficiency, innovation and creativity in service delivery. Looking forward to 2027 we can be certain that social, economic, technological and environmental change will continue to offer us both opportunities and challenges as a borough. It is therefore important that we have a strong vision, priorities and values that will guide us in making the choices and decisions we will face.

Our four year plan is based on many conversations we have had with members of the public and our partners and draws upon a large and varied evidence base. It sets out our plans to help tackle some of the most pressing issues we face in our borough.

Our Vision: Putting our communities first

Our simple but important vision is at the heart of everything we do. We are here to serve and support our communities including our residents, tenants, businesses, visitors, students and voluntary groups. Together we will continue to make our borough a great place to live, work, visit and invest.

Our Priorities

The Council Plan includes our priorities for the next four years:

- Making Chesterfield a thriving borough
- Improving quality of life for local people
- Building a more resilient Council

These are the activities on which we will focus our efforts and want to see a real shift in over the four years. The four year plan allows us time to plan ahead without trying to speculate about what our communities will need and expect in the distant future. The Plan doesn't cover in detail everything we do (this is covered in our service plans and annual council plan delivery plan) but we have included some key facts and figures which tell you a bit more about our day to day activity.

How we will work

It isn't just what we do that is important, it is the way that we do it. The council has four values that describe how we will work to achieve our vision of putting our communities first.

We are customer focused: delivering great customer service, meeting customer needs. We regularly carry out satisfaction surveys to find out what our communities and residents think of the services we provide. We engage with our residents, tenants, visitors and businesses through a wide range of groups, forums, roadshows and online, seeking their views on our services and how we can improve them. We look to deal promptly and effectively with complaints and always welcome comments and compliments.

We take a can do approach: striving to make a difference by adopting a positive attitude. Our staff come up with and deliver solutions to problems and regularly go the extra mile to ensure our communities are well served. We contribute actively to partnerships with other organisations in the borough and beyond. We manage our suppliers and contractors fairly but robustly to make sure we get the best from the public money we spend.

We act as one council, one team: proud of what we do, working together for the greater good. We value regular and open engagement with all staff and carry out regular surveys to find out how we can improve as an employer. We invest in the development of our staff, regularly attracting additional funding for training. We promote a commercial outlook within our teams, to make sure we secure value for money and look for opportunities to generate additional income that we can then invest in service delivery.

We believe in honesty and respect: embracing diversity and treating everyone fairly. The council has a strong record of going well beyond its statutory equality duties and regularly works with partners to host and promote events throughout the borough that celebrate diversity. Our staff and councillors work well together and individuals are able to express their views openly within their teams and at wider meetings and events.

Your Council

We're proud of our staff who deliver over 50 services for our residents and visitors to the borough. During the course of the last Council Plan March 2019 – March 2023 we:

- Processed 900 planning applications a year
- Managed over 300 industrial units and workshops, 150 offices and 115 shops with an average of 94% occupancy
- Protected 244 listed buildings, 2 ancient monuments and 12 conservation areas forming our unique heritage
- Secured over £52m in external funding to support the regeneration of the borough
- Secured over £1.4 million through the Community Infrastructure Levy towards infrastructure to support growth
- Achieved 100% delivery of Local Labour Clauses on eligible developments
- Facilitated development of 959 (net) new homes
- Prevented over 1,500 households becoming homeless
- Managed almost 9000 council homes

- Invested over £82 million in our housing stock
- Received and actioned over 238,000 calls to our Careline service, supporting vulnerable people
- Taught over 4000 children how to swim
- Provided and maintained over 280 parks and open spaces including award winning destination parks, play areas, allotments etc.

Priority – Making Chesterfield a thriving borough

Our aspiration: To strengthen the distinctive character and vibrancy of our town centres

We want our town centres to be attractive, clean and well supported with something for everyone. This includes a great mix of retail, leisure and experiences to suit all tastes and ages. Town centres also provide attractive opportunities for living and working side by side.

We will: deliver our multi-million pound Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield Project including:

- Improving the look, flow and feel of Chesterfield town centre with better connectivity between our key public buildings and spaces
- Improving paving, seating, lighting, street furniture and planting schemes to provide spaces which people can enjoy and socialise in
- Developing our market place and New Square to create attractive spaces that can not only host a range of markets but also festivals, events, cultural celebrations and community gatherings

We will: through the Staveley Town Deal Partnership deliver the Staveley 21 plan. This is a regeneration programme to ensure that Staveley Town Centre is fit for the 21st Century and continues to be a place to visit, shop, work and relax for our communities and visitors.

We will: develop a Southern Gateway Masterplan that will improve the town centre connections with Ravenside and present a plan for the future of the Pavements Shopping Centre.

We will: develop the delivery plan for the next phase of the Northern Gateway to support footfall into the town centre

We will: increase the number of residents living and working in our town centres by enabling and facilitating quality residential conversions and developing town centre sites which will reduce commuter carbon emissions.

We will: ensure the effective co-ordination and delivery of town centre services including pro-active engagement with town centre businesses.

Our aspiration: To build a competitive place infrastructure that accelerates employment and housing growth

For Chesterfield Borough to achieve its ambitions, we need a strong, vibrant, thriving, and diverse economy. Key infrastructure investment is vital to achieve to ensure inclusive growth, where all residents can benefit from the proceeds of growth.

We will: progress the Chesterfield HS2 Station Masterplan to create a vibrant gateway to Chesterfield and beyond. With improvements to public realm, pedestrian, cycling and public transport routes, while unlocking the potential for over 850 new jobs.

We will: work in partnership with Derbyshire County Council and other partners to support the construction of the Chesterfield-Staveley Regeneration Route, supporting 1500 new homes supported by a new local centre and school and new employment opportunities.

We will: work with partners to develop proposals for the re-opening of the Barrow Hill Line, including a new station at Barrow Hill, as part of the 'Restoring your railway' project.

We will: support the future development of the Chesterfield Waterside area and deliver further housing and commercial development on Basin Square.

We will: work with partners to bring forward the comprehensive regeneration of the Staveley Growth Corridor, tackling the physical and environmental issues and facilitating the delivery of jobs and employment floorspace.

We will: manage the delivery of the Staveley Town Deal programme to shape the future of the town, create new jobs and training opportunities, improving community facilities and making the most of our infrastructure.

We will: work to accelerate the delivery of housing sites across the borough to facilitate the development of over 1,000 new homes.

Our aspiration: To develop Chesterfield's role as a visitor destination and as a base for exploring the surrounding area.

We will: work in partnership to deliver a range of marketing activities to raise the profile of Chesterfield both as a visitor destination and as a base for exploring the Peak District and Derbyshire.

We will: complete the refurbishment of Stephenson Memorial Hall to significantly enhance Chesterfield's cultural, heritage and visitor offer by bringing together an extended Pomegranate Theatre, a reconfigured and modern museum, alongside a new gallery space, café bar, education and community facilities.

We will: deliver a programme of speciality markets, events and festivals to attract more visitors to Chesterfield.

We will: work with partners to support the further development of the borough's visitor offer including PEAK Resort, an enhanced Crooked Spire experience and the reopening of Chesterfield Canal.

Our aspiration: Helping businesses to grow and secure new investment in the borough

Chesterfield has a rich history of innovation and pioneering industry. We want to build on that business excellence and help to protect and support businesses large and small to prosper and generate inclusive, sustainable growth.

We will: support innovation through our innovation support programme which provides one to one advice services to over 120 small and medium sized enterprises to maximise innovation and increase productivity.

We will: increase support for businesses and business start-ups, digitisation and de-carbonising through specialist business support advisors and programmes.

We will: manage the Enterprise Chesterfield network as a focus for the growth of higher-value businesses.

We will: encourage inward investment and business expansion by providing a comprehensive accommodation advice and support service.

We will: work with Destination Chesterfield to strengthen inward investment and business engagement with a range of campaigns including 'Made in Chesterfield', 'Chesterfield Inspired' and 'Love Chesterfield'.

Priority – Improving quality of life for local people

Our aspiration: To progress our Climate Change target to be a carbon neutral borough by 2050.

Climate change represents one of the biggest challenges we will face, not just locally but worldwide and we will all need to work together. We are taking this issue very seriously and declared a climate emergency in 2019. We are working with our partners and our communities to become a carbon neutral borough by 2050.

We will: progress the delivery of our Climate Change Strategy 2023 – 2030 with a focus on:

- Working with partners to progress towards our 2050 target for a carbon neutral borough. Focusing on decarbonised transport, buildings and energy, offsetting, green space, land management and carbon offsetting, and adaptation
- Assessing the risk and exploring adaptation strategies for our changing climate
- Establishing plans to decarbonise the council's housing stock, to provide low carbon, high quality, affordable
- Supporting decarbonisation of the borough's private sector housing stock

- Developing and delivering our offsetting strategies to maximise opportunities for carbon storage
- Developing a climate friendly Local Plan incorporating key policy developments including biodiversity net gain
- Expanding our communication, engagement and training campaigns

Our aspiration: To help people to be healthier and more active

We want people to live in better health and for longer. We can help and empower people to choose healthy lifestyles and have good physical and mental health and wellbeing by improving access and the quality of cultural and physical activity opportunities.

We will: provide increased opportunities for active travel.

We will: deliver the first four years of our Parks and Open Spaces Strategy delivery plan to progress our strategy vision: *'for every park and open space to offer a high quality and fulfilling experience; supporting biodiversity, promoting health, well-being and enjoyment, and improving the quality of life for residents and visitors to the borough'* to achieve our vision we will:

1. Use a clear approach for investment in parks and open spaces
2. Use our resources effectively and sustainably
3. Increase the use of our parks and open spaces
4. Engage with our community and partners effectively

We will: deliver the first four years of our Play Strategy delivery plan to progress our strategy vision: *'for every play space to be a destination, by creating a variety of sustainable play experiences that offer children and young people of all ages and abilities accessible, quality, challenging and fun opportunities for play'* to achieve our vision we will:

1. Raise awareness of play
2. Raise the quality of play
3. Improve the range and accessibility of play
4. Provide informal and natural play opportunities
5. Maximise resources to improve and develop play
6. Provide strategic management and Growth Sites

We will: support the Walk Derbyshire Pilot for Chesterfield to maximise the potential of walking for health and active travel to achieve Walk Derbyshire's vision *'to make everyday walking the norm for all residents of Derbyshire'*.

We will: support the delivery of accessible programmes of activity in our leisure centres, building on award winning programmes such as Outswimming Cancer and our exercise by referral programme.

Our aspiration: To ensure local people have the right skills to support progression in the labour market and benefit from future employment opportunities

We want a borough where economic growth benefits everyone, where residents are able to develop their skills, access good quality employment opportunities and take advantage of new opportunities such as climate change mitigation and adaptation - green skills.

We Will: establish a Skills and Employment Partnership to develop and deliver a Skills Action Plan that will increase skills and opportunity for Chesterfield residents, businesses and communities

We will: invest in green and digital skills courses to increase access to emerging employment opportunities. Through UKSPF we will provide a future skills development fund to support the development of new course provision that will enable 80 individuals access the skills required to access emerging employment opportunities. We will deliver a green a digital skills programme for the work force, supporting 60 people with skills required to progress within employment.

We will support the delivery of a work readiness and digital inclusion programme which will support 120 people with access to employability and basic skills.

We will: develop a skills brokerage services to link existing businesses and inward investors to local people with a diverse range of skills and experience. 50 local businesses will receive support and be provided with increased access to skills and funding provision available to help up-skill and re-skill their workforce.

We will: through the Staveley Town Deal Partnership deliver DRIIVe – a nationally significant rail innovation and training centre that brings skills and training, businesses and research and development together under one roof, ensuring that learners, businesses, employers and ultimately the wider rail sector can benefit from collaboration and the relationships that are developed.

We will: through the Staveley Town Deal Partnership deliver the Construction Skills Hub. This is an on-site construction training centre that will provide construction related training for 340 people and develop a pipeline of skilled workers for future developments. The facility will help increase engagement with the sector and act as a focus for sector specific careers engagement. The hub provide a focus from which to channel training, employment and supply chain outputs secured via 'local labour' planning conditions.

We will: develop a long term strategic collaboration with the University of Derby, focused on maximising the resources and assets of each organisation, to deliver skills improvement and future skills, jobs and investment and through effective support, help to raise peoples aspirations and strengthen our communities.

Our aspiration: To help to the most vulnerable in our borough and reduce inequality

We will focus support for our most vulnerable residents, who may need additional support to access services and improve their wellbeing and quality of life. We will also celebrate and support our diverse communities and thriving community and voluntary sector.

We will: work with our partners to reduce homelessness by focusing on specific issues including:

- Hidden homelessness
- Improved specialist residential care for more complex cases
- Stronger and earlier engagement with probation and offender management services
- Enhanced benefits and debt advice
- Routes to employment support
- Improved out of hours service

We will: help vulnerable people to maintain independent living through the delivery of high quality support services and effective partnership working.

We will: support the community and voluntary sector to offer advice and advocacy for a range of issues including debt, welfare benefits, housing, employment issues etc.

We will: increase our community development, training opportunities and provide a grant programme to help increase community capacity in areas of deprivation and for vulnerable groups.

We will: co-develop a community and voluntary sector compact which strengthens our relationship with and commitment to our thriving community and voluntary sectors.

We will: enable people to access our services by maintaining our commitment to a fair and transparent concessions policy.

We will: continue to support the Chesterfield Equality and Diversity Forum to improve community cohesion and raise awareness of equality issues and celebrate our diverse communities.

Our aspiration: To help improve housing standards for all

Good quality affordable housing is incredibly important to people's health and wellbeing, it can help to reduce crime, unemployment, improve school attainment and provide a sense of community belonging. We need to ensure that we have the right mix of homes so that everyone has access to a home that is suitable for them, whether that be social housing, private rented or owner occupied.

We will: facilitate the development of over 1000 new homes with improved standards around design, adaptability and sustainability.

We will: facilitate the delivery of at least 15% new affordable homes through new housing development

We will: ensure at least 25% of new homes on major housing sites are built to accessible and adaptable standards

We will: build or acquire 100 new homes for council rent

We will: ensure all new homes designed by the Council from 2023 onwards will achieve high levels of energy efficiency (EPC Band A)

We will: Invest over £81million in our own housing stock to continue to meet the decent homes standard and improve adaptability and sustainability of homes.

Our aspiration: To help people to feel safe in their communities

Through partnership working we will develop and deliver innovative, intelligence led activity to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime and disorder. This will include the provision of additional enforcement capacity and investment in community crime prevention equipment.

We will: work with partners to deliver Chesterfield Borough's Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy with a focus on:

- Early intervention and prevention
- Positive, proportionate, robust and effective enforcement
- Working alongside our local community and voluntary organisations to create structured diversionary activity and citizen focused programmes to provide positive alternatives for young people
- Develop effective communication channels with the communities to highlight key activities, build trust and confidence in our approach and reduce the fear of crime

We will: work with partners to deliver 'designing out crime' initiatives to reduce neighbourhood level crime and anti-social behaviour.

We will: work with partners to maximise the potential from a community safety perspective for Chesterfield Town Centre through the Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield project. With a specific focus on enhancing safety during the night time economy.

Priority – Building a more resilient Council

Our aspiration: To be financially sustainable

Like all local authorities, we are under huge pressure as the local population grows and ages, demand increases and our funding reduces. Tough choices will have to be

made about what we are able to deliver and we will need to be agile in how we respond to the both the opportunities and challenges facing our borough and our communities.

We will: deliver the Council's medium term financial strategy to ensure we have sufficient funds to provide our core services and priorities as well as resilience to withstand emerging challenges.

We will: ensure we have a viable, well managed 30 year business plan for the Housing Revenue account.

We will: be agile, creative and responsive to maximise opportunities for external funding and new income streams.

Our aspiration: An effective and resilient workforce

We recognise that our staff are our greatest asset and that we can only deliver this plan and our services by recruiting and retaining the right people and investing in their skills and experience.

We will: recruit and retain the right people, making use of each employee's skills, talents, abilities and experience to deliver our services and priorities.

We will: provide opportunities for staff to do their best through learning and developing skills and recognise and reward great work.

We will: support staff wellbeing in the workplace and be a fair and inclusive employer that values diversity.

Our aspiration: To embrace new ways of working and maximise potential from our assets, partnerships and respond to key challenges

We are identifying and embracing news ways of working to deliver efficient and effective services and to ensure we are well placed to take advantage of opportunities for positive change and respond to emerging pressure points and challenges.

We will: progress in our target to become a carbon neutral Council by 2030, by delivering our Climate Change Strategy and action plan, focusing on the delivery of low carbon services through decarbonisation of our operational buildings, maximising opportunities for clean energy generation, fleet management, supplies and services and our policies.

We will: implement the new Asset Management Strategy and action plan, ensuring the alignment of our asset base to the service needs of a modern, agile Council.

We will: seek new property-based income opportunities to support our financial resilience, aligned to our core objectives and climate commitments.

We will: seek the most effective and efficient way of delivering our services and be well placed to take advantage of social, cultural, environmental and technological change.

We will: collaborate and work in partnership with different parts of the public sector, business community and community and voluntary sector to deliver better outcomes for our borough.