

Introduction and foreword

From the Leader of the Council, Cllr Lynda Needham

Local Government faces a period of significant and at times quite rapid change brought about by new or revised legislation, significant changes to how the Council is funded and, for North Hertfordshire, a number of changes within the district, its people and how we work together to maintain the environment so many of us evidently enjoy. It is important that we regularly review the Council's objectives, and its delivery of services to ensure they are still fit for purpose.

We maintain a clear vision for the District, 'Making North Hertfordshire a vibrant place for people to live, work and prosper' but we cannot deliver the vision alone; it is clear that we must work with our partners, our businesses, our urban and rural communities in order to achieve this.

This Corporate Plan document itself is one of the many tools we use to keep people informed and increase their awareness of the work to which the Council will commit its resources.

The District's Local Plan, which we anticipate having its final consultation in the Autumn, will inform both the number of homes and location of housing required in North Herts in the longer term. Whilst it will prove challenging, it is important we have sufficient homes in the right places, with adequate infrastructure to support them, for successive generations and for people to work here.

North Hertfordshire District Council continues to deliver high quality, efficient services to residents against a backdrop of reducing budgets, and sustained reduction in central government grant. NHDC will need to continue to significantly increase the level of savings made and, where possible, generate income to sustain other services – this is not unique to North Hertfordshire. The continued strong leadership from both elected members and officers will be paramount in continuing to challenge, monitor and support the Council to deliver these improvements, especially against changing needs and at times, increasing demands for other services.

In order to inform our objectives and ensure we are reflecting the wishes of our residents in both the short and longer term, we will use information gathered in our recent District Wide Survey 2015; full details can be found online <http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/customer-services/publications-and-consultations/district-wide-survey>

Comparison with other authorities through that survey shows that 96% of residents are satisfied with North Herts as a place to live, compared with 82% nationally. 83% of North Herts' residents are satisfied with the way the Council runs things, against 67% nationally. 65% of residents feel NHDC keep them well or fairly well informed about the services and benefits it provides, against a national average of 61% for other authorities. This demonstrates very clearly how much our residents value the place in which they live and the services that the Council provides.