

Chesterfield Borough Council – Council Plan 2023 - 2028

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 and wanted to ensure that this approach continued into the future.

During the development of the new Council Plan, approved by Full Council in February 2023, it was recognised that social, economic, technological and environmental change will continue to provide opportunities and challenges but having a strong vision, priorities and values that will guide us in making the choices and decisions we will face.

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

In December 2024 Government published the English Devolution White Paper with a clear goal of widening devolution to all parts of England. In the White Paper, Government also announced its intention to facilitate a programme of local government reorganisation in all county areas where two-tier local government is currently in place and to also include adjoining unitary councils where there is evidence of failure or where their size or boundaries may be hindering their ability to deliver sustainable and high-quality public services. The proposed timetable for local government reorganisation in Derby and Derbyshire would mean that all local authorities in Derbyshire would cease on 31.03.28 and new authorities would be vested on 01.04.28.

We have therefore taken the opportunity to refresh and revise the Council Plan to extend it to April 2028, to guide our efforts and continue to put our communities first as we transition to the new authority.

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 all 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 until 2028:

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

These are the activities on which we will focus our efforts for Chesterfield Borough, while fully engaging in the development of the new unitary authorities, securing the best for Chesterfield's future.

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.

Partnership working

We recognise that we cannot achieve our vision and deliver on our priorities alone. Success requires strong partnerships and shared commitments to ensure that Chesterfield continues to thrive and the seize opportunities for the future.

Since the Council Plan was first adopted we have been developing the way that the Health and Wellbeing Partnership and Local Place Alliance work together, as part of the Integrated Care System, with a focus on developing our approach to improving overall wellbeing, tackling health inequalities and learning from lived experience. This includes the targeted use of Public Health and Government funded grant programmes such as UKSPF.

The Community Safety Partnership has also been strengthened, with a number of focused multi-agency groups delivering responsive and evidence-based activities including reducing anti-social behaviour, improving safety in the nighttime economy, and continuing to make Chesterfield an attractive and welcoming town.

The Skills and Employment Partnership was established in 2023 – delivering the Skills Action Plan with the collaboration of many partners. The partnership framework has enabled us to make links through to the work of the health and wellbeing partnership and linking to the local Place Alliance.

Destination Chesterfield has recently adopted a new strategic plan, and has a refreshed board. There is a real focus on inward investment, the visitor economy and links into East Midlands Combined County Authority.

We have also set up a number of partnership programme boards that bring together public service providers, the community and voluntary sector and business to deliver on key grant funding that has been awarded to Chesterfield Borough by Government.

Your Council

We're proud of our staff who deliver over 50 services for our residents and visitors to the borough. This Plan doesn't cover in detail everything we do and all the services we provide. This is covered in our directorate plans and 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.

- We process 900 planning applications a year
- We manage over 300 industrial units and workshops, 150 offices and 115 shops with an average of 94% occupancy
- We help to protect 244 listed buildings, 2 ancient monuments and 12 conservation areas forming our unique heritage

- We achieved 100% delivery of Local Labour Clauses on eligible developments, securing jobs for local people
- We facilitated development of 959 (net) new homes over the last four years
- We prevent around 150 households per year from becoming homeless
- We manage almost 9000 council homes
- In the last four years we have invested over £82 million in our housing stock
- We teach around 1800 children to swim each year
- We provide and maintain 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: Seek to establish a broader mix of retail, leisure, employment and community service uses in our town centres, working pro-actively with partner organisations and property owners to secure new roles for vacant premises.

We will: complete the delivery of 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: Support the delivery of the Pride in Place Programme and the Town Board to deliver a range of interventions to build stronger communities, create thriving places and empower residents.

We will: Through Staveley Town Deal and beyond strengthen Staveley to be a great place to visit, shop, work and learn.

We will: Enable more opportunities for town centre living, focussing on the development of sustainable urban neighbourhoods which offer a diverse housing mix.

We will: We will begin the delivery of the Spire Neighbourhood, working with partners to create a vibrant new community that brings high-quality homes, green

spaces, and local services into the heart of Chesterfield. Or We will lead the first phase of the Spire Neighbourhood, collaborating with public and private partners to unlock new homes, community facilities, and public realm improvements that strengthen the town centre.

We will: Provide a welcoming environment through the effective co-ordination of town centre management services, maintaining the street scene and ensuring people have a safe and enjoyable experience at all times of day.

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: Enable new employment and housing growth through the planning framework and work proactively with public partners and the private sector to bring forward new infrastructure and site development.

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

We will: work with partners to develop options and proposals for the re-opening of the Barrow Hill Line.

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 secure the comprehensive regeneration of the Staveley Growth Corridor, enabling the infrastructure, tackling the physical and environmental issues in order to facilitate the delivery of significant residential development and new employment as part of the East Midlands Investment Zone

We will: complete the delivery of the Staveley Town Deal programme that will shape the future of the town, creating new jobs and training opportunities, improving community and leisure facilities, making the most of our infrastructure.

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

Our aspiration: To enhance 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 and Staveley in partnership with the Town Board and supported by the Pride in Place Programme.

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 restoration of Chesterfield Canal and the provision of additional visitor accommodation in the borough.

Our aspiration: Help businesses to grow and secure new business 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, working alongside the East Midlands County Combined authority to support the delivery of the East Midlands Growth Plan.

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

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

We will: manage the Enterprise Chesterfield network as a focus for higher value growth and for new and expanding businesses, public and community and voluntary sector organisations.

We will: encourage inward investment and business expansion by providing key account management and a comprehensive commercial property service.

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 and delivering plans to decarbonise the council’s housing stock, to provide low carbon, high quality, affordable improve the energy efficiency of the council’s housing stock, reducing carbon and making energy bills more affordable
- Supporting decarbonisation of the borough’s private sector housing stock
- Developing a climate friendly Local Plan incorporating key sustainability policy developments including biodiversity net gain
- Expanding our communication, engagement and training campaigns

Our aspiration: That people are healthier and more active

We want people to live in better health and for longer. Working with key partners in the Health and Wellbeing Partnership and Place Alliance, we can help and empower people to choose healthy lifestyles and maintain good physical and mental wellbeing by improving access and the quality of cultural and physical activity opportunities.

We will: provide increased opportunities for active travel through the planning policy framework and development of key regeneration schemes.

We will: deliver our Parks and Open Spaces Strategy delivery plans 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 Play Strategy delivery plans 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. Use a clear approach for investment in parks and open spaces
4. Improve the range and accessibility of play
5. Provide informal and natural play opportunities
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 progress in the labour market and benefit from future employment opportunities

We want a borough where we can achieve inclusive growth, where economic growth benefits everyone, and residents are able to develop their skills, access good quality employment opportunities, take advantage of new opportunities such as climate change mitigation and adaptation (green skills) and build successful and fulfilling local careers.

We Will: Take a lead role in the Chesterfield Employment and Skills Partnership, seeking to ensure a co-ordinated approach to skills delivery that evolves in line with future job requirements.

We will: invest in green and digital skills courses to increase access to emerging employment opportunities.

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

We will: develop a skills brokerage service to link existing businesses and inward investors to local people with a diverse range of skills and experience. 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 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 provides 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.

We will: Foster links between businesses and schools so that young people are aware of future career pathways, including apprenticeship opportunities.

We will: Maximise the local benefits of new development which takes place in Chesterfield, through the agreement of local labour clauses and promotion of supply chain opportunities.

Our aspiration: That the most vulnerable in our borough are supported and inequality reduced

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: 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: Improved housing 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 and acquire new council homes and develop a pipeline of sites for future council housing development, and continue to purchase homes to add to the Council's stock.

We will: Ensure all new homes designed by the Council achieve high levels of energy efficiency (EPC Band A).

We will: Continue to invest at least £15m each year into our council homes to maintain compliance with the decent homes standard and improve energy efficiency.

Our aspiration: That people 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
- Developing effective communication channels with our 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 now and for the future

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 including preparing for transition to a unitary authority via local government reorganisation.

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 including local government reorganisation.

We will: work in partnership with local authorities across Derbyshire to enable a safe and legal transition to unitary status, securing the delivery high quality services for our communities and celebrating Chesterfield Borough Council's legacy.

We will: work in partnership with the East Midlands County Combined Authority as it seeks to progress towards an established strategic authority to champion for the region, influencing Government at a national level to boost growth and innovation, shape policy and access further funding.

We will: progress delivery of 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: Continue to implement the Asset Management Strategy, ensuring the alignment of our asset base to existing and future service needs.

We will: seek new property-based income opportunities to support our financial resilience and support regeneration activity.

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