



**Luton Council**  
**Corporate Plan**  
2023-2028

**Luton 2040**  
A place to thrive



**Luton**



# Foreword

**I am pleased to present Luton Council's Corporate Plan for 2023-2028. This is the council's principal plan for the next five years, setting out how we will play our part in delivering on the town's ambitious vision for Luton 2040.**

Our shared vision is for Luton to be a healthy, fair and sustainable town where everyone can thrive and no-one has to live in poverty. I believe that this vision has the potential to truly transform Luton for the better and I know that most of our residents now feel optimistic about the future of our town.

This plan builds on the successes of the last two years, including the work we have done with partners and the community to overcome the pandemic by protecting our most vulnerable residents and supporting our economy. We have also seen many other achievements, including securing more than £49 million of funding for transformational projects, the first steps to regenerating our town centre, the delivery of more good quality homes and vital improvements to our children's services.

The Corporate Plan has been updated to align our strategic priorities to those within the Luton 2040 vision. It sets out the important role the council will play as the system leader to drive progress, as well as how we will work with partners to achieve our shared aims. The document also sets out in detail the actions that we will take through the 730 services we deliver to achieve these aims.

Our latest Corporate Plan matches the incredible ambition that is felt across Luton, as demonstrated in the Luton 2040 vision. While we will continue to work together over the next five years to deliver on this ambition, we recognise that we will still face significant challenges.

The ongoing cost of living crisis will further restrict public sector funding after years of austerity, while also increasing demand for vital services and short-term support among residents. Although Luton 2040 sets a long-term strategic approach to preventing poverty, we will continue to maintain support in the here and now that can help those in greatest need.

We know that partners across business and the voluntary sector will also face difficult times ahead, with rising costs and skills shortages providing risks to most sectors. This demonstrates more than ever the importance of working in partnership, with all parts of the Luton system to be able to address common challenges and do more with our limited resources. This approach is at the heart of the Luton 2040 vision and Luton Council's approach to delivering over the next five years.

This Corporate Plan sets an ambitious focus for our council to deliver on the Luton 2040 Vision over the next five years. Every member of our organisation, from councillors to officers has an important role to play in achieving the objectives set out in this document.

I am looking forward to working with you all as we continue to make Luton a place where everyone can thrive.

**Cllr Hazel Simmons MBE**

Leader of Luton Council

**This Corporate Plan sets an ambitious focus for our council to deliver on the Luton 2040 Vision over the next five years.**



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IF YOU  
CAN  
DREAM IT  
YOU MUST  
DO IT

The Hat Factory

RECEPTION



# Introduction

**The Corporate Plan for Luton Council 2023-2028 is our key organisational plan, which sets out how we will deliver on our mission over the next five years.**

## **Our Mission:**

To work with everyone to deliver our shared vision for Luton 2040 – a healthy, fair and sustainable town where everyone can thrive and no-one has to live in poverty.

The Luton 2040 vision was initially published in 2020, with our last Corporate Plan launched shortly after in January 2021. The last Corporate Plan was aligned with the initial priorities in the vision, with an immediate focus on our town's recovery from Covid-19 and laying the foundations to achieve our long-term vision.

The Luton 2040 vision is town-wide, built by residents and stakeholders across the town, and is being delivered by all parts of the Luton system, including the public sector, businesses and voluntary and community sector organisations. The Luton 2040 vision has recently been updated, following the success of our Covid-19 recovery plans, with a renewed focus on delivering across all of our shared priorities over the next five years as we continue our journey to 2040.

This updated Corporate Plan responds directly to the updated vision for Luton 2040 and sets out how the council will play its role in delivering on the five priorities of the vision:



This document sets out how the council will contribute to delivering on the Luton 2040 vision as the place leader for Luton, as well as by delivering through our own services and working in partnership with others in the town.

In addition, this document outlines how we will continue to plan for the long-term future of the council and our residents against the challenging context of the cost of living crisis and ongoing restraints on local government finance. This will include how we plan to maintain the financial sustainability of the council, support and develop our workforce and transform our services to meet the changing needs of residents.

This plan will help us to deliver on the town-wide vision for Luton 2040, making Luton a place where everyone can thrive.

# Corporate Plan Framework

## Our Mission:

To work with everyone to deliver on our shared vision for Luton 2040 – a healthy, fair and sustainable town, where everyone can thrive and no-one has to live in poverty.

## Our Strategic Priorities

Building an inclusive economy that delivers inward investment to support the growth of businesses, jobs and incomes.



Improving population wellbeing and tackling health inequalities to enable everyone to have a good quality of life and reach their full potential.



Supporting a strong and empowered community, built on fairness, local pride and a powerful voice for all our residents.



Tackling the climate emergency and becoming a net zero town with sustainable growth and a healthier environment.



Becoming a child friendly town, where our children grow up happy, healthy and secure, with a voice that matters and the opportunities they need to thrive.



Creating a modern and innovative council, providing high-quality, efficient services that meet the needs of residents and delivers on the vision for Luton 2040.





**Part 1:**

**Where we are now**

# About Luton

**Luton is a vibrant, modern and diverse town in the East of England. The town is home to 225,300 people and has many valuable assets, including a publicly owned airport, a university, excellent education facilities, a university hospital, outstanding greenspaces, dynamic businesses and a strong community with a rich variety of cultures and heritage.**

## Location

**Luton benefits from its excellent strategic location at the centre of London, Oxford and Cambridge, with outstanding links to the capital and Europe by road, rail and air.**



Luton is situated beside the M1 motorway and is just ten miles from the M25. The town has three railway stations, all providing access to Central London within 30 minutes, as well as direct journeys to the Midlands and the South Coast of England. Luton is also home to the UK's fifth largest airport, providing flights to more than 150 destinations across Europe, the Middle East and North Africa for up to 18 million passengers per year.

## Population

**Luton has a population of 225,300 people and a total of 78,900 households. The town is more densely populated than some London boroughs, with an average of 52 people per hectare of land. The population of the town grew by 11% between 2011 and 2021, a faster increase than that of the population nationally.**



Luton has the third youngest population in the country, with 22% of residents below the age of 15. Despite this, the number of people aged 90 and above increased by more than 30% between 2011 and 2021 and the town's population is projected to age significantly over the next two decades.

Luton is a super-diverse town, with no single ethnic group making up the majority of the population. 45% of Luton residents are from White British backgrounds, with 30% Asian, 10% Black and 10% from other White Backgrounds. Luton has many long-established diverse communities, including Irish, South Asian, African and Caribbean communities, as well as a growing Eastern European population. The town is home to a range of diverse cultures and heritage, with more than 150 different languages and dialects being spoken.



## Economy

**Luton has a strong local economy, which has demonstrated resilience over recent years. Prior to the pandemic, the local economy was worth around £6.3 billion per year and had a higher productivity rate than the UK as a whole (just over £36 Gross Value Added per worker, per hour).**



The town is home to more than 8,800 businesses, supporting around 93,000 jobs. The vast majority of businesses in Luton are small and micro-sized businesses and the town has a higher rate of business start-ups per population size than the country as a whole. In 2021, 48% of all business start-ups in Bedfordshire were based in Luton, with the local economy providing an excellent environment for the sustainability of new enterprises.

Luton's economy has a number of traditionally important sectors that employ many people in the local area, including manufacturing, construction, transport and aviation. Manufacturing is the largest sector, contributing around 17% of the town's total output. London Luton Airport also contributes significantly to the wider economy, supporting 27,000 jobs and adding £1.8 billion per year to the UK economy. The town is also experiencing growth in a number of emerging sectors, including creative and digital industries, new types of advanced manufacturing and the green economy.

Median weekly earnings have increased in recent years, alongside an increase in private sector jobs. Despite this, residents' earnings remain lower than workplace earnings in the town and around one in four workers in Luton are estimated to be earning below the Real Living Wage. This is partly related to many residents being unable to access higher skilled jobs. One in ten working-age adults in Luton have no formal qualifications and just 67% are qualified to level two or above, compared to 78% of the population nationally.

Luton's economy faced significant challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic, with around one in three jobs in the town identified as at risk due to lockdowns. This was the second highest rate of at-risk jobs in the country, due to the high proportion of jobs in industries such as aviation, transport, retail, hospitality and the creative sectors. Unemployment in Luton rose faster than anywhere in the country during the pandemic, peaking at 9.3% in March 2021, with an almost threefold increase in the claimant count for 16-24-year-olds in the town. Despite these challenges, the economy has bounced back well during 2022, following the delivery of support to businesses, workers and employment support to those who were out of work. Most industries have since reopened and unemployment had fallen to 5.8% by August 2022.

## Education

**90% of schools in Luton are rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted and provide excellent education that raises aspirations and helps our children to reach their full potential. The percentage of pupils in Luton achieving the expected standard for reading, writing and maths by the end of Key Stage 2 is currently above the national average (62% compared to 59%), however at GCSE the average attainment 8 score in Luton schools (43.4) and the percentage achieving levels 9-5 in English and Maths (38%) are below the national average (46.7 and 43%). Luton also has a significant gap in early years development and Key Stage 1. Despite this, children who are in receipt of free school meals in Luton schools consistently achieve higher attainment scored than disadvantaged children nationally.**



Luton also has excellent higher and further education provision. The University of Bedfordshire provides higher education to around 20,000 students from over 100 countries. The University was recognised by the Sutton Trust as one of the top 25 English universities for supporting social mobility in 2021, as well as being ranked 8th out of 125 UK institutions for its green credentials by the People and Planet University Guide. The University's main campus in Luton is also home to excellent facilities, including the £40 million STEM building, which opened in 2019.

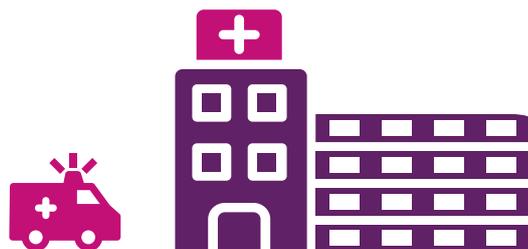
Luton Sixth Form College is one of the oldest and largest further education colleges in the country, and provides A level and vocational courses to more than 3,100 students each year. Barnfield College specialises in vocational courses across two campuses in the town, including in New Bedford Road, which completed a £25 million redevelopment in 2022.

## Health and Wellbeing

**Life expectancy in Luton is below the national and regional averages for both men and women, but is better in comparison to areas with similar populations.**

**Women in Luton are expected to live to an average of 82.5 years, compared to 83.2 years across England;**

**men in Luton are expected to live to 78.1 years, compared to 79.6 years nationally. There is also a clear gap in life expectancy rates between Luton's most and least deprived areas, with males in our top 10% most deprived areas expected to live almost seven years less than those in the least deprived areas; for females, this gap is around five years. Healthy life expectancy for men in Luton has fallen in the last three years and is now around six years below the national average.**



Luton has particular health challenges around childhood obesity, with 27% of year 6 children classified as obese compared to 21% nationally, and dental decay, with 36.8% of five-year-olds experiencing this compared to 23.4% nationally. Physical activity in adults is also low in Luton, with just 57.7% physically active compared to 66.4% nationally. Luton also has higher rates of smoking prevalence and hospital admissions due to alcohol-related conditions, than nationally and regionally, however these rates are more in line with similar places.

Luton does have lower rates of sexually transmitted infections than the rate for England as a whole, with a significant fall in the rate of new STI diagnoses over the past three years. Luton also has better rates of detection of dementia and breast cancer screening than nationally, but poorer rates of screening for bowel cancer and cervical cancer.

Demand for social care remains a challenge across the country, however, in Luton there has been a fall in the number of new requests for social care for over-65s in the past three years, with Luton's demand now lower than the national and regional rates and the second lowest out of sixteen similar comparison areas.



## Housing

House prices have climbed significantly in Luton over recent years, with median house prices now more than eight times the median annual income. Luton also has a high rate of households living in the private rented sector, (29% of households compared to 17% across England), with slightly lower rates of home ownership and social renting. 16.4% of households in the town are in fuel poverty, compared to 13.2% of households across England.



To address these challenges, developers have delivered around 2,000 new homes between 2020 and 2023. This includes new council housing and homes built by the council's own development company Foxhall Homes. Luton's Housing Strategy sets out an ambition to build a further 425 homes per year over the next five years, with a minimum target of 20% affordable homes and an aspiration to be building 350 affordable homes per year by 2027.

## Environment

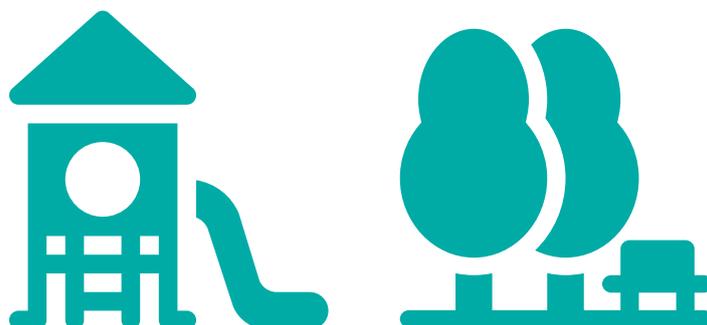
Luton has many examples of outstanding natural environment across the town. This includes six parks with Green Flag Status: Brantwood Park; Leagrave Park; Memorial Park; Peoples Park; Stockwood Park and Wardown Park. The town also has many other high-quality greenspaces, including Hat Gardens, the first in a series of new pocket parks which opened in the town centre in early 2023. The river Lea runs through Luton and is our oldest natural heritage asset. The council is currently carrying out extensive work to uncover the river in the town centre and has an ambition to make a linear park along the route of the river. The town is also surrounded by many other greenspaces and areas of outstanding natural beauty, including the nearby Chilterns.



Luton Council declared a climate emergency in January 2020 and has set a commitment with partners for the town to become net zero by 2040, ten years ahead of the government's target for the whole of the UK.

Luton's current emissions profile is estimated to be around 790 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e, (the equivalent of 790 kilotons of carbon emissions) per year. Approximately 39% of Luton's emissions come from households, followed by 29% from industry and 23% emitted on the road.

In 2023, Luton launched its roadmap to net zero, with a clear action plan to reduce and offset carbon emissions across the town. The council and its partners are delivering on this plan by reducing emissions across buildings and services, while also investing in improvements to buildings, housing stock, vehicles and technology to reduce non-renewable energy consumption.



## The council and its services

**Luton Council was established in 1997 and is one of the smaller unitary authorities in the country, covering an area of 25 square miles and serving 225,300 residents.**

Luton Council is made up of 48 elected Councillors, that will represent a total of 20 electoral wards in the town, following the 2023 local elections.

The council directly employs more than 2,500 members of staff and more than 250 agency staff that are also employed through the council. The council delivers around 730 different services for the residents of Luton. These services are split across four corporate divisions within the council; Chief Executive's, Inclusive Economy, Population Wellbeing; and Children, Families and Education. Each of these divisions is led by a Corporate Director. A separate division is responsible for the airport, with its Corporate Director also serving as the Chief Executive Officer for the airport company, Luton Rising.

Many of the council's services are crucial to the everyday life of residents, including waste collections, housing, public health, adult social care, children's services and education. The council also delivers a number of other services that help to improve the town and quality of life for residents, such as neighbourhood enforcement, planning, licensing of business premises, parks maintenance and strategic community services.



# Progress since our last Corporate Plan

Since the start of our last Corporate Plan in 2021, the council has made significant progress across its services and work with partners. This includes leadership of the system-wide approach to delivering the first steps towards the Luton 2040 vision and cross-partnership working to protect residents and secure a strong recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. The council has also played a leading role in building partnerships between local stakeholders and national government around our shared ambitions for Luton.

Over the last two years, the council has also restructured many services to become more modern and efficient, responding to the needs of residents and the ongoing financial challenges.

There have been a number of major successes for the council over the past two years, including generating tens of millions of pounds' worth much-needed funding for the town and several awards recognising outstanding achievements.

**Secured over £49 million of funding** – including £20 million Levelling Up Funding, **£19.1 million** to deliver our Bus Improvement Plan, **£7.7 million Salix grant** to decarbonise public buildings, **£4.8 million** for tackling rough sleeping initiative, **£3.4 million** to improved energy efficiency in social housing and privately owned and rented homes. 

Creation of our **Integrated Family Partnership service.** 

**Delivered £56.6 million of government support grants** to businesses during the pandemic. 

**Administered government furlough payments** to 39,500 employees throughout the pandemic. 

**Launch of Luton Rising** – a new brand for our airport focussed on sustainable growth that supports our community and our planet. 

**Kickstart employment scheme** delivered to support young people into work. 

Launch of new **Adult Social Care Strategy** and Luton's first **social work academy.** 

Delivered on our **improvement plans for children's services** and progressing towards a good Ofsted rating. 

## People Plan achievements

including, workforce development, increasing apprenticeships and delivering a mentoring scheme.



Increased the number of care leavers attending university.



Edge of Care service launched.



Doubled the number of adoptions on 2021-2022.



Six Luton Parks retained Green Flag status.



Improvements to social housing, including insulation and removal of cladding on high rise buildings.



Upgrades delivered to highways and the Vale Crematorium.



Over 280 people taken out of temporary accommodation in 2021-2022.



Council pest control team won the **Local Authority of the Year Award** at the **National Pest Awards 2021** and **Sustainability Initiative of the Year award** in 2022.



Support for Afghan and Ukrainian refugees.



Council Planning department were runners-up at the **Royal Town Planning Institute's East of England awards** in 2021.



Ranked in the **top five local authorities** for youth justice performance.



# The launch of the Luton 2040 vision

The Luton 2040 vision was officially launched in October 2020. This town-wide vision was developed by residents and partner organisations, building on the recommendations of the Luton Inclusive Growth Commission in 2019.

The Luton 2040 vision sets out a long-term ambition for our town, built around a shared mission that Luton should be a place where everyone can thrive and no-one has to live in poverty. To achieve this mission, we have set five priorities; to build an inclusive economy, improve population wellbeing; become a child-friendly town; tackle the climate crisis and become a net zero town; and strengthen our community with fairness for everyone at its heart.

This vision is being delivered by everyone in the town and over the last two years the council has led this collective effort, shaping our detailed plans and strategies to get to 2040 and delivering the first steps to transform the town. So far, we have seen the delivery of a number of major achievements across these partnerships, including:

**Delivery of Covid-19 recovery plans,** including supporting wellbeing, the community and reopening the economy.



**London Luton Airport back to 80% of pre-pandemic passenger numbers** by summer 2022.



**Opening of the new Windmill Hill SEND school and Putteridge High School's new £23 million building.**



**Over 375,000 vaccines** delivered to residents.



**The launch of a new Town Centre Masterplan** and the first steps towards realising this with funding secured for The Stage, progression of plans for Power Court and the completion of Hat Gardens, a new pocket park and the Covid-19 memorial in the town centre.



**Luton school pupils achieve better Key Stage 2 results** than the national average in 2022.



**Completion of Barnfield College's £25 million redevelopment.**



**Launch of BLMK Integrated Care System** and University of Bedfordshire's research hub.



Luton officially becomes a **Marmot Town**, following the release of report by the **Institute for Health Equity on Reducing Inequalities in Luton**.



Refurbishment of **Lewsey swimming pool and sports facilities**.



Opening of **Hat Works in the Hat District** by The Culture Trust, Luton.



Launch of the **University of Bedfordshire's Premium Progression Partnership**.



Delivery of **600 new homes** by developers, with a **further 1,500** due to be completed by March 2023.



Access for **All upgrades** delivered at Luton Airport Parkway Station.



**ABCD community clean ups** organised as part of **#KeepLutonTidy** campaign.



Mary Seacole Housing Association and Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation **launch Will Power project**, to inspire and raise aspirations among young people from ethnic minority backgrounds.



Launch of **Luton's Fairness Taskforce**.



London Luton Airport awarded **Level 3 of the Airport Carbon Accreditation scheme**.



**73% of residents happy with Luton as a place to live in 2022** – the highest level on record.



## Levelling Up Luton

Since launching the Luton 2040 vision, the council has worked closely with central government through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to secure funding to deliver on our shared priorities.

The vision aligns with the aims of the Government's Levelling Up agenda, with matching priorities around tackling inequality, improving skills, economic regeneration and restoring local pride. The commitment within the vision of becoming a net zero town also meets the government's aims following COP26.

The council and its partners locally have demonstrated how our vision can help government to achieve its levelling up aims, clearly setting out the needs of our town and the opportunities that exist here. As a result, Luton was listed as a priority one area for Levelling Up in June 2021.

Since then, the council has successfully led the bid for £20 million of Levelling Up funding to kick-start regeneration of the town centre with the building of The Stage. This will be a brand new mixed-use development on an existing brownfield site in Bute Street, which will provide 372 new homes, 7,000m<sup>2</sup> of high quality workspace, 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of community space, a cycle hub and improvements to the public realm. This project will be a major catalyst for growth and unlocking further investment in our town centre.

In addition, the council and partners also successfully secured £238,000 of funding as part of the government's Partnerships for People and Place programme and over £4 million from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which will deliver a range of projects around skills, community safety and town centre regeneration.

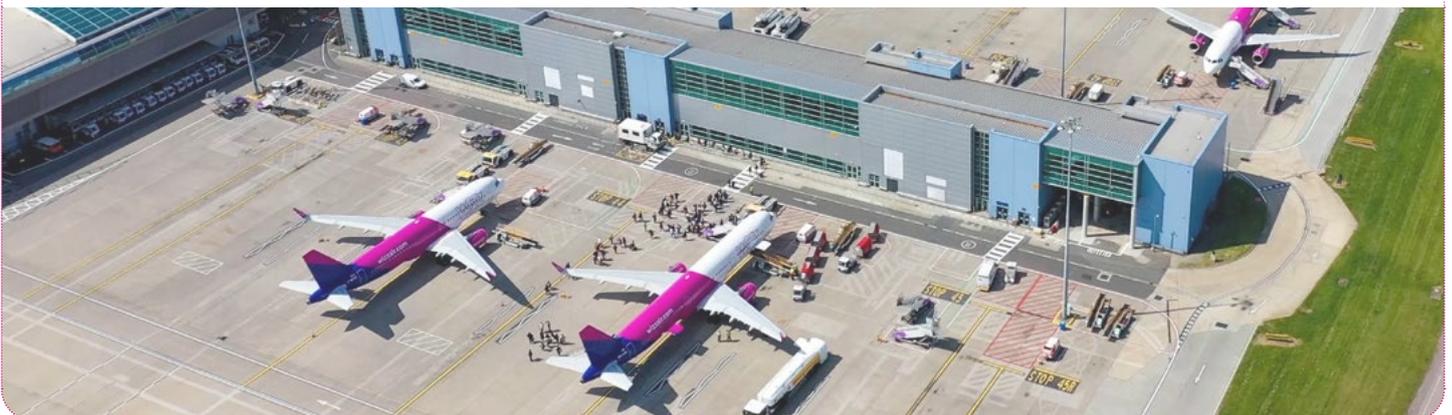
## The Covid-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic had a major impact on Luton, our residents and the council. In terms of health, Luton had one of the highest rates of infection and mortality from Covid-19 anywhere in the country. The local economy was significantly impacted as well, with around one in three jobs in the town put at risk and unemployment in Luton rising to 9.3% within the first 12 months of the pandemic.

In response, the council had to realign many services and redeploy hundreds of members of staff to protect vulnerable residents with the delivery of food and essential supplies, as well as to support the rollout of vaccines and the implementation of restrictions. The council also worked with central government and partners locally to deliver more than £56.6 million of support grants to businesses and furlough payments to 39,500 employees throughout the pandemic.

After the initial crisis phase of the pandemic, many council services were able to resume as normal, while others continued to provide support to residents in the community and businesses. Together with partners, the council delivered plans for recovery from the health and economic impacts, including actions to address widening inequalities that were exacerbated by the pandemic, as well as steps to reopen the economy safely get people back into work, with unemployment falling to 5.8% by September 2022.

Although the council and partners have been able to work in an agile way to respond to the pandemic, this has come at a significant cost. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the council's budget, with reductions in revenue from council tax, business rates and, most crucially, the airport dividend.



## Financial position and savings

The council continues to face significant challenges, like the whole of the local government sector, following a decade of austerity and the more recent impacts of the pandemic and inflation.

Between 2010 and 2019, the council achieved savings of more than £160 million from its annual budget, as a result of the reduction in the Revenue Support Grant from Central Government (reduced from £120 million in 2010 to £11 million in 2022). Luton has traditionally been more dependent on this grant due to above-average levels of need among the population for some services and below average income from council tax receipts. The council currently ranks 52nd out of 57 local authorities for average council tax per head of the population.

The council has therefore taken early and often difficult decisions to make savings while protecting the most critical services and continuing to offer value for money to council tax and business rate payers.

The council took innovative approaches throughout this period, including raising additional income through alternative sources, such as by trading services with other authorities and investing in assets like London Luton Airport (by 2019/20, this investment had resulted in an annual dividend from the airport company Luton Rising paid to the council, which funded one pound of every twenty spent on local services). These innovative approaches helped to ensure Luton Council was in a better and more sustainable financial position than many other authorities across the country.

Since 2020, the council has faced further challenges as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic added many additional costs to the organisation, including investment in technology to facilitate the shift from office to hybrid working, as well as a loss of £50 million of revenue in 2020. The biggest impact, though was the loss of the dividend paid to the council from Luton Rising between 2019 and 2023 as a result of the aviation industry temporarily closing down (in the year 2019/20, although unpaid due to Covid-19, this dividend was worth £19.25 million per annum). The council has responded to these additional challenges with further savings, many of which have been achieved by reducing the number of buildings owned by the council.

As a result of these further financial pressures and the continued reduction in funding for local government, the council estimated in 2022 that a further £12 million of savings would need to be made over the next four years. This figure, however, is likely to increase due to the ongoing inflationary and wage pressures the council is expecting over the same period.

The future funding for local government continues to be a live issue, with financial settlements agreed every three years by central government. The council's financial strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan are therefore designed to achieve further savings in line with the government's proposed move away from the Revenue Support Grant, to be replaced by 75% retention of business rates.

The public sector continues to face financial uncertainty, which presents continued risks to the council. These risks include additional cost increases caused by inflationary or pandemic-related pressures and any further negative impacts on the aviation sector and the funding this provides for council services. These risks have been accounted for and are being mitigated within all of the council's financial plans.



## Organisational Development

The Council's People Strategy and Implementation Plan is our key framework for supporting, developing and growing our workforce to enable and empower them to be the best they can be to deliver quality services to our residents.

Our most recent People Strategy ran from 2019-2022 and was aligned to the last Corporate Plan. The strategy and implementation plan aimed to develop our workforce to be equipped to deliver on our priorities for Luton 2040. This was an agile plan that also sought to respond to the challenges of the pandemic, the council's savings targets and recruitment and retention challenges across the sector.

Since 2019 we have seen significant progress on delivering against this framework, including:

- Our Career Pathways Programme
- Participation in the National Graduate Development Programme
- Apprenticeships First for all vacancies and qualification requests
- Increased project and secondment opportunities
- Providing valuable opportunities to engage young people in our organisation and supporting educators with identifying skills of the future
- Becoming a Cornerstone employer, developing an active work experience programme for students from Year 10 through to college/university
- Progression pathways
- We have been successful in growing more of our own staff; since the launch of the Apprenticeship Levy in 2017, as of 2022 there have been over 200 level 2-4 starts. Future ambitions include an annual target to increase the proportion of our workforce from ethnic minority backgrounds to better reflect the community we serve.
- Employees throughout the organisation are supported with a range of development opportunities, delivered in-house, increasingly through 'blended' solutions to fit with increased hybrid and flexible working.
- Our workforce continues to benefit from a range of wellbeing initiatives:
  - NHS health checks
  - Counselling services as part of our Employee Assistance Programme.
  - Flexible retirement
  - Shared cost additional voluntary contributions (AVCs)
  - Purchase additional annual leave to support a healthy work-life balance
  - Range of active lifestyle activities and local gym discounts

An aerial night view of a modern city. The central focus is a large, brightly lit stadium with a green field and a large crowd of spectators. Surrounding the stadium are several tall, modern buildings with green roofs. The city is illuminated with warm lights, and the sky is dark with some stars visible. The image is framed by a colorful geometric pattern in the top left corner.

**Part 2:**

**Luton 2040**

**Our town-wide vision**

# How we developed our shared vision

**The Luton 2040 vision was developed with residents and partners across Luton in 2020, drawing together our shared ambitions for the future of our town, while building on our many collective strengths and overcoming the challenges that we face together.**

The vision was developed in response to Luton's independent Inclusive Growth Commission, which released its final report in 2019. This report outlined the 12 ambitions for the town based on the unique opportunities and most pressing challenges. In particular, this report identified overcoming poverty and inequality as a central mission that could enable everyone in Luton to thrive, as well as identifying many key assets such as our anchor institutions, our voluntary and community sector and key sectors within our economy such as manufacturing, digital and green industries.

Throughout 2020, Luton Council carried out an extensive consultation with residents and organisations across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors in the town to build on these recommendations and develop a shared vision for everyone to work towards. Throughout the course of this and the consultation with the Inclusive Growth Commission in 2019 and 191 organisations and over 700 residents took part in shaping the Luton 2040 vision.

Throughout these consultations, residents and organisations considered the opportunities and challenges facing our town and told us what mattered to them. This included building a more inclusive economy, improving wellbeing, tackling the climate emergency, giving our young people the best start in life and tackling injustice and inequality. Each of these priorities link back to the central challenge set by the Inclusive Growth Commission around tackling poverty and inequality so that everyone in our town can reach their full potential.

The Luton 2040 vision was first published in October 2020, setting a long-term vision for the town with strategic priorities focussed on achieving this. It was agreed that these priorities, as well as our plans to deliver on them, would be updated regularly through continuous engagement with partners and residents throughout our 20-year journey. Residents have the ability to shape these priorities and plans over time, through direct engagement with elected representatives and through participation in our Fairness Taskforce and citizen's forums. Partners across the town are also able to shape the direction of the vision through representation on our partnership boards and involvement in a range of partnership networks that drive key work streams within each of our priorities.



# Our unifying mission – no-one in poverty

**At the heart of our town-wide vision for Luton 2040 is a central mission for everybody in Luton to work together to tackle poverty so that all our residents can thrive.**

Before we developed the vision, there were around 46% of children in Luton growing up in relative poverty (End Child Poverty Coalition, 2019). By the middle of 2020, this figure had fallen to 39%. However, this had since increased again to 45% by 2021. Although it is still too early to see the overall impact of all of the work we are doing, this initial shift demonstrates the immediate impact that partners across the town have had, as well as the challenges brought by the pandemic, which have exacerbated hardship and inequality.

Over the next five years, we are likely to see continuing challenges that will impact the most deprived residents within our communities, as well as many who are currently above the poverty line. These challenges include the current cost of living crisis, as well as uncertainty for jobs and businesses and the impact of inequalities that have widened during the pandemic. This backdrop has only strengthened the importance of the mission of no-one in poverty at the heart of the Luton 2040 vision.

The council will therefore be committed to working with partners across the Luton system and beyond to protect the most vulnerable residents and households, build resilience in communities and work to tackle the systemic causes of poverty and inequality in the town.



# Vision and priorities for Luton 2040

## Our town-wide Vision for Luton 2040:

Luton will be a healthy, fair and sustainable town, where everyone can thrive and no-one has to live in poverty.

## Our priorities for Luton 2040

The five updated priorities for Luton 2040 were agreed by partners at the end of 2022. These priorities are designed to help us to achieve our shared vision for the town and the council is committed to delivering on all five, aligning our Corporate Plan and service delivery with each of these.

Further details on all five priorities, including target outcomes and plans to deliver on each can be found in the Luton 2040 vision document 2023-2028.

Part 3 of this document sets out how the council will play its part in delivering on these priorities.



**Building an inclusive economy that delivers investment to support the growth of businesses, jobs and incomes.**



**Improving population wellbeing and tackling health inequalities to enable everyone to have a good quality of life and reach their full potential.**



**Tackling the climate emergency and becoming a net zero town with sustainable growth and a healthier environment.**



**Becoming a child friendly town, where our children grow up happy, healthy and secure, with a voice that matters and the opportunities they need to thrive.**



**Supporting a strong and empowered community, built on fairness, local pride and a powerful voice for all our residents.**





**Part 3:**

**Delivering on our shared vision and priorities for**

**Luton 2040**

# Delivering on our shared vision and priorities for Luton 2040

The council's mission is to work with everyone to deliver on our shared vision for Luton 2040 – a healthy fair and sustainable town where everyone can thrive and no-one has to live in poverty.

As this section of the Corporate Plan sets out, the council does this in three ways:



## System leadership

Luton Council is the place leader for Luton and its community. Alongside other key anchor institutions that have an inherent, long-term stake in the future of the town, we are among the system-leaders with responsibility for place-shaping. These system leaders work together to use our collective influence, power and resources to make the town a prosperous and attractive place for people to live, work and do business.

System leadership involves setting out long-term plans for the town, including economic regeneration, wellbeing, the local environment and the community, as well as long-term planning for improving services that residents need now and in the future. This also includes bringing together wider stakeholders within the town, as well as regionally and nationally, to galvanise and facilitate partnership working.

As the place leader, the council has a central role in leading the overall delivery of our shared vision for Luton 2040 and enabling everyone in the town to play their part. The council leads and facilitates this programme through the Luton 2040 governance framework, which includes our 2040 partnership boards, (The Inclusive Economy and Health and Wellbeing Boards) as well as a series of other partnership boards that deliver the priorities and key strands of the 2040 programme.

Through this framework, the council works with system leaders and key stakeholders to deliver on our five major strategies for Luton 2040:



The council and other system leaders also lead the town's engagement with national and regional stakeholders, including central government (and government agencies such as Network Rail, Homes England, Arts Council England and Ofsted), neighbouring local authorities and potential investors to generate funding and support to achieve our vision for the town.

The council also represents Luton in its role as part of the wider regional system. This includes its role within the Integrated Care System for Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes, which oversees the join-up of the regional health and social care services, and within SEMLEP (South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership), which works together to drive sustainable and inclusive growth across the region.

# Luton 2040 Governance Framework



## Working in partnership

Partnership is crucial to delivering on our shared vision for the town, enabling us to make the most of our limited resources and coordinate activities to reach our collective aims. By working in partnership locally and nationally, we are able to achieve better, faster and more lasting outcomes for our residents.

This includes working directly with schools, further and higher education partners, and health partners to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities. This also includes working with businesses in the town to increase inward investment and regeneration to attract people to Luton, as well as working with emergency services and the voluntary and community sector to make the town a safer, more resilient and more cohesive place for everyone to live.

Many organisations have developed pledges to align their internal strategies to the Luton 2040 vision, which include commitments to working closely with the council. The University of Bedfordshire has developed a civic agreement, which sets out how it will work in partnership with the council and the community to deliver on the Luton 2040 vision.

## Delivering through our services

The council delivers around 730 services for the people of Luton. This includes many frontline and statutory services that are essential for residents, including education, children's services, adult social care, waste collection and street cleansing, housing and highways management.

These essential services contribute to many of the priorities for Luton 2040, however, we also deliver much more across our organisation that helps to deliver on Luton's ambitions. This includes economic regeneration of key employment sites and the town centre, delivery of programmes to improve health outcomes and many actions that strengthen community safety, opportunities for young people and measures to enhance our natural environment and invest in buildings and homes to improve sustainability.

The rest of this section sets out in detail the main actions we will take as an organisation to deliver on each of the five priorities for Luton 2040.

# Building an inclusive economy that delivers inward investment to support the growth of businesses, jobs and incomes.

Building a more inclusive economy that creates opportunities for everyone in Luton to thrive is an important priority within the Luton 2040 vision. The council has a key role to play in this priority as one of the largest employers in the town, supporting jobs, skills and investment, as well as having a clear stake in the town centre.

The council provides system leadership by facilitating the Inclusive Economy Board, and other key groups that help to deliver on this priority, including the Employment and Skills Partnership Board, Town Centre Strategic Board, Anchor Institutions workshop and other key industry specific groups.

The council also works closely with central government and wider stakeholders such as SEMLEP (South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership), Arts Council England, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and others to generate investment and support for the growth and regeneration of the local economy and key sectors.

The actions the council will take for each target outcome within this priority are summarised below.

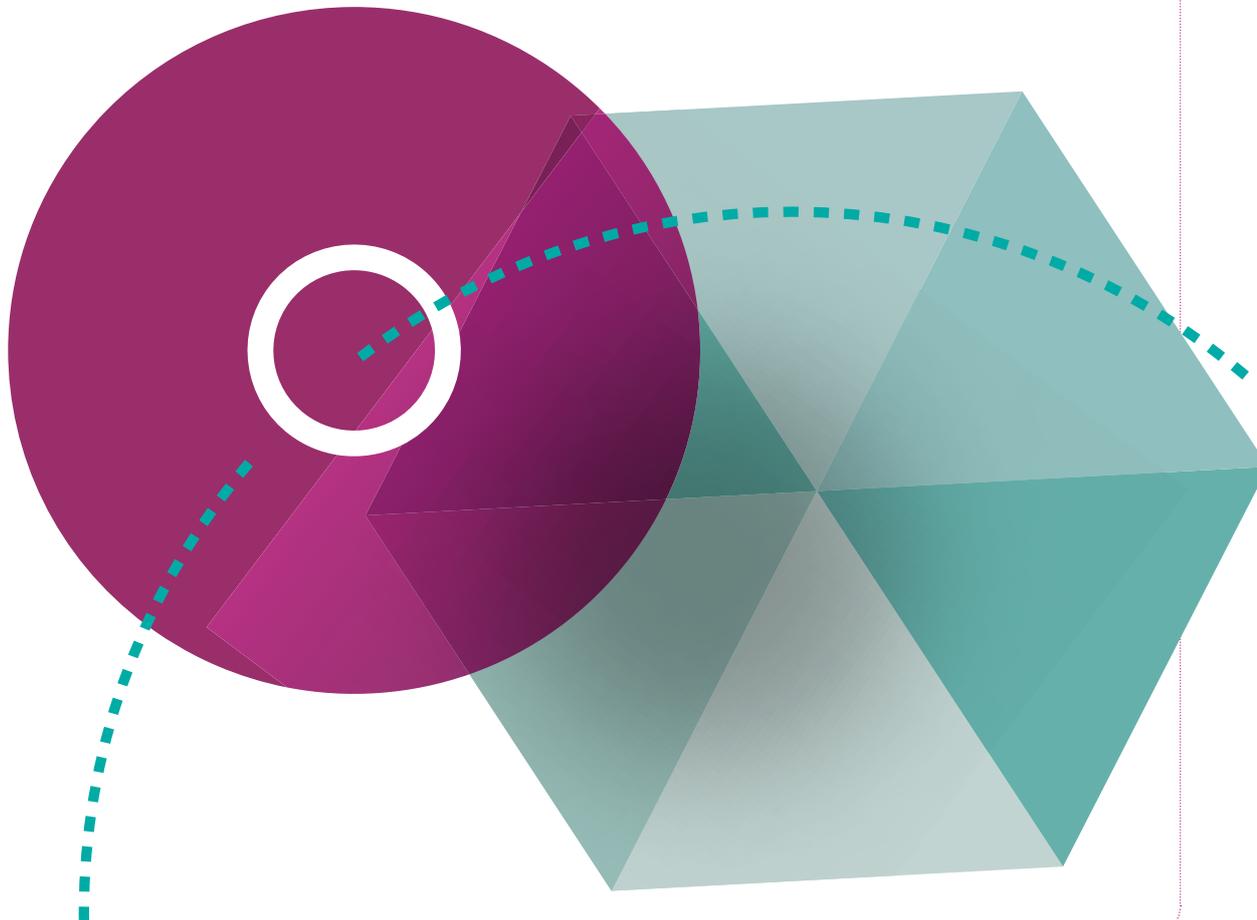
Target Outcome	How we will deliver through our services and in partnership
Increased inward investment supporting the growth of our key and emerging sectors, including aviation, manufacturing, digital and creative industries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in partnership with businesses to develop a new place brand to attract inward investment and business start-ups.</li> <li>• Support businesses across key sectors to grow in Luton.</li> <li>• Continue to support the sustainable growth of the airport through Luton Rising – working with the aviation sector to increase green growth.</li> <li>• Work with key partners to deliver our plans for transforming lives through arts, culture and heritage.</li> <li>• Continue to engage with central government to leverage investment to level-up our local economy.</li> </ul>
More of our residents in well-paid, high value and fair employment within Luton.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become a Real Living Wage employer and ensure this is embedded into third party contracts with suppliers.</li> <li>• Support the rollout of the Good Business Charter, working with businesses and employers to ensure more workers earn the Real Living Wage with fair employment conditions.</li> <li>• Work with partners to increase access to higher-paid jobs for residents.</li> </ul>
A more highly skilled workforce that meets the needs of local employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver our employment and skills strategy with partners, including higher education, further education and other training providers.</li> <li>• Continue to work in partnership with DWP to support people back into employment.</li> <li>• Continue to deliver our own skills and employability programmes such as Passport to Employment and Passport to Care.</li> <li>• Work with businesses, skills providers, SEMLEP and national government to identify skills gaps, hard-to-fill vacancies and future skills needs.</li> <li>• Work collaboratively to invest in skills for the future including digital, creative and green skills.</li> <li>• Work with partners to reduce barriers to participation in employment and skills programmes.</li> </ul>

Increased local spending and social value through supply chains of large employers and anchor institutions.

- Increase the council's local spend to 70% of all procurement by 2025.
- Increase social value in the council's procurement, including sustainability, skills and apprenticeships and fair pay and employment.
- Continue to develop our social value framework with major public sector employers and anchor institutions, ensuring more money remains within the Luton system.
- Support the growth of local supply chains and SMEs by reducing barriers to bidding, providing guidance on social value and by delivering 'meet the buyer' events.

A thriving town centre with the right mix of office, retail, leisure, residential and community space.

- Deliver our new Town Centre Masterplan, working with town centre partners to provide the right mix of spaces.
- Deliver our own key developments in the town centre, including The Stage and the creation of pocket parks.
- Develop a town centre place brand and work with partners to increase engagement, marketing and place activation in our town centre.
- Improve the look and feel of our town centre through investment in cleaner streets and enhancing heritage assets.
- Work with the police, community safety partners, central government and local businesses to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and improve town centre safety.
- Work with arts, cultural and heritage partners to deliver events and heritage action zones that make our town centre an attractive destination for residents, visitors and investors.



# Improving population wellbeing and tackling health inequalities to enable everyone to have a good quality of life and reach their full potential.

Improving wellbeing through a preventative approach to reducing health inequalities is important to helping everyone in Luton to reach their full potential. The council and its services are intrinsically linked to all aspects of this, including provision of health and social care services, as well as housing for many residents and families and an important role in supporting community safety.

The council has led the development of this priority through its work with the Institute of Health Equity, which set out its recommendations within the report, 'Reducing Health Inequalities in Luton: A Marmot Town.'

The council provides system leadership through chairing the Health and Wellbeing Board, as well as facilitating other important groups that deliver on this priority, including the Place Board, Health Inequalities Board and the Housing Delivery Board. In addition, the council engages closely with central government and regional stakeholders through its role as a key member of the Integrated Care Board.

The actions the council will take for each target outcome within this priority are summarised below.

Target Outcome	How we will deliver through our services and in partnership
A preventative approach to improving physical and mental wellbeing that addresses the wider determinants of health to achieve better and more equal health outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners across the town to tackle the wider determinants of health and deliver on the eight Marmot principles to reduce health inequalities.</li> <li>• Develop a system-wide approach, with businesses, employers, housing providers, education, health partners and police to tackling the wider determinates of health.</li> <li>• Support primary care and health partners and extend social prescribing to address the social determinants of health.</li> </ul>
A healthier start for our children and young people with better and more equal physical and mental health outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase provision of services such as Family Hubs to support children and families.</li> <li>• Work with partners across the system to deliver programmes that increase physical activity and healthy weight from early years.</li> <li>• Work with the NHS, local health partners and national government to identify additional opportunities to support young people's mental health in schools, the community and at work.</li> </ul>

A stronger care sector with increased capacity to help people and families to manage long-term conditions.

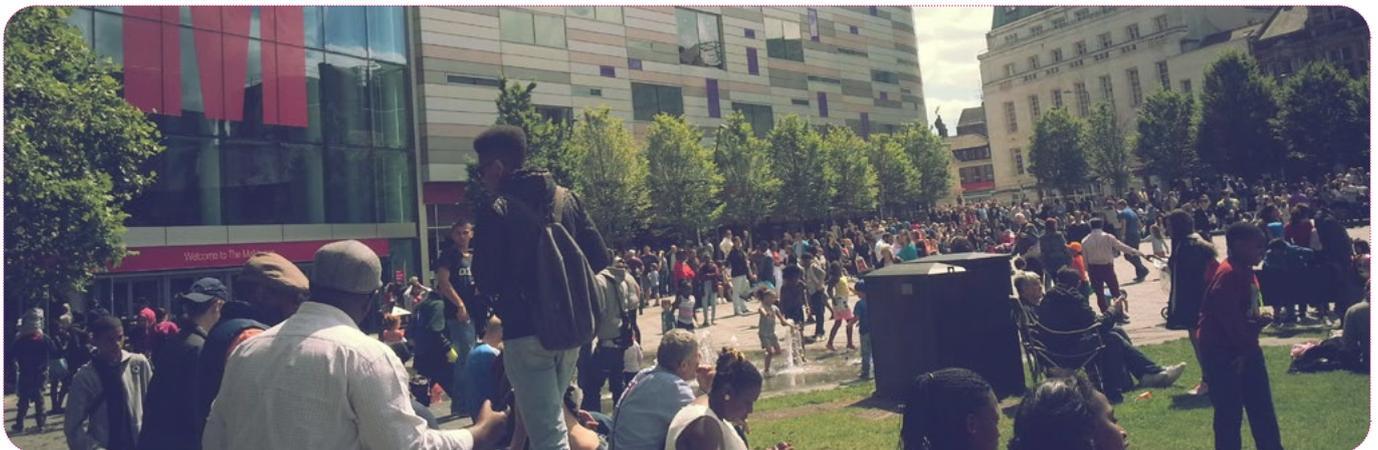
- Work with residents and partners across the system to identify inequalities in how people access and experience care.
- Work closely with external care providers to identify needs of residents and ensure that they are receiving good quality and appropriate care.
- Continue to work closely with hospitals and other health care providers to continue our effective approach to hospital discharge.
- Plan for changing needs of residents and invest in more preventative approaches to care and support.
- Embrace digital resources and new technology to transform services and provide greater personalised care and support.

More of our households living in good quality and affordable housing.

- Work with developers to deliver on our target for 400 new homes per year, delivering our own share of these through our company Foxhall Homes and council housing.
- Continue to affordable rents and maintain good standards, including meeting all new building safety requirements across all our social housing.
- Work with developers and private sector landlords to drive-up standards across all housing tenures.
- Continue to work with homelessness, health and enforcement partners to eliminate rough-sleeping and reduce homelessness.
- Engage with central government and Homes England to tackle long-term housing need and housing affordability challenges.

A safer community with fewer cases of crime, domestic abuse, serious violence and addiction.

- Continue to work closely with police, community safety partners, health partners and businesses to tackle issues of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Continue to deliver neighbourhood enforcement and licensing services that help to tackle crime and safety concerns in the town.
- Work with the police and University of Bedfordshire to build intelligence around crime and engage with residents and communities to better understand perceptions of safety.
- Work with young people and youth organisations to support young people's safety and reduce reoffending by young people.
- Engage with central government to deliver programmes that improve safety and to identify future funding and opportunities to continue this.



# Tackling the climate emergency and becoming a net zero town with sustainable growth and a healthier environment.

Improving sustainability and tackling the climate emergency is a key priority within the Luton 2040 vision, which is linked to better wellbeing and economic growth. The council is committed to ensuring that its own operations and the town as a whole can both become net zero by 2040.

The council is leading the local system through the Climate Change Steering Group, and has also facilitated valuable discussions and engagement between residents, organisations and experts to build a roadmap to net zero by 2040.

The council has an important role to play, like all other businesses and partner organisations in the town, to reduce its own impact on the environment. This includes the impact from the output of services, our buildings, our vehicles and the airport. In addition, the council has influence over other important factors in tackling climate change, such as housing, planning, transport infrastructure and green spaces.

The actions the council will take for each target outcome within this priority are summarised below.

Target Outcome	How we will deliver through our services and in partnership
<p>Reduced net carbon emissions from businesses, organisations and households.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade and retrofit council and public sector buildings to reduce emissions, including offices, schools, community centres and social housing.</li> <li>• Work with developers to encourage best possible energy efficiency standards in all new-build homes.</li> <li>• Work with businesses and partners across the town to support upgrades of existing buildings to reduce emissions.</li> <li>• Continue to provide waste services that encourage residents to waste less and recycle more.</li> <li>• Support introduction of a Community Carbon Offsets Programme.</li> <li>• Provide support to businesses, residents, community groups, voluntary and charitable organisations by sharing information, promoting best practice, practical advice and funding.</li> </ul>



A greener transport network, with a reduction in car usage and an increase in walking, cycling and sustainable public transport usage.

- Deliver plans for a new park and ride service from Butterfield Business Park.
- Work with central government and local transport partners to deliver our Bus Improvement Plans.
- Work with partners to increase the number of public electric vehicle charging points in the town to more than 200 by 2025.
- Upgrade council vehicles to cleaner and renewable fuel alternatives and encourage this shift among residents and key sector such as transport and private hire taxis.
- Continue to improve walking and cycling routes across the town.
- Increase connectivity between walking, cycling and public transport, including with the introduction of a new cycle hub in the town centre.
- Promote walking and cycling among council staff, with initiatives such as cycle to work scheme.
- Work with businesses and employers to develop plans for active and sustainable travel among their workforces.

The most sustainable airport in the UK.

- Support our airport company Luton Rising and the aviation sector to achieve their collective plans for sustainable growth and offsetting of emissions.
- Continue to invest in sustainable infrastructure, such as the Luton DART to enable and encourage more low-carbon journeys to and from the airport.

Enhanced greenspace and richer biodiversity that offset emissions and enriches our local environment.

- Continue to maintain excellent parks and greenspaces, including our six Green Flag parks.
- Create new pocket parks in the town centre and open up the River Lea, increasing biodiversity in the river corridor.
- Work with voluntary and community groups to help maintain clean and tidy parks and greenspaces.
- Increase tree planting and wildflower coverage across the town, encouraging developers and businesses to do the same.
- Work with the community to manage flood risk and engage with central government to identify funding and opportunities to reduce flood risk and increase resilience.

Improved air quality across our town to support better health outcomes.

- Monitor air quality in key locations in the town, including near the airport, busy roads and schools.
- Work with key partners in these locations to identify measures to reduce congestion and poor air quality.
- Work with partners and central government to identify innovative approaches to improving air quality, including pedestrianised streets, strategic bus lanes and enforcement to prevent engine idling.

# Becoming a child-friendly town, where our children grow up happy, healthy and secure, with a voice that matters and the opportunities they need to thrive.

Luton Council is committed to delivering on the priority to make Luton a child-friendly town. The council leads the local system through chairing the Children’s Trust Board, as well as facilitating other key partnership groups such as local education leaders and by engaging with youth representatives. The council also works to promote the voice of children and young people through the Youth Council and its Looked After Children’s Panel.

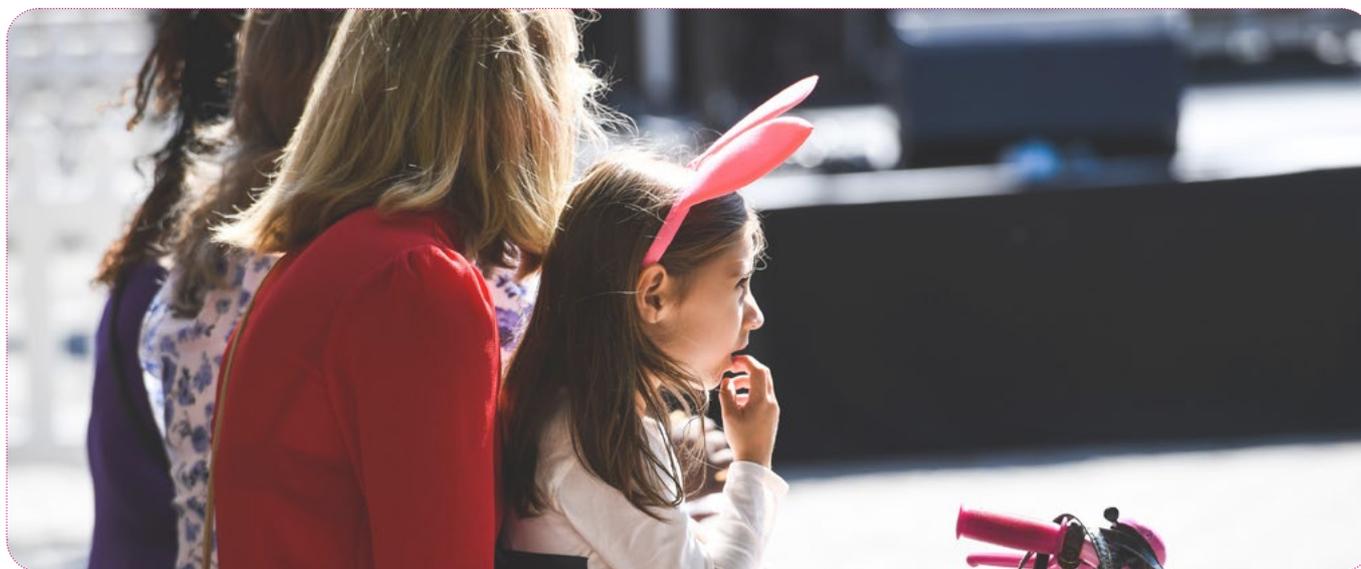
The council takes a corporate parenting approach which gives it a central role in the lives of children and young people in the town. This role includes the delivering services that keep children and young people safe, overseeing the provision of education for all children in Luton, and providing services for children and young people with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) and their families.

The council also aims to ensure that all services delivered independently and in partnership with others help to make Luton a Child-friendly town. This can include actions that improve mental and physical wellbeing, increase employment and skills opportunities, or how we make our community safer for children and young people.

The actions the council will take for each target outcome within this priority are summarised below.

Target Outcome	How we will deliver through our services and in partnership
Our children and young people will have access to good quality services that keep them safe and secure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue our children’s services improvement journey, working with Ofsted, the Department for Education and partners to deliver good and outstanding services for children and families.</li> <li>Work closely with partners across the system to ensure that children and young people are protected in our town and across all services.</li> <li>Work with police, health partners, schools and the criminal justice system to prevent youth offending and re-offending and ensure that young people feel safe in their homes, their schools and in our town.</li> <li>Continue to support free school meal provision and identify opportunities to extend this to school holiday periods for the most vulnerable children, working with schools, businesses and the voluntary and community sector.</li> </ul>
Every child has an excellent education that raises aspiration and achievement and reduces educational inequalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with education partners across the system to build on success of school readiness and improve education outcomes for all pupils.</li> <li>Work with education leaders to ensure that all children in Luton can access good and outstanding schools.</li> <li>Work with all parts of the system, including education, police, children’s services, private and public sector employers and the community to support looked after children and marginalised young people into skills and employment.</li> </ul>

<p>More opportunities for our children and young people to develop, play and socialise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with early years providers and schools to enable good development and social skills in children from early years.</li> <li>• Develop spaces for children and families to play and socialise within our town centre, parks and neighbourhoods.</li> <li>• Work with partners to fund opportunities for children and young people to play outside of school, include holiday camps and after-school clubs.</li> </ul>
<p>Greater and more equal opportunities for children and young people with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to children with SEND and their families through our Family Wellbeing Service.</li> <li>• Improve the quality and timeliness of Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs), with all plans person-centred and outcome focussed and developed with children and their families.</li> <li>• Strengthen universal services that provide support on development of children with SEND, working with parents, carers and schools.</li> <li>• Strengthen our services for children and families with SEND, including Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), after school provision, respite services and travel assistance.</li> <li>• Work with schools to increase SEND education places and address identified gaps in current provision.</li> <li>• Work across the system to enable transition into adulthood for 16-25 year olds, including employment and skills opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p>All of our children and young people will have a meaningful voice that is heard and that matters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to promote the voice of young people in shaping the future of Luton, through our Young People’s Council and young people’s citizen’s forums.</li> <li>• Embed co-production in council services that children and young people use, by engaging with children and young people and the Parent Carer Forum.</li> <li>• Work with partners across sectors to ensure that children and young people have a strong voice in shaping all of the services they use.</li> <li>• Encourage more businesses and partners across education, health, social care and the voluntary and community sector to sign up to our Working Together Charter.</li> </ul>



# Supporting a strong and empowered community, built on fairness, local pride and a powerful voice for all our residents.

Our community is at the heart of our vision for Luton 2040 and the council will work with all partners and residents to ensure that we build a fairer town, tackling inequality and building local pride, resilience and participation, while promoting the voice of all parts of the community.

The council is providing leadership of the local system by bringing together key partners, including the voluntary and community sector, and residents, through our innovative Fairness Taskforce and Citizens' Forums. The council also oversees the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board and work with partners to deliver our Fairness Strategy.

The council's elected members and officers have a clear duty to promote and represent the voice of people across Luton to shape the future of the town and services that they use. In addition, by providing services that are used by all parts of the community, the council is committed to delivering these services in a fair and equitable way that meets everyone's needs and helps to reduce inequality.

Target Outcome	How we will deliver through our services and in partnership
A town built on fairness with equitable outcomes for all our residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to lead and facilitate Luton's Fairness Taskforce and Citizen's Forums to identify and tackle inequalities and structural barriers in our town.</li> <li>Work with partners and residents to deliver citizen-led solutions to reduce inequality and social exclusion.</li> <li>Deliver as a council on our commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion, to ensure fairer outcomes for all residents.</li> </ul>
A more resilient community, protecting and enabling the most vulnerable and excluded.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with existing networks of local partners that help to tackle issues of debt, homelessness, unemployment and financial hardship in a multi-agency way.</li> <li>Establish a network of community hubs, in partnership with the voluntary and community sector, to provide access to services that protect our most vulnerable and excluded communities.</li> <li>Engage with government and energy companies to tackle fuel poverty, insecurity and barriers to accessing universal credit and other support.</li> <li>Work with partners across all sectors and the community to tackle digital exclusion and address barriers to services for socially excluded residents.</li> </ul>
A thriving voluntary and community sector, delivering on shared priorities with our residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase collaboration and investment with voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise groups and networks to meet shared goals.</li> <li>Build leadership and skills across the voluntary and community sector.</li> <li>Help to coordinate the work of the voluntary and community sector, with that of other partners in the town to ensure effective collaboration and fill gaps in provision.</li> <li>Work with employers to support opportunities for volunteering among residents.</li> </ul>

A stronger and more meaningful voice for all our residents to shape the vision and direction of our town.

Continue to support direct democracy, including increasing accessibility of participating in elections, consultations and the democratic process.

Continue to work with partners to establish a range of citizen's forums and assemblies to promote the voice of residents across each of the five priorities for Luton 2040.

Embed co-production of services with residents, including tenant participation and scrutiny.

Renew member-led engagement initiatives to ensure that the voice of residents is heard by their elected representatives.

Develop more diverse and innovative opportunities for citizen involvement in direct decision-making to shape the town and their neighbourhoods.

A welcoming and compassionate town, with respect, social responsibility and increased civic pride at its heart.

Support neighbourhood groups to build pride in their local areas.

Increase opportunities for residents to play an active role in the town, through participation in arts, culture and heritage, protecting our local environment and supporting neighbours.

Continue to monitor and promote pride in our town through our perceptions surveys and working with residents to develop a strong place brand narrative for Luton.





**Part 4:**

**Organisational Strategic**

**Priority:**

**Creating a modern and  
innovative council**

## Creating a modern and innovative council, providing high-quality, efficient services that meet the needs of residents and delivers on the vision for Luton 2040.

Our sixth priority, in addition to those linked to the Luton 2040 vision, is to be a modern and innovative council. This is an enabling priority that aims to set up our organisation to meet the objectives of Luton 2040, as well as the needs of our residents.

This priority requires us to maintain the council's solid financial foundations, while investing in our services, technology and workforce to enable us to deliver more with less in an efficient, high-quality and accessible way.

**This priority has four clear objectives:**

**Putting our corporate values at the heart of everything we do, ensuring we are a council that cares.**

**Delivering our People Strategy to recruit, develop and enable our workforce to be the best that they can be.**

**Maintaining a financially sustainable council, with a balanced budget and the ability to make sound long-term investments to achieve our wider priorities for the town.**

**Designing and delivering modern, efficient and high-quality services, utilising digital technology to meet residents' needs faster and more effectively.**



## Objective 1:

# Our corporate values – a council that cares

Our corporate values underpin everything that we do as an organisation, including the decisions we make and the way that we deliver services for the people of Luton.

These values were developed by staff across all parts of our organisation, reflecting the personal and professional values of our workforce. These values demonstrate our determination to be a council that cares about our residents, our partners and our colleagues.



To uphold these values, we will be:

**Collaborative** – We will work together across the teams within our organisation and with partners and our community to deliver on our strategic priorities. We demonstrate this commitment through our work to achieving Luton 2040, which is a shared vision being delivered through collaborative work across the Luton system.

**Ambitious** – We believe that Luton 2040, our shared vision for the town, which we are delivering with partners, is one of the most ambitious programmes anywhere in the country. Our staff are delivering on these ambitions every day and we are always striving to scale-up these ambitions wherever we believe we can go further.

**Respectful** – We recognise the challenges that are faced by people of all backgrounds throughout our diverse community and the structural barriers that we must overcome to build a fairer town where everyone can thrive. Respect for one another is at the heart of our decision making and our engagement with residents, colleagues and partners. As part of this respect, we will always strive to be open, honest and constructive with everyone we work with.

**Empowering** – We will empower our staff and our partners to make decisions and carry out interventions that have a positive impact on the lives of our residents, placing trust in the knowledge and expertise that they bring to their roles. We will also empower our community to be active, resilient and socially responsible in supporting one another, while doing all we can to promote the voice of all residents, including children and young people, to shape the future of our town.

**Supportive** – Supporting everyone in Luton is at the heart of our mission to enable everyone to thrive. We will support our staff and our partners with the resources they need to provide high-quality services for residents. We will also support all of our residents and our staff with the opportunities they need to reach their full potential and support those that are struggling in our community.

## Objective 2:

# A financially sustainable council

Maintaining a financially sustainable council provides us with the solid foundations that we need to continue providing good quality and value-for-money services to residents and to be able to make long-term investment decisions to achieve our priorities for Luton 2040.

The context for this objective is a persistent challenge, following more than a decade of reductions in the revenue support grant from government and future funding settlements only made over three year periods.

Following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the ongoing war in Ukraine and the cost of living crisis are both likely to further impact local government costs, such as energy prices, while also having a negative impact on council tax, business rates and other revenue streams for the council. The council also continues to operate into 2022/23 without the annual dividend paid by Luton Rising, while the aviation industry continues to recover.

## Medium Term Financial Plan

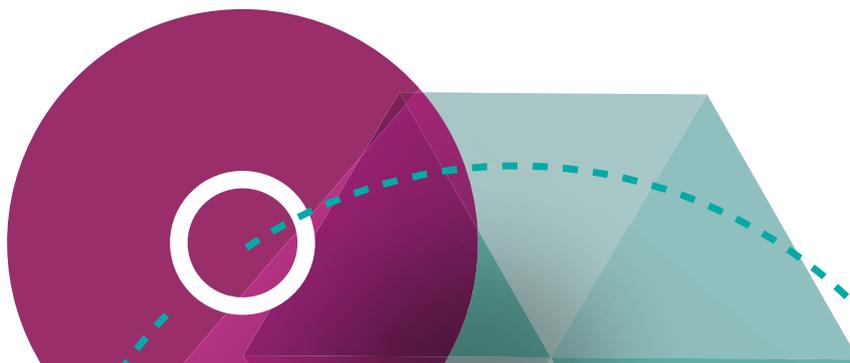
To maintain a solid financial position, the council takes a longer-term view through the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The MTFP sets out the council's approach to financial planning over a period of several years, including all capital and revenue expenditure.

The council has approved the following aims as the principles which underpin the MTFP:

- To maintain a balanced budget position, and to set a Medium Term Financial Plan demonstrating how that position will be maintained
- Spending plans will be closely aligned with the council's aims and objectives.
- The council will maintain a prudent level of reserves.
- Budgets will be continually reviewed and modified to ensure that resources are targeted on key objectives.

This plan is aligned to a number of other financial strategies including:

- Financial Strategy – sets out how the council structures and manages finances over the medium term to achieve a balanced budget.
- Investment strategy – sets out how the council will invest to support or improve services, earn investment income or invest surplus cash ahead of its use for expenditure (treasury management).
- Investment Property Strategy – sets out how the council will use capital expenditure to invest in properties, as well as the disposal of properties, for the purpose of generating investment income.
- Treasury Management Strategy – sets out how the council manages cash flows to achieve a balanced budget and minimise the level of risk in investments.



## Annual Budget and Savings Programme

The council sets an annual budget for each financial year which aligns with the principles of the MTFP.

To achieve a balanced budget, the council has had to find savings of around £160 million since 2010, due to a reduction of around £120 million in government funding as well as the loss of £50 million of commercial revenue and the airport dividend during the pandemic. During the first two years of the pandemic, the council managed to find around £25 million of savings, putting us in a stronger position, with relatively lower levels of savings now required.

Despite this, a number of variable factors remain, including the possibility of impact of new variants of Covid-19 and the impact of the cost of living crisis on council costs and finances.

The council's budget for 2022/23 totals £596 million. This money is spent on services for the people of Luton and long-term investment in the town. The largest proportion of this money is spent on services that support the most vulnerable, including adult social care and services for children, families and adults who are in need. Along with money spent on education, these services make up nearly 60% of all council expenditure. The current budget also includes an increase of £2 million for services such as street cleansing, enforcement and highways, which residents have identified as priorities in recent years.

## Capital Strategy and Investment in Luton 2040

The Medium Term Financial Plan and a balanced annual budget, puts the council in a sound financial position to make long-term strategic investments that can help us to achieve our aims for Luton 2040.

The council's Capital Strategy sets out the framework and principles for how these long-term capital investments are made. The Capital Strategy is governed by a set of investment principles which are aligned to those of the MTFP, including investing to improve service delivery, maintaining and improving council assets, delivering on our 2040 priorities and meeting our statutory responsibilities as a council. These principles also include making the best use of funding and mitigating against risk in all investments.

The council's Capital Programme is updated and agreed annually alongside the budget, based on these investment principles. This programme includes major capital projects which have been approved or are underway over the medium term and these are included within the Council's Green Book.

The current Capital Programme for 2022-2027 includes major investment in 19 regeneration projects, including the delivery of The Stage (part-funded by £20 million Levelling Up Funding), the redevelopment of Library Road carpark, construction of a renewable energy generation park, the introduction of a park and ride service at Butterfield Green, as well as other upgrades to schools, highways, community buildings, playgrounds and the Town Hall.



## Objective 3:

# Delivering our People Strategy

Our People Strategy sets out how we intend to recruit, develop and enable our workforce to deliver on our strategic priorities to achieve the Luton 2040 vision.

Having an effective, efficient and engaged workforce is the heartbeat of our organisation and essential to driving everything that we do.

Our People Strategy aims to meet the broader aims within this Corporate Plan and the Luton 2040 vision by:

- Ensuring that we have a strong workforce that delivers high quality services to our communities.
- Leading by example as a key anchor organisation in Luton as a good employer.
- Developing a workforce reflective of our community.
- Providing quality jobs pathways for local residents.
- Inspiring and providing opportunities for our young people and acting as corporate parent for our looked after children.
- Building an empowered, representative workforce whose voices are heard.
- Fostering a culture of innovation, continuous improvement and values-led behaviours.

As an employer, we are committed to ensuring that everything we do to support our workforce is underpinned by:

- Our corporate values
- Equalities, diversity and inclusion
- Employee wellness
- Effective leadership
- Quality service delivery



Our People Strategy is delivered through an implementation plan which focusses on the following five key areas:

## 1. Recruitment and career progression

To achieve our priorities and deliver high-quality services, we need to attract and retain the brightest and the best people to work in our organisation. The relationship between employees and work is changing and we must continue to adapt our offer to meet be an attractive proposition for current and potential staff. As an organisation, we also believe in growing our own talented people to be successful in their roles and to progress in their careers.

We will achieve this by:

- Increasing the number of 'recruit for potential' opportunities, providing career progression through a range of schemes, such as our career pathways programme, secondments, our mentoring and coaching programme, and access to higher-level apprenticeships.
- Investing in our talent pipeline through a range of early talent initiatives, including our First Steps to Employment programme, work experience and support for years nine and ten, college and university students, as well as recruiting new apprentices and graduates.
- Continuing to provide a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for care leavers and progression opportunities for underrepresented groups and care leavers.

## 2. Reward, recognition and benefits

Providing a competitive benefits package is important to recognising and rewarding our staff for their hard work, while also helping to attract and retain great people.

We will achieve this by:

- Enhancing our already attractive health and wellbeing offer.
- Ensuring our pay and rewards strategy remains fair, equitable and competitive.
- Continuing to develop modern recruitment and on-boarding processes that respond to labour market challenges, including targeting hard to recruit areas, modernising our job descriptions and building career structures through job families.

## 3. Actively listening to and learning from our workforce

Fostering a culture of fairness, positive engagement and transparency is essential to empowering our staff and ensuring they feel valued and listened to.

We will achieve this by:

- Undertaking regular employee surveys and 'pulse' surveys.
- Supporting our existing staff networks to create a culture of engagement, giving staff a voice that is listened to and heard with ideas acted upon.
- Encouraging staff to use online platforms to learn, discuss, debate and support each other.
- Ensuring exit interviews are undertaken for all leavers where feedback is analysed, reported and acted upon.
- Exploring different methods of inclusive engagement with our front-line staff.

## 4. Supporting our workforce with accessible, timely and inclusive learning opportunities

Enabling our workforce with the learning and skills to work in a more modern and efficient way is an important focus. This includes supporting new ways of working, including the use of new technologies, digital skills and hybrid working.

We will achieve this by:

- Improve access to data and information among our workforce.
- Developing internal communication channels and creating an information dashboard to support planning and decision-making.
- Developing employees digital skills to use digital technology confidently.

## 5. Ensuring managers are able to lead, manage and improve performance of individuals, teams and services

Our plan also sets out how we will develop leadership among managers and staff in our workforce. Effective leadership at all levels of our organisation is important to driving better performance and decision-making throughout our workforce.

We will achieve this by:

- Creating the space for our managers to carry out their leadership roles effectively and by developing a culture of inclusion and fairness.
- Creating time and space for managers to come together to reflect, collaborate and develop.
- Communicating our expectations clearly with managers and staff.
- Providing up to date and clear policies, procedures and toolkits to empower good leadership.
- Providing effective training and development to support leadership and management that is based on our values.
- Developing an accountability framework to model consistent performance management.
- Promoting 'Good Work' principles of happier, healthier, more productive and fair workplaces that support quality work for all.



## Objective 4:

# Designing and delivering modern, efficient and high-quality services

The first three objectives within this priority – the corporate values that underpin all of our work, financial sustainability providing strong foundations for our organisation, and an effective, efficient and engaged workforce that is the heartbeat of all that we do – gives us all of the tools that we need to deliver high-quality services.

The final objective within this priority is focussed on designing and delivering modern, efficient and high-quality services that meet residents' needs and help to achieve the Luton 2040 vision. This requires us to do different things and work in different ways.

The council's strategic change team leads our transformation strategy, working across departments to optimise all of our processes and structures, adapt our organisational cultures and utilise technology and data in the best ways possible to deliver better and more efficient services that meet the needs of residents.

Our transformation strategy is built on a number of key principles, including:

- A focus on delivering services that deliver our Luton 2040 target outcomes.
- Investing in new technologies and better integrating technology to support easier, faster and more effective services.
- Developing more efficient processes, to give customers what they need quickly and enable self-service, while reducing staff time spent on repetitive, low-value tasks.
- Utilising new ways of working, to enable the right balance between office-based work, home-working and hybrid working for all our teams to perform at their best.
- Understanding and managing demand for services and identifying opportunities to intervene to prevent long-term pressures.
- Promoting the voice of residents, service users, children and young people, partners and staff within the design of services through consultations and engagement.
- Delivering savings and taking advantage of commercial opportunities where possible.
- Using joined-up data and business intelligence to better understand our residents and their changing needs.
- Monitoring performance of services in an intelligence-led way with meaningful measures and performance indicators for all services.
- Ensuring strong governance is in place for all corporate services and at all levels of the organisation, including elected members, the senior leadership team and within each directorate.

Our approach to transformation is delivered collaboratively, with all of our people to ensure that their expertise in their role is used to inform change and to ensure that all of our staff have the tools they need to do their jobs effectively.



**Part 5:**

**Governance and**

**Accountability**

# Governance and accountability

The council has a strong system of governance in place that ensures decision-making is intelligence-led and subject to political scrutiny and democratic accountability. This governance process includes our democratic processes, how we engage with our residents to shape plans, policies and services and our framework for service planning and monitoring the performance of our organisation.

## Democracy and elected members

Luton Council is governed by 48 elected members, with the majority party currently in overall control. The Council is here to serve its 225,300 residents and 8,800 businesses.

The council follows an Executive or 'Cabinet' model of decision-making, with an Executive Leader of the Council elected at Full Council every four years, a Deputy Executive Leader and eight additional members appointed by the Leader each year to form a ten-member single party Executive. The Executive is the primary decision maker for the majority of the council's business.

Each member of the Executive, including the Leader and Deputy Leader, holds a portfolio of key responsibilities, however, decisions are taken by the Executive collectively.

Full Council meetings are responsible for a range of administrative matters as well as approving the budget and policy framework matters, on recommendations from the Executive. All 48 Councillors sit as the Full Council.

The council's Executive is held to account by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and four scrutiny sub-committees, comprising of an Overview and Scrutiny Board and three topic-specific scrutiny committees for health, children's services and finance. Other policies and matters that require closer scrutiny are dealt with through time limited 'Task and Finish' groups.

Non-executive functions are carried out by regulatory committees, which deal with matters such as planning, licensing, audit and administrative functions. The council also has a Standards Committee, which is responsible for overseeing members' conduct and probity, as well as a Petitions and Representations Board, which deals with matters brought by members of the public through the council's petitions scheme.

## Citizens' engagement

The council and its elected members are directly held to account by residents at local elections, held every four years, and by-elections. In addition, the council also seeks to engage with citizens regularly in a number of ways:

**Formal consultations and engagement** – New strategies and policy changes often require the council to undertake a period of statutory consultation. In some cases, this is not a legal requirement; however, the council seeks the views of residents anyway. Formal consultations often include a survey via our online consultation portal and engagement sessions held in the community.

**Direct consultation** – Residents may sometimes be consulted on a specific issue affecting their local area or a service they use. For example a planning application or road layout changes within a neighbourhood or changes to policies relating to schools or care services.

**Member-led engagement** – Elected members often carry out engagement within their local wards, either through surgeries or direct engagement on issues affecting their area.

**Citizens' panels or assemblies** – Citizens' panels and assemblies are often used as part of the wider Luton 2040 programme linked to specific topics such as climate change or the Fairness Taskforce. These panels enable residents to shape services linked to these priorities, not just within the council but across the town.

**Residents' perceptions surveys** – Luton Council carries out an annual Perceptions of Luton survey, which asks residents for their views on a range of the town's features. This includes questions around education, employment opportunities, community safety and services provided by the council and partners. These surveys are representative of all parts of the community and help to shape the future of the town and services.

## Delivery framework

The diagram below sets out the delivery framework for Luton 2040. This includes both the system-wide delivery framework that the council has an important role in leading, as well as the council's internal delivering framework.



### Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan is aligned to the Luton 2040 vision, based around the same five priorities, with an additional sixth priority, which enables us to better deliver as an organisation.

The Corporate Plan sets out our internal delivery of the Luton 2040 Vision as an organisation at a high-level, including how we lead the local system, work with partners and deliver through our services.

The Corporate Plan includes a list of Corporate KPIs, which are used to monitor our performance as an organisation against our six strategic priorities.

The Chief Executive and Corporate Directors are responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

### Service Plans

Service plans set out in more detail how each of the council's fourteen service areas will deliver on its objectives. These service plans are set annually, with objectives aligned to the strategic priorities. Service level KPIs are also set to monitor progress and these are aligned to the Corporate KPIs.

Service directors are responsible for setting and overseeing the delivery of their service plans.

### Team Plans

Within each service area, individual teams will have a detailed plan or programme of work. This is updated annually and provides greater detail than service plans, with key objectives and milestones included to monitor progress and delivery.

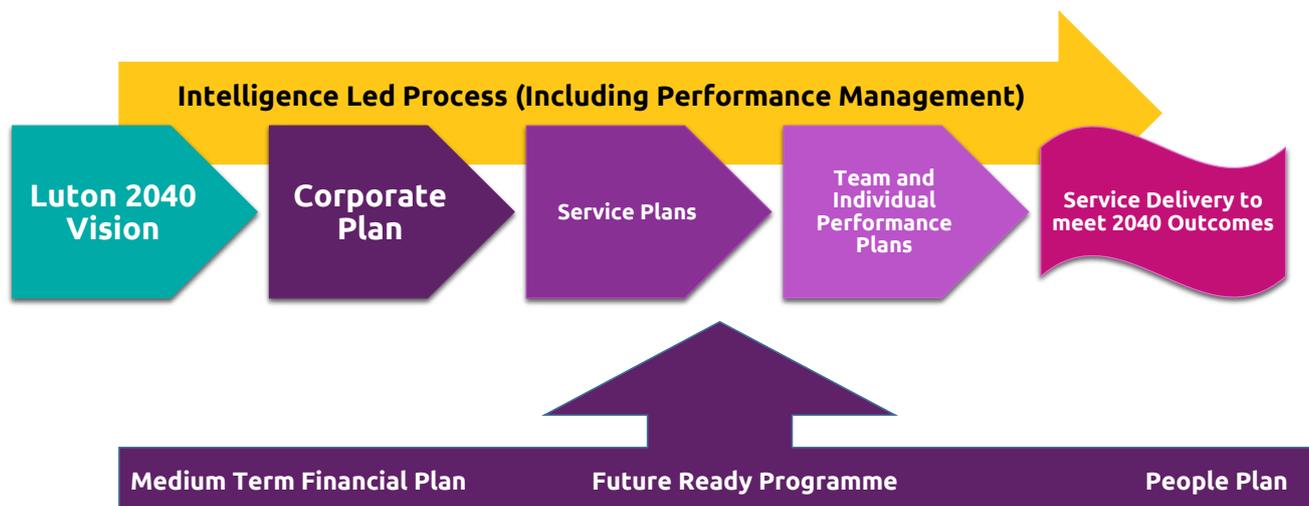
Managers are responsible for setting and delivering their team plans.

### Individual Performance Plans

Managers within teams agree individual performance plans with their staff to set objectives and targets from their team plans. This will include individual tasks that staff will undertake. Managers perform regular check-ins with their staff on a quarterly basis to monitor performance and feed this back up to report on progress of team plans and feed into service plan reporting.

Development of the council’s internal delivery is an intelligence-led process. Intelligence and performance monitoring is a golden thread which is used to shape all service plans and team plans to achieve our vision for Luton 2040. These plans are also underpinned by all of the elements of our sixth strategic priority, including our Medium Term Financial Plan, People Plan and transformation programme.

## Luton Council Internal Delivery Framework for Luton 2040



### Measuring our progress

The council contributes to the wider performance of Luton 2040 and the target outcomes set for the town as a whole within each of the five strategic priorities.

Measuring progress against these target outcomes is set out in detail within the Luton 2040 vision and is monitored through the Minimum Income Standard model, which measures poverty in the town, and Luton’s Thriving People Index, which monitors wider outcomes for our community.

The council also has to measure the progress of its own activity, to monitor the impact of its direct contribution towards achieving the Luton 2040 vision, as well as the performance of key statutory services.

To monitor the council’s progress, we have agreed a list of corporate KPIs (key performance indicators), which are attached as an appendix to this document. These KPIs are aligned to our six strategic priorities, as well as the legal and statutory responsibilities that we have.

The corporate transformation programme is a major journey of organisational modernisation. It will help ensure that we make the most of all of our resources – people, places and finances – and, as importantly, find new ways to work in partnership with our communities & partners. It will touch every part of the Council, building on what is already great and encouraging everyone to think about how we become a more resilient and agile organisation that delivers on what matters most to Luton’s diverse communities. The programme is expected to run for 3 years and will be a key part of delivering a solid foundation for achieving our 2040 ambitions.

In line with our council delivery framework, the corporate set of KPIs are used to develop more detailed performance measures and targets for each of our services and their teams.

Monitoring of our corporate KPIs is carried out by the council’s Business Intelligence team and these KPIs are updated regularly as part of our intelligence-led process.

For further details please go to  
[www.luton.gov.uk/Luton2040](http://www.luton.gov.uk/Luton2040)

Or contact us by:

Email: [Luton2040@luton.gov.uk](mailto:Luton2040@luton.gov.uk)



**Luton**