



Tewkesbury Borough Council Plan

Year 2: 2021

2020-24



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Councillor Rob Bird, Leader of the Council



Councillor Jim Mason, Deputy Leader of the Council

“Tewkesbury
Borough, a place
where a **good
quality of life** is
open to all”

Foreword

We are pleased to introduce the annual refresh of our Council Plan 2020 to 2024 (Year Two). This document is a statement of intent to drive forward our vision:

“Tewkesbury Borough, a place where a good quality of life is open to all.”

To deliver this vision and provide focus we have established six priorities:

- Finances and resources
- Economic growth
- Housing and communities
- Customer first
- Garden communities
- Sustainable environment

Following a year of unprecedented challenge, we are working hard to support our borough to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic - providing help that will enable residents, communities and businesses to prosper again. Our Covid-19 Recovery Plan, which sits alongside our Council Plan, gives us a focus on improvement for the future, and the flexibility to adapt as things change.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we have successfully continued to implement the priorities we agreed in this Council Plan. Our ambition to ensure that we deliver for the future, with housing for young people and generations to come, sustainable and thriving communities, a prosperous local economy, a sustainable environment and cost-effective services designed around the customer, has been pursued with enthusiasm and drive.

In March 2020 a Local Government Association Peer Challenge of Tewkesbury Borough Council provided a very encouraging report on our performance, indicating clear

areas of strength, and setting out some valuable advice about how we can improve to deliver on our ambition. We will ensure that we pursue the subsequent action plan carefully, to help achieve the objectives we have set.

We continue to embrace our belief that there is more of a role for councils than just operational service delivery. The future for Tewkesbury Borough is solid infrastructure, innovative skills, timely housing delivery and cohesive communities.

Our commitment to delivering a garden town for Tewkesbury at Ashchurch and being a key partner in the Golden Valley Development at West Cheltenham reflects our desire to deliver sustainable, well designed and vibrant communities where people can live, work and raise families. Our borough has an abundance of beautiful, natural assets and our commitment to prioritise a sustainable environment will help us enhance and protect our landscape and support our climate emergency declaration.

The focus and commitment of the council's staff, councillors and partners will enable us to overcome the challenges ahead and make our vision and priorities a reality. We work extremely well with others and have taken radical steps to bring together our public sector partners to share our building and our vision for our communities.

We are transforming our business to meet the challenges we face and, in everything we do and in the decisions we make, we will be a council that is 'better for customers, better for business'.

You will see that we have already made a number of achievements in our first year (2020-2021) under each of our priority themes, and these can be found on pages 14-16.



Tewkesbury Borough

Our borough is predominantly rural and located in the north of the county extending southwards beyond Gloucester and Cheltenham. The eastern part of the borough lies within the Cotswold AONB. Our population is roughly 95,015 made up of 42,878 households spread across 160 square miles. It has an excellent location at the heart of the M5 corridor.

Although apparently rural in character, our borough includes a wide range of economic activity - from large multinationals to micro businesses. We are an established centre for high quality manufacturing and home to some world class high tech aero engineering firms. The diverse and contrasting range of settlements provides a high quality environment in which to live. Combined with its excellent strategic location, it makes an ideal area for economic and business growth.



Our Borough

POPULATION
95,015
51.2% female
48.8% male

15.2%
population INCREASE
2009 - 2019

2.5% **BLACK, ASIAN and MIXED ETHNICITY (ONS 2011)**

81.6%
EMPLOYMENT rate

20.8%
employed in MANUFACTURING

55.4%
of borough are WORKING AGE

327,600
Number of visitors staying in the BOROUGH

LIFE expectancy
83 years

37.45
CRIME rate per 1000 population

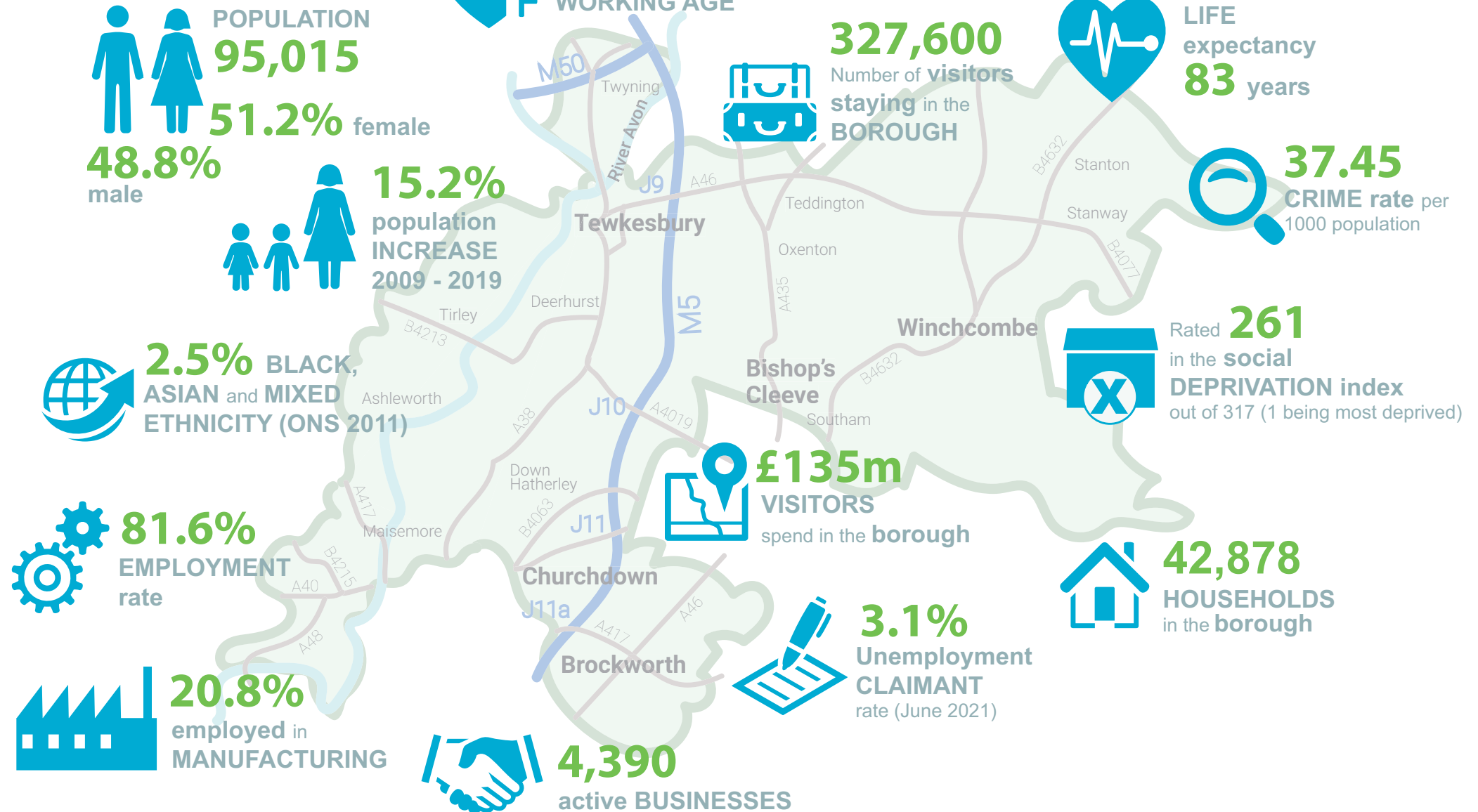
261
Rated in the social DEPRIVATION index out of 317 (1 being most deprived)

£135m
VISITORS spend in the borough

3.1%
Unemployment CLAIMANT rate (June 2021)

42,878
HOUSEHOLDS in the borough

4,390
active BUSINESSES



More about us...



860

FOOD BUSINESSES
registered



Responded to
577 FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION requests



Employ
220
STAFF



Carried out
127 TREE
ASSESSMENTS
which is 70% of the land
with trees in our ownership



Dealt with over
111k
CALLS
to key services



1352
PLANNING
APPLICATIONS
considered



Carried out
856
PLAYGROUND
INSPECTIONS



Carried out over
4 million
BIN COLLECTIONS



Paid
3367
INVOICES
during the year



2,437
HOUSING
benefit claims



19,000
GARDEN
WASTE customers



We have
38
COUNCILLORS



500+
Volunteer LITTER
...PICKERS



18,620
tonnes of WASTE was
RECYCLED or
COMPOSTED



Considered
144 FORMAL
COMPLAINTS



Received
1.3m
PAGE VIEWS by 385,389
visitors through our WEBSITE



£96,612
AWARDED in
COMMUNITY
grants



1,835
active
HOUSING
register applicants



Responded to
2185
ENVIRO-CRIMES



Dealt with
7411 applications
for CHANGE of CIRCUMSTANCES
for benefits customers



“Everything we do is aimed at **delivering our vision** but the way we deliver services is equally important to us”

Our vision and values 2020-2024

Our vision is to make:

“Tewkesbury Borough, a place where a good quality of life is open to all.”

Our values

Everything we do is aimed at delivering our vision but the way we deliver services is equally important to us. We are an ambitious council punching above its weight, and we have therefore adopted a set of values which we apply across all of our activities. We are a council which:

✓ Puts customers first

We will put the needs of our customers at the heart of what we do and listen to what they say, treating people fairly and without bias.

✓ Is positive about working with others

We recognise we cannot achieve our vision by working alone. We will continue to develop productive working relationships with other organisations and our communities, including the voluntary sector, town and parish councils and neighbourhood groups to achieve common goals.

✓ Values our employees

We will support, praise and invest in our workforce to develop our organisation.

Supporting our values we also have an ethos that whatever we do will be ‘better for customers, better for business’.





Our priorities and objectives 2020-24

Finance and resources

- To ensure the council remains financially secure in the long term
- Maintain a low council tax
- Maintain our assets to maximise financial returns
- Deliver the council's commercial strategy

Economic growth

- Deliver our strategic and economic development plans
- Deliver employment land and infrastructure to facilitate economic growth
- Deliver borough regeneration schemes
- Promote the borough as an attractive place to live and visit

Housing and communities

- Deliver the housing needs of our communities
- Ensure development plans provide for the five year land supply requirement
- Support infrastructure and facilities delivery to enable sustainable communities

Customer first

- Maintain our culture of continuous service improvement
- Develop online services to achieve 'digital by preference, access for all'

Garden communities

- Delivery of Tewkesbury Garden Town
- Delivery of Golden Valley Garden Community

Sustainable environment

- Deliver the climate emergency action plan
- Promote a healthy and flourishing environment in the borough
- Promote responsible recycling across the borough
- Preserve and enhance the natural assets and built heritage of our borough





“The council has to manage with less money whilst demands on our services increase”

Finance and resources

The local government financial climate means we have no choice but to manage with less money from central government while the demand on our services and costs increase. We therefore need to ensure that every pound spent by the council is spent efficiently and achieves the maximum possible benefit whilst also seeking to generate additional income to support our front line services. We are also proud of our council tax setting history, and maintaining our place as one of the lowest charging councils in the country is an integral part of our financial strategies. The council is determined to meet our financial challenges whilst continuing to provide value for money for our residents and businesses.

To deliver this priority, our objectives and actions are:

To ensure the council remains financially secure in the long term

- a) Introducing and complying with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) new Financial Management Code.
- ~~b) To maximise the return and balance the risk of our treasury investments.~~
- b) Produce a Medium Term Financial Strategy that recognises the impact of funding reform and, delivers a balanced approach to meeting funding gaps.

Maintain a low council tax

- ~~a) Produce a Medium Term Financial Strategy, which ensures council tax remains low for our residents.~~
- a) Ensure our council tax remains in the lowest quartile nationally.

Maintain our assets to maximise financial returns

- a) Update the council's asset management plan.
- b) Approve a new planned maintenance programme.
- ~~e) Review our property portfolio to ensure ongoing benefits to our communities.~~
- c) Ensure that voids within our commercial property portfolio are re-let at the earliest opportunity

Deliver the council's commercial strategy

- ~~a) Develop a business case to ensure our trade waste service operates more commercially.~~
- a) Deliver the approved trade waste business case to make the service commercially viable.
- ~~b) In source the management of our homeless property portfolio.~~
- b) Ensure that the Ubico resource made available as a result of the bulky waste review is redeployed.
- c) Deliver the One Legal service review and action plan.



“The borough occupies a **strategic location** and we want the local economy to thrive”

Economic growth

Tewkesbury Borough is THE place to do business and this mindset is embedded in everything we do. Reflective of this mindset is our commitment to deliver employment land and housing, together with the right infrastructure and skills. Attracting new investment, as well as retaining and strengthening existing businesses, will help us to ensure the future prosperity of our borough.

To deliver this priority, our objectives and actions are:

Deliver our strategic plans and economic development plans

- a) ~~Deliver the final year of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.~~
- a) To deliver an economic assessment of businesses within Tewkesbury Borough.
- b) ~~Deliver growth hub services in the Public Services Centre.~~
- b) Deliver 50 workshops/events through the Tewkesbury Growth Hub.
- c) Work with the Local Enterprise Partnership and other partners to deliver the Local Industrial Strategy.

Deliver employment land and infrastructure to facilitate economic growth

- a) Deliver employment land through allocating land in the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and Tewkesbury Borough Plan (TBP).
- b) ~~Work with partners to secure transport infrastructure improvements around the borough, including the all-ways Junction 10, Junction 9 and the A46 improvements.~~
- b) Work with partners to secure transport infrastructure improvements for the all-ways Junction 10

- e) ~~Support the delivery of the County's Local Transport Plan.~~
- c) Publish the Infrastructure Funding Statement.

Deliver borough regeneration schemes

- a) ~~Work with partners to deliver the Heritage Action Zone (HAZ).~~
- a) Increase community engagement through delivery of a range of community initiatives and events for the Tewkesbury High Street Heritage Action Zone.
- b) ~~Bring forward plans for the redevelopment of Spring Gardens.~~
- b) Introduce a shop-front grant scheme through the Tewkesbury High Street Heritage Action Zone.

Promote the borough as an attractive place to live and visit

- a) ~~Work with Cotswold Tourism to promote the area.~~
- a) Work with Cotswold Tourism to increase digital marketing to promote the borough.
- b) ~~Promote, through the HAZ, the heritage offer of Tewkesbury through the cultural consortium.~~
- b) Celebrate with partners the significance of 2021 for Tewkesbury.



“We recognise how important it is for residents to feel part of their communities”

Housing and communities

Our borough was recognised as the fastest growing district outside of London (ONS 2019) and without doubt, our ambition for growth is unprecedented for a borough of our size. We are committed to punching above our weight and creating a ‘sustainable place’ to meet the needs of our growing population.

To deliver this priority, our objectives and actions are:

Deliver the housing needs of our communities

- a) Work with partners to undertake the required review of the JCS.
- b) Finalise and adopt the Tewkesbury Borough Plan.
- e) ~~Develop a work programme with landlords to ensure residents have a supply of rented properties to meet their needs.~~
- c) Developing a fit for purpose four-year housing strategy.
- d) Carry out housing needs assessments to deliver affordable housing in rural areas.

Ensure development plans provide for the five year land supply requirement

- a) Ensure adequate land is allocated within the JCS and Tewkesbury Borough Plan to meet housing need.
- b) Work with developers and stakeholders to deliver sustainable sites to meet housing needs.
- e) ~~Annually monitor the delivery of homes within the borough.~~

Support infrastructure and facilities delivery to enable sustainable communities

- a) Work with partners, infrastructure providers and developers, to progress the delivery of key sites.
- b) ~~Through the development process, work with communities to deliver the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106.~~
- b) Provide training to parish councils on Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies.
- c) Support community groups to access funding to deliver improved community facilities.





“We want to provide the **best possible service** to all of our customers”

Customer first

We simply would not exist without our customers, and we aim to provide a really positive council experience no matter how we are contacted. It's really important our services are accessible to all and our new digital platform is transforming the way our customers can interact with us online. It's also helping to free up our customer advisor's time so that they can deal with our customers who need to use the more traditional methods of contacting us.

To deliver this priority, our objectives and actions are:

Maintain our culture of continuous service improvement.

- a) Continue to improve the proactive homelessness prevention programme.
- b) ~~Continue to build on the success of our garden waste club.~~
- b) Continue to build on the early success of our new bulky waste service.
- c) Deliver the planning service improvement plan.
- d) ~~Deliver the council's Communications Strategy Action Plan.~~
- e) ~~Establish the new business transformation team to support service improvements.~~

Develop online services to achieve 'digital by preference, access for all'

- a) ~~Develop and implement a corporate digital platform.~~
- a) Carry out a review of our corporate website.
- b) Implement an online offering for the licensing service.
- e) ~~A full review of the bulky waste service including the online bookings.~~

- c) Implement a digital solution to improve internal HR processes.
- d) Explore the opportunity for an online offering for our cemeteries function.





“Deliver a masterplan that sets out the key principles and quality development expected”

Garden communities

We will work with Homes England and other partners to develop plans for the garden town communities at Ashchurch in Tewkesbury and Cyber Central in Cheltenham. These garden communities reflect our commitment to delivering sustainable, well-designed and vibrant communities where people can live, work and raise families. Improving transport links, education provision and green infrastructure, such as new parks and cycle routes will all play a big role in the development of these new communities.

To deliver this priority, our objectives and actions are:

Delivery of Tewkesbury Garden Town

- a) Formally establish the garden town planning status through the JCS.
- b) Establish a governance structure and ways of working with key stakeholders.
- b) Prepare a design guide and sustainability strategy.
- e) Prepare a masterplan that sets out the key principles, quality development and infrastructure requirements.
- c) Deliver the planning and design phase of the Ashchurch and Northway Bridge Over Rail.
- d) Deliver the first phase of the ‘bridge project’, in line with the funding requirements.
- d) Work with partners to progress the business case for the J9 and A46 improvements.

Delivery of Golden Valley Garden Community

- a) Produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for west Cheltenham Cyber Park in collaboration with Cheltenham Borough Council.
- a) Work with Cheltenham Borough Council and landowners towards the submission of a planning application in accordance with the Golden Valley Supplementary Planning Document.
- b) Prepare a land assembly programme to aid in the delivery of the Garden Village.





“Deliver the **climate emergency** action plan”

Sustainable environment

We recognise that it is important that we carefully manage our carbon footprint and support our recent climate change declaration. Our borough is full of natural assets and built heritage, and we are committed to preserving and enhancing these. We also know that reducing waste and increasing recycling is key to helping our environment flourish, and we will work with our residents to promote responsible waste and recycling habits.

To deliver this priority, our objectives and actions are

Deliver the climate emergency action plan

- a) ~~Review and update our plans in relation to environmental sustainability and carbon management, taking account of the latest evidence and national policy.~~
- a) Deliver the Public Services Centre's low-carbon heating and solar PV systems.
- b) ~~Seek to reduce waste and emissions across our own estate, assets and activities, and use natural resources more efficiently.~~
- b) Embed our carbon reduction objectives within council services and raise awareness of our programme across staff, communities and partners.
- e) ~~Work with Gloucestershire County Council and other partners to help local residents and businesses take action to reduce their own carbon footprint, and to make better use of resources.~~
- c) Source and secure funding opportunities to support the delivery of our carbon reduction programme.

Promote a healthy and flourishing environment in the borough

- a) Establish planning policies to ensure the delivery of healthy and sustainable communities.
- b) ~~Improve bio-diversity across the borough and educate communities on its benefits.~~
- b) Support community-led bio-diversity projects across the borough.
- e) ~~Work with volunteers across the borough, and help communities to maintain our "place".~~
- c) Carry out a review of our litter pickers' scheme.

Promote responsible recycling across the borough

- a) Take a robust approach towards fly-tipping and other enviro-crimes.
- b) ~~Working with the Gloucestershire Waste and Resources Partnership to encourage recycling and reduce plastic waste.~~
- b) Work with the Gloucestershire Waste and Resources Partnership to improve our recycling figures and reduce waste.
- c) Introduce a small Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) scheme across the borough

Preserve and enhance the natural assets and built heritage of our borough

- a) ~~Work with the local nature partnership on the natural capital asset mapping.~~
- a) Utilise the high street heritage action zone funding to implement a programme of projects that contribute towards regeneration and enhancement of the town's historic environment
- b) ~~Publish the heritage strategy to set out the actions to protect our built environment.~~
- b) Adopt a Shopfront Design Guide (SPD) to provide guidance on shopfronts to ensure they contribute to a quality urban and historic environment.
- c) Establish and publish a local list of non-designated heritage assets in the borough



Keeping our performance on track

Good performance management is when an organisation knows it is doing the right things well. To monitor how well we are performing, our performance management framework includes a council plan performance tracker. The tracker monitors the progress in delivering the actions which support each priority theme. Progress is reported on a quarterly basis to our Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Supporting the tracker is a set of key performance indicators and a financial summary analysis. The findings from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review are personally reported by the chair of committee to the council's Executive Committee.

Supporting our performance management framework and delivery of this Council Plan are other key governance processes such as our:

- Risk management framework
- Project management framework
- Communications strategy
- Transformation programme
- Digital and ICT strategies

Collectively, the above provides a good oversight on what we are delivering and alert us to when we need to take remedial action.

We look forward to reporting our Council Plan success and as always the plan will be refreshed annually to ensure it remains a live document.

Should you require any further information about the Council Plan, please contact:

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email: graeme.simpson@tewkesbury.gov.uk





Our achievements 2020-21 (year one)

Finance and resources

- Our investment portfolio continues to perform very well – our return income is significantly higher than the local council average.
- The purchase of a Volvo garage in Crawley brought our total investment in commercial property to £60m. The portfolio generates around £3.43m (5.73%) gross rental resulting in just under £2m benefit to the council.
- Avoiding the potential closure of Cleeve Hill Golf Club due to financial unviability, we agreed and signed a new long-term lease with a tenant who will transform the facilities, offering locals, visitors and golfers a really exciting place to visit.
- With effect from 1 April 2022, we extended the contract with Ubico (provision of waste, recycling, street cleaning and grounds maintenance services) for another five years.
- Effective leadership, embracing digital change, engaged staff with a 'can do' attitude and a good understanding of its place was just some of the positive feedback we received.
- Tewkesbury Culture has been successful in its bid to historic England for up to £80,000 to cover multiple projects for the next three years entitled 'Rise up Tewkesbury Culture'.
- The Growth Hub delivered over 100 events throughout the year to help support businesses with social media, video promotion, branding, developing eco-businesses and social enterprise.
- The examination into our Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan took place – with adoption expected early next year.
- We provided £25,000 of funding to support the Tewkesbury 2021 celebrations.
- Gloucestershire County Council was awarded £219m for the delivery of an all-ways Junction 10 on the M5. We continue to work with Cheltenham Borough Council in meeting the funding contract conditions and preparations for the project.

Economic growth

- We will shortly start to deliver the Heritage Action Zone project for Tewkesbury. This is an exciting three-year programme and includes activities such as a grant scheme for improving shop fronts, and the setting up a culture consortium made up of 12 local community groups. The consortium, called Tewkesbury Culture, is aimed at promoting Tewkesbury's fantastic culture.



Our achievements 2020-21 (year one)

Housing and communities

- We agreed a Local Development Scheme which sets out the timetable for a review of our Joint Core Strategy (which sets out the overall housing and employment land requirements for our area).
- The first stages of the Housing Needs Assessment were carried out by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC). These surveys focus on Community Led Housing (CLH) within rural areas where people and communities play a leading role in addressing their own housing needs.
- The new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has seen multiple parish councils receive CIL payments collectively totaling in excess of £192k.
- We now manage five homeless properties in-house - resulting in £18,000 of savings.
- We supported 276 community groups with funding advice, including creating funding plans, reviewing funding applications and linking with other groups and projects in the area.
- We donated 21 surplus laptops to Gloucestershire Voluntary Community Sector Alliance and IT Schools for Africa.
- We supported the Office for National Statistics (ONS) with promoting the Census 2021 with its first digital survey. Our borough's response rate exceeded expectations and 97 per cent of households completed the survey across England and Wales.
- The borough's population was rated one of the top five fastest growing districts outside of London (2020 ONS).

Customer first

- Our garden waste club continues to go from strength-to-strength and we are on target to meet our £990,000 budget target with more than 85 per cent of our 19,000 customers renewing online.
- Our new communications strategy was approved, which will help us to ensure we're continuing to engage effectively with our customers and promoting the work we do.
- We launched a new Business Transformation Team, which has already implemented a new digital platform providing our customers with a more improved online experience and delivering efficiency savings.
- We launched a new bulky waste service, with customers being able to make a booking online for the first time. The changes include a new contractor running the service and now at least 75 per cent of items are recycled or reused. The new service also introduced a more commercial pricing structure, a reduction in wait times from six weeks to one week, automated customer communications and improved back-office processes. We are on target to make £90,000 savings in the first year.
- A new Customer Care Strategy was approved, which includes a refreshed set of customer care standards – clearly setting out what our customers can expect from us in our approach to customer care.
- We responded to 577 Freedom of Information requests.
- We remain one of the top performing councils in relation to the low number of formal complaints we receive, with 144 received last year.
- We continue to provide a grant of £52,000 to the Citizens' Advice Bureau, helping them to provide support to over 1500 members of the community. Throughout 2020/21, residents using the service have benefitted from nearly £1.8m of financial gains.



Our achievements 2020-21 (year one)

Garden communities

- The Tewkesbury Garden Town has been awarded £2.4m funding by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
- We established a governance structure for our Tewkesbury Garden Town to ensure this major programme is delivered in the best possible way.
- The Tewkesbury Garden Town concept masterplan is in its final stages and will be submitted as supporting evidence for the Joint Core Strategy review later in the year.
- A crucial part of the supporting infrastructure, a bridge over the railway at Ashchurch and Northway, was permitted planning permission.
- Work is now starting on the next stage of the programme, finalising detailed design and assembling the land required, ahead of commencing the procurement of a contractor in Spring 2022.
- We continue to be actively engaged in both the A46 Partnership and Midlands Connect to promote the development opportunities at the Garden Town.
- A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for West Cheltenham Cyber Park- known as the Golden Valley development - was adopted by Council on 28 July 2020.

Sustainable environment

- Following the declaration of a Climate Change Emergency, we approved a 'climate change and carbon reduction action plan' with the aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
- Supporting our carbon reduction action plan, and using £284,000 of funding from Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, we made a decision to replace our council offices heating system with an air-to-air system. This project is set to achieve a 78% reduction in the carbon usage for the heating of the building.
- Our waste and recycling contractor Ubico has increased awareness on the impact of contaminated recycling bins. Work has included carrying out additional checks and providing an information sticker explaining why a bin hasn't been emptied, and this work has been supported by a social media campaign.
- We worked with Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership to map our natural capital assets. The goal is to help guide land-use and planning decisions, to identify opportunities for investment in the enhancement of natural capital in the county, and provide a tool for delivering positive benefits for people, wildlife and the economy.
- We have worked with partners across the county to promote a 'Be Clear on Plastics' campaign to encourage residents to reduce, reuse and recycle plastics.
- Our draft heritage strategy, which focuses on the conservation and enjoyment of our historic environment, is now being used to support the examination in public for our local plan.



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Produced: August 2021