



Draft

Corporate Plan (update 2024)

Foreword

Southampton... our city of opportunity.

As the new Leader and Chief Executive for Southampton City Council, we have developed the 2024 update of the Corporate Plan to reflect our changing circumstances as a council and a city.

With a challenging financial position, we are going to need to make some difficult decisions to get us to a place that means we have a balanced budget for 2025/26 and confidence that the planned budget is sustainable.

Despite the current challenge, we truly believe that Southampton is a city of opportunity. So, our Corporate Plan supports our aspirations, that we're building and delivering ambitious plans for change, improvement and growth, and to be a place that fosters and grows ambition and enables people to understand and develop their possibilities.

We are determined to continue to support those who are most in need, while working with community leaders, partners and businesses to take Southampton forward, expanding on everything the city has to offer and recognising the ambitions we share for our great city.

Together we will build a proud, pioneering global destination and maritime city - investing in infrastructure, skills and technology to attract more businesses, create quality jobs and renew and regenerate housing across the city. Building on the inclusive diversity of our city, we will promote and develop our vibrant culture and events to promote Southampton as a destination city. Through the green economy, emerging technologies and creative industries we'll work collectively to develop our local talent and deliver quality jobs that benefit local people.

Through the corporate plan we are committed to delivering on those things that will genuinely help improve the quality of life of our residents. Through our transformation programme we will change the way we engage with people and the way we work both within the council and with others to achieve our goals.

We look forward to working together alongside cabinet, council officers, community leaders, partners and businesses to deliver the plan for and with the people of Southampton, to achieve Southampton's ambitions.

Councillor Lorna Fielker - Leader of Southampton City Council

Andrew Travers - Chief Executive Officer, Southampton City Council

Introduction

At Southampton City Council we are committed to creating a place where people want to live, work, study, visit and enjoy. This is Southampton City Council's updated medium-term plan.

We want Southampton to be a city that creates opportunities for all ages and backgrounds. We want residents to have strong foundations for life, pride in their city and a successful city council to depend on. We are dedicated to working together to make Southampton a city of opportunity. A city of diversity where all are welcome, we are a city of music, dance, theatre, and art. Our two universities are leading the way with innovative research.

As well as our proud history and thriving cultural scene, we have difficult challenges that we must face head-on. Our residents experience greater health inequality than some of our statistical neighbours and we score higher in the index of multiple deprivation than other areas in Hampshire, despite this we want to tap into the potential we have for economic growth, tackle health inequalities, and be part of making Southampton a city of opportunity for all.

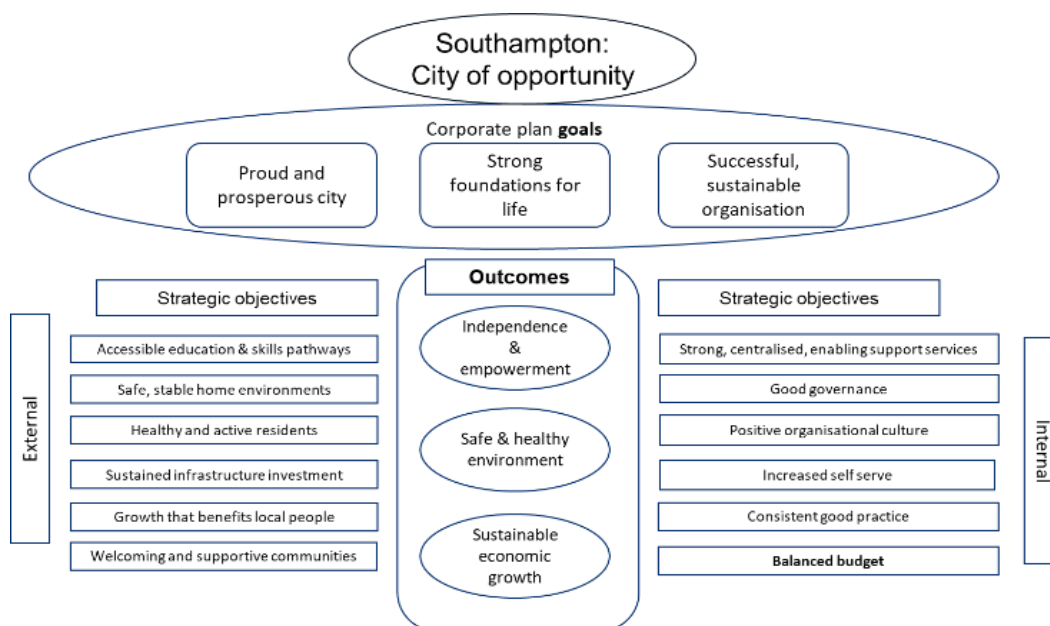
Southampton City Council is a unitary authority. That means we are responsible for all local services within the city. We provide services for our 250,000 residents, 16,300 tenants, 60,000 businesses and over 3,000 employees. These include:

- Libraries
- Highways
- Social services
- Processing planning applications
- Waste collection and disposal
- Council tax
- Housing
- As a local education authority, we run some schools as well.

We are committed to delivering these services to a high standard, despite growing financial challenges, we know that this plan will help us deliver this. We want to build our future as an enabling, inclusive, and productive council that delivers for our residents, partners, businesses, and visitors, whilst working together to help Southampton achieve its potential.

Our plan

Our vision is Southampton as a city of opportunity.



Outcomes focused:

Our outcomes, whilst broad, are fundamental to Southampton’s success. Our strategic objectives and everything we do is focused around achieving these outcomes and the corporate plan goals. These goals, outcomes and objectives provide the clear links throughout all directorate business plans, service plans and employee’s individual performance objectives.

Strategic objectives

Our strategic objectives have been developed by working with Cabinet Members and listening to residents, businesses and council officers. Thriving communities and businesses create places where people want to live, work and study. We will focus on growing our local economy and bringing investment into our city. Working with partners and businesses across the city, Southampton City Council is committed to enabling residents of all ages and backgrounds to better help themselves by supporting people to develop the strong foundations that will help them flourish throughout their lives.

We recognise that there is work to do to improve ourselves, so we have also developed a set of internal objectives that will support us to develop our role as a contemporary, inclusive and productive council.

- **Safe and stable home environments**

A safe place to call home should be a fundamental right for everyone. Home, in whatever form that takes, gives stability and a sense of belonging. It is where we make memories, and it helps us to build a strong foundation for our lives. We will focus on helping individuals to remain in a safe home, by providing quality housing across the city, and access to support when needed.

- **Accessible education and skills pathways**

From early years and throughout life, accessing good quality education and developing useful skills provides strong foundations from which people can build. We are committed to working with partners and businesses across the city to enable more Southampton residents to have the opportunity for higher-skilled, higher-paid jobs. We will support access to education, training, and advice throughout people's lives.

- **Healthy and active residents**

Physical and mental health and well-being are key for a good quality of life and a thriving city. They impact people's life chances, education, and employment opportunities. We will work to protect and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of everyone who lives, works, and learns in Southampton.

- **Sustained infrastructure investment**

We will continue work to ensure that Southampton benefits from funding opportunities on a continuous basis. Building better sustainable infrastructure, with safer, more affordable, and accessible modes of travel options around Southampton will support our communities and businesses to grow. This will enable economic, environmental, and social benefits and offer opportunities for all.

- **Growth that benefits local people**

Everyone benefits most when there is growth and opportunity that local people can tap in to. Whether that's local business, more job opportunities or investment in the city that attracts visitors to our events, shopping and attractions.

- **Welcoming and supporting communities**

Our focus is on working with communities to creating a welcoming environment for all people from all backgrounds. We will continue to celebrate and embrace Southampton as a culturally rich and diverse city.

The successful delivery of the internally focused outcomes in this plan are rooted in the culture of our organisation. We are transforming the way we deliver services to ensure we are an efficient, well-run organisation with clear and sustainable goals.

- **Strong centralised enabling support services**

Continuing our drive for productivity and efficiency, we are evolving the way we work, and the way we set up work to improve our services, maximise skills and capacity, and build a stable, efficient, and innovative organisation.

- **Positive organisational culture**

A positive, open culture supports people to feel inspired, connected and empowered. We want to develop an ambitious, forward-thinking, and optimistic organisation. Having the right people working in the right way and understanding and embedding our values will help us create an enabling council that supports a city of opportunity.

- **Increased self-serve**

Where practical we are working to make sure people can easily access useful information and digital council services. We are continuing to develop systems and approaches to enable residents, employees and partners to help themselves. With new digital and data strategies we are working to ensure we have systems that work for everyone.

- **Good governance**

Fast paced, robust decisions and actions are supported by good governance. Promoting accountability, transparency, and efficiency in our decision-making will build trust and stability across the organisation and city.

- **Consistent good practice**

We are dedicated to upholding ethical, fair, and transparent practices, understanding what we need to do and embedding good practice throughout the organisation. This will build trust, deliver better and more consistent services, reduce cost and risk, and promote long-term stability.

- **Balanced budget**

We are committed to achieving long-term financial sustainability for the council. This is so we can invest purposefully into the city and help it to grow to its full potential.

Financial challenges

Against a challenging economic climate, with increasing demand for services alongside increasing costs of delivery, the council is facing significant financial pressures. We have worked together to develop a new medium-term financial strategy to support the organisation achieve financial sustainability. We currently have a nearly £40m budget gap for the 2024/25 financial year and a continued ongoing deficit that needs addressing through transformation activity across the organisation, working alongside more tactical cost reduction and savings activities.

As well as our direct financial challenges, residents are experiencing a cost-of-living crisis. This is affecting all residents, particularly those in more deprived households. We have taken a city-wide partnership approach to providing support for people across the city.

We recognise that some of the decisions we make over the next few years will not be easy. We must address the difficult choices to make sure we provide services for those who need them and deliver on our commitments to the city. This Corporate Plan reflects our approach to support residents and businesses across the city as well as visitors, to understand and access the opportunities Southampton has to offer.

The medium-term financial strategy is key to providing clarity on our financial position and ensuring our ongoing financial strategy supports our goals. We have a financial management improvement plan that will ensure that our staff are grounded in financial acumen, understand the importance of financial challenges and are thinking commercially when redesigning services. Some of the principles include enabling more people to help themselves, rationalising council buildings, seeking income generation opportunities, creating the conditions for economic growth and recovery, and considering the needs of communities. Together with the key strategies and transformation plan it is critical to identifying how we will align our existing and future resources with the goals, outcomes and objectives within the Corporate Plan.

Business planning

Our business planning framework has been developed to align all business planning activity to the vision, strategic objectives, savings proposals and change activity, enabling us to address both short-term challenges and longer-term goals.

Building an evidence informed, enabling council

The active use of data is ever more important, our new data strategy is fundamental to shaping the way we gather, process and use data to understand and inform the decisions we make. Evidence informed decision making is a core principle of the way we work.

Digital thinking and innovation are key enablers for our transformation and improvement work. Our digital strategy has been developed with expert support and provides a roadmap for digital development and continuous improvement, including additional use of robotics, artificial intelligence, and appropriate automation.

Our People Strategy will support delivery of the Corporate Plan by ensuring we develop a positive organisational culture that enables a proactive, innovative, skilled and engaged workforce that work together to deliver our strategic objectives. This strategy is inextricably linked with the data and digital strategies and will help to develop our peoples' data and digital skills so that we can fully utilise the new tools, solutions and innovative technologies.

We have evolved our employee values to reflect how we work best together in challenging times of great opportunity

- Trust - We work together and trust each other.
- Pride - We are proud and passionate about Southampton.
- Respect - We take time to listen and understand.
- Accountable - We take personal responsibility, deliver value for money, and try new things.

As we work towards delivering this, we are evolving a set of consistent organisation design and operating principles that will help to provide the foundations for the way we operate and all our service redesigns.

Our commitment to a prosperous, healthy city is stronger than ever. Our promise to positively address health in all policies, and our successful bid to become a Health Determinates Research Collaboration (HDRC), provides us with funding to set up a research hub that will support our work with partners and communities across the city to ensure that initiatives we implement have positive impact on the health of our residents.

Transformation

We have been working on, and are further developing, an organisational transformation programme. This programme of activity will address what we do, how we work and what technological, process and structural changes are needed to enable us to reshape the organisation to deliver quality services within a balanced budget. The programme will be supported by the implementation of the data, digital and people strategies.

The programme will be underpinned by a set of organisational design principles, focused around building an enabling council.

Business planning throughout the council will align to achieving the strategic objectives, savings proposals and transformation activity (as it develops) following our agreed approach.

How we will measure success:

We have identified a core set of key performance indicators (KPIs) that will demonstrate our progress towards achieving the outcomes and objectives. These will be reviewed and published on an annual basis so that we can be held accountable for our performance.

In addition to this we have a Corporate Performance Framework that is being further developed to ensure we have the right overview of performance across the organisation, which is regularly monitored. As part of this, a wider key performance indicator report will be developed to ensure council performance is aligned with the Corporate Plan. These reports will be shared and discussed within the council on a regular basis to ensure that we are making progress, we'll also provide updates on our website.

- Percentage of homes that meet the decent homes standard
- Rate of Looked After Children (per 10,000)
- Percentage of pupils achieving a grade 5 or above in English & Maths
- Percentage of economically active population with no or low qualifications
- Gap in median weekly pay between residents and workers (£)
- Male/Female healthy life expectancy at birth (years)
- Percentage of Year 6 children with excess weight (%)
- Proportion of physically active adults (%)
- Economic growth measured by GVA per head (£)
- Percentage of working age adults claiming out of work benefits (%)
- Proportion of residents that agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (%)
- Southampton's relative deprivation rank amongst Local Authorities in England