



Ashfield

DISTRICT COUNCIL

Strategic Direction

2017 – 2022

OUR PURPOSE

1. The council exists to serve the communities and residents of Ashfield.
2. We will provide good quality, value for money services.
3. We will act strategically and plan for the future, working with others to bring about sustainable improvements in people's lives.

VALUES

Enterprising, Ambitious and Innovative

Community and Customer Focused

Positive, Proactive and Successful

Collaborative

Transparent and Accountable

Size and scope

- The Council will retain its purpose as set out in this document.
- The assumption is that in five years we will still be an independent sovereign Council. However with greater levels of integration with other public sector services. The potential for more shared services will also be explored.
- The Council will be smaller in terms of its employee numbers, spending power and will likely offer fewer services to residents.
- The Council will be better placed to engage with and work alongside local communities and businesses to support them in delivering local improvements.
- The Council will have greater influence with external partners.
- The Council is likely to expand some service areas especially where generating net commercial and income gain.

Customers

- The Council will treat customers with courtesy and respect, have a better understanding of its different customers needs and preferences and be transparent and open in its decision-making.
- The Council will have a greater knowledge of its customers and offer a more personalised service.
- Customers will have access to a customer account where they can get information on their dealings with the Council including payments.
- The Council will significantly increase the digital service opportunities for people to self-service their request via on line and digital methods, but remain accessible to those who have difficulty operating technology.
- The Council will seek to reduce demand through solving customer's problems without the need for multiple referrals and signposting.
- After an interaction with the Council, customers will be satisfied.
- The Council will consider the impact of its decisions on individual customers, other Council services and partners.

Money (Finances)

- The Council will aim to be self-financing based on reducing our expenditure and generating income from Council Tax, Retained Business Rates and Government Grants e.g. New Homes Bonus, Returns on Investments and income from trading services.
- The Councils finances will still depend largely on national government policy.
- As all Council house rents received are put back into maintaining the properties, providing services for residents and acquiring additional houses-significant efficiencies will be required to balance the Housing Revenue Account.

Buildings and Assets

- The Council will continue with a process of rationalising and sharing its office space.
- The Council will continue with its commitment to increasing its social housing properties.
- The Council will have reviewed its depot and maximise the potential for the site.
- The Council will need to rationalise other assets and this could include community and parks buildings. These buildings may remain in community use but perhaps not delivered by the Council.
- The Council will increase the amount and quality of commercial property it holds and seek to maximise the income generation from these holdings, this might include disposing of non/low-profitable commercial property.
- The Council will seek to ensure that its buildings are environmentally friendly and energy efficient.
- The Council will maintain Decent Homes standard and maximise its return from Housing Revenue Assets.

Our People

- Our People will have a public service ethos and commercial awareness, ensuring the public gets value for money.
- There is likely to be fewer people directly employed by the Council.
- There is likely to be a move towards more generic jobs although specialisms and technical specialists will still be required in many services.
- The Council will employ talented, proactive and highly engaged people 'living and breathing' the values and competency behaviours.
- The future workforce will be recruited and developed based on our competencies.
- Our People will be more adept at working in partnership and across departmental and organisational boundaries to solve customers' problems and provide improved services.
- The council will have a workforce more representative of the local community profile.
- The workforce will be more agile in how and where work is conducted. Jobs and job design will be more flexible and support a good home/work life balance.
- The Council will be a competitive and desirable 'employer of choice' through an attractive package of pay, personal development, lifestyle rewards, flexible working and wellbeing support.
- The organisational culture will be focused on innovation, creativity, engagement, empowerment, trust, accountability, customer first and transformational change.

Democracy

- The Council will make open and transparent decisions, underpinned by good governance and democratic processes.
- Councillors will be provided with the skills, knowledge and information to carry out their roles effectively and will be accountable for their decisions.
- Councillors will be effective community leaders, leading by example, demonstrating appropriate behaviours and upholding the Seven Principles of Public Life. <https://goo.gl/2InvTX>

Technology

- There will be a significant introduction of new technology and systems producing leaner, joined up, user-friendly access to services, 24/7.
- Employees will be 'digital savvy' increasing their productivity through full use of technology in their work environment. Single entry data input and the use of digital analytics will be used to measure performance.
- There is likely to be enhanced electronic data transfer between partners further supporting integrated services, collaborative working and sharing of services.
- The Council will be using a range of social and digital media and marketing approaches to effectively engage with residents and customers recognising their own preferred engagement approach and enable faster 2-way feedback.
- The Council will use technology to further enhance 2-way engagement for all its employees and elected members.

How will we change?

The existing action plans that underpin the following strategies will be periodically reviewed and updated to deliver the above principles:

- Corporate Plan
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- People Strategy
- Technology Strategy
- Commercial Enterprise Strategy