Introduction

We live in a world that is rapidly changing and our lives are increasingly shaped by global and national forces beyond our control. Demographic change, technology breakthroughs, further austerity, Brexit: all of these factors are disrupting our society and economy in ways that are difficult to predict and at a pace unseen since the industrial revolution.

Within this uncertain context, Creating Futures is our strategy for success. Our aim is to harness the benefits of global and national trends, build our resilience and ability to mitigate risks, and respond to unexpected opportunities and change. By taking this approach, we will give ourselves the best possible chance of successfully delivering the Council’s priorities and creating a borough where every resident enjoys a quality life.

This transformation plan sets out the key programmes and projects we will focus on delivering over the next twelve months in order to make Creating Futures a reality. Some elements of our plan represent large scale transformation like the redevelopment of the Town Hall Campus or further integration of health and social care. Other elements are smaller and more experimental such as our plans to test out new ways of working or explore the power of behavioural insight. But however big or small, all of these changes are designed to make sure we drive forward the agenda set out in Creating Futures and build a bright, sustainable future for Waltham Forest.
The Creating Futures transformation plan: An overview

Creating Futures sets out five guiding principles that are intended to shape the Council and everything it does:

- **Our unique strengths**: building on what's best about our borough
- **Return on investment**: always getting maximum value from our resources
- **People focussed**: providing 21st century services that meet people's needs
- **New relationships**: building deeper relationships with our partners and a new relationship with our community
- **New ways of working**: creating an agile council that is more digitally driven and more commercially minded

All the programmes and projects in our plan have been aligned to one of these driving principles although many of them are cross-cutting and will help to embed multiple principles across the Council and beyond.

In addition, each programme and project in our plan has been assigned to one of the following four categories:

- **Flagship projects**: these are strategically significant, high profile changes to the way the Council works or delivers
- **Pilots**: these are changes that will be rolled out on a trial basis so we can learn from the experience of delivery before deciding whether to scale up
- **Prototypes**: these are more experimental changes funded by low value investment with the aim of trying something out at an early stage to see if it works
- **Gamechangers**: these are standout projects with a higher degree of risk, which demonstrate innovation and have the potential to be gamechangers not only in Waltham Forest but in the world of local government and beyond

An outline of our transformation plan is set out on the next page, followed by a detailed description of the programmes and projects we will be delivering over the year ahead.
Creating Futures: Initial programme structure

**OUR UNIQUE STRENGTHS**
- Town Hall Campus
- Unlocking housing opportunity
- Borough of Culture bid legacy
- Think Family: Asset-based public services

**RETURN ON INVESTMENT**
- Return on investment hub
- Outcome based budgeting
- Commercial property portfolio
- Housing development company

**PEOPLE FOCUSED**
- Customer experience in a digital age
- Neighborhood model: Next steps
- Think Family: Transforming services
- Accountable care system

**NEW RELATIONSHIPS**
- Leading with partners
- A new relationship with communities
- Think Family: Transforming services
- Employment and skills

**NEW WAYS OF WORKING**
- Modern councillors
- Enterprising council
- Digital strategy
- Agile and flexible working

**RETURN ON INVESTMENT**
- Behavioural insight

**KEY**
- Flagship
- Pilot
- Prototype
- Gamechanger
Creating Futures

Driving Principle 1: Our unique strengths

At the heart of Creating Futures is a commitment to building on the strengths of our borough. This means making the most of:

• the assets in our community: people’s energy, creativity and skills
• the assets in our place: our cultural heritage, our buildings, our open space

By drawing on these assets, we aim to fully realise the potential of both our people and our place.

Key projects

1.1 Town Hall Campus redevelopment

The Council’s greatest physical asset is the Town Hall. Officially opened in 1942, it has served as a major civic centre ever since.

Last year, our Cabinet committed to a major redevelopment of the Town Hall and its surrounding campus, creating a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reinvent the site for future generations.

We want to protect and preserve the art deco heritage of the Town Hall while providing our staff with a 21st century workplace and opening up the campus to our whole community. Our aim is to create a thriving social hub – a new asset – which people will visit to connect, enjoy culture, and contribute to the civic life of our borough.

In parallel with preparing for capital works on the Town Hall site, we will test and experiment with:

• flexible and collaborative ways of working
• new approaches to opening up the Town Hall Campus to residents and local businesses
• events that bring more economic activity on to the campus

Learning from these trials will directly shape our approach to redeveloping the Town Hall site, ensuring our plans are based on practical insight into what does – and doesn’t – work.
1.2 Unlocking housing opportunity

We want to deliver 12,000 new homes across the borough by the end of the decade – and Council assets have an important role to play in helping us achieve this target. As we move more staff on to the Town Hall Campus, we will close down our satellite offices and release these sites for housing development. As we do so, we will ensure these sites enable the delivery of high quality homes, with a strong focus on affordability and the creation of neighbourhoods people feel proud to live in.

1.3 Borough of Culture bid legacy

When the Mayor of London announced his competition for the first London Borough of Culture, we decided to put Waltham Forest at the forefront of the competition. Backed by thousands of residents and businesses, we worked with our community to develop a cultural programme that is uniquely Waltham Forest: a showcase for both our rich cultural heritage and the creative communities who thrive here today.

The Mayor is due to announce the winning borough in February 2018, but whatever the result, we are determined to ensure the process of developing our bid leaves a lasting legacy. We will continue working with our community and partners in the same collaborative way that we approached our bid and, together, transform the way culture in Waltham Forest is developed, delivered and governed.

1.4 Think Family: Asset-based public services

Often, public services focus on what people can’t do and try to fix this. Asset-based services take a fundamentally different approach. They look first for what people can do – or could do with the right support – and aim to build on this.

Through our Think Family approach, we have been piloting a number of asset-based services, such as social prescribing, which connects people with resources available in the community. Over the year ahead, we will:
- evaluate the impact of the asset-based services we have trialled to date
- use the learning from this evaluation to inform a wider roll-out of the asset-based approach
Driving Principle 2: Return on investment

The Council’s strong financial focus is one of our core strengths. Through Creating Futures, we want to build on this and embed a relentless focus on the return our resources achieve. Whether we are investing in service delivery or opportunities to generate income, we need to ask ourselves: are we doing well enough, how do we know, and what more could we achieve?

Key projects

2.1 Return on investment hub

As our funding from central government continues to reduce, it is more and more important than we maximise the return our resources achieve. For this reason, we plan to pilot the creation of a return on investment hub, which will be a new corporate function responsible for leading the Council’s approach to measuring our return on investment across the full range of Council services and activities. Early deliverables from the pilot will include:

- a new approach to tracking, evaluating and reporting on the return our resources achieve
- a framework for assessing new ideas, which supports a focus on allocating resource to investment proposals that will deliver the greatest return
- building our capacity to assess social as well as financial returns

2.2 Outcomes based budgeting

A growing number of Councils are using outcome based budgeting to shake up their financial planning process and allocate resources to priority outcomes. Over the coming months, we will complete a pilot exercise where we will focus on a discrete number of outcomes and test this new budget setting approach.

The learning from this pilot will inform our future approach to financial planning, as well as feeding into the work on our new return on investment hub.
2.3 Commercial property portfolio

Last summer, Cabinet agreed to establish a new commercial property portfolio, which is due to deliver a return of £2m per annum by the end of the decade. We recently made our first purchase, The Tramworks in Walthamstow, and further acquisitions are set to follow.

Over the year ahead, we will:
- continue growing our property portfolio in line with the policy framework adopted by Cabinet
- review our approach to the existing commercial property portfolio managed within Property Services

2.4 Housing development company

Waltham Forest Developments is a housing company owned wholly by the Council. Over the next decade, we expect the company to develop thousands of new, high quality homes, as well as retail and commercial property. The new homes will then be offered for private rental, enabling residents to access secure, competitively priced tenancies while creating a new income stream for the Council.

Over the next year, we will:
- accelerate the growth of the company and commence our first new builds
- identify the lessons we can learn from the company’s first full year of operation
Driving Principle 3: People focussed

Whether someone is having a quick look at our website or receiving long-term social care support, our ambition is the same: a high quality service that delivers just what that person needs. Through Creating Futures, we want to make greater use of technology and further integrate with our partners to provide people with truly 21st century public services.

Key projects

3.1 Customer experience in a digital age

When residents contact the Council, we want their experience to match the standards they expect when using a bank or shopping online. We will focus on developing a high quality, integrated customer experience, where all our customer facing services are organised around the individuals who access them. Through our digital programme, we have already taken important steps in this direction: over 90,000 residents have signed up to My Account and nearly 60% of customer transactions now take place online. We want to build on this progress by:

- developing a new customer care strategy, fit for a digital age
- using an insight-led approach to identifying and delivering the improvements that will have the biggest impact on people’s experience of contacting the Council
- embedding user-experience and customer-experience at the heart of our organisation and across all our customer facing services
- continuing to promote high-quality, responsive online access to services while ensuring we have the right support in place for people who can’t contact us in this way

3.2 Neighbourhood model: Next steps

We are in the process of finalising a range of digital solutions that will make it easier for residents to report problems in their neighbourhood and track our response. These include:

- a new reporting service available on Facebook and Twitter
- a new microsite, which will provide a real-time view of all neighbourhood service delivery and enforcement activity

Over the coming months, we will launch these services to residents and start planning a second phase of development, which will include further use of social media, greater automation of neighbourhood service delivery, and new digital tools to support our neighbourhood officers and contractors.
3.3 Think Family: Transforming services

Through our Think Family approach, we are joining up services around the needs of individuals and families to provide people with support and services that build their independence and resilience.

To date, the changes we have made include launching our integrated disability service, creating a new children and family centre model, and introducing our digital wellbeing platform. We now want to build on these successes and develop a Think Family operating model. This will set out a new blueprint for our Families and Homes directorate, ensuring that all the Council’s services for vulnerable adults and children are delivered in line with our Think Family approach.

3.4 Accountable care system

The Council and its health partners have agreed to work towards the creation of an Accountable Care System (ACS), a bold new approach to joining up the commissioning, resourcing and delivery of health and social care services.

We are well underway in delivering our plans, and over the coming months we will:

- deliver an integrated commissioning function, jointly governed by the Council and our Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- further develop our local provider alliances, which will be responsible for joined up delivery of key services, such as hospital discharge and end-of-life care
Driving Principle 4: New relationships

Our aim is to create the best possible future for Waltham Forest – but we know the Council can’t achieve this on its own. We want to build deeper relationships with our partners and a new relationship with our community – one where we significantly grow the role that residents play in solving problems, making decisions and delivering services.

Key projects

4.1 Leading with partners

From regenerating town centres to reducing health inequalities, the biggest goals we are aiming to achieve can only be delivered by working in collaboration with partners. We already have strong, successful relationships with many of the key organisations influencing and impacting on our borough, but through Creating Futures we want to go further. In particular, we will:

- test out new approaches to sharing accountability with partners for the delivery of outcomes
- review our strategic procurement processes and how well they support the development of effective relationships with our largest suppliers
- use our Town Hall Campus and One Public Estate programmes to achieve a step change in our partnership with local public service providers, in particular health and the police

4.2 A new relationship with communities

Building a new relationship with our communities is at the very heart of what Creating Futures is aiming to achieve. In future, we expect the Council to focus less on delivering services and more on enabling people to achieve outcomes for themselves.

Over the coming months, we will:

- test the use of service design techniques to help communities make improvements to their local area, starting with Sutherland Road
- complete a review of community ward forums and work with elected members to co-design new and innovative approaches to ward-based engagement

Learning from this work will then inform the development of a wider strategy for engaging and empowering our residents, with the ultimate aim of achieving a fundamental shift in the relationship between the Council and our communities.
4.3 Think Family: Transforming communities

A key element of Think Family is growing strong, connected communities that can serve as the first port of call for people who need help and support. Over the last year, we have invested in the infrastructure that supports our voluntary and community sector. We have also developed plans to increase the use of volunteers in service delivery and introduce a local giving scheme.

Over the next year, we want to build on this progress and:
- pilot the use of volunteers in children’s social care
- improve our approach to supporting the development of local community organisations
- trial the use of digital solutions that make it easier for people and organisations to find and connect with each other

4.4 Employment and skills

We want all our residents to have the skills and ability to access high-quality employment opportunities in the borough and across London. Over the last year, we have significantly improved the Council’s approach to supporting this goal – modernising our Adult Learning Service, building new relationships with local businesses, and developing new, successful approaches to supporting residents into work.

Over the year ahead, we want to accelerate our progress and:
- further strengthen our relationships with local business
- review the role and work of our Employment and Skills Board
- use service design techniques to further enhance our delivery of employment and skills support

4.5 Behavioural insight

Sometimes known as nudge theory, behavioural insight aims to influence people’s decisions by making it easy or desirable to choose a certain course of action – to pay a bill, to attend an appointment, to access a service in a particular way.

We are already working with external experts to deliver two behavioural insight prototypes:
- one that is focussed on tackling a social challenge
- one that is focussed on delivering a direct financial return

Learning from these tests will help us to understand the power of behavioural insight and how it might be used across the Council in future.
Driving Principle 5: New ways of working

The Council of the future will look very different to the one we work in today – more digitally driven, more commercially minded, more used to experimenting and trying things out. We want to place a strong focus on bringing about this cultural change and ensure the whole Council works in line with our Creating Futures approach.

Key projects

5.1 Modern councillors

Elected members are the leaders of our Council and our community. We want to transform the way we help them to carry out their role – in particular, by exploring the potential to make better use of digital solutions.

We will:
- engage councillors in a review of the support they receive and co-design new solutions
- test the preferred option with a group of councillors before rolling it out more widely
- prepare a new councillors development and community involvement programme, ready for delivery following the local elections in May 2018

5.2 An enterprising Council

Over the last year, we have launched a number of new commercial ventures, including ServiceStore, which delivers competitively priced neighbourhood services, and Waltham Forest Developments, a housing company owned wholly by the Council.

Through Creating Futures, we want to build on these successes and develop a culture of enterprise that runs right across the Council. To achieve this, we will:
- develop a new enterprise strategy, which will set out our vision for an enterprising Council
- review our internal systems and processes to ensure they support an enterprising approach
- establish an entrepreneurs club for commercial leads within the Council to exchange ideas, share practice, and influence the way the Council works
- deliver further improvements to our commissioning and procurement practice
5.3 Digital strategy

To date, our digital programme has focussed on customer contact and service delivery. This continues to be an important priority but we also want to develop a more expansive view of the role that digital can play, both within the Council and across the borough. Put simply, how can digital help us to achieve all our priorities, from regenerating town centres and helping people into work, to keeping vulnerable people safe?

Over the months ahead, we will finalise and launch a cutting edge digital strategy, which will set out the full extent of our digital ambition, as well as priority areas for investment.

5.4 Agile and flexible working

Through Creating Futures, we want to build a Council that is organised around our strategic objectives, empowering our people, and ever more fleet of foot. To do this, we will employ a rapid, dynamic approach to redesigning the Council, which tactically focuses our effort on those areas where there is the greatest opportunity to achieve a step change in how we are organised and work together.

Specifically, we will:

- develop and deliver a new rapid review process, which will help to reshape the Council in line with our Creating Futures approach, to be piloted on our corporate functions first, including insight and business intelligence
- trial bringing people together in squads and agile project teams to focus on addressing particular outcomes, issues or themes
- introduce a new model for organisational development and learning, including a new performance, reward and recognition scheme for staff

Learning from this project will help us develop plans for rolling out a wider culture change across the Council, with the ultimate aim of ensuring the whole organisation is fully aligned behind our Creating Futures vision.
How we will deliver

Creating Futures represents a bold new agenda for the Council – and we need to be equally bold in our approach to delivery. We want to accelerate our adoption of agile and service design methodologies, and use these techniques to better understand need, then rapidly design solutions and test them out in practice. We recognise this means that sometimes we will fail, but when we do, we will fail quickly, using minimal investment, learn from the experience and improve.

Crucially, the way we approach transformation and change will place a high priority on bringing people together, within the Council, our partners and across communities. No one person or organisation has all the answers, but together we can design, deliver and sustain the solutions that will build the best possible future for Waltham Forest. We have drawn up six principles that set out our overall approach:

- **This is for everyone**: We all have a part to play in improving things and making a better future
- **Fix it**: Understand the real cause of an issue and put time and energy into making it right
- **Try new things and share mistakes**: Don’t be afraid to try something, but be open and let it go when it doesn’t work
- **Embrace creativity**: Learn from real experiences, understand what others are doing, and share what you have learned
- **Focus on people**: Find out what genuinely makes a difference to people’s lives and deliver change that improves their experience
- **Work with others**: Collaborate, build relationships and co-design: it makes things better and delivers more

Our transformation plan isn’t set in stone and we fully expect it will develop and evolve as we learn from the experience of delivery, identify new opportunities and come up against unexpected challenges. Our aim is to be responsive and adaptive, to welcome change, and to keep an open mind about the best way forward.

Reflecting this approach, we will formally refresh our transformation plan every year and present the updated plan to Cabinet, alongside a report on our progress, impact and learning.