



**SWHERTS**  
Joint Strategic Plan

# **South West Hertfordshire 2050**

## **Our Vision for Realising our Potential**



**December 2023**





# Foreword

**As Leaders of the six authorities that make up South West Hertfordshire, we are pleased to publish our long term vision for the future of our area.**

Publication of this vision marks an exciting step in preparing a Joint Strategic Plan, which will set out our approach to the long term planning of our area to 2050.

We want this plan to be visionary, aspirational and use growth as an opportunity to improve the quality of life for those who currently live, work and play in the area, and those who will wish to do so in the future.

In developing our vision we have recognised the many existing assets and strengths of SW Herts – in terms of our built, natural and human resources. We have also ensured that we make the most of our economic strengths, enhance the wellbeing of our communities and reduce and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

We hope you will continue to support us on this important journey. Keep up to date via [www.swhertsplan.com](http://www.swhertsplan.com)

**Cllr Ron Tindall**  
Leader of Dacorum  
Borough Council

**Cllr Jeremy Newmark**  
Leader of Hertsmere  
Borough Council

**Cllr Chris White**  
Leader of St Albans City  
& District Council

**Cllr Sarah Nelmes**  
Leader of Three Rivers  
District Council

**Cllr Peter Taylor**  
Mayor of Watford  
Borough Council

**Cllr Richard Roberts**  
Leader of Hertfordshire  
County Council

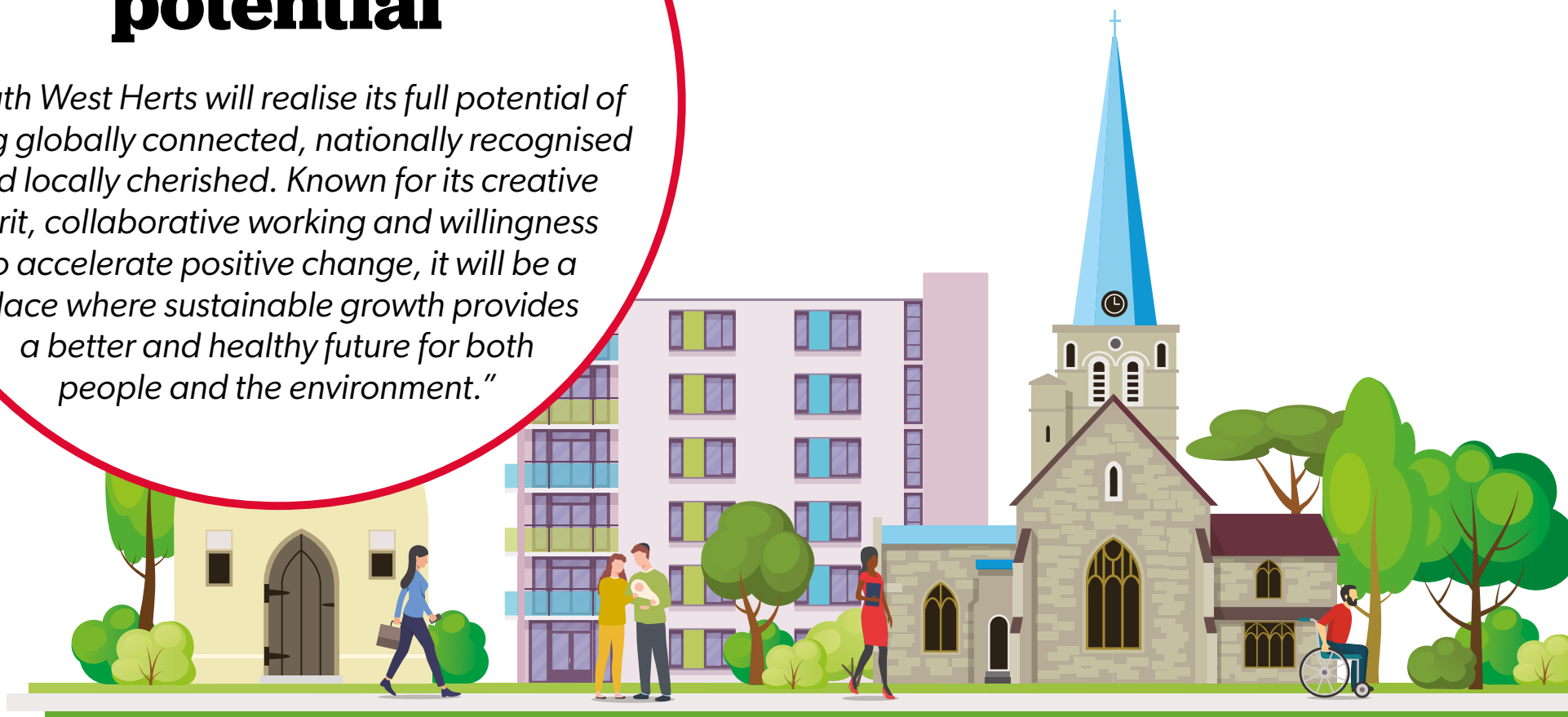
## Our vision statement

# Realising our potential

*"South West Herts will realise its full potential of being globally connected, nationally recognised and locally cherished. Known for its creative spirit, collaborative working and willingness to accelerate positive change, it will be a place where sustainable growth provides a better and healthy future for both people and the environment."*

**In order to achieve our vision, we have established six pillars to guide us.**

These set out our ambitions relating to key areas that the plan will cover. Each pillar contains a number of more specific principles that are designed to help shape future policies within the Joint Strategic Plan, and the wider planning and investment decisions in the area.



# The 6 Pillars

## Living green in a healthy natural environment

What if SW Herts made living green easy and led our country's response to climate change?

## Growing opportunities to work locally

What if SW Herts was a place where investors, innovators, entrepreneurs and creators chose to come together?

## Living in healthy, thriving local communities

What if SW Herts was an affordable, sustainable and fulfilling place to live?

## Moving easily in well connected places

What if SW Herts had more people moving around by public transport, bikes and on foot than by car?

## Building homes and places that people are proud of

What if SW Herts became nationally recognised as providing a high quality of life?

## Delivering robust and sustainable infrastructure

What if SW Herts was cleaner and greener, with more robust and sustainable infrastructure?



# Living green in a healthy natural environment

We have nationally recognised, and locally cherished, green and open spaces, but our natural environment is fragile. We are facing a climate and ecological emergency and it is time for us to accelerate change. Our future will balance demand for resources and growth with the natural capacity of our environment. We must be greener, healthier and leaders in climate action.

## Our objectives



### Commit to net zero carbon

Ensure all new development is net zero carbon and striving to be carbon negative, while improving the carbon performance of the existing built environment.



### Bring people closer to nature

Protect the natural, recreational and character value of the area's green spaces, integrate nature into all new development, and improve existing links.



### Create sustainable buildings and infrastructure

Introduce nature based solutions that are resilient to the effects of climate change and protect and enhance water resources.



### Enrich native biodiversity and ecology

Protect, enhance and connect new and existing biodiversity and ecological networks.



### Green construction

Build responsibly with modern methods that reduce resource consumption and reuse materials.



# Growing opportunities to work locally

We have a high performing economy with globally leading scientific research, film, TV and creative media together with office and service sector jobs. But it will not be enough to rely on these businesses and sectors alone to drive our future. We must embrace new and growing sectors, new models of working, and new ways of shopping and accessing services. There must be opportunities for everyone.

## Our objectives



### Create space to grow

Support the delivery of a wide range of quality workspaces, where new and existing businesses from different sectors, in both urban and rural areas, can grow and flourish.



### Target investment

Encourage investment in new and high performing sectors to allow the local economy to prosper and keep the workforce local.



### Diversify and increase activity in centres

Encourage the resilience of high streets and town centres by supporting mixed use and their diversified role as destinations for leisure, culture and work.



### Retain and develop talent

Support and promote the provision of facilities, funding, and links to business for education and training, including access to higher education, lifetime learning, apprenticeships, and re-skilling for all.



### Strengthen the visitor economy

Build on our globally recognised attractions, to develop a thriving visitor economy.



# Living in healthy, thriving local communities

Our area is a desirable and attractive place to live. Our population is generally healthy and prosperous, and people feel positive about the experience of living and working here. But this must not mask our challenges. We have areas of deprivation and a number of services under pressure. We know that our people are our future, and we must help both new and existing communities achieve the highest quality of life and support their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

## Our objectives



### Provide healthy places to live

Focus on creating homes and neighbourhoods that provide opportunities for healthy living and strong physical and mental wellbeing.



### Locate facilities to encourage community interaction

Support the timely delivery of well located, flexible spaces for work, leisure, health, learning, cultural, community and shopping facilities.



### Ensure safe and inclusive places and spaces

Create and protect environments where individuals and communities feel safe and supported.



### Improve air quality

Maximise opportunities to maintain and enhance air quality standards.





# Moving easily in well connected places

Our area is defined by its location and its easy access to London. However, our roads are congested and east-west public transport links are poor. It is time for us all to change the way we travel. We need a future where fast, efficient and affordable public transport and walkable neighbourhoods encourage greener travel, where our communities feel connected and where our people, businesses, visitors and goods can move around easily.

## Our objectives



### Transform travel

Encourage a radical shift away from car travel by providing accessible, efficient, safe, and affordable alternatives.



### Connect towns and villages

Make travel between new and existing communities easier by strengthening public transport, cycle and walking networks and promoting on-demand services.



### Improve delivery solutions

Support a move towards carbon negative and more sustainable delivery networks.



### Create walkable neighbourhoods

Create neighbourhoods full of activity, where people can access all their daily needs, workplaces and transport options by foot and bike, and where life is active.



# Building homes and places that people are proud of

Our area's distinct qualities have long attracted people to move here. The natural environment, the mix of towns and villages and the proximity to London are all key factors in what makes the area an enviable place to be. There is no single unifying character, but this variety is our strength. We want to build on our diversity and desirability by making strategic decisions about where and how we build.

## Our objectives



### Design attractive places

Deliver places that are fit for current and future needs, where high quality buildings and public spaces create places that people feel proud to call home.



### Celebrate a diverse place

Reinforce the varied urban and rural character of the area.



### Deliver new homes in the right places

Ensure homes are built in sustainable, well connected locations, accompanied by the timely delivery of new infrastructure.



### Recognise current and future housing needs

Ensure current and future residents can live in a high quality home they can afford, that is flexible and adaptable to different lifestyles and work patterns.



### Value the historic environment

Development to reflect and respect the historic environment.



# Delivering robust and sustainable infrastructure

Our area is growing and there is an ever increasing demand on resources. This will not change and indeed we want to actively encourage continued investment in our area. But we must change how we do this. We need a proactive and positive approach to planning and delivering infrastructure that focuses on a more resilient and sustainable future.



## Our objectives



### Deliver key infrastructure

Identify the infrastructure required to support new and existing growth, work with partners to deliver it in a timely manner and ensure it meets local needs, and adapts to the effects of climate change.



### Green energy generation

Promote local energy production with an increased focus on renewable sources.



### Promote circular economies

Minimise waste by promoting the reduction, reuse and recycling of materials.



### Advance digital infrastructure

Ensure everyone can be connected through fast digital networks.





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