



CORPORATE PLAN

2024/2028

FOREWORD

Southend-on-Sea City Council's corporate plan sets out our focus for the next four years: what we aim to achieve for our residents, businesses and visitors and how we will transform as an organisation. Our aim is to deliver the best possible outcomes for our residents and communities and build a sense of pride in the city. This plan addresses challenges such as rising demand for social care services, increasing cost pressures and high UK inflation.

We are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of our residents. Our plan for providing the best adults and children's services possible focuses on providing integrated, efficient, caring, safe and collaborative social services that are accessible to all. We will put residents at the heart of decision-making and drive improvements in a people-centred way. We will also continue to improve our community schools and inclusion support and expand accessible play equipment in parks and play areas. We want Southend-on-Sea to be a fair city, where health and life expectancy inequalities that exist in some areas are reduced. We want to support the creation of jobs and economic growth opportunities for individuals and organisations, so everyone can thrive.

We will promote Southend-on-Sea as the best place to live, work and visit, and support our culture and tourism offer for both visitors and residents. This includes delivering an annual events programme and supporting culture-led regeneration in the city. We will focus on major regeneration projects, including the Better Queensway regeneration scheme. The council will also progress the development of a Local Plan with adequate infrastructure, maximise genuinely affordable housing delivery and reduce homelessness in Southend-on-Sea.

Investment in a safer Southend-on-Sea will be made through pavement and road improvements and street cleaning, as well as policing, improved CCTV delivery and increased investment in the Community Safety Team. We will progress traffic calming measures around schools and residential areas, school streets and air quality improvements.

We want to create an inspiring environment that is unique to Southend-on-Sea. We aim to enhance the environment, biodiversity and our coastline and improve the quality of our air. We will do this by expanding verge management, upgrading our parks and play areas, continuing work with the Essex Nature Recovery Programme and updating our waste resource and recycling approach.

Our long-term financial future requires a continued focus on transformation and delivering cost-effective services for residents and communities. We will maintain robust financial planning and introduce a programme of zero-based budget reviews, ensuring all expenditure is justified in each financial year. We will listen to and work together with residents and communities, partners and stakeholders to redesign services, focusing on honesty, openness, transparency and strong relationships. We will be responsive and act in the best interests of the city and its residents, visitors, businesses and organisations, reflecting their views and striving to build a proud city.

Thank you to everyone who makes this work possible, including councillors, employees, partners and stakeholders. We look forward to continuing to work together to achieve our strategic priorities.



**Councillor Daniel Cowan,
Leader of the Council**



**Colin Ansell,
Chief Executive**

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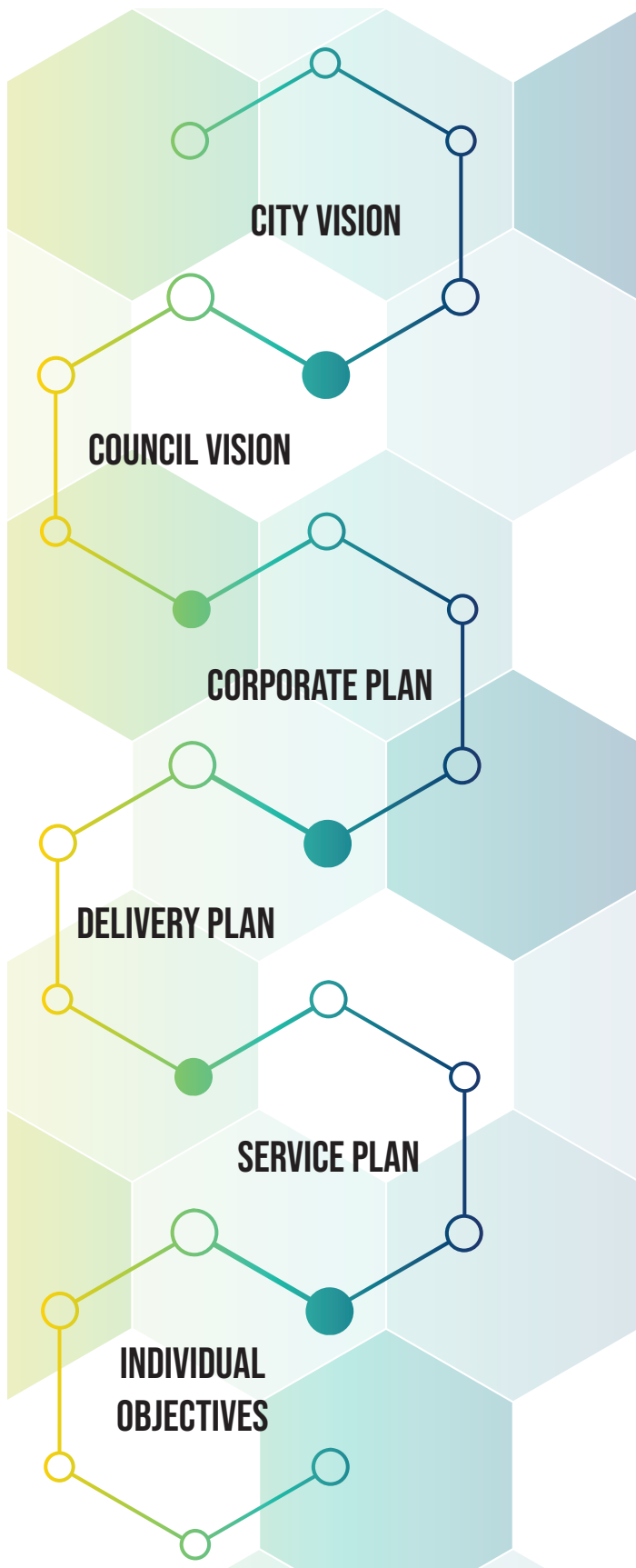
Led by a transformative, responsive council

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How the corporate plan will be delivered



Introduction



This corporate plan is the principal corporate strategy of Southend-on-Sea City Council. It recognises our primary role in delivering good quality local government services in the city. The corporate plan sets out our areas of focus for the city in three overarching priorities and underpins them with a fourth priority for our organisation. It details the outcomes we wish to achieve, the actions we will take to deliver them and how we manage and measure performance. The document covers the full range of the council’s responsibilities and priorities and is an important tool to help focus our effort and resources on the right things. This is even more important in the context of reducing budgets and rapid change.

Our corporate plan forms part of the council’s strategic framework (see diagram to the left). We are working alongside our key strategic partners to establish a refreshed vision for the city.

The council is committed to ensuring good governance principles and management practices are adopted in all business activities to ensure public trust. The Local Code of Governance provides a public statement that sets out the way in which the council will meet and demonstrate that commitment. The council commits in its Local Code of Governance that this corporate plan will “provide the necessary focus on the priorities for the council, so that the council’s resources can be applied to the delivery of those priorities”.

By articulating a clear set of priorities and commitments, the corporate plan also helps residents to hold the council to account for its performance and challenge it to improve. Through aligning our resources, actions and activities to the corporate plan, we can measure how public money is turned into results for our residents and communities. By defining outcomes, performance measures and key

deliverables for each priority, we can regularly chart and report progress towards achieving corporate plan priorities.

The corporate plan informs other key strategies and plans, whether these are council documents or those of our partners. These documents vary widely in purpose, scope and time horizon. The corporate plan does not replace these other documents, but it should shape them whenever they are being updated. Good strategic planning also means aligning financial and service planning.

The priorities identified in the corporate plan set the context for the allocation of resources within the council's budget and medium-term financial strategy. We will strive to ensure that the council remains financially stable and resilient for the future. This will get more challenging over the coming years. Demand for core statutory services of social care continues to grow, with increased cost pressures and pricing challenges due to the impact of recent and historic UK inflation.

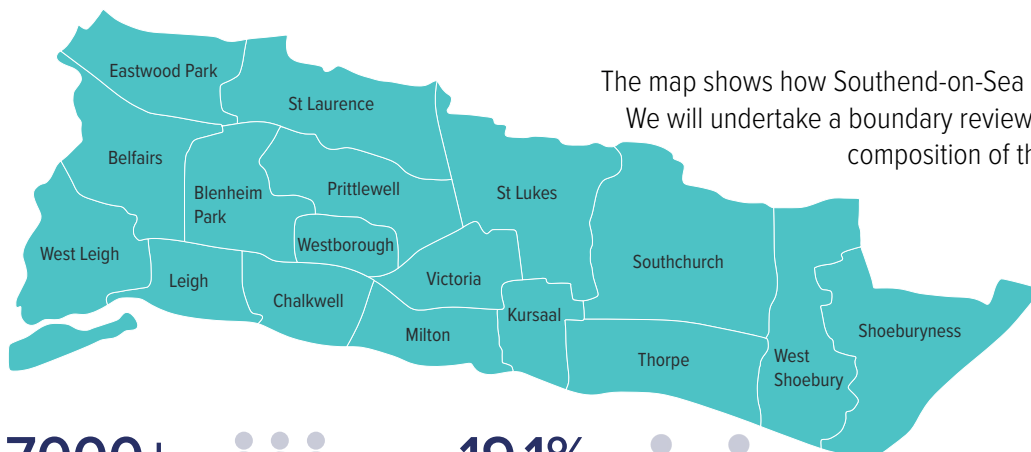
Resourcing our strategic priorities will require tough choices and careful consideration over the next four years, including how we meet local economic regeneration and business development ambitions, our aspirations as a coastal community and facilitate effective joined-up health and social care services, while navigating the challenges and impact of a cost-of-living crisis, inequality and climate change.

Despite the challenges, the council will build on the solid financial foundation we have worked so hard to create. We are introducing a programme of zero-based budget reviews. We will maintain robust financial planning, scrutinise budgets, be prudent in managing risks and always strive to deliver better value for money for people. We will make sure that our financial strategy continues to align with government funding and aim to mobilise our limited resources to deliver priorities that will make a tangible, positive difference for our residents, businesses and visitors.



Our City in numbers

The infographic below shows the make-up of our city, illustrating the context in which we are supporting and delivering services to our residents, visitors, businesses and stakeholders.



The map shows how Southend-on-Sea is comprised of 17 wards. We will undertake a boundary review, which could change the composition of the wards from May 2026.

Census 2021 population data
180,686 residents

7000+
(4.1%) population increase since 2011, when it was 173,568. In England, the population grew by 6.6% from 2011.

19.1% of population aged 65 and over, a 1.3% increase since 2011. Across England, there was a 2% increase, from 16.3% to 18.3%.

19% of population aged 15 years and under, a 0% change since 2011. Across England, the percentage fell by 0.4%, from 18.9% to 18.5%.

78,344 households in the city, an increase of 4.9% from 2011, when there were 74,678

4,336 residents per sq km in 2021, compared to 433.5 people per sq. km for England. This is up 4% from 4,167 per sq. km in 2011.

4.2% of households (3,304) had fewer bedrooms than required, down from 4.7% (3,545) in 2011. Some 32.8% (25,698) of households had the required number of bedrooms, and the remaining 63% (49,342) of households had more bedrooms than required.

Culture and Tourism



Pleasure Pier
and theme park

140+ historic buildings and structures

Purple Flag accreditation for our evening and night-time economy

2 nationally recognised art companies

3 theatres, including one regional theatre

5 museums

Ethnicity

Percentage of usual residents in Southend-on-Sea by ethnic group

- 87.5%** White
- 5.5%** Asian
- 3.1%** Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
- 2.9%** Black, Caribbean or African
- 1%** Other ethnic groups

Schools and colleges

1 university

2 colleges

58 schools

Careers, businesses and jobs

7025 businesses

(Business Count 2023 data)

20

business/industries



48

commercial areas, including fishing industry in Leigh-on-Sea



6380

micro businesses - with up to 10 employees

540

small businesses - with fewer than 50 employees

£730.60

resident full-time gross weekly pay (ONS annual survey 2023 data.)

£746.50 male

£643.50 female



65,000

jobs in Southend-on-Sea
40,000 full-time and
25,000 part-time (2022 figures)



80

medium businesses - with fewer than 250 employees

25

large businesses - with over 250 employees

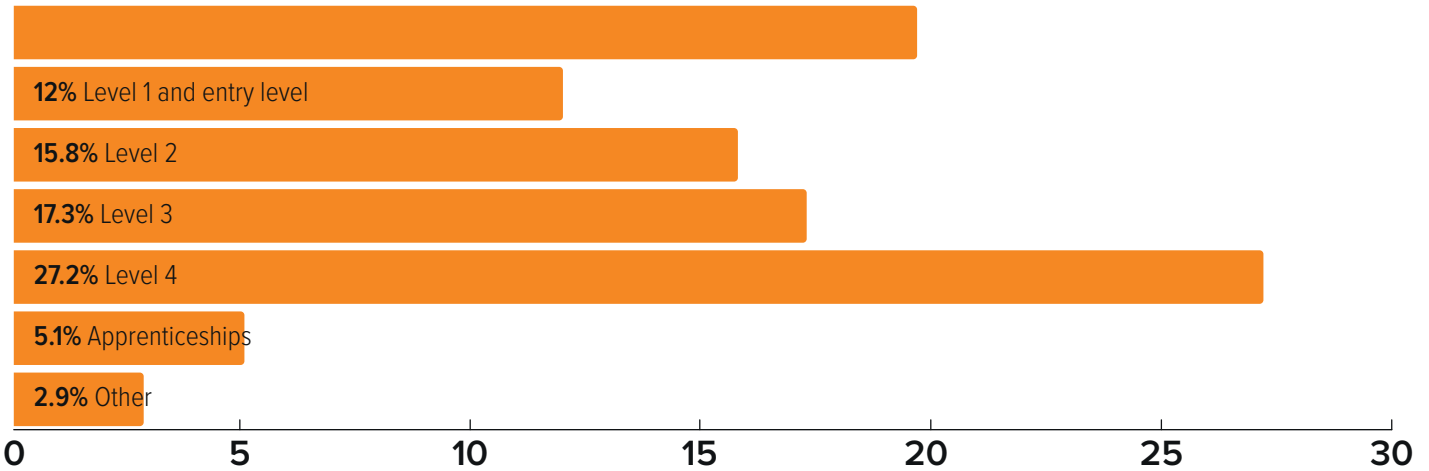
£340,000

median house price compare to £290,000 for England Q1 2023/24



Level of qualifications

(2021 Census data)



Parks and green spaces

7 miles of coastline

8 beaches and 4 Blue Flag awards

28

parks



9

Green Flags



14

allotments



16

conservation areas



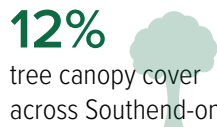
50+

sports facilities and pitches



12%

tree canopy cover across Southend-on-Sea 2019



47k+

trees, in addition to street trees



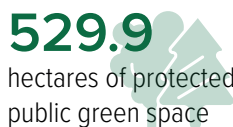
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nature conservation areas



529.9

hectares of protected public green space



88%

of households in Southend-on-Sea live within a 5-minute walk of public green space



Transport connections in the city

39

bus routes



35.39km

(21.99 miles) of cycle paths



9

railway stations



1

international airport





Our vision

At Southend-on-Sea City Council, we are proud to be part of a **modern, vibrant coastal city that values its heritage.**

We listen, with our city's many voices shaping what we do. We have the confidence to innovate, embrace connection and seek opportunity, and are building a sustainable future together.



Our priorities

We have **four priorities** which seek to address the needs and challenges of our city and the council.

A **city** that is:

Proud and prosperous

Safe, clean and green

Caring with a good quality of life for all

Led by a transformative, responsive council



A city that is:

Proud and prosperous

Challenges: The rising cost of living and tackling poor labour market outcomes and inequalities in our communities.

Our response: We will boost Southend-on-Sea's local economy in a way that benefits everyone and enhances the city as a place for prosperity and opportunity. This includes supporting local businesses and business parks, improving workforce skills and labour market outcomes, addressing cost-of-living pressures and reducing inequalities. Our response also includes pushing for inward investment, fast broadband speeds and delivering the Better Queensway regeneration scheme. The council's spending power will be used to support economic growth and regeneration. We will enhance Southend-on-Sea's tourism, culture and leisure offer, promoting the city as a welcoming and vibrant place to visit and stay, fostering pride among its residents.



Outcomes:

- Thriving businesses, a strong local economy, a healthier, more productive labour market and people proud to live and work in Southend-on-Sea
- Our spending is having the greatest impact possible on local communities
- Growing tourism trade, flourishing culture sector and enhanced leisure offer, which are all boosting the local economy, creating a vibrant city for our residents and visitors and contributing to better health and wellbeing



A city that is:

Safe, clean and green

Challenges: Anti-social behaviour; an ageing built environment; environmental instability; the poor quality of our air; risks of natural flooding and coastal erosion; ineffective transport systems; and low recycling rates.

Our response: We will tackle anti-social behaviour so residents, visitors and those working in the city feel safe and secure. We will enhance the street scene and built environment and protect the natural environment. We will promote environmental sustainability and make our communities greener, helping the city to become resilient to climate change. The council will work with partners to improve water quality and make Southend-on-Sea a national exemplar for flood and coastal erosion risk management. We will also make sure the city has effective travel choices and optimise recycling and waste collection opportunities.



Outcomes:

- Safe, inclusive communities and neighbourhoods improving people's lives
- Enhanced and protected street scene and environmental and air quality improvements, which support health and wellbeing
- Build a resilient city to tackle effects of climate change
- Improved and cleaner transport system making Southend-on-Sea a healthier and more accessible place to live, work and visit
- Minimise waste, promote re-use and increase recycling



A city that is:

Caring with a good quality of life for all

Challenges: Rising levels of obesity; poor physical health and mental wellbeing; poor oral hygiene; ensuring the right care and access to adult and children's services; unequal life chances for children and young people; and a lack of housing and the right infrastructure.

Our response: We will take action to address the root causes of poverty and inequality and empower communities to be strong, resilient and safe. We will ensure the right care and advice is available for those who need social care support. We will also make sure every child and young person has the best possible start in life and improve support for children with Special Educational Needs. We will promote healthy eating and good oral hygiene through schools and family centres. We will enable the housing and infrastructure the city needs.



Outcomes:

- People live well, age well and care well and remain living independently in the community for as long as possible
- Children and young people including those cared for by the council, feel safe at home, in education and in their communities, and have access to opportunities where all children can achieve success
- Quality, affordable and safe homes are available for residents in Southend-on-Sea, with the right infrastructure to support this



A city that is:

Led by a transformative, responsive council

Challenges: Pressure on services and not enough funding for local government; fragile financial sustainability; services not responsive to customer needs; increasing demands on employee workloads and change fatigue; services not universally accessible; and adapting to the evolving digital landscape and growing cyber threats.

Our response: We will work hard to achieve better value for money for residents, streamline services to enhance efficiency and productivity, provide needs-based, digitally-enabled and resident-focused services and deliver against service standards. The council will be transformed through an open, transparent, structured, and well-governed approach to transformation. We will improve resident access to advice and services, listen to people through customer services and the council's front door project, enhance contract management and social value and work on the constitution reset.

Outcomes:

- Clear service standards for our residents and customers
- Social value and value for money is achieved for the taxpayer
- Services designed around the needs of our residents



How the corporate plan will be delivered

To deliver this ambitious plan we need to build on our strengths. We must reflect on our areas of development and transform as a council. As a major employer and leader in the city, we must become an outstanding and inclusive organisation that all councillors, employees, residents and communities can be proud of.

A clear set of priorities

This plan provides a clear set of priorities, which provide a purpose for every council employee and are collectively owned by the organisation's political and corporate leadership. All departments in the council will lead on or enable one or more of these priorities to be delivered.

Outcome-based approach

We are committed to achieving changes for the better for our residents and visitors. We will enhance collection of relevant data, analysis and use of insight, effectively engage with all our residents and communities and deliver the right services to achieve identified outcomes.

Measure and monitor our progress

We will measure and monitor our progress in delivering priorities and adapt our resources and approach accordingly. Our performance monitoring is aligned with our financial reporting and risk management. Key performance indicators are aligned to each of our strategic priorities, reporting to our Cabinet and Corporate Leadership Team. All council employees will have performance and development conversations, connecting them to the delivery of outcomes.

Employee and member development

Together our councillors and employees combine the essential skills, experience and knowledge to manage and lead our council. A core component of our People Vision is to build a collaborative learning culture that embeds personal growth, ensuring the right skill sets and behaviours to build mutual trust and respect are at the heart of the working relationship between councillors and officers. We will be clear to our present and future employees what our employment proposition is, how they will be supported to perform their roles well and progress their careers. We will support underrepresented groups at senior levels and eliminate discrimination. The council's constitution review will enable better decision making by councillors and council employees.

Working in partnership

We will continue to work alongside national, regional and local stakeholders, including central government, MPs, neighbouring councils and local partnerships. We will share services and assets where appropriate.

We will work with partners across Southend-on-Sea to establish a refreshed vision for the city. We will also work with our partners in the statutory, voluntary, business and tourism sectors, and continue to explore the potential for joint working and additional powers that could bring in south Essex and wider work across pan Essex with the South Essex Councils.

Values and behaviours

This corporate plan is underpinned by our current organisational values and behaviours, which are due to be refreshed following the introduction of our new council vision. Our current values are collaboration, honesty, inclusiveness and pride. In terms of our behaviours: we will drive positive change; embody trust and respect; demonstrate strong leadership; act with integrity and behave responsibly; and build relationships to work well together.

We will apply the Seven Principles of Public Life, which are: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

COLLABORATIVE
HONEST
INCLUSIVE
PROUD

Empowering our communities and residents

We will engage and empower our communities and residents through co-design and co-production, where service providers and users work together.

We will further develop our online engagement platform 'Your Say Southend', develop a consistent approach for working with communities and residents, and reach out to voices seldom heard and those who are not engaged digitally. We will involve residents in the design and delivery of services and help increase the capacity for communities to come together to enhance their environment. Understanding the knowledge and experiences that people gain in their lives is crucial to co-producing local solutions. We will build trust and relationships with residents and communities, work jointly on challenges, provide support and training, and where possible, share power and resources.

Improving equality, diversity and inclusion

We will challenge inequality to make sure Southend-on-Sea is a city that works for everyone. Inequalities between the city's most and least disadvantaged communities in areas such as income, productivity, housing affordability, life expectancy, and skills levels cannot continue to hold people back and prevent them from reaching their full potential. We will act to remove barriers that people face, such as poor-quality housing, low educational and skills attainment, financial poverty and ill-health, with particular emphasis on addressing spatial inequality, equality of access to opportunities and giving every child the best start in life.

Our Equalities Statement sets a vision about the type of council we aspire to be - a council that values the benefits of diversity and inclusiveness in our city, supports all councillors and employees to feel they belong at the council and have opportunities to succeed, and that works in collaborative partnership with residents from all groups of protected characteristics to design, co-produce and deliver high quality services that work for all. We will deliver on our equality objectives and commitments under our Equalities Statement to ensure that we achieve our equalities vision.

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Owner: Suzanne Newman,
Head of Corporate Strategy

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A summary of this document can be provided in alternative formats such as Braille, audio-tape or large print, and translations in alternative languages are available upon request.



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