



MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

CORPORATE PLAN 2024-2028






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INTRODUCTION

Through our Corporate Plan, we want to set out our ambitions for Mid Devon and the Council. By doing this, we hope to provide a shared understanding of what we are trying to achieve. Our Corporate Plan is split into five sections (or themes). These are:

-  **Planning, Environment & Sustainability**
-  **Community, People & Equalities**
-  **Homes**
-  **Economy & Assets**
-  **Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement**

Within each of these five themes we set out:

What we want to achieve

How we will achieve it

How we will measure our performance

The Council's Corporate Plan provides the framework for the delivery and monitoring of the Council's corporate ambitions.

BACKGROUND

“It is my pleasure to present the Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028. This plan expresses a positive and ambitious vision for Mid Devon, however it also acknowledges the financial challenges facing the Council and the district more generally. Understanding this broader context is important for setting the right expectations. The actions and targets set out in the Corporate Plan must be both ambitious and achievable in order to provide a meaningful assessment of the progress the Council is making. We will keep these under regular review to ensure they drive continual improvement and deliver the Council’s vision. We are committed to engaging with others in a collaborative way. We are strong local leaders and will help others to improve and grow. We take pride in doing this.”



Cllr Luke Taylor
Leader of Mid Devon District Council

Mid Devon District Council serves a rural location covering an area of 353 square miles (914 km²) in the agricultural heartland of Devon, between Dartmoor, Exmoor and the Blackdown Hills. Mid Devon has three principal towns – Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton. These towns provide services for surrounding rural communities.

Approximately 83,000 people live in Mid Devon, and more than half of our residents live in villages across the rural hinterland. Of the 296 districts in England, Mid Devon is the 32nd largest by area, but it is also the 23rd smallest by population. This reflects its rural characteristics.

Strategically located on South West England’s main transport and communication corridor, Mid Devon is mid-way between Taunton and Exeter. Our main offices lie to the North East of the city of Exeter, one of the most rapidly expanding economies in the country. As a district council, Mid Devon seeks to maximise this opportunity by delivering quality growth in a high-quality environment.



FACTS AND FIGURES



***Budget Shortfall:**
The difference between our estimated costs to run the Council and the available resources to fund it.

***Deliverable Capital Programme:**
What we estimate to be the total of all the capital projects in 2024/25 (e.g. Council house building, infrastructure, etc.)

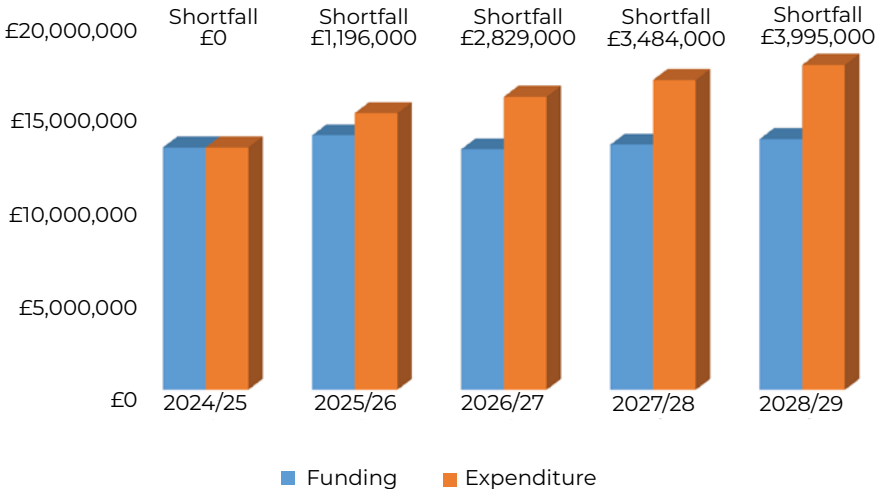
***Net Revenue Services Budget:**
The cost of day to day Council expenditure (e.g. waste collection, leisure centres, parks and play areas, planning, etc.)



MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The General Fund Medium Term Financial Plan summary position shows a cumulative shortfall of just under £4M over the remaining four years of the plan which remains to be addressed.

The underlying budget shortfall occurs largely in 2025/26 and 2026/27 due to inflation and reduced grant funding assumptions linked to long-outstanding and overdue reforms to Local Government Funding mechanisms. These include:



- 2025/26 grant allocations remain as per 2024/25. 2026/27 and beyond grant allocations assume a 50% reduction;
- A partial loss of historic growth in business rates on reset of the business rates system in 2026/27;
- Council Tax referendum principles at previous levels (£5 or 2%) from 2025/26.

These projections demonstrate the challenging financial position facing local councils, and set the context for outlining our corporate objectives.

OUR PRIORITIES

Our aims and objectives are centred around five themes:

- Planning, Environment & Sustainability** - To be a leader and pioneer of best practice so new innovation and thinking is at the heart of the services we deliver and informs our planning policies.
- Community, People & Equalities** - Involving and engaging with our communities, ensuring everyone is treated with equity and respect, and protecting our most vulnerable.
- Homes** - Delivering new affordable and social homes annually, improving and maintaining the existing stock to the highest standards.
- Economy & Assets** - Growing the district economy and increasing returns from our assets.
- Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement** - Providing high quality and efficient services to support and improve the lives of people in Mid Devon.

PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

To be a leader and pioneer of best practice so new innovation and thinking is at the heart of the services we deliver and informs our planning policies.

1.1

Demonstrate climate leadership through achieving ambitious net zero targets

We will take action to reduce our own emissions and attract funding to support our journey towards net zero. This includes further work to lower the carbon footprint from our homes, vehicles, leisure services and land in our management. We will seek support for the adoption and implementation of our Climate Action Plan.

1.2

Support the district's response to the climate emergency

We will continue to work with and support the implementation of the Devon Carbon Plan and look beyond our borders to exchange experience and find innovative ways of lowering emissions, generate renewable energy and increase sustainable travel options. We will provide leadership and support for communities to build resilience and adaptive capacity. We will work with community groups to share best practice, encourage learning and respond to the climate emergency together through partnership working.

1.3

We will work with stakeholders to introduce planning policy which reflects the key issues and challenges facing the district

We will work with communities to bring forward the new local plan – Plan Mid Devon based around our top planning priorities, seeking to encapsulate and reflect the planning ambitions of the Council and its communities. As the Government increases its oversight on planning performance, we will ensure our planning decisions are timely, robust and defensible. We will continue to be a considerate planning authority.

1.4

We will ensure that biodiversity is increased across the district

We will develop and implement our Biodiversity Duty Action Plan across all Council services. Through the planning system, we will encourage developers to exceed the minimum 10% biodiversity net gain, working with local communities where possible, in order to bring real enhancement to nature and landscapes across the district.

1.5

We will value and protect Mid Devon's natural and built environment

We will work with our communities to address environmental damage and will look to prosecute those who cause harm through fly-tipping or littering on public land. We will also challenge those who fail to mitigate environmental impact, liaising with other statutory bodies as required to bring about change. We recognise the importance of the natural and built environment and will work to protect our cultural heritage.



PERFORMANCE MEASURES & TARGETS

To ensure transparency and accountability, we have set out how we will measure the performance of our Corporate Plan and our targets.

| | MEASURE | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | TARGET | COMMENT |
|-----|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| 1.1 | Council carbon footprint | 17,730 t CO ₂ e | 16,454 t CO ₂ e | 16,000 t CO ₂ e 24/25 15,500 t CO ₂ e 25/26 15,000 t CO ₂ e 26/27 14,500 t CO ₂ e 27/28 | Targets reflect potential delivery using existing resources. Further progress depends upon attracting additional Government funding. It is also likely that given we are unable to cease key service provision, a degree of carbon offsetting will be required. |
| 1.1 | Carbon emissions avoided (renewables and green transport) | N/A | 52.5 t CO ₂ e | 60 t CO ₂ e | Measure captures carbon avoided through our solar photovoltaic installations and the introduction of low carbon vehicles into our fleet. |
| 1.2 | Electric car charger points installed across Mid Devon District Council sites | Mid Devon District Council sites host 16 charge points | 0 | 10 new public charge points by 2028 | Annual targets: 2024/25 (4); 2025/26 (4); 2026/27 (2). |
| 1.2 | Secure external funding to deliver carbon reduction in the district | £2.8m Salix funding | HotSW LEP £24,245 for businesses | £100 k per annum | Funding secured to reduce leisure service carbon footprint and other funding to support third party decarbonisation. Opportunities depend upon funding availability - efforts will continue to maximise the grants secured. |
| 1.3 | Planning application standards on the speed and quality of decision making | Speed: 94% Quality: 0.8% | Speed: 95% Quality: 0.5% | Speed: >70% Quality: <10% | Speed and quality of minor planning applications (full data reported to Planning Committee). |
| 1.3 | Strengthen planning enforcement approach by bringing forward a revised local enforcement plan | | | Adoption of new plan by end of 2024 | A new enforcement plan is in development and will be presented for approval asap. |
| 1.3 | Adopt Plan Mid Devon | | | Public consultation (2024/25) Adoption by 2027 | Officers are preparing a Draft Policies and Site Options Report for Plan Mid Devon (the new local plan). It is intended this will be published for public consultation in the autumn 2024. |
| 1.4 | Biodiversity gain above 10% across new developments | | | <10% | To be reviewed once we have a meaningful baseline |

COMMUNITY, PEOPLE & EQUALITIES

Involving and engaging with our communities, ensuring everyone is treated with equity and respect, and protecting our most vulnerable.

2.1
We will work closely with town and parish councils

We value and understand the importance and expertise of our town and parish councils. We will seek to develop closer collaborative working relationships through improved communications and engagement, and will measure our performance on this.

2.2
We value and will work closely with local voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations

We recognise the vital role that voluntary, community and social enterprises play in our district. We will continue to support these organisations development including through the use of grant funding. We will support community events across the district and recognise the importance of youth services.

2.3
We will support the health, wellbeing, and safety of our residents

We will ensure that our leisure services continue to help improve peoples' health outcomes. We will keep the public safe through our rigorous public health inspections. And we will continue to enable people to stay in their homes by coordinating housing adaptations. We will work to ensure our places are planned to improve health and wellbeing.

2.4
We will support our residents and communities through the cost of living crisis

We recognise the challenges facing people brought about by the cost of living crisis. Through administrating benefit schemes and applying Council Tax Reduction schemes we will support the vulnerable in our communities. We will draw down grant funding to support businesses in our communities through these challenging times.

2.5
We will listen to and respond to feedback

We value all feedback that the Council receives. We will maintain an effective complaints process and ensure that we respond promptly and appropriately. We will ensure that the we consult and engage with stakeholders in an open and transparent manner.



PERFORMANCE MEASURES & TARGETS

To ensure transparency and accountability, we have set out how we will measure the performance of our Corporate Plan and our targets.

| | MEASURE | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | TARGET | COMMENT |
|-----|---|---------|---------|------------------|---|
| 2.1 | Support towns and parishes to develop their community emergency plans | | 4 | 4 per annum | A community emergency plan is a written plan detailing the steps a community will take before, during and after an emergency incident. Officers are working with towns and parishes to create plans, including discussions at the 2024 State of the District Debate. A number of towns and parishes are looking to update their plans and the Council will actively support this. |
| 2.2 | Support the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector by securing additional external funding | | £200k | >£200k per annum | Need to baseline. Action can come from various departments within the Council and will include supporting organisations in making their own successful funding applications. |
| 2.3 | Homes made safe under the Housing Assistance Policy | | 81 | 60 per annum | This measure records number of homes adapted and made safe to enable disabled and vulnerable people to remain in their homes through the grants detailed in the policy. |
| 2.5 | New subscribers to Let's Talk Mid Devon | N/A | 415 | 400 per annum | Let's Talk Mid Devon is a website launched in 2023 to encourage open discussion, idea sharing, and active community participation. |
| 2.5 | Complaints resolved within target timescales | 93% | 92% | 85% per annum | Revised complaints policy timelines are far shorter for complex cases, hence reduced proportion expected to meet target timescales |

HOMES

Delivering new affordable and social homes annually, improving and maintaining the existing stock to the highest standards.

3.1
We will increase the delivery of quality designed, well built homes across the housing market to meet identified needs

Mid Devon does not have enough homes. We will support the delivery of quality new homes built in the district. We will build and expand our own social housing, and encourage the delivery of new affordable homes built in the district.

3.2
We will build, promote, and encourage the building of energy efficient and low carbon homes and communities

We recognise that our homes in Mid Devon need to be fit for the future. We will ensure our social housing meets high energy efficiency standards. Through planning and building control we will act so that homes in the district are energy efficient, low carbon, and resilient to climate change.

3.3
We will invest in our homes

We will upgrade our social housing by installing energy efficiency measures and renewable energy. We will maintain our high standards of maintenance across Mid Devon homes. We will monitor tenant satisfaction with maintenance and act on the feedback received.

3.4
We will work closely with our tenants to ensure they feel safe, secure and happy in their homes

We will monitor and continue to improve overall tenant satisfaction. We will work to ensure that cases of antisocial behaviour are kept to a minimum. We will work with our tenants through engagement events, and be guided by them to ensure they feel safe, secure, happy and satisfied in their homes.

3.5
We will support and respond to people presenting as homeless

We will act compassionately to minimise rough sleeping in the district, ensuring people have a safe warm place to sleep. We will maximise homelessness prevention through the use of different types of accommodation, and increase the number of housing options available. We will provide support and guidance for people presenting as homeless.



PERFORMANCE MEASURES & TARGETS

To ensure transparency and accountability, we have set out how we will measure the performance of our Corporate Plan and our targets.

| | MEASURE | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | TARGET | COMMENT |
|-----|---|---------|---------|-----------------------|---|
| 3.1 | New Council houses added to Mid Devon Housing (MDH) stock | N/A | 50 | 100 per annum | Mid Devon Housing currently has approximately 3,000 council homes. Anticipated addition of 440 new homes by 27/28, of which 300 modular net zero carbon units. |
| 3.1 | Additional affordable homes delivered across the district | 23 | 88 | 94 per annum | The target figure has been informed by the adopted Local Plan and technical evidence in the form of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The target will be updated on adoption of Plan Mid Devon in 2027 |
| 3.1 | Applicants on the Devon Home Choice waiting list (Band A-C) | 454 | 465 | N/A | This is a performance outcome the Council is working with partners to reduce. Due to our limited control it is not appropriate to set a performance target. |
| 3.2 | New net zero Modern Methods of Construction properties in Mid Devon | | | 50 per annum | The majority (greater than half) of new council houses added to MDH stock to be net zero |
| 3.2 | Private sector landlord engagement event | | | 1 per annum from 2025 | Event will bring together local landlords and agents with key stakeholders and Mid Devon District Council. The purpose will be to further develop cooperation and networking, improve access to housing as well as sharing information on regulation, best practice and support opportunities |
| 3.3 | Tenant satisfaction with the overall repairs service | | 63.8% | 70% per annum | Performance completing repairs within timescale is in the upper quartile for the sector. |
| 3.4 | Tenant satisfaction that home is safe | | 71.6% | 70% per annum | National benchmarking data will be available later in 2024 after all registered providers of social housing have submitted their results. |
| 3.5 | Providing support to those experiencing homelessness | | | 100% per annum | Percentage of total homelessness approaches that the Council has supported. This will be a combination of different support and outcomes; advice only, prevention, relief or main duty. |

ECONOMY & ASSETS

Growing the district economy and increasing returns from our assets.

4.1
We will work with local businesses, stakeholders and residents to regenerate our town centres

We will act to secure and distribute grant funding to support our town centres. Events and projects will be used to encourage increased footfall and ensure vibrant high streets.

4.2
We will build on successful commercial activity, working with our communities to ensure its success

We will continue with prudent commercial ventures. This includes letting industrial units to local businesses, expanding electric vehicle charging points on council assets, and ensuring Tiverton Pannier Market continues to be a success.

4.3
We will support local businesses set-up, develop and grow

We will fully investigate the potential of establishing a co-working space for small businesses through the work hub project. We will drawdown and administer grants for local businesses to set up, develop and grow in the district.

4.4
We will support business and economic development across Mid Devon, enabling job creation, and supporting sustainable tourism growth

We will build on our excellent track record of securing funding to support economic development projects and will support businesses develop into new markets. We will work to develop events and festivals in Mid Devon to encourage footfall into our communities to benefit our businesses, making Mid Devon a destination in its own right.

4.5
We will work with partners to ensure that Mid Devon has the infrastructure it requires to meet its potential

We will play a key role in realising the major infrastructure the district requires to help it meet its potential. This includes the upgrade to J28 of the M5; the Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road; Cullompton Station; Culm Garden Village; upgrading J27 of the M5; and the Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension.

4.6
Work with our communities and stakeholders to ensure our car parks meet the parking requirement needs of our communities

We will continue to work in a collaborative manner with key stakeholders to review the use of our car parks. We will ensure that our parking charges are fair whilst maintaining a sustainable business model.

4.7
The Council is able to maintain its property and land and maximise the benefits of these assets to the Council and to the public

It is vital that we maximise income streams from our assets. We will explore opportunities for partners becoming commercial tenants in our existing properties.



PERFORMANCE MEASURES & TARGETS

To ensure transparency and accountability, we have set out how we will measure the performance of our Corporate Plan and our targets.

| | MEASURE | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | TARGET | COMMENT |
|-----|---|---------|---------|---|---|
| 4.1 | Events supported in our town centres | | 68 | 6 per annum | This will involve delivering grant funding or officer support to enable and support town centre events. |
| 4.2 | Pannier Market occupancy rate | 85% | 86% | 85% per annum | Maintaining performance levels for Tiverton Pannier Market at 85% p.a. is an appropriate target. The Pannier Market is open 3 days per week and tends to have higher occupancy levels on Fridays and Saturdays than Tuesdays. |
| 4.3 | Co-working spaces developed or supported to support local economic activity | 3 | 3 | 4 more by 2027/28 | This will involve financial or officer support to existing local co-working spaces and, where possible, the facilitation or support of additional spaces. |
| 4.3 | Businesses supported (non-financial support) | 269 | 360 | TBC (250 per annum) | This indicator measures the number of businesses supported by the Growth, Economy and Development team. Also applicable for 4.4 |
| 4.4 | Tourism events supported | 0 | 0 | 2 per annum | Either direct design and delivery of district-wide tourism events (such as walking festival) or support existing initiatives with funding (grant dependent or officer resource/time). |
| 4.5 | Secure the delivery of key enabling infrastructure at Cullompton | | | Re-opening of Cullompton Railway Station (in 2026) and delivery of Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road | Re-opening railway station to passenger services in 2026 with the delivery of relief road asap to unlock planned growth. |
| 4.7 | Commercial property voids | | | Less than 5% | This is a new metric. It is calculated by dividing the number of "void" commercial leases out of the total available number of commercial leases. |

SERVICE DELIVERY & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Providing high quality and efficient services to support and improve the lives of people in Mid Devon.

5.1

We will ensure that the Council remains the employer of choice in Mid Devon

Against a set of challenging circumstances, we will ensure that our staff remain motivated and satisfied. We will ensure that staff development opportunities are available and that people choose to have long, productive, and happy careers with us.

5.2

We will further increase our recycling services, enabling our communities to achieve even higher levels of recycling

Through education and enforcement, we will continue to reduce residual waste collected. Alongside this we will strive to have one of the highest recycling rates in England, and consider additional waste streams we can collect as recycling. Our services will remain excellent, with minimal missed bin collections, and a high opt-in rate to our garden waste service.

5.3

We will maintain our leisure services and ensure they are fit for the future

We recognise the need to continue to reduce the environmental impact of our leisure services and will work to reduce the carbon emissions of our leisure centres. We will also strive to move the service to having less financial dependence on the Council, whilst ensuring our leisure users are satisfied.

5.4

Council finances remain sustainable despite difficult financial conditions

Prudent financial management is critical in the testing financial environment. We will build up our financial reserves, maximise income collection, and ensure that debt remains at an appropriate level.

5.5

We will continue to improve and transform our services

We will continue to take the opportunities that arise from digital transformation to improve our services. Where appropriate we will consider opportunities for shared services or new ways of working with our partners. We will seek to improve our overall productivity to ensure value for money.

5.6

Ensure that the public have a good understanding of council services, and that they are satisfied that the services are efficient and effective

We will strengthen our public communications to ensure clarity on the services that we are responsible for. We will measure public satisfaction and act on the results to ensure residents are satisfied with our performance.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES & TARGETS

To ensure transparency and accountability, we have set out how we will measure the performance of our Corporate Plan and our targets.

| | MEASURE | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | TARGET | COMMENT |
|-----|---|----------|----------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 5.1 | Staff turnover | 19.5 % | 17.0 % | 17.0% in 2024/25 | Natural part of operating any organisation. Numerous reasons for departures. 27/28 target: 15% (excluding retirees/ dismissals) |
| 5.1 | Positive staff engagement | N/A | 67% | 72% in 2025/26; 75% in 2027/28 | As derived from the staff survey and is an overall aggregate of all the responses. |
| 5.2 | Residual waste per household | 327.3 kg | 313.3 kg | 300 kg in 2024/25 | There has been a significant decrease in residual household waste collected as a result of council interventions and householder behaviours over the past 15 years. Targets: 290 kg (25/26); 285 kg (26/27); 260 kg (27/28) |
| 5.2 | Household recycling rate | 55.4% | 57.8% | 58.5 % in 2024/25 | District in the top 10% council areas. Targets: 59% (25/26); 59.5% (26/27); 62 % (27/28) |
| 5.2 | Missed bin collections (all) | 0.04 % | 0.03 % | 0.03 % per annum | Includes all bin types collected by the Council. |
| 5.3 | Leisure cost per visit | £2.94 | £1.30 | £1.12 (2024/25) | Target for 2024/25 is based upon a challenging £200k improvement target on income to reduce net cost, whilst increasing visitor numbers. |
| 5.4 | National non-domestic rates collection rate | 96.8 % | 99.4% | 98% per annum | Collection rate in 2023/24 was the highest in over a decade. |
| 5.4 | Council Tax collection rate | 97.1% | 97.5% | 97.5% (2024/25) | Collection rates historically have varied between 96.7% and 98.5%. Target for 23/24 set in the Council Tax Resolution. |
| 5.6 | Public survey engagement rate | | | 15% per annum | Implementation of customer satisfaction surveys across services. Response rates to satisfaction surveys are notoriously low. Measurement is overall return rate. |
| 5.6 | Overall council approval rating | 49% | 41% | 70% per annum | Source: Residents survey. Response: very/ fairly satisfied. LG Inform 2023 (60%) |

OUR VALUES

OUR VALUES

People
Performance
Pride
Partnership

The organisation has an agreed set of core values that underpin the way we work and how we fulfil our aspirations. These values are known as the four Ps and set out what we believe should be the basis for the type of organisation we want to be.

While our organisation is a place-based entity, rooted in the custodianship of the area of Mid Devon, it is nevertheless primarily a people-focused business. The organisation supports and is steered by our Councillors as the democratically-elected representatives of the people, and is run for the benefit of the people of Mid Devon. Our performance as individuals and as a collective is paramount, and we expect all those working for or with Mid Devon to take pride not only in their own work, but in the way we operate and the outcomes that are achieved for our communities.

Finally, we recognise the core value of partnership as so many of our services depend on our relationships and collaboration with suppliers, contractors, government and its departments and agencies; local towns, parishes and the voluntary sector; or the wider strategic network of councils working together across Devon and the South West.



SUMMARY

The Corporate Plan sets out the ambition for what the Council is aiming to achieve over the next four year period. It acts as the driving force behind our collective efforts and the guiding principles unifying our shared intent. Importantly, it also sets the strategic framework for managing our performance – and this cascades through the organisation in order that everyone can understand their role and how their success as an individual or as a local delivery team contributes to the success of the whole organisation and wider Mid Devon team.

We will use regional and national benchmarking to evaluate our performance and will ensure that we take opportunities to learn in order to deliver services for the people of Mid Devon that are informed by best practice and tailored to reflect the needs of our residents and communities. We will look ‘up and out’ not only to contextualise our own performance, but also to seek opportunities to collaborate with other authorities; neighbours, peer groups, and national innovators, to deliver better quality, more efficient services.

We start this Corporate Plan with a number of award winning services and top quartile achievement on a national basis. Against an increasingly difficult resource backdrop for local government, our challenge will be to maintain our existing high performance in the priority areas set out in this plan, and to support those functions where greater focus is needed. Our ambition can only be delivered by continuing to transform and modernise the way we work in order to deliver best value, by recognising the partnership and community interests of many other stakeholders in delivering this plan, and by working to maximise the effectiveness of all those with whom we share a common goal.



Stephen Walford
Chief Executive



www.middevon.gov.uk