



Letchworth
Garden City
Heritage Foundation

Making Letchworth
a great place **for everyone**



OUR VISION

Where do you live?

It's a simple question. If you answer, 'I live in Letchworth', what does this say about you?

The truth is this: where we live, work and go to school helps define us. If we're lucky enough to live in a place that enhances our day-to-day life; a place that makes us feel confident about our future life – this can be a cause for celebration.

We feel that living or working in Letchworth Garden City is something to celebrate. Our new strategy stems from the truth that as a Foundation we feel privileged to be asset rich and custodians of some very special spaces and places.

We are proud to care for our houses and homes. We are responsible for an abundance of green spaces. We look after Standalone Farm. We are rich with culture: Broadway Gallery and Broadway Cinema & Theatre. And we have the

Garden City Collection: an archive, that along with the Garden Cities Institute, attracts people from all over the world, with original materials showing the pioneering and compelling story of how Letchworth Garden City came to life, and how this influenced new settlements across the world.

Our new strategic plan is about sharing and celebrating everything we take care of with every single person in the town. In our report published earlier this year, *A Review of Life in Letchworth Today*, we highlighted the reality that not everybody who lives in Letchworth is benefitting from what we have to offer.

In this new three-year plan we aim to find ways to make more of our assets, and to use them in ways that address and start to solve some of the issues research has identified. We believe that everything we already look after in the town can work harder for us to help make life better in Letchworth and, more importantly, to improve the lives of the people who live, work, and go to school here.

Our vision is to make Letchworth Garden City a great place for everyone. We have identified three main areas where we aim to focus our attention over the next three years and will explore them over the coming pages. They are to:

- 1 Improve life chances**
- 2 Be a great place to live**
- 3 Be a great place to work and do business**



1 Improving life chances



EMBRACING THE PAST AND UNLOCKING THE FUTURE

Letchworth is special. The unique cultural heritage of Letchworth offers us a great opportunity to enhance the aspirations of our children. We know that if we can nurture a strong sense of place in our youngest children, they will develop a sense of pride about the town they live in.

Our Garden City Collection in Wilbury Hills Road is an internationally significant collection of historical artifacts. There are over 250,000 items to discover and for

many children in Letchworth, a visit here will provide an opportunity to trace their personal stories, their house or street, or the history of the clubs and societies they are involved in.

Given our culture rich in art, design, architecture and Arts & Crafts, we have exciting plans to inspire our children to engage with creative arts projects: drama, poetry and letter writing.

We are delighted to have the chance to collaborate with a range of partners over **the next three years** to establish the **Letchworth Creative Learning** programme. Together we will also partner with schools in Letchworth to use the Collection to develop two curriculum-based creative learning programmes for children aged 5-11 and 11-16.

We want our children to draw strength from the stories of their hometown and to go forwards with confidence and enthusiasm for life. And the reality is that all of these plans aren't really about history. It's the fact that our town is an exciting and vibrant place to live today.



By 2021:

- **3000** children will have taken part in the **Letchworth Creative Learning** programme
- We will be measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of the programme on key skills and attitudes
- Some schools will be working towards Artsmark awards based on the effectiveness of the programme
- Broadway Cinema & Theatre and Broadway Gallery will be supporting further **Creative Learning** in partnership with local schools.



LETCWORTH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PARTNERSHIP

Improving the quality of life for the families in Letchworth who are struggling and removed from many of the things that other people take for granted is something we want to focus on more clearly.

EARLY LIFE CHANCES

What better start in life can a child have than to grow up in a supportive and nurturing community? Positive beginnings set us up for life. Growing up feeling valued and secure helps to develop a tangible belief in opportunity. We are committed to find ways to support

communities to give children in Letchworth the best possible start to their lives. Empowering our youngest children as early as possible will build their confidence and help develop happier and more fulfilled adults.

We are conscious that when it comes to child development, at age five, some of our children are below the national average. We have already started working with schools and pre-schools to strengthen early years support and improve future opportunities for our youngest residents and their families.

In the **next three years** we aim to:

- Establish a cross sector partnership to offer an integrated support service for priority families with young children
- Commission services to support at least **75 local families each year** with a bespoke development programme
- Commission preventative **welfare advice and support services** to a further 100 families every year.

LIVING WELL IN LETCWORTH

Letchworth has a vibrant social community. Many residents meet regularly to enjoy similar interests. A shared common purpose is hugely beneficial to our mental and physical health. And of course, we have a wonderful natural environment in which we live.

In our natural environment, we want to identify who is using the Greenway and we aim to create a programme that will inspire more people to enjoy the benefits of our abundant green spaces. We want to grasp opportunities to create new habitats, and to continue our long term positive partnership working with Natural England.

Yet while there is an impressive number of clubs and societies active in town such as LALG there are nevertheless many people living in Letchworth in isolation. We are very conscious of the fact that as a community, we're not all as active or involved with local life as we need to be in order to stay well.



Our ageing population is another group of people we are determined to support so that they can enjoy our natural environment and also the extended social networks.

Our aim is for living in Letchworth to be good for everyone's physical and mental health.

During the **next three years** we aim to:

- Implement a **Wellbeing Policy** that integrates our own wellbeing services including community transport
- Contribute to the development of local health and wellbeing partnerships and help to support their wider strategic goals
- Continue to develop **Active Letchworth**, and improve levels of physical activity particularly amongst older people
- Increase the number of people volunteering on activities throughout the Foundation such as the Gallery and the Greenway.

ARTS, CULTURE, LEISURE FOR ALL

We have a Cinema, a Theatre, a Gallery and a Farm. While some residents take advantage of one of these spaces regularly, there are many others who never visit. We want to change this. We want everyone to benefit from our investment in the rich cultural and leisure activities and spaces if they would like to.

Over the **next three years** we aim to:

- Provide and support a range of high quality cultural (and financially sustainable) services to appeal to a diverse customer base – both local and regional
- Create more opportunities for volunteers to be involved
- Work increasingly with other partners such as the Arts Council to create an even more compelling cultural programme to attract wider audiences.



2 A great place to live

KEEPING UP WITH KEEPING UP

We are so lucky to live in such a beautiful place. At the Foundation, we are proud to be responsible for looking after our built and natural environment with appropriate care and attention. We are also keen to inspire everyone who lives here to share our enthusiasm for caring for our heritage homes and well-designed town. Over the next three years we aim to nurture this collective responsibility.

For the built environment we have applied Design Principles, which set out our criteria for alterations that may be acceptable to Garden City Homes.

Together these have helped preserve the character and quality of our street scenes.

We believe that there is an opportunity to work more positively with homeowners and our



Housing Association partners to develop our guidance and free advice service. In 2019 we will be publishing a series of guides to help residents tackle some key issues such as building maintenance, how to make homes more efficient and how to accommodate extended family members. We will also launch a programme of open sessions where residents can have early discussions with our team about their ideas at times convenient to them. We will also be able to help provide initial advice and signposting around building efficiency, whilst protecting the heritage value of buildings.

By 2021 we will have:

- Completed a review of our current approach to supporting homeowners with their preservation of garden city cottages and houses and implemented the findings
- Increased the number of people using the Greenway
- Increased the number of people volunteering to care for our natural environment.

REIMAGINING THE 21ST CENTURY GARDEN CITY

How do you take the best and most successful elements from a garden city designed in 1903 to create a 21st century garden city?

Our plans for the first extension to Letchworth in a generation are now underway. This new development is on a 100-acre site just north of the Grange Recreation Ground and will include 900 new homes, 40% of which will be affordable housing and 60% of which will be private homes. There will also be the opportunity for self-build and community owned housing.

This extension to our town will be built according to garden city principles and with strong community involvement, fulfilling the opportunities of the District Council's Local Plan.



We're already living in a town that makes people travel from the other side of the world to marvel at the layout, the houses, and the idea itself. With our new development we hope to create something more contemporary and appropriate not just for how we live today, but something to enhance lives that are constantly changing, and will continue to do so, in ways we can't yet imagine.

We have launched a competition, *Reimagining the Garden City*, in partnership with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), and we are inviting RIBA members from across the world to submit their ideas about how modern garden cities should be designed, creating high quality places where people want to live.

We have an opportunity to create an exemplary development which we hope can have the same level of influence as the original Parker and Unwin plan. This should provide high quality well designed places, meeting today's and tomorrow's needs, whilst reflecting the very best of the principles on which Letchworth is founded.



We believe that thoughtful design will help us to build new homes that could spark a new and public debate about garden cities and sustainable living; not just in the UK, but all over the world.

By 2021 we will have:

- Completed our *Reimagining the Garden City* design competition
- Created a master plan that has a high level of community engagement and involvement
- Agreed a planning and infrastructure delivery plan with local planning authority.

STARTING OUT

Nationally in recent years the private rented sector has grown significantly. However this is not the case in Letchworth and so there are less opportunities, particularly for young adults to set up home here. Over the next three years we will create a new



generation of private rented accommodation by refurbishing some of our existing buildings and supporting proposals for new flats in the town centre. These will offer homes to younger people who are not eligible for social housing, helping to attract young people who work in Letchworth to come and make their home here.

In the **next three years** we aim to:

- Increase the amount of private rented accommodation in Letchworth
- Encourage housing partners to develop plans to increase the range of options for people in Letchworth who are not eligible for social housing.

3 A great place to work and do business

LETCWORTH IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS.

A TOWN OF OPPORTUNITY

Letchworth was made for a harmonious work life balance, a strong principle of the Garden City Movement. We have great transport links, plentiful office and industrial accommodation that is relatively affordable, and good public transport.

There are many creative and dynamic businesses that have chosen to make their home in Letchworth and they are thriving. A dynamic local economy is essential to keeping Letchworth vibrant



and enabling residents to have a good quality of life and a future for our young people. Our objective is to develop more business partnership opportunities that will help to create long-term and sustainable economic growth in Letchworth. These opportunities will also help to improve people's skills.

We are lucky to be located in a region of opportunity. We are currently working with the Herts Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and in the next three years, we want to be welcoming more businesses to the town.

Pioneering technology, industrial innovation, engineering, independent thinking and creativity are part of the fabric of our town. The model making company Ogle Design has been based in Letchworth since 1962. It offers 3D printing, rapid prototyping and laser sintering to clients in a wide range of industries from automotive and aerospace to architects and medical companies all over the world. Altro and Willmott Dixon are two businesses which regularly feature in the Sunday Times' *Best Companies to Work For* list. Both have their head offices in Letchworth.



Letchworth is a great location for start-ups. Accommodation is relatively inexpensive and there is an existing community that is conducive to entrepreneurial spirits. Wicked Mata is a creative business which designs and builds stylish and sustainable 'live edge' tables and other furniture using new and reclaimed wood. We also have a vibrant vegan café, a thriving zero-waste shop, a quirky best-before café and an award-winning craft brewery.

In the next three years we aim to:

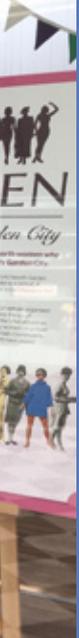
- Develop a business-led action plan to implement a creative vision for sustainable economic growth and the development of skills within the town
- Work in partnership with Letchworth Business Improvement District (BID) and other partners to support and nurture the town's economy.

RESOURCES AND FINANCE

At the Heritage Foundation our role as custodians is as unique as Letchworth Garden City itself. The model for how we care for our communities is through 'value capture'. This means that we generate income from managing the assets under our stewardship – from the homes we rent and the outdoor environment we care for – to the cultural, leisure and wellbeing activities we fund and develop. A key element of our stewardship design is that we don't have shareholders.

We are proud to be in a position of financial stability that enables us to invest in the physical, economic and social environment of the world's first garden city. Any surplus income goes straight back into our community.





INCOME GENERATED

**ENCOURAGES
RE-INVESTMENT**



COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

Letchworth Garden City

Heritage Foundation

- 🏠 letsworth.com
- ✉ response@letsworth.com
- ☎ 01462 476007
- 📷 @letsworthgardencity
- 🐦 @LetchworthGC
- 📘 /letsworthgardencityhf
- 🌐 Letchworth Garden City
Heritage Foundation

