

New Strategic Plan Vision, Priorities and Outcomes 2019-2045

Final Decision-Maker	Council
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Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the Vision, Priorities, and Outcomes for the new Strategic Plan. The report includes information on how the document has been drawn together including the results of consultation and feedback. The report sets out the next steps if the document is recommended to Council including the development of the action plan and narrative to complete the plan.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That Council be recommended to adopt the new Strategic Plan Vision, Priorities and Outcomes as set out in Appendix A

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	28 November
Council	12 December

New Strategic Plan Vision, Priorities and Outcomes 2019-2045

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Timeline of Strategic Plan Development

- 1.1 The corporate planning process within the Council ensures the overall vision for the Borough is clear and delivered. The priorities and outcomes in the Strategic Plan are developed alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as the financial expression of the Strategic Plan. Service planning allows the Council to convert high level objectives from the Strategic Plan into actions for each directorate, service or team across the Council, which then feeds into individual staff performance objectives.
- 1.2 The current Strategic Plan covers the period until 2020. Policy and Resources Committee agreed in June that the plan should be reviewed comprehensively in 2018 so that the Council has an up to date vision and priorities to inform other plans that go beyond 2020 and need to be reviewed in the near future including the Local Plan.
- 1.3 In June a half day workshop was held with Members and officers to explore Maidstone's 'big issues' and key challenges and identify collective agreement for focus.
- 1.4 Following this in August four further workshops were held covering the four emerging themes of the Council's future Strategic Plan; the numbers in brackets represent the number of Councillor attendees at each workshop:
 - Creating a great place for living and visiting (17)
 - Great communities by design (16)
 - People are healthy and safe (10)
 - Prosperity – Working in the Borough (13)
- 1.5 The purpose of the workshops was for Councillors to consider the objectives and outcomes the Council should aspire to in the new Strategic Plan considering what the Council could do to achieve these objectives alone and working with others.
- 1.6 These themes were further refined following the workshops and a draft vision, 8 objectives and outcomes were presented to Policy and Resources on the 19 September when agreement was given to undertake formal consultation.
- 1.7 Significant consultation has been undertaken on the draft vision, objectives and outcomes:

- Members were further consulted with a report taken to all four service committees for detailed exploration and for recommendations and were asked to complete a Pairwise prioritisation activity
- Business representatives were given a presentation at the Maidstone Economic Business Partnership.
- Two Parish workshops were held in October at Lenham and Yalding
- Staff were asked their views at the most recent One Council event
- Residents were asked their views as part of the wider Budget survey

1.8 Results of the consultation can be seen at section 5 of the report.

Development of the Vision

1.9 The vision statement has developed significantly throughout the process. Early discussions highlighted that there was a general desire for the statement to be shorter than the existing statement in the Strategic Plan 2015-2020.

1.10 It was also identified from conversations with Members that our new vision needed to go beyond the 5 years of the Strategic Plan to ensure it leads all policies and strategies of the council and sets out where we want to be in the future. As such it is was proposed that the Strategic Plan covers the period to 2045.

1.11 Feedback from Parishes was that the vision (and objectives) felt urban centric and didn't reflect rural communities. Other feedback included that the vision should be:

- understandable
- not a slogan
- meaningful
- progressive
- forward looking

1.12 Following on from this a new vision statement was presented to Members at a workshop on the 13th of November. The majority of Members present were supportive of the new statement. Although some forms of alternate phrasing were suggested these were not universally accepted. One amendment was made to change aspirations to potential as a number of those present supported this change.

Development of the Objectives

1.13 Members will observe that there has been a significant change in the draft objectives reducing from 8 to 4.

1.14 This change is reflective of a range of feedback from all consultees' comments that the outcomes were too detailed; feedback from Parishes, businesses and Members that infrastructure was important; and the prioritisation of clean, green and safe from a range of consultees.

1.15 The current Strategic Plan has eight objectives the majority of which have been picked up in the new four. The main changes from the old to the new are:

- More emphasis on growth
- A focus on all infrastructure not just transport
- New cross cutting priorities that all actions should seek to achieve

1.16 We have reviewed our Partners' priorities (see Appendix C). The desktop review has identified a lot of synergy between others who shape our Borough and our own vision and priorities. It was very clear from the consultation that we need to acknowledge the role of others in shaping our Borough and that many of the outcomes we want to achieve will require partnership working or lobbying/influencing other players to get change.

1.17 A section has been included on how we do things. This encapsulates how we will achieve our vision and outcomes. At the workshop on the 13th of November Councillors present were broadly supportive of these:

- Community Engagement and Leadership
- Partnership working
- Proactive Investment

1.18 Two straplines have also been identified:

- Pride in our Borough
- A Borough that works for everyone.

The first strapline is already in use and appears on Borough Insight and Council Vehicles. The second could be used for key projects and other work we are undertaking as appropriate. Again, whilst some wording changes were suggested, on the whole most Members were largely supportive of the straplines as they are.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

2.1 Recommend as is. The document at Appendix A has been developed following extensive consultation and engagement with Councillors, Parishes, Leaders, businesses and residents as outlined in the consultation section of the report. Feedback has been taken into account to shape and change the document; the new draft has also been shared with Councillors at an informal workshop on the 13th of November where it was accepted positively with some feedback on wording which where possible has been taken into account.

2.2 Amend and recommend. The Committee could following consideration of all the feedback decide to amend the document and recommend an amended version to Council.

- 2.3 Do not recommend a new Strategic Plan. The current Strategic Plan finishes in 2020 so would stay in place. The purpose of creating a new plan was to ensure the Council's vision and priorities led important documents such as the Local Plan, Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Commissioning and Procurement Strategy that are all coming forward in the next few months. Policy and Resources agreed in July that a new Strategic Plan would be developed to ensure there was a clear strategic narrative for the Council ahead of the refresh of the Local Plan.
- 2.4 Come up with a new version of the plan. This would be difficult to achieve in a single committee session, so it would be unlikely that a new plan and vision would be in place by December as originally agreed by the Committee.
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3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Recommend as is or Amend and recommend to Council. A huge amount of work has been undertaken by officers and Members to reach this point. The document has been carefully developed to take into account the extensive consultation and input we have received as part of the corporate planning process. To take an alternative course of action runs the risk of not taking into account feedback and consultation that has been sought which would be detrimental to the Council's reputation. Additional points of member involvement have been included in the process to ensure the document reflects the wishes of as many Councillors as possible.
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4. RISK

- 4.1 Risks associated with the delivery of the Strategic Plan will be set out in the Risk Management Framework and operationally through the service planning process.
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5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 The outcome of the most recent consultation results is summarised below, and a more detailed summary can be seen at the appendices B, D, E and F.

Businesses

- 5.2 There were a total of 33 votes from businesses (3 per business) identifying the objectives that were most important for the Borough. Their top three areas for focus were: A Thriving Economy, Better Transport Systems and Well Connected Safe and Empowered Communities.
- 5.3 There were three main areas of comment at the meeting
- Improving infrastructure
 - Attracting investment

- Cleanliness

Staff

- 5.4 There were a total of 435 total votes from staff (3 per officer) at the One Council event in September. Officers identified that the three most important objectives to them as people who work, live or travel into the Borough as Better Transport Systems, Great Environmental Quality and A Decent Home for Everyone.
- 5.5 The Commissioning and Procurement Strategy is currently under development and it has been identified as part of this preparation, that the Council considers its strategic objectives alongside all commissioning and procurement activities.
- 5.6 The how we do things, section has been updated to reflect this with the following addition:
- Outcome focussed commissioning and service delivery

Parishes

- 5.7 There were 60 attendees from Parishes across the Borough at the two Parish events in Lenham and Yalding. An overview of their comments on the Vision, Objective and Outcomes can be seen at Appendix D.
- 5.8 Parish representatives identified the following three areas of focus for the Borough: Better Transport Systems, Great Environmental Quality and A Decent Home for Everyone. However it should also be noted that attendees at the Lenham workshop requested an additional box for infrastructure, which received a majority of tokens - 67 in total.
- 5.9 Key comments made by Parishes included;
- Improve relationship with partners including Parishes and KCC.
 - Improved management of infrastructure including transport.
 - Improving parking.
 - Support businesses & communities.
 - Disconnect between rural and urban.

Residents

- 5.10 The survey had a total of 870 respondents, based on Maidstone's population aged 18 years and over. This means unweighted results are accurate to 3.3% at a 95% confidence level. Residents identified the following three areas as the most important to them: Well Connected Safe and Empowered Communities, Better Transport Systems and Great Environmental Quality.
- 5.11 Comments have been aligned to the new draft objectives at Appendix E.

Members

- 5.12 Earlier feedback from Members was attached to the report to Policy and Resources in September (please see background documents).

- 5.13 Each Service Committee considered the original 8 objectives the feedback can be found in the background papers for each meeting where it was considered. Feedback on the vision statement at these meetings included reference to ensuring it was not a slogan and should embrace all of our communities and be progressive. There were other comments regarding naming key sites or buildings – name all or none at all and a wish to reduce the 8 objectives to 6. A further request was that the language should not be passive.
- 5.14 29 Members participated in the Pairwise exercise and four priorities emerged: Decent Home for Everyone, Better Transport Systems, Environmental Quality and Well Connected, Safe & Empowered Communities.
- 5.15 Following revision of the vision, objectives and outcomes a further session was held with Members on the 13 November, to review the revised draft.
- 5.16 Overall Members attending were enthusiastic about the changes with only some minor amendments suggested. Several comments received support from other attending Members and the draft document has been updated to reflect this. These are:
- The inclusion of the word 'potential' as opposed to aspirations in the vision;
 - The inclusion of biodiversity in the cross cutting themes alongside Environmental Sustainability; and
 - Amending the fourth bullet point under Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure to state 'sufficient infrastructure is planned to meet the demands of growth'.
- 5.17 Some suggestions made were specific actions which will be considered and included as part of the 'how we deliver section'.
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6 NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 If the new Strategic Plan is approved by Council, work will then begin on the "how we will" section of the Strategic Plan and the narrative that needs to surround our vision. As with previous iterations of the plan the action plan will cover 5 years, the vision, priorities and outcomes apply for the period to 2045.
- 6.2 There will be action planning with Heads of Service and Committee Members through workshops in January and February. The results of these will go to Policy and Resources to recommend the full Strategic Plan document in March alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 6.3 The completed document will then need to be shared with our partners. Events will be planned post March with key partners including our Parish Councils to look at how we can all deliver the outcomes and achieve our vision for the Borough.

- 6.4 The new vision will be used to set the direction for the refresh of the Local Plan and other key strategies and policies as they are developed.
- 6.5 Democracy Committee is undertaking a review of the committee structure. They will consider the new priorities and whether any changes may need to be made to the service committees as a result. Any changes will be recommended to Council for decision.

7 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Strategic Plan sets the Corporate Priorities	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Financial	Financial implications of the Strategic Plan will be addressed by developing an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy in parallel with the Strategic Plan.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	Creating a new Strategic Plan will have staffing implications for the Policy and Information Team and Leadership Team.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Legal	There are no legal implications	
Privacy and Data Protection	All data collected as part of the Strategic Plan process will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Equalities	Equalities will need to be taken into account when we plan the consultation and any service changes resulting from the budget	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Crime and Disorder	Crime and Disorder has been outlined in the priorities for the new plan	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Procurement	N/A	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance

8 REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: New Strategic Plan Vision, Priorities and Outcomes
 - Appendix B: Consultation Summary Table
 - Appendix C: Desktop Research Partner Priorities
 - Appendix D: Parish Council Feedback
 - Appendix E: Residents Comments from the Budget Survey by Objective
 - Appendix F: Members Comments from the 13 November Briefing
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9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

<https://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/documents/g3051/Printed%20minutes%202018%2018.30%20Heritage%20Culture%20and%20Leisure%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

<https://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/documents/g3031/Printed%20minutes%202018%2018.30%20Strategic%20Planning%20Sustainability%20and%20Transportation%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

<https://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/documents/g3041/Printed%20minutes%202018%2018.30%20Communities%20Housing%20and%20Environment%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

<https://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/documents/g2999/Printed%20minutes%202018%2018.30%20Policy%20and%20Resources%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

<https://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/documents/g2998/Printed%20minutes%202018%2018.30%20Policy%20and%20Resources%20Committee.pdf?T=1>