

Front Cover: Strategic Plan 2019-2045

Artwork to be added

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Leader and Chief Executive's Foreword

Maidstone is at the heart of Kent, we are extremely fortunate and proud to have glorious rural settings and a vibrant town centre.

As the Borough Council we have an important role in shaping Maidstone's future. The ambitious priorities set out in this plan recognise the potential in Maidstone's offer whilst setting long-term ambitious aspirations that will benefit our residents, businesses and partners now and in the future.

Maidstone borough has a growing population – which brings many challenges – most obviously in the delivery of good quality new homes and more jobs and increased need for facilities and places people enjoy for leisure in a way that respects our environment and complements the quality of life of our existing communities.

We want to make sure that we embrace growth so that prosperity is shared and that we use our influence to bring investment in the infrastructure that our communities need including transport, health, parks and digital. As the Business Capital of Kent we have a wealth of small and medium sized enterprises and we want to support them so that they thrive and create an environment where new ones are created and sustained too.

Fundamental to our success is understanding what matters most to our communities. We invest in regular consultation, engaging with our residents, parish councils, businesses and partners on important issues and decisions that affect and benefit us all. This underpins our decision making and the direction and journey we will take together.

We value our relationships with partners, both in the private and public sector. We will continue to collaborate and work hard together so that we use our finite resources to get the best results particularly in meeting our communities' housing needs, improving health and employment opportunities and delivering sustainable transport and infrastructure solutions.

We want our residents to have access to the homes they need to so that they are safe and secure, have the opportunity of good health and to succeed at work and school and have a sense of belonging in their community. Working with our partners we will continue to support people so that the risks of becoming homeless or rough sleeping are reduced and address the quality of accommodation on offer to our residents.

We know our residents value the quality of their environment and cleanliness of our Borough, We will continue to keep our streets clean, maintain our public spaces well and look after our heritage. We will also look to the community to be good custodians and where this is not the case we will take enforcement action to address the harm being caused.

We have a long term vision and commitment, supported by all political groups, that now puts us in an excellent position to attract investment and opportunities for Maidstone. Over the last year we have invested in the high street to keep our local economy buoyant at a time when others have struggled, in housing delivery to fulfil our aim of a home for everyone and in Mote Park so that facilities are in place for our growing population and we have the resources to sustain it. We will continue to invest ensuring Maidstone borough remains an attractive place to live, to work and to visit and at the same time be proud of our rich heritage, keep a focus on biodiversity and environmental sustainability and ensure our green spaces benefit our resident's health and well-being as well as our local economy.

Our Strategic Plan 2019-2045

PRIDE IN OUR BOROUGH
A Borough that works for everyone



- Cross Cutting Objectives:**
- Heritage is respected
 - Health inequalities are addressed and reduced
 - Deprivation is reduced and social mobility is improved
 - Biodiversity and Environmental sustainability is respected



Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure

We want Maidstone Borough to work for the people who live, visit and work; now and in the future. We want a Borough where there is a variety of jobs, housing need is met and infrastructure is in place to meet the growing needs of our residents and economy. We also want to ensure we lead and shape our place as it grows, including leading master planning and investing to bring about high quality housing and jobs in the Borough.

Snapshot

- As of 2017 we had 167,700 people living in the Borough
- Our population is forecast to grow by 24.3% between 2016 and 2036
- From 2011/12-2017/18 a total of 5,291 new homes have been built in the Borough
- In 2017/18 the employment rate was 78.5% (83,400 people) up from the same period in the previous year by 3.9%
- In 2018 the average home broadband speed was around 46.2Mbps, up from 36.2Mbps in 2017
- Better transport systems is the second highest priority for our residents

Our Outcomes:

- The Council leads master planning and invests in new places which are well designed
- Key employment sites are delivered
- Housing need is met including affordable housing
- Sufficient infrastructure is planned to meet the demands of growth

Between 2019-24 we will place particular importance on:

- Engaging with our communities on the Local Plan review 
- The Council will take a proactive role in creating and investing in new places 
- Expanding the Council's role in the delivery of affordable and market rent housing 
- Working with partners to get infrastructure planned, funded and delivered 
- Intervening where necessary in the market, to deliver key employment sites 

Safe, Clean and Green

We will keep Maidstone an attractive and clean place for all. Maidstone is a safe place to live and we want our residents to feel safe. We want to protect and where possible enhance our environment and make sure our parks, green spaces, streets and public areas are looked after, well managed and respected.

Snapshot

- Over 50% of waste is recycled
- The town centre and its immediate surrounds have been designated as an Air Quality Management Area
- Maidstone has 30 large parks, four of which are Green Flag parks and 80 Neighbourhood greenspaces
- Just over 40% of residents use amenity green space once a week
- Overall, 70.5% of respondents were very or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live
- 93% of residents feel safe in their own home, but 22% don't feel safe walking in their local area at night

Our Outcomes:

- People feel safe and are safe
- A Borough that is recognised as clean and well cared for by everyone
- An environmentally attractive and sustainable Borough
- Everyone has access to high quality parks and green spaces

Between 2019-24 we will place particular importance on:

- Taking action against those who don't respect our public spaces, streets, green spaces and parks 🏡 + 🌿
- Improving community safety by working with our partners to make people less vulnerable to crime + 👤
- Raising resident satisfaction with the cleanliness of the Borough 🏡 🌿
- Implementing the "Go Green Go Wild" project to embrace and encourage biodiversity and protect and enhance our green spaces 🏡 + 🌿
- Improving air quality + 🌿

Homes and Communities

We want to have a place that people love and where they can afford to live. This means ensuring that there is a good balance of different types of homes, including affordable housing. We will have safe and desirable homes that enable good health and wellbeing for our communities. We will address homelessness and rough sleeping to move people into settled accommodation. We will work with our partners to improve the quality of community services and facilities including for health care and community activities. Residents will be encouraged and supported to volunteer and play a full part in their communities.

Snapshot

- In 2018 we provided emergency accommodation for in excess 30 people sleeping rough
- On average people could expect to pay 9 times their annual earnings in 2018 compared to 7 times in 2007
- Only 22% of residents agree their neighbourhood is a place where homes are affordable
- Three of our wards rank in the top 10% for deprivation in Kent

Our Outcomes:

- A diverse range of community activities is encouraged
- Existing housing is safe, desirable and promotes good health and well-being
- Homelessness and rough sleeping are prevented
- Community facilities and services in the right place at the right time to support communities

Between 2019-24 we will place particular importance on:

- Reducing rough sleeping in a sustainable way 
- Reducing the use of temporary accommodation for homeless families 
- Improving housing through use of our statutory powers to promote good health and wellbeing 
- Increasing our interventions with Houses of Multiple Occupation 
- Supporting the health service to improve access to primary care including local care hubs 

A Thriving Place

Maidstone is a Borough that is open for business, attractive for visitors and is an enjoyable and prosperous place to live for our residents. Maidstone is the Business Capital of Kent; we will continue to grow our local economy with high employment, good local jobs and thriving local businesses. We want our town and village centres to thrive and be fit for the future. We will lead investment in the County town and rural service centres through our regeneration projects and working with partners. We are proud of our heritage and will continue to grow our leisure and cultural offer.

Snapshot

- We attract over 4.5 million visits a year with over £284 million spend in the local economy
- 45% of residents view the economy as thriving or on the way up
- Maidstone has the highest total GVA (£3,842m) of all the Kent districts
- Unemployment (job seeker allowance claimants) is 1.1% (Nov 2018)
- 1160 more businesses have started up or located to the Borough since 2010

Our Outcomes:

- A vibrant leisure and culture offer, enjoyed by residents and attractive to visitors
- Our town and village centres are fit for the future
- Skills levels and earning potential of our residents are raised
- Local commercial and inward investment is increased

Between 2019-24 we will place particular importance on:

- Reviewing and delivering leisure and cultural services that are fit for the future   
- Building the innovation centre at Kent Medical Campus, promoting inward investment in the borough 
- Working with partners to redevelop the Maidstone East site and modernise the bus station in the County Town  
- Developing and delivering plans for the five opportunity sites in the town centre and the Staplehurst regeneration project  
- Working with parishes and community groups on neighbourhood plans    

How we do things

- Community Engagement and Leadership
- Partnership working
- Proactive Investment
- Outcome focussed commissioning and service delivery

We recognise that our vision is ambitious and the outcomes we are seeking to achieve will require us to work with our partners and key stakeholders in the Borough. We are keen to take an active role in shaping the Borough through investing our resources in housing and regeneration as well as leading the development of new communities. We will do all this whilst engaging and listening to our communities.

We are a confident organisation, so whilst central government funding has reduced, we are prepared to generate resources locally to fulfil our ambitions and aspirations to deliver our priorities. Building on our strengths - assets, knowledge and expertise and our track record for innovation and improvement we are creating a financially sustainable future so that we can continue with our undiminished plans.

Our Values:

Service

It is important to understand that everything we do impacts on our customers, both internal and external. We will listen to and understand their needs, then take action to provide the right service in a positive and professional manner.

Teamwork

Working together to achieve our objectives and goals in a way that utilises the talents and creativity of everyone in our organisation.

Responsibility

Knowing that we work in an environment that encourages us to take ownership for our actions. Making the right choices and decisions that lead to a satisfactory outcome for all.

Integrity

Having the courage to act on our convictions to build trust and honesty within the organisation. Working with our partners and customers to create a feeling of openness and transparency in all that we do.

Value

Taking care and weighing up our options, aiming to get the maximum effect for every penny of public money we spend.

Equality

Valuing our differences and understanding how they can contribute to a better working environment and services that are fair and easy to access.

Strategy Map – to be added