

Strategic Plan Refresh

Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Director	Alison Broom, Chief Executive
Lead Officer and Report Author	Alison Broom, Chief Executive Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance Anna Collier, Policy and Information Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report proposes refreshed areas of focus for the Council's Strategic Plan for the period 2021-2026 consistent with the Council's Vision and blended with the continued need for response to and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The report includes a set of key performance indicators developed in response to Covid-19 at Appendix B and Appendix A sets out the proposed areas of focus for 2021-26,

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To approve and recommend to Council the revised areas of focus for the strategic plan for 2021-26.
2. Approve the Key Performance indicators for 2021-22.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	10 February 2021
Council	24 February 2021

Strategic Plan Refresh

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>This report considers the proposed areas of focus for the Strategic Priorities for the next five years and identifies action for progressing the shaping of the areas of focus for 2021-2026.</p>	Chief Executive
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>Consideration has been given to the crosscutting objectives in formulating the proposed areas of focus for the Strategic Plan</p>	Chief Executive
Risk Management	A review of corporate risk will be undertaken with respect to any changes made to the Strategic Plan areas of focus.	Chief Executive
Financial	The Strategic Plan sets the Council's Priorities and the direction for the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Chief Executive
Legal	The Council has a statutory duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of	Legal Team

	economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Council’s Strategic Plan demonstrates compliance with this duty. This review of the Council’s priorities within the Strategic Plan will enable the Council to deliver services in an efficient and effective manner which meets the needs of the borough and aspirations of local inhabitants and stakeholders. In reviewing the priorities, the Council is obliged to ensure that its financial obligations are adhered to. The Council has a legal duty to set a balanced budget and continue to monitor the budget during the course of each municipal year and take remedial; action if needed at any time	
Privacy and Data Protection	The recommendations do not have an impact on privacy and data protection. If as a result of the update to the milestones and the emerging MTFS for 2021-2026 changes are required to services involving personal data, then Data Protection Impact Assessments will be undertaken.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment. If as a result of the update to the milestones and the emerging MTFS for 2021-2026 changes are required to services, then an Equalities Impact assessment will be undertaken.	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	One of the Council’s cross cutting objectives is that Health Inequalities are addressed and reduced. The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an impact assessment. If as a result of the update to the milestones and the emerging MTFS for 2021-2026 changes are required to services, then a Health Impact assessment will be undertaken.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The recommendations include reviewing the areas of focus for 2021-26 for the Safe, Clean and Green Priority	Chief Executive
Procurement	No direct implications	Chief Executive

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report proposes refreshed areas of focus for 2021-2026 consistent with the Council's Vision and four priorities; it reflects both the long-term ambitions of the Council blended with the continued need for response to and recovery from the Covid-19 health pandemic. Each service committee has had the opportunity to comment on the refreshed areas of focus and feedback is provided in the central column of the table at Appendix A. As the Communities Housing and Environment (CHE) and Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (SPI) Committees are meeting following the agenda publication date an updated Appendix will be provided to Policy and Resources Committee as an urgent update on the 10 February.
- 2.2 In July 2020 the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance presented a report to the Policy and Resources Committee which set out progress made against the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan Outcomes The report also included a timetable to refresh the outcomes to ensure they reflected the progress that had been made and to respond to the impact of the Covid19 pandemic.
- 2.3 The current Strategic Plan was developed involving a wide cross section of Councillors, staff and other stakeholders in 2018 before being adopted in December of that year. The vision and priorities are clear and remain relevant.
- 2.4 In June 2020 the Policy and Resources Committee also considered the Council's approach to recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and recognised that it was likely that this would be intertwined with episodes of response, and this has proved to be the case. The Council's approach to recovery is based on four themes: economic recovery, supporting resilience for communities and vulnerable people, adapting the way we work and financial recovery. This has been managed via a core group of officers led by the Chief Executive and both response and the limited work on recovery has been informed by a Member Covid19 Recovery Consultative Forum chaired by the Leader of the Council.
- 2.5 Work was carried out in the summer of 2020 to enable all Councillors to review our Strategic Plan outcomes for 2019-24 and contribute to production of revised priorities and a refreshed set of outcomes for 2021-26. Over the period August to October 2020 a survey was conducted inviting the public to give feedback on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The full results can be found here:
<https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primaryservices/council-and-democracy/primary-areas/consultations/closedconsultations>
- 2.6 Covid-19 has had a major impact for our communities, our economy and on the Council's financial position. The Covid-19 Recovery Consultative Forum have been regularly briefed on the impacts and the Council's support for residents and businesses in the borough. The Policy and Resources Committee has been regularly briefed on the review of Council priorities. It has also been briefed on the scale of the financial impact, for the current financial year and over the term of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

2.7 In September the Policy and Resources Committee agreed the following in relation to shaping the areas of focus:

- There should be further development of the Council's capital strategy and programme including consideration of partnership funding of large-scale projects and infrastructure including consideration of joint ventures and a development corporation.
- A review of planning and economic development services reflecting on the effectiveness of our current services and reconsidering our service delivery model taking into account the changes in the planning system and looking at: expertise, organisational arrangements, including the synergies between planning policy and economic development, our arrangements for delivering/enabling construction projects, and agility.
- A report concerning a protocol for working strategically with the community and voluntary sectors and parishes is progressed initially via the Communities Housing and Environment Committee.
- That the Council initiates dialogue with the Business Improvement District concerning current challenges and future investment in the town centre.
- Officers review the scope of work undertaken and resources allocated to the Community Safety Unit.
- The direction of travel on modernising the arrangements at the museum is now more modest and focuses on making the best use of existing spaces.
- Review of the contribution of the Hazlitt to the town centre economy and consideration of options for its sustainability.
- Reduction of the priority of raising resident satisfaction with cleanliness to maintaining it.

2.8 The draft areas for focus for 2021-26 (Appendix A) and new KPIs for Covid-19 recovery (Appendix B) endeavour to reflect the current position on these topics and what needs to be achieved over the period to 2026 to bring the Council's vision to fruition. Both appendices contain feedback from the last Policy and Resources Committee and the Economic, Regeneration and Leisure Committee, further updates from SPI and CHE will be tabled at the meeting as urgent updates.

2.9 The new KPIs will be reported to Service Committees on a quarterly basis in accordance with their terms of reference, some information will be monitored on a more regular basis by officers as indicated in previous versions of the table. Feedback from SPI and CHE will be presented to the Committee at the meeting.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 The proposed refresh to the areas of focus for the next 5 years has been set out in Appendix A, this includes feedback from the Service Committees.

- 3.2 Policy and Resources Committee could accept the amendments as set out in the final column of the table, they could amend the wording or add/delete areas of focus. This is all within the Committee's remit. Please note a revised Appendix A will be circulated at the meeting with amendments following the feedback from SPI and CHE committees.
- 3.3 The KPI list attached at Appendix B has been developed in response to the impact of the pandemic. Policy and Resources Committee can approve/amend or delete as they see appropriate. The KPIs once agreed will be reported quarterly to Service Committees as per the current process. Any additional feedback will be presented at the Committee as an urgent update.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Policy and Resources Committee agreed in the summer that the Strategic Plan would be refreshed to reflect the impact of the pandemic. Following this agreement, the Committee has received reports to approve the direction of discussion and focus for the amendments to the Plan. This has included reports to the Service Committees and has been closely linked to the emerging Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 4.2 The Committee is recommended to consider and approve the new areas of focus and revised set of KPIs as set out in Appendices A and B.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework.
- 5.2 A review of corporate risk will be undertaken with respect to any changes made to the Strategic Plan areas of focus.
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6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Councillors have been consulted concerning priorities for the Strategic Plan areas of focus from July 2020 onwards and have taken a range of subsequent decisions which are also reflected in the proposed areas of focus set out in Appendix A. The member Covid-19 Recovery Forum has been consulted on the draft KPIs set out in Appendix B. Each Service Committee has had the opportunity to give their feedback and an updated version of the Appendices including comments from SPI and CHE Committees will be circulated.
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The approved refreshed areas of focus will be submitted to Council for approval as the Strategic Plan is a budget and policy framework document.
 - 7.2 Once approved the new areas of focus will be shared with all employees to ensure the delivery of the Council's priorities. The refreshed Strategic Plan will be made available on the Council's website.
 - 7.3 The new KPI set will be reported to each Service Committee on a quarterly basis alongside financial reporting as we do at present.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

- 8.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:
 - Appendix A: Strategic Plan Areas of Focus 2021-26
 - Appendix B: New KPI list for 2021-22
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None