

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

24 FEBRUARY 2021

REPORT OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2021

STRATEGIC PLAN REFRESH

Issue for Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee agreed in July 2020 to review the priorities and outcomes in the Strategic Plan 2019-2045 over the five-year period 2021-2026.

The proposed areas of focus for 2021-2026 are consistent with the Council's Vision and are blended with the continued need for the response to and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Recommendation Made

That the revised Areas of Focus for the Strategic Plan 2021-26, as set out in Appendix A, be approved.

Reasons for Recommendation

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.

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.

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.

The draft areas for focus for 2021-26 (Appendix A) 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. 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.

Alternatives Considered and Why Not Recommended

None.

Background Documents

None.

Appendices

Appendix A – Strategic Plan Areas of Focus 2021/26