

# Maidstone Borough Council **Strategic plan** **2019 - 2045**





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# Foreword

Maidstone Borough Council's responsibility is to make every effort to deliver its services and produce cohesive plans for – economic, environmental, social and cultural prosperity. We have stewardship for our future, and it's important that we get it right. The ambitious priorities set out in this plan recognise the potential in Maidstone Borough whilst setting long-term aspirations that will benefit our residents, businesses and partners now and in the future.

Despite huge and unprecedented cuts in central Government funding, prudent investment by the Council will lead to significant improvements to enable delivery of our vision.

We will achieve our ambitions by being good stewards and ensuring we take a long-term view. The choices we make today will impact on the state of our environment, and the quality of life enjoyed by our residents, decades from now. That's why it's so important for the Council to have a long-term strategic plan and vision to lead us towards a planned future where we embrace controlled growth.

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.





This document sets out our aspiration for Maidstone through to 2045, and how we're going to achieve it. Of course, we can't do it alone. It should come as no surprise that a key feature of this plan is collaboration. We value the relationships with partners, both in the private and public sector. We will continue to collaborate 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 recognise each member of staff and Councillor for their contribution to our success. Over time we will reap the benefit of our long-term plans and should soon be able to function without being at the continual mercy of the ebb and flow of funding from Central Government. The work we do together today is supported by all political groups, which now puts us in an excellent position to attract investment and opportunities for Maidstone that will help us achieve each milestone and goal we challenge ourselves with to deliver our Strategic Plan.

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.

## Our Outcomes by 2045

- 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 2021-26 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 consider investing in new places 
- Expanding the Council's role in the delivery of affordable and market rent housing including the provision for the Gypsy and Traveller community 
- Working with partners to get infrastructure planned, funded and delivered 
- Intervening where necessary in the market, to deliver key employment sites 



As of 2017 we had  
**167,700** people  
living in the Borough

Our population  
is forecast  
to grow by



between 2016 and 2036

From 2011/12-2017/18  
a total of

**5,291** new homes  
have been built in the Borough



Better transport systems  
was the **second highest  
priority** for our residents



In 2018 the average  
**home broadband speed**  
is around **46.2Mbps**,  
up from **36.2Mbps in 2017**  
We do recognise that in the  
rural areas there are substantial  
problems with broadband.



In 2017/18 the **employment rate** was  
**78.5%** (83,400 people) up from the same  
period in the previous year by 3.9%





# 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 high quality by ensuring they are looked after, well managed and respected.

## Our Outcomes by 2045

- 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 2021-26 we will place particular importance on:

- Taking action against those who do not respect our public spaces, streets, green spaces and parks 
- Improving community safety by working with our partners to make people less vulnerable to crime 
- Maintain resident satisfaction with the cleanliness of the Borough 
- Implementation of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 

Over **50%** of the Borough's waste is recycled 

The town centre and its immediate surrounds have been designated as an **Air Quality Management Area**

Overall, **70.5%** of respondents were **very or fairly satisfied** with their local area as a place to live 

Just over **40%** of residents use amenity green space once a week 

of residents feel safe in their own home, but **93%** don't feel safe walking in their local area at night 

Maidstone has **30 large parks**, four of which are Green Flag parks and **80 Neighbourhood greenspaces** 





# 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.

## Our Outcomes by 2045

- 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 2021-26 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 
- Working with the Integrated Care Partnership to identify opportunities to reduce health inequalities in the borough 

In 2018 we provided emergency accommodation for in excess of **30 people** sleeping rough



On average people could expect to pay **9 times their annual earnings** on purchasing a home 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.

# 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.

## Our Outcomes by 2045:

- 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 2021-26 we will place particular importance on:

- Deliver key actions for the refreshed Economic Development Strategy focussing on actions to enable economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic 
- Deliver a sustainable and vibrant leisure and cultural offer across the Borough 
- Working with community groups and parish councils, to develop more sustainable community resilience and to encourage pride in our Borough 
- Promote inward investment in the Borough to ensure a diverse employment and business offer 
- 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 



Maidstone has the **biggest economy** of all the Kent districts



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

**1160** more businesses have started up or located to the Borough since 2010

Unemployment (job seeker allowance claimants) is **1.1%** (Nov 2018)



# How we do things

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 have a key role in the Borough through our direct service delivery as well as the services we commission. 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.

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

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, 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

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2019 - 2045

