

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





Contents

Introduction	3
Vision and Priorities	4
Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure	5
Safe, Clean and Green	6
Thriving Place	7
Homes and Communities	8
Our Values	9
Strategy Map	10

Introduction

Our Strategic Plan sets the overarching goals for the future of the borough of Maidstone. It is a shared vision that will ensure Maidstone Borough is a place to be proud of and where everyone can realise their potential. 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 Borough's potential whilst setting long-term aspirations that will benefit our residents, businesses and partners now and in the future.

The unprecedented pressures as a consequence of the pandemic and the ongoing cost-of living crisis are significant. This is why it is so important for the Council to have a long-term strategic plan and vision that will lead us towards a planned future where we embrace controlled growth with opportunity for all.

A key feature of our 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 resources to get the best results, particularly in meeting our communities' housing needs, employment opportunities and infrastructure solutions.

Everyone has a meaningful voice in shaping the future of Maidstone. 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. The decisions we make today will contribute to the quality of life enjoyed by our residents' decades from now.

We have set out our ambition to deliver an additional 1,000 affordable homes for local people to ensure availability of good quality housing that's sustainable in both financial and ecological terms. We have also committed to revitalising our Town Centre through a new Town Centre Strategy. The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and Biodiversity and climate change remains central to our decision-making processes. This is to ensure that the Council can positively influence residents, businesses and partners across the borough as well as ensuring its own estate is as close to carbon neutral as possible by 2030.

I recognise and thank each member of staff and Councillors for their contribution to our success. Working together 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.

Councillor David Burton
Leader of the Council

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 2023-28 we will place particular importance on:

- 1.1 Engaging with our communities throughout the continuous development of the local plan
- 1.2 Proactively take a role in creating and investing in new places
- 1.3 Working with partners to get strategic infrastructure planned, funded and delivered
- 1.4 Intervening where necessary in the market, to deliver key employment sites



As of 2017 we had
175,800
people
living in the Borough



Population increased by
13.3%
between 2011
and 2021



From 2011-2021
a total of
7,926
new households in the Borough



In 2020 the average
home broadband speed
was around
121.4Mbps,
up from 46.2Mbps in 2017



We do recognise that in the rural areas there are substantial problems with broadband



In 2021 the **employment rate** was **63.5%**
(90,265 people) and **dropped by -9.4%** since
2011 (82,528)

Access to transport links
was the **third highest priority**
for our residents in 2022



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 2023-28 we will place particular importance on:

- 2.1 Promoting and enhancing our parks and open spaces to meet the needs of residents and visitors, whilst taking action against those who do not respect them
- 2.2 Working with our partners to take action against those who break the law to ensure our communities feel safe
- 2.3 Working to ensure resident satisfaction with the cleanliness and appearance of the borough
- 2.4 Ensuring that the impact on climate change and biodiversity is central to all decisions
- 2.5 Maintaining the resilience and quality of the waste service



49.44%
of the Borough's waste
waste was recycled
for Q2 2022/23

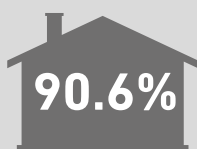
The town centre and its immediate surrounds are no longer designated as an
Air Quality Management Area



Overall, **68.8%** of respondents said they **felt very strongly or fairly strongly** that they belonged to their neighbourhood



63% of residents have visited a Maidstone park or outdoor space in the last 12 months



90.6% of residents feel safe in their own home, but 38% 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**

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 2023-28 we will place particular importance on:

- 3.1 Delivering a sustainable and vibrant leisure and cultural offer. Utilising all opportunities to maximise funding
- 3.2 Promoting inward investment in the Borough to ensure a diverse employment and business offer
- 3.3 Developing an ambitious Town Centre Strategy which reflects the needs of the wider community, creating a vibrant and transformed town centre for all



Maidstone has the biggest economy of all the Kent districts



Visitors increase in borough by **57%** in 2021 from 2020 which was a result of many festivals, concerts and events local economy.



81% of residents are **satisfied** with their **current housing**



325 more **businesses** have started up or located to the Borough since 2021






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 2023-28 we will place particular importance on:


- 4.1 Continuing our holistic and innovative approach to reduce rough sleeping in Maidstone 
- 4.2 Increasing the supply of Temporary Accommodation to reduce cost, whilst working towards long-term housing solutions 
- 4.3 Working with Anchor Institutions and partners to improve community resilience, pride in the borough, well-being and financial inclusion so no-one to be left behind 
- 4.4 Urgently identify and deliver a 1000 affordable homes to ensure availability of good quality housing that's sustainable in both financial and ecological terms reduce health inequalities in the borough 
- 4.5 Improving the quality of housing through the consistent use of our statutory powers to promote good health and wellbeing 

 In 2022 we provided emergency accommodation for in excess of

 **44 people**
sleeping rough

 **51.5%** of households in Maidstone are **not deprived** in any dimension.

 **69%** of residents feel they **belong to their neighbourhood**

 **13** times their annual earnings on purchasing a home in October 2023 compared to 9 times in 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

