

2016/17

Quarter 2 Strategic Plan Action Plan Update



For further information about
Performance Management at Maidstone
Council, please contact Alex Munden,
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OUR VISION

That our residents live in decent homes, enjoy good health and a pleasant environment, with a successful economy that is supported by reliable transport networks.

OUR MISSION

Putting People First.

OUR PRIORITIES

Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all

Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough



ACTION AREAS

Providing a clean and safe environment

Encouraging good health and wellbeing

Respecting the character and heritage of our Borough

Ensuring there are good leisure and cultural attractions

Enhancing the appeal of the town centre for everyone

Securing improvements to the transport infrastructure of our Borough

Promoting a range of employment opportunities and skills required across our Borough

Planning for sufficient homes to meet our Borough's needs

OUR VALUES

Service



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



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



We have the courage to act on our convictions to build trust and honesty. We work with our partners and customers to create a feeling of openness and transparency in everything 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.

Priority 1: Keeping Maidstone an attractive place for all

Providing a Clean and Safe Environment

Over the past 5 years, Maidstone Borough Council has demonstrated its commitment to deliver cost effective and sustainable waste and recycling services, as a result our recycling rate has improved significantly. Maidstone does not experience high levels of crime.

Safer Maidstone Partnership Strategic Assessment

Adoption of Safeguarding Policy

A report containing the revised policy was reviewed and agreed by Corporate Leadership Team. A report is being taken to Communities, Housing, and Environment Committee with the new policy to be adopted on 18 October.

Depot Services Development Plan

Consider the feasibility of all potential projects

A number of initiatives have been considered and research has been carried out to determine their viability. Two areas, commercial waste and fleet maintenance, have been identified as the most feasible for commercial growth or improved efficiencies and therefore additional support is currently being sought to undertake full reviews into these areas to explore the most viable opportunities. The work is not expected to be complete until early 2017.

Identify viable projects

Specifications have been prepared for the two projects which have been identified as feasible both from an operational and financial perspective, in order to gain external support to carry out a full options appraisal. The reviews are due to take place by the beginning of 2017 enabling viable options to be implemented in 2017/18.

Environmental Enforcement Strategy

Increase in FPN littering and dog fouling charges

The littering fixed penalty notice charges have been increased, however the dog fouling charges are proposed to increase to £100 as part of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) which the team is preparing for approval by the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee, which will also see plans to require dogs to be on leads in specific areas (i.e. shopping parades) and on request from an officer. The plans are currently out to consultation with the public.

Draft new youth littering engagement programmes

Analysis of evidence captured by Kingdom Security has shown that very little littering witnessed is by youths and therefore it is not currently proposed to have a specific youth engagement programme. The main form of litter which results in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice are cigarette ends and there is no evidence to suggest there is an issue with under 16s. However the educational programme for littering will continue and is currently focused on Keep Britain Tidy's chewing gum campaign.

Develop a coherent analysis of all environmental data

The development of environmental data analysis is being incorporated into an action plan for improving the delivery of Environmental Enforcement which will include looking at the resourcing of the service and administration functions.

Street Cleansing Mobile Technology Development Plan

Implementation of a Bin Audit review action plan

All litter bins have now been given an asset number and work is starting on the removal of all dog waste bins by the end of the financial year. Approximately 60 new litter bins for both litter and dog waste are being installed in areas where dog bins have been removed. Work is also underway to obtain funding to replace the metal litter bins in the town centre which cause rust stains on the granite service and require additional cleansing.

Adoption of vehicle asset management systems

Mobile tracking now in place through the mobile technology solution. Dash cams also being explored to assess the benefits particularly relating to accidents and insurance claims.

Explore opportunities for dynamic tasking of street cleansing operatives

Phase 3 of the mobile technology has now been implemented with the allocation of tasks without the need for a supervisor to manually allocate work.

MBC Commercial Waste Service

Achieve 350 business customers

The service continues to be actively marketed and has now achieved over 380 customers and is reaching capacity with the existing resource. A specification has been drafted and quotations have been sought to undertake a full review of the service and explore the viability of expanding the service further and the requirement of additional investment.

Glass feasibility collection study

An initial feasibility study was carried out into the provision of glass collections, however the success of the existing service has resulted in further investment being required to continue to grow the existing service. Therefore a review of the service is going to be carried out over the next couple of months to explore the opportunities to maximise income and continue to be competitive within the market. Glass collections will be considered as part of this along with opportunities to extend the service into neighbouring boroughs who have expressed an interest in the service.

Encouraging Good Health and Wellbeing

Deprivation in the borough is lower than average, however 15% (4,300) of children (under 16 years old) in Maidstone live in poverty. There is a larger difference in life expectancy of men and women; 7 years lower for men and 4 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Maidstone than in the least deprived.

Housing Assistance Policy

Complete stock condition survey

Discussions are taking place to enable a partnership procurement from the Building Research Establishment to provide the survey at a reduced cost to a number of Kent authorities. Ashford Borough Council is taking the lead and will report back by the year end.

Respecting the Character of our Borough

Maidstone is the County town of Kent. In terms of its geography, it is largely rural and the countryside offers high quality landscape and biodiversity. Approximately 50% of the borough population live in a parished area. We are focused on achieving economic prosperity, whilst at the same time balancing protecting the environment and landscape that makes the borough of Maidstone a great place to live, work in and visit.

Culture and Heritage

The project with the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) did not progress as resources were diverted into the preparation and submission of a bid for £2m to the Heritage Lottery Town Scape Initiative Fund for Gabriel's Hill. We have also been accepted to receive a visit from the Urban Panel via Historic England. The RSA remain supportive of the ambition for Maidstone..

Priority 1: Keeping Maidstone an attractive place for all & Priority 2: Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

Ensuring there are good Leisure and Cultural Attractions

There is always something to see or do in Maidstone with the river, two museums and a theatre in the town centre, four green flag parks, a well-used Leisure Centre, a castle, various markets and a variety of festivals and events held across the Borough and throughout the year.

A sustainable future for Mote Park

Planning permission obtained for the adventure zone

Planning application submitted 19th August 2016.
Planning permission expected by 15th December 2016

Procurement undertaken and contract awarded for the Adventure Zone

Invitation to tender posted on Kent Portal 12th August 2016. Tenders will all be received by 7th October 2016. We are looking to award contract in December 2016 in line with receiving planning permission.

Business case produced for a new Café/Visitor/Education Centre for Mote Park

Draft business case has been produced and reviewed by Head of Commercial and Economic Development. Revisions to be made in anticipation of the meeting with Corporate Leadership Team in December 2016. The business case will be used as part of the committee report to be submitted to Heritage Culture and Leisure Committee January 2017.

Funding bid submitted to Heritage Lottery Fund and/or other bodies

The Mote Park Centre is fully funded by the council to the value of £2.5m and will be progressed using project management toolkit with an opening date of summer 2018. Any additional funding will be secured from a range of sources subject to justifiable need.

Play Area Improvements Programme

Complete year one programme of works

Year one, phase one completed successfully. Phase two will commence after summer.

Assess performance of contractor on year one programme

Performance assessed and current contractor will continue to phase 2.

Retender or Award phase 2 contract

Phase 2 contract was awarded in September 2016 after the phase 1 review. The terms of the contract are currently being agreed.

Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Development Plan

Develop Draft Plan

Draft plan to go to Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee November 2016.

Consultation with key stakeholders

This will be arranged following feedback from Heritage, Culture, and Leisure Committee.

Adoption of Plan

Adoption will follow once the draft has been to Heritage, Culture, and Leisure Committee.

Museum Development Plan

Capital works completed in East Wing reception

This project was successfully completed in April 2016. The reception desk was successfully relocated and adjustments made to the retail and Visitor Information areas to improve their layout and impact.

Draft Museums 20 year development plan produced with the Museums strategic development board

The Museum Strategic Board is now established and has had its first meeting at which members of the Board were given an overview of the museum's current position, the risks and opportunities and the current vision for forward movement in the next 20 years. 3 areas were identified as priority for the museum's sustainability - Museum governance, funding and audiences. The panel is made up of the Leader of the Council, the Chair of HCL committee, Chair of Maidstone Museums Foundation, Partnership Manager Arts Council England, Museums Development Officer Kent and Medway and 2 Kent Ambassadors each with a background of senior management in industry or 3rd sector organisations. The Board will next meet in November. A consultant has been selected and is about to be appointed to carry out a review of museum governance which will inform the 20 year Development Plan and work outlined in the museum's Capital Works programme has begun.

Enhancing the Appeal of the Town Centre

Maidstone has had a historically thriving town centre however, we need to ensure that we keep pace with the changing economic environment and continue to meet the demands of businesses and consumers. Investment in Maidstone town centre is needed if it is to continue to be a popular place for leisure, to live, shop and work.

Town Centre Development Plan

Establish Maidstone Town Centre Strategic Advisory Board

The Board was established in February 2016. Meetings are held quarterly, and the terms of reference have been agreed.

Agree 5 year programme of public and private investment

Programme was presented to Policy and Resources Committee and was agreed.

Work with capital and Regional to deliver an improved retail and leisure offer in The Mall in 2016

Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) officers continue to meet with Capital & Regional on a monthly basis. At these meetings, a range of strategic issues are discussed, to include the redevelopment/extension of the Gabriel's Hill end of the Mall, for further retail and some leisure space too. MBC has already made a proactive move in acquiring Granada House, as this will in the fullness of time facilitate the redevelopment, and it is apparent that this move was welcomed by Capital & Regional. From the meetings it is clear that Capital & Regional are working on land assembly opportunities in the vicinity to further facilitate the redevelopment, but these explorations have not reached a positive conclusion yet. It is also reasonable to say that the BREXIT vote did in the short term cause some turbulence to the investment appetite of most commercial property companies. This may have had an impact upon the speed at which Capital & Regional have pursued expansion at the Mall, but in this respect, it's possible that market sentiment is starting to settle again. In summary, they will not make a planning application this year, and late 2017 would seem the earliest that this is likely to happen.

Priority 2: Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

Securing Improvements to the Transport Infrastructure for our Borough

Maidstone is strategically situated between London and the channel ports and is serviced by two motorway networks, the M20 and M2, with rail connections to central London. With regard to travelling in and around the Borough by car, congestion is an issue particularly at peak time in the town centre. The bus transport network serving Maidstone town is relatively strong whilst rural transport presents distinct challenges

The Local Plan

Submission of Maidstone Borough Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination

The Maidstone Borough Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on 20th May 2016.

Public consultation on the draft Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule

Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee resolved to publish the Draft Charging Schedule, Draft Regulation 123 List and Draft Instalments Policy for consultation at the meeting on 12 July and consultation took place between 5 August and 16 September.

Adoption of the Integrated Transport Strategy by Strategic Planning Sustainability & Transport Committee (and Full Council)

Following the request for minor changes to the documents by the Strategic Planning Sustainability and Transportation Committee on 6th July the revised Integrated Transport Strategy and the Walking and Cycling Strategy were adopted by the Strategic Planning Sustainability and Transportation Committee on 13th September. However, as a result of continuing discussions with Kent County Council the latest revised documents were not subsequently reviewed by the JTB on 13 July 2016 as envisaged. Instead a joint report was presented by the KCC Head of Transportation and the MBC Head of Planning and Development which updated Members with respect to the 7 December 2015 resolution. Further to the JTB resolution of 13 July 2016, MBC will continue to work with Kent County Council towards its joint adoption.

Submission of the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination

Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee's approval for minor changes to the Draft Regulation 123 List will be sought on 11th October together with their recommendation to Full Council to approve the Draft Charging Schedule and revised Draft Regulation 123 List for submission for examination which is timetabled for December 2016/January 2017.

Promoting a range of employment skills and opportunities across the borough

There were 76,300 people employed in the Maidstone economy in 2014 with a high proportion in the public sector, reflecting the town's status as Kent's County Town and administrative capital. There were 6,885 registered businesses in Maidstone in 2013, equivalent to 43 businesses per 1,000 population, compared to 37 for the United Kingdom and higher proportion of people that are self-employed compared to the South East and to United Kingdom.

Economic Development Strategy Update

The former Royal Mail Depot site has now been purchased in the partnership with Kent County Council. A holding strategy is being put in place whilst the master planning work for its comprehensive redevelopment with the adjoining Network Rail land is produced. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between all partners and the Government regarding the North Kent Enterprise Zone. Consultants have been commissioned to design the public realm phase 3 works and a HLF bid has been submitted for Gabriel's Hill. A Business and Learning sub group of MEBP has been established to improve careers opportunities and information in schools. An LGF bid has been submitted to fund infrastructure improvements at Junction 7 M20 and nearby roundabouts.

Planning for Sufficient Homes to meet our Borough's Needs

Over the last five years, the supply of new, affordable housing within the borough has been greater than in neighbouring authorities, although still less than historic levels. 189 new affordable homes were built in the borough in 2013/14 and 163 in 2014/15. In total 413 new homes were delivered in 2014/15, of these new homes over 75% were built on land that had previously been developed.

Treat large scale major planning applications cumulatively as a project

Set a Pricing Structure

A draft pricing structure for the new Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) has been produced which has been agreed in principle by the Head of Planning and requires verification from the Director. Following this, the fees would require approval in the normal way. This sets a combined pricing structure for pre application discussions, meeting with members, signing of a PPA agreement (which agrees the project management of the application) for a set fee. This consists of £3,500 for small scale major (50 units plus or 2,500 sqm commercial floor space) and £5,000 for large scale major (100 units plus or 5,000 sqm commercial floor space). The customer is then entitled to a number of pre application meetings, a member briefing and a completed PPA. This fee excludes the planning fee and fees negotiated through the PPA for specialist staff involvement i.e viability reviews/ES reviews etc.

Fees have also been raised by 5% across the service to cover the standard pre application fees and a new category introduced which covers member reviews (£509).

Set a template S106 agreement with standard heads of terms

A specimen draft S106 has been produced and is available for customers to review from the MBC website. This contains MBC' standard clauses and will enable developers to have a "head up" on the clauses we use. All Developer forum members were notified of its availability. A protocol is also being produced between Development Management (DM) and MKLS to cover the timely delivery of information necessary to deliver the S106. This will commit both DM and MKLS to meeting set time frames for progression of S106 agreement e.g production of first draft of S106 within 15 working days of instruction to MKLS. This document is currently in draft form and is expected to be agreed shortly.

Setting a standardised Planning Performance Agreement for future developments

A draft PPA template has been produced and feedback from officers is currently being incorporated into the template. Once all relevant feedback on the template has been received the PPA will be piloted. The fees associated with the PPA have been included on the Fees and Charges list put forward for 17/18. This provides a combined pricing structure for pre application discussions, meeting with members, signing of a PPA agreement (which agrees the project management of the application). This set fee consists of £3,500 for small scale major (50 units plus or 2,500 sqm commercial floor space) and £5,000 for large scale major (100 units plus or 5,000 sqm commercial floor space). This fee excludes the planning fee and fees negotiated through the PPA for specialist staff involvement.

Migration of all historic S106 data into a new system

All historic S106 data has been successfully migrated into the test Exacom system. A few minor changes are being made by IT regarding the nightly update to the Exacom system from Uniform. Once this issue has been resolved the updates will be automated into the live system.

Housing Assistance Policy

Complete stock condition survey

Discussions are taking place to enable a partnership procurement from the Building Research Establishment to provide the survey at a reduced cost to a number of Kent authorities. Ashford Borough Council is taking the lead and will report back by the year end.