

Strategic Plan 2015-2020





New section to be drafted for Policy and Resources in February

~~Over the next five years Maidstone Borough Council faces an exceptionally challenging future as our funding from Central Government for the provision of local services is removed. Increasingly we have to rely on~~

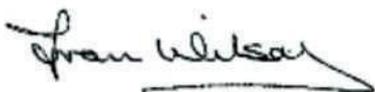
~~self-generated income and on our own tax base. Despite this we are confident we can produce a solid medium term financial strategy and continue to deliver the first class services which residents value.~~

~~Devolution is now high on Central Government's Agenda. It is vital that we put time and effort into determining what this will mean for the people of this Borough and, working with the County Council and other district colleagues, into shaping the future for Kent.~~

~~At the heart of the Borough is our county town. Emphasis will be placed on regeneration and transportation projects to underpin a vibrant economy and enhance its appeal to both residents and visitors.~~

~~The gap between income and house prices continues to grow. This, allied to an acute shortage of affordable housing, has made it increasingly difficult to get a foot on the housing ladder and has seen homelessness rise at an alarming rate. A key priority is to provide decent and affordable homes for our growing population.~~

~~Despite these challenges we are determined to remain ambitious in our aspirations for the Borough and its people and to emphasise its unique heritage, cultural and natural assets~~



Our Vision, Mission and Values

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

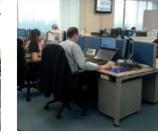
OUR MISSION

Putting People First.

OUR PRIORITIES

Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for

Securing a successful economy for Maidstone



ACTION

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

Regenerating and 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

A home for everyone
Planning for sufficient homes to meet our Borough's needs

OUR

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 to 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 customer experience

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

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 they can contribute to a better environment and services that are fair and easy to access.

Providing a Clean and Safe Environment

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. We have with our Community Safety Partnership agreed that reducing anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, reoffending and improving road safety are our priorities up until 2018. During the first year of the Strategic Plan the Council has introduced a street cleansing service designed to meet the current and future needs of the Borough.

We mean:

- People feel safe in the Borough and they live in ~~a clean environment of high quality~~ an attractive and clean environment

We will:

- Work with our partners to improve all areas of the public realm
- Deliver the waste and recycling strategy
- Deliver an efficient and effective street cleansing service
- Deliver the Community Safety strategy
- Deliver the Air Quality Strategy working with partners

Measured by:

- ~~Resident satisfaction~~
- ~~British crime survey~~
- ~~Environmental quality indicators~~
- ~~Recycling~~
- ~~Reduction in residual waste~~
- ~~Estimated levels of CO2 Emissions (per head of population)~~

Encouraging Good Health and Wellbeing

Deprivation in the Borough is lower than average, however 14.1% (4,100) of children (under 16 years old) in Maidstone live in poverty. There is a difference in life expectancy of men and women; women are expected to live 3 years longer than men and there is a 13 year gap between the ward with the highest life expectancy and the one with the lowest life expectancy.

We mean:

- Addressing the social determinants of health through our role in services like Housing, Environmental Health and Community Development and our provider role in terms of leisure activities
- Improved health outcomes for residents, reduced health inequality

We will:

- Deliver our Housing Strategy
- Deliver our Health Inequalities Action Plan
- Work with businesses to promote health and wellbeing

Measured by:

- ~~Health Indicators~~
- ~~Number of private sector homes improved~~
- ~~Disabled Facilities Grants~~
- ~~Homelessness Prevention~~

Respecting the Character and Heritage 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 lives in a parished area. We are focused on achieving economic prosperity, whilst at the same time protecting the environment and landscape that makes the Borough of Maidstone a great place to live, work and visit.

We mean:

- Thriving and resilient urban and rural communities
- Listening to our communities
- Respecting our heritage and natural environment
- Devolving services where we can and working with Kent County Council to do the same

We will:

- Deliver and honour our Parish Charter
- Deliver the Communication and Engagement Action Plan
- Work with our Parishes and Communities on the design of their communities

Measured by:

- ~~Resident survey~~
- ~~Parish survey~~

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.

We mean:

- Maidstone has leisure and cultural offers which attract visitors and meet the needs of our residents

We will:

- ~~Adopt and deliver~~ Deliver thea Destination Management Plan with a shared statement of intent to manage, develop and promote our borough
- Deliver the Festival and Events Strategy
- Adopt and deliver the Museum 20 year plan
- Maximise the benefits of our leisure and cultural assets through our commercialisation approach to maintain key services

Measured by:

- ~~Customer satisfaction with our leisure and cultural attractions~~
- ~~Visitor economy indicators~~

Regenerating the Town Centre

Maidstone has had an 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.

We mean:

- Ensuring we have a thriving and attractive town centre that is fit for the future

We will:

- ~~Be proactive in delivering~~ Deliver a vision for the town centre through working with partners, businesses and regenerating areas ourselves.

Measured by:

- ~~% of vacant retail units~~
- ~~Conversion of office space to residential,~~
- ~~How Maidstone is rated as a retail destination~~
- ~~Resident satisfaction~~

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.

We mean:

- A transport network that meets the needs of residents and businesses

We will:

- Deliver an Integrated Transport Strategy and work with our partners to seek improvements to the transport infrastructure

Measured by:

- ~~Measures from Integrated Transport Strategy~~
- ~~Resident Survey~~

Promoting a range of employment skills and opportunities across the borough

There were 83,100 people employed in the Maidstone economy in 2015 with a high proportion in the public sector, reflecting the town's status as Kent's County Town and administrative capital. There were 6,735 registered businesses in Maidstone in 2015, equivalent to 42 businesses per 1,000 population, compared to 39 for England and an above average rate of self-employment.

We mean:

- Meeting the skills and employment needs of our residents, not becoming a dormitory Borough and supporting and attracting businesses

We will:

- Deliver our Economic Development Strategy with Partners.
- Work with businesses and support them to grow and develop
- Build on the success of the enterprise hub
- Work with our partners to support those not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Measured by:

- ~~% of our residents that are NEET~~
- ~~Net change in jobs~~
- ~~% of Job Seekers Allowance claimants~~
- ~~Business start-ups versus failures~~

A Home for Everyone

The supply of new affordable housing within the borough has been greater than in neighbouring authorities, although still less than historic levels. 163 new affordable homes were built in the borough in 2014/15. [New text to be added](#)

We mean:

- Having enough homes to meet our residents needs with sufficient homes across a range of tenures

We will:

- ~~Deliver the Adept-a~~ Local Plan
- ~~Deliver the Housing Strategy~~
- ~~Deliver the Temporary Accommodation Strategy~~

Measured by:

- ~~Net Additional Homes~~
~~% of additional homes that are affordable~~

[Design work to be added](#)