

2016/17

## Quarter 4 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**

### **Review of Licensing Policies**

#### **Review and Implement Gambling Act Policy**

Following the closing of the consultation period no significant responses were received. The amended policy was presented to the Licensing Committee in January 2017 and the Committee recommended the policy for adoption by the Council. The process of adoption was completed on 1 March 2017 at full Council.

### **MBC Commercial Waste Service**

#### **Food waste collection feasibility study**

Having reviewed the Commercial Waste operation, further work is intended to maximise the profitability and reduce the cost of the current service. Capital funding has been allocated to the expansion of the service however this will be focused on delivering the current service to more customers as opposed to diversifying. There is no further work proposed to explore the introduction of commercial food waste collections.

### **Crematorium Development Project**

#### **Commence implementation of Phase One**

A refocussing of Bereavement Services development plans is envisaged and a report was taken to Heritage, Culture, and Leisure Committee in June 2017.

### **Encouraging Good Health and Wellbeing**

#### **Housing Assistance Policy**

#### **Review and update housing assistance policy**

Communities Housing and Environment Committee approved the new housing assistance policy in September 2016.

#### **To determine the number of properties for improvement following review of outcome from stock condition survey**

Work on this project has been delayed, as a Kent-wide consortium has been implemented to explore whether a better package can be achieved by commissioning a multi-borough survey. It is anticipated that a decision will be reached in late 2017.

## **Respecting the Character of our Borough**

### **Culture and Heritage**

#### **Public realm/public art guidelines produced for Maidstone Town Centre**

Public Realm Design Guide for Maidstone Town Centre and Public Art Policy for the Borough both developed and adopted by Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee in November 2016.

The Public Art Policy will be taken to Strategic Planning Sustainability and Transport Committee before the summer to consider its adoption as a material consideration for planning purposes.

### **Parish Charter**

#### **Undertake full review**

The Parish Services Scheme will now be reviewed in 2017/18. A report on this review and implications for the Parish Charter will be taken to Communities, Housing, and Environment Committee in Autumn 2017.

## **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**

#### **A sustainable future for Mote Park**

##### **Construction of Adventure Zone complete**

A second procurement process has had to be undertaken. This has now taken place and a framework agreement has now been entered into.

#### **Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Development Plan**

##### **Consider the future operational models for parks and open spaces**

New operational models will emerge from the 10 Year Plan for Parks and Open Spaces.

#### **Museum Development Plan**

##### **Capital programme board established to oversee further capital projects**

The Capital Programme Board continues to monitor progress on individual capital projects. Damp works in the cloisters gallery and old chapel started in March as anticipated, and have now been completed. The 6-week drying out period has nearly completed. After advice from MBC Planners, a revised scheme to provide a two storey, self-supporting glass lift shaft was submitted for planning approval and Listed Building Consent. This was considered by Planning Committee in May and approved. It is anticipated that the refurbished gallery and new lift will open to the public in September.

Work to the Visitor Information point has taken longer than expected, partly due to contractor work schedules. It has now been held back by a few additional weeks to allow for decorative works to be combined with those necessary for the gallery works, thus benefitting from economies of scale and staff capacity to oversee the work. The point will be open by the end of June and school summer holidays. In the meantime we continue to offer the complete service from the old desk.

##### **Consult with key stakeholders on the draft Museums 20 year development**

Members were given an update report on Museum Development at the April meeting of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee. The museums governance report is underway and the appointed consultant has met with Corporate Leadership Team and members of the Bentlif and Queens Own Royal West Kent Trusts. A meeting with the Brenchley Trust and MMF took place in May.

## **Enhancing the Appeal of the Town Centre**

### **Town Centre Development Plan**

#### **Plan, design, and implement phase 1 redevelopment of Maidstone East Station**

Demolition of the Victoria pub has been delayed by Network Rail. The demolition will now be added to the main tender for the Station building works which has been issued to NR's framework contractors. The tender period will be up to 8 weeks and once a Principal Contractor is appointed NR will share with partners a programme for the demolition works and main works.

#### **Agree 5 year programme of public and private investment**

The Holding Strategy will be implemented in phases. The building refurbishment work has been delayed by 4 weeks. Caxtons has been appointed as facilities management and lettings agents. Occupier interest exists for the office block. A sifting exercise has been carried out through the HCA Property Panel to identify a short list of lead consultants for a mini competition to take forward redevelopment plans for the site.

#### **Deliver bridge gyratory widening scheme**

Since the completion of the new highways configuration, work has continued to the pedestrian areas in the lower High Street. This work was scheduled to be completed by 23 April (supposing there were no unanticipated delays to progress).

Crowning of the trees on the tow path from High Level Bridge to Medway Street subway was completed in advance of nesting season, with works to this stretch commencing w/c 4 April initially with grinding out stumps & tree removal. The section was temporarily reopened over Easter and was then closed to pedestrians again to allow for repaving works.

Resurfacing of Earl Street has been delayed following the results of the coring, but will still be completed within the scope of the project, along with old Fairmeadow.

Drainage designs are still ongoing. We're currently anticipating that work to upgrade the drainage will take place in July/August with aesthetic improvements commencing in September. This work will be completed in June/July.

KCC's ITS team have assessed and altered the traffic light timings through the gyratory and in the junctions leading into the system w/c 24 April.

## **Priority 2: Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough**

### **Securing Improvements to the Transport Infrastructure for our Borough**

#### **The Local Plan**

##### **Independent Examination into Maidstone Borough Local Plan**

Programmed examination hearings have been completed. The Inspector has asked for formal public consultation on required modifications to the Local Plan. This took place between 31st March 2017 until 19th May 2017.

##### **Independent Examination into the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule**

The examination of the Community Infrastructure Levy commenced following its submission at the end of April 2017. The appointed Examiner arranged a hearing session for participants scheduled for 14 June 2017. Officers have completed responses to the Examiner's matters, issues, and questions, and liaised with the programme officer. The hearing took place on 14 June, and we are expecting the Examiner's report within the next month.

### **Promoting a range of employment skills and opportunities across the borough**

##### **Economic Development Strategy Update**

The Holding Strategy for Maidstone East will be implemented in phases but will be completed by the end of May. Six expressions of interest have been received following the issue of a Sifting Brief for a Lead Consultant on the Homes and Communities Agency Property Panel Framework. A shortlist will be produced and mini competition will follow. The Housing and Regeneration Strategy will be presented to Policy and Resources Committee (P&R), alongside an update of the Town Centre Investment Plan in July 2017. A Delivery Plan for the Enterprise Zone was approved by P&R in March. The Council's Local Government Funding bid to fund infrastructure improvements at Junction 7 M20 and nearby roundabouts was not successful - other funding opportunities are being explored. Approval has been given by Heritage, Culture and Leisure and Communities, Housing, and Environment Committees to extend the scope of the public realm work phase 3, and approve the designs for public consultation purposes. P&R approval is being sought in April.

# **Planning for Sufficient Homes to meet our Borough's Needs**

## **Housing Strategy 2015-2020**

### **Acquisition of property**

Policy & Resources Committee agreed at its meeting on 29 March to proceed with the acquisition of 13 properties. Offers have been made on 13 suitable properties with a view to completion as soon as possible.

## **Housing Assistance Policy**

### **Adopt New Empty Homes Strategy**

Acknowledging that Maidstone does not have a significant issue with long-term empty homes this issue was considered during the member review of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Having reviewed the progress made in previous years it was agreed that other areas of work, such as supporting the Temporary Accommodation Strategy, required prioritisation for resources. It was therefore agreed that a new Empty Homes Strategy was not required but the work on empty homes would continue as part of the overall Housing Strategy.

### **Review and update housing assistance policy**

Communities Housing and Environment Committee approved the new housing assistance policy in September 2016.

### **To determine the number of properties for improvement following review of outcome from stock condition survey**

Work on this project has been delayed, as a Kent-wide consortium has been implemented to explore whether a better package can be achieved by commissioning a multi-borough survey. It is anticipated that a decision will be reached in late 2017.