

Strategic Plan – Proposed Areas for Focus 2021-2026 and Key Performance Indicators for Covid-19 Recovery

Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Director	Alison Broom Chief Executive
Lead Officer and Report Author	Alison Broom Chief Executive Angela Woodhouse - Head of Policy, Communications and Governance Anna Collier - Policy and Information Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report proposes refreshed areas of focus for the Council's Strategic Plan for the period 2021-2026 consistent with the Council's Vision and blended with the continued need for response to and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Feedback is sought from the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee especially for areas of focus which are within the scope of the Committee's terms of reference. All feedback will be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 10 February and recommendations made to Council on 20 February 2021.

Purpose of Report

Discussion and to identify recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee consider the proposed refreshed areas of focus for the Council's Strategic Plan for the period 2021-2026, set out in Appendix C and feedback and recommendations are provided to Policy and Resources Committee
2. That the proposed Key Performance Indicators for Covid-19 Recovery set out in Appendix D are considered and feedback and recommendations are provided to the Policy and Resources Committee

Timetable	
<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee	9 February 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	10 February 2021
Council	24 February 2021

Strategic Plan – Proposed Areas for Focus 2021-2026 and Key Performance Indicators for Covid-19 Recovery

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p><i>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</i> <i>Safe, Clean and Green</i> <i>Homes and Communities</i> <i>A Thriving Place</i> <p>This report considers the proposed areas of focus for the Strategic Priorities for the next five years and identifies action for progressing the shaping of the areas of focus for 2021-2026.</p>	Chief Executive
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p><i>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Heritage is Respected</i> <i>Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</i> <i>Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved</i> <i>Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</i> <p>Consideration has been given to the cross-cutting objectives in formulating the proposed areas of focus for the Strategic Plan</p>	Chief Executive
Risk Management	A review of corporate risk will be undertaken with respect to any changes made to the Strategic Plan areas of focus.	Chief Executive
Financial	The Strategic Plan sets the Council's Priorities and the direction for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Chief Executive
Legal	The Council has a statutory duty to make arrangements to secure continuous	[Legal Team]

	<p>improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Council's Strategic Plan demonstrates compliance with this duty.</p> <p>This review of the Council's priorities within the Strategic Plan will enable the Council to deliver services in an efficient and effective manner which meets the needs of the borough and aspirations of local inhabitants and stakeholders.</p> <p>In reviewing the priorities, the Council is obliged to ensure that its financial obligations are adhered to. The Council has a legal duty to set a balanced budget and continue to monitor the budget during the course of each municipal year and take remedial action if at any time.</p>	
Privacy and Data Protection	The recommendations do not have an impact on privacy and data protection. If as a result of the update to the milestones and the emerging MTFS for 2021-2026 changes are required to services involving personal data, then Data Protection Impact Assessments will be undertaken.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment. If as a result of the update to the milestones and the emerging MTFS for 2021-2026 changes are required to services, then an Equalities Impact assessment will be undertaken.	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	One of the Council's cross cutting objectives is that Health Inequalities are addressed and reduced. The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an impact assessment. If as a result of the update to the milestones and the emerging MTFS for 2021-2026 changes are required to services, then a Health Impact assessment will be undertaken.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The recommendations include reviewing the areas of focus for 2021-26 for the Safe, Clean and Green Priority and the actions proposed are included in Appendix C	Chief Executive

Procurement	No direct implications	Chief Executive
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1. This report proposes refreshed areas of focus for 2021-2026 consistent with the Council's Vision and four priorities; it reflects both the long-term ambitions of the Council blended with the continued need for response to and recovery from the Covid-19 health pandemic. These were considered for consultation with Service Committees by the Policy and Resources Committee on 20 January 2021, the following feedback was received on areas of focus under the remit for this committee.
- Inclusion of a detailed focus on the potential provision for G&T communities under local plan work suggested wording "Expanding the Council's role in the delivery of affordable and market rent housing including the provision of G&T"
- 2.2. In July 2020 the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance presented a report to the Policy and Resources Committee which set out progress made against the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan Outcomes (see Appendix A). The report also included a timetable to refresh the outcomes to ensure they reflected the progress that had been made and to respond to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2.3. The current Strategic Plan was developed involving a wide cross section of Councillors, staff and other stakeholders in 2018 before being adopted in December of that year. The vision and priorities are clear and remain relevant.
- 2.4. In June 2020 the Policy and Resources Committee also considered the Council's approach to recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and recognised that it was likely that this would be intertwined with episodes of response, and this has proved to be the case.
- 2.5. The Council's approach to recovery is based on four themes: economic recovery, supporting resilience for communities and vulnerable people, adapting the way we work and financial recovery. This has been managed via a core group of officers led by the Chief Executive and both response and the limited work on recovery has been informed by a Member Covid-19 Recovery Consultative Forum chaired by the Leader of the Council.
- 2.6. Work was carried out in the summer of 2020 to enable all Councillors to review our Strategic Plan outcomes for 2019-24 and contribute to production of revised priorities and a refreshed set of outcomes for 2021-26. Over the period August to October 2020 a survey was conducted inviting the public to give feedback on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. A summary of the responses is included at Appendix B. The full results can be found here: <https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/council-and-democracy/primary-areas/consultations/closed-consultations>

2.7. Covid-19 has had a major impact for our communities, our economy and on the Council's financial position. The Covid-19 Recovery Consultative Forum have been regularly briefed on the impacts and the Council's support for residents and businesses in the borough. The Policy and Resources Committee has been regularly briefed on the review of council priorities. It has also been briefed on the scale of the financial impact, for the current financial year and over the term of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This Committee has also been regularly briefed concerning the council's current financial position and on-going work to revise the MTFS.

2.7 In September the Policy and Resources Committee agreed the following in relation to shaping the areas of focus:

- There should be further development of the Council's capital strategy and programme including consideration of partnership funding of large-scale projects and infrastructure including consideration of joint ventures and a development corporation.
- A review of planning and economic development services reflecting on the effectiveness of our current services and reconsidering our service delivery model taking into account the changes in the planning system and looking at: expertise, organisational arrangements, including the synergies between planning policy and economic development, our arrangements for delivering/enabling construction projects, and agility.
- A report concerning a protocol for working strategically with the community and voluntary sectors and parishes is progressed initially via the Communities Housing and Environment Committee.
- That the Council initiates dialogue with the Business Improvement District concerning current challenges and future investment in the town centre.
- Officers review the scope of work undertaken and resources allocated to the Community Safety Unit.
- The direction of travel on modernising the arrangements at the museum is now more modest and focuses on making the best use of existing spaces.
- Review of the contribution of the Hazlitt to the town centre economy and consideration of options for its sustainability.
- Reduction of the priority of raising resident satisfaction with cleanliness to maintaining it.
- References to individual projects e.g. Go Green Go Wild are removed from areas of focus in the Strategic Plan; and
- Climate change becomes a cross cutting issue for all services to consider proactively and that an officer is required to lead this work and be proactive in finding funding streams to complement the Council's commitment.

2.9 The draft areas for focus for 2021-26 (Appendix C) and KPIs for Covid19 recovery (Appendix D) endeavour to reflect the current position on these topics and what needs to be achieved over the period to 2026 to bring the Council's vision to fruition.

- 2.10 Feedback is invited from this Committee on the draft areas of focus and the KPIs. The same process has already been undertaken with the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee and Communities, Housing and Environment Committee. Feedback will be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on 12 February before recommendations are made to Full Council on 20 February 2021.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Option 1 - The Committee can consider and provide feedback with respect to proposed areas of focus arising from the Strategic Plan, for the period 2021-2026 and the proposed KPIs for monitoring Covid19 recovery. This is the preferred option to ensure that the work of the council reflects both the Council's overall ambitions, what has been achieved to date and the changed operational and financial environment arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.2 Option 2 - The alternative is that no feedback is given or change contemplated. This option is not recommended as it would produce a situation which is the antithesis of refreshing actions in the Strategic Plan and which would fail to recognise the significantly changed operational and financial environment which in turn would not respond to changed needs and result in sub-optimal use of resources.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Option 1 is recommended for the reasons set out above.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework.
- 5.2 A review of corporate risk will be undertaken with respect to any changes made to the Strategic Plan areas of focus.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Councillors have been consulted concerning priorities for the Strategic Plan areas of focus from July 2020 onwards and have taken a range of subsequent decisions which are also reflected in the proposed areas of focus set out in Appendix C. The member Covid-19 Recovery Forum has been consulted on the draft KPIs set out in Appendix D.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Further consultation concerning proposed areas of focus for 2021– 2026 and KPIs for Covid-19 recovery is currently in progress with service committees with a subsequent report will be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee which will make recommendations for adoption to Full Council in February 2021.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Progress against outcomes in the Strategic Plan 2019-24
- Appendix B: Results from the Residents Survey – Impact of Covid-19
- Appendix C: Strategic Plan Proposed Areas of Focus 2021–2026
- Appendix D: Proposed Covid-19 KPIs for Recovery

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None