



# Corporate Strategy, 2025-2035



## Leader's Foreword

Our aim is to make Maidstone Borough a place people can be proud of, where they feel they belong, where they feel safe, and where the rights of nature and people are respected. We will place the needs of people and the environment at the heart of everything we do to ensure we have a borough fit for future generations.

In recent years, there have been many challenges, from the global pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis to the escalating climate and nature emergencies, and from the ongoing international conflicts with their locally felt impacts. These challenges have highlighted the need to work in partnership with the public, business and community sectors so that together we co-create the solutions that tackle the multitude of crises that we face.

Residents and their lived experience will be the driving force of change. By empowering them through new citizen engagement models, including a poverty truth commission and citizens assemblies, we will harness your collective wisdom and creativity. Through genuine partnership working and strong local leadership, we can foster community-led initiatives that create lasting impact.

We have an ambition to deliver quality homes for all, going beyond the 1,000 affordable homes target previously set to ensure we meet everyone's housing need in our Borough. We will deliver an ambitious Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy focused on adaptation and nature recovery including nature based solutions to improve our rivers. We will tackle health inequalities working with our partners creating a new health inequalities action plan and ensuring we have a health in all policies approach. Our new economic development strategy will be focussed on ensuring that we meet the needs of both people and the planet. We will support our thriving cultural community with grants, events and the delivery of a new creative maker space in our town centre.

We are committed to tackling the scourge of litter and fly-tipping that so disfigures our Borough, utilising new technology and tough intelligence-led enforcement. Protecting and restoring the countryside is a key priority and we are taking forward ambitious plans to better protect our most cherished local landscapes and ramp-up safeguards for our precious trees and woodland.

However, in December 2024 the government announced the biggest reform to local government since the 1970s, this sees our two-tier structure of county and district councils replaced with new unitaries and new regional mayors. Our strategy and the plans that support it will therefore be a living document to help us deliver as much of what is needed for the Borough in the final years of this Council.

Together we will work towards taking action that is both ecologically and socially just and is a bold step towards creating a more sustainable and fairer future for the Borough of Maidstone.

Councillor Stuart Jeffery

Leader of Maidstone Borough Council

## **A High Quality Place, Adapted for a Changing Climate**

### **Context:**

Maidstone is a place of rich history and natural beauty. We are committed to preserving this heritage and creating a sustainable future for generations to come. This priority focuses on protecting and enhancing our environment, from our urban centre to our rural landscapes and villages. We will address pressing environmental challenges, investing in green infrastructure, improving public spaces, and promoting sustainable transport. We will take a collaborative approach with residents, businesses and community groups, to create a vibrant and sustainable place for everyone to enjoy.

### **Our Outcomes:**

- The borough to be net zero by 2030
- A climate resilient borough through appropriate adaptation
- A well-connected and accessible transport system
- Well maintained and beautiful parks
- Local Heritage is protected and enhanced
- Increased quantity of accessible natural space
- Healthy and diverse ecosystems

### **We will place particular importance on:**

- A clean and safe environment
- Delivering actions to ensure cleaner air for our borough's residents.
- Delivering an improved Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan that supports both mitigation and adaptation.
- A new approach to landscape management that puts nature recovery at its heart.
- Improving our network and connectivity of green and blue spaces.
- Celebrating and protecting Maidstone's rich natural and heritage assets.
- Developing a new landscape area assessment, which reduces impact on rural areas and works collaboratively with the agricultural sector.
- Delivering an Integrated, Sustainable Transport Strategy with better transport choices.
- River Restoration and rewilding to promote landscape beauty, biodiversity and flood mitigation.
- For Maidstone to deliver Local Plan policies that respond to social, environmental and economic needs.

## **Resilient Communities**

### **Context:**

Our strong and resilient communities are the foundation of our thriving borough. We will empower residents, foster local partnerships, and address social and economic challenges including poverty, to create a borough where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. This priority focuses on working with the voluntary and community sector to strengthen communities. We will address health inequalities, ensuring our residents are heard and services are accessible to all.

### **Our outcomes:**

- A reduction in health inequalities
- Residents have a sense of belonging and pride in place
- Council services are accessible, inclusive and trusted
- Residents' voices are heard
- An environment where different agencies can work together in a spirit of cooperation

### **We will place particular importance on:**

- Engaging with our underrepresented and unheard communities to understand their unique views and meet their needs.
- Strengthening communication with our Parish Councils and community organisations, recognising the important role they play in our communities.
- Working in partnership we will develop new and imaginative ways to provide leisure and health facilities.
- Improving the way residents access the Council's services and information and strengthen the Council's presence in the borough.
- Developing and delivering a health and wellbeing action plan to address health inequalities including health in all policies.
- Bringing people who experience poverty and local leaders together to understand what causes poverty and find creative solutions.
- Creating a Food Strategy that delivers a sustainable food economy.
- Making the most of community organisations and assets to improve community resilience.
- Supporting our local voluntary and community sector partners so they remain resilient and can continue to support our local communities.
- Supporting and engaging with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- Conducting a community governance review for unparished areas

## **Quality Homes for All**

### **Context:**

A safe, warm and comfortable home is essential for the wellbeing of our residents and the basis of a resilient community. This priority focuses on enhancing the quality and availability of housing options across the borough, that anyone can afford to pay for. By investing in new affordable housing, implementing robust homelessness prevention strategies, and raising standards within the private rented sector, we will ensure everyone has access to a secure, high-quality and affordable home.

### **Our outcomes:**

- More affordable and social housing in the borough
- Reduction in Homelessness
- Improved waiting times on the housing register
- Improved quality of accommodation and housing
- Increased pride in homes and place

### **We will place particular importance on:**

- Investing to accelerate the council's delivery of high-quality affordable and social housing that promotes healthy living, focussing on building sustainable communities.
- Working in partnership to improve homelessness prevention, reducing the use of temporary accommodation and the amount of time spent in it
- Working with tenants and landlords to improve the quality of private rented accommodation.
- Helping residents make their homes more energy efficient and their money go further, including seeking opportunities for innovation in local energy generation and supply.
- Identifying and allocating enough suitable land to meet the borough's housing need and support delivery of homes where people need them.
- Increasing the availability of housing with additional support services which help people live independently.
- Delivering improved and increased capacity for the Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities
- Minimising the number of empty homes

## **Fairer Economy for People and Planet**

### **Context:**

A fairer economy will ensure that people's needs are met without harming the environment. This priority focuses on creating a more sustainable and equitable future for our borough. It represents a move away from a linear 'take, make, consume and throw-away society', towards one that minimises waste of energy and resources, reduces pollution, keeps products and materials in use for as long as possible and supports the regeneration and protection of natural resources.

### **Our outcomes:**

- A borough that meets social and environmental needs
- A sustainable system where resources are used efficiently and waste is minimized
- Increased recycling rates and a reduction in waste
- Increase in jobs and business opportunities within our local economies  
A thriving cultural community supporting local creatives

### **We will place particular importance on:**

- Increasing rates of recycling and reuse to support a circular local economy
- Considering people, planet and finance to embed social and environmental accountability into the Council's operations and decisions.
- Developing employment and training opportunities that support young people and others requiring retraining to develop the economic prosperity of the borough for all.
- Refreshing the Economic Development Strategy to start with social and environmental principles first, to transform the economy rather than focus on growth.
- Refreshing the Arts and Culture Strategy to develop sustainable events, that develop local talent to attract visitors to our borough.

## **How we do things**

We will deliver true partnership working and ensure strong governance in all our actions through:

- Involving members early in policy development and decisions
- Recognise the importance of partnership working, pursuing opportunities to expand the ways we work with others
- Being evidence based in our decision making and having strong performance management
- Demonstrate strong local leadership, championing the borough at a regional and national level.
- Ensuring the needs and rights of both people and nature are considered in decision-making.
- Encouraging greater resident involvement in council policy and decision-making including use of citizen's panels
- Ensuring our commercial operations are high quality and customer focused

Strategy Map

To be added