

Corporate Plan 2021 - 2024

Our key priorities

We are determined to drive real and noticeable improvements in our core services while we deliver on our key priorities. This will be at the heart of what we do for the remaining term of this council.

There is no doubt resources will remain under intense pressure for years to come so, when the inevitable choices have to be made, these priorities will take precedence.

We will always look at the evidence to see if there is a compelling cultural, heritage, environmental or market-failure reason to justify us investing council taxpayers' money.

We will ensure the services residents really care about represent value for money while we build the foundation for the district's economy to recover from the current crisis then grow and flourish.

Sustainability, our commitment to the environment and our determination to be carbon-neutral will be a golden thread that runs through all of our priorities and are detailed in our Climate Change Action Plan.

Our four main priorities will be:

- **To support the district's economy to recover then grow**

We will create a pro-business district that supports enterprise and innovation in order to drive economic development through our policies, by the use of our extensive assets and the use of technology alongside our commitment to sustainability and the environment.

- **To deliver a better social housing service for our tenants**

We will create a Housing service that is as well funded as possible so that we can provide the services tenants need, when they need them. We will also use every way we can to buy, build and maintain a stock of quality homes.

- **To deliver better waste collection services for all residents**

Poor performance in this area has been an issue for years. Now is the time to deliver refuse collection and environmental services worthy of our residents. We aim to deliver a significant improvement in service over 2020/21 levels by the end of the 2019-2023 Council.

- **Using our enforcement powers to protect the district**

We will redouble our efforts to use our enforcement powers to take action against those who break the rules and affect the quality of life enjoyed by everyone else.

The rule breakers should be the ones expected to pay for this work wherever possible.

The Council's role

Everyone at the council recognises the key to driving improvements to our core services and delivering on our key priorities is leadership and excellent organisation.

Fostering healthy, strong and robust relationships is vital so we will continue to promote equality and diversity in everything we do and foster good relations among all of our communities especially residents and businesses.

We will:

- **Ensure we become increasingly efficient and effective in all of the services we provide**

We believe we should continue to work towards becoming financially self-sufficient by ensuring:

- We generate income to reduce our reliance on Council Tax and government funding
- We run services that are fully digital and allow our customers to serve themselves wherever possible. This frees up resources and reduces the need to stop providing other services or lower their standards
- Where we have control over fees and charges, the user of the service will pay the whole cost of the service they receive

We will ensure all customers can access our services according to their needs.

- **Providing leadership and fighting for the district**

We are an ambitious and environmentally-aware council. By showing leadership and fighting for the district, we will deliver economic growth not only across this Council term but also lay the foundations for success for the next 20 years.

- We will develop, lead and support the district's recovery as we move to a post-Covid and EU transition world, ensuring our economy and communities can adapt to and benefit from the new normal
- We want our new Local Plan to focus on prosperity, wealth creation and sustainability. Infrastructure is vital, as is the quality of homes delivered. We want the people living in those homes to feel part of our community

- We are committed to the council achieving its carbon-neutral ambitions by 2030 by working to deliver our Climate Change Action Plan, but we cannot ignore the global, national and local opportunities and threats that have emerged over the past nine months. That means our efforts must be economically viable and timed to get best value for our residents
- We recognise preserving and enhancing our heritage assets is important but in order to do so they must where possible be actively participating in the district's economy. We should embrace the private and third sectors to find new and innovative ways to use these assets. When it comes to the private sector, One Pound Lane is an excellent example, while the third sector is playing a positive role in relation to the Whitstable West Quay, Herne Bay Pier and the Marlowe Kit
- We recognise new housing developments need real open space that is close by to protect the health and wellbeing of residents. The Council should - within our powers - protect these spaces and work in partnership to enhance and maintain them
- We will work hard to keep our influence over transport matters in our district, even though responsibility lies elsewhere, so that we can implement our plans wherever possible

What our priorities mean

To support the district's economy to recover then grow

The perfect storm of a pandemic followed by the inevitable sharp recession has wiped away years of economic growth and we need to support the district's economy to recover then help it to grow

We will focus on providing support that will result in the creation of jobs with a particular focus on those that are well paid and created by new business start ups. We will create as many different opportunities as we can to ensure wealth creation and prosperity.

We will support our brilliant education sector as one of the main drivers of higher wages and using their research work to create new opportunities for local businesses.

Even with our limited resources, there are ways we can achieve this. We will:

- Create a new Disposals Policy, to sell those of our assets that are not contributing to our economy or other priorities, and to reinvest the money that generates, with a focus on redevelopment and regeneration
- In the face of increasing car parking charges, we will launch new incentive schemes that make best use of our innovative and cutting-edge technology to stimulate demand at the right times, paying particular attention to our green credentials
- Seek money from elsewhere to support business start-ups, advice clinics and/or growth hubs
- Use the Local Plan and Transport Strategy to focus on creating commercial opportunities and deliver new infrastructure with a particular focus on green development
- Be proud to support private enterprise and encourage it to thrive

We will continue to deliver the infrastructure projects we have already committed to such as the Riverside, Canterbury.

We will invest in future development that benefits the district and our economy. We will also seek money from outside our organisation to support and invest in the delivery of our Climate Change Action Plan.

To deliver a better social housing service for our tenants

Bringing the social housing service back in-house is likely to come at significant cost as we lose the economies of scale of the shared housing service, make up for years of under-investment and false 'savings' are uncovered.

Improving the standard and quality of the service we provide is our priority with a desire to find new ways to pay for a growing housing stock in the face of a Housing Revenue Account that is currently stretched to capacity.

Tenants need to be supported through what are often difficult circumstances, with significantly better access to services than they have been getting under East Kent Housing. Their challenges are our challenges.

To deliver better waste collection services for all residents

If bringing housing back in-house was a significant challenge, that pales into insignificance to the Council running its own refuse collection and environmental services company.

Collections need to be made consistently and on time while the streets need to be clean. The system residents use to report problems needs to be simple and efficient.

Moreover, graffiti needs to be removed and that will also be the responsibility of our new Canterbury Environment Company.

Using our enforcement powers to protect the district

When we use our powers, we have to be as quick as we can and the action we take publicised. This will send a very clear message that our district does not tolerate those who seek to harm it or impact the quality of life of our other residents. We want to make residents feel safer and happier about where they live.

Our enforcement activity runs across planning, parking, licensing, littering, protecting our open spaces and public realm improvements and more; strong enforcement is important across the entire district.

Wherever possible the cost of providing this service should be made up by those who break the rules, so that the council taxpayers who are good members of our communities and always follow the rules are not punished and hit in their pockets.