

ANNEX 1

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Corporate Strategy - DRAFT

2017 – 2019



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About our Corporate Strategy

The development of a new Corporate Strategy marks a significant change in approach for Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council when compared to previous years. Our previous Corporate Performance Plan sought to address a wide range of service issues and assessed performance using a myriad of indicators and targets. We now need to be more strategic in our approach. We are facing considerable financial challenges alongside changing and, in some cases, increasing demands on the services we provide. We have made good progress in addressing these challenges to date but we now need to continue to adopt and embed different and smarter ways of working to sustain our progress.

The strategy sets out how we intend to plan and deliver our services in the future and ensure they are relevant to our residents, businesses, visitors to the Borough, and our partners.

This Strategy sets out for the next three years :

- ***Our vision and values***
- ***Meeting the challenges ahead***
- ***The way forward***
- ***A commitment to working in partnership***
- ***Measuring Success.***

Our Vision and our Values

Our vision for the next three years is:

To be a financially sustainable Council that delivers good value services, provides strong and clear leadership and, with our partners, addresses the needs of our Borough.

We will be guided in the delivery of the above vision by the following core values:

- ***Taking a business-like approach*** - focusing on ensuring good value for money, continuously reviewing how our services are provided and funded, focusing our available resources where they will have most beneficial impact, and maximising commercial opportunities.
- ***Promoting Fairness*** - acting transparently at all times and being accountable for what we do, and promoting equality of opportunities.
- ***Embracing Effective Partnership Working*** - achieving more by working and engaging effectively with a wide range of local partners from the private, public, voluntary and community sectors.
- ***Valuing our environment and encouraging sustainable growth*** - keeping our towns, villages and countryside clean and well maintained, planning for our future homes and jobs and seeking investment in economic regeneration and infrastructure.

Meeting the Challenges Ahead

The Council is facing a period of considerable change and challenge over the next three years and beyond. Reducing financial support from Government will mean we need to target resources on delivering core services. At the same time we have to be agile in the way we manage these services to meet the rapidly changing demands and needs of our residents and businesses.

We have recently adopted a Savings and Transformation Strategy that sets out what we need to do over the next three years in terms of change and financial savings that total £1.8M. There are seven key themes:

- generating new income and cost recovery
- looking at ways of delivering retained services more efficiently
- reviewing discretionary services and delivering mandatory services at a lower cost
- reducing costs when service contracts are renewed and re-tendered
- realignment of services and reviewing our management structures
- reviewing our partnership arrangements and the funding we offer to those bodies
- Investing the proceeds gained from the release of assets.

To deliver this strategy successfully, we need to increase our pace of change and inject further fresh approaches to our business and the way we undertake it.

The Way Forward

With significant reductions in Government funding support over the next three years and changing demands on our services, we need to decide what is most important in ensuring our adopted vision is achieved and that we fully embrace our agreed values.

Building on our Savings and Transformation Strategy, we will seek to deliver the following **key actions**:

We need to continue to identify additional opportunities to **generate more income** to compensate for reductions in Government grant. This means being more commercial and imaginative about the way we operate than we have been previously, being bolder in our approach and less risk-averse. It could include selling services to others and developing new sources of income, such as our community lottery, and investing our money differently. We will also review how our existing property assets can be used to generate new revenue income streams that can then be invested in service delivery.

New income generation will help us sustain key services, but the scale and pace of change in Government funding will mean that the Council will need to **review some discretionary services and, in some cases, significantly reduce, discontinue, or do them differently**. We will identify annual savings and efficiencies, to supplement the themes set out in the Savings and Transformation Strategy, and set out the proposed changes to our services, the reasons for these changes, and how they will be implemented.

We will also seek to identify **new efficiencies** that could save money and allow key services to be developed. We will look at ways we can transform the organisation, for example, by reorganising our staff structures, adopting a 'one team approach' to meet the best needs of our residents and communities and reviewing how we work to deliver efficient and effective services.

A Commitment to Working in Partnership

Most of the work we undertake now involves joint working with a wide range of partners. The Borough Council remains fully committed to maintaining the close working relationships we already have in place and to develop stronger and wide-ranging jointly delivered initiatives and actions.

Working with our Borough Partners

We are committed to retaining and developing our close working relationships with our Borough partners. We will continue to support our Local Strategic Partnership, our main partnership which brings together key local partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors. We will continue to engage with our Parish Councils via a refreshed Parish Partnership Panel led by a new, jointly agreed Parish Charter. In addition, we remain committed to developing our dialogue with local businesses and traders' groups, with local housing providers, and other partners including those for health improvement, sports and recreation, community development and community safety. We will foster relationships with those agencies providing infrastructure to support our communities and facilitate growth where appropriate, working with the private development, investment and commercial sectors.

Working Across West Kent

The Borough Council works closely with Sevenoaks District Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent County Council. The West Kent Partnership, for example, has enabled us to work jointly on wider economic regeneration and transport issues and has enabled us to have a stronger collective voice helping to secure funding for key infrastructure projects. We now wish to develop those relationships even further. The new approach might include stronger Governance arrangements to underpin a wider range of shared services and closer working relationships between the two tiers of Local Government. Under this new arrangement, there might also be the potential to seek freedoms and flexibilities from Central Government and enable the West Kent authorities to deliver certain national services on a more local basis.

Measuring Success

We will review this corporate strategy each year to evaluate what we have achieved so far and what new and redirected efforts we need to focus on. The key measures we intend to use for this review include the following:

- *Our progress towards meeting our financial targets as set out in the Savings and Transformation Strategy both in terms of the cost savings we have achieved and new income we have generated*
- *Adopting a culture of continuous improvement in change and efficiency through a small set of key indicators covering the core services we provide*
- *Assessing the pace of change we have achieved in rewiring our services to meet customer needs and to identify where positive changes could be accelerated further*
- *Engage with our key partners to challenge us on our progress and achievements*
- *Explore opportunities to receive feedback and comments via consultation with our residents, businesses, visitors, partners and staff.*

To ensure transparency and accountability, we will commit to publishing the results of our annual savings and will be open about the need for continuing change.