

Draft Corporate Plan 2020 - 2022

Priorities and key actions

Priority one

We will take a leading role in tackling climate change across the district.

What does this mean?

In July 2019, the council declared a climate emergency and set a target to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2030.

To meet this long-term target, the council needs to change how it works, find a way of balancing the need for the district to grow and prosper with the climate change agenda and encourage others, including residents, to adapt their behaviour for the good of the environment.

This does not mean the council will stop being ambitious.

But it will mean councillors will need to make difficult decisions because of the limited amount of money at our disposal and our need to deliver essential frontline services.

As we head towards 2030, each of our corporate plans will move the council closer to meeting its target.

The council realises the scale of change needed cannot be delivered by any single policy, action or council administration.

How will we do this?

Climate change has climbed to the top of the agenda in recent but months but the council has already taken some steps in the right direction. We set out our work up to now and what we will do in the future below.

Key committee

The Policy and Resources Committee will oversee most of the work relating to this priority and receive recommendations from the all-party Climate Change Working Group on the action it needs to take in the longer term.

What are we currently doing?

- Supporting a councillor-led, cross-party working group as it works on our immediate response to the climate challenge
- Installing more electric vehicle charging points than any other district in Kent
- Redeveloping Station Road West car park to enable greater use of rail for out-of-district travel
- Increasing our park and ride provision for the city to reduce congestion and improve air quality

- Appointed a car club operator in Canterbury to help to reduce car ownership
- Extending the Park and Pedal scheme to the Sturry Park and Ride site
- Continuing to improve and maintain our sea defences to protect our at-risk coastal communities from the effects of climate change
- Installing signs near to level crossings to encourage drivers to switch off their engines
- Running events at schools encouraging pupils to tell their parents to leave the car at home for the school run
- Working with event venues and the organisers of events on council land to restrict the use of generators using solid fuel, diesel or petrol

What will we do over the next two years?

- Continue the council's leadership role in tackling climate change by establishing a Canterbury Climate Change Board to work with other public sector bodies, engage with the public and continue to support grassroots organisations such as Plastic Free Whitstable and Refill Whitstable
- Review our Local Plan to ensure that climate change is a key consideration in the district's future growth
- Use the creation of a local authority trading company for refuse collection as an opportunity to ensure refuse freighters are as low emission as they can be within technological and financial restraints
- Endorsing a new parking strategy that persuades drivers to change their behaviour
- Use the renewal of the Park and Ride contract to specify the fuel type and emissions levels of the buses to be used for travel between park and ride sites and the city centre within technological and financial restraints
- Work with others to implement an intelligent transport system such as linking traffic signals, interactive car parking signs and variable message signs to give motorists up-to-date information on queues and car parks that are full
- Move the council's main offices from its current building in Canterbury to a new one that is carbon neutral ready and has significantly lower day-to-day running costs
- Lobby Network Rail for line speed improvements from Ramsgate to Ashford
- Work with the Quality Bus Partnership to improve the frequency of buses, journey times and reliability and the relative cost of bus travel compared to driving, while reducing emissions
- Lobby for the improvement in broadband infrastructure to enable more people to work from home
- Encourage the use of low-emission or electric taxis through Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle licence fees
- Support the delivery of road network improvements that will contribute to a reduction in congestion and result in improved traffic flows on the inner ring road These improvements include new A2 off slip at Wincheap, Wincheap relief road and a new A2 interchange at Bridge
- Facilitate and work with others to promote alternative modes of transport such as cycling and walking

- Develop strategies to ensure our custodianship of our important open spaces are improved and maintained such as restoring the Seasalter Levels SSSI and Reculver Country Park extension
- Conduct feasibility study on converting the 1,582 street lights operated by Canterbury City Council to LED lights
- Install solar panels on the South Quay Shed development in Whitstable Harbour along with energy-efficient glazing and insulation.

Who will we need to engage, encourage and inform to ensure success?

- Kent County Council which is the highway and transport authority for the district
- Key public transport providers including Stagecoach, Network Rail and the train operating company
- Other leading organisations including the city's universities, schools, the National Health Service (NHS), businesses and community groups
- Our residents to support their efforts to reduce their carbon footprint
- Grassroots projects like Plastic Free Whitstable and Plastic Free Herne Bay
- Our colleagues in parish councils

Priority two

We will deliver our services effectively and efficiently ensuring we do all we can to get them right the first time

What does this mean?

It is fair to say the maxim that change is the only constant has been true of local government for some time.

Canterbury City Council has embraced change and often leads the way in the county and across the country.

Delivering effective and efficient services means we need to constantly need to think about how we work and the best way of doing that is by putting the needs of our customers at the very heart of what we do.

We need to make sure we do not spend more money than we have and be more commercial in the way we work.

How will we do this?

By keeping the way we deliver constantly under review to ensure we put the customer at the heart of the way we work, that we are fleet of foot and can take advantage of the opportunities presented to us and we use technology to find out what our customers want, when they want it and how they want it.

That can mean using the wealth of data the digital world provides to shape and deliver our services, constantly improving the communication between the council and its customers and helping residents to access services or report problems online.

Sometimes that will mean taking greater control of the services we deliver. Moving from a bin collection service delivered by a private company to one delivered by a company wholly-owned and controlled by the council is just one example.

We will also need to be far more commercially-minded in the way we work.

More than two-thirds of the money we use to deliver services comes from things that we charge for.

This will mean running some parts of the council in the same way we would run our own businesses, learning from the private sector, minimising our costs and charging for services where we can to make sure we can pay for the frontline and safety-net services that make a vital difference to people's day-to-day lives.

Key committee

The Policy and Resources Committee will oversee most of the work relating to this priority and may receive recommendations from other committees based on consultation or specific investment priorities.

What are we currently doing?

- Constantly reviewing how the council works in order to deliver effective services
- Investing in our digital systems to provide innovative and accessible online ways to access services
- Ensuring we act commercially in the way we deliver services
- Tackling our £5m budget savings target head on while ensuring the quality of our services does not fall below expectations
- Investing in projects within the district so we can use the profit we generate to invest in frontline and safety-net services

What will we do over the next two years?

- Create a council-owned company to deliver our waste and street cleansing services
- Review the way we manage our social housing stock to ensure our tenants and leaseholders get the best possible service
- Continue investing in digital technology to help drive efficiency, save money and allow residents to access services online 24 hours a day
- Consult on charging for some of our services where this will help maintain or improve the service we provide.
- Expand our Lifeline service to more customers and use advances in technology to support vulnerable residents
- Provide free WiFi in high footfall areas throughout the district boosting online access to council services while supporting high-street businesses and tourism
- Move the council's main offices from Military Road in Canterbury to a new building that is carbon neutral ready and has significantly lower day-to-day running costs
- Invest in the continued expansion of the automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) car park system to improve the customer experience, cut running costs and improve the collection of payments
- Review and implement new ways of working in the management of our property portfolio to maximise income and use
- Recommend further investment opportunities for the council

Who will we need to engage, encourage and inform to ensure success?

- Those that live, work and study in the city to understand how our services can be better and to help shape our plans to save money
- Key players in the district such as businesses, the higher and further education sector, the NHS, Kent County Council and parish councils

- Advisory groups such as the Disability Advisory Panel to ensure our services meet the needs of their users
- Grassroots organisations including amenity groups

Priority three

We will help to increase prosperity throughout the district in as sustainable a way as we can

What does this mean?

There are a huge number of ways the council can act as a catalyst for increased prosperity across the district.

To do that in a sustainable way and one that does not add to the effects of climate change and adversely affect air quality is a much more difficult line to tread.

Councillors will need to make difficult decisions about where to strike the balance.

How will we do this?

All of our decisions in this area, many of them extremely difficult, need to be underpinned by accurate information and data. We also have to recognise the fact the city, Herne Bay, Whitstable and our villages will have different needs now and in the future.

The council has just started the process of refreshing the district's Local Plan.

This will establish a long-term vision for the district that will determine future housing numbers, secure improvements to infrastructure like roads and schools, help to create jobs and will protect our open spaces. It will also need to balance all of this with the need to stop climate change

We recognise the need to deliver housing for residents in all income brackets including homes in the social rented, private rented and home ownership sectors.

We also need to fulfil the needs of business while making sure we minimise the environmental impacts of growth.

The council will continue to invest directly in the district's future. Our role in the regeneration of the Kingsmead area of Canterbury and the creation of a cinema, restaurants, parking, affordable homes and student accommodation is a case in point.

We will use any profits we generate to invest in frontline and safety-net services.

Along with others, the council will work hard to attract investment into the district to help create jobs.

We acknowledge the role tourism plays in the prosperity of the district and, working with others, we will work hard to increase the number of visitors enjoying the area and helping the businesses that create jobs to survive.

Key committee

The Regeneration and Property Committee will oversee most of the work relating to this priority and may receive recommendations from or make recommendations to other committees based on the type of decision required.

The Regeneration and Property Committee will work with the Community Committee on buying or building social housing and temporary accommodation.

The Planning Committee plays a key role in delivering the vision outlined in the Local Plan. around homes, job creation and business growth, infrastructure improvements like new schools and surgeries and the protection of open spaces.

The Licensing Committee also has a role to play in regulating some of the activities that are vital to a vibrant local economy.

What are we currently doing?

- Developing the Riverside scheme in Kingsmead, Canterbury with a range of partners to create affordable housing, a cinema, restaurants, parking and student accommodation
- Building homes at Kingsmead Field, Canterbury and Beach Street in Herne Bay which will deliver houses to be sold on the open market and social housing
- Developing the Beach Street area of Herne Bay including new spaces for local businesses
- Creating new social housing in the Parham Road area of Canterbury to increase the amount of social housing available to those that need it
- Created a property company to enable the council to develop its own housing
- Continuing to improve and maintain our sea defence infrastructure to protect our at-risk coastal communities
- Redeveloping Station Road West car park to enable and encourage greater use of rail for out-of-district commuting and travel
- Increasing our park and ride provision for the city to reduce congestion and improve air quality
- Enabling the development of the Slatters Hotel site in Canterbury to increase quality hotel provision
- Created new business space in Herne Bay to enable and attract new businesses

What will we do over the next two years?

- In the review of our Local Plan we will create a sustainable vision for the district which describes how homes, jobs and infrastructure projects like schools and roads will be delivered to meet the needs and aspirations of the community while doing all we can to limit climate change
- Buy and develop new temporary accommodation through investment opportunities such as the Parham Road scheme

- Develop new social housing provision on existing council land
- Review and then sell assets that no longer meet our needs or those of the community so we can use that money to invest in frontline services
- Make St George's Street in Canterbury a place people will want to stop in and enjoy
- Review our car park portfolio to ensure we are making the best use of our assets and encouraging greater use of our park and ride sites
- Deliver a new Park and Ride contract that encourages greater use with emission-free buses, subject to technological and financial constraints
- Review and implement new ways of working in the management of our property portfolio to maximise income and use
- Enabling further hotel development within the district to encourage visitors to stay and spend for longer
- Developing the South Quay Shed at Whitstable Harbour to deliver new public amenities and generate income
- Create new business space in Herne Bay to enable and attract new businesses
- Support and act as a critical friend to the University of Kent in producing their masterplan
- Ensure our heritage buildings are looked after so that they continue to support the growth and appeal of the district as a place to live, work and visit
- Working with the Canterbury Business Improvement District to enhance and maintain our city centre
- Using our strategic relationship with the county council to lobby and make the case for improved transport development and investment that eases congestion

Who will we need to engage, encourage and inform to ensure success?

- Kent County Council as the highways and transport authority
- Key players in the district such as businesses and those represent them such as the Canterbury Connected Business Improvement District, the higher and further education sector, the NHS and parish councils
- Our tenants including Active Life, Marlowe Theatre and local businesses to enable further investment in the services we deliver
- Those that live, work and study in the city to understand their needs
- Historic England and other relevant non-governmental organisations

Priority four

We will focus our increasingly-scarce resources on meeting the needs of our communities

What does this mean?

The council delivers a wide range of services from emptying bins, helping the homeless and tackling anti-social behaviour like flytipping and dog fouling to ensuring restaurant kitchens are clean, running cemeteries and helping to regulate zoos and animal parks. This list is by no means exhaustive.

So that our services are the best they can be, we will focus on meeting the needs of our residents using data to shape and deliver them, regularly review what we and how we do it and listen to everyone in the community and not just those who have the time and resources to lobby elected councillors.

This will allow councillors to take the difficult decisions needed to prioritise resources with a full understanding of the cost and impact.

How will we do this?

We will listen to our communities recognising there is not a single voice, that their needs and demands will often conflict and the council will not be able to do everything.

Councillors will be called upon to make some very difficult decisions along the way.

There is a whole host of ways the council can try to understand the needs of those who live, work and study here including intelligence gathered by councillors while out in the community, give people the opportunity to have their say at council meetings, the use of data, consultation and talking to the myriad organisations in the district that represent the community.

We are a proud part of the democratic system so will encourage as many people as possible to take part.

We recognise will need to use our knowledge of our district and communities to make the case for those that cannot or will not engage in this way.

While we do not make all of the decisions affecting the district, we can act as a clear voice for our communities.

We will lobby on important issues and make clear the impact individual decisions will have.

Key committee

The Community Committee will oversee most of the work relating to this priority and may receive recommendations from or make recommendations to other committees based on the type of decision required.

The Community Committee will work with the Regeneration and Property Committee on buying or building social housing and temporary accommodation, and the Policy and Resources Committee for recommendations that require significant investment or new policies to enable new ways of working.

What are we currently doing?

- Constantly reviewing how the council works in order to deliver effective services
- Investing in our websites and communications channels to ensure we can actively talk and listen to residents, customers and interest groups
- Using our enforcement powers to actively manage anti-social behaviour such as littering and graffiti
- Installing security bollards in the city centre to ensure residents, businesses and visitors a protected from some forms of terrorism
- Working to end rough sleeping by closely cooperating with charities Catching Lives and Porchlight, appointing a full time rough sleeper co-ordinator to work out on the frontline with individual rough sleepers to encourage them into housing and help them to overcome problems like drink and drug addiction and working intensively with rough sleepers during very cold weather in an effort to stop them returning to the streets
- Preventing homelessness at the earliest opportunity by working with high-risk groups like released prisoners, targeting single people who are sofa surfing, working with private sector landlords to prevent tenancies ending and working with young people to raise their awareness of housing options
- Building or buying enough homes each year to counteract the effects the Right To Buy scheme
- Identifying empty homes in the district and working to bring them back into use
- Identifying council-owned land and other sites suitable for the building of council homes
- Ensuring new housing meets local needs
- Ensuring homes in the private rented sector are of high quality
- Investing in temporary accommodation to make it the best it can be for those that need it while minimising costs
- Using our social lettings agency to enable individuals and families move from social housing to private sector homes
- Resettling two Syrian families per year

What will we do over the next two years?

- Use our new council-owned company to deliver improved service standards for our waste and street cleansing services
- Manage our social housing stock more effectively to ensure our tenants and leaseholders get the best possible service
- Continue investing in technology to help drive efficiency, save money and allow residents to access services online 24 hours a day
- Upgrade our closed circuit television (CCTV) network in order to keep the public as safe as possible
- Improve the city's leisure centre to meet the high standards being delivered in our coastal towns
- Update our seaside byelaws to make them fit for the way the world is changing
- Review the district's youth activities and implementing any recommendations for change
- Ensure our parks, gardens, city centre and beaches remain among the country's best by achieving Green Flag, Purple Flag and Blue Flag status respectively
- Give financial help to specialist charities and community groups so they can deliver targeted services that communities needs
- Lobby for the development of a new hospital in Canterbury
- Review our Local Plan to secure the community facilities needed to support planned housing and jobs growth
- We will work to adopt a policy that ensures that developments help raise money for identified community facilities and infrastructure, such as roads and parks

Who will we need to engage, encourage and inform to ensure success?

- Those who live, work and study in the district especially our social housing tenants to make sure our services meet their current and future needs
- Kent County Council especially in the areas where they have responsibility including social care, education and transport
- Our colleagues in parish councils
- Influence and support others to deliver essential youth services
- The NHS in all of its guises
- Charities and community organisations who deliver targeted services
- Amenity and interest groups but not at the expense of deeper contact with all of our residents, businesses and other communities of interest