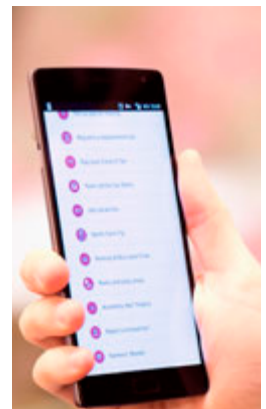
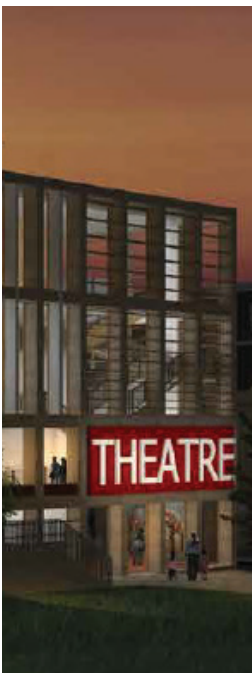


THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

2017 – 2022





VISION

History has a tendency to repeat itself and there are few places where this is more evident than in Tunbridge Wells. Health, leisure, culture and tourism first made our borough a destination over 400 years ago. Some would argue that these key ingredients never went away. I would argue that unless we continue to build on our spa town heritage, invest in our cultural venues, sports facilities and beautiful parks, we will not continue to be an attractive destination.

Yes, I want Royal Tunbridge Wells to continue to be the cultural capital of the Kent and Sussex Weald, with theatres, galleries and alternative venues and music festivals to suit all tastes. This enhances everyone's quality of life, but our borough does not stop there. Looking beyond the town centre, in the heart of the Garden of England, lie a range of ancient market towns and villages, with outstanding countryside, world-famous gardens and many National Trust properties that tell the stories of England's past. And these play an equally important role.

Our borough is an incredibly attractive place to live, work and visit. We have the highest levels of skills and entrepreneurship in the county, amazing and creative businesses, outstanding schools, and the lowest levels of crime and unemployment, but we need to be ambitious. Standing still is not an option. We need growth.

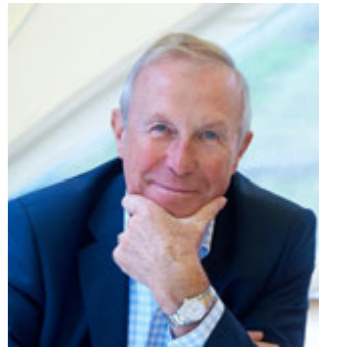
For me, growth has to be sustainable to preserve the wellbeing of our residents. It will not be accepted at a detrimental cost. It will start with preserving what we have and dealing with some of the current challenges such as tackling congestion. It will be achieved by encouraging business, retail and trade to grow and prosper. And it will require the building of new homes so that everyone has the chance to be included in

our prosperity. This will present its own set of challenges as it will test our natural environment and require the right infrastructure, but we must meet the demand for new homes.

When I became Leader of the Council, I was determined to run the Council like a business. This approach has had much success. We've raised income through the sale of assets and managing our costs. By 2019 we will no longer receive any funding from the Government. We have achieved the cost-savings associated with this a year ahead of schedule. However, we can't and won't stop there. We will continue to cut costs, manage our finances and will have to take some difficult decisions if we are to deliver our ambitious programme of work.

People will have heard me say it many times but my door is always open. The Council will make certain it works together with local councils, groups and forums across the borough. We are an enabling council and will always help others to deliver their aims and aspirations.

This Five Year Plan sets out my vision for the borough. At its heart is a mission to see an enhanced quality of life for all. This will be delivered through sustainable growth, investing in our local economy by building new arts venues, and enhancing our community and sport facilities.



Councillor David Jukes
Leader of the Council

"To encourage investment and sustainable growth, and to enhance quality of life for all."



What sometimes gets overlooked when people think about the Council is the significant role that our services play in the day-to-day life of residents. Our team of staff work tirelessly – often in difficult circumstances – to provide a vast range of services that cost less than 50 pence per day.

The Leader often describes running the Council as a business. My job is to deliver this alongside our responsibilities for providing a wide range of services that don't generate income: cultural and leisure facilities, regulatory services that keep people safe, our Gateway and customer service staff, and our housing and community safety teams. This mix of emphasis is what makes local government both vital and exciting.

Like any business we have had to change over recent years, and I have been blown away by how our staff have responded to the most demanding challenges that have faced local Government in recent times. In the face of huge cuts to our funding, constant changes to our operating environment, and rising customer expectations, they have worked passionately and innovatively, not just to keep services going, but to make them better, cheaper and more accessible. We know that residents value this – we have some of the highest satisfaction ratings of any local council, and the regular compliments we receive from residents, businesses and partners are a testament to the dedication of our staff and councillors.

In the current climate it could be tempting to dwell too heavily on the negatives of the next few years, and the evitable changes to legislation and further reductions to our funding. But I'm an optimist and I think Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has shown it is well placed to tackle these head on.

Yes, it will mean continuing to do things differently, sometimes enabling where we once delivered directly, or working in partnership to achieve goals; but we have a great track record of doing this. What is more, our ambitions could see us moving into new civic premises. This will present opportunities to not only improve the way we work by doing more digitally, but also see us continuing to play an active role as part of the community, and to make sure we enhance quality of life for all.

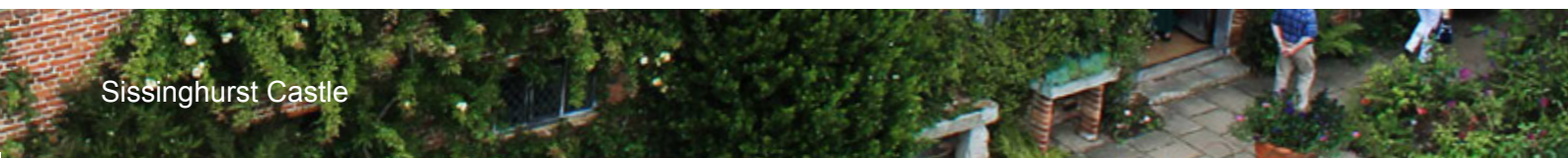
I think this edition of the Five Year Plan neatly encapsulates both side of the Council: our place shaping project work and our innovative day-to-day services. I also think it will be an exhilarating five years.



William Benson
Chief Executive Officer



CONTEXT



Sissinghurst Castle

The borough of Tunbridge Wells

Demographic and economic growth

The population of Tunbridge Wells borough has grown by more than the national average, and this trend is set to continue with predicted population growth from 116,100 in 2014 to 122,700 by 2022.

We're also seeing interest in the borough as a place for businesses, retailers and restaurants to set up. Our predicted employment growth is 8.3 per cent by 2024, which is greater than the South East average.

Our economy is also dependent on the availability of a highly educated workforce. We have a higher proportion of jobs in the knowledge economy at 32.9 per cent compared with the average across Kent at 16.8 per cent.

Access and commuting

A growing population and successful businesses create significant pressures on our road and rail networks. We have some of the slowest journey to work times in Kent, and commuters regularly contend with delays and congestion, which impacts on our economy.

However, funding for the highways infrastructure is prioritised by central Government according to the delivery of new homes and jobs. This presents us with a problem because we are already congested, and are restricted on where we can develop.

Housing demand

Our economic success and population growth have put pressure on housing demand, and the cost of housing is increasing.

The cost of an average semi-detached house has risen by 19 per cent in the four years from 2012 to 2016. To help alleviate this we need to find land for an additional 650 new homes each year.

This is a difficult challenge, given our congestion problems, and because many areas are classed as green belt or areas of outstanding natural beauty. Opportunities to develop are limited, but if we fail to meet it, the housing gap widens.

Educational needs

There is growing pressure on places and a need for a number of new primary schools and secondary schools.

Tunbridge Wells borough also has a mix of further education and higher education provision which we are keen to build on. We need a range of opportunities for learners and young people, including skilled manual and technical professions.

Social and health inequalities

Much of Tunbridge Wells borough is prosperous and healthy, and we will continue to support residents in maintaining healthy lifestyles, and access to good homes, jobs and education. However, our success also masks the social and health inequalities that exist. Some areas are in the 10 per cent most deprived in the country.

The rural areas

We are home to a number of attractive towns and villages with a rich natural history, a pleasant built environment and thriving rural businesses. Approximately 70 per cent of the land is designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty.

Part of the success of Royal Tunbridge Wells is its pleasant setting and easy access to high quality countryside. Our historic towns and villages act as important service centres and are a vital part of the tourism economy.

Larger towns such as Cranbrook, Paddock Wood, and Southborough are essential focal points for the local economy and access to services.

Over many years we have worked with parish and town councils in our area to enhance these features and deliver improved services.

A destination town

Royal Tunbridge Wells is rooted in culture, leisure and the arts. It's what first made it a spa-town destination over 400 years ago.

Today, the town continues to be a prominent destination, with cultural, leisure and arts opportunities complemented by our beautiful parks and open spaces, our spa town heritage and a wide range of sports and activity clubs on offer.

This is a significant benefit to the local economy and for residents across the area.

More people enjoy cultural and arts activities in our area than the average across England. We can capitalise on this, but to do so we need to invest in our facilities.

Our residents value activities for promoting health and wellbeing, but we need to invest in our sports and recreation provision to encourage greater participation.

The tourism that comes with being a destination town is an important part of our economy, estimated at £261m in 2016. We will continue to support the industry, encouraging the growth in visitor accommodation, and promoting an all year round offer of attractions that visitors can enjoy.

The Borough Council

A new policy landscape

In the summer of 2016, a historic referendum on the future of Britain's membership of the European Union was held, with the outcome in favour of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union. On the current timetable, the Government has indicated that the UK will have left the European Union by March 2019, which is within the lifespan of this Five Year Plan.

The Council will implement any necessary changes in policy that may occur as a result of this new central Government policy direction.

Devolution

A national policy agenda for local Government is to devolve local services to public bodies.

Devolution means that services which are currently provided and funded by central Government may be devolved to other public bodies. It also means that services we currently provide as a borough council may be devolved to parish and town councils, or community groups.

This is to ensure that services can be provided at the most local level, where knowledge and choice can be used to provide the best services for residents.

The models for local Government are changing to recognise this, which is creating both opportunities and challenges.

Resources and finances

Public services are facing unprecedented funding pressures. We are providing for an increasing population, who are growing older, and have higher expectations. While all councils are facing these challenges, we face particular difficulties.

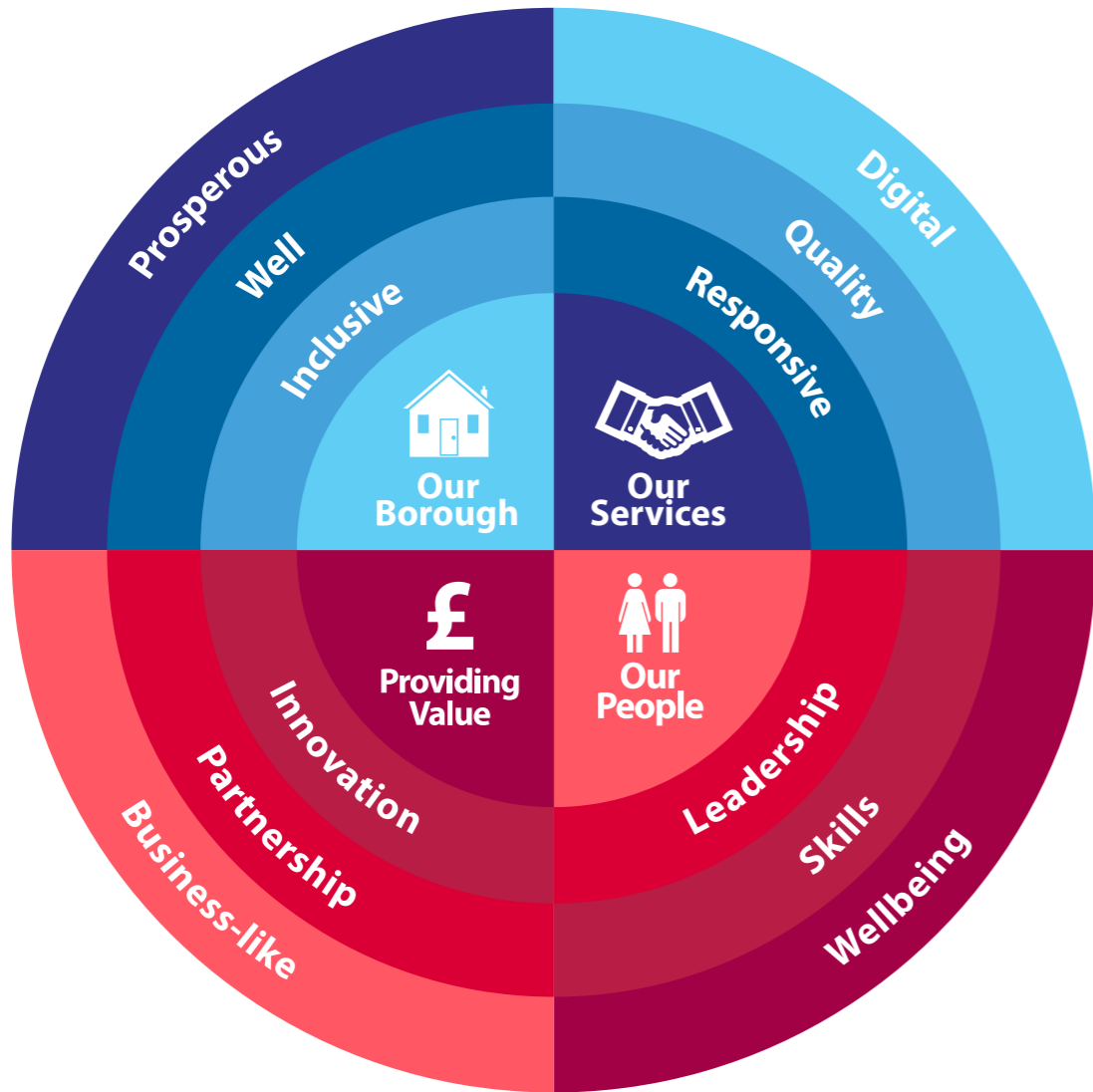
The grant that we receive from central Government will disappear by 2018/19. We need to become self-sufficient – a challenge when operating in a high-cost area.

In the future, we will need to compete for central Government funding linked to economic and housing growth, but because of our challenges we can't compete on an equal footing with other areas.

So we need to find ways to be self-sufficient, and look at a range of options for how we do things.



Cranbrook Windmill



CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Our Corporate Priorities are the things the Council believes are the most important to deliver over the next five years, to ensure we achieve the vision.

“To encourage investment and sustainable growth, and to enhance quality of life for all”

Our Borough

Supporting activities in the borough that encourage prosperity, wellness and inclusivity will make it a more attractive place for businesses to invest and for sustainable growth to take place.

- To support a **prosperous** borough
- To support a **well** borough
- To support an **inclusive** borough

Our Services

The Borough Council also needs to operate in a sustainable way, delivering services that enhance the quality of life for our residents and customers. Focusing on providing digital choice and support, good quality services, and services that respond to need will help to achieve this.

- To provide **digital** choice
- To provide **quality** services
- To provide **responsive** services

Our People

Alongside operating as a sustainable business, councillors and staff need to be equipped to lead and manage the services of the future. This will need effective leadership, relevant skills and high levels of wellbeing.

- To have **effective** leadership
- To have **relevant** skills
- To have high levels of **wellbeing**

Providing Value

To get the best value out of the public purse, the Borough Council needs to innovate to find different ways to deliver the same or better services for less money. This includes working in partnership to deliver more for less, and acting in a business-like way to secure efficiencies.

- To ensure **innovation** in our services
- To ensure effective **partnership** working
- To ensure we operate in a **business-like** way



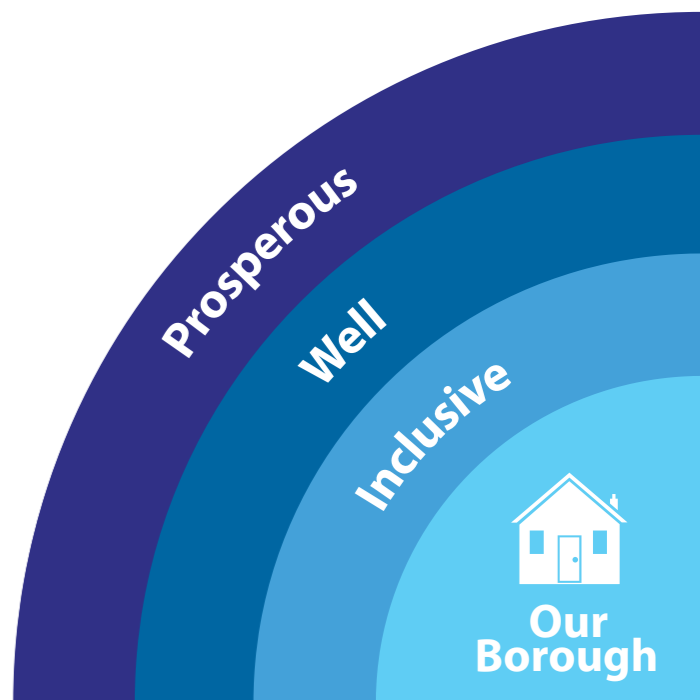
OUR BOROUGH

Grosvenor & Hilbert Park

Our vision is to encourage investment and sustainable growth and enhance quality of life for all.

Focusing on activities that support prosperity, wellness and inclusivity, the borough will be a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

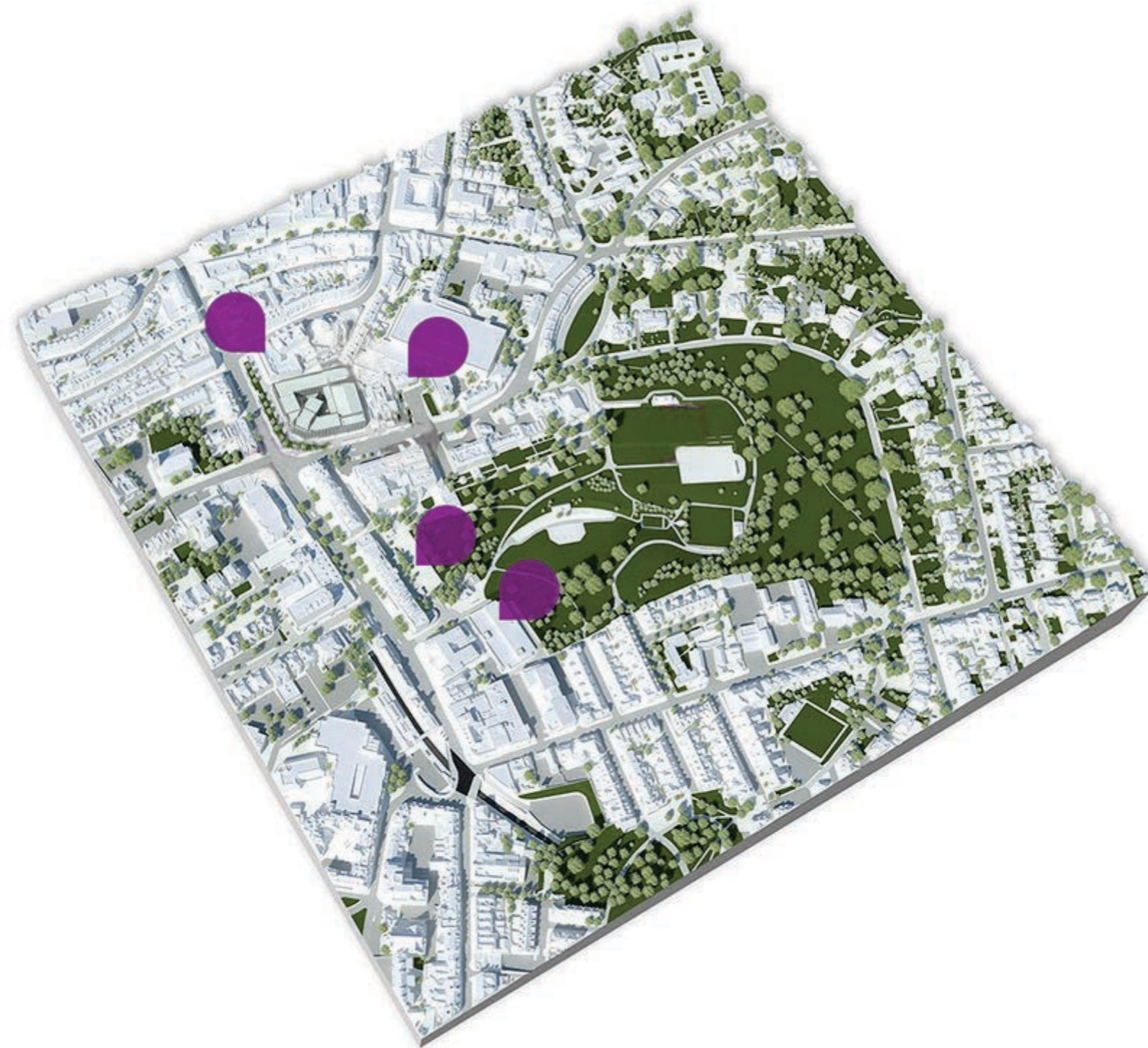
Our commitments on the following pages will help us to achieve this.



EIGHT BIG PROJECTS

Over the next five years, the borough council will work to deliver eight big projects that will meet the vision.

- **Provide a new Cultural and Learning Hub in Royal Tunbridge Wells**
To enhance the vibrant cultural and arts scene, and to further encourage tourism and investment in the economy, work has started on providing a new Cultural and Learning Hub in Royal Tunbridge Wells. Funding has been secured from Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund, and construction is expected to start in 2018.
- **Explore the delivery of a new theatre in Royal Tunbridge Wells**
A new theatre in Royal Tunbridge Wells to replace the Assembly Hall will encourage economic investment and tourism, and add an estimated £15 million to the local economy. A significant amount of work has already been done and, if Full Council agreement is secured, the new theatre is expected to be open in 2021.



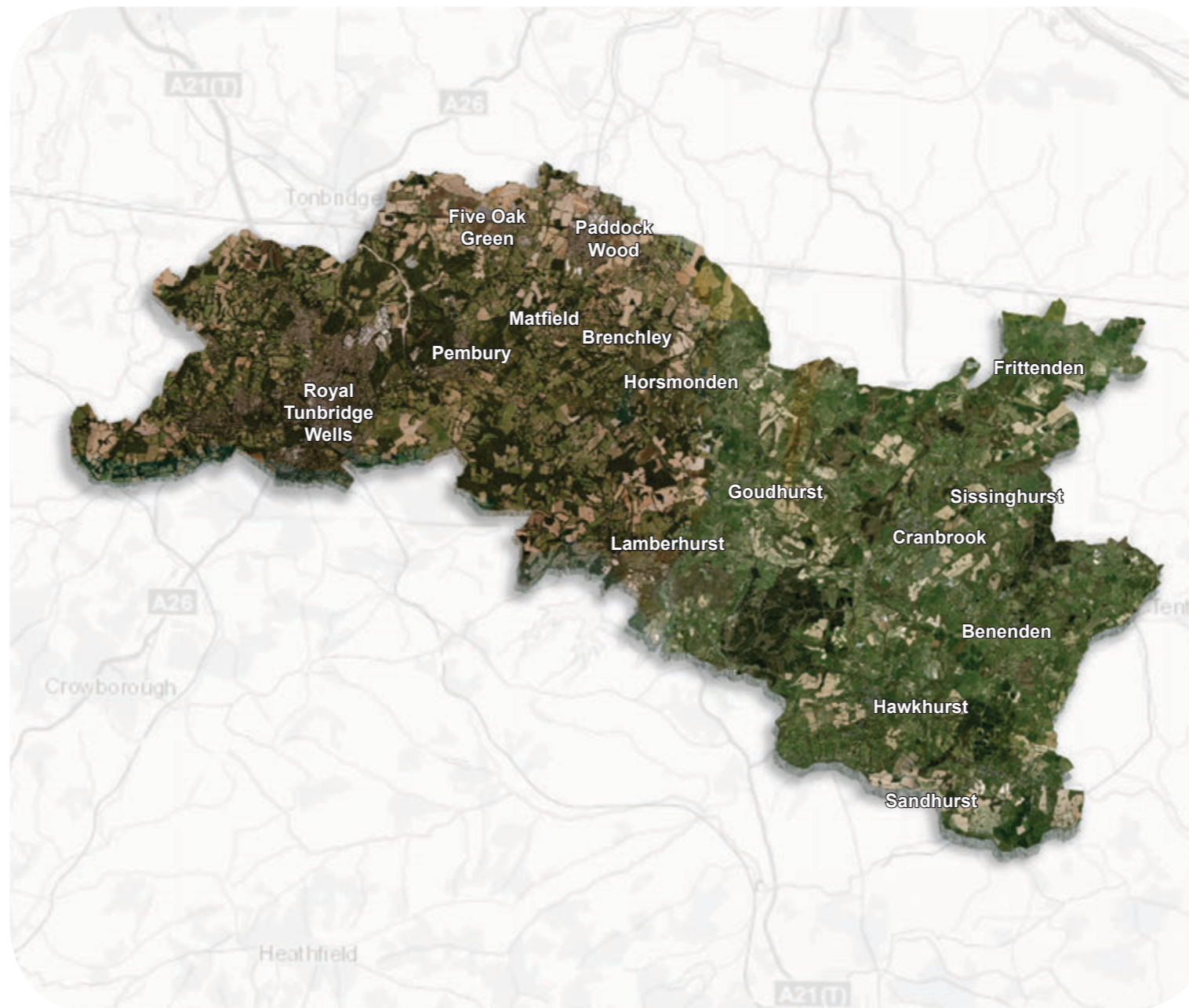
- **Explore the delivery of new civic centre and office space in Royal Tunbridge Wells**
The borough is a thriving place to do business. To support economic investment and maintain the Council's presence in Royal Tunbridge Wells, a project to deliver a new civic centre and office space has begun. If Full Council agreement is secured, proposals will move forward into the development stage of the project. It is anticipated that the civic centre and offices will be open and ready for occupation in 2021.
- **Provide additional off-street car parking in Royal Tunbridge Wells**
Additional off-street parking will support the thriving economy in Royal Tunbridge Wells. It will also ensure visitors, who provide investment into the wider borough economy through tourism, are able to stay in town as long as they like, and want to come back. Options will be explored to provide additional off-street car parking within the town to accommodate tourism growth.

- **Creating a new local plan for the borough**

The new local plan will cover the period from 2013 – 2033. It will outline how we shape, enhance and preserve our local built and natural environment, and encourage the growth and investment we need in a sustainable way. This may include opening up areas for high-tech businesses, such as a science park, and an aspiration for a garden village in the borough.

- **Creating new sports facilities across the borough**

Residents value the provision of facilities and activities that promote health and wellbeing, and access to these activities adds to the quality of life experienced in the borough. There is a high take-up of sports club activities across the borough, and the local football and rugby clubs have both had considerable success in recent years. Options will be investigated to provide new sports facilities so that access is improved and increased, including the possibility of a new site that can act as a focus for a variety of sporting activities and as a catalyst for greater achievement.



- **Support the development of the Community Centres in the borough**

The Council has worked closely with Southborough Town Council to help them secure a planning application for the delivery of new community facilities. We will continue to work with them to deliver this exciting project, and with Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council, and Paddock Wood Town Council, who have similar aspirations to increase the availability of local services in the heart of their communities and so enhance quality of life of residents.

- **Enhancing the public realm in the borough**

An enhanced and more pleasant public realm will help to attract further tourism, and investment in local economies, and help our businesses to grow because they are located in a place people want to come to, where there is a high quality of life. Funding has been secured the public realm in Royal Tunbridge Wells, which will see improvements to create a more pedestrian-focused space and improve the setting of the civic complex.

A PROSPEROUS BOROUGH



As an organisation we know we can't deliver everything by ourselves. There are a number of other activities which we know are important to residents, but we need to work in partnership to achieve.

The next pages outline the work we will undertake with others to achieve a prosperous, well and inclusive borough.

■ **Advocating for further improvements to alleviate congestion**

Whilst we are not responsible for transportation or highways improvements, we know this is one of the most important issues for our residents.

We will continue to encourage and work with Kent County Council and Highways England to secure further enhancements to our road network, and try to secure vital funding from the Local Growth Fund to enable infrastructure improvements to happen. We are also keen to work with responsible partners to secure improvements to access between Royal Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone and East Sussex.

Proposed improvements to roads leading to Royal Tunbridge Wells and those trunk routes going through the town will reduce congestion and tackle air pollution. This may mean reducing road parking and widening the roads in some places.

■ **Supporting the development of Neighbourhood Plans**

Neighbourhood Plans give local communities the power to create positive economic, social and environmental development in their area.

Where parish and town councils or local community groups such as the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum have the desire to create a Neighbourhood Plan, we will support them with advice and assistance to ensure they align with and complement national planning policy and the Council's own Local Plan.

■ **Advocating for new education facilities**

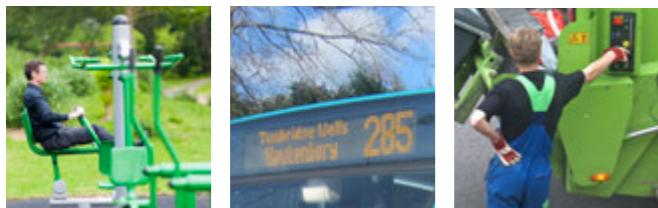
There is a lack of primary school places and will work with our partners to secure a new school at Hawkenbury.

One of our strengths is the quality of our local schools and education establishments, including Hadlow Group, West Kent College and Canterbury Christ Church University.

We will explore the provision of a higher education facility and/or training facility in the borough to encourage young people to stay and learn here, so that they might remain to work here. We will try to get an established university to open a campus or faculty to kick-start the provision of higher education opportunities.



A WELL BOROUGH



■ Household recycling

We have extended our service to include a wider range of plastic materials and cartons that can now be put out for collection. We know from feedback that residents are keen to have kerbside glass collection. The introduction of glass collection is one of the options that will be considered as part of the process to put a new recycling and waste collection service in place, and to achieve a recycling rate of at least 50%. We anticipate that this will be in place in 2019.

■ Active travel

We need to ensure every resident is supported to live a healthy lifestyle. Switching more car journeys to active travel (walking, cycling and public transport) can improve health outcomes, is good for the environment (including air quality) and will also help to support local businesses. We know that congestion is a significant issue for residents, and whilst highways issues are matters for Kent County Council, we are able to help mitigate this by supporting active travel initiatives. The Council will work with partners to improve the cycle network in the borough, and introduce 20mph schemes to improve the safety of more vulnerable road users. We will continue to work with the bus and rail operators to improve services in the borough and provide residents and visitors with a range of travel options.

■ Improving social and health inequalities

We know that there are significant pockets of deprivation in some wards, and that the life-chances of some of our residents are limited by this deprivation.

Over the next plan period, we will continue to work with our partners to deliver the Health Inequalities Action Plan, and we will work with the West Kent Partnership to improve public health services on a regional basis.

We will expand the successful model of community partnership that was set up during the last plan period to tackle social deprivation. This will be extended to other areas of the borough to secure the same positive outcomes for local families, and focus on the benefits of work and employment. We will also work with our partners to deliver better housing options, and to provide better temporary housing for families in crisis.

AN INCLUSIVE BOROUGH



■ Engaging with Parish and Town Councils

We will continue to engage and work with parish and town councils and will revise and update the existing Parish Charter to take account of the significant changes to the local government landscape over the last five years.

We will also continue to support the Parish Chairmen's Forum and will involve town and parish councils in all discussions that affect rural areas, particularly in areas of work such as planning, where we know that government planning policy decisions can have a significant impact on rural communities.

Tourism is an important part of our borough's economy and the unique setting of our towns and villages play a key role in attracting visitors.

Our new economic development strategy will outline how we intend to support the rural economy including tourism.

■ Devolution of Services

We will explore opportunities to work with our partners across the West Kent Partnership, with Kent County Council and with parish and town councils to devolve services and funding where appropriate. We will work with Sevenoaks District Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council to deliver a range of services across our boundaries, and where the town or parish councils are the best placed partner to provide these services we will work with them to deliver very local services such as grass cutting, footway maintenance and highways, ensuring that budgets follow services.



OUR SERVICES

Calverley Grounds

Delivering services in a sustainable way means we need to work more digitally, more responsively, and put the customer at the heart of everything we do to ensure quality services.

Our commitments on the following pages will help us to achieve this.



OUR RANGE OF SERVICES

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council provides a vast range of day to day services that our residents, businesses and visitors rely on. For less than 50p a day, we provide a range of different services such as:

- a household recycling and waste collection service
- a service to provide business support and visitor information
- help to assist and support planning applications, from small residential extensions and loft conversions, to schemes for several hundred houses, offices and shops
- an emergency call-out service for dangerous trees and structures
- care for a variety of public parks and gardens, including Dunorlan Park, Grosvenor and Hilbert Park, and Calverley Grounds
- a housing service for individuals and families at risk of eviction
- a private rental housing monitoring service to ensure a minimum standard
- licences for pubs, restaurants and entertainment venues
- a service to check and approve food outlets so that they meet minimum health and safety standards
- a service to deal with noise, litter and other environmental concerns
- a theatre
- leisure centres in Royal Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook
- a museum and art gallery in Royal Tunbridge Wells
- community centres in Sherwood and Broadwater
- management of on-street parking and off-street car parks
- a crematorium and cemetery
- a farmers' market
- street sweeping and litter enforcement

We also have a small set of in-house services that support and give advice to our publicly-provided services, such as accountants, lawyers, property and facilities specialists, and administrators.

To provide all of this for our community, we bring in funding from four separate areas:

- council tax
- fees and charges on certain products and services (such as theatre tickets and off-street car parking)
- special Government grants for certain services
- awards, bids and grants from Government departments, agencies or non-governmental organisations

OUR SERVICE COMMITMENTS

■ All our business that can be online, will be online

As an organisation we need to move with the times. Now, more than 87 per cent of people use the internet or are online within the borough, and this is increasingly becoming the method of choice for contacting the Council. We need to adapt to this change, and make sure that all of our services that can be provided online, are available online.

■ Digital inclusion

Moving more services on to digital channels doesn't mean closing down our other contact channels.

We recognise that for some, using the internet can be difficult, and so we will continue to support people by providing 'face-by-face' services, and by designing our online services to be as easy and simple to use as possible.

■ Getting it right first time

We'll strive to get it right every time we deliver a service to the public.

We'll promote a culture of flexibility and adaptability within the Council, even if that means working in different ways, because our focus will be to deliver excellent services.

■ Putting it right first time

We know that sometimes we won't get things right first time, which is why we are also committed to putting it right first time when things go wrong, so that residents can be confident in the service they are receiving

■ Learning from complaints

When someone takes the time to complain to us, we will use this information to ensure that we learn from the mistakes we have made.

We will embed a culture of continuous improvement by using lessons learned and applying them across the Council. We will promote a positive culture around complaints, recognising that they are one of the vital ways in which we can learn from things when they go wrong.

■ Designing services you need

As a country, we are going through significant demographic change, and technological advances are driving social progress. In the future, our residents are more likely to be older, more likely to use digital technology, and more likely to engage with the Council directly through technology. We need to design our services to meet these future needs.



Leadership

Skills

Wellbeing

We work in an increasingly complex world where our staff and councillors will need to show leadership and have the right skills to ensure we meet ever rising demands.

Our commitments on the following pages will help us to achieve this.

OUR PEOPLE

WHAT WE DO

The following are a 'day in the life' of a Housing Officer and a Tree Preservation Officer, which shows some of the variety of work we do as an organisation.

Housing Needs

No two days are ever the same in Housing Needs. We may be dealing with residents who are homeless that day, or people who have several months before they will become homeless. We try to get to people at as early a stage as possible to try and help them keep their home, or help them find somewhere else to move to before they have to leave where they are.

When a resident has lost their home, the team will speak to their family or friends, where appropriate, aiming to get them somewhere to stay in the short term. We then explore the resident's circumstances with them and give advice on how they can find alternative accommodation.

Cases could involve giving advice to a single homeless person and making referrals to supported housing, helping someone to make bids for a housing association property through our housing register, attending child protection conferences and assisting with a loan to help someone with the costs of securing a private rented property. Sometimes homelessness is unavoidable and for those who have a 'priority need' under the homelessness legislation, emergency accommodation has to be secured.

Tree Preservation

We received two telephone calls in quick succession from neighbours of a house that had just come up for sale. The neighbours were concerned that an area of ancient woodland behind the house, and partially within its grounds, might be at risk when the sale went through, as it was likely that the house would be redeveloped. We promised to have a look and assess the trees.

A couple of days later we received a call to say that tree felling had begun. We immediately visited the site, and noted that one large tree very close to the rear of the house had been felled, presumably to make the sale a more viable proposition. This did not necessarily mean that the woodland itself was under threat at that point, but a future risk was definitely foreseeable, and so a Tree Preservation Order was immediately made to protect the woodland for the benefit of all residents into the future.



OUR PEOPLE COMMITMENTS

- **Being a councillor-led council**

Councillors are at the heart of our decision-making, and are best-placed to make the right decisions for their communities.

As an organisation, we expect all of our councillors to bring forward ideas for improvement and progress in their areas, both urban and rural. We will continue to support and train councillors in their work as community leaders and ensure they have excellent access to information.

- **Staff who are well led and managed**

Effective working relationships are key to ensuring the delivery of good services, so we will invest in our managers to ensure they have the right mix of skills to lead the organisation effectively, to deal with change, and to manage staff in the best way possible.

- **Staff and councillors have the skills they need**

The Council is going through significant change. To provide high quality services, we need to have well trained, competent and committed people. We will invest in digital technologies and upskill staff and councillors to use these, develop a more business-like focus in our staff, and put systems in place to retain knowledge and expertise.

- **Supporting healthy working environments**

The Council has a diverse and engaged workforce, and to ensure this is maintained we will continue to support activities that promote healthy lifestyles and working environments, by supporting staff and promoting flexible working arrangements and a positive working environment.

- **Anticipating change**

We need a workforce that can adapt quickly to changing business needs, and to be able to anticipate those needs in advance. Flexibility in both the workplace and in mindset will be key to this.

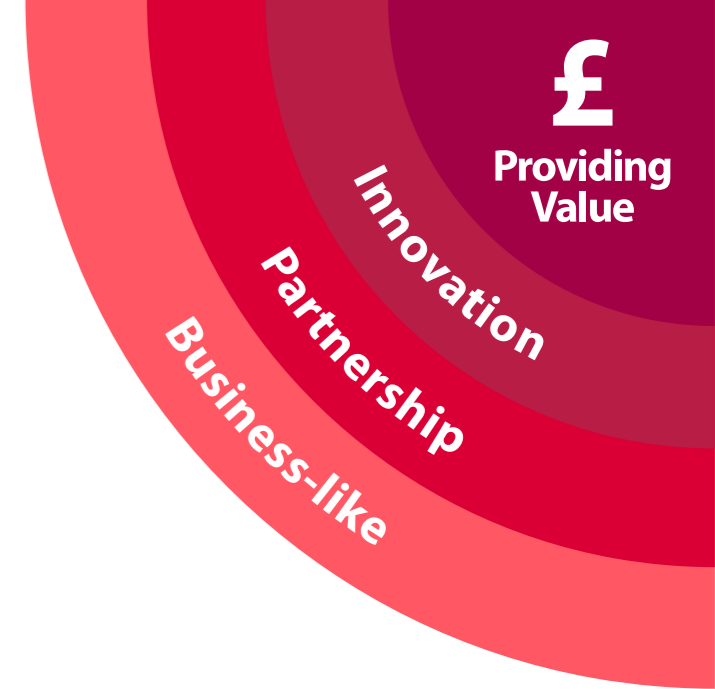
We will ensure that we are working in the most flexible way possible, and that our organisational structure continues to meet the aims and plans of the organisation.

- **Good quality councillor and officer relationships**

Good working relationships are the foundation of everything we do and strong councillor and officer relationships are a core element. We will ensure that staff are well informed and connected to promote cross-departmental and organisational working and that councillors are informed of key developments in individual service areas.



PROVIDING VALUE

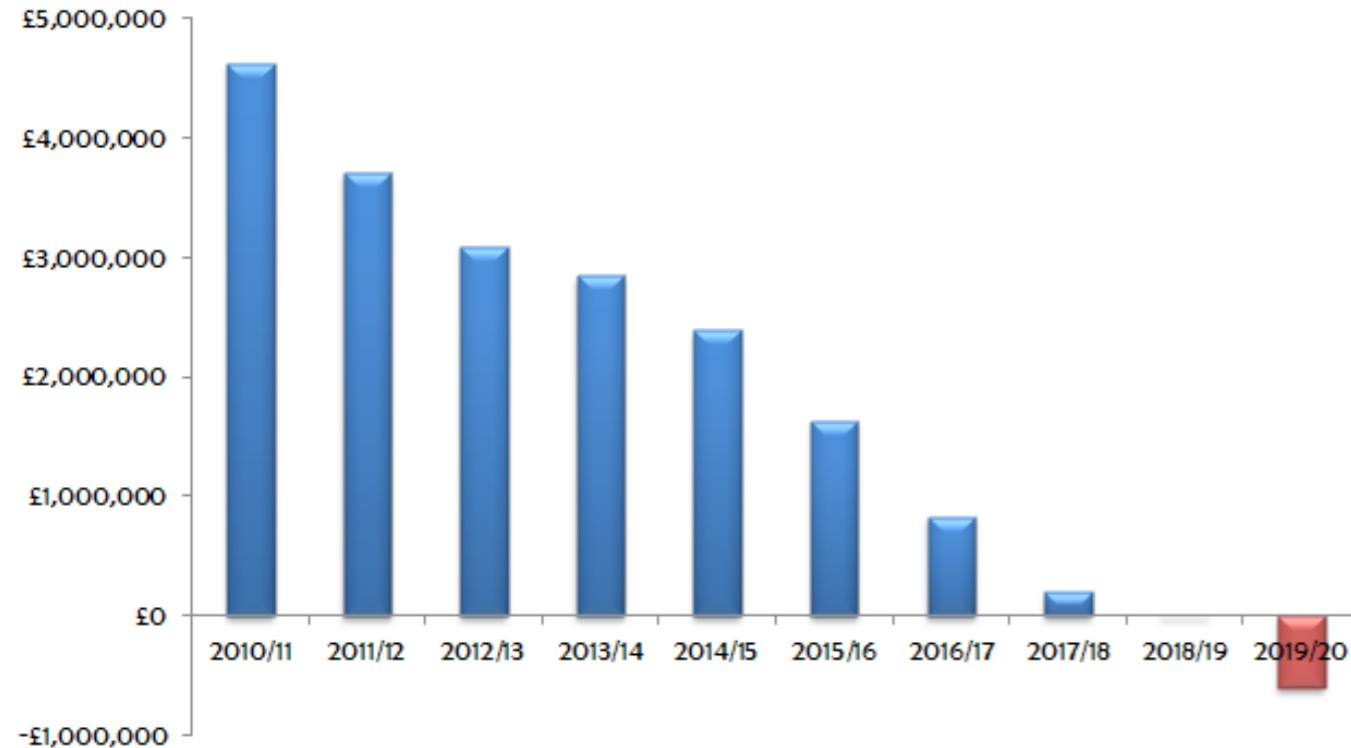


Along with many others in local Government, we are facing difficult financial circumstances, but will continue to deliver a broad range of excellent services. To ensure this for the future, we will need to transform the way in which we deliver services, by being more innovative, more business-like and working in partnership with others.

Our commitments on the following pages will help us to achieve this.

OUR FALLING GOVERNMENT GRANT

This chart shows how our Government grant has fallen from £4.6 million in 2010/11 to £0 in 2018/19. The future is uncertain and we need to ensure the council can be self-sustaining.



OUR VALUE COMMITMENTS

- **Using technology to innovate and improve**

Led by the intelligent analysis of data and feedback from customers, we will design our services from the residents' point of view so that they get what they need from us, in the way they want it.

- **Transforming what we do**

We will remove duplication and fragmentation, and design end-to-end digital transactions to improve demand management and deliver savings. Finding the best way of doing things will make sure we all work in a consistent way, so that standards remain high.

- **Working with the best-placed partners**

We will be proactive in seeking out partners who are able to help us deliver services, whether this is through contractors, community groups, other public authorities or the third sector. We will take a mixed economy approach, will remain committed to our existing partnerships, such as Mid Kent Services, but will explore partnerships with others, such as the West Kent Partnership.

- **An enabling council**

We will continue to be an enabling council. This means that where we cannot provide a service, we will actively encourage and work with others to do so. We will also assist the parish and town councils in our area to help them deliver their ambitions at a very local level.

- **Investing to create opportunities**

We understand that at times we will need to invest to create the best opportunities for efficiency and additional income. We will continue to explore opportunities to invest to save. In developing our Medium-Term Financial Strategy, we have been clear that we will take advantage of low interest rates to invest in income-generating projects.

- **Make money, save money and improve processes**

We are conscious that we need to continue to deliver an excellent level of service, despite the significant changes we are going through. To ensure that we can continue to do this we will generate new income streams for the Council, spending wisely by getting best value in everything we do, and continually challenging ourselves to improve our processes to deliver more effective services.

