

Strategic Plan

2020/21 – 2023/24

Introduction

Tandridge Council has experienced a period of significant change and is making progress in addressing a number of important areas for improvement, including tackling significant financial challenges. We know we have to get these things right to support our local communities and economy as we move from our response to the COVID crisis to recovery.

This plan reflects both the need to complete that vital improvement work, and to respond to the district's local characteristics, the needs of our residents and businesses, and the wider context – both regional and national – in which we are operating.

Although close to London, we are a very rural district, with almost 94% covered by Green Belt. Many residents commute into London and enjoy living in a District with beautiful green spaces and a large number of listed buildings and conservation areas. The district is an attractive place for visitors, in striking distance of many local attractions, and a destination for walkers in the Downs: tourism is an increasingly important source of income for the local economy. The district's significant amount of open space presents opportunities to work with partners and our residents to explore the potential for better use of this space.

A significant proportion of our population is highly skilled. Most of these residents commute outside the district to work and employment opportunities in the area are in lower skilled roles.

We have good road links to Gatwick, the coast and through to Europe, but road connections between the main routes are less good, and rail links are slower than in neighbouring areas. Infrastructure is deteriorating and needs investment to secure upgrades to transport, schools and health services. 92% of businesses in the district have 9 employees or fewer. Rural businesses struggle with poor broadband connections and isolation and there is little opportunity to relocate to more appropriate and/or larger premises due to a lack of quality employment space in the district.

A lack of affordable housing makes home ownership for younger people, families and keyworkers difficult. 407 households on the Council's housing register are considered to be in urgent housing need.

In February 2020 the Council declared a climate change emergency, making a commitment to do what it can to tackle climate change.

Like all local areas up and down the country, the Tandridge district has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Local voluntary, faith and community organisations, town and parish councils have come together with the Council and other public agencies to support vulnerable people at this time of crisis. We want to continue to build on these partnerships to support strong and healthy local communities.

As elsewhere, the pandemic is seriously impacting the local and regional economy. Alone the Council does not itself have all the levers to address these challenges but is committed to working in partnership to support economic recovery.

This plan sets out our priorities and the actions we are taking now and into the next four years. Recognising this is a time of significant change and challenge, we will keep it under regular review, refining and updating our plans as needed.

Our priorities

1. **Building a better Council** – making the Council financially sustainable and providing residents with the best possible services.
2. **Making Tandridge a good place to live and work** - with homes, open spaces and infrastructure that meet local needs now and into the future.
3. **Supporting economic recovery in Tandridge** – from lockdown to growth that everyone benefits from.
4. **Becoming a greener, more sustainable District** – tackling climate change.

We will achieve these priorities by working in partnership with other public-sector agencies and businesses within the district and beyond.

As we implement our financial recovery plan, we will identify further actions to achieve this plan's priority outcomes.

Our action plan

| <u>Priority Outcomes</u> | <u>Actions</u> | <u>Completed by</u> | <u>Responsibility</u> |
|---|--|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Building a better Council | | | |
| 1.1 Agreeing and implementing the Financial Recovery Plan | Develop a plan for financial recovery which is credible and enables key services to be delivered within acceptable timescales | Aug 2020 | Chief Finance Officer |
| | Explore commercial opportunities within the District including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting other statutory services with more cost-effective delivery models building on the example of the Wellbeing Prescription Service • developing expertise and capacity in Planning services to provide support to other rural districts and customers • generating income from the open space within the District building on the value of exercising outdoors, closer to nature (learning from COVID experience) | Dec 2020 | Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer |
| | Review opportunities for joint working and shared services with other Local Authorities | Ongoing (starting Sep 2020) | Transformation Lead |
| 1.2 Engaging with local government reform | Make a positive contribution to the debate on local government in Surrey and drive a bid for a unitary in the east of the county in the interests of local residents and businesses | Ongoing | Chief Executive |
| 1.3 Implementing the Corporate Improvement Plan | Implement recommendations of the independent review of governance | Dec 2020 | Monitoring Officer |
| | Develop and implement a digital strategy for the Council | Dec 2021 | Executive Head of Corporate Resources |
| | Adopt new complaints policy and process | Sept 2020 | |
| | Undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge to gain an external perspective on the Council's progress | Apr 2021 | Chief Executive |
| 1.4 Supporting and developing staff to deliver this plan and services for residents | Ensure staff are equipped with the right IT and tools to carry out their job | Dec 2020 | Executive Head of Corporate Resources |

| <u>Priority Outcomes</u> | <u>Actions</u> | <u>Completed by</u> | <u>Responsibility</u> |
|---|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Adopt new Values and Behaviours for members and officers | Apr 2021 | |
| | Complete review HR of policies, contracts, procedures and benefits | Dec 2020 | |
| 1.5 Looking for opportunities to support better health and wellbeing for local residents | Adopt a strategy to improve open spaces in the District, which will include maximising their potential to improve health and wellbeing | Mar 2021 | Executive Head of Communities |
| | Work with the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sectors (VCFS) to develop proposals to support community resilience in the face of a crisis, building on work during the COVID pandemic | Ongoing | Executive Head of Corporate Resources |
| | Maximise wellbeing and opportunities for young people through development of a Youth Strategy in partnership with health and employment partners | Jan 2023 | |
| 2. Making Tandridge a good place to live and work | | | |
| 2.1 Achieving a fully-functioning planning service that protects the interests of the District | Complete and adopt the Local Plan | 2021 | Chief Planning Officer |
| | Determine when to undertake a local plan review | 2021 | |
| | Produce design guide to inform planning applications for development within the Green Belt (Greenbelt Supplementary Planning Document) | Sep 21 | |
| 2.2 Ensuring consistent, efficient appropriate planning decision-making and enforcement, including breaching of planning conditions | Develop and implement an action plan to improve capacity and delivery in the planning team | Mar 2021 | |
| | Use best endeavours to protect our valued landscapes, open spaces and high quality built and historic environment by developing expertise in our team | Sept 2020 and ongoing | |
| 2.3 Lobbying for infrastructure that meets the needs of local residents, public sector partners and businesses for the whole District | Contribute to the development of the Surrey Infrastructure Plan and use influence to ensure that existing standards are met | Ongoing | Chief Executive |
| | Revise the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, informed by the Local Plan, Surrey Infrastructure Delivery Plan and open spaces strategy, and develop a costed proposal to increase capacity to support its delivery | 2021 | Chief Planning Officer |

| <u>Priority Outcomes</u> | <u>Actions</u> | <u>Completed by</u> | <u>Responsibility</u> |
|---|---|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Prepare a funding statement setting out the Council's infrastructure priorities for the next five years | Annually from 2020 | |
| | Monitor and respond to funding and partnership opportunities which meet the needs of the district | Ongoing | |
| | Deliver infrastructure through utilisation of the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and collection of planning obligations | Ongoing | |
| 2.4 Developing policies and working with others to support the building of affordable homes | Carry out housing needs assessment for the District to inform plans for affordable homes | Dec 2021 | Executive Head of Communities |
| | Conduct a review of Sheltered Housing to inform plans to ensure the right mix of provision in the District | Nov 2020 | |
| | Review the Council's housing stock and prepare plans to improve environmental performance and increase provision of affordable and lifetime homes | Dec 2022 | |
| | Deliver 100 new affordable homes | Dec 2022 | |
| | Explore alternative options for reviewing viability assessments submitted with planning applications, and if appropriate implement change accordingly, to maximise delivery of affordable housing | Dec 2020 | Chief Planning Officer |
| 3. Supporting economic recovery in Tandridge | | | |
| 3.1 Working closely with businesses, listening and responding to their concerns | Continue to meet with local Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and hold annual business network meetings to understand what's needed to help economic recovery | Ongoing | Executive Head of Communities |
| 3.2 Working with partners to support economic recovery | Establish a Business Development Board to drive economic recovery in the District | Mar 2021 | Executive Head of Communities |
| | Continue to seek opportunities to drive and influence recovery and good growth, informed by insight about local needs and 'what works' | Ongoing | Executive Head of Communities |
| | Work with Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to develop and implement a LEP industrial strategy that benefits Tandridge District | Ongoing | |
| | Support Caterham Business Improvement District to deliver Caterham Regeneration Programme | Ongoing | |

| <u>Priority Outcomes</u> | <u>Actions</u> | <u>Completed by</u> | <u>Responsibility</u> |
|---|---|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Develop plans to promote and expand the evening economy in Caterham in line with the Caterham Masterplan | 2021 - 2024 | Chief Planning Officer |
| | Work with Surrey County Council to ensure that the Surrey Place Ambition strategy delivers good growth for the Tandridge district | Ongoing | Chief Executive |
| | Work with Surrey County Council and broadband providers to extend network across Tandridge and to improve speed of service | Ongoing | |
| 4. Becoming a greener, more sustainable District | | | |
| 4.1 Deliver the climate change action plan, including supporting and promoting the use of alternative fuel sources for vehicles in the district | Deliver climate change action plan | 2020 - 2024 | Executive Head of Corporate Resources |
| | Conduct feasibility study to install electric vehicle charging points in TDC operated car parks | Dec 2020 | |
| | Install electric vehicle charging points as appropriate throughout the district | 2021 - 2024 | |
| | Complete baseline report on organisations' greenhouse gas emissions and produce action plan | Jan 2021 | |
| 4.2 Promoting green and sustainable development through planning policies | Work with local parishes to complete Neighbourhood plans | 2020 - 2021 | Chief Planning Officer |
| | Consult on and adopt a Green Infrastructure Strategy | 2021 - 2022 | |