

Corporate Plan

2017/18 - 2019/20



Executive Summary

Introduction by Councillor Kim Forward, Deputy Leader of the Council

The Corporate Plan is very important because it sets out our vision, mission, values and priorities for Hastings and St Leonards which aim to benefit all the people who live here. I hope that the refreshed layout of the plan which shows our key activities, how we aim to overcome the challenges we face and how we will measure our progress is easy for people to understand. This plan demonstrates our commitment to turning our vision for the borough into a reality.

Our vision for Hastings and St. Leonards...

Hastings will be recognised as an international centre of excellence for cultural and scientific creativity, supported by the highest quality educational establishments to provide first-class career opportunities to its citizens. Rewarding jobs with a decent wage, good standards of healthcare and warm, comfortable, affordable homes will be available to all. It will be a town that welcomes visitors and new residents wherever they are from, where diversity, individuality and eccentricity are celebrated, and the individual needs of all are recognised and met. The best of our historic built and natural environment will be preserved, while embracing new developments that excite and enrich our town's appearance. It will be a green town, where industries, structures and practices that help to reduce our carbon footprint are strongly promoted, creating the best possible quality of life for all our workers and citizens, who are enabled and encouraged to accept opportunity as their birth-right. Hastings will be famous not just for its history, but for its vision and achievements, a place to be admired throughout the world, to which every visitor would seek to return.

Our Mission

Hastings Borough Council is committed to improving the quality of life and well-being of all of its residents. We recognise our duty to be responsive to the needs of all who live and work in our borough and to do so in a way which respects cultural identity, providing equality of opportunity and equality of access to the means to live a healthy, fulfilling life. We will work in partnership with other bodies, whether statutory, public, private, voluntary or community to achieve this, whilst promoting our borough in an active and positive manner.

Our Values

- ▶ We believe that equality of opportunity is paramount, and that services to local people should be provided in a way that addresses their needs and reasonable expectations, regardless of their gender, social class, race, religion, disability, age, culture, sexuality or philosophical beliefs, in as far as such beliefs do not oppress others.
- ▶ We believe that the council should uphold a culture of co-operation, openness, fairness and transparency in all it does, enabling local people to hold us to account and other agencies to work with us.
- ▶ We believe that all local people (including employees of the council) should be entitled to a high standard of education and decent jobs that pay a living wage, where they are treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
- ▶ We believe that all local people have a right to a safe, secure, affordable home in an environment that enhances their health, quality of life and access to lifelong learning.
- ▶ We believe that the economic regeneration of Hastings should narrow the gap between the most deprived communities and those of the rest of the town, as well as between Hastings and the rest of the South East, and that poorer people should not be excluded from the new opportunities that arise.

Our Priorities

- ▶ Economic and physical regeneration
- ▶ Cultural regeneration
- ▶ Intervention where it's needed
- ▶ Creating decent homes
- ▶ An attractive town
- ▶ A greener town
- ▶ Transforming the way we work



About Hastings and St. Leonards

“ Little wonder people are rediscovering Hastings.
It is a splendid place, with that sort of beautiful
oddness that characterises the best of the British seaside. ”
(The Guardian)

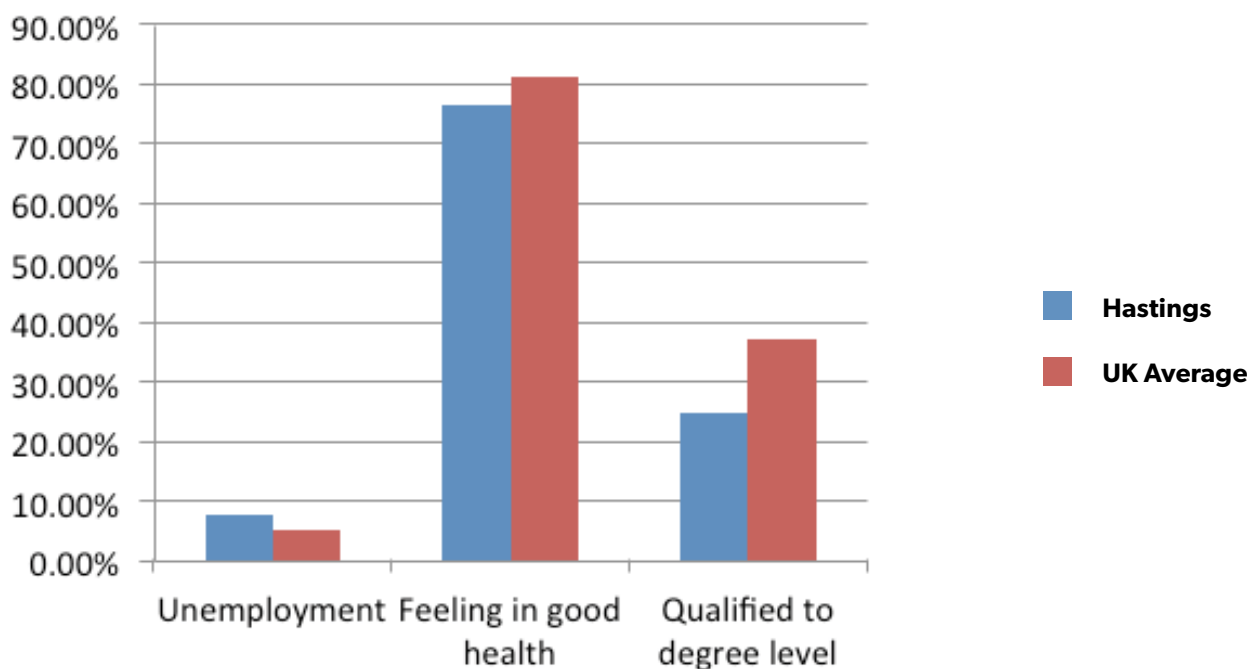
Hastings is well known as an exciting place to live and visit. With a fascinating history stretching back to the famous battle in 1066, to its thriving arts scene and packed calendar of events.

Over the past year, a series of events to mark the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings have shown that Hastings remains an imaginative, diverse and creative town, and one which its residents are rightly proud of.

Many parts of the town that used to be run-down have also been transformed, notably the renovation of Hastings Pier and the redevelopment of the former White Rock Baths to form a new BMX and skate park.

However, challenges remain if all of the town's 91,000 residents are going to benefit from the new opportunities available in our town. In 2015, Hastings was ranked as the 20th most deprived area of England in the indices of deprivation. The chart on page 5 shows how Hastings compares with the rest of the UK on a number of key indicators.

Extensive work has been undertaken to understand why some parts of the town consistently appear amongst the most deprived in the country.



The council continues to work with a variety of partner agencies to tackle issues such as unemployment, educational attainment and healthcare. In August 2016, the local Clinical Commissioning Group, in partnership with the council, announced a programme for the coming year to continue to address health inequalities in the most deprived areas of the borough.

You'll find an overview of the projects coming up this year later in the plan.

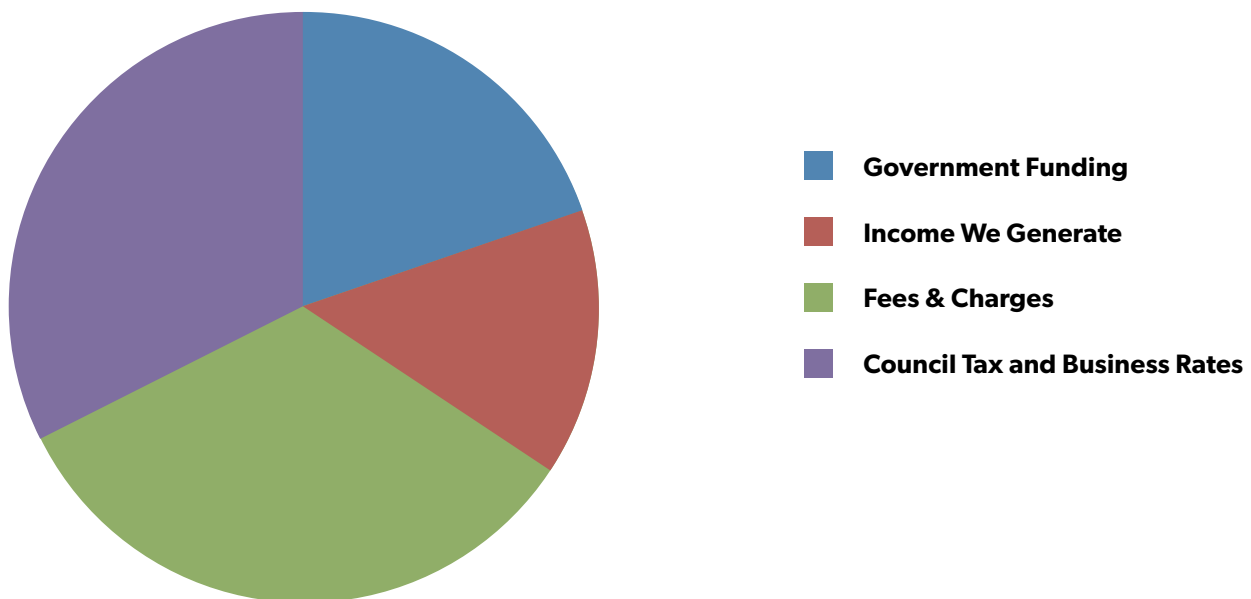
“ It's a big year for Hastings. Not only is it the 950th anniversary of the Norman Conquest, with events and exhibitions to mark the occasion, but its pier has finally reopened after a £14 million redevelopment. ”
(The Times)

The Council

The council is made up of 32 elected members, serving 16 wards across Hastings and St. Leonards. The elected members set the council's policies, which are then carried out by council officers. In February 2017, the council has around 320 members of staff.

The council continues to look at the services it provides to see if they could be made even more efficient. So far, this includes redesigning our website Hastings Online and creating the My.Hastings portal so that more things can be done online. We've also moved our democratic and civic functions to our refurbished seafront offices, bringing most of our services together. Part of the Town Hall has become a Register Office for East Sussex County Council.

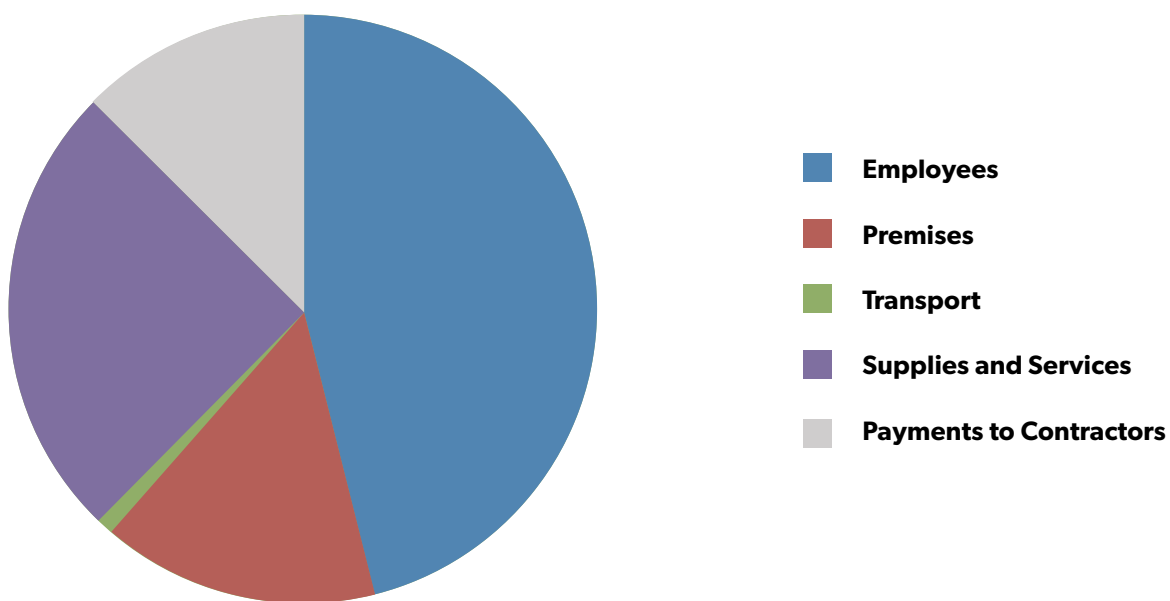
OUR FUNDING



This Corporate Plan

The corporate plan tells you what we will be doing over the next year and beyond. It also tells you why we're doing it, what challenges we might face and how we plan to overcome them.

HOW WE SPEND OUR FUNDING



1 - the council also receives a grant from the government which it has to administer as housing benefit payments

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Enhancing Quality of Life



Fit for the Future



How will we know if it's working?

Key Performance Indicators (See page 21)

Cleaner and Safer

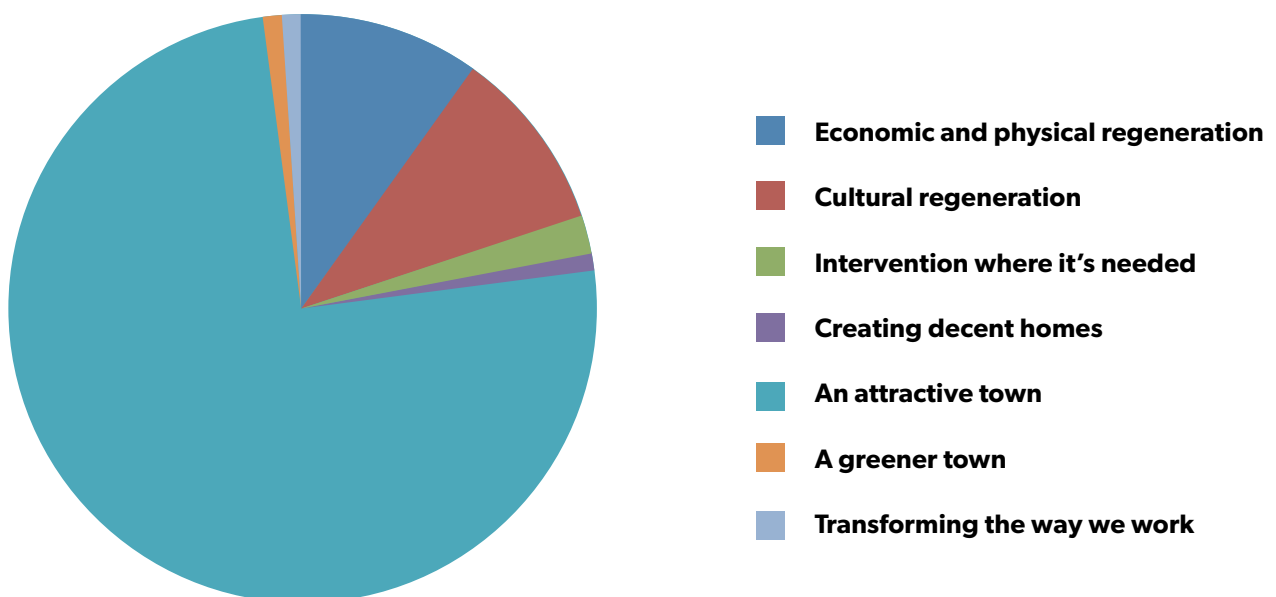
What we want for Hastings by 2019:

The green spaces and public areas of the town need to be safe, well maintained and clean so they can be enjoyed by residents and visitors.

Food businesses need to maintain good standards of hygiene and safety so that residents and visitors enjoy visiting them, and they prosper.

Why are we doing it?

Cleaner Safer activity contributes to our following corporate priorities:



What will we be doing?

- ▶ Improving the cleanliness of the town, working closely with our waste, street cleansing and grounds maintenance contractors.
- ▶ Supporting community safety and working with the Safer Hastings and Rother Community Safety Partnership.
- ▶ Delivering fair and proportionate enforcement services in relation to off street parking, environmental crime, and environmental health.



What challenges could we face?

- ▶ Littering making the town less attractive.
- ▶ Ensuring falls in recycling levels nationally don't follow suit in Hastings.
- ▶ Businesses may cut corners and compromise health and hygiene standards.
- ▶ Holding down crime rates as resources to tackle crime reduce.

How can we overcome these challenges?

Raising public awareness of the negative impact of littering, and where appropriate taking a robust approach to enforcement. Raising public awareness about recycling. Continuing successful multi-agency partnership working on community safety issues.

How will we know if it's working?

Meeting housing needs and delivering support

What we want for Hastings by 2019:

We want people to be able to access the right housing for their needs and aspirations and to help them sustain their homes when they are in need of support. The government will be continuing to reform the way in which people access housing and benefits over the next year. We will need to implement these changes in a way which help protects vulnerable people.

We will ensure the supply of new housing supports economic growth and satisfies local needs and that private sector housing is licensed appropriately.

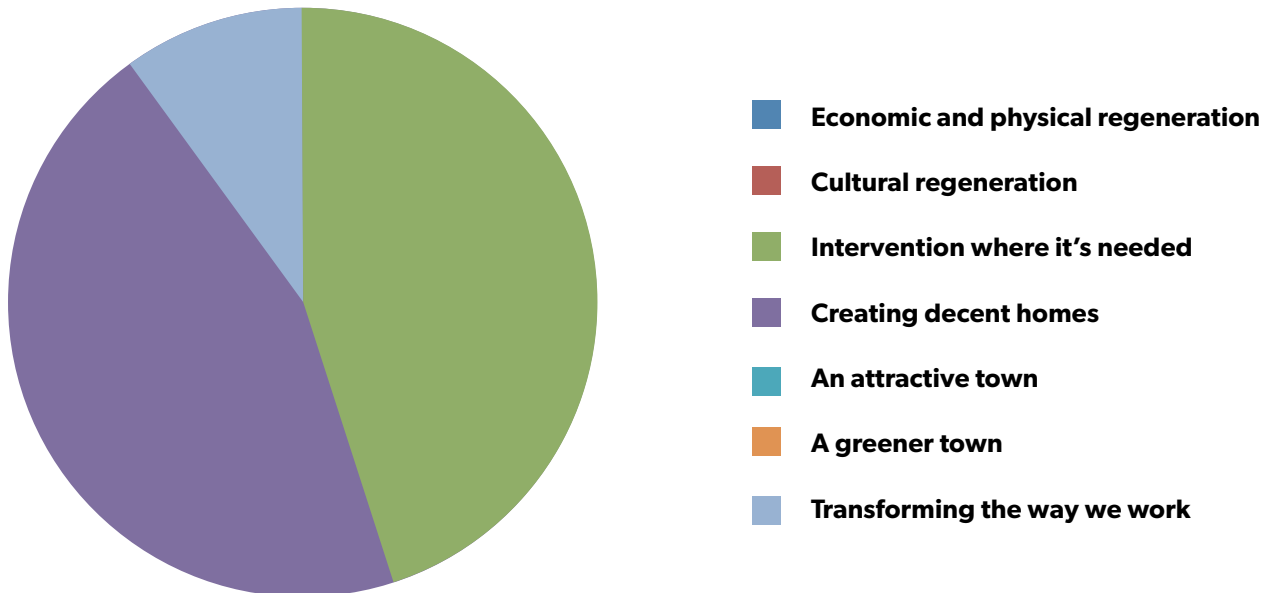
We want everyone in the town to enjoy warm, safe and secure housing.

Why are we doing it?

The continued regeneration of the town depends upon creating the right environment for business to flourish and for jobs and incomes to be further created. Housing and employment growth need to be mutually supportive of the councils regeneration plans.

We also need to ensure that the vulnerable and those less able to compete in the housing and employment markets are not left behind.

Housing and Benefit activity contributes to our following corporate priorities:



What will we be doing?

- ▶ Supporting local people during the transition to Universal Credit and other welfare changes
- ▶ Look to support as far as possible those affected by welfare changes.
- ▶ Maintaining and further developing our approach to improving standards in housing through licencing and proactive enforcement activity.
- ▶ Releasing land for residential development that caters for a range of housing needs.
- ▶ Continuing our innovative approach to housing regeneration through the Coastal Space Programme, grot busting and empty homes programmes.
- ▶ Extending our housing offer through the new housing company.
- ▶ Working with developers and Housing associations to improve the supply of new affordable homes.



What challenges could we face?

- ▶ Difficult to find appropriate accommodation and increasing homelessness.
- ▶ Ensuring we can cope with increasing demand on housing services.
- ▶ Developing viable proposals for intervention in the housing market.

How can we overcome these challenges?

Continue to work with both private and affordable housing providers to extend opportunities for development.

Investing in and developing a housing company.

Work closely with other agencies and partners, including the Department of Work and Pension (DWP), so that changes affecting the most vulnerable households are minimised.

Ensure our staff are trained to provide the best advice possible.

How will we know if it's working?

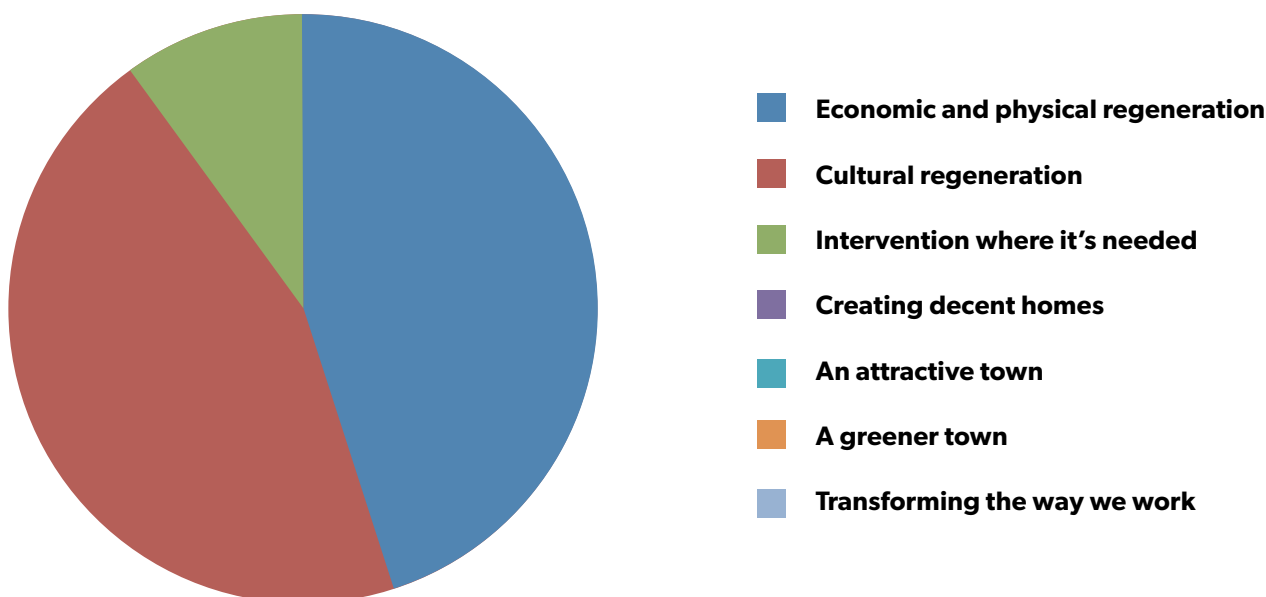
Driving Economic Growth

What we want for Hastings by 2019:

We want to continue our economic growth and focus on how our regeneration can be as inclusive as possible. Economic prosperity and inclusion are key determinants of health and social cohesion. We want to create the conditions where as many people as possible can enjoy these benefits and we will deliver this through inclusive means, ensuring culture and leisure deliver both social and economic benefits.

Why are we doing it?

Economic growth underpins improvements to health, crime, housing and social cohesion.



What will we be doing?

- ▶ Working with regional and County partnerships to attract investment into the area including improved rail links and support to business.
- ▶ Building on the opening of The Source, Hastings Pier and our widely recognised cultural programme we will promote Hastings as an exciting place to live, visit, work and invest.
- ▶ Continue to support Higher Education provision in the town and the development of provision to succeed the University of Brighton.
- ▶ Taking forward the development of a Town Centre and White Rock Action Plan to lay the basis and spread the benefits of regeneration along and adjacent to the seafront.
- ▶ Subject to funding will deliver schemes to help some of the most excluded communities in the Borough into economic activity and training.
- ▶ Seek to enhance sports and leisure activity through new contracts for our facilities and encouraging others to invest in new provision.
- ▶ Maximise the level of occupancy of the council's business premises and support the provision of new employment space by Sea Change or ourselves as appropriate.
- ▶ Work with the Town Centre Management Committee and its successor 'Love Hastings' to deliver an enhanced and more sustainable town centre.



What challenges could we face?

- ▶ Continuing to improve our image internally and externally as a great place to live, visit, work and invest.
- ▶ Brexit will mean a change in how funds for economic growth are distributed.
- ▶ Maintaining our recovery in the face of changes Brexit will bring – keeping foreign language schools here for example – may require focused work in key economic sectors.
- ▶ Ensuring regional economic partnerships genuinely support investment in Hastings and coastal areas rather than just on the M25 belt.
- ▶ A wider downturn means the fall in unemployment slows or we don't create a mix of jobs that offers a sustainable future.
- ▶ Ensuring empty buildings are put to good use.

How will we overcome these challenges?

We're continuing to explore all the opportunities we can to develop the town and improve the life-chances of local people.

We will continue to work in partnership with local and regional bodies to build on the local employment base and secure new investment in the town.

How will we know if it's working?

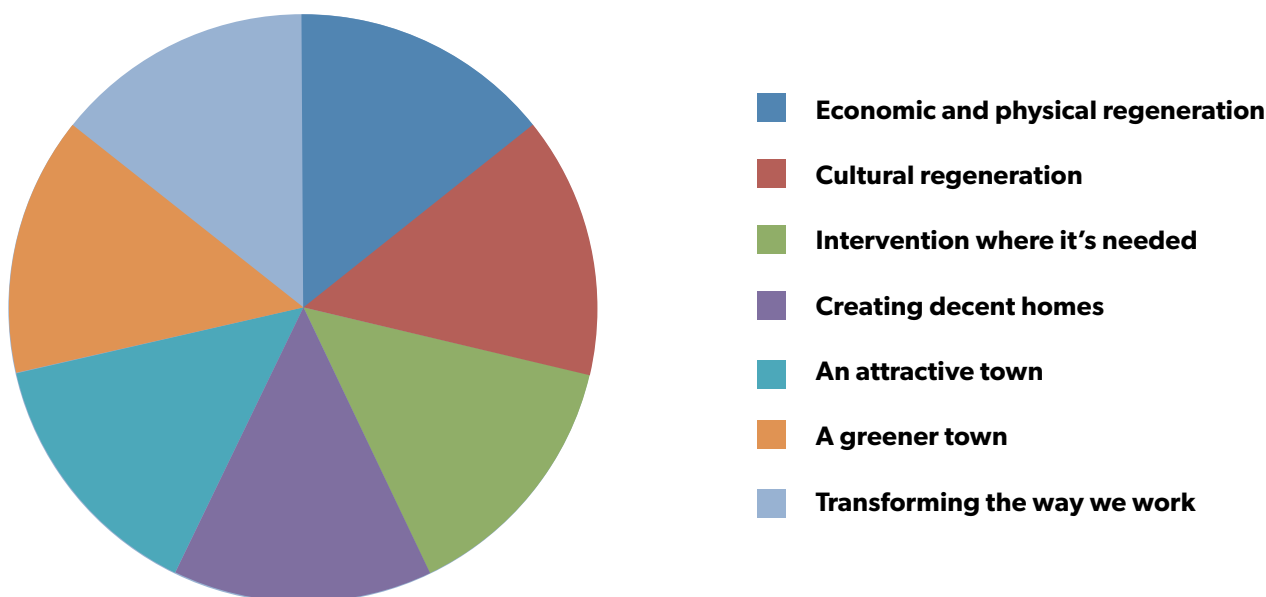
Providing great services

What we want for Hastings by 2019:

We are facing a massive funding gap in a few years and need to determine how we will meet our priorities. We need to plan ahead for the new ways we will be working and delivering our services. We need to make sure that the work the council does is properly planned and we have enough funding to do it well. Our staff and councillors need to have the right skills and tools for the job and be ready to take on new challenges.

Why are we doing it?

Effective corporate planning contributes to our following corporate priorities:



What will we be doing?

- ▶ Reviewing all our services and activities and consider the best ways of delivering these in future.
- ▶ Finishing our transformation programme to make sure our processes and systems are as efficient as possible and our services are designed to be delivered online.
- ▶ Striving to continuously improve our performance and customer care.
- ▶ Working with partnerships to get the best for local people.



What challenges could we face?

- ▶ Competing pressures on our resources.
- ▶ Time and financial restrictions.
- ▶ Uncertainty about future funding and responsibilities of local government.

How can we overcome these challenges?

Lobbying Government to ensure they understand the needs of towns like Hastings. Looking at new innovative ways of delivering services and learning from those who have tried them already. Make sure that everyone understands why the way we work needs to be reviewed and how the council will deliver services in the future. Making sure we have the skills and resources to meet our commitments. Keeping our customers informed and increasing online transactions.

How will we know if it's working?

The outcome of our strategic planning activity will be our Corporate Plan and Budget for 2018/19 onwards

Income Generation

What we want for Hastings by 2019:

We want a council that is financially strong enough to continue to deliver the services and regeneration our town needs in the face of public expenditure reductions. We want to develop goods and services which will both create new benefits for residents and income for the council. To do this we need to change radically to create an increasingly enterprising culture in our organisation.

What will we be doing?

We will develop the financial, staffing and other policies that will enable us to put a more commercial approach at the centre of everything we do. At the heart of this will be a new Income Generation Strategy that will influence our planning and thinking for the future.

We will be bringing forward proposals for

- ▶ Housing investment – having set up a housing company
- ▶ Generating energy low carbon initiatives and involvement in the energy market.
- ▶ Expanding seafront assets, like beach huts and glamping.
- ▶ Purchasing commercial property where this is profitable and economically beneficial.
- ▶ Using our Parks and Open Spaces for new events that generate income and add to our cultural and community life.
- ▶ Collecting our council tax and business rates efficiently.
- ▶ Reviewing fees and charges.



What challenges could we face?

- ▶ We need to change what we do relatively quickly, which is a huge challenge for staff who are already fully committed to existing work.
- ▶ Changing the culture and image of what a council is to one which fits a future where commercial thinking and digital communications are seen as the new standard.
- ▶ Balancing opportunity and risk to make sure we protect both the taxes paid by residents and businesses whilst creating new income.
- ▶ There is insufficient income generated to enable the council's future to be sustainable.

How can we overcome these challenges?

The council already has experience of generating its own income, and this knowledge will be developed further and shared across the organisation. Each project will be investigated thoroughly before any investment is made.

We will listen to the ideas of residents, staff and partners to ensure opportunities are not missed and this will be a key focus for senior management.

How will we know if it's working?

How will we know if it's working?

Key Performance Indicators

We will be developing the indicators we use to measure our progress over the next couple of months, but these might include...



Cleaner and Safer

- ▶ Less litter, dog fouling, detritus, graffiti and flyposting
- ▶ % of household waste sent for recycling doesn't drop
- ▶ % of food establishments which meet food hygiene law doesn't drop
- ▶ Fewer failed bin collections
- ▶ Green flag status retained for our key parks and open spaces



Meeting housing needs and delivering support

- ▶ 1500 homelessness cases prevented and no more than 60% of homeless applications received resulting in a duty to rehouse
- ▶ 200 more private sector homes meeting the required standard
- ▶ 75 affordable homes created
- ▶ 70 empty properties bought back into use
- ▶ 50 neglected buildings improved
- ▶ 200 new homes built
- ▶ New housing benefits claims processed faster
- ▶ Changes to housing benefit claims processed faster
- ▶ Council Tax reduction claims processed faster
- ▶ Changes to Council Tax reduction claims processed faster



Driving economic growth

- Increased number of visitors to Hastings Museum and Art Gallery
- Increased number of people using council Leisure Centres
- 80% major residential & commercial planning applications determined within 13 weeks or as agreed with the applicant
- 80% minor residential & commercial planning applications determined within 8 weeks or as agreed with the applicant
- 80% householder planning applications determined within 8 weeks or as agreed with the applicant
- 80% non-major planning applications determined within 8 weeks or as agreed with applicant



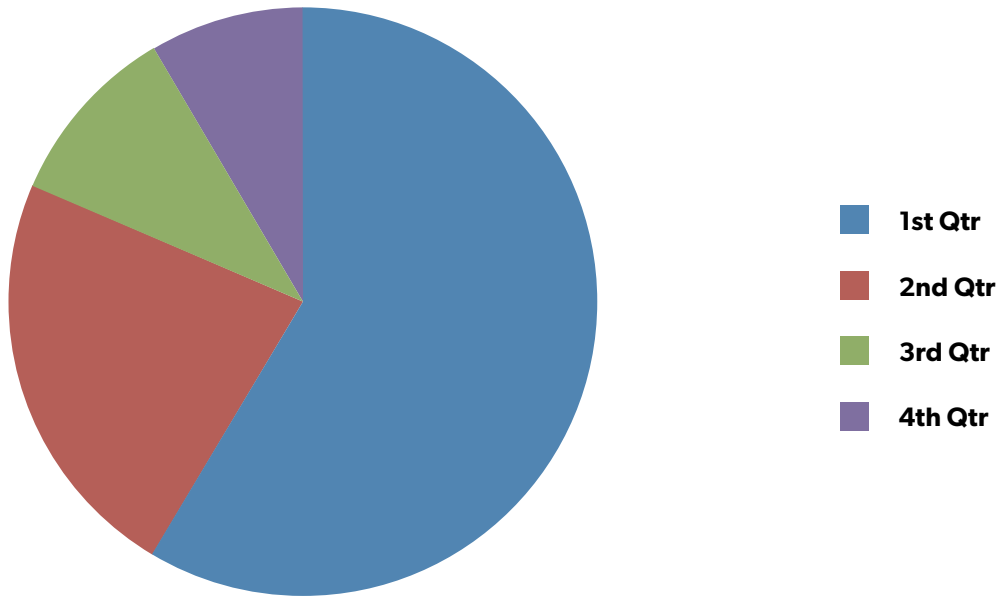
Providing great services

- 60% customers self-serving online
- Fewer work days lost due to sickness absence



Income Generation

- % council tax collected in year
- % non-domestic rates collected in year
- % of factory units occupied
- (additional targets TBC)
- Surplus generated from investment
- Design and delivery of projects moving forward
- A strong income generation strategy linked firmly to the council's ability to safely borrow and its wider financial strategies



2 - the performance indicators listed here will be presented using pie charts (or similar) as part of the performance monitoring over the year

