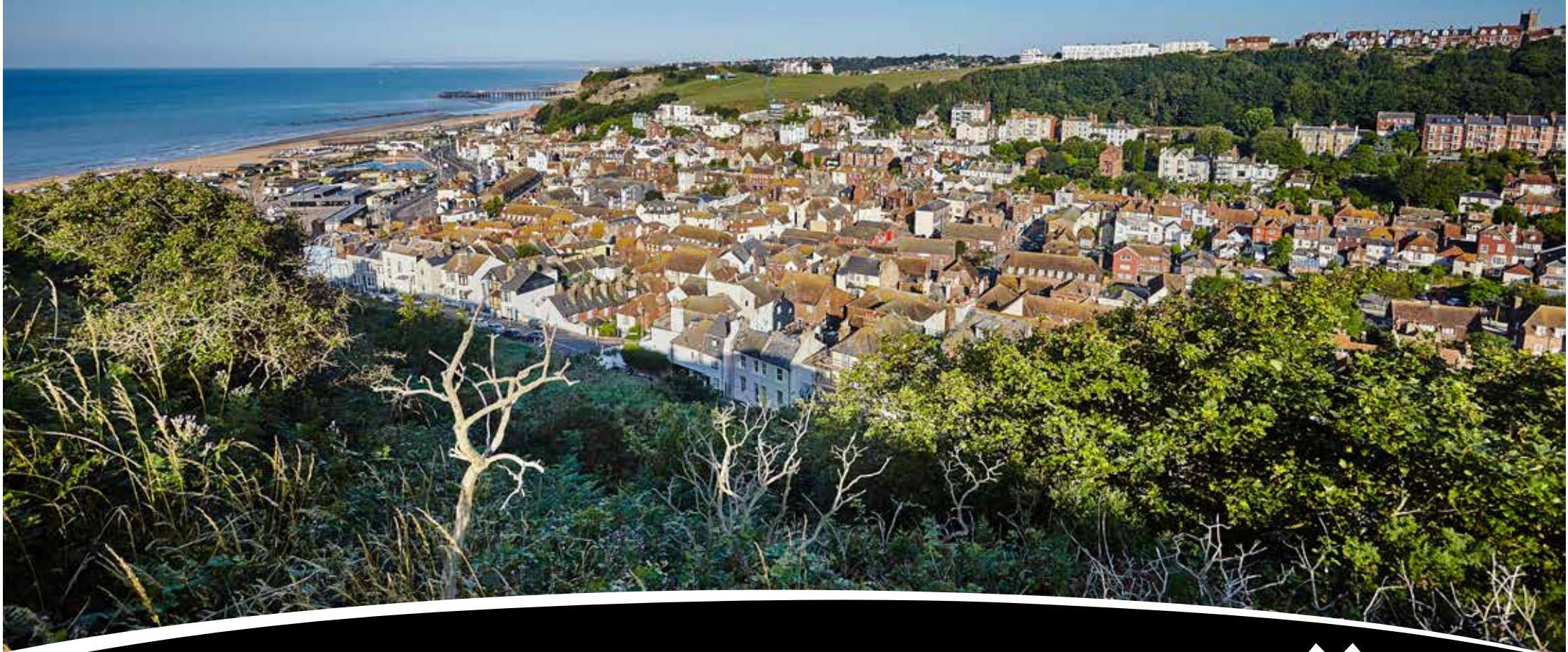


# Corporate Plan 2018/19





# Executive Summary

Introduction by Councillor Kim Forward, Deputy Leader of the Council

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The corporate plan is an important document in helping local people understand the council's vision and priorities for Hastings and St Leonards.

We've refreshed the layout of the plan to show the key activities we will be working on over the next year or so, the challenges we might face, and how we plan to overcome them. We've also set out the measures we will be using to check progress on these key pieces of work.

## About the Corporate Plan

The council publishes a corporate plan each year. It tells residents, businesses and our staff about the progress we have made to pursue key opportunities and some of the key projects and activities we will be working on to continue to improve the town.



## Our vision for Hastings...

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 – Making the Difference

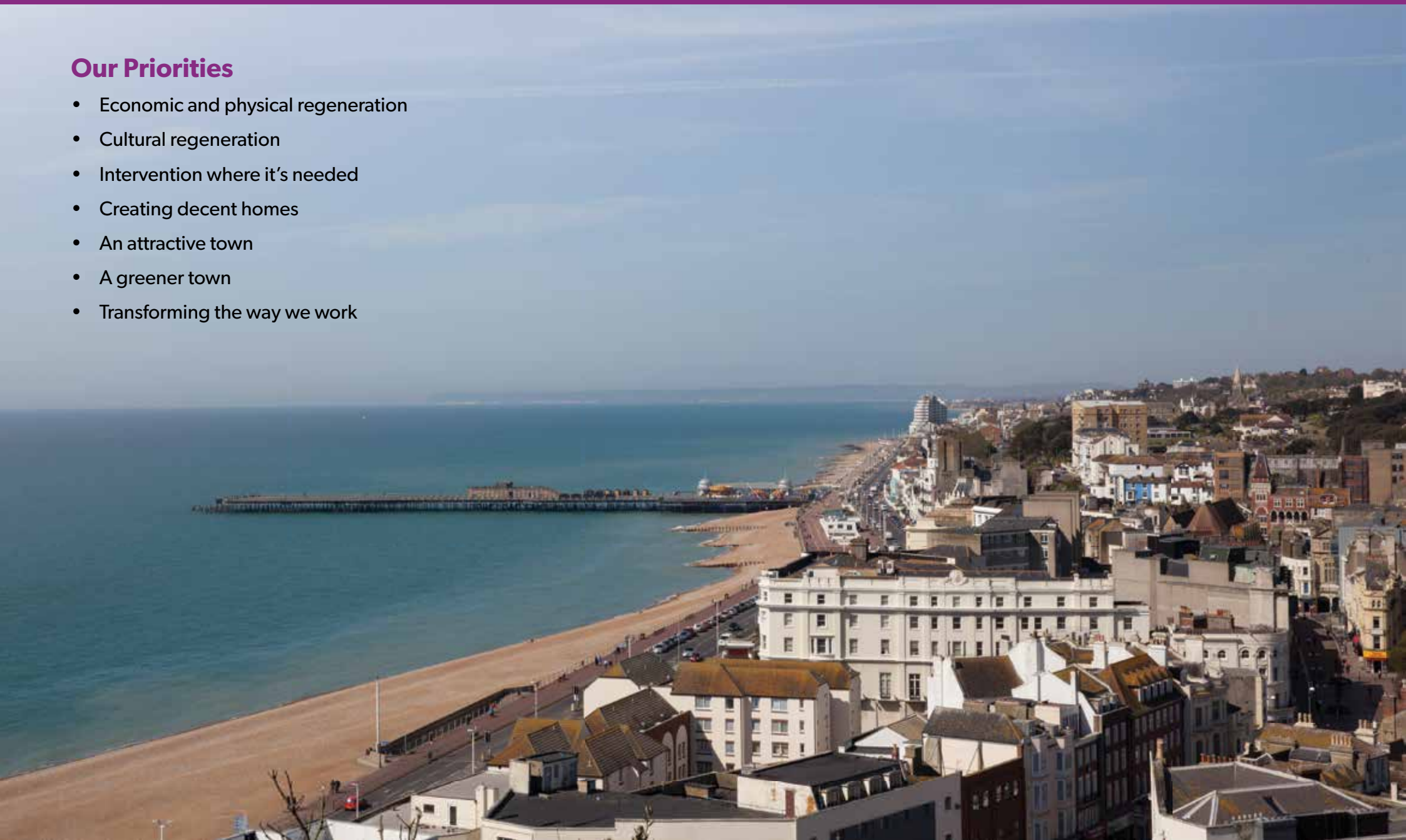
Hastings Borough Council is committed to improving the quality of life and well-being of all of its residents. We recognise our duty to be responsive to the needs of all who live and work in our borough and to do so in a way which respects cultural identity, providing equality of opportunity and equality 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



HOW WE COMPARE:

\* From 2017/18



Time taken to process housing benefit  
new claims in Hastings (days)

Hastings  
**16**

Nearest neighbour average  
**22**

Time taken to process housing benefit  
change events in Hastings (days)

Hastings  
**6**

Nearest neighbour average  
**7**

Numbers accepted  
as being homeless  
and in priority need  
- Total (Annual)

\* From 2016/17



FACT AND FIGURES



**1,999**  
people attended  
AH sessions in 2017

**43%**  
of these people live  
in deprived areas of  
the town



Secondary school  
results in Hastings  
2017

**50%**  
of pupils achieved  
A\*-C / 9 - 4  
in English and Maths

compared to East Sussex  
of **61.2%**



**14.5%**  
of residents lived in  
social housing\*

**28.8%**  
in private  
rented sector\*

**55.2%**  
in owner-occupied  
accommodation\*

\* From 2011 census



**Homelessness** in Hastings has continued to rise over the past year, as it has across the country. The reasons for this are increasing numbers of people needing to access homelessness services and a lack of availability of accommodation in both the social and private rented sector. This means that the council is relying on temporary accommodation more and more.

New laws will be introduced in April 2018 which give the council extra responsibilities to prevent homelessness. The government has also changed the way it funds this work by introducing a flexible homelessness support grant. The council needs to balance providing effective mainstream homelessness prevention services, as well as looking at new ways of engaging with hard to reach groups.

We also need to look at how we use **temporary accommodation**. This may include purchasing our own properties to give us more control over how this accommodation is managed, as well as working with housing associations to provide short term accommodation for families. Other towns have also developed temporary housing solutions using vacant parcels of land, and we'll find out if this approach could work in Hastings.

Lots of people in Hastings live in **private rented accommodation**. Because house prices in Hastings have increased over recent years, many people rent for longer before buying their own home. It's important that we make sure that accommodation in the private sector is good quality and managed by responsible landlords. A new licensing scheme for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) will be introduced in May 2018. The scheme covers four wards in the town, all of which have a large number of HMOs, and sets out standards for accommodation and how it is managed. We're also developing a new social lettings agency, which will provide a similar range of services to a high street estate agent.

Many residents from the most deprived parts of the town live in **social housing**. We're working with the largest social housing provider to improve the standards of street cleansing on their estates, after residents reported problems with fly-tipping and litter.

Our wardens issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) for **litter and anti-social behaviour**, and we've introduced Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) in some parts of the town. The enforcement of PSPOs is coupled with a package of support for alcohol abuse, when needed. It is intended to work with partners to develop

a similar approach for drug abuse issues. The **Hastings Street Community Partnership**, which is made up of county council, local council, health and voluntary sector representatives, has been reviewing the services provided to the street community to find any gaps in support.

We know that **improving health** is key to tackling deprivation. That's why the Healthy Hastings and Rother Programme, a partnership initiative between the council and the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), includes a co-investment programme in Ore, Hollington and Sidley. All of these areas have high numbers of people living in social housing.

The **Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP)**, which is based in the Ore Valley, has been working to reduce problem drinking amongst young people. Active Hastings has launched the StreetBites project this year, also based in the Ore Valley, which provides nutritional meals during the school holidays, to children who receive free school meals during term time.

**Universal credit** went live in Hastings in September 2017. Like many other authorities, we have noticed that it is taking us longer to process new benefit applications and change of circumstances. People need to contact the council

more often to let us know about changes in their circumstances, which might affect the amount of **council tax support** they receive. We want to simplify this process in the future and will be reviewing our council tax support scheme.

You can only access universal credit online, so we've been working with Citizens Advice to develop a training package to help people improve their computer skills. The training ranges from refresher sessions to 1-2-1 support. Not only does this help people with their universal credit applications, but the computer skills they learn will enable them to access many other services online. Staff in the community contact centre have been training with local advice agencies, to enable them to understand the welfare changes in more detail and help us sign post people to other agencies when we need to.

We've also been looking at new ways of supporting residents who have been affected by the **changes to the welfare system**. We used some of our funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to appoint an officer to visit families affected by the new benefits cap, to help them reduce their spending and find other sources of support. This approach has worked well and the officer has been able to build up a trusted relationship with the families they support.

We're also sending fewer unpaid council tax bills to the bailiffs for recovery, instead the team are working proactively with households that may be at risk of falling behind with their payments.

A good education improves **social mobility**. Hastings is an education opportunity area. A board has been formed to develop projects to improve education in the town, using a fund set up by the government and by exploring other grant opportunities. The board is made up of representatives of the council, county council, local schools and colleges and the voluntary sector. A university centre recently opened at Sussex Coast College Hastings, the council has been looking at new options to maintain higher education provision in the town.

The council has also successfully applied for **community-led local development (CLLD)** funding. This will enable us to work alongside local people in some of the most deprived parts of our town to design and deliver projects to support social mobility.

## What to look out for next year?

- Projects which focus on social inclusion, such as CLLD, Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) and Opportunity Area
- Implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act, which comes into force in April 2018
- New temporary housing initiatives
- Reviewing the housing offer for people with disabilities
- Developing a social lettings agency
- Working with the Hastings Street Community Partnership
- Working with the CCG on a health and wellbeing programme

## HOW WE COMPARE TO OTHERS:



Job density (of total jobs to population aged 16-64)

\* From 2015

Hastings

**0.65**

Nearest neighbour average

**0.76**

Working age people on out of work benefits

\* From Oct - Dec 2016

Hastings

**14.3%**

Nearest neighbour average

**10.0%**

Median gross weekly pay of employees by residence

\* From 2017

Hastings

**£465.0**

Nearest neighbour average

**£503.1**

Volume and value of tourism

\* From 2014-2016

Total visits (day and overnight - millions)

Hastings

**2.82**Nearest  
neighbour average**2.93**

Expenditure (day and overnight - millions)

Hastings

**£126.7**Nearest  
neighbour average**£111.7**



## FACT AND FIGURES



LOCAL MUSEUM  
GLOBAL COLLECTION

The most popular  
exhibition this year

'A Sussex Wave from Japan: the  
colour woodcuts of Eric Slater  
and Arthur Rigden Read'

Ran from 27 May  
to 3 September.

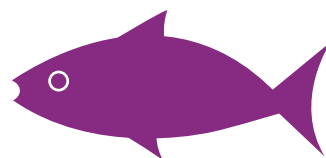


Total visitors:  
**15,266**



Busiest day:  
**1,200**  
approx. visitors

125th birthday party / 16th Aug



Number of visitors to the  
3 Fish Festivals in 2017

Mid-summer Fish Festival



**5,000**  
approx. visitors

Seafood & Wine Festival



**20,000**  
approx. visitors

Herring Fair



**8,000**  
approx. visitors



**13**  
events  
programmed



**11,000**  
attended



**50**  
artists involved



Value of funding from  
external grants in 2017

**£2,184,885**

external funding approved  
between Jan and Dec

THIS  
INCLUDED

**£812,770**

worth of funding from the  
Coastal Communities Fund for  
Destination White Rock.

## Hastings is full of potential.

Over the past year we have been working with local business and community groups to develop a master plan for the **White Rock area**. We know that this part of the town offers opportunities to develop new leisure facilities. The plan has now been published on the council's website and will form part of more detailed public consultations in the future. We will be keeping the new leisure facilities contracts flexible, so these sites can be included in bigger plans for the area if needed.

The council's planning policy will need to be reviewed to deliver the aims of the master plan. This means developing an area action plan specifically for White Rock. This will take time (around 3 years), but we've already started work on two key documents which will underpin the process. There'll be an opportunity for people to have their say during the process through public consultations. We'll also be working with the county council on traffic calming measures for the seafront.

We're working with developers on a number of exciting proposals. This includes continuing to support the development of a **new sports village**. Not only does this offer the opportunity to improve the sports and leisure facilities in the town, but there is also the possibility of

developing new housing on the former sites. We invited expressions of interest in a potential development on the former bathing pool site at **West Marina**. A number of exciting proposals were received, and these will now be invited to progress to a full bid stage. The council will also work with developers to see if plans for a marina in the old town are viable.

It's important that we ensure there are **attractions throughout the town**. The Heritage Angel award-winning Source Skate Park and Stirling prize-winning pier are helping to draw visitors along the seafront. There was a popular installation in Bottle Alley as part of this year's Coastal Currents festival, called wave length. Since then, a new lighting system has been installed. A kiosk has also been opened on the upper promenade. Further improvements will follow this year, including restoring the disused fountain near the entrance to the pier using a grant from the Coastal Communities Fund.

We've also been carrying out a review of the **music and performance venues** in the town. Hastings is home to many talented musicians and it's important that we have the right mix of venues for the local scene. The contract with the current operator of the White Rock Theatre will be coming to an end soon, and we're considering what

the future options for this facility together with the findings of the review. The Cultural Leaders Group, which was originally formed to oversee the Root1066 festival, also adopted an action plan which focuses on the creation of a music city.

**Hastings Museum and Art Gallery** celebrated its 125th anniversary in July 2017. Museums around the country are facing challenges with their funding, with many reducing their opening hours or closing completely. Here in Hastings, the team have been carrying out a resilience study, to look at new ways of making the museum more sustainable and ensuring it's treasures remain available for the people of Hastings, and visitors to our town, to enjoy into the future.

Hastings is famous for the **wide variety of events** we host. Many of these events are organised by local voluntary groups. This has continued in 2017, with the St Leonards Festival, Seafood and Wine Festival and Hastings Bonfire. The Stade Saturday's programme also ran throughout the summer, bringing world class street and circus performers to the town. We commissioned local company, Sweet and Dandy, to organise this year's Coastal Currents festival. Working in partnership with local groups is one of the key ways we can continue to support the exciting events Hastings is famous for. Many of

events in the town are also supported by funding from the Arts Council England. It's important that the council continues to develop links to the Arts Council and other partners to develop our cultural offer further. We've also had to look at new ways of making the events we organise directly more sustainable, and in some cases this means introducing an entry charge.

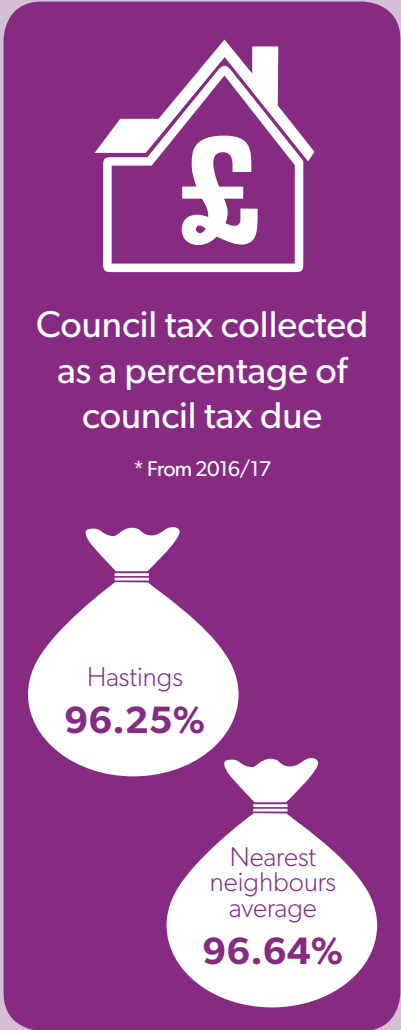
The **job density** (the number of jobs in the area, divided by the working age population) is low in Hastings. We're continuing to look for new ways to attract employers to area. We've developed new employment space in the town, both on our own land and by working with SeaChange Sussex. We're also part of Locate East Sussex, a county-wide project which supports business expand and develop, and encourages new companies to relocate to the area.

### What to look out for next year?

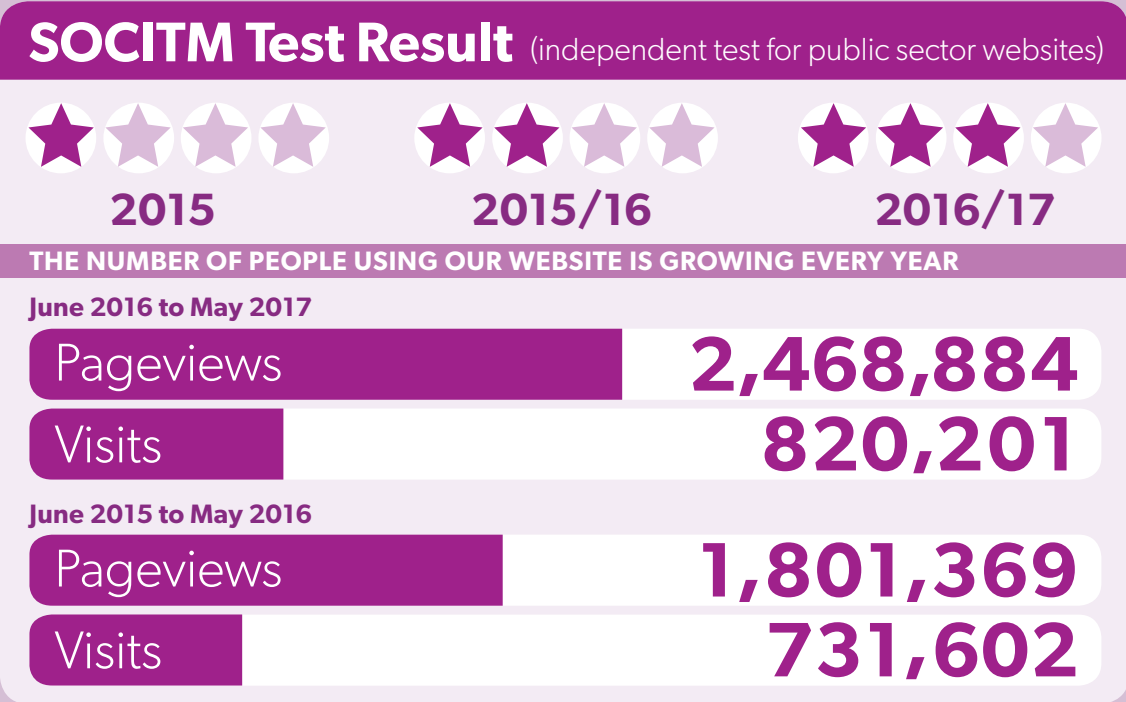
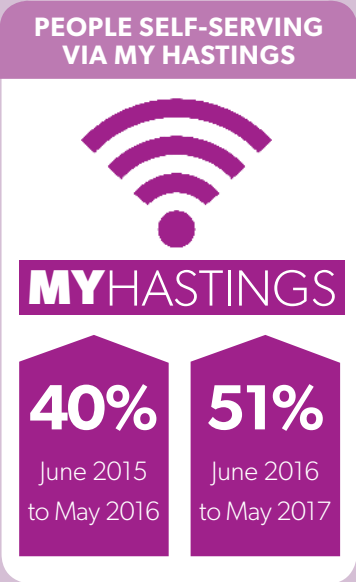
- Working with developers to look at options for key sites including West Marina, the Harbour and Sports Village
- Support the development of a high speed rail link between Hastings and London
- Look at opportunities to develop new employment space both on our own land, and with partners
- Develop an area action plan for White Rock
- Explore options for improving key visitor attractions including Hastings Castle, White Rock Theatre and the seafront
- Continue to build up our cultural offer, including the Hastings and Rother Music City brand



HOW WE COMPARE TO OTHERS:



FACT AND FIGURES



There are some big challenges coming up for the council. We need to continue to deliver the core services local people expect and prioritise our work to improve the town. To support this work, we'll need to generate more income and continue to look for cost savings. The council has a role, not only in delivering services, but also supporting a collaborative approach between local people and a range of public, private and voluntary organisations.

We've also been looking at how we deliver services. People now expect to be able to carry out day to day transactions online, at a time which is convenient for them.

We launched **My Hastings** our online platform for residents just over a year ago. Teams across the organisation are continuing to make more services available online. In January 2018, we launched a new Report It package, which makes it easier and faster for people to let us know about problems. There was also a town-wide marketing campaign to encourage people to use My Hastings as its available 24/7 and often gets issues dealt with more quickly. Enabling people to carry out simple transactions online means our staff will have more time to deal with complex enquiries on the phone or in person at the Community Contact Centre.

We are continuing to review every aspect of what we do to ensure our services are designed and delivered with customers in mind i.e. 'Customer First' and that we are efficient and offer value for money.

We also need to consider what the best model for delivering our broad range of services into the future is. In some cases this may involve bringing services back in-house - we are looking at this for our street cleaning service as local people have told us the service we get from our contractor is not good enough. There are also opportunities for us to work in partnership with other authorities. Recent examples of this include implementing a new finance and HR system, in partnership with Rother District Council. Over the next year, we'll be continuing to work with other authorities in East Sussex to jointly procure a new waste and recycling service to operate from June 2019.

We also need to look at new ways of delivering services that we may not be able to afford to do in the future – we need to work with organisations that may be able to access funding not available to councils or look at other innovations to protect the services that local people want.

The council needs to generate extra income to make up for the reductions in funding it receives

from government. In October 2017, we approved our income generation strategy. The strategy sets out the three main ways the council will generate extra income; investment in commercial and residential property and energy generation. We'll be continuing to maximise opportunities within each of these themes throughout the year ahead.

Over the past year, the council has acquired a retail park in the town which is already generating significant income. A housing company was also formed and has begun acquiring its first properties, which will then be made available for rent. Not only does this generate extra income for the council but in many cases it also supports our plans for the regeneration of the town.

We're always looking for new ways of making Hastings friendly greener town. Earlier this year, we commissioned research into how we can make our own offices and industrial units more energy efficient. We have been putting these recommendations in place over the past few months. The research also identified a number of longer term opportunities for the council to **generate and supply renewable energy**. Not only could this provide us with additional income, but it will also deliver economic, social and environmental benefits to the people of the borough. This will be a significant project and

will involve many parts of the council and lots of resources to deliver – we'll be developing an energy strategy for the borough in spring 2018.

We're continuing to invest in and develop our staff with technical, project management, professional and managerial skills, to make sure we have the right mix of people for the future. The council also belongs to a national apprenticeship scheme, which enables us to provide a wide range of training opportunities. We work hard to support staff with welfare issues and our HR team are trained as mental health first aiders. We've undertaken an internal review of how we communicate with staff and are introducing new approaches over the next year.

### **What to look out for next year?**

- Develop a new council tax support scheme
- Delivering on the 3 key themes in our income generation strategy
- More services available online via My Hastings – including benefits and council tax
- Continuing to work in partnership with other local authorities, including procuring the new waste collection contract
- Development of our renewable energy plans for the town
- New internal staff intranet and communications tools to better involve staff in planning and delivering the council's priorities



We'll continue to use key performance indicators to measure progress against our targets throughout the year. The performance indicators we use will be agreed by Cabinet in July 2018.

## Inclusion

- Improve street and environmental cleanliness
- Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting
- Percentage of food establishments which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law
- The average number of failed bin collections (per 100,000 collections)
- Increased number of people using council leisure centres
- Number of homelessness cases prevented (bigger is better)
- % of homeless applications resulting in a placement in emergency accommodation (smaller is better)
- Private sector homes meeting the required standard
- Number of affordable homes created
- Average number of days to process new

housing benefit claims (smaller is better)

- Average number of days to process changes to housing benefit claims (smaller is better)
- Average number of days to process new Council Tax Reduction claims
- Average number of days to process changes to Council Tax Reduction claims

## Growth

- Green Flag status retained for parks and open spaces
- Increased number of visitors to Hastings Museum and Art Gallery
- Major planning applications determined within 13 weeks or as agreed with applicants
- Non-major planning applications determined within 8 weeks or as agreed with the applicant
- Householder planning applications determined within 8 weeks or as agreed with the applicant
- Major planning applications determined within 13 weeks or as agreed with the applicant between October 2017 and September 2019

- Non major planning applications determined within 8 weeks or as agreed with the applicant between October 2017 and September 2019
- Number of long term (2+ years) empty properties bought back into use (bigger is better)
- Number of neglected buildings improved (bigger is better)
- Number of new homes built

## Futureproof

- % of customers self-serving online
- The proportion of working days / shifts lost due to sickness absence
- Income Generation
- % Council Tax collected in year (bigger is better)
- % Non domestic rates collected in year (bigger is better)

