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**Shape the District
Corporate Strategy 2017 - 2020
Mendip District Council**

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Foreword

Our previous Corporate Plan was published in 2015, and was originally created to see us through until 2020. In the past 2 years we have seen unprecedented changes to the political and funding landscape, to the extent that we now need to revisit that plan for the remainder of the original 5-year term.

The contribution made to our progress by the outgoing Corporate Plan however, has been significant, and can be seen and felt today in many of the initiatives that we have embarked upon in recent years. From the inception of Shape Mendip to our Five Councils Partnership. From the transformation underway at Dulcote Quarry to the ambitious contract arrangement with id verde that is currently transforming the district's neighbourhoods and green spaces.

But now we recognise the need to set out a new Strategy, updated in line with current circumstances and conditions. To reflect the greater degree of uncertainty we face, we have taken the decision to adopt a shorter 3-year planning lifecycle. Through this work we have identified 2 core priorities in pursuit of our overall Vision – Transformation and Inclusive Growth.

When faced with difficult choices we will continue to make brave decisions in pursuit of best value and enhanced service delivery, an approach that has garnered significant praise in the recent Peer Review:

*“..there exists a culture of innovation and trust throughout the council and this extends to many of its partnership arrangements... Indeed many of the partnership arrangements the council has led, fostered or committed to are truly inspiring...”**

We welcome your thoughts and feedback as we look to build ever-stronger partnerships, working together to make Mendip an even better place to live and work.

Harvey Siggs, Leader of the Council and Stuart Brown, Chief Executive

** Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge,
28 February – 2 March 2017*

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Introduction

This document sets a clear direction for what we want to achieve over the next three years. It outlines where we want to be and how we intend to get there.

Everything we do will contribute to the delivery of the desired outcomes in this strategy. Our success relies on our ability to align the activities and performance of our wider team (including staff, elected members and service delivery partners) around our new priorities.

We are constantly being required to develop new approaches to public service delivery, driven by many different factors including national and global economic uncertainty, an ageing population, the rapidly changing nature of technology and the ever-evolving requirements and needs of our communities.

We recognise that as a council we can only deliver on our Inclusive Growth objectives if we have a sustainable and financially sound base from which to operate. In the current economic reality this is far from secure, and so we must transform the ways in which we work, and from there shape the kind of place that our communities (both residential and business) want to live in.

Fortunately, we recognised early on the benefits of a more enterprising and optimistic way of working, one that's built around innovation, collaboration and exploring ways to achieve more while using fewer resources.

We fully understand the scale of the challenges we face. Our medium term financial projections suggest a need for savings and additional income of £1.8m by 2019/20, rising to £3.3m by 2021/22 if we are to deliver and sustain a balanced budget.

During the lifespan of this plan, we intend to become independently financially sustainable for the longer term, no longer reliant on government funding for our core activities.

By aligning our resources and assets to the priorities defined in this plan, and by supporting our activity with sound financial management, we can invest astutely, increase revenue, spend wisely and secure additional external funding from outside traditional streams.

The next three years are set to be a story of transformation and inclusive Growth. Transformation in the way we organise and deliver our public services, and growth in the quality of life enjoyed by the people who live and work here in Mendip.

Measuring success

Each year we will produce a series of business plans, reporting on specific measures and targets. These reports will be published online, through meetings and via the local media, so everyone can check on our progress.

Our Vision

Working together to make Mendip a great place to live and work, helping our communities and businesses to thrive.

Our Priorities

We have identified two core priorities in support of our Vision – Transformation and Inclusive Growth. These are explained in more detail on the following pages, including the specific commitments that flow from them. As a council we recognise the role we need to play if we are to grow as a district, and are transforming the way we do things to make it happen.

Our Priorities – Transformation

Transformation in this context means finding better ways of working together, and making better use of our assets, resources and skills to deliver the best possible outcomes for our communities.

The specific drivers for transformation are many and varied, but a need to do more with less has become ingrained in our culture. Since 2011 we have met the challenges presented by the early years of austerity by moving from a model of cost reduction to a model of service innovation. This has ensured that our communities continue to receive high quality services, despite downward pressure on funding across the board.

In anticipation of a future with no Revenue Support Grant (and significant legislative changes), sustained transformation is necessary if we are to meet our corporate and operational priorities. We are working with our staff and members to agree a new set of organisational values that reflect how we are responding to the challenges and opportunities, and these will help shape everything we do. We must continue to find new, creative and enterprising ways to meet the needs of our people.

Whilst this uncertainty and complexity is challenging, it also creates an opportunity to shape the future of the council. Our transformation programme has been developed around three key themes:

1. Enterprise

Pursuing commercial opportunities that offset the need to reduce service provision.

2. Partnerships

Developing cross-sector partnerships that reduce duplication and deliver more integrated services.

3. Redesign

Embracing bold solutions that reimagine how local authority works, both for today and in the future.

Our Commitments – Transformation

We Will:

- pursue a prudent approach to investment and other commercial opportunities, to boost income and/or safeguard services.
- develop and deliver strategic options for services, exploring a range of models that could include commissioning, selling, merging or divesting.
- work with our full range of partners to coordinate and deliver services focused on specific groups, improving customer experiences while reducing duplication.
- continue to develop Shape Mendip as an exemplar of public sector best practice, enhancing our reputation as a great place to live and work.
- develop and train our staff and councillors to build the right skills, to deliver our strategy and strengthen our culture of innovation and collaboration.

Our Priorities – Inclusive Growth

We want to see positive growth in Mendip. We want to see businesses develop, grow and enjoy greater success.

We want to build greater access to skills training, so that people can improve their employment opportunities and the district can attract businesses that will in turn make Mendip a better place to work.

We recognise that for 'growth' to be good for Mendip, it must fairly deliver improved social and economic wellbeing across all our communities. To achieve this, we recognise a need for a partnership approach between our council, our communities and the many different organisations that have a role to play in helping us grow.

The devolution agenda has shown that we must be active, and have our voice heard at local, regional and national levels. We must also recognise the benefits of a stronger and more productive wider South West region, even if that means supporting opportunities that lie outside our boundaries.

With all this in mind, we will do everything we can to grow Mendip positively in our role as a place leader. We will work to build partnerships and influence others who hold key responsibilities or who can enable greater success and help build community capacity to deliver positive and well-rounded growth.

Our Commitments – Inclusive Growth

We Will

- work with our business community to deliver the ambitions of our Economic Strategy and increase the economic vibrancy of the Mendip area
- work with our communities to deliver successful place shaping through vehicles such as the Local Plan, towns working groups and Neighbourhood Plans.
- challenge our partners to fully deliver the Somerset sustainability & Transformation Plan and adapt our services to support the actions to prevent ill health.
- use our position as a community leader to influence partners who can in turn deliver outcomes that improve the wellbeing of Mendip residents.
- work at county, regional and national level to build communities where people live well in good quality homes with a network of support.

Flagship Projects

SHAPE Mendip

The SHAPE Mendip Hub in Shepton Mallet has brought a number of public service providers together on one site, providing better access to more streamlined public services. It is a vital initiative that puts customers first while saving the council millions of pounds. During a visit to the Hub, then Local Government Minister Eric Pickles remarked “This is what the future of local government will look like,” while MP Oliver Letwin called the hub “groundbreaking and forward-thinking”.

Fusion Lifestyle

Leisure facilities across Mendip received a multi-million pound cash injection after the council awarded 50-year leases to Fusion Lifestyle, an independent charity, to operate the District’s leisure centres. In addition to the investment, Fusion has assumed all associated running costs and risk, freeing up finances for reinvestment in frontline services.

Id Verde

Street cleansing and ground care are among the services being delivered to Mendip residents through an ambitious contract arrangement with id verde UK which is saving the council more than £350,000 each year. For the first time, Mendip’s Core Services Contract has combined a range of services into one contract, providing greater flexibility and control over expenditure while giving residents an improved, more streamlined service.

Five Councils Partnership

Mendip has joined forces with Hart District Council, Havant Borough Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council to deliver improved services and a projected £40 million of savings. The two nine-year contracts mark the first time a group of councils have looked beyond their immediate neighbours’ to share services in this way. Nominated in the LGC 2017 Awards for Most Innovative Service Delivery Model.

Shape Mendip Lottery

A new lottery with a £25,000 jackpot prize, helping to fund local voluntary and community groups. The draw takes place weekly, with 60% of the ticket price supporting community groups throughout the district. There’s an option for players to support a specific organization of their choosing, and none of the money raised goes to the council.

Dulcote Quarry

Charlie Bigham, founder of the eponymous high quality ready meals producer, approached Mendip District Council last year, with a vision for building a major new food production campus to complement the company’s current site in London. The business intends to create 300 new local jobs in future years. By forming an internal project team to work on this challenging project at the Council and working closely with partners, this £20m+ investment project has now begun the development of Phase 1 and the company will start recruiting the first 100 jobs during the second half of 2017.

Mendip Today – in numbers

111,700

Population spread across 738 square kilometres.
(2015 midyear population estimate, ONS).

2/3

Of residents live in Glastonbury, Street, Frome, Wells and Shepton Mallet, the remainder across over 100 smaller villages.

14%

Predicted population growth between 2012 and 2037. The largest growth is predicted in the over-75s, which could double over the same period.
(2014 population projections, ONS).

45,000

Employee jobs, up 10% since 2012.
(Business Register and Employment Survey 2015, ONS).

5,665

Business enterprises, up by 11% since 2012. 89% employ fewer than 10 people. (2016 inter-departmental business register, ONS)

11,400

People reported to be self-employed (Annual population survey, ONS)

4.2%

Of the economically active population are currently unemployed. However the number claiming Jobseeker's Allowance is just 0.5% (October 2015 to September 2016, NOMIS).

1.7%

Long term unemployment, against a national average at 4.6% (2015, Nomis).

5.6 / 4.7 years

Life expectancy gap for men / women in the district's most deprived areas compared to the least deprived areas (2016 Health Profile, PHE).

14.8%

Of children under 16 living in low-income families.
(2016 Health Profile, PHE).

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Contacts