

# AGENDA

## CABINET MEETING



Date: Wednesday 15 September 2010  
Time: **2.00 pm**  
Venue: Town Hall, High Street,  
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Ash, Garland (Chairman), Greer,  
Mrs Ring, Sherreard and J.A. Wilson

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1. Apologies for Absence
2. Urgent Items
3. Notification of Visiting Members
4. Disclosures by Members and Officers
5. Disclosures of lobbying
6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information
7. Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 August 2010

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**Continued Over/:**

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**Issued on 7 September 2010**

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact JANET BARNES on 01622 602242**. To find out more about the work of the Cabinet, please visit [www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk)

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council,  
Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone Kent ME15 6JQ**

## **KEY DECISION REPORTS**

- |     |  |         |
|-----|--|---------|
| 8.  | Report of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment<br>- Core Strategy Housing Targets and Distribution of<br>Development | 5 - 32  |
| 9.  | Report of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment<br>- Core Strategy: Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Target                  | 33 - 42 |
| 10. | Report of the Assistant Director for Environment and Regulatory<br>Services - Waste and Recycling Strategy 2010-2015                 | 43 - 79 |

## **NON-KEY DECISION REPORTS**

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| 11. | Record of Recommendation of the Local Development<br>Document Advisory Group - Core Strategy - Public Consultation | 80 - 91   |
| 12. | Report of the Head of Change and Scrutiny - Corporate<br>Improvement Plan update                                   | 92 - 108  |
| 13. | Report of the Leader of the Council - Forward Plan   | 109 - 111 |

## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 AUGUST 2010

**PRESENT:** Councillor Garland (Chairman) and  
Councillors Ash, Greer, Mrs Ring, Sherreard and J.A. Wilson

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs Wilson

41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

42. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

43. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Mrs Wilson indicated her wish to speak on Agenda Items 8 – Budget Consultation, 10 – Quarter 1 Performance Report and 11 – Executive Arrangements.

44. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

45. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

46. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on the Agenda be taken in public as proposed.

47. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed.

48. BUDGET CONSULTATION

DECISION MADE:

1. That the consultation timetable and programme, as set out below, be agreed:

- i) A 12 week consultation programme with the theme – My Council, What Matters to Me. The programme will raise awareness of the budget situation over the next three years, the statutory services the Council provides and the savings options already considered by Cabinet Members. The final phase of engagement activities will encourage consultees to indicate the non-statutory services which are most important to them and comment on the service options considered by Cabinet Members. A suggested timetable is set out below.
- ii) August 2010 – General awareness raising including stakeholder communications, the local media, Borough Update, and staff communications.
- iii) Week commencing 6 September – Launch event with first engagement activity supported by news releases, website, Facebook and Twitter posts. The Council has 800 followers on Twitter and 250 friends on Facebook. These sites could be used to point people to the Leader’s Twitter site where he could engage with people about the issues facing the Council.
- iv) September – October – My Council, What Matters to Me roadshow activities at events and meetings including some of the following as agreed with the Leader of the Council:

The Local Strategic Partnership  
 Neighbourhood Forums  
 Cabinet Roadshows  
 Business Forum  
 Youth Forum  
 Older Persons Forum  
 Transport Users Group and  
 Individual Ward events

For full details of this Record of Decision, please follow this link:-  
<http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=352>

49. BUDGET MONITORING - FIRST QUARTER 2010/11

DECISION MADE:

1. That the position, as detailed in the report of the Head of Finance & Customer Services, be noted and further reports be received, at least quarterly, during the financial year, in a similar format.
2. That the satisfactory revenue position at the end of the first quarter 2010/11 be noted.
3. That the proposals for slippage in the capital programme to 2011/12 be agreed.

4. That the detailed information on treasury management activity be noted.

For full details of this Record of Decision, please follow this link:-  
<http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=354>

#### 50. QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Change and Scrutiny regarding the progress made in the first quarter of 2010/11 against the authority's key performance indicators.

The Cabinet felt that a review was required of what we are measuring, the targets being set, including the quarterly targets.

#### RESOLVED:

1. That the progress and out-turns of the Key Performance Indicators, as shown at Appendix A of the report of the Head of Change and Scrutiny, be noted.
2. That the changes to how indicators are rated and the layout of the report of the Head of Change and Scrutiny be noted.
3. That the postponement of the Place Survey 2010 and the National Indicators that will not be collected this year, as shown at Appendix B of the report of the Head of Change and Scrutiny, be noted.
4. That the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, with Officers, should undertake a full review of the performance targets.

#### 51. EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services regarding a requirement under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("the Act") that each authority should consider its executive arrangements in light of the changes to the Leader and Cabinet Executive model set out within the Act.

#### RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:

1. That the new Leader and Cabinet Executive model as set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 be adopted as the Council's preference when undertaking the consultation of local government electors and other interested persons in their area.
2. That the consultation with local government electors and other interested persons in the area be undertaken by a press release on the Council's website.

52. FORWARD PLAN

The Cabinet considered the report of the Leader of the Council regarding the Forward Plan for the period 1 September 2010 – 31 December 2010.

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan for the period 1 September 2010 – 31 December 2010 be noted, subject to the following amendments:-

Cabinet

Shared Service Proposal for Revenue & Benefits	Special Cabinet Meeting on 13 September 2010
Waste and Recycling Strategy 2010-2015	15 September 2010
Core Strategy: Gypsy & Traveller Pitch Targets	15 September 2010
Core Strategy: Housing Targets	15 September 2010
Core Strategy Public Consultation Draft	Moved to 10 November 2010

53. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.32 p.m.

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**15 SEPTEMBER 2010**

## **REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHANGE, PLANNING AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Report prepared by Michael Thornton & Sue Whiteside**

### **1. CORE STRATEGY HOUSING TARGETS AND DISTRIBUTION OF DEVELOPMENT**

#### **1.1 Issue for Decision**

1.1.1 The Local Development Document Advisory Group (LDDAG) has considered successive drafts of the Core Strategy, but has yet to reconsider a housing target for the Core Strategy. This report addresses the setting of this target; a similar report to this has been considered by LDDAG and Prosperity and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee and their comments will be available at the meeting as references.

1.1.2 This report: (a) outlines a methodology and considerations in the setting of a housing provision target and the implications of the target on the strategy for the spatial distribution of development; (b) seeks endorsement of this approach; and (c) seeks agreement to shortlisted key options to be the subject of further detailed consideration. A further report to LDDAG on 25 October will further advise over the final recommendations to be made to Cabinet in November.

#### **1.2 Recommendation of Director of Change, Planning and the Environment**

1.2.1 That the Cabinet consider the references from the Local Development Document Advisory Group (13 September 2010) and the Leisure & Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee (14 September 2010).

1.2.2 That Cabinet agree:

- a) The methodology and approach to target setting outlined in diagram Appendix A and section 1.3 of this report be endorsed, together with any comments or amendments the Cabinet agree

- b) That the three Options 1-3 outlined in sections 1.3 E and F, be agreed as the basis for the further more detailed testing outlined in the report in order to identify the most suitable housing target for the borough. All of the options plan for the balance of housing necessary after the existing development pipeline of 5,800 dwellings is completed, to achieve total housing target figures of: Option 1 - 8,200 dwellings, Option 2 - 10,080 dwellings, and Option 3 - 11,000 dwellings. Options 1 and 2 would distribute the remainder development in a disperse pattern, Option 3 would focus 2,500 - 3,500 dwellings into a single strategic development area with the remainder dispersed. All three options are assessed on the basis of housing densities averaging 45 dwellings to the hectare.
- c) That the LDDAG be advised of the decisions of Cabinet, and that Cabinet request that the LDDAG consider their final recommendations to Cabinet to enable Cabinet to agree in November a housing target and distribution strategy, as the basis of the draft Core Strategy for public consultation.

### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

#### The evolution of the Core Strategy to date

- 1.3.1 The LDF Core Strategy has been in preparation over a considerable period of time; extensive evidence has been gathered and public consultation conducted and these matters thoroughly considered by the Advisory Group. An 'issues and options' public consultation in 2006 was followed by the preparation of and public consultation upon, a 'preferred options' document in early 2007. Further development of the draft plan was then halted later that year until August 2009 whilst the Council determined the representation made to the Core Strategy and the planning application submitted for the Kent International Gateway.
- 1.3.2 Meantime the Council bid for and was awarded Growth Point status with the requirement for the LDF Core Strategy to provide for a rate of development equivalent to 10,080 dwellings over the plan period. The Council also adopted various other relevant strategies including the Sustainable Community Strategy and Economic Development Strategy, all consistent with this and with which, the Core Strategy should be prepared with regard to. Subsequently the Regional Strategy (South East Plan) was published by Government in 2008 with a Maidstone Borough housing target of 11,080 additional dwellings over the plan period 2006-26.
- 1.3.3 However, as reported at the 26 July meeting of LDDAG, on 6 July 2010 the new Government revoked the Regional Strategies and advised



local authorities to proceed with preparing LDF Core Strategies on the basis of their own local determination of suitable housing targets.

- 1.3.4 Since August 2009 much of the evidence base on which the draft plan has been prepared has been updated or published, much of it underpinned by the need to achieve a housing target of 11,080 additional dwellings. Members have had briefings on much of this evidence and this contributed directly to the successive drafts of the plan considered by LDDAG over the last 5-6 months. In February, June and July the content of the plan, the 'spatial vision', 'spatial objectives' and 'core policies' were all considered. However, LDDAG have yet to reconsider the housing target figure and consequential effects on spatial distribution in the light of the revocation of the Regional Strategy.

#### Opportunity to set a district housing target

- 1.3.5 Setting of the housing target must be done on the basis of clear and sound evidence that will withstand scrutiny at independent examination into the Core Strategy. It is important that the target forms an integral part of the plan strategy and is not considered in isolation from the Vision and Objectives that the plan seeks to achieve. For instance the right balance must be struck between housing and employment targets, the spatial distribution strategy must be capable of delivering these targets and the target must be sufficiently ambitious to deliver the aspirations of the vision and objectives of the draft plan. In the event of significant change to the target these and other aspects of the plan may need to be revised significantly too.
- 1.3.6 Previously, housing targets were primarily determined at a strategic level, principally by Counties and other first tier authorities engaging with the regional planning body and in turn, the regional body with government; individual Boroughs and other second tier authorities had relatively little input to methodology and techniques of population, household and economic forecasting nor the national and regional scale policy debates that resulted, other than making representations alongside all other interest groups on the output figures. Districts such as Maidstone have not previously been empowered to determine their own housing targets and Government advice, best practice and regulations do not yet exist to indicate how this should be done. The Council now faces both a great challenge and opportunity to determine its own target in a robust manner.

#### Methodology for setting a housing target

- 1.3.7 While all local planning authorities in England have this same opportunity few have to act as quickly as Maidstone, which has a pressing need to update the saved Local Plan policies and which was

about to publish a draft Core Strategy based on the Regional Strategy just as it was revoked. Officers have been liaising with colleagues across Kent and beyond to 'compare notes' and method and are working with KCC research and intelligence group who have expertise in population and economic projections to develop an approach.

1.3.8 An overview of the approach adopted is represented by a diagram illustrating an iterative evidence based approach to determining housing targets - attached as **Appendix A**. Each aspect is explained in more detail in the headed sections A – K below.

1.3.9 It is clear that Members require extensive sound evidence to inform their decision making around all the realistic options available; not all aspects of this have been completed in the time available so far. Some verbal update on the ongoing work will be possible at the meeting, but whilst a clear picture of the likely key options for decision is emerging and confidently informs this report, it is not possible in certain respects, to make a firm recommendation at this time. Where this is the case a clear note is made. The recommendations at 1.2 above seek endorsement of the approach adopted and the agreement of key emerging options as the basis for more detailed consideration before final recommendations to Cabinet are made.

1.3.10 The explanations below refer to the draft 'spatial vision' and 'spatial objectives' for the draft Core Strategy previously considered by the Advisory Group, as well as to some of the background evidence that that has been reported previously.

1.3.11 To reiterate, it is vital that the options for the housing target figure and consequential effects for the spatial distribution strategy are not considered in isolation but as an integral part of the vision and objective the plan is seeking to achieve. To assist Members, an extract of the vision and objectives of the draft Core Strategy are attached as **Appendix B**.

#### Methodology and considerations

##### **A. Meeting population and housing need**

1.3.12 Previously, projections of the change in population and households, and therefore the need for more dwellings were determined at strategic level, providing district level targets of additional dwelling numbers.

1.3.13 Projections of change in population and household numbers are anchored on the 2001 Census with precise projection forecasts made on the basis of broad trend based or policy based assumptions about future behaviours; thus wide variations between different projections

of apparently precise figures are not uncommon. Concerns over the veracity of previous projections has led to joint work with KCC research and intelligence team to:(a) review previous trends in population and housing growth in Maidstone and the previous projections made to identify the most accurate 'control' point for making new projections; (b) to prepare a range of projections using different trend based assumptions of net migration; and to compare these with (c) alternative population projections assuming 10,000 or 11,000 additional dwellings are built. Comparison of these projections will help identify the level of additional dwelling targets required. Initial results should be available for verbal report at the meeting and will be analysed before the meeting of 25 October.

- 1.3.14 The dwellings requirement figure indicated by these projections does not necessarily determine the target but can be adjusted to achieve policy objectives or otherwise relate with the other factors A-K indicated in the diagram at **Appendix A**.
- 1.3.15 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment published in March 2010 considered the need for additional affordable and market housing, the types of housing needed and stock condition. It identified a need for 1,081 affordable homes per annum. The Assessment suggested that 38% of all housing built over the whole of the plan period (using a target of 11,080 dwellings) represented a balanced market option to meet need. Clearly, if the housing target is reduced then less affordable housing will be built or if a higher target is set, outstanding housing need might be addressed more quickly.
- 1.3.16 The policy response to the needs evidenced in the SHMA will also influence the provision of the right size and type of dwellings in all sectors of the housing market. A comprehensive approach is required, including in the affordable stock the requirement for: 76% social rent/24% intermediate; 45% 1-2 bedroom/55% 3-4 bedroom.
- 1.3.17 Local needs housing in rural areas is an important aspiration in meeting housing need and this influences decisions on the spatial distribution of housing made in the Core Strategy.
- 1.3.18 Underneath the 1,081pa figure, the SHMA also identifies different groups of need: those in the private rented sector who are willing and able to pay more than 25% of their income on housing (280pa); and those in private rented housing on local housing benefit support (460pa). (It is not sustainable and is poor value for public money for large numbers of households to be in private rented housing on housing benefit.) The remainder of 341pa are in acute housing need. The effects of insufficient housing are various; rising numbers on housing revenue support, homelessness, repossessions, various health

and wellbeing effects, and poor cost effectiveness of measures taken in response.

1.3.19 More widely, the Office of National Statistics (ONS) estimates national population growth to be around 65 million by 2020 with almost 12 million below 30 years of age. Many of these will be first time buyers squeezed by lack of mortgage credit and lack of housing supply – nationally a housing market structural imbalance. Furthermore, the poor quality of some of the housing stock requires further replacement dwellings to be built although these will not be net dwelling additions.

1.3.20 The Core Strategy Spatial Vision and Spatial Objectives considered previously (extract included at **Appendix B**) stress the need for adequate number and mix of housing (para 4.13 and 4.18 k). However, the council's aspirations to meet housing need also need to be balanced with competing aspirations, including for providing strategic and local infrastructure from new development and safeguarding environment.

## **B. Policy aspirations and drivers for prosperity**

1.3.21 There are a number of council strategy aspirations for improving the economy and prosperity of the borough that can be delivered through the LDF and in particular the Core Strategy. These help form the context for setting the strategy for development and can indicate a policy driven case for adjusting the housing need target indicated by population change as above. The council's prosperity agenda aims to:

- Achieve a step change in prosperity, and to ensure Maidstone establishes a role that complements rather than competes with the growth areas in Kent Thameside, Ashford and East Kent
- Redress an imbalance in employment growth in that past job creation rates in Maidstone which are below south east growth rates.
- Introduce a quantitative and qualitative step change in local employment, including by the creation of local higher skilled jobs opportunities, to half out-commuting from some 38%
- Maintain and enhance Maidstone's role as the County town and premier shopping centre
- Regeneration of areas of deprivation and sites in the town centre
- Provision of integrated development of employment and housing with sustainable infrastructure for place shaping and to attract investment into the borough.

- Key elements of the strategy include – shifting the balance of local employment from non-B Class shops and services and B8 warehousing towards higher skilled B1 and some B2 Class uses; developing strong sector specialism, promotion of new further and higher education facilities, investment in transport access, and ensuring a suitable supply of sites to support this.
- 1.3.22 Clearly, economic prosperity is not increased simply by increasing population / resident workforce supply and a range of measures are required to increase demand for local employment. The jobs target is based on a Gross Value Added growth rate rather than dwellings or labour supply. However, a higher housing target will increase labour supply and will increase local demand for goods and services. In general terms, inadequate labour supply can be a major constraining factor to economic growth. Further work is in hand to assess past performance compared to other factors.
- 1.3.23 Economic prosperity and growth underpins the demand for housing through the impact on household incomes and migration. Similarly, the economy affects household formation and housing demand. The gap between local wages and house prices is clearly of concern to residents; overall a good housing balance supports long term economic growth prospects.
- 1.3.24 Literature reviews confirm that an area's offer of good housing locations (and a mix of relevant facilities) will attract higher and intermediate social economic groups which are vital to developing/maintaining a robust resident labour supply and therefore improving the prosperity of the local economy.
- 1.3.25 The Spatial Vision stresses the aspiration of sustainable economic growth and regeneration, strengthening the boroughs retail and leisure offers, creation of high quality employment and regeneration and encouraging a wide range of new development including shops and businesses (see **Appendix B**).
- 1.3.26 The overall aspiration of the Economic Development Strategy and Sustainable Community Strategy is for 10,000 additional jobs. Demographic patterns mean that 10,000 additional dwellings would produce less than 10,000 additions to the workforce so the achievement of this target will also need a significant increase in inward commuting for work and a significant decrease in outward commuting, however, the contribution of the growth in the resident employee workforce will be a significant factor.
- 1.3.27 With the Regional Strategy evidence base and a target of 11,080 dwellings this aspiration appeared achievable. Detailed ongoing work

with the KCC research and intelligence unit will refine new estimates of resident workforce growth associated with differing options for dwelling growth levels, and help indicate the realism of the policy aspiration to achieve 10,000 new jobs and the other measures necessary to achieve this or any future revision to this target. Further information and recommendations in this respect will be made in the 25 October report.

### **C. Past housing figures and trends**

1.3.28 In the process to determine development targets, it is important to consider past building rates, which can give an indication of future trends and also the realism of the future options being considered. In the 19-year period between 1991 and 2010 a total of 10,130 units have been constructed across the borough, which translates to an annual average rate of 533 dwellings.

1.3.29 There are wide variations over individual years but over the period 1991 to 2000 annual rate averaged 513; over the past 10 years (2000 to 2010), the annual average completion rate increases to 626 dwellings; and for the past 5 years (2005 to 2010) construction rates have been even higher at 697 dwellings p.a. Furthermore, despite the recession, Maidstone constructed 581 units during the year ending March 2010.

Period	No. of years	Annual dwelling construction rates
1991 to 2010	19	533
1991 to 2000	9	513
2000 to 2010	10	626
2005 to 2010	5	697
2009 to 2010	1	581

1.3.30 Further work is in hand to consider significant changes in the net migration rates into/out of Maidstone as part of population change over these periods.

1.3.31 If taking forward these trends based on past completion rates and taking into account the number of units that have been constructed in the period 2006 to 2010 (2,728 units), the outcome for the period 2006 to 2026 would be:

- For a 5-year trend rate - 13,900 dwellings
- For a 10-year trend rate - 12,750 dwellings
- For a 19-year trend rate - 11,250 dwellings.

## D. Past policy targets

1.3.32 For comparison, it is helpful to consider the plan-led housing targets that have been based on previous population forecasting but adjusted to meet planning policy strategies. The KCC submission to the South East Plan was below past trend rates and reflected a policy of seeking lower house building targets in total in the southeast, and then directing growth in Kent to the Kent Thameside and Ashford and East Kent growth areas. The MBC submission in fact reflected past long term trend building rates and which equated to an up lift on the RPG9 regional plan. The adopted South East Plan figure reflects the then governments policy of significantly increasing housebuilding in England and the southeast in particular to support economic growth.

Former South East Plan	Housing target 2006 to 2026	Annual dwelling target
KCC submission to examination	8,200	410
MBC submission to examination + new growth point target	10,080	504
Former South East Plan target	11,080	554

## E. Commitments and completions:

1.3.33 In setting a housing target for 2006 to 2026, the number of dwellings that have already been built since 2006 plus outstanding planning permissions must be taken into account. It is also prudent to build in a 10% contingency figure after deducting the completed dwellings from the target, to address the possibility that not all planning consents within the plan period will be built and to allow some flexibility in the delivery of local housing targets. This approach will help to meet the tests of soundness which will be applied to the Core Strategy at examination and is provided for in the provision figures set out below.

1.3.34 Between April 2006 and March 2010 2,728 dwellings were built and at April 2010 there were 3,077 dwellings with an outstanding planning consent, representing a total housing land supply of some 5,800 dwellings of the total target already in hand. Plan strategy now needs to be focussed on this balance.

1.3.35 At this stage it is recommended that 3 options for housing targets are further tested in detail. First, a target of 8,200 representing County's submission to the former south east plan examination in December 2005. Second, the target of 10,080 which identified by this Council and was the basis for Maidstone securing Growth Point status and funding. The third target for testing should be 11,000 which approximates to the adopted Regional Plan target and the long term trend in Maidstone's housing growth. When accounting for completions and

outstanding planning consents, the residual balance or target for each option is set out below.

Option	Plan period target 2006 to 2026	Residual target 2010 to 2026	Annual dwelling rate 2010 to 2016 <sup>1</sup>	Annual dwelling rate 2016 to 2026
1	8,200	2,942	513	294
2	10,080	5,010	513	501
3	11,000	6,022	569	569

## **F. Environmental capacity and land availability**

1.3.36 Members are aware of the environmental and policy factors that constrain the growth of the borough and the need for measures to mitigate the impact of development. The council's evidence base has addressed, for example, issues of flooding have been assessed in detail in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, water supply and sewage in the Water Cycle Strategy, landscape sensitivity and quality in the ongoing Landscape Character Strategy, built and natural heritage, habitat and bio-diversity with reference to appropriate evidence bases that are maintained and updated and augmented by specialist bodies.

1.3.37 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), taking account of these constraints, 'rejected' many sites and 'accepted' sites potentially capable of supplying some 16,300 units of housing land in the borough. After excluding the known development pipeline, this provided for over 10,700 potential new sites. However, some of the 'accepted' sites will be found more suitable than others for some form of development once more detailed assessments are complete. Further work is in hand, but initial analysis by officers has broadly categorised sites into three groups: (a) those with few constraints, (b) those with more constraints, and (c) those with many. Under different options more all sites in category (a) and more in (b) or possibly (c) would be required.

1.3.38 These are only informed assumptions at this stage to help appraisal of the different housing target options. It must be stressed, however, that any sites identified for this testing are not recommendations for allocating development to sites, and nor is there any presumption that such sites would be released for development.

1.3.39 With the range of targets identified in section E above, it is not necessary to 'urgently' allocate strategic housing sites in the Core Strategy because the scale of recent building rates and planning

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<sup>1</sup> Years 2010-2016 include commitments of 3077 (513 p.a.)



permissions means the council can readily maintain and plan for a rolling 5-year supply of housing land supply. Sites will need to be identified in due course in a land Allocations DPD or successor Local Plan. However, a target significantly higher than 11,000 would present a challenge to demonstrating a five year supply.

1.3.40 The scale and delivery rate within the plan period for a potential urban extension – referred to as the 'strategic development area' - are in the region of 2,500 and 3,500 dwellings, dependent on the planning policy objectives. However, looking beyond 2026, the total capacity of a mixed use urban extension could be 5,000 to 6,000 dwellings to achieve a maximum benefit of a properly planned new community with new supporting infrastructure.

1.3.41 Realistically, with existing housing commitments Option 1 (8,200 dwellings) is too small a target to support a strategic development area and a dispersed spatial pattern of development would be the only realistic pattern. Conversely, it appears that option 3 (11,000 dwellings) could only be delivered with significant reliance on a strategic development area, although a combination of a single larger urban extension and development on some of the more suitable dispersed greenfield sites at the urban periphery and rural service centres is achievable. Option 2 (10,080) can be accommodated with a dispersed pattern of development, although this approach would require the use of the more constrained and less suitable sites in category (b) above.

1.3.42 Options 2 or 3 could deliver a strategic development area with very little development elsewhere, but could be a high risk strategy, is less flexible or potentially deliverable in a period of economic uncertainty, and is likely to be challenged by some developers with sites of equal potential but located elsewhere. Option 2 could not allocate enough dwellings for a properly planned new community in addition to dispersal.

1.3.43 The realistic shortlisted options emerging as most suitable for further testing are:

**Option 1 - 8,200 dwellings**

The option could result in retail, office and housing development in Maidstone town centre with limited additional housing development dispersed within the built up area of the town and at the edge of the town and villages. The option would not include a strategic development area. After allowing for the existing development pipeline of 5,800, mostly on urban brownfield sites, plan making would focus on a residual of 2,942 to mostly greenfield sites.

**Option 2 – 10,080 dwellings**

The option could result in greater demand for retail, office and housing development in Maidstone town centre and some housing development within the built up area of the town. In addition to the housing pipeline as in Option 1, plan making would focus around the edge of Maidstone town the majority of new housing development for 5,010 dwellings to be concentrated in larger pockets of approximately 100 – 600 units on greenfield sites around the edge of the urban area. There would be a need for greenfield sites for employment development at the edge of Maidstone town and the villages. In addition, this option would result in the greatest amount of development at the villages and the greatest dispersal of development. The option would not include a strategic development area.

**Option 3 – 11,000 dwellings**

The option will result in the greatest level of demand for retail, office and housing development in Maidstone town centre and some housing development within the built up area of the town. After the existing housing pipeline as in Options 1 and 2, plan making would focus on the further 6,022 dwellings around Maidstone town where the majority of housing development together with some employment opportunities would be located in a mixed use new strategic development area at the edge of the town together with some larger pockets of housing around the edge of the urban area. There may be scope to expand the strategic development area beyond the plan period in order to maximise the benefits of sustainable development. There would be a need for greenfield sites for employment development at the edge of Maidstone town. This option would also result in some additional development at the villages.

1.3.44 The recommendations as 1.2 seek endorsement of these key options for further testing and the identification of any further options that should be considered in greater detail. Further evidence assessing the shortlisted options will be presented at the 25 October meeting. These options are discussed in greater detail in a later section of this report.

**G. Infrastructure capacity**

1.3.45 Consultations with stakeholders in respect of existing infrastructure capacity and the need for new infrastructure were well advanced but focussed on the original housing target of 11,080 using a SDA and a more dispersed alternative pattern of development. Providers have now been requested to respond to alternative growth target options and spatial distributions and many of the necessary responses are not yet available. Further information will be available for the 25 October

meeting, including on further transport modelling and resultant infrastructure assessments that are underway.

- 1.3.46 Initial indications are that infrastructure costs for a specific target number of dwellings, whether provided in a SDA with new significant new infrastructure or a dispersed pattern and utilising more existing infrastructure in different locations but encountering a wider number of shortcomings to be resolved, are not greatly dissimilar. However, the new options involve three target levels and a critical issue will be that of the transport implications and necessary sustainable transport infrastructure.
- 1.3.47 Transport modelling work on further alternative patterns and targets is not yet completed but issues are clearly emerging. A SDA concentrates traffic growth on certain sectors whereas a dispersed pattern increases flows across the outer-traffic model cordon throughout the town. These lead to requirement for differing sets of measures and costs and impacts that need to be compared. The required transport strategy will provide for the preferred approach and therefore cannot be finalised at this time.
- 1.3.48 Further updates will be possible in October and a full report on infrastructure matters in November. One particular uncertainty is the funding of necessary infrastructure identified; new Government intentions signalled in the Planning Green Paper for a 'development incentive' or New Homes Bonus scheme based on grant matching Council tax income are now unclear and no further information is available yet on the intended reforms to the system of Community Infrastructure Levy or s106 based planning tariffs. The strength of the housing market and developers / landowners ability to contribute will also have significant effect.
- 1.3.49 The ability to deliver the necessary infrastructure associated with the three key options for housing targets and spatial distribution is likely to be a very significant factor to decision making; at this point in time it is not possible to make full recommendations to Members in this respect. Further information will be available for 25 October and most likely, further still after the Government's Spending Review in the Autumn.

## **H. Place Making**

- 1.3.50 Alongside the setting of Maidstone's quantitative housing targets, decisions must be made about the distribution of development. Options include that of reliance on the creation of a single large strategic development area to accommodate the vast majority of development in a new mixed use community, or a very dispersed

pattern of development, or a combination of the two.

1.3.51A dispersed development pattern can exploit the capacity of existing infrastructure, potentially offer investment into enhancing the capacity of existing infrastructure, spread negative impacts more 'thinly', and help absorb new residents into existing communities. Dispersal spreads the risk of development sites not coming forward as planned, and it creates flexibility in the phasing of the release of sites to achieve objectives. However, transport modelling of the greater resulting trip generation and are yet to be fully modelled. Further, this approach would create the need to develop all identified sites at the edge of Maidstone urban area and a greater amount of development would need to be directed to the rural service centres and smaller villages. There is no strategy looking beyond 2026.

1.3.52The planning of a new community has a number of advantages, particularly in terms of co-ordinating the provision of physical, social and green infrastructure. The economies of scale present more scope for shared local infrastructure, it offers the greatest opportunity for exemplar and visionary masterplanning to create a new community development, and also provides potential for development and a transportation strategy that looks beyond 2026 to future planning and transport needs. The promotion of a 'new place' can help attract investment in housing and new employment opportunities as well as facilitate more sustainable patterns of travel, reduce trip generation rates and facilitate community scale sustainable green and blue strategy, energy and waste schemes. Infrastructure can be viewed in new ways as demonstrated at 'The Bridge' in Dartford where new education, health and community facilities are coordinated in one integrated development with share facilities.

1.3.53A combination of the two approaches would mitigate risk of development sites not coming forward as planned. The approach would create the opportunity to develop a well integrated, coordinated and sustainable community and to develop it at a slower rate for flexibility; and would not require the need to develop all the identified potential sites at the edge of Maidstone urban area in one go or require such significant quantities for housing in the rural service centres.

1.3.54One important point of detail is the densities of development assumed in the option testing. The SHLAA assessments and subsequent work applied specific site density assumptions based on site circumstances but averaging 45 dwellings to the hectare but a minimum of 30/ha reflecting the previous PPS3 minimum requirement of 30/ha. PPS3 was recently amended to remove this minimum standard but the land take calculations used for the Core Strategy continue with these assumptions at this time. Clearly, if the density standards are reduced then more land will be required. Members are requested to express

any comment on this approach now as it underpins all the option testing. Whether to set a minimum density is an issue Members will need to return to in consideration of the relevant Core Policy.

1.3.55 The recommendations at paragraph 1.2 seek agreement to the spatial distributions options (including assumptions on housing density) as the basis of further testing and for members to identify any further combinations they wish to see assessed in similar detail.

## **I. (Initial draft) Sustainability Appraisal**

1.3.56 Having deliberated the potential options for setting housing targets together with the distribution of development, the sustainability of the 3 options set out above can be tested with further objectivity by reference to the Sustainability Framework adopted for all the Maidstone LDF documents.

1.3.57 Members will recall approving the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the Core Strategy in December 2009. The scoping report sets a framework against which Core Strategy policies and objectives can be assessed. The 3 options are being appraised against 18 sustainable objectives derived from the scoping report (**Appendix C**). The results will be colour coded so that green indicates the option would likely meet the sustainability objective, amber that it partially meets the objective, and red that it does not significantly contribute to meeting the objective. This cannot be completed as yet a identified above but patterns are emerging.

1.3.58 Option 1 (8,200 dispersed) does not appear to be a sustainable development option. It appears (subject to further detailed assessment) to not cater for the natural growth of the borough nor established trends in migration, it would mean a shortfall in necessary housing and a reduced supply of affordable housing, and would not support the council's wider objectives of prosperity and regeneration, employment growth, and would secure the least funding for infrastructure.

1.3.59 Option 2 (10,080 dispersed) appears closer to meet natural growth in population but not migration trends (subject to further testing). It would appear to generate investment in new social and green infrastructure. Less affordable housing would be provided than option 3. This option could be likely to meet the council's employment aspirations (subject to further testing, to be confirmed), and to some extent support the prosperity agenda and regeneration. However, this option would result in the greatest amount of development at the edge of Maidstone urban area and the villages and category more constrained sites and would result in trips of greater length. There would be little opportunity for a focused approach to sustainable

transport measures. The option could perform poorly in terms of air pollution and the emission of greenhouse gases.

1.3.60 Option 3 (11,000 strategic development area with some dispersal) appears to meet the needs of the natural growth of the borough and much of recent migration trends, provides for the highest number of affordable homes, and supports the council's economic development strategy. This like Option 2 would help to deliver the prosperity agenda and would be a catalyst for the regeneration of certain areas of deprivation but comparison of the two in this respect is ongoing. This option could support a new community adjacent to the urban area with a focused approach to sustainable transport measures, and would provide opportunities for a well designed and integrated sustainable development.

## **J. Risks**

1.3.49 There will be a number of risks associated with any set housing targets and agreed development strategy. The prime risks include:

- The potential for ongoing legal challenge to the Government's action to revoke the Regional Plans, this could mean the reintroduction of the previous targets.
- The viability and deliverability of development
- The availability of Government funding streams and mechanisms for development contributions for necessary supporting infrastructure
- Ensuring targets and the distribution of development are based on sound methodology evidence to withstand challenge at examination – Maidstone appears to be one of the earlier authorities to be taking this challenge on.

## **K. Localism and the local agenda**

1.3.61 It is critical that the council's housing and employment targets, together with its strategy for distributing development, are based on sound evidence, but also very important are the views of residents and businesses. It may be that with the expectations of the new 'localism agenda' accompanied by the lack of clear explanation of the 'development incentive' New Home Bonus scheme from government, that it is increasing hard to make the case for necessary development to local communities.

1.3.62 Public consultation on the Core Strategy will be one means of inviting comment on the strategy, but the council has already engaged with stakeholders and the public, bringing together local views through the production of various documents and holding of stakeholder events:

- Sustainable community strategy
- Strategic plan
- Economic development strategy
- Core Strategy evidence base and stakeholder workshops
- Town centre management
- Parish councils
- Developers and agents
- Service providers.

## **Recommendation**

1.4 The recommendations at 1.3 seek endorsement and comment to the methodology and approach outlined above, agreement to the 3 shortlisted options as the basis of further testing to identify Maidstone's housing target and associated approach to the distribution of development. A further report on 25 October with additional evidence available will enable me to make clear recommendation on the preferred option to be incorporated into the draft Core Strategy.

### 1.4.1 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.2 A number of alternative options have been considered throughout this report. The three options appear realistic options to focus to enable Members and the public a clear set of options to consider.

### 1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The Options 2 and 3 (subject to further assessment) appear to best reflect the spatial elements of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy, the Strategic Plan and the Economic Development Strategy.

### 1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 The different risks associated with the delivery of the options are addressed in the report.

1.6.2 The risks have been mitigated by testing the viability and availability of development sites; including a 10% contingency for housing targets to manage sites not coming forward; building flexibility into the option 3 through the planned dispersal of development sites in addition to the identification of a strategic development area; ensuring that all options are built on evidence testing and sound sustainability principles; and testing soundness further through public engagement, seeking to build

local consensus. Risks associated with government funding decisions cannot be controlled, other than by responding to changes promptly.

1.7 Other Implications

1. Financial	X
2. Staffing	
3. Legal	
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment	
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development	X
6. Community Safety	
7. Human Rights Act	
8. Procurement	
9. Asset Management	

1.7.1 **Financial:** There are no financial implications directly arising from this report. However, this report recommends targets for housing and the strategy for distributing development in the Core Strategy DPD, which will have implications for the securing of funding for local and strategic infrastructure, and affordable housing, through various funding streams. The production of the Core Strategy DPD during 2010/11 can be managed within the LDF budget.

1.7.2 **Environmental/Sustainable Development:** The options set out in this report have been initially tested against the sustainability objectives of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the Core Strategy.

1.8 Relevant Documents

Maidstone Borough Council Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (November 2009)



1.9 Appendices

**Appendix A:** An evidence based approach to determining housing targets

**Appendix B:** extract for the 26 July draft Core Strategy - spatial vision and spatial objectives

**Appendix C:** Comparison of Options against the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

1.10 Background Documents

None

**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes

No **X**

If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?

.....

This is a Key Decision because: It affects all wards and parishes, and it will influence the Core Strategy which sets the Council's planning policy framework.

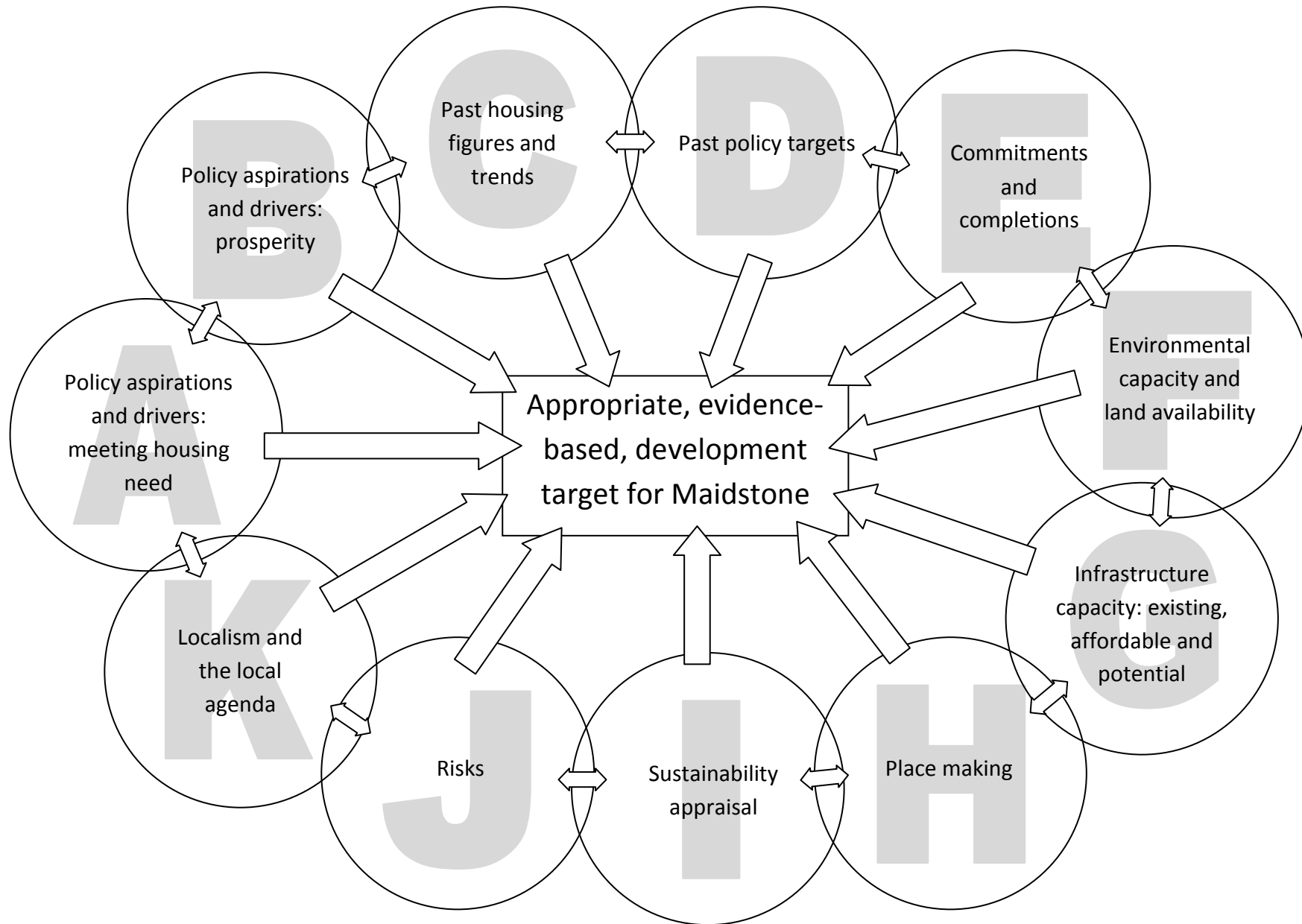
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Wards/Parishes affected: All wards and parishes.

.....

# Appendix A

## Maidstone housing figures - Diagram of the methodology and evidence-based approach



**APPENDIX B**  
**EXTRACT FROM DRAFT MAIDSTONE CORE STRATEGY**  
**13 SEPTEMBER 2010**

### 4 Vision and Objectives

#### Spatial Vision

**4.1** The council's vision for the borough, set out in its sustainable community strategy and strategic plan, seeks prosperity and vibrancy for Maidstone's urban and rural communities whilst retaining and enhancing the borough's distinctive history, landscape and character. The vision for Maidstone's Economic Development Strategy seeks to create a model 21<sup>st</sup> century county town as a distinctive place known for, amongst other things, a dynamic service sector based economy.

**4.2** The Core Strategy determines the spatial expression of the council's vision for the borough. The DPD sets out the "why, what, where, when and how" for a development strategy to deliver the spatial vision and objectives; the need for planned growth and regeneration together with supporting infrastructure, within the context of protecting the borough's built and environmental assets; the scale of that development, general locations and timing, and necessary delivery mechanisms.

**4.3** The borough has a complex set of characteristics that require distinctive planning strategies to achieve the Core Strategy vision, in order to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and specifically the period to 2026.

**4.4** By 2026, prosperity will be achieved through sustainable economic growth **across the borough**, supported by the creation of high quality employment opportunities, the regeneration of key sites, investment in the town centre, and access improvements.

**4.5** There will be a first class traditional town centre in Maidstone, maintaining its place as one of the premier town centre offers in the region, by creating a distinctive, accessible, safe and high quality environment for the community to live, work and shop. The town centre will be transformed by encouraging a wide range of new development including shops, business, residential development, cultural and tourism facilities, education and enhanced public spaces.

**4.6** There will be an emphasis on sustainable transport access improvements to the town centre through an integrated approach to transport strategy, to promote the role of Maidstone's urban area as a transport hub with national and regional links. By 2026, the general location of growth will help bring about a step change in the use of public transport and other sustainable means of travel, coupled with restraints on parking where this will not prejudice economic growth, together with the creation of new and improved cycle and pedestrian networks.

**4.7** The urban area of Maidstone will be revitalised throughout with the regeneration of key commercial and residential sites and areas of existing social and environmental problems, and by improving links to surrounding areas that will create better access to jobs and other facilities.

**4.8** A high quality green and blue infrastructure that forms the setting of the urban area and creates suitable access to the surrounding countryside will be developed. This will protect and enhance the borough's rich natural heritage and wildlife with a special emphasis on ~~rivers~~ and local landscape character.

**4.9** For the first part of the delivery of the plan, the focus of development across the borough will be on brownfield land in the urban area, extending in the latter part to greenfield land adjacent to Maidstone's urban area. Growth will be **led by the timely provision of strategic and local infrastructure, including quality green spaces, sustainable transportation and utilities, as well as a full range of social and leisure facilities.**

**4.10** By 2026 **major new development** will be laid out in a manner that reduces the need to travel and is designed as an exemplar of low energy consumption and minimal carbon and other emissions.

**4.11** To protect the special character of the countryside and to provide for needs in rural areas, the role of the rural service centres of Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst will be reinforced as the focus of additional limited housing development, supported by necessary infrastructure and enabling local choice. **All** new development will be mixed and well integrated with the existing settlements and will maintain the character and identity of villages.

**4.12** Development in smaller rural settlements and the countryside will be tightly restricted to local needs housing, rural economic diversification and meeting community needs. The separate identity and unique character of individually distinct villages and the urban area will be maintained. **Robust landscape protection policies will be developed to safeguard the borough's locally significant and cherished landscape.**

**4.13** Prosperity will be created by strengthening the borough's employment, retail and leisure offers, which should exceed the growth in population with the creation of additional jobs so that more and better jobs are provided locally. New jobs will be located where existing infrastructure and new investment in transport and other infrastructure underpins growth.

**4.14** There will be a better mix and balance of housing in the borough, achieved through the provision of an adequate number, range and mix of housing, including affordable housing, accommodation for the elderly, local needs housing at rural settlements, and sites for gypsy and traveller communities **based on an assessment of local need.**

**4.15** The phasing, density and location of development will ensure the best use of previously developed land and buildings to help regenerate urban areas, and minimise the necessary release of greenfield land in total, and will make best use of a finite resource in a manner that protects and enhances the borough's best built and natural heritage, including its rivers and water bodies.

**4.16** Development throughout the borough will be of a high quality, utilising designs that respond to the distinctive local character of areas. The design of new development will incorporate sustainability principles, and will take into account the impact of climate change.

**4.17** **Sustained development growth throughout the period will be maintained by ensuring an appropriate supply of suitable development sites. Demanding but realistic expectations of development to contribute to the type of accommodation required to meet needs (including affordable housing) will be**

carefully balanced with a tariff for development contributions and the introduction of development incentive-grants from government to fund necessary strategic and local infrastructure. Good design quality and sustainable construction standards of at least national standards will apply.

### **Spatial vision**

By 2026 Maidstone will be a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable community benefiting from an exceptional and unique urban and rural environment.

The Core Strategy will help in delivering sustainable growth and regeneration while protecting and enhancing the borough's built and natural assets. Regeneration will be prioritised and delivered at the urban area of the county town first to make best use of brownfield land, so the release of greenfield sites, **well related to existing urban areas**, will be phased after 2016. Development will be **led** by a sustainable and integrated transport strategy, together with necessary strategic and local infrastructure.

The establishment of a multi-functional green and blue network of open spaces, rivers and water courses will safeguard biodiversity and define the urban character of Maidstone while offering access to the countryside, which will be valued in its own right. The character and identity of **all rural settlements** will be maintained by directing **suitable** development and supporting infrastructure to the rural service centres of Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst.

Employment skills will be expanded to meet an improved and varied range of local jobs, and there will be a better balanced housing market to meet the community's needs. Development will be of high quality design, and constructed in a sustainable manner to respond to climate change and protect the environment and biodiversity.

### Spatial Objectives

**4.18** A number of spatial objectives have been identified to ensure the Core Strategy vision is achieved. The effectiveness of these objectives will be monitored, and performance indicators are included in each section of the DPD.

#### Spatial objectives

- a. To provide for xxxxxx new homes and xxxxxx new jobs, primarily in skilled employment uses, in the borough alongside developing learning opportunities.
- b. To focus new development at Maidstone urban area with:
  - 90% of new housing built within and adjacent to the urban area of Maidstone, appropriate sustainable greenfield development being well located to the existing urban area
  - The aim of providing 60% of new housing across the plan period on previously developed land and through the conversion of existing buildings
  - New employment allocations in Maidstone town centre strictly coordinated and targeted with opportunities on the most suitable greenfield sites only.
- c. To transform the offer, vitality and viability of Maidstone town centre, including office, retail, further and higher education, leisure and tourism functions, together with a significant enhancement to the built and natural environment.
- d. To create sustainable, innovative and well designed new neighbourhoods of sufficient scale to achieve good levels of local services, green space, development mix, and strategic infrastructure in a timely manner, as well as creating opportunities for local power generation.
- e. To consolidate the roles of Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst as rural service centres with successful village centres, as the focus of the network of rural settlements, with retained services and regenerated employment sites.
- f. To support new housing in the borough's smaller villages that meets local need and is of a design, scale, character, tenure and location appropriate to the settlement, and supports the retention of services and facilities.

- g. To safeguard and maintain the **unique** character of the district's landscapes, **including** the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty **and distinctive local landscapes**, whilst facilitating the economic and social well-being of these areas including the diversification of the rural economy.
- h. To respect and enhance the character, extent and biodiversity of green spaces and the aquatic environment within and around built areas, together with the linkages between the spaces.
- i. To ensure that new development takes account of the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change and improve air quality by locating development to minimise energy use; to promote travel patterns that reduce the need to travel by car; to develop a greater choice of sustainable transport measures, particularly in the urban area; to support water and energy efficiency measures in existing development; and to encourage renewable energy sources and sustainable drainage solutions in new development.
- j. To ensure that a new development is designed to a high quality and makes a positive contribution to the distinctive character of the area in which it is situated, including the protection of the built and natural heritage and its biodiversity.
- k. To provide for the type of future housing that meets the changing needs of the borough's population, including provision for an ageing population and family housing, affordable housing at x%, and accommodation that meets the **local** needs of the gypsy and traveller community.
- l. To ensure that key infrastructure and service improvements needed to support delivery of Core Strategy objectives and policies are brought forward in a co-ordinated and timely manner, and that new development makes an appropriate contribution towards any improvements required as a result of such new development.



## Appendix C

### Framework for comparison of options - Sustainability Appraisal

Would be likely to meet the sustainability objective			
Would be likely to partially meet the sustainability objective			
Would not contribute significantly to meeting the sustainability objective			
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Option 1 8,200 dwellings - dispersed</b>	<b>Option 2 10,080 dwellings - dispersed</b>	<b>Option 3 11,000 dwellings – with SDA &amp; dispersed</b>
1 To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, sustainably constructed and affordable home suitable to their need			
2 To improve the health and well-being of the population and reduce inequalities in health			
3 To reduce poverty and social exclusion and stimulate economic revival in deprived areas			
4 To raise educational achievement levels and develop the opportunities for everyone to acquire the skills needed to find and remain in work			
5 To reduce crime and perceptions of disorder			
6 To create and sustain vibrant communities			
7 To improve accessibility to all services and facilities			
8 To develop a dynamic, diverse and knowledge-based economy and ensure high and stable levels of employment			

9 To improve efficiency in land use through the appropriate re-use of previously developed land and existing buildings, including re-use of materials from buildings, and encourage urban renaissance			
10 To reduce the risk of flooding			
11 To reduce air pollution and ensure air quality continues to improve			
12 To address the causes of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases			
13 To conserve and enhance biodiversity			
14 To protect and enhance the countryside and historic environment			
15 To improve the efficiency of transport networks by enhancing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and by promoting policies which reduce the need to travel			
16 To reduce waste generation and disposal, and achieve the sustainable management of waste			
17 To maintain and improve the water quality and to achieve sustainable water resources management			
18 To increase energy efficiency, security and diversity of supply and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources			

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**15th SEPTEMBER 2010**

### **REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHANGE, PLANNING & THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Report prepared by Sarah Anderton**

#### **1. CORE STRATEGY GYPSY & TRAVELLER PITCH TARGET**

##### 1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To give initial consideration to the numerical target for Gypsy and Traveller pitches for inclusion in the Core Strategy.

1.1.2 Additionally to consider and decide upon the timeframe for the pitch target and the approaches to the provision of accommodation for Travelling Showpeople and to transit sites.

1.1.3 These matters will be considered by the Local Development Document Advisory Group on 14<sup>th</sup> September and Leisure & Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> September and the recommendations arising will be available at the meeting.

##### 1.2 Recommendation of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment

1.2.1 That Cabinet confirms that the timeframe for the Gypsy and Traveller pitch target is 2006 to 2016.

1.2.2 That Cabinet endorses the approach set out in the report to the setting of a numerical target for Gypsy and Traveller pitches for inclusion in the Core Strategy.

1.2.3 That Cabinet confirms that no specific numerical target be set for Travelling Showpeople plots in the Core Strategy and that any local need for additional plots be addressed through the development control process using the criteria in Core Strategy Policy CS14 when adopted.

- 1.2.4 That Cabinet confirms that Kent County Council be encouraged to lead the process of the identification and delivery of appropriate transit sites in the county.

### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

#### **Background**

- 1.3.1 With the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy, a local target for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller pitches must be set. The target will be included in Core Strategy Policy CS14 which sets out the overall strategy for provision and the criteria for assessing windfall planning applications.
- 1.3.2 Regarding travellers' needs, a letter dated 6th July 2010 from the Communities and Local Government department confirms that 'local authorities will be responsible for determining the right level of site provision, reflecting local need and historic demand and for bringing forward land in DPDs. They should continue to do this in line with current policy'. The letter goes on to suggest that Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) are a good starting point for this work although local authorities 'are not bound by them'.
- 1.3.3 Notwithstanding this national change, some particular and local issues are relevant as a specific borough target is considered. Firstly, the abolition of targets being set in Regional Spatial Strategies does not mean that there will be no further need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. With a target figure set too low, the trend for unauthorised development followed by retrospective planning applications on unsuitable sites is likely to continue, in particular as long as Circular 01/06 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites' remains extant which is supportive of ensuring the need for pitches is met, including in rural locations where conventional housing is strictly controlled. The Government has announced its intention to revoke the Circular, it has not confirmed when this will happen. Appeal decisions have pointed to a lack of available alternative authorised pitches in the borough, including public pitches. Councils are also under the statutory obligation to ensure suitable housing is available for Gypsies and Travellers (s225 of the Housing Act) and have other statutory duties in respect of homelessness and the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. There is also a duty on local authorities to promote race equality. A reasoned and reasonable target which can be supported through the Examination of the Core Strategy will provide the basis for planned pitch provision in the borough in the future.

#### **Timeframe**

- 1.3.4 The South East Plan Partial Review would have provided target figures for Gypsy and Traveller pitches and for Travelling Showpeople plots for the 10 year period from April 2006 to 2016.
- 1.3.5 Members could now decide to set a target for the full Core Strategy period to 2026 however the assumptions from the West Kent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (05/06) will become less robust over a longer timeframe. Also the national framework for planning for Gypsy needs may change in due course and the Council may wish to adapt its approach in response.
- 1.3.6 On this basis it is recommended that the target be set to 2016, with the opportunity for a future review based on updated evidence for the 2016-26 period.

### **Factors influencing the Gypsy and Traveller pitch target**

- 1.3.7 Circular 01/06 lists some information sources, in addition to GTAAs, for authorities to use in assessing the required level of provision namely incidents of unauthorised encampments, numbers and outcomes of planning applications and appeals, occupancy, plot turnover and waiting lists for public sites, the status of existing authorised private sites including those with temporary and personal consents and unoccupied sites and caravan count data to give a picture of numbers and historic trends .
- 1.3.8 To establish a target based on the local need for pitches, it is proposed that the following aspects are assessed:
- a. Historic picture
  - b. The findings of the West Kent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2005/6)
  - c. The position since the GTAA was completed
  - d. Future local needs for 2011-16
- 1.3.9 **Historic picture:** The borough is one in which Gypsies and Travellers have historically resided. The borough has the highest number of existing authorised pitches in the region with provision mostly on small, privately owned sites.
- 1.3.10 This historic pattern originated in particular because of Gypsies and Travellers seasonal employment in agriculture, particularly hop and fruit picking. Whilst Gypsies continue to have family links to the area, the traditional employment links are now substantially less significant as working patterns have changed. Circular 01/06 states that " there is a need to provide sites, including transit sites, in locations that meet the current working patterns of Gypsies and Travellers. In view of the changes in their work patterns these may not be the same areas they have located in or frequented in the past" (paragraph 18). The

revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies means however that there is no higher tier framework to achieve a redistribution of provision and opportunity.

- 1.3.11 **West Kent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)**: The West Kent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) provided an assessment of pitch needs arising locally taking account of the backlog of need, including from unauthorised sites, and that arising in the period to 2011 due to household growth. It concludes that there is a gross need for 47 pitches in the borough for the 5 year period 2006 to 2011 which, when supply factors are taken into account, translates into a net need for 32 additional pitches. Table 1 (paragraph 1.3.19) includes the gross need figure at line 1. The supply of pitches is accounted for separately in Table 2 (paragraph 1.3.24).
- 1.3.12 The numerical need measured in the GTAA includes within it the figure of 15 new local households that will form during the period 2006 to 2011 and assumes that each new household will require an additional pitch. In reality, a proportion of these new households will share pitches as some will form couples and move in together. It is therefore recommended that a rate of 0.75 be applied to the household growth figure, the same rate as used by the Kent and Medway authorities in the Advice they submitted to SEERA for the South East Plan Partial Review, to avoid over-estimating the need for pitches. This factor results in a reduction in the gross need figure included in the GTAA by some 3 pitches as shown in line 2 of Table 1 (Calculation:  $15 \times 0.75 = 12$ , then  $15 - 12 = 3$  pitches).
- 1.3.13 The GTAA tried to identify Gypsy households living in bricks and mortar accommodation to survey in order that their needs could be encompassed in the findings. This process proved difficult as such households tend not to publicise their Gypsy status with the result that only 29 such households across the whole GTAA area were interviewed. The GTAA concluded that it was not possible to make a realistic estimate of the needs arising from housed Gypsies and Travellers and excluded this source of need from the final assessment. This may be regarded a significant shortcoming of the GTAA process, particularly as any such households are living in lawful housing, possibly because of the lack of site-based accommodation, rather than choosing to live on unauthorised sites.
- 1.3.14 The picture of the needs arising from the source is currently unclear. It may be significant but it is unquantified and the evidential basis on which to make a numerical allowance for this factor is absent. Any allowance made would be to a large extent arbitrary and consequently has been excluded from the assessment at this stage.

1.3.15 **Position since the GTAA was completed:** In reaching the net figure of 32 additional pitches, the GTAA assumed that there would be a supply of 15 pitches over the 5 years on the MBC-owned sites through households moving into permanent housing. In fact the supply rate has been substantially below this; only 3 genuine vacancies have occurred since April 2006. This supply of 3 pitches is accounted for in line 9 of Table 2.

1.3.16 The existence of unauthorised sites is an indicator of need and the current position is that there are 28 unauthorised mobiles on unauthorised sites in the borough (based on an average from the last three caravan counts). The GTAA took full account of the level of unauthorised provision at the time of the survey in reaching its findings. No further account is taken of the unauthorised sites that have arisen since the GTAA was undertaken (Table 1, line 4).

1.3.17 **Future local needs (2011-16):** As for conventional housing the target should allow for the natural growth of the local population for the 2011-16 period. Applying the GTAA annual household growth rate of 2.7% results in a household growth figure of 22 households for the 2011 to 2016 period. After the allowance for pitch sharing, the number of pitches needed to accommodate the new local families is 17 as shown in line 5 of Table 1 (Calculation:  $22 \times 0.75 = 17$ ).

1.3.18 Additionally, the GTAA did not take any account of sites with temporary consents which were treated as authorised sites for the purposes of the GTAA. The need arising from these lawful sites as the consents lapse is not factored into the GTAA need figure. 34 mobiles currently have temporary consents which will lapse before the end of 2016 and this is accounted for at line 6 of Table 1.

1.3.19

Table 1: local needs summary

<b>Needs 2006 – 2011 (pitches)</b>	
1. GTAA (gross need)	47
2. Minus allowance for pitch sharing by newly forming households	-3
3. Allowance for needs arising from 'bricks and mortar'	0
4. Allowance for unauthorised pitches post-GTAA	0
<b>Needs 2011 – 2016 (pitches)</b>	
5. Household growth (incl. allowance for pitch sharing)	17
6. Expiry of temporary consents	34
Gross local need	95

### Supply of pitches

1.3.20 An understanding of pitch supply provides context for the needs assessment above.

1.3.21 Pitches granted permanent consent since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 contribute towards the meeting the target to be set in the Core Strategy. Permanent consents have been granted for some 32 pitches to date. Additionally the personal, permanent consents that have been granted for a further 10 pitches can be judged to be meeting a current local need albeit that these pitches will not be available to meet wider needs in the future (lines 7 & 8 of Table 2).

1.3.22 Allowance can also be made for future pitch turnover on the two MBC-owned sites but at a more realistic rate than that assumed in the GTAA. Based on past performance, it is estimated that 3 pitches will become available during the 2011-16 period (line 10 of Table 2).

1.3.23 Finally, there are 4 private authorised pitches in the borough which have been vacant for at least 12 months and which may be available to meet local needs (line 11 of Table 2).

1.3.24

Table 2: identified supply summary

<b>Identified supply 2006 – 2016 (pitches)</b>	
7. Non-personal permanent consents granted to date	32
8. Personal permanent consents granted to date	10
9. Achieved pitch vacancies on MBC sites (2006 to date)	3
10. Estimate of MBC pitch vacancy (2011 – 16)	3
11. Vacant private pitches	4
Identified supply	52

1.3.25

Table 3: net position

<b>Net position</b>	
Gross local need	95
minus identified supply	-52
minus new public site(s)	-15
<b>Net position</b>	<b>28</b>
Registered applications/appeals (pipeline)	38
Renewal of temporary consents due to expire (potential max)	34

1.3.26 Table 3 sets out the net position taking account of need and identified supply. Additionally, account is taken of the potential for a further 15 pitches on a new public site(s). Funding for such a site(s) is being pursued through arrangements in the emerging Core Strategy affordable housing policy whereby a proportion of section 106 contributions would be ring-fenced for public pitch provision and through bidding approaches to the Homes and Communities Agency.



The Government has announced that, as for conventional housing, new authorised traveller sites will attract development incentive payments through the New House Bonus scheme.

1.3.27 The 'residual' requirement of 28 pitches (95-52-15) could be met through the granting of some of the applications/appeals already in the pipeline (up to 38 pitches) and/or the granting of some permanent consents on sites with temporary consents which will expire before 2016. Subject to Members' decisions on these matters, there could be little (or no) numerical requirement for wholly new sites to be identified through the DPD process.

1.3.28 Members' views are sought on the approach to setting a local target for Gypsies and Travellers.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Party Review**

1.3.29 There is currently no established methodology or common practice guiding how a local pitch target should be set. In view of this, it is considered prudent for the factors and approach set out to be reviewed by an external body or individual ahead of a final decision on the target being made. The review will provide external feedback on the robustness and comprehensiveness of the approach.

1.3.30 The feedback from this review, along with Members' comments from the current cycle of meetings, can inform the subsequent report to Members on this matter.

### **Travelling Showpeople**

1.3.31 In contrast to Gypsies and Travellers, there has been little historic demand for Travelling Showpeople plots in the borough. There are two existing sites in the borough near Detling and Marden and a further apparently vacant site near Headcorn.

1.3.32 The need for further Travelling Showpeople plots was assessed through the North and West Kent Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (2007) which covered 9 authority areas including this borough. Through this process two of the ten Travelling Showpeople households in the borough were interviewed and neither household identified a need for further plots in the period to 2011. Unfortunately the response rate achieved in the study was insufficient to enable the statistically valid 'grossing up' of the findings, either for the Study area as a whole or for the borough individually. The existence of need for additional plots to 2011 or indeed to 2016 is unclear based on the available evidence.

- 1.3.33 A way forward would be to apply a standard growth rate to the known number of households in the borough. The Guild of Travelling Showmen's submissions to the Partial Review of the South East Plan proposed a household growth rate of 2.5%. Applying this growth rate cumulatively from 2006/7 would result in a target of 2 additional plots for the period to 2016.
- 1.3.34 An alternative approach would be to deal with demand from local Travelling Showpeople as it arises using the criteria in Core Strategy Policy CS14 to assess planning applications. This approach would not provide a clear indication of the Council's view of the 'right' level of provision but would avoid the allocation of plots for which there is no local demand. On balance, this approach is recommended.

### **Transit Sites**

- 1.3.35 Transit sites provide shorter-term accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers who are actively travelling. The issue of transit sites was addressed in the Advice that the Kent and Medway authorities prepared for submission to SEERA for the South East Plan Partial Review. This Advice, which was based in particular on the pattern of unauthorised encampments in the county, did not identify Maidstone borough as a location for transit site(s) for the period to 2016. Local assessment therefore does not point to a need to make specific provision for a transit site.
- 1.3.36 It is recommended that Kent County Council be encouraged to progress the planning and implementation of appropriate transit sites across the county.

### **1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended**

- 1.4.1 Members could decide not to set a target for Gypsies and Travellers in the Core Strategy, or to defer setting a target. In response, the CLG letter of 6<sup>th</sup> July gives the clear expectation that authorities will set local targets. Furthermore, Gypsy site provision is a significant local issue in the borough and as such a clear statement of the Council's assessment of a reasonable scale of pitch provision, and to subject this to public consultation, will provide greater clarity than the status quo.

### **1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives**

- 1.5.1 The content of the report impacts on the key objectives of the Strategic Plan, particularly those relating to homes and communities. It is relevant to the Sustainable Community Strategy objectives of building stronger and safer communities and reducing inequalities in the borough.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 The Government has indicated that Circulars 01/2006 – ‘Planning for Gypsy & Traveller Caravan Sites’ and 04/07 ‘Planning for Travelling Showpeople’ will be revoked to be replaced with ‘light touch guidance’ but has not specified when this will happen. There is a significant risk that the national approach to planning for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation will alter as the Core Strategy is progressed or soon after it is adopted. In response, there will be the opportunity for the Council to further consider this matter prior to the submission of the Core Strategy and thereby take account of any subsequent national guidance changes.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

1. Financial	
2. Staffing	
3. Legal	x
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment	
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development	
6. Community Safety	
7. Human Rights Act	x
8. Procurement	
9. Asset Management	

1.7.2 Legal/Human Rights: The setting of a numerical target for Gypsy and Traveller pitches and a decision not to set a target for Travelling Showpeople plots will have implications for the accommodation choices of these groups when the specified number of pitches are provided. The Council’s approach will be publically tested and open to challenge through the Core Strategy Examination which should serve to mitigate the risk of a future legal, including Human Rights Act, challenge.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices None

1.8.2 Background Documents

- West Kent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2005/6)
- North & West Kent Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (2007)
- Circular 01/06 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites'
- Circular 04/07 'Planning for Travelling Showpeople'

**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes

No

If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?

Forward Plan 1<sup>st</sup> Sept – 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2010 published 18<sup>th</sup> August 2010

This is a Key Decision because: it affects all wards and parishes and will form part of the Core Strategy which sets the Council's planning policy framework.

Wards/Parishes affected: all wards and parishes

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**15<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2010**

## **REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT AND REGULATORY SERVICES**

**Report prepared by Waste Collection Manager**

### **1. WASTE AND RECYCLING STRATEGY 2010-2015**

#### 1.1 Issue for Decision

- 1.1.1 To consider the adoption of a waste and recycling strategy which identifies improvements to the Council's waste and recycling services in order to meet waste reduction and recycling targets and increase the cost efficiency of the service.

#### 1.2 Recommendation of the Assistant Director of Environment and Regulatory Services

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 1.2.1 adopts the Waste and Recycling Strategy 2010-2015, included as Appendix A; and
- 1.2.2 agrees, subject to confirmation of the enabling funding being provided, the implementation of borough-wide weekly food waste collection alongside fortnightly residual waste and recycling collections as detailed in Appendix B; and
- 1.2.3 agrees the Policy and Procedure Statement for the new service as included in Appendix C; and
- 1.2.4 considers additional changes to the waste and recycling service to identify potential savings in line with the 2011/12 Budget Strategy;

#### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 1.3.1 The Best Value Review carried out in December 2009 recommended that the Council prepare and adopt a Waste and Recycling Strategy that was based on the waste hierarchy. The aim of this is to ensure

that the most cost effective and environmentally friendly options for both residents and the Council are prioritised that meet the recycling targets that have been set by government and EU legislation.

- 1.3.2 The Waste and Recycling Strategy (Appendix A), identifies the vision and sets out the Council's objectives for the next 5 years, including increasing the amount of household waste recycled or composted to 50% by 2015 (slightly above the national target of 45%) and reducing total household waste arisings by 10% by 2015 (compared with 2005-10 average). The implementation of borough-wide weekly food waste collections alongside fortnightly residual waste collections is projected to achieve a recycling rate of 45%. Measures to increase participation in the mixed dry recycling service and additional recycling through the local recycling sites should increase the recycling rate further to 50% by 2015.
- 1.3.3 There is still a need in the present financial climate to be realistic about what can be achieved within existing resources. Therefore the objective to meet any additional costs of operating the service through efficiency improvements has been included within this strategy. However, in order to deliver the new service, start up costs and some limited ongoing financial support will be needed. WRAP has agreed to significantly increase its capital support and additional funding is being sought from the Kent Waste Partnership.
- 1.3.4 This Strategy supports the objectives of the Kent Waste Strategy, the 'Vision for Kent' Kent's Community Strategy, the Sustainable Community Strategy for the borough of Maidstone as well as the Council's medium term plans (Strategic Plan 2009-12 and Medium Term Financial Plan).
- 1.3.5 Following the principles of the waste hierarchy, waste prevention and minimisation offer the Council the most significant benefits, both environmentally and financially. The production of less waste reduces the need for transportation as well as the requirements for treatment or disposal. This improves the efficiency of the service, reduces contract costs and contributes to the Council's carbon reduction target.
- 1.3.6 The Strategy does not neglect the importance of reuse and recycling. These remain key priorities for the Council especially with regard to reuse opportunities for the bulky collection service, offering weekly food waste collections and increasing recycling through local recycling sites.
- 1.3.7 On the wider agenda, the strategy reflects European and National objectives with regard to waste and recycling and recognises that

the Secretary for State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has launched a review of waste policies. This follows the announcement of the government's ambition for a "zero waste economy" and the purpose for the review is to look at waste policy and waste management in England to ensure that it supports the deliverability of this ambition. Maidstone's waste and recycling strategy supports the overall aims of a zero waste economy, through the prioritisation of waste reduction measures and focus on waste prevention wherever possible. The review is currently calling for evidence from local authorities, individuals and organisations. The Council will be replying within the timetable for response.

#### 1.3.8 Options Appraisal

As part of the Best Value Review and subsequent development of the waste and recycling strategy, four options have been identified. These are:

- (i) Retain existing service
- (ii) Implement fortnightly residual waste collections whilst retaining existing recycling services
- (iii) Implement borough-wide weekly food waste collections alongside fortnightly residual waste collections and the existing recycling services
- (iv) Introduce a weekly food waste and fortnightly residual waste trial to 7000 households

The full appraisal of these options is included as Appendix D of this report.

- 1.3.9 Option two, the implementation of fortnightly residual waste collections whilst retaining existing recycling services represents the best option financially for the council, offering significant savings and reducing the cost per household of the service.

However, only option three would enable the Council to reach the national recycling target of 45% by 2015. It is expected that increases in participation in the recycling collection and additional services offered through the bring sites would ensure the Council reaches a recycling rate of 50% for little additional cost.

- 1.3.10 At present there is a significant opportunity to obtain investment that will meet the costs of the implementation and operation of the new service.

- 1.3.11 Following informal discussions with the Cabinet Member and Shadow Cabinet Member for the Environment, implementation of borough-wide food waste collections alongside fortnightly residual waste

collections offers a publicly acceptable option for maximising recycling and managing Maidstone's waste. However it is accepted that this option does not provide the Council with any savings and therefore in the current financial climate it is important that service costs are reviewed as part of the Best Value Review action plan and the current collection arrangements are challenged.

- 1.3.12 Also as part of the Best Value Review, the implementation plan was considered by the Environment and Transportation Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the comments made were reflected in the final plan. This included discussions regarding fortnightly residual waste collections and the provision of a weekly food waste collection.
- 1.3.13 The strategy recognises the benefits of alternate week collections, through reducing waste arisings and significantly increasing recycling, but reflects that this alone would not meet recycling targets and therefore proposes a combination of weekly food and alternate week collections of residual waste and recycling. This will raise recycling levels to 45% by 2015 and when combined with efforts to improve participation rates and improved "bring" collection systems will aim to reach 50% recycling by 2015. The continued weekly collection of food waste provides a continued high quality collection system which the public will be able to support.
- 1.3.14 Households would be provided with a 5 litre kitchen caddy, initial supply of compostable liners and a 23 litre external caddy for the collection of cooked and uncooked food.
- 1.3.15 The collections would be made weekly by a small specialist vehicle and the waste will be taken to a local in-vessel compost facility.
- 1.3.16 Special consideration will need to be given to those households who currently have a sack collection as it likely that they would have to remain on a weekly refuse collection. Some properties with communal refuse collections will also retain their current collection frequency as it will not be feasible to provide sufficient bins due to storage limitations. The Policy and Procedure Statement (Appendix B) has been prepared to take into account the implementation of weekly food waste collections and fortnightly refuse collections. It includes criteria for the provision of larger refuse bins as well as the policy regarding those remaining on weekly refuse collections. This also includes additional help for those experiencing difficulties reducing their waste or with the food waste collections. Information regarding the problems experienced will be gathered from residents in order to identify specific solutions which will meet their needs



- 1.3.17 The proposed implementation plan for the introduction of this service is included as Appendix C.
- 1.3.18 The strategy also considers other ways to increase recycling operations through improvement to bring sites including specific targets for glass.
- 1.3.19 The implementation of the mixed dry recycling collections has been very successful with participation rates in excess of 80% in some areas. However the monthly performance data shows that the tonnage collected appears to be reaching a plateau. Therefore new methods of engagement along with service improvements will be needed to improve the Council's performance.
- 1.3.20 The Waste and Recycling Strategy also proposes to maintain the comprehensive communications and education campaign which currently promotes the "Love Food Hate Waste" campaign, home composting and other waste prevention messages. Use of Mosaic will help identify and target key messages to individuals and the local press will be actively engaged to ensure that the true benefits of the new scheme are realised.
- 1.3.21 For the majority of households the recycling week would remain unchanged and the alternate week would become the refuse collection week. This means that half of the borough will have their refuse collection one week and the other half will have their refuse collection on the following week. This will limit the disruption to the existing recycling service.

#### Financial Implications

- 1.3.22 There are significant set up costs for the new service in order to provide caddies and bins. These are estimated at £355,000. It is anticipated that this will be funded through grants from WRAP and from Kent Waste Partnership.
- 1.3.23 The estimated costs of operating the new service will be close to cost neutral although some limited ongoing funding may be required from the Kent Waste Partnership. Discussions are ongoing with officers from both organisations. Final costs and funding arrangements will be concluded in the next few weeks. This will mean that the Council will need to identify alternative savings in order to meet the agreed Budget Strategy Savings for 2011/12.
- 1.3.24 The introduction of a food waste service is not the most cost effective option for the council and the cost per household of the service would remain high. As part of the Best Value Review, efficiency savings have already been implemented and further

options identified. It is important that the costs of the core service be reviewed in the context of the Best Value Review to see if further savings can be found.

Maximisation of recyclate income has also been identified as part of the waste strategy and therefore ongoing discussions will be held with Kent County Council in order to identify any opportunities to increase the income generated from waste recycling in Maidstone.

#### Communications and Engagement

- 1.3.25 The Communications Strategy will include the provision of information through direct mail and face-to-face activities such as roadshows and public meetings. One-to-one advice would also be available to address individuals' concerns about reducing their waste.
  - 1.3.26 Engagement work should start immediately the recommendations within this report are approved and will continue past the start of the scheme. This would be followed with specific information immediately prior to the implementation of the service change in January 2011.
  - 1.3.27 The current recycling calendar expires in October 2010 and therefore a new calendar will be issued to identify recycling and refuse collection weeks. A supporting leaflet will be supplied with the calendar to provide residents with all necessary information, promote recycling and reuse and provide contact information.
  - 1.3.28 Participation monitoring of the recycling service would also be carried out prior to the introduction of fortnightly collections and then again following the implementation of the service change. This would be used to focus resources on areas where recycling participation remains low or contamination issues are high.
- 1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended
- 1.4.1 The Council could decide not to adopt a Waste and Recycling Strategy and focus on maintaining existing services. This approach has been adopted in the past and has resulted in inefficient services which do not provide value for money. It could also result in uninformed decisions being taken in the future which do not support the overall objectives of the Council, Kent Waste Strategy and Sustainable Community Strategies for both the county of Kent and the Maidstone borough.
  - 1.4.2 Alternatively, the Waste and Recycling Strategy could prioritise recycling rather than waste prevention and minimisation. This is likely to be the most expensive option, with the requirement for

considerable investment to provide additional services and increase the amount of waste sent for recycling. The food waste collections without fortnightly refuse collections would incur an additional revenue cost of approximately £650,000.

- 1.4.3 As above the Council could retain weekly refuse collections however this would result in food waste collections being financially unviable. Weekly refuse collections do not promote waste reduction and recycling so the council's performance in these areas would be unlikely to improve resulting in failure to meet the Council's targets.
- 1.4.4 It would be possible to adopt a strategy which provided the most cost effective solution, i.e. fortnightly residual waste collections and ignore government recycling targets which are not mandatory. However the inward investment provides an opportunity to increase the quality of the service and recycling rate at limited cost.
- 1.4.5 It is not recommended that the Council change the fleet to introduce split-bodied vehicles for the co-collection of refuse and recycling on the same week as this would incur considerable contract costs, including additional relocation costs for the existing vehicles. This could be considered for the new waste collection contract in 2013 and could significantly reduce operational costs.
- 1.4.6 The Council could decide to move to alternate weekly collections only. However such arrangements would not meet the recycling targets set by government.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 1.5.1 The recommendations described in this report support the Council's priorities to be 'A place that is clean and green' and 'A place with efficient and effective public services'. The Strategy plays an important part in achieving the Council's key objective 'Reduce the amount of waste produced by local people and increase the proportion of waste reused or recycled'.

1.6 Risk Management

- 1.6.1 A risk assessment of the recommendation has been carried out and is attached in Appendix E of the report.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

- 1. Financial
- 2. Staffing

X
X

- 3. Legal
- 4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment
- 5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
- 6. Community Safety
- 7. Human Rights Act
- 8. Procurement
- 9. Asset Management

X

1.7.2 Financial – The financial implications are set out in the report.

1.7.3 Staffing – Additional contact centre staff would be required during the implementation of this to handle the increase in calls expected. This would be managed through the Project Board and costs are included within the set up costs (Appendix C).

1.7.4 Environmental/Sustainable Development – The recommendations included in this report contribute to the Council’s priority to be a place that is clean and green and one that provides value for money for the local taxpayers.

These recommendations offer the most sustainable service to Maidstone taxpayers and focus on reducing the Council’s impact on the environment through waste prevention, minimisation, reuse and recycling.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

- (i) Appendix A – Waste and Recycling Strategy 2010-2015
- (ii) Appendix B – Food Waste Implementation Plan
- (iii) Appendix C – Policy and Procedure Statement
- (iv) Appendix D – Options Appraisal
- (v) Appendix E - Risk Assessments

1.8.2 Background Documents

- (i) Cabinet Report for Best Value Review of Waste and Recycling – Options Appraisal – 11 November 2009
- (ii) Defra waste review document August 2010.

**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes

No

If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?

June 2010

This is a Key Decision because: The recommendations affect all households within the borough.

Wards/Parishes affected: All

# **Waste and Recycling Strategy 2010 – 2015**



**September 2010**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Maidstone Borough Council is committed to reducing household waste, increasing reuse and recycling whilst offering cost effective and sustainable waste and recycling services.

This needs to be achieved in partnership with our residents, local businesses and other boroughs including the County Council (who are the waste disposal authority). The Council will be letting a new waste collection contract in 2013 and also wants to assess the sort of service that is required in the longer term, particularly as waste disposal costs increase.

As part of the Kent Waste Partnership, Maidstone is committed to the Kent Waste Strategy. Waste minimisation and reuse are key priorities with the intention to break the link between waste production and economic growth as well as increasing recycling or composting to over 40% by 2012/13. These are reflected in Maidstone's vision and the objectives set out in Maidstone's Waste Strategy.

The 'Vision for Kent' is the county-wide community strategy which is about the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Kent's communities. This sets out an objective for waste disposal infrastructure, including processing, composting and transfer facilities, to be delivered in line with improvements in district services at best value to the Kent taxpayer. Maidstone's Waste Strategy supports this objective through partnership working, cost effective services and consideration of local recycling and treatment opportunities.

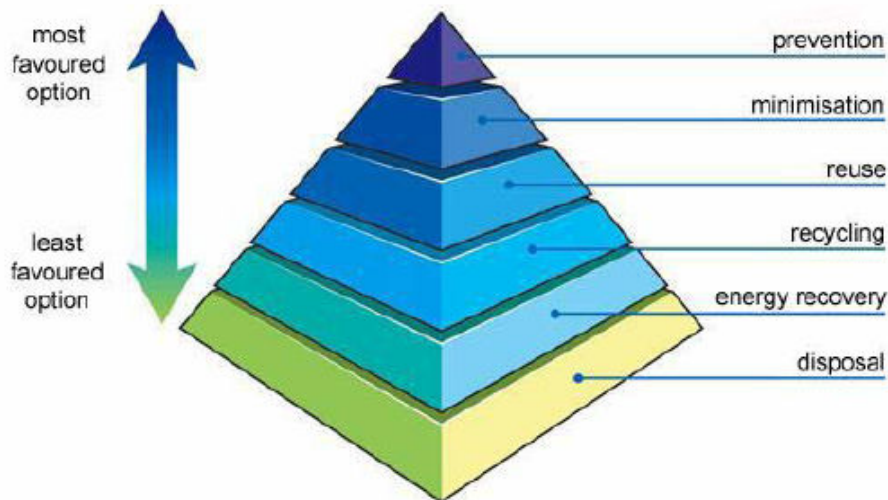
Nationally, the government has recently announced its ambition for a zero waste economy, with focus on waste prevention through innovative product and packaging design. A full review of waste policies in England is being carried out by Defra to ensure that this ambition is achieved. With the forthcoming adoption of the revised EU Waste Framework Directive into UK legislation, nationally the focus remains on waste prevention and reduction initiatives. This strategy fulfils the objectives of both European and national priorities for waste management. The outcome of this review will also produce new targets for recycling which will at least meet the current national targets of 45% of waste arisings recycled by 2015 and 50% by 2020.

The revised EU Waste Framework Directive (WFD) is to be brought into UK domestic legislation by 12 December 2010. The main features of this directive are the application of the waste hierarchy as a priority order in waste prevention and management legislation, the separate collection of paper, metal, plastic and glass by 2015 and a recycling target of 50% from households by 2020.

This strategy supports the revised directive and recycling targets set.

Maidstone Borough Council will apply the principles of the waste hierarchy whereby waste prevention and minimisation offer the optimum solutions to waste management compared with energy recovery and disposal. Appreciation of the most favourable options will ensure Maidstone meets local and national targets and enable us to move to the forefront of waste management in Kent.

This is the first Waste Strategy that the Council has produced and will sit alongside the Council's medium term plans (Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan).



## **OUR VISION**

Overall the Council wants Maidstone Borough to be a place that is clean and green and one that provides value for money for local taxpayers. For waste services this is to provide an excellent service which will reduce waste, ensure sustainable and cost effective recycling collections and enable Maidstone residents to achieve high levels of participation.

## **OBJECTIVES – WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?**

In order to achieve the vision for the future of the service, the following objectives are proposed:

- i) To increase the amount of household waste sent for recycling, reuse or composting to 50% by 2015 (above the national target of 45%)
- ii) To reduce total household waste arisings by 10% by 2015 compared with 2005-2010 average.
- iii) To meet any additional costs of operating the service through the support of the Kent Waste Partnership and efficiency improvements in the rest of the waste collection service.
- iv) To improve the value for money of the waste collection service.
- v) To improve residents' satisfaction with Maidstone Borough Council's wasteand recycling services.
- vi) To increase glass recycling collections by up to 600 tonnes during the period of the plan.



- vii) To work with KCC to minimise the amount of recyclables sent to incineration and maximise the benefits of the value of those materials for both the Council and KCC.
- viii) To support the Council's objective of 3% annual carbon reduction through the optimum utilisation of resources, increased consideration of energy efficiency and higher priority given to service improvements which offer energy reduction

By reaching a recycling rate of 50%, Maidstone will also exceed the national diversion target of reducing waste which is not recycled, reused or composted by 35% from the level of waste in the year 2000, by 2015.

## **HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO IT?**

In order to achieve the objectives and ultimately the vision for Maidstone's waste and recycling services, there needs to be the combination of service development and targeted promotion. Priority will be given to development options which best support the objectives and principles of the waste hierarchy, starting with waste prevention as the most favourable option.

### **1. Waste Prevention**

Waste prevention primarily focuses on the avoidance of waste from manufacturers and retailers; however it is important that residents are aware of ways they can also help. This will remain a key message throughout the educational campaigns, with advice about avoiding products with excessive packaging and using their consumer power to force manufacturers to improve their sustainability.

The Council also supports the Courtauld Commitment which is a voluntary agreement for retailers, manufacturers and suppliers to reduce household packaging and food waste. Details will be available on Maidstone's website, including links to free support from organisations such as Envirowise and BREW (Business Resource Efficiency and Waste Programme).

### **2. Waste Minimisation**

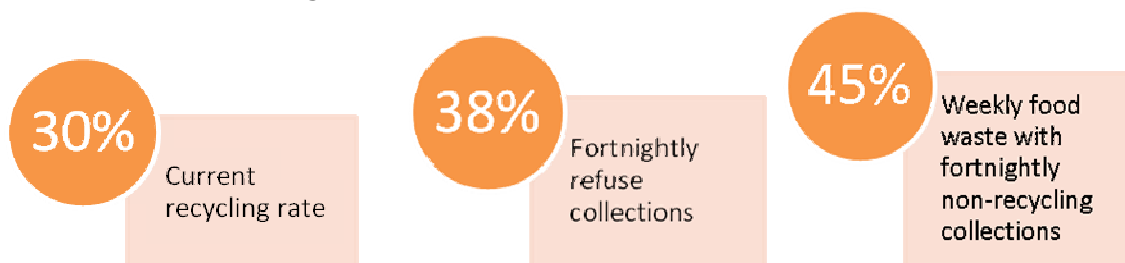
The key priority is to promote waste minimisation or reduction through strategic service developments. All options which support this priority will be considered.

Collecting the non-recyclable element of household waste on a fortnightly basis has been shown to reduce the amount of waste collected by 25%. It also encourages residents to use recycling services more effectively thereby increasing recycling rates and offering better value for money. This waste minimisation measure helps engage residents with their recycling service, raising participation rates and reducing waste sent for disposal. It is therefore intended to move to fortnightly collection of residual waste to increase recycling by encouraging greater participation in the established fortnightly collection of dry recyclables. This move will also significantly improve the cost effectiveness of the waste collection service which is currently the highest in Kent.

Waste minimisation also supports the Council's objective of 3% annual carbon reduction, through reduction in transportation requirements and therefore fuel usage. Optimisation of the fleet through careful monitoring through the use of technology, such as GPS tracking and in-cab devices will also ensure that the Council actively seeks ways to reduce the carbon impact of the waste and recycling service.

Although fortnightly collections offer a more efficient service, reduce household waste arisings and increase recycling rates, alone they will not enable the Council to achieve the current national recycling targets.

Surveys of residual waste have confirmed that up to 40% of that waste is food arisings. The option to combine the approach of fortnightly collections with a separate weekly food waste collection scheme will ensure that food, which is the highest category of waste that is currently present in the non recycling bin is recycled. In addition this type of service has also been shown to decrease the amount of food waste produced by highlighting the vast amount of food which is thrown away. By combining these themes the Council will be moving towards 50%.



**Waste Minimisation Strategy:** *Fortnightly non-recycling collections and weekly food waste will support the Council's objectives of reducing household waste arisings and increasing the amount of waste recycled or composted*

Therefore the Council intends to introduce borough-wide weekly collections of food waste alongside the implementation of fortnightly residual waste collections from end of January 2011. The cost of the food waste collections will be met through the savings gained from the fortnightly refuse collections and through support from the Kent Waste Partnership. Set up costs for the new service will be provided by WRAP and the Kent Waste Partnership. It is also projected that by moving to this collection service now, additional savings will be made in 2013 when the new collection contract is let.

In addition to the above initiatives home composting offers two major benefits; the composting of garden waste and vegetable peelings produces nutritious plant food whilst also reducing the amount of waste which needs to be collected for disposal or treatment. Although the recycling of garden waste through kerbside collection or the Household Waste Recycling Centre is preferable to disposing of it in landfill or burning it, reducing the amount of garden waste collected significantly reduces the transportation and energy requirements, providing environmental and financial benefits. The council currently promotes subsidised home compost bins in order to encourage residents to use this option for waste reduction over the alternatives. The scheme will be monitored throughout 2010/11 to identify ways to increase uptake year on year.

The majority of methods to encourage waste minimisation are through education and increasing public awareness, including use of the Love Food Hate Waste campaign and these initiatives will continue with local groups and individuals. School workshops teaching children about waste prevention and inspiring them to be inventive with scrap materials remain a key part of the strategy. Regular roadshows demonstrating easy waste reduction techniques will also continue throughout the borough.

### **3. Reuse**

Reuse of items, such as furniture, is a very effective way of reducing the amount of waste sent for disposal.

Some items collected through the bulky waste collection and Saturday freighter services have the potential for being reused or recycled, whilst for other items on the freighter (such as green waste) there are better disposal options. A review of the services identified the composition of this waste and the extent that can be reused.

The weekend freighter service was re-launched in August as a Saturday-only service and no longer accepts items which could be easily recycled or reused within the borough. Diverting garden waste and large bulky items from disposal will reduce the Council's costs, increase recycling performance and reduce Maidstone's household waste arisings.

Discussions will take place with private and voluntary sectors regarding the reuse of furniture and electrical items in order to identify options available to divert these items from disposal.

Another area for reuse is textiles. Textiles are currently collected at the majority of Maidstone's recycling sites for reuse or recycling. Expansion of these banks and investigating options for a kerbside collection, facilitated through a third party partnership, will increase the reuse of textiles within Maidstone.

Smaller scale reuse also plays a fundamental role in the educational activities, with workshops and school assemblies showing children how to reuse everyday items into fun creativity. These remain an essential part of the Council's comprehensive educational campaign along with fostering children's imaginations through challenges and competitions.

### **4. Recycling**

Although Maidstone already recycles 30% of household waste, there is the potential to increase this to 45% through the introduction of weekly food waste and fortnightly residual waste collections. The current participation rate with the recycling service is high, over 80% and this will be built upon to ensure the success in the future. Through the expansion of the materials collected and concerted efforts to maintain and indeed increase participation levels it is hoped to reach the 50% recycling target by 2015.

Maidstone intends to investigate and implement the following improvements to the existing recycling service:

#### Food Waste

The food waste collected as part of the new service will be recycled through in vessel composting which ensures any pathogens are killed and produces high grade compost.

#### Maximising recycled material values

Currently recyclable materials collected in the borough are taken to KCC's materials recovery facility at Allington. Wherever possible the material is processed and sent for recycling. Contaminated materials are sent for incineration along with the residual waste. The borough council receives no income from the value of the recycled materials. However paper collected in the paper banks and glass collected in the glass banks does provide income for the Council. Therefore over the period of the strategy the Council will work with Kent County Council to find ways to minimise the amount of contaminated recyclable materials which are incinerated and maximise the benefits of the value of the recycled materials for both authorities.

#### Garden Waste Collections

The performance of this chargeable service is subject to seasonality and annual weather fluctuations. Promotion of the service, in particular the garden waste bins, is essential to maximise the recycling of garden waste whilst recognising the importance of home composting as the more favourable option for garden waste.

After six weeks of monitoring the weekend freighter service, it was evident that garden waste was the primary type of waste being disposed of by residents. As all waste disposed of through this service is sent to landfill, the Council decided to disallow garden waste to be disposed of in this way from 21<sup>st</sup> August 2010.

The decision has also been taken to change from plastic garden waste sacks to compostable ones for the garden waste recycling collections. This will reduce the amount of non-recyclable waste generated by the council and improve the efficiency of the service. These bags will be available to purchase from retailers from the beginning of October 2010.

#### Recycling Sites

The need for paper and cardboard banks with Maidstone is perhaps questionable as these items are now collected through the kerbside service. However the paper banks generate the Council an income and aid the separation of a high quality material. For this reason the paper banks will be retained although options for cost savings will be investigated. However the cardboard banks were removed from the end of July 2010 as this material can be collected more cost effectively through the kerbside recycling collection and have negligible impact on Maidstone's recycling rate.

Separating glass by colour is the most effective and environmentally beneficial form of recycling glass as new bottles can be produced time and time again. Therefore additional glass recycling banks will be provided throughout the borough where locations can be agreed with local communities. Identifying suitable sites which will be convenient yet unobtrusive is difficult so a new joint proforma is being created with all stakeholders to highlight the criteria required for new recycling locations. Maidstone Borough Council is committed to increasing the number of recycling sites for glass and will continue to work with Ward Councillors, Parish Councils and businesses to find suitable locations over the next 5 years.

650

tonnes of extra glass could be recycled through additional glass banks, increasing Maidstone's recycling rate by 1%

Other materials such as CDs, batteries, WEEE (waste electrical and electronic equipment) and drinks cartons can be recycled and the possibility of increasing the materials accepted at local recycling sites will be investigated. The Council proposes to collect new materials at the recycling sites by March 2012.

### **5. Energy Recovery**

Maidstone's priority is to reduce the overall volume of waste requiring treatment and maximise the diversion of waste from energy recovery to recycling or reuse. Energy recovery however presents a more favourable option to disposal through landfill. Therefore household waste which can not be reused or recycled should be sent for energy recovery wherever possible. The Allington Energy from Waste (EfW) facility allows the recovery of energy from the majority of Maidstone's household waste.

Kent County Council is currently undertaking a trial of shredding bulky waste to allow it to be taken to Allington EfW for recovery. Maidstone supports this trial for any bulky waste which is not suitable for recycling or reuse and will work with the County Council to encourage the extension of this trial.

### **6. Disposal**

Disposal is the least favourable option as it is costly both environmentally and financially. Maidstone Borough Council is committed to maximising the diversion of waste away from disposal.

At present the only waste which is sent to landfill from Maidstone is bulky waste collected through the bulky waste service or the weekend freighter. The Council is committed to achieving zero waste to landfill by 2015 with the support of Kent County Council, the waste disposal authority.

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP**

It is important to ensure that Maidstone residents understand why changes are being made and want to become involved.

The Recycle for Maidstone "brand" has played a key role in the past few years and is widely recognisable; however the priority of waste reduction and reuse has out-grown this campaign.

Maidstone Borough Council's commitment to waste reduction, reuse and recycling through the development of a coordinated service will be promoted in the same way; a coordinated campaign which is recognisable and promotes community ownership.

A comprehensive communications campaign will be used to promote the complete package of changes being undertaken as well as ensuring that the profile of the service is raised and that local communities are more engaged. This will include direct public engagement through meetings, roadshows, community events, school workshops and door-knocking alongside promotion through Maidstone's website, Borough Update, local press and informational leaflets. Mosaic will also be used to identify and target key messages to individuals or groups.

It is important that the local press are provided with details of the schemes and actively engaged to ensure that the true benefits of the proposals are realised and that any negative experiences elsewhere do not adversely impact the success of Maidstone's services.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Efficiencies, savings and the generation of increased income will allow the service to evolve and develop and increase performance. At present the cost for Maidstone's waste and recycling services is the highest in Kent. Therefore increasing the cost efficiency of the service is a key objective. The strategy aims to fulfil this through the introduction of services which will maximise income and reduce costs. This will also need to be undertaken in collaboration with the current contractor (SITA) in the short term and also the County Council. In addition, through taking a more proactive approach to dealing with waste it is envisaged that the Council will be able to access a range of regional improvement funds, including the Kent Waste Partnership's Service Improvement Plan (SIP) Fund.

It is also envisaged that through these initiatives the overall kilograms of waste per household will be reduced (currently one of the highest in Kent) which will also have an impact on the service costs. However, at this stage the financial savings are being investigated.

The costs of implementing the services identified in this strategy will be met from improvements to service delivery and the kind support from WRAP and the Kent Waste Partnership.

The Kent Waste Partnership has also agreed to fund the preparation of a business case for the possible joint procurement and contract arrangements for those mid and west Kent authorities seeking new contracts in 2013. This work will be completed before the end of this year and will identify contract options and potential savings.

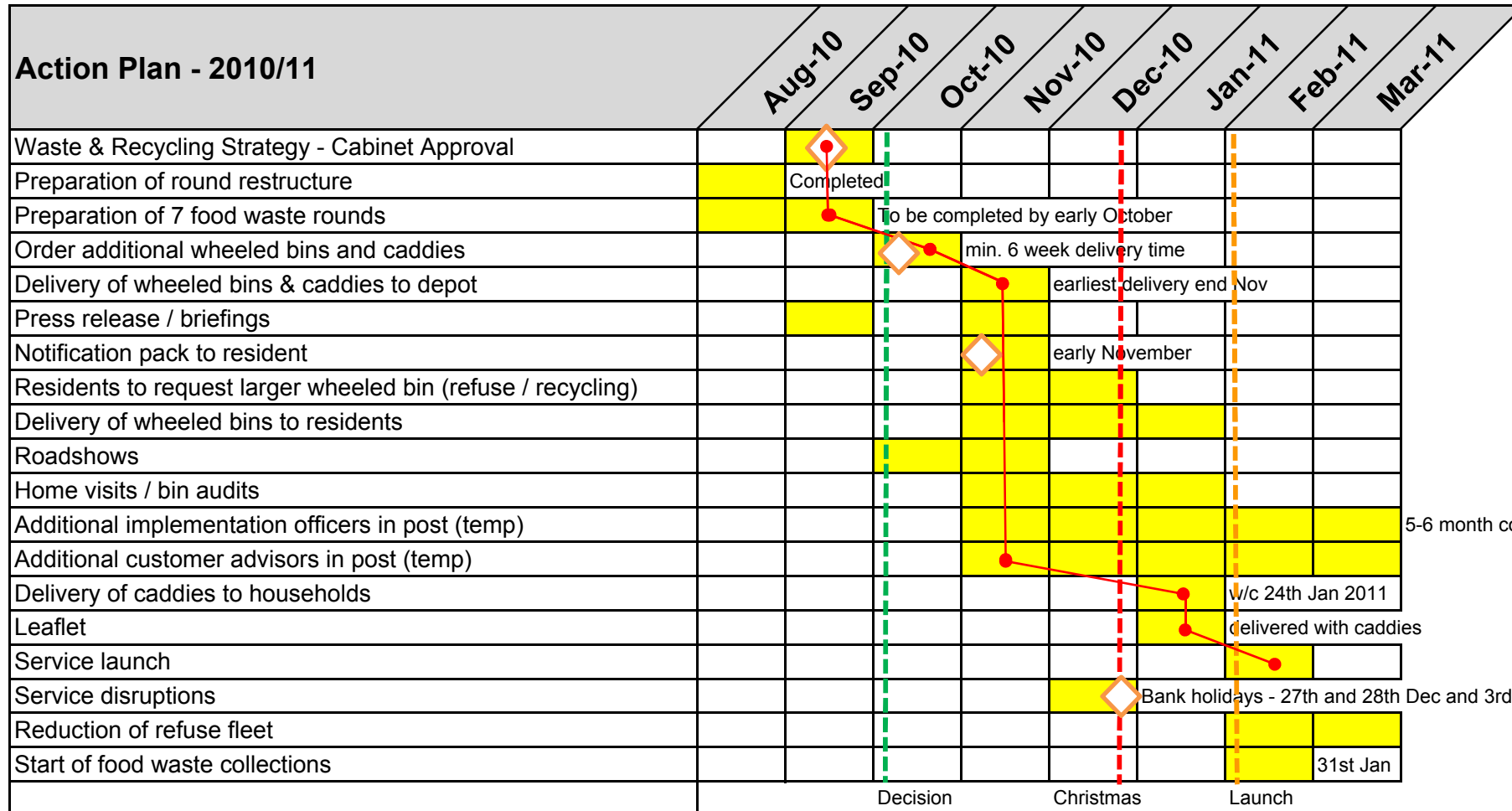
## **FURTHER DETAILS**

If you require any details please contact the waste and recycling team on 01622 602162 or email [waste@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:waste@maidstone.gov.uk)

Alternatively information on waste and recycling initiatives can be found on the Council's website at [www.maidstone.gov.uk/recyclingrubbishandwaste](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/recyclingrubbishandwaste).

# Implementation Plan for Food Waste Collections

APPENDIX B



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Critical Path  
Milestone

**DOMESTIC REFUSE & RECYCLING COLLECTION – POLICY &  
PROCEDURE STATEMENT**

**September 2010**

**Introduction:**

The purpose of this document is to outline the Council's Refuse and Recycling Collection service and its associated policies.

The Council will be implementing and operating a weekly collection of food waste alongside a fortnightly collection of refuse for the majority of domestic households within the borough, whilst maintaining existing collection arrangements for the mixed dry recycling and garden waste services.

The following individual policies are covered by this document:

- 1 New Food Waste Collections – Containers
- 2 Fortnightly Refuse Collections
- 3 Collection Point
- 4 Assisted Collections
- 5 Side Waste
- 6 Additional or Different-Sized Containers
- 7 Property Suitability – Wheeled Bins
- 8 Damaged, Stolen or Dirty Containers
- 9 Recyclables – Acceptable Materials
- 10 Enforcement – Residual Waste
- 11 Enforcement – Contamination of Recyclable Waste
- 12 WRAP's Waste Collection Commitment

**1 New Food Waste Collections - Containers**

- All households in the Borough which have individual refuse and recycling collections will receive a weekly collection of food waste. Households will be provided with a 5L silver kitchen caddy for use within the house and a 23L external black/orange caddy for presentation of waste for collection. The external caddy has a locking lid to prevent spillages.
- Households will also be provided with an initial supply of 13 compostable kitchen caddy liners. Householders will be required to purchase subsequent supplies of these compostable liners from local supermarkets or use newspaper to line their caddies.



- Food waste collections will occur on the same day as the refuse, recycling and garden waste collections. Households will present their external caddy out for collection at the boundary of their property by 7am on collection day.
- Households currently receiving a communal refuse and recycling collection will not be provided with individual caddies at the present time. Communal food waste collections will be investigated following the implementation of the individual household collections.

## **2 Fortnightly Refuse Collections**

- All households currently assessed as suitable for a wheeled bin refuse collection will receive fortnightly refuse collections alongside the weekly food waste collection.
- Households currently receiving a sack collection service for refuse will continue to receive sack collections and these households will remain on a weekly refuse collection; however will also receive a weekly food waste collection.
- Households currently receiving communal refuse collection services will retain these at the current emptying frequency.
- Fortnightly refuse collections will be on the alternate week to the mixed dry recycling collections.
- During the Christmas and New Year period, households will remain on fortnightly collections. Side waste will be collected only during this period.

### **Collection Point**

- The normal collection point for wheeled bins, caddies, boxes and sacks will be at the boundary of the property nearest to where the collection vehicles pass.
- The collection point will be located no further than 25 metres from where the vehicle passes. This brings Council policy in line with the most recent amendments (SI 2001/3335) to the Building Regulations 2000. This policy will be applied to all new developments, and may be applied to existing properties if risk assessments show the need for revised collection practices.
  - For example, in the instance of shared driveways, the presentation point of the container should be at the boundary of each individual property, so long as this point is not further than 25 metres from the road which the collection vehicle uses to service those properties.

- Where a variation from the normal collection point is applied (e.g. at the side/rear of property, at the end of a rear entry, at the nearest adopted highway) the occupants of the property concerned will be notified. The Council's decision as to where containers are to be presented for collection is final. Staff will be trained to use their discretion when determining this.
- Back alley collection will only be made in exceptional circumstances. A communal collection point will be considered in the first instance in such cases. Where this applies, containers will need to be labelled by the residents with their property name or number. The containers will need to be returned back to the properties by the residents as soon as possible after collection.

### **3 Assisted Collections**

- In situations where all occupiers are, through infirmity or disability, unable to take a 240 litre or 180 litre wheeled bin to the boundary, smaller (140 litre) wheeled bins may be considered more appropriate and will be offered. Reusable bags will also be offered as an alternative where this would help residents bring their own recyclable waste to the boundary.
- In situations where all occupiers are, for the same reasons, unable to place their own refuse or recycling containers at the boundary, assisted collections will be offered, where the containers will be collected from an agreed storage point. If an alternative container is not an adequate solution, the following procedure will be used to determine qualification for an assisted collection:
  - On taking a request from the resident, the Contact Centre procedure is to ask:
    - The reason for the request;
    - If a smaller bin (or boxes for recyclables) would be an appropriate solution;
    - If not, if there is anyone else in the household who can move the containers to the boundary and back;
    - If Contact Centre staff are satisfied that an assisted collection is required, this is logged onto the system for the contractor to action;
    - If necessary, however, a Council Officer will visit the property concerned to agree or determine the presentation point for the container(s). Following confirmation that an assisted collection service will be provided the collection crew will collect the appropriate container from the agreed location and put it back in the same place.
- Periodically the Council will review assisted collections to determine that they are still appropriate and required.

### **4 Side Waste**

- “Side Waste” means refuse or other waste materials from the household, left alongside the wheeled bin (or other container) or which prevent the lid from closing. (MBC Garden waste sacks are not classed as side waste and will be collected separately from refuse and recyclables.)
- No side waste will be collected when presented with the non-recyclable refuse bin, except for the two-week period containing the Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays in each year.
- Side waste of recyclable material will be collected with the recyclable waste container on the appropriate collection days, provided it is suitably contained in rigid containers (recycling box or cardboard box) and not in refuse sacks or plastic carrier bags.
- Due to the nature of the waste side waste should not be presented next to the external food waste caddy. Additional caddies will be provided where necessary.

## **5 Additional or different-sized containers**

- If a householder requests a larger or an additional recycling container because they are utilising the recycling container to its full capacity, a larger or additional container will be provided.
- If a householder requests a smaller bin for either refuse or recycling, this may be provided, so long as the resident is sure that they can manage with a smaller container.
- A “larger” household will receive a larger (240 litre) wheeled bin for non-recyclable refuse, on request. A “larger” household is defined as one where there are six or more people in permanent residence.
- Where a household of five or fewer people reports that they have insufficient capacity to store non-recyclable refuse in a standard (180 litre) grey wheeled bin, a visit may be made by a Council Officer to assess the situation.
- The Officer will seek to establish the extent to which the householder is currently recycling. If the householder is fully utilising the recycling facilities provided (either kerbside or bring sites) but can still demonstrate a shortfall in their bin capacity, a larger (240 litre) grey wheeled bin may be provided for refuse.
- Where the Officer deems that a household is not making full use of the recycling collection services they will not be given a larger residual waste wheeled bin.
- Additional food waste caddies will be provided where necessary to help alleviate problems with excessive refuse.

## 6 Property Suitability

- The criteria being used for assessing each property is similar to that adopted by the Health Committee in March 1999 for the introduction of the original wheeled bin service. Those criteria are:
  - The property should have access from its front to the rear.
  - If not, the property should have storage space at the front into which the bin would fit.
  - The bin should be capable of being moved by **the resident** from the storage position to the point of collection without the need to negotiate steps or loose gravel surfaces. However, if the resident wishes to have a bin and is willing to move the bin to the collection point over steps or gravel surfaces, a bin may be provided.
  - Narrow streets and parked cars may prevent the effective emptying of bins and properties on such streets may be excluded from the wheeled bin service.
  - For the purposes of the recycling collection scheme, it is considered that any frontage larger than four square metres is automatically suitable for storing two bins. Any properties with a frontage smaller than this may still be able to accommodate two bins, but if not, will be offered alternative containers for their recyclables.
  - Due to Health & Safety reasons wheeled bins will not be provided where **the collection crew** has to negotiate the bin over more than three steps between collection point and collection vehicle. In this case an Officer will visit to discuss alternative collection methods. Such properties will typically remain on sack collections for refuse and will be offered boxes for recycling.
  - The Council will provide a 180 litre container as the standard receptacle in which Council residents are asked to store their refuse, and a 240 litre container for their recyclables. However, there may be certain properties or other circumstances where a 180 litre bin for recyclables might be more appropriate and will be provided subject to an assessment with a Council Officer.
  - Where a weekly sack collection service continues to be provided the Council will provide 78 sacks per year in line with current policy. A householder can request a grey wheeled bin in which to store non-recyclable waste between collections, but must only present sacks for collection on the designated day at the correct collection point.

- Where weekly collection of residual waste continues, recyclables will be collected fortnightly, using a box or re-usable bag, as supplied by the Council.

## **7 Damaged, stolen or dirty containers**

- The Council will be responsible for the provision of replacement containers when damaged or stolen.
- Collection crews have a duty to report any damaged containers caused either through their activities or otherwise.
- The Council will not offer or provide a wheeled bin or caddy cleaning service during the implementation or operation of the new service; responsibility for cleaning containers provided will remain with the householder, should they chose to do so.

## **8 Recyclables – Acceptable Materials**

- Acceptable waste for the new weekly food waste collection scheme are:
  - All uncooked food;
  - All cooked food;
  - Meat (including bones);
  - Dairy products;
  - Fruit;
  - Vegetables;
  - Bread;
  - Compostable liners only;
  - Newspaper (for lining purposes only);

All food packaging must be removed prior to the waste being put into the internal or external caddy. Plastic bags must not be used to contain the food waste. Only compostable liners made from paper or potato starch are acceptable with the food waste.

- Acceptable recyclable materials for the mixed dry recycling scheme, which must all be empty, clean and dry, are:
  - Newspapers and magazines;
  - Cardboard and other papers;
  - Plastic bottles;
  - Plastic Yoghurt pots, margarine and ice cream tubs;
  - Steel cans;
  - Aluminium cans including aerosols;
  - Aluminium food trays and foil.
- Unacceptable materials for recycling collections are any not specified, specifically excluding:
  - Clinical waste including medicines, needles or syringes
  - Glass
  - Food waste
  - Plastic film, bags or sacks

- Scrap metal
- Expanded polystyrene foam
- Plastic wrapped items
- General household waste
- Wet materials
- LDPE (Cling film)
- PVC (sheets, paddling pools)
- Plastic toys, buckets, plant trays
- Hazardous materials
- Plastic foil laminated papers (drink cartons etc)
- Textiles
- Expanded polystyrene food trays

## **9 Enforcement – Residual Waste**

- Where a resident does not wish to participate in the service (for example, the resident finds the bin unsightly or they are not prepared to accept or use the containers provided) a number of steps will be taken to ensure that the householder is fully aware of how the service operates. These steps are set out below, the final step being to take enforcement action using powers given to the Council under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
  - If the resident fails to use the recycling or food waste collection service but instead stores all their waste in their grey refuse bin or sacks (if on sack collections) between refuse collections, then no enforcement action would be taken.
  - However, where a resident uses their recycling container for residual waste, the following steps will be taken:
    - (a) On the first occasion, the recycling container will not be collected by the recycling crew and a sticker placed on the bin by the crew explaining why the container hasn't been emptied, and that it will be emptied by the residual waste collection vehicle on the following week. Side waste arising from this incident will also be collected at that time.
    - (b) On the second occasion, the same procedure will be followed.
    - (c) On the third occasion within any rolling 6 month period, the Monitoring Officer will arrange to visit the resident to establish why the resident is failing to use the system correctly. An audit of the waste presented will be offered. This would entail sorting through the contents of the refuse container with the householder present. If recyclable material is found to be present, the resident will be given further advice on how to use the scheme.

- (d) If the resident then fails to use the system correctly, further enforcement action may be taken:
  - i. In accordance with Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Council may serve a Statutory Notice to the householder to require waste to be placed within the containers specified. The authority is entitled to specify that separate containers are used for waste to be recycled and waste which is not recycled and to determine where such containers must be placed to facilitate the emptying of them.
  - ii. Any person that fails, without reasonable excuse, to comply with the requirements of such a Notice they may be issued a Fixed Penalty Notice of £100 in accordance with section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
  - iii. **However, any such action will only be taken as a last resort.**
- All households which are accessed as suitable for a wheeled bin for their refuse will be deemed suitable for fortnightly refuse collections. Whereby a resident presents their waste in sacks despite having a wheeled bin, a fortnightly collection will be maintained.

## **10 Enforcement - Contamination of recyclable materials**

- Recyclable materials for both the food waste collection and recycling collection must be of an appropriate quality (minimal contamination) to avoid loads being rejected at the Materials Recycling Facility or composting facility. Information about the correct materials for the food waste caddy and recycling container will be provided/made available to householders.
- Mixed Dry Recycling Contamination
  - Where a small amount of contamination is present in the mixed recycling the collection crew will collect the recyclables, but leave a sticker on the container informing the resident of what the contamination was.
  - Where a significant amount of contamination occurs, the container will not be emptied, and a sticker placed on the bin/box/bag. Householders will be advised to remove the contaminating material from the recycling container prior to the next scheduled collection.
  - Recycling collection crews will be instructed to lift lids of each recyclables bin to check for contamination prior to emptying.

- Where incidents of contamination are of a persistent nature (e.g. more than two collections), a letter may be sent to the householder and/or they may receive a visit from an Officer to reinforce what the householder should and should not be putting in their recycling container. The system of enforcement outlined in (9) above may also be used for persistent offenders, **but only once all other options for information and education have been exhausted.**
- Food Waste Contamination
  - Where any amount of contamination is present in the food waste caddy, the collection crew will not collect the waste and will place a sticker on the bin to advise the resident to remove the contaminant or bag the waste and put it in their refuse bin for collection.
  - Collections crews will be instructed to lift the lids of the external caddy and check for contamination prior to emptying
  - Where incidences of contamination are of a persistent nature (e.g. more than two collections) a letter may be sent to the householder and/or they may receive a visit from an Officer to reinforce what the householder should and should not be putting in their food waste caddy. The system of enforcement outlined in (9) above may also be used for persistent offenders, **but only once all other options for information and education have been exhausted.**



### Waste and Recycling Strategy: Options Appraisal

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Cost Implications	Impact on Recycling Rate
<b>Retain existing service</b>	No additional costs (other than standard contract uplift) Maintain high customer satisfaction	Offers the council no savings. The Council will not meet the national recycling target of 45% by 2015	Contract uplift on 31 <sup>st</sup> July each year Cost per household remains high	<b>30%</b>
<b>Implementation of fortnightly residual waste collections</b>	Offers significant savings to the council. More efficient and cost effective service. Significantly increases recycling rate through reduction in overall waste arisings	Public perception – customer satisfaction likely to fall based on Place Survey results elsewhere Food waste would only be collected fortnightly increasing likelihood of smells and problems of waste not being contained within bin. With this service alone, the council will not meet the national recycling target of 45% by 2015.	Savings in excess of £300,000 taking into account the set up costs. Cost per household significantly reduces	<b>38%</b>

<p><b>Implementation of weekly food waste collections alongside fortnightly residual waste collections</b></p>	<p>Increases amount sent for recycling – both food waste and mixed dry recycling. Council will meet/exceed the national recycling target of 45% by 2015.</p> <p>Maintains a weekly collection for the food waste which is most likely to cause smell and problems for residents – therefore should be perceived well by residents.</p> <p>Encourages waste reduction and leads to less waste being disposed of.</p> <p>Reduces disposal costs. Will maintain/improve reputation of the council with Kent County Council and WRAP.</p>	<p>Does not offer any savings to the council.</p> <p>As some residents have to remain on weekly service this creates a more complex service.</p> <p>Potential issue with nappies being collected fortnightly.</p>	<p>Set up cost of £426,000 funded through WRAP and Kent Waste Partnership SIP fund.</p> <p>Running costs for the food waste collections would be minimal due to the savings generated from fortnightly residual collections. Further funding from Kent Waste Partnership is being sought to meet the operational costs of running the service.</p> <p>Further savings in the core service operation will be sought within the context of the Best Value Review of waste.</p>	<p><b>45%</b> up to 50% with additional educational work and promotion of glass banks at recycling sites</p>
<p><b>Introduction of weekly food waste and fortnightly residual waste collections to 7000 households</b></p>	<p>Allows trial of scheme prior to re-tender of waste contract Increases waste sent for recycling in trial area.</p> <p>Maintains reputation with Kent County Council, WRAP and local residents</p>	<p>Different services operating across the borough will result in higher operational costs Complexity of service increases – impact on contact centre and provision of information to residents</p>	<p>£118,000 Kent Waste Partnership SIP funding has been awarded as well as £70,000 WRAP funding which would cover the set up costs.</p> <p>Running costs until 2013 are likely to be met by the savings generated from a reduction in one residual waste vehicle.</p>	<p><b>32%</b></p>

## Strategic Risk Catalogue

Section or Service

Risk category

**Waste Collection****Customer, Environmental/Financial**

<b>Risk No</b>	<b>Vulnerability</b> (Why, what's happening, what's the problem)	<b>Trigger/risk</b> (What's the event/ what could go wrong?)	<b>Consequences</b> (What would occur as a result, how much of a problem would it be, to whom and why?)	<b>Current Rating</b>
1	Purchase / acquisition of food waste collection vehicles may not be completed by Monday 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2011	Lead times for these vehicles cannot be established until the order is placed with the manufacturer. The vehicles may not be available in time for the first collection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialist food waste vehicles not available in time for the first collection</li> <li>Hired vehicles would be required which are likely to be more expensive</li> <li>No sealed vehicles could be available for the collection of this waste resulting in the service being delayed</li> </ul>	B2
2	Unable to collect all the refuse within operating hours using five refuse vehicles, resulting in waste not being collected or additional resources being required.	Levels of refuse are not reduced sufficiently through the fortnightly collections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All refuse would not be collected on the scheduled collection day</li> <li>Additional resources would be required resulting in less savings being achieved</li> </ul>	C3
3	Levels of recycling increase above the levels of the existing	Fortnightly refuse collections lead to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some recycling can not be collected on the</li> </ul>	C2

	resource	significantly more recycling being presented for collection	<p>scheduled collection day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional resources would be required resulting in increased costs for the collection of dry recycling</li> </ul>	
4	Communications campaign fails to engage residents	Residents fail to reduce their waste or use their food waste collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large quantities of refuse left as side waste next to the bin</li> <li>• Higher levels of waste dumped on pavements / flytipped</li> </ul>	C2
5	Kitchen caddies are contaminated with non-food based wastes	Residents do not receive or fail to read the informational leaflet regarding the acceptable food waste items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High numbers of caddies can not be emptied by the food waste collection vehicles</li> <li>• Increased numbers of phone calls to the contact centre</li> <li>• Caddies required to be emptied into domestic waste</li> </ul>	D3
6	Kitchen caddies are not received in time for delivery	Residents are unable to separate their food waste out for collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The food waste collection scheme is delayed</li> <li>• Residents are confused about the new service and fail to participate when caddies are delivered</li> </ul>	D1

## Risk Action Plan

Risk Number	Current Risk Score	Target Risk Score	Description			
1	B:2	C:3	Purchase / acquisition of food waste collection vehicles may not be completed by Monday 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2011			
Action/Controls already in place	Adequacy of action/control to address risk	Required management action/control	Responsibility for action	Critical success factors & KPIs	Review frequency	Key dates
Contact has been made with various suppliers regarding the provision of these vehicles. Sita UK Ltd have a Fleet department who would be able to source vehicles on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council	Fair	Decision needs to be taken as soon as possible to allow the acquisition of the vehicles. Delay in decision would require delay to the start of the service. Ongoing liason with Sita UK Ltd Fleet department and supplier	Jennifer Gosling	Acquisition of seven food waste collection vehicles	Fortnightly from decision until start of collections to ensure vehicle supply is on target	31 <sup>st</sup> January 2011

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Risk Number	Current Risk Score	Target Risk Score	Description			
2	D:3	D:3	Unable to collect all the refuse within operating hours using five refuse vehicles, resulting in waste not being collected or additional resources being required.			
Action/Controls already in place	Adequacy of action/control	Required management	Responsibility for action	Critical success factors & KPIs	Review frequency	Key dates

	<b>to address risk</b>	<b>action/control</b>				
Significant work has been undertaken by the waste team and local Sita UK Ltd management to ascertain the resource requirement for a fortnightly refuse collection	Good	Approval of Policy & Procedure statement specifying only properties on black sacks to retain weekly refuse collections and side waste not accepted. Ongoing monitoring of tonnages of waste collected and participation monitoring of the recycling and food waste collections	Jennifer Gosling	Approval of Policy & Procedure Statement.  Participation rate for the recycling and food waste collections.	Monthly	September 2010 and ongoing

<b>Risk Number</b>	<b>Current Risk Score</b>	<b>Target Risk Score</b>	<b>Description</b>			
3	C:2	D:2	Levels of recycling increase above the levels of the existing resource			
<b>Action/Controls already in place</b>	<b>Adequacy of action/control to address risk</b>	<b>Required management action/control</b>	<b>Responsibility for action</b>	<b>Critical success factors &amp; KPIs</b>	<b>Review frequency</b>	<b>Key dates</b>

Some spare capacity within the recycling collections has been identified and participation rates are already fairly high	Average	Participation monitoring before and after the introduction of food waste and fortnightly refuse collections. Restructuring of the recycling rounds where necessary to manage variations in the level of resource required. Monitoring of kg/recycling per household to manage the increase and determine levels when additional resource may need considering	Jennifer Gosling / Waste Team	Participation rate and kg/recycling per household	Monthly	September 2010 – baseline participation monitoring  31 <sup>st</sup> January 2011 – implementation of food waste and fortnightly refuse collections  Monitoring ongoing
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<b>Risk Number</b>	<b>Current Risk Score</b>	<b>Target Risk Score</b>	<b>Description</b>			
4	C:2	D:3	Communications campaign fails to engage residents			
<b>Action/Controls already in place</b>	<b>Adequacy of action/control to address risk</b>	<b>Required management action/control</b>	<b>Responsibility for action</b>	<b>Critical success factors &amp; KPIs</b>	<b>Review frequency</b>	<b>Key dates</b>

Initial discussions have already taken place with the communications team to ascertain the most effective methods for communicating these service changes to residents. WRAP guidance is available along with additional support as part of the funding provided. Experience from the implementation of the mixed dry recycling will also be used.	Good	Project Board will be set up and this will include members of the communications team. Meetings with local press will be arranged to ensure information provided is correct and their support is gained. Communications plan will be developed in conjunction with WRAP.	Annika Fraser / Jennifer Gosling	Communication Plan produced  Customer satisfaction levels monitored	Fortnightly meetings with Project Board	September 2010
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<b>Risk Number</b>	<b>Current Risk Score</b>	<b>Target Risk Score</b>	<b>Description</b>			
5	D:3	E:2	Kitchen caddies are contaminated with non-food based wastes			
<b>Action/Controls already in place</b>	<b>Adequacy of action/control to address risk</b>	<b>Required management action/control</b>	<b>Responsibility for action</b>	<b>Critical success factors &amp; KPIs</b>	<b>Review frequency</b>	<b>Key dates</b>



WRAP have guidance and communication templates which have been developed as part of their trials and have proved successful.	Good	Project Board meetings will be held to ensure that all literature is clear and details of what can and can't be accepted will be provided.	Annika Fraser	Leaflets produced	Fortnightly meetings	September 2010 onwards
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<b>Risk Number</b>	<b>Current Risk Score</b>	<b>Target Risk Score</b>	<b>Description</b>			
6	D:1	E:2	Kitchen caddies are not received in time for delivery			
<b>Action/Controls already in place</b>	<b>Adequacy of action/control to address risk</b>	<b>Required management action/control</b>	<b>Responsibility for action</b>	<b>Critical success factors &amp; KPIs</b>	<b>Review frequency</b>	<b>Key dates</b>
The ESPO framework is available to purchase the caddies without requiring procurement. Discussions with manufacturers has identified that the current lead time is approximately 6 weeks however this can not be confirmed until an order is placed	Good	Order must be placed as soon as possible and regular liaison between MBC and the supplier is required.	Jennifer Gosling	Order for caddies placed  Delivery of caddies to depot	Fortnightly	September 2010 - ongoing

# Agenda Item 11

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **RECORD OF RECOMMENDATION OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT ADVISORY GROUP TO THE CABINET**

Recommendation Made: 26 July 2010

#### **CORE STRATEGY - PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

##### **Issue for Decision**

To consider some important potential implications following the Regional Strategy being revoked and significant changes to the plan making system to be introduced to parliament by the new Government in the "Localism Bill"; and steps the Council might take to maximise the opportunities this offers and mitigate the delaying effect of these changes, to ensure the prompt and proper advancement of the Maidstone Core Strategy and other LDF documents to meet the Council's requirements.

##### **Recommendation Made**

That the LDF Core Strategy process be advanced to public consultation at the earliest opportunity, consistent with having proper regard to the opportunities now presented to the Council in the development of the Core Strategy.

##### **Reasons for Recommendation**

On 26 July 2010, the Local Development Document Advisory Group "LDDAG" considered the report of the Head of Spatial Planning.

The new Government has signalled intention to radically change the planning system<sup>1</sup>. The details of the new system are as yet unclear but on 6 July the Secretary of State Revoked the Regional Strategies and the Government's Chief Planner issued advice on some of the immediate issues that arise from this announcement. The advice is short and clear in the form of questions and answers and is attached in full at Appendix A.

Little further comment on this is necessary, it is clear (Q&A No.5) that LPAs "should continue to develop LDF Core Strategies...reflecting local peoples aspirations and decisions on important issues...", and furthermore, (Q&A No.7) that where DPDs are being prepared, LPAs may decide to review or revise their emerging policies in the light of the revocation, whilst ensuring that the requirements for soundness and other policy requirements under current legislation are met.

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<sup>1</sup> Coalition Government Manifesto, and Open Source Planning and Control Shift – Conservative Green Papers

Some authorities have decided to halt work on their LDFs until the situation is clarified. In Maidstone this would not be appropriate because:

- The strategy of the Local Plan is now over 10 years old, a clear sense of direction needs to be communicated to developers and communities. This will provide essential strategy context for further LDF documents or, just as important, guide the new style local plans when and if they are introduced.
- Policy gaps have opened up as parts of the Local Plan could not be “saved”, as the Kent and Medway Structure Plan was revoked, and further gaps will open up as the South East Plan is revoked. PPSs and the planned NPSs are also likely to be greatly scaled back in the future.
- Members’ aspirations to adopt new guidance to respond to current circumstances reveal a further shortfall in the coverage of policy and guidance – notably for a prioritised list of SPDs.

None of these shortfalls can be addressed until a Core Strategy is significantly progressed.

On this basis, urgent work is in hand to review and revise aspects of the draft plan that is being prepared. This includes: a review the appropriate housing target and the implications of any change on strategy; to consider a locally derived local Gypsy and Traveller figure; a review the gaps that are created as the South East Plan is revoked; and the likely future methods of future infrastructure funding including developer contributions and tariff levy, new development incentives and reductions in mainstream government funding.

Not all these matters are appropriate for inclusion in a Core Strategy and will be for other future policy documents, but the Core Strategy must anticipate and provide the necessary basis of these.

It is important to progress this assessment further before the Spatial Strategy and key target figures to be included in the Plan are put into the public domain. It is anticipated that this may mean further Member consideration before the Core Strategy is released for public consultation, slightly later in the autumn. The scope to catch-up lost time will be evaluated. Any options and the financial resource implications will be presented for consideration in due course.

### **Alternatives considered and why not recommended**

The Core Strategy programme could continue relying on all the current targets and the regional strategy but this would likely lead to an unsupported draft plan being generated, greatly increased risk of challenge and potentially abortive work and cost.

Rather than release the plan in sections, the process could have been delayed until a whole draft was ready, however, this would have led to increased delay.

Alternatively, the Core Strategy programme could be frozen until the government's new plan making proposals are in place. This action is not recommended because it would exacerbate the Council's position of having gaps in its policy framework when determining planning applications and other problems considered above.

### **Background Papers**

Maidstone draft Core Strategy - Preferred options report Jan 2007

The Chief Planning Officer  
Local Planning Authorities in England

6 July 2010

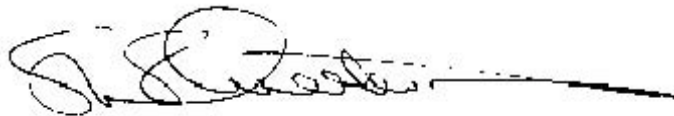
**Chief Planning Officer Letter:**

**REVOCATION OF REGIONAL STRATEGIES**

Today the Secretary of State announced the revocation of Regional Strategies with immediate effect.

I have attached some 'questions and answer' advice on immediate issues that may arise from this announcement. It will be important for local planning authorities to carry on delivering local development frameworks and making decisions on applications and the attached document focuses on how to continue taking these forward.

Please address any queries to Eamon Mythen at CLG in the first instance ([Eamon.Mythen@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Eamon.Mythen@communities.gsi.gov.uk)).



**STEVE QUARTERMAIN**  
*Chief Planner*

Department for Communities and Local Government  
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SW1E 5DU

## **Guidance for Local Planning Authorities following the revocation of Regional Strategies**

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government confirmed today that Regional Strategies will be revoked (see the attached copy of the Parliamentary Written Statement). In the longer term the legal basis for Regional Strategies will be abolished through the “Localism Bill” that we are introducing in the current Parliamentary session. New ways for local authorities to address strategic planning and infrastructure issues based on cooperation will be introduced. This guidance provides some clarification on the impact of the revocation; how local planning authorities can continue to bring forward their Local Development Frameworks (LDFs); and make planning decisions in the transitional period.

### **1. Under what powers are Regional Strategies being revoked?**

Regional Strategies have been revoked under s79(6) of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and no longer form part of the development plan for the purposes of s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This guidance covers the period between revocation of Regional Strategies and legislation to abolish them altogether.

### **2. Do Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) remain in force?**

Yes. The Policy Statement on Regional Strategies (February 2010) is cancelled, and references to Regional Strategies in other Policy Statements are no longer valid. But all other PPSs will continue to apply until they are replaced by the National Planning Framework.

### **3. Will this affect the London Plan?**

The London Plan will continue to provide the planning framework for London boroughs. As part of a wider process of decentralisation in London, we are reviewing how powers and discretion can be shifted downwards from central government to the Mayor and Assembly, to London Boroughs and to local neighbourhoods. This will include reviewing the scope for devolving power from the Greater London Authority down to the Boroughs and below.

*The following sections provide advice on some of the issues likely to arise following revocation of Regional Strategies, until the “Localism Bill” and the new National Planning Framework are in place. This guidance should be regarded as a material consideration by local planning authorities and the Planning Inspectorate in their decisions.*

### **4. How will this affect planning applications?**

In determining planning applications local planning authorities must continue to have regard to the development plan. This will now consist only of:

- Adopted DPDs;
- Saved policies; and

- Any old style plans that have not lapsed.

Local planning authorities should also have regard to other material considerations, including national policy. Evidence that informed the preparation of the revoked Regional Strategies may also be a material consideration, depending on the facts of the case.

Where local planning authorities have not yet issued decisions on planning applications in the pipeline, they may wish to review those decisions in light of the new freedoms following the revocation of Regional Strategies. The revocation of the Regional Strategy may also be a material consideration.

## **5. Should we continue preparing LDF documents?**

Yes – the revocation of Regional Strategies is not a signal for local authorities to stop making plans for their area.

Local planning authorities should continue to develop LDF core strategies and other DPDs, reflecting local people's aspirations and decisions on important issues such as climate change, housing and economic development.

These local plans will guide development in their areas and provide certainty for investors and communities. Local authorities may wish to review their plans following the revocation of Regional Strategies. We recommend reviews should be undertaken as quickly as possible.

## **6. How does this affect adopted local plans / LDFs?**

Adopted DPDs and saved policies will continue to provide the statutory planning framework. Local authorities may decide to review these now that Regional Strategies have been revoked. There is no need to review the whole LDF, only those issues or policies which local authorities wish to revisit. When undertaking consultation and sustainability appraisal on their draft policies, authorities should take an approach that considers the stage reached, the extent of work already undertaken and the scope of the policy changes they are making.

## **7. What if my LDF document is still being prepared?**

Where local planning authorities are currently bringing forward development plan documents they should continue to do so. Authorities may decide to review and/or revise their emerging policies in the light of the revocation of Regional Strategies. Where authorities decide to do this they will need to ensure they meet the requirements for soundness under the current legislation. When undertaking consultation and sustainability appraisal on their draft policies, authorities should take an approach that considers the stage reached, the extent of work already undertaken and the scope of the policy changes they are making.

## **8. Will Examinations in Public continue for DPDs?**

Yes – where local planning authorities are bringing forward new development plan documents or reviewing adopted plans they should present evidence to support their plans. The examination process will continue to assess the soundness of plans, and Inspectors will test evidence put forward by local authorities and others who make representations.

## **9. Will data and research currently held by Regional Local Authority Leaders' Boards still be available?**

Yes. The regional planning function of Regional LA Leaders' Boards – the previous Regional Assemblies – is being wound up and their central government funding will end after September this year. The planning data and research they currently hold will still be available to local authorities for the preparation of their local plans whilst they put their own alternative arrangements in place for the collection and analysis of evidence. Notwithstanding, the new Government regards the Regional Leaders' Boards as an unnecessary tier of bureaucracy.

### **Clarification on policy issues**

*There are a number of areas where Regional Strategies supplemented the national policy framework. Further clarification on these areas is set out below.*

## **10. Who will determine housing numbers in the absence of Regional Strategy targets?**

Local planning authorities will be responsible for establishing the right level of local housing provision in their area, and identifying a long term supply of housing land without the burden of regional housing targets. Some authorities may decide to retain their existing housing targets that were set out in the revoked Regional Strategies. Others may decide to review their housing targets. We would expect that those authorities should quickly signal their intention to undertake an early review so that communities and land owners know where they stand.

## **11. Will we still need to justify the housing numbers in our plans?**

Yes – it is important for the planning process to be transparent, and for people to be able to understand why decisions have been taken. Local authorities should continue to collect and use reliable information to justify their housing supply policies and defend them during the LDF examination process. They should do this in line with current policy in PPS3.

## **12. Can I replace Regional Strategy targets with “option 1 numbers”?**

Yes, if that is the right thing to do for your area. Authorities may base revised housing targets on the level of provision submitted to the original Regional Spatial Strategy examination (Option 1 targets), supplemented by more recent information as appropriate. These figures are based on assessments undertaken by local authorities. However, any target selected may be tested during the examination process especially if challenged and authorities will need to be ready to defend them.



### **13. Do we still have to provide a 5 year land supply?**

Yes. Although the overall ambition for housing growth may change, authorities should continue to identify enough viable land in their DPDs to meet that growth. Strategic Housing Market Assessments and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments can help with this. Local planning authorities should continue to use their plans to identify sufficient sites and broad areas for development to deliver their housing ambitions for at least 15 years from the date the plan is adopted. Authorities should also have a five year land supply of deliverable sites. This too will need to reflect any changes to the overall local housing ambition.

### **14. How do we determine the level of provision for travellers' sites?**

Local councils are best placed to assess the needs of travellers. The abolition of Regional Strategies means that local authorities will be responsible for determining the right level of site provision, reflecting local need and historic demand, and for bringing forward land in DPDs. They should continue to do this in line with current policy. *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments* (GTAAAs) have been undertaken by all local authorities and if local authorities decide to review the levels of provision these assessments will form a good starting point. However, local authorities are not bound by them. We will review relevant regulations and guidance on this matter in due course.

### **15. How do we establish the need for minerals and aggregates supply without Regional Strategy targets?**

Minerals planning authorities will have responsibility for continuing to plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregate minerals to support economic growth. They should do this within the longstanding arrangements for minerals planning. Technical advice provided by the Aggregate Working Parties, including their current work in sub-apportioning the CLG guidelines for 2005-2020 to planning authority level will assist with this.

Planning authorities in the South East should work from the apportionment set out in the "Proposed Changes" to the revision of Policy M3, published on 19 March 2010.

Planning authorities can choose to use alternative figures for their planning purposes if they have new or different information and a robust evidence base. We will work with the minerals industry and local government to agree how minerals planning arrangements should operate in the longer term.

### **16. How do we establish the need for waste management without Regional Strategy targets?**

Planning Authorities should continue to press ahead with their waste plans, and provide enough land for waste management facilities to support the sustainable management of waste (including the move away from disposal of waste by landfill). Data and information prepared by partners will continue to assist in this process. For the transitional period this will continue to be the data and information which has been collated by the local authority and industry and other public bodies who

currently form the Regional Waste Technical Advisory Bodies. We intend for this function to be transferred to local authorities in due course.

**17. Does the abolition of the hierarchy of strategic centres mean the end of policies on town centres?**

No. Local authorities must continue to have regard to PPS 4: *Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth* in preparing LDFs and, where relevant, take it into account in determining planning applications for retail, leisure and other main town centre uses.

In assessing any planning applications proposing unplanned growth in out of town shopping centres, particularly those over 50,000 sqm gross retail floor area, local authorities should take account of the potential impacts of the development on centres in the catchment area of the proposal.

**18. What about regional policies on the natural environment?**

Local authorities should continue to work together, and with communities, on conservation, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment – including biodiversity, geo-diversity and landscape interests. Authorities should continue to draw on available information, including data from partners, to address cross boundary issues such as the provision of green infrastructure and wildlife corridors.

**19. What about regional policies on Flooding and Coastal Change?**

Local authorities should continue to work together across administrative boundaries to plan development that addresses flooding and coastal change. For flooding matters local authorities already have a duty to co-operate under the Floods and Water Management Act. The Environment Agency will continue to work with local authorities individually and/or jointly to provide technical support on these matters. The Coalition agreement is clear that we should prevent unnecessary building in areas of high flood risk.

**20. What about regional policies on Renewable and Low Carbon Energy?**

Through their local plans, authorities should contribute to the move to a low carbon economy, cut greenhouse gas emissions, help secure more renewable and low carbon energy to meet national targets, and to adapt to the impacts arising from climate change. In doing so, planning authorities may find it useful to draw on data that was collected by the Regional Local Authority Leaders' Boards (which will be made available) and more recent work, including assessments of the potential for renewable and low carbon energy.

**21. What about regional policies on Transport?**

Local authorities should continue to ensure their land use and local transport plans are mutually consistent, and deliver the most effective and sustainable development for their area. Local authorities should work with each other and with businesses and communities to consider strategic transport priorities and cross boundary issues.

## **22. Does the end of Regional Strategies mean changes to Green Belt?**

No. The Government is committed to the protection of the Green Belt and the revocation of Regional Strategies will prevent top-down pressure to reduce the Green Belt protection. Local planning authorities should continue to apply policies in PPG2. As part of their preparation or revision of DPDs, planning authorities should consider the desirability of new Green Belt or adjustment of an existing Green Belt boundary, working with other local planning authorities as appropriate.

## **Parliamentary Statement Revoking Regional Strategies**

Today I am making the first step to deliver our commitment in the coalition agreement to “*rapidly abolish Regional Spatial Strategies and return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils*”, by revoking Regional Strategies.

Regional Strategies added unnecessary bureaucracy to the planning system. They were a failure. They were expensive and time-consuming. They alienated people, pitting them against development instead of encouraging people to build in their local area.

The revocation of Regional Strategies will make local spatial plans, drawn up in conformity with national policy, the basis for local planning decisions. The new planning system will be clear, efficient and will put greater power in the hands of local people, rather than regional bodies.

Imposed central targets will be replaced with powerful incentives so that people see the benefits of building. The coalition agreement makes a clear commitment to providing local authorities with real incentives to build new homes. I can confirm that this will ensure that those local authorities which take action now to consent and support the construction of new homes will receive direct and substantial benefit from their actions. Because we are committed to housing growth, introducing these incentives will be a priority and we aim to do so early in the spending review period. We will consult on the detail of this later this year. These incentives will encourage local authorities and communities to increase their aspirations for housing and economic growth, and to deliver sustainable development in a way that allows them to control the way in which their villages, towns and cities change. Our revisions to the planning system will also support renewable energy and a low carbon economy.

The abolition of Regional Strategies will provide a clear signal of the importance attached to the development and application of local spatial plans, in the form of Local Development Framework Core Strategies and other Development Plan Documents. Future reform in this area will make it easier for local councils, working with their communities, to agree and amend local plans in a way that maximises the involvement of neighbourhoods.

The abolition of Regional Strategies will require legislation in the “Localism Bill” which we are introducing this session. However, given the clear coalition commitment, it is important to avoid a period of uncertainty over planning policy, until the legislation is enacted. So I am revoking Regional Strategies today in order to give clarity to builders, developers and planners.

Regional Strategies are being revoked under s79(6) of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and will thus no longer form part of the development plan for the purposes of s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Revoking, and then abolishing, Regional Strategies will mean that the planning system is simpler, more efficient and easier for people to understand. It will be firmly

rooted in the local community. And it will encourage the investment, economic growth and housing that Britain needs.

We will be providing advice for local planning authorities today and a copy has been placed in the house library.

# Agenda Item 12

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

**15 SEPTEMBER 2010**

### **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CHANGE AND SCRUTINY**

**Report prepared by Ellie Kershaw**

#### **1. Corporate Improvement Plan**

##### 1.1 Issue for consideration

1.1.1 To consider and give feedback about both the new format of and updated recommendations in the Corporate Improvement Plan at Appendix A; and

1.1.2 To consider the comments against recommendations at Appendix B

##### 1.2 Recommendation of the Head of Change and Scrutiny

1.2.1 The Committee is asked to note the actions below and make any recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.

- i. Note the new format of the Corporate Improvement Plan at Appendix A;
- ii. Note the progress made against the objectives set in the Corporate Improvement Plan;
- iii. Consider the recommendations to be added and the comments against the tasks at Appendix B.

##### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The purpose of the Corporate Improvement Plan (CIP) is to identify and monitor progress on key areas of improvement, primarily related to inspection recommendations but also taking into account any internally or externally identified areas for improvement. Since the national changes to the inspection regime it is likely that most new actions will now be generated internally. One of the consequences of the changes is greater local flexibility in identifying performance indicators. It is currently intended to retain our Performance Management system and procedures and to comprehensively review the number and content of performance indicators from April 2011 onwards.

1.3.2 The introduction of the Covalent performance management system has meant that the format of the CIP monitoring report has been changed. However, no changes have been made to the dates or actions that were previously agreed. The new report uses colour coding to show which tasks are on track to finish on target, which are out of target and which are complete. The aim in making these changes has been to make the report far more user friendly and make it is easy to identify any actions which have passed their target date. The new system also sends out automatic reminders to officers when a task is nearing its completion date and

provides the Council with a robust audit trail of how actions have progressed.

1.3.3 Recommendations resulting from the IDeA productivity peer review are at Appendix B. Once agreed these need to be added to the plan so that they are monitored. In some cases it is felt that the tasks have now been completed or do not sit within the CIP.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 Cabinet could decide not to produce a CIP but not considering progress against the plan could mean improvement work is not progressed. This would have a detrimental impact upon service delivery and the reputation of the authority.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The CIP supports the Council in achieving its corporate objectives by identifying key areas of corporate improvement and identifying how these improvements will be delivered. Any additions are made in accordance with the Council's current Strategic Plan to ensure it is in line with the vision and priorities of the Council.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 Actions in relation to risk management are reported through the CIP where appropriate. Risks related to particular actions will be set out in the Strategic Risk Register or, below that, in individual service plans.

1.6.2 There are also risks to the reputation and performance of the authority associated with not responding to inspection and ensuring that best practice identified in other authorities is considered. The CIP provides a mechanism for driving improvement.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

- 1. Financial
- 2. Staffing
- 3. Legal
- 4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment
- 5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
- 6. Community Safety
- 7. Human Rights Act
- 8. Procurement
- 9. Asset Management

x



1.7.2 Officers identified in the plan will need to ensure that they keep their actions on target and that Covalent is updated accordingly.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

- Appendix A- Corporate improvement plan
- Appendix B- Actions from the IDeA peer review

1.8.2 Background Documents

- IDeA peer review report

**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes  No

If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?

.....

This is a Key Decision because: .....






.....

Wards/Parishes affected: .....


.....





## Appendix A Corporate Improvement Plan

Action Status	
	Cancelled
	Overdue;
	Unassigned; Not Started; Check Progress
	Resuming; In Progress; Assigned
	Completed

### Objective 002 Monitoring effectiveness of counter fraud partnership with Tunbridge Wells


Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
COIP 002.01	Provide the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the operation of the counter fraud partnership	31 Aug 2010		Steve McGinnes	A joint report is planned for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for both Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells in September, with a further report planned for the Audit Committee.

### Objective 003 Addressing the outstanding learning and development issues from the IIP reassessment and equality impact assessments


Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 003.01	Create action plan of outstanding L&D issues to be implemented before reassessment	31 Jan 2011		Claire Hayes	Against Indicator 4 - MKIP Management Development Programme has been devised and delivered through 2010 with new dates for 2010/11. Indicator 5 - restructures are still taking place, will commence work on this at a later period. Indicator 10 - Workforce Plan will include skills matrix
CIP 003.02	Undertake child protection training	30 Apr 2010		Claire Hayes	This has been added to Ivy learning and is now a requirement for all staff to complete.

Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 003.03	Include Transgender training on the new corporate training calendar	30 Jun 2011		Claire Hayes	Sessions added in quarterly for 2010/11

**Objective 004** Improve areas of weakness where Audit reports have shown a level of assurance lower than substantial one area remains outstanding since March 2009: Aspects of section 106 Agreements




Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 004.01 96	Undertake six monthly follow-up review by Internal Audit on these areas to ensure recommendations have been implemented	30 Sep 2010		Brian Parsons	This is an ongoing process. All reports are followed-up after six months. Where action has not been taken, the Head of Service is made aware in a report, with a copy to the Director and the Chief Executive. If this occurs in an area where only limited control assurance was in place at the time of the original audit, the lack of action will be reported to a meeting of the Audit Committee.

**Objective 005** Further work is required to build on work currently undertaken by the Council with partners on delivering outcomes for the public.




Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 005	Further work is required to build on work currently undertaken by the Council with partners on delivering outcomes for the public.	30 Sep 2010		Zena Cooke	The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has been significantly strengthened in terms of representation and governance arrangements. The Safer Maidstone Partnership is now formally part of the LSP and its priorities and objectives are being aligned to ensure consistency in delivering outcomes. The LSP has commissioned a resource mapping exercise to identify the total public sector spend in Maidstone with a view to redirecting resources in line with service priorities and areas of

Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
					greatest need. The LSP has also agreed a work programme for tackling key challenges, such as Domestic Violence, Road Safety, Worklessness, Child Poverty and Community Engagement. The Sustainable Community Strategy is also due to be "refreshed" by March 2011 to define the key LSP priorities and the associated measures to monitor performance and delivery.




**Objective 006** Develop and implement a Waste and Recycling Strategy

Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
97 CIP 006.01	Research existing strategies, particularly amongst waste partnerships	30 Apr 2010		Jennifer Gosling	Existing strategies have been researched and reference visits to Southend on Sea and Tunbridge Wells have been undertaken to learn about different recycling strategies. Maidstone's Waste and Recycling Strategy has now been drafted and links with the existing Kent Waste Strategy and Sustainable Community Strategy.
CIP 006.02	Develop a short strategy for the Cabinet Member for Environment to approve	30 Apr 2010		Jennifer Gosling	A draft Strategy and accompanying Cabinet Report has been written and is due to go to Cabinet for approval on 15th September 2010. It was delayed due to new information provided by Central Government.
CIP 006.03	Implement Waste and Recycling Strategy	31 May 2010		Jennifer Gosling	The Waste and Recycling Strategy is due to go to Cabinet on 15 <sup>th</sup> September

**Objective 007** Ensure that the finance section has the appropriate skill mix to meet the more challenging reporting requirements of IFRS.





Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 007.01	Annual Training Programme of Seminars and Workshops	31 Mar 2010		Claire Hayes; Paul Riley	The training programme will be finalised once the structure of the team has been established.
CIP 007.02	Undertake Internal Development of team members through cross training	30 Jun 2010		Claire Hayes; Paul Riley	Internal development has taken place and will continue on an on-going basis.
CIP 007.03	Enhance team through filling vacancy	28 Feb 2010		Paul Riley	This objective has been achieved, but there will now be a vacancy due to an external promotion. The current structure will be reviewed to ensure the skill mix of the team is appropriate.

**Objective 008** Implement strategies for managing the expectations of consultees


Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 008.01	Review of consultation handbook and toolkit carried out as part of communication strategy	31 Dec 2009		Roger Adley	Review was completed in December 2009 and the revised handbook and tool-kit has been rolled out to staff.
CIP 008.02	Present handbook and toolkit to members and officers	31 Mar 2010		Roger Adley	The revised consultation handbook and tool-kit have been rolled out. A presentation on the handbook has been given to section managers and was also undertaken with the staff forum.
CIP 008.03	Actions developed to manage the expectations of consultees	31 Jul 2010		Roger Adley; Angela Woodhouse	Update to follow


**Objective 009** Demonstrating improved service delivery and customer satisfaction from Council initiatives (e.g. Gateway)

Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 009.01	Evaluate results from the 2009 mystery shopping exercise	30 Jun 2010		Sandra Marchant	The results from the 2009 Mystery Shopping programme have been




Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
					analysed and a report was submitted to Corporate Management Team and agreed on 3 August 2010.
CIP 009.02	Undertake mystery shopping exercise and evaluate results	30 Jun 2011		Sandra Marchant	The 2010 Kent wide Mystery Shopping exercise is due to start in September 2010 with the final report expected mid 2011.
CIP 009.03	Benchmark performance of Contact team through KCSNG	31 Oct 2010		Sandra Marchant	A Measurement and Benchmarking exercise was carried out across all Kent Authorities in March 2010 looking at the number and type of calls handled by Contact Centres. A similar exercise was carried out in July 2010. No formal comparison report has been published across Kent.
CIP 009.04	Undertake benchmarking with the national one stop shop benchmarking group	28 Feb 2011		Sandra Marchant	Data for the annual National One Stop Shop (NOSS) benchmarking exercise was submitted in June 2010 for the year 2009 to 2010. No results have been published to date.
CIP 009.05	Review customer care charter	30 Apr 2010		Sandra Marchant	A Customer Care Charter has been drawn up but still requires agreement from the Head of Communications and then reported to Management Team for final approval.

**Objective 010** Ensuring evolving partnerships maintain principles of good governance


Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 010.01	Carry out assessments of key partnerships	30 Apr 2010		Sarah Robson	To coincide with the recently appointed role of Community Partnerships Manager, an assessment of key partnerships with the Borough Council and LSP will be undertaken in the second half of the financial year (2010/11)

Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 010.02	Review partnership protocol	30 Sep 2010		Sarah Robson	To be reviewed by Community Partnerships Section.

**Objective 011** The council considers and tracks with its significant partners the impact on users when making decisions on reducing costs.



Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 011.01	Work with KCC to coordinate the effects of savings on inter-organisations	31 Oct 2010		Paul Riley	Further information required from KCC, due date may need to be extended to allow for the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review and Local Government Finance settlement.
CIP 011.02	Expand the consultation on the budget strategy and the MTFS to include the impact of the identification savings with partners	31 Dec 2010		Paul Riley	Budget strategy consultation is being expanded to include a range of consultation approaches and is on target to be delivered by the due date.
<del>100</del> CIP 011.03	Work with the LSP on the resource mapping project and feed into the MTFS	31 Dec 2010		Paul Riley	LSP resource mapping project on track, initial results received, further work progressing.

**Objective 012** Progress and monitor action plans to improve satisfaction on those services where one in five people were dissatisfied with the service.


Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 012.01	Assess the possible use of mosaic to raise satisfaction	30 Sep 2010		Georgia Hawkes	Mosaic databases for key services completed. Research and prioritisation of options to improve some take up in progress
CIP 012.02	Continue to monitor the action plans and present reports to Cabinet	31 Oct 2010		Angela Woodhouse	Action plans are in place and are being monitored accordingly.
CIP 012.03	Assess the appropriateness of the actions within action plans in relation to 2010 results	30 Jun 2011		Angela Woodhouse	The Place survey is no longer a requirement. Discussions are taking place about how to collect this information if it is deemed necessary.
CIP	Identify any patterns or trends following	30 Sep 2011		Angela Woodhouse	The Place survey is no longer a

Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
012.04	the completion of the second survey				requirement. Discussions are taking place about how to collect this information if it is deemed necessary.


**Objective 013** The authority has made a commitment to carbon reduction and has established a Climate Change Strategy. Ensure that the Strategy is successfully implemented over the next three years.

Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 013.01	To develop the Carbon Reduction Action Plan in conjunction with the Energy Saving Trust One-to-One Programme	30 Apr 2010		Jenny Hunt	The Carbon Reduction Action Plan is being held until a suitable replacement Climate Change Strategy / Framework is written which replaces the old one which ran from 2005 - 2010. Until this is written it is felt that the Carbon Reduction Action Plan would not have suitable context on its own.
CIP 013.02	To implement the actions of the Carbon Reduction Plan and report back progress and update the action plan annually	30 Mar 2011		Jenny Hunt	Work is underway and is on track to meet the deadline


**Objective 014** Seek technical advice when accounting for complex capital transactions, discuss proposed action with the external auditor early on so that the accounting treatment can be agreed prior to productions of draft financial statements

Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 014.01	Ensure that all future quarterly review meetings with Auditor include an agenda item on issues that may involve complex accounting transactions.	30 Mar 2011		Paul Riley	This has now been achieved


**Objective 015** The Council should review asset valuations at each year-end considering both impairment and other material changes in asset values

Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 015.01	Request, as part of annual review of 20% of assets, an assessment of material changes in all asset values.	31 May 2010		Chris Finch; Paul Riley	All assets are revalued on a 5 year cycle. The valuer will give his opinion outside of this cycle where an asset has undergone significant change e.g. Mote Park Leisure Centre or where outside influences such as recession may require all assets to be revalued.


**Objective 016** Once the Council has taken a decision to dispose of an asset this should be re-categorised from operational assets to non-operational assets, surplus for resale, and revalue to market valuation obtained prior to sale in accordance with the SORP

Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 016.01	Identify process in closedown procedure and formally reconcile actions with asset sales detailed in usable capital receipts / cabinet member decisions	31 May 2010		Paul Holland; Gill West	This work is complete.



**Objective 017** Prime council tax records should be retained until completion of the annual audit, and otherwise in accordance with the Council's document retention policy.

Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 017.01	Set up share point site accessible to revenues team to hold records of VO balancing	28 Feb 2010		Steve McGinnes	An area has been created within the existing Revs and Bens team site to provide a full audit trail.

**Objective 018** Promoting the role of the Audit Committee in ensuring action plans are implemented and contributing to risk identification

Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 018.01	Consideration given to a review being carried out across the four MKIP authorities of the audit committees.	30 Mar 2010		Brian Parsons	Peer review agreed by all four MKIP authorities. This will take place in September 2010



Code	Title	Due Date		Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 018.02	Commission the IDeA to carry out a review of the Council's Audit Committee The role of the Committee in ensuring action plans are implemented and risk identification will be considered as part of the review.	30 Jun 2010		Brian Parsons	The IDeA commissioned via proposal in August 2010
CIP 018.03	Present findings to the Audit Committee on the options for future development.	30 Jun 2010		Brian Parsons	Awaiting review in September 2010, report will go to December Audit Committee



### Appendix B Recommendations from the IDeA peer review

Action	Lead Officer	Status
Following on from the Place survey and to give effect to the community engagement objective in the SCS, the council should hold regular focus groups to explore how people want to be engaged and develop a robust action plan to deliver this. The council already engages really well with the local community on budget consultation and from that gets a clear mandate; this could be extended to establishing council priorities.	Roger Adley/Angela Woodhouse	New objective 1: Use customer and staff feedback to improve the way the Council delivers its services
Continue with plans to strengthen the structure of the LSP including measuring outcomes, linking more explicitly with LAA targets, evaluating added value of the LSP and consistently delivering on outcomes.	Zena Cooke	Add to CIP 001 Developing a clear view of where partnership resources can be focused to improve service outcomes
The business/service planning process and timetable should make provision for timely and adequate involvement and consultation of staff, as engaged staff are productive staff leading to satisfied customers. There needs to be a clear expectation that business/service planning is fully explored in team meetings and perhaps establish staff away days or extended management team meetings expressly for this purpose	Angela Woodhouse	New objective 1: Use customer and staff feedback to improve the way the Council delivers its services
Performance appraisal targets need to be taken directly from service plan objectives and competencies based on STRIVE values	Clare Hayes	Values are the overarching drivers to our competencies (please see below). So when the competencies were identified (in consultation with staff) the Values were used in order to identify what these were. This means that we wouldn't require a different set of competencies as these are based on our STRIVE Values. Therefore, it is felt that it is not necessary to add this action to the CIP.

<p>MBC needs to define, using its Corporate Plan, its top (three) priorities and use these to determine the focus of the council in terms of members, staff, finances and partnership working and as you have recognised improve delivery plans through better links to financial planning and clearer timely actions. These top priorities could be reviewed on an annual or biennial basis</p>	<p>Angela Woodhouse</p>	<p>New objective 2: Determine the top priorities of the council, refresh the Strategic Plan and ensure that delivery plans and policies link to these</p>
<p>The plans to develop a shared database of customer information and insight needs to be significantly strengthened and speeded up so that there is an holistic understanding of customers needs and an agreed corporate approach to using this information to determine the business needs of the council established</p>	<p>Georgia Hawkes</p>	<p>New objective 1: Use customer and staff feedback to improve the way the Council delivers its services</p>
<p>There should be an agreed annual programme of engagement activity driven by the corporate priorities. To avoid consultation fatigue it is essential that the draft plan is shared at an early stage to identify where consultations can be merged or questions offered to other services and partners so that one activity can address more than one purpose</p>	<p>Roger Adley/Angela Woodhouse</p>	<p>New objective 1: Use customer and staff feedback to improve the way the Council delivers its services</p>
<p>Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a system in place for satisfaction surveys and other forms of customer feedback it is important that the use of the results of customer feedback is embedded into service review and improvement</p>	<p>Angela Woodhouse/Georgia Hawkes</p>	<p>New objective 1: Use customer and staff feedback to improve the way the Council delivers its services</p>
<p>Learning from compliments and complaints could be systemised, for example, evidence what changes have emerged from stage 3 complaints and spotting trends at first stage as well</p>	<p>Angela Woodhouse</p>	<p>New objective 1: Use customer and staff feedback to improve the way the Council delivers its services</p>
<p>Staff mentioned that they felt all measures were quantitative and wanted customers to be better enabled to give qualitative feedback as well. For example, the WOW awards are an innovative form of customer feedback where customers tell the council</p>	<p>Angela Woodhouse</p>	<p>New objective 1: Use customer and staff feedback to improve the way the Council delivers its services</p>

where they have been 'wowed' at the point of service delivery. This scheme is very successful in terms of increased customer satisfaction levels and impact on staff motivation, engagement and morale.		
Equality impact assessments should be routinely carried out and the results fed into all recommendations for change, this includes training and involving ward councillors in equality impact assessments so that they are able to input knowledge of the diversity and needs of their local community and provide challenge.	Zena Cook	New objective 3: Ensure equality issues are considered and addressed across the organisation
Consider developing a strategic 3 year plan on delivering efficiencies and savings	Paul Riley	New objective 2: Determine the top priorities of the council, refresh the Strategic Plan and ensure that delivery plans and policies link to these
Project planning and management is becoming more systematic across the council but needs to be further strengthened to ensure action plans cover all basic elements (who, what, why, where and when) and are comprehensively monitored and managed. Senior managers should be held accountable for delivery of key projects and their benefits	Georgia Hawkes	New objective 2: Determine the top priorities of the council, refresh the Strategic Plan and ensure that delivery plans and policies link to these
Consideration could be given to different governance models to determine the most appropriate to deliver the council's ambitious change agenda and also to be able to respond most effectively to long term economic challenges.	Neil Harris	Whilst this is being worked on it is not felt that this is an objective for the Corporate Improvement Plan
Workforce planning (both members and staff) needs to be linked to the top priorities of the council.	Clare Hayes	New objective 4: Determine the focus of the council using the Strategic Plan
Consider adopting a common methodology with HR shared services partners to integrate and progress workforce planning	Clare Hayes	Add to CIP 001 Developing a clear view of where partnership resources can be focused to improve service outcomes
Consider developing an Employee Engagement Strategy to include employee perception measures so that the council has up to date information on how staff think and feel and to ensure effective internal communications including the management of	Zena Cook/Roger Adley/Neil Harris	New objective 1: Use customer and staff feedback to improve the way the Council delivers its services

important messages e.g. staff savings. This could also be extended to members		
To help demonstrate the council's good reward package rewards statements could be issued to employees and used as models in recruitment and there could also be a rolling programme of occasional promotions of some benefits e.g. free/reduced fees for adult education.	Dena Smart	Staff are already made aware of the Perkz and KCC reward schemes. It is therefore felt that this action does not need to be included in the CIP
Staff survey and appraisal information should be considered alongside the council's change programme to determine a Training Strategy and training provision that is relevant for the medium as well as the short term. This should apply to members as well as staff	Clare Hayes	New objective 2: Determine the top priorities of the council, refresh the Strategic Plan and ensure that delivery plans and policies link to these

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**15 SEPTEMBER 2010**

### **REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Report prepared by Janet Barnes

#### 1. **FORWARD PLAN**

##### 1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To note the Forward Plan for the period 1 October 2010 – 31 January 2011.

##### 1.2 Recommendation of the Leader of the Council

1.2.1 That the proposed Forward Plan for the period 1 October 2010 – 31 January 2011 be noted.

##### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The Forward Plan is a way to ensure that members of the public have longer from the point at which they learn that a decision is coming up, until the time it is made, to encourage greater interaction between stakeholder and decision makers.

1.3.2 The Forward Plan is published monthly, to cover decisions starting on the first day of each month and is a rolling four month programme of decisions.

1.3.3 The current index to the proposed Forward Plan is attached as an Appendix to this report. However, please note that Officers have until 12 Noon on 15 September 2010 to submit further entries or make any amendments.

1.3.4 If Members wish to receive a complete copy of the Forward Plan it can be obtained from Janet Barnes (01622) 602242 and from 17 September 2010 will be on public deposit in the following locations: The Gateway, Public Libraries and the maidstone.gov website.

##### 1.4 Alternative Actions and why not recommended

1.4.1 The proposed Forward Plan includes key decisions as defined in the Constitution and the development of the budget and plans which form the policy framework. The entries have been made by the relevant managers who have the best idea of the issues likely to be coming up.

##### 1.5 Impact of Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The Forward Plan should help to realise on the core values set out in the Corporate Plan as follows:

“It (the Council) welcomes, encourages and values public participation in its activities and will inform, advise and listen carefully to people in developing its key strategies, policies and programmes”.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There are no risk management implications in this report.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1	Financial	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Staffing	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Legal	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Equality Impact Needs Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Environmental/sustainable development	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Community safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Human Rights Act	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Risk Management	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Procurement	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Asset Management	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.8 Background Documents

None

<b><u>IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?</u></b>	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan? .....	
This is a Key Decision because: ..... .....	
Wards/Parishes affected: ..... .....	



## Index October 2010 – January 2011

<b>Title</b>	<b>Decision Maker and Date of Decision</b>
Adoption of the Maidstone Local Bio Diversity Action Plan	<b>Cabinet</b> 13 October 2010
High Street Improvement Project	<b>Cabinet</b> 13 October 2010
Amending the Allocation Scheme	<b>Cabinet</b> 13 October 2010
Housing Strategy	<b>Cabinet</b> 13 October 2010
Common Housing Assessment Framework	<b>Cabinet</b> 13 October 2010
Core Strategy Public Consultation Draft	<b>Cabinet</b> 10 November 2010
Strategic Planning 2011/12	<b>Cabinet</b> 22 December 2010
Council Tax 2011/12 Collection fund adjustments	<b>Cabinet</b> 22 December 2010
Budget Strategy 2011/12 onwards	<b>Cabinet</b> 22 December 2010
Approval of finalised Air Quality Action Plan for submission to Defra	<b>Cabinet Member for Environment</b> 31 October 2010
Fees and Charges – Market Services 2011/12	<b>Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture</b> 26 November 2010
Fees and Charges – Bereavement Services 2011/12	<b>Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture</b> 26 November 2010
Crematorium – Environmental Considerations	<b>Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture</b> 26 November 2010
Crematorium – Recycling of Metal following Cremation	<b>Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture</b> 26 November 2010
Private Sector Housing Review of HMO Licensing fees, conditions and Assistance	<b>Cabinet Member for Regeneration</b> 18 December 2010