

AGENDA

LEISURE AND PROSPERITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING



Overview and Scrutiny

Date: Tuesday 14 September 2010

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Town Hall, High Street,
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors: Burton, Mrs Joy (Vice-Chairman),
Nelson-Gracie, Paine (Chairman),
Pickett, Mrs Smith and Thick

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1. The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be web-cast
2. Apologies
3. Notification of Substitute Members

Continued Over/:

Issued on 1 September 2010

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

4. Notification of Visiting Members

5. Disclosures by Members and Officers:

- a) Disclosures of interest
 - b) Disclosures of lobbying
 - c) Disclosures of whipping
-

6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information

7. Core Strategy: Housing Targets and Distribution of Development: 1 - 28

Interview with Michael Thornton, Head of Spatial Planning.

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Interview with Michael Thornton, Head of Spatial Planning and Sarah Anderton, Principal Planning Officer.

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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE AND PROSPERITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 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 has considered successive drafts of the Core Strategy, but has yet to reconsider a housing target for the Core Strategy. 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 report to the Advisory Group on 25 October will further advise over the final recommendations to Cabinet.

1.1.2 This report to the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee 14 September will enable comments to be made to Cabinet and to LDDAG for their consideration.

1.2 Recommendation of Director of Change, Planning and the Environment

1.2.1 That the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet and the Local Development Document Advisory Group that:

- 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 Advisory Group 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 a further report be made to the 25 October meeting of the Advisory Group that sets further evidence and recommends a housing target and distribution for agreement by Cabinet 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. 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. 53% of affordable housing is sought in the rural area.
- 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 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 65million 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 to be increased simply by increasing population / resident workforce supply and but 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 birth rates and household formation. A gap between local wages and house prices is important and thus 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 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 ¹	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 new sites. However, not all of the sites identified as having development potential in the SHLAA will be suitable for development once more detailed assessments are complete. Further work is in hand and Members briefing is required on these matters, 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 not developable. Under different options more all sites in category (a) and more in (b) 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

¹ Years 2010-2016 include commitments of 3077 (513 p.a.)

Strategy because scale of recent building rates and planning permissions the council to continue to readily maintain and plan for a rolling 5-year supply of housing land. Sites would 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 begin to present a challenge to five year supply in the short term.

- 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 value 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, 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.

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.

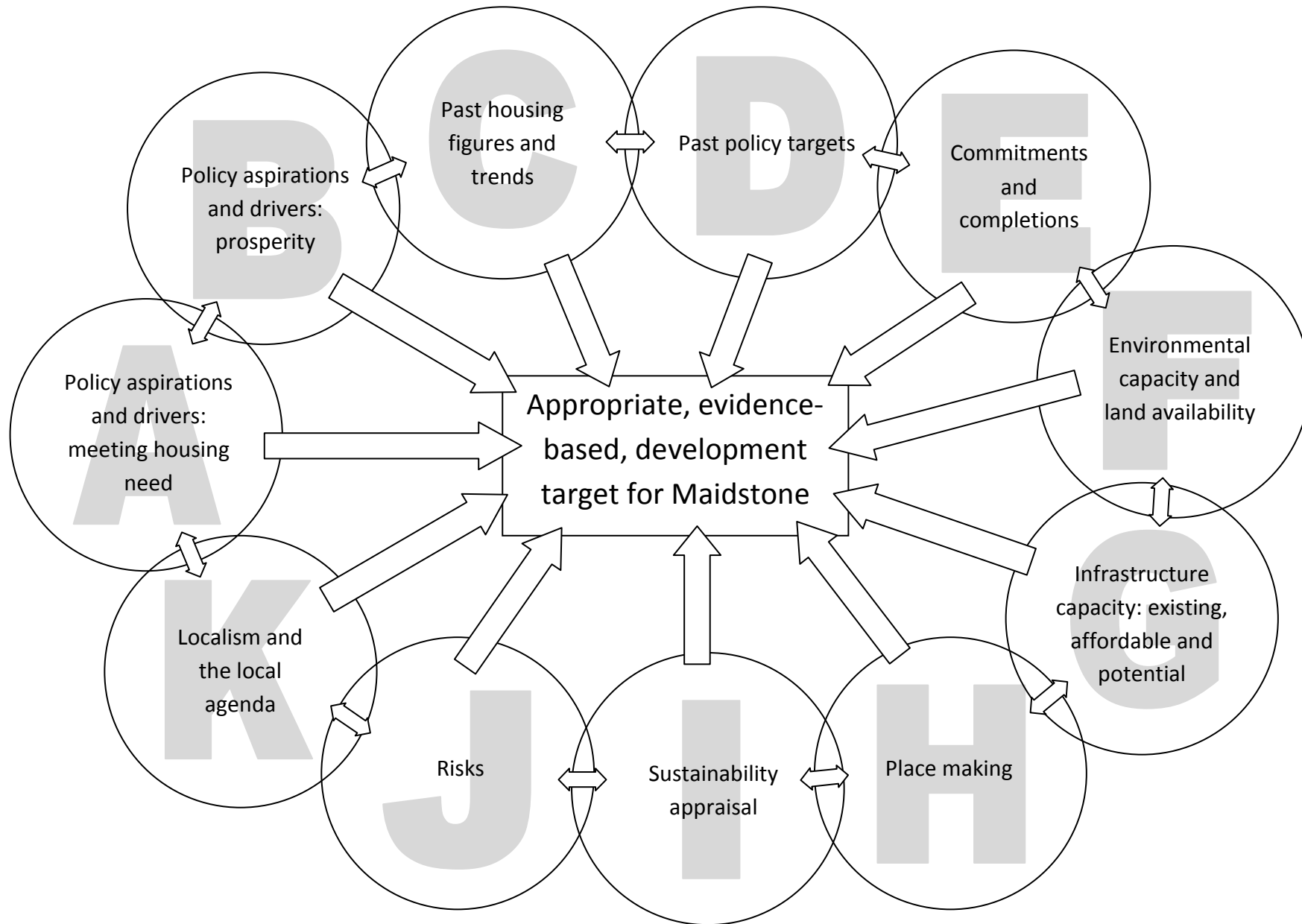
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Wards/Parishes affected: All wards and parishes.

.....

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 21st 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 21st 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			
Objective	Option 1 8,200 dwellings - dispersed	Option 2 10,080 dwellings - dispersed	Option 3 11,000 dwellings – with SDA & dispersed
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

LEISURE & PROSPERITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14th 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 the timeframe for the pitch target and the approaches to the provision of accommodation for Travelling Showpeople and to transit sites.

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

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

1.2.2 That the Committee recommends to Cabinet that 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 be endorsed.

1.2.3 That the Committee recommends to Cabinet 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 the Committee recommends to Cabinet 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

Needs 2006 – 2011 (pitches)	
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
Needs 2011 – 2016 (pitches)	
5. Household growth (incl. allowance for pitch sharing)	17
6. Expiration 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 1st 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

Identified supply 2006 – 2016 (pitches)	
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

Net position	
Gross local need	95
minus identified supply	-52
minus new public site(s)	-15
Net position	28

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.

3rd 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 6th 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 1st Sept – 31st Dec 2010 published 18th 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

LEISURE AND PROSPERITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 SEPTEMBER 2010

REPORT OF HEAD OF CHANGE AND SCRUTINY

Report prepared by Esther Bell

1. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

1.1 Issue for Consideration

1.1.1 To consider the Committee's future work programme and the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

1.2 Recommendation of the Head of Change and Scrutiny

1.2.1 That the Committee considers its Future Work Programme, attached at **Appendix A**, to ensure that it is appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.

1.2.2 That the Committee considers the First Quarter Key Performance Exception Report relevant to its remit, attached at **Appendix B**, and identifies any issues it wishes to add to its future work programme.

1.2.3 That the Committee considers the sections of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions relevant to the Committee and discuss whether these are items requiring further investigation or monitoring by the Committee.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 **Future Work Programme**

Throughout the course of the municipal year the Committee is asked to put forward work programme suggestions. These suggestions are planned into its annual work programme. Members are asked to consider the work programme at each meeting to ensure that remains appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.

1.3.2 **Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

At the meeting of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 February 2009, Members considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions and agreed that "this should be a standing item on the agenda to ensure important issues were dealt with in a proactive, rather than reactive, manner." The Forward Plan will therefore now be included on each Committee agenda under the "Future Work Programme" item.

1.3.3 The Forward Plan for 1 September 2010 – 31 December 2010 contains the following decisions relevant to the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- Core Strategy: Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Target;
- Core Strategy Housing Targets and Distribution of Development;
- High Street Improvement Project;
- Amending the Allocation scheme;
- Housing Strategy 2010-15;
- Core Strategy Public Consultation Draft
- Fees & Charges – Market Services 2011/12
- Building Surveying Charges; and
- Private Sector Housing Review of HMO licensing fees, conditions and assistance.

Reports with further details on these are attached at **Appendix C**.

1.4 Alternative Action and Why Not Recommended

1.4.1 The Committee could choose not to consider its Future Work Programme, however considering it ensures that it remains appropriate, relevant and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.

1.4.2 reactive, manner.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following Council priority:

- 'A place to achieve, prosper and thrive'; and
- 'A place to live and enjoy'.

1.5.2 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities. Actions to deliver these key objectives may therefore include work that the Committee will consider over the next year.

1.6 Risk Management

1.5.1 There are no risks involved in considering the future work programme.

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

1.8 Relevant Documents

- Appendix A – Future Work Programme
- Appendix B – 1st Quarter Key Performance Report
- Appendix C – Relevant extract of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee






Work Programme 2010-2011




Date	Items to be considered
22 June 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman • Work Programming 2010/11
27 July 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture Written Vision Statement • Cabinet Member for Regeneration Written Vision Statement • High Street Regeneration • Value of Leisure and Culture Review
14 September 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Development Framework Targets and Distribution • 1st Quarter performance monitoring
28 September 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Housing Strategy • Housing Allocations
October ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of Leisure & Culture Review
26 October 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holiday Play Schemes • LSP thematic quarterly performance report • Value of Leisure and Culture Review
November 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Development Framework Document
23 November 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with Cabinet Member for Regeneration– mid-year progress • Interview with Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture– mid year progress • Housing Policy
13 December 2010 (Monday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd quarter performance monitoring report • Maidstone Market Update • Rural Economy?
25 January 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSP thematic quarterly performance report • 2012 Olympics • Rural Economy?
22 February 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Economy?
22 March 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSP thematic quarterly performance report • 3rd quarter performance monitoring report • Rural Economy?
26 April 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Leisure and

	Culture – Progress Over the Year
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Quarter 1 Key Performance Exception Report- Leisure & Prosperity

Appendix B

PI Status	
	Alert
	Warning
	OK
	Unknown
	Data Only

Direction of Travel	
	Improving
	No Change
	Getting Worse



KO 016 Improve the cultural offering of the borough through projects like the Museum East Wing Extension

		2009/10 Out-turn	Quarter 1		Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year to Date					
PI Ref	Indicator Description	2009/10	Q1 2010/11	2010/11	2010/11	2010/11	2010/11	2010/11	Annual Target 2010/11	Responsible Officer	Expected Outcome	Direction of Travel	Status
KPI 039	Percentage of all available tickets sold at the Hazlitt	63%	64.12%	65%				64.12%	65%	Mandy Hare	Target will be met		
	Historically the performance of this indicator is at its lowest in the first quarter of the year. The out-turn has improved compared to the same quarter last year which is positive. Quarter 3 is traditionally the busiest quarter for the Hazlitt due to the pantomime and it is expected performance will improve throughout the year and that the annual target will be achieved.												
KPI 040	Donations received for the Museum's East Wing Extension	New for 2010/11	£42,000	£82,500				£42,000	£330,000	Simon Lace	Annual target will not be achieved		
	The uncertainty about the current economic climate has meant that it has been difficult to obtain funding as funding streams are limited. Difficulties around fundraising have been discussed with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive and a new action plan for fundraising will be presented to Cabinet in the next few months. A new phase of fundraising has begun with the termination this month of the fundraising consultant's contract and the employment of David Terry, Community Funding Officer, lending support for two days a week.												

Quarter 1 Key Performance Exception Report- Leisure & Prosperity

Appendix B

KO 018 Improve the condition, accessibility and energy efficiency of existing housing , including reducing fuel poverty

		2009/10 Out-turn	Quarter 1		Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year to Date					
PI Ref	Indicator Description	2009/10	Q1 2010/11		2010/11	2010/11	2010/11	2010/11	Annual Target 2010/11	Responsible Officer	Expected Outcome	Direction of Travel	Status
		Value	Value	Target									
KPI 042	Number of Energy Advice Surveys	3401	16	50				16	200	John Littlemore	Target will be met		
This service is provided via a partner agency. There has been uncertainty concerning future funding and this has had a negative impact on promoting the service. This issue has now been resolved; a promotion campaign agreed and performance should now improve.													

**Forward Plan
September 2010 - December 2010**

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN

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**1 September 2010 to
31 December 2010**

**Councillor Christopher Garland
Leader of the Council**

**Forward Plan
September 2010 - December 2010**

Decision Maker, Date of Decision/Month in which decision will be made and, if delayed, reason for delay:	Title of Report and Brief Summary of Decision to be made:	Consultees and Method:	Contact Officer and deadline for submission of enquiries:	Relevant Documents:
Cabinet Due Date: 15 Sep 2010	Core Strategy: Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Target to consider targets for Gypsy and Traveller pitches and for Travelling Showpeople for inclusion in the Core Strategy	stakeholders, including parish councils and the wider public the target is being approved for consultation as part of the wider informal public consultation on the Core Strategy	Michael Thornton, Head of Spatial Planning 9/9/10	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Core Strategy: Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Target
Cabinet Due Date: 15 Sep 2010	Core Strategy Housing Targets and Distribution of Development Following revocation of the South East Plan and the abolition of regionally set housing provisions, to set housing targets and confirm employment targets for the borough, and to agree an approach towards the distribution of development in the Core Strategy.	Scrutiny and LDDAG meetings Internal consultation	Sue Whiteside 31 August 2010	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Core Strategy Housing Targets and Distribution of Development

**Forward Plan
September 2010 - December 2010**

<p>Cabinet Due Date: 13 Oct 2010</p>	<p>High Street Improvement Project</p> <p>To consider whether to approve the final designs and budget for the High Street Improvement project</p>	<p>Bus operators, taxi representatives, disability groups, retailers and Town Centre Management, Kent County Council A programme of stakeholder engagement is taking place. A planning application has also been submitted</p>	<p>Brian Morgan, Assistant Director of Regeneration & Cultural Services</p> <p>August 6th 2010</p>	<p>Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for High Street Improvement Project</p>
<p>Cabinet Due Date: 13 Oct 2010</p>	<p>Amending the Allocation Scheme</p> <p>To amend the statutory scheme for accessing social housing; and to review the framework used to prioritise between applicants.</p>	<p>Applicants Housing Associations Supported housing providers Key stakeholders Stakeholder events Questionnaires</p>	<p>John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Community Safety</p> <p>13 August 2010</p>	<p>Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Amending the Allocation Scheme</p>

**Forward Plan
September 2010 - December 2010**

<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Due Date: 13 Oct 2010</p>	<p>Housing Strategy 2010-15</p> <p>The Housing Strategy 2010-15 will replace the existing Housing Strategy 2005-09. It will set out the vision for housing in Maidstone</p>	<p>Supported housing service users</p> <p>Supported housing service providers</p> <p>Statutory & 3rd sector housing partners - KASS, Kent SP, Porchlight, MDC, Police, Probation, PCT, Prison Service, Maidstone Voluntary Action, WSS etc</p> <p>Housing Needs Survey - 8,000 households</p> <p>House Condition Survey - 6,000 households</p> <p>Stakeholder Event 30 June 2010</p> <p>Housing Sounding Board</p> <p>Strategic Housing Land Study</p> <p>Gypsy & Travellers Accommodation Assessment</p>	<p>John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Community Safety</p> <p>30 August 2010</p>	<p>Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Housing Strategy 2010-15</p>
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**Forward Plan
September 2010 - December 2010**

<p>Cabinet Due Date: 10 Nov 2010</p>	<p>Core Strategy Public Consultation Draft Draft Core Strategy for public consultation September/October 2010</p>	<p>All key stakeholders, including parish councils, and the public Public notice, letters, emails, newsletter to interested parties whose details are held on the LDF database, Limehouse notification, targeted parish council/public meetings and exhibitions, etc., inviting comments on the draft Core Strategy</p>	<p>Michael Thornton, Head of Spatial Planning 12th July 2010</p>	<p>Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Core Strategy Public Consultation Draft</p>
<p>Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture (post) Due Date: 26 Nov 2010</p>	<p>Fees & Charges - Market Services 2011/12 To set the fees & charges for Market Services 2011/12</p>	<p>Market traders; site hirers; site users Contacts on site</p>	<p>Steve Goulette, Assistant Director of Environment & Regulatory Services 30/09/10</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Report for Fees & Charges - Market Services 2011/12</p>
<p>Cabinet Member for Regeneration (post) Due Date: 3 Sep 2010</p>	<p>Building Surveying Charges To agree the Building Surveying Charges from 1st October 2010</p>	<p>Everyone Website and advert in KM</p>	<p>David Harrison 01/08/2010</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Report for Building Surveying Charges</p>

**Forward Plan
September 2010 - December 2010**

<p>Cabinet Member for Regeneration (post)</p> <p>Due Date: 18 Dec 2010</p>	<p>Private Sector Housing Review of HMO licensing fees, conditions and assistance</p> <p>To review and agree Housing Assistance available from April 2012, to set the licence fees for Houses in Multiple Occupation and conditions from April 2012</p>	<p>Key stakeholder meeting</p>	<p>John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Community Safety</p> <p>6/11/2010</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Report for Private Sector Housing Review of HMO licensing fees, conditions and assistance</p>
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