

AGENDA

CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING



Overview and Scrutiny

Date: Tuesday 6 March 2012
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street,
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors: Mrs Wilson, Mrs Gooch (Chairman),
Yates, English, Mrs Gibson, Hogg,
Paine (Vice-Chairman), Pickett and
de Wiggondene

Page No.

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

Continued Over/:

Issued on 27 February 2012

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact Orla Sweeney on 01622 602524**. To find out more about the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk/osc

Alison Broom

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

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. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2012	1 - 8
8. Quarter 3 Complaints Monitoring	9 - 17
Interviews with:	
• Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager; and	
• Catherine Negus, Policy and Research Assistant	
9. Equalities Objectives	18 - 62
Interviews with:	
• Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager; and	
• Catherine Negus, Policy and Research Assistant	
10. Residents Satisfaction Survey	63 - 113
Interview with Roger Adley, Head of Communications.	
11. Future Work Programme and Forward Plan of Key Decisions	114 - 121

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 10 JANUARY 2012

PRESENT: Councillors Beerling, Black, Burton, English, Mrs Gooch (Chairman), Hogg and Paine (Vice-Chairman).

84. The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be web-cast

It was resolved that all items be webcast.

85. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs Gibson, Pickett, de Wiggondene and Mrs Wilson.

86. Notification of Substitute Members.

Councillor Beerling substituted for Councillor Mrs Wilson, Councillor Black substituted for Councillor Mrs de Wiggondene and Councillor Burton substituted for Councillor Mrs Gibson.

87. Notification of Visiting Members.

There were no Visiting Members.

88. Disclosures by Members and Officers:

There were no disclosures.

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

It was agreed that all items be taken in public as proposed.

90. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2011

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2011 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and duly signed.

91. The Budget Strategy

The Chairman introduced Paul Riley, Head of Finance and Customer Services, Councillor Chris Garland, Leader of the Council, Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager and Georgia Hawkes, Head of Business Improvement.

Mr Riley introduced the Budget Strategy. He informed Members that the two reports had been taken to Cabinet since he last attended Scrutiny; The Budget Strategy 2012/13 onwards and the Budget Strategy 2012/13 Fees and Charges which covered the changes to the budget to date. On 8 November 2011 the Council informed of the Revenue Support Grant they would be receiving in 2012/12. The details confirmed the assumed figure of £5.7 million detailed in the Budget Strategy.

It was explained that the report included updates on the changes to date to the strategic revenue projections and savings proposals to achieve a balanced budget. In relation to strategic revenue projections changes included the proposal that the three temporary posts in Economic Development should be made permanent in order to achieve growth in tourism, a priority for Maidstone. Changes to savings proposals included bringing forward savings that had been identified for 2013/14 in Democratic Services and Overview and Scrutiny as they had been achieved early.

Members were informed that the Budget Strategy for the medium term included an assumed 2.5% Council Tax increase in its projections. In 2011/12 the Council had taken a four year grant in place of a rise in Council Tax. It was explained that the grant on offer from Government for 2012/13 was a one year, one off grant of £339,000 and there was no ongoing financial recompense being offered by Government after that year. In accepting the grant the Council would be accepting a freeze on Council Tax for 10 years. In 2013/14 and thereafter the Council would have to find additional savings of £339,000. Mr Riley highlighted that the Budget Strategy Savings Proposals forecast in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2013/14 was calculated without taking into account the impact of the grant freeze and were in excess of £600,000 of savings to find. In 2013/14 without a Council Tax rise and without the grant the Council would have to find over £1million in savings with only £305,830 identified so far.

Members were informed that the if the Council were to refuse the grant from Government and opt to raise Council Tax by 2.5% this would equate to a 0.38% rise to a band D Council Tax bill or £5.56 for the year.

The Committee questioned Maidstone's Band D average Council Tax bill in comparison to other authorities in Kent. They were informed that it was the 2nd highest in Kent. It was clarified by Officers that Maidstone received more in Council Tax than Government Grant. Members considered the position of other Kent Authorities and were informed that Gravesham Borough Council would not be accepting the Council Tax freeze grant.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Garland, told the Committee that in 2012/13 he expected the Council to benefit financially from proposed changes to Business Rates and that Cabinet would be recommending that Maidstone Borough Council accept the Council Tax freeze grant. He

estimated that residents would save approximately £70 on their Council Tax over the next ten years as a result of Cabinet's decision.

The Committee considered the options and felt it was difficult to make a calculation in terms of savings to the resident or the deficit faced by the Council. A Member was concerned that the authority could find itself in position that would be difficult to recover from as a result of accepting the freeze grant. The Committee were sympathetic to the 2.5% rise but felt that the debate should go on to full Council.

The Committee considered ways in which further savings could be found or income generated. Suggestions included:

- Abolishing the Park and Ride service in Maidstone;
- A reduction in elected Members;
- Income generated by departments such as Building Control and Development Control from fees and charges; and
- The commercial viability of the crematorium.

The Chief Executive informed Members that work had begun on looking at the size and shape of the organisation. With regards to the Park and Ride she identified that the structure of car parking charges in Maidstone as the issue, confirming that the current charging structure did not enhance the Park and Ride service. In response to the suggestion that the number of elected Members could be reduced, it was clarified that recent consideration had been given to this option when the Council had the opportunity to take part in the Boundary review but this had not been pursued.

It was explained that Building Control could not make a profit and had to break even over a three year period. With regards to Development Control it was explained that Government Legislation which would decentralise responsibility for setting planning application fees to the local planning authority had not yet come into effect. The Council had done a great deal of work on benchmarking in this area in preparation for this change.

Finally, with regards to the Crematorium, the Chief Executive explained that on the basis of its performance this year the Crematorium had exceeded its targets and there was a recent agreement to change the Crematorium's commercial viability in auxiliary areas such as with memorials. She explained that the surplus profit made benefitted other council services and it would continue to do this. Some Members raised questions about the state of repair of buildings on the Crematorium site. They were informed that the buildings on the road frontage had been disposed on and the chapel had been closed due to its current state. The Committee were advised that they were at liberty to recommend an alternative course of action such as including the repair of the chapel in the Capital Programme. It was confirmed that relation to commercial activity the Crematorium and Bereavement Services was an area that had already been identified by the Council. Housing was also being looked at in depth with a visit to Wokingham Borough Council planned.

The Leader of the Council felt that the savings and income generation would be achieved by a combination of measures with the Council ceasing to provide certain services and moving into partnerships with other authorities via the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership in order to generate an income.

Some Members felt that there was an opportunity to build on the successes of the environmental enforcement team's litter enforcement expanding a self funding service to other areas of the borough. The Leader of the Council informed members that the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Mrs Ring, was investigating this at present. It was agreed that this was an area that should be explored more fully.

A Member felt there would be benefit in looking at parking enforcement and in particular non-compliance with residents parking across the borough to ensure that there was a fair and consistent approach taken. Officers agreed that this was something that could be investigated and adjustments could be made to service delivery but in terms of the budget for parking enforcement this could not be increased.

Officers informed Members of the Council's policy on setting fees and charges detailed in the budget strategy report on fees and charges. This informed the range of issues considered by Officers in considering fees and charges and areas of income generation of which £140,000 had been identified. Members observed that proposed increases were in areas where they could be sustained.

A Member of the Committee highlighted that Maidstone Borough Council was not enforcing mooring charges along the river and were informed that these were enforced at certain times of the year when it was considered financially viable to do so. Members felt that this was an area that could be explored further and an opportunity could be being missed in promoting Maidstone via boating and tourism organisations as a place to come and moor boats free of charge.

Mr Riley moved on to the Council's Capital Programme and other areas of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. He explained that the New homes Bonus would be used in lieu of assets for the Council's Capital Programme. This was due to one property remaining unsold and a key proposal within the budget strategy was to delay the sale of this asset in order to get the best price.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan was discussed and the Community Infrastructure Levy which would replace Section 106 agreements. The Capital Programme for 2015/16 remained blank and would be informed with the information from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which would provide the details of the infrastructure required to deliver the Core Strategy.

Finally Mr Riley explained the recent consultation with residents to establish which statutory services were important. Residents had been asked to consider levels of customer services provided in areas such as

the Gateway and in relation to Officer response times by email and letter. It was explained that the information gathered would be used to inform work being undertaken on a customer programme and was not being used to make immediate savings. Members were informed that if changes were to be made to achieve savings to customer service the intention would be to direct the saving to another 'channel' and increase its resources. Mr Riley gave the example of the website and work being carried out to utilise it as a customer services tool.

With reference to the consultation some Members sought clarification on the way in which responses was gathered from residents and were informed that a day had been spent at the Gateway and a further two days in the Mall. There were concerns that the results were overly simplistic and not fully representative of the residents of Maidstone. They were told that the responses had been kept separate. The Committee were informed that the respondents would be mapped by postcode to help evaluate the responses.

Ms Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager, explained that a recent Overview and Scrutiny review had also helped identify that the Gateway was poorly used during its extended opening hours on a Thursday evening and a Saturday morning.

It was recommended that:

- a) It be noted that the Committee supports the work being carried out by Councillor Mrs Ring to expand a 'self funding' litter enforcement team to other areas of the borough;
- b) The appropriate Officer be contacted to provide feedback to the Committee on the way in which parking and litter enforcement is apportioned across the borough and in doing so provides an answer to the following questions:
 - i. Are Parking and Littering enforcement resources concentrated in the Town Centre? and
 - ii. Could the deployment of enforcement officers be re evaluated for overall effectiveness in all areas of the borough.
- c) That the Head of Finance and Customer Services investigate the financial benefits of enforcing Maidstone's river mooring fees. That the viability of promoting, via boating and tourist organisations, that mooring fees are not enforced in Maidstone is investigated as an alternative course of action.

92. Strategic Plan Refresh

The Leader of the Council explained that the Strategic Plan had three main priorities and approximately 60 Key Performance indicators (KPIs), informing Members that KPIs had been significantly reduced by the Coalition Government. He explained that the Strategic Plan offered a

detailed breakdown of what the Council sought to achieve from the outcomes of the Priorities set:

1. For Maidstone to have a growing economy

Outcomes:

- A Transport network that supports the local economy; and
- A growing economy with rising employment, catering for a range of skill sets to meet the demands of the local economy.

2. For Maidstone to be a decent place to live

Outcomes:

- Decent, affordable housing in the right place across a range of tenures;
- Continues to be a clean and attractive environment for people who live and visit the Borough; and
- Residents are not disadvantaged because of where they live or who they are, vulnerable people are assisted and the level of deprivation is reduced (*previously an outcome of Corporate and Customer Excellence*).

3. Corporate and Customer Excellence.

Outcome:

- The Council will continue to have value for money services that residents are satisfied with.

Councillor Garland explained that work had been undertaken to refresh the current priorities with a newly defined focus on the outcomes and the action plan had been updated to show the progress made from April- November 2011.

Ms Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager, explained that the outcome 'residents are not disadvantaged because of where they live or who they are, vulnerable people are assisted and the level of deprivation is reduced' had been moved to become an additional outcome of the priority 'For Maidstone to be a decent place to live'. As a result an additional outcome was required to address 'customer excellence' for the priority 'Corporate and Customer Excellence.'

Members told the Officer that they found the Strategic Plan to be bold, ambitious and succinct. They questioned the progress of the Leisure and Tourism Strategy which had an original target date of April 2011 as its importance as a strategic priority had been reflected in the Budget Strategy. Ms Kershaw informed Members that important decisions had been made in relation to the Museum and Hazlitt Theatre which had delayed the action but the relevant paperwork had been completed to move the target date to a more pertinent date in the future.

The Committee questioned the budget savings associated with Planning in relation to its importance to the Council in meeting its priority outcomes. They considered how quality could be maintained when the cost of delivering the service was being reduced.

Officers explained that Planning remained a high priority area for the Council but it was not immune from efficiency savings. Ms Kershaw

clarified that KPIs were measured by specific areas that could be monitored in the same way each year. She explained that quality was measured in a different way i.e. through complaints monitoring.

Members highlighted the KPIs relating to the Museum East Wing project and the High Street Project. It was felt that an update or comment on the Museum would be helpful. They felt that the rising cost of the High Street Project and the work being done to find savings to offset this should have been highlighted more clearly in the Budget Strategy. They were satisfied that any concerns would be identified and considered as part of the quarterly budget monitoring report. Members also agreed that a brief update on the Museum should be sought from responsible Officers.

The Committee raised a final concern regarding the focus of the Strategic Plan on families with multiple needs and the Council's ability to deliver this effectively. The Chief Executive explained that this was at a formative stage as the Locality Board had met for the first time in November 2011. She explained that Maidstone role would be to provide Community Leadership and this would be delivered efficiently and effectively as it would be spread across the public sector with marginal costs to the authority as a result of joined up working.

It was recommended that:

- a) The Scrutiny Officer seek a brief update on the Museum East Wing extension as highlighted by Members in the Key Performance Indicators identified in the Strategic Action Plan;
- b) That the report be noted by the Committee; and
- c) That attention is given to the grammatical consistency in the report in relation to the tenses used.

93. Draft Improvement Plan

Georgia Hawkes, Head of Business Improvement, introduced the Draft Improvement Plan 2012/15

It was explained that this was a first attempt by the authority at taking a comprehensive approach to governance arrangements as detailed in the Strategic Plan and the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It was explained that the Draft Improvement Plan detailed the key pieces of work and projects carried out to deliver the council's priority outcomes and savings.

Members questioned whether the plan was for public consumption, observing that the inhouse performance management system 'Covalent' referenced in the plan required a definition. It was felt the plan would benefit from a glossary.

Members felt that the plan provided a good starting point and would provide something from which comparisons could be drawn in the future.

It was recommended that:

- a) A glossary be added to accompany the Draft Improvement Plan; and
- b) The report be noted.

94. Local Strategic Partnership - Written Update

The Committee considered the written update from the Local Strategic Partnership.

The Committee acknowledged that the Locality Boards were at an extremely formative stage. It was felt that the Committee should keep a watching brief on Locality Boards until they were established.

It was recommended that written updates should be provided to the Committee to keep them informed on the progress of the Locality Boards.

95. Forward Plan and Scrutiny Officer Update

The Committee considered items on the Forward Plan for 1 January to 30 April 2012.

Members agreed that the Committee should revisit the Parish Services Scheme as the Joint Corporate Services and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was agreed that the Committee's February meeting should be cancelled and the Joint Committee meeting should be arranged in its place.

The Committee considered its future work programme and agreed to meet as a working group to progress 'The Council as a Business?' Review before the next scheduled meeting in March. It was agreed that the Scrutiny Officer would contact Members by email to arrange a time for the working group to meet.

It was resolved that:

- a) The Committee should meet as the Joint Corporate Services and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 February 2012 to revisit the Parish Services Scheme; and
- b) The Scrutiny Officer should liaise with Committee Members via email to arrange an informal working group meeting to progress the 'Council as a Business?' Review.

96. Duration of Meeting

6.31 p.m. to 9.09 p.m.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6th MARCH 2012

REPORT OF THE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGER

Report prepared by Catherine Negus

1. REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2011

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider the Council's performance in dealing with complaints during October-December 2011 and to note the areas identified for improvement.

1.2 Recommendation of the Policy and Performance Manager

1.2.1 That the Committee notes the performance in relation to complaints and agrees action as appropriate.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 In order to ensure that complaints are being dealt with effectively and within corporate timescales it is important that a monitoring mechanism is in place.

1.3.2 Details of the complaints received broken down by service area, category and performance can be found at Appendix A.

1.3.3 During the period October – December 2011, 102 complaints were closed, of which 88 (86%) were responded to in time. This is a deterioration from 96% (108 out of 112) in the previous quarter. Of the complaints responded to outside the target time seven related to Housing, two to Customer Services, and one each to Vehicle Licensing, Parks and Leisure, Hazlitt Theatre, Development Management and Council Tax/Business Rates. The Head of Housing has commented that the deterioration in responding to complaints on time is due to the dedicated officer having been on long-term sick leave since October, and is being addressed. Help will therefore be provided by Executive Support to cover the staff shortage. There are also unresolved problems with the complaints software not sending reminders to officers when a complaint is nearing its deadline.

1.3.4 The services with the highest number of complaints were:

- Development Control – 25
- Waste Collection – 19

1.3.5 The Head of Planning has commented that the number of complaints about Development Control reflects the high profile of the service, including the high volume of planning applications. Furthermore, a more disciplined, efficient stance has been taken recently whereby 'dialogue' letters are re-categorised as complaints. Eight complaints concerned the time taken by Development Control to deal with issues - this was often combined with a complaint about lack of contact from officers during this time. Six were related to the quality of service provided by the department, but these were nearly all unrelated. Seven complaints concerned Development Control policy which is unsurprising as these were mainly people unhappy with planning decisions.

1.3.6 Waste Collection is another service with an understandably high number of complaints given the number of residents served by the department. The number of complaints about Waste Collection has fallen from 27 last quarter to 19 this quarter. 12 complaints concerned the quality of service. Of these, six were about failures in collection, and three were about bins being returned to the wrong point. The Waste Manager has noted that some of these complaints were unsubstantiated as often there is a valid reason for non-collection. This was probably the case in four incidents - two where the driver reported the bin as not out, one where food waste may not have been wrapped, and one access problem. Details have been sought from the Waste Manager as to how Waste Collection's consistently good complaints management performance is achieved, so that lessons may be learnt by other service areas.

1.3.7 Six complaints concerned Pollution staff, all of which were about the behaviour of litter enforcement officers. For five of these, the CCTV footage was examined by managers and the behaviour of the officers deemed professional. The sixth complaint is being dealt with by the contractors. It should be noted that a system has recently been introduced to deal with the cases of people who contest fines issued for littering as 'representations' rather than complaints. However, complaints that concern the behaviour of officers must still be counted as such.

1.3.8 The possibility that some Housing complaints are actually 'appeals' was raised (though in this quarter only one complaint was about not having been provided with a house). However, the Housing Services Manager notes that if a complaint was being investigated through the appeals process this would be noted in the response to the complainant. We should not limit the logging of such complaints due to the potential for

claims to the local government ombudsman and the potential for criticism for failing to respond to a complaint.

- 1.3.9 Ten Stage 2 complaints were processed in this quarter of which nine (90%) were answered on time. This is up from 86% in the previous quarter.
- 1.3.10 Five of the Stage 2 complaints related to Development Management, two to Council Tax or Business Rates, and one each to Vehicle Licensing, Parks and Leisure, and Waste Collection. Of the five Stage 2 complaints related to Development Management, two were from people unhappy with planning decisions.
- 1.3.11 A breakdown of complaints satisfaction surveys can be found at Appendix B. 91 surveys were sent out of which 28 (31%) have been returned. Another two, both from the same address, came back as 'address incomplete'. Eight (29%) of the 28 respondents were very satisfied or satisfied, which is a drop from 40% last quarter. Five were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. A further respondent ticked both 'satisfied' and 'very dissatisfied', commenting that while everyone was helpful the problem (of litter by a path) had not been addressed. Grounds Maintenance have since been in touch with the complainant, and the problem is being dealt with by Tesco and monitored through the year. Other survey responses also included actionable comments (rather than simply dissatisfaction with our decision):
- One complaint has been escalated to Stage 2.
 - One customer wrote that after three months the problem had not been solved. However, there has since been correspondence with the customer and it appears that this has been resolved under Stage 2.
 - One customer was satisfied on the grounds that she was waiting to hear back from Grounds Maintenance about a pigeon/path sweeping issue. The team have confirmed they have been in touch with the complainant, the path is now being cleaned regularly, and the issue is now in the hands of Network Rail.
 - One customer wrote that the problem of his food waste not being fully emptied improved for a few weeks then recurred. He also added a new issue – he has to walk down the public footpath to retrieve his bins. This has been noted by Waste Collection, who will be monitoring the issue over the next few collections, and will remind crews again to ensure that food bins are fully emptied.
- Three other respondents said that they would be taking their issue further or going to Stage 2 of their own accord.
- 1.3.12 Of the 14 dissatisfied or very dissatisfied people, six said their complaint was not responded to within ten days (though one said it had been acknowledged). In one of these cases our records show that

a reply was sent on the third day; in another case the response was posted on the tenth day itself. Eight people said they were not informed of the progress of their complaint – these comments were spread across several services. Eight people said we had not understood their complaint, and two were unsure whether we had understood:

- Three of these have since gone to Stage 2 so any issues are being addressed.
- Four of the responses appear satisfactory and complainants may simply be unhappy with the decision taken.
- Two of the responses appear satisfactory but as the original complaint was made by telephone it is possible that some details were missed.
- In the final case there had been a dispute about what was promised by council officers. However, a compromise has since been reached which should satisfy the complainant.

1.3.13 Equality implications: One complainant stated that in his personal relationship with a staff member, he had heard her make racist comments about customers (logged as a problem with specific 'staff' rather than an identified incident of 'discrimination'). However, upon investigation no evidence was found for this. In another case (the only one logged as being specifically about 'discrimination') a customer complained that changes in council tax payment methods discriminated against elderly residents without internet access. However, it was determined that the automated payments line was more efficient than the discontinued service and was accessible to all age groups. No other complaints were directly about discrimination, but some involved protected characteristics. In one case a complainant stated that a parking officer had asked a disabled person to get out of a vehicle. They were satisfied with the complaint handler's assurance that procedures would be clarified with APCOA, though as she has since left it is not possible to confirm that this was done. All other cases involving protected characteristics were found to be issues where MBC could not take action (eg the complaint was vexatious).

1.3.14 In none of the cases involving protected characteristics had the relevant 'Discrimination' box been ticked on the complaint form - perhaps the term 'discrimination' needs to be interpreted more broadly. Officers should ensure this box is ticked if there is potentially any Equalities aspect to the complaint, to ensure this is not missed in analysis.

1.3.15 Community safety implications: Action has been taken to prevent a repetition of two cases where letters were sent erroneously to the ex-partners of customers.

- Corporate Support have been told to index documents to existing references only if the address is the same on Anite as

on the proofs being provided. If this is different then a new reference will be created.

- The Revenues team has been instructed to put any letters in separate envelopes personally as soon as they are written, rather than sending them to the post team for enveloping.

1.3.16 As was the case last quarter, many complaints records (at least a dozen) are incomplete, with the original complaint or the response being recorded but not both. This is inefficient and ineffective, making analysis of complaints limited or difficult, and could lead to problems if complainants return - indeed, it made dealing with comments on the satisfaction surveys more difficult. A reminder will be put into the core brief, and in future quarters a list of complaints which were not recorded properly will be provided to CLT. There was no particular service which stood out for having incomplete records.

1.3.17 Two complainants were deemed 'vexatious' in this period, ie. had been 'unreasonable and unreasonably persistent'. The Local Government Ombudsman defines vexatious complainants as 'those complainants who, because of the nature or frequency of their contacts with an organisation, hinder the organisation's consideration of their, or other people's, complaints' - MBC's guidance interprets this as meaning their aim is not genuinely the resolution of the situation. The Council's policy on such complaints is that:

'we will request that the complainant follow the steps in the complaints procedure. Once they have been through the complaints procedure unless they raise new information, correspondence will be put on file but no longer be responded to.' It must however be read to ascertain that no new information is being presented. Very trivial persistent complaints do not have to be escalated to Stage 2. If a complainant persistently telephones, officers may choose to close the call and insist on corresponding only by letter for a period. It is best if a vexatious complainant has a single named contact at the Council to avoid mixed messaging.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 The Council could choose not to monitor complaints handling but this would impact severely on the Council's ability to use complaints as a business improvement tool.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 Customer service is a core value and one of the Council's priorities is Corporate and Customer Excellence. Management of complaints is critical to the success of this objective.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 Failure to manage complaints in a robust fashion represents both a financial and reputational risk to the Council. Regular reports are produced for CLT and also presented to the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Standards Committee. Monitoring is carried out by the Policy and Performance Manager.

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

1.8.1 Appendices

- Appendix A – Stage 1 complaints breakdown
- Appendix B – Satisfaction surveys breakdown

IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

Yes

No

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

.....

This is a Key Decision because:

.....

Wards/Parishes affected:

.....

Service	Total	On Time	Late	% On Time	Service	Policy	Staff	Time taken	Lack of contact	Information provision	Discrimination
Building Surveying	1	1	0	100%	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Council Tax or Business Rates	4	3	1	75%	3	0	0	0	0	1	0
Customer Services (mainly Contact Centre)	8	6	2	75%	3	1	3	0	0	0	1
Development Control	25	24	1	96%	6	7	1	8	2	1	0
Grounds Maintenance	4	4	0	100%	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
Hazlitt Theatre	1	0	1	0%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing and Council Tax Benefits	3	3	0	100%	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Options, Private Sector Housing or Housing Policy	9	2	7	22%	3	2	1	1	1	1	0
IT Support	1	1	0	100%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Markets in Maidstone	1	1	0	100%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parking Enforcement	9	9	0	100%	4	2	2	0	1	0	0
Parks and leisure	2	1	1	50%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Planning Enforcement	3	3	0	100%	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Pollution (mainly Litter Enforcement)	10	10	0	100%	3	1	6	0	0	0	0
Street Sweeping	1	1	0	100%	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Vehicle licensing	1	0	1	0%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waste Collection	19	19	0	100%	12	3	2	0	1	1	0
TOTAL	102	88	14	86%	46	18	16	11	6	4	1

2011 Q3 complaints data (Stage 1)

Service	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Unclear	TOTAL
Grounds Maintenance	1	0	0	0	1	1	3
Housing and Council Tax Benefits	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Housing Options, Private Sector Housing or Housing Policy	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
IT Support	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Parking	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Parks and Leisure	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Planning Enforcement	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Street Sweeping	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Development Control	0	0	1	1	3	0	5
Customer Services	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Council Tax or Business Rates	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Building Surveying	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Waste Collection	1	2	2	2	1	0	8
TOTAL	4	4	5	4	10	1	28

2011 Q3 complaints satisfaction surveys data

Agenda Item 9

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6TH MARCH 2012

REPORT OF THE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGER

Report prepared by Catherine Negus

1. Setting Equality Objectives

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider the equality objectives to be set by the Council for up to the next four years according to the Council's equality duty.

1.2 Recommendation of the Policy and Performance Manager

1.2.1 That the Council adopt the equality objectives suggested for the Museum, the Healthy Weight Programme, and improving the level to which young people feel informed about the Council, as laid out at 1.3.6 – 1.3.8 below.

1.2.2 That the objectives, as well as progress on the objectives and details of any engagement with stakeholders, be published in an accessible format.

1.2.3 That progress on achieving objectives be reported to CLT and the relevant Portfolio Holder on a 6-monthly basis.

1.2.4 That when conducting future surveys and collecting data on customers, services ask questions about more of the protected characteristics where possible.

1.2.5 New or revised objectives must be set by 6th April 2016 but it is recommended that further objectives be set before this date as data becomes available, preferably in accordance with the normal business planning and performance monitoring cycle.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 Local authorities must set, by 6th April 2012 then at least every four years, one or more equality objectives that they think they need to achieve to further the aims of the general equality duty. The three aims of the duty must be considered: to eliminate discrimination,

harassment and victimization, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between different people. Authorities must consider whatever data is available on all of the protected characteristics. These are disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. For those aged 18 years and over, age is also a protected characteristic. The new equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnership but only with regard to eliminating discrimination. Equality objectives may cover both staff and service users.

1.3.2 Statutory and non-statutory guidance recommends that when authorities are deciding which issues to focus on in setting objectives:

- Objectives should be **specific** (this does not mean that they must all be quantitative rather than qualitative) and **measurable**.
- Objectives should be **achievable**, but authorities should show they have considered different ways of achieving an objective before deciding it is unachievable.
- Authorities should focus on the issues causing the most disadvantage to protected groups – even if the protected group suffering a significant disadvantage is small.
- Objectives should reflect the priorities of the organisation as a whole, that can be delivered and monitored through mainstream operations.
- Objectives should be about change and improvement, not about continuing something that is already happening.
- Objectives should be expressed in terms of outcomes for people, not in terms of setting new strategies, policies, processes, funding etc.
- Authorities should not just focus on whether proportionate numbers of people are participating, but also their quality of experience and the outcome for that group. (It should be noted that for some services takeup can be compared in a straightforward way with the population as a whole, whereas for others (eg housing) analyzing the match of need and takeup is more complex.)
- There is no set number of objectives required. Public authorities should take a proportionate approach. This means that the number of objectives they set, and their level of ambition, will be different depending on the size and role of the public authority – so a government department will set several objectives and a school might set just one.
- Authorities can set important objectives even if they will take a long time to achieve, and continue to address them in the next cycle. Conversely, new objectives can be set at any time as new data and analysis becomes available. Details of areas where this may happen are given at 1.5 below.

1.3.3 It is obligatory for authorities to publish details of objectives, and any engagement with stakeholders, in an accessible format. This could be

on the website or within workplans or another document. Objectives should be clearly signposted. Authorities should consider publishing in formats other than on the website where proportionate (particularly formats which might be accessible to people with the different protected characteristics).

1.3.4 **Data issues**

When collecting data, many services still focus on age, gender and sometimes ethnicity and disability, and data can be limited. Therefore more reliance than would be ideal has been placed on data from the Place Survey 2009, which surveyed a sample of the Borough's residents and included information on age, gender, race and disability status. The report on the Place Survey data highlighted issues where there was a significant disparity between groups, and these disparities have been included here where relevant. Data is included in **Appendix B**. A new Residents' Survey is currently being analysed, though this included fewer questions than the Place Survey.

Work is already underway to improve the data available on equalities in Revenues and Benefits, Transport Services, Parks and the Council's workforce, and further analysis will take place when data is available. The potential for gathering data on equalities for Parking and the Theatre, and more up-to-date data on equalities among Sports and Leisure facilities users, should be investigated. New data can be compared against improved baseline data when the results of the 2011 Census become available. The baseline population data used as a reference point for this report can be found in **Appendix A**.

Where it is not possible to collect data directly, the Council should engage with stakeholder groups, perhaps particularly for newer protected characteristics.

In Maidstone, small groups of people with certain protected characteristics sometimes have more positive experiences than the average for the borough's population, but this does not necessarily mean that people with the opposite characteristic do significantly worse than average. This is probably because there is more intra-group inequality within certain large groups, such as white residents, than there is inter-group inequality.

1.3.5 **Economic and educational inequalities**

Some of the most reliable data available concerns the economic and educational inequalities faced by certain protected groups. Issues in Maidstone include disparities in qualifications according to gender, religion and ethnicity, higher unemployment among female than male lone parents, lower weekly wages among women, and a slightly

greater propensity among disabled people with a Work Limiting Disability to be unemployed in Maidstone than nationwide. These are not issues which can be addressed by MBC, a lower-tier authority, on its own, but should be considered as work on education and worklessness progresses. The Locality Board, of which MBC is a member, is currently focusing its efforts in this area on the Community Budgets programme, which targets the most troubled families. Future topics will include youth services, libraries and school exclusions. Golding Homes is also undertaking Priorities Focus Group work with its tenants on the subject of worklessness.

1.3.6 Maidstone Museum

A study in 2007 found that the age profile of visitors to the Museum was biased towards teenagers, probably due to school visits. There were also generally fewer visitors aged 45+, and non-visitors were less likely to have young children than visitors. This reflects the effectiveness of marketing aimed at local primary schoolchildren and their families.

Surveys of visitors to Maidstone Museum and the Bentrif Art Gallery include questions about gender and age. According to the survey results in the first quarter of 2011/12, people aged over 55 are still underrepresented among visitors (20.5% of visitors were aged over 55, compared to 30.4% of people in Maidstone). The oldest people within this band are the least represented. (In fact there may be even more younger visitors than revealed in the survey, due to school parties visiting). Data is included in **Appendix C**.

The Place Survey 2009 likewise found that the older population was underrepresented among museum visitors: all age groups above age 55 were all less likely than average (10.3%) to visit at least monthly, (55-64 (9.5%), 65-74 (9.2%), 75+ (9.4%)).

The gender balance of visitors should be kept under review in case it falls further and becomes significant again. The Place Survey 2009 did not highlight significant inequalities due to ethnicity or disability.

Possible objective (RECOMMENDED): Improve the number of visitors to the museum aged 55+ by 5% over the next year. This target would then be expected to recur but this should be assessed after the first year. This target would fit into the Council's priority of making Maidstone a decent place to live by maximizing the enjoyment and educational benefit obtained from a resource which has recently received significant funds for regeneration work. There will be opportunities for promotional work around the launch of the new Museum facilities. Work is already underway or planned on several projects to attract and cater to older visitors.

The Museums and Heritage Manager has concerns about how to measure use by different age groups accurately, given reduced staff resources, and this is being looked into.

1.3.7 **Community Partnerships: Healthy Weight Programme**

Though sometimes recorded, insufficient data is available to analyse the ethnicity or age of participants in the programme. From the limited data available it seems possible that the number of disabled participants is representative.

The Healthy Weight Programme is targeted at adults with a BMI of 28 or over, referred by health professionals or by themselves. A large majority of people taking part in the Healthy Weight programme are female. Of the people whose gender was recorded, 80.12% of participants were female. Using first names it was possible to estimate more accurately that 76.18% of participants were female (though such assumptions are uncertain and might wrongly categorise a small number of people who do not fit into male/female gender categories). It is very unlikely that this reflects the proportions of Maidstone men and women who are overweight: the Department of Health Survey for England 2003 found that in the South East as a whole, men were more likely than women to be overweight (BMI over 25) (65.2% of men versus 51.8% of women) or obese (BMI over 30) (19.9% of men versus 19.3% of women). As the gender breakdown of the surveyed population was almost the same as that in Maidstone, it is possible to estimate that around 55.3% of overweight people and 52.9% of obese people will be male. Data is available in **Appendix D**.

Possible objective (RECOMMENDED): Increase the proportion of of men registering for the Healthy Weight from 24% to 28% over the next year. Subject to review, targets would then be set for each of the next three years leading to a probable target of 40% by the end of the fourth year. This depends on the programme being granted PCT funding to continue for the next year and Clinical Commissioning Group funding in subsequent years. This target would fit into the council's priority of ensuring that 'residents are not disadvantaged because of where they live or who they are, vulnerable people are assisted and the level of deprivation is reduced', particularly because male mortality is disproportionately high in the borough's more deprived wards. The Maidstone Health Profile (2008) found that while the health of people in Maidstone is better than the England average, there are health inequalities within Maidstone which need to be addressed - for example, men from the most deprived areas have over 5 years shorter life expectancy than those from the least deprived areas. The imbalance of men and women is a problem across West Kent. The programme delivery officer for Tunbridge Wells is currently studying the issue. It is also useful to consider the uptake

by men of different programmes – the weight management programme at Zeroth, which includes exercise, is more popular among men than others.

1.3.8 Information about council services

In the Place Survey 2009, the youngest age group (16-24) felt least informed about all areas covered except what standards to expect (where the lowest was 25-34). (See also 1.3.9 below). The new Residents' Survey 2011/12 also found that 47% of people aged 18-24 felt that the Council told people 'not much at all' or 'only a limited amount of information' about services and benefits, compared to 37% of the whole survey population. 53% of people aged 18-24 felt that the Council keeps people 'well informed' or 'fairly well informed' about services and benefits, compared to 63% of the whole survey population. (All age groups below the age of 55 were less likely than average to feel well informed and more likely than average to feel poorly informed, but the difference is most striking for the age group 18-24).

In the Place Survey 2009, 19% of 16-24 year olds felt they could influence decisions in their local area (the mean was 25%). 70% of 16-24 year olds felt they had been treated with respect and consideration by local public services (the mean was 76%). These questions were not asked in the Residents' Survey 2011/12 but they reinforce the fact that more attention should be paid to involving and informing this age group.

The Place Survey did not highlight significant disadvantages in terms of feeling informed according to gender, ethnicity or disability.

Possible objective (RECOMMENDED): Increase the proportion of people aged 18-24 who feel that the Council keeps people 'well informed' or 'fairly well informed' about services and benefits to 58% over four years.

1.3.9 Electoral Registration Services

Registration Services hold data only on citizens' names and nationality, not protected characteristics. It is therefore not possible to ascertain whether any protected characteristics are underrepresented. However, the Place Survey 2009 found that the youngest age group (16-24) felt significantly less well informed than average about how to register to vote (28.8% compared to an average of 7.8% felt poorly informed), and the number of people who felt informed increased with age. (The other age groups where more people than average felt poorly informed about registration were 25-34 (16.1%) and 35-44 (8.2%).)

The Place Survey did not highlight significant disadvantages in this area according to gender, disability or ethnicity.

Possible objective: Increase the proportion of younger people (aged 16-24 or aged below 44) who feel informed about how to register to vote. However, the Registration Services Manager believes people's perceptions of the registration system are not always accurate - they may believe they are not registered when in fact they are. Since Place Survey 2009 substantial work has been done to increase awareness of registration among young voters, including visits to schools and university freshers' fairs.

1.3.10 Parks

The Place Survey 2009 found that the oldest residents (aged 75+) are least likely to have used parks and open spaces within the last 6 months (64%, compared to an average of 85.8% of residents), followed by the age groups 65-74 (79.4%) and 55-64 (72.3%). The oldest group was also the least likely to use parks and open spaces weekly (21%, compared to an average of 40.1% for all residents), followed by the age groups 55-64 (28.7%) and 65-74 (29.6%).

During the regeneration of Mote Park, issues around accessibility for the elderly and disabled were taken into account in the design of paths and toilets. A questionnaire known as GreenStat has just been introduced and will be used to collect data on the park's users and their experiences from now on.

The Place Survey 2009 noted no significant disadvantages according to gender, disability or ethnicity.

Possible objective: Ensure that older residents are better represented among the park's users.

1.3.11 Housing

Data is available about the gender, marital status, ethnicity, age, religion, sexuality, and trans/cissexual status of people accessing the housing service, though some categories are incomplete. It is not appropriate to set targets based on this data as analysis is extremely complicated. A few years ago the potential for university analysis was investigated but there were no funds to pay for the work.

- It is possible that some groups who are likely to join the register but have lower levels of need may become overrepresented on the register due to waiting for longer periods.
- When groups appear underrepresented on the housing register it is not clear whether this is due to lower need, or issues accessing the service. Support groups are used to help people access the service.
- Data for the people housed in 2010/11 is available: this cannot be compared directly with the current housing register. The Housing Manager does not believe that vulnerable people on the Housing Register would have trouble bidding for properties as housing officer support will be provided. Furthermore, people will be prioritised according to their level of need.

However, some observations which may point to potential future monitoring:

- The religion and sexuality of the large majority of people on the housing register are not recorded.
- The larger proportions of people on the register and housed in younger age groups, female, and married are probably due to needs in the population group (non-affordability of homes, lone female parents, and people with children).
- A smaller proportion of people on the housing register are disabled than in the population of Maidstone in general (2.19% compared to 4.3%). Disabled people formed a slightly larger proportion of people housed in 2010/11 but at 3.9% were still underrepresented compared to the population as a whole. It would be useful to investigate why this is the case.
- A larger proportion of people on the housing register are from 'other white' groups than in the population of Maidstone in general (5.82% compared to 3.2%). Of these, a notable number (17 out of 206) were gypsies/travellers. A larger proportion of people on the housing register are BME than in the population of Maidstone in general (8.59% compared to 7%). It is unclear whether this reflects greater need among these groups or problems for the white British and Irish population in accessing the register.
- However, 'other white' people formed a slightly smaller proportion (3.59%) of people housed in 2010/11 than they do on the register. None of them were categorised as gypsies/travellers but people are sometimes wary of identifying themselves in this way. A smaller proportion of those housed in 2010/11 were BME than on the

register (5.93% - lower than their representation in the population in general). This is a change from a few years ago and it is unclear whether it reflects the level of need of the people on the register, or issues finding suitable housing for these people.

Housing data is attached in **Appendix E**.

1.3.12 **Sports and Leisure Services**

Detailed information on protected characteristics (age, gender and ethnicity) is available only for users who were members in the period June-September 2009 (and therefore may be outdated). 60% of visits during this period were made by members (which does not mean that 60% of visitors were members).

Of people who were *active* leisure centre members in the quarter June-September 2009:

- Despite a greater proportion of members being female, of active members attending on average at least monthly and at least weekly, only 43.25% and 47.42% respectively were female. (Females form 50.53% of the population as a whole.) The Place Survey 2009 found that men were more likely than women to use sports and leisure facilities at least weekly (26% of men versus 19% of women), implying that these trends applied not just to members.
- Despite a proportionately high membership among over-75s, of active members using the facilities on average at least weekly and at least monthly only 3.71% and 4.26% respectively were aged over 75. (Over 75s form 7.96% of the population as a whole). The Place Survey 2009 found that 43% of the oldest residents last used the facilities longer than a year ago (the average is 25.2%). The age group 55-64 were also slightly underrepresented among active members using the facilities frequently. This accords with Place Survey 2009 data which showed that this age group was the least likely to use facilities weekly.

Ethnicity is recorded for only 2% of members so cannot be analysed.

Data is attached in **Appendix F**.

Possible objective: Increase the frequency of visits among female residents.

Possible objective: Increase the frequency of visits among older residents.

The age of the data and the fact that it is limited to members would make it a poor basis for an objective, though measures to improve experiences for particular groups of members should have knock-on effects for non-members. The Leisure Monitoring Officer notes that any

objectives set would need to be agreed with the contractors operating Maidstone Leisure Centre as they would not be part of their contractual objectives, and the contractors' work would be important in achieving any targets.

1.3.13 **Community safety and community cohesion**

The Place Survey 2009 found that men are significantly more likely than women to feel safe in their local area after dark and the oldest age group (75+) are least likely to feel safe in their local area even in the day (87.3% compared to 92.1% on average).

77% of respondents to the 2011/12 Residents' Survey agreed that people from different backgrounds get on well with each other in their local area. This is a deterioration from 81% in the Place Survey 2009. The average for districts in 2008/9 was 77.2% and the top quartile was 81.7%. Though these figures may now be out of date, this does imply that there is room for improvement here.

Possible objective: Increase the percentage of women who say they feel safe in their local area after dark, and increase the percentage of people in the 75+ age group who feel safe in their local area. This is an issue where services such as the Police are able to have a much greater impact than the Council. Inequalities will also reflect, to an extent, physical vulnerabilities and cultural anxieties.

Possible objective: Further increase the proportion of respondents to Residents' Surveys who agree that people from different backgrounds get on well in their local area. However, this information is not specific enough to form the foundation of an objective as people's interpretations of the question will vary. Nonetheless, it is hoped that as work on the Big Society progresses this figure may improve as people get to know their neighbours while working towards shared goals.

1.3.14 **The Council's workforce**

This is based on the more detailed report produced to accompany the Report of the Head of Human Resources on 'Equality Duty – Publication of Data', which is attached in **Appendix G**.

Figures suggest more action should be taken to attract younger workers (especially aged under 25) as they are under represented in the work force (the age group 41-50 in particular is overrepresented). Analysis of recruitment suggests that we are positively recruiting younger candidates with an increase in the percentage of those being offered positions compared to those applying; however, this is also likely to be skewed due to the age profile of the Hotfoot school holiday

play scheme staff candidates and this being such a large part (37%) of the recruited pool.

The gender split of the workforce is 52% female and 48% male; in the local area the gender split is 49.9% female and 50.1% male (Mid-year population estimates 2010). Given that the public sector traditionally attracts more female employees, the workforce balance is good compared to the local population. However, in grades 4 to 8 women are more represented than men by up to as much as 156% (Grade 6) and at grades 10 to 12 there are up to 60% fewer women than men. Overall it appears that recently a higher percentage of males have been shortlisted then failed to be offered a position - this pattern is even more marked if Hotfoot positions are excluded from the analysis. This is not representative of the work force profile but may reflect the type of posts that have been recruited this year.

Based on the 2001 census data, employees from BME communities are over-represented in the workforce, but this census data is out of date and more recent data sets do not include figures for working-age adults. Of the 83 Hotfoot applications only one was received from a candidate from a mixed ethnic origin and none from BME candidates. It was also found that there was a low success rate for BME applicants to customer service roles.

No concerning pay inequalities (by gender, ethnicity or disability status) were identified in analysis. Given the very limited data available, no significant inequalities according to disability, religion, maternity or sexual orientation have been identified.

Possible objective: Increase the proportion of men working in grades 4 to 8 (to increase entry level opportunities) and/or of women working in grades 10 to 12 (to increase higher level opportunities). With a reducing headcount it is very difficult to address this situation at present.

Possible objective: Increase the representation of younger people (aged under 25) in the Council's workforce. Actions already proposed in the HR action plan included advertising suitable vacancies in local schools, and continuing the apprenticeship programme. However, recruitment into the Council is currently minimal so making targets in this area is inappropriate.

Possible objective: Increase the number of BME candidates for Hotfoot roles and/or increase the success rate of BME candidates applying for customer services roles. The HR action plan proposes advertising Hotfoot posts to target areas with more people from ethnic minorities, but the future of the Hotfoot scheme is uncertain. The action plan also proposes examining the activities

within the assessment centre to identify if there are any areas of bias against BME candidates and consider the possibility of a member of BME group as one of interviewers. However, a fixed target can be set only when recruitment levels rise again and once the issue is better assessed.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not recommended

1.4.1 Setting equality objectives is a statutory duty. Failure could result in action against the Council, and reputational damage. It would be against the values of the Council, which upholds the promotion of equality. The Council could choose to set fewer than two objectives but this is not proportionate to the Council's size and role.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 Equality is a core value for the organization. Setting equality objectives can also help us in moving towards the organizational priority of ensuring that 'Residents are not disadvantaged because of...who they are, vulnerable people are assisted and the level of deprivation is reduced.' Some objectives would also address other priorities.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There are risks associated with not setting equality objectives.

1.6.2 Monitoring progress on objectives will ensure that services have the best chance of meeting them by adjusting strategies where necessary.

1.7 Other Implications

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



- 1.7.1 Financial: funding may be required for some of the objectives to be achieved.
- 1.7.2 Staffing: staff will need to be made aware of the new objectives as part of their roles. Objectives around the Council's workforce are not being recommended.
- 1.7.3 This report has highlighted some areas where future analysis would be useful; in itself this forms a type of equality needs assessment.
- 1.7.4 There would be legal implications if the Council did NOT set objectives.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

- Appendix A: Baseline population data for Maidstone
- Appendix B: Place Survey 2009 data
- Appendix C: Museum visitor data
- Appendix D: Healthy Weight Programme data (including NHS obesity figures)
- Appendix E: Housing data
- Appendix F: Leisure centre membership data
- Appendix G: MBC workforce data

1.8.2 Background Documents

- EHRC: 'Objectives and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities'
- BRAP: 'Equality objectives and public authorities: Tips, hints, and bright ideas'
- KCC area data profiles and ONS area profiles
- Place Survey 2008/9 report and data tables
- Museum visitor survey writeup Q1 2011/12
- Powerpoint presentation on museum data for 2007
- Healthy weight data provided by the Community Partnerships team
- NHS/The Information Centre, 'Statistics on obesity, physical activity and diet: England 2006.'
- Leisure centre data provided by the service
- Housing data provided by the service
- Maidstone Profile Report produced for the LSP in 2008

IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

Yes

No

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

..... Issue was logged 13/2/2012 so will appear in next Forward Plan....

This is a Key Decision because: It affects the whole borough....

Wards/Parishes affected:All....

Appendix A: Baseline Population Data for Maidstone

Mid-2010 population estimates, ONS (to compare with 2010/11 housing data)												
	Total	Gender		Age								
		Male	Female	Under 16	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
<i>Figures</i>	149800	74100	75700	27800	7000	8200	18100	21900	21300	19500	14000	12000
<i>% of population belonging to each group</i>		49.47%	50.53%	18.56%	4.67%	5.47%	12.08%	14.62%	14.22%	13.02%	9.35%	8.01%

Mid-2009 population estimates, ONS (to compare with 2009 leisure centre data)												
	Total	Gender		Age								
		Male	Female	Under 16	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
<i>Figures</i>	148200	73,300	74,900	27600	7100	8,100	17,900	22,200	20,700	19,400	13,400	11,800
<i>% of population belonging to each group</i>	100%	49.46%	50.54%	18.62%	4.79%	5.47%	12.08%	14.98%	13.97%	13.09%	9.04%	7.96%

ONS

2009 population estimates by ethnic group, ONS																	
	Total	Ethnicity															
		White British	White Irish	Other white	African	Caribbean	Other black	Bangladeshi	Indian	Pakistani	Chinese	Other Asian	Mixed white /Caribbean	Mixed white /African	Mixed white /Asian	Other mixed	Other
<i>Figures</i>	148200	133400	1100	3700	1300	900	200	400	1500	700	1300	700	600	300	800	500	800
<i>% of population belonging to each group</i>		90	0.70	2.50	0.90	0.60	0.10	0.30	1	0.50	0.90	0.50	0.40	0.20	0.50	0.30	0.50
<i>Figures</i>		138,200			2,400			3,300			2,200			2,100			

Appendix A: Baseline Population Data for Maidstone

2001 Census: Religion										
	Total	Religion								
		No religion	Christian	Muslim	Buddhist	Hindu	Sikh	Jewish	Other	Not stated/blank
<i>Figures</i>	138939	19916	106025	729	310	665	148.00	166	719	10261
<i>% of population belonging to each group</i>		14.30%	76.30%	0.50%	0.20%	0.50%	0.10%	0.10%	0.50%	7.40%

April 2010 - March 2011, Annual Population Survey, ONS: Disability among age groups 16-64		
	Disabled according to DDA	Work Limiting Disabled
Maidstone	4.30%	3.20%
South East	5.30%	3.50%
England	5.30%	3.40%

Appendix B: Place Survey Data 2009

	aged 75+	aged 65-74	aged 55-64	aged 45-54	aged 35-44	aged 25-34	aged 16-24	white	BME	male	female	MEAN
how satisfied they are with their local area as a place to live		89%				82%			plus 5%			85%
overall satisfaction with their home as a place to live		96%				84%						90%
satisfied with the way MBC run things	60%					35%					plus 23%	44%
satisfaction with parks and open spaces						75%	70%					73%
satisfaction with refuse collection	94%					80%	85%					86%
satisfaction with local tips/household waste recycling centres		80%					49%					67%
satisfied with the keeping of public land clear of waste and refuse				54%			74%			57%	62%	60%
satisfaction with doorstep recycling	74%					29%			plus 14%		plus 5%	51%
satisfaction with local transport information		49%		33%					plus 27%	37%	44%	41%
satisfaction with local bus service	58%			33%				42%	62%	39%	46%	43%
satisfaction with museums and galleries		69%			51%				plus 7%		plus 11%	58%
satisfaction with theatres and concert halls							61%	44%	51%		plus 8%	44%
satisfaction with Sport/Leisure facilities				37%			52%		plus 9%	39%	46%	43%

Appendix B: Place Survey Data 2009

	aged 75+	aged 65-74	aged 55-64	aged 45-54	aged 35-44	aged 25-34	aged 16-24	white	BME	male	female	MEAN
use parks and open spaces at least weekly (also a general decrease from age 35-44 on, and higher for those with children)	21%; 36% made their last trip more than 6 months ago				54%							40%
use local bus services almost daily	17.80%					10%	17.90%			9%	15%	12%
use sport and leisure facilities at least weekly	25%; but 43% last used the facilities longer than a year ago so overall least likely		12%		33%					26%	19%	22%
use local tips/household waste recycling centres at least monthly		57%					39%	51%	69%			15%

Appendix B: Place Survey Data 2009

	aged 75+	aged 65-74	aged 55-64	aged 45-54	aged 35-44	aged 25-34	aged 16-24	white	BME	male	female	MEAN
use local transport info at least weekly						19%	27%	13%	44%	monthly (+7%)		15%
visit museums and galleries at least monthly				7% went at least monthly	26% last visited longer than a year ago		51% last visited longer than a year ago	9%	36%			10%
visit theatres and concert halls at least monthly - no inequality noted												7%
well informed re how/where to register to vote (Overall = 92%)	97%^						71%	93%	78%			92%
well informed re how your council tax is spent (Overall 66%)			80%				39%			70%	63%	66%
well informed re how you can get involved in local decision-making (27%)		41%					15%					27%
well informed re What standard of service you should expect from local public services (35%)	53%					26%			plus 13%			35%
well informed re how well local public services are performing (35%)	55%						23%					35%

Appendix B: Place Survey Data 2009

	aged 75+	aged 65-74	aged 55-64	aged 45-54	aged 35-44	aged 25-34	aged 16-24	white	BME	male	female	MEAN
well informed re local public services (37%)	51%						18%		plus 7%			37%
feel well informed how to complain about local public services (33%)		48%					24%					33%
well informed re what to do in the event of a large scale emergency (17%)	31%						13%		plus 7%			17%
agree that they can influence decisions in their local area (20 mins walk from home)		33%					19%	25%	49%		plus 5%	25%
think it is a problem people not treating each other with respect and consideration is in their local area		16%					33%					28%
feel as though they have been treated with respect and consideration by their local public services	83%						70%		plus 10%			76%
feel safe outside in local area after dark	39%				62%				plus 15%	plus 12%		56%
feel safe outside in local area in the day	87%						94%		plus 6%			92%
satisfied with the way their complaint had been handled/dealt wit						25%	58%				plus 10%	41%

Appendix B: Place Survey Data 2009

	aged 75+	aged 65-74	aged 55-64	aged 45-54	aged 35-44	aged 25-34	aged 16-24	white	BME	male	female	MEAN
how strongly they feel they belong to their immediate neighbourhood		72%					48%					
		70%				49%				55%	63%	59%
have contacted the council with a complaint in the last year	18%			29%				23	13			
give unpaid help to a group/organisation at least weekly		19%				9%						
give unpaid help to a group/organisation at least monthly					34%	15.00%						
have NOT given unpaid help to a group/organisation in the last year					43%	62%		52%	46%			

Appendix C: Museum visitor data

	Total			Age								
WHOLE POPULATION		Male	Female	Under 16	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	149800	74,100	75,700	27800	7000	8,200	18,100	21,900	21,300	19,500	14,000	12,000
% of population belonging to each group		49.47%	50.53%	18.56%	4.67%	5.47%	12.08%	14.62%	14.22%	13.02%	9.35%	8.01%
					10.15%						17.36%	
										30.38%		
Museum visitor survey completers, first quarter 2011/12	1522	Male	Female	Under 15	16-25		26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	Over 66	
% of these visitors belonging to each group		46.60%	53.40%	10.70%	12.30%		16.70%	19.30%	18.40%	11.10%	9.40%	
										20.5%		

Appendix D: Healthy Weight Programme data

Healthy Weight Programme data: Gender				
Group	Total	Male	Female	Blank
WHOLE POPULATION		49.47%	50.53%	x
Registered on healthy weight programme	535	65	262	208
<i>% of participants belonging to each group</i>		12.15%	48.97%	38.88%
<i>% of participants belonging to each group with unknowns excluded (gender only)</i>		19.88%	80.12%	x
[Amended figures using names to estimate gender]		116	371	48
<i>[% of participants belonging to each group using names to estimate gender]</i>		21.68%	69.35%	8.97%
<i>% of participants belonging to each group, using names to estimate gender, with unknowns excluded</i>		23.82%	76.18%	x

Healthy Weight Programme data: (Dis)ability and age														
Group	Total	(Dis)ability			Age on date of joining programme									
		Not disabled	Disabled	Blank	Under 16	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Unknown
WHOLE POPULATION			4.30%		18.56%	4.67%	5.47%	12.08%	14.62%	14.22%	13.02%	9.35%	8.01%	0
Registered on healthy weight programme	535	108	22	405	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	4	23	43	46	69	66	15	269
<i>% of participants belonging to each group</i>		20.19%	4.11%	75.70%	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0.75%	4.30%	8.04%	8.60%	12.90%	12.34%	2.80%	50.28%
<i>% of participants belonging to each group with unknowns excluded (gender only)</i>														

Appendix D: Healthy Weight Programme data

Healthy Weight Programme data: Ethnicity																			
<i>Group</i>	Total	White British	White Irish	Gypsy/ Traveller	Other white	African	Caribbean	Other black	Bangladeshi	Indian	Pakistani	Chinese	Other Asian	Mixed white/ Caribbean	Mixed white/ African	Mixed white/ Asian	Other mixed	Other	Blank
WHOLE POPULATION		90.0%	0.7%	2.5%		0.9%	0.6%	0.1%	0.3%	1.0%	0.5%	0.9%	0.5%	0.4%	0.2%	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%	
Registered on healthy weight programme	535	84	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	442
<i>% of participants belonging to each group</i>		15.70	0.37	0.00	0.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.37	0.00	0.00	0.19	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	82.62

Appendix D: Healthy Weight Programme data

Department of Health Survey for England 2003: Obesity figures for the South East by gender		
group	male	female
% of group with BMI over 25 (overweight)	65.2%	51.80%
% of group with BMI over 30 (obese)	19.9%	19.30%
% of total sample in each group	49.55%	50.45%
% of overweight sample in each group	55.28%	44.72%
% of obese sample in each group	52.94%	47.06%
Department of Health Survey for England 2005: Obesity figures for England by gender		
group	male	female
% of group with BMI over 25 (overweight)	64.7%	56.4%
% of group with BMI over 30 (obese)	22.1%	24.3%
% of total sample in each group	49.68%	50.32%
% of overweight sample in each group	53.11%	46.89%
% of obese sample in each group	47.31%	52.69%

Appendix E: Housing data

Housing data: Gender and marital status								
		Gender			Marital status			
Group	Total	Male	Female	Blank	Married	Cohabiting	Single	Blank
POPULATION OF MAIDSTONE		49.47%	50.53%					
% of over 16s in total population of Maidstone made up by group								
On Housing Register 30th Jan 2012	3968	1762	2171	35	649	480	2587	252
% of total on register made up by group		44.41	54.71	0.88	16.36	12.10	65.20	6.35
Housed 2010/11	641	264	375	2	111	65	404	61
% of total housed made up by each group		41.19	58.50	0.31	17.32	10.14	63.03	9.52

Appendix E: Housing data

Housing data: Ethnicity																			
Group	Total	White British	White Irish	Gypsy /Traveller	Other white	African	Caribbean	Other black	Bangladeshi	Indian	Pakistani	Chinese	Other Asian	Mixed white / Caribbean	Mixed white / African	Mixed white /Asian	Other mixed	Other	Blank
% of POPULATION OF MAIDSTONE		90.00	0.70	2.50		0.90	0.60	0.10	0.30	1.00	0.50	0.9	0.50	0.40	0.20	0.50	0.30	0.50	
						6.7													
On Housing Register 30th Jan 2012	3968	3166	25	17	189	73	23	13	18	5	19	14	99	13	1	8	11	44	230
% of total on register made up by group		79.79	0.63	0.43	4.76	1.84	0.58	0.33	0.45	0.13	0.48	0.35	2.49	0.33	0.03	0.20	0.28	1.11	5.80
						8.59													
Housed 2010/11	641	522	3	0	23	4	1	2	6	1	1	1	12	0	1	1	4	4	55
% of total housed made up by each group		81.44	0.47	0.00	3.59	0.62	0.16	0.31	0.94	0.16	0.16	0.16	1.87	0.00	0.16	0.16	0.62	0.62	8.58
						5.9													

Appendix E: Housing data

Housing data: (Dis)ability and age													
	Total	(Dis)ability			Age (on date of housing register/date of case closure)								
Group		Not disabled	Disabled	Blank	Under 16	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
POPULATION OF MAIDSTONE			4.3%		18.56%	4.67%	5.47%	12.08%	14.62%	14.22%	13.02%	9.35%	8.01%
% of over 16s in total population of Maidstone made up by group					x	5.74%	6.72%	14.84%	17.95%	17.46%	15.98%	11.48%	9.84%
						45.25%				54.75%			
On Housing Register 30th Jan 2012	3968	3879	87	2	4	159	643	1028	796	595	339	221	183
% of total on register made up by group		97.76%	2.19%	0.05%	0.10%	4.01%	16.20%	25.91%	20.06%	14.99%	8.54%	5.57%	4.61%
% of over 16s on register made up by group					x	4.01%	16.22%	25.93%	20.08%	15.01%	8.55%	5.58%	4.62%
						66.25%				33.75%			
Housed 2010/11	641	616	25	0	0	63	135	153	94	79	51	37	29
% of total housed made up by each group		96.10%	3.90%	0.00%	0.00%	9.83%	21.06%	23.87%	14.66%	12.32%	7.96%	5.77%	4.52%

Data is collected on religion, sexual orientation, and trans/cisgender status, but there were too few responses for this to be useful.

Appendix F: Leisure Centre Membership data

Leisure Centre Membership data: Gender				
Group	Total	Male	Female	Blank
WHOLE POPULATION (ONS mid-2009)	148200	73,300	74,900	
<i>% of population belonging to each group</i>	100%	49.46%	50.54%	
Active members of leisure centres, June-Sep 2009	5137	2092	2947	98
<i>% of active members belonging to each group</i>	100.00%	40.72%	57.37%	1.91%
<i>% of group who are active members</i>	3.47%	2.85%	3.93%	
Members attending at least once a month	2088	1185.00	903.00	
<i>% of members attending monthly belonging to each group</i>	100%	56.75%	43.25%	
<i>% of group in Maidstone who are active members AND attended monthly</i>	1.41%	1.62%	1.21%	
<i>% of active members in group who attend monthly</i>	40.65%	56.64%	30.64%	
Members attending at least weekly	620	326	294	
<i>% of members attending weekly belonging to each group</i>	100%	52.58%	47.42%	
<i>% of group in Maidstone who are active members AND attended weekly</i>	0.42%	0.44%	0.39%	
<i>% of active members in group who attend weekly</i>	12.07%	15.58%	9.98%	

Appendix F: Leisure Centre Membership data

Leisure Centre Membership data: Age at end of quarter											
Group	Total	Under 16	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Blank
WHOLE POPULATION (ONS mid-2009)	148200	27600	7100	8100	17900	22200	20700	19400	13400	11800	
<i>% of population belonging to each group</i>	100.00%	18.62%	4.79%	5.47%	12.08%	14.98%	13.97%	13.09%	9.04%	7.96%	
Active members of leisure centres, June-Sep 2009	5137	1547	221	261	783	754	652	374	348	109	88
<i>% of active members belonging to each group</i>	100.00%	30.11%	4.30%	5.08%	15.24%	14.68%	12.69%	7.28%	6.77%	2.12%	1.71%
<i>% of group who are active members</i>	3.47%	5.61%	3.11%	3.22%	4.37%	3.40%	3.15%	1.93%	2.60%	0.92%	
Members attending at least once a month	2088	203	92	122	398	378	338	234	233	89	1
<i>% of members attending monthly belonging to each group</i>	100.00%	9.72%	4.41%	5.84%	19.06%	18.10%	16.19%	11.21%	11.16%	4.26%	0.05%
<i>% of group in Maidstone who are active members AND attended monthly</i>	1.41%	0.74%	1.30%	1.51%	2.22%	1.70%	1.63%	1.21%	1.74%	0.75%	
<i>% of active members in group who attend monthly</i>	40.65%	13.12%	41.63%	46.74%	50.83%	50.13%	51.84%	62.57%	66.95%	81.65%	1.14%
Members attending at least weekly	620	41	11	31	110	107	122	80	95	23	
<i>% of members attending weekly belonging to each group</i>	100.00%	6.61%	1.77%	5.00%	17.74%	17.26%	19.68%	12.90%	15.32%	3.71%	
<i>% of group in Maidstone who are active members AND attended weekly</i>	0.42%	0.15%	0.15%	0.38%	0.61%	0.48%	0.59%	0.41%	0.71%	0.19%	
<i>% of active members in group who attend weekly</i>	12.07%	2.65%	4.98%	11.88%	14.05%	14.19%	18.71%	21.39%	27.30%	21.10%	0.00%

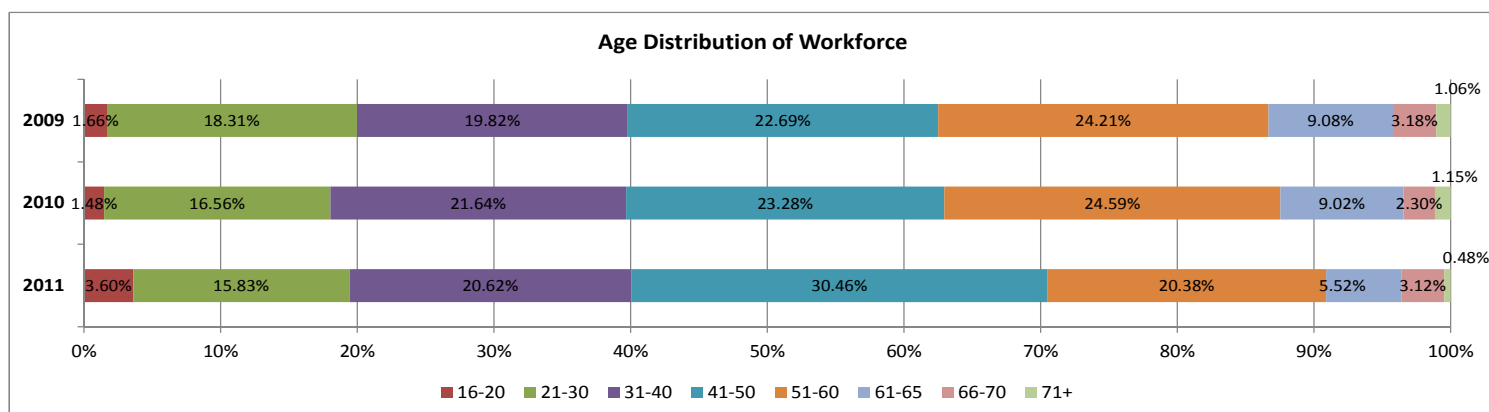
1. Introduction

This report sets out the key information relating to the work force at Maidstone Borough Council. Where the data suggests that further investigation is required this is noted. Where it is possible to compare the data in a meaningful way to other statistics this has been undertaken to identify whether we are representative of the local area. This information is monitored actively by the Corporate Management Team.

Human Resource is part of the CIPRA benchmarking club and where appropriate references to this data have been made. It should be noted that when benchmarking Maidstone has been compare to other district councils a full list of district council within the benchmarking club is available from HR.

2. Work force analysis

Age



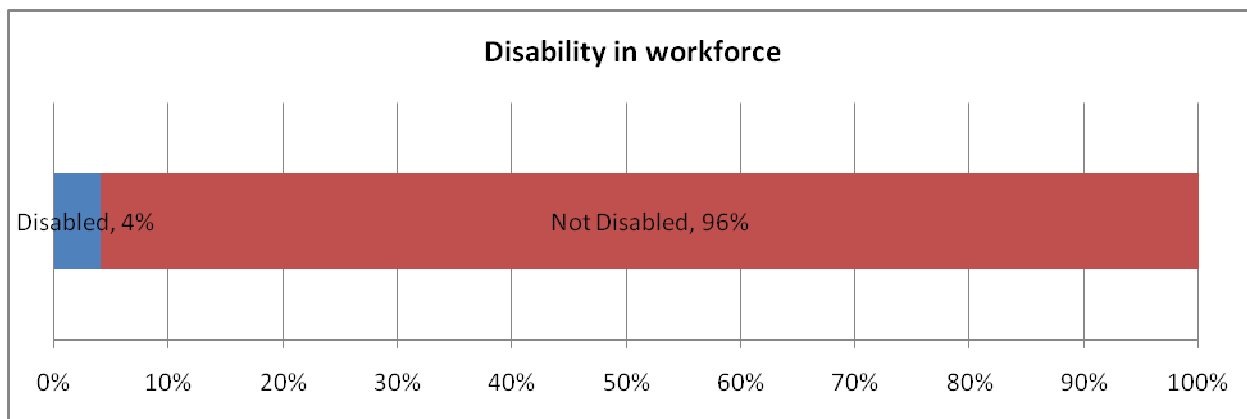
The distribution of age across the authority has fluctuated slightly in the past three years. The workforce has shrunk by 25% since 2008.

In the last three years the percentage of the workforce aged 16-20 has doubled and the percentage of those aged over 71 has been reduced by half.

There have also been an 8% increase of workers in the age band 41-50 and a slight increase in those aged 31-40. However, this group does not compare to local picture 13% more people in this age group than there are in the local community. Both the group aged 21-30 and 31-40 are representative of the local population. Although community figures illustrate higher numbers of 16-25 and over 70's as they include people who are in education and who are retired. The figures suggest more action should be taken to attract younger workers as they are under represented in the work force.

Age Band	2011	2010	2009	2010 ONS
16-20	3.60%	1.48%	1.66%	7.20%
21-30	15.83%	16.56%	18.31%	14.74%
31-40	20.62%	21.64%	19.82%	19.03%
41-50	30.46%	23.28%	22.69%	17.26%
51-60	20.38%	24.59%	24.21%	17.27%
61-65	5.52%	9.02%	9.08%	6.39%
66-70	3.12%	2.30%	3.18%	5.34%
71+	0.48%	1.15%	1.06%	12.78%

Disability

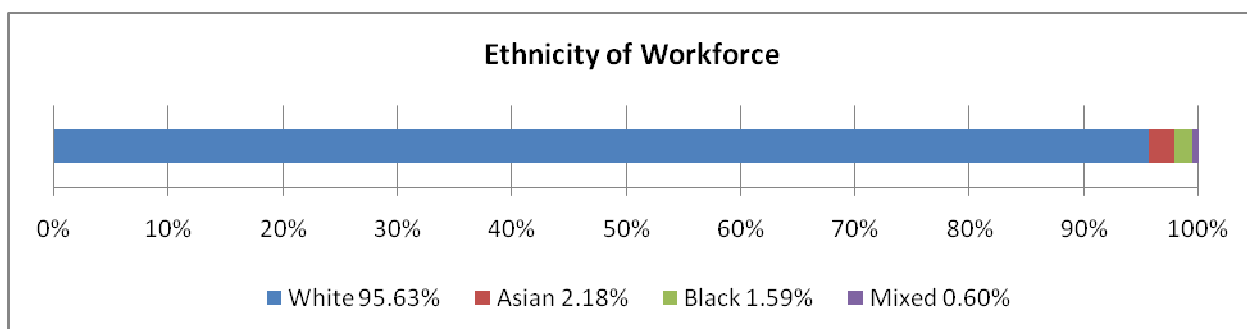


The above data represents individuals who consider themselves to be disabled under the definition of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005, which is the test applied in law to disability discrimination. The latest figures¹ from the Department of work and Pensions show that 4% of the working age population are claiming disability benefits, which suggests that the council does match the local population. The CIPFA average for districts is 5.6% and the district with the highest reporting of DDA in the comparator group is Braintree with 10% and the lowest is Tamworth with 1.8%.

	No. of workers
Disabled	25
Not disabled	545

Non-declaration by applicants and employees of a disability is common, even though they are encouraged to declare. Nationally, it has been observed that there remains a fear among many that declaration will result in discrimination in employment. Since the introduction of the ITrent Self Service HR System employees have been encourage to update their details when a lifestyle change occurs and it is accepted that disability is an area which can change during service. It is thought that disability is being under reported in the organisation, action will therefore continue to be taken to encourage reporting.

Ethnicity



Local Authorities have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make appropriate arrangements to ensure their various functions are carried out with due regard to the need to eliminate

¹ DWP Longitudinal Study May 2011

Appendix G: MBC workforce data

unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups.

The data shows that 4.32% of employees come from a BME (Black or Minority Ethnic) group at 31st April 2011 this is an increase of 0.10% from 2010. The result for 2011 compares favourably with the percentage of economically active people in Maidstone who are from black or minority ethnic communities which is 2.7%².

Ethnic origin	No. of workers	%
Asian: Other	2	0.38%
Asian: Chinese	1	0.19%
Asian: Indian	5	0.94%
Asian: Pakistani	3	0.56%
Black: African	5	0.94%
Black: Caribbean	3	0.56%
Mixed: Other	1	0.19%
Mixed: White & Asian	1	0.19%
Mixed: White & Black Caribbean	1	0.19%
White: Other	10	1.88%
White: UK	496	93.41%
White: Irish	3	0.56%

Based on the 2001 census data, the workforce does not reflect the ethnic profile of Maidstone, with employees from BME communities over represented, although the census data is widely accepted as being out of date and does not, therefore, provide an accurate picture of the County profile today; it is however, the most readily available dataset. A more up-to-date figure will not be available until the Office of National Statistics releases Census 2011 data (normally two years after the census takes place), as the mid-year estimates do not include a figure for the percentage of working-age adults.

The mid-year population estimates suggest that the census data is out of date as the latest available data (2009) shows that Maidstone has a BME population of 6.7% however it should be noted that this figure covers all ages ranges and not just those classed as economically active (16 to 65).

6.7% of the workforce did not give their ethnicity.

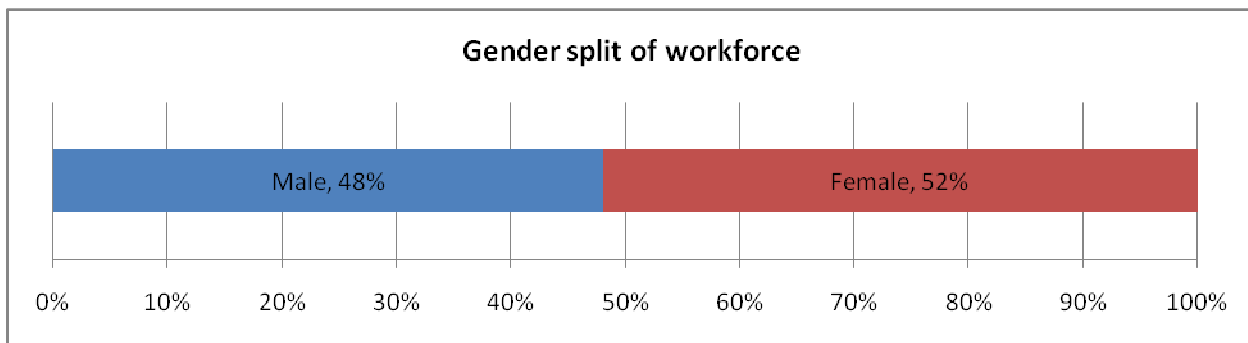
Gender

The Council has a requirement to report on Gender under the Equality Act 2010 which created a public sector duty to have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

	No. of workers
Male	276
Female	294

² 2001 Census

Appendix G: MBC workforce data

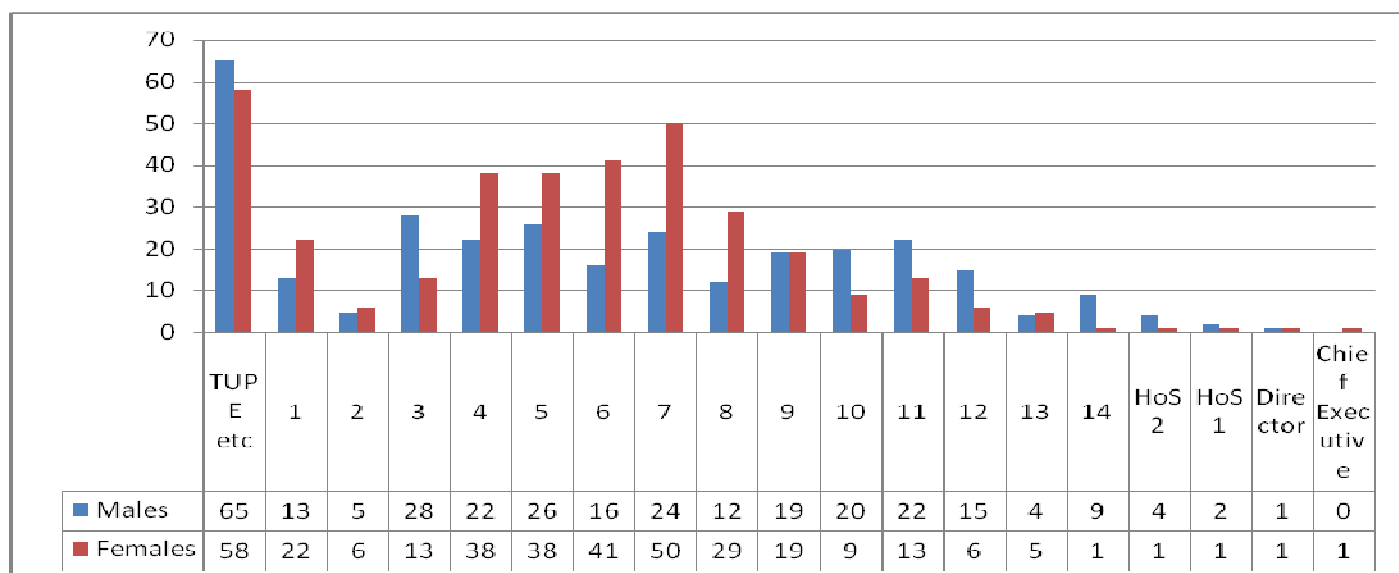


The information from the 2010 mid-year population estimates show that in the local area the gender split for economically active people is 50.10% males and 49.90% females. The data above compares favourably with the local picture and historic trends within the public sector which traditionally attracting more female employees.

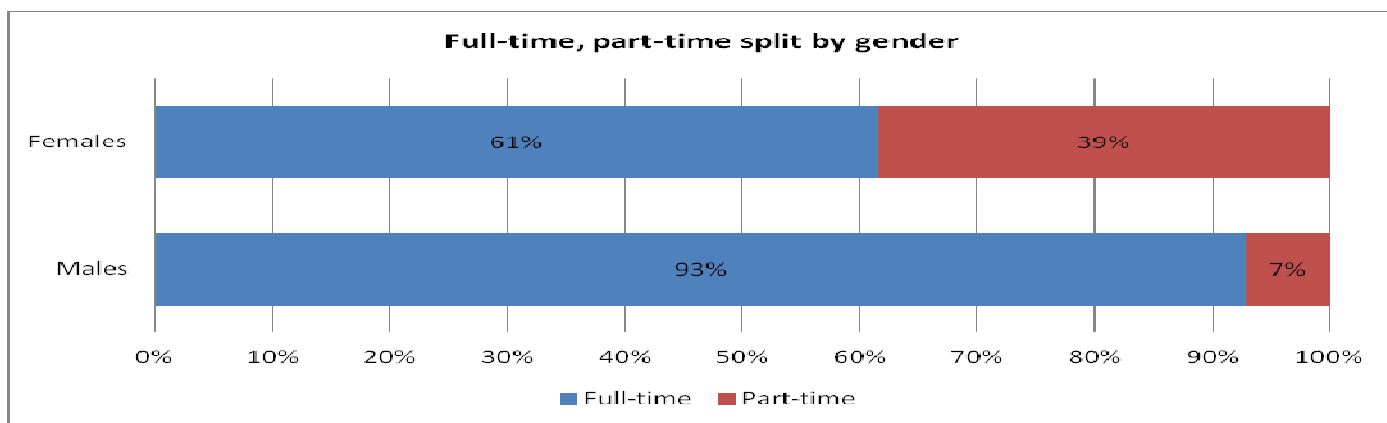
Gender	Full-time	Part-time
Males	233	18
Females	158	99

Looking at the age spread across the grades, in grades 4 to 8 women are more represented than men up to as much as 156% (Grade 6). However, at grades 10 to 12 there are up to 60% less women than men.

Overall 23% of the workforce works part-time this is slightly higher than the district average of 22.4%. When this is broken down into men and women, 39% of all women in the workforce work part-time compared to just 7% of men.



Appendix G: MBC workforce data



Sexual Orientation & Religion

The majority of employees (77.19%) did not give details of their sexual orientation or religion, this is not surprising as it is a more recently protected characteristic and therefore data has not been gathered over the same time period from new applicants.

Sexual orientation	No. of workers
Heterosexual/Straight	126
Gay/Lesbian	3
Bisexual	1
Not given	440

In the case of sexual orientation there is no data currently available to show if the workforce is representative of the borough as it was only in the 2011 census that this question was first introduced, employees will be encouraged to up-date their information on this issue.

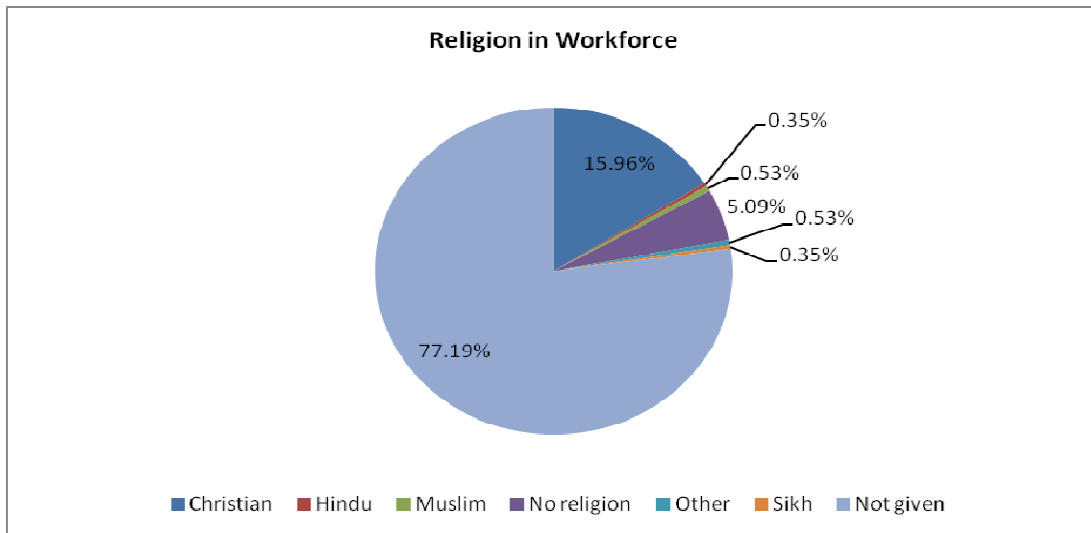
Of those who did give details of their religion the latest data for comparison is the 2001 census data where the question on religion was asked for the first time and was optional. Therefore it should be noted that 7.5% of residents did not respond to this question in the census, compared to 77.19% of the workforce where religion was not given.

Where details of religion have been given the data shows that although both Buddhism and Judaism account for 0.2% of the population in the local area however no-one in the workforce who has given details of their religion has reported themselves as Jewish or Buddhist. As above it is suggested that employees are encouraged to update this information before the next Annual Workforce Monitoring Report.

Religion	No. of workers
Christian	91
Hindu	2
Muslim	3
No religion	29
Other	3
Sikh	2
Not given	440

It should be noted that in Maidstone’s local area a higher proportion of residents say they are Christian or ‘all other religions’ than the average for England and Wales and that there is higher reporting of Christians, Hindus and ‘all other religion’ than the Kent average.

Appendix G: MBC workforce data



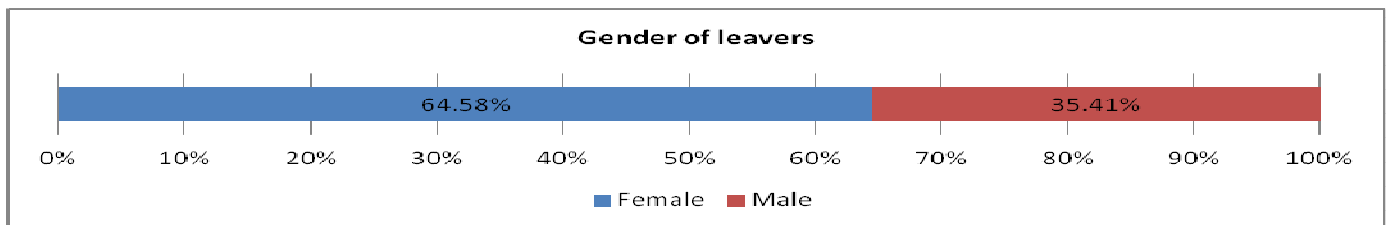
Leavers

The workforce has reduced by 7% in the year ending March 2011.

The percentage of staff turnover for 2011 was 10% for 2010/11 this is higher than the average 8% within the benchmarking group. However, the authority was reorganised during 2010 and some of this work has continued into 2011/12. Out of the comparator group Lincoln had the highest turnover at 50%.

Gender	No. of Leavers
Female	93
Male	51

During 2010/11 a total of 144 people left the authority, 64.58% of leavers were women and 36.8% were between 21-30 years old.



Ethnic Origin	No. of Leavers
Not given	27
Asian:Indian	2
Black:African	1
Black:Caribbean	1
White:Other	4
White:UK	109

Reason for Leaving	No. of Leavers
Career Progression	2
Died in Service	4
Dismissal	4
End of Fixed Term Contract	13
End of Seasonal Work	1
End of Temp Contract	51
Personal Reasons	1

Appendix G: MBC workforce data

	No. of Leavers
Disabled	6
Not Disabled	138

Age Band	No. of Leavers	%
16-20	17	11.8%
21-30	53	36.8%
31-40	17	11.8%
41-50	18	12.5%
51-60	21	14.6%
61-65	11	7.64%
66-70	5	3.47%
71+	2	1.38%

Redundancy	8
Resignation	39
Early Retirement	1
Retirement - Flexible	3
Retirement	12
Retirement - Redundancy	5

Disciplinary & Grievance Cases

There were three instances where disciplinary action was taken.

Stage	Number of cases	Gender	Age band	Ethnic Origin	Disability
1st Level Warning	1	Female	51-60	White: UK	
2nd Level Warning	1	Male	31-40	White: UK	
Final Warning	1	Male	51-60	White: UK	

Grievance Cases

There were no grievances raised during this period.

Return to work rates

Number of employees whose maternity leave ended in period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011	9
Number of employees who returned to work after maternity leave	9
	100.00%

3. Equal Pay Analysis

The Council conducts an equal pay analysis annually to check that there are no imbalances within pay grades.

Grade	Grade average	No. Grade equality report	White Groups Average	BME groups Average	Percentage Difference	Number FTE not known
1	£13,509.93	10.216	£13,509.93	N/A	N/A	1.00
2	£14,316.00	4.00	£14,316.00	N/A	N/A	0.00
3	£15,275.00	25.19	£15,266.46	N/A	N/A	0.00
4	£15,976.87	38.92	£16,022.62	£16,060.00	-0.23%	0.50
5	£17,448.18	52.03	£17,472.13	£17,113.00	2.06%	0.00
6	£19,473.75	43.16	£19,474.67	£19,451.00	0.12%	0.00
7	£22,195.89	67.90	£22,169.60	£22,656.00	-2.19%	1.00
8	£24,441.53	38.84	£24,440.34	£24,631.00	-0.78%	0.00
9	£27,378.46	33.04	£27,345.78	£27,727.00	-1.39%	0.00
10	£31,174.73	25.27	£31,155.20	N/A	N/A	1.00
11	£34,449.35	35.85	£34,431.39	£35,096.00	-1.93%	0.00
12	£39,288.86	21.11	£39,288.86	N/A	N/A	0.00
13	£45,219.13	8.00	£45,154.00	£45,675.00	-1.15%	0.00
14	£52,961.67	9.00	£52,961.67	N/A	N/A	0.00
Head of Service 2	£63,454.17	6.00	£63,454.17	N/A	N/A	0.00
Head of Service 1	£76,718.00	3.08	£76,718.33	N/A	N/A	0.00
Director	£94,419.00	2.00	£94,419.00	£94,419.00	0.00%	0.00
Chief Executive	£105,766.00	1.00	£105,766.00	N/A	N/A	0.00

In general equal pay analysis would focus on the differences between males and females as this is where there is a legislative requirement for equality. This analysis is also extended here to disability and ethnicity.

The equal pay analysis will generally focus on areas where there is a difference of more than 5% and in those cases will turn attention to the 'genuine material factor reasons that might explain the difference. As can be seen from the table above there are no percentage differences above a magnitude of 5% and indeed the differences are considerably smaller than this.

The gender pay difference is set out below and in only two areas are there differences greater than 5%. At grade 14 there is a difference between males and females which is caused by the incremental points on the scale and the appointment rules in place. Newly appointed

Appendix G: MBC workforce data

employees are expected to be appointed at the lowest point of the grade and move up each year provided there is satisfactory performance, the difference in the males and females at grade 14 reflect the fact that the females are more recently appointed. At the Head of Service 1 grade the difference reflects the fact that the two males in the group are holding positions of additional responsibility and therefore have access to two additional incremental points.

Appendix G: MBC workforce data

Equal Pay Analysis 2010/11 – Gender and Disability

Grade	Scale	Grade average	Number FTE in grade
1		£13,509.93	10.216
2		£14,316.00	4.00
3		£15,275.00	25.19
4		£15,976.87	38.92
5		£17,448.18	52.03
6		£19,473.75	43.16
7		£22,195.89	67.90
8		£24,441.53	38.84
9		£27,378.46	33.04
57 10		£31,174.73	25.27
11		£34,449.35	35.85
12		£39,288.86	21.11
13		£45,219.13	8.00
14		£52,961.67	9.00
Head of Service 2		£63,454.17	6.00
Head of Service 1		£76,718.00	3.08
Director		£94,419.00	2.00
Chief Executive		£105,766.00	1.00

Female	Male	Percentage Difference
£13,459.17	£13,548.00	-0.66%
£14,316.00	£14,316.00	0.00%
£15,501.00	£15,235.83	1.71%
£15,939.97	£16,059.88	-0.75%
£17,388.38	£17,526.38	-0.79%
£19,461.35	£19,506.50	-0.23%
£22,217.14	£22,154.25	0.28%
£24,434.10	£24,463.80	-0.12%
£27,074.65	£27,665.39	-2.18%
£31,119.00	£31,195.25	-0.25%
£33,889.64	£34,790.04	-2.66%
£39,650.00	£39,153.44	1.25%
£44,763.25	£45,675.00	-2.04%
£49,611.00	£53,919.00	-8.68%
£63,017.00	£63,541.60	-0.83%
£74,091.00	£78,032.00	-5.32%
£94,419.00	£94,419.00	0.00%
£105,766.00	N/A	N/A

Disabled	Not Disabled	Percentage Difference
£13,548.00	£13,507.00	0.30%
N/A	£14,316.00	N/A
£15,500.00	£15,266.46	1.51%
£15,734.67	£15,991.69	-1.63%
£17,633.00	£17,434.98	1.12%
£19,840.00	£19,458.80	1.92%
£22,656.00	£22,176.45	2.12%
£24,965.00	£24,441.53	2.10%
£27,727.00	£27,368.21	1.29%
£31,663.00	£31,134.04	1.67%
£35,096.00	£34,412.40	1.95%
£39,650.00	£39,252.75	1.00%
N/A	£45,219.13	N/A
N/A	£52,961.67	N/A
N/A	£63,454.17	N/A
£74,091.00	£78,032.00	N/A
N/A	£94,419.00	N/A
N/A	£105,766.00	N/A

Appendix G: MBC workforce data

There are a higher percentage of males in both the TUPE transfer group, which reflects the largely male manual group of workers, but also in the most senior grades. With a restricted level of recruitment and a reducing headcount it is difficult to quickly address this situation but every effort is made to encourage applicants from under represented groups when recruitment does take place.

4. Recruitment Analysis

Since September 2010 the council has used an electronic application process through the web site enable a greater level of data analysis than was previously possible. This means that it is difficult to draw clear comparisons with previous data which was manually collated. The first year of information gathering will give good baseline data.

The recruitment activity at the Council has diminished in the last two or three years during a period when turnover has been used to freeze posts and reduce costs. Of the recruitment that has taken place 37% of the posts have been for the Hotfoot summer play schemes and these are predominantly for short term play workers during the Easter and Summer school holidays. This is felt to have had an impact on the figures and skewed the usual recruitment profile. Of the 83 Hotfoot applicants only one was received from a candidate from a mixed ethnic origin and none from BME candidates. This indicates that action needs to be taken to attract candidates from a wider ethnic group than currently.

The age analysis suggests that we are positively recruiting younger candidates with an increase in the percentage of those being offered positions compared to those applying, however this is also likely to be skewed due to the age profile of the Hotfoot candidates and this being such a large part of the recruited pool.

An examination of the applications by post suggest that the highest number of applications from those in none white groups are received in the field of customers services and consideration will be given to the profile of the recruitment panel in the future.

In relation to gender it appears that a higher percentage of males are short listed but then fail to succeed to be offered a position, this pattern is even more marked if Hotfoot positions are excluded from the analysis when the percentage of male applicants rises to 34% whereas the percentage of those offered a position is just 6% male. This is not representative of the work force profile but may reflect the type of posts that have been recruited this year; it will need to be monitored closely.

Gender	Applicant Total	Percentage	Shortlisted Total	Percentage	Offer Total	Percentage
Female	458	66.18%	146	61.09%	73	77.66%
Male	225	32.51%	88	36.82%	20	21.28%
Unspecified	9	1.30%	5	2.09%	1	1.06%
Total	692		239		94	

Age	Applicant Total	Percentage	Shortlisted Total	Percentage	Offer Total	Percentage
17 and under	25	3.61%	9	3.77%	5	5.32%
18-25	280	40.46%	72	30.13%	44	46.81%
26-35	139	20.09%	45	18.83%	14	14.89%
36-45	87	12.57%	40	16.74%	15	15.96%
46-55	97	14.02%	38	15.90%	10	10.64%

Appendix G: MBC workforce data

56-65	41	5.92%	26	10.88%	4	4.26%
65 Plus	3	0.43%	2	0.84%		
Age Not Revealed	20	2.89%	7	2.93%	2	2.13%
Total	692		239		94	

Ethnicity	Applicant Total	Percentage	Shortlisted Total	Percentage	Offer Total	Percentage
White	603	87.14%	212	88.70%	92	97.87%
Mixed	10	1.45%	6	2.51%		0.00%
Asian or Asian British	35	5.06%	10	4.18%	1	1.06%
Black or Black British	29	4.19%	7	2.93%		
Chinese	3	0.43%				
Gypsy	3	0.43%				
Other Ethnic Groups	2	0.29%				
Ethnic Group Not Declared	7	1.01%	4	1.67%	1	1.06%
Total	692		239		94	

Disability	Applicant Total	Percentage	Shortlisted Total	Percentage	Offer Total	Percentage
Yes	47	6.79%	14	5.86%	7	7.45%
No	645	93.21%	225	94.14%	87	92.55%
Total	692		239		94	

Sexual Orientation	Applicant Total	Percentage	Shortlisted Total	Percentage	Offer Total	Percentage
Bisexual	3	0.43%	2	0.84%	1	1.06%
Gay/Lesbian	21	3.03%	9	3.77%	3	3.19%
Hetrosexual	597	86.27%	193	80.75%	77	81.91%
Not Specified	71	10.26%	35	14.64%	13	13.83%
Total	692		239		94	

Religion	Applicant Total	Percentage	Shortlisted Total	Percentage	Offer Total	Percentage
Christian	319	46.10%	110	46.03%	49	52.13%
Buddhist	2	0.29%				
Hindu	9	1.30%	4	1.67%		
Jewish	2	0.29%	1	0.42%		
Muslim	10	1.45%	3	1.26%		
Sikh	7	1.01%	1	0.42%		
No Religion	231	33.38%	74	30.96%	24	25.53%
Other	28	4.05%	6	2.51%	4	4.26%
Not Specified	84	12.14%	40	16.74%	17	18.09%
Total	692		239		94	

Appendix G: MBC workforce data

Marital Status	Applicant Total	Percentage	Shortlisted Total	Percentage	Offer Total	Percentage
Single (including engaged)	386	55.78%	116	48.54%	59	62.77%
Married	151	21.82%	72	30.13%	18	19.15%
Civil Partnership	6	0.87%	2	0.84%		
Seperated/Divorced	53	7.66%	20	8.37%	7	7.45%
Partner	64	9.25%	15	6.28%	6	6.38%
Widow(ed)	3	0.43%	1	0.42%		
Not specified	29	4.19%	13	5.44%	4	4.26%
Total	692		239		94	

5. Conclusion and Action Plan

The work force information indicates that overall the council is matching the local community in relation to most areas of analysis.

The particular areas of action that are indicated in the report are as follows:

Analysis Indicator	Area of Action / Outcome	Timescale	Responsibility
Unknown data in relation to more recent protected characteristics	Employees encouraged to update information on HR system	Annually in March	Head of HR
Employees under 25 years of age under represented in the work force	Suitable vacancies advertised in local schools	As vacancies arise	HR Manager
Employees under 25 years of age under represented in the work force	Apprenticeship programme	On-going	Learning and Development Manager
Low number of applications from BME candidates on Hotfoot Scheme	Consider the advertisement of these posts and target higher ethnic areas	March 2012 onwards	HR Manager
Low success rate of BME applicants for customer service roles	Examine the activities within the assessment centre to identify if there are any areas of bias	As vacancies occur	HR Manager

Appendix G: MBC workforce data

	against BME candidates and consider the possibility of a member of BME group as one of interviewers.		
--	--	--	--

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCUTINY COMMITTEE 6 MARCH 2012

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

Report prepared by Roger Adley and Clare Wood

1. RESIDENTS SATISFACTION SURVEY

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider the results of the 2011-12 residents satisfaction survey.

1.2 Recommendation of the Head of Communications

It is recommended that the Committee:

- i) note the results of the 2011-12 residents satisfaction survey;
and
- ii) note the findings and residents priorities for actions to be built into corporate and service level planning.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The Council is committed to providing value for money services which residents are satisfied with. The 2011-12 residents survey provides the Council with an insight into residents perceptions of the Council and its service. It also includes perceptions of the local area, levels of agreement with actions to achieve the Council's priorities and suggestions for other issues the Council should be tackling.

1.3.2 The results are set out in full at **Appendix 1** in the report by Lake Market Research, Maidstone. Further ward level analysis of the results is attached at **Appendix 2**. The report and the ward level analysis will be built into corporate and service level planning.

1.3.3 The survey is the first of its type since the Place Survey of 2008-09 and although not 'like for like' it tracks or provides similar comparison with a number of questions which were contained in the much longer Place Survey. It should be noted that the methodology differs from that of the Place Survey and that the sample size is smaller. It is

intended that this survey is repeated every two years and therefore the results will become more robust over time.

1.3.4 The overall results suggest that residents are more satisfied with the Council than in 2008-09. The survey includes 14 questions on satisfaction with the local area, the Council and council services. As stated in the Lake Market Research report there is margin of error allowed of +/- 3% and therefore any results within this level should be viewed cautiously.

1.3.5 Satisfaction has improved in five of the tracking questions from 2008-09:

- Influence over local decisions +10%;
- Satisfaction with the way the council runs its services + 20%;
- Treating People Fairly +3%;
- Doorstep recycling +27%;
- Parks and Open Spaces +3%.

1.3.6 Satisfaction has also improved in four areas where we were able to ask similar questions to 2008-09:

- Belonging to local area +24%;
- Providing value for money + 14%;
- Keeping residents informed +26%;
- Maidstone Leisure Centre +10%.

1.3.7 By contrast there have been small falls in satisfaction with:

- Satisfaction with the local area -1%;
- Different backgrounds getting on well together -4%;
- Refuse Collection -4%;
- Street Cleanliness -4%.

1.39 It is worth noting that our routine in-house waste and street cleansing customer satisfaction surveys continue to record high levels of satisfaction with street cleansing (70%) and refuse collection (97%).

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 Cabinet could decide not to respond to the results of the survey but it is an independent assessment of resident's views and can be used to improve services. The survey also provides the Council with resident's preferences for actions it should pursue.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The Council is committed to putting the customer at the heart of the delivery of its services. The survey provides valuable insight into resident’s perceptions of these services.

1.5.2 The survey includes resident’s perceptions of the Council’s strategic priorities and preferences for actions to achieve the priorities.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 If the results of the survey are not considered it is possible that services to customers will not improve or could decline. This could have an adverse affect on a range of council services

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

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

1.7.2 Financial and Staffing – Further consideration of the results will have implications in terms of staff time.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Report by Lake Market Research – Maidstone Borough Council/Satisfaction Report.

Appendix 2 – Ward Level Analysis of survey results.

1.8.2 Background Documents

The appendices listed above.

IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

Yes

No

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

.....

This is a Key Decision because:

.....

Wards/Parishes affected:

.....

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL RESIDENT SATISFACTION REPORT

Prepared by Lake Market Research for the Maidstone Borough Council

Date: 24th February 2012

This report complies with ISO:20252 standards and other relevant forms of conduct



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Research Context	3
2	Executive Summary	8
3	Views on the local area	10
4	Satisfaction with Council	19
5	Recommended actions vs. priorities	31
6	Influences on perceptions	35

1. RESEARCH CONTEXT

1.1 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Maidstone Borough Council is committed to providing value for money services which residents are satisfied with. Due to the value of information and insight generated from the Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, Maidstone Borough Council commissioned Lake Market Research to conduct a similar survey towards the end of last year. We recognise the importance of resident consultation in shaping local public services and the pressures on local government to deliver more to its residents than ever before and with reduced budgets. The continuation of this type of research study allows Maidstone Borough Council to robustly monitor resident opinion and utilise it to prioritise resources and shape future initiatives.

As such, we set the following research objectives in line with the general themes covered in this research:

- Explore general perceptions of the local area, such as satisfaction with it as a place to live, whether people feel they belong to it;
- Provide a public assessment of satisfaction with how Maidstone Borough Council runs its services and how well informed residents consider themselves;
- Provide a public assessment on five of the key council services provided by the council (doorstep recycling, refuse collection, Maidstone Leisure Centre, parks and open spaces, street cleanliness);
- Explore residents perceptions in line with the core values and strategic priorities set by Maidstone Borough Council and what areas residents perceive should be tackled.

1.2 METHODOLOGY & WEIGHTING

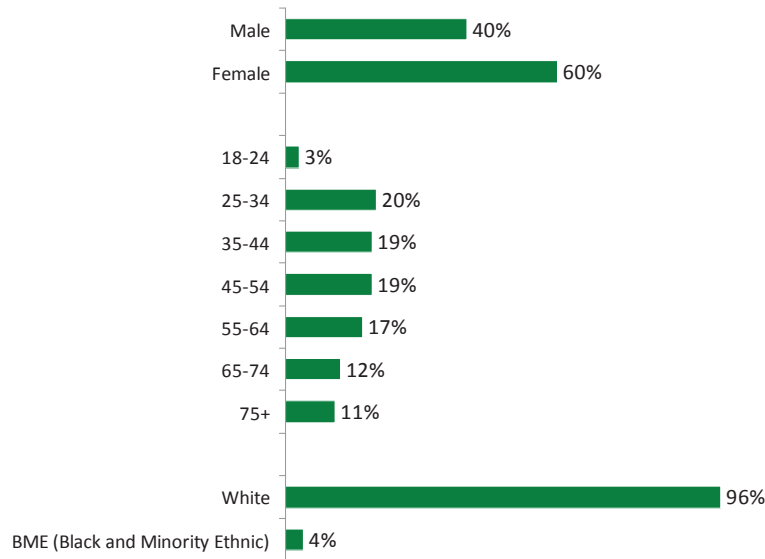
The survey was conducted by Lake Market Research via a postal survey distributed to Maidstone residents. In line with the Place Survey conditions outlined for the 2008/2009 Place Survey in Maidstone, a sample of 1,700 completed questionnaires were required for this year's research. Maidstone Borough Council used random sampling to select potential residents with each of the residents having an equal, calculable and non-zero probability of being selected to receive a questionnaire. This sample list was then sent to Lake Market Research to use to distribute questionnaire packs. A sample of 4,600 were sent in the initial mailout and residents were given 3 weeks in which to complete and return the survey to Lake Market Research. Responses were tracked and a sample of those that did not respond were sent a reminder letter with 4 weeks in which to complete and return the survey (which encompassed the Christmas period, where delivery of post is different to all other times of the year). Another invitation to complete the survey was then sent to a random sample of 1,600 residents from specific wards supplied by Maidstone Borough Council. The covering letter enabled respondents to also complete the survey online if they wished, this resulted in 81 residents completing their survey online as opposed to returning it by post, thus a total of 1,623 completed surveys were returned – a 26% response rate.

In addition to the survey being sent by post, the survey was also distributed to the Lake Market Research Local Opinion panel of Maidstone residents which resulted in a further 93 questionnaires being completed online.

1.3 RESIDENT PROFILE

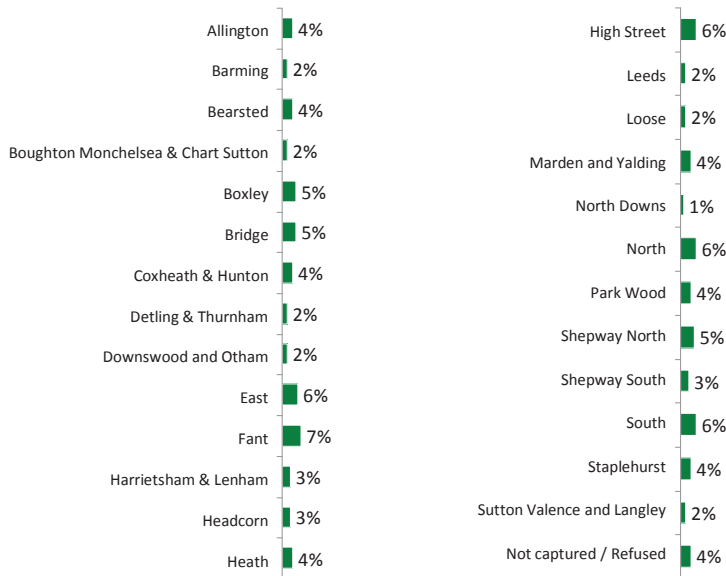
A summary of the profile of residents who completed the survey are as follows:

Gender, Age & Ethnicity



Base: All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1709)

Ward profile



Base: All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1716)

1.4 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETING THE DATA

It should be noted that a sample of residents participated in the survey rather than all residents of Maidstone. Therefore, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences are statistically significant. Crudely speaking, overall results are accurate to +/- 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, but this assumes a perfect random sample has been achieved (in practice, margins of error may be slightly larger).

As is often observed with a postal survey design, weights were applied to the final data collected to rebase the underrepresented proportion of 18-34 year olds that completed the survey. The following table shows the unweighted and weighted base sizes for gender, age and ward:

AGE	Unweighted	Weighted
Total	1709	1709
18 - 24	19	43
	1%	3%
25 - 34	152	347
	9%	20%
35 - 44	236	326
	14%	19%
45 - 54	281	317
	16%	19%
55 - 64	375	290
	22%	17%
65 - 74	344	205
	20%	12%
75+	302	181
	18%	11%
Net - 18 - 34	171	390
	10%	23%
Net - 35 - 54	517	643
	30%	38%
Net - 55 +	1021	676
	60%	40%

GENDER	Unweighted	Weighted
Total	1637	1655
Male	739	669
	45%	40%
Female	898	986
	55%	60%

WARD NAME	Unweighted	Weighted
Total	1716	1709
Allington	81	70
	5%	4%
Barming	32	32
	2%	2%
Bearsted	91	76
	5%	4%
Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton	33	28
	2%	2%
Boxley	88	90
	5%	5%
Bridge	73	80
	4%	5%
Coxheath and Hunton	77	74
	4%	4%
Detling and Thurnham	34	33
	2%	2%
Downswood and Otham	27	30
	2%	2%
East	98	98
	6%	6%
Fant	104	118
	6%	7%
Harrietsham and Lenham	63	58
	4%	3%
Headcorn	56	49
	3%	3%
Heath	56	63
	3%	4%
High Street	84	97
	5%	6%
Leeds	31	29
	2%	2%
Loose	32	28
	2%	2%
Marden and Yalding	81	74
	5%	4%
North Downs	28	22
	2%	1%
North	89	100
	5%	6%
Park Wood	61	72
	4%	4%
Shepway North	85	82
	5%	5%
Shepway South	61	58
	4%	3%
South	93	95
	5%	6%

Staplehurst	67	61
	4%	4%
Sutton Valence and Langley	34	29
	2%	2%
N/A / Refused	57	62
	3%	4%
Net - Urban	885	935
	52%	55%
Net - Rural	774	712
	45%	42%

Where possible, this report makes comparisons to the results of the 2008 / 2009 Place Survey conducted amongst Maidstone residents. For consistency with how the 2008 / 2009 Place Survey results were presented, residents who indicated 'Don't know' have been removed from the results presented in this report.

1.5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the team at Maidstone Borough Council for all their help and advice in developing the project. We would also like to thank all 1716 Maidstone residents who agreed to take part and whose views made this research possible.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

VIEWS ON THE LOCAL AREA

The vast majority are positive about their experiences of living in Maidstone, with over eight in ten claiming they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Satisfaction with the local area is broadly consistent to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009. Broadly consistent proportions also agree that they feel they belong to their local area.

Just over three quarters of residents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together and just under a quarter disagree. A 4% decrease in agreement is observed when comparing opinions to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009.

Proportions are markedly different when looking at resident perceptions of influencing local decisions with just over a third of residents believing they can influence these decisions. Perceptions have significantly improved, however, compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents agreeing that they can influence these decisions. Three in ten residents indicated that they would like to become involved and 56% indicated that it would depend on the issue. The proportion wanting to become more involved has increased (but not significantly) compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009).

SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL

The majority of residents speak favourably of Maidstone Borough Council, with just under two thirds indicating they are satisfied with how it runs its services. In contrast, just over one in ten are dissatisfied with how the Council runs its services. Perceptions have significantly improved compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents indicating they are satisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services. It should be noted when interpreting this improvement, however, that the question wording has altered for this year's survey in that the Place Survey referred to a more generic reference of 'how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the Council runs things'.

Views on perceptions of value for money vary with 46% of residents agreeing that Maidstone Borough Council provides value for money and 34% of residents disagreeing.

The majority of residents believe they are kept informed about the services and benefits Maidstone Borough Council provides, with just under two thirds indicating they are kept very or fairly well informed. In contrast, just under four in ten consider themselves not very well informed in that they are given only a limited amount of information or they believe Maidstone Borough Council doesn't tell them much at all about what it does.

The majority of residents believe that Maidstone Borough Council treat all types of people fairly, with three quarters of residents indicating agreement in terms of 'a great deal' or 'to some extent'. A quarter of residents, however, indicate 'not very much' or 'not at all'.

The majority of residents speak favourably of their refuse collection services, with just over eight in ten indicating they are satisfied with the service provided. A 4% decrease in

agreement is observed when comparing opinions to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009.

The majority of residents also speak favourably of their doorstep recycling, with just under eight in ten indicating they are satisfied with the service provided. Reflecting the recent work put in place by Maidstone Borough Council, perceptions have significantly improved compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents indicating they are satisfied.

Perceptions of Maidstone's parks and open spaces are also positive, with just over three quarters indicating they are satisfied with them. Perceptions have improved (but not significantly) compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents indicating they are satisfied with.

Satisfaction levels for street cleanliness are more polarising with just under six in ten residents indicating that they are satisfied with the service provided. In contrast, just under three in ten are dissatisfied. A 4% decrease in agreement is observed when comparing opinions to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009.

Satisfaction levels with Maidstone Leisure Centre vary with just over half of residents indicating that they are satisfied with the service provided. In contrast, just over a third of residents indicated that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and just over one in ten are dissatisfied with the services provided at Maidstone Leisure Centre.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS VS. PRIORITIES

There is a general consensus in the two main actions residents believe Maidstone Borough Council should take to 'grow the economy'; encouraging new business and attracting investment. It should be noted, however, that whilst not in the majority a significant proportion also selected 'improve skills & knowledge' so this area should also be considered.

Response is more varied when looking at the actions residents believe Maidstone Borough Council should take to achieve residents perceptions of 'a decent place to live'. The top three actions listed, however, are to ensure 'elderly and disabled people live in their homes for longer', 'make houses more energy efficient' and 'provide better access to affordable housing'.

When looking at the actions residents believe Maidstone Borough Council should take to achieve 'corporate and customer excellence', there is a general consensus for the two main actions; improve communications with residents and improve consultation with residents.

3. VIEWS ON THE LOCAL AREA

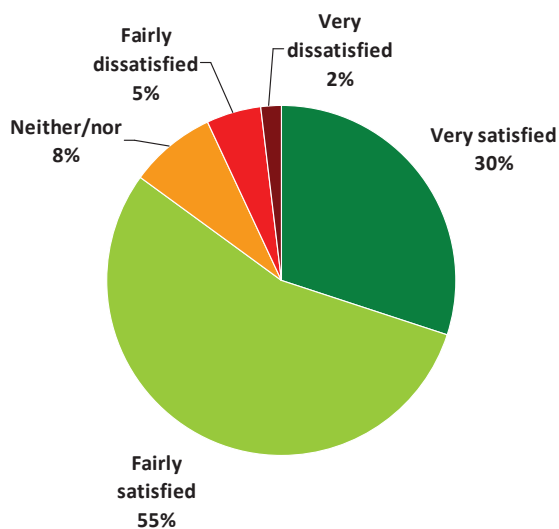
3.1 LOCAL AREA AS A PLACE TO LIVE

The vast majority are positive about their experiences of living in Maidstone, with over eight in ten (84%) claiming they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Only 7% of residents are dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with the local area is broadly consistent to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009 (84% vs. 85% for 2008/2009).

Satisfaction with the local area

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?



% Satisfied	84%
% Dissatisfied	7%
% Satisfied change vs. 2008 / 2009 Place Survey	-1%

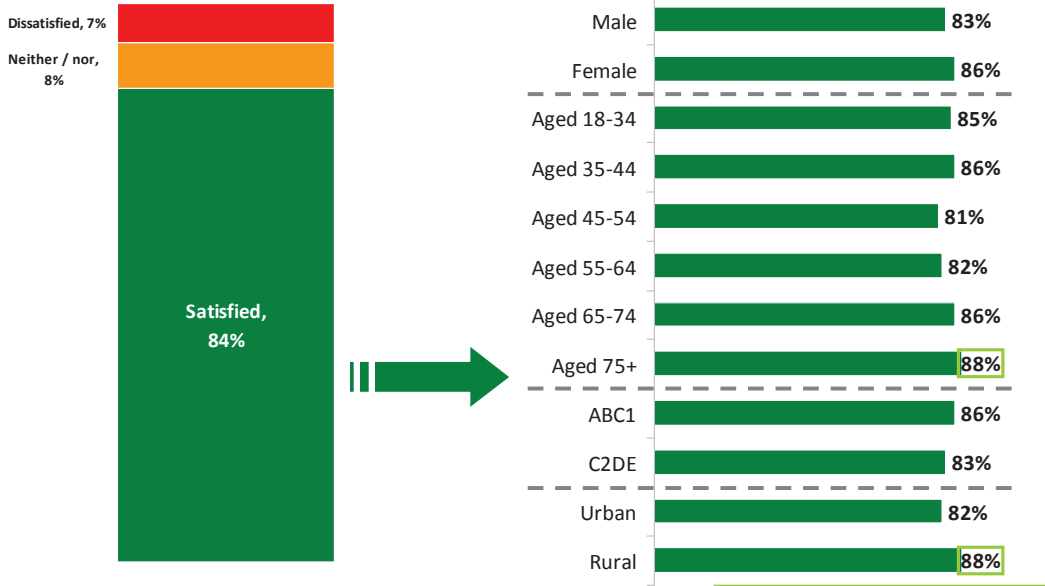
Base: Q1, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1695)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, residents aged 75+ are the most satisfied with their local area (88%) and residents aged 45-54 and 55-64 are the least satisfied (81% and 82%). These age trends are broadly consistent with those observed in the Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009 in Maidstone.

Perceptions also vary amongst residents living in urban areas and rural areas of Maidstone; a significantly higher proportion of rural residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (88% vs. 82% for urban residents).

Satisfaction with the local area by key subgroups

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?



Base: Q1, Male (unweighted base size - 731), Female (888), 18-34 (168), 35-44 (235), 45-54 (280), 55-64 (370), 65-74 (339), 75+ (296), ABC1 (262), C2DE (338), Urban (871), Rural (767)

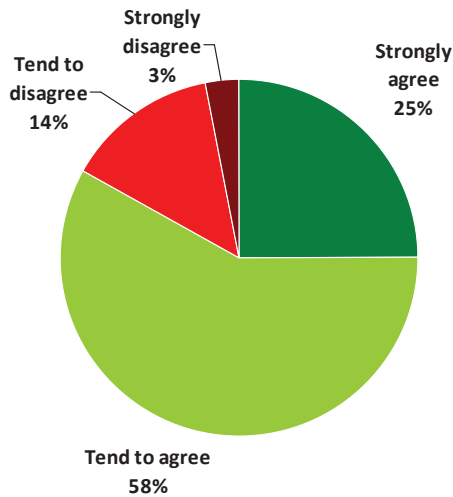
Significantly higher compared to other subgroup at 95% confidence level

3.2 BELONGING TO THE LOCAL AREA

Broadly consistent proportions also agree or tend to agree that they feel they belong to their local area, with over eight in ten (83%) residents in agreement and just under one in five (17%) in disagreement. In the 2008/2009 Place Survey, only 59% of residents were in agreement. It should be noted, however, when making comparisons that the question was phrased as belonging to 'immediate neighbourhood' as opposed to 'local area'.

Belonging to local area

How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?



% Agree	83%
% Disagree	17%
% Agree in 2008 / 2009 Place Survey	59%

* Please note in the 2008/2009 survey the question was phrased 'How strongly do you feel you belong to your immediate neighbourhood?' so true comparative data is not available for this question

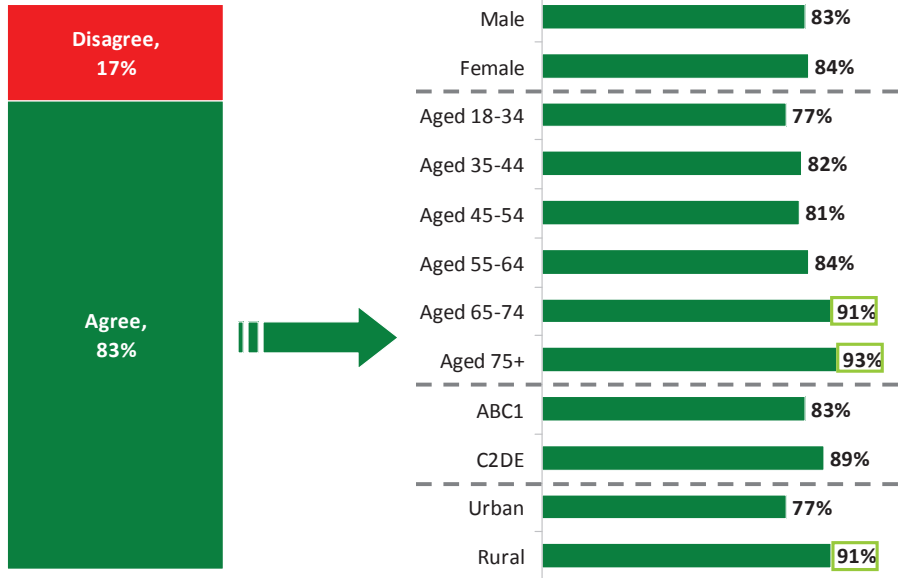
Base: Q2, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1520)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 65-74 and 75+ feel they belong to their local area (91% and 93%) and a lower proportion of residents aged 18-34 feel they belong to their local area (77%).

Perceptions also vary amongst residents living in urban areas and rural areas of Maidstone; a significantly higher proportion of rural residents feel they belong to their local area (91% vs. 77% for urban residents).

Belonging to local area by key subgroups

How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?



Base: Q2, Male (unweighted base size - 661), Female (791), 18-34 (139), 35-44 (206), 45-54 (246), 55-64 (347), 65-74 (318), 75+ (258), ABC1 (231), C2DE (298), Urban (771), Rural (697)

Significantly higher compared to other subgroup at 95% confidence level

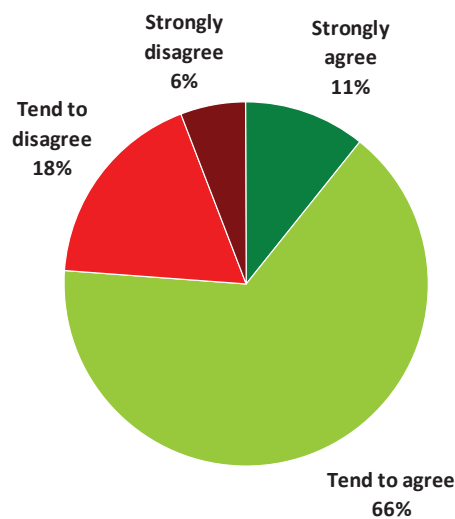
3.3 DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS GETTING ALONG

Often linked to a sense of area belonging, another important influence on attitudes to a local area is determining people’s perceptions of different backgrounds getting on well with each other. Just over three quarters (77%) of Maidstone residents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, but just under a quarter (23%) disagree.

A 4% decrease in agreement is observed when comparing opinions to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009 (77% vs. 81% for 2008/2009).

Different backgrounds getting on well together

To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?



% Agree	77%
% Disagree	23%
% Agree change vs. 2008 / 2009 Place Survey	-4%

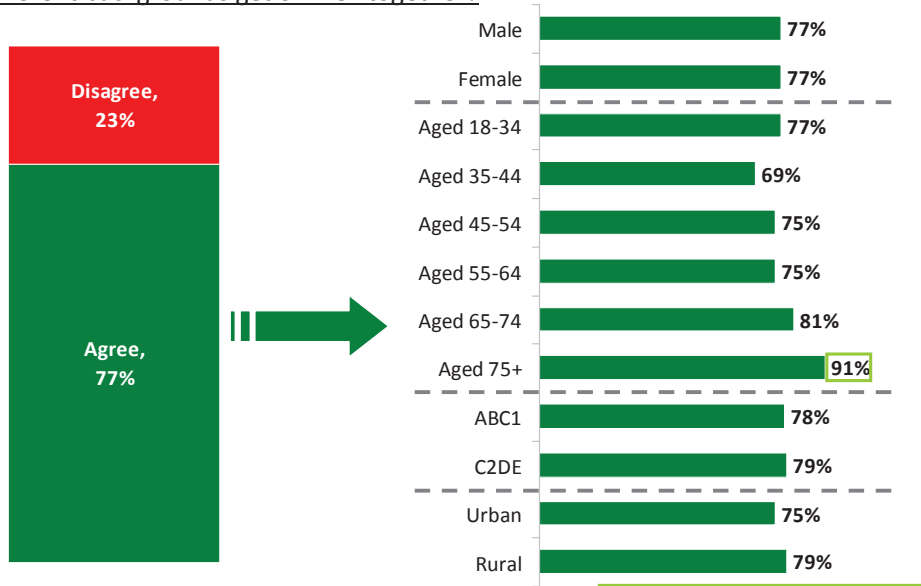
Base: Q4, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1353)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 75+ agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (91%) and a lower proportion of residents aged 35-44 agree (69%).

In contrast to local area metrics observed so far, perceptions are broadly consistent amongst residents living in urban areas and rural areas of Maidstone.

Different backgrounds getting on well together by key groups

To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?



Base: Q4, Male (unweighted base size - 596), Female (699), 18-34 (136), 35-44 (199), 45-54 (226), 55-64 (304), 65-74 (280), 75+ (204), ABC1 (218), C2DE (280), Urban (691), Rural (614)

Significantly higher compared to other subgroup at 95% confidence level

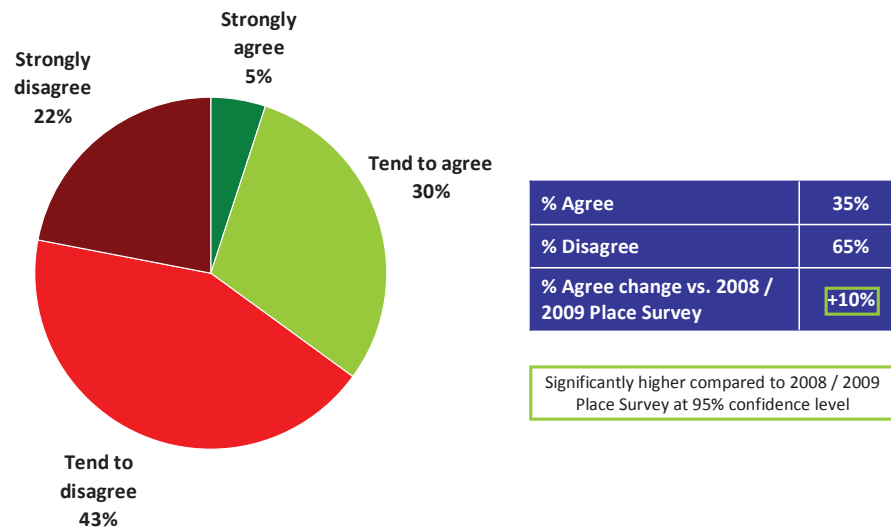
3.4 INFLUENCING LOCAL DECISIONS

Proportions are markedly different when looking at resident perceptions of influencing local decisions with just over a third (35%) of Maidstone residents believing they can influence these decisions. Only one in twenty (5%) strongly agree that they can influence these decisions whereas just under one in five (22%) strongly disagree.

Perceptions have significantly improved, however, compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents agreeing that they can influence decisions affecting their local area (35% vs. 25% for 2008/2009).

Influence over local decisions

Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?



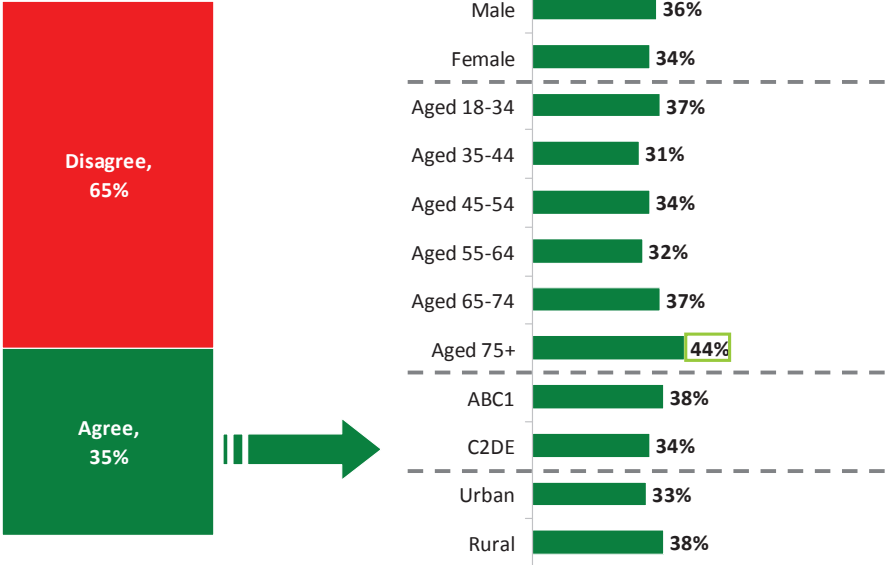
Base: Q3, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1430)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 75+ agree that they can influence local decisions affecting their local area (44%) compared to all other age groups residents aged (18-34: 37%, 35-44: 31%, 45-54: 34%, 55-64: 32%, 65-74: 37%).

Also in contrast to local area metrics observed so far, perceptions are broadly consistent amongst residents living in urban areas and rural areas of Maidstone.

Influence over local decisions by key groups

Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?



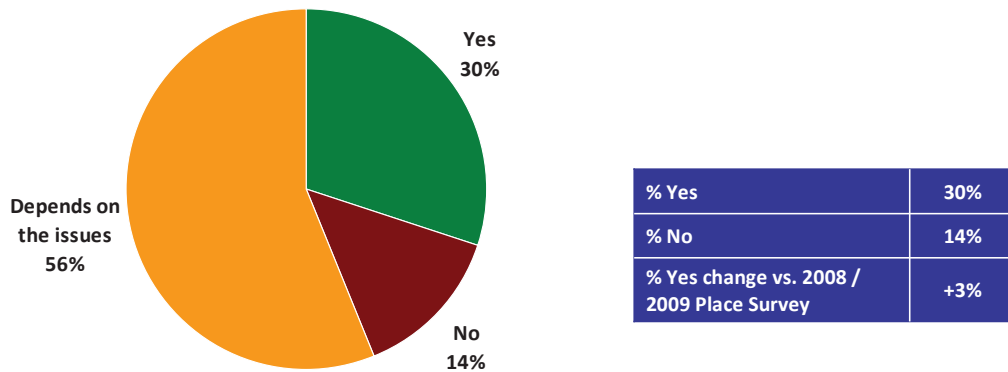
Base: Q3, Male (unweighted base size - 644), Female (720), 18-34 (139), 35-44 (193), 45-54 (243), 55-64 (326), 65-74 (302), 75+ (221), ABC1 (235), C2DE (270), Urban (722), Rural (654)

Significantly higher compared to other subgroup at 95% confidence level

Residents were also asked whether they would like to be more involved in the decisions that affect their local area, generally speaking. Three in ten indicated that they would like to become involved and 56% indicated that it would depend on the issue. The proportion wanting to become more involved has increased (but not significantly) compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009 (30% vs. 27% for 2008/2009).

Influence over local decisions moving forward

Generally speaking, would you like to be more involved in the decisions that affect your local area?



Base: Q11, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1600)

The likelihood that residents would like to be more involved in the decisions that affect their local area decreases with age, with a significantly lower proportion of residents aged 75+ indicating they wanted to become more involved compared to other age groups (11% vs. 33% for 18-34, 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64: 33%, and 23% for 65-74). In addition, a significantly higher proportion of male residents and ABC1 residents indicated they wanted to become more involved (36% vs. 26% for female residents, and 41% vs. 28% for C2DE residents).

4. SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL

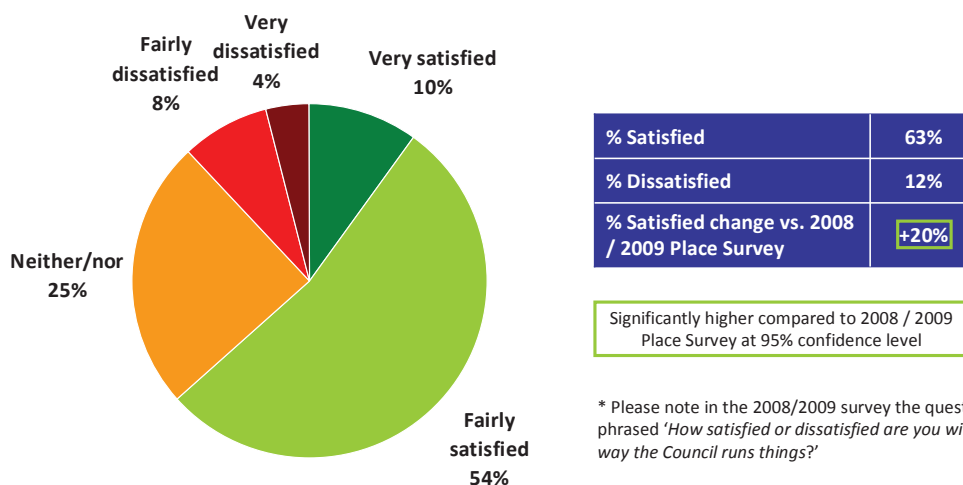
4.1 OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE WAY THE COUNCIL RUNS ITS SERVICES

The majority of residents speak favourably of Maidstone Borough Council, with just under two thirds (63%) indicating they are satisfied with how it runs its services. In contrast, just over one in ten are dissatisfied with how the Council runs its services (12%).

Perceptions have significantly improved compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents indicating they are satisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services (63% vs. 43% for 2008/2009). It should be noted when interpreting this improvement, however, that the question wording has altered for this year's survey in that the Place Survey referred to a more generic reference of 'how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the Council runs things'.

Satisfaction with the way the Council runs its services

All things considered, how satisfied are you with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services?



Base: Q6, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1671)

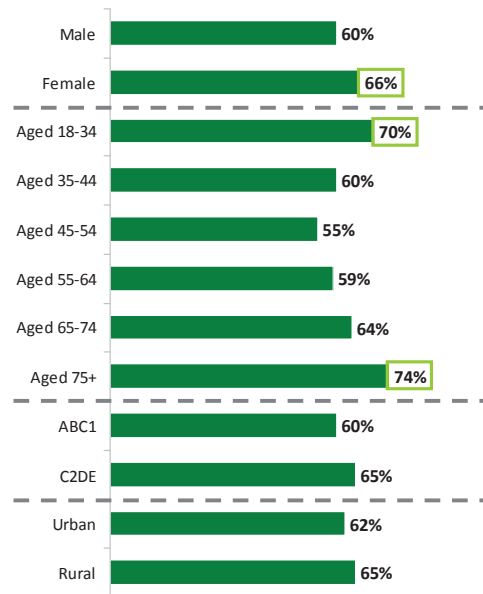
Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, residents aged 18-34 and 75+ are the most satisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services (70% and 74%) and residents aged 45-54 are the least satisfied (55%). These age trends are broadly consistent with those observed in the Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009 in Maidstone.

Perceptions also vary amongst male and female residents of Maidstone; a significantly higher proportion of female residents are satisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services (66% vs. 60% for male residents). Again, these gender trends are broadly consistent with those observed in the Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009 in Maidstone.

Satisfaction proportions are broadly consistent amongst residents living in urban areas and rural areas of Maidstone.

Satisfaction with the way the Council runs its services by subgroups

All things considered, how satisfied are you with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services?



Base: Q6, Male (unweighted base size - 722), Female (872), 18-34 (165), 35-44 (229), 45-54 (275), 55-64 (369), 65-74 (338), 75+ (288), ABC1 (258), C2DE (330), Urban (866), Rural (751)

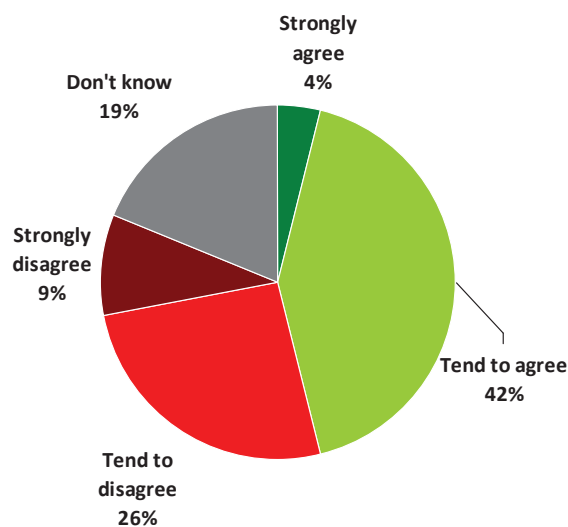
Significantly higher compared to other subgroup at 95% confidence level

4.2 PERCEIVED VALUE FOR MONEY

46% of residents agree that Maidstone Borough Council provides value for money. In the 2008/2009 Place Survey, 32% of residents were in agreement. It should be noted, however, when making comparisons that the 2011 survey did not include a mid point ('neither agree or disagree') to keep consistency with the style of Lake's recent benchmarking data whereas the 2008/2009 Place Survey included a mid point. As a result, residents indicating 'don't know' have been presented for this question.

Providing value for money

To what extent do you agree that Maidstone Borough Council provides value for money?



% Agree	46%
% Disagree	34%
% Agree in 2008 / 2009 Place Survey	32%

* Please note a mid point was included in the response scale ('neither agree or disagree') in the 2008/2009 Place Survey but not in the 2011 survey. As a result, 'don't know' had been included to make approximate year on year comparisons.

Base: Q8, All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1701)

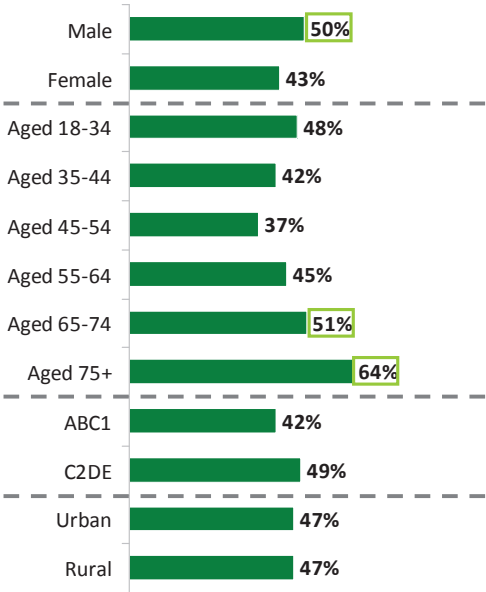
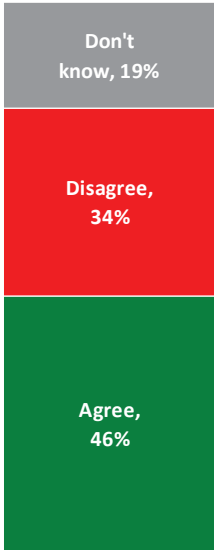
Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 65-74 and 75+ agree that Maidstone Borough Council provides value for money (51% and 64%) and a lower proportion of residents aged 45-54 agree (37%).

Perceptions also vary amongst male and female residents of Maidstone; a significantly higher proportion of male residents are satisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services (50% vs. 43% for female residents).

Value for money perceptions are consistent amongst residents living in urban areas and rural areas of Maidstone.

Providing value for money by subgroups

To what extent do you agree that Maidstone Borough Council provides value for money?



Base: Q8, Male (unweighted base size - 735), Female (888), 18-34 (170), 35-44 (233), 45-54 (278), 55-64 (374), 65-74 (340), 75+ (299), ABC1 (262), C2DE (336), Urban (881), Rural (763)

Significantly higher compared to other subgroup at 95% confidence level

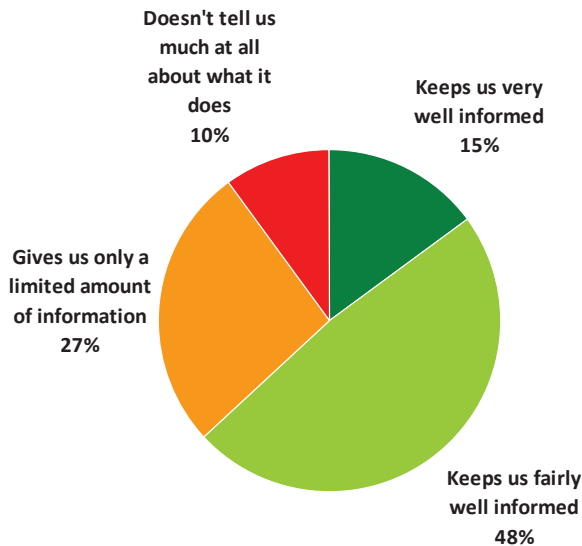
4.3 FEELING INFORMED

The majority of residents believe they are kept informed about the services and benefits Maidstone Borough Council provides, with just under two thirds (63%) indicating they are kept very or fairly well informed. In contrast, just under four in ten consider themselves not very well informed in that they are given only a limited amount of information or they believe Maidstone Borough Council doesn't tell them much at all about what it does.

In the 2008/2009 Place Survey, only 37% of residents considered themselves informed. It should be noted, however, when making comparisons that the 2008/2009 Place Survey asked for views on 'local public services' and an alternative semantic scale was used.

Keeping residents informed

How well informed do you feel Maidstone Borough Council keeps you about the services and benefits it provides?



% Very / fairly informed	63%
% Limited / doesn't tell us	37%
% Very / fairly well informed in 2008 / 2009 Place Survey	37%

* Please note in the 2008/2009 survey the question was phrased 'How well informed do you feel overall about local public services? and an alternative response scale was used – very well / fairly well / not very well / not informed at all' so true comparative data is not available for this question

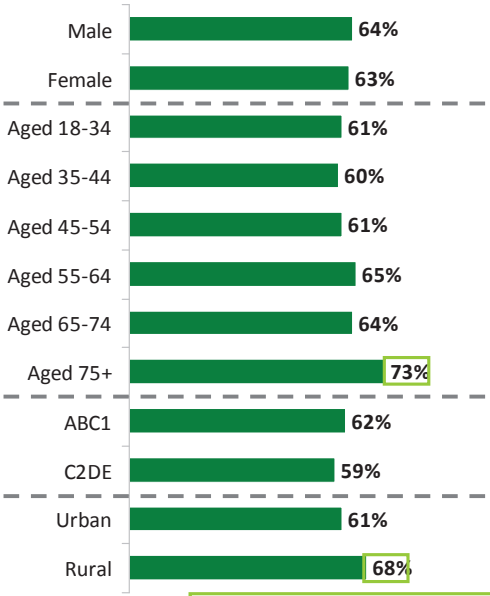
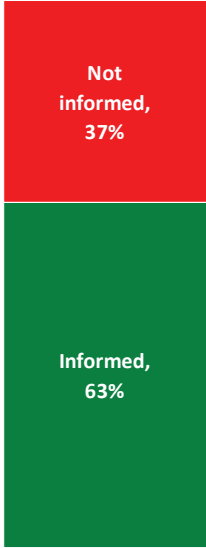
Base: Q7, All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1694)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 75+ feel they are kept informed (73%) compared to all other age groups residents aged (18-34: 61%, 35-44: 60%, 45-54: 61%, 55-64: 65%, 65-74: 64%).

Perceptions also vary amongst residents living in urban areas and rural areas of Maidstone; a significantly higher proportion of rural residents feel they are kept informed (68% vs. 61% for urban residents).

Keeping residents informed by subgroups

How well informed do you feel Maidstone Borough Council keeps you about the services and benefits it provides?



Base: Q7, Male (unweighted base size - 728), Female (888), 18-34 (171), 35-44 (234), 45-54 (273), 55-64 (371), 65-74 (340), 75+ (298), ABC1 (257), C2DE (336), Urban (879), Rural (764)

Significantly higher compared to other subgroup at 95% confidence level

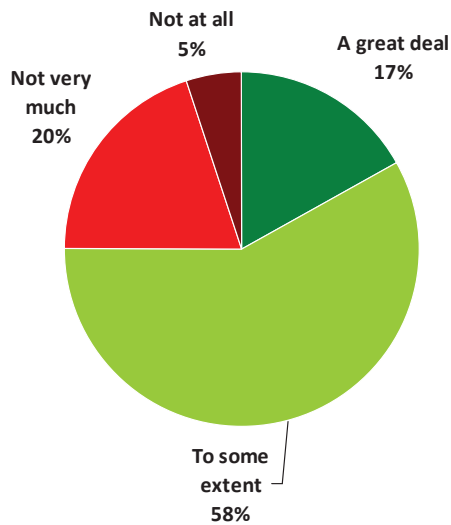
4.4 TREATING PEOPLE FAIRLY

The majority of residents believe that Maidstone Borough Council treat all types of people fairly, with three quarters of residents indicating agreement in terms of 'a great deal' or 'to some extent'. A quarter of residents, however, indicate 'not very much' or 'not at all'.

Perceptions have improved compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents indicating they believe Maidstone Borough Council treats all types of people fairly (75% vs. 72% for 2008/2009).

Treating people fairly

To what extent do you think that Maidstone Borough Council treats all types of people fairly?



% A great deal / to some extent	75%
% Not very much / not at all	25%
% A great deal / to some extent change vs. 2008 / 2009 Place Survey	+3%

Base: Q12, All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1201)

Residents were also asked to indicate the extent to which they were satisfied with five key services provided or supported by Maidstone Borough Council: Refuse collection, Doorstep recycling, Parks & open spaces, Street cleanliness and Maidstone Leisure Centre.

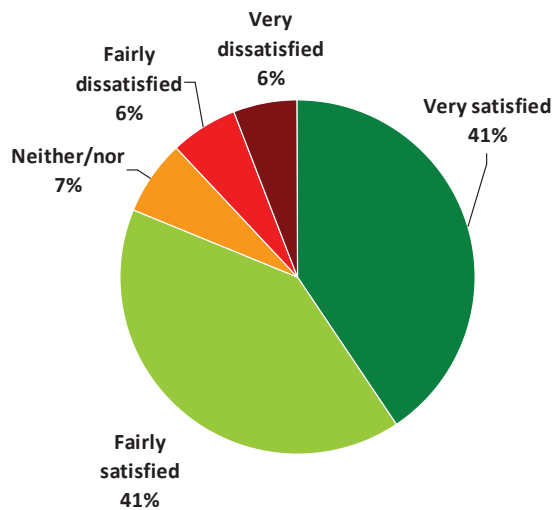
4.4 SATISFACTION WITH REFUSE COLLECTION

The majority of residents speak favourably of their refuse collection services, with just over eight in ten (82%) indicating they are satisfied with the service provided. In contrast, just over one in ten are dissatisfied with their refuse collection (11%).

A 4% decrease in agreement is observed when comparing opinions to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009 (82% vs. 86% for 2008/2009).

Satisfaction with Refuse Collection

How satisfied are you with each of the following services... Refuse Collection?



% Satisfied	82%
% Dissatisfied	11%
% Satisfied change vs. 2008 / 2009 Place Survey	-4%

Base: Q5b, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1691)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 65-74 and 75+ are satisfied with their refuse collection (91% and 95%) compared to other age groups residents aged (18-34: 78%, 35-44: 72%, 45-54: 81%, 55-64: 85%). Satisfaction levels are broadly consistent by gender, social class and residents living in the rural and urban areas of Maidstone.

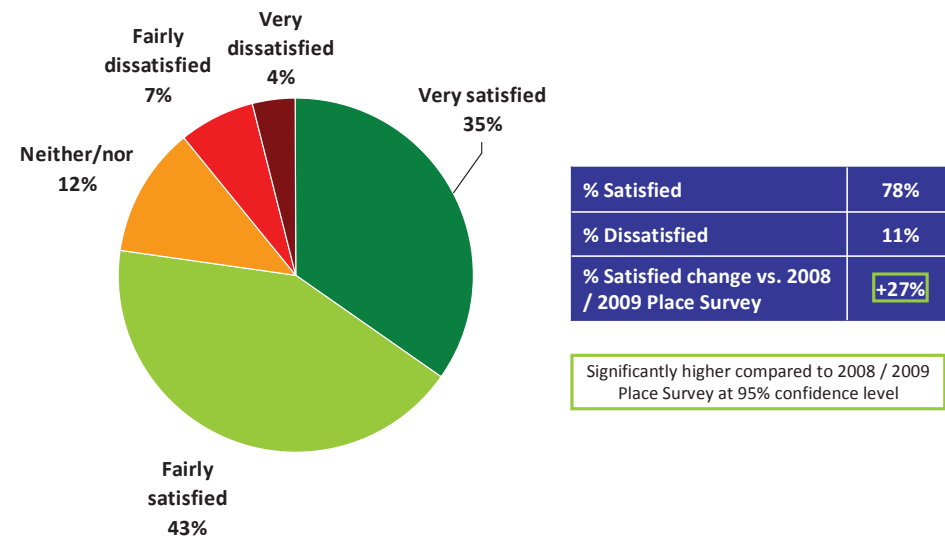
4.5 SATISFACTION WITH DOORSTEP RECYCLING

The majority of residents speak favourably of their doorstep recycling, with just under eight in ten (78%) indicating they are satisfied with the service provided. In contrast, just over one in ten are dissatisfied with their doorstep recycling (11%).

Reflecting the recent work put in place by Maidstone Borough Council, perceptions have significantly improved compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents indicating they are satisfied with them (78% vs. 51% for 2008/2009).

Satisfaction with Doorstep Recycling

How satisfied are you with each of the following services... Doorstep Recycling?



Base: Q5a, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1618)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 55-64, 65-74 and 75+ are satisfied with their doorstep recycling (80%, 86% and 92%) compared to other age groups residents aged (18-34: 75%, 35-44: 70%, 45-54: 73%, 55-64: 80%). In addition, a significantly higher proportion of residents living in the rural areas of Maidstone are satisfied with their doorstep recycling (81% vs. 76% for rural areas).

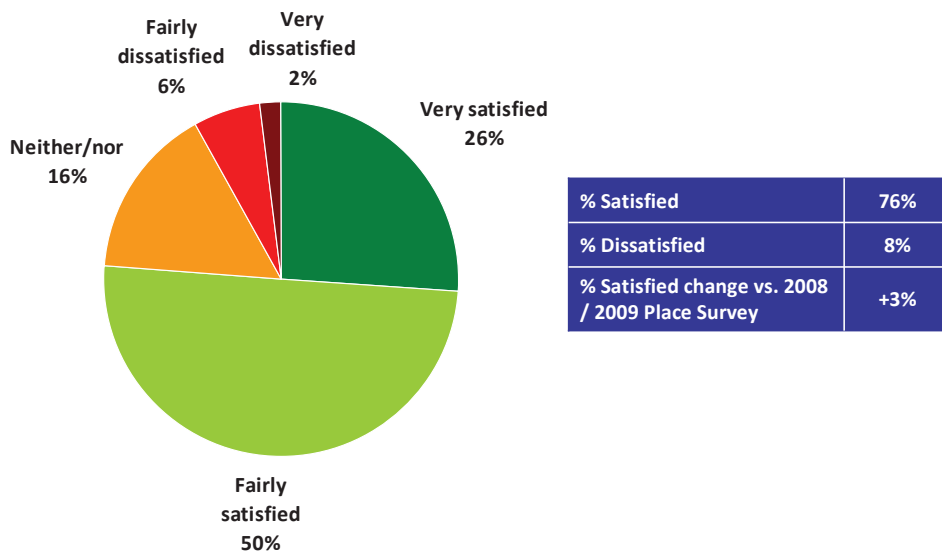
4.6 SATISFACTION WITH PARKS & OPEN SPACES

The majority of residents also speak favourably of the parks and open spaces in Maidstone, with just over three quarters (76%) indicating they are satisfied with them. In contrast, just under one in ten are dissatisfied with the parks and open spaces in Maidstone (8%).

Perceptions have improved (but not significantly) compared to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009, with more residents indicating they are satisfied with them (79% vs. 76% for 2008/2009). Satisfaction levels are broadly consistent by gender, age, social class and residents living in the rural and urban areas of Maidstone.

Satisfaction with Parks & Open Spaces

How satisfied are you with each of the following services... Parks & open spaces?



Base: Q5d, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1476)

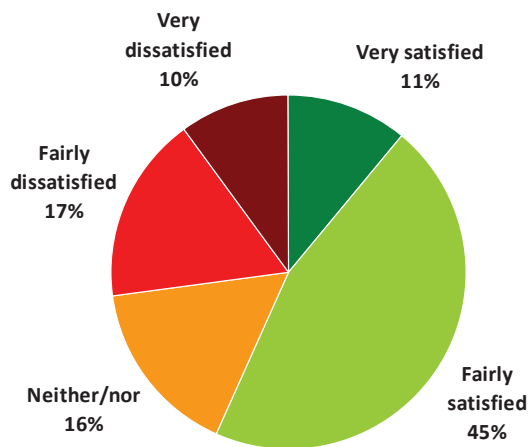
4.7 SATISFACTION WITH STREET CLEANLINESS

Satisfaction levels for street cleanliness are more polarising with just under six in ten (56%) residents indicating that they are satisfied with the service provided. In contrast, just under three in ten (27%) are dissatisfied.

A 4% decrease in agreement is observed when comparing opinions to the last Place Survey conducted in 2008/2009 (56% vs. 60% for 2008/2009).

Satisfaction with Street Cleanliness

How satisfied are you with each of the following services... Street Cleanliness?



% Satisfied	56%
% Dissatisfied	27%
% Satisfied change vs. 2008 / 2009 Place Survey	-4%

* Please note that satisfaction with 'street cleanliness' was not tested in the 2008/2009 survey so comparisons have been made versus satisfaction with 'keeping public land clear of litter and refuse'

Base: Q5e, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 1653)

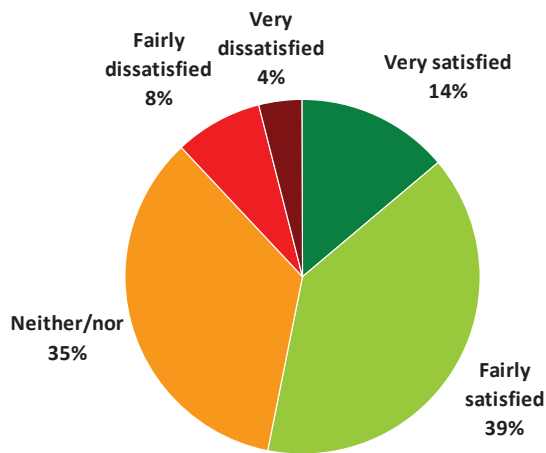
Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 18-34 and 75+ are satisfied with street cleanliness (62% for both age groups) compared to other age groups residents aged (35-44: 54%, 45-54: 52%, 55-64: 54%. 65-74: 55%). In addition, a significantly higher proportion of residents living in urban areas of Maidstone are dissatisfied with street cleanliness (30% vs. 25% for rural areas).

4.8 SATISFACTION WITH MAIDSTONE LEISURE CENTRE

Satisfaction levels with Maidstone Leisure Centre vary with just over half (53%) of residents indicating that they are satisfied with the service provided. In contrast, just over a third of residents indicated that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (35%) and just over one in ten (12%) are dissatisfied with the services provided at Maidstone Leisure Centre.

Satisfaction with Maidstone Leisure Centre

How satisfied are you with each of the following services... Maidstone Leisure Centre?



% Satisfied	53%
% Dissatisfied	12%
% Satisfied with Sport/Leisure Facilities	43%

* Please note that satisfaction with 'Maidstone Leisure Centre' was not tested in the 2008/2009 survey so 'sport / leisure facilities' has been used as an approximate benchmark

Base: Q5c, All Maidstone residents answering excluding Don't know (unweighted base – 893)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 25-34, 35-44 and 75+ are satisfied with the services provided at Maidstone Leisure Centre (59%, 55% and 62%) compared to other age groups residents aged (45-54: 45%, 55-64: 46%, 65-74: 50%). In addition, a significantly higher proportion of female residents are satisfied with the services provided at Maidstone Leisure Centre (56% vs. 47% for male residents).

5. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS VS. PRIORITIES

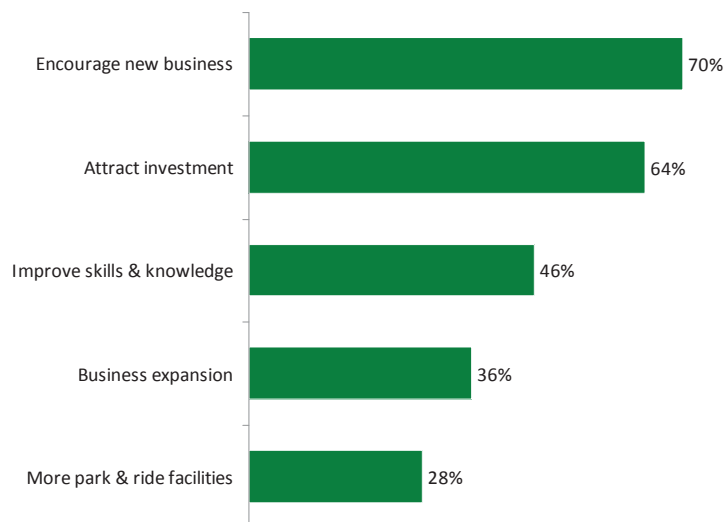
Residents were also asked to indicate their agreement with a list of actions they think Maidstone Borough Council should take in achieving the three priorities set by the Council up until 2015: 1) Growing the economy, 2) A decent place to live and 3) Corporate and customer excellence.

5.1 GROWING THE ECONOMY

There is a general consensus in the two main actions residents believe Maidstone Borough Council should take to 'grow the economy', with the majority of residents selecting encourage new business (70%) and attract investment (64%). It should be noted, however, that whilst not in the majority a significant proportion also selected 'improve skills & knowledge' so this area should also be considered.

Recommended actions for 'Growing the economy'

What actions do you think the council should be taking to achieve these priorities...
Growing the economy?



Base: Q9a, All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1651)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, there are significant differences observed by gender, age and social class:

- A significantly higher proportion of male residents selected 'attract investment' (68% vs. 62% for female residents); a significantly higher proportion of female residents selected 'improve skills & knowledge' (49% vs. 44% for male residents) and 'more park & ride facilities' (30% vs. 24% for male residents)
- A significantly higher proportion of residents aged 35-54 selected 'attract investment' (69% vs. 64% for 18-34 and 58% for 55+); a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 55+ selected 'more park & ride facilities' (35% vs. 24% for 18-34 and 23% for 35-54)

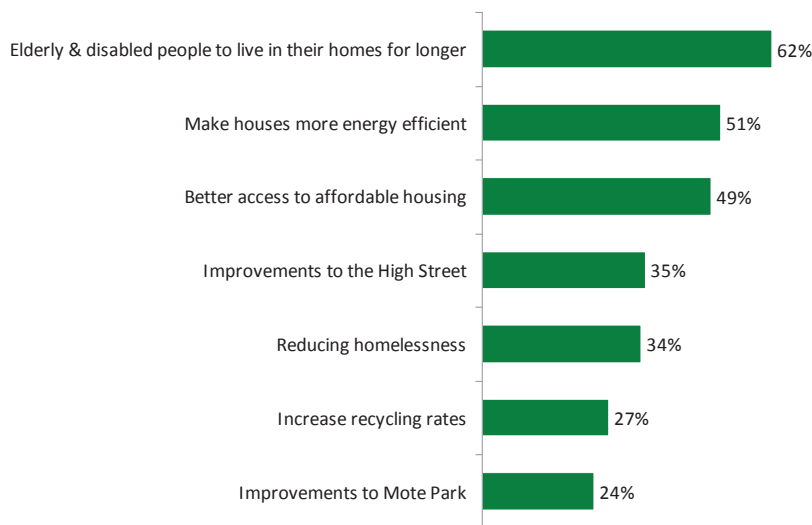
- A significantly higher proportion of ABC1 residents selected ‘attract investment’ (74% vs. 61% for C2DE residents).

5.2 A DECENT PLACE TO LIVE

Response is more varied when looking at the actions residents believe Maidstone Borough Council should take to achieve ‘a decent place to live’. The top three actions listed, however, are to ensure ‘elderly and disabled people live in their homes for longer’ (62%), make houses more energy efficient (51%) and provide better access to affordable housing (49%).

Recommended actions for ‘A decent place to live’

What actions do you think the council should be taking to achieve these priorities...
A decent place to live?



Base: Q9b, All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1674)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, there are significant differences observed by gender, age, social class and area of living:

- A significantly higher proportion of female residents selected ‘make houses more energy efficient’ (55% vs. 46% for male residents) and ‘better access to affordable housing’ (52% vs. 45% for male residents)
- A significantly higher proportion of residents aged 18-34 selected ‘make houses more energy efficient’ (62% vs. 50% for 35-54 and 46% for 55+) and ‘improvements to the High Street’ (44% vs. 38% for 35-54 and 26% for 55+); a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 55+ selected ‘elderly and disabled people helped to live in their homes for longer’ (79% vs. 43% for 18-34 and 55% for 35-54)
- A significantly higher proportion of C2DE residents selected ‘elderly and disabled people helped to live in their homes for longer’ (72% vs. 52% for ABC1 residents); a significantly higher proportion of ABC1 residents selected ‘improvements to the High

Street' (44% vs. 32% for C2DE residents) and 'increase recycling rates' (34% vs. 23% for C2DE residents)

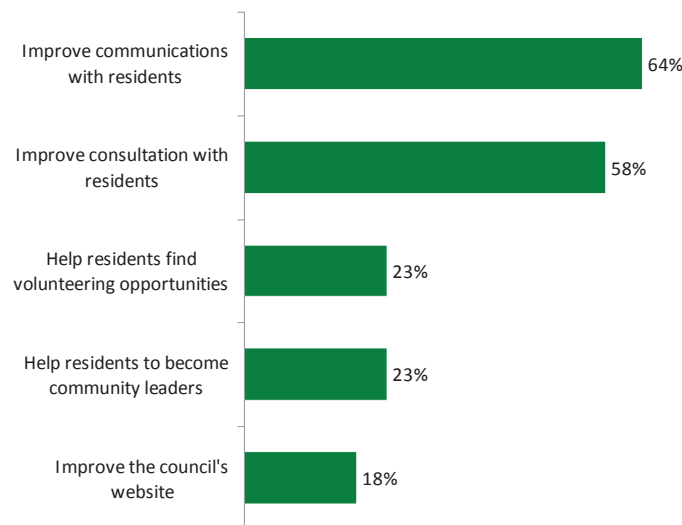
- A significantly higher proportion of residents living in rural areas selected 'elderly and disabled people helped to live in their homes for longer' (68% vs. 57% for urban residents).

5.3 CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER EXCELLENCE

There is a general consensus in the two main actions residents believe Maidstone Borough Council should take to achieve 'corporate and customer excellence', with the majority of residents selecting improve communications with residents (64%) and improve consultation with residents (58%).

Recommended actions for 'Corporate & Customer Excellence'

What actions do you think the council should be taking to achieve these priorities... Corporate and Customer Excellence?



Base: Q9c, All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1519)

Looking at how perceptions vary across the demographic groups of interest, there are significant differences observed by gender, age and area of living:

- A significantly higher proportion of female residents selected 'improve communications with residents' (69% vs. 59% for male residents); a significantly higher proportion of male residents selected 'improve consultation with residents' (62% vs. 56% for female residents)
- A significantly higher proportion of residents aged 18-34 and 35-54 selected 'improve communications with residents' (71% and 66% vs. 59% for 55+); a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 55+ selected 'improve consultation with residents' (66% vs. 61% for 35-54 and 43% for 18-34)

- A significantly higher proportion of residents living in urban areas selected ‘improve communications with residents’ (67% vs. 60% for rural residents); a significantly higher proportion of residents living in rural areas selected ‘improve consultation with residents’ (62% vs. 57% for urban residents). This is an important distinction to note when considering future improvements.

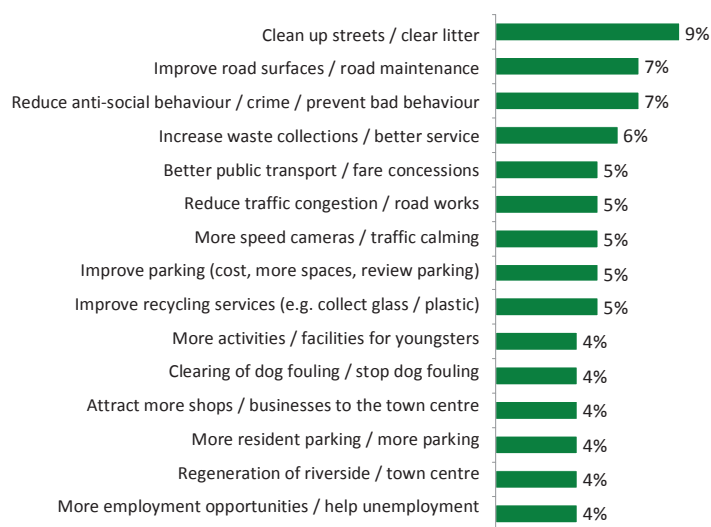
5.4 IMPORTANT ISSUES COUNCIL SHOULD BE TACKLING

Residents were also asked to describe what important issues they think Maidstone Borough Council should be tackling in their own words. For the purposes of analysis, these descriptions have been grouped into common themes as depicted in the chart below.

A variety of suggestions are given and cover all elements of the services Maidstone Borough Council provides to residents. The most common, however, are in relation to street cleaning, road maintenance, anti social behaviour and waste collections.

Important issues council should be tackling

In your opinion, are there any important issues that you think the Council should be tackling?



Base: Q10, All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 919)

6. INFLUENCES ON PERCEPTIONS

In order to further understand the influences of residents' satisfaction, correlation analysis was undertaken on the measures 'satisfaction with the Maidstone as a place to live' and 'satisfaction with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services' with other measures used in the survey. A correlation is an estimate of how related two variables are. The scale runs from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates a complete lack of a relationship and 1 indicates a perfect relationship between the two variables.

Attitudes towards Maidstone as a place to live are influenced by a sense of belonging to the area (0.48), different backgrounds getting on well together (0.4). Value for money is also a key consideration to residents (0.39). When looking at satisfaction with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services, these metrics remain important but to less of a degree. The provision of offering value for money is essential (0.67) and perceptions of treating all types of people fairly (0.51) and the sense of feeling informed about services and benefits Maidstone Borough Council provides is also important (0.51).

Correlation analysis

Correlation between 'satisfaction with the local area as a place to live' and 'satisfaction with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services' **0.43**

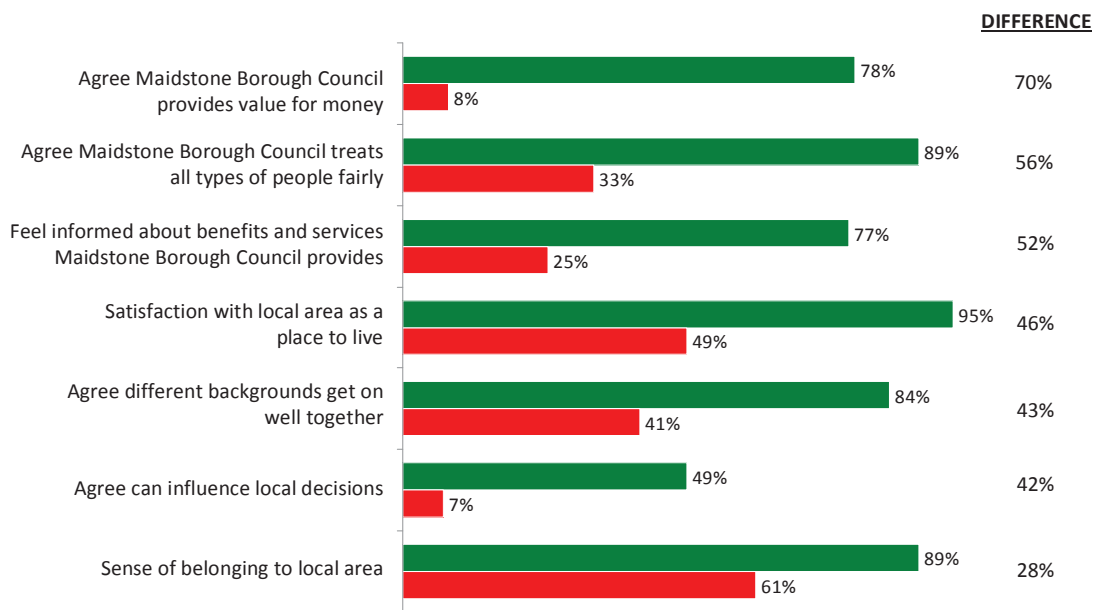
	Satisfaction with the local area as a place to live	Satisfaction with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services
Belonging to local area	0.48	0.31
Different backgrounds getting on well together	0.40	0.35
Influencing local decisions	0.37	0.44
Maidstone Borough Council treating all types of people fairly	0.38	0.51
Feeling informed about services & benefits Maidstone Borough Council provides	0.30	0.46
Maidstone Borough Council providing value for money	0.39	0.67

Base: All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1716)

Filtering metric agreement scores by those that are satisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services and those that are dissatisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services further emphasises these trends. The three largest distinctions between those satisfied and dissatisfied are:

- Perceptions of value for money: 78% vs. 8% for those dissatisfied
- Perceptions of treating all types of people fairly: 89% vs. 33% for those dissatisfied
- Perceptions of being kept informed: 77% vs. 25% for those dissatisfied

Metric influence on satisfaction levels



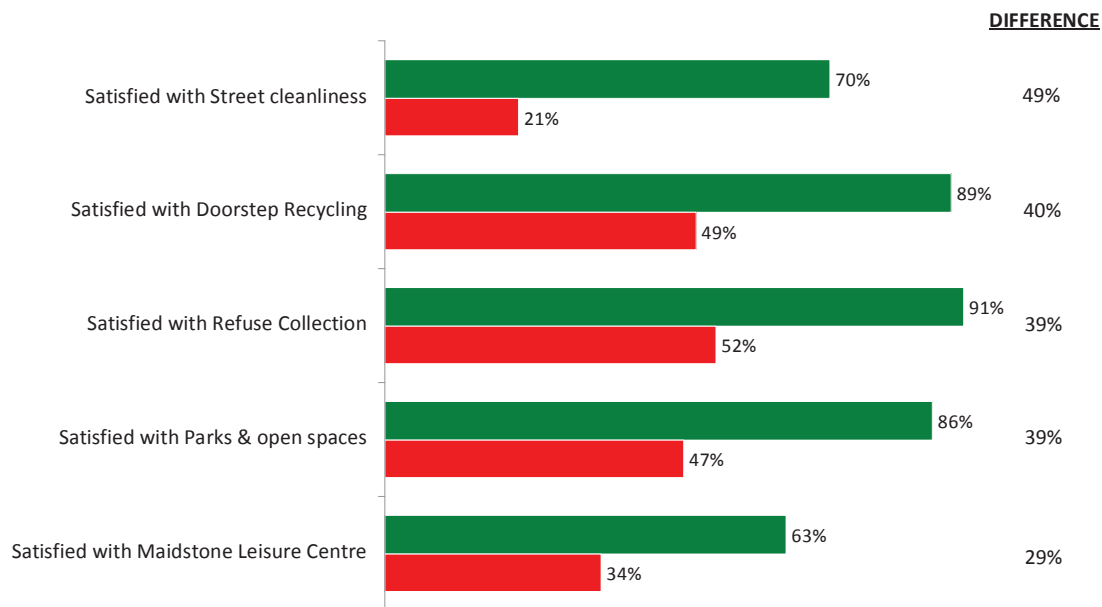
Base: All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1716)

We observed the following correlations when looking at analysis patterns between ‘satisfaction with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services’ and the five key services in the survey (street cleanliness, doorstep recycling, refuse collection, parks & open spaces and Maidstone Leisure Centre):

- Street cleanliness (0.41)
- Doorstep recycling (0.40)
- Parks and open spaces (0.37)
- Refuse collection (0.36)
- Maidstone Leisure Centre (0.33)

Filtering metric agreement scores by those that are satisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services and those that are dissatisfied with the way Maidstone Borough Council runs its services further emphasises the importance of street cleanliness with the largest distinctions between those satisfied and dissatisfied.

Metric influence on satisfaction levels (2)



Base: All Maidstone residents answering (unweighted base – 1716)

Q5d. Satisfaction with Parks and Open Spaces

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Overall satisfaction 2012	Overall satisfaction 2009	% Change
Shepway North	42.9%	45.5%	6.5%	3.9%	1.3%	88.3%	92.0%	-3.7%
Boughton Monchelsea*	24.0%	64.0%	8.0%	4.0%	0.0%	88.0%	80.6%	7.4%
Heath	28.8%	53.8%	7.7%	5.8%	3.8%	82.7%	87.5%	-4.8%
Leeds*	30.4%	52.2%	13.0%	4.3%	0.0%	82.6%	84.6%	-2.0%
Barming*	40.7%	40.7%	18.5%	0.0%	0.0%	81.5%	90.3%	-8.8%
Bearsted	31.8%	49.4%	11.8%	7.1%	0.0%	81.2%	92.9%	-11.7%
Coxsheath	13.0%	68.1%	15.9%	2.9%	0.0%	81.2%	88.0%	-6.8%
Allington	23.7%	56.6%	15.8%	2.6%	1.3%	80.3%	95.8%	-15.5%
High St	35.5%	44.7%	10.5%	6.6%	2.6%	80.3%	94.1%	-13.8%
Parkwood	28.3%	50.9%	9.4%	5.7%	5.7%	79.2%	76.0%	3.2%
North Downs*	47.4%	31.6%	15.8%	5.3%	0.0%	78.9%	84.0%	-5.1%
Boxley	23.5%	52.9%	17.6%	4.4%	1.5%	76.5%	87.6%	-11.1%
Detling*	31.3%	43.8%	18.8%	3.1%	3.1%	75.0%	94.7%	-19.7%
Loose*	7.1%	67.9%	17.9%	3.6%	3.6%	75.0%	100.0%	-25.0%
Fant	24.2%	50.5%	18.7%	4.4%	2.2%	74.7%	92.0%	-17.3%
North	25.6%	48.7%	19.2%	2.6%	3.8%	74.4%	92.5%	-18.1%
East	24.7%	49.4%	18.8%	5.9%	1.2%	74.1%	90.2%	-16.1%
South	20.0%	53.8%	21.3%	3.8%	1.3%	73.8%	89.9%	-16.2%
Bridge	28.6%	44.4%	20.6%	4.8%	1.6%	73.0%	87.5%	-14.5%
Sutton Valence*	17.2%	55.2%	13.8%	6.9%	6.9%	72.4%	96.2%	-23.8%
Downswood*	30.0%	40.0%	25.0%	5.0%	0.0%	70.0%	100.0%	-30.0%
Shepway South	25.0%	44.6%	21.4%	7.1%	1.8%	69.6%	92.7%	-23.1%
Harrietsham*	14.6%	54.2%	18.8%	8.3%	4.2%	68.8%	82.8%	-14.1%
Marden	22.0%	45.8%	25.4%	3.4%	3.4%	67.8%	89.0%	-21.2%
Headcorn*	16.3%	48.8%	27.9%	7.0%	0.0%	65.1%	83.3%	-18.2%
Staplehurst	14.0%	50.9%	28.1%	5.3%	1.8%	64.9%	89.4%	-24.5%

104

Top Quartile 80.9%
 Median 75.0%
 Bottom Quartile 72.6%

Q5e. Satisfaction with street cleanliness

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Overall satisfaction 2012
Barming*	33.3%	53.3%	10.0%	0.0%	3.3%	86.7%
Downswood*	25.0%	50.0%	12.5%	8.3%	4.2%	75.0%
Allington	19.8%	50.6%	11.1%	8.6%	9.9%	70.4%
Detling*	9.1%	60.6%	9.1%	12.1%	9.1%	69.7%
Boxley	12.3%	53.1%	11.1%	11.1%	12.3%	65.4%
Bearsted	15.4%	49.5%	17.6%	12.1%	5.5%	64.8%
Heath	12.7%	50.9%	12.7%	16.4%	7.3%	63.6%
Staplehurst	13.8%	47.7%	16.9%	15.4%	6.2%	61.5%
Bridge	11.1%	50.0%	13.9%	16.7%	8.3%	61.1%
Sutton Valence	18.2%	42.4%	18.2%	9.1%	12.1%	60.6%
High St	6.2%	51.9%	13.6%	17.3%	11.1%	58.0%
Coxsheath	9.6%	47.9%	19.2%	12.3%	11.0%	57.5%
Leeds*	7.1%	50.0%	17.9%	21.4%	3.6%	57.1%
North	12.8%	44.2%	16.3%	11.6%	15.1%	57.0%
East	9.7%	44.1%	15.1%	20.4%	10.8%	53.8%
South	4.3%	48.9%	17.4%	16.3%	13.0%	53.3%
Marden	8.9%	44.3%	17.7%	17.7%	11.4%	53.2%
Shepway South	15.0%	36.7%	18.3%	18.3%	11.7%	51.7%
Parkwood	13.6%	37.3%	13.6%	20.3%	15.3%	50.8%
Shepway North	15.7%	34.9%	20.5%	20.5%	8.4%	50.6%
Loose*	3.1%	46.9%	21.9%	15.6%	12.5%	50.0%
Harrietsham	4.9%	42.6%	13.1%	23.0%	16.4%	47.5%
Boughton Monchelsea*	6.3%	37.5%	25.0%	31.3%	0.0%	43.8%
Fant	8.1%	31.3%	16.2%	28.3%	16.2%	39.4%
North Downs*	4.3%	34.8%	30.4%	17.4%	13.0%	39.1%
Headcorn*	10.4%	27.1%	25.0%	29.2%	8.3%	37.5%

Top Quartile 63.1%

Median 57.1%

Bottom Quartile 50.7%

Q6 Satisfaction with the way MBC runs things	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Overall satisfaction 2012	Overall Satisfaction 2009	% Change
Downswood*	20.0%	60.0%	12.0%	8.0%	0.0%	80.0%	42.9%	37.1%
Leeds*	9.7%	67.7%	9.7%	9.7%	3.2%	77.4%	42.1%	35.3%
Bearsted*	8.0%	69.3%	14.8%	3.4%	4.5%	77.3%	53.3%	24.0%
Allington	8.6%	63.0%	21.0%	4.9%	2.5%	71.6%	62.3%	9.3%
Detling*	14.7%	55.9%	26.5%	0.0%	2.9%	70.6%	39.6%	31.0%
Coxsheath	10.4%	59.7%	23.4%	5.2%	1.3%	70.1%	44.3%	25.8%
Barming*	12.9%	54.8%	32.3%	0.0%	0.0%	67.7%	41.0%	26.7%
Bridge	10.0%	57.1%	17.1%	8.6%	7.1%	67.1%	40.2%	26.9%
Shepway North	14.8%	51.9%	24.7%	4.9%	3.7%	66.7%	47.0%	19.7%
Staplehurst	15.6%	50.0%	26.6%	6.3%	1.6%	65.6%	40.0%	25.6%
South	7.5%	55.9%	21.5%	11.8%	3.2%	63.4%	46.1%	17.3%
Marden	7.6%	55.7%	32.9%	2.5%	1.3%	63.3%	45.8%	17.5%
Shepway South	8.3%	53.3%	23.3%	6.7%	8.3%	61.7%	42.3%	19.4%
North Downs*	7.7%	53.8%	30.8%	3.8%	3.8%	61.5%	44.0%	17.5%
High St	8.4%	53.0%	22.9%	13.3%	2.4%	61.4%	46.7%	14.8%
Loose*	9.7%	51.6%	22.6%	12.9%	3.2%	61.3%	52.8%	8.5%
Boxley	13.1%	47.6%	27.4%	8.3%	3.6%	60.7%	43.6%	17.1%
North	11.9%	48.8%	25.0%	8.3%	6.0%	60.7%	47.4%	13.3%
Boughton Monchelsea*	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	6.7%	13.3%	60.0%	49.0%	11.0%
East	9.5%	50.5%	22.1%	9.5%	8.4%	60.0%	40.0%	20.0%
Parkwood	10.0%	50.0%	18.3%	18.3%	3.3%	60.0%	56.3%	3.8%
Harrietsham	8.1%	51.6%	24.2%	8.1%	8.1%	59.7%	44.9%	14.8%
Headcorn	14.8%	42.6%	37.0%	1.9%	3.7%	57.4%	42.1%	15.3%
Heath	10.7%	44.6%	30.4%	10.7%	3.6%	55.4%	42.2%	13.2%
Sutton Valence	20.6%	32.4%	32.4%	11.8%	2.9%	52.9%	41.5%	11.5%
Fant	8.7%	43.7%	30.1%	11.7%	5.8%	52.4%	42.9%	9.6%

Top Quartile 67.6%
Median 61.6%
Bottom Quartile 60.0%

Q7 How well informed do you feel MBC keeps you about the services and benefits it provides?	Well informed	Fairly well informed	limited information	doesn't tell us much	% well or fairly well informed
Detling*	8.8%	73.5%	14.7%	2.9%	82.4%
Barming*	12.9%	67.7%	19.4%	0.0%	80.6%
Leeds*	22.6%	54.8%	16.1%	6.5%	77.4%
North Downs*	14.3%	60.7%	17.9%	7.1%	75.0%
Staplehurst	25.8%	48.5%	22.7%	3.0%	74.2%
Downswood*	25.9%	48.1%	14.8%	11.1%	74.1%
Allington	19.8%	53.1%	22.2%	4.9%	72.8%
Bearsted*	15.6%	56.7%	22.2%	5.6%	72.2%
Marden	22.5%	48.8%	23.8%	5.0%	71.3%
Coxsheath	15.8%	53.9%	26.3%	3.9%	69.7%
Boughton Monchelsea*	18.2%	51.5%	21.2%	9.1%	69.7%
Loose*	16.1%	51.6%	22.6%	9.7%	67.7%
Headcorn	23.6%	43.6%	25.5%	7.3%	67.3%
Parkwood	19.7%	47.5%	27.9%	4.9%	67.2%
Heath	19.6%	46.4%	23.2%	10.7%	66.1%
Fant	16.7%	48.0%	29.4%	5.9%	64.7%
Shepway North	19.0%	44.0%	28.6%	8.3%	63.1%
Harrietsham	9.7%	53.2%	27.4%	9.7%	62.9%
Sutton Valence*	17.6%	44.1%	23.5%	14.7%	61.8%
North	9.0%	51.7%	27.0%	12.4%	60.7%
Boxley	15.3%	43.5%	25.9%	15.3%	58.8%
South	17.4%	41.3%	26.1%	15.2%	58.7%
Shepway South	10.0%	48.3%	33.3%	8.3%	58.3%
High St	19.0%	39.3%	31.0%	10.7%	58.3%
East	12.4%	44.3%	26.8%	16.5%	56.7%
Bridge	17.8%	17.8%	17.8%	17.8%	35.6%

Top Quartile 72.7%
Median 67.2%
Bottom Quartile 60.9%

Q8. % agreeing that MBC provides value for money

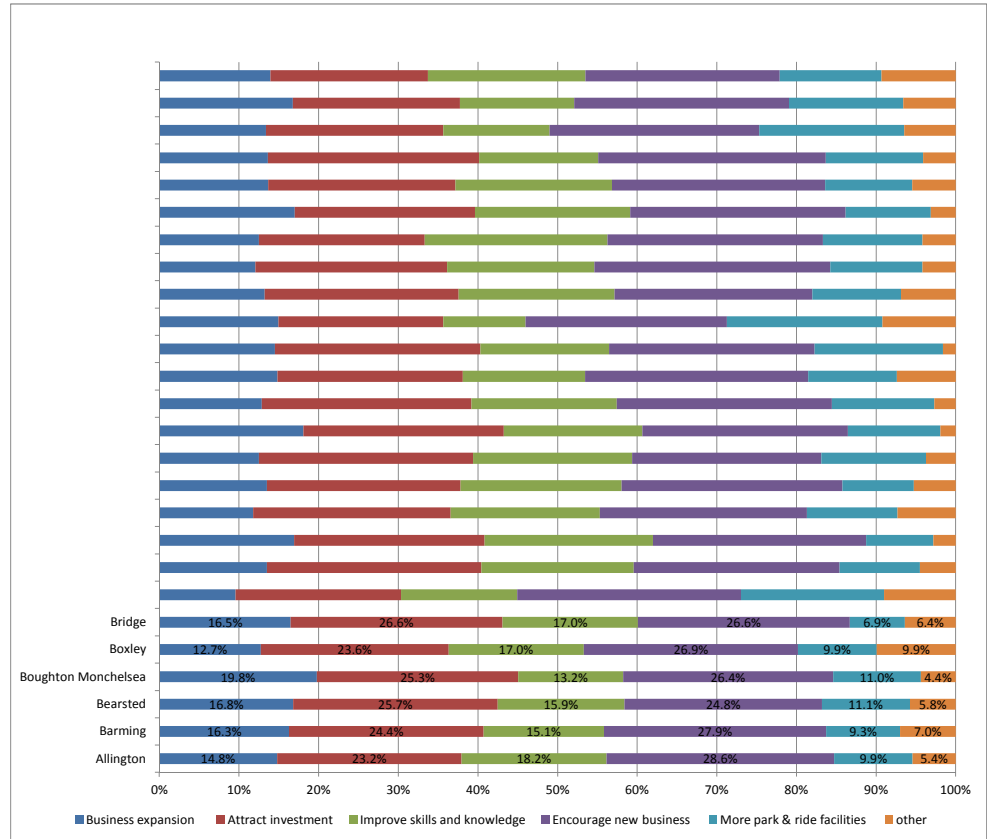
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	% Agreeing 2012	% Disagreeing 2012	% Agreeing 2009	% Change
Downswood*	5.0%	80.0%	15.0%	0.0%	85.0%	15.0%	48.3%	36.7%
Bearsted	5.6%	66.7%	20.8%	6.9%	72.2%	27.8%	40.6%	31.7%
Shepway North	10.0%	58.6%	25.7%	5.7%	68.6%	31.4%	39.2%	29.4%
Leeds*	4.0%	64.0%	20.0%	12.0%	68.0%	32.0%	34.3%	33.7%
Headcorn*	4.7%	62.8%	23.3%	9.3%	67.4%	32.6%	30.1%	37.3%
High St	9.1%	56.1%	22.7%	12.1%	65.2%	34.8%	37.4%	27.8%
Allington	8.2%	56.2%	24.7%	11.0%	64.4%	35.6%	46.9%	17.5%
Barming*	4.0%	60.0%	36.0%	0.0%	64.0%	36.0%	39.5%	24.5%
Parkwood	8.8%	54.4%	28.1%	8.8%	63.2%	36.8%	49.1%	14.0%
Marden	3.0%	59.1%	30.3%	7.6%	62.1%	37.9%	32.5%	29.6%
Bridge	11.1%	50.0%	25.9%	13.0%	61.1%	38.9%	26.5%	34.6%
Heath*	2.1%	58.3%	27.1%	12.5%	60.4%	39.6%	30.0%	30.4%
Staplehurst	3.8%	56.6%	32.1%	7.5%	60.4%	39.6%	29.9%	30.5%
Harrietsham	6.0%	54.0%	28.0%	12.0%	60.0%	40.0%	26.7%	33.3%
Coxsheath	0.0%	59.7%	37.1%	3.2%	59.7%	40.3%	30.4%	29.3%
Detling*	0.0%	59.3%	33.3%	7.4%	59.3%	40.7%	23.9%	35.3%
Boxley	1.4%	57.5%	24.7%	16.4%	58.9%	41.1%	30.6%	28.3%
North	4.8%	50.8%	34.9%	9.5%	55.6%	44.4%	37.1%	18.4%
Shepway South	9.8%	45.1%	25.5%	19.6%	54.9%	45.1%	22.2%	32.7%
North Downs*	4.5%	50.0%	31.8%	13.6%	54.5%	45.5%	37.8%	16.8%
East	5.1%	49.4%	34.2%	11.4%	54.4%	45.6%	30.3%	24.2%
Loose*	0.0%	53.8%	34.6%	11.5%	53.8%	46.2%	33.3%	20.5%
South	8.6%	44.3%	35.7%	11.4%	52.9%	47.1%	32.5%	20.3%
Boughton Monchelsea*	0.0%	51.9%	29.6%	18.5%	51.9%	48.1%	37.8%	14.1%
Sutton Valence	13.6%	36.4%	36.4%	13.6%	50.0%	50.0%	27.0%	23.0%
Fant	6.6%	41.8%	40.7%	11.0%	48.4%	51.6%	31.8%	16.6%

Top Quartile 64.3%

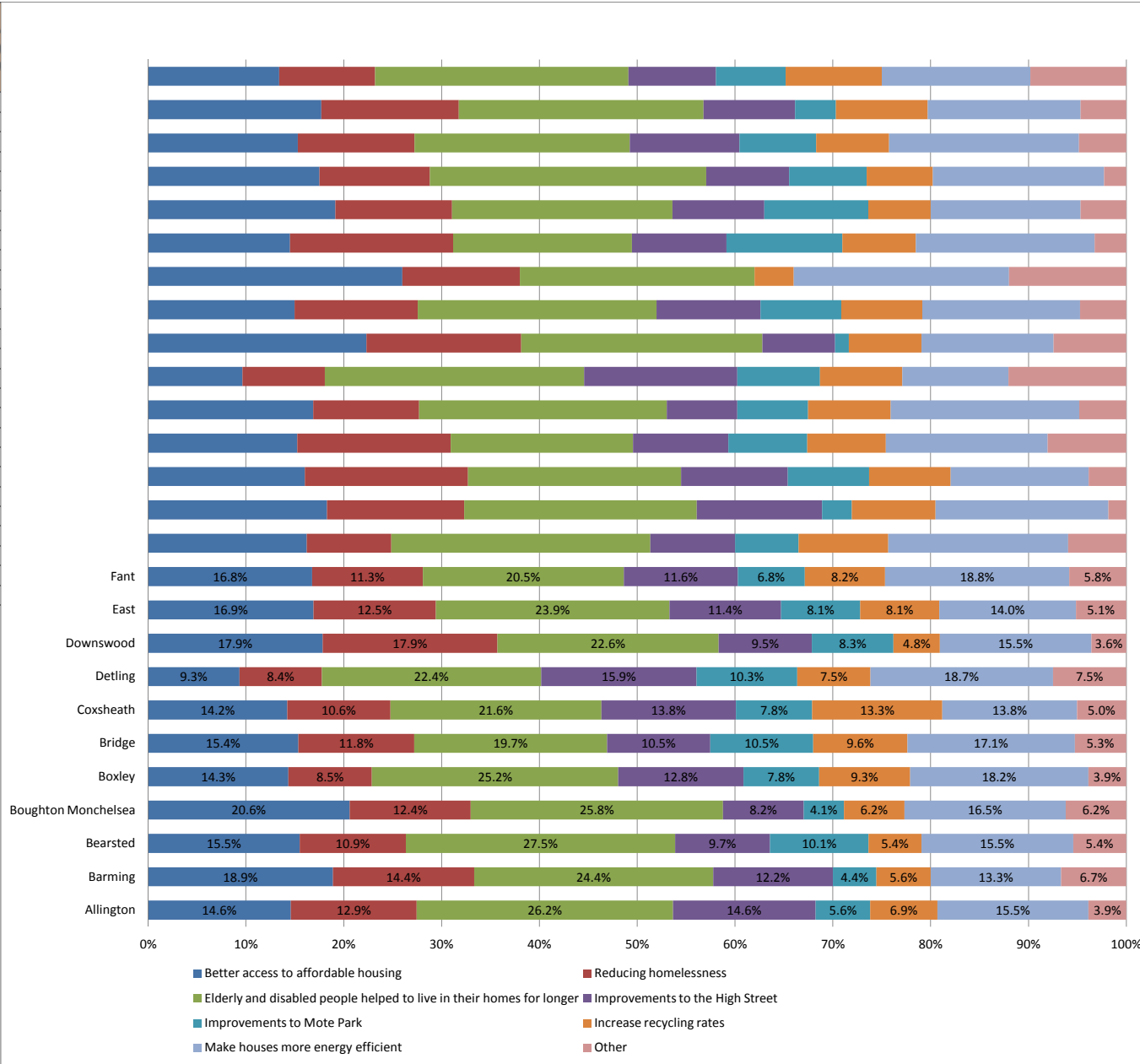
Median 60.2%

Bottom Quartil 54.6%

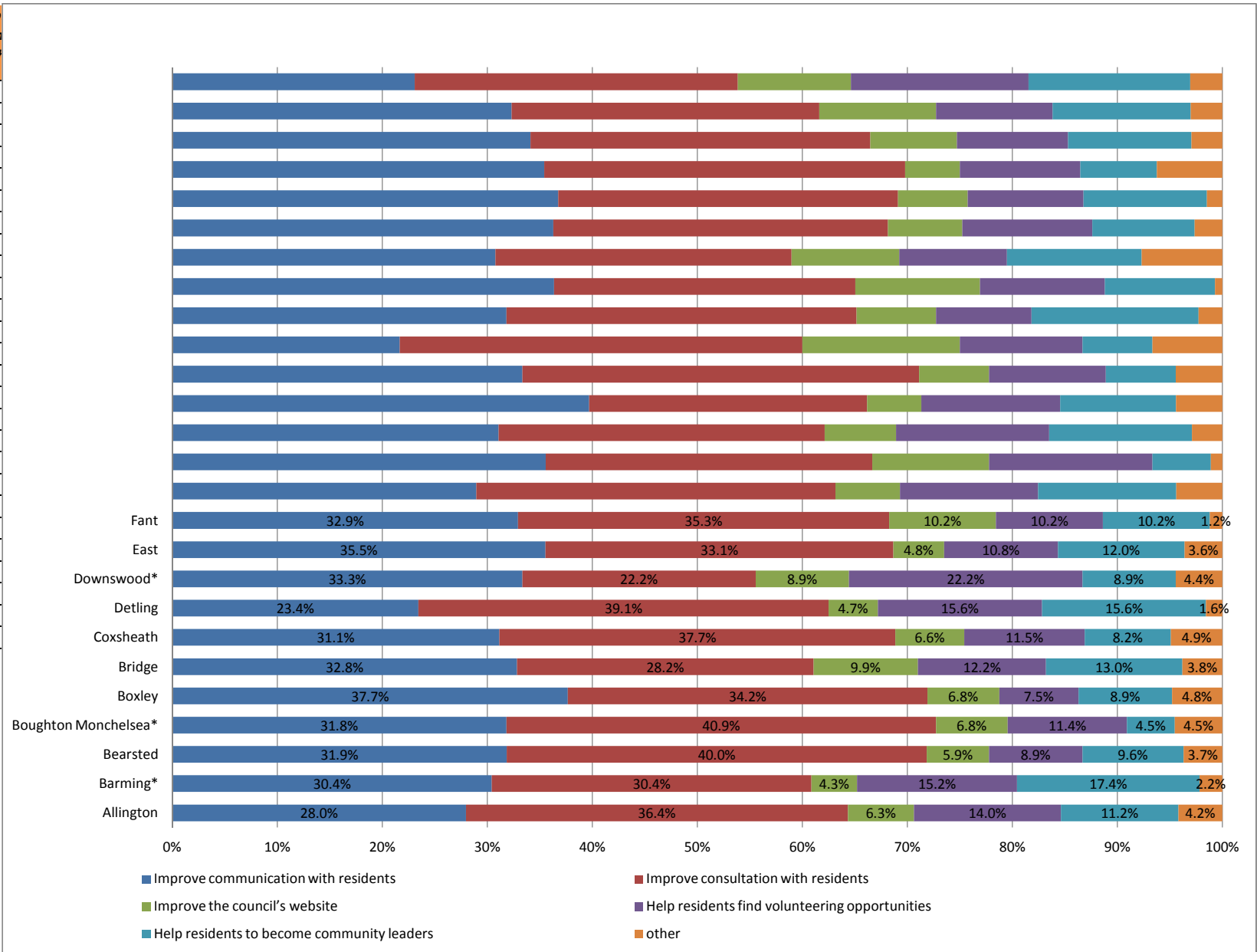
	Business expansion	Attract investment	Improve skills and knowledge	Encourage new business	More park & ride facilities	other
Allington	14.8%	23.2%	18.2%	28.6%	9.9%	5.4%
Barming	16.3%	24.4%	15.1%	27.9%	9.3%	7.0%
Bearsted	16.8%	25.7%	15.9%	24.8%	11.1%	5.8%
Boughton Monchelsea	19.8%	25.3%	13.2%	26.4%	11.0%	4.4%
Boxley	12.7%	23.6%	17.0%	26.9%	9.9%	9.9%
Bridge	16.5%	26.6%	17.0%	26.6%	6.9%	6.4%
Coxsheath	9.6%	20.8%	14.6%	28.1%	18.0%	9.0%
Detling	13.5%	27.0%	19.1%	25.8%	10.1%	4.5%
Downswood*	16.9%	23.9%	21.1%	26.8%	8.5%	2.8%
East	11.8%	24.8%	18.7%	26.0%	11.4%	7.3%
Fant	13.5%	24.3%	20.2%	27.7%	9.0%	5.2%
Harrietsham	12.5%	26.9%	20.0%	23.8%	13.1%	3.8%
Headcorn	18.1%	25.2%	17.4%	25.8%	11.6%	1.9%
Heath	12.8%	26.4%	18.2%	27.0%	12.8%	2.7%
High St	14.8%	23.3%	15.3%	28.0%	11.1%	7.4%
Leeds	14.5%	25.8%	16.1%	25.8%	16.1%	1.6%
Loose	14.9%	20.7%	10.3%	25.3%	19.5%	9.2%
Marden	13.2%	24.3%	19.6%	24.9%	11.1%	6.9%
North	12.0%	24.1%	18.5%	29.6%	11.6%	4.2%
North Downs*	12.5%	20.8%	22.9%	27.1%	12.5%	4.2%
Parkwood	17.0%	22.6%	19.5%	27.0%	10.7%	3.1%
Shepway North	13.7%	23.5%	19.7%	26.8%	10.9%	5.5%
Shepway South	13.6%	26.5%	15.0%	28.6%	12.2%	4.1%
South	13.4%	22.3%	13.4%	26.3%	18.2%	6.5%
Staplehurst	16.8%	21.0%	14.4%	26.9%	14.4%	6.6%
Sutton Valence	14.0%	19.8%	19.8%	24.4%	12.8%	9.3%



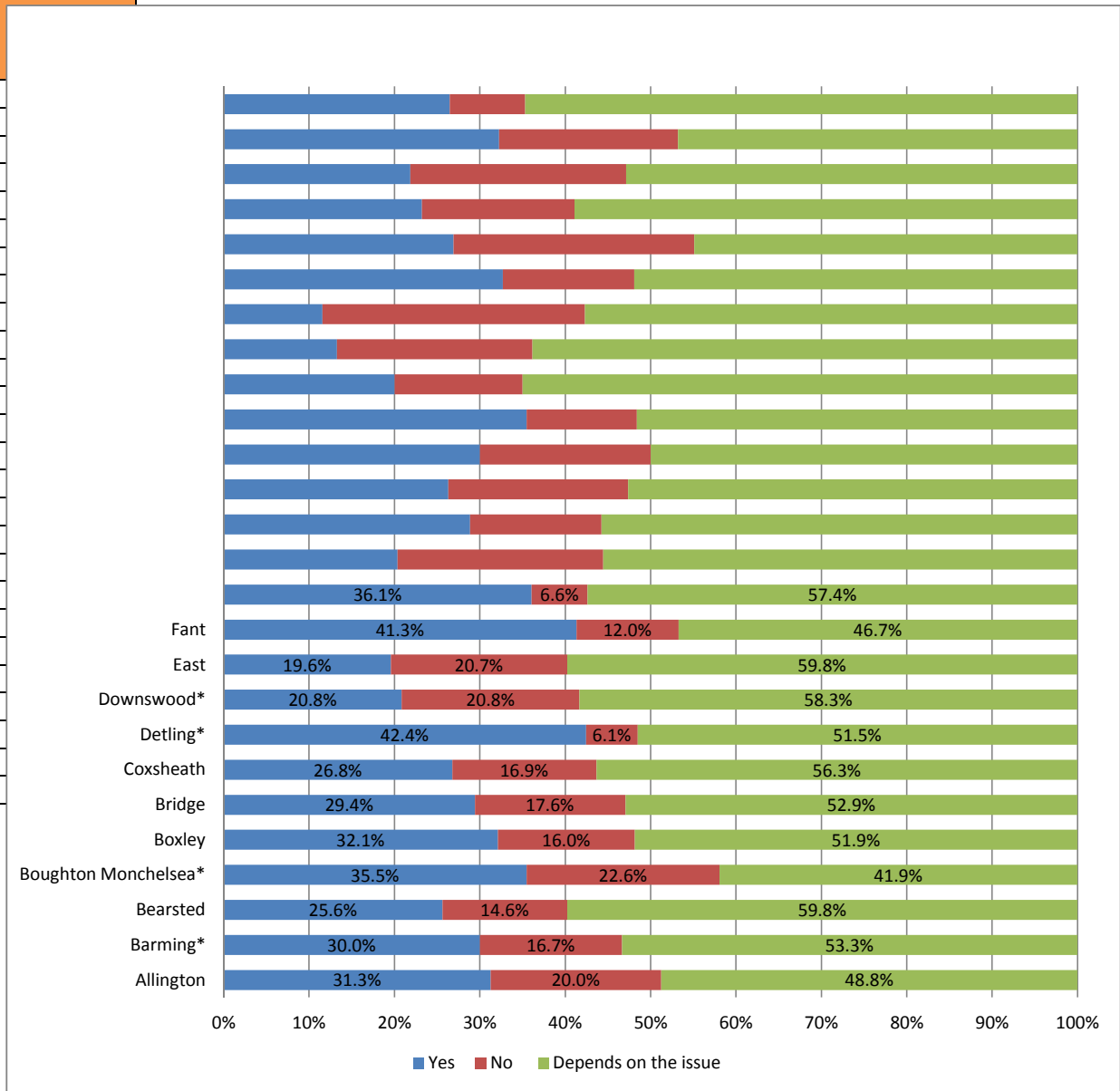
	Better access to affordable housing
Allington	
Barming	
Bearsted	
Boughton Monchelsea	
Boxley	
Bridge	
Coxsheath	
Detling	
Downswood	
East	
Fant	
Harrietsham	
Headcorn	
Heath	
High St	
Leeds	
Loose	
Marden	
North	
North Downs	
Parkwood	
Shepway North	
Shepway South	
South	
Staplehurst	
Sutton Valence	



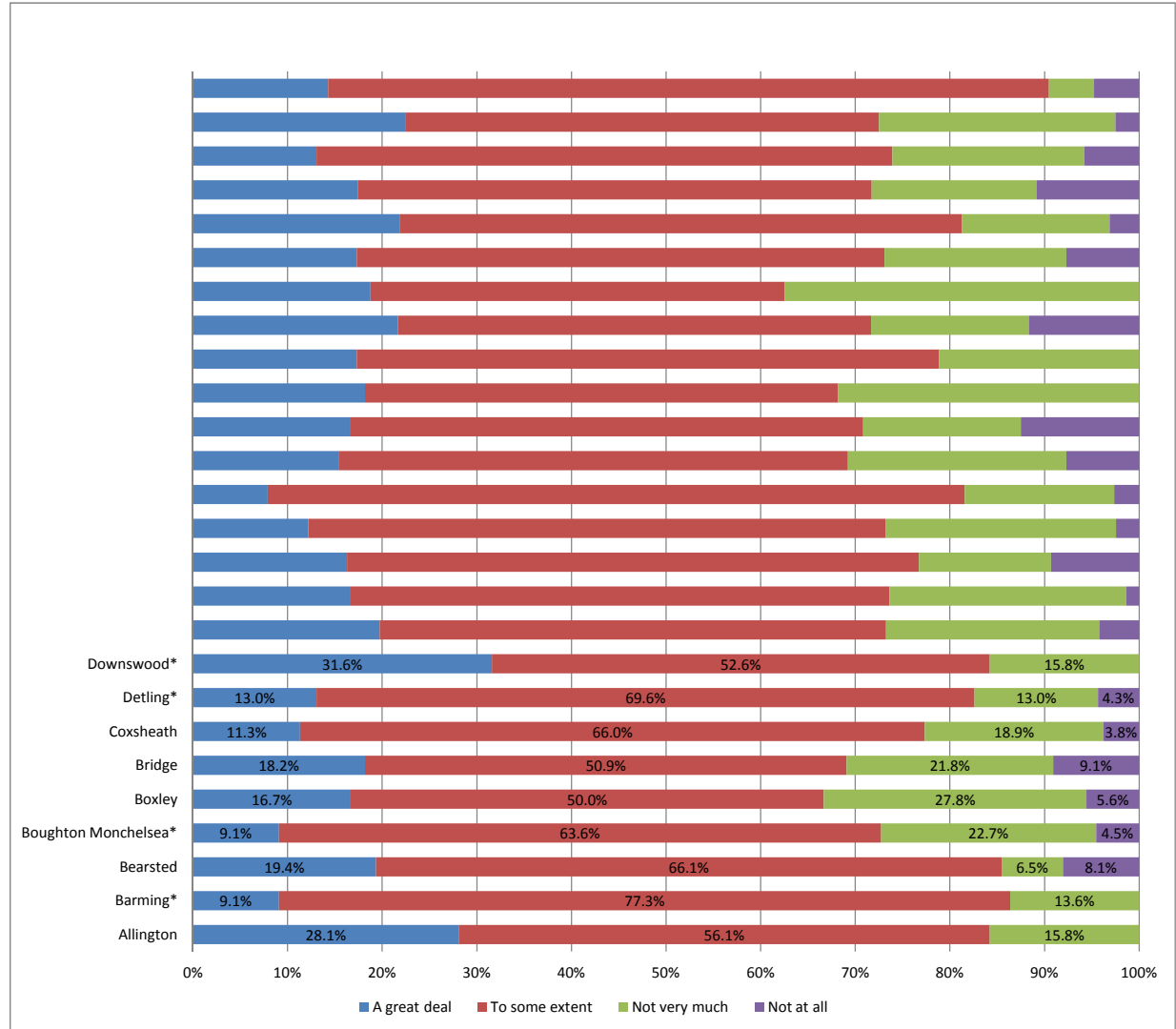
	Imp com with
Allington	
Barming*	
Bearsted	
Boughton Monchelsea*	
Boxley	
Bridge	
Coxsheath	
Detling	
Downswood*	
East	
Fant	
Harrietsham	
Headcorn	
Heath	
High St	
Leeds*	
Loose	
Marden	
North	
North Downs*	
Parkwood	
Shepway North	
Shepway South	
South	
Staplehurst	
Sutton Valence	



Q11. More involved in the decisions that affect your local area	Yes	No
Allington	31.3%	20.0%
Barming*	30.0%	16.7%
Bearsted	25.6%	14.6%
Boughton Monchelsea*	35.5%	22.6%
Boxley	32.1%	16.0%
Bridge	29.4%	17.6%
Coxsheath	26.8%	16.9%
Detling*	42.4%	6.1%
Downswood*	20.8%	20.8%
East	19.6%	20.7%
Fant	41.3%	12.0%
Harrietsham	36.1%	6.6%
Headcorn	20.4%	24.1%
Heath	28.8%	15.4%
High St	26.3%	21.1%
Leeds*	30.0%	20.0%
Loose*	35.5%	12.9%
Marden	20.0%	15.0%
North	13.3%	22.9%
North Downs*	11.5%	30.8%
Parkwood	32.7%	15.4%
Shepway North	26.9%	28.2%
Shepway South	23.2%	17.9%
South	21.8%	25.3%
Staplehurst	32.3%	21.0%
Sutton Valence*	26.5%	8.8%



Q12. Extent to which MBC treats all types of people fairly	A great deal	To some extent	Not very much	Not at all
Allington	28.1%	56.1%	15.8%	0.0%
Barming*	9.1%	77.3%	13.6%	0.0%
Bearsted	19.4%	66.1%	6.5%	8.1%
Boughton Monchelsea*	9.1%	63.6%	22.7%	4.5%
Boxley	16.7%	50.0%	27.8%	5.6%
Bridge	18.2%	50.9%	21.8%	9.1%
Coxsheath	11.3%	66.0%	18.9%	3.8%
Detling*	13.0%	69.6%	13.0%	4.3%
Downswood*	31.6%	52.6%	15.8%	0.0%
East	19.7%	53.5%	22.5%	4.2%
Fant	16.7%	56.9%	25.0%	1.4%
Harrietsham	16.3%	60.5%	14.0%	9.3%
Headcorn	9.1%	45.5%	18.2%	1.8%
Heath	5.6%	51.9%	11.1%	1.9%
High St	11.9%	41.7%	17.9%	6.0%
Leeds*	12.9%	41.9%	12.9%	9.7%
Loose*	12.9%	35.5%	22.6%	0.0%
Marden	11.1%	39.5%	13.6%	0.0%
North	14.8%	34.1%	11.4%	8.0%
North Downs*	10.7%	25.0%	21.4%	0.0%
Parkwood	14.8%	47.5%	16.4%	6.6%
Shepway North	16.7%	45.2%	11.9%	2.4%
Shepway South*	13.3%	41.7%	13.3%	8.3%
South	9.8%	45.7%	15.2%	4.3%
Staplehurst*	14.1%	31.3%	15.6%	1.6%
Sutton Valence*	8.8%	47.1%	2.9%	2.9%



Agenda Item 11

Maidstone Borough Council

Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 6 March 2012

Future Work Programme and Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Report of: Overview & Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 To consider the Committee's future work programme and the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.
- 1.2 To consider the information update given by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee considers the draft 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.
- 2.2 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.

3 Future Work Programme

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The Committee is reminded that the Constitution states under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules number 9: Agenda items that 'Any Member of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Sub-Committee shall be entitled to give notice to the proper officer that he wishes an item relevant to the functions of the Committee or Sub-Committee to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting. On receipt of such a request the proper officer will ensure that it is included on the next available agenda.'

4 Forward Plan of Key Decisions

4.1 The Forward Plan for March 2012 to June 2012 (**Appendix B**) contains the following decisions relevant to the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee's current work programme:

- ICT Partnership;
- Annual Governance Statement; and
- Asset Management Plans 2012-15.

6. Impact on Corporate Objectives

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

- 'Corporate and Customer Excellence.

6.2 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.

Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Future Work Programme 2011-2012

Date	Items to be considered
24 May 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman • Work Programming 2011/12
7 June 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman • Work Programming 2011/12
5 July 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman • The Marketing of Council Buildings • Interview with Councillor Rob Field • Annual Review of Complaints 2010-11 • Interviews with Angela Woodhouse, Head of Change and Scrutiny and Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Officer • The Council as a Business – Scoping Document for Review • The Leader and Cabinet members – Written Updates
02 August 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints Policy • Interview with Angela Woodhouse, Head of Change and Scrutiny • The Council as a Business? Review • Interviews with Chief Executive and Directors and • Interim report on Staff Survey results
06 September 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st quarter performance monitoring report • Interview with Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Officer • Complaints Quarter 1 Report • Interview with Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Officer • Corporate Improvement Plan Update • Interview with Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Officer • The Council as a Business? Review • Written updates from Committee Members on best practice and evaluation of Staff Survey results
4 October 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council as a Business? Review Interviews with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Taylor, Chair of the Regeneration and Economic Development Local Strategic Partnership Sub Group; • Victoria Wallace, Chief Executive Leeds Castle, • Elaine Collins, Marden Business Forum and the Network of Rural Business Forums; • Terry Collins, Marden Business Forum and the Network of Rural Business Forums; • Councillor Chris Garland, Leader of the Council; and • Councillor David Burton, Burton's Medical Equipment

Appendix A

	Limited
01 November 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd Quarter Complaints Monitoring Report Interview with Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager • Revenues and Benefits Update Interview with Steve McGinnes, Head of Revenues and Benefits • The Budget Strategy Interview with Paul Riley, Head of Finance and Customer Services
29 November 2011 CANCELLED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Strategy • Community Halls Audit Interview with Sarah Robson, Community Partnerships Manager • Strategic Plan • 2nd quarter performance monitoring report • LSP thematic quarterly performance report • The Parish Scheme (Provisional)
10 January 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Budget Strategy Interview with Paul Riley, Head of Finance and Customer Services. • Strategic Plan Refresh Interview with Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager. • Draft Improvement Plan Interview with Georgia Hawkes, Head of Business Improvement • LSP Written Update
7 February 2012 CANCELLED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council as a Business? Review • LSP thematic quarterly performance report • 3rd quarter performance monitoring report • 3rd quarter complaints monitoring report
6 March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equalities Objectives Interview with Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager and Catherine Negus, Policy and Research Assistant • Quarter 3 Complaints Monitoring Report Interview with Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager and Catherine Negus, Policy and Research Assistant • Residents Satisfaction Survey Results Interview with Roger Adley, Head of Communications
3 April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Welfare Reform Interview with Steve McGinnes, Head of Revenues and Benefits • Update from the Leader and Cabinet Members • The Council as a Business Review

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN

118

**1 March 2012 to
30 June 2012**

**Councillor Christopher Garland
Leader of the Council**



Forward Plan March 2012 - June 2012

INTRODUCTION

This is the Forward Plan which the Leader of the Council is required to prepare. Its purpose is to give advance notice of all the “key decisions” which the Executive is likely to take over the next 4 month period. The Plan will be up-dated monthly.

Each “key decision” is the subject of a separate entry in the Plan. The entries are arranged in date order – i.e. the “key decisions” likely to be taken during the first month of the 4 month period covered by the Plan appear first.

Each entry identifies, for that “key decision” –

- the subject matter of the decision
- a brief explanation of why it will be a “key decision”
- the date on which the decision is due to be taken
- who will be consulted before the decision is taken and the method of the consultation
- how and to whom representations (about the decision) can be made
- what reports/papers are, or will be, available for public inspection
- the wards to be affected by this decision.
-

DEFINITION OF A KEY DECISION

A key decision is an executive decision which is likely to:

- Result in the Maidstone Borough Council incurring expenditure or making savings which is equal to the value of £250,000 or more; or
- Have significant effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in Maidstone.

WHO MAKES DECISIONS?

The Cabinet collectively makes some of the decisions at a public meeting and individual portfolio holders make decisions following consultation with every member of the Council. In addition, Officers can make key decisions and an entry for each of these will be included in the Forward Plan.

**Forward Plan
March 2012 - June 2012**

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:
<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Due Date: 14 March 2012</p>	<p>Equality Objectives</p> <p>To enable Members to set Equality Objectives for the next four-year cycle according to MBC's Equality Duty</p>	<p>Housing, Revenues and Benefits, Registration, Transport, Parking, Bereavement Services, Museum, Theatre, Parks, Leisure Centres, Community Partnerships, Community Safety Partnership, HR, CLT, Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Going through CLT and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p>	<p>Ellie Kershaw elliekershaw@maidstone.gov.uk</p> <p>28th February 2012</p>	<p>Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Equality Objectives</p>
<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Due Date: 16 April 2012</p> <p>Original Date: 3 Oct 2011</p>	<p>ICT Partnership</p> <p>Report detailing the business case for a MKIP ICT shared service/partnership</p>	<p>Staff, Heads of Service, Members Questionnaire</p>	<p>David Lindsay, Head of IT Services DaveLindsay@maidstone.gov.uk</p> <p>31/7/2011</p>	<p>Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for ICT Partnership</p>

**Forward Plan
March 2012 - June 2012**

Decision Maker and Date of Decision/Month in which decision will be made:	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: 16 May 2012	Annual Governance Statement To agree the Annual Governance Statement for 2011/12	Corporate Leadership Team Heads of Service Members Internal communication/report to Corporate Leadership Team	Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk 27 April 2012	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Annual Governance Statement
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services Due Date: March 2012	Asset Management Plan: 2012-15 To consider the Council's Asset Management Plan 2012-15	Corporate Leadership Team Heads of Service Discussions with Corporate Leadership Team and Heads of Service	David Tibbit davidtibbit@maidstone.gov.uk 29/02/12	Cabinet Member Report for Asset Management Plan - 2012-15