# AGENDA

## CABINET MEETING

Date: Wednesday 8 June 2011
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street,
          Maidstone

Membership:

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

Page No.

1.    Apologies for Absence

2.    Urgent Items

3.    Notification of Visiting Members

4.    Disclosures by Members and Officers

5.    Disclosures of lobbying

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

**Continued Over/:**

**Issued on 31 May 2011**

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 KAREN LUCK on 01622 602743**. To find out more about the work of the Cabinet, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk

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

**PART II**

**To move that the public be excluded for the items set out in
Part II of the Agenda because of the likely disclosure of
exempt information for the reasons specified having applied
the Public Interest Test.**

**Head of Schedule 12A/
Brief Description**

## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 MAY 2011

**Present:**     Councillor Garland (Chairman), and
Councillors Greer, Hotson, Mrs Ring and J.A. Wilson

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

   There were no apologies for absence.

2. URGENT ITEMS

   The Leader of the Council agreed to take as urgent the joint report of the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Cultural Services and the Theatre and Events Manager because the work to the Hazlitt Arts Centre needs to be carried out urgently for the following reasons:
   - The health and safety of staff and contractors;
   - Business continuity if the boilers fail;
   - The need to do the work in the summer during the scheduled annual summer shut down of the Arts Centre.

3. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

   There were no Visiting Members.

4. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

   There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

5. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

   There were no disclosures of lobbying.

6. EXEMPT ITEMS

   RESOLVED: That the item on Part II of the Agenda be taken in private as proposed.

7. MINUTES

   RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 April 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed.

8. INFORMATION STRATEGY 2011 - 2014

   DECISION MADE: That the Information Strategy 2011 – 2014 as set out at Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of ICT Services be adopted.

   To view full details of this decision, please click here:-
   http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=445

9.    HAZLITT ARTS CENTRE WORKS

      DECISION MADE:

      That the boilers and associated pipework and controls, electrical
      switchgear and mains distribution panels are replaced and health and
      safety works are carried out and that the necessary urgent works are
      funded from balances, and the monies recouped through either reduced
      subsidy and/or increased income.

      To view full details of this decision, please click here:-
      http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=447

10.   PROVISIONAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN 2010/11

      DECISION MADE:
      1.  That the provisional outturn figures for revenue and capital for 2010/11 be
          noted.
      2.  That the provisional funding of capital expenditure in 2010/11 be agreed.
      3.  That the carry forward of revenue resources of £1.73m for the financing of
          future capital expenditure be agreed.
      4.  That the carry forward of grant funding be approved.
      5.  That the revenue carry forward requests be agreed.
      6.  That the impact on the balance sheet of the provisional outturn
          2010/11 be noted.

      To view full details of this decision, please click here:-
      http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=446

11.   FORWARD PLAN

      The Cabinet considered the report of the Leader of the Council regarding
      the Forward Plan for the period 01 June to 30 September 2011.

      RESOLVED:  That the Forward plan for the period 01 June to 30
      September 2011 be noted, subject to the following amendments:-

| Annual Governance Statement | Cabinet | Moved from 18 May to 08 June 2011 |
| Bid to the Homes & Communities Agency's Traveller Pitch Fund | Cabinet | New for 08 June 2011 |
| Tendering Strategy – Waste & Recycling Contract from 2013 | Cabinet | New for 10 August 2011 |
| Community Development Strategy 2011 - 2016 | Cabinet member for Community & Leisure Services | Moved from 18 May to 08 June 2011 |

12.   DURATION OF MEETING

      6.30pm to 6.56pm

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**8th June 2011**

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION & COMMUNITIES**

**Report prepared by Sarah Anderton and Andrew Connors**

1. **Bid to the Homes & Communities Agency's Traveller Pitch Fund**

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider a bid to the Homes & Communities Agency for funding to deliver a new public Gypsy and Traveller site in the borough by 2014/15.

1.2 Recommendation of Director of Regeneration & Communities

That Cabinet:

1.2.1 Agrees in principle to seek to provide additional public Gypsy and Traveller pitches, subject to the availability of funding;

1.2.2 Agrees to work in partnership with Town & Country Housing Group to:-

a. Develop a bid to the Homes & Communities Agency's Traveller Pitch fund; and
b. Implement new pitches in the borough by 2014/15, if the bid is successful.

1.2.3 Agrees to delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Communities to finalise the details of the bid by 20th June and to progress contractual and financial arrangements with Town & Country Housing Group.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

**Background**

1.3.1 The borough has a significant number of Gypsy and Traveller residents, the highest number of any of the boroughs and districts in the south east. The greatest majority of the borough's gypsies

live on privately-owned sites. The 2005/6 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment found that 20% of respondents had a preference for a publicly managed site.  Furthermore household incomes were found to be low with the result that private site purchase is beyond the means of many Gypsy and Travellers.

1.3.2    There are 2 public sites at Stilebridge Lane, Marden (18 pitches) and Water Lane, Ulcombe (14 pitches) which are owned by the Council and managed by KCC.  These sites are long established, fully occupied, have a low turnover of pitches and have waiting lists.  Whilst the stock of private sites has expanded through the granting of planning permissions, no additional public pitches have been provided since these two sites were established in the 1970s. .

1.3.3    Additional affordable public pitches in the borough from a site of some fifteen pitches would therefore be a substantial permanent addition to the existing stock.  The pitches will also contribute to the borough need of seventy-one pitches for the period 2006 -16 agreed by Cabinet on 9th February 2011.

1.3.4    Additionally, the availability of alternative provision is frequently a significant issue at planning and enforcement appeals.  A further public site would add to the availability of pitches under public control and thereby contribute to addressing this concern.  It may also be possible to provide a mix of more flexible shorter term tenancies in addition to longer term tenancies, subject to satisfactory management.

1.3.5    The Council's overall planning strategy for Gypsy accommodation will be part of its LDF Core Strategy and Gypsy & Traveller accommodation issues feature in both the existing and the emerging Housing Strategy.  Provision for a new public site in the borough is also a priority scheme project in the West Kent Local Investment Plan anticipated to be delivered in the later part of the 2011-15 period.

1.3.6    A suitable site for new public pitches has not yet been identified.

**HCA's Affordable Homes Programme and Traveller Pitch Fund**

1.3.7    The HCA recently published the Affordable Homes Programme Framework, in which they are seeking offers from providers to deliver a new supply of affordable housing over the next four years.  Delivery proposals will cover the 2011-15 Spending Review Period and outline the provider's requirement for funding from the HCA to support that delivery.  The HCA will invest £4.5bn in new affordable housing through the programme.

1.3.8    Within the HCA's new Affordable Homes Programme there is a specific, ring-fenced Traveller Pitch fund of £60million with priority for funding focused on the provision of new or additional pitches on permanent sites. 100% of site costs are grant eligible.  A key consideration for the HCA will be the extent to which the proposal represents value for money.

1.3.9    The HCA will welcome offers from local authorities, housing associations, and traveller community groups working with Registered Providers (RPs).  Although they will consider standalone proposals for single schemes, the HCA is strongly encouraging local authorities to work with RPs (principally housing associations) and other larger investment partners to access the pitch fund.  The aim is that traveller pitch proposals will be presented as an element of an individual RP's larger Affordable Homes Package bid for HCA funding.  The RP would act as 'Developing Agent' on the local authority's behalf and would be the recipient of the grant funding.

1.3.10   HCA officers have advised that they expect the schemes that are due to be delivered in the latter two years of the programme to be more indicative in nature and not necessarily based on specific sites at offer stage.  This would be the situation with this Council's proposal; the bid would constitute the RP's commitment to the HCA to deliver fifteen pitches in the borough on an, as yet, unidentified site by the end of 2014/15.

1.3.11   Housing and Spatial Planning Officers have had discussions with a number of RPs who expressed an interest in assisting the Council to make a bid.  Distinguishing issues have been the willingness of RPs to forward fund pre-construction elements significantly in advance of the receipt of grant (which the HCA pays upon scheme completion), willingness to submit a non site specific bid, willingness to submit the planning application, and differing views on the supplementary information needed in a bid to the HCA.

1.3.12   Assuming a successful bid, the role of the RP would be:

• To submit a HCA scheme bid, acting as a Developing Agent on behalf of the council;
• To work with the Council to search for and identify an appropriate site/s;
• To lead the detailed site assessment process;
• To assist with pre-planning application public consultation (with the Council);
• To lead the evaluation of costs associated with the site delivery; and

- To lead the site delivery process, including the scheme design, planning application submission, site development and the tender for works as a design and build contract.

1.3.13   Based on these discussions, the recommendation is that Town & Country Housing Group is selected as the Council's partner in this process, as they are prepared to undertake all of the above specified roles and responsibilities.  A summary of the outcomes of the discussions with RPs is attached in an exempt Appendix.  It is intended that the site/scheme will be owned by the Council and that management of the site will be undertaken by KCC, subject to negotiation, as with the two existing public sites.

1.3.14   The bid process takes place over a number of months and has already commenced.  The timetable is as follows;

| 3rd May 2011 | Deadline for initial bids to be submitted to the HCA. Town & Country HG bid submitted including non site-specific proposal for 15 pitches in the borough. |
| May-June | Assessment/negotiation between HCA, RPs and local authorities to refine bids. |
| 20th June – 4th July 2011 | HCA national aggregation and analysis of the final programme. |
| w/c 4th July | Ministerial and national HCA Board sign off of aggregate programme (subject to provider contracts) and confirm successful bids. |
| July 2011 | Initial contracts signed between RPs and the HCA. |

**Costs**

1.3.15   The costs incurred in submitting the bid are being met by Town & Country 'at risk' that the bid may not be successful.

1.3.16   Town & Country has recruited Lawson Queay Surveyors (LQS) from their Consultants Framework. LQS's tender provided best value for money. LQS will act as Employers Agent and Construction Design Management Coordinators for this project.  Should the HCA bid be successful, Town and Country would be looking to tender the works as a Design and Build Contract.

1.3.17   The indicative costs provided by Town & Country for the purpose of submitting the bid, estimate a scheme cost of some £1,960,705. This is based upon a worst case scenario in terms of potential costs and would equate to a sum of £130k per pitch (based on a 15 pitch scheme).  Given constrained public finances, it is imperative that

the best use is made of limited public funding, and also the resources contributed by providers.

1.3.18   In order to offer value for money, and to seek to demonstrate an effort to reduce costs and the funding per pitch, the initial bid to the HCA is based on a grant requirement of £1.885m.  This equates to a grant requirement of £125k per pitch. Once a suitable site has been identified and Town & Country are able to undertake a site inspection, they will be in a position to provide more informed and accurate figures for the build costs.  Town & Country and LQS would seek to ensure that the project's overall costs do not exceed the set budget for which grant is available.

1.3.19   Subject to Cabinet's consideration, these costs will be further reviewed and refined during the bid offer assessment and negotiation process ahead of the HCA's national aggregation and analysis of the final programme starting on the 20th June.

1.3.20   As set out in paragraph 1.3.12, one of Town & Country's roles would be to project manage the delivery of the site itself.  A breakdown of the estimated scheme costs show an overall project management fee of 5.04% of the build cost (contract sum) estimated at £1.7m, which equates to £85,680.

1.3.21   There are general rules applying to the choice of purchasing procedure for contracts at stated financial threshold levels, within the Council's Purchasing Guide.  For works, supplies or services contracts, which represent a total value/income to the contractor of £75,000 to £156,441, at least three written tenders are required in advance, following advertisement by public notice.  This procedure applies even though the costs will be paid through grant by the HCA and not from Council funds.

1.3.22   The overall project management fee is estimated to exceed £75k.  The Director of Change, Planning and the Environment has agreed to waive the Contract Procedure Rules for the requirement to obtain competitive tenders in this case due to the extensive market testing and discussions that have taken place with a number of RPs who had expressed an interest in partnering with the Council.

**Forward Funding**

1.3.23   The HCA will not stage payments to the RP.  It will make a single grant payment upon completion of the scheme. Town and Country have indicated that the build costs can be front funded by them stipulating that payment will be made to the contractor upon completion in their build contract, so there will be a relatively short lead in time before their costs will be recouped from the HCA.

1.3.24      There is the potential that the RP could incur significant pre-construction costs two or more years before the grant will be paid (eg site investigations, planning application costs). It is proposed that a budget for estimated pre-construction costs be agreed with Town and Country. Based on indicative costs and a similar comparable scheme, this is thought to be in the region of £250k to £415k.

1.3.25      Should the council be convinced of the need, it could offer to help meet these advanced costs ('forward funding') in the knowledge that expenditure would be recouped at the end of the project when the HCA grant is paid. The current capital programme includes a small budget to support the development of a gypsy site or sites. The sum available is £48,000 and is allocated in 2011/12.

1.3.26      The act of forward funding the balance of the acquisition and other pre-construction costs by the Council would constitute capital expenditure as the asset acquired would be recognised on the Council's balance sheet. The expenditure will require financing from resources such as capital receipts but, on completion, the grant would replace the funds utilised. As the grant would be received post completion of the scheme it would effectively be recycled into the financing of the future capital programme.

1.3.27      In order to ensure that this approach is affordable, some realignment of funding will be required around the period between commencement and receipt of grant. The resources available to finance the capital programme will not be reduced in total however the need to forward fund this scheme may mean greater pressure on resources earlier in the programme period. At the meeting in May 2011 Cabinet considered the additional resources available from one-off underspend in 2010/11 and transferred the sum of £0.8m to general balances. This unallocated sum could be considered as a possible method of mitigating any risk to the Capital Programme should the grant be delayed or not received.

1.3.28      The risk borne by the Council in forward funding the cost is the failure of Town & Country to complete the works and therefore the failure to meet the grant criteria. A legal agreement will be required between the Council and Town & Country and should include appropriate clauses to ensure the progress toward completion is adequate and that the RP takes the necessary action to obtain the grant on the Council's behalf as well as confirming the arrangements for reimbursement to the council once the grant is paid.

**Revenue consequences**

1.3.29 The inclusion of an additional site or sites in the Council's portfolio will increase repair and maintenance costs and the management charge from Kent County Council. In the case of the two existing sites the income generated from rents falls slightly short of being sufficient to cover direct costs. The shortfall is approximately £19,000 over the two sites in 2010/11. Charges from the Housing and Property Services teams are not covered by the rent and service charge income. An additional site will have an impact on costs and at this stage it should be assumed that an increase in revenue funding of £10,000 will be required. Identification of a site or sites and detailed design work will enable this figure to be more accurately estimated at a later time and this will be submitted for consideration as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 Cabinet could decide not to make a bid for HCA funding at this time. The Traveller Pitch fund is a ring fenced fund providing 100% costs of new Gypsy and Traveller pitches. The current funding round is not expected to be repeated for a further four years. To not make a bid on this occasion would represent a missed opportunity to access scarce public funding.

1.4.2 The Council could submit a bid without the partnership of a RP. However such stand alone proposals will not be considered until after the Affordable Rent programme packages, including any Traveller Pitch Funding proposals submitted as part of a package, have been assessed and agreed. There is a significant risk that funding will have been fully allocated before such stand alone schemes are assessed. A RP will also bring additional expertise to the process of bringing a potential site forward.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 This report's subject matter is directly relevant to the Council's Strategic Plan objective of making Maidstone a decent place to live. Specifically it would add to the stock of decent affordable housing in the borough.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 'Forward funding': The Council will firstly enter into further discussions with Town & Country and the HCA through the bid offers assessment and negotiation process, to see if the HCA will

consider proposals for different funding profiles and to determine how the pre-construction costs associated with the site delivery will be met. If the Council is satisfied that a contribution to 'forward funding' is merited, a legal agreement will be prepared to confirm the terms for repayment.

1.6.2 Partnership arrangements: The partnership with Town and Country Housing Group can be dissolved should Cabinet not endorse the decision, and in the event that front funding the development proves unachievable, or if sufficient grant is not available from the HCA, the bid can be withdrawn prior to contracts being signed with RP's in July 2011. If the bid is successful, a legal agreement, in the form of a Developing Agent agreement or similar, will be prepared to confirm the terms of the Council's partnership with Town & Country Housing Group.

1.6.3 Indicative costs: The grant that has been applied for is based on estimated costs. There is a risk that actual costs relating to the delivery of this project will be greater than the estimated costs, due to the bid being submitted on a non-site specific indicative funding basis, with no detailed site assessment having been undertaken.

1.6.4 The HCA intend to operate framework contracts with providers on a flexible basis, recognizing that parameters may change. The contract will allow for variations and amendments to take into account changes in any range of parameters. Their contract management approach will allow for the application of flexibilities on a fully open book basis through quarterly reviews of the contract. They will also undertake a full strategic annual review, jointly with providers, of how the contract is operating, to capture all variations agreed in previous quarterly reviews.

1.6.5 However, it is unlikely to be possible at any stage during the programme period to respond to changes in contract parameters by increasing the rate of funding per unit (if additional funding is needed for whatever reason) to deliver the new supply outputs envisaged. It is expected that such additional funding would have to be generated from a provider's own resources or capacity (where that is achievable without adversely impacting their financial viability). The Council will therefore work with the HCA and Town & Country to maintain a strong focus on the management of costs throughout the programme period, including efficient procurement approaches to reduce costs.

1.6.6 The deliverability status and progress of the scheme will be monitored on a regular basis, and will form part of the Affordable Housing Delivery Risk Assessment process which is undertaken on

a quarterly basis. A value engineering exercise will also be undertaken by LQS throughout the duration of the programme to mitigate against the risk of the overall actual costs exceeding the budget for which grant is available. This process will include liaison between Housing, Town & Country, the HCA, Spatial Planning, Development Management and Finance.

1.7     Other Implications

1.7.1

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

1.7.2   Financial: the potential financial implications are set out at paragraphs 1.3.15 to 1.3.29.

1.7.3   Staffing: the project will be delivered within existing staffing resources.

1.7.4   Legal: the need to have legal agreements with Town & Country HG is set out in paragraphs 1.3.28 and 1.6.2 of the report.

1.7.5   Procurement: procurement issues are addressed at paragraphs 1.6.21 to 1.2.22.

1.8     Relevant Documents

1.8.1   Appendices

Exempt appendix: outcomes of discussions with RPs.

1.8.2 <u>Background Documents</u>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2"><b><u>IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?</u></b></td></tr>
<tr><td>Yes    [ X ]</td><td>No    [ ]</td></tr>
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**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes    ☒          No    ☐

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

………………17th May 2011…………………………………………………………………………..

This is a Key Decision because: it affects more than one ward or parish

Wards/Parishes affected: all parishes/wards

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**8 JUNE 2011**

**REPORT OF HEAD OF CHANGE & SCRUTINY**

**Report prepared by Clare Wood**

1.  **PERFORMANCE INDICATOR TARGETS 2011-15**

1.1  Issue for Decision

1.1.1  To consider targets for performance indicators 2011-15 as set out in the Strategic Plan 2011-15.

1.2  Recommendation of Head of Change & Scrutiny

1.2.1  It is recommended that Cabinet:

a)  Agree changes to specific indicators following the agreement of the Strategic Plan 2011-15 contained within the report;

b)  Agree targets for performance indicators 2011-15 at Appendix A for publication as part of the Strategic Plan 2011-15;

c) Note the Performance Indicator Explanations at Appendix B;

d)  Note the indicators that have been deleted at Appendix C;

e)  Decide if any further action is required.

1.3  Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.3.1  Having a comprehensive and relevant set of performance targets is vital to ensure that the Council delivers the priorities and outcomes set for the next four years.  It is important to look at these measures and set targets that reflect the Council's overall aim of continuous improvement.

1.3.2  During 2010 the Government abolished the National Indicators (NIs) set as part of its programme on reducing the data burden for local government. This year we have reduced the number of outcomes in the Strategic Plan and the number of performance indicators in line with the message from central government and the Council's own wish to focus on priority areas.

1.3.3 Previously the Local Authority had a duty to produce a Best Value Performance Plan setting out the annual out-turns for all performance indicators and  targets for the next three years. In 2009 this duty was removed it is still considered best practice to set and publish targets.

1.4     Performance Indicators 2011-15 Targets and Monitoring

1.4.1 The performance indicators for 2011-15 were agreed in the Strategic Plan 2011-15. Since this was agreed a number of indicators have been changed as the methodology for collecting the data was still being devised at the time of drafting the plan. An explanation of each indicator for 2011-15 is available at Appendix C.

1.4.2 The following indicators have had their definitions revised or been replaced with a more appropriate measure:

- The percentage of car parking spaces used – was originally going to be reported quarterly however due to the level of resources required to collect this data its frequency has been changed to annual.

- Income from pay and display car parks per parking space will be reported quarterly rather than annually.

- Percentage of vacant units within the town centre has been further defined and is Percentage of vacant retail units within the town centre.

- Average grant per MBC funded affordable home unit will be reported annually rather than quarterly due to concerns over misinterpretation of data as home units will not be completed in accordance with a quarterly schedule.

- Local Street & Environmental Cleanliness a) Litter, b) Detritus, c) Graffiti, d) Fly posting was previously a national indicator.  A local measure has been devised using the national indicator guidance which will report on a) litter and b) detritus.

- Average time taken to respond to reports of fly-tipping has been changed to percentage of fly-tipping reports responded to within one working day as this measure makes it easier to identify trends in service response times.

- Savings identified through reviews has become savings delivered through reviews and will be reported annually.

- Average time taken to process commercial planning applications and average time taken to process residential planning applications have both been changed to percentage processed within statutory timeframes. This is due to the different categories of planning

application for example there could be a minor residential applications which will always be processed in a shorter timeframe than a major residential application.

1.4.3 Where possible targets have been set for the next four years to align with the Strategic Plan 2011-15 this is available at Appendix B (an explanation of the indicators is at Appendix C and details of deleted indicators are at Appendix D). This does not means that all targets are set in stone. Targets are agreed by Service Managers and Heads of Service. Each year targets are reviewed and throughout the year managers are asked if the annual target is likely to be achieved, this is then reported to Cabinet through the Quarterly Monitoring Reports, so that early action can be taken to mitigate the situation.

1.4.4 As targets are part of the Council's aspiration it is proposed that they are published as part of the Strategic Plan 2011-15.

1.4.5 To put the indicators into context we are looking at including a borough profile with the performance reports. Management team have been requested to consider the profile information we are able to gather in terms of age, accuracy and relevance to determine what information should be included. A census was undertaken in 2011 and it is expected that the data will not be available until July 2012, this will assist in providing a more up to date and accurate picture for next year's plan.

1.5 Ongoing Performance Management

1.5.1 Cabinet receive quarterly performance reports which are also considered by Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Overview & Scrutiny, to ensure that performance issues are picked up and actions are taken to improve performance before the end of the year. In addition at the end of each quarter the Performance Officer meets with all Heads of Service to discuss performance issues in their area. Performance issues are also discussed at Cabinet Member portfolio meetings.

1.5.2 CMT also receive monthly performance reports for each team through Reach the Summit (RTS), which measures the operational service provided by each team. Managers are responsible for indicators that are at basecamp (performing below a minimum level) for three consecutive months have to formulate an action plan to improve performance and present this to CMT. RTS is also one of the Council's mechanisms to reward good performance with monthly awards and an annual award. All RTS indicators and targets were reviewed in 2010/11 and for 2011/12 service plan actions plans will be reported alongside indicator out-turns.

1.6 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.6.1 The Key Performance Indicators are part of the Council's overarching Strategic Plan 2011-15 and play an important role in the achievement of corporate objectives. Other Performance Indicators cover a wide range of

service and priority areas for example waste and recycling, customer contact, planning and costs.

1.7     Risk Management

1.7.1   The setting and monitoring of performance targets linked to our strategic outcomes forms a key part of our risk management framework by enabling the organisation to measure progress towards achieving its objectives and identify areas that are under-performing.

1.8     Other Implications

1.8.1

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

**Financial**

1.8.2   Performance targets are closely linked to the allocation of resources and determining good value for money.

1.8.3   The financial implications of any proposed changes are also identified and taken into account in the Council's budget setting process with issues highlighted as part of the budget monitoring reporting process.

**Staffing**

1.8.4   Having a clear set of targets enables staff outcomes/objectives to be set and effective action plans to be put in place.

**Environmental/Sustainable Development, Community Safety and Procurement**

1.8.5 The performance indicators cover and are used to monitor a number of priority areas.

1.9     Relevant Documents

- Strategic Plan 2011-15
- Performance Plan 2010-13
- Annual Performance Report 2010/11

1.9.1 Appendices

- Performance Indicator Targets 2011-15
- Performance Indicator Explanations
- Deleted Indicators

**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes      | X |         No      |   |

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

………………………………………December 2010……………………………………………………..

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

………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Wards/Parishes affected: ……………………………………………………………………………..

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

| REF | Indicator |
|---|---|
| **A place to achieve, prosper and thrive** | |
| **Key Objective 001:** Increase the prosperity of the borough by stimulating investment and working with existing businesses to create a distinctive local economy | |
| NI 171 | New business registration rate |
| NI 172 | Percentage of small businesses in the borough showing growth |
| **Key Objective 002:** Raise  skills levels and reduce worklessness, including matching the skills of the workforce to the needs of local business | |
| NI 117 | 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) |
| NI 151 | Overall Employment rate (working-age) |
| NI 152 | Working age people on out of work benefits |
| NI 163 | Proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 2 or higher |
| NI 173 | Flows on to incapacity benefits from employment |
| **Key Objective 004:** Improve outcomes for  vulnerable people and minimise the negative effects of the recession | |
| NI 32 | Repeat incidents of domestic violence |
| NI 34 | Domestic violence – murder |
| NI 138 | Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood |
| NI 139 | The extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently at home |
| **Key Objective 005:** Reduce traffic congestion and support economic growth through the development of a sustainable transport strategy | |
| NI 47 | People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents |
| NI 48 | Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents |
| **A place that is clean and green** | |
| **Key Objective 006:** Enhance the Council's parks, green spaces and natural habitats through initiatives like the Mote Park improvement project | |
| KPI 016 | Improvements to the quality of parks as measured through quality audits |
| PS 001 | Satisfaction with parks and open spaces |
| **Key Objective 007:** Maintain a clean and pleasant environment for people who live in and visit the borough | |
| PS 002 | Satisfaction with keeping public land clear of litter and refuse |
| **Key Objective 008:** Reduce carbon emissions across the borough and improve air quality | |
| NI 186 | Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in local authority area |
| NI 194 | Percentage reduction in Nox and primary PM10 emissions through local authority's estate and operations |

| REF | Indicator |
|---|---|
| **Key Objective 009:** Reduce the Council's carbon footprint and improve the use of other natural resources, whilst ensuring the Council is planning to adapt to climate change | |
| **NI 188** | Planning to Adapt to Climate Change |
| **NI 189** | Flood and coastal erosion risk management |
| **Key Objective 10:** Reduce the amount of waste produced by local people and increase the proportion of waste reused or recycled | |
| **PS 003** | Satisfaction with doorstep recycling service |
| **PS 004** | Satisfaction with refuse collection |
| **A place with strong, healthy and safe communities** | |
| **Key Objective 011:** Improve social, economic and environmental outcomes for communities in priority areas | |
| **KPI 025i** | Number of crime per 1,000 population (Parkwood) |
| **KPI 025ii** | Number of crime per 1,000 population (High Street) |
| **KPI 025iii** | Number of crime per 1,000 population (Shepway North) |
| **KPI 025iv** | Number of crime per 1,000 population (Shepway South) |
| **KPI 026i** | Average unemployment rate (Parkwood) |
| **KPI 026ii** | Average unemployment rate (High Street) |
| **KPI 026iii** | Average unemployment rate (Shepway North) |
| **KPI 026iv** | Average unemployment rate (Shepway South) |
| **NI 119** | Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing |
| **Key Objective 012:** Improve the health of people living in the borough and reduce health inequalities | |
| **NI 39** | Rate of Hospital Admissions per 100,000 for Alcohol Related Harm |
| **NI 55** | Obesity in primary school age children in Reception |
| **NI 119** | Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing |
| **NI 120** | All-age all cause mortality rate |
| **NI 121** | Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75 |
| **NI 122** | Mortality rate from all cancers at ages under 75 |
| **Key Objective 013:** Make people feel safer where they live | |
| **KPI 028** | Recorded crime per 1,000 population |
| **KPI 029** | Percentage of residents feeling safe walking in the area where they live in the |

| REF | Indicator |
|---|---|
| | dark |
| NI 15 | Serious violent crime (per 1,000 population) |
| NI 16 | Serious acquisitive crime (per 1,000 population) |
| NI 17 | Perceptions of anti-social behaviour |
| NI 20 | Assault with injury crime rate |
| NI 21 | Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police |
| NI 22 | Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area |
| NI 23 | Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and consideration |
| NI 27 | Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police |
| NI 29 | Gun crime rate (per 1,000 population) |
| NI 30 | Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders |
| NI 35 | Building resilience to violent extremism |
| NI 36 | Protection against terrorist attack |
| NI 37 | Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area |
| NI 41 | Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem |
| NI 42 | Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem |
| **Key Objective 014:** Engage communities so people have the opportunity to participate and have a real say in what happens in their local area | |
| NI 1 | Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area |
| NI 2 | Percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood |
| NI 3 | Civic participation in the local area |
| NI 4 | Percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality |
| NI 5 | Overall / general satisfaction with local area |
| NI 6 | Participation in regular volunteering |
| **A place to live and enjoy** | |
| **Key Objective 15:** Encourage more adults and children to participate in sport | |
| PS 005 | Satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities |
| NI 8 | Adult participation in sport and active recreation |
| **Key Objective 16:** Improve the cultural offering of the borough through projects like the Museum East Wing Extension | |
| PS 006 | Satisfaction with museums and galleries |
| PS 007 | Satisfaction with theatres and concert halls |
| NI 10 | Visits to museums and galleries |
| NI 11 | Engagement in the arts |

| REF | Indicator |
|---|---|
| **Key Objective 17:** Deliver enough of the right type of well designed new homes where they are needed, maximising the numbers of affordable homes | |
| **NI 170** | Previously developed land that has been vacant or derelict for more than 5 years |
| **Key objective 18:** Improve the condition, accessibility and energy efficiency of existing housing, including reducing fuel poverty | |
| **NI 187** | Tackling Fuel Poverty |
| **Key Objective 19:** Better meet the accommodation needs of the gypsy and traveller community | |
| **KPI 044** | Satisfaction with local sites (Gypsies and Travellers) |
| **A place with efficient and effective public services** | |
| **Key Objective 21:** Deliver more efficient and effective Council services and increase value for money | |
| **PS 008** | Percentage of people agreeing that the authority provides value for money |
| **PS 009** | Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things |
| **NI 179** | Value for money – total net value of ongoing cash-releasing value for money gains that have impacted since the start of the 2008-09 financial year |
| **NI 182** | Satisfaction of business with local authority regulation services |
| **NI 184** | Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law |
| **Key Objective 23:** Improve the delivery of community services to local people through an effective Local Strategic Partnership | |
| **NI 140** | Fair treatment by local services |

| REF | Indicator | Frequency | Details |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome: By 2015 Maidstone has a transport network that supports the local economy** | | | |
| PKG 001 | Percentage of parking spaces used **(NEW)** | Annual | To ensure the provision of off street parking spaces effectively meets customer demand. Surveys will be conducted within each pay and display car park to record the number of vehicles occupying parking spaces during both morning and afternoon peak periods. Car park occupancy will be defined as a percentage against the number of parking spaces available. |
| SPT 001 | Percentage change in bus usage on services from Maidstone depot **(NEW)** | Annual | This data is provided by Arriva and is the change in the number of ticket sales compared to the previous year. It is reported as a percentage change due to commercial sensitivity. |
| KCC 001 | Average journey time per mile for key routes (Congestion) | Annual | To monitor the level of congestion during morning peak times. Congestion impacts on people's quality of life, imposes significant and increasing economic costs as identified in the Eddington Report, and relates to other important priorities including air quality and climate change. The indicator contributes to the evidence about how well the authority is performing its network management duties. |
| SPT 002 | Number of Park and Ride transactions | Quarterly | The Indicator compares the on bus transaction figure (these are the cash sales to passengers boarding buses) on Park and Ride with the same period of the previous year. The Council receives electronic copies of daily print outs from Its Park and Ride contractor (currently Arriva) on a monthly basis. These show the number of on bus transactions on each of the three services by ticket type. Allowances are made for the use of free bus passes (OAP tickets /2 and ten trip tickets *5). |
| PKG 002 | Income from pay and display car parks per parking space **(NEW)** | Quarterly | This indicator is designed to assess income efficiency and usage.   Pay and Display income is monitored closely - data is collated daily and will be used to calculate the income per parking space at each quarter of the financial year. Parking monitoring systems are used to monitor Income and reconciled against cash counted. |
| **Outcome: By 2015 Maidstone has a growing economy with rising employment, catering for a range of skill sets to meet the demands of the local economy.** | | | |
| LEV 001 | Number of business enquires to locate in Kent **(NEW)** | Quarterly | This is a measure of the attractiveness of the Borough as a business location. Locate in Kent is the investment agency for Kent and Medway. It receives corporate relocation enquiries directly and through referrals from Government sources. |
| DCV 001 | Percentage of commercial planning applications processed within statutory timescales **(NEW)** | Quarterly | To ensure that local planning authorities determine planning applications in a timely manner. This indicator measures the processing of commercial applications across all types of application (major, minors, others) |
| LEV 002 | Number people claiming Job Seekers Allowance **(KPI 006)** | Quarterly | This indicator measures the health of the local economy. JSA Claimant Count records the number of people claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and National Insurance credits at Jobcentre Plus local offices. |
| LEV 003 | Percentage of vacant units within the town centre  **(NEW)** | Quarterly | Maidstone is a shopping centre of regional significance. Its continued attractiveness for businesses, visitors and shoppers is important to the prosperity of the Borough. Economic Development Services subscribes to Co-star, a recognised provider of commercial property information which has a GIS facility. A search on a defined area can be set up which identifies all the retail units on the market in a given area. This will be set up to mirror the Town Centre boundary proposed by the Planning Policy section of the Council. |
| LEV 004 | Unemployment rate (model based) **(NEW)** | Quarterly | This indicator measures unemployment. The model-based estimate improves on the APS estimate by borrowing strength from the claimant count to produce an estimate that is more precise (i.e. has a smaller confidence interval). The claimant count is not itself a measure of unemployment but is strongly correlated with unemployment, and, as it is an administrative count, is known without sampling error. The gain in precision is greatest for areas with smaller sample sizes. |
| LEV 005 | Percentage of economically active people in Maidstone | Annual | This indicator measures the level of worklessness in the Borough Economically active: People who are either in employment or unemployed aged 16-64. |
| LEV 006a | Completions of business space gained **a) Office (NEW)** | Annual | To show the amount and type of completed employments floor space (net). Net additional employment floor space is calculated as new floor space completions, minus permitted losses e.g. change of use, conversions etc |

| REF | Indicator | Frequency | Details |
|-----|-----------|-----------|---------|
| LEV 006b | Supply of ready to occupy completions b) Industrial **(NEW)** | Annual | completions, minus permitted losses e.g. change of use, conversions etc. Floor space must be available for use and includes extensions made to existing floor space, where identified through development management process and surveys. Employment floor space type is defined by Use Class Orders B1 (a) B1 (b) B1 (c) and B2 and B8 - simplified for reporting to Office, Industrial, Logistics. |
| LEV 006c | Supply of ready to occupy completions **c)** Logistics **(NEW)** | Annual | |
| R&B 001 | Cost of Revenues & Benefits Service **(NEW)** | Annual | This is a key measure of the council's performance in relation to the objective of corporate and customer excellence, providing a baseline against which value for money can be monitored. The total gross cost of the revenues and benefits service (council tax, business rates, benefit fraud and benefit administration) divided by the population, as provided by the ONS mid- year estimate. |
| R&B 002 | Value of business rateable floor space **(NEW)** | Annual | The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) is an executive Agency of HM Revenues and Customs (HMRC). The work of the VOA includes compiling and maintaining lists of rateable values of the non-domestic properties in England to support the collection of business rates. |
| R&B 003 | Supply of business rateable floor space **(NEW)** | Annual | The rateable value represents the open market annual rental value of a business/non-domestic property. This means the rent the property would let for on the valuation date, if it was being offered on the open market. It is the combined value of that rateable value that will be reported as part of |
| DCV 002 | a) Percentage of major business planning applications taking-up pre-application advice | Bi-annual | These indicators measure the take-up and quality of pre-application advice. Pre-application advice is being promoted by the team and is a measure in ensuring that developments are high quality and well designed. |
| | b) Percentage of those taking pre-application advice where the applications were approved **(NEW)** | | |
| Outcome: By 2015 Maidstone has decent, affordable housing in the right places across a range of tenures |||| 

| SPT 003a | Percentage of residential planning applications granted a) Urban area **(NEW)** | Quarterly | Maidstone Borough is divided in  terms of rural and urban communities. These indicators provide contextual information on where new residential homes are being built. Allowing the urban rural split to be assessed. |
| SPT 003b | Percentage of residential planning applications granted a) Rural area  **(NEW)** | Quarterly | |
| DCV 003 | Percentage of residential planning applications processed within statutory timescales **(NEW)** | Quarterly | To ensure that local planning authorities determine planning applications in a timely manner. This indicator measures the processing of residential applications across all types of application (major, minors, others) |
| DCV 004 | Percentage of planning applications determined within statutory timescales a) Majors | Quarterly | To ensure local planning authorities determine planning applications in a timely manner. This indicator measures the percentage of planning applications dealt with in a timely manner. Averaging out performance across very different types of application would render any target as meaningless. Therefore it has been broken down into three broad categories: major, minor and other |
| DCV 005 | Percentage of planning applications determined within statutory timescales b) Minors | Quarterly | |
| DCV 006 | Percentage of planning applications determined within statutory timescales c) Others | Quarterly | |
| HSG 001 | Number of affordable homes delivered | Quarterly | To promote an increase in the number of affordable homes. Affordable housing is as set out in PPS3 (Planning Policy Statement 3), "The Government defines affordable housing as including social-rented and intermediate housing". Note this can include pitches on Gypsy and Traveller sites owned and managed by local authorities or registered social landlords. |
| HSG 002 | Number of homes occupied by vulnerable people made decent | Quarterly | This is the number of homes occupied by vulnerable persons that have been made decent by various means throughout the year.  The means are: (A) Our own Home Repair Grants (HRA'S). (B) By the national "Warmfront" scheme. (C) Our own Energy Efficiency grants administered by Creative Environmental Networks (CEN) on our behalf. (D) Homes made decent by enforcement action/negotiation. |
| SPT 004 | Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land | Annual | To encourage the provision of additional housing on previously developed land and through conversions of existing buildings in order to minimise development on green fields. |
| HSG 003 | Average grant per MBC funded affordable home unit **(NEW)** | Annual | This indicator covers the supply of all affordable dwelling completions built or acquired by RSLs (or other bodies) with financial support (grant) directly from the Council. This indicator is the figures that MBC contributes in grant form for the development of affordable homes. |
| DCV 007 | Cost of planning per application **(NEW)** | Annual | This indicator is to assess value for money in the planning processing expressed per application. Costs will exclude enforcement work. |

| REF | Indicator | Frequency | Details |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome: By 2015 Maidstone continues to be a clean and attractive environment for people who live in and visit the Borough** | | | |
| HLD 001 | Number of listed building consents granted **(NEW)** | Annual | This indicator shows the number of listed building consents that have been granted within the year and allows us to assess the amount of development to older/historic properties. |
| WCN 001 | Percentage of waste recycled (NI 192) | Quarterly | The indicator measures percentage of household waste arising which have been sent by the Authority for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion. This is a key measure of local authorities' progress in moving management of household waste up the hierarchy, consistent with the Government's national strategy for waste management. |
| MUS 001 | Visits/Uses of the Museum per 1,000 population | Quarterly | This includes Number of in-person visits; unique user visits to the museums' website; the number of schoolchild visits, the number of schoolchildren visited in outreach sessions; the number of schoolchildren using museum objects outside the museums; the number of adult, community and business groups visited outside the museums; the number of users reached by video-conferencing; the number of people engaged at outside exhibitions and events; the number of enquiries. |
| HLD 002 | Number of Tree Preservation Orders granted **(NEW)** | Quarterly | This indicator is contextual data showing how many tree preservation orders have been granted. |
| DEP 001 | Percentage of relevant land assessed with unacceptable levels of a) litter | Annual | This is reported as the percentage of relevant land and highways that is assessed as having deposits of litter and detritus that fall below an acceptable level. The Street Cleansing indicator (bespoke Ni195) is reported as two parts, one for each element of environmental and street cleanliness: (a) Litter, (b) Detritus,
This indicator was previously collected as BVPI 199 in 2007/08. |
| DEP 002 | Percentage of relevant land assessed with unacceptable levels of b) detritus | | |
| EEF 001 | Percentage of fly-tipping reports responded to within 1 working day **(NEW)** | Quarterly | Fly-tipping is the common term used to describe waste illegally deposited on land as described under Section 33 of the Environment Protection Act 1990. The removal of illegal dumping of waste on relevant land and highways should be removed the next working day following the report. |
| PKS 001 | Cost of maintaining the Borough's parks & green spaces per hectare **(NEW)** | Annual | This indicator measures the cost of maintaining the boroughs parks and green spaces enabling the authority to assess value for money. |
| WCN 002 | Cost of waste collection (per household) | Annual | To monitor cost of municipal waste disposal, to ensure that good value for money is achieved while delivering a high quality service. |
| DEP 003 | Cost of street cleaning per head of population **(NEW)** | Annual | The cost of street cleansing per head of the residents of Maidstone is an accurate indicator to show any changes in the cost of street cleansing. The population count to be used is the ONS mid-year estimate. |
| CMP 001 | Percentage reductions in C02 emissions from local authority operations (Tonnes) | Annual | The aim of this indicator is to measure the reduction of CO2 emissions from the relevant buildings and transport used to deliver its functions and to encourage them to demonstrate leadership on tackling climate change. This indicator is part of the carbon reduction action plan. |
| **Outcome: By 2015 residents in Maidstone are not disadvantaged because of where they live or who they are, vulnerable people are assisted and the level of deprivation is reduced** | | | |
| INT 001 | Percentage of the Borough covered by Broadband **(NEW)** | Annual | This indicator assesses the percentage of the borough covered by broadband with a speed of 2 megabytes or higher. |
| HSG 004 | Average time taken to process and notify applicants on housing register | Quarterly | Average time taken to process and notify housing register applicants per month, is measured using the date the application is processed, minus the date the application is received. A letter of notification is automatically sent on date of processing the production of which is included in this indicator. Only working days are counted. |
| CDP 001 | Number of individual volunteers registered on the Voluntary Action Maidstone Database of volunteers | Annual | The data for these indicators is provided by Volunteer Action Maidstone (VAM). They assess the level of volunteering in the borough and the growth of third sector (voluntary) organisations. |
| CDP 002 | Number of volunteer organisations registered with VAM | Annual | |
| CDP 003 | Number of residents participating in Neighbourhood planning as a percentage of the ward population | Annual | This indicator measure the level of community involvement in the Neighbourhood Planning process which helps communities identify and resolve local issues through Neighbourhood action Plans. |
| R&B 004 | Average time taken to process new benefit claims and changes of circumstances (NI 181) | Quarterly | HB/CTB of £19bn is paid to over 5 million low income households. Delays in the administration of these benefits can impact on some of the most vulnerable people in our society by. This indicator measures the average time taken to process these elements calendar days. |
| HSG 005 | Number of households presented from becoming homeless through intervention | Quarterly | This number of households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the local authority's housing advice service, housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation. |

| REF | Indicator | Frequency | Details |
|---|---|---|---|
| LEV 007 | Gap between median wage of employee (residents) and the median wage of employees (workplace) (salary differences) | Annual | This indicator measures increases in standard of living but also is a measure of economic competitiveness with knowledge driven industries requiring higher skilled labour force and able to pay higher wages. Resident based wage levels in Maidstone are higher than the workplace based levels suggesting lower skilled and lower wage level local economy. |
| **Outcome: By 2015 the Council will continue to have and demonstrate value for money services that residents are satisfied with** | | | |
| COM 001 | Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things **(bi-annual survey)** | Biennial | All of these indicators will be gathered through a resident based survey to be carried out in the third quarter. The methodology will be comparable to the Place Survey but has yet to be confirmed. |
| WCN 003 | Satisfaction with Council's recycling service **(bi-annual survey)** | Biennial | |
| WCN 004 | Satisfactions with Council's refuse collection service **(bi-annual survey)** | Biennial | |
| PKS 002 | Satisfaction with Council's parks and open spaces **(bi-annual survey)** | Biennial | |
| DEP 004 | Satisfaction with Street Cleansing **(bi-annual survey)** | Biennial | |
| PKS 003 | Satisfaction with the Leisure Centre **(bi-annual survey)** | Biennial | |
| R&B 004 | Percentage of business rates collected | Quarterly | These two indicator monitor the collection of Council Tax and NDNR against the target. |
| R&B 005 | Percentage of Council tax collected | Quarterly | |
| C&S 001 | Savings delivered through reviews (Value for Money | Quarterly | This indicator demonstrates the levels of savings that's has been agreed and shows progress towards overall savings targets.<br>Reviews include: Best Value Reviews, Business Transformation Reviews (savings achieved for Maidstone only), Overview & Scrutiny Reviews (of Maidstone Services) and service specific reviews. |
| R&B 006 | Value of fraud identified (Housing benefits) | Quarterly | To demonstrate the efficiency of the Revenues and Benefits team in identifying fraud. |

# Performance Indicators & Targets 2011-15

The Council's overall aim is for continuous improvement.  However, the current economic and political climate means that we have to ensure our resources and services are focussed on the agreed priorities.  Inevitably, performance against some targets will remain static or perhaps reduce over the next four years.  This is reflected in the targets set for the performance indicators set out over the next few pages and in our service planning principles. For some indicators where the Council does not own the data or have any control over its performance it has not been appropriate for the Council to set a target and in some cases indicator data is provided for information only (e.g. Number of list building consents granted) as the Council's ability to influence the performance of such an indicator is limited.  In setting targets for the next four years the Council has considered available resources, whether a service is statutory, national and local priorities, as well as current performance and how this compares nationally.  Targets are both challenging and realistic and will be reviewed in 2011/12 to ensure that they remain relevant.

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The Council has aligned all performance indicators to outcomes as set out in the Strategic Plan 2011-15. This will allow us to assess progress towards the desired outcomes and ultimately our priorities.

There are also a number of new performance indicators this year and, where possible, baselines have been included or will be set during 2011/12.

## Understanding targeting tables

This is the performance measure.

Shows how often the indicator is reported.

Targets for the next 4 years. These are reviewed each year to ensure they are

The officer responsible for the managing and collating of the data

| REF | Indicator | Frequency | Baseline | Target 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 | Target 2013/14 | Target 2014/15 | Good Performance | Managed by |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

The unique reference number.

Previous data which is considered when setting targets.

Indicates whether a higher or lower out-turn is preferable.

## Indicators and Targets 2011-15

### For Maidstone to be a growing economy

| REF | Indicator | Frequency | Baseline | Target 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 | Target 2013/14 | Target 2014/15 | Good Performance | Managed by |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Outcome: **By 2015 Maidstone has a transport network that supports the local economy** | | | | | | | | | |
| PKG 001 | Percentage of parking spaces used **(NEW)** | Annual | 67% | 66% | 64% | 62% | 60% | ↑ | Jeff Kitson |
| SPT 001 | Percentage change in bus usage on services from Maidstone depot **(NEW)** | Annual | 5,916,605 | Contextual – partner data | | | | ↑ | Clive Cheeseman |
| KCC 001 | Average journey time per mile for key routes (Congestion) | Annual | 3.28 | Contextual – partner data | | | | ↓ | KCC |
| SPT 002 | Number of Park and Ride transactions | Quarterly | 442,318 | 450,000 | 455,000 | 460,000 | 465,000 | ↑ | Clive Cheeseman |
| PKG 002 | Income from pay and display car parks per parking space **(NEW)** | Quarterly | £1,191.04 | £1,115.37 | Will be set as part of the budget process each year. | | | ↑ | Jeff Kitson |
| SPT SP 009 | Integrated Transport Strategy Action Plan Update | Bi-annual | Updates on action plans will be provided as commentary. | | | | | | David Edwards |
| SPT SP 010 | Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update | Bi-annual | | | | | | | Sue Whiteside |
| Outcome: **By 2015 Maidstone has a growing economy with rising employment, catering for a range of skill sets to meet the demands of the local economy.** | | | | | | | | | |
| LEV 001 | Number of business enquires to locate in Kent **(NEW)** | Quarterly | 100 | 120 | 130 | 140 | 150 | ↑ | John Foster |
| DCV 001 | Percentage of commercial planning applications completed within statutory timescales **(NEW)** | Quarterly | 85% | 85.5% | 86.0% | 86.5% | 87.0% | ↓ | Rob Jarman |
| LEV 002 | Percentage of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance **(KPI 006)** | Quarterly | 2.4% | 2.4%≤ | 2.4%< | 2.3%< | 2.3%< | ↓ | John Foster |

| REF | Indicator | Frequency | Baseline | Target 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 | Target 2013/14 | Target 2014/15 | Good Performance | Managed by |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LEV 003 | Percentage of vacant units within the town centre **(NEW)** | Quarterly | 13.25% | 12.25% | 11.50% | 10.75% | 10% | ↓ | John Foster |
| LEV 004 | Unemployment rate (model based) **(NEW)** | Quarterly |  | 5%< | 5%< | 4%< | 4%< | ↓ | John Foster |
| LEV 005 | Percentage of economically active people in Maidstone | Annual | 80.10% | 80.00% | 80.20% | 80.30% | 80.40% | ↑ | John Foster |
| LEV 006a | Completions of business space gained **a) Office (NEW)** | Annual | -97m² | 0m² | 500m² | 1000m² | 1500m² | ↑ | John Foster |
| LEV 006b | Supply of ready to occupy completions b) Industrial **(NEW)** | Annual | 7748m | 2000m² | 2000m² | 2000m² | 5000m² | ↑ | John Foster |
| LEV 006c | Supply of ready to occupy completions **c) Logistics (NEW)** | Annual | -10362 | 0m² | 0m² | 1000m² | 1000m² | ↑ | John Foster |
| R&B 001 | Cost of Revenues & Benefits Service **(NEW)** | Annual | TBC | TBC | Will be set as part of the budget process each year. |  |  | ↓ | Steve McGinnes |
| R&B 002 | Value of business rateable floor space **(NEW)** | Annual | £140,001,901 | £141,401,920 | 1% increase year on year |  |  | ↑ | Steve McGinnes |
| R&B 003 | Supply of business rateable floor space **(NEW)** | Annual | 4414 | 4458 | 1% increase year on year |  |  | ↑ | Steve McGinnes |
| DCV 002 | a) Percentage of major business planning applications taking-up pre-application advice | Bi-annual | 93.75% | 94.00% | 94.50% | 95.00% | 95.50% | ↑ | Rob Jarman |
| DCV 002 | b) Percentage of those taking pre-application advice where the applications were approved **(NEW)** | Bi-annual |  | 80% | 82% | 84% | 86% | ↑ | Rob Jarman |
| HSG SP 001 | £'s retained from employment growth bonus (TBC) **(NEW)** | Annual | Waiting for details from central government. |  |  |  |  | ↑ | Brian Morgan |

| REF | Indicator | Frequency | Baseline | Target 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 | Target 2013/14 | Target 2014/15 | Good Performance | Managed by |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EDV SP 001 | Economic Development Strategy Update | Bi-annual | | | | | | | John Foster |
| SPT SP 011 | Regeneration Statement Milestone Update | Bi-annual | Updates on action plans will be provided as commentary. | | | | | | Brian Morgan |
| HSG SP 001 | Local Implementation Plan Homes and Community Agency Milestones Update | Bi-annual | | | | | | | John Littlemore |
| SPT SP 012 | Local Development Framework (LDF) Milestones Update | Bi-annual | | | | | | | Sue Whiteside |

## For Maidstone to be a decent place to live

| REF | Indicator | Frequency | Baseline | Target 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 | Target 2013/14 | Target 2014/15 | Good Performance | Managed by |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome: By 2015 Maidstone has decent, affordable housing in the right places across a range of tenures** | | | | | | | | | |
| SPT 003a | Percentage of residential planning applications granted a) Urban area **(NEW)** | Quarterly | | Contextual | | | | | Sue Whiteside |
| SPT 003b | Percentage of residential planning applications granted a) Rural area **(NEW)** | Quarterly | | Contextual | | | | | Sue Whiteside |
| DCV 003 | Percentage of residential planning applications processed within statutory timescales **(NEW)** | Quarterly | 85% | 85.5% | 86% | 86.5% | 87% | ↓ | Rob Jarman |
| DCV 004 | Percentage of planning applications determined within statutory timescales a) Majors | Quarterly | 86.36% | 86.50% | 87.00% | 87.50% | 88% | ↑ | Rob Jarman |
| DCV 005 | Percentage of planning applications determined within statutory timescales b) Minors | Quarterly | 84.79% | 85.00% | 85.50% | 86.00% | 86.00% | ↑ | Rob Jarman |
| DCV 006 | Percentage of planning applications determined within statutory timescales c) Others | Quarterly | 95.09% | 95.50% | 96.00% | 96.50% | 97.00% | ↑ | Rob Jarman |
| HSG 001 | Number of affordable homes delivered | Quarterly | 228 | 100 | Targets for future years will be agreed as part of the budget process. | | | ↑ | John Littlemore |
| HSG 002 | Number of homes occupied by vulnerable people made decent | Quarterly | 302 | 150 | Beyond 2012 the Council will no longer have the funds to carry out the survey that informs this body of work. | | | ↑ | John Littlemore |
| SPT 004 | Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land | Annual | 78% | 60% | 60% | 50% | 50% | ↑ | Sue Whiteside |
| | The targets for this indicator have been profiled to take into account the reducing amount and type of previously developed land. | | | | | | | | |

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| REF | Indicator | Frequency | Baseline | Target 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 | Target 2013/14 | Target 2014/15 | Good Performance | Managed by |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HSG 003 | Average grant per MBC funded affordable home unit **(NEW)** | Annual | | Less than £60,000 | | | | | John Littlemore |
| DCV 007 | Cost of planning per head of population **(NEW)** | Annual | TBC | TBC | Targets for future years will be agreed as part of the budget process. | | | ↓ | Rob Jarman |
| HSG SP 002 | Housing Strategy Update | Bi-annual | Updates on action plans will be provided as commentary | | | | | | John Littlemore |
| HSG SP 003 | Tenancies Policy (TBC) | | | | | | | | |

**Outcome: By 2015 Maidstone continues to be a clean and attractive environment for people who live in and visit the Borough**

| REF | Indicator | Frequency | Baseline | Target 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 | Target 2013/14 | Target 2014/15 | Good Performance | Managed by |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HLD 001 | Number of listed building consents granted **(NEW)** | Annual | | Contextual – data only | | | | | Deanne Cunningham |
| WCN 001 | Percentage of waste recycled (NI 192) | Quarterly | 32.62% | 43% | 45% | 48% | 50% | ↑ | Jennifer Gosling |
| MUS 001 | Visits/Uses of the Museum per 1,000 population | Quarterly | 722.5 | 725 | 750 | 800 | 825 | ↑ | John Foster |
| HLD 002 | Number of Tree Preservation Orders granted **(NEW)** | Quarterly | 16 | Contextual – data only | | | | | Deanne Cunningham |
| DEP 001 | Percentage of relevant land assessed with unacceptable levels of a) litter | Annual | 2% | 1.96% | 1.94% | 1.92% | 1.90% | ↓ | Jonathan Scott |
| DEP 002 | Percentage of relevant land assessed with unacceptable levels of b) detritus | | 6% | 5.90% | 5.80% | 5.75% | 5.70% | ↓ | |
| EEF 001 | Percentage of fly-tipping reports responded to within 1 working day **(NEW)** | Quarterly | | 95% | 95% | 95% | 95% | ↓ | Jonathan Scott |
| | Although there is no baseline currently for this indicator the service manager has set a performance standard that he would like the team to achieve. | | | | | | | | |
| PKS 001 | Cost of maintaining the Borough's parks & green spaces per head of population **(NEW)** | Annual | TBC | TBC | Targets for future years will be agreed as part of the budget process. | | | ↓ | Jason Taylor |
| WCN 002 | Cost of waste collection (per household) | Annual | £54.58 | <£59 | <£59 | <£57 | <£57 | ↓ | Jennifer Gosling |

| REF | Indicator | Frequency | Baseline | Target 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 | Target 2013/14 | Target 2014/15 | Good Performance | Managed by |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DEP 003 | Cost of street cleaning per head of population **(NEW)** | Annual | £10.38 | £10.50 | Targets for future years will be agreed as part of the budget process. | | | ↓ | Jonathan Scott |
| CMP 001 | Percentage reductions in C02 emissions from local authority operations (Tonnes) | Annual | 5247 (2009) | -3% | -3% | -3% | -3% | ↑ | Jenny Hunt |
| | The target for this indicator has been set as a 3% reduction year on year as set out in the Carbon Management Plan. | | | | | | | | |
| ENH SP 001 | Air Quality Action Plan Update | Annual | Updates on action plans will be provided as commentary | | | | | | John Newington |
| CMP AP 001 | Carbon Management Plan Update | Bi-annual | | | | | | | Jenny Hunt |

## Corporate & Customer Excellence

| REF | Indicator | Frequency | Baseline | Target 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 | Target 2013/14 | Target 2014/15 | Good Performance | Managed by |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Outcome: **By 2015 residents in Maidstone are not disadvantaged because of where they live or who they are, vulnerable people are assisted and the level of deprivation is reduced** | | | | | | | | | |
| INT 001 | Percentage of the Borough covered by Broadband **(NEW)** | Annual | 56.65%. | 60% | 63% | 66% | 69% | ↑ | Dave Lindsay |
| HSG 004 | Average time taken to process and notify applicants on housing register | Quarterly |  | 4 weeks | 4 weeks | 3.5 weeks | 3.5 weeks | ↓ | John Littlemore |
| CDP 001 | Number of individual volunteers registered on the Voluntary Action Maidstone Database of volunteers | Annual | 3367 | 3600 | 3800 | 4000 | 4200 | ↑ | Sarah Robson |
| CDP 002 | Number of volunteer organisations registered with VAM | Annual | 115 | 120 | 125 | 130 | 135 | ↑ | Sarah Robson |
| CDP 003 | Number of residents participating in Neighbourhood planning as a percentage of the ward population | Annual | 11.6% | 15% | 20% | 25% | 30% | ↑ | Sarah Robson |
| R&B 004 | Average time taken to process new benefit claims and changes of circumstances (NI 181) | Quarterly | 7.66 days | 15 days | 15 days | 10 days | 10 days | ↓ | Steve McGinnes |
| R&B 004 | In setting the above target at 15 days I have worked on the basis that the focus going forward will be on reducing cost of delivery, whilst maintaining the level of service expected by customers and allowing for some short term impact on performance during the shared service implementation.  This is supported by the BTP review of the service which looked specifically at processing times to establish whether it was a driver for satisfaction and concluded that within certain boundaries, it was quality of service as opposed to speed of assessment that was key. | | | | | | | | |
| HSG 005 | Number of households prevented from becoming homeless through intervention | Quarterly | 567 | 400 | 400 | 350 | 350 | ↑ | John Littlemore |
| HSG 005 | The Council provides help for all households presenting as homeless and will use the appropriate means to resolve the situation. It should be noted that intervention is not an appropriate option in all cases. It is expected that the performance of this indicator will improve as the economy recovers from the recession. | | | | | | | | |

| REF | Indicator | Frequency | Baseline | Target 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 | Target 2013/14 | Target 2014/15 | Good Performance | Managed by |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LEV 007 | Gap between median wage of employee (residents) and the median wage of employees (workplace) (salary differences) | Annual | £82.50 | £82.50 | >£80.00 | >£80.00 | <£80.00 | ↓ | John Foster |
| CDP AP 001 | Community Development Strategy | Bi-annual | Updates on action plans will be provided as commentary | | | | | | Sarah Robson |
| NAP 001 | Neighbourhood Action Plans | Bi-annual | | | | | | | Jim Boot |
| **Outcome: By 2015 the Council will continue to have and demonstrate value for money services that residents are satisfied with** | | | | | | | | | |
| COM 001 | Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things **(biennial survey)** | Biennial | 44% | 46% | | 48% | | ↑ | Roger Adley |
| WCN 003 | Satisfaction with Council's recycling service **(biennial survey)** | Biennial | 51.3% | 55% | | 57% | | ↑ | Jennifer Gosling |
| WCN 004 | Satisfactions with Council's refuse collection service **(biennial survey)** | Biennial | 85.5% | 85% | | 85% | | ↑ | Jennifer Gosling |
| PKS 002 | Satisfaction with Council's parks and open spaces **(biennial survey)** | Biennial | 73% | 75% | | 77% | | ↑ | Jason Taylor |
| DEP 004 | Satisfaction with Street Cleansing **(biennial survey)** | Biennial | | 60% | | 62% | | ↑ | Jonathan Scott |
| PKS 003 | Satisfaction with the Leisure Centre **(biennial survey)** | Biennial | | 60% | | 62% | | ↑ | Jason Taylor |
| R&B 004 | Percentage of business rates collected | Quarterly | 97.03% | 97.00% | 97.00% | 97.00% | 97.00% | ↑ | Steve McGinnes |
| R&B 005 | Percentage of Council tax collected | Quarterly | 98.70% | 98.70% | 98.70% | 98.70% | 98.70% | ↑ | Steve McGinnes |
| C&S 001 | Savings delivered through reviews (Value for Money | Quarterly | £491,750 | Contextual | | | | ↑ | Angela Woodhouse |
| R&B 006 | Value of fraud identified (Housing benefits) | Quarterly | £1,190,546 | £500,000 | £500,000 | N/A | N/A | ↑ | Steve McGinnes |
| | Future targets have been set to take into account previous two year's performance which totals £1.7 million. | | | | | | | | |

| REF | Indicator | Frequency | Baseline | Target 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 | Target 2013/14 | Target 2014/15 | Good Performance | Managed by |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BIM 001 | Review customer access to services to improve access and efficiency | Bi-annual | | | | | | | Georgia Hawkes |
| C&S SP 005 | Service Improvements | Bi-annual | Updates on Action Plan will be provided as commentary | | | | | | Georgia Hawkes |

If you require any information about performance management at Maidstone or have any comments or queries about this document please write to the Policy and Performance Team, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, ME15 6JQ. You can also call the office on 01622 602491 or email policyandperformance@maidstone.gov.uk

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**8 JUNE 2011**

**REPORT OF HEAD OF CHANGE & SCRUTINY**

**Report prepared by Clare Wood**

1.    **END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2010/11**

1.1    Issue for Decision

1.1.1  To consider the draft out-turn results for 2010/11.

1.2    Recommendation of Head of Change & Scrutiny

1.2.1  It is recommended that Cabinet:

a)  Agree the Performance Out-turns for 2011-15 at Appendix A for inclusion with the Annual Report;

i.    Note the performance out-turns and narrative for 2010/11 (page 5); and

ii.   Note the areas where data has not been provided as requested (KPI 013 and 050) or is currently unavailable; and

b)  Decide if any further action is required.

1.3    Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.3.1  Having a comprehensive and relevant set of performance targets is vital to ensure that the Council delivers the priorities and outcomes set for the next four years.  It is important to look at these measures and set targets that reflect the Council's overall aim of continuous improvement.

1.3.2  During 2010 the Government abolished the National Indicators (NIs) set as part of its programme on reducing the data burden for local government. This year we have reduced the number of outcomes in the Strategic Plan and the number of performance indicators in line with the message from central government and to allow focus on priority areas.

1.3.3  Previously the Local Authority had a duty to produce a Best Value Performance Plan setting out the annual out-turns for all performance indicators and  targets for the next three years. In 2009 this duty was

removed it is still considered best practice to produced an annual performance report as well as set and publish targets for the next three years.

1.4    Performance Out-turns 2010/11

1.4.1 From 2009 Cabinet have received quarterly monitoring reports with year to date information. This level of detail is now included in the annual performance report to allow trends and fluctuations in data to be seen.

1.4.2 As the Annual Performance Out-turn (Appendix A) is a backward look at how we have achieved against the targets set it is proposed that they are published as part of the Annual Report.

1.4.3 Not all the performance indicators from 2010/11 were retained for 2011-15 details of deleted indicators are available at Appendix E.

1.4.4 Overall 66% of all indicators achieved the targets set for 2010/11 and 54% of all indicators have improved, with 18% just missing their target. Last year 75% of the targets were met and 58% of all indicators improved. In terms of priority themes performance has been strong for the Strong, healthy and safe communities theme but weaker in Clean and green. It is clear that the economic climate and service changes have impacted on performance for example there have been lower numbers of planning applications received and the introduction of a food waste collection service has created changes to service which have resulted in an initial decline in performance.

1.5    Performance Summary

1.5.1 Performance against target

| Performance against target | On Target | Missed target (within 10%) | Target not achieved | N/A[1] | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Achieve, prosper and thrive | 7 (64%) | 3 (27%) | 1 (9%) | 2 | 13 |
| Clean and green | 7 (46.6%) | 4 (26.6%) | 4 (26.6%) | 2 | 17 |
| Strong, healthy and safe communities | 5 (83%) | 1 (16%) | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Live and enjoy | 17 (77%) | 2 (9%) | 3 (14%) | 0 | 22 |
| Efficient and effective public services | 16 (64%) | 4 (16%) | 5 (20%) | 3 | 28 |
| **Total** | 52 (66%) | 14 (18%) | 13 (16%) | 7 | 86 |

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[1] Indicators rated N/A are not included in percentage see page 5 of the Appendix A for a full key to understanding how performance has been rated.

1.5.2 Direction of Travel

| Direction of Travel | Improved | Sustained | Declined | N/A | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Achieve, prosper and thrive | 6 (66%) | 0 | 3 (33%) | 4 | 13 |
| Clean and green | 5 (38%) | 3 (23%) | 5 (38%) | 4 | 17 |
| Strong, healthy and safe communities | 3 (50%) | 1 (16.6%) | 2 (33.3%) | 0 | 6 |
| Live and enjoy | 9 (45%) | 0 | 11 (55%) | 2 | 22 |
| Efficient and effective public services | 17 (65%) | 0 | 9 (35%) | 2 | 28 |
| Total | 40 (54%) | 4 (5%) | 30 (40.5%) | 12 | 86 |

Strong performance

1.5.3 Unemployment rate is down from 2.7% at quarter 4 last year to 2.4% (KPI 006). A baseline has been set for vacant retail units at 13.25% and the Council is aiming to reduce this to 12.25% for 2011/12 (KPI 008).

1.5.4 Housing has performed strongly throughout 2010/11. The number of households in temporary accommodation (NI 154), the number of households prevented from becoming homeless through intervention (KPI 009), the number of people helped through the staying put partnership (KPI 010) and the number of homes occupied by vulnerable people made decent (KPI 011) all exceeded the annual targets. There was an increase of 490% in the number of people helped through the Staying put Partnership. Changes were made to expand the programme in 2010, the large increase coupled with only slightly lower figures for households in temporary accommodation compared to this point in 2010 illustrates that the impact of the recession is still being felt by Maidstone's residents.

1.5.5 The indicators relating to key objective 15: Encourage more adults and to participate in sport have all achieved target. There was a 20% increase in take-up of council funded activities provided through Sports and Play (KPI 034). Satisfaction with the leisure centre (KPI 035) increased from 52% in 2009/10 to 60.8% for 2010/11 and the number of users at the leisure centre (KPI 036) has increased by 18%.

1.5.6 Planning performed well in 2010/11 with five out the seven indicators under objective 20: Improve the quality of the built environment including protecting the borough's heritage and ensure new buildings are well designed achieving the annual target. In relation to ensuring good design 93.75% of major planning applications had pre-application discussions (KPI 047). On protecting heritage 29.27% of conservation areas have up to date character appraisals (BV 219b) and 80.65% of planning enforcement cases were signed off within 21 days (KPI 046).

1.5.7 Revenues and Benefits have performed well for 2010/11. The collection rates for Council tax (BV 009) and National Non-domestic rates have both achieved target and improved slightly since last year. The fraud partnership identified over a million pounds of fraud an increase of 120%. The team also reduced the time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims and change of events by over a day giving an annual result of 7.66 days.

1.5.8 Corporately, the number of day lost to sickness absence (BV 012) has improved and for 2010/11 averages 6.22 days per employee.  The introduction of invoice manager has helped increase the percentage of invoices processed within 30 days (BV 008).

<u>Weak performance</u>

1.5.9 Performance indicators related to key objective ten: Reduce the amount of waste produced by local people and increase the proportion of waste reused or recycled have struggled to achieve the annual targets set this year. The roll out of the food waste collections has increased the number of missed bins (BV 88) for the last quarter which has resulted in the annual target not being achieved. The food waste collection and the recycling collections have helped reduce the amount of residual household waste (NI 191) by 2.5% and increase the amount of waste recycled (NI 192) by 2.5% however these changes are lower than predicted and both indicators have marginally missed the annual target.

1.5.10 Looking ahead to 2011/12 the Council is keen to improve customer satisfaction and recognizes the importance of improving complaint handling. Satisfaction with complaint handling (KPI 051) dropped from 55.25% (2009/10) to just 26.53% (2010/11) and although rated as amber the percentage of complaints resolved within timescales (KPI 052) dropped from 98% to 90.03%. During 2011 a new correspondence system will be introduced which should help improve the tracking and monitoring of complaints. The Head of Change and Scrutiny will also be taking an action plan to Standards Committee for improving satisfaction including training for staff, revising and updating the policy and monitoring responses.

1.5.11 There has been a 15% decrease in the number of people visiting parks and open spaces measured by footfall compared to 2009/10 (KPI 015). This could be due to a number of variables such as weather. Footfall in quarter 1 was unexpectedly low compared to previous years, 32% down on the 2009/10 figures for quarter 1.

1.5.12 Of the six indicators relating to key objective seven: Maintain a clean and pleasant environment for people who live and visit the borough, three have not achieved the annual target. Satisfaction with street cleansing (KPI 019) has declined by 2% since 2009/10 resulting in the annual target being marginally missed. Environmental cleanliness –litter (NI 195a) also

missed the annual target and declined during 2010/11, cleanliness has declined and this has been noticed by residents as demonstrated by satisfaction scores. Fly-tipping (NI 196) also failed to achieve the annual target but is moving in the right direction from 'Not effective' in 2009/10 to 'Effective' for 2010/11.

1.5.13 Overall, the Revenues and Benefits section has performed well during 2010/11. However, two indicators have marginally missed their annual targets; satisfaction with the benefits service (KPI 055) and the percentage of benefit claims calculated correctly (KPI 056). Although the satisfaction rate remains high, performance has dropped from 96% to 93.42%. Analysis of the survey results shows that there has been an increase in the number of respondents stating that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the service. The percentage of claims calculated correctly has also marginally missed the target. A high priority is given to ensuring the accuracy of benefit decisions and regular feedback is provided to staff.

1.5.14 Performance for some areas of the Museum is also down but to be expected as 40% of the building was closed due to the East Wing refurbishment. Usages (KPI 037) are down 10% to 722.5 visits per 1,000 population and only £51,820 was raised during 2010/11 against the target of £330,000. Council officers are still actively seeking external funding.

1.6     Data Quality

1.6.1   The Council's Data Quality Policy which has been updated for 2011-15 to take into account the changes in service planning, reporting of NIs and BVPIs. The policy was previously reviewed and published as part of the Best Value Performance Plan, it will now go to Cabinet in July as a Policy Framework Document.

1.7     Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.7.1   The Key Performance Indicators are part of the Council's overarching Strategic Plan 2011-15 and play an important role in the achievement of corporate objectives. Other Performance Indicators cover a wide range of service and priority areas for example waste and recycling, customer contact, planning and costs.

1.8     Risk Management

1.8.1   The production of a robust performance plan contributes to minimising risks, good data quality and improving use of resources.

1.9     Other Implications
1.9.1

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

**Financial**

1.9.2   Performance targets are closely linked to the allocation of resources and determining good value for money.

1.9.3   The financial implications of any proposed changes are also identified and taken into account in the Council's budget setting process with issues highlighted as part of the budget monitoring reporting process.

**Staffing**

1.9.4   Having a clear set of targets enables staff outcomes/objectives to be set and effective action plans to be put in place.

**Environmental/Sustainable Development, Community Safety and Procurement**

1.9.5   The performance indicators cover and are used to monitor a number of priority areas.

1.10    Relevant Documents

- Strategic Plan 2011-15
- Performance Plan 2010-13

### 1.10.1 <u>Appendices</u>

- Annual Performance Report 2010/11

**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes     | X |         No     |   |

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

…………………………………December 2010……………………………………………………..

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

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Wards/Parishes affected: ……………………………………………………………………...

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

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# 2010-11

# Annual Performance Report

**MAIDSTONE**
**Borough Council**
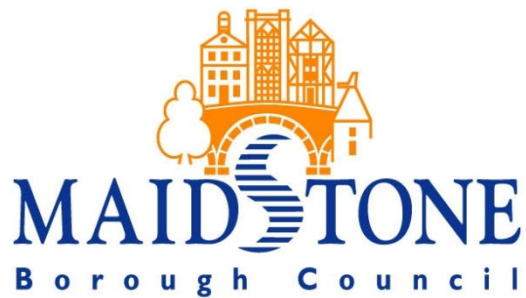
**Clare Wood, Performance & Scrutiny Officer**

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# Introduction

Welcome to Maidstone Borough Council's Annual Performance Report. This is a technical document that sets out how we have performed over 2010/11 and contains details of what we will be measuring from 2011/12 onwards.

During 2010/11 we have reviewed and reduced our priorities. The council now has three priorities and six outcomes that we are aiming to deliver. Details on priorities and outcomes are set out in the Strategic Plan 2011-2015 for further information or a copy of the plan please use the contact detail in the links section on page 35 of this document.

By managing our performance we are able to:

- Identify poor performance early and take necessary action to remedy this;
- Learn from past performance and use it as a driver for success; and
- Ensure that resources are allocated to the achievement of our priorities.

**Maidstone Borough Council**

## Our Priorities

1. **For Maidstone to have a growing economy**

   **Outcomes by 2015:**
   - A transport network that supports the local economy.
   - 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 by 2015:**
   - Decent, affordable housing in the right places across a range of tenures.
   - Continues to be a clean and attractive environment for people who live in and visit the Borough.

3. **Corporate and Customer Excellence**

   **Outcomes by 2015:**
   - Residents are not disadvantaged because of where they live or who they are, vulnerable people are assisted and the level of deprivation is reduced.
   - The Council will continue to have value for money services that residents are satisfied with.

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MAIDSTONE
Borough Council

## Performance 2010/11

Progress against targets is monitored through the performance framework. Directors, service managers and partnership leads are responsible for accuracy, reliability and timeliness of data in relation to their targets. Robust data is the essential ingredient for reliable performance and financial management information to support strategic decision making and planning.

Overall performance against target has declined from 2009/10 where 75% of all targets were achieved to 66% of targets being achieved for 2010/11. In relation to direction of travel the results are slightly lower than last year but are still comparable dropping from 58% of all indicator improved in 2009/10 to 54% for 2010/11.

### Performance Summary[1]

| Performance against target | On Target | Missed target (within 10%) | Target not achieved | N/A | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Achieve, prosper and thrive | 7 (64%) | 3 (27%) | 1 (9%) | 2 | 13 |
| Clean and green | 7 (46.6%) | 4 (26.6%) | 4 (26.6%) | 2 | 17 |
| Strong, healthy and safe communities | 5 (83%) | 1 (16%) | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Live and enjoy | 17 (77%) | 2 (9%) | 3 (14%) | 0 | 22 |
| Efficient and effective public services | 16 (64%) | 4 (16%) | 5 (20%) | 3 | 28 |
| **Total** | 52 (66%) | 14 (18%) | 13 (16%) | 7 | 86 |

| Direction of Travel | Improved | Sustained | Declined | N/A | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Achieve, prosper and thrive | 6 (66%) | 0 | 3 (33%) | 4 | 13 |
| Clean and green | 5 (38%) | 3 (23%) | 5 (38%) | 4 | 17 |
| Strong, healthy and safe communities | 3 (50%) | 1 (16.6%) | 2 (33.3%) | 0 | 6 |
| Live and enjoy | 9 (45%) | 0 | 11 (55%) | 2 | 22 |
| Efficient and effective public services | 17 (65%) | 0 | 9 (35%) | 2 | 28 |
| **Total** | 40 (54%) | 4 (5%) | 30 (40.5%) | 12 | 86 |

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[1] Indicators rated N/A are not included in percentage calculations and rounding anomalies can mean that when percentage figures are added together they do not total exactly 100%.

## Understanding Performance Tables

This is the performance measure.

Quarterly Data reported throughout the year. Includes quarter 4 data and targets.

Direction of Travel (DoT) shows change compared to the previous year please see keys to symbols below

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 | | 2010/11 Out-turn | Annual Target 2010/11 | DoT | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Value | Target | | | | |

The unique reference number.

Results for previous year so that comparisons can be made.

Values and Targets for the financial year 2010/11

The status symbol shows if the target has been achieved please see keys to symbols below

**Key to performance ratings**

Performance indicators are judged in two ways; firstly on whether performance has improved, been sustained or declined, compared to the same period in the previous year for example, 2010/11 annual out-turns will be compared against 2009/10 annual out-turns. This is known as Direction of Travel. Where there is no previous data no assessment of Direction of Travel can be made. The second way in which performance is assessed looks at whether an indicator has achieved the target set and is known as PI status. Some indicators will show an asterix (*) after the figure, these are provisional out-turns that are awaiting confirmation.

| Direction of Travel | |
|---|---|
| ⬆ | Performance has improved |
| ▬ | Performance has not changed / been sustained |
| ⬇ | Performance has declined |
| ? | No previous performance to judge against |

| PI Status | |
|---|---|
| 🔴 | Target not achieved |
| 🔺 | Target missed (within 10%) |
| ✅ | Target met |
| ? | No target to measure performance against |
| 📈 | Data Only |

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## Actual Performance 2010/11

This section of the report details out-turns for Key Performance Indicators which were set against key objectives in the 2010/11 Update to the Strategic Plan. The National Indicator set was abolished during 2010, therefore data is unavailable for the majority of the indicators in this set and these have therefore not been reported. National Indicators remain in Planning, Waste and Cleanliness where the Council owns the data and the indicator is related to the outcome.

### A place to achieve, prosper and thrive

| KO 001 Increase the prosperity of the borough by stimulating investment and working with existing businesses to create a distinctive local economy | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
| KPI 001 | Percentage of total spend with local suppliers | 26.05% | 29.63% | 29.61% | 26.2% | 31.38% | 30% | 29.31% | 30% | David Tibbit | ⬆ | ⚠ |
| KPI 001 | The performance for the fourth quarter met the quarterly target. However, despite the performance of the indicator improving compared to 2009/10 the annual target has not been achieved. There was a reduction in spending this year with KCC on printing and leased cars both of which are part of a wider efficiency programme. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 002 | Number of businesses in the borough | 6,770 | Not measured for Quarters. The data for this indicator is provided by the Office for National Statistics. The 2010 data will be released in December 2011. | | | | | N/A | 5,915 | John Foster | ❓ | ❓ |
| KPI 003 | Gap between median wage of employees (resident) & median wage of employees (Workplace) | | Annual Indicator | | | | | £82.50 | £100.00 | John Foster | ❓ | ✅ |

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 | | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Percentage of business starter units occupied | 100% | 100% | 100% | 84.62% | 43.48% | 75% | 43.48% | 75% | David Tibbit | ⬇ | |
| KPI 005 | Performance for this indicator was sustained for the first half of the year. The council has been productive and acquired a further 14 units for letting during 2010/11. Four were acquired in quarter 3 and ten acquired during quarter 4 which has impacted on the end of year position. All available units are currently being marketed and it is expected that performance will increase as the economic situation improves. The Council currently has a total of 23 business starter units. | | | | | | | | | | | 🔴 |

## KO 002 Raise skills levels and reduce worklessness, including matching the skills of the workforce to the needs of local business

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| KPI 006 | Unemployment rate | 2.9% | 2.7% | 2.3% | 2.2% | 2.4% | 3% | 2.4% | 3% | John Foster | ⬆ | ✅ |

## KO 003 Achieve regeneration focussing on enhancing the attractiveness of the Town Centre through initiatives like the High Street public realm projects

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| KPI 007 | Footfall in the High Street | 538,000 per week | This indicator is measured triennially, and is next due 2012/13 | | | | | | | Sue Whiteside | ❓ | ❓ |
| KPI 008 | Percentage of vacant retail units in town centre | | Annual Indicator | | | | | 13.25% | Set baseline | John Foster | ❓ | ✅ |

**KO 004 Improve outcomes for vulnerable people and minimise the negative effects of the recession**

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 | | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Value | Target | | | | | |
| NI 156 | Number of households living in temporary accommodation | 38 | 33 | 32 | 35 | 36 | 60 | 36 | 60 | John Littlemore | ⬆ | ✅ |
| KPI 009 | Number of households prevented from becoming homeless through the intervention of housing advice | 533 | 128 | 143 | 145 | 151 | 75 | 567 | 300 | John Littlemore | ⬆ | ✅ |
| | As a result of the current economic climate the number of people presenting as homeless has increased. Due to timely intervention by MBC 567 preventions were achieved in 2010/11. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 010 | Number of people helped through the 'Staying put Partnership' | 224 | 377 | 329 | 358 | 258 | 300 | 1,322 | 1,200 | John Littlemore | ⬆ | ✅ |
| | This indicator has exceeded the annual target. This is due to the scheme being expanded in 2010/11, scheme provides minor adaptations and a handyperson service. The new scheme has gathered momentum more quickly than originally anticipated as a result more residents have been assisted. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 011 | Number of homes occupied by vulnerable people made decent | 222 | 45 | 66 | 64 | 127 | 44 | 302 | 175 | John Littlemore | ⬆ | ✅ |
| | The additional resources provided by the Regional Housing Board enabled more homes to be made 'decent' than initially budgeted. | | | | | | | | | | | |

| KO 005 Reduce traffic congestion and support economic growth through the development of a sustainable transport strategy | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 | | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
| | | | | | | Value | Target | | | | |
| KPI 012 | Number of onboard Park & Ride bus transactions | 445,129 | 104,014 | 110,103 | 120,104 | 108,097 | 112,500 | 442,318 | 450,000 | Clive Cheeseman | ⬇ | ⚠ |
| | There was a small increase in the number of passenger transactions for the Park and Ride service in quarter 2 and quarter 4 despite this increase the annual target has not been achieved and overall there has been a decline of 0.6% in passenger transactions. Quarter 3 usually performs the best due to pre-Christmas shoppers; however, the snow experienced at the end of November and in December is thought to have resulted in a 5.5% decline for this quarter compared to 2009/10. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 013 | Average journey time per mile during the morning peak | 3.28 | Annual Indicator | | | | | 3.36 | 3.26 | Jim Boot | ⬇ | ⚠ |
| | The data for this indicator is provided by KCC. There were spikes in the data in March, May and September. | | | | | | | | | | | |

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## A place that is clean and green

**KO 006 Enhance the Council's parks, green spaces and natural habitats through initiatives like the Mote Park improvement project**

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| KPI 014 | Footfall in Mote Park | | 268,015 | 277,256 | 153,428 | 186,152 | Set baseline | 884,851 | Set baseline | Jason Taylor | ? | ✅ |
| | This indicator is not in the Strategic Plan 2011-15 but the data will continue to be collected and reported to Management Team and the Cabinet Member as part of the programme of improvements to Mote Park. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 015 | Improvements to the accessibility of parks and open spaces measured through footfall (compared to previous year) | 16,397 | 4,425 | 5,096 | 1,911 | 2,456 | 16,561 | 13,888 | 16,561 | Jason Taylor | ⬇ | 🛑 |
| | Parks monitored during 2010/11 were Brenchley Gardens, Whatman Park, Clare Park and South Park. During 2010/11 there has been a 15% decrease in numbers being recorded visiting parks. The expected profile of the indicator has changed and unlike previous years where quarter 1 generally performs the best, this year the quarter 1 figure was down by 32% compared to 2009/10. This could be due to a number of variables including weather. Another factor could be the greater number of visitors using Mote Park instead of these parks. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 017 | Hectares of local land with nature reserve | | Annual Indicator | | | | | 6062 | Set baseline | Jason Taylor | ? | ✅ |
| KPI 018 | Percentage of land in Local Authority holdings currently managed to enhance biodiversity | | Annual Indicator | | | | | 0.00 | Set baseline | Jason Taylor | ? | ? |
| | As the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) has not yet been adopted no areas as defined in the methodology for this indicator have reached the required criteria of being managed for biodiversity. It is expected that the LBAP will be adopted within the next quarter and will include targets for this indicator for the next four years.  This will be managed and measured as part of the LBAP but not reported in the in the strategic plan. | | | | | | | | | | | |

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**KO 007 Maintain a clean and pleasant environment for people who live in and visit the borough**

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 | | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Value | Target | | | | | |
| KPI 019 | Satisfaction with street cleaning | 64% | 58.14% | 56.12% | 70.99% | 61.05% | 67% | 61.94% | 67% | Jonathan Scott | ⬇ | |
| | The third quarter performance was the best for 2010/11 this is a different performance profile compared to 2009/10 where the fourth quarter performed the best. Overall the annual target has been marginally missed and there has been a 2% decline in overall satisfaction. The response rate to the survey remains high at around 20% however, this indicator is subject to personal interpretation/perception and can easily be influenced and therefore may not be an actual reflection on the cleanliness of the borough or the service that the council provides. The way in which satisfaction with council services is measured is currently being reviewed, in quarter 4 face to face collection of data was trialled and deemed to be more successful in terms of response rate. | | | | | | | | | | | 🔺 |
| NI 195 a | Percentage of sites in the LA area falling below a Grade B for Litter | 1.65% | Annual Indicator | | | | | 2.00% | 1.00% | Jonathan Scott | ⬇ | 🛑 |
| | The calculation of this indicator based on the results of three surveys carried out over a four month period. The result 3rd tranche was 1.83% which is also lower (better) than for the equivalent periods for the last two years. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NI 195 b | Percentage of sites in the LA area falling below a Grade B for Detritus | 6.51% | Annual Indicator | | | | | 6.00% | 6.00% | Jonathan Scott | ➖ | ✅ |
| NI 195 c | Percentage of sites in the LA area falling below a Grade B for Graffiti | 1.00% | Annual Indicator | | | | | 1.00% | 1.00% | Jonathan Scott | ➖ | ✅ |
| NI 195 d | Percentage of sites in the LA area falling below a Grade B for Fly-posting | .00% | Annual Indicator | | | | | .00% | .00% | Jonathan Scott | ➖ | ✅ |
| NI 196 | Percentage of sites in the LA area falling below a Grade B for fly tipping | 3 Not Effective | Annual Indicator | | | | | 2 Effective | 1 Very Effective | Jonathan Scott | ⬆ | 🛑 |

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A number of improvements were made in 2010/11 including changes to the investigation process to improve the evidence base for cases and a move to area based cleansing which has lead to better intelligence sharing between services.  In additon some prevention work on fly-tipping has been undertaken with the police. In 2009/10 there were 3 prosecutions this has impacted on the figures as these are weighted as part of methodology. | | | | | | | | | | | |

**KO 009 Reduce the Council's carbon footprint and improve the use of other natural resources, whilst ensuring the Council is planning to adapt to climate change**

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| KPI 021 | Council's water consumption in operational buildings (m³) | 24,119 | | 11,195.6 | | 10,887.8 | 11,750 | 22,083.4 | 23,500 | David Tibbit | ⬆ | ✅ |
| NI 185 | Co2 reduction from local authority operations (tonnes) | 5247.11* | Not measured for quarters. The 2010/11 figure will be available in September. Following the abolition of the NI set the methodology for this indicator is being reviewed. | | | | | N/A | 5431 | Jenny Hunt | ❓ | ❓ |

**KO 010 Reduce the amount of waste produced by local people and increase the proportion of waste reused or recycled**

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BV 88 | Number of collections missed (per 100,000) | 23.83 | 11.83 | 15.08 | 11.99 | 57.57 | 20.00 | 23.23 | 20.00 | Jennifer Gosling | ⬆ | 🔴 |
| | The performance for the first three quarters of 2010/11 was exceptional. Unfortunately the roll-out of the new weekly food waste collection service and fortnightly refuse collections accounts for the increase in missed collections for quarter 4. These new services have resulted in significant revisions to the collection rounds and the figure is expected to return to more typical values as crews become familiar with these new rounds. | | | | | | | | | | | |

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NI 191 | Residual household waste per household | 608.89 | 161.63 | 146.61 | 146.48 | 139.01* | 143.58 | 593.73* | 574.30 | Jennifer Gosling | ⬆ | 🔺 |
| | The effects of the new weekly food waste recycling service are partially reflected in the 4th quarter result which beat the target. This demonstrates that although the annual target was not achieved significant progress has been made as a result of the new waste collection service which was introduced towards the end of the year in January 2011. The full effects of which will be seen in the first quarter of 2011/12. The quarter 1 figure is higher than the other quarters as it was calculated using the 2009/10 dwelling stock figure as the 2010/11 figure was yet to be released. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NI 192 57 | Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting | 30.06% | 33.01% | 33.07% | 29.75% | 34.55%* | 34.00% | 32.62%* | 34.00% | Jennifer Gosling | ⬆ | 🔺 |
| | The weekly food waste collection service was introduced towards the end of the year during the 4th quarter and as such the full effect has yet to show through in this measure. Although the annual target was not achieved the recent changes to the service have produced a step improvement in the recycling rate which means that Maidstone is now delivering far in excess of this target. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 022 | Satisfaction with refuse collection services | 94% | 97.6% | 94.25% | 95.06% | 83.96% | 88% | 83.96% | 88% | Jennifer Gosling | ⬇ | 🔺 |
| | Moving to weekly food waste collections and alternate weekly refuse collections during the 4th quarter has been a significant change for residents to adjust to. It is expected that satisfaction will improve as people adapt to the new service. A reduction in satisfaction was expected through the roll-out of the new scheme and although satisfaction of 84% is still at a high level, it is below target. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 023 | Satisfaction with recycling services | 91% | 95.2% | 89.93% | 93.21% | 84% | 80% | 84% | 80% | Jennifer Gosling | ⬇ | ✅ |

**A place that has strong, healthy and safe communities**

**KO 012 Improve the health of people living in the borough and reduce health inequalities**

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| KPI 027 | Percentage of people attending a choosing health programme reporting positive outcomes | 74.78% | Annual Indicator | | | | | 97.74% | 80% | Sarah Robson | ⬆ | ✅ |

**KO 013 Make people feel safer where they live**

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Value | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BV 174 | Racial Incidents Recorded | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | Sarah Robson | ➡ | ✅ |

**KO 014 Engage communities so people have the opportunity to participate and have a real say in what happens in their local area**

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| KPI 030 | Number of members registered with volunteer centres | 2,825 | Annual Indicator | | | | | 3,367 | 2,881 | Sarah Robson | ⬆ | ✅ |
| KPI 031 | Response rate for electoral registration (households) | 95.19% | Annual Indicator | | | | | 94.13% | 95.2% | Neil Harris | ⬇ | ⚠ |
| | The figure is less this year compared to last year as registration figures tend to increase in parliamentary election years which was the year before this canvass (2009/10), also the ballot on whole council elections led to one less reminder to complete the electoral registration | | | | | | | | | | | |

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | form being sent to residents. At present the impact is difficult to assess until another canvass has been carried out then comparisons can be made. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 032 | Local election turn-out | 36.7% | Annual Indicator | | | | | 66% | 33% | Neil Harris | ⬆ | ✅ |
| | A parliamentary election was held in 2010/11. Parliamentary elections always produce a higher turn-out it is expected that the turn-out for the referendum will be significantly lower. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 033 | Total number of web hits on webcast meetings | 18,296 | 3,968 | 4,035 | 4,097 | 3,995 | 3,750 | 16,095 | 15,000 | Neil Harris | ⬇ | ✅ |

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## A place to live and enjoy

**KO 015 Encourage more adults and children to participate in sport**

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 | | 2010/11 Value | Annual Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Value | Target | | | | | |
| KPI 034 | Take-up of council funded activities (Sports & Play) | 75% | 99.09% | 94.25% | 97.21% | 88.16% | 77% | 95.97% | 77% | Sarah Robson | ⬆ | 🟢 |
| KPI 035 | Satisfaction with the leisure centre | 52% | 58.18% | 69.77% | 60% | 56.25% | 55% | 60.8% | 55% | Jason Taylor | ⬆ | 🟢 |
| KPI 036 | Number of users at the leisure centre | 524,620 | 144,906 | 165,574 | 141,712 | 168,793 | 137,712.5 | 620,985 | 550,850 | Jason Taylor | ⬆ | 🟢 |
| | It appears that the improvement works undertaken at the Leisure Cente in 2009/10 have increased visitor figures. Performance has improved by 18%. | | | | | | | | | | | |

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

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 | | 2010/11 Value | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Value | Target | | | | | |
| KPI 037 | Visits or uses of the museum per 1,000 population | 804 | 205.2 | 219.5 | 131.4 | 166.4 | 200 | 722.5 | 800 | Simon Lace | ⬇ | 🔺 |
| | Considering that more than 40% of the Museum's public galleries are now closed for the East Wing refurbishment work, it is positive that the annual target has only marginally been missed. This has had an impact on the level of the Museum's offer, due to the refurbishment there have also been no temporary or touring exhibitions at the Museum which are vital for attracting repeat visits. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 038 | Satisfaction with the museum | 94% | 91.48% | 89.98% | 91.2% | 88.03% | 85% | 90.36% | 85% | Simon Lace | ⬇ | 🟢 |
| KPI 039 | Percentage of all available tickets sold at the Hazlitt | 63% | 64.12% | 67.4% | 68.09% | 75.19% | 65% | 70.10% | 65% | Mandy Hare | ⬆ | 🟢 |

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Value | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| KPI 040 | Donations received for the Museum's East Wing Extension | | £42,000 | £4,220 | £3,900 | £1,700 | £82,500 | £51,820 | £330,000 | Simon Lace | ❓ | 🔴 |
| | Management team and the Cabinet have been alerted to the situation in relation to donations received for the East Wing project. The fundraising consultant who was leading the fundraising effort left the Council's employment last summer. This role has been partly taken up by the Council's Community Funding Officer. Unfortunately an approach made in March to the Heritage Lottery Fund for an increase in grant aid was unsuccessful. Council officers are still actively seeking external funding. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 041 | Number of students benefiting from the museums educational service | 7,950 | 2,180 | 1,123 | 2,149 | 2,451 | 6,500 | 7,903 | 6,500 | Simon Lace | ⬇️ | ✅ |

**KO 017 Deliver enough of the right type of well designed new homes where they are needed, maximising the numbers of affordable homes**

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BV 106 | New homes built on previously developed land | 86.00% | Annual Indicator | | | | | 78% | 60.00% | Sue Whiteside | ⬇️ | ✅ |
| | The performance of this indicator has reduced however, this was expected as the supply of previously developed land reduces the target becomes more difficult to achieve. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NI 159 | Supply of ready to develop housing sites | 113% | Annual Indicator | | | | | 123% | 100% | Sue Whiteside | ⬆️ | ✅ |
| NI 154 | Net additional homes provided | 581 | Annual Indicator | | | | | 649 | 180 | Sue Whiteside | ⬆️ | ✅ |
| | This figure includes new affordable homes and new home from private developer hence the over achievement of the target (target was set to align with the target for affordable homes). | | | | | | | | | | | |

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|--------|----------------------|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----|----------------|
| NI 155 | Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) | 399 | 46 | 39 | 43 | 100 | 45 | 228 | 180 | John Littlemore | ⬇ | ✅ |
| | The Council's excellent reputation with Homes and Communities Agency allowed us to be allocated slippage in the national programme. | | | | | | | | | | | |

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

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|--------|----------------------|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----|----------------|
| BV 064 | Number of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned into occupation or demolished | 83 | 19 | 18 | 7 | 27 | 15 | 71 | 60 | John Littlemore | ⬇ | ✅ |
| KPI 042 | Number of Energy Advice Surveys | 3,401 | 16 | 231 | 201 | 6 | 50 | 454 | 200 | John Littlemore | ⬇ | ✅ |
| | The target for this indicator was set when there was still a lot of uncertainty about the resources available for the energy advice surveys. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 043 | Average time taken to process disabled facilities grants (weeks) | 4.2 | 4 | 5 | 9.5 | 17.05 | 4.5 | 8.89 | 4.5 | John Littlemore | ⬇ | 🛑 |
| | There has been uncertainty over the medium term capital programme which directly impacted on the time taken to process DFGs. | | | | | | | | | | | |

**KO 020 Improve the quality of the built environment including protecting the borough's heritage and ensuring new developments are well designed**

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NI 157 a | Percentage of major planning applications processed within statutory timescales | 80.04% | 100.00% | 84.62% | 100.00% | 60.00% | 77.00% | 86.36% | 77.00% | Rob Jarman | ⬆ | ✅ |
| NI 157 b | Percentage of minor planning applications processed within statutory timescales | 89.10% | 90.32% | 85.06% | 80.25% | 82.98% | 87.00% | 84.79% | 87.00% | Rob Jarman | ⬇ | 🔺 |
| | The performance of this indicator remains in the top quartile. Overall the number of minor applications going to planning committee has increased while the numbers of minor applications received overall has decreased; this has had a direct impact on performance. Proportionally this is the highest volume category   for committee referrals and includes gypsy and traveller applications. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NI 157 c | Percentage of other planning applications processed within statutory timescales | 93.40% | 97.28% | 96.61% | 92.67% | 93.46% | 92.10% | 95.09% | 92.10% | Rob Jarman | ⬆ | ✅ |
| BV2 19b | Preserving the Special Character of Conservation Areas Appraisals | 29.27% | Annual Indicator | | | | | 29.27% | 29.27% | Deanne Cunningham | ⬆ | ✅ |
| KPI 045 | MBC success rate at planning appeals (rolling 6 months) | | | 53.85% | | 63.33% | 70% | 60.47% | 70% | Rob Jarman | ❓ | 🔴 |

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| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | This indicator measures the quality of planning decisions. During 2010/11 there have been several appeals on the same site. The service is aiming to increase pre-application advice to improve the quality of applications and reduce the number of appeals and committee referrals. It expected that there will be changes to planning rules in 2011/12 to make pre-application advice compulsory in certain applications. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 046 | Percentage of major planning applications having pre-application discussions | 100% | Annual Indicator | | | | | 93.75% | 90% | Rob Jarman | ⬇ | ✅ |
| KPI 047 | Percentage of planning enforcement cases signed off within 21 days | 83.8% | 87.71% | 86.33% | 62.41% | 86.47% | 80% | 80.65% | 80% | Rob Jarman | ⬇ | ✅ |
| | The dip in performance during the third quarter is due to staffing issues where both Enforcement Investigation Officers were off sick at the same time. | | | | | | | | | | | |

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## A place with efficient and effective public services

**KO 021 Deliver more efficient and effective Council services and increase value for money**

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BV 010 | Percentage of Non-domestic Rates Collected | 97.00% | 33.87% | 63.91% | 88.34% | 97.03% | 97.00% | 97.03% | 97.00% | Steve McGinnes | ⬆ | 🟢 |
| BV 009 | Percentage of Council Tax collected | 98.50% | 30.70% | 59.78% | 87.52% | 98.70% | 98.50% | 98.70% | 98.50% | Steve McGinnes | ⬆ | 🟢 |
| KPI 048 | Value of fraud identified by the fraud partnership | £543,533.89 | £202,958.08 | £380,778.41 | £411,757.71 | £195,052.45 | £80,000.00 | £1,190,546.65 | £891,450.00 | Steve McGinnes | ⬆ | 🟢 |
| BV 008 | Percentage of invoices paid on time | 96.50% | 93.31% | 97.55% | 100.00% | 98.56% | 97.00% | 97.95% | 97.00% | Paul Riley | ⬆ | 🟢 |
| BV 086 | Cost of household waste collection | £63.50 | £9.79 | £24.07 | £32.11 | £54.58 | £61.00 | £54.58* | £61.00 | Jennifer Gosling | ⬆ | 🟢 |
| BV 11a | Top 5% of Earners: Women | 20.65% | Annual Indicator | | | | | 23.72% | 20.00% | Baljinder Sandher | ⬆ | 🟢 |
| BV 11b | Top 5% of Earners: Ethnic Minorities | 8.26% | Annual Indicator | | | | | 4.74% | 4.00% | Baljinder Sandher | ⬇ | 🟢 |
| BV 012 | Working Days Lost Due to Sickness Absence (rolling year) | 7.80 | 5.41 | 5.26 | 4.69 | 6.22 | 7.50 | 6.01 | 7.50 | Baljinder Sandher | ⬆ | 🟢 |
| BV 014 | Percentage of Early Retirements | .18% | Annual Indicator | | | | | 1.12% | .40% | Baljinder Sandher | ⬇ | 🔴 |

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| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 | | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Value | Target | | | | | |
| BV 015 | Percentage of Ill-health Retirements | .36% | Annual Indicator | | | | | .00% | .20% | Baljinder Sandher | ⬆ | ✅ |
| BV 16a | Percentage of Employees with a Disability | 3.91% | 4.07% | 3.75% | 3.78% | 3.78% | 5.00% | 3.78% | 5.00% | Baljinder Sandher | ⬇ | 🛑 |
| | We continue to monitor the recruitment and selection process to ensure that there is no bias. Due to the restructure there are very few appointments being made. There are currently 25 employees in the workforce with a disability. It should be noted that disability is the one area which can change based on a person's circumstances. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BV 17a | Ethnic Minority representation in the workforce - employees | 4.23% | 3.63% | 3.45% | 3.63% | 3.63% | 4.20% | 3.63% | 4.20% | Baljinder Sandher | ⬇ | 🛑 |
| | We continue to monitor the recruitment and selection process to ensure that there is no bias. Due to the restructure there are very few appointments being made however, if the workforce shrinks the out-turn for this indicator is likely to improve. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BV 01c | Top 5% of Earners: with a disability | .00% | Annual Indicator | | | | | 4.74% | 4.00% | Baljinder Sandher | ⬆ | ✅ |
| NI 181 | Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events | 8.12 | 9.68 | 7.85 | 10.06 | 4.87 | 8.12 | 7.66 | 8.12 | Steve McGinnes | ⬆ | ✅ |
| KPI 049 | Total savings over 3 years identified by reviews and agreed by Cabinet/Cabinet member within period | £938,200 | £123,000 | £0.00 | £298,000 | £70,750 | N/A | £491,750 | N/A | Angela Woodhouse/ Georgia Hawkes | ⬇ | ❓ |
| KPI 050 | Net cost of collecting council tax per chargeable dwelling | £8.16 | Annual Indicator | | | | | TBC. | £8.49 | Steve McGinnes | ❓ | ❓ |
| KPI 051 | Satisfaction with complaint handling | 55.25% | 40% | 22.22% | 20.83% | 36.36% | 55% | 26.53% | 55% | Angela Woodhouse | ⬇ | 🛑 |

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | The Head of Change and Scrutiny will be taking an action plan to Standards Committee to address the performance in this area, the plan will include training for officers, a new correspondence system and increased monitoring of complaint responses. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 052 | Percentage of complaints resolved within the specified timescale | 98% | 98.73% | 91.3% | 81.82% | 87.63% | 96% | 90.03% | 96% | Angela Woodhouse | ⬇ | 🔺 |
| KPI 053 | Percentage of appeals to the National Parking Adjudication service in which the Council was successful | 26% | 50% | 54.55% | 40% | 18.75% | 25% | 36.89% | 25% | Jeff Kitson | ⬆ | ✅ |
| | During Q4 several cases were lost due to an adjudicator's view that our Notice to Owner documentation failed to meet the requirements of the Traffic Management Act legislation. The Notice to Owner documentation was amended shortly after to take account of the adjudicators view. Statutory notices already issued which continued to progress to Traffic Penalty Tribunal appeal were not contested leading to the variance in performance reported. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 054 | Spend in collaboration with other authorities as percentage of total spend | 11.83% | 8.13% | 16.67% | 13.24% | 16.67% | 12.5% | 13.55% | 12.5% | David Tibbit | ⬆ | ✅ |
| KPI 055 | Overall satisfaction with the benefits service | 96% | 89.23% | 93.6% | 94.44% | 94.3% | 95% | 93.42% | 95% | Steve McGinnes | ⬇ | 🔺 |
| | The benefit team have continued to perform well.  Of the 456 respondents to the survey 426 (93.42%) stated that they were satisfied with 18 (3.95%) stating that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.   Only 12 (2.63%) customers stated that they were dissatisfied. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 056 | Percentage of benefit claims calculated correctly | 97.3% | 96% | 96% | 97.33% | 95.33% | 96.5% | 96.17% | 96.5% | Steve McGinnes | ⬇ | 🔺 |
| | The benefits team marginally missed the target but have continued to give a high priority to accuracy of benefit decisions, with cases selected for checking based on risk. In addition regular feedback/training is provided to staff to ensure that lessons are learnt. | | | | | | | | | | | |

## KO 022 Ensure people can access a wider range of services in ways that suit them

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NI 014 | Avoidable contact: the proportion of customer contact that is of low or no value to the customer | 14.7% | 7.5% | 2.5% | 2.7% | 6.6% | 13.5% | 4.9% | 13.5% | Sandra Marchant | ⬆ | ✅ |
| | The annual council tax letter went out in quarter 4. Some customers expected payment slips to be included with their annual letter however these have been withdrawn and are now supplied on a request basis. Phonecalls from residents enquiring about payment slips was classed as avoidable contact. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KPI 057 | Percentage of financial transactions not carried out on-line or by direct debit/standing order | 15.4% | 13.96% | 13.6% | 12.03% | 22.53% | 15% | 14.41% | 15% | Paul Riley | ⬆ | ✅ |
| KPI 058 | Average Wait Time of Calls into the Contact Centre | 59 | 58 | 71 | 71 | 99 | 50 | 58 | 50 | Sandra Marchant | ⬆ | 🛑 |
| | There was an increase in calls of 13,000 to the Contact Centre in quarter 4 compared to quarter 3. The increase is mainly due to the additional calls for the new Waste Scheme (approximately 9,000 more calls), Council Tax (over 1,500 and over 1,300 more calls on the Payments line) plus a general increase in calls for all other services. With effect from early February, the Contact Centre Advisors have been handling all Council Tax calls whereas prior to this they were also handled by Revenues staff. This has increased workloads and in turn call waiting times. In addition there are still two vacant posts within the team. Extra staff were brought into the team on temporary contracts to help with the new Food Waste Scheme; however two out of four new staff left within a matter of weeks. Another experienced member of the team left during quarter 4 and although the post has been replaced on a temporary basis, by a Trainee therefore a limited number of services are being handled at present.<br>Another impact on call waiting times is that during March it seems that the 'skills based routing' system that allocates the calls to the appropriately qualified advisor is not working within IPFX and this can have an adverse affect on wait times. In addition, virtual queues have been introduced following IPFX's instructions on the assumption that it will reduce our overall wait times however we have found that some calls have got 'stuck' in a virtual queue and not passed to an Advisor. | | | | | | | | | | | |

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| KPI 059 | Percentage of Visitors to the Gateway responded to by a CSA within 20 minutes | 72.49% | 74.46% | 78.6% | 81.77% | 87.52% | 72% | 80.79% | 72% | Sandra Marchant | ⬆ | ✅ |
| KPI 060 | Satisfaction with borough update | 91.42% | Annual Indicator | | | | | 91.3% | 92% | Roger Adley | ⬆ | 🔺 |
| | The target was only marginally missed and steps will be taken to increase the response rate for the 2011 survey. | | | | | | | | | | | |

**KO 023 Improve the delivery of community services to local people through an effective Local Strategic Partnership**

| PI Ref | Indicator Description | 2009/10 Out-turn | Q1 2010/11 | Q2 2010/11 | Q3 2010/11 | Q4 2010/11 Value | Q4 2010/11 Target | 2010/11 Out-turn | Target 2010/11 | Responsible Officer | DoT | 2010/11 Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 69 KPI 061 | Percentage of actions within SCS action plans completed | N/A | Not measured for Quarters | | | | | N/A | N/A | Sarah Robson | ❓ | ❓ |
| | With the abolition of the National Indicators, the actions are being updated as part of the overall SCS refresh. The final strategy is expected to be signed off by 30 June 2011 latest. | | | | | | | | | | | |

If you require any information about performance management at Maidstone or have any comments or queries about this document please write to the Policy and Performance Team, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, ME15 6JQ. You can also call the office on 01622 602491 or email policyandperformance@maidstone.gov.uk

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**8 JUNE 2011**

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

**Report prepared by Sue Whiteside**

1.  **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME PRIORITY DOCUMENTS**

1.1  Issue for Decision

1.1.1  To consider and approve the development plan documents (DPD), area action plans (AAP) and supplementary planning documents (SPD) prioritised in this report as the basis for preparing an amended Local Development Scheme.

1.2  Recommendation of Director of Change, Planning and the Environment

1.2.1  That the Core Strategy DPD, Development Delivery DPD and Central Maidstone AAP comprise the key documents in a review of the Local Development Scheme.

1.2.2  That priority be given to preparing a Parking Standards SPD, a Landscape Character Assessment Guidelines SPD and an Affordable Housing SPD to provide the detail necessary for the implementation of Core Strategy policies.

1.3  Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1  The Council is required to produce a Local Development Scheme (LDS) that sets out the range of DPDs it is proposing to prepare together with a work programme over a minimum three year period.  Although there is no duty to include a programme for the production of SPDs, the identification of key SPDs that are a priority to deliver Core Strategy policies provides clarity for the public.

1.3.2  The government has stressed the importance of keeping local development schemes up-to-date.  The LDS must be agreed and submitted to the Secretary of State, and the scheme will come into effect when the Council receives notification from the Secretary of State.  There is no longer a requirement to submit the LDS to GOSE

for comment or suggested revisions.

1.3.3 This report recommends changes to the local development documents programmed in the adopted LDS (2009) that will form the basis for a review.

1.3.4 Maidstone's LDS was first adopted in 2005, and was amended in 2007 and 2009. There have been a number of events since 2009 that have resulted in delays to the LDS programme and led to the need for a review of the scheme:

- A deferment of the Core Strategy DPD timetable to enable the Council to set a locally derived housing target;
- A delay to the Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Allocations DPD programme as a result of the need to set a locally derived pitch target;
- Amendments to national planning policy statements; and
- Proposed changes to the plan making system emerging through the Localism Bill and the government's Plan for Growth.

1.3.5 The 2009 LDS[1] incorporates the following development plan documents (DPD) and area action plans (AAP):

- Core Strategy DPD
- Gypsy & Traveller Pitch Allocations DPD
- Town Centre Regeneration AAP
- Maidstone Urban Extension AAP
- Land Allocations DPD.

1.3.6 The 2009 LDS also confirms that the Council will give consideration to prioritising a number of supplementary planning documents (SPD) including:

- Planning Tariff SPD
- Parking Strategy SPD
- Landscape Character Area Assessment SPDs
- Character Area Assessment SPDs
- Air Quality SPD.

**Core Strategy DPD**

1.3.7 The **Core Strategy DPD**, which sets the Council's spatial vision and objectives for future development in the borough, is the lynchpin of Maidstone's local development framework (LDF) and its adoption is a priority for the Council.

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[1] http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/pdf/LDS%20Combined.pdf

**Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Allocations DPD**

1.3.8 The purpose of the Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Allocations DPD was to allocate land to meet the pitch target that was due to be determined through the South East Plan Partial Review. The supply of gypsy and traveller pitches has long been a local issue for the Council, so an independent DPD prepared in advance of the Core Strategy was intended to address the urgent need as identified in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). Future need for pitches beyond 2016 would be addressed in the Land Allocations DPD.

1.3.9 Alongside the government's announcement that it intended to revoke regional strategies, it was also confirmed that the South East Plan Partial Review would not be completed. It will be the responsibility of local authorities to set their own pitch targets in DPDs based on evidence. The Council has already given consideration to a local pitch target, and the draft Core Strategy sets a target of 71 pitches to be provided between 2006 and 2016 as well as setting the criteria for determining planning applications for pitches on previously unidentified sites.

1.3.10 Due to the time that has elapsed since work on the DPD commenced, a number of private pitches have been provided through the grant of planning permission or by appeal, and it is possible that the numerical target of 71 pitches by 2016 will be met through the granting of planning permissions. However, securing a suitable site(s) for public pitch provision is a challenge and the subject of ongoing work (as discussed elsewhere on this agenda).

1.3.11 Furthermore, as the Core Strategy will confirm the pitch target to 2016, any DPD that allocates land for gypsy and traveller pitches cannot be produced in advance of the adoption of the Core Strategy. Work on the DPD can commence at an earlier stage but Public Participation consultation cannot be undertaken before the Core Strategy is adopted.

1.3.12 The option to prepare an independent DPD for gypsy and traveller accommodation remains, although there is now an opportunity to consider a more efficient and cost effective approach to meeting need. Proposals to update the LDS include bringing forward the production of the Land Allocations DPD (under a new title of Development Delivery DPD) so it would now be timely to allocate pitches in the Development Delivery DPD. An updated evidence base to assess accommodation needs to 2026 will be prepared prior to the preparation of the DPD. The identification and development of a public site(s) can be pursued outside of the DPD process, so the merging of DPDs would not result in a delay to public pitch provision in the period to 2016.

1.3.13 This approach would result in staff resource and cost savings. The process for a DPD requires staffing resources and budget to fund at least three consultation stages and an independent examination. Not all time/costs involved can be avoided but there would be significant reductions, particularly for administration, consultation events and examination costs. The primary risk to incorporating pitch allocations in the Development Delivery DPD is if there is a delay to preparing this DPD given its wide remit but, balancing the benefits and risks of combining DPDs, this is the recommended approach and an independent Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Allocations DPD is not proposed to be included in the review of the LDS.

**Town Centre Regeneration AAP**

1.3.14 Priority will be given to the production of the Town Centre Regeneration AAP following the adoption of the Core Strategy. However, it is recommended that this document is renamed the **Central Maidstone AAP** to allow some flexibility to incorporate pertinent sites adjacent to the town centre boundary.

**Maidstone Urban Extension AAP**

1.3.15 The Core Strategy no longer proposes an urban extension or strategic development area as part of its strategy for the distribution of development. Consequently, the Maidstone Urban Extension will not be included in the revised LDS.

**Land Allocations DPD**

1.3.16 In the 2009 LDS, the Land Allocations DPD is programmed to commence in 2013. The recommended removal of other DPDs from the updated LDS presents an opportunity to bring this DPD forward, which will capitalise on the vast amount of work undertaken for the Core Strategy. The Land Allocations DPD will contain site specific allocations for all land uses, as well as designated areas of protection.

1.3.17 There is a further option to include development management policies in this document, which were outside the scope of the 2009 LDS. However, the saved Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan policies, which form part of the development plan, are increasingly becoming outdated as further government guidance and planning policy statements are published. In addition to the Spatial Policy team, staff resources from other departments have been identified to assist in this task. This approach will provide an up-to-date policy framework for development management processes. Given the wide scope of this document, it is recommended that it be renamed the **Development Delivery DPD**.

**Supplementary Planning Documents**

1.3.18 The Core Strategy is the key LDF document, but it is a broad policy framework document. Subsequent DPDs and AAPs will strengthen the policy framework, but a suite of SPDs will also be required to add detail to Core Strategy policies as well as other DPDs. There are a number of options for SPD production, but it is crucial to prioritise those SPDs that will be required to deliver the Core Strategy.

1.3.19 The Planning Tariff SPD will no longer be required due to the introduction of the community infrastructure levy. The Council has prepared an Infrastructure Delivery Plan and will develop a charging schedule to set its community infrastructure levy.

1.3.20 A **Parking Standards SPD** and the **Landscape Character Assessment Guidelines SPD** will need to be prepared as soon as practical after the adoption of the Core Strategy to add detail to policy. Similarly, an **Affordable Housing SPD** will be required to expand on the detail of the Core Strategy affordable housing policy, which will supersede the currently adopted Affordable Housing DPD.

1.3.21 The adopted LDS (2009) refers to a Parking *Strategy* SPD but the parking strategy is a document that will underpin the Sustainable Transport Strategy. The Parking *Standards* SPD will set out local parking standards for both new residential and commercial development, acknowledging national guidance but informed by local demand, accessibility levels and smarter transport choices identified in the Sustainable Transport Strategy.

1.3.22 Further Character Area SPDs and an Air Quality SPD are desirable but are not critical to Core Strategy delivery. Priority can be given to the production of these SPDs and others once key documents are adopted.

**LDS Programme**

1.3.23 Consequently, it is recommended that the revised LDS programme prioritises the production of the following documents:

- Core Strategy DPD
- Development Delivery DPD
- Central Maidstone AAP
- Parking Standards SPD
- Landscape Character Assessment Guidelines SPD
- Affordable Housing SPD.

1.3.24 Cabinet approval of the above list of local development documents is sought. A subsequent report will recommend adoption of a revised LDS, and seek approval to submit the LDS to the Secretary of State.

1.4     Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1   The LDF must contain a Core Strategy DPD and a Proposals Map, and
        the Council has a duty to maintain an up-to-date LDS.  The Council
        could confine its LDS programme to the production of a Core Strategy
        only but this approach is not recommended.  Although the Core
        Strategy will set a policy framework, it will not deliver the level of
        detail necessary to implement all of its policies and strategies.  The
        alternative approach would exacerbate a growing policy framework
        vacuum for development management processes, and would impact on
        the Council's ability to plan for its growth in a sustainable manner.

1.5     Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1   The local development documents in the LDS deliver the spatial
        objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Strategic
        Plan.  They also have regard to objectives set out in other Council
        documents, such as the Economic Development Strategy, Housing
        Strategy and Regeneration Statement.

1.6     Risk Management

1.6.1   The adoption of the DPDs/SPDs set out in the revised LDS will reduce
        the risk of inappropriate development and will provide a clear policy
        direction to landowners, developers, officers, Members, and the public.
        The following table identifies the risks and mitigation measures
        involved in creating a new programme for the LDS.

| Risk | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigation Measures |
|------|-----------|--------|---------------------|
| The Secretary of State rejects the amended LDS | Low | Unlikely to affect the Core Strategy programme but could impact on the timetable for other DPDs/AAPs. | Fewer DPDs/AAPs are programmed in the LDS, reducing risk of rejection.  Continued officer engagement with the Planning Inspectorate. |
| An incomplete evidence base | Low | Would delay the preparation of DPDs/AAPs. | Core Strategy evidence base will be in place for Regulation 25 consultation. To ensure resources for further studies are commissioned at an early stage. |
| The Core Strategy found | Medium | The programme for other DPDs/AAPs would be delayed. | Legal advice taken to ensure the Core Strategy is in general |

| Risk | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|
| unsound | | | conformity with the South East Plan. PINS and PAS reviews undertaken. Use of soundness self-assessment tool kit. |
| Delays as a result of decision making processes | Medium | Would delay the preparation of DPDs/AAPs. | Successful programme management and setting of realistic deadlines. |
| Insufficient staff resources to deliver the LDS | Medium | LDS prepared on the basis of a fully staffed team, so loss of resources would delay the preparation of DPDs/AAPs. | Spatial Policy team fully staffed at present due to the employment of consultants on short-term contracts. Staff resources from other departments will assist in delivering the LDS. |
| Insufficient funding to deliver the LDS | Medium to low | LDF budget normally sufficient to deliver LDS but funding of contract staff to cover Spatial Policy team absences will place a strain on the budget. | To manage the budget efficiently and effectively, and to report any likely deficiencies at an early stage. |
| The introduction of new planning regulations for the LDF delaying the programme | Medium | Possible delays to the LDS programme. | Likely to be transition arrangements so officers will keep a watching brief and respond quickly to changes. |

## 1.7   Other Implications

1.7.1

| | |
|---|---|
| 1.    Financial | X |
| 2.    Staffing | X |
| 3.    Legal | X |
| 4.    Equality Impact Needs Assessment | |
| 5.    Environmental/Sustainable Development | |

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6.      Community Safety

7.      Human Rights Act

8.      Procurement

9.      Asset Management

1.7.2  The number of DPDs/AAPs proposed will impact on the LDF budget, as will the approach taken to producing documents (in-house resources and/or the use of consultants).  There are significant savings on production and examination costs by reducing the number of DPDs/AAPs from five in the 2009 LDS to three in the proposed revision of the LDS.  The employment of consultants on short-term contracts will affect the LDF budget so the early identification of any deficiencies is critical.

1.7.3  The LDS has been prepared on the assumption that current staffing levels with appropriate skills will continue.  Consultants and contractors will be engaged as required, for example, to prepare specialist evidence to support DPDs/AAPs and/or to cover staff absences.

1.7.4  Legal advice on specific aspects of DPDs/AAPs will be sought as required.

1.8    <u>Relevant Documents</u>

1.8.1  <u>Appendices</u>

None.

1.8.2  <u>Background Documents</u>

None

**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes    | X |        No    |   |

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

This is a key decision report that has not appeared in the Forward Plan.  The report is necessary at this stage to ensure consistency with the emerging Core Strategy Public Participation draft, and to amend a range of document references and information that has been updated in recent weeks.

This is a Key Decision because: It affects all wards and parishes

Wards/Parishes affected: All wards and parishes

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**8 JUNE 2011**

**REPORT OF THE LEISURE & PROSPERITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Report prepared by Christina Chemsi**

1.    **Rural Economy Review**

1.1    Issue for Decision

1.1.1  To consider the recommendations within the 'Rural Economy' report attached at **Appendix A**.

1.2    Recommendation of the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1.2.1  That the Cabinet agrees to the following recommendations and fills in the attached Scrutiny Committee Recommendation Action Implementation Plan:

1) The Economic Development Strategy July 2008 needs to be revised to show an equal focus on the rural and urban aspects of the Borough and reflect the recent changes concerning the Localism Bill.
2) To lobby for station improvements within the rural areas to allow better disabled access to all platforms.
3) That the Cabinet Members for Environment and Regeneration support the future work programme for 2011/12 and that the rural economy transport issues are suitably addressed as part of the Local Development Framework.
4) The Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Environment should lobby support to the Growth Without Gridlock team on the major priorities concerning Maidstone in the Rail Action Plan for Kent Strategy.
5) As the new plan is being devised, the Committee would like to see a stronger recognition of the rural transport issues and provide detail on how the Council intend to overcome the current obstacles.
6) Following the announcements of the first successful round of applications for the Superfast Broadband Pilot Fund in mid May 2011, the Committee see which applicants have been successful

within the borough, and what the next procedure is before this can be implemented.

7) The Cabinet Member for Regeneration seeks methods to educate Maidstone residents in renewable energy benefits, perhaps with the help of Distributed Generation Ltd at possible community and town events.

8) In line with the Council's Sustainable Procurement Strategy , the Council support businesses within the borough when possible

9) The Cabinet Member for Community Services investigates any licence issues regarding obtaining a business recycling point in Marden.

10) The Cabinet Member seeks the possibility of creating a 'bank roll' service, using Cornwall Council as an example, in order to support applicants in the Leader Programme.

11) The Cabinet Member liaises with the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment and the Head of Development Management to reduce the time taken for planning to write confirmation that no planning permission was required on the site concerned.  This may include highlighting to the Leader Programme team the process to apply for Certificate for Lawful Developments on sites concerning the Leader Programe.

12) That the Cabinet Member and Leader of the Council should ensure planning policies reflect the contemporary needs of Maidstone's agricultural businesses. Spatial planning policies should be pro-active in encouraging planning applications for renewables and polytunnels (where appropriate and done in a sensitive manner)to help our agricultural community compete.

13) The Committee would like the Council to give encouragement for local affordable housing schemes in the rural communities. Ways of incentivising such schemes should be given consideration.

14) Cabinet Member to pursue lobbying KCC Members to review the procedure for renewing and mending brown tourism signs.

15) That the neighbourhood forum meets with the business forums from time to time to help lobby the council with issues as a community.

16) The Cabinet Member should review the possibility of adapting the boroughs neighborhood forums using Merton Council as an example.

1.3   Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1  At its meeting on 13 December 2010, the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to carry out a review of the borough's rural economy to show how the Council are currently supporting it, and how the Council could enhance this support for the future.

1.3.2 The attached report presents the findings of the Committee, the field trip and Select-Committee style interviews. Members asked each witness what they would like to be done to improve the rural economy in Maidstone and the recommendations were formulated from the responses.

1.3.3 The review is a Member-led initiative. Some of the recommendations regarding Council arrangements would need to be further explored with various departments and it should be noted that the report does not include costs. The Committee felt that its suggestions and recommendations were a helpful starting point in attempting to address key issues in the rural economy of Maidstone.

1.3.4 Cabinet is recommended to agree the recommendations within the 'Rural Economy' report as these are based on evidence found by the Working Group and Select-Committee style interviews during the course of its review.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 Cabinet could decide not to agree the recommendations within the "Rural Economy" report, however the recommendations are based on evidence from a range of sources and support the Council's objectives with regard to Maidstone having a growing economy and being a decent place to live, as outlined at 1.5.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The Council's Strategic Plan 2011-15 lists "a growing economy and to be a decent place to live" as a key priorities. The recommendations within the report contribute to the fulfillment of these objectives.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There are no risks associated with the Cabinet accepting the Committees recommendations.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Financial | X |
| 2. | Staffing | X |
| 3. | Legal | |
| 4. | Social Inclusion | |

| | |
|---|---|
| 5. Environmental/Sustainable Development | X |
| 6. Community Safety | |
| 7. Human Rights Act | |
| 8. Procurement | |
| 9. Asset Management | |

1.8 Background Documents

1.8.1 None.

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**NO REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS BOX BEING COMPLETED**

Is this a Key Decision?      Yes  ☐      No  ☒

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

Is this an Urgent Key Decision?      Yes  ☐      No  ☒

Reason for Urgency

N/a

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**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (SCRAIP)**

**Report Title: Leisure & Prosperity – Rural Economy Review**

**Report of Leisure & Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Date of Publication: 9 June 2011**

**Dates to report back to Committee:**

| Update | Date | Completed? | Note |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | **Dec 2011** | | 6 months after publication |
| 2nd | **June 2012** | | 12 months after publication |
| | | | |

| Recommendation[i] | Chief Officer /Cabinet Member[ii] | Response[iii] | Timetable[iv] | Lead Officer[v] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Economic Development Strategy July 2008 needs to be revised to show an equal focus on the rural and urban aspects of the Borough and reflect the recent changes concerning the Localism Bill. | Chief Officers of Economic Development | | | |
| To lobby for station improvements within the rural areas to allow better disabled access to all platforms. | Full Cabinet | | | |
| That the Cabinet Members for Environment and Regeneration support the future work programme for 2011/12 and that the rural economy transport issues are suitably addressed as part of the Local Development Framework. | Cabinet Members | | | |
| The Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Environment should lobby support to the Growth Without Gridlock team on | Cabinet Members | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| the major priorities concerning Maidstone in the Rail Action Plan for Kent Strategy. | | | | |
| As the new plan is being devised, the Committee would like to see a stronger recognition of the rural transport issues and provide detail on how the Council intend to overcome the current obstacles. | Full Cabinet | | | |
| Following the announcements of the first successful round of applications for the Superfast Broadband Pilot Fund in mid May 2011, the Committee see which applicants have been successful within the borough, and what the next procedure is before this can be implemented. | IT/Economic Development Officers | | | |
| The Cabinet Member for Regeneration seeks methods to educate Maidstone residents in renewable energy benefits, perhaps with the help of Distributed Generation Ltd at possible community and town events. | Cabinet Member | | | |
| In line with the Council's Sustainable Procurement Strategy, the Council support businesses within the borough when possible | Full Cabinet | | | |
| The Cabinet Member for Community Services investigates any licence issues regarding obtaining a business recycling point in Marden. | Cabinet Member | | | |
| The Cabinet Member seeks the possibility of creating a 'bank roll' service, using Cornwall Council as an example, in order to support applicants in the Leader Programme. | Cabinet Member | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Cabinet Member liaises with the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment and the Head of Development Management to reduce the time taken for planning to write confirmation that no planning permission was required on the site concerned.  This may include highlighting to the Leader Programme team the process to apply for Certificate for Lawful Developments on sites concerning the Leader Programe. | Cabinet Member | | | |
| That the Cabinet Member and Leader of the Council should ensure planning policies reflect the contemporary needs of Maidstone's agricultural businesses. Spatial planning policies should be pro-active in encouraging planning applications for renewables and polytunnels (where appropriate and done in a sensitive manner)to help our agricultural community compete. | Full Cabinet | | | |
| That the Cabinet Member and Leader of the Council should ensure planning policies reflect the contemporary needs of Maidstone's agricultural businesses. Spatial planning policies should be pro-active in encouraging planning applications for renewables and polytunnels (where appropriate and done in a sensitive manner)to help our agricultural community compete. | Full Cabinet | | | |
| The Committee would like the Council to give encouragement for local affordable housing schemes | Full Cabinet | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| in the rural communities. Ways of incentivising such schemes should be given consideration. | | | | |
| Cabinet Member to pursue lobbying KCC Members to review the procedure for renewing and mending brown tourism signs. | Cabinet Member | | | |
| That  the neighbourhood forum meets with the business forums from time to time to help lobby the council with issues as a community. | Janet Barnes/Cabinet Member | | | |
| The Cabinet Member should review the possibility of adapting the boroughs neighborhood forums using Merton Council as an example. | Cabinet Member | | | |

**Notes on the completion of SCRAIP**

[i] Report recommendations are listed as found in the report.

[ii] Insert in this box the Cabinet Member whose portfolio the recommendation falls within.

[iii] The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box either the acceptance or rejection of the recommendation.

> **If the recommendation is rejected** an explanation for its rejection should be provided.  The 'timetable' and 'lead officer' boxes can be left blank
> **If the recommendation is accepted** an explanation of the action to be taken to implement the recommendation should be recorded in this box.  Please also complete the 'timetable' and 'lead officer' boxes.

[iv] The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box when the action in indicated in the previous box will be implemented.

[v] The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box the Officer responsible for the implementation of the action highlighted in the 'response' box.
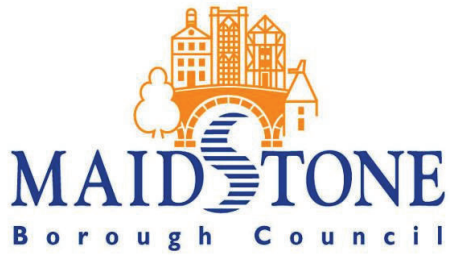
# Leisure & Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee

# Rural Economy

## Municipal Year 2010/11

**Committee Membership:**

Councillor Paine (Chairman)
Councillor Joy (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Burton
Councillor Mrs Gibson

Councillor Nelson-Gracie
Councillor Pickett
Councillor Mrs Smith

**This report is available in alternative formats.  For further information about this service please contact the Scrutiny Section on 01622 602463.**


**The report is also available on the Council's website:**

**www.maidstone.gov.uk/osc**

## Acronyms

The following are acronyms that may feature throughout this report:

Maidstone Borough Council – MBC

Kent County Council – KCC

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – OSC

Broadband Delivery UK – BDUK

Country Land and Business Association – CLA

Local Action Groups – LAG

Kent Rural Development Framework – KRDF

Network for Rural Business Forum – NRBF

Marden Business Forum – MBF

Local Government Association – LGA

Local Development Framework – LDF

Neighbourhood Development Plans –NDP

Planning Policy Statements – PPS

Strategic Housing Market Assessment – SHMA

South East England Development Agency – SEEDA

Department for Environment food and Rural Affairs – DEFRA

Office for National Statistics – ONS

Department for Business Innovation and Skills – BIS

The Office of Communications – OFCOM

Local Loop Unbundling – LLU

Digital Subscriber Line – DSL

National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency – NGA

Local Action Groups - LAG

# Contents

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## Forward

With so much attention focused on retail and the urban centre, we sometimes forget the many small, medium and large enterprises based in our countryside. The diversity of rural business within the Borough is astounding; everything is out there, from the smallest farm shop selling local produce, to large manufacturers of high-tech goods (e.g. top end veterinary equipment, or road sweepers for export to Brazil!). They can be found in discreet hamlets, open countryside, or industrial parks at the edge of large villages.
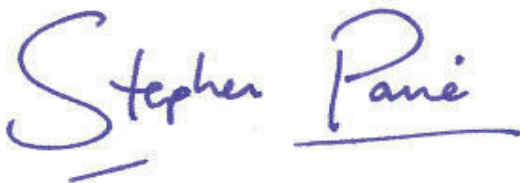
In Kent, rural businesses generate more than £5.5bn annually, and in Maidstone they account for 30% of our total offer. Our committee found that Maidstone has a thriving Rural Economy with untapped potential for further growth and diversification.

To achieve this, we need to address some of the issues facing rural enterprise. Transport, the lack of broadband, and planning policies were all raised as concerns in our consultation with local companies and expert witnesses. Some of these problems will require money to solve, others can be tackled through better partnership working and new policies. We, the council, may also have a further role to play by finding ways to help share best practice, e.g. through the support and expansion of rural business forums.

On a personal level, this review was an eye-opening experience. When we began, I assumed that our Rural Economy was vulnerable, weak and fragmented as a result of the credit crunch. I was wrong - it is doing remarkably well. The diversity of our companies, the business acumen of rural entrepreneurs, and the benefits of being located in Maidstone – the heart of Kent – have all contributed to this success story. Now we must build on this success, to keep Rural Maidstone competitive and a great place to do business.

I would like to express my thanks to the committee, witnesses and all contributors for making this review a possibility. Finally, I would like to reserve special thanks for Christina Chemsi, our hard working Scrutiny clerk; without her patience, enthusiasm, and late nights, this report would never have left the printers!

Enjoy this read – and please support Maidstone's Rural Economy.

Cllr Stephen Paine
Chairman, Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## List of Recommendations

| Pg No. | Ref. | Recommendation |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4 | The Economic Development Strategy July 2008 needs to be revised to show an equal focus on the rural and urban aspects of the Borough and reflect the recent changes concerning the Localism Bill. |
| 12 | 5.2.1 | To lobby for station improvements within the rural areas to allow better disabled access to all platforms. |
| 12 | 5.2.1 | That the Cabinet Members for Environment and Regeneration support the future work programme for 2011/12 and that the rural economy transport issues are suitably addressed as part of the Local Development Framework. |
| 13 | 5.2.9 | The Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Environment should lobby support to the Growth Without Gridlock team on the major priorities concerning Maidstone in the Rail Action Plan for Kent Strategy. |
| 14 | 5.2.11 | As the new plan is being devised, the Committee would like to see a stronger recognition of the rural transport issues and provide detail on how the Council intend to overcome the current obstacles. |
| 19 | 5.3.9 | Following the announcements of the first successful round of applications for the Superfast Broadband Pilot Fund in mid May 2011, the Committee see which applicants have been successful within the borough, and what the next procedure is before this can be implemented. |
| 22 | 5.5.2 | The Cabinet Member for Regeneration seeks methods to educate Maidstone residents in renewable energy benefits, perhaps with the help of Distributed Generation Ltd at possible community and town events. |
| 22 | 5.5.2 | In line with the Council's Sustainable Procurement Strategy , the Council support businesses within the borough when possible |
| 22 | 5.5.2 | The Cabinet Member for Community Services investigates any licence issues regarding obtaining a business recycling point in Marden. |
| 24 | 6.4.3 | The Cabinet Member seeks the possibility of creating a 'bank roll' service, using Cornwall Council as an example, in order to support applicants in the Leader Programme. |
| 24 | 6.4.3 | The Cabinet Member liaises with the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment and the Head of Development Management to reduce the time taken for planning to write confirmation that no planning permission was required on the site concerned.  This may include highlighting to the Leader Programme team the process to apply for Certificate for Lawful Developments on sites concerning the Leader Programe. |
| 27 | 7.1.6 | That the Cabinet Member and Leader of the Council should ensure planning policies reflect the contemporary needs of Maidstone's agricultural businesses. Spatial planning policies should be pro-active in encouraging planning applications for renewables and polytunnels (where appropriate and done in a sensitive manner)to help our agricultural community compete. |
| 30 | 7.2.6 | The Committee would like the Council to give encouragement for local affordable housing schemes in the rural communities. Ways of incentivising such schemes should be given consideration. |
| 32 | 8.1.2 | Cabinet Member to pursue lobbying KCC Members to review the procedure for renewing and mending brown tourism signs. |
| 33 | 8.2 | That  the neighbourhood forum meets with the business forums from time to time to help lobby the council with issues as a community. |
| 33 | 8.2.4 | The Cabinet Member should review the possibility of adapting the boroughs neighborhood forums using Merton Council as an example. |

The Committee would like to thank the following individuals and organisations who have contributed to this report:

**Maidstone Borough Council**

Economic Development Manager, John Foster
Economic Development Officer, Keith Grimley
Head of IT Services, Dave Lindsay
Director of Change, Planning and the Environment, David Edwards
Head of Development Management, Rob Jarman
Head of Spatial Planning, Michael Thornton
Interim Head of Core Strategy Development, Flo Churchill
Planning Officer for Spatial Planning, Michael Murphy
Housing Enabling Officer, Andrew Connors
Performance & Scrutiny Officer, Clare Wood
Overview & Scrutiny Officer, Christina Chemsi
Visitor Economy Business Unit Leader, Laura Dickson
Assistant Economic Development Officer, Christine Dier

**Kent County Council**
Liz Harrison, KCC Rural Regeneration Manager
Huw Jarvis, Programme Manager, Kent Downs and Marshes Leader

**Network of Rural Business Forums**
Elaine Collins, Chairman

**National Farmers Union**
Isobel Bretherton, PR Officer

**Castle Farm, Heath Road, East Farleigh**
Mr & Mrs Checkley
**Scarabs Sweepers, Pattenden Lane, Marden**
Darren Hoadley, Patrick Golding and Paul Beaney
**Claygate**
Mel and Andrew Streek
**Burtons Medical Equipment Ltd**
David Burton and Sue Marshall
**Haven Farm Shop**
Claire and Neil Samuell
**Pippa's Tea Room**
June Ross
**Court Farm, Thurnham Lane, Thurnham**
Nick Leggatt

The Committee would also like to thank the council officers and members of the public who took the time to contact the Committee and offer their opinions and ideas on the rural economy. All of the correspondences received were considered and added a valuable dimension to this review.

## 1.     Background

1.1.    In February 2009 the Regeneration and Sustainable Communities OSC looked at the Economic Development Strategy and found it to be urban-focused in its remit and implications. The Committee decided that they could look at the Rural Economy as part of its work programme for 2010/11.

1.2.    In May 2010, Members participated in a Work Programming Workshop to develop ideas for the 2010-11 Overview and Scrutiny Work programmes.  Ideas were received from officers, and these were considered alongside Members' own ideas at the workshop by each Committee.  Members considered a range of ideas with the potential for further review. The Rural Economy was suggested as a topic, but was not pursued at the time because the Committee decided to wait for a policy steer from the newly-elected Coalition Government in Westminster.

1.3.    At its meeting on 13 December 2010, the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to carry out a review of the Council's approach to Maidstone's rural economy.

1.4.    The Committee noted the existing work programme commitments and agreed that working groups report back on particular aspects of the review. The Committee agreed it was important to interview a range of experts and agreed to suggest possible witnesses to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer.

1.5.    The original Rural Economy scope (see Appendix A) was too broad to be completed within the existing time frame therefore new, punchier terms of reference was adopted by the committee.


## 2.     Terms of Reference

2.1.    The Committee agreed that, by conducting this review, it would aim to meet the following objectives and desired outcomes:

- To identify the key challenges facing the rural economy and what support is offered to new businesses and existing businesses. To determine which factors the Borough Council, in co-operation with its partners could influence in order to strengthen the rural economy;
- To investigate opportunities to develop appropriate planning and financial policies, preparing for upcoming legislation such as the Localism Bill; and
- To consider ways of sharing good practice to establish how to improve and support the rural economy, especially small businesses.

## 3.    Methodology

3.1    To consider the range of support currently provided to the rural areas and establish the key challenges that new and existing businesses are facing, the Committee sought evidence from a variety of sources. This included Select Committee-style interviews with:

- the Council's Economic Development Manager (MBC),
- Director of Change, Planning and the Environment (MBC),
- Head of Development Management (MBC),
- Head of Spatial Planning  (MBC),
- Rural Regeneration Manager (KCC),
- Rural Leader Programme (KCC),
- Chairman of the Network for Rural Business Forum (NRBF).

Attempts were made to interview a senior witness from SEEDA, but no response was received.

3.2    Public involvement was also considered to be vital for this review. A press release was sent to all residents via the Council's website, while a message was posted in a Maidstone-based group on the social networking site, 'Facebook'. Responses were circulated to the Committee and taken into account during Members' discussions.

3.3    Desktop research was carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer to establish strengths and weaknesses within the rural areas of the borough and the level of support available to the public.

3.4    A business survey was put together to gather anecdotal evidence with the following questions asked:

- What is the nature of your business?
- How long have you been based in a rural area? Why did you choose this area?
- What are your main challenges as a business in the rural area?
- Can you find the relevant support for your business, as and when you need it? If so, who is this predominantly from?
- How do you advertise your business? Are there other methods you'd like to use, but are unavailable?
- How has your business been impacted by the economic recession?
- Are there areas of support you feel could be better provided by Maidstone Borough Council?

3.5    A rural field trip was scheduled for 14 March 2011 to visit a diverse range of rural businesses from across the Borough. The itinerary was:

| Full Day |
| --- |
| 9.30am -    Pick up Cllrs from King St |
| 9.45am-    East Farleigh  visit latest planning approved 40m wind turbine site at Castle Farm |
| 10.30am -  leave for Marden |
| 11am -       Marden local businesses (Scarab sweepers and Claygate) |
| 12.30 -2pm -Lunch at Marden with Forum Members |
| 2.30pm -    Sutton Valence Visit Haven Farm Shop |
| 3pm -         Lenham, Pippas' Tea Room |
| 4pm-          visit Lenham – site for possible solar panel farm |
| 4.30pm -    Go through Thurnham Village  visit Nick Leggats'dairy farm – Court Farm |
| 5.30pm/6pm-Back to King St |

# Business survey

A SURVEY of how out-of-town firms are coping with the downturn and competing with urban shopping centres is being carried out by Maidstone council. It is asking villagers, rural shop workers and farmers to write to Christina Chemsi at christinachemsi@maidstone.gov.uk or call 01622 602463.

## 4. Introduction

4.1  In 2006 Maidstone had a total population of 148,460 projected to grow to 157,242 in 2011[1].  In 2009 this equated to 41,210 people in the rural areas, and 106,980 in the urban areas.[2] Maidstone was ranked one of the top ten shopping centres in the south east of England during 2006 with more than one million square feet of retail floor space. It is in the top 50 retail centres in the UK.[3]

4.2  The Borough is made up of one large radial-shaped town with several Rural Service Centres, and many smaller villages surrounding these. The Borough is set in the geographical context of Kent with Ashford, Medway and Canterbury competing (and complementing) with the Urban centre, and large Rural villages in other Districts also interacting with Maidstone's  Rural economy (e.g. Tenterden). In the rural South East of the Borough, anecdotal evidence suggests that many residents do not shop in Maidstone but travel to Tenterden, Ashford and other 'more accessible' centres instead.

4.3  In comparison to national figures, Maidstone has a high percentage of workers in construction and public administration, and a relatively low percentage in agriculture.[4]The total breakdown for employment in the Borough is shown as a percentage in the chart below.

### Percentage of Workers in Borough According to Career
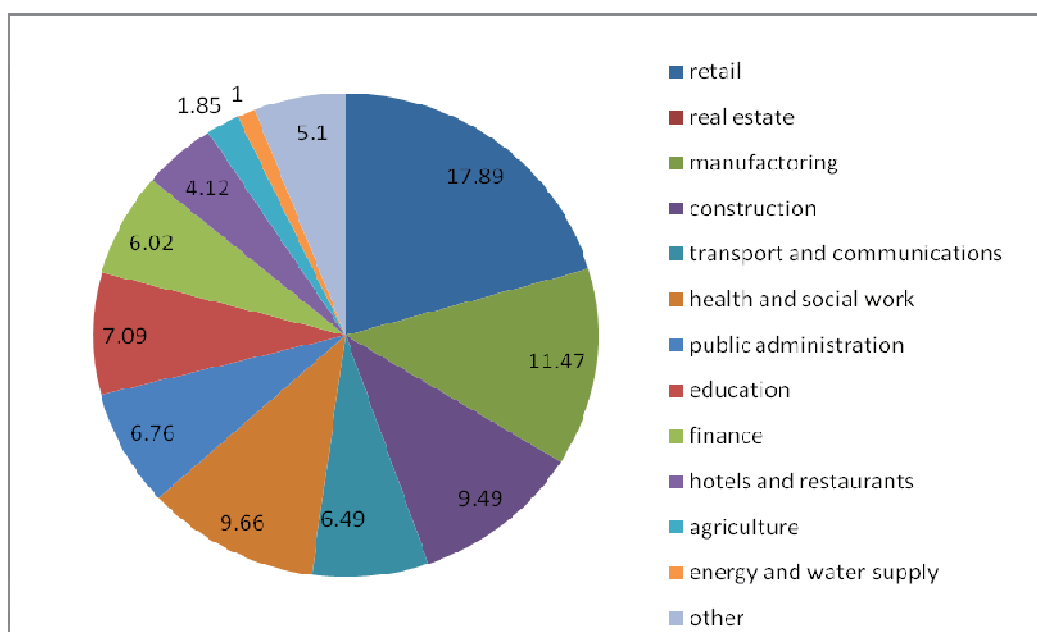


> **Recommendation: The Economic Development Strategy July 2008 needs to be revised to show an equal focus on the rural and urban aspects of the Borough and reflect the recent changes concerning the Localism Bill.**

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[1] http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/annual_monitoring_report_2009/10 Source: KCC, Demographic and labour supply forecasts, October 2010

[2]  KCC Research and Intelligence 2009 Ward Level Population Estimates Bulletin

*'2009 Lower Super Output Area population estimates (experimental); Office for National Statistics (ONS) © Crown Copyright,*

*aggregated to 2009 Ward level population estimates by Research & Intelligence, Kent County Council'*

[3] ^ ᵃ ᵇ http://www.alexandrapatrick.co.uk/userfiles/file/Maidstone.pdf [accessed 28.2.11]

[4]  http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do? [accessed 28.2.11]

4.4     Prior to road and rail improvements, the River Medway was one of the principal means of transport for goods to and from Maidstone. In 1739 improvements were made so that barges of 50 to 60 tons could get upriver to East Farleigh, Yalding and even Tonbridge allowing trade including corn, hops, fodder, fruit, stone and timber to pass through the town. In 1879 the medieval stone bridge was replaced to give better clearance with a second bridge, St. Peter's Bridge, built in 1977. These days, the river is only used for pleasure-boat owners and rowers with a number of people living on houseboats, and an annual river festival during the summer. There is very little industry still using the river within the Borough of Maidstone.

4.5     Two other rivers flow through Maidstone Borough – the River Len and the River Beult. Neither have been navigable for goods barges, but both facilitated a thriving network of grain and other mills – rural industries which no longer operate here.

4.6     Maidstone has a large proportion of businesses in rural areas, standing at just under 30%.[5]  There are 73.8% of rural businesses in Maidstone employing 0-4 people, compared to 64% in the urban area, and 5.6% employing 20 or more staff in the rural area compared to 9.8% in the urban area of Maidstone.[6]


River Medway, Maidstone 1934
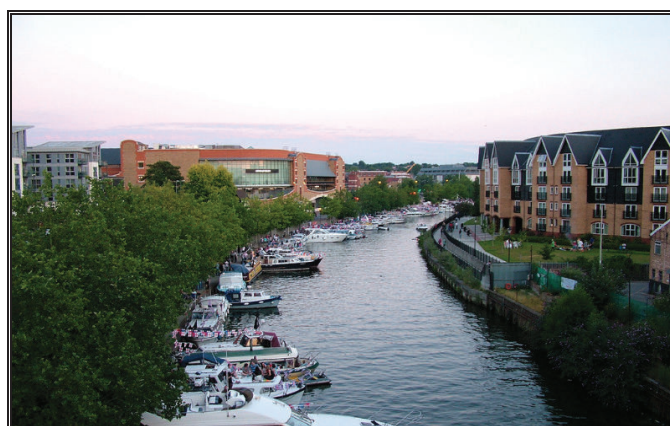

River Medway, Maidstone 2010

4.6     Transport is an issue for the borough, with the bus, train and road networks frequently under pressure to accommodate the growing areas.

4.7     The Economy Development Strategy sets the following vision for Maidstone :

"In 2028, Maidstone is a model '21st Century county town'. A distinctive place, known for its blend of sustainable rural and urban living, excellence in public services, vibrant service sector-based economy, and above all, quality of life."[7]

[5] Maidstone Economic Development Strategy July 2008.
[6] http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do? [accessed 28/2/11]
[7] Maidstone Economic Development Strategy July 2008.

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### Key Findings

**5.1** Members of the Leisure & Prosperity Committee approached rural businesses within Maidstone with a Rural Business Survey that was designed to identify key challenges facing the rural economy.

> Poor internet connections, late or erratic postal service, heavy use of fuel as no alternative for travel.

**5.1.1** One of the questions was 'What are your main challenges as a business in the rural area?' Common answers were the difficulties with transport and poor internet connections. The bad winter weather also featured as a problem for transport as both the road and rail services were severely affected.

**5.2** **Transport and Accessibility**

**5.2.1** There are 12 train stations within the borough, of which 9 are in the surrounding rural areas. However, only one has a step- free platform, making it harder for disabled commuters.

**5.2.3** There are 23 Arriva Bus routes providing transport to rural areas out of the 41 routes or, 43 buses connected with Maidstone.[8] Similarly, there are 10 Nu-Venture Bus routes out of a possible 16 or 18 busses that provide transport to rural communities.[9] Although this may be sufficient, the times of the busses are not suitable for a variety of bus users, in particular young people and workers, as the last bus from Hollingbourne to Maidstone for example is 16.47pm. Many people working in Hollingbourne would not have finished work by this time.

> **Recommendations: To lobby for station improvements within the rural areas to allow better disabled access to all platforms;**
> **That the Cabinet Members for Environment and Regeneration support the future work programme for 2011/12 and that the rural economy transport issues are suitably addressed as part of the Local Development Framework.**

**5.2.4** "Rural places make up 86% of England. Nearly one-fifth of our population live and work there (9.8 million people), in a patchwork of farms, hamlets, villages and towns"[10].

**5.2.5** According to KCC, 85% of Kent is rural in nature, and 13% of rural households have no access to a private car. Transport is vitally important for individuals and communities in rural areas, who can often be at risk of social exclusion.

**5.2.6** Kent County Council's Local Transport Plan (2006-2011) supports Maidstone's Integrated Transport Plan and aims to:

*"provide good, safe accessibility to jobs and services for all sections of the community in Kent, and to improve the environment and health of the community by reducing congestion and pollution, widening the choice of transport available, and by developing public transport, walking and cycling."[11]*

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[8] www.arrivabus.co.uk  [accessed 28/2/11]
[9] http://www.nu-venture.co.uk [accessed 28/2/11]
[10] http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/communities/ [accessed 28/4/11]
[11] http://www.kent.gov.uk/static/local-transport-plan/chapter_46.html [accessed 4/3/11]

5.2.7 On 22 March 2011, the Committee heard from Kent County Council's (KCC) Rural Regeneration Manager, Liz Harrison who stated that 'the issues surrounding transport in the rural area were hard to address due to the lack of resources in the transport infrastructure'. However, as there is no specific rural strategy covering this, she advised the Committee to refer any transport concerns within the review to the 'Growth without Grid-lock strategy' and KCC's Highways team.' The full minutes of this meeting are attached at Appendix B.

5.2.8 The Growth without Grid-lock strategy identifies local priorities for KCC with their district council partners, some are shown below:



5.2.9 The strategy states that they are producing a **Rail Action Plan for Kent** which will be used to inform future rail investment and service plans, both in the short term and for future rail franchises. The Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Environment should be encouraged to lobby Maidstone Borough Council's support on the major priorities concerning Maidstone, listed below:

- Reinstatement of the City service to Maidstone and West Malling.
- Feasibility of extending high-speed services from Ebbsfleet to Maidstone West.
- Improvements to the North Kent line
- Investigating the feasibility of introducing a through service between Gatwick and Kent after 2015.
- Including Maidstone East as the principal Kent terminus for Thameslink services from 2018.

5.2.10 The Committee are aware of Growth without Gridlock's inadequate level of funding for district roads due to the priority being large scale capital investment on the strategic network (e.g. a second Thames crossing).

> **Recommendation: The Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Environment should lobby support to the Growth Without Gridlock team on the major priorities concerning Maidstone in the Rail Action Plan for Kent Strategy.**

5.2.11 The Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy 2005-2015 notes that there is a need to improve accessibility to jobs and services throughout the Borough[12], as supported by the Government when the Department of Transport required that each Local (Transport) Authority develop an Accessibility Strategy as a core component of their Local Transport Plan for the 2006 – 2011. As the new plan is being devised, the Committee would like to see a stronger recognition of the rural transport issues and provide detail on how the Council intend to overcome the current obstacles.

5.2.12 The Council's Integrated Transport Strategy has sought to address a number of issues identified by the Council's Transport User Group and Mobility Focus Group including:

- **"Lack of accessible rail stations and trains**
  Whilst plans are being drawn up for improvements to Maidstone East and Staplehurst stations, there is a lack of information on how other journeys are to be made. Issues regarding the design of the new rolling stock also remain unanswered.
- **Only a limited number of accessible buses operating on a limited number of routes**
  Single deck routes have significantly improved accessibility during the past year, but apart from the service to Medway, no other double deck buses are currently accessible. New easy access buses were placed in service on the Park and Ride services in the spring of 2004.
- **Insufficient bus stops with easy access facilities**
  Most bus stops on Sutton Road, London Road, Tonbridge Road, Loose Road and in Shepway now have bus boarders or raised kerbs, and some others have also been adapted when circumstances permit. Only a few town centre bus stops have so far been adapted and this means that it is difficult for some persons to undertake journeys. Earlier plans to extend the coverage of such stops have been delayed or suspended. Uncontrolled parking at such stops prevents buses making use of the facility.
- **Difficulty of obtaining taxis at certain times and in rural areas**
  Reducing the possibility of attending or accessing facilities, or making it prohibitively expensive to do so.
- **Lack of completed "drop-kerb" pavement routes**
  A town centre guide has been issued showing the locations of dropped kerbs and other access features. Whilst much work has been undertaken in this area there are still a number of routes that cannot be undertaken."[13]

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**Recommendation: As the new plan is being devised, the Committee would like to see a stronger recognition of the rural transport issues and provide detail on how the Council intend to overcome the current obstacles, such as early last bus time of some buses.**

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[12] http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/pdf/050603_its.pdf [accessed 4/3/11]
[13] Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy 2005—2015

## 5.3 __Broadband Internet Connection__



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4 March 2011 Last updated at 16:51
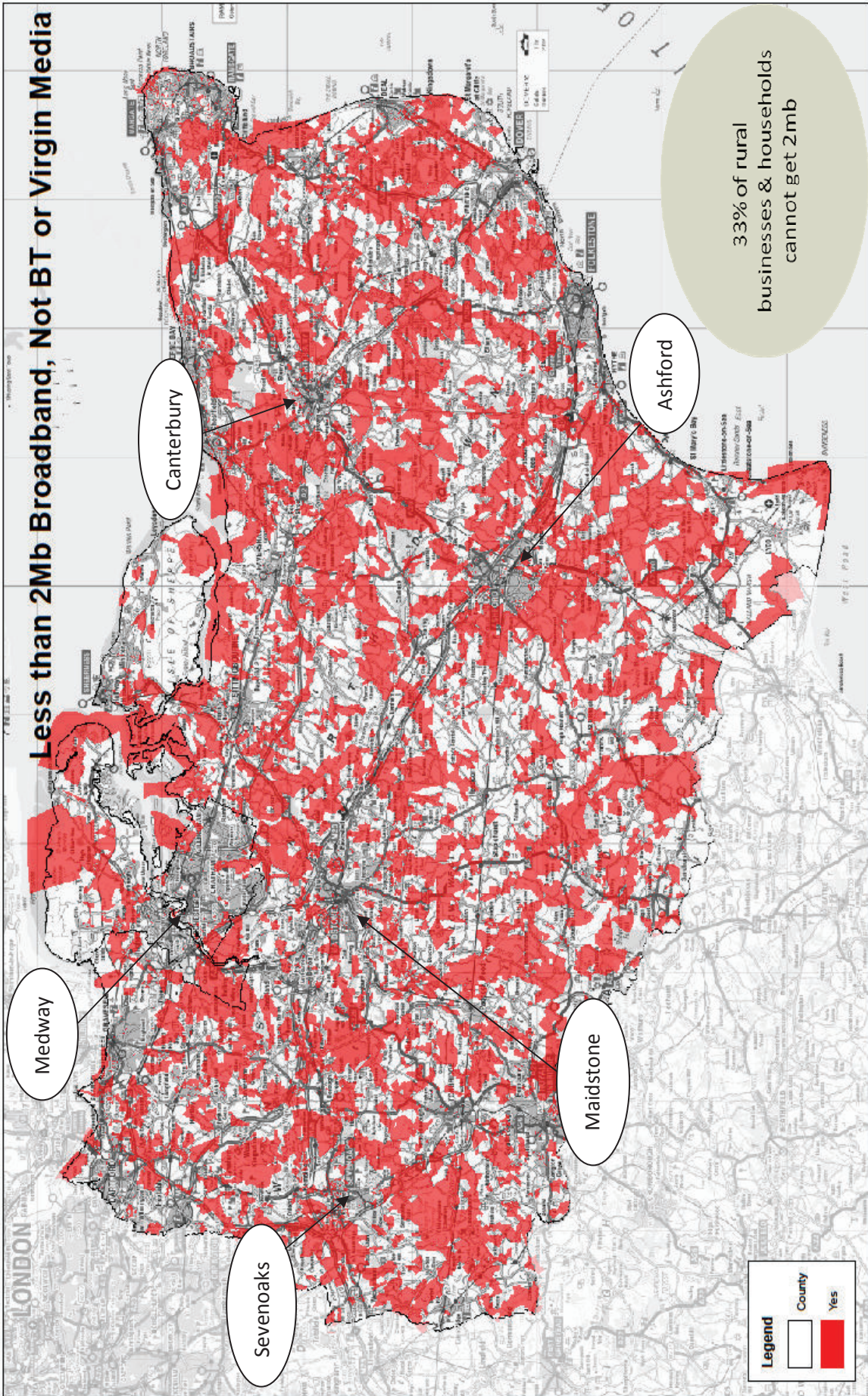
## UK government pushes ahead with rural broadband plans

5.3.1 A large portion of the response from the business survey indicated that Broadband coverage was a huge obstacle for them, with some companies requiring more than one line to support coverage as the connection can fluctuate at any given moment. KCC's Liz Harrison pointed out an agricultural need for broadband – for example, farmers need access to the internet in order to claim and manage their Single Farm Payments (SFP). Other reasons for the necessity of a good broadband connectivity for businesses include products such as audio and video conferencing, radio, television and news broadcasts. Smaller companies who need to create their own web page will also require a good connection, as domain, web and email hosting is paramount to a communicative business.

5.3.2 Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) has been created within the Department for Business Innovation & Skills (BIS) as a delivery vehicle for the Government's policies on broadband. Its vision states *"…Our goal is simple: within this parliament we want Britain to have the best superfast broadband network in Europe."*[14] They aim to deliver a fibre point in every community in the UK by the end of this parliament, so that homes and businesses even in the most remote places, can receive a decent level of connectivity.

5.3.3 The map below shows the areas within Kent that are not able to receive 2megabytes of internet connectivity.[15]

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[14] http://interactive.bis.gov.uk/comment/bduk/ [accessed 9/3/11]
[15] KCC briefing to MBC on BDUK 24/2/11

15

# Less than 2Mb Broadband, Not BT or Virgin Media

33% of rural businesses & households cannot get 2mb

Canterbury

Ashford

Maidstone

Medway

Sevenoaks

**Legend**
County
Yes

Produced by The KCC GIS Team

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Ref: mat674_7

Kent County Council

0    5    10    20 Kilometers

5.3.4 The BDUK is currently engaging with various stakeholders, including the 'industry', public sector bodies, OFCOM, regional bodies and community groups to ensure the following:

- Develop the commercial and delivery models that will be used for investing public money in broadband;
- Plan and execute 4 superfast broadband pilots to ensure that the maximum information is gained for targeting potential future government intervention;
- Investigate the detail of reuse of public sector networks and assets, identify the challenges and develop solutions;
- Develop tools and guidance for communities to come together to help solve their broadband issues; and
- Develop tools and guidance for local authorities wishing to help solve broadband issues in their areas.

5.3.5 By comparison, the BDUK goal of 'having the best superfast broadband network in Europe'[16] is a tall order. According to the New York Times, '**the paradises of broadband — Japan, South Korea and Sweden — can surf far faster and far cheaper...than the likes of the United States'[17]** due to broadband deployment spurred by a combination of heavy government involvement, subsidies and lower corporate profits. It continues to say that 'Sweden has built one of the fastest and most widely deployed broadband networks in Europe because its government granted tax breaks for infrastructure investments, directly subsidized rural deployment, and, perhaps most significantly, required state-owned municipal utilities to create local backbone networks, reducing the cost for the local telephone company to provide service.'[18]

5.3.6 However, since then KCC have produced a survey on the 'Broadband Leadership' which is shown below. This shows that Japan is now third, with Sweden twelfth, the United States nineteenth and the UK a disappointing twenty-fifth.

## Broadband Leadership Survey October 2010

| Rank | Country |
|------|---------|
| | |
| 1 | S. Korea |
| 2 | Hong Kong |
| 3 | Japan |
| 4 | Iceland |
| 5= | Luxembourg |
| 5= | Singapore |
| 5= | Switzerland |
| 8 | Malta |
| 9 | Netherlands |
| 10= | Qatar |
| 10= | United Arab Emirates |
| 12 | Sweden |
| 13 | Denmark |
| 14 | Norway |
| 15 | Bahrain |
| 16= | Finland |
| 16= | Ireland |
| 18 | Israel |
| 19= | Canada |
| 19= | France |

| Rank | Country |
|------|---------|
| | |
| 19= | Latvia |
| 19= | Slovenia |
| 19= | United States |
| 24 | Belgium |
| 25= | Estonia |
| 25= | Germany |
| 25= | United Kingdom |
| 28 | Cyprus |
| 29 | Taiwan |
| 30= | Australia |
| 30= | Spain |
| 32= | Lithuania |
| 32= | Portugal |
| 34 | Romania |
| 35 | Czech Republic |
| 36= | Greece |
| 36= | New Zealand |
| 38 | Austria |
| 39 | Italy |
| 40 | Bulgaria |

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[16] http://interactive.bis.gov.uk/comment/bduk/ [accessed 9/3/11]
[17] The New York Times, March 12 2009, by Saul Hansell
[18] http://.nytimes.com/2009/03/12/the-broadband-gap-why-do-they-have-more-fiber/ [accessed 9/3/11]

17

5.3.7 Head of IT Services, Dave Lindsay informed the Committee that MBC 'are doing a joint bid for £50m of government funding for broadband improvement. It's called Broadband Delivery UK... The aim would be to cover as much of Kent with some work of broadband.'[19]



5.3.8 On 28 February 2011, KCC announced a '£1.5 million **Superfast Broadband Pilot Fund** to help rural communities benefit from high speed broadband. This money is available to community groups, parish councils or local authorities. All applications must have a sound business case and show the economic benefits of fast broadband and must be submitted by 14 April 2011.'[20] The maximum amount of funding available for each case is £100,000. The Committee noted that it would be difficult for communities already suffering from low speed connectivity to apply for this online, as it was not clear what other advertising methods were used by KCC. Announcements of the first successful round of applications will be made in mid May 2011, when the Committee would be interested to see which applicants have been successful within the borough.

5.3.9 With many areas in Kent having 'not spots' (i.e. either slow broadband or none at all), it is hoped that this funding will bring economic benefit to businesses in the rural areas. The KCC continued to say that "however, there are only so many communities we can help, and **ultimately by helping to prove the demand for broadband we hope the telecomms providers will take responsibility for bringing this technology to 'harder to reach' areas as well as benefiting from the more profitable urban areas.** There will be further KCC funds available in the Summer and Autumn to enable a total of 15 areas to benefit, but it would be great to see the private sector recognizing the need too."[21]

5.3.10 This is not the only source of funding available for broadband provisions with rural communities. Since 2006, '17 parishes have received more than £600,000 to help install new broadband' [22]within Kent, for example, Iwade in Sittingbourne.

5.3.11 On 28 February 2011, KCC Cabinet Member for Business Strategy and Support, Roger Gough, said: "This funding also supports KCC's '**Connecting Kent'** campaign to build market demand in Kent and lobby for better and faster broadband services. This campaign will be launched in the next few weeks and we want businesses and the

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[19] Email from Dave Lindsay to Christina Chemsi 3/3/11.

[20] http://www.kent.gov.uk/community_grants_and_funding/community_broadband/news [accessed 3/3/11]
[21] http://www.kent.gov.uk/community_grants_and_funding/community_broadband/news [accessed 3/3/11]
[22] http://www.kent.gov.uk/community_grants_and_funding/community_broadband/news [accessed 3/3/11]

18

residents of Kent to get behind us, so together we can lobby for superfast broadband."[23]

5.3.12 In November 2010, Point Topic Ltd published a report showing the 'Measures of infrastructure' that they used to calculate the broadband infrastructure of an area. As there are a variety of ways to do this, Point Topic focused on six which covered the various different options between them. They are:

1. "Local loop unbundling (LLU) availability; where do operators such as TalkTalk and Sky provide LLU-based services?
2. Twenty-first century network (21CN) roll-out; where is BT's 21CN technology implemented?
3. Cable coverage; where does Virgin Media offer broadband over its cable network?
4. 2Mbps downstream; where can end-users expect to get broadband services of at least 2 megabytes per second download speeds, whether over the BT and LLU DSL networks, or by cable or fibre-based "next generation access" (NGA)?
5. Current (end-2010) NGA availability; which areas are enabled for some form of NGA service today?
6. Future NGA prospects; what is the average probability that this area will have NGA service by end-2015?"[24]

5.3.13 All these measures can be expressed in the same terms; the percentage of premises (homes and businesses) in the area which have access to each particular feature of broadband infrastructure. The below table reflects the results of Kent and its local authorities. Clearly, Maidstone is not competing with its neighbouring local authorities, as it is ranked 10th out of 13.

| Local Authority | Total Premises | Index |
|---|---|---|
| Medway | 111,924 | 67.96% |
| Dartford | 41,714 | 67.40% |
| Gravesham | 43,169 | 67.07% |
| Swale | 58,588 | 56.56% |
| Canterbury | 67,808 | 50.99% |
| Ashford | 50,699 | 50.51% |
| Tonbridge and Malling | 50,700 | 50.06% |
| Tunbridge Wells | 48,011 | 49.61% |
| Thanet | 62,557 | 48.92% |
| Maidstone | 64,727 | 48.33% |
| Shepway | 48,785 | 48.24% |
| Dover | 50,558 | 46.54% |
| Sevenoaks | 52,028 | 41.95% [25] |

> **Recommendation:** Following the announcements of the first successful round of applications for the Superfast Broadband Pilot Fund in mid May 2011, the Committee see which applicants have been successful within the borough, and what the next procedure is before this can be implemented.
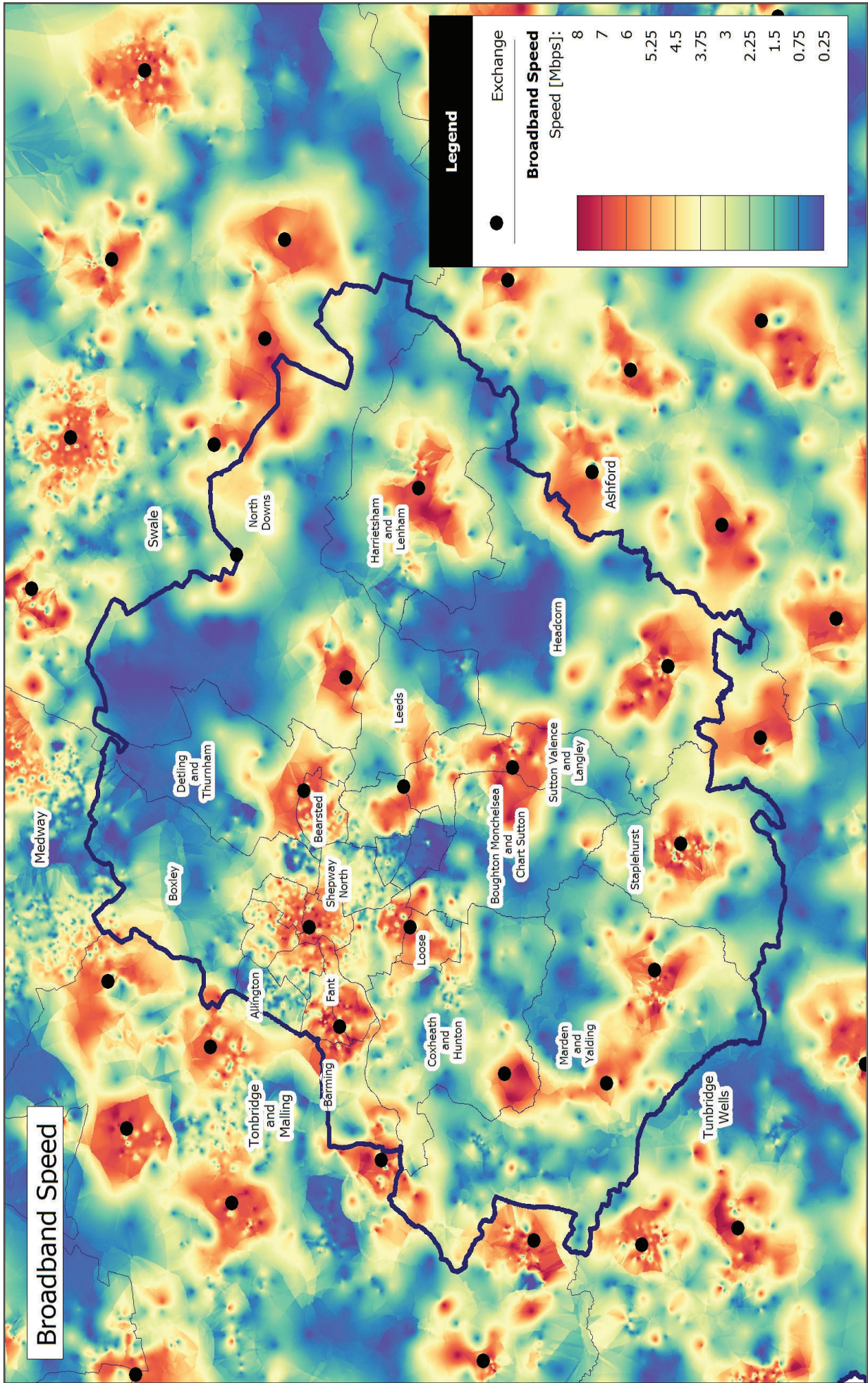
5.3.14 As part of the ongoing work that the MBC's IT section are doing together with KCC, the Committee requests that they are updated with how this progresses, both the success from lobbying and the timescale expected to begin the broadband improvements.

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[23] http://www.kent.gov.uk/community_grants_and_funding/community_broadband/news [accessed 3/3/11]
[24] Point Topic Ltd, 'How good is your town's broadband?' Nov 2010.
[25] http://point-topic.msgfocus.com/c/1a0OZTvJrCfVYXAH [accessed 11/3/11]

5.3.15 The below graph shows the connectivity speed throughout Maidstone borough.  As can be seen, there are many areas that are in need of this before the proposed time of 2015. Particular areas that are suffering from less than 1Megabyte are Boughton Malherbe, Marden, Coxheath, Boughton Monchelsea, Detling and Thurnham. Areas that are able to receive 5Mb or more include Harrietsham and Lenham, Staplehurst, Sutton Valence, Bearsted, Headcorn and town wards, in particular Fant, High Street and Shepway North.

Broadband Speed

**Legend**

Exchange ●

**Broadband Speed**
Speed [Mbps]:

8
7
6
5.25
4.5
3.75
3
2.25
1.5
0.75
0.25

Medway

Boxley

Allington

Fant

Barming

Tonbridge and Malling

Detling and Thurnham

Bearsted

Shepway North

Loose

Coxheath and Hunton

Marden and Yalding

Tunbridge Wells

Swale

North Downs

Harrietsham and Lenham

Leeds

Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton

Sutton Valence and Langley

Staplehurst

Headcorn

Ashford

21

5.4 **Reaching the Rural Community**

On Monday 14 March 2011, the Committee, and two spatial planning officers took part in a field trip that was organised by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Cllr Malcolm Greer, was also invited.

5.4.1 The field trip was organised to gain a better understanding of the diversity of businesses in Maidstone's rural area and to ascertain key challenges facing the rural economy.

5.4.2 Recommendations that were established on the day were found in the following:

After talking to the owners of Castle Farm and to Darran Potter from Distributed Generation Ltd, the Committee realised there is a need to promote education about the need for and role of renewables in the rural area – both as ways to help businesses lower their carbon footprint as well as become more economically stable.

> **Recommendation: The Cabinet Member for Regeneration seeks methods to educate Maidstone residents in renewable energy benefits, perhaps with the help of Distributed Generation Ltd at possible community and town events.**

During a tour of Scarab Sweepers, who build and export sweepers for both national and international markets, the Committee learnt that certain sweeper parts come from Europe, with the vast majority coming from within the UK, including 50-70 tonnes of steel every four weeks.

> **Recommendation:In line with the Council's Sustainable Procurement Strategy, the Council support businesses within the Borough when possible.**

The group visited Claygate Distribution who distribute bathrooms and accessories for retailers. Claygate anticipated growth when they built their new facilities, which also included provisions for recycling water, glass which retains heat, air-conditioning which also controls the heating, low energy and sensored lighting as well as a generator which is used frequently for maintaining adequate electricity levels. However, the main challenge they face is being able to recycle things such as wood.

> **Recommendation: The Cabinet Member for Community Services investigates any licence issues regarding obtaining a business recycling point in Marden.**

5.4.3 The full account of the field trip is attached at Appendix C.

## 6. Support for Businesses in the Rural Community

*"So the rural challenge today includes supporting new, better-paid and diverse employment opportunities, providing the homes needed for those who live and work in rural areas on low incomes, and maintaining and evolving the services they rely on. The greater challenge is to achieve this while genuinely enhancing rural communities, increasing local and national sustainability in the context of climate change, and continuing to conserve the open countryside to ensure environmental security, food security, and access to open countryside for the enjoyment of all."*[26]

### 6.1 Rural Regeneration

The Committee heard from Mrs Liz Harrison, KCC Rural Regeneration Manager who 'informed the Committee that 40% of Kent's businesses were located in the rural areas, and although it was recognised that farming was an important component, it was not the only industry in rural areas. Research had shown that there were many similarities between industries in the urban and rural areas and rural businesses generated £5.5 billion per annum to Kent's economy.'[27]

### 6.2 Kent Rural Development Framework

The Kent Rural Development Framework (KRDF) was published by KCC in June 2007 with a vision for rural Kent in 2017 covering three main areas, including;

- to be a pioneering rural economy;
- with vibrant rural communities; and
- a valued rural environment.

6.2.1 In order to achieve this, a range of priority themes for action have been identified;

- Conserve Kent's distinctive rural character and sense of place
- Help the land-based sector to adapt to the impacts of climate change
- Increase the production and consumption of renewable energy across rural Kent
- Manager the impacts of urban growth
- Live within environmental limits (One Planet Living)

The table below shows the 'Environmental drivers of change'.
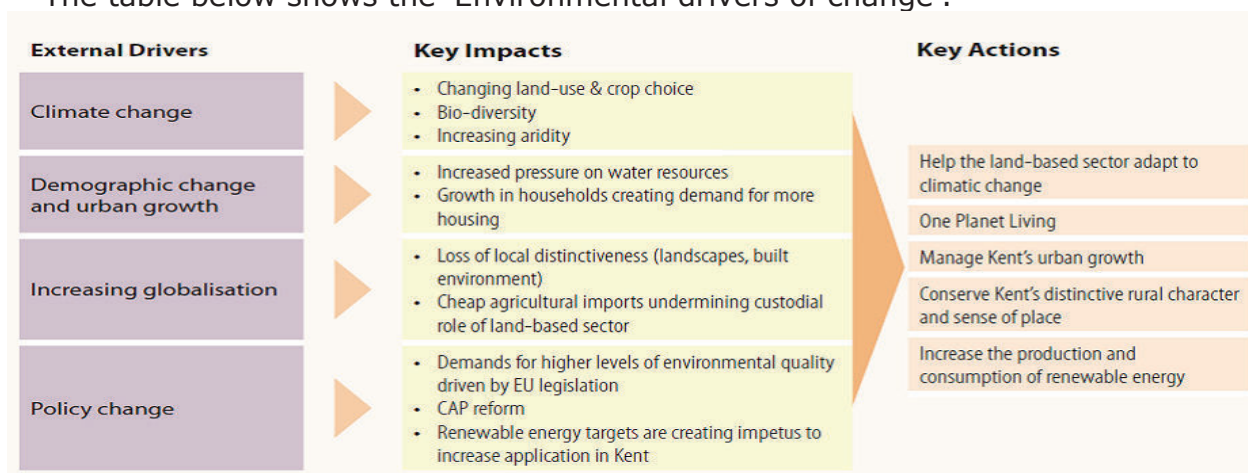


[28]

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[26] The Rural Challenge, Achieving sustainable rural communities for the 21st century, by Matthew Taylor Aug 2010
[27] Minutes from the Leisure & Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 22 March 2011
[28] http://www.kentruralnetwork.org.uk/kent-rural-framework

**Renewable Energy**

6.3     Whilst on the field trip that took place on Monday 14 March 2011, the group heard of the difficulties rural companies (in particular farms) have with adapting their business to utilise renewable sources. However, their obstacles were not only due to planning permission, finances and geographic location but also due to human misconception of how efficient, quiet, and communally beneficial renewable energy can be.

6.3.1   The benefits have been stated in the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) vision statement in section 7.4.12, as emphasis in their statement was placed on renewable energy policies and the need for a balanced approach to sustainable development. The report showed that technologies such as anaerobic digestion, as well as gas, wind and solar farms, and biomass and biogas heating should be favoured where feasible by planning authorities.

6.3.2   It was also noted in the policies and legislation section of 7.2.5 as there would also be changes to enforcement powers, when the current 27 planning policy statements were being condensed into one, and it is hoped that details in Planning Policy Statements (PPS) PPS7, sustainable development in rural areas, PPS4, sustainable economic growth and PPS22, renewable energy are not lost.

6.4     **Leader Programme**

On 22 March 2011, the Committee heard from Mr Huw Jarvis, Kent Downs and Marshes Leader Programme Manager about the Leader Programme. The Leader Programme is implemented through Local Action Groups (LAGs) and provides grants of up to £50,000 (depending on the project) for rural businesses and communities up until 2013.

6.4.1   'Projects seeking funding must be able to fit with the overall strategies of the Local Action Groups, broadly these are:

- improve the competitiveness and sustainability of Kent's land-based sectors through diversification, innovation, and adding value to products;
- fostering sustainable rural tourism and related businesses; and
- assisting rural communities and businesses in managing change and combating rural deprivation.'[29]

6.4.2   Mr Jarvis explained how the membership was set up within the LAGs, and that each member stood for two years. Currently a member from Shepway Council represented Dover, Ashford, Shepway and Canterbury and that a member from Swale Council represented Medway, Maidstone and Swale.

6.4.3   The Leader Programme had identified obstacles that were identified as part of the application process 'was the upfront funding required from the applicant. Although the programme would match 50% of the funding required (up to £50,000), many applicants did not have the funding upfront to support this. Mr Jarvis gave an example of a local authority who had created a 'bank roll' service, whereby they provided the funding upfront on a 0% interest, and they received the funding back within two months. The Committee were very interested in how this local authority, Cornwall, made this work and requested further information be provided with a view to consider this as a way forward.  Mr Jarvis also highlighted another obstacle with regard to

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[29] http://www.kentruralnetwork.org.uk/leader [accessed 7/3/11]

24

obtaining written confirmation from planning that no planning permission was required on the site concerned, as this was possibly taking longer than necessary.'[30]

> **Recommendations: The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services seeks the possibility of creating a 'bankroll' service, using Cornwall Council as an example, in order to support applicants in the Leader Programe;**
>
> **The Cabinet Member for Regeneration liaises with the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment and the Head of Development Management to reduce the time taken for planning to write confirmation that no planning permission is required on the site concerned. This may include highlighting to the Leader Programme team the process to apply for Certificate for Lawful Development on sites concerning the Leader Programe.**

6.5 **Business Forums**

The Network for Rural Business Forum (NRBF) is a member based forum which brings together businesses and local enterprises in rural communities, enabling them to network, build businesses and share expertise, as highlighted in their slogan 'Business and Community Working Together Throughout Kent'.

6.5.1 Benefits for members include private healthcare, free legal, HR and accounts advice, five networking events a year, two business breakfasts a month and advertising in a local directory to name a few.

6.5.2 The Committee received a written statement from Elaine Collins, Chairman of the NBRF which was created within the past 12 months following the success of Marden Business Forum (MBF).The Common Factors between the MBF and NRBF are the Chairman Elaine Collins is Chairman of both the MBF and NRBF. In summary, 15 members of the MBF committee are involved in the NRBF in some way.

6.5.3 On Tuesday 26 April 2011 the Committee heard from Councillor Burton, Vice-Chairman for MBF that the MBF was created following a Kent County Council (KCC) proposal to install a roundabout in the village which would interfere with local traders road usage. As a community of traders, they collaborated their skills and knowledge to petition against the roundabout proposal, which proved successful. This led them to believe that a network of business traders would be valuable. The Parish boundary was used as a boundary for members, they achieved a membership of 130 businesses out of a possible 200, employing 2500 people collectively. The MBF had created a training programme that allowed one company at a time to apply for a grant via the Skills South East. They would then distribute the training within the MBF members accordingly, using their own skilled trainers.

6.5.4 The Committee enquired how many people come to the meetings, and whether it was open to the public. Councillor Burton, confirmed that the meetings were not open to the public; however they were open to all Members and network events that took place four times a year received between 40 and 100 people, depending on the season. Annually there were one or two exceptions who did not renew their membership, but they retained as close to 100% as thought possible.

6.5.5 In response to a question, the Committee learnt that although it was believed that the MBF had been successful due to being parochial, there was a danger of it becoming

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[30] Minutes from the Leisure & Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 22 March 2011

stagnant.  In response to this they occasionally meet with other forums to cross-fertilize ideas, whilst each forum remained distinctly local.

## 7.  Addressing Economic Development in Rural Areas Policies and Legislation

### 7.1  Planning

On 13 December 2010, The Local Government Association (LGA) published a briefing note on the Localism Bill, confirming the following changes in relation to planning:

- o  Abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies.
- o  Transferring of national infrastructure decisions to the Secretary of State;
- o  New powers and processes for parishes; and
- o  Newly created voluntary community groups to develop neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood development orders.

7.1.1  A further briefing note on the Localism Bill was published by the LGA dated 17 January 2011.

The LGA stated their views as follows;

'We support councils having maximum freedom to make spatial plans which reflect the needs and wishes of their residents. Proposed new approaches to pre-application discussion and planning enforcement are also welcome. We do, however, have **significant concerns about the neighbourhood planning policies...**We support the principles behind neighbourhood planning. However, to make this a success, the Government must not impose rigid bureaucratic processes on local people and councils, which only serve to increase complexity and delay, and create opportunities for litigation. The Government's current approach also risks putting too much power in the hands of people who are not elected or removable by a democratic process, without enough assurance of inclusiveness, transparency and financial probity. **The LGA believes there is a far simpler model for communities to work with councils on planning that will not require the 44 pages, 6 Clauses and 3 Schedules proposed in the Bill**, and we want to work with the Government to help put this model into action.'[31]

7.1.2  On 25 January 2011, the Leisure & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee heard from David Edwards, Director of Change, Planning and the Environment, Rob Jarman, Head of Development Management and Michael Thornton, Head of Spatial Planning about how the Council are positioned to respond to the new legislation proposed within the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the proposed changes within the Localism Bill that will have an impact on the rural economy.

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[31] The Local Government Association http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/16195428 [accessed 18 January 2011]

7.1.3 'Mr Edwards summarised that the rural economy was very important to the borough as 30 percent of businesses were within the rural areas, representing a key contribution to the whole Borough's economy.'[32]



7.2.2 Although the Localism Bill is still in its early stages, it is anticipated that further information should form over the coming 6-9 months.

7.1.4 The Localism agenda has created Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) in addition to the LDF that was currently in place. The new NDPs will allow local communities to put forward plans to develop their areas providing they agree with the LDF. **Mr Thornton informed the Committee that NDPs would be approved by a referendum of local residents only, it would not include the businesses within that area.** This could potentially create tension between the communities, regardless of how helpful the NDP process is intended to be for rural economies.

7.1.5 There are areas causing concern over the practicality of the changes proposed by the Bill. For example; "social housing reforms having an 'affordable rent' and the community having the 'right to buy' assets".[33]

7.1.6 There would also be changes to enforcement powers, as the current 27 planning policy statements were being condensed into one. **The Planning Policy Statements (PPS) that would most affect the rural economy are PPS7, sustainable development in rural areas, PPS4, sustainable economic growth and PPS22, renewable energy.** It is hoped that important details within these are not lost when merged.

7.1.7 Mr Jarman told the Committee that if Kent suppliers could not meet supermarket standards, they would simply look elsewhere, regardless of the public becoming more interested in where their food originates from. He advised the Council to be 'mindful of this when receiving planning applications for things such as polytunnels'. ' Mr Jarman stated that within planning they were noticing change, for example the recent approval of the first wind turbine in Maidstone and the application they had received for a solar panel park, which would set a trend for similar applications to come in the future.'[34]

7.1.8  The Country Land & Business Association explained that many national planning policies have the effect of impacting disproportionately on rural businesses and communities, highlighting that 'speed is of the essence if we are to provide rural businesses with the same tools as are provided to urban businesses'.[35]

7.1.9 The Committee heard that retail businesses often require a lot of residential properties and a viable transport system already in place, before they settle in a village.

7.1.10 The information presented at scrutiny meeting was published in the Maidstone KM on 4 February 2011, page 27, set out below.

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[32] Minutes of the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held Tuesday 25 January 2011.

[33] Minutes of the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held Tuesday 25 January 2011.

[34] Minutes of the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held Tuesday 25 January 2011.
Photograph from http://www.thelocalismbill.co.uk/

[35] Country Land & Business Association, 'Planning for Change in the Countryside – A CLA Position Statement' May 2010

Newsdesk: 01622 695666                                          www.kentonline.co.uk

# Localism to mean more development, not less

### by Alan Smith
ajsmith@thekmgroup.co.uk

VILLAGERS hoping that a new government bill will give them powers to throw out unwelcome building developments had better think again.

That is not the interpretation of planning officers at Maidstone council.

Although the Localism Bill talks about pushing power down to the lowest tiers of democracy, with the use of referenda to decide local policies, that is not the way its going to work, a scrutiny committee heard.

### Condition

Cllr Wendy Hinder told colleagues that many of her constituents in Boxley were hoping to use the Localism Bill to ban unwelcome development in the village.

Although the bill allows communities to draft their own local planning policies, called Neighbourhood Development Plans, the council's head of spatial planning, Michael Thornton, warned there was a condition.

He said: "It's a phrase you're going to learn to hate. It is that the NDPs must be 'in general conformity' with the (coun-

Maidstone Borough Council planning policy manager Michael Thornton

Cllr Wendy Hinder says constituents hoped to stop unwelcome developments

**'They are a set of words that will be picked over through the courts and argued over in appeals'**

cil's) core strategy. Otherwise the neighbourhood plans will never even be allowed to get to the referendum stage.

"What does general conformity mean? They are a set of words that will be picked over through the courts and argued over in appeals."

Mr Thornton said the localism agenda was about communities coming together to ask for more development than that earmarked in the council's overall proposals.

Mr Thornton said: "That might mean a bit more employment enterprise, a bit more housing.

"What it doesn't mean is that a community can say 'no, we don't want what the core strategy says is our target figure'.

"It could mean more (growth), but it can't mean less."

### Obstacle

If that wasn't enough, Cllr Clive English (Lib Dem) warned that, as things stood, most communities would be very unlikely to have the resources to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan in the first place.

He said: "The NDPs are essentially similar to parish plans, and there have been very few of those come forward in recent years because of the obstacle now required of producing a sustainability appraisal.

"If that requirement is not lifted in the new Localism Bill then the whole idea of NDPs will be dead before they start."

■ What do you think? Find out how to contact us on p2

## 7.2    Housing & Sustainable Development

On 18 March 2011, the Overview and Scrutiny officer met with the Councils' Housing Enabling officer for Housing Policy and Development, Andrew Connors, to discuss the policies in place regarding sustainable rural housing.

7.2.1 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which was undertaken in Maidstone Borough in 2009, conforms to the major Government Guidance on the subject, and provides a wide ranging examination of the housing market, and part of the 'evidence base' on which a wide range of planning and housing policies can be based.

7.2.2 According to SHMA, the definition of 'affordable housing' includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not

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met by the market. 'Affordable housing' should be at a cost which is below the costs of housing typically available in the open market and be available at a sub-market price in perpetuity (although there are some exceptions to this such as the Right-to-Acquire). [There is an ambiguity in PPS3: Housing, where 'intermediate housing' is defined as being below market entry to rent, while 'affordable housing' is defined to be below the threshold to buy (normally much higher than the private rental one). But in principle the Guidance defines affordable housing as below the market threshold, and rationally speaking, that includes the private rented as well as purchase sectors]."[36]

7.2.3 Often, the definition for sustainable development reflects a no 'one size fits all' approach. Sustainable development is a broad and complex field, and therefore many affordable housing providers define their own version of what they consider sustainable development to be. However, there are common key elements of sustainable developments which need to be addressed by all providers of housing, in order to successfully integrate and implement sustainable development principles. The Homes and Communities Agency also has a statutory duty to contribute toward sustainable development and good design and to improve the quality of the homes that they enable or in which they invest.

The below figure illustrates the three main facets to sustainability - community, the environment and the economy. These facets are in no way mutually exclusive. The integration of and balance between these areas will result in sustainability.
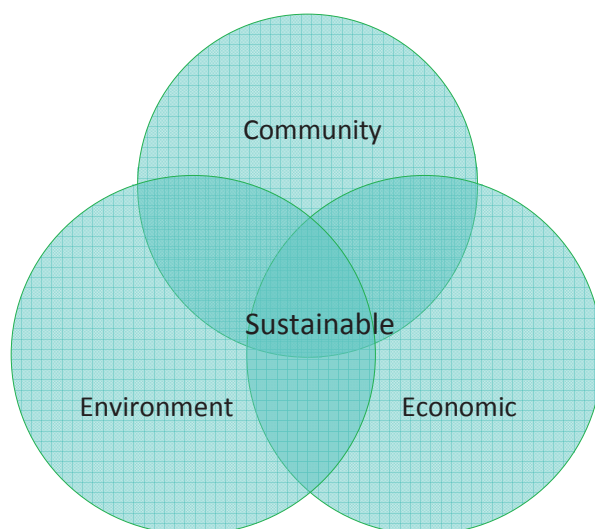


7.2.4 Maidstone Borough has a total of 41 Parishes, each containing expensive properties within villages and small towns; a reflection on the attractiveness of the Borough. However, this means that local people are unable to live locally, as they are priced out of the market, leaving young couples and families to move somewhere more affordable. There are 405 households identified in local housing need surveys, undertaken by Rural Housing Trust or Action with Communities in Rural Kent, who are in reported affordable housing need within the rural parishes of the Borough. There are rural schemes in the pipeline which will deliver 55 homes, therefore there is still a 350 homes shortfall. Some parishes have yet to see a scheme come to fruition to see their local residents affordable housing needs met.'[37] The lack of affordable housing has a detrimental effect on the sustainability of the rural local community. Through the provision of affordable housing in rural locations, the Council can help local people remain in the village or town where they have strong family or employment ties.

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[36] SHMA by Fordham Research Published March 2010

[37] Meeting with Mr Connors, Housing Enabling Officer. Figure up to date as of 22/3/11.

7.2.5 Now under new powers in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, more than 13,000 small rural settlements will be designated 'protected' areas across England. These will be areas where land to build new affordable homes is severely limited or where it is not possible to buy existing properties for shared ownership because of the small size of the housing market.

7.2.6 Shared ownership properties in these 'protected' areas will be retained by either restricting to 80 per cent the share owners can buy or allowing owners to acquire up to 100 per cent but ensuring the provider, for example a housing association, buys the property back to retain it for future purchasers. The below table shows the full list of protected areas within Maidstone.

| Bicknor | Detling | Hollingbourne | Marden | Teston |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Boughton Malherbe | East Farleigh | Hucking | Nettlestead | Ulcombe |
| Boughton Monchelsea | East Sutton | Langley | Otham | West Farleigh |
| Boxley | Frinsted | Leeds | Otterden | Wichling |
| Bredhurst | Harrietsham | Lenham | Stockbury | Wormshill |
| Chart Sutton | Headcorn | Linton | Sutton Valence | Yalding[38] |

> **Recommendation: The Committee would like the Council to give encouragement for local affordable housing schemes in the rural communities. Ways of incentivising such schemes should be given**

7.2.7 The planned development and maintenance of sustainable communities underpins the Council's approach to rural areas, where the primary aim is to direct development to rural settlements that can best act as service centres for their surrounding hinterland.

7.2.8 Rural service centres play a key part in the economic and social functioning of the borough, and in contributing to its character and built form. They often act as a focal point for trade and services by providing a concentration of public transport networks, employment opportunities and community facilities, which minimise car journeys for those living in the service centres and surrounding areas. Therefore, development in the rural service centres is far more sustainable in the long term than indiscriminate growth of smaller rural settlements.

7.2.9 There are 5 designated Rural Service Centres in Maidstone (Staplehurst, Marden, Headcorn, Harrietsham and Lenham). The Council's draft Core Strategy policy CS4 notes that the vision for the service centres is that they will continue to be the focal points for their surrounding rural communities, where a pattern of infrastructure led development will be created that fosters economic and social vitality and ensures easy access to services and facilities for rural residents, thus reducing the need to travel by car.

7.2.10 Mrs Harrison, Rural Regeneration Manager from KCC informed the Committee that nationally policies were beginning to cite good practice including planning and economic development policies being more intertwined, and rural proofing policies becoming part of normal procedure. An example of where rural proofing was currently being done was at Medway Council.

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[38] Briefing Note: Affordable Housing Key Issues, by Andrew Connors 2010.

7.2.11 Peter Hockney, Principal Planning Officer at Maidstone Borough Council was able to confirm on 21 April 2011 that he has 'looked at the policies from Medway and BNE27 (Re-use of Buildings in the Countryside) is similar to our re-use policy. I know Medway have had problems in the past as their policy does not refer specifically to tourism use as a commercial possibility and they have subsequently lost appeals for residential use. Our policy does have tourism built into it as a specific commercial option.
In relation to policy BNE26 (Business Development in Rural Settlements) there is no saved policy comparable to this, although PPS4 (Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth) does allow for such development'.

7.2.12 The CLA produced a Position Statement in 2010 making four recommendations for areas to achieve sustainable development in a more transparent and flexible fashion.

7.2.13 The four recommendations focus on:

- sustainable development and planning policy;
- complexity and the impact on rural businesses;
- how to resource the planning system; and
- proportionality – reducing the regulatory burden.

7.2.14 To enable delivery of rural housing, the CLA encouraged planning policies that promote scale, good quality and architectural design within the diverse rural communities. This should support the economic activity with each individual area and promote renewable technologies to minimise any associated impact on the surrounding landscape and environment.

## 8. Communication & Marketing

### Tourism

8.1 On 4 April 2011, a working group within the Committee met with Laura Dickson, Tourism Manager for the Council. They wanted to hear how tourism factors into the rural economy, and what the Council could do to proactively support this.

8.1.1 Mrs Dickson told the working group of a 'Hidden Britain' report which had recently been performed on Lenham. This was funded through a government grant (SEEDA) and assistance was offered to rectify any concerns subject to funding from the Council.

8.1.2 Signage was found to be a frustrating problem for the Visitor Economic Unit, due to the timescale taken to approve new applications (in some cases over a year), as well as mend damaged signs (one taking 18 months). Also, once a business ceased trading that sign was not removed, causing confusion amongst locals and tourists. Mrs Dickson explained that an application is sent to KCC Highways, who consult MBC to check that the business is legitimate, before KCC Highways erect the sign. It was thought that lack of funding is the cause for obsolete signs not being removed.

8.1.3 The minutes from this meeting are at Appendix C.



**Recommendation: Cabinet Member for Regeneration should pursue lobbying KCC Members to review the procedure for renewing and mending brown tourism signs.**

8.2 **Neighbourhood Forums**

As part of Maidstone Council's ongoing work with both the community and making efficient use of council staff, the Cabinet Member should review the possibility of adapting the boroughs neighborhood forums likewise, using Merton Council as an example.

8.2.1 The Council currently holds Neighbourhood Forum meetings, covering areas as follows;

- **Central and North East**
  - Wards - Allington, Bridge, East, Fant, Heath, High Street, North
  - Parish – Boxley (part of)

- **Rural North and East**
  - Wards – Bearsted, Boxley, Detling & Thurnham, Harrietsham & Lenham, Leeds, North Downs
  - Parish - Bearsted, Bicknor, Boxley, Boughton Malherbe, Bredhurst, Broomfield & Kingswood, Detling,East Sutton, Frinsted, Harrietsham, Headcorn, Hollingbourne, Hucking, Lenham, Otterden,Stockbury, Thurnham, Ulcombe, Wichling, Wormshill

- **Rural West and South**
  - Wards - Barming, Boughton Monchelsea & Chart Sutton, Coxheath & Hunton, Loose, Marden & Yalding, Staplehurst, Sutton Valence & Langley
  - Parish - Barming, Teston, Boughton Monchelsea, Chart Sutton, Coxheath, East Farleigh, Hunton, Linton, West Farleigh, Loose, Collier Street, Marden, Nettlestead, Yalding, Staplehurst, Langley, Sutton Valence

- **South and South East**
  - Wards - Downswood & Otham, Leeds, Park Wood, Shepway North, Shepway South, South
  - Parish - Downswood, Otham, Leeds, Boughton Monchelsea, Tovil

8.2.2 Forum membership is made up of county, borough and parish councillors, other service provider and community groups and these are primarily only for the residents of the respective areas.

8.2.3 These provide a good method of communication between residents and the Council, however the various business forums that are currently represented by retailers and businesses do not participate with the residents, which from time to time may be beneficial when needing to lobby local authorities on behalf of the community regarding issues directly affecting their companies or homes.

8.2.4 The Committee considered how the neighbourhood forums could be improved, and noted that Merton Council operates their equivalent of neighbourhood forums using a different technique. They hold 'Community Forums' annually during the autumn, to coincide with the council's budget making process which is resourced and supported by the Council. They are high profile events, with all local residents encouraged to attend and make their views on council and other public services known.

8.2.5 However, 'residents and ward Councillors in some forum areas are also continuing with community forum meetings during the year; organising, chairing and minuting the meetings themselves.'[39]  In a report to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on 31 March 2011, it was noted that Merton Council only provides a limited support to these meetings, in the form of free use of council owned meeting places and some help with

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[39] http://www.merton.gov.uk/community-living/communityforums.htm [accessed 19 April 2011]

publicity. They do not provide servicing support, so residents and/or ward councillors service the meetings themselves.[40]

8.2.6  It was calculated that by functioning in this way Merton would save in excess of £45,000 a year[41] whilst remaining committed to enforcing community engagement.  By developing the role of ward councillors as community champions, they work together with residents associations and other community organisations, and increase the use of social media as a means of involving residents, particularly younger ones.

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**Recommendations: That the neighbourhood forum meets with the business forums from time to time to help lobby the council with issues as a community; The Cabinet Member Regeneration should review the possibility of adapting the boroughs neighborhood forums using Merton Council as an example.**

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[40] http://www.merton.gov.uk/community-living/os310311community_forum_review.pdf [accessed 19 April 2011]

[41] http://www.merton.gov.uk/community-living/os310311community_forum_review.pdf [accessed 19 April 2011]

## 9    Conclusion

9.1    The Committee found in their findings of this review that the economy has been changing quicker than the policies currently in place, many of which seem to lack an equal focus on both urban and rural aspects of the borough.  Although it can be understood why policies are not always able to keep up in speed, there is no reason why the rural aspects should be excluded, or lacking detail when large focus is given to urban aspects throughout policies. The review found the CLA to provide a good example of how planning policies could be better placed to achieve this in a transparent, flexible fashion.

9.2    From desktop research regarding accessibility throughout the borough, it became clear that public transport is not user friendly for disabled passengers. As more emphasis is placed on carbon footprint and making better use of public facilities, it is evident that more work could be done by the train network providers to make improvements allowing for all platforms to be accessible to the disabled passenger.

9.3    With regard to the ongoing work on the Local Development Framework, the Committee believes that it is vital for the transport issues to be suitably addressed within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and that the progress should be presented to the relevant Scrutiny Committee in the forthcoming municipal year.

9.4    When considering broadband within the borough, a large amount of information was provided for this review as work was already underway for accomplishing a better speed by 2015. Whilst the Committee were pleased to hear that the Council are already working very closely with KCC and BDUK it is important that progress reports are given to Councillors so that they can keep the public informed.

9.5    The Committee heard how the residents of the borough were not aware of the benefits of renewable energy, its commercial and community benefits, cost implications, and general importance for securing a greener future.  Whilst the Planning Committee also need encouraging to approve similar applications, the Scrutiny Committee agreed that this topic needs attention as the borough strives to be a growing economy.

9.6    It was evident from the interview with Kent Downs and Marshes Leader Programme, that this service was not being utilised to its full potential in Maidstone. As this service will not be available after 2013, and is only for rural areas, the Committee are very keen to hear how the 'bank roll' service works in Cornwall Council so that if feasible, Maidstone Council can implement the same financial help to its' rural independent businesses.

9.7    Further desktop research found that neighbourhood forums in Merton Council were being used and sourced in a different way to Maidstone, which if implemented would potentially allow Councillors to be more pro-active and enforce community engagement.

9.8    The Committee identified the timescale of new or mended tourism signs as a particular issue; it became apparent that it is not clear why this takes so long, and why obsolete signs are not removed quickly.  The Committee has made a recommendation that the Cabinet Member lobbys' KCC to review their procedure for this.

| Name of Review:  The Rural Economy | Appendix A |
|---|---|

**What are the objectives and desired outcomes of the review**
- To determine which factors the Borough Council, in co-operation with its partners could influence in order to strengthen the rural economy;
- To identify the impact of the Local Development Framework on the rural economy;
- To investigate opportunities to develop appropriate planning and financial policies;
- To determine whether there is a need for a rural economy strategy or a rural vision statement;
- To determine whether the Council is undertaking the right activities to ensure a sustainable economic future for rural areas;
- To identify the key challenges facing the rural economy and what support is offered to new businesses and existing businesses.
- To identify potential funding sources for the development of the rural economy;
- To identify marketing opportunities for Maidstone's rural economy;
- To consider best practice to establish how to improve and support the rural economy, especially small businesses;

And make recommendations as appropriate.

**What equality issues will need to be considered as part of the review – giving consideration to the 6 strands:**

Age, Gender, Race, Sexual orientation, Faith & Disability

whether opportunities offered by the Council for the rural economy are inclusive

**Which witnesses are required?**
- Economic Development Manager
- Association of Market Towns,
- National Farmers Union
- KCAS
- Kent Association of Local Councils
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- South East England Development Agency
- South East Rural Affairs Forum or South East Rural Board
- Representatives from various rural employers

**Other ways to seek evidence? E.g. site visits, involving members of the public, consultation.**
- External meeting in rural location;
- Workshops with rural employers;

**What information/training is needed?**
- Percentage of population living in rural locations
- Number and make up of businesses in rural Maidstone
- Information regarding the Rural Development Programme for England
- Government's rural strategy: http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/policy/strategy/rural_strategy_2004.pdf
- Improvement and Development Agency: How to help people into employment in rural areas: http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/19225448

**Suggested time for review and report completion date**
- 6 months

**How does the review link to council priorities?**
- A place to achieve, prosper and thrive

**How does this item deliver CfPS effective scrutiny principles?**
- Provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers
- Enables the voice and concerns of the public

**Any co-optees or expert witnesses?**
- Expert witnesses

## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL
## MINUTES OF THE LEISURE AND PROSPERITY
## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING
## HELD ON TUESDAY 22 MARCH 2011

**PRESENT:**    Councillor Paine (Chairman)

Councillors Burton, Mrs Jenefer Gibson, Mrs Joy, Pickett, Nelson-Gracie and Mrs Smith.

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

**Resolved:** That all items on the agenda be web-cast.

**Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from John Foster, Economic Development Manager.

**Notification of Substitute Members**

There were no substitute members.

**Notification of Visiting Members**

There were no visiting members.

**Disclosures by Members and Officers:**

It was noted that Councillor Burton declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 by virtue of his membership of the Marden Business Forum.

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

**Resolved:**  That all items be taken in public as proposed.

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on 22 February 2011**

**Resolved:**  That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2011 be agreed as a correct record and duly signed by the Chairman.

**Rural Economy**

The Chairman welcomed Liz Harrison, Kent County Council Rural Regeneration Manager and Huw Jarvis, Kent Downs and Marshes Leader Programme Manager to the meeting, and invited them to present their report to the Committee.

Mrs Harrison summarised the work that had been accomplished over the past two years, and informed the Committee outlined some of the key headlines from the Kent Rural Evidence Base work (an ongoing research project). This has utilised the 2004, Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and Office for National Statistics (ONS) official urban and rural definition to produce specific rural datasets for Kent.

Mrs Harrison informed the Committee that 40% of Kent's businesses were located in the rural areas, and although it was recognised that farming was an important component, it was not the only industry in rural areas. Research had shown that there were many similarities between industries in the urban and rural areas and rural businesses generated £5.5 billion per annum to Kent's economy.

Mrs Harrison stated that by 2050 the world population was due to reach nine billion, with a 30% increase in food required. The food sector was particularly important for Kent and was worth £2.6 billion per annum. Growing concerns over global food security are leading to a reappraisal of the strategic importance of UK food production and in Kent a Food Sector Strategy is being developed.

In answer to a question Mrs Harrison informed the Committee that depending on the required levels of 'E-channels' it would be necessary to factor in that many rural areas and businesses have poor quality broadband provision.

The Committee queried the statistics that Mrs Harrison had mentioned regarding South Korea providing 250mb and asked if this was something the residents had to pay extra for, or was it considered the normal bandwidth to receive. Mrs Harrison stated that this was installed when South Korea had reconstructed its streets which enabled exchanges to be placed within many buildings. The Committee acknowledged this, and enquired into recent news that every medical library in the UK had a network already available for the public to use, and whether Mrs Harrison could elaborate on this. Mrs Harrison informed the Committee that as part of its pilot they were looking into utilising the Kent public network which provides broadband access to public sector buildings across Kent e.g. schools and libraries.

In answer to a question, Mrs Harrison stated that the issues surrounding transport in the rural area were hard to address due to the lack of resources in the transport infrastructure. However, as there is no specific rural strategy covering this, she advised the Committee to refer any transport concerns within the review to the 'Growth without
Grid-lock strategy' and KCC's Highways team, and would provide the Overview & Scrutiny Officer with this document to circulate to Members.

The Chairman asked if live work units should be promoted via planning or whether the Council would be better advised to restrain from permitting this in rural areas. Mrs Harrison informed the Committee that KCC was currently undertaking research into the home based business sector and the potential for live-work. This was being undertaken by Tim Dwelly, a national expert in this field, who has published extensively on live work potential and concepts. Mrs Harrison explained that she would be happy to arrange for copies of these reports to be forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer. This work has stressed that live work needs to specifically designed for home-based businesses rather than simply placing a desk in the corner.

To date, the research has highlighted that between 2001 - 2009 there was a 12.5% increase in home working within Kent. Mr Dwelley's draft report advised local authorities to take a brave approach and encourage it as a means to grow the economy. His final report will provide guidance for what Kent should be achieving for the future.

The Committee noted this and stated that the recent field trip accentuated the various sizes of business within the boroughs' rural areas, and asked if Mrs Harrison was aware of other initiatives currently being pursued by other local authorities that would benefit Maidstone. Mrs Harrison informed the Committee that nationally policies were beginning to cite good practice including planning and economic development policies being more intertwined, and rural proofing policies becoming part of normal procedure. An example of where rural proofing was currently being done was at Medway Council. The Committee noted this and suggested that this be investigated further as part of the review. Mrs Harrison highlighted a recent OECD

report commissioned by DEFRA had emphasised the importance of planning and economic development being a joint approach whilst the Food, Agricultural and Horticultural Business Growth event held in January had highlighted rural business concerns over perceived inconsistencies and proportionality issues regarding planning policy across Kent. In particular, there was growing concern from the business community planning policy needs to keep abreast of changing business requirements  to ensure that the sector remained competitive and productive.

The Chairman enquired into the relationship between Mrs Harrison's department and the councils Economic Development team, and how often do they meet. Mrs Harrison stated that although KCC's rural team was small, the connection with Maidstone Borough Council was impeccable, as the team are very proactive and forthcoming. The Chairman expressed his delight at this news, and informed the Committee that Mr Foster, Economic Development Manager had sent his apologies as a sporting injury had prevented him from attending. The Committee stated they would appreciate Mr Fosters' views on the topic in a written response.

Mr Jarvis gave a summary of the work he was involved with concerning the Leader Programme. He explained the geographical areas that his section covered and what the Leader programme can do for rural Communities, for example the £1.8million funding available for projects. In answer to a question Mr Jarvis confirmed that this was only available to rural areas.

He explained how the membership was set up within the Local Action Group (LAG), and the each member stood for two years. Mr Jarvis explained that a member from Shepway Council represented Dover, Ashford, Shepway and Canterbury and that a member from Swale Council represented Medway, Maidstone and Swale. The Committee expressed a keen interest in Maidstone becoming a representative for the forthcoming 2 years. Mr Jarvis welcomed this and informed the Committee that further information would be provided via the Economic Development team.

Mr Jarvis stated that regardless of providing presentations on the leader programme in Headcorn, and other various locations, Maidstone had received funding for 5 projects out of the 30 in the Kent Downs and Marshes area. The Committee enquired why, in Mr Jarvis' opinion, Maidstone had not submitted more plans for projects. Mr Jarvis explained that the biggest obstacle was the upfront funding required from the applicant. Although the programme would match 50% of the funding required (up to £50,000), many applicants did not have the funding upfront to support this. He gave an example of a local authority who had created a 'bank roll' service, whereby they provided the funding upfront on a 0% interest, and they received the funding back within two months. The Committee were very interested in how this local authority, Cornwall, made this work and requested further information be provided with a view to consider this as a way forward. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised the Committee that Corporate Services Committee should also partake in the decision to provide a 'bank roll' service.

Mr Jarvis also highlighted another obstacle that applicants frequently met with regards to obtaining written confirmation from planning that no planning permission was required on the site concerned, as this was possibly taking longer than necessary.  The Committee agreed this could be frustrating and would consider this as part of the recommendations found within the rural economy review.

The Committee noted that the information within the covering report and the Kent Rural Delivery Programme showed no future plans after 2013, and queried if this was due to no funding being available then. Mr Jarvis confirmed that the programme was due to finish in the summer of 2013 due to lack of funds.

In answer to a question, Mr Jarvis informed the Committee that the National Farmers Union, Swale Borough Council and Chamber of Commerce had advertised the programme particularly well which was a reflection of the amount of projects submitted in that area. The Committee stated that they would be very accommodating with any assistance required with advertising within Maidstone, using tools such as the 'Downs Mail'. It was noted that both the Communications and Economic Development team could liaise together with Mr Jarvis to achieve this.

The Committee asked both Mrs Harrison and Mr Jarvis their opinion on what Maidstone Borough Council could do to help the rural economy. Mrs Harrison suggested that whatever outcomes materialise from the review, that it feeds back into the planning and economic policies. Mr Jarvis reiterated the need for a 'bank roll' service and quicker process for obtaining proof that no planning permission is required.

**Resolved:**  That Mrs Harrison and Mr Jarvis be thanked for the information and it be recommended that:
a) The Communications Team and Economic Development Team work together with Mr Jarvis to promote the Leader Programme within the borough;
b) Mr Jarvis provides an example of bank rolling used in Cornwall, to be circulated to the Committee;
c) It be suggested that Maidstone be nominated as a representative for the next two years as part of the Leader Programme;
d) Mrs Harrison provides the documents as suggested throughout the meeting as part of the ongoing work with the review, and these be circulated to the Committee;
e) A closer look at Medway Council regarding planning policies and inclusion of rural proficiencies be undertaken and circulated to the Committee;
f) A definition of working from home and business at home be provided and circulated to the Committee;
g) Pre-existing broadband provisions within medical libraries be explored and explained to the Committee; and
h) Mr Foster provides a written response to the Committee due to his unavoidable absence.

1.2 The first place on the itinerary was Castle Farm in East Farleigh. Mr Checkley is the owner of this farm which produces mostly pears and apples. They have been able to secure a 80/20 deal whereby fruit is sold to supermarkets and they received 80% of the payment in return, albeit some 12-18months after the hard work is complete.  Unfortunately, only 5% of the price of the fruit is a reflection of the fruit growing processes. The 95% reflects the cost of logistics and administration. Although the re-planting should take place every 15-20years, they are struggling to do this due to lack of capital funding. They recruited between 20-30 local residents for the harvest time, but currently hold no staff due to finances. They had received planning permission for a wind turbine earlier in 2011, which was thought to provide enough energy to allow them to not need fossil fuels and an income of circa £8-10,000 per year. However a covenant on the land restricted this to be erected, as the previous owner living on the land was able to dispute the wind turbine being a 'reasonable development'. After talking to the owners of Castle Farm and to Darran Potter from Distributed Generation Ltd, the Committee realised there is a need to promote education about the need for and role of renewables in the rural area – both as ways to help businesses lower their carbon footprint as well as become more economically stable.

1.3 The Committee continued to Pattenden Lane in Marden, and stopped at Scarab Sweepers, who build and export sweepers for both national and international markets. The group were escorted throughout the facilities with a clear description of what tailor-made sweepers the company are able to build. With a total of 150 Scarab employees and 44 welder fabricators they are able to build customised chassis of all makes of sweepers according to client specifications, both national and international. Although certain sweeper parts come from Europe, the vast majority come from within the UK, including 50-70 tonnes of steel every four weeks. Scarab's rural location can be a hindrance in this case, where bad weather and poor road conditions sometimes cause delays in the delivery of raw materials.  This is also the case for staff commuting from various locations in Kent, as public transport connections are not extensive. During the visit, it was established that the Council only has two Scarab sweepers, (the other vehicles are from Johnsons Sweepers).  The group were able to see the new model Scarabs were working on, and it was discussed that perhaps the Council could provide a test run, with the view to support the local business, and rent or purchase future sweepers from Scarab.

1.4    Just around the corner, the group visited Claygate who manufacture bathrooms for retailers. They anticipated growth when they built their new facilities, which also included provisions for recycling water, glass which retains heat, air-conditioning which also controls the heating, low energy and sensored lighting as well as a generator which is used frequently for maintaining adequate electricity levels. Although they have 91 employees, they have a low turnover due to good quality staff facilities that are provided, giving them a high sense of belonging, worth and value to the company. Car sharing is frequently used for commuting to work and the majority of employees are able to walk to work. The main challenge they face is being able to recycle things such as wood. Although they are contemplating investing into a biomass boiler, there are no business recycling points in Marden and it is a common problem throughout the area.

1.5 Burtons Medical Equipment in Marden manufacture, service and sell goods to 80% veterinary and 20% human medical practices. With 80 employees in total, only half are on site, as part of the maintenance service means that employees will go to the product to fix the problem. As part of the fast service, modern technology is used with the procedure for paperwork, as a camera on the pen allows the information to be sent directly to the office, allowing a quicker payment method, and a quick solution to queries. Like many other businesses in Marden, they are able to recycle everyday



materials such as cardboard, and have a generator which allows production to continue amid power failure.

1.6 The group were able to converse with some members of the Marden Business Forum, to establish what their concerns were and what they hoped the Council may be able to assist with.



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1.7 Our next visit on the itinerary was the Haven Farm Shop in Sutton Valence. The new owners had recently been nominated for the 'Best Retailer' category in the Taste of Kent Awards, and came third against two large establishments. Their sales have increased by 30% when comparing 2009 figures to 2010, and currently they are not receiving a wage and do not hold any staff.  Although they have been facing difficulty with conditions concerning the products they sell, this problem was unknowingly inherited when they bought the farm shop and they are currently seeking guidance from the Council concerning this matter.  The main challenges they face are connected to products they can sell, as they realise that many people would not like to do extra trips to the farm shop to obtain goods, and therefore would like to be able to sell other goods so that people can obtain all grocery style foods within the one venue. For example, oranges, bananas and dates which are not grown in the UK, are a top seller when bought along side local free-range eggs, local made ciders and ready meals.

1.8 Our visit to Lenham's Pippa's Tea Room enabled us to talk to another small independent business who had been there for a substantial time. Like many other businesses, their problems arise during the bad weather, when people are not able to get to them as road conditions make it unsafe. Also, there was a perception that pedestrians were not able to venture out as the venue in a rural area means that the pavements are not cleared as frequent and therefore makes it more costly to be open.

The last visit on our itinerary was Court Farm, in Thurnham. This dairy farm has been a family run farm for 16 years, only employing 1 person. They currently have 130 cows, which is relatively low compared to previous years when farming was more stable, and it is low compared t the average successful diary herd.  Each cow produces a high yield of approximately 40-50 litres of milk per day. This is sold for 25p per litre, which is only just about enough to survive (ideally, the dairy farmer needs to earn 30p in order to cover costs and invest in his/her business). The owner is concerned about the rising price of fuels (and shrinking margins) and has plans to put solar panels on one of the barns, which would create a source of heating and reduce utility bills. However, the roof currently holds asbestos and needs to establish a safe way to overcome this problem. Another obstacle to overcome is the capital to invest in the solar panels. Although grants are available, this isn't always achievable. The cows are 'loose housed' although milked and fed twice a day. They recycle the water from the cows faeces as this provides nitrogen for watering the fields, therefore renewable energy is sought from every possible angle. Vandalism has previously been an issue in the area but this could be due to being a rural area without much security. With the Olympics looming, it is thought perhaps some income can be provided via tourists and campers.

**Leisure & Prosperity Overview & Scrutiny Committee Informal Meeting**

**Rural Economy review**

**4 April 2011**

Present: Councillors Mrs Joy, Mrs Gibson and Nelson-Gracie;
Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Christina Chemsi; and
Tourism Manager, Laura Dickson.

**Item 1        Interview with Christine Dier, Assistant Economic Development Officer**

It was noted that Mrs Dier had sent her apologies due to illness and Mrs Laura Dickson, Tourism Manager was able to present the working group with information.

Mrs Dickson informed the working group that there was an audit on Lenham tourism by Hidden Britain, who produced a report that was funded by a government grant (SEEDA). This report detailed the aspects of tourism which needed to be addressed, and assistance was offered to rectify any concerns subject to funding from the Council.  This report was to be sent to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer, so that the Committee could ascertain what challenges were established and could be a focus point for other rural parishes. This report also showed a link to the Hidden Britain web site, where case studies illustrating the Hidden Britain programme could be explored.

In answer to a question, Mrs Dickson informed the working group that brown tourism signs were causing some frustration. This is due to the timescale taken to approve new applications (in some cases over a year), as well as mend damaged signs (one taking 18 months) and once a business ceased trading that sign was not removed, causing confusion amongst locals and tourists.  Mrs Dickson explained that an application is sent to KCC Highways, who consult MBC to check that the business is legitimate, before KCC Highways erect the sign.  It was thought that lack of funding is the cause for obsolete signs not being removed.  The working group noted this and suggested that as part of the review, MBC would lobby KCC Members to review this procedure.

Mrs Dickson highlighted that Cycling is a major industry for tourism in the rural areas, as this could be done on the road or cross-country.

The working group asked about the possibility to obtain temporary permits for caravan or camp sites in light of the Olympics 2012. Mrs Dickson stated that although that may have been feasible, the applications would need to be submitted now to allow for the process of assessment to take place in good time before 2012.  The assessments that take place as part of the 'star rating' was undertaken by either the AA or Visit Britain. Mrs Dickson highlighted that those entering the UK via the Channel crossing would be expected to stay in Maidstone and its surrounding areas on various campsites, and that the Ferry bookings were already very full with group passengers.  Mrs Dickson highlighted the potential to loose regular visitors during the Olympic season, as prices may increase and regulars may choose to 'set up camp' elsewhere, and was keen to make sure this did not happen.
In answer to a question, Mrs Dickson stated that caravan sites are usually busier than cottage lets during the course of a year.  It is assumed that this is due to it taking approximately 3 years to establish a holiday let business, especially as cottages tended to be busy for only 6 months a year. However, as self catering holidays and budget hotels were becoming more popular, Bed and Breakfast establishments were closing down.

Mrs Dickson informed the working group that the 'Heart of Kent Holiday Guide' had been disbanded. This was a catalogue detailing accommodation, walks, itineraries including things to see and do which has now subsequently been made available on-line. However, during February-March 2011, they had received hard copy requests from the public totalling 19,000 which was 4,000 more than the previous year. Although this guide was self-funded, the promotions and distribution of the guides was funded by the districts concerned. In answer to a question Mrs Dickson stated that the only district who had made a decision on how to go forward was Sevenoaks. MBC was until this time, still undecided whether to combine with the magazine publication of 'Visit Kent' or not. Mrs Dickson was able to confirm that an iphone app entitled 'Visit Maidstone' was due to be published soon.

The working group made a reference to the TV adverts associated with visiting parts of Great Britain, and questioned if there was one for England. Mrs Dickson stated that there was, although this was not aired in England itself, and recalled the 'Enjoy England' campaign.

Mrs Dickson was asked for her opinion as to why people visit Maidstone. Mrs Dickson stated that the Kent wide events encouraged visitors to stay in Maidstone, although it was not just the visitors who are being accommodated at these times, but also the employees and tour organisers. Mrs Dickson gave some examples, using Brands Hatch, Open Golf in Sandwich, Leeds Castle, County Show Ground and the International Mini Owners Club to name a few.


Duration of meeting: 9.30-10.30am.

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**08 June 2011**

**REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Report prepared by Karen Luck

1.       **FORWARD PLAN**

1.1      Issue for Decision

1.1.1    To note the Forward Plan for the period 01 July 2011 – 31 October 2011.

1.2      Recommendation of the Leader of the Council

1.2.1    That the proposed Forward Plan for the period 01 July 2011 – 31 October 2011 be noted.

1.3      Reasons for Recommendation

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

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

1.3.3    The current index to the proposed Forward Plan is attached as an Appendix to this report.  However, please note that Officers have until 12 Noon on 15 June 2011 to submit further entries or make any amendments.

1.3.4    If Members wish to receive a complete copy of the Forward Plan it can be obtained from Karen Luck (01622) 602743 and from 17 June 2011 will be on public deposit in the following locations:  The Gateway, Public Libraries and the maidstone.gov website.

1.4      Alternative Actions and why not recommended

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

1.5       Impact of Corporate Objectives

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

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

1.6    Risk Management

1.6.1    There are no risk management implications in this report.

1.7    Other Implications

1.7.1

| | |
|---|---|
| Financial | |
| Staffing | |
| Legal | |
| Equality Impact Needs Assessment | |
| Environmental/sustainable development | |
| Community safety | |
| Human Rights Act | |
| Risk Management | |
| Procurement | |
| Asset Management | |

1.8    Background Documents

None

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**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes [ ]                    No [ X ]

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

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

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

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Wards/Parishes affected: ………………………………………………………………………..

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| Title | Decision Maker and Date of Decision |
|---|---|
| Annual Governance Statement | **Cabinet**<br><br>13 July 2011 |
| Budget Strategy 2012/13 Onwards | **Cabinet**<br><br>13 July 2011 |
| Core Strategy 2006-2026: Public Participation Draft | **Cabinet**<br><br>13 July 2011 |
| Tendering Strategy – Waste and Recycling Contract from 2013 | **Cabinet**<br><br>10 August 2011 |
| Housing Strategy 2011 - 2015 | **Cabinet**<br><br>10 August 2011 |
| Data Quality Policy | **Cabinet**<br><br>10 August 2011 |

Last submission date for next Forward Plan: 15 June 2011
Publication of next Forward Plan: 17 June 2011

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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