

# AGENDA

## COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING



Overview and Scrutiny

Date: Tuesday 14 June 2011  
Time: 6.30 pm  
Venue: Town Hall, High Street,  
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors: Ash, Mrs Blackmore (Chairman), Field,  
FitzGerald (Vice-Chairman),  
D Mortimer, Mrs Parvin, Paterson,  
Mrs Stockell and Yates

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Page No.

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

**Continued Over/:**

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**Issued on 2 June 2011**

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*Alison Broom*

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

<b>5. Disclosures by Members and Officers:</b>	
a) Disclosures of interest.	
b) Disclosures of lobbying.	
c) Disclosures of whipping.	
<b>6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.</b>	
<b>7. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2011</b>	
<b>8. Housing Strategy 2011-2015</b>	<b>1 - 31</b>
Interviews with:	
• John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Safety; and	
• Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Officer.	
<b>9. Appointment of Joint Health Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>10. Waste Review</b>	<b>33 - 37</b>
<b>11. Future Work Programme</b>	<b>38 - 45</b>

## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 MAY 2011

**PRESENT:** Councillors Ash, Mrs Blackmore, Mrs Parvin, Yates, Field, D Mortimer, Paterson and Fitzgerlad

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

**Resolved:** That all items be web-cast.

- 2. Apologies.**

Councillor Paulina Stockell sent her apologies.

- 3. Notification of Substitute Members.**

Councillor Adrian Brindle attended the meeting as a substitute Member for Councillor Mrs Stockell.

- 4. Notification of Visiting Members.**

There were no visiting Members.

- 5. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

**It was resolved that:**

- a) Councillor Annabelle Blackmore be appointed as Chairman for the municipal year 2011-12; and
- b) Councillor Mike Fitzgerald be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2011-12

- 6. Disclosures by Members and Officers:**

There were no disclosures.

- 7. 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

- 8. Minutes of the Meetings held on 12 April 2011 and 19 April 2011**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meetings held on 12 and 19 April 2011 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chairman.

## **9. Work Programming Workshop**

The Chairman introduced the Work Programming Workshop to the Committee. Members were informed that this was their opportunity to speak to the Officers present and to come up with ideas for the Committee's Work Programme for the coming year. The Committee then met with Officers to discuss their work and key priorities for the year.

After half an hour the Committee reconvened to discuss their ideas. Members added the following items to the list of suggested topics for the Work Programme:

LSP – and move to Locality Boards – Priorities of this Council and how they would feed in – To pass on to Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Neighbourhood action Planning – Focus on vulnerable and areas of deprivation. Set against Localism Bill - Where we are heading in longer terms – strengthen ties with communities (add to existing entry)

Communal Open Spaces – Jason Taylor to include Play Areas – Look at reducing? (add to original suggestion on same topic)

Youth and Community – Youth Forum, Switch Café and Youth Strategy.

Elderly – link to PCT and those living in their own homes, those with dementia.

Children – Demelza House. What do we have in Maidstone – in terms of relating to provisions already existing in Kent? How do we associate with providers in this area?

The Chairman then asked the Committee to go through the complete list of suggested topics and decide which could be considered for their two main reviews of the year and which topics could be addressed at one off Meetings. Members were also reminded that they would meet twice over the course of the year as the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members discussed the CDRP protocols and established that a topic was usually set ahead of the meeting so that all those involved could be prepared and the topic set would be reviewed as widely as possible.

Members narrowed down their expansive list to three topics for major reviews:

- Neighbourhood Action Planning;
- Care of the elderly; and
- Waste Reduction (including Commercial Waste and the new Waste and Recycling Contract)

At this juncture a Member reminded the Committee of the Joint Health Scrutiny work that had been completed with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and the recent meeting that had taken place at the Blackthorn Trust on Mental Health which was a follow up meeting to the Joint Review on Adult Mental Health Services.

Members decided that 'Care of the Elderly' was a topic that could be explored as a Joint Review topic with Tunbridge Wells which would then leave two major review topics.

The Committee discussed 'Air Quality' in relation to the Joint Sustainable Communities Act Working Group which had been established the previous Municipal Year. Councillors Paterson and Mortimer had been Members and expressed a need for this topic to be kept on the agenda. The group had looked at Air Quality in Maidstone and wanted to explore the possibility of a Low Emission Zone.

**It was resolved that:**

- a) The suggested topic 'Exploring Green Behaviours at Maidstone House' should be extended to include all council run buildings and passed to Management Team to investigate;
- b) The LDF topic should be passed to Regeneration and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny to be included in their suggested topics;
- c) The topic 'Private Sector Housing enforcement' should be passed to the Housing Consultative Board for investigation to avoid duplication;
- d) A Joint 'Low Emission Zone' task and finish group should be created with Regeneration and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Councillor Mortimer and Councillor Paterson put forward from Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- e) The 'Business Engagement' topic should be passed to Regeneration and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny to be included in their suggested topics;
- f) The possibility of a Joint Review into Elderly Care should be explored with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council; and
- g) The topic 'Café Networking and Localism' should be passed to Angela Woodhouse, the lead on Localism and the work on this should be reported back to the Committee.

**10. Future Work Programme**

The Committee discussed their future work programme giving consideration to the Forward Plan, their role as the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee and their topics for review.

**It was resolved that:**

- a) Neighbourhood Action Planning set against the Localism Bill and Waste Reduction, including commercial waste and the new waste and recycling contact should be the Committee's two main reviews for the year;
- b) Anti Social Behaviour and Domestic Violence should be the topics explored when the Committee meet as the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- c) Youth Offending and Community Payback should be looked at as a 'one off meeting';
- d) Jason Taylor and the Cabinet Member should be invited to discuss the Bio Diversity Plan; and
- e) The Waste Review topic should be scoped for consideration at the next meeting.

**11. Duration of Meeting**

6.30 p.m. to 8.18 p.m.

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**14 JUNE 2011**

#### **REPORT OF HEAD OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

**Report prepared by Ellie Kershaw**

#### **1. DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2011/12-14/15**

##### 1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider and comment on the draft Housing Strategy 2011/12-2014/15

##### 1.2 Recommendation of the Head of Housing and Community Safety

1.2.1 That the Committee recommends to Council that the draft Housing Strategy 2011/12 -2014/15 is adopted.

1.2.2 That any recommendations made by the Housing Consultative Board at their meeting on 6 June 2011 are considered.

1.2.3 That a copy of the adopted strategy is passed to the Homes and Communities Agency (East Region) and the Department of Communities and Local Government for information.

##### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 In Maidstone, People Matter and so do the homes and communities where they live. The Housing Strategy is an overarching plan that guides the Council and its partners in tackling the major housing challenges facing the borough. The Strategy contributes to the key aim stated in the Sustainable Communities Strategy of "Developing Maidstone borough's urban and rural communities as models for 21<sup>st</sup> century quality and sustainable living."

1.3.2 The ambition behind this strategy is to ensure that all people in the Borough have access to good quality homes that are affordable for them and meet their needs. Every council has a responsibility to understand what matters most to its local communities and to respond to this through investment, service planning and delivery. We also

have to take into account national and regional aspirations and sometimes this requires a balance with local priorities

- 1.3.3 Our Strategic Housing Role: The transfer of our housing stock to Golding Homes (formerly Maidstone Housing Trust) in February 2004 has enabled the Council to develop its strategic housing role. Over the past 15 years, central government legislation and guidance has encouraged local authorities to take a more strategic approach to the provision of housing, so encouraging better 'place-shaping', and developing a deeper understanding of the relationship between housing, planning and the economy.
- 1.3.4 The Housing green paper, *Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable* emphasised the strategic role that housing services play in delivering new affordable housing and in 'place shaping'. High performing local authorities (3 and 4 stars and 'excellent') such as Maidstone are currently exempt from the duty to renew their housing (and homelessness) strategies, although there is an expectation that such authorities will wish to keep them valid and up to date. Given the economic climate, and the changes in grant funding regimes and mechanisms, there is a compelling case for ensuring that all housing authorities have a housing strategy which is kept up to date.
- 1.3.5 In the 5 years since our last Housing Strategy was published many new or revised central and regional Government housing and social policies have been issued for consultation and implementation. These include recent Acts of Parliament, Government sponsored reviews, regional and sub-regional policy changes and have been taken into account in the creation of this strategy.
- 1.3.6 Research and consultation: As well as a review of our existing council plans and strategies, several pieces of research were undertaken to provide evidence for the Strategy:

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA);  
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA);  
Gypsy and Traveler Accommodation Assessment (GTAA);  
Private House Condition Survey (PSH).

Extensive consultation took place with housing stakeholders, providers, developers and clients, including Housing Sounding Board, a local housing conference and a domestic violence awareness event. Further consultation will be undertaken with the Housing Consultative Board, the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Council.



### 1.3.7 Our Housing Challenges – Summary

From the analysis of the SHMA, the SHLAA, the stock condition survey, a review of regional, county and local policy and input from stakeholders and partners, the key housing challenges in Maidstone were identified and translated into the following priorities, each of which contains one or more outcomes to be reached by 2014/15;

Priority 1- Increase choice and improve the quality of life for vulnerable people;

Priority 2-Develop sustainable communities;

Priority 3-Improve our existing homes;

Priority 4-Improve access to housing advice and work to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping in Maidstone.

1.3.8 The Council can only achieve the priorities contained in this Strategy by working in partnership with other statutory and voluntary organisations. This strategy has been developed with the Housing Sounding Board that comprises a broad range of stakeholders from housing providers, elected Members, KCC Supporting People & Adult Services, the Primary Care Trust and voluntary sector.

### 1.3.9 Our achievements 2005-10

During the 5 year life of the previous Housing Strategy much was achieved which made a real difference to peoples' lives. These achievements are described at Appendix A

## 1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 The Council could choose not to adopt a new Housing Strategy and instead continue to refresh the 2005-10 strategy. However, the 2010 election and the subsequent forming of the Coalition Government have led to a number of housing reforms which need to be addressed. A new Council Strategic Plan has been written to take these changes into account and new corporate priorities agreed. It is important that the Housing Strategy aligns with these priorities.

1.4.2 If a new Housing Strategy were not agreed this would adversely affect our community leadership and strategic housing roles and would make effective engagement with our partners much more difficult. In addition the Housing Strategy supports the Core Strategy for planning by providing additional information and policy direction that will assist developers in choosing Maidstone as an area to invest in.

1.4.3 The Homes and Communities Agency would be unlikely to direct funds to Maidstone if they could not clearly see an up to date and coherent vision for the area.

## 1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 1.5.1 The Housing Strategy forms part of Priority 2, For Maidstone to be a decent place to live and Priority 3, Corporate and customer excellence.
- 1.5.2 The strategy also contributes to the vision and long term objectives stated in the Maidstone Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2020

***"We want Maidstone Borough to be a vibrant, prosperous 21st century urban and rural community at the heart of Kent, where its distinctive character is enhanced to create a safe, healthy, excellent environment with high quality education and employment where all people can realise their aspirations".***

## 1.6 Risk Management

- 1.6.1 In developing this strategy we have taken into account our research and consultation to develop a broad-based document that takes account of the present economic situation, whilst looking ahead to recovery.
- 1.6.2 The delivery of this strategy will depend upon effective partnership working between the statutory and voluntary sector and listening to and involving service users. Housing is a cross-cutting issue, affecting many areas of wellbeing and new partners need to come on board and recognize the importance of tackling the challenges identified. This will require an effective strategic partnership that focuses on delivery of successful outcomes across services, combined with robust risk assessment.
- 1.6.3 There are a number of risk factors that could impact on the delivery of the Housing Strategy. These include:
- **The effects of the public sector grant reductions and continued economic downturn:** the resulting reduction in number of affordable houses delivered, increase in unemployment with mortgages more difficult to obtain and increase in mortgage arrears and house repossession actions;
  - **The long-term future of the CLG homelessness grant** which funds our rent deposit scheme and other tenancy sustainment activities. Currently we receive £80,000 per year which in 2010/11 enabled the Council to assist over 100 households into private rented accommodation. The removal of this grant would severely compromise the Council's ability to prevent homelessness and increase our costs in related areas e.g. use of bed & breakfast;

- **Recruitment and retention of staff:** The need to recruit and retain experienced and effective staff remains an issue across agencies and the high cost of housing locally has a bearing upon this. In addition the Housing Options team relies on voluntary workers through the Vision Project in order to meet the increasing demand for our services. Should this source of assistance no longer be available the Housing Options Team would have difficulty in providing the same level of service with its salaried establishment;
- **The contraction of the private rented** sector as landlords are unable to service more expensive loans;
- **Population and household growth** in line with Maidstone’s changing demographics of an ageing population;
- **Supporting People funding** in the longer term and concern that under the funding arrangements for Local Area Agreements the budget will no longer be ring-fenced to housing support and could result in budgets being used for non-housing services resulting in current supported-housing projects contracting;
- **Pressure from the increasing prison population** – Maidstone having a high number of prisons and the County’s only probation hostel;
- **Complexity of the client base:** This is likely to be a major factor as support and other services are stretched across agencies to meet the needs of vulnerable families and people with special needs such as alcohol, mental health, learning disability, young people and ex-offenders;
- **Diversity:** The impact of immigration and changing ethnic mix has had only a limited impact on services to date but this can be expected to change over the next few years and appropriate responses need to be developed;
- **Pressures on the ability of the Council to continue to fund** the affordable housing capital programme due to interest rate changes or lower than forecast capital receipts.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

1. Financial
2. Staffing
3. Legal
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment

X
X

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


1.7.2 Financial – The main financial implications arise through the level and availability of grant funding from two Government bodies – the Homes and Communities Agency and the Department for Communities and Local Government, across the following three service areas:

1. Affordable housing
2. Housing advice and homelessness
3. Private sector housing improvement

The Council’s ability to fully address our housing challenges is dependent on the level of Government grant received – see Risk Assessment section 1.6.

1.7.3 Equality Impact Needs Assessment – The Housing Strategy potentially affects all population sections and groups. An EQIA will be completed following consultation with relevant stakeholder groups.

## 1.8 Relevant Documents

### 1.8.1 Appendices

- Appendix A- Housing Strategy 2011/21-2014/15
- Appendix B- Our achievements 2005-2010

### 1.8.2 Background Documents

- Housing Strategy 2005-2009
- Housing Strategy Review 2007
- Homelessness Strategy 2008-13
- Maidstone Sustainable Community Strategy 2009
- Maidstone Economic Strategy
- Affordable Housing DPD
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2009
- Gypsy and Traveler Accommodation Assessment 2007
- Private House Condition Survey 2009
- Kent and Medway Housing Strategy 2011

**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes

No

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

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

.....

Wards/Parishes affected: .....

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**Building Safe, Sustainable Communities:  
HOUSING STRATEGY  
2011/12 to 2014/15**



## **C O N T E N T S**

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## **i Foreword**

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**By Councillor John A Wilson, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services and Alison Broom, Chief Executive**

To be inserted after completion of the consultation process.

## **ii Executive Summary**

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To be inserted after CMT 24/05/11



## 1. About this Strategy

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### What is the Purpose of the Housing Strategy?

The Strategy contributes to the key aim of “Developing Maidstone borough’s urban and rural communities as models for 21<sup>st</sup> century quality and sustainable living”<sup>1</sup>. It is an overarching plan that guides the Council and its partners in tackling the major housing challenges facing the borough. The Strategy looks ahead for four years, covering 2011-2015 to coincide with the Homes and Community Agency’s 4 year development framework.

Our ambition is to ensure that all people in the Borough have access to good quality homes that are affordable for them and meet their needs. People should be able to live in communities that are clean and healthy, are pleasant to live in and within which they feel safe. In seeking to achieve this aim our actions will not be directed purely at the affordable housing sector but on influencing the whole of the housing market. Every council has a responsibility to understand what matters most to its local communities and to respond to this through investment, service planning and delivery. We also have to take into account national and regional aspirations and sometimes this requires a balance with local priorities.

The Council cannot achieve all of the priorities contained in this Strategy without working in partnership with other statutory and voluntary organisations, including the Housing Sounding Board, elected Members and a broad range of stakeholders and partners. (A list of our partners can be found at [www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk))

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<sup>1</sup> Maidstone Borough Council Sustainable Community Strategy

## **2. National Context**

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### **New Political Leadership**

Britain has been going through a state of change having just come out of a recession and entering a new political environment. The election in May 2010 resulted in a hung parliament and a subsequent coalition government forming between the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Parties. The coalition government has stated their top priority is cutting Britain's budget deficit, "with the main burden of deficit reduction borne by reduced spending rather than increased taxes".

In May 2010, the Government published 'The Coalition: our programme for government' which outlined the key policy areas, with an emphasis on 'freedom, fairness and responsibility' creating the Big Society, giving citizens, communities and local government a central role in enabling a new approach to sustainable, low carbon economic growth. To enable some of these changes, the Government has introduced the Localism Bill to devolve greater powers to Councils and neighbourhoods and give local communities greater influence over budgets, housing and planning decisions

### **Planning and Housing**

The Government is undertaking reforms to the planning system with the aim of giving neighbourhoods more ability to decide what the local area in which they live should look like, within a strategic framework provided by the Local Development Framework Core Strategy. Local people will determine where best to build the new homes and the local facilities they know are necessary to make their communities successful. The Community Right to Build will allow an application for planning permission to go ahead where there is overwhelming community support for the project. Regional Strategies will be abolished and decision-making on matters such as housing targets and planning are now made by local Councils in the Core Strategy and related documents. Changes to the national planning framework for planning policies are also to be introduced in the future.

A range of significant changes are proposed to social housing tenure and other reforms to existing housing legislation, including access to affordable housing. As a result changes will be made to the way social housing is delivered with public investment in affordable housing being more targeted.

### **Localism Bill**

The Localism Bill has been introduced to enable many of the changes proposed above. The bill proposes to give council's a general power of competence, whereby as long as an activity is not unlawful, they are empowered to carry it out if they wish to. Community groups and social enterprise organisations will be encouraged to have an active role, including taking over and delivering public services.

The bill also brings changes to social housing, allowing Local Authorities greater freedom to set their own lettings policies and for housing providers to offer tenancies on a fixed term basis rather than the previous policy of a home for life. This will allow Local Authorities to ensure that the housing supply is used where it is most needed. The bill will also allow Local Authorities to meet their homelessness duty by placing someone in suitable private rented housing.

The Community right to build will give groups of local people the right to bring forward small developments including new homes, businesses and shops, the profits from which remain in the community. The Bill also introduces a requirement for developers to consult communities prior to submitting planning applications for large scale developments giving local people a real say in their area.

### **3. Local context**

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#### **Maidstone the place**

Maidstone is an exceptionally green Borough with a number of parks, the largest of which is Mote Park, which is Grade II on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and home to thriving rugby and cricket clubs. There are numerous smaller parks and squares within the town and villages which have benefited from a major playground and sports facility investment programme in recent years. We recognise the importance of maintaining a quality environment for residents including our heritage and conservation areas. The attractive country side offers high quality landscape and biodiversity and a wide range of informal recreation opportunities.

Maidstone Borough is considered a good place to live and work with high rates of employment, relatively low levels of adults claiming incapacity benefits and a higher proportion of residents who have a degree than the South East average. Larger numbers of people commute into than out of the Borough. The Borough has a very mixed business sector with large numbers of small and medium size businesses with particular strengths in professional services (law and accountancy) and construction. There is a growing media industry led by Maidstone Studios and the Kent Messenger Group. Maidstone has an extensive further education campus (Mid Kent College) and a growing higher education offer with both the University for the Creative Arts and Mid Kent College seeking to increase their range of courses and facilities. Residents living in the Borough have relatively high wages (although many higher earners commute out of the Borough to achieve these). Maidstone came out as the top destination for business in the 2010 study of locations for business in Kent.

Maidstone's Local Strategic Partnership has carried out work in 2010 looking at how public money is spent locally. They have identified that £602 million has been spent in Maidstone in 2010 by various bodies including Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Kent Police and the local Primary Care

Trust. Just over 35% of the money is spent on health and social well-being, nearly 17% is spent on education and 15% on housing.

### **Maidstone Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2020:**

The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is the topmost level of policymaking in the Council. Our SCS was published in April 2009, and it contains the following vision and long term objectives for the Borough agreed with our partners:

***"We want Maidstone Borough to be a vibrant, prosperous 21st century urban and rural community at the heart of Kent, where its distinctive character is enhanced to create a safe, healthy, excellent environment with high quality education and employment where all people can realise their aspirations".***

In Maidstone sustainable communities mean a place where people want to live and work, now and in the future. We involve the local community in a range of ways to ensure that people can share their views housing services, and priorities for service development. We already encourage our housing services customers to tell us what they think and suggest how we can do things better, for example through stakeholder meetings, community events (e.g. annual Housing Stakeholders Event) and public consultation events for policy changes e.g. choice based lettings, housing needs review. We continue to look for other ways to improve customer involvement and particularly where there may be communication barriers. It is important that we continue to engage with our residents and customers to ensure our knowledge remains up to date and we can respond to changes in local issues.

### **Population and household change<sup>2</sup>**

South-East Plan<sup>3</sup> population projections indicate that Maidstone's population will increase by around 13.2% between 2010 and 2026, which represents an increase of 19,520 people.

Regeneration is vital to transform the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Borough and the need to integrate new developments with existing communities is critical. Two of our neighbouring authorities are the 'Growth Areas' of Ashford and the Thames Gateway: huge public and private investment in housing, the economy and the environment is being channelled into these areas and there is a risk that Maidstone will be left behind if its offer to investors and entrepreneurs does not improve.

Estimates of housing need are provided by Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMAs)<sup>4</sup>. Maidstone's SHMA was published in April 2010 and

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all data in this section is derived from Maidstone Borough Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2010. Go to [www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk)

<sup>3</sup> This regional planning document will be abolished by the Localism Act

following the methodology set out in SHMA practice guidance, there is estimated to be an annual need for 1,081 affordable units in Maidstone borough area.

<b>Summary of housing needs assessment model</b>	
<b><i>Element</i></b>	<b><i>Number</i></b>
Current need	339
Current supply	237
<b>Net current need</b>	<b>102</b>
Future need	1531
Future supply	552
<b>Net future need</b>	<b>979</b>
<b>Total net annual need</b>	<b>1081</b>
Total gross annual need	1870
Total gross annual supply	789
<b>Total net annual need</b>	<b>1081</b>

### **Tenure mix**

Maidstone Borough Council has regularly kept up to date on the levels of housing need in the borough, with the most recent Strategic Housing Needs Survey being reported in March 2010. The supply and demand analysis that sits alongside the SHMA gives helpful information on mismatches between the supply of certain types of homes and the demand for them locally.

The housing market is considered balanced if the local population is adequately accommodated. A household is considered adequately housed currently unless:

- They are in unsuitable housing (as defined by CLG Guidance) and cannot resolve this unsuitability without moving to a new property;
- Their property is overcrowded (according to the bedroom standard).

Currently about 5.5% of households are classified as inadequately housed. Lone parent households are the household group least likely to reside in adequate accommodation, with multiple pensioner households the most likely. Pending final agreement on local house building targets, the following analysis is based on the previous South-East Plan target of 11,080 homes.

### **Affordable housing**

Affordable housing refers to a range of tenures that includes socially rented, intermediate or affordable rent and a variety of shared ownership products.

The SHMA suggests that there is a need for affordable housing of all sizes, and a significant need for rural homes. Smaller (one and two bedroom) units account for almost 45% of the need, but larger (three and four bedroom) homes comprise over 55% of need. Opportunities for securing family sized

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<sup>4</sup> SHMAs were introduced in November 2006, with final guidance on how to undertake a SHMA published in August 2007.

accommodation (typically 3+ bedrooms) must be maximised where site and scheme particulars allow.

At present the Maidstone Affordable Housing Development Plan Document requires developers to provide 40% affordable housing on sites of 15 units or 0.5 hectare or greater. Within the 40%, the tenure split is expected to be 60/40 socially rented/intermediate tenure accommodation respectively. As the Core Strategy is developed further, more flexibility concerning the proportion of affordable housing may be needed to ensure development viability.

### **Flexible tenure**

Flexible tenure allows shared owners to decrease their equity in their home, potentially selling all their equity and becoming assured tenants. For landlords flexible tenure is optional but strongly encouraged. Flexible tenure is not a legal right and is pendant on a financial assessment. The money realised through decreasing equity can only be used to clear mortgage arrears.

Maidstone BC responded to the '**Local Decisions; a fairer future for social housing**' consultation document and made the following comments in relation to flexible tenure: MBC welcomes the ability to make better use of social housing stock which should promote mobility and help to reduce under occupation; however, this should not be at the expense of creating balanced and sustainable communities nor should it act as a disincentive to tenants obtaining employment and self improvement.

### **Lifetime Homes**

A Lifetime Home should be accessible and incorporate built-in or designed provision for a range of adaptations that will respond to the needs of any member of the household who has, or develops a disability or impairment, which could include the need to use a wheelchair within the home. Maidstone Borough Council expects affordable dwellings to be constructed to full Lifetime Homes Standards.

Dwellings built to wheelchair housing standards are designed specifically to meet the diverse and changing needs of wheelchair users and the multiplicity of impairments that some wheelchair users experience. Lifetime Homes, while suitable and offering choice for some people with impairments will not have the additional spatial requirements all wheelchair users need to access every room and facility of the dwelling in order to maximise their potential for independence. Therefore the Council will seek a proportion of new affordable dwellings to be designed for full wheelchair use to respond to the needs of housing applicants who are in need of wheelchair accessible housing. The detailed design and specification requirements of wheelchair housing will be sourced from relevant specific guidance documents.

#### 4. The Corporate Priorities:

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The Council has identified the following three priorities and six outcomes to deliver the vision for Maidstone over the next four years:

<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
1. For Maidstone to have a growing economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A transport network that supports the local economy</li><li>• A growing economy with rising employment, catering for a range of skill sets to meet the demands of the local economy</li></ul>
2. For Maidstone to be a decent place to live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decent, affordable housing in the right places across a range of tenures</li><li>• Continues to be a clean and attractive environment for people who live in and visit to Borough</li></ul>
3. Corporate and Customer Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Residents are not disadvantaged because of where they live or who they are, vulnerable people are assisted and the level of deprivation is reduced</li><li>• The Council will continue to have value for money services that residents are satisfied with</li></ul>

We want Maidstone to be a place where people enjoy where they live and a key part of this will be having access to affordable and decent housing as we understand that good housing promotes educational attainment, better health outcomes and employment opportunities. Decent means housing that meets residents' needs in terms of availability and size as well as meeting the national decent homes standard.

Housing in Maidstone town has traditionally been considered relatively affordable compared to the south east average, but this is not the case in rural Maidstone and for those on average or low incomes, home repossession is likely to become more frequent as a result of the recent economic climate. Maidstone has a fairly low level of households living in temporary accommodation provided under the homelessness legislation compared to the other districts in Kent and a significantly lower level than the average for England according to the 2010 Health Profile. The numbers have dropped each year. Maidstone is consistently above target for homelessness prevention.

## 5. Delivery through Partnership

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Maidstone Borough Council believes that partnership is the underlying principle of community planning and fundamental to the delivery of this strategy. Over the next four years we will ensure that partnerships continue to be developed to ensure that they focus on priorities and make effective use of resources. The Council is committed to working with key stakeholders to assist in meeting local housing needs.

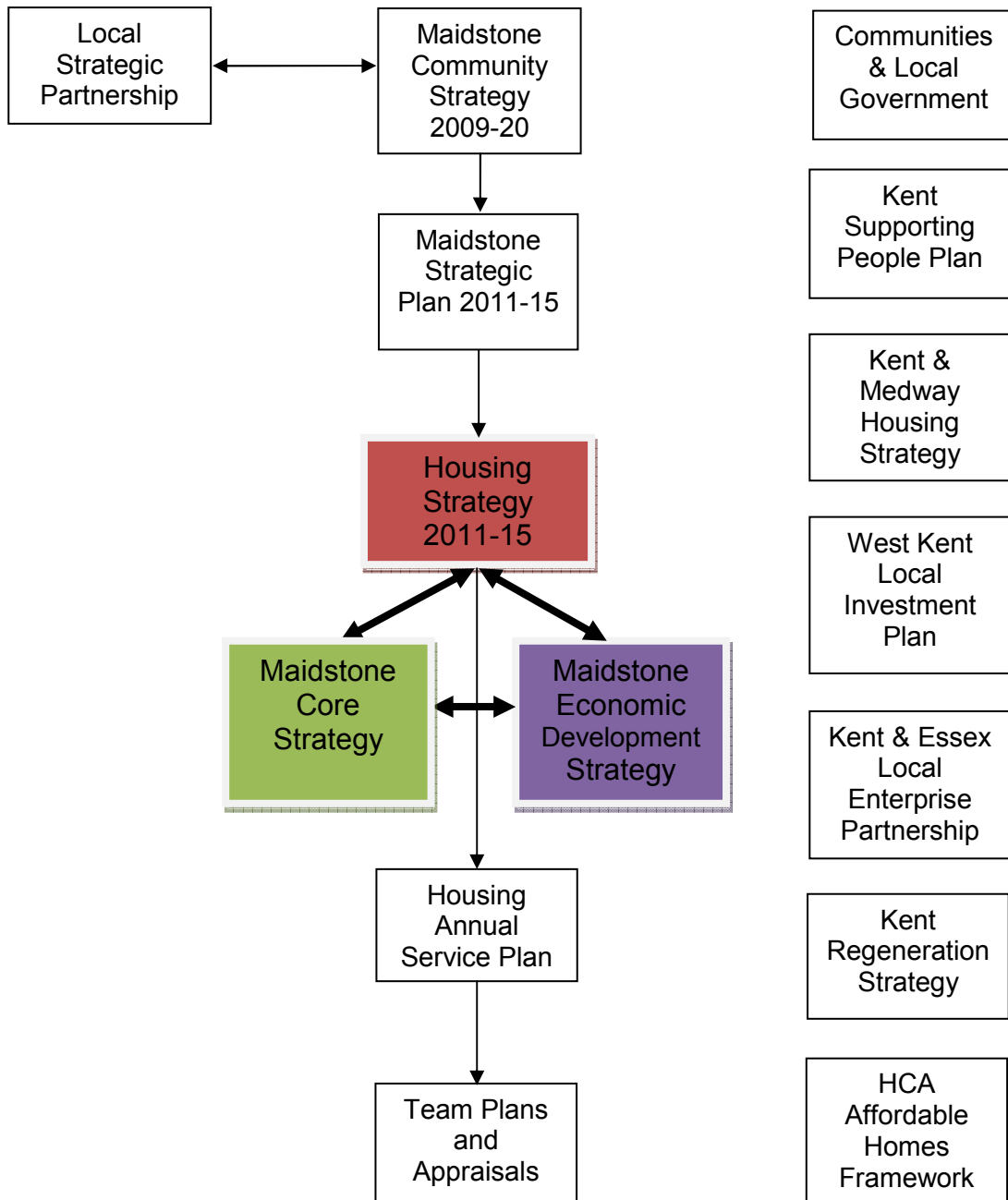
Three key partnerships are:

- The Kent Housing Group, set up to represent Kent's housing bodies, providing a 'Kent voice' to regional and national bodies. The aims of the Kent Housing Group are to:
  - **Provide strategic leadership - shaping and setting the housing agenda;**
  - **To build relationships and influence decisions for the benefit of Kent;**
  - **To draw in resources from both traditional and alternative sources.**
  - **To work together to improve the supply and quality of affordable homes.**
  - **To create sustainable communities in Kent.**
- the Kent Rural Housing Partnership, set up to enable borough and district Councils across Kent to work closely with Rural Housing Providers, and access Housing Corporation funding;
- West Kent Local Investment Plan - The Council, together with Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge & Malling and Sevenoaks Councils and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) have progressed the West Kent Local Investment Plan (LIA). The LIP is an agreed sub-regional investment programme which will determine where HCA and LA investments and interventions will be made. The process has aimed to ensure that all the partners are joined up and working to the same objectives, and that these reflect the HCA's objectives. . The West Kent LIP was agreed by all the partners in February 2011 and submitted in March 2011. The LIP was submitted in time to form the basis for the latest bidding round of the Affordable Homes Programme.

A full list of partners with whom the Council works on matters relevant to the Housing Strategy can be viewed at [www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk) .



## 6. How the Housing Strategy links with other plans and strategies



## 7. Our Housing Priorities and objectives

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### Priority 1 – Increase choice and improve the quality of life for vulnerable people

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**Outcome: Ensure that vulnerable people are able to access the support they need at a time when they require it to help reduce homelessness, offending and reoffending, anti-social behaviour and admission to hospital or nursing care.**

#### **Why is this important to Maidstone?**

There are a considerable number of households in Maidstone that are unable to meet their immediate housing needs or who need support to enable them to live independently within the community. Overall there are an estimated 10,399 households in Maidstone Borough with one or more vulnerable people– this represents 17.0% of all households. The essential characteristics are households with support needs are:

- Housing need
- Low income
- Housing affordability
- Unsuitable housing
- Tenure

Households unable to access support when required are more likely to disengage with services and suffer ill health. This will be detrimental to education and employment opportunities, resulting in further inequality and isolation. We aim to make sure residents are supported to maintain their independence, minimising the need for more intensive institutional or residential type care.

Population projections indicate a significant increase in the retired population in Maidstone up to 2021 and beyond. Our ageing population will have an impact on private sector housing in the future and the Council has consequently identified as a strategic housing priority the requirement to address the housing needs generated by an ageing population.

Key to meeting vulnerable peoples' needs is the Supporting People programme, which provides a range of services and supported accommodation. We play an active role in the development and delivery of the Supporting People Programme for Kent. As a member of the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group we helped develop the current Five Year Strategy, as well as increasing specialist housing such as the new teenage-pregnancy supported housing project.

The SHMA 2010 found that, when given the choice, an overwhelming majority of disabled persons would prefer physical adaptations to remain in their home. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) are mandatory for disabled residents regardless of tenure, to enable them to gain better access, move around freely or use the essential facilities within the home.

<b>What we plan to do</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Target</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review DGF grant regime in order to ensure that the most value for money is gained from DGF grant</li> </ul>	MBC Change & Improvement Team KCC OT Bureau	Review completed by Autumn 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the role of the HIA in the delivery of Mandatory DFGs</li> </ul>	HIA HCA Supporting People Team	Review services by Autumn 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following the Southwark judgement work with Kent Social Services to jointly commission new forms of temporary accommodation and long-term solutions to youth homelessness</li> </ul>	Joint Policy & Planning Board; KCC; housing providers	Review annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>housing is a key risk factor to preventing offending behaviour; and Maidstone hosts a number of criminal justice establishments. It is in the community's interest to find solutions that reduces the likelihood of offending</li> </ul>	JPPB sub group on offenders & housing; Kent Probation; Youth Offender Service; outreach services	Review annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist the SNP in developing and delivering an action plan to support survivors of domestic violence</li> </ul>	Maidstone Safer Neighbourhood Partnership	To be confirmed

## **Priority 2 – Develop sustainable communities**

**Outcome: The long-term balance of the housing market in the borough is improved to reflect local need and demand including an increase in the supply of affordable rented and shared ownership homes.**

### **Why is this important to Maidstone?**

The right mix of high quality housing in the right places contributes to social mobility across and within tenures and helps generate inward investment. People have different housing needs at different stages of their lives, and ensuring that people have the opportunity to access the right home for their needs at the right time means that real housing choices are available. The quality of a person's life is greatly influenced by the quality of their home. Good housing provides an economic impetus not only during construction, but thereafter by providing a secure base from which to seek employment and training

The need for affordable housing consistently emerges as a high priority in district-wide consultation. This is particularly important in the current climate where housing costs are high relative to income and large deposits are needed to purchase a property.

<b>What we plan to do</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Targets</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft a Tenancy Strategy for the Borough in full consultation with partner RPs and other stakeholders</li> </ul>	West Kent LIP Partnership, RSLs, developers Action for Rural Communities in Kent HCA, KHG, RSLs	September
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring forward LIP Phase 1 sites</li> <li>Consider /research formation of housing delivery vehicle e.g. Local Housing Company link to Kent &amp; Medway strategy</li> <li>Review the Affordable Housing DPD</li> </ul>	HCA RPs West Kent LIP Partnership West Kent Development Forum	2011-13  By end 2011  By end 2011

**Outcome: A core strategy is adopted that delivers a range of market and affordable housing to meet a spectrum of need.**

Why is this important to Maidstone?

The foundation of a sustainable community and a thriving economy is the supply of good housing that is attractive and desirable to existing households and those that are economically mobile.

We want Maidstone to be a place where developers want to invest and our SHMA has indicated that we need a range of housing as set out in the table below.

<b>Tenure</b>	<b>Number of households</b>	<b>Percentage of households</b>
Market	55,726	83.2%
Intermediate	2,053	3.1%
Social rented	9,234	13.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67,013</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The table indicates that for the remaining period to 2026, to achieve the above tenure mix, around 62% of newly constructed dwellings should be market accommodation, around 21% social rented dwellings and around 17% intermediate housing, making a total of 38% affordable housing.

<b>What we plan to do</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Targets</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure LDF/Core Strategy provides an appropriate policy framework</li> <li>• Engage with the Planning Policy and Development Control teams to bring forward the delivery of new housing</li> </ul>	Housing developers, land owners	2026, but reviewed on an annual basis to ensure progress is being made

**Outcome: The housing and related needs of people in rural areas are addressed**

**Why is this important to Maidstone?**

Nearly 28,000 households (45% of all households in Maidstone BC) live in our rural areas. Maidstone BC is committed to ensuring that the rural areas of the borough remain vibrant and sustainable places to live. The availability of housing affordable to local people of all income levels is critical to achieving this. The 2010 SHMA showed that the highest income to purchase and private rental prices are in the rural areas in the borough and that levels of need for affordable homes are high in the rural parts of the borough, including the five main rural 'service centres'.

The rural affordable local-needs housing policy allows the development of affordable local-needs homes outside the built confines of villages where open market homes would not normally be permitted. Homes are restricted to occupation by people with local connections in perpetuity.

<b>What we plan to do</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Targets</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure LDF/Core Strategy provides an appropriate policy framework</li> <li>• Complete the programme of rural housing needs surveys</li> </ul>	Action for Rural Communities in Kent Registered Providers Parish Councils HCA	18-24 months 10 affordable homes on rural exception sites Complete two surveys by 31/3/12

**Outcome: The housing needs of the gypsy and traveller community are addressed**

**Why is this important to Maidstone?**

Maidstone Borough contains 168 legally authorised gypsy pitches. The most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for Maidstone Borough was

published in 2006, carried out as part of a wider study involving three neighbouring Local Authorities. The GTAA recommended that 32 new pitches should be built in Maidstone Borough in the 2006-2011 period which equates to an additional public site. This has been included in the identified housing need and will form part of the 40% affordable housing provision. This will require developers to make an offsite contribution from housing developments.

<b>What we plan to do</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Targets</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure LDF/Core Strategy provides an appropriate policy framework</li> <li>• Start on site</li> </ul>	Planning Policy HCA RPs	By 2012  By 2014

### **Priority 3 – Improve our existing homes**

**Outcome: Homeowners and private landlords are encouraged and supported to maintain and repair their homes; the grant programme is targeted to achieve community benefit e.g. nomination rights**

#### **Why is this important to Maidstone?**

Poor quality housing is known to have a detrimental effect on a household’s health, educational and emotional wellbeing. With nearly 86% of Maidstone’s housing stock in private ownership (both owner-occupied and privately rented), the borough has had to formulate mechanisms to tackle poor conditions including poor heating, overcrowding, improve energy efficiency and enable vulnerable and disabled households to remain in their homes. At the same time we must ensure that standards are maintained in the existing private rented sector and ensure that any investment results in a benefit to the Council and the residents of Maidstone.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Target</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage small landlords to work with the council to improve the condition and management of their property through the accreditation scheme</li> <li>• Annual Landlords Forum</li> </ul>	National Landlords Association	

**Outcome: Use of existing stock is maximised by empty homes being brought back into use.**

#### **Why is this Important to Maidstone?**

The SHMA indicates that over 70% of households are in the owner-occupied sector, Whilst overcrowding in Maidstone is not problematical (some 1.9% of households are overcrowded, lower than the latest national and regional estimates from the Survey of English Housing of 2.7% and 2.0% respectively), the household survey indicates that in Maidstone 39.5% of households are under-occupied. Under-occupation is not evenly spread, with nearly half (45.4%) of all properties in rural parts of Maidstone Borough under-occupied compared to 34.7% in the urban area.

Whilst all social housing landlords operate some form of tenant incentive scheme to enable tenants in larger family accommodation to move to more suitable property, there are few incentives for elderly owner occupiers in large unsuitable houses to move into smaller accommodation. The SHMA indicates that relatively few older owner occupiers are intending to move to more suitable housing in the next two years due mainly to a perceived lack of choice.

Actions	Key Partners	Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring Empty Property units back into use through grant activity and the RDBS</li> <li>Update the Empty homes strategy</li> </ul>	No Use Empty initiative CEN	

**Outcome: Energy efficiency fuel poverty have improved across all tenures**

**Why is this important to Maidstone?**

New housing has to make minimum impact on the environment. As well as national targets for carbon-neutral development, and regional plans and policies which include more specific requirements for ensuring sustainability, Maidstone seeks level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes on all new homes, or 'very good' under the EcoHomes Standard, and it is already a requirement for all new affordable homes.

In Maidstone around 4,230 properties (8.2%) are in fuel poverty. With an average household size of 2.32 persons, there are nearly 10,000 persons (1 in 15) living in fuel poverty in Maidstone. Fuel poverty is a result of the interaction of three factors – household incomes, energy prices and energy efficiency in homes. It is estimated that nationally a 1% rise in energy prices forces around 40,000 households into fuel poverty. A household is considered to be in fuel poverty if it needs to spend more than 10% of its income on energy costs to achieve an adequate level of warmth. Fuel poverty is strongly associated with single parent, elderly and economically vulnerable households.

Actions	Key Partners	Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the average energy</li> </ul>		

efficiency of homes in the Borough • Tackle “hard to heat” & “hard to treat homes” in rural areas		
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**Priority 4- Improve access to housing advice and work to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping in Maidstone**

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**Outcome: There is an improvement in the quality and range of information relating to advice services that results in more households being prevented from becoming homeless**

**Why is this important to Maidstone?**

The Council has a duty to ensure that advice and information about housing, homelessness and the prevention of homelessness are available free to anyone in the district. We want to ensure that everyone is able to access this advice when they need it in a way that is convenient for them.

In June 2010 the new Government announced changes to the housing benefits (HB) system, with the intention of saving £1.1b over 4 years. Housing Services monitor local market rent levels in respect of Local Housing Allowance payable, and will monitor the effects of these changes closely, including whether we experience an increase in applicants from London, or other more expensive parts of the South-East.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Target</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review our use of IT in the provision of housing advice.</li> <li>Review how we can improve the accessibility of our housing options services.</li> </ul>	Kent Homechoice Housing DCLG stakeholders	Within Year 1 of strategy

**Outcome: Work to prevent homelessness and end the need to sleep rough in Maidstone.**

**Why is this important to Maidstone?**

The Government is committed to tackling and preventing homelessness and so is Maidstone Borough Council. Activities aimed at the prevention of homelessness have a wide reaching benefit, including reducing the need for other agency services and costs to public finances as well as the obvious savings to the Council made from reduced use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation.



<b>Actions</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Target</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with our partners to increase the effectiveness of the Rent Deposit Bond Scheme.</li> <li>• Review the need to set up an emergency open access hostel</li> <li>• Develop and promote a Private Homeowner Incentive Scheme</li> </ul>	Housing Benefit, CAB, Shelter and Maidstone Mediation Supported housing providers Porchlight Day Centre	On-going

**Outcome: Access to affordable housing is improved and the range of housing options available to applicants is increased.**

### **Why is this important to Maidstone?**

Our Choice Based Lettings scheme, Kent Homechoice, has allowed households on the Housing Register to state an interest and 'bid' for the social housing available for rent. Priority is then given to the household bidding that has the highest level of need who has been on the list longest. In addition to advertising social rented properties on the Kent Homechoice website, we now include homes available for low cost home ownership and new mobility indicators highlight those homes which are adapted or particularly suitable for wheelchair users. In the future we are also looking to include the private rented homes of accredited landlords through Home Choice to provide a greater range of housing to households seeking alternative accommodation. However, we need to review whether this system is working for those in the greatest need and continues to provide value for money. The Allocation Scheme will be reviewed following the enactment of the Localism Bill and this provides an opportune time to evaluate the choice based lettings approach.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Target</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the housing allocation</li> <li>• Develop Maidstone's approach to the Kent-wide Single Assessment Scheme</li> <li>• Review whether Choice Based Lettings is still the best way of people accessing social housing</li> </ul>	Kent Homechoice Housing stakeholders Service users	Autumn 2011

## **9. Implementation and Monitoring arrangements**

The Housing Department operates within a Council-wide performance management system which is structured around effective political and managerial leadership, a clear vision, action centred service planning, regular performance reporting and constructive challenge

To ensure that the Housing Strategy is delivered, the Council will review and monitor the Action Plan through various methods:

- The Housing Consultative Board is a Member constituted body responsible for advising Cabinet on all housing issues.
- Housing Sounding Board (HSB). The HSB will review the Action Plans and produce an annual Position Statement.
- Housing Services performance indicators reported quarterly to Senior Management Team, Portfolio Holder and Cabinet.
- Satisfaction surveys – Housing Services seeks the views of our customers and stakeholders through questionnaires.

Following the streamlining of the Council's priorities and objectives for the next four years the performance indicators that form part of the Council's performance plan have been reduced. A new balanced scorecard approach has been adopted this year across the performance management processes including reach the summit and strategic plan. The balanced scorecard approach seeks to measure performance in a more rounded and balanced fashion with indicators across four areas:

- Finance
- Learning and Growth
- Customer
- Internal Processes

<b>Performance Scorecard</b>		
<b>Element</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Customer	Percentage of residential planning applications granted a) Urban area b) Rural	Quarterly
	Average time taken to process residential planning applications	Quarterly
	Percentage of planning applications determined within statutory timescales (a Majors, b) Minors, c) Others	Quarterly
Internal process	Number of affordable homes delivered	Quarterly
	Number of homes made decent	Quarterly
	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land (Location and Environment)	Annual
Finance	Average grant per MBC funded affordable home unit	Quarterly
	Cost of planning per head of population	Annual
Learning & Growth	Housing Strategy	Bi-annual
	Tenancies Policy (TBC)	Bi-annual

## **Appendix B**- Our achievements 2005-2010

### **Increasing the Supply of new Affordable Homes**

- Delivering 1,204 affordable houses of which 334 were directly funded by the Council,
- Successfully applying to become a Growth Point;
- Bringing forward our Affordable Housing Development Plan Document ahead of the Core Strategy to help deliver new housing at the earliest opportunity;
- Increasing the percentage of affordable housing expected through planning policy from 25% to 40%. In 2009/10, some 69% of all homes built in Maidstone were affordable;
- Committing significant resources from its own capital programme to deliver new affordable housing within its medium-term financial plan;
- Completing the following policy reviews: Housing Strategy Supplement Review, Homelessness Strategy, Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Gypsy and Traveler Housing Needs Surveys completed in partnership with Kent colleagues;
- Completing 10 Rural Housing Needs Surveys in partnership with the Rural Housing Enablers.

### **2. Tackling Homelessness**

- Over the period 2005-10, reducing the number of homeless applications from 312 to 55, and the number of homeless acceptances from 174 to 7;
- Over the same period, some 1,515 households have been prevented from becoming homeless through housing advice provided by the Housing Options Team and our partners;
- Reduced the number of households in temporary accommodation from 149 in December 2004 to 38 in March 2010. Our 2010 temporary accommodation target was met in September 2007, some two years early;
- Successfully housing 2,209 households from the housing register;
- Assisting 315 households through the Rent Deposit Bond Scheme;
- Lobbying the DCLG, resulting in a significant increase in our Homelessness Grant throughout 2007-10, when other authorities' grants were reduced or stayed the same.

### **3. Improving Existing Homes**

- Making 836 homes occupied by vulnerable households decent;
- In the last two years helped 3,344 households through the Staying Put Partnership;

- In five years, 230 vacant private sector dwellings were demolished or returned to occupation;
- Licensed 91 Units of houses in multiple occupation to ensure compliance with the 2004 Housing Act;
- Partnership arrangements with the Kent Energy Centre enabled 7,755 energy advice surveys to be completed since 2005;

#### **4. Addressing the Needs of Vulnerable Households**

- Hosting the newly formed Maidstone Mental Health Forum with partners from Health, Social Services and other stakeholders;
- Tumim House became operational to provide housing for ex-offenders in conjunction with the Kent Drug & Alcohol Action Team and service users successfully moving onto settled accommodation;
- Active participation in the East Sutton Park Women's Prison Vision Project;

# Agenda Item 9

## **Maidstone Borough Council**

### **Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Tuesday 14 June 2011**

#### **Appointment of Joint Health Sub Committee**

**Report of:** Head of Change and Scrutiny

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Maidstone's Overview and Scrutiny procedure rules include an agreed protocol for overview and scrutiny of local NHS bodies. It states that 'the protocols are based on the principles that Overview and Scrutiny should minimise the additional administrative burdens on local authorities or NHS bodies.' Furthermore, the protocol also states that District Councils should coordinate or have joint committees to consider local service issues to ensure cross-district issues are dealt with jointly. Having a joint health sub committee would therefore enable this.
- 1.2 The first item of the year would be to consider the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Draft Annual Quality Account Statement. The Committee could also consider carrying out review work where there was shared interest.
- 1.3 The Committee could choose not to form a joint health sub committee with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council; instead both Committees would hold separate meetings with NHS authorities. However this would be contrary to the agreed protocol to minimise the administrative burdens of Overview and Scrutiny on local NHS authorities.

#### **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Committee:
  - Agrees to form a joint Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Health Sub Committee; and
  - Nominates three representatives onto the Committee.

## **Maidstone Borough Council**

### **Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**Tuesday 14 June 2011**

#### **Waste Review**

**Report of:** Overview & Scrutiny Officer

#### **1. Introduction**

To consider the scoping document for the Waste Review which will form one of the Committee's two major reviews for the 2011/12 municipal year.

#### **2. Recommendation**

2.1 That Members discuss the scoping document that has been prepared and consider:

- The objectives and desired outcomes of the review;
- The equality issues that will be considered as part of the review;
- The witnesses required;
- The methods used to seek evidence e.g. site visits, workshops;
- Information or training required;
- The suggested timescale for the review;
- Its link to the Council's priorities;
- Its delivery of effective scrutiny principles; and
- The suggested co-optees and expert witnesses.

#### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

3.1 The Committee has created a work programme for the next municipal year. At their first meeting held on 25 May 2011 Members resolved that:

- Neighbourhood Action Planning set against the Localism Bill and Waste Reduction, including commercial waste and the new waste and recycling contact should be the Committee's two main reviews for the year;
- Anti Social Behaviour and Domestic Violence should be the topics explored when the Committee meet as the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- Youth Offending and Community Payback should be looked at as a 'one off meeting';

- The Waste Review topic should be scoped for consideration at the next meeting.

#### **4. Impact on Corporate Objectives**

- 4.1 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following Council priorities:
- 'Corporate and Customer Excellence' and 'For Maidstone to be a decent place to live.'
- 4.2 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities. Actions to deliver these key objectives may therefore include work that the Committee will consider over the next year.



**Name of Review:**

**'Making waste work for Maidstone'**

The Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee have decided to cover Waste as a major review topic for the 2011-2012 municipal year. They wish to incorporate the following three aspects by investigating the current priorities of the Waste Team with a view to making recommendations to strengthen the outcomes by taking a full view of what is being achieved in the rest of the Country:

- **Commercial Waste collection opportunities;**
- **Waste reduction; and**
- **The new waste & recycling contract which will be tendered later this year.**

**What are the objectives and desired outcomes of the review?**

- To monitor the outcomes from the Best Value Review and targets set especially those relating to Commercial Waste and Waste Reduction:
  - a. 005 - Provide residents with an easy to use bulky collection service with an improved pricing structure
  - b. 009 - Investigate options for the collection of commercial waste
  - c. 010 - Robust monitoring arrangements are established with a greater focus on the outcome achieved
  - d. 012 Ensure that education and promotion work is targeted with monitorable outcomes
- Identify how to unlock the economic value of waste in Maidstone;
- Identify opportunities to engage and support the business community in reducing and reusing their waste as well as waste and recycling collections (large and small businesses and charities) and establish what businesses in the borough have large quantities of waste;
- Investigate best practice for incentivised waste reduction on offer i.e. Manchester City Council's Environmental Business Pledge and Lancashire County Council's Green Partnership Awards;
- Examine best practice in established commercial waste services in terms of collection, reuse and recycling;
- Investigate possible partnership or subcontracting arrangements;
- Investigate Community Projects which could benefit from the reuse of waste materials (and other not for profit organisations) i.e. terra cycle <http://www.terracycle.co.uk/brigades>, YMCA, charities and the Prison (include Bulky collections);
- Investigate the consideration given to new developments by the planning authority in relation to waste and waste disposal;
- To make recommendations as appropriate to the Best Value Review of Waste which remains a 'live' document ;and
- Ensure the new waste contract delivers the most comprehensive and efficient service possible for residents.

**What equality issues will need to be considered as part of the review – giving consideration to the 9 protected characteristics? \***

Age and Disability are two equality issues which may need to be considered in the review. When establishing new methods of waste reduction disability issues will be a consideration to ensure they are accessible to all and when communicating and age will be a consideration when engaging with different sectors of the community.

**Which witnesses are required?**

- Businesses (Invicta Chamber of Commerce, Marden Business Forum, Town Centre Management)
- Waste Team
- Property and Procurement
- Economic Development (to explore commercial waste with business)
- Environmental Enforcement
- Jennifer Hunt, EMS Project Manager
- Dr Jane Beasley (Chartered Wastes Manager at Beasley Associates Ltd who presented at the Local Authority Advisory Committee Conference in 2010)
- Defra
- Representative from Mayor of London’s Office
- Representative from Manchester City Council (Leading the way to become first Green City) or other outside Local Authority demonstrating Best Practice
- KCC

**Other ways to seek evidence e.g. site visits, involving members of the public, consultation.**

Dependant on the Committee Member’s experience of this topic prior to the review evidence would be sought by including:

- Visit to the depot to fully understand the aims, achievements and resources available to the Waste team;
- The Waste Team’s road shows;
- Running a workshop with Businesses (with the waste team) to demonstrate the value of reducing, reusing and recycling municipal waste;
- Visit to London to gain an understanding of Mayor of London’s Waste Management Resource and other areas identified as demonstrating best practice;
- Businesses (Large and small);
- Maidstone Prison;
- Evidence from Defra, Environment Agency, Love food Haste Waste, WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme), Confederation of European Waste to Energy Plants and other advisory organisations;
- Mosaic (Maidstone’s demographic); and
- Parliamentary Select Committee Reviews.

**What information/training is needed?**

Calendar of important dates relating to important decisions made by the relevant authorities.

**Suggested time for review and report completion date**

6-9 months

**How does the review link to council priorities?**

- For Maidstone to have a growing economy
- For Maidstone to be a decent place to live
- Corporate and Customer Excellence

**How does this item deliver CfPS effective scrutiny principles?**

- 1 Provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers
- 2 Enables the voice and concerns of the public
- 3 Is carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny role
- 4 Drives improvement in public services

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

- KCC
- Mid/West Kent Partnership
- DEFRA
- Dr Jane Beasley
- Other expert/academic witnesses

\* What do you know about the equality groups and the make-up of the people using the service or in the area? Qualitative and quantitative information  
Think of the wider 'community' including people who possibly do not currently use the service but could or should.

# Agenda Item 11

## Maidstone Borough Council

### Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 14 June 2011

#### Future Work Programme and Forward Plan of Key Decisions

**Report of:** Overview & Scrutiny Officer

#### **1. Introduction**

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

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Committee considers the evolving Future Work Programme, attached at **Appendix B**, to ensure that it is appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.
- 2.2 That the Committee considers the sections of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions relevant to the Committee and discuss whether these are items requiring further investigation or monitoring by the Committee.

#### **3 Future Work Programme**

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

#### **4 Forward Plan of Key Decision**

- 4.1 The Forward Plan for June 2011 – 11 September 2011 contains the following decisions relevant to the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
- Housing Strategy 2011-15;
  - Community Development Strategy 2011-2016
  - Bid to the Homes & Communities Agency's Traveller Pitch Fund; and
  - Tendering Strategy – Waste & Recycling contract from 2013

#### **5. Impact on Corporate Objectives**

- 5.1 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following Council priorities:
- 'Corporate and Customer Excellence' and 'For Maidstone to be a decent place to live.'
- 5.2 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities. Actions to deliver these key objectives may therefore include work that the Committee will consider over the next year.

# **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# **FORWARD PLAN**

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**1 June 2011 to  
30 September 2011**

**Councillor Christopher Garland  
Leader of the Council**



## **Forward Plan June 2011 - September 2011**

### **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

Each entry identifies, for that "key decision" –

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

### **DEFINITION OF A KEY DECISION**

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

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

**Forward Plan  
June 2011 - September 2011**

**HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS?**

The Council encourages and welcomes anyone wishing to express his or her views about decisions the Cabinet plans to make. This can be done by writing directly to the appropriate Officer or Cabinet Member (the details of which are shown for each decision to be made).

Alternatively, the Cabinet are contactable via our [website](#) where you can submit a question to the Leader of the Council or any Cabinet Member on-line. There is also the opportunity to invite the Leader of the Council to speak at a function you may be organising.

Cabinet Roadshows are held 3 times a year in different wards. This is an opportunity for you to meet the Cabinet Members direct and discuss any issues that may concern you.



**Forward Plan  
June 2011 - September 2011**

<b>Decision Maker, Date of Decision/Month in which decision will be made and, if delayed, reason for delay:</b>	<b>Title of Report and Brief Summary of Decision to be made:</b>	<b>Consultees and Method:</b>	<b>Contact Officer and deadline for submission of enquiries:</b>	<b>Relevant Documents:</b>
<b>Cabinet</b>  Due Date: 8 Jun 2011	Housing Strategy 2011-2015  To present and gain approval for the new Housing Strategy	Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet, Housing sounding board, Residents Meetings, internet	Ellie Kershaw  31 May 2011	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Housing Strategy 2011-20
<b>Cabinet</b>  Due Date: 8 Jun 2011	Bid to the Homes & Communities Agency's Traveller Pitch Fund  To consider a bid to the HCA for funding to deliver a new public Gypsy and Traveller site in the borough.	Registered Providers, HCA meetings/conversations with Registered Providers and HCA officers	John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Community Safety  23rd May	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Bid to the Homes & Communities Agency's Traveller Pitch Fund
<b>Cabinet</b>  Due Date: 10 Aug 2011	Tendering Strategy - Waste and recycling contract form 2013  This report considers options for the tendering of the new contract for waste and recycling from 2013	Cabinet members	Steve Goulette, Assistant Director of Environment & Regulatory Services  Letter e mail	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Tendering Strategy - Waste and recycling contract form 2013

**Forward Plan  
June 2011 - September 2011**

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<p><b>Cabinet Member for Community Services</b></p> <p>Due Date: Jun 2011</p>	<p>Community Development Strategy 2011 to 2016</p> <p>The Community Development Strategy for Maidstone Borough is a key strategic planning and delivery document for the Maidstone borough as set out in the council's new Strategic Plan 2011-2015.</p>	<p>Maidstone Local Strategic Partnership Voluntary Action Maidstone Kent County Council Kent Youth Service Kent Children's Service Arts Council England NHS West Kent Kent Children's Fund Local Network Urban and rural communities within Maidstone Borough Colleagues in other district councils within Kent Maidstone Youth Forum Switch Youth Café Draft report will be made available to councillors and key partners to give their views.</p>	<p>Sarah Robson</p> <p>15/04/2011</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Report for Community Development Strategy 2011 to 2016</p>

## Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Future Work Programme 2011-2012

Date	Items to be considered
25 May 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman</li> <li>• Work Programming 2011/12</li> </ul>
14 June 2011	<p><b>Housing Strategy 2011-2015</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with John Littlemore and Ellie Kershaw</li> <li>• Waste Review Scoping Document</li> <li>• Appointment of Joint Health Sub Scrutiny Committee</li> </ul>
12 July 2011	
09 August 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Major Review (1)</b></li> </ul>
13 September 2011	<p><b>Meeting as the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LSP thematic quarterly performance report</li> </ul>
11 October 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Major Review (1)</b></li> </ul>
08 November 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>One off item/Begin Major Review (2)</b></li> </ul>
06 December 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LSP thematic quarterly performance report</li> </ul>
17 January 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Agree report for Major Review (1)</b></li> <li>• <b>One off item/Major Review (2)</b></li> </ul>
14 February 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>One off item/Major Review (2)</b></li> <li>• LSP thematic quarterly performance report</li> </ul>
13 March 2012	<p><b>Meeting as the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Agree report for Major Review (2)</b></li> </ul>
10 April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>