

AGENDA

COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING



Overview and Scrutiny

Date: Tuesday 13 March 2012

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Town Hall, High Street,
Maidstone

Membership:

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

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

Continued Over/:

Issued on 5 March 2012

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Alison Broom

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

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

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

7. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2012 1 - 7

8. Neighbourhood Action Planning 8 - 18

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- Sarah Robson, Community Partnerships Manager;
- Councillor Marion Ring, Cabinet Member for Environment;
- Representatives from Parents is the Word;
- Caroline McBride, Head of Community Development, Golding Homes;
- Eddie Walsh, Kent Youth Service; and
- Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager.

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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 17 JANUARY 2012

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs Blackmore (Chairman), Brindle, Field, FitzGerald (Vice-Chairman), Hinder, D Mortimer, Mrs Parvin, Paterson, Yates

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

It was resolved that all items be webcast.

111. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs Stockell.

112. Notification of Substitute Members.

Councillor Brindle substituted for Councillor Mrs Stockell.

113. Notification of Visiting Members.

There were no Visiting Members.

114. Disclosures by Members and Officers:

Councillors FitzGerald and Mortimer disclosed an interest in item 9, Locality Boards – Written Update, by virtue of their position as nominated Members on the Locality Boards. Councillor Yates declared an interest in Item 8 of the agenda, Parks and Open Spaces, by virtue of his involvement with the Friends of Mote Park.

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

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

116. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2011 and 6 December 2011.

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November and 6 December 2011 should be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and duly signed.

117. Parks and Open Spaces

The Chairman introduced Jason Taylor, Parks and Leisure Manager. Mr Taylor gave a presentation explaining the way in which services had been delivered by the Parks and Leisure team in the past, the financial restraints and the impact of budget decisions on the Parks and Open Spaces team and new ways of working to achieve value for money.

The Committee were informed that the borough's Parks and Open Spaces consisted of:

- 30 major parks and open spaces;
- 8 Green space types;
- 71 play areas;
- 686 allotment plots; and
- 425 hectares total green space.

It was explained that the Parks and Leisure team consisted of a team of seven responsible for play areas, leisure centre, golf course, allotments, planning applications, trees, rivers, moorings, wildlife sites, sports and event bookings and Mote Park audience development. The Maintenance team known as Maidstone Borough Services were made up of the Parks Maintenance Team, a team of 14 who looked after Mote Park, Whatman Park, Cobtree, Clare Park, South Parks and Brenchley Gardens and a mobile team of 20 who looked after the grounds maintenance in the rest of the borough.

It was explained that in the past there had been grounds maintenance contracts in place with rigid specifications. Two Monitoring Officers were employed to oversee the contract arrangements and ensure the work was being carried out as agreed in the contract. Mr Taylor explained that the result of this approach was that little ownership was taken as the maintenance team were working to the contract rather than for the parks. Teams were static (except in Mote Park) and anything that was done in addition to the contract specification was done so at an additional cost. Work had to be carried out even when it was not needed. For example grass was cut even if the weather had been dry and it did not need to be cut. If it was not done the contractor could be fined by Maidstone Borough Council. Tree Maintenance was cited as an example of an additional cost to the contract arrangements.

The Officer informed the Committee of the positive events of the past few years which included the adoption of the Green Space Strategy in 2005 and the successful Mote Park Lottery bid. He also highlighted the appointment of an additional Parks Technical role in September 2009 and the two Green Flags awarded to parks (Clare Park and Whatman Park), the benchmark national standard for parks and open spaces.

In 2010 the Parks Management Plans were updated, for thirty Parks and Open spaces which provided the following information on each park:

- The relationship to the Council's aims and objectives;
- Vision and objectives for the site;
- The site and its facilities;

- Management and maintenance standards;
- Aspirational improvements;
- Funding; and
- Results of quality audits.

Mr Taylor explained the Parks and Leisure Team's budget. In addition to the main budget allocation there was a separate budget for the River Park and Cobtree Manor Park because the River Park was part of a lottery bid and Cobtree was run as a charity. The team had an income target of £87,150 and budget for extra works of £81,100. This covered additional works, such as repairs and income short falls.

The Committee were informed that the team had achieved the following savings:

- Reduction in the team by 1.5 posts in 3 years;
- No monitoring officers – reduction on a further two posts;
- Tree Inspections carried out in house by Parks and Opens Spaces Officers who have undertaken training; and
- The Leisure Centre now took sports bookings on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council following the reduction of the sports bookings post.

Indirect cuts that impacted on the team included:

- The removal of pest control in Parks from the Environmental Services contract – funding now has to come from the additional works budget;
- Loss of a dedicated Funding Officer in the Community Services Team at the Council meant that the Parks team now has to find and make bids for additional funding themselves; and
- The income target set in the budget strategy for Mote Park car parking charges, which was not taken forward had to be absorbed by the Parks budget – This additional cost is £15,000 in 2011/12 and £30,000 in 2012/13.

Mr Taylor explained that the Parks maintenance team was now in house team and there was no longer a contract in place. The advantage of this was that the team could be more reactive and were also able to carry out additional work, at no extra cost. It was described as a 'winter work list'. In order to make savings and achieve value for money Parks Technical Officers had trained as tree inspectors and as a result no longer needed to pay an external contractors to do this work.

The work done in Benchley Gardens and the areas around All Saints and the Carriage Museum were described as a means of illustrating what has been achieved by the Parks and Leisure Team. Images showed an open and inviting Benchley Gardens as the result of high hedges being removed and hedges and shrubs cleared from around the Carriage Museum made it more visible and open. Members raised some concerns over the removal of vegetation and queried whether it would be replaced with like for like. The Officer explained that the area around the Carriage museum had been

altered as it was creating a problem with Anti Social Behaviour but that this had been handled by experts.

Members were informed that Mote Park had approximately 1 million visits a year, comparable with the Hop Farm but was currently providing a minimum income. The appointment of an Audience Development Officer (funded by Heritage Lottery) as part of the Mote Park Improvement Project had proved very successful and the financial value of the volunteer work target for the 4 year project of £10,000, had already been exceeded by £8,000. This had been achieved through bringing in volunteers who undertook various projects and tasks that would otherwise be completed at a cost to the council. The £18,000 total excluded 945 hours of volunteering work done by under 18s. The Audience Development Officer also organised events such as the recent stargazing event in partnership with the BBC.

Mr Taylor informed the Committee that the facilities in Mote Park were comparable with London and Royal Parks, and that a research project was currently underway to investigate increasing income potential. The team regularly visited other parks such as Regent's Park, talking to other professionals. It was highlighted that some events were not hugely profitable such as fairs but could still impact on the team's income targets set as part of the budget strategy.

With events it was established that there was a cost to clean up afterwards. Members suggested that those hiring a park should pay a deposit that could be retained if not cleared up satisfactorily. Mr Taylor explained that London Parks made a £3 surcharge per person to cover this.

The Committee considered the waste in Mote Park on a Monday left after weekend sports activities. The Officer explained that sports clubs would be known to them and they would go back to them. There were ways to address the problem though the Rugby and Football leagues and the responsibility would be with the home team. It was felt that the littering problem should be highlighted as part of the re launch of Mote Park. The Officer explained that it would be addressed but it should be handled carefully as it could be counterproductive in attracting visitors to the Park if images of a litter filled park were used as part of the advertising as was the initial suggestion.

The use of the Amphitheatre and how it was marketed was discussed. It was explained that this was part of the River Park and was marketed by the Hazlitt Theatre. Shakespeare would be moving to Mote Park and would be a free event. Members queried the lack of electricity at the Amphitheatre. It was explained that this had been reviewed and there were objectives to this now.

It was observed that with events there were various teams involved rather than one single team. The approach at present seemed disjointed and did not enable the Council to build on successes such as the Radio One Big Weekend. The success of the stargazing event which was held in

partnership with the BBC and attracted more than 1000 people was also noted. The Committee felt that the Borough Update could be utilised to promote events. The Officer explained that the Audience Development Officer was working on the programme of events for the next year and it would be available the following month. Members felt that a focused Event Strategy was needed.

Mr Taylor felt that the temporary post of the Audience Development Officer could be extended as a self funding position focused on volunteering and events in all the boroughs parks. He highlighted the positive working relationship with partners such as the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership in delivering the Local Bio Diversity Action Plan (LBAP) efficiently and effectively, and partners providing services such as the water sports at Mote Park and several tennis clubs across the borough's parks. The Officer also felt that the Mote Park Cafe contract which was coming up could provide a new opportunity for the Park.

Questions were raised about professionals using the parks for business purposes. The Officer explained that for groups of more than six there was a fee, and that British Military Fitness used the Mote Park for training sessions with 20-30 people and were happy to pay. This fee did not apply to individual personal trainers.

The Committee observed that despite a substantial budget the Parks and Leisure team were not able to address the sustainability of what was offered, they were still looking for investment and as such standing still. All maintenance issues from signs and fences to pathway repairs were to be paid for from the additional works budget of £81,100 which was also needed to absorb any income shortfalls. The Officer explained that a business like approach was needed to deal with budget cuts and income target sets. He informed Members that the management plans were continually being reviewed and the tree management and maintenance policy were currently being re written. The management plans were described as living documents and with aspirations included, these had potential as and when development contributions or other funding was available in the future. Trees were to be inspected every three years and a review of the River Park was due as it was now twelve years old. Members queried the responsibility of the main bridges that would impact on access to the River Park and were informed that they were maintained by Property. It was felt that an Asset Management Strategy was needed to assist the Parks and Leisure team going forward.

Members were informed that the recent Play Area Review had been undertaken and the scoring system used would inform the strategic direction taken. The results of this would come to the Committee to evaluate. It was explained that Play areas were looked at every two years and the scoring table was updated. The condition was scored as either green, amber or red with the same standard applied across the borough. Members were concerned about dangerous equipment. The Officer explained that if it was not in a safe state it would be repaired or removed. High use areas were inspected on a daily basis. The Committee

were keen to gain an understanding of the scoring system and asked to see sight of this.

Members questioned whether there would be more dog bins in parks; the Officer explained that dog bin collection contract was already at capacity with the collection from those already in place. It was explained that the problem was usually not with the bins but with the dog waste being picked up in the first place

Members requested that the Officer's presentation to be shared with all Members.

It was recommended that:

- The Parks and Open Spaces Manager's presentation should be shared with all Members;
- The cost of maintaining all the main bridges impacting on the access to the River Park should be established;
- A focussed Events Strategy should be developed taking into account the current successes highlighted to the Committee such as the role of the Audience Development Officer, Volunteering and Events held at Mote Park;
- The Committee wish to see sight of the scoring system used in the Play Review;
- The Committee would like to keep a watching brief on the current events project being undertaken by a member of the Parks and Open Spaces team; and

A review should be undertaken on the approach taken with sustainability and asset management in relation to Parks and Open Spaces and the Committee updated.

118. Locality Boards - Written Update

The Committee considered the written update on the locality board. Concerns were raised about cuts to youth services at a County level.

Members felt that a watching brief should be kept on the Locality Board as it was in its early stages and in particular the Council's input and relationship with 'ambition boards'.

It was resolved that the Locality board should be kept on the Committee's agenda.

119. Forward Plan and Scrutiny Officer Update

The Committee were informed that a Corporate Services and Communities Joint Overview and Scrutiny Meeting would be held on 7 February to consider the draft Parish Services Scheme.

The Committee considered its next review topic, Neighbourhood Action Planning. It was felt that representatives from pilot schemes should be invited along with an external organisation and Jim Boot, Community Development Manger. The Chairman invited Councillor FitzGerald to recommend pilot groups involved in the Park Wood Neighbour Action Plan which would be the Committee's focus.

It was recommended that Jim Boot, Community Development Manger and Pilot Groups along with an external organisation involved in the pilot Neighbour Action Plan at Park Wood be invited to the next meeting.

120. Duration of Meeting

6.30 p.m. to 8.40 p.m.

Agenda Item 8

Maidstone Borough Council

Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 13 March 2012

Neighbourhood Action Planning

Report of: Overview & Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the beginning of the Municipal Year the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee made a recommendation as part of its future work programme to evaluate 'Neighbourhood Action Planning with a focus on the vulnerable and areas of deprivation.' Members felt that this should be 'set against the Localism Bill' and it be established 'where we (Maidstone Borough Council) are heading in the longer term to strengthen ties with communities'.
- 1.2 The Localism bill was given Royal Assent on 1 November 2011. It details the intended power shift from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and local councils.
- 1.3 Localism provides the framework for the 'Big Society,' the idea launched in the 2010 Conservative manifesto. The Localism Act Localism outlines the following principles for communities under which Neighborhood Action Planning can be established:
 - makes it easier for local people to take over the amenities they love and keep them part of local life;
 - ensures that local social enterprises, volunteers and community groups with a bright idea for improving local services get a chance to change how things are done; and
 - enables local residents to call local authorities to account for the careful management of taxpayers' money.
- 1.4 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has an 18 month Structural Reform Plan. The actions to be completed within that time frame will enable the decentralisation and transparency reforms that will put residents and councils in control of their communities.
- 1.5 In the DCLG's latest monthly implementation update (January 2012) the following action is detailed to be started by the end of January 2012:
 - 5.1 (iv) Work with a small number of places to develop neighbourhood plans using existing powers.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to interview Sarah Robson, Community Partnerships Manager, Councillor Marion Ring, Cabinet Member for Environment, Representatives from Parents is the Word, Caroline McBride, Head of Community Development, Golding Homes, Caroline McBride, Head of Community Development, Golding Homes and Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager.
- 2.2 Areas of discussion could include but are not limited to:
- Maidstone Borough Council's role in Neighbourhood Action Planning;
 - The role of partners and other public sector agencies in Neighbourhood Action Planning;
 - Available funding to the Council and Community Groups;
 - How groups can become 'constituted' and therefore eligible for funding;
 - Aspirations for the future for young people and residents in Park Wood and suggestions for ways in which underlying issues relating to health, teenage pregnancies, worklessness and skills and education attainment can be tackled across all age groups;
 - Whether the priorities of residents remain the same;
 - To consider the strengths and weaknesses of the Park Wood Neighbourhood Action Plan and established residents groups and what could be taken forward to benefit other areas of Maidstone.

3. Neighbourhood Action Planning

- 3.1 A pilot Neighbourhood Action Plan has been developed in Park Wood using Planning for Real which is a registered Trademark (**as detailed in appendix a**). It was developed in Park Wood by Maidstone Borough Council with local residents and with the support of partners which included Kent County Council, Golding Homes and Kent Police.
- 3.2 The Park Wood Neighbourhood Action Plan 2010-2015 (**appendix b**) was adopted by Cabinet on 10 November 2010.
- 3.3 One year on from the development of the Action Plan residents were surveyed to establish whether they felt there had been improvement in the priority areas highlighted (**appendix c**).
- 3.3 Parents is the Word is a residents group which operates in Park Wood it is advertised online (www.netmums.com).

- 3.4 Park Wood has Meadows Children's Centre, Fusion Healthy Living Centre and Heather House. These facilities help to aid the delivery of services by various partners for the residents of Park Wood.

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 out the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities. The Committee's work will contribute to the delivery of these key objectives over the next year.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Planning for Real

Report by: Sarah Robson

February 2012

What is 'Planning for Real®'?

Planning for Real® is a nationally recognised process of community consultation. It begins with contacting the local community networks and reaches a conclusion with the formation of an action plan for taking forward the decisions made during the process. It can be revisited at any point; models are often kept and used many times.

First stages

An initial scoping meeting is held to explore requirements and the objectives for the programme. Once agreed, Planning for Real® will start by letting everyone know how Planning for Real® works and taking their advice on matters such as which venues would work - often what seems like an ideal venue to an "outsider" turns out to be one that local people know always gets a poor turnout.

Option cards are central to the Planning for Real® process and allow local people to have their say about what's happening in their neighbourhood. At this stage option cards are looked at - are there issues specific to the neighbourhood that need to be covered? Of course, there are always blank cards on the consultation days for people to write themselves.

Model-making

Next is the model-making. Starting from a large scale map (usually around 1:300), a three-dimensional model is built. It helps the local 'ownership' of the project if this is done locally, either by adults, or more commonly, in the local school. This begins the process of looking at the area as a whole - finding where your house is, tracing your regular journeys and considering what needs to be done to improve community wellbeing.

Planning for Real® events

The Planning for Real® events are held in venues and locations convenient for local people, as many as required. Sometimes an event is arranged for a specific group, perhaps young people, or Asian women. At the events, the model is laid out with cards placed around it. These show options, around 300, which people put on the model to show what they want and where they want it. There are also blank cards for people to write their own suggestions.

Action Plan

Following on from this, all the options placed on the model are prioritised into HIGH, MEDIUM, or LOW, again using visual hands-on techniques. This is then developed into an action plan looking at stakeholder involvement, actions and opportunities for progression. For neighbourhood planning projects, this is the stage when the neighbourhood development plan would be created.

Park Wood Neighbourhood action planning (Planning for Real)

A pilot Neighbourhood Action Plan, utilising Planning for Real (registered trademark) has been developed in Park Wood by the Borough Council with local residents and the support of Kent County Council, Golding Homes (formerly Maidstone Housing Trust), Kent Police and other local partners. The plan was adopted by Maidstone Borough Council's Cabinet at its meeting on 10th November 2010 and is now available: Park Wood Neighbourhood Action Plan 2010-15 (see attachment).

Since its agreement in November 2010 the action plan has resulted in improved estate cleaning, streamlined measures to tackle noisy neighbours and a job shop and training programme for young people. Additional activities have been organised for children and young people such as Be Free at the park. Further work has also been carried out to explore some of the underlying issues in the area with workshops on health, teenage pregnancy, unemployment, education and skills and new actions developed.

£50,000 was secured by the Borough Council to make some environmental improvements on council owned property within Park Wood and residents are helping to choose how the money is to be spent. The favoured projects are: new CCTV at the parade of shops, improving areas adjacent to the parade, a mini-ball park (cage) to the rear of the shops, a dog free picnic area at the community centre Heather House and motorcycle barriers to the park. There is a shortfall in the funding so residents are being asked to list their top priorities.. All the projects will provide training and volunteering opportunities for local residents and young people.

PARK WOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PLAN 2010 to 2015– THE STORY SO FAR

Background

The Park Wood Neighbourhood Action Plan was developed with local residents between October 2009 and September 2010 and adopted by Maidstone Borough Council in November 2011. Nearly 600 residents took part raising 2800 issues and ideas. Community safety and crime stood out right from the start – young people hanging around, drinking and people afraid to go out at night. Also important were dog mess and litter, housing and employment.

In the first year (November 2010 to November 2011) of the five year action plan, Maidstone Borough Council, partner organisations, local groups and residents have concentrated on delivering on these issues, on the basis of 'You said, we did' (see attached). At the same time, further work has gone on to explore in more detail underlying issues relating to health, teenage pregnancies, workless-ness, skills and educational attainment, resulting in a new revised action plan.

Young people

By far the biggest issue was 'young people hanging around' the parade of shops, anti-social behaviour and intimidation. As a result, existing youth diversionary activities have been maintained or improved. Long-standing programmes such as the community football programme have been re-commissioned by MBC's Community Development Team to address anger, frustration, respect for others and team-work while still maintaining the focus on 'footie' and fun. Extra funding was found to extend the sessions so that younger kids (8-11 year olds) could take part. Using Lottery Funding, MBC Community Development and Parks and Open Spaces commissioned social enterprise Play Place Innov8 to run play activities at the park on three afternoons a week between April and September. Local residents joined in as parent volunteers or 'Play Rangers' receiving training in child protection and First Aid.

Most recently, KCC's Youth Service have just started a new detached youth project with a focus on basket ball, and strenuous efforts are being made to retain the Thursday evening youth café at Fusion, for which they are currently seeking support from MBC/Safer Maidstone Partnership. A brand new 8-12 year olds activity club has been jointly commissioned by MBC and KCC Children's Preventative Services and funded by West Kent NHS for the most vulnerable children. It started in September at New Line Learning and is run by Kent and Medway Groundwork Trust.

Litter, rubbish dumping and dog mess

Next on the list was littering, dumping of rubbish and dog mess. Visual audits and litter picks with residents and school children started even before the plan was agreed, to get everyone thinking and acting differently. MBC Environmental Services have increased their monitoring of street cleanliness from every sixteen months to quarterly, the traditional 'barrow' patrols have increased from once to three times a week, deep cleans took place at the parade and there is now enhanced cleaning at the park and play areas by MBC Parks and Open Spaces.

There has been more enforcement by Environmental Health too, with the Foul Play dog mess campaign being launched in Park Wood in May this year. Park Wood had more fixed penalty notices issued than any area outside the town centre. The threat of enforcement action was enough to make shop keepers and the parade landlord Golding Homes secure lock ups to the rear of the shops which had become an eyesore and targeted by fly tippers and for anti-social behaviour. Letters have been written to householders above the shops and in other areas reminding them of their obligations to avoid rubbish dumping and further enforcement action promised if they don't.

Community Safety

Residents said that drug dealing and taking were a significant problem. Although the police were at first reluctant to accept the level of drug dealing identified by residents, following meetings with the police, three high profile raids were undertaken in quick succession in the summer of 2010 and pressure on drug dealers has since been maintained. Measures to address street drinking, intimidation of adults to buy alcohol for under age drinkers and drinking at the park have however, had limited success and further action and education is needed.

Healthy living and leisure activities

A significant number of issues raised by residents were already catered for in Park Wood, but people simply didn't know what was available. The problem wasn't so much duplication as fragmentation of services. To help residents find out what's available and where, MBC has published a What's On Guide and distributed it from community venues in July to October. It is already being reprinted so that every household will have a copy. New residents will receive a copy via a Welcome Pack provided by their estate agent or landlord.

Unemployment

Another key issue was unemployment. The charity Tomorrows People set up a job club and re-located their operations and a training programme for 16-19 year olds to Park Wood, all of which continue to this day. They also run a programme called Families Matter Most for people dealing with long-term unemployment. Golding Homes have recently employed an employment advisor who is working alongside Tomorrows People to expand their job club. A fact finding visit took place to Mid Kent College in September meeting with the Principle and Vice Principles for both Maidstone and Medway campuses to explore more joined up working. A follow up visit is planned to KCC's new Senacre Community and Skills Centre on 14th and 18th November.

Next steps – from neighbourhood planning to management

Resulting from a review carried out with MBC's Policy and Performance Team between April and July this year, a new programme of neighbourhood management is being trialled to maintain or increase the momentum as we approach the second year of the five year plan. This will include:

- Monthly visits to Park Wood by the Mobile Gateway to bring services and information direct to residents,
- Bi-monthly 'grime busting' estate inspections and
- Listening Days visiting community activities to update residents and get feedback.
- The whole plan – is being put onto a shared data base to ensure that regular updates can be fed back to residents and problems identified and addressed.
- Environmental improvements are being made by MBC to its land adjacent to the parade of shops and at Heather House.

All in all, many teams from across the council, partner organisations, local groups and residents have contributed and responded to the challenge of the Park Wood Neighbourhood Action Plan. A lot has been learnt, there have been set backs, some real change has been brought about as well, but there is still a lot to do. What is most encouraging, is that new resident groups such as Parents is the Word and R-Shop are emerging, getting organised, gaining confidence and taking the initiative. Overleaf is a list of the key issues identified by residents through the Planning for Real process that have already been either fully or partly addressed on the basis of 'you said, we did'.

You said	We did
1. Security cameras / CCTV needed. View is that existing CCTV is insufficient or does not work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCTV checked. Deficient CCTV removed from parade and pole re-wired ready for new camera. Two other camera's checked and confirmed to be operating. • Currently exploring whether to re-deploy mobile camera from Joy Wood with Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council's support, or else to buy new camera as part of environmental improvements.
2. Drug dealing/drug taking problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although police were at first reluctant to accept the level of drug dealing identified by residents, following meetings between the Cabinet Member and the police, three high profile raids were undertaken in quick succession in summer 2010 and pressure on drug dealers has been maintained.
3. Night noise and rowdiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new streamlined approach to neighbour noise has been agreed by MBC Environmental Health with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), a leaflet produced and promoted to residents. RSLs are being encouraged to use their full range of sanctions from loss of points to Notice of Seeking Possession to tackle persistent offenders.
4. Football pitches wanted over summer holidays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Football goals turned 90^o over summer to allow turf to recover, but football to continue.
5. Bullying problem - This was raised most frequently as an issue around the Parade, play areas and in the cul de sacs rather than schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAYDAG¹ funded community football programme on Wednesday nights extended from 1.5 to two hours and split into two sessions for pre-teens and 11-16 yr olds. • Extra funding found by MBC to run inside Heather House during winter. • New provider Kick Kent commissioned from September 2011 to focus on behaviour, relationships (bullying) and team work. • First inter-estate tournament took place in October half-term.
6. Permanent youth provision needed including: Youth theatre / Recording studio / rehearsal room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCC Youth Service stepped in to support the youth café at Fusion in 2010, organised a youth and community day in August 2011 and starts detached youth work in autumn 2011. • Be Free play activities for younger children commissioned by MBC took place at the park from April to September 2011. • MAYDAG commissioned further younger (6-13) play provision through Play Place starting October 2011 until 31st March 2012.
7. Playgrounds for Under 5's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new play area was installed at Heather House/the park at the end of 2009. Golding Homes is now installing a new play area on the Island Site between Wallis Avenue, Hollingworth Road and Brishing Lane.

¹ Maidstone Youth Development Action Group – Sub-group of Safer Maidstone Partnership

8. Litter problem / broken glass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular litter picks were held with residents and Tomorrow's People 'Working It Out' programme around parade, at park and at Heather House throughout 2010. Tomorrow's People have continued to carry these out in 2011 in the vicinity of Heather House. The cleaning frequency of the play area was increased, and Scarab street cleaning machinery utilised, to coincide with play activities sponsored by the Big Lottery over the summer of 2011 but this is an on-going problem.
9. Illegal dumping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents in rubbish dumping hot-spots written to reminding them of their responsibilities and collection days, problem has reduced but needs constant vigilance owing to high turn over of residents in housing above parade of shops.
10. Clean up needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of street cleanliness stepped up from every sixteen months to quarterly • Traditional 'barrow' woman now patrolling parade of shops, pavements and alleyways increased from once to three times a week. • Increased cleaning of play areas and parks and emptying of bins. MBC and Golding Homes have made significant steps towards resolving disputed responsibilities over ownership and cleaning of public land. • Increased enforcement against litter and dog mess at the parade and park led to seven fixed penalty notices being issued earlier this year. Increase in penalties from £50 to £75. Foul Play campaign launched in Park Wood on 24th May 2011. • The threat of enforcement by MBC Environmental Health against rubbish dumping has resulted in lock-ups at rear of shops being secured and rubbish dumping drastically reduced. • Two new bins installed on Wallis Avenue (October 2011).
11. Dog mess problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emptying of dog waste bins by contractors checked to ensure they are meeting their service level agreements. • Proposal to scrap dog waste bins and encourage residents to use litter bins shelved.
12. School crossing patrol/ Zebra crossings, accident spots, blind spots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two zebra crossings were installed and although subject to initial problems with electrical supply are now fully functioning. Site meetings were held with the ward member, residents and KCC Highways to address issues of compliance, signage and positioning. The signage issues have been acknowledge and addressed. The crossings now appear to be providing safe crossing of the roads for elderly residents and children.

13. Damp and condensation problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents have been encouraged to contact their landlord in the first place and then MBC's Housing Condition team if they feel they are not getting re-dress. Fusion is organising a drop-in surgery as part of their Staying Safe Month in November 2011.
14. Tenants and residents association to be set up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although a new resident's association did emerge 2010 it sadly folded in January 2011. However, on-going support is being given to R-Shop (Bulk Buy Group) and to the new group Parents is the Word including a community chest grant of £900. The Mobile Gateway visits and Listening Day (next 15th November) are being developed as an alternative to engage with and listen to resident's issues.
15. Improve Heather House and other community facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fusion has teamed up with Golding Homes to increased its presence on the parade of shops by taking on adjacent property 5, Park Wood Parade. Tomorrows People's Families Matter Most and Job Shop now providing a 5 day a week service to residents. The Tuesday afternoon sexual health clinic has been re-located to this more private venue.
16. Local job information point / Job Search Club / support for people seeking work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Job Shop was started by Tomorrows People on Tuesday mornings before the action plan was even formally adopted. Golding Homes have now recruited an employment advisor who is working with Tomorrows People to expand the job shop to two mornings a week. Tomorrows People also run Families Matter Most on three days a week supporting residents to gain confidence and return to employment Tomorrows People also run Working It Out at Heather House for 16-19 year olds not in education, employment or training.
17. Cookery Classes wanted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ratatouille's cooking course at Fusion on Wednesdays and Little Stirrers at the Meadows Children's Centre for children and their parents.
18. After Hours School Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New 8-12 year olds activity club jointly commissioned by MBC and KCC Children's Preventative Services and funded by West Kent NHS started in September at New Line Learning run by Kent and Medway Groundwork Trust.
19. Stop smoking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared service and cross referrals with Meadows Children's Centre.
20. What's On?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A significant number of issues raised were already catered for in Park Wood, but people simply didn't know what was available. A What's On Guide has been published by MBC listing sixty different activities/clubs and distributed in July, August, September and October. It is now being revised to fill gaps identified by residents and groups through a feed-back form. Reprint just about to be published and delivered to every household.

In The Last Year Have the following got better or worse?

	Much Better	Better	Same	Worse	Much Worse	Don't Know
Young people hanging around	2	24	26	4	1	3
Drinking problems at the parade of shops	4	22	20	3	0	11
People afraid to go out at night	3	5	34	4	1	12
Drug dealing problems	0	5	16	6	1	32
Visible police presence	17	15	16	6	3	3
Night noise and rowdiness	3	16	12	8	0	19
Dog mess problems	4	10	14	16	14	2
Litter and rubbish dumping	4	20	17	10	6	3
Park Wood as a place to live	3	26	21	8	1	1
Services from Maidstone Borough Council	6	20	25	8	0	1
	<u>46</u>	<u>163</u>	<u>201</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>87</u>
	<u>7.70519263</u>	<u>27.30318</u>	<u>33.6683417</u>	<u>12.2278057</u>	<u>4.522613065</u>	<u>14.57286432</u>

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Other issue(s) that are important to you (please add issues below)						
Job Centre					1	
Elderly Pensioners area needs clearing up					1	
Cat Mess					1	
Litter by Groft Green					1	
How was the service you received today?	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	
	42	18	0	0	0	
Any other comments	Speed Ramps - Bicknor Rd - 2					
	Repairs - Slow					
	Housing Demonstration					
	It's not as bad as people make it out to be, lots of facilities for children.					

Maidstone Borough Council

Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 13 March 2012

Draft Community Development Strategy

Report of: Overview & Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee has 'Community Development' within its terms of reference.
- 1.2 The draft Community Development Strategy was an item on the Forward Plan of Key Decisions January 2012 to April 2012 and was included in the Committee's future work programme.
- 1.3 '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.'
- 1.4 The draft Community Development Strategy is under consultation. The period of consultation will end on 30 March 2012.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to consider the draft Community Development Strategy and consultation document (**appendices A and B**).
- 2.2 The Committee is recommended to interview Sarah Robson, Community Partnerships Manager, and make recommendations as appropriate as part of the consultation process.

3. Community Development Strategy

- 3.1 The Community Development Strategy is a 5 year plan that provides a framework under which Community Development can take place in the borough.
- 3.2 The draft document details a number of actions that will be delivered with partners to achieve outcomes that will in five years time 'have produced measurable differences to the lives of residents of the Borough in the programme areas within its brief.'
- 3.2 *"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."* This outcome of the Strategic

Plan sets out the role of the Community Development strategy which is to:

- Reduce inequalities with communities through preventative action;
- Promote active citizenship – to facilitate and support increased involvement by local people in decision making and involvement in their neighbourhoods;
- Review the Park Wood Planning for Real activity to inform further work and activities supporting communities in identifying and meeting their needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities; and
- Implement meaningful community commissioning of services for local people.

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 out the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities. The Committee's work will contribute to the delivery of these key objectives over the next year.



Maidstone Borough Council Community Development Strategy 2012- 2016

Your community, our priority

D R A F T

DRAFT

1. Foreword by Councillor John A Wilson, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services



I am delighted to introduce Maidstone Borough Council's Community Development Strategy 2012 – 2016. This Strategy is essentially about enabling Maidstone Borough's communities to develop through empowerment, learning and pro-actively embracing change while valuing and enhancing the best of what already exists.

Community development will make an important contribution to The Vision for Kent, the countywide strategy for the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Kent's communities. This strategy supports the Vision's Ambition, 'Put the citizen in control' and will show how community development's values and skills can be used in practical ways to improve life for communities to help them become more active and capable of controlling their own circumstances and play a constructive role in society.

This is an ambitious document establishing a long-term commitment and approach to giving every child the best start in life and building the 'Big Society' - central government's vision for reshaping relationships between individual citizens and their communities to ensure communities play a central role in securing our vision for the borough and delivering the priorities of both the Borough Council's Strategic Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy.

In these challenging economic times, the Council must be sure of the value provided by community development. We acknowledge the benefit that community development brings to people's lives and recognise that it is our job, as a local authority, to ensure that as many people as possible have access to that benefit. The well-being that community development can bring to people right across the borough is even more important when the economic climate has such significant implications.

Everybody in Maidstone Borough can help achieve the strategy's objectives and its action plan shows how local organisations, communities, families and individuals can be involved. Fulfilling the activities identified within the Strategy is the key to success. However, it is vital to recognise that the Strategy represents the beginning of a process, rather than an end in itself and it is therefore essential that we continue to work together to take forward the values and principles of the Strategy and make our vision a reality.

2. Introduction

Community development is at the heart of the Council's aim to enable a vibrant and economically stable community. Engaging local people on a range of issues, so that they can influence the decisions affecting their local area and the development of services to meet local need will be at the heart of our approach. This strategy encourages strong partnerships between the Council, other agencies and residents and promotes good working relationships internally between councillors and council officers, in order to achieve better outcomes through more effective and targeted allocation of scarce resources.

The Strategy provides a strategic framework under which community development can take place in the borough. Community development, as we interpret it, is an effective means of achieving a better quality of life, encouraging personal development, responsibility, social interaction and active participation in the community as a whole. It gives focus to the skills, awareness, knowledge and experience of existing and potential partners working in the private, statutory, voluntary, community and faith sectors. By working together with these partners the Strategy will identify needs and gaps and secure new funding sources.

In five years' time the Borough Council, alongside partners, intends to have produced measurable differences to the lives of residents of the Borough in the programme areas within its brief. It will provide an important contribution toward improving skills and training, building healthier and sustainable communities and enhancing the quality of life of residents in the borough.

The Community Development Strategy priorities have been reviewed and determined using evidenced based information, including comparative county-wide performance and strategic needs assessments. No priority community groups (e.g. black and minority ethnic groups, disabled or older persons etc.) were highlighted as requiring focused intervention. Therefore, this Strategy will focus on the Borough's priority geographical communities as well as priority issues such as tackling disadvantage, reducing worklessness and building stronger communities. However, this may shift as the local context changes and it is our aim to realise improvement right across the whole social-economic spectrum.

This Strategy will play a full part in delivering a successful outcome to the county's 'Vision for Kent' strategic ambitions to; help the Kent economy grow; put the citizen in control and; tackle disadvantage. There will be in place a range of successful community partnerships delivering many of these outcomes, involving the public, private, voluntary, community sectors.

This document is a joint strategy between the Borough Council and local people, who will be involved in the development and delivery of this strategy at a number of levels, as planners, participants and beneficiaries. The diverse civic life of the borough, its communities and people are all central to the success and range of work that takes place. The skills and experiences of all these people and their right to participate, voice views

and opinions is recognised and valued. Consultation and participation are often talked about as separate approaches. However, they can more usefully be considered as part of a single continuum, which moves from non-engagement to true participation.

3. The national, regional and local context

- **New Political Leadership**

Britain has been going through a state of change, having come out of a recession and entered a new political environment. The election in May 2010 resulted in a hung parliament and a coalition government being formed 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 creating 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.

- **The bigger picture - Big Society and Localism**

The Big Society is central government's vision for reshaping relationships between individual citizens and their communities. This Strategy supports the development of communities to become more active and capable of controlling their own circumstances by playing a more constructive role in society. The backbone to the Big Society is the Localism agenda, which will see more power and freedoms being devolved from central to local government and local neighbourhoods.

At its core are three principles:

- Empowering Individuals and Communities
- Encouraging Social Responsibility
- Creating an Enabling and Accountable State

- **The Marmot Review**

The review chaired by Professor Sir Michael Marmot examined the social determinants of health inequalities and established a range of cross-cutting themes that included education, housing, employment and social well-being. The review established six actions:

- Give every child the best start in life
- Enable all children young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
- Create fair employment and good work for all
- Ensure healthy standard of living for all
- Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities
- Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention

The review identified that significant savings across a range of budgets as well as major improvements in community health and well being could be achieved. Furthermore the review stated that delivering these policy objectives will require action by central and local government, the NHS, the third and private sectors and community groups.

National policies will not work without effective local delivery systems. The review concluded that effective local delivery requires effective participatory decision-making at local level. This can only happen by empowering individuals and local communities.

- **Local context: 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 countryside 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 higher education offer with both the University for the Creative Arts and Mid Kent College seeking to increase their range of courses and facilities.

Mid Kent College is widening the range of courses and facilities it provides as part of a £23 million redevelopment of Maidstone' Oakwood Park Campus. This major project is due to commence in 2012/13 and the College is one of just a handful of UK further education colleges currently investing in a major capital scheme. Over the next three years the University for Creative Arts will be expanding the broadcast media courses being delivered at Maidstone Studios.

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.

Transport links are generally good although rail travel could still be improved. 2011 saw the introduction of High Speed services from the Maidstone west to St. Pancras. Rail journey times to London from some of the smaller rural towns (Staplehurst and Marden) are as low as 40 minutes

The Borough is well served by the motorway network with the M20 and M2 both providing links to the M25 and the Channel Ports. The international high speed railway stations at Ebbsfleet (15 mins) and Ashford (25 mins) are also extremely accessible. The Council is pleased that an extension to the Thameslink network is being proposed to provide a direct link to London from Maidstone. With regard to travelling in and around the Borough by car, congestion is an issue particularly at peak time in the town centre. The bus transport network serving Maidstone town is relatively strong whilst rural transport presents distinct challenges. Road safety is a concern for Maidstone, with the poorest record in Kent. Following a scrutiny review of road safety, the Council will be supporting the Safer Maidstone Partnership in taking initiatives forward to address this issue.

Maidstone's Local Strategic Partnership carried out work in 2010 looking at how public money is spent locally. It has 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 wellbeing, nearly 17% is spent on education and 15% on housing.

In November 2011, the Maidstone Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) was replaced by the Maidstone Locality Board, which draws together local public services for greater effectiveness and efficiency to oversee and shape the local delivery of services.

The key difference between the LSP and Locality Board will result in a greater input from county and district councillors, but with representation from the wider public sector, including Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, NHS, the voluntary and community sector and the business community. The first formal meeting of the Maidstone Locality Board was held on 20 January 2012.

4. The Corporate priorities

The Council is committed to and shares the vision for Maidstone, identified in the 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."

Priorities

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

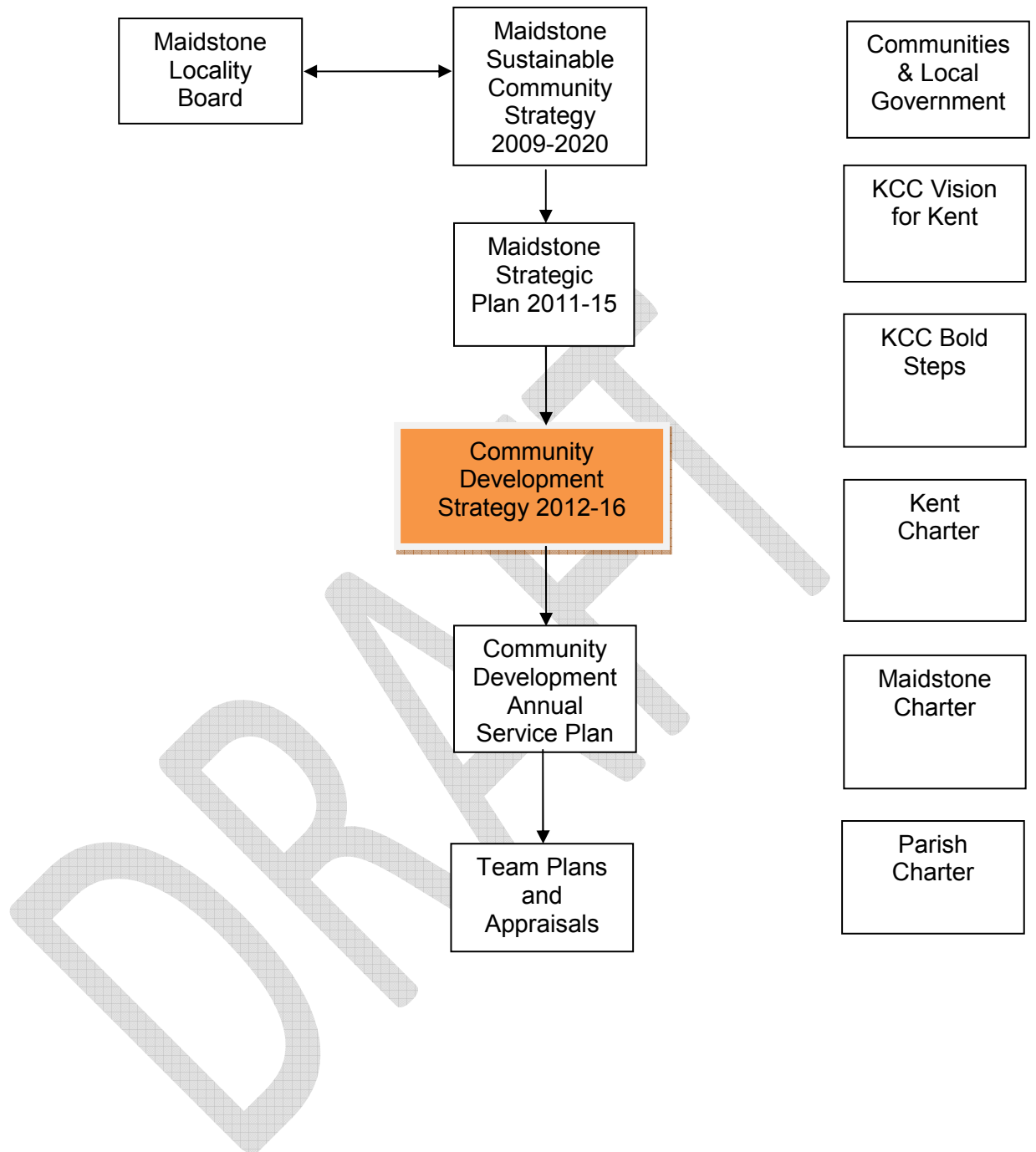
Priorities	Outcomes
1. For Maidstone to have a growing economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A transport network that supports the local economy • A growing economy with rising employment, catering for a range of skill sets to meet the demands of the local economy
2. For Maidstone to be a decent place to live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 to Borough
3. Corporate and Customer Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

The Community Development Strategy will contribute to the strategic objectives set out in the Strategic Plan (2011-15), the five year delivery plan for the Borough Council. The Strategic Plan identifies the Community Development Strategy as the key delivery vehicle for achieving the 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."*

Under this outcome the Strategic Plan sets out the role of the Community Development strategy as working to;

- Reduce inequalities with communities through preventative action
- Promote active citizenship – to facilitate and support increased involvement by local people in decision making and involvement in their neighbourhoods
- Review the Park Wood Planning for Real activity to inform further work and activities supporting communities in identifying and meeting their needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities
- Implement meaningful community commissioning of services for local people

5. How the Community Development Strategy links with other plans and strategies



6. Priorities and outcomes for this strategy.

Priority 1: Tackling disadvantage

Outcomes – What we plan to achieve?

- 1a. Improve early years development to enable people to develop to their full capability and have control over their lives
- 1b. Reduce the gaps in health inequalities to enhance the health and quality of life of all Maidstone citizens.

Why is this important to Maidstone?

- By enabling young people to develop their life skills they will be more ready to achieve better whilst in education, become ready for employment and learn those skills and have positive aspirations to pass onto their children
- The Marmot report identified that by age 6 the attainment of a child from a poor socio economic background with high cognitive skills will be overtaken by a child with poorer cognitive ability from a better off background
- 50% of offenders leaving prison are unable to read and write – improving basic education attainment will reduce the cost of re-offending and crime
- Life expectancy for men in the most deprived wards is five years below the borough average and for women is 2.4 years lower
- Maidstone has a higher estimated percentage of obese adults than the England average – at 26.5 per cent (24.2% nationally). Reception year children classified as obese is similar to the England average, but school aged children spending at least 3 hours a week on physical activity at school is 11.3% below the national average
- Kent has seen an overall reduction in teenage pregnancy of 18%, compared to a national reduction of 19%; however Maidstone figures have increased by 11%. However, rates in hotspots have significantly reduced.

Actions – What we will do in order to achieve the stated outcomes

Outcome	What we plan to do	Key partners	Target date
1a.	Increase targeted support for families with children aged 0-3, particularly the most vulnerable and deprived	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary Action Maidstone • Children's Centres • Children's Groups • Parenting Groups 	By December 2015
1a.	Organise and deliver a stakeholder event celebrating children's services in the Maidstone borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Children's Trust • Maidstone schools/colleges • Voluntary and community sector 	31 March 2012
1b.	Develop and deliver a sustainable programme of preventative health work focusing on the Borough's health priorities, including	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Commissioning Consortia • NHS Trusts • Health and 	31 March 2016

	obesity, smoking, substance misuse, sexual health, self harm and mental health in priority areas	Wellbeing Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Children's Centres • Voluntary and community sector • Ward councillors 	
1b.	Develop a referrals process whereby GPs can refer patients to Community Development's health prevention programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Trainers • Clinical Commissioning Consortia • NHS Trusts • Health and Wellbeing Board • Voluntary and community sector • Maidstone Leisure Centre • Zeroth Gym 	By 30 April 2012

Performance measures

- Reduce percentage of obese adults, currently 26.5% to the national average of 24.2% by 2016.
- Increase physically active children, currently 46.2% to the national average of 55.1%.
- Reduce hospital stays for self-harm, currently 226.2, to the national average of 198, by 2016.

Priority 2: Reduce Worklessness

Outcomes – What we plan to achieve?

- 2a. Enable people who are not in employment or training to aspire to and engage in positive activities leading to employment
- 2b. Numbers of young people engaged in apprenticeships and volunteering are increased

Why is this important to Maidstone?

- Unemployment in the borough is increasing. As at January 2012, 2611 people (2.7%) of Maidstone's population were registered unemployed.
- 760 18 to 24 year olds (31.1%) are claiming unemployment benefit.
- 5.59% of 16-18 year olds are categorised as Not in Education, Employment or Training compared to the county average of 5.66%.

Unemployment is a national issue and a particular issue for Maidstone Borough Council to tackle in conjunction with our partners. The Government has set up Community Budget projects in a number of areas and the Maidstone Locality Board has adopted the approach as a tool to tackling six wards of Maidstone which have unemployment rates almost twice as high as the Kent average.

The Community Budget project seeks to improve the lifestyle of those households who pose most problems for members of their own family as well as

the communities in which they live. Often characterised by intergenerational unemployment these households account for less than 1% of the population but can cost central and local agencies up to £330,000 a year.

Maidstone's Community Budgets project will focus on families who have:

- Household unemployment/NEET 16-18 year olds
- At least one adolescent aged 13-18 experiencing difficulties (school non-attendance, exclusion, emotional/behavioural, and offending)
- Parental need or existing involvement in adult services (Police, Probation, mental health, social services)

The community development function is to ensure that priority communities are able to maximise these opportunities, through facilitating appropriate capacity building, learning, training and volunteering opportunities to give people the confidence, experience and support to access employment opportunities working alongside other agencies such as Job Centre Plus, the academies, the new Senacre Skills Centre, Mid Kent College and voluntary groups such as Tomorrow's People.

Actions – What we will do in order to achieve the stated outcomes

Outcome	What we plan to do	Key partners	Target date
2a.	Establish a Community Budgets pilot in Maidstone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maidstone Locality Board • Maidstone Local Children's Trust Board 	31 March 2016
2a.	Organise and deliver a Worklessness stakeholder event addressing sustainable employment through targeted support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maidstone Locality Board • Maidstone schools/colleges • Business Forum • Voluntary and community sector • Connexions • Registered Providers • Kent Probation 	30 April 2012
2b.	Develop a training action plan for young people (including work placements, apprenticeships, mentoring and volunteering)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maidstone Locality Board • Maidstone schools/colleges • Business Forum • Voluntary and community sector • Connexions • Registered Providers • Kent Probation 	30 June 2014

Performance measures

- Reduce percentage of 17 year olds and under claiming unemployment benefit, currently 0.4% to the county average of 0.3%.
- Reduce the percentage of 16-18 year olds categorised as Not in Education, Employment or Training, currently 5.59%, to 5% lower than the Kent-wide comparison of 5.66%.

Priority 3: Building stronger communities**Outcomes – What we plan to achieve?**

- 3a. An increase in local people actively participating and influencing local community provision and delivery
- 3b. A reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour

Why is this important to Maidstone?

- Progressing developments in priority areas of deprivation – community development supports the engagement of local residents, agencies and partners in neighbourhood planning, which is vital to ensuring that physical regeneration of particular areas meets the identified needs of the local community
- Tackling crime and instances of anti-social promotes vibrant, active, and safe communities in which businesses can be attracted to and thrive

Actions – What we will do in order to achieve the stated outcomes

Outcome	What we plan to do	Key partners	Target date
3a.	Develop a neighbourhood action approach within priority communities (Park Wood, Shepway North, Shepway South and High Street Wards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maidstone Locality Board • Park Wood Neighbourhood Action Group • Residents • Ward councillors • Other partners – schools/children's centres 	Park Wood: By 31 August 2012 Roll-out completed by 31 March 2016
3a.	Finalise model for engaging residents in priority areas in neighbourhood management/ neighbourhood policing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent County Council • Kent Police • Golding Homes and other registered providers • Ward councillors 	Pilot delivered and evaluated by 31 March 2012
3a.	Develop an approach to Community Asset Transfer so that community groups, the voluntary sector and social enterprises can take on the management of the Borough Council's buildings/facilities as part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MBC Business Transformation • MBC Property • MBC owned community halls • Voluntary and community sector 	By 31 December 2014

	of new service delivery models		
3b.	Increase opportunities for children and young people to participate in community development activities to increase positive outcomes e.g. improved literacy and reduced levels of antisocial behaviour in priority areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maidstone Locality Board • Sports and play clubs/facilitators • Maidstone School Sport Partnership • West Kent Arts Partnership • Children's Centres • Community • Kent Archives and Library Service • Ward councillors 	By 31 March 2014
3b.	Implement diversionary activities and projects for young people to tackle ASB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer Maidstone Partnership • Voluntary groups • Contender - (Amateur Boxing) • Zeroth Gym 	31 March 2014

Performance measures

- Number of residents participating in Neighbourhood Planning as a percentage of the ward population, currently 11.6% to 30% by 2015.
- Reduce ASB incidents per 1,000 population, currently 22.67%, to 20% under Kent-wide comparison (25.25%) by 2014.
- Reduce first time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10 – 17, currently 13.7%, to 20% under Kent-wide comparison (12.8%) by 2020.

7. Implementation and monitoring arrangements

Community Development 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 Community Development Strategy is delivered, the Council will review and monitor the Action Plan through various methods:

- The strategy's action plan has been developed by Maidstone Borough Council and its partners and the delivery of the action plan will be shared by the partners. Maidstone Borough Council will take responsibility for driving this work and for monitoring delivery. We will present an annual report and commentary on progress to achieve the vision and deliver the strategy's action plan, using this as an opportunity to challenge partners, to renew commitment to the plan and to update and increase the ambition of the plan when opportunities arise.
- Clear and effective communication with wider audiences who would be the future partners and stakeholders for delivery will increase the strategy's prospects for success. The strategy is a bold statement of intent and the

foundation of a cohesive, partnership approach towards community development in the borough. The action plan links directly to the Borough Council's overarching Communications and Engagement Strategy, providing common ground on which to build partnerships and will help all contributors to broker discussions with new partners.

- Using the Covalent performance monitoring system, the Community Development performance indicators and action progress will be reported quarterly to Senior Management Team, Portfolio Holder and Cabinet.
- Satisfaction surveys - Community Development seeks the views of our customers and stakeholders through questionnaires.
- This strategy will be updated annually to ensure any relevant changes are taken into account and that the action plans are updated.

DRAFT

This letter is to accompany the draft for consultation of Maidstone Borough Council's Community Development Strategy.

Thank you for taking the time to read it.

We welcome your response to this draft strategy as part of our consultation period. The deadline for receiving responses is no later than 4pm on Friday 30 March 2012.

Background

The main purpose of this document is to put forward a number of new priorities and actions, framed within the Borough Council's new strategic priorities.

This is an ambitious document establishing a long-term commitment and approach to giving every child the best start in life and building central government's vision for reshaping relationships between individual citizens and their communities to ensure communities play a central role in securing our vision for the borough and delivering the priorities of both the Borough Council's Strategic Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy.

The development of this draft has been a cross-sector piece of work, with involvement from statutory partners.

How you can respond

Specific templates are not provided, however responses to the following questions would be useful:

1. Do you agree with the expression of strategic priorities and actions outlined in the draft Community Development Strategy?
 - If not, what alternatives would you suggest and why?
2. Do you think that there is anything missing from this draft?
 - What is your justification for inclusion?

Please return your consultation responses by 4pm on Friday 30 March 2012 to:

'Community Development Strategy Consultation'

Community Development Team
Maidstone Borough Council
Maidstone House
King Street
Maidstone
Kent ME15 6JQ

Alternatively, responses can be submitted by email to;
williamsolly@maidstone.gov.uk

The steps following the end of the consultation will be to:

- Gather responses to the consultation
- Moderate responses and amend the document
- Report to the Borough Council's Corporate Leadership Team in April 2012
- Seek approval from Cabinet Member in April 2012

Thank you for your considered response to this consultation.

Yours faithfully

Sarah Robson
Community Partnerships Manager

Maidstone Borough Council

Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 13 March 2012

Future Work Programme and Scrutiny Officer Update

Report of: Overview & Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

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

2. Recommendation

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

3 Future Work Programme

- 3.1 Throughout the course of the municipal year the Committee is asked to put forward work programme suggestions. These suggestions are planned into its annual work programme. Members are asked to consider the work programme at each meeting to ensure that remains appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.
- 3.2 The Committee is reminded that the Constitution states under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules number 9: Agenda items that 'Any Member of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Sub-Committee shall be entitled to give notice to the proper officer that he wishes an item relevant to the functions of the Committee or Sub-Committee to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting. On receipt of such a request the proper officer will ensure that it is included on the next available agenda.'

4 Forward Plan of Key Decision

4.1 The Forward Plan for 1 March 2012 to 30 June 2012 (**Appendix B**) contains the following decisions relevant to the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee's current work programme:

- Private Sector Housing: Review of Housing Assistance;
- Tenancy Strategy;
- Adoption of Dog Control Orders in Maidstone; and
- Implementation of Cobtree Master Plan.

6. Impact on Corporate Objectives

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

- 'Corporate and Customer Excellence' and 'For Maidstone to be a decent place to live.'

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

Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Future Work Programme 2011-2012

Date	Items to be considered
25 May 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman • Work Programming 2011/12
14 June 2011	<p>Housing Strategy 2011-2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with John Littlemore and Ellie Kershaw • Waste Review Scoping Document • Appointment of Joint Health Sub Scrutiny Committee
12 July 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Draft Local Bio-Diversity Plan • Interviews with Jason Taylor and John A Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Leisure • Appointment of Joint Health Sub Scrutiny Committee • Waste Review Scoping Document
09 August 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Making Waste Work for Maidstone' • Interviews with Paul Vanston, Kent Waste Partnership Manager and Steve Goulette, Assistant Director Environment & Regulatory
13 September 2011	<p>Meeting as the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update: New Operational Policing Model and the revised priorities of the Safer Maidstone Partnership <p>Interviews with:</p> <p>Chief Inspector Steve Griffiths, Borough Commander for Maidstone.</p> <p>Martin Adams, Chairman of the Safer Maidstone Partnership;</p> <p>Barry Weeks, Manager Central Kent Youth Offending Team; and</p> <p>Niki Luscombe, Chief Executive (Interim) Women's Support Services.</p>
11 October 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tendering Strategy – Waste and recycling contract from 2013 • Interview with Steve Goulette, Assistant Director Environment & Regulatory Services
08 November 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Making Waste Work for Maidstone' Review <p>Interviews with Jim O'Connor and Steve Gill, Chief Executive and</p>

	Director at NOAH Enterprise; and Carolyn Gomez, Environmental Systems Manager, Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics
06 December 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Waste Work for Maidstone' Review Interviews with • Jim O'Connor and Steve Gill, Chief Executive and Director at NOAH Enterprise and • Jennifer Gosling, Waste Manager • Bigger Society • Interview with Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager
17 January 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Open Spaces – one off item • Locality Boards – Written Update
14 February 2012	Meeting as the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Focus on Neighbourhood Action Planning Issues)
13 March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Action Planning • Community Development Strategy
10 April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree Review Reports

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN

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**1 March 2012 to
30 June 2012**

**Councillor Christopher Garland
Leader of the Council**



Forward Plan March 2012 - June 2012

INTRODUCTION

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

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

Each entry identifies, for that “key decision” –

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

DEFINITION OF A KEY DECISION

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

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

WHO MAKES DECISIONS?

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

**Forward Plan
March 2012 - June 2012**

Decision Maker, Date of Decision/Month in which decision will be made and, if delayed, reason for delay:	Title of Report and Brief Summary of Decision to be made:	Consultees and Method:	Contact Officer and deadline for submission of enquiries:	Relevant Documents:
Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services Due Date: March 2012	Private Sector Housing: Review of Housing Assistance To seek agreement for proposals for the Council's private sector Housing Assistance programme for 2012/13	Cabinet Member and key stakeholders Email	Neil Coles neilcoles@maidstone.gov.uk 08/02/12	Cabinet Member Report for Private Sector Housing: Review of Housing Assistance
Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services Due Date: March 2012	Tenancy Strategy Tenancy Strategy to comply with s150 of the Localism Act		Andrew Paterson andrewpaterson@maidstone.gov.uk End of January	Cabinet Member Report for Tenancy Strategy

**Forward Plan
March 2012 - June 2012**

Decision Maker and Date of Decision/Month in which decision will be made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary of Decision to be made:	Consultees and Method:	Contact Officer and deadline for submission of enquiries:	Relevant Documents:
<p>Cabinet Member for Environment</p> <p>Due Date: March 2012</p> <p>Original Date: Feb 2012</p>	<p>Adoption of Dog Control Orders in Maidstone</p> <p>The Cabinet member will be asked to decide whether to proceed with a proposal to introduce Dog Control Orders under Section 55(1) of The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 in relation to fouling and exclusion of dogs from childrens play areas</p>	<p>Ward Councillor; Parish Council; Service Users; Local Residents; Stakeholders/Partners; Consultation will be through circulation of the report and also through advertisement in local newspapers</p>	<p>Martyn Jeynes martynjeynes@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Report for The adoption of Dog Control Orders in Maidstone</p>
<p>Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee</p> <p>Due Date: 14 March 2012</p> <p>Original Date: 7 Nov 2011</p>	<p>Implementation of Cobtree Master Plan</p> <p>To consider proceeding with and the allocation of funds towards the Cobtree Master Plan.</p>		<p>Jason Taylor, Parks and Leisure Manager jasontaylor@maidstone.gov.uk</p> <p>January 4th 2012</p>	<p>Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Implementation of Cobtree Master Plan</p>