

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the

## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL



Date: Wednesday 13 April 2016

Time: 6.30 p.m.

Venue: Town Hall, High Street,  
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Ash, Mrs Blackmore, Boughton, Brice, Burton, Butler, Chittenden, Clark, Cox, Cuming, Daley, Ells, English, Fissenden, Fort, Garland, Mrs Gooch, Greer, Mrs Grigg, Harper, Harwood, Hemsley, Mrs Hinder, Mrs Joy, McKay, McLoughlin, Moriarty (Mayor), B Mortimer, D Mortimer, Munford, Naghi, Newton, Paine, Mrs Parvin, Paterson, Perry, Pickett, Mrs Ring, Mrs Robertson, Ross, Round, J Sams, T Sams, Sargeant, Springett, Mrs Stockell, Thick, Vizzard, Watson, Webb, Webster, de Wiggondene, Willis, J.A. Wilson and Mrs Wilson

Continued Over/:

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**Issued on 5 April 2016**

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*Alison Broom*

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

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## **AGENDA**

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1. Prayers
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Dispensations (if any)
4. Disclosures by Members and Officers
5. Disclosures of Lobbying
6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.
7. Minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 2 March 2016 1 - 10
8. Mayor's Announcements
9. Petitions
10. Question and Answer Session for Members of the Public
11. Questions from Members of the Council to the Chairmen of Committees
12. Current Issues - Report of the Leader of the Council, Response of the Group Leaders and Questions from Council Members
13. Report of the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee held on 8 March 2016 - North Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan 11 - 48
14. Report of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee Acting as the Crime and Disorder Committee held on 15 March 2016 - 2016-17 Strategic Assessment and 2013-18 Community Safety Partnership Plan Refresh 49 - 103
15. Report of the Democracy Committee held on 17 March 2016 - Changes to the Constitution 104 - 121
16. Oral Report of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee to be held on 12 April 2016
17. Notice of Motion - Use of Mobile Phones by Councillors in the Council Chamber  
Notice of the following motion has been given by Councillor Brice:

That just as MPs do in Westminster, Councillors can use their mobile phones in the Council chamber during meetings for the purposes of accessing Council papers online, researching items that are raised or if they are using a calculator on their device. Obviously the use of technology in the chamber for personal use during Council/Committee meetings should still not be allowed.

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, MAIDSTONE ON 2 MARCH 2016**

**Present:** Councillor Moriarty (The Mayor) and Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Boughton, Brice, Burton, Butler, Chittenden, Clark, Cox, Cuming, Daley, English, Fort, Garland, Mrs Gooch, Greer, Mrs Grigg, Harper, Harwood, Hemsley, Mrs Hinder, Mrs Joy, McKay, McLoughlin, B Mortimer, Munford, Naghi, Paine, Mrs Parvin, Paterson, Perry, Mrs Ring, Mrs Robertson, Ross, Sargeant, Vizzard, Webb, Webster, Willis, J A Wilson and Mrs Wilson

102. PRAYERS

Prayers were said by the Reverend Canon Andrew Sewell.

103. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ash, Fissenden, Newton, Pickett, Round, J Sams, T Sams, Springett, Mrs Stockell and Watson. In addition, Councillor Ells was on his way to the meeting, but had been delayed. In the event, Councillor Ells arrived after the meeting was closed by the Mayor.

104. DISPENSATIONS

There were no applications for dispensations.

105. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

The Chief Executive, on behalf of herself and all other members of staff present, disclosed an interest in the report of the Employment Committee relating to the Pay Policy Statement 2016.

106. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillor Mrs Ring said that earlier that evening, she had met with people demonstrating in Jubilee Square about homelessness in the town.

107. EXEMPT ITEMS

**RESOLVED:** That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

108. MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2016

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Borough Council held on 25 January 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed.

109. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor updated Members on recent/forthcoming events, and thanked them for their support.

110. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

111. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

**Question to the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee**

Mr Tobe Hayden Leigh asked the following question of the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee:

*At a previous full Council meeting the Council confirmed that the Council Tax Liability Order was enforced but not as a legal entity as such.*

*My question is if it is not a legal entity as such what entity is it?*

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee replied that:

I believe you are making reference to a question asked of the former Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Blackmore, at the meeting of the Council on 25 February 2015.

To answer your question, a Council Tax Liability Order is a Court Order which enables the Council to recover unpaid Council Tax.

Councillor Mrs Blackmore, the Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor Sargeant, the Leader of the UKIP Group, and Councillor McKay, the Leader of the Labour Group, then responded to the question.

Mr Leigh asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee:

*If it is not a legal entity as such, then what is it? Is it, for example, a trust arrangement, and, if so, who are the beneficiaries?*

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee replied that:

If I understand you correctly, you seem to be querying whether Maidstone Borough Council or, indeed, the Court is a legal entity, so I will give you a

very straightforward answer. In this country, people are obliged to pay their Council Tax, and if they do not do so then there are measures that can be taken which involve a Court Order and going to Court. If you have any further queries, I suggest that they are dealt with outside of this meeting, but I do not think that I can be any clearer about what this organisation is. It is a legal entity, it is a sovereign authority, and as such it has the right to levy Council Tax and expect it to be paid when it is due.

Councillor Mrs Blackmore, the Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor Sargeant, the Leader of the UKIP Group, and Councillor McKay, the Leader of the Labour Group, then responded to the question.

### **Question to the Chairman of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee**

Mr Daniel Wilkinson asked the following question of the Chairman of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee:

*To what extent can Maidstone Borough Council put pressure on Kent County Council to open up empty buildings it owns as temporary shelter for the homeless, with a view to converting them into social housing?*

The Chairman of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee replied that:

I can assure you that the Council works very closely with Kent County Council, but currently there are no empty buildings owned by the County Council that we know of that they would be willing to hand over to convert to social housing.

I would refer you to the Maidstone Housing Strategy on the agenda this evening and the response to Councillor Harper's motion, and I believe that the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee is aware of the issues and is trying to put things right. You may wish to take the opportunity to put questions to the Committee.

Councillor Mrs Blackmore, the Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Mrs Wilson, the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor Sargeant, the Leader of the UKIP Group, and Councillor McKay, the Leader of the Labour Group, then responded to the question.

Mr Wilkinson asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee:

*Will the Council run an audit of other properties it owns, if any?*

The Chairman of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee replied that:

The Council keeps its property portfolio up to date and reviews it continuously, and is always looking for opportunities to increase the supply of accommodation for homeless people. Reference has been made to an empty property at the cemetery, but there are problems with asbestos, and the renovation of the property will do little to solve the homelessness problem.

Councillor Mrs Blackmore, the Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Mrs Wilson, the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor Sargeant, the Leader of the UKIP Group, and Councillor McKay, the Leader of the Labour Group, then responded to the question.

112. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL TO THE CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

There were no questions from Members of the Council to the Chairmen of Committees.

113. CURRENT ISSUES - REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, RESPONSE OF THE GROUP LEADERS AND QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

There was no report from the Leader of the Council on this occasion.

114. REPORT OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2016 - MAIDSTONE HOUSING STRATEGY 2016-2020

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Wilson, seconded by Councillor Mrs Ring, that the recommendation of the Policy and Resources Committee relating to the Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020 be approved.

**RESOLVED:** That the Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020, attached as Appendix A to the report of the Policy and Resources Committee, be adopted.

115. REPORT OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2016 - STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020 (2016-17 REFRESH)

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Wilson, seconded by Councillor Cox, that the recommendation of the Policy and Resources Committee relating to the Strategic Plan 2015-2020, 2016-17 Refresh and Action Plan, be approved.

**RESOLVED:** That the Strategic Plan 2015-2020, 2016-17 Refresh and Action Plan, attached as Appendix A to the report of the Policy and Resources Committee, be approved.

116. REPORT OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2016 - MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2016/17 ONWARDS

Before calling upon Councillor Mrs Wilson to move the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee relating to the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 onwards, the Mayor reminded Members that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.4, each Group Leader could speak for up to ten minutes when moving his/her Group's budget proposals.

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Wilson, seconded by Councillor Mrs Blackmore, that the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee relating to the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 onwards be approved subject to the amendments to the table in recommendation 16 and to Appendices B and D circulated separately.

Amendment moved by Councillor McKay, seconded by Councillor Harper:

That the increase in the Council Tax should be limited to 1.99% in 2016/17, and that contingency funds be used to make up the deficit.

As a consequence of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a named vote was taken on the amendment as follows:

FOR (3)

Councillors Harper, McKay and Sargeant

AGAINST (38)

Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Boughton, Brice, Burton, Butler, Chittenden, Clark, Cox, Cuming, Daley, English, Fort, Garland, Mrs Gooch, Greer, Mrs Grigg, Harwood, Hemsley, Mrs Hinder, Mrs Joy, McLoughlin, Moriarty, B Mortimer, Munford, Naghi, Paine, Mrs Parvin, Paterson, Perry, Mrs Ring, Mrs Robertson, Ross, Vizzard, Webster, Webb, Willis, Mrs Wilson and J A Wilson

ABSTAINED (0)

AMENDMENT LOST

The original motion was then put to the vote.

As a consequence of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a named vote was taken on the original motion as follows:

FOR (38)

Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Boughton, Brice, Burton, Butler, Chittenden, Clark, Cox, Cuming, Daley, English, Fort, Garland, Mrs Gooch, Greer, Mrs Grigg, Harwood, Hemsley, Mrs Hinder, Mrs Joy, McLoughlin, Moriarty, B Mortimer, Munford, Naghi, Paine, Mrs Parvin, Paterson, Perry, Mrs Ring, Mrs Robertson, Ross, Vizzard, Webster, Webb, Willis, Mrs Wilson and J A Wilson

AGAINST (0)

ABSTENTIONS (3)

Councillors Harper, McKay and Sargeant

ORIGINAL MOTION CARRIED

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the revised revenue estimates for 2015/16 as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Policy and Resources Committee (circulated separately) be agreed.
2. That the minimum level of General Fund Balances be set at £2m for 2016/17.
3. That the proposed Council Tax of £240.66 at Band D for 2016/17 be agreed.
4. That the revenue estimates for 2016/17 incorporating the growth and savings items, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Policy and Resources Committee, be agreed.
5. That the Statement of Earmarked Reserves and General Fund Balances, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Policy and Resources Committee, be agreed.
6. That the Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Policy and Resources Committee, be agreed.
7. That the funding of the Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Policy and Resources Committee, be agreed.
8. That the Medium Term Financial Strategy statements for revenue and capital, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Policy and Resources Committee, be agreed.
9. That the Strategic Revenue Projection, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Policy and Resources Committee, be endorsed as the basis for future financial planning.

10. That it be noted that the Council's Council Tax Base for the year 2016/17 has been calculated as 58525.4 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992.
11. That it be noted that in accordance with Government guidance the yield from business rates has been calculated as £60,146,945.
12. That it be noted that the individual Parish Area Tax Bases set out in amended Appendix B to the report of the Policy and Resources Committee (circulated separately) are calculated in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Regulations and are the amounts of the Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of the Council's area to which a special item relates.
13. That the distribution of Local Council Tax Support funding to Parish Councils, as set out in Appendix C to the report of the Policy and Resources Committee, be approved.
14. That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2016/17 (excluding Parish precepts) is £14,084,722.
15. That the following amounts now be calculated by the Council for the year 2016/17 in accordance with Sections 31A, 31B and 34-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011:
  - (a) £83,623,728 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
  - (b) £68,041,790 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
  - (c) £15,581,938 being the amount by which the aggregate at 15(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 15(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31A(4) of the Act).
  - (d) £266.24 being the amount at 15(c) above (Item R), all divided by the figure stated at 10 above (Item T in the formula in Section 31A(4) of the Act), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
  - (e) £1,497,216 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per amended Appendix B to the report of the Policy and Resources

- (f) £240.66 Committee).  
 being the amount at 15(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 15(e) above by the Tax Base given in 10 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

16. That it be noted that for the year 2016/17 Kent County Council, the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner and the Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands	Kent County Council Precept	Kent County Council Adult Social Care	Kent Police & Crime Commissioner Precept	Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority Precept
	£.p	£.p	£.p	£.p
A	741.18	14.52	101.43	48.00
B	864.71	16.94	118.34	56.00
C	988.24	19.36	135.24	64.00
<b>D</b>	<b>1,111.77</b>	<b>21.78</b>	<b>152.15</b>	<b>72.00</b>
E	1,358.83	26.62	185.96	88.00
F	1,605.89	31.46	219.77	104.00
G	1,852.95	36.30	253.58	120.00
H	2,223.54	43.56	304.30	144.00

17. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 15 (d), and 16 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets out in amended Appendix D to the report of the Policy and Resources Committee (circulated separately), the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2016/17 for each of the categories of dwellings shown.

Please follow this link to the amendments to the table in recommendation 16 and Appendices B and D:

<https://services.maidstone.gov.uk/meetings/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=151&MIId=2455&Ver=4>

Note: Councillors English and Garland entered the meeting during consideration of this item (7.25 p.m.).

117. REPORT OF THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2016 - TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2016/17

It was moved by Councillor McLoughlin, seconded by Councillor Daley, that the recommendation of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee relating to the Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17 be approved.

**RESOLVED:** That the Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17, including the Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators, attached as Appendices A and B to the report of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee, be adopted.

118. REPORT OF THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2016 - PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2016

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Gooch, seconded by Councillor Cox, that the recommendation of the Employment Committee relating to the Pay Policy Statement 2016 be approved.

**RESOLVED:** That the Pay Policy Statement 2016, attached as Appendix B to the report of the Employment Committee, be approved for publication on the Council's website after 31 March 2016.

119. REPORT OF THE DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2016 - MAYORALTY AND CIVIC CEREMONY REVIEW

It was moved by Councillor Cuming, seconded by Councillor English, that the recommendation of the Democracy Committee relating to the Mayoralty and Civic Ceremony Review be approved.

**RESOLVED:** That the amendments to the Protocol to Guide Councillors When Electing the Mayor/Appointing the Deputy Mayor and the Order of Seniority of Councillors, as set out in Appendix B to the report of the Democracy Committee, be approved.

120. ORAL REPORT OF THE HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 MARCH 2016

It was noted that there was no report arising from the meeting of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee held on 1 March 2016.

121. NOTICE OF MOTION - HOUSING CRISIS - WHERE ARE THE YOUNG GOING TO LIVE

The following motion was moved by Councillor Harper, seconded by Councillor McKay:

In the Borough of Maidstone as elsewhere in the UK we face a housing crisis. We are doing the first part to identify sites through the Local Plan suitable for housing development (the 18,560 housing units). Current Council Affordable Housing policy relating to new housing developments, adopted in December 2006, is for sites of 15 units or more to have 40% affordable housing.

However our looming housing crisis is disproportionately affecting the young and vulnerable. Whilst there are people sleeping on the streets in Maidstone, they only represent the easily identified need. Most homelessness is hidden as people are forced to remain at home with their parents, move around people's houses to find a bed, or live in unfit and overcrowded accommodation.

Whilst recognising that the Council has been trying to tackle people sleeping on the streets, and has set up a number of emergency hostel type facilities, as the statutory housing authority for the Borough of Maidstone, this Council has a responsibility to address this.

This Council therefore resolves to do the following during the next few months:

1. Actively work with private landlords to identify empty housing units and work with them to provide bed spaces for the homeless.
2. Engage with young people in the Borough about their housing needs, via a public consultation exercise.
3. Identify over occupied property and develop procedures to work with the relevant occupiers/landlords to address the problem.
4. Organise a Housing Conference around the topic of "Where Are the Young Going to Live" of statutory authorities, local active housing associations and the voluntary sector to propose a multi-sector approach to tackling these issues in the Borough of Maidstone.
5. Request a report back to the next Council meeting on the implementation of measures 1 - 3 above and progress towards the Housing Conference in 4 above.

**RESOLVED:** That the motion, having been moved and seconded, be referred to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee, as the decision making body, for consideration.

122. APPOINTMENT OF MAYOR SELECT 2016/17

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Blackmore, seconded by Councillor Naghi, supported by Councillors Mrs Gooch, Sargeant and McKay and:

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Derek Butler be appointed as Mayor Select for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

123. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR SELECT 2016/17

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Blackmore, seconded by Councillor Daley, supported by Councillors Mrs Gooch, Sargeant and McKay and:

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Malcolm Greer be appointed as Deputy Mayor Select for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

124. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **COUNCIL**

**13 APRIL 2016**

## **REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE FROM 8 MARCH 2016**

### **NORTH LOOSE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

#### **Issue for Decision**

At their meeting of 8 March 2016 the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport (SPST) Committee considered a report and an Urgent Update Report of the Head of Planning and Development on the North Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The North Loose Neighbourhood Forum has spent approximately four years working on its plan, seeking local views and aspirations and working to ensure the Plan remains true to these values whilst also reflecting both local and national planning policy. This Neighbourhood Plan is the first to go through a referendum in Maidstone.

In October 2015 the SPST Committee approved the Council's response to the formal consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan under Regulation 16<sup>1</sup>. The response, along with all others received, was considered by the appointed Examiner, Ann Skippers, during the latter part of 2015 as part of the independent examination of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Ms Skippers completed her Examiner's report in December 2015, concluding the Plan was fit to proceed to referendum subject to some minor modifications. These were brought to the SPST Committee for consideration on 19 January 2016. The subsequent recommendations of the Committee were considered by Council on 25 January 2016 at which time approval was given to undertake a local referendum on the Plan as amended to include the minor modifications suggested by the Examiner.

The referendum took place on 3 March 2016 as required by the Regulations<sup>2</sup> with the process being overseen by the Registration Services team. Three polling stations were used: Polling district XA – YMCA, Melrose Close, Cripple Street, Maidstone; Polling district XD – Maidstone Hockey Club, Armstrong Road, Maidstone; Polling district XX – The Vine, Boughton Lane, Loose, Maidstone; with the official count taking place after the close of the poll at The Vine, Boughton Lane, Loose.

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<sup>1</sup> Town and Country Planning, England, Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Town and Country Planning, England, Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012.

The turnout for the referendum was 34.8%, with 95% voting 'Yes' to the question: "*Do you want Maidstone Borough Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for North Loose to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?*". The total number of votes cast was 1,410; 'Yes' votes were 1,332, 'No' votes were 77 and there was one void ballot paper.

When the outcome of a referendum is a 'Yes' the Regulations<sup>3</sup> require that the Council must make (adopt) the Plan as soon as reasonably practicable after the referendum.

### **Recommendation Made**

That the Committee recommends to Council that the North Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan be made and becomes part of the Development Plan for Maidstone.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

There was only one option available to the SPST Committee which was to note the positive result of the referendum as set out in this report, and make a recommendation to Council at its meeting of 13 April 2016 to make the North Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan in accordance with the Regulations.

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<sup>3</sup> Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

# North Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan

2015 - 2031

*Where town and country meet*



**North Loose Residents' Association**

Tithe Map 1840



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# North Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan

2015 to 2031

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## North Loose: where town and country meet

### Vision towards 2031

**Our vision is to maintain and raise the quality of life for present and future residents and businesses by improving services; by carefully managing the provision of new homes, our ancient woodlands and open spaces and also by improving ease of movement across our community - to remain where Town and Country meet.**

## Foreword

**T**he Localism Act 2011 has given communities the right to shape their future development at a local level. In this, the Localism Act provides that planning policy developed by communities shall, if passed by an independent examination and passed by a local referendum, be adopted by the Local Planning Authority. It would then become part of the statutory planning policy framework, having the same legal status as the Borough Local Plan and have significant weight when it comes to planning officers taking decisions about planning applications.

The North Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole and conforms with those other policies within the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, existing and Draft, and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and NPPG (2014) which set out the strategic and national policy frameworks respectively. Individual site allocations will be determined through the emerging MBC Local Plan. This plan seeks to manage positively the effects of development for the health and well-being of local residents

In December 2012, North Loose Neighbourhood Plan Area was approved by Maidstone Borough Council. The Forum was formally approved May 2013.

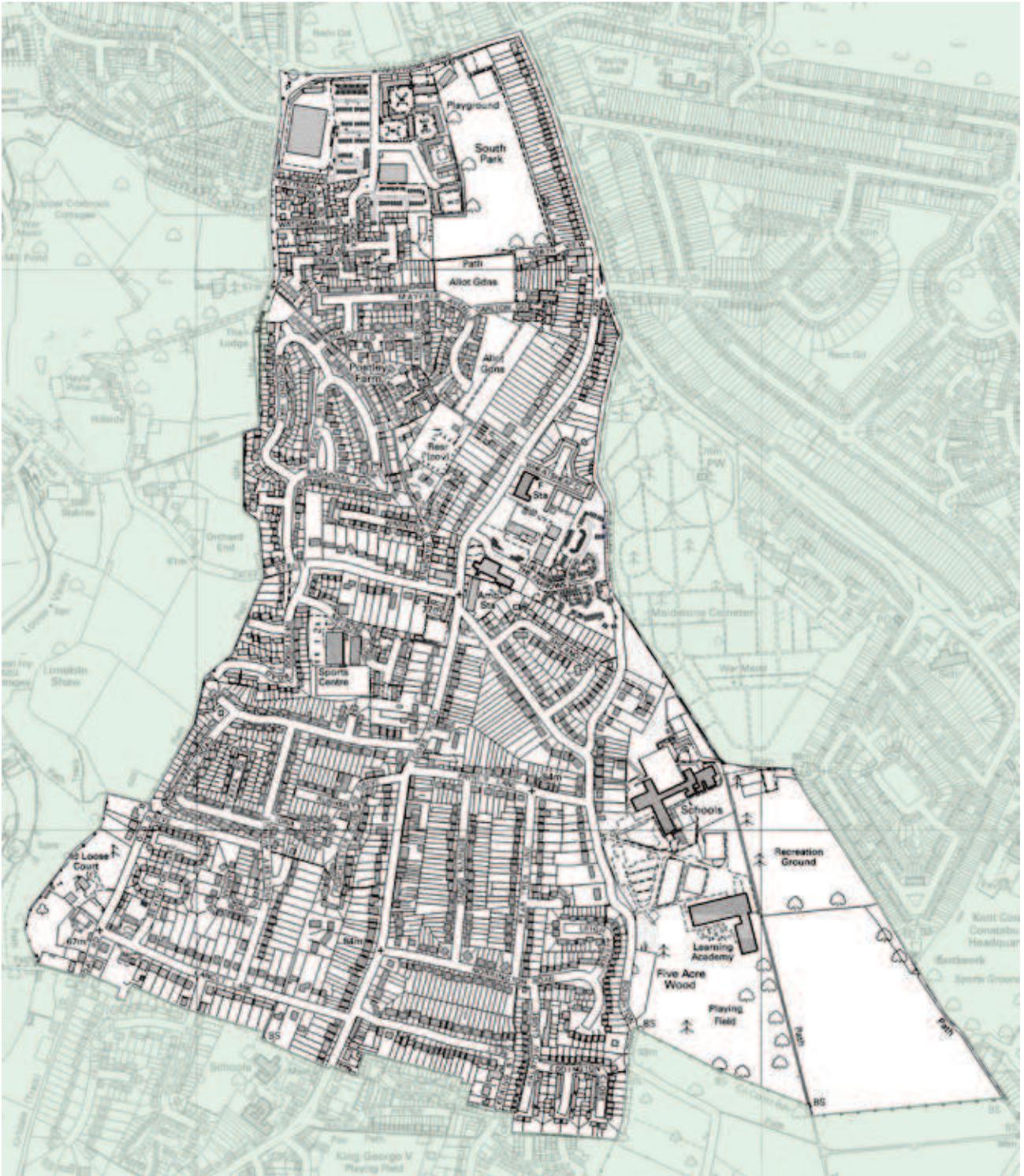
The North Loose Neighbourhood Plan reflects community-wide views, concerns and wishes about its future. It brings these together with local plan policies – emerging and extant – and locally gathered data into a coherent community drive to improve the quality of life and make North Loose an even better place to live and work, for present and future generations.

The draft plan has been produced by a Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group, community volunteers, RTP1's Planning Aid, the help of Maidstone Borough Council and consultants Sophie Leon, Leon Urban Design and Community Spirit Partnership CIC.



*Where town meets country - the western boundary of the North Loose area where it meets the Loose Valley Conservation Area*

**Neighbourhood Plan Area approved 18 December 2012**



# 1 Introduction and vision

## 1.1 About our neighbourhood

The North Loose neighbourhood area is some 2 miles (3 km) south of Maidstone, Kent, situated at the head of the Loose Valley. The North Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan (NLNDP) Area consists of a busy central spine (once a historic route into the market town), and pleasant residential areas with easy access to the countryside.

1.2 The area the NLNDP covers is the whole of the non-parished sections of South Ward and does not overlap any other adjoining parish. It currently includes 2,460 houses, 58 business premises, a school campus, leisure centre, bowls club, hockey club, allotments and services such as doctors, dentist and care home. It contains two local centres, in the vicinity of the Wheatsheaf and Swan pubs. These perform an important role giving residents the opportunity to access local shops and services by foot. They have the potential to improve as community hubs but both are currently traffic dominated with a poor quality public realm.

## 1.3 Neighbourhood Planning Forum – history

The Forum began its life as a community initiative in 2003, the North Loose Residents Association. It was concerned about the type and scale of development being brought forward in the area, triggered by proposals for a major supermarket in a traffic hotspot. The country's planning system at the time only permitted local people's reactive input through objections to development proposals. Neighbourhood Planning now permits communities to be proactive and to actively plan for development in their areas.

1.4 The North Loose Residents Association (NLRA) continues as an active community body and takes guidance from members over community issues. Social events and a regular newsletter are used to keep members informed, and notice boards are installed in the area with information for all members of the public. The website is also available to communicate to the widest audience possible. [www.northloose.co.uk](http://www.northloose.co.uk)

1.5 On application to Maidstone Borough Council for designation of a Neighbourhood Forum, several representations were received in favour of the Association being designated as a neighbourhood forum and MBC considered the application met the criteria outlined in Part 3, S.8 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. MBC considered the plan area to be acceptable in planning terms and that the NLRA followed due process in line with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations, Part 2, S. 5(1).

## 1.6 History of North Loose

The origin of the name 'Loose' is hard to establish. Some experts believe it to be Old English for 'pig-sty' and reflects how the people once earned a living – not how they lived! Others claim that it is a reference to the stream which disappears underground for several miles and is therefore lost to view – 'Hlosan' signified to lose or be lost in Saxon. Certainly the stream played an important part in the commercial life of the area. From the 17th to the 19th century the fast flowing water drove the mills that produced the fine quality paper for which the area was famous.

1.7 Kent Ragstone used to build walls, kerbs and gullies had been quarried locally since Roman times and continued to do so until the early part of the 20th century. The Tower of London is probably the most famous building to use this material.

1.8 The rich well drained soil meant that this was a thriving grain and fruit growing area and well within living memory there were apple and cherry orchards now occupied by the Fire Station and the recently demolished Ambulance Station.

1.9 The North Loose area is fortunate to be surrounded by places of historic interest although it has relatively little history of its own but does have a few sites of historic interest. The records do show Iron Age and Romano-British heritage in the area, with a Roman Road extending off the A229 heading through the Cemetery which could be surviving as a historic landscape feature and Iron Age



Top: The Loose Road, early 1920s (photo courtesy Loose History Society)

Bottom: The same view in 2014



*Above: The quiet and pleasant environment is valued by residents*

remains have been located to the east of the A229 and in the fields south of the New Line Learning School. The general store that stood at the corner of Cripple Street and Loose Road has long since disappeared and is now a Lloyds Bank. Next to the bank was a petrol station and garage but that too was demolished and a firm of heating engineers occupies the site.

1.10 The Loose Road is an area of particular townscape and high visual amenity which results from its landscaping and architecture and it once formed the settlement's historic core. Probably the oldest building in the area is The Swan public house which dates back to the late 17th century. There has been a public house on the site of the current Wheatsheaf since at least 1778 and possibly during the reign of Charles II. The current building on this site was completed in 1830. However the Loose Road illustrates the settlement's 19th and early 20th century suburban development.

1.11 At the southern-most part of our area is Lancet Lane a "highly desirable" location where substantial, detached Edwardian houses are the typical feature while at the northern-most part, there is a large housing development. At the western end of Lancet Lane stands the buildings and gardens of Old Loose Court. There are a few Grade II listed buildings – Bockingford Farm House and Osborne House are two built in the early to mid 19th century when the architectural style was still 'Regency'. Less than one hundred years later the occupants of Osborne House would have looked across the Loose Road to their new neighbours living in Edwardian houses but still surrounded by open fields. As can be seen in the photographs, the

Loose Road is no wider than it was almost a hundred years ago but the same road now has a traffic movement every two and a half seconds and that is likely to increase. In future the Neighbourhood Forum would want to highlight and recognise any listed buildings and any other buildings of local and architectural interest.

### 1.12 Why we need a Neighbourhood Plan

Over the years, planning developments and resultant traffic has caused lengthening delays and air pollution. This has caused a great deal of concern to residents and North Loose Residents' Association takes the lead in responding and advising members.

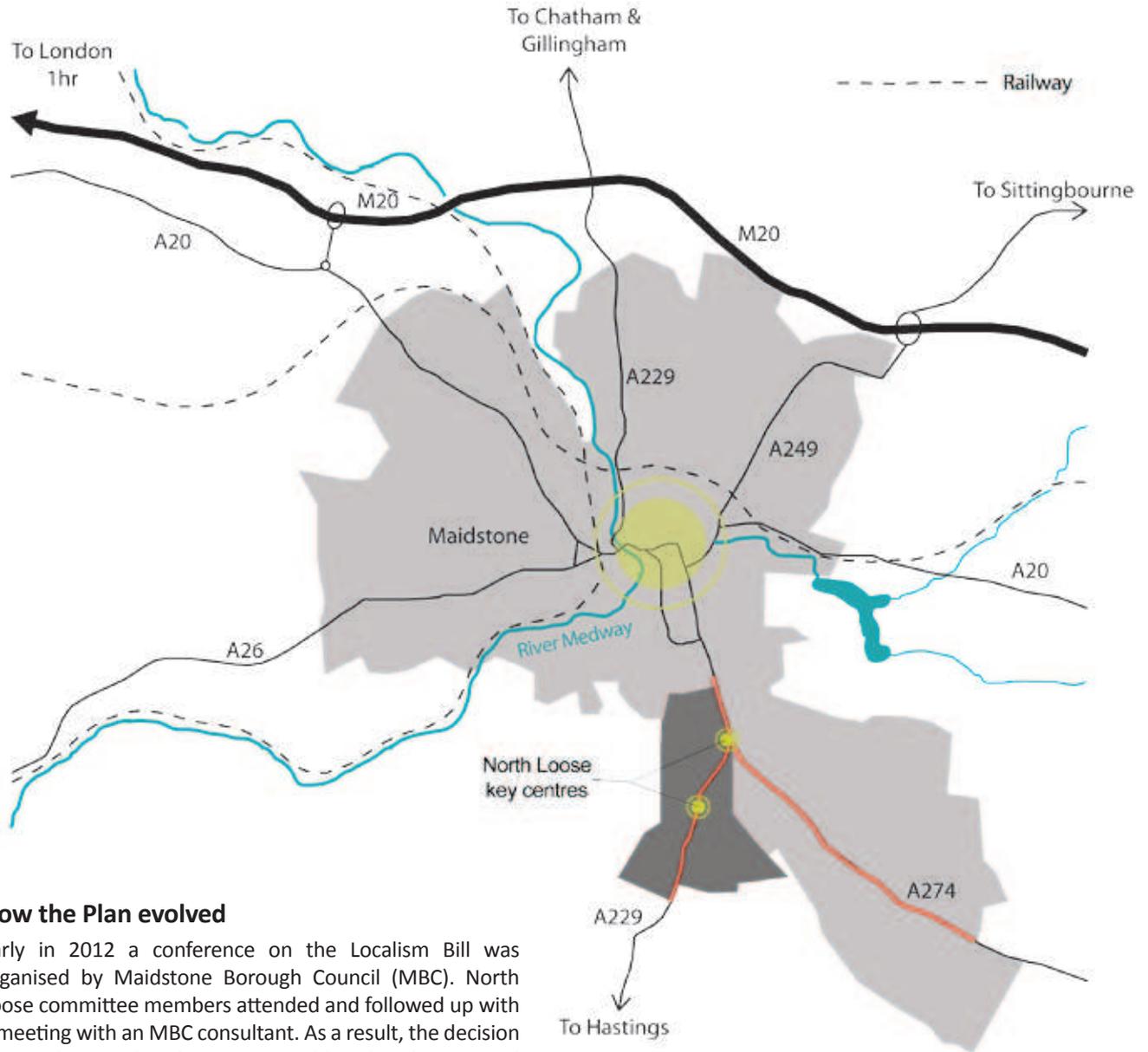
1.13 The area continues to come under ever more pressure from developers as this is seen as an ideal location, on the edge of the Loose Valley Conservation Area, with plenty of green spaces, attractive residential areas and yet within easy reach of Maidstone town centre. The traffic implications of each new development have not historically been taken into account by Maidstone Borough Council and Kent Highways, and the resultant traffic congestion and air pollution is lowering the quality of life of residents. Air pollution at the Wheatsheaf junction is the second highest hotspot in Maidstone. Within the same Air Quality Management Area, the highest is upper Stone Street. Both are on the same route to and from Maidstone on this stretch of the A229<sup>2</sup>.

1.14 North Loose Neighbourhood Forum, through the forward planning enabled by our own locally focussed Neighbourhood Development Plan, therefore encourages more sustainable forms of development and to ensure that benefits are channelled for the well-being of the existing community, providing an holistic approach to improving the quality of life for residents and businesses in the area.

<sup>1</sup>[www.thewheatsheaf-maidstone.co.uk/about-us](http://www.thewheatsheaf-maidstone.co.uk/about-us)

<sup>2</sup>LAQM progress report 2013, Maidstone Borough Council Air Quality Action Plan 2013

## North Loose in relation to Maidstone



### How the Plan evolved

1.15 Early in 2012 a conference on the Localism Bill was organised by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC). North Loose committee members attended and followed up with a meeting with an MBC consultant. As a result, the decision was made to apply to become a Neighbourhood Forum and write our own Neighbourhood Development Plan.

1.16 The Plan has evolved through continuous engagement with residents and businesses and calls for expressions of interest from local people to join and assist with compiling their Plan. It has resulted in a boundary change for the Residents' Association area to incorporate the whole of the non-parished area of South Ward.

Our community engagement and outcomes are detailed in the attached Consultation Statement.

### 1.17 What this Plan aims to achieve

1. A more sustainable community
2. Improvements in health and well-being
3. Maintain and improve service areas
4. Encourage local business and home working and supporting retail and community uses

5. Encourage new residential development where it contributes to the viability of the Plan Area by:
  - requiring it to be well located so as not to exacerbate critical air quality and highway conditions;
  - providing residents with transport choices;
  - being well designed;
  - reducing energy consumption and managing water;
  - maintaining and enhancing green infrastructure especially the ancient woodland and contributing to local initiatives through the Developer and other contributions and funding sources indicated in the Delivery Strategy of this Plan
6. Manage and improve traffic flows through the Plan area
7. Proposing alternative movement routes and means of transport

### 1.18 Implementing the Plan

The North Loose Neighbourhood Forum will work in partnership with stakeholders and interested parties seeking to develop within the Plan Area to guide and encourage development that carries out the aims of this Plan.

1.19 The North Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan's aims and policies will be implemented by different stakeholders and interests through the statutory planning process in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan, the wider Local Authority policies, National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance.

1.20 The North Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan (NLNDP) provides a direction for change through its vision, objectives and strategy specific to its area. Flexibility will be needed as new challenges and opportunities arise over the Plan period. In this way the review period will be crucial. NLNDP is a "living" document and as such will be reviewed every 5 years.

1.21 The Delivery Strategy is also a 'live' document that will continue to be updated during the Plan period. Monitoring procedures, delivery mechanisms and infrastructure requirements may therefore change.

1.22 The accompanying Delivery Strategy sets out expectations for developers to provide community benefits in their proposals. Policy HWT A 1 provides the link between this Plan and the Delivery Strategy's requirements.

1.23 There is a cost to everything. However we consider the cost of not undertaking these improvements would create too much of a strain on services in an area already under

pressure. Local improvements should be delivered through various funding streams including Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) in partnership with developers in advance of any major residential developments within the neighbourhood.

1.24 Cycle routes would be delivered as a priority in advance of major residential developments in order to provide a genuine and environmentally friendly alternative to the use of the polluted and over congested main road.

1.25 Water and energy targets will be delivered by developers in accordance with MBC building regulations and development management as well as the work of Climate Local.

1.26 High quality sensitive development which contributes positively to the character of North Loose will be achieved by developers and MBC Development Management in accordance with the Kent Design Guide, Character Area Assessment for the Loose Road Area, MBC's adopted and emerging local plans and this Neighbourhood Development Plan.

### 1.27 Community Infrastructure Levy and North Loose Neighbourhood Forum

Maidstone Borough Council has decided that it will become a charging authority for the Community Infrastructure Levy. The timetable for the production of the CIL is expected to follow that of the Local Plan. The 'made' North Loose NDP would receive 25% of the value of development subject to CIL payments.



*Lakelands sheltered housing, Loose Road*

## 2.1 Issues

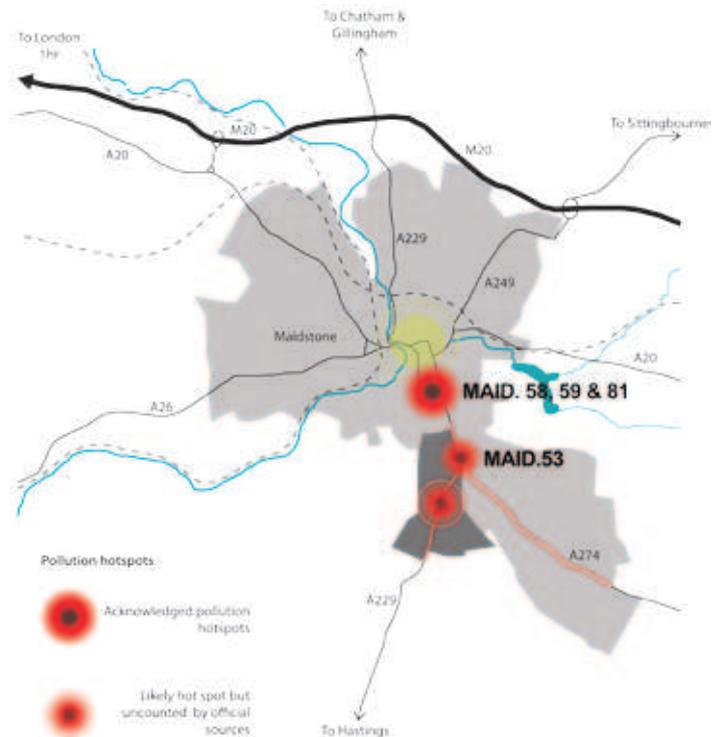
Poor air quality caused by traffic congestion is a major concern in North Loose and this is likely to be exacerbated by future development. It is therefore a priority to mitigate traffic congestion and provide convenient alternative forms of transport.

2.2 Much of the plan area is made up of residential development based on a layout of looping roads and cul-de-sacs. This has created a quiet and pleasant living environment which residents value. However, the lack of connectivity and indirect routes discourage walking and cycling and promote dependence on car travel, with negative implications for health and air quality.

2.3 The plan area contains two key centres in the vicinity of the Wheatsheaf and Swan pubs. These perform an important role giving residents the opportunity to access local shops and services by foot.

2.4 Water shortage is another major concern in the south east and scarce resources are likely to be stretched by planned development. The neighbourhood plan seeks to enhance local character while welcoming new technologies to make better use of natural resources including water management and energy.

2.5 The issues and menu of solutions highlighted in this section are important for the health and well-being of the neighbourhood – for residents, business and those moving through it. They have been arrived at through survey and consultation: see Consultation Statement.



2.6 Whilst motorways may be widened to increase their capacity as most have been built on open land, important trunk roads and primary routes rarely can. They are often constrained by ribbon development and therefore remain essentially as they were 50 or 100 years ago while attempting to cope with a significant increase in traffic. This is particularly true of the A229 running through North Loose.



The Wheatsheaf junction is a pollution hotspot

2.7 The existing draft Maidstone local plan proposes in excess of 2,000 houses to be built in adjoining parishes to the south of the NDP area. This will further exacerbate the congestion already being experienced on the A229 and A274, converging at the Wheatsheaf junction.

2.8 South Maidstone has much to commend it but for many people the noise, the pollution and the frustration created by the ever increasing number of vehicles is causing real concern.

2.9 The private car now causes the largest single impact on our area. Along with commercial vehicles, of ever increasing size and weight, our roads are in danger of becoming overwhelmed by the sheer volume of traffic.

2.10 The NLRA undertook three major traffic surveys between October 2012 and May 2013 and published the findings in a report attached in the Appendix to the Basic Conditions Statement. The statistic which caused the most concern is that there is a traffic movement every 2.5 seconds on the Loose Road throughout a 12 hour day. In an attempt to avoid the congestion, many drivers approaching Maidstone from the south will use side roads. Some of these are no more than country lanes and too narrow to pass oncoming traffic unless one vehicle pulls off the road – in some cases into private driveways.

2.11 Improving the flow of traffic on the Loose Road would reduce pollution and noise levels, reduce driver and pedestrian frustration and reduce damage to the environment where lanes and narrow roads are used as through ways.

2.12 Air quality is such an issue in the Borough that the latest Draft of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan issued March 2014 has a section on air quality and Air Quality Policies. Over 90% of North Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan Area is within the Designated Air Quality Management Area for Maidstone and is within the nine ‘areas of exceedence’ highlighted in the Air Quality Action Plan 2013. The North Loose NDP augments these policies to provide a local focus on improving the health and well-being of people in the area.

2.13 Additionally, the community consultation raised several ways of making small improvements to traffic flow, road safety and air quality which are outside the scope of a neighbourhood plan. North Loose Residents Association will therefore approach the community later to discuss and agree a range of options to take further. Each one would be relatively inexpensive to undertake. Individually they offer small improvements but the cumulative effect would be highly beneficial to our community with positive consequential benefits to neighbouring parishes.

2.14 Real improvements are an ongoing benefit and should be considered as a positive use of capital expenditure, not a negative drain on a budget. The following is one example of how costly ‘doing nothing’ can be –

*“Campaigners have been fighting for years to have a path built alongside a busy B Road so children can walk safely to their primary school in Bridport, Dorset. It would cost about £100,000 to lay the pathway but the*



*Cripple Street, another busy country lane*

*local authority has chosen to provide four minibuses a day to ferry the pupils at a cost of about £50,000 per school year”.*

(The Daily Telegraph 16th November 2013)

It is not difficult to calculate that by the end of the third year it will have cost rate payers £50,000 to have nothing done and it will cost that much to do nothing every year thereafter.

2.15 These policies offer some easily attained and cost-effective solutions to the problems caused by the ever increasing number of vehicles passing through the North Loose area. The relatively low financial cost of putting these ideas into practice would soon be offset by the improvements and the real long term benefits to our neighbourhood and to our adjoining neighbours.

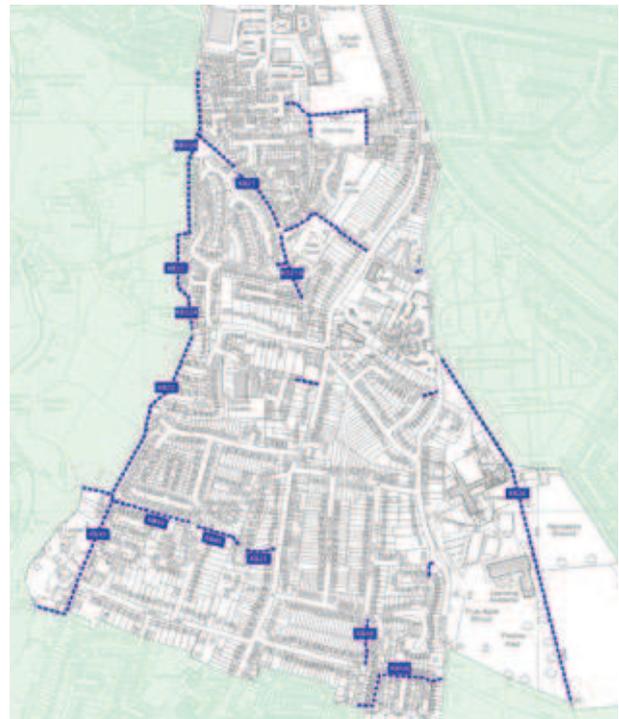
2.16 Recognising that North Loose acts as a major through route for vehicular traffic, the following policies are intended to manage and improve upon the current situation, in order to increase the health and prosperity of people and businesses within the Plan area and the surrounding environs, including Maidstone.

**Pedestrian and cycle links**

- 2.17 The NPPF states, para 41, “Local planning authorities should identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice.” NLNDP also encourages MBC to provide for safe, convenient and secure cycle parking in the centre of town to encourage cycle commuters, as per NPPF 40.
- 2.18 New and improved pedestrian and cycle links, together with safe and secure town centre cycle parking, have the potential to significantly improve the quality of life. Maidstone’s Draft Cycle Strategy encourages an improvement in the level of cycling in the borough as it is a healthy, non-polluting and environmentally friendly mode of transport. It is also timely as recent statistics reveal that Maidstone is now experiencing increasing levels of ill health, childhood and adult obesity, traffic congestion and air pollution.
- 2.19 Investment and commitment is required in order to achieve the Strategy’s aim to increase the proportion of trips made by walking or cycling from 12% to 20% of all trips made in the borough by 2026. A new cycle route linking North Loose to the town centre is an aspiration of the North Loose Neighbourhood Plan.  
The North Loose Area has the great advantage of being within walking and cycling distance of both Maidstone town centre and the open countryside.



- 2.20 However as figure 3 (page 11) shows, cul-de-sacs are widespread in North Loose and there are few through routes within the area. Although this creates a quiet residential environment it has a number of disadvantages. In particular this sort of layout can make way finding difficult, discourages walking and cycling due to the lack of direct links and channels movement onto the over congested Loose Road. In some places footpath connections exist but they are not obvious and signage is poor or the footpaths are poorly maintained.
- 2.21 In discussions with KCC a new cycle route and greenway is proposed (as shown in Fig 1). This does not form part of this plan but is supported by the Forum. This section of proposed route will link people within the NDP area to the town centre and Loose village. Part will utilise an existing footpath which will also be considered for use as a bridleway. The section between Old Drive and Cripple Street is now being delivered.
- 2.22 A Green Living Plan (GLP) will ensure that there is an efficient and consistent environmental approach to new residential dwellings to assist new and existing residents integrate into the community and reduce impacts of new developments. It will include a set of advice and a map showing where and how to access low impact local sustainable aspects of the area such as green spaces, allotments and non-car based routes into Maidstone town centre and surrounding countryside. It is intended to contribute towards wider initiatives for reducing air pollution and resource use as well as improving quality of life, health and well being.



(Above) Figure 2: Plan showing footpaths, bridleways and connecting paths in North Loose

(Left) Figure 1: Proposed new Cycle route and 'greenway'

## Health, Well-being and Transport Alternatives Policies

### HWTA Policy 1: Promotion of Healthy Communities

New development will be expected to provide or contribute towards the provision of infrastructure and other measures that would contribute to the health and well-being of residents subject to an assessment that will include consideration of the development and site-specific issues and viability where necessary.

### HWTA Policy 2: Air Quality

- (a) In addition to meeting the assessment and mitigation policies in the local plan and AQAP, all site promoters are required to show how their proposals will maintain or contribute to an improvement in air quality in North Loose, in particular with regard to NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations.
- (b) Development will be resisted where proposals lead to air pollution above the objective values, in order to protect the health and well-being of residents in the area.
- (c) Items for inclusion in any air quality assessment carried out for the purposes of (a) are set out in Technical Appendix 1: Air Quality Assessment.

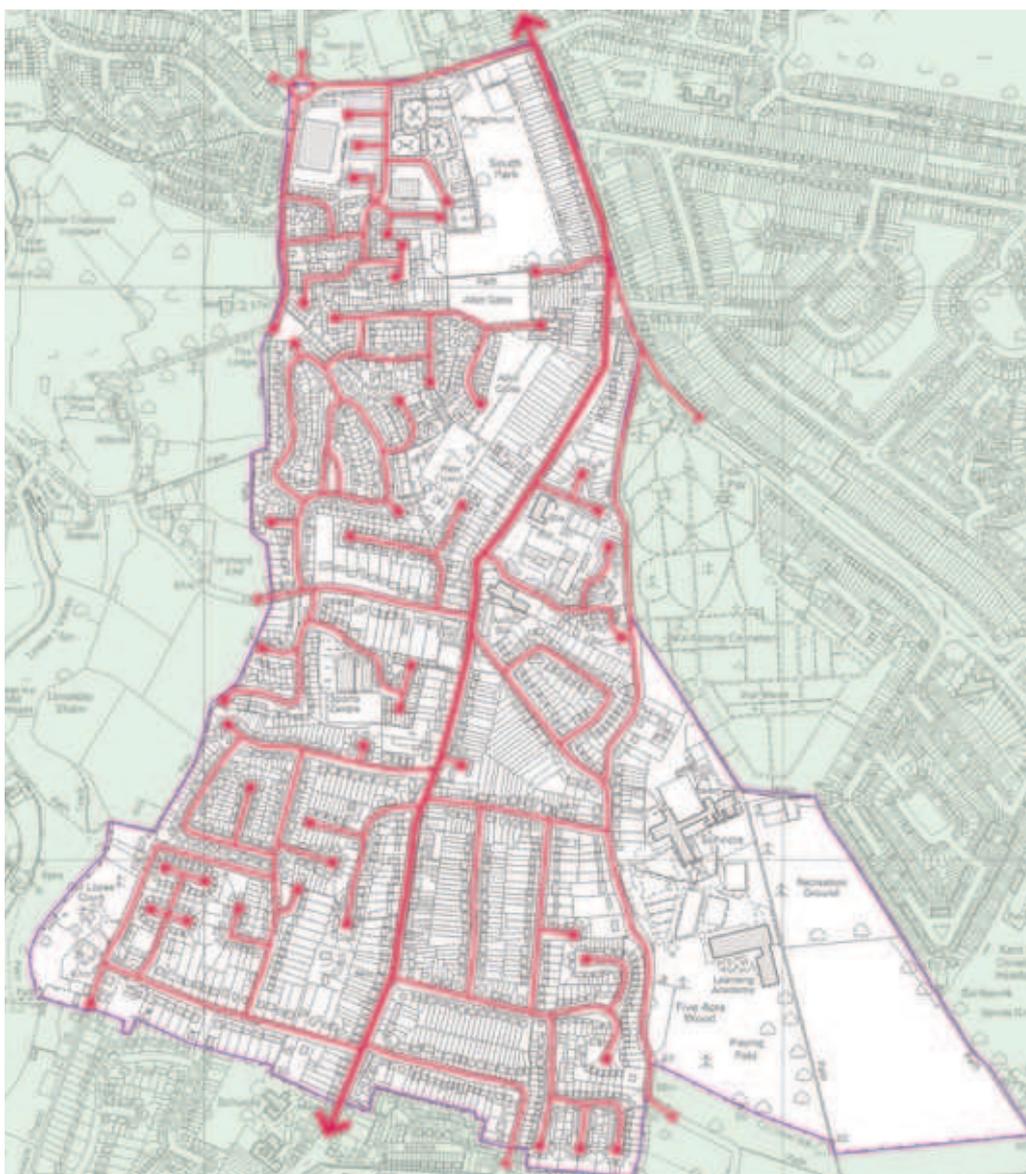


Figure 3

### **HWTA Policy 3: Transport Matters**

Development proposals will be permitted where the cumulative impacts of existing capacity and proposed transport requirements are taken into account at local junctions within the North Loose NDP Area and where residual cumulative traffic impacts of developments are shown not to be severe (ref: para 32 NPPF).

### **HWTA Policy 4: Connectivity, Pedestrian and Cycle Links**

New development should be well connected and demonstrate how it relates to existing pedestrian and cycle routes and take any opportunities available to provide new, or improve existing, convenient, safe and direct links for pedestrians and cyclists to local facilities and Maidstone town centre.

### **HWTA Policy 5: Sustainable Living**

Proposals for new residential development, whether conversions or new build, will be required to submit a Green Living Plan (GLP) with planning applications in order to contribute to a coordinated approach to sustainable living in North Loose.

Items for inclusion in the Green Living Plan are provided in the Technical Appendix 2: Green Living Plan.



*Mangravel Recreation Ground*



Above: Allotments looking north  
Left: South Park

3.1 **T**he area of North Loose has been heavily developed over the last 40 years and the majority of greenfield areas have disappeared, predominantly replaced by housing and a small business park. This extra housing has meant more people needing more leisure and recreation facilities and therefore we need to ensure existing facilities are improved to cater for this demand.

3.2 All that remains to serve a growing population is a park at the northern boundary, a recreation ground on the south-east boundary, an allotment site which is divided by a road, two pieces of ancient woodland and a small open space.

3.3 The main park, South Park, is divided by a road which is the dividing line between our designated area and the Town Ward of Maidstone. The park, owned by Maidstone Borough Council, comprises tennis courts, hockey pitch, skate park and gardens in the Town Ward part, and a car park, three football pitches and children's play area in the North Loose part, with plans for an outside adult gym. The whole park is well used and the southern part offers an alternative pedestrian route to avoid the main road.

3.4 The North Loose Residents Association works closely with Maidstone Borough Council and Friends of South Park to achieve joint aims for the park.

3.5 It is possible that a running track could be incorporated into the park as there is no such facility in the area. The local running club, Maidstone Harriers, has its changing

rooms in the Hockey Clubhouse which is adjacent to the park and therefore this needs to be explored in greater detail.

3.6 Overall, the satisfaction level of people using the park is high and North Loose Residents Association has agreed with Friends of South Park to register this as a community asset in 2016/7.

3.7 The other sports field in the North Loose area is Mangravet Recreation Ground, also owned by Maidstone Borough Council. At one time it was well used with a football pitch and a children's play area, but these facilities need upgrading to restore the Recreation Ground to full use.

3.8 The Recreation Ground, which does not have any parking facilities, backs on to a large housing estate which is outside the North Loose area. Discussions with Maidstone Borough Council planners have assured us there are no plans to build on this site; we have also met with the local ward councillor and set up meetings with local residents to get their views on how this asset could be better used.

3.9 One meeting resulted in requests for a perimeter path around the field, an adult outdoor gym, a larger skateboard area, seats, benches and litter bins.

3.10 Enhancements, including allowing car parking to encourage parents to use the field, better equipment and facilities such as changing rooms will be included in the delivery strategy. These changes would also help to develop a more secure environment.

3.11 North Loose also has a very successful bowls club, established in 1929, with an outdoor green and therefore only used during the summer months. Because of its position on the main Loose Road, parking is always an issue.

3.12 In Melrose Close off Cripple Street, the Y Centre is a leisure centre incorporating a fitness suite, rooms for meetings and a hall for indoor sports, an outdoor floodlit all weather pitch for football and a small café.

3.13 Directly to the south of South Park is an allotment site (123 plots) which is divided by a small residential road. At present there are no vacancies and a waiting list, despite a clever management initiative to divide larger

plots into two when they become available. The southernmost plots are bounded by a footpath which divides them from land owned by South East Water for a small pumping station and covered reservoir. There is also quite a good piece of grassland on this site and if in the future South East Water were to take the decision to vacate this land, it would be ideal to extend the allotments to cater for the requests for this amenity, as well as keeping a green corridor extending from Armstrong Road to nearby Cripple Street.

3.15 North Loose Residents Association acquires small but important pieces of amenity land for the benefit of residents now and in the future. There are two pieces of ancient woodland in our area. Mangravet Wood is already open to the public. We are maintaining and improving public access alongside proper woodland maintenance to encourage more wildlife and the potential for educational visits. The other piece of ancient woodland adjoins a school playing field in Boughton Lane and forms part of a green corridor which is of great importance to the area.

3.16 There are certain areas that should be retained as open space shown on Figure 4. Small plots of land such as Richmond Way are valuable in protecting and contributing

to the cumulative green lung of the area. Whilst outside the Plan area the Loose Valley is considered by local residents to be the jewel in the crown and both the valley and surrounding fields that overlook it are essential to providing the link between urban and rural. Identified by residents as being used and valued, they provide a link with other open spaces and make a cohesive grouping of green areas with an open aspect. The woodlands and green spaces bring the countryside into the area and contribute to its character as being 'where town and country meet'



*Above: Reservoir*

*Below: Mangravet Wood*



# Green Spaces, Sports and Recreation Policies

## GSSR Policy 1: Green Infrastructure

New development that makes a positive contribution to the existing network of green infrastructure or provides an increase in the amount of publicly available green spaces will be supported.

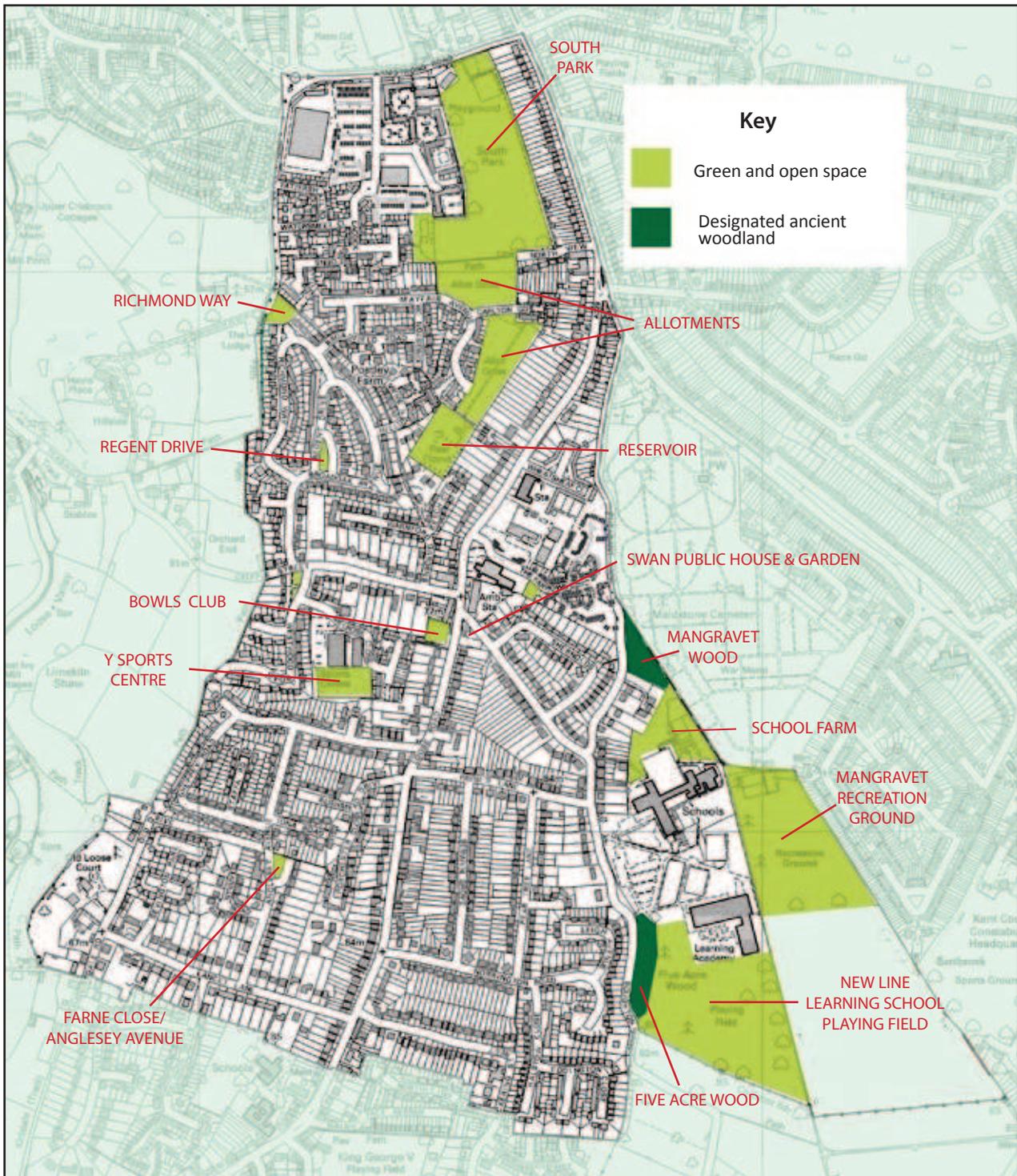


Figure 4: Plan showing existing green and open spaces in the NLRA area

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## **GSSR Policy 2: Green and Other Spaces**

The green spaces, playing fields, allotments, ancient woodlands and other areas used for sports and recreation purposes identified on Figure 4 on page 15 will be conserved and enhanced to maintain and improve the quality of life for residents, to encourage health, recreation and sport opportunities, to encourage opportunities for these areas to be used as an educational resource, to promote biodiversity and to help manage air quality.

Ancillary development relating to the primary use of the green spaces, playing fields, allotments and other areas used for sport and recreation purposes will be supported provided that it does not adversely affect the quality and use of the area.

Proposals for new development which would result in the loss of green and other spaces will not be permitted unless an assessment clearly shows the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements or alternative provision of an equivalent or better quantity and quality would be provided on a suitably located site or the development is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss. Any loss of green and other spaces should take account of the contribution that the area makes to the wider network of spaces and green corridors in the area. Any alternative provision should be made in locations that would ensure that the wider networks and green corridors are maintained and wherever possible enhanced.

Planning permission should be refused for development that results in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodlands unless the need for, and the benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.

Development for essential infrastructure will be supported where the benefits clearly outweigh any harm and there are no other reasonable alternative sites available.

## **GSSR Policy 3: New Public Open Space**

The creation of new public open space will be encouraged throughout the plan area.

On cessation of any operational or functional use of the reservoir and land at Hazlitt Place Reservoir, this site, identified on Figure 4, will be used for open space, allotments or other leisure and recreational uses for the benefit of the community.



*Open space at the lower end of Richmond Way*

#### 4.1 Natural Resources

Nationally the Energy Saving Trust estimates that by 2050, domestic and microgeneration could provide 30-40% of the UK's electricity needs. The Government is also committed to a zero carbon strategy which states that all new homes will be zero carbon from 2016. At the local level Climate Local is a Kent wide initiative supported by Maidstone Borough Council which is working towards a cut in emissions of 2.6% annually and a target of 10% of energy from renewable sources by 2020.

4.2 Domestic scale generation can provide all or a significant proportion of the energy needs of the building to which it is attached or associated. Micro energy generation can provide energy security, help tackle fuel poverty, and in some cases provide extra income for residents as well as addressing wider environmental concerns. A significant number of properties in North Loose have already benefited from improved insulation and installation of solar panels

4.3 Kent is one of the driest parts of England and Wales and this situation is likely to be exacerbated by planned levels of development. The level of water stress for South East water which supplies Maidstone is classified as Serious by the Environment Agency. (Water Stressed Areas Final Classification, July 2013). In view of this Climate Local Kent has set a target to reduce water consumption in Kent from 160 to 140 litres per person per day by 2016.

#### 4.4 Character

In the face of considerable development pressure the neighbourhood has seen a number of housing schemes in recent years which have not integrated successfully with the established character of the area.

4.5 The Character Area Assessment for the Loose Road Area (2008) is a detailed document prepared by Maidstone Borough Council in close consultation with the local community. Further excellent design guidance is provided by the Kent Design Guide. Nevertheless recent years have seen housing developments which integrate poorly with established character in terms of their scale, roof form, landscaping and use of materials.

4.6 Most of North Loose is characterised by two storey development with pitched roofs and bungalows. Traditional materials include stock brick, peg tiles and Kentish ragstone. Away from the Loose Road much of the development has a semi rural feel with features including views to the countryside, mature trees, grass verges and established hedges. Local character is summarised in the table on pages 22/23, which highlights positive features that should inform new development in the area.

#### 4.7 Public realm

Two locations have been identified as a priority for public realm improvements. The areas around the Swan and Wheatsheaf pubs have an important role to play. Both pubs are important local landmarks and the nearby shopping parades provide a valuable amenity. The importance of these locations and scope for improvement



*A typical bungalow in north Loose*



*Recent development in North Loose with PV panels replacing tiles*



*Recent developments which do not reflect local character*

has previously been identified in the Loose Road Character Area Assessment. In both cases these clusters of uses are located in prominent locations on the main road where various routes meet. As North Loose faces more residential development it is important for these local centres to be strengthened and improved in order to meet local need within the area, reduce the need to travel and boost local businesses.





Scope to improve public realm in front of parade of shops



Scope to improve parade of local shops and services

## **SD Policy 1: Public Realm Improvements**

Improvements to the public realm in and around the two centres of the Wheatsheaf Shopping Parade and the Boughton Parade identified in Figure 5 will be encouraged and supported. New development is expected to contribute to enhancement work that could include the provision of street trees, improved shop fronts, high quality surface materials, provision of cycle parking, increased security measures and the removal of street clutter and barriers to pedestrian movement.

## **SD Policy 2: Materials**

Preference will be given to the use of durable, attractive and locally available or reclaimed materials. The use of red and buff stock brick, Kentish ragstone and white or cream painted brickwork and slate roof tiles is encouraged.

## **SD Policy 3: Encouraging Sustainable Development**

New development other than new dwellings which incorporates the use of solar panels and other energy generation technologies will be encouraged. Careful consideration should be given to the impact on heritage assets and buildings of local merit.

Developments of 10 or more dwellings, non-residential or mixed use development as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 will be expected to put in place sustainable drainage systems for the management of run-off unless demonstrated to be inappropriate.

## **SD Policy 4: Lighting**

Lighting associated with any activity including leisure, recreation and business must be managed to reduce energy usage and impact on biodiversity, to reduce light pollution and any potential harm to local residents and to minimise the visual impact on the local character of the area. Therefore it is expected that consideration will be given to any lighting at an early stage of design and planning so that this can be achieved.

## **SD Policy 5: Design of New Housing**

New development must demonstrate how it responds to its context and the established character of the area in which it is located and take account of the Loose Road Character Area Assessment. In particular developments should have regard to typical building form, roof lines, materials, openings and boundary treatments as well as responding well to its context.



Element	Typical examples			
Built form				
Public realm				
Boundaries				
Materials				
Entrances				
Windows				

Table illustrating local character

## Positive features



Building types include terraced cottages, semi detached houses and bigger detached properties in large plots. Houses are predominately two storey with some areas of bungalows. Pitched roofs are typical and features such as chimneys and gables create a varied roofline.



Mature trees make an important contribution to the street scene. Granite sets are used for kerbs and rumble strips to slow cars. Many streets have an informal, semi rural character with features including grass verges, tall hedges and timber fencing. Attractive signage can encourage travelling by foot and bicycle.



Typical and attractive front boundaries include Kentish ragstone walls, carefully detailed brick walls, substantial hedges and white picket fencing. In the more characterful streets such boundaries are used consistently creating a clear separation between the public street and private front gardens.



Typical, natural and attractive materials include Kentish ragstone, buff stock brick, red stock brick detailing, white or cream painted brickwork, Kent peg tiles and slate or clay roof tiles. The best buildings use a limited palette and materials are used to highlight elements such as an entrance, upper storey or bay, rather than being applied in patches as a superficial facade.



The best entrances are clearly visible and easy to access. They also create depth in the building frontage and provide space for inhabitants to personalise e.g. with pot plants. Well designed entrances use quality materials and are carefully detailed. Attractive house numbers, letter boxes, porch lights, door handles, doorbells and sidelight panels all contribute to welcoming and characterful entrances.



Tall sash windows and wide casement windows with careful brick detailing are found in characterful properties. Small dormer windows are also common. In better quality housing the windows are generously proportioned and subdivided with wooded frames. Windows can create depth in the building frontage and a regular rhythm along the street.

# 5 Housing development

## 5.1 Considerations

The local community, through the engagement in this Plan, said they really liked the area and the houses they live in. It has a stable population and local people feel the ambience is good with good local amenities. They value their green spaces and reasonable sized gardens. New developments are too dense and there are some extreme examples of this in the area. Parking provision should be on a case by case basis that considers housing type and locational context including visitor parking to reduce parking on roads and pavements as parking is a major problem. Increased traffic is causing air quality issues (see technical appendix). Developer contributions shall be sought through Community Infrastructure Levy, S.106 and other means, such as developer provision, as highlighted in the Delivery Strategy. In terms of house types, local people say - evidenced by responses to our questionnaire, consultations and the experience of local estate agents - the area needs more sheltered housing and bungalows. This is a fact supported by national statistics. Local age profiles show the largest increase in age range is that of 75 year olds and above. This will support downsizing thereby releasing larger family homes.

5.2 This NDP prioritises building on brownfield sites including, but not exclusively, the following list: Arriva bus depot, Armstrong Road; Papermakers Arms, Loose Road; Scout Headquarters, Pickering Street; Apollo/Celsius site, Loose Road and other potential windfall sites. Garden development is not encouraged in this Plan. The NPPF 2012 specifically excludes gardens from brownfield land definitions and so gardens are not a priority for development. Gardens, especially back gardens, can provide havens of peace and quiet and fresh air. This is particularly the case in North Loose which is characterised by heavy traffic and poor air quality, yet is close to open countryside with an expectation of quiet and low ambient noise and pollution levels. Garden development can erode the character of an area and further reduce the quality of life for neighbouring development through loss of privacy, increased activity in proximity and noise generation from vehicular movement into areas that are normally quiet. Gardens generally maintain a street's character as either leafy or semi-rural. Collectively they contribute to a 'green lung' for the area. Therefore in only exceptional circumstances will the North Loose NDP support development on gardens.

## Housing Development Policies

### HD Policy 1: Garden Development

Garden development will be considered only in exceptional cases where:-

1. There is a demonstrable local need and the development has an acceptable impact on the visual and landscape amenity of the area. This may be acceptable in the case of either new build dwellings or conversion of traditional buildings. In each case ancillary works such as access, outbuildings, curtilage boundaries should similarly have no unacceptable impact on the visual and landscape amenity of the area.
2. The higher density resulting from the development would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.
3. There is no significant loss of privacy, light or outlook for adjoining properties and/or their curtilages;
4. Access of an appropriate standard can be provided to a suitable highway; and
5. There would be no significant increase in noise or disturbance from traffic gaining access to the development These developments will need to consider how the balance of benefits such as any social, economic, environmental or community benefits for the intended occupier or wider local community justifies the proposal and considers the visual impact particularly form, proportion and impacts upon the rhythm of the street.

### HD Policy 2: Housing Types, Mix, Density and Car Parking

A mix of housing types and densities that reflect local needs and demographic changes and respect the context and character of the area in which the development is located will be supported. The development of bungalows or housing to suit the needs of older people is particularly encouraged.

A case by case approach to parking will be adopted that considers housing and locational context including visitor parking.



## Businesses and Employment

- 6.1 North Loose Neighbourhood Forum has undertaken a study of businesses and employment in the area, attached in the Appendix, and which has informed this section.
- 6.2 The Neighbourhood Plan sets out to maintain and encourage the area's small local economy and to support its growth and on-going sustainability of the community. It will support the sustainable growth of all types of businesses and enterprise in the area and will ensure that the current provision of retail and commercial areas is maintained by encouraging positive changes and where a change of use to residential is initially promoted, to explore alternative uses to control changes of use of property purpose-built for commercial use.
- 6.3 Noise and hours of operation are already taken into account by the Local Planning Authority when determining planning applications. Where appropriate conditions are imposed to ensure an adequate level of protection against noise especially generated outside of business hours.
- 6.4 **Business Survey:** During the early stages of the Neighbourhood Planning initiative, the North Loose Residents Association surveyed 58 local businesses in the area. The results showed traffic congestion and delays at traffic lights is a common concern, raised by 31% of respondents. With a number of developments proposed for the neighbourhood, it will be important to consider the impact on traffic especially opportunities to improve upon the current situation within the built up area and considering often limited resources for highway improvements. The next biggest concerns were littering and vandalism.



## Business and Employment Policies

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The Neighbourhood Plan will consider the following issues which could assist businesses to thrive in the area without causing harm to the neighbourhood. It provides greater and locally specific detail supporting emerging Local Plan Policies. Business and hence employment development will be supported in the area with the following considerations:

### **BCE Policy 1: New Retail and Commercial Development**

**New retail or commercial development, including any expansion of existing premises, will be supported throughout the Plan area provided all of the following criteria are met:**

- a) The proposal would maintain or enhance the retail and community functions and the vitality and viability of the two key centres, identified in Figure 5 as Boughton Parade and Wheatsheaf Shopping Parade, and**
- b) it would have an acceptable effect on residential amenity and any landscape or parking, highway and traffic considerations, and**
- c) it would respect the character of its surroundings and local buildings paying special attention to its scale, bulk and design and materials, and taking into account the Loose Road Character Area Assessment.**

### **BCE Policy 2: Change of Use of Commercial and Business Premises**

**Proposals that result in the loss of commercial and business premises that provide a service to the local community such as post offices, chemists, banks and shops will be required to demonstrate that either the use is no longer viable or the proposed use would provide an alternative community use. Where a lack of viability is satisfactorily demonstrated, and the building was originally built as a dwelling, there will be a preference for the unit to revert to residential use.**

# Appendices

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## Appendix of Delivery Partners

MBC Council and Councillors  
KCC Council and Councillor  
Loose Parish Council  
Tovil Parish Council  
Y Centre  
Vine Church  
Valley Conservation Society  
Loose Amenities Association  
Loose Valley Conservation Area Partnership  
Loose Area History Society  
South Maidstone Action on Roads and Transport  
Friends of South Park  
Golding Homes – Eling Court  
Golding Homes – Enterprise Road  
Mangravet residents  
Enterprise Road residents

## Glossary of terms from NPPF 2012, relevant to NLNDP

**Air Quality Management Areas:** Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.

**Ancient woodland:** An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.

**Climate change adaptation:** Adjustments to natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic factors or their effects, including from changes in rainfall and rising temperatures, which moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

**Climate change mitigation:** Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Community Infrastructure Levy:** A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.

**Development plan:** This includes adopted Local Plans, neighbourhood plans and the London Plan, and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. (Regional strategies remain part of the development plan until they are abolished by Order using powers taken in the Localism Act. It is the government's clear policy intention to revoke the regional strategies outside of London, subject to the outcome of the environmental assessments that are currently being undertaken.)

**Economic development:** Development, including those within the B Use Classes, public and community uses and main town centre uses (but excluding housing development).

**Ecological networks:** These link sites of biodiversity importance.

**Ecosystem services:** The benefits people obtain from ecosystems such as, food, water, flood and disease control and recreation.

**Environmental Impact Assessment:** A procedure to be followed for certain types of project to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment.

**Green infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. (from NPPF)

**Green Living Plan:** A light touch and low-cost set of advice and a map showing where and how to access low-impact local sustainable aspects of the local area such as green spaces, allotments and non-car based routes into Maidstone Town Centre and surrounding countryside. It is a step towards contributing to wider initiatives for reducing air pollution and resource use as well as improving quality of life, health and well-being. With reference to *One Planet Living*, the global sustainable initiative developed by BioRegional and WWF.

**Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

**Historic environment:** All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

**Inclusive design:** Designing the built environment, including buildings and their surrounding spaces, to ensure that they can be accessed and used by everyone.

**Local Nature Partnership:** A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, established for the purpose of protecting and improving the natural environment in an area and the benefits derived from it.

**Local planning authority:** The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority apply to the district council, London borough council, county council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority and the Greater London Authority, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

**Local Plan:** The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies or other planning policies, which under the regulations would be considered to be development plan documents, form part of the Local Plan. The term includes old policies which have been saved under the 2004 Act.

**Nature Improvement Areas:** Inter-connected networks of wildlife habitats intended to re-establish thriving wildlife populations and help species respond to the challenges of climate change.

**Neighbourhood plans:** A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

**Older people:** People over retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly, whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing for those looking to downsize from family housing and the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

**Open space:** All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

**People with disabilities:** People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs.

**Planning condition:** A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

**Planning obligation:** A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

**Playing field:** The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010.

**Pollution:** Anything that affects the quality of land, air, water or soils, which might lead to an adverse impact on human health, the natural environment or general amenity. Pollution can arise from a range of emissions, including smoke, fumes, gases, dust, steam, odour, noise and light.

**Previously developed land:** Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

**Public Realm:** publicly accessible space including streets, footpaths, cycle routes and parks.

**Renewable and low carbon energy:** Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

**Setting of a heritage asset:** The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the

ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest:** Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

**Stepping stones:** Pockets of habitat that, while not necessarily connected, facilitate the movement of species across otherwise inhospitable landscapes.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment:** A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

**Sustainable transport modes:** Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

**Sustrans:** Sustrans is a UK charity helping to enable people to travel by foot, bike or public transport.

**Transport assessment:** A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport and what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.

**Transport statement:** A simplified version of a transport assessment where it is agreed the transport issues arising out of development proposals are limited and a full transport assessment is not required.

**Travel plan:** A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives through action and is articulated in a document that is regularly reviewed.

**Wildlife corridor:** Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.

**Windfall sites:** Sites which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process. They normally comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.

#### **ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS**

##### **Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)**

Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines. The boundary of the AQMA is set to define the geographical area that is to be subject to the management measure to be set out in a subsequent action plan, to work towards the achievement of national air quality objectives, rather than to define an area of potential exceedance. (source: URS)

**Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP)** (source: Maidstone Borough Council)



# Notes

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The North Loose Area in 1870



[www.northloose.co.uk](http://www.northloose.co.uk)



Designed by Brian Patey 01622 759093

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## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **COUNCIL**

**13 APRIL 2016**

#### **REPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE ACTING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 MARCH 2016**

#### **1. 2016-17 STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT AND 2013-18 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PLAN REFRESH**

##### **1.1 Issue for Decision**

1.1.1 To adopt the 2016-17 Strategic Assessment and the 2013-18 Community Safety Partnership document refresh to be implemented by the Safer Maidstone Partnership.

##### **1.2 Recommendation Made**

- 1.2.1 (1) That Council agree to adopt the 2016-17 Strategic Assessment to be implemented by the Safer Maidstone Partnership as set out in Appendix 1 to this report; and
- (2) That Council adopt the 2013-18 Community Safety Partnership Plan refresh to be implemented by the Safer Maidstone Partnership as set out in Appendix 2 to this report.

##### **1.3 Reasons for Recommendation**

1.3.1 On 15 March 2016 the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee acting as the Crime and Disorder Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing and Community Services (copy attached at Appendix A) regarding the 2016-17 Strategic Assessment and 2013-18 Community Safety Partnership Plan refresh and agreed to recommend these documents for adoption and implementation by the Safer Maidstone Partnership.

1.3.2 The Committee asked for human trafficking and slavery to be added to the emerging themes.

##### **1.4 Appendices**

- 1.4.1 Appendix A – Report of the Head of Housing and Community Services to Community, Housing and Environment Committee acting as the Crime and Disorder Committee  
Appendix 1 – 2016-17 Strategic Assessment  
Appendix 2 – 2013-18 Community Safety Partnership Plan Refresh

# Community, Housing & Environment

## March 15<sup>th</sup> 2016

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

**No**

## 2016-17 Strategic Assessment & 2013-18 Community Safety Partnership Plan refresh

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Council
<b>Lead Director or Head of Service</b>	John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Nicolas Rathbone, Community Safety Partnerships Officer
<b>Classification</b>	Non-exempt
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards

### This report makes the following recommendations to the final decision-maker:

1. That the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee recommend to Council that the 2016-17 Strategic Assessment is adopted and implemented by the Safer Maidstone Partnership.
2. That the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee recommend to Council that the 2013-18 Community Safety Partnership document refresh is adopted and implemented by the Safer Maidstone Partnership.

### This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- The Strategic Assessment will continue to create safer communities and deter and reduce crime & anti-social behaviour.
- It will contribute to the delivery of the Strategic Plan priorities; for Maidstone to be a decent place to live and Corporate and Customer Excellence.
- The Community Safety Partnership Plan also supports tackling disadvantage and building stronger communities.

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Safer Maidstone Partnership	February 24 <sup>th</sup> 2016
Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	March 15 <sup>th</sup> 2016
Council	April 13 <sup>th</sup> 2016

# 2016-17 Strategic Assessment & 2013-18 Community Safety Partnership Plan refresh

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update the Committee on the work of the Safer Maidstone Partnership since last year and ask for the two aforementioned documents to be accepted for implementation.
- 

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Maidstone Community Safety Strategic Assessment is a report published by the council each year as required under the Crime and Disorder act 1998. The act requires Local Authorities in conjunction with key partners to produce a detailed crime and disorder audit. This identifies community safety issues, emerging trends and future priorities for the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

2.2 The Maidstone Community Safety Plan 2013-18 is a five year rolling document, which highlights how the SMP plans to tackle local community safety issues that matter to the local community. The plan is revised annually through reviewing information set out in the Strategic Assessment which ensures that current issues can be taken into account and used to direct the SMP's strategy.

2.3 Last year's Strategic Assessment raised the following priorities:

- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
- Reducing Re-offending
- Road Safety (Killed or seriously injured)
- Substance Misuse
- Violent Crime – Domestic Abuse
- Violent Crime – Night-Time Economy

Emerging themes that occurred through the year were:

- Safeguarding, educating and engaging young people (Child Sexual Exploitation and Prevent)
- New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) Legal highs
- Self-Neglect and Hoarding
- Victim support and restorative justice

2.4 Our priorities for this year have been extracted from a wide variety of information shared with our partners and represent the most important issues to focus on this

(2015/16) year. Based on the information in the Strategic Assessment, it is recommended that the Committee confirm the following 2016/17 priorities:

- Violent Crime (specifically Domestic Abuse and Night Time Economy)
- Substance Misuse
- Reduce Re-offending
- Road Safety – Killed & Seriously Injured
- Community Resilience (emerging issues around CSE, Prevent, SOC and Safeguarding)

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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

3.1 Do nothing (not recommended). This is not a recommended option as the data sourced from the Kent Safer Communities portal shows that some community safety trends have changed. Other emerging issues need to be tackled within the partnership and if not picked up by the SMP, this will potentially result in more victims of crime, especially amongst the most vulnerable of society.

3.2 Support the identified priorities for 2016/17 so they can be implemented and developed by the SMP. These priorities have been clearly evidenced and some also raised by other Community Safety Partnerships around the county. This assists with cross borough interventions and valuable information sharing around similar issues.

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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 Move forward with the acceptance and implementation of the listed priorities. These will be delivered under the umbrella of the Safer Maidstone Partnership. The annual Strategic Assessment and refresh of the Partnership Plan demonstrate that issues do change and even emerge between assessments. Often this is as a result of partnership working targeting specific issues or crime types. It also shows that keeping up to date with current issues allows partners to be at the forefront of innovation and try to keep within one step of the perpetrators of crime.

4.2 It is recommended that ASB is removed as a priority based on a continued reduction in ASB and the mandatory legislation and partnership working that is in place. It is advised that given the importance of ASB, support is continued and made available through the existing CSU meetings and referral pathways. ASB is more of a service lead response than a targeted project based intervention. The sub group shall remain but will meet when a Community Trigger is prompted and if there is an emergence of new ASB powers.

**5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

5.1 Both reports have been sent out to members of the SMP for consultation. These comments have been carefully considered and the reports updated accordingly in line with the desired direction of the majority of the partnership. The comments mainly related to specific wording within the documents and changes made to avoid confusion or misrepresentation of data. Other responses have queried where certain issues would sit best in the priorities. They will be discussed further after sign off as this do not affect the SMP’s response to them.

**6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

6.1 Following final approval from Council and implementation of the decision, the Strategic Assessment and Partnership Plan will be disseminated to all partners for their information and for action through the priority subgroups. This year’s Police & Crime Commissioner’s community grant will then be able to be advertised externally. Part of the criteria for bids is their alignment with the SMP’s priorities and applications will need to be submitted, sifted and a report sent to the PCC’s office for invoicing by May 27<sup>th</sup>.

**7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The Community Safety Partnership Plan will contribute to the delivery of the Strategic Plan priorities; for Maidstone to be a decent place to live and Corporate and Customer Excellence. In addition, the Community Safety Partnership Plan supports the delivery of Tackling Disadvantage and Building Stronger Communities.	Head of Housing and Community Services
<b>Risk Management</b>	None.	Head of Housing and Community Services
<b>Financial</b>	All Community Safety Grant funding is allocated directly to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) who uses this money to target her identified priorities and support the ongoing delivery of the Crime Plans. Having evidenced and demonstrated its ongoing successes, Maidstone Borough Council attracted PCC funding of £37,104 for 2016-17. However, the plans and strategies	Head of Finance and Resources

	detailed within the plan cover a wide range of services provided by the Council and partner agencies with the majority of activity being either mainstream funded or funded via other grants or allocations not directly allocated to community safety.	
<b>Staffing</b>	The priorities within the Plan cross cut the agencies that make up the Safer Maidstone Partnership. Delivery against the priorities will be via mainstream activity and any grant funding that the borough is able to secure, including this year's Community Safety Grant allocation.	Head of HR Shared Service
<b>Legal</b>	<p>Sections 5 to 7 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (the 1998 Act), headed "Crime and Disorder Strategies", require "responsible authorities" to comply with section 6 of the 1998 Act which states that "responsible authorities" shall formulate and implement;</p> <p>a) A strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder in the area; and</p> <p>b) A strategy for combating the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in the area; and</p> <p>c) A strategy for the reduction of re-offending in the area.</p> <p>By virtue of section 5(1)(a) of the 1998 Act, the Council is the "responsible authority". By completing an annual refresh of the Community Safety Plan based on the findings of a comprehensive Strategic Assessment, Maidstone is fulfilling its statutory requirement. There are reputational, environmental, economical and legal risks to the Council for not pro-actively pursuing an improvement in crime and disorder levels. The recommendations in this report recognise the importance of constructive dialogue with the partner organisations comprising the Community Safety Partnership and also the importance of coordinated and collaborative working.</p>	Head of Legal Partnership
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	The benefits of delivery against the plan will apply across the Maidstone borough, although by adopting an evidence based approach more benefit should be felt in areas where identified problems are greatest.	Policy & Information Manager
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	None.	Head of Housing and

		Community Services
<b>Community Safety</b>	The Community Safety team is under the reporting line of the Community Partnerships and Resilience Manager. The focus is strongly on preventative work while continuing to be co-located and working closely in partnership with the police and other community safety related partners.	Head of Housing and Community Services
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	None.	Head of Housing and Community Services
<b>Procurement</b>	None.	Head of Finance and Resources
<b>Asset Management</b>	None.	Head of Housing and Community Services

## 8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Strategic Assessment 2016-17
- Appendix II: SMP Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-18



Strategic Assessment  
2016-17

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## 1. Executive Summary

### 1.1 What is a Strategic Assessment?

Locally, our CSP is known as the 'Safer Maidstone Partnership' (SMP).

The assessment will also look at the SMP's progress against the priorities set last year, and evaluate the effectiveness of the work undertaken. This document is reviewed annually and agreed by the Safer Maidstone Partnership in March each year. It is also independently assessed by Kent CSU.

### 1.2 Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP)

The SMP brings together people from local government, the NHS, the police, the fire service, probation, local businesses, housing providers and the voluntary and community sector to work as a team to tackle crime.

Priorities Identified from the last strategic assessment were:

- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
- Reducing Re-offending
- Road Safety (Killed or seriously injured)
- Substance Misuse
- Violent Crime – Domestic Abuse
- Violent Crime – Night-Time Economy

Emerging themes that occurred through the year:

- Safeguarding, educating and engaging young people (Child Sexual Exploitation and Prevent)
- New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) Legal highs
- Self-Neglect and Hoarding
- Victim support and restorative justice

These priorities were closely aligned with the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's crime plan and that of the Kent County Council community safety agreement to ensure a continuity of strategy locally. Consideration has also been given to the Kent Police Control strategy which has seen the emergence of the following themes:

#### **Counter Terrorism and Domestic Extremism**

Threats exist both in terms of an attack by foreign-influenced terror groups, and from individuals returning from fighting abroad. An emergence of the Prevent strategy underpins the work planned to tackle extremism both from radicalisation to far right wing extremism.

#### **Child Abuse & Exploitation**

Exploitation refers to activity which makes a gain for an individual or organisation. Sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation are the most common reasons for young people to be trafficked. Threats within this area are the production of indecent images or videos; online abuse; and exploitation of a child victim by individuals who are unrelated to them, or by groups or gangs.

#### **Human Trafficking**

Human trafficking is the movement of a person from one place to another into conditions of exploitation, using deception, coercion, the abuse of power or the abuse of someone's vulnerability. It is possible to be a victim of trafficking even if your consent has been given to being moved.

### **Modern Slavery**

Modern slavery is a brutal form of organised crime in which people are treated as commodities and exploited for criminal gain. Victims may have entered the United Kingdom illegally, using forged documentation or they may be British citizens living in the United Kingdom.

### **Gangs**

The Government defines a gang as ‘a group who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a noticeable group, and engage in criminal activity and violence. They may also identify with or have claim over territory; and/or be in conflict with other, similar gangs.’

In the context of the Control Strategy and wider police work, a gang relates to a group who carry out criminal activity and violence; rather than a group which congregate in an area causing anti-social behaviour such as noise, drinking or the misuse of illegal substances such as cannabis or ‘legal’ highs such as nitrous oxide.

Intelligence shows that members of London-based gangs travel into Kent and other counties to sell drugs, often exploiting vulnerable individuals and using their properties to deal drugs from. Violence can also occur between rival gangs, or as punishment for unpaid debts.

### **Organised Acquisitive Crime**

An Organised Criminal Network is a group of individuals who persistently commit crime in order to gain from their activities in some way; either in terms of material wealth or items to depict status.

There can be crossover between whether a group is a ‘gang’ or an Organised Criminal Network, however differences are primarily about the level of criminality, organisation, planning, and control.

### **Domestic Abuse, serious violence, and sexual offences**

The CSP has acknowledged the importance of tackling domestic abuse since the Partnership was formed, and the Control Strategy recognises that crimes committed by intimate partners or family members account for around a third of all violent crime.

## **1.3 Methodology**

Data for this year’s Strategic Assessment has been sourced by the Kent Community Safety Unit from a variety of statutory partners including Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS), Health, Probation and KCC Services. They are available in the Partnership data sets section on the Kent Safer Communities portal.

It is important to note that most of the data relating to crime and disorder collated for this strategic assessment covers the period October 2014 – September 2015 unless otherwise stated. It should also be noted that changes to crime definitions in 2013 and changes to data collection practices has meant that comparisons before 2014 were not possible. The data in this assessment will be used to identify trends in criminal activity in Maidstone and will be cross referenced with other districts in Kent and previous Maidstone data sets to highlight specific issues unique to Maidstone.

## **1.4 Demographic and Economic Information**

### **Population profile**

The latest population figures from the 2014 Mid-year population estimates show that there are 161,800 people living in Maidstone Borough. This population size makes Maidstone Borough the largest Kent local authority district area.

75% of the borough’s population live in the Maidstone urban area with the remaining 25% living in the surrounding rural area and settlements.

District	Total unemployed as at September 2015	Resident based rate %	Change since previous month		Change since last year	
			Number	%	Number	%
Maidstone	1,171	1.2%	12	1.0%	-86	-6.8%
Kent	12,907	1.4%	105	0.8%	-3,255	-20.1%
Great Britain	751,795	1.9%	-29,169	-3.9%	-334,498	-38.0%

Source: NOMIS - JSA Claimant Count; DWP Stat Xplore Universal Credit Claimants

### Unemployment rates

Maidstone's claimant rate is currently 1.2%. This is slightly lower than the county average of 1.4% and is considerably lower than the national average of 1.9%. The majority of those unemployed are aged between 16-24, this age group accounts for 26% of all those unemployed in Maidstone.

### 1.5 Headline information aligned to key priorities 2014-2015:

- ASB – a reduction of 9.1% in Maidstone. Since 2012, recorded ASB incidents in the borough have fallen by 22.7% from 2,489 in September 2012 to 1,925 in September 2015
- Substance Misuse - a reduction in offences of 35.3% in Maidstone. This equates to a reduction of 152 recorded drug offences since September 2014 to September 2015
- Violent crime (domestic abuse) – an increase of 28.6%
- Violent crime – an increase of 12.5%
- Road Safety (killed or serious injured) – an increase of 5.5% (over two years 2013-2015)
- Reoffending rate – Due to the division of the Probation services into the National Probation Service (NPS) and the Kent, Surrey & Sussex Crime Rehabilitation Company (KSS CRC) data around re-offending will not be released by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) until 2017. However integrated Offender Management (IOM) data shows a 32% reduction in offending for the West division cohort of prolific offenders.

## 2. Total Recorded Crime

### 2.1 Total recorded Crime in Maidstone October 2014-September 2015

This section looks at total crime data and is followed by a more detailed analysis of the crime categories that have formed Maidstone's strategic assessment.

All crime in the borough fell by 2.5% in the period October 2014 to September 2015 compared with the same period the previous year, from a total of 9,410 crimes to 9,178 crimes, This equates to 56.7 offences per 1,000 population in Maidstone. When compared to the county, Maidstone has a below average number of offences per 1,000 of the population and is ranked 6th out of all of the districts in Kent.

## 2.2 Total recorded crime per 1,000 population in Kent October 2014-September 2015

Area	No. offences	of	2015 rate per 1,000 pop.	2014 rate per 1,000 pop.	County ranking
Tunbridge Wells	5040		43.4	43.2	1
Tonbridge & Malling	5633		45.3	45.7	2
Sevenoaks	5592		47.5	48.2	3
Ashford	6361		51.6	57.5	4
Canterbury	8997		57.1	58.7	5
Maidstone	9178		56.7	59	6
Dover	6537		57.8	59.1	7
Shepway	6197		56.6	59.6	8
Swale	9533		67.7	73.9	9
Gravesham	7243		68.8	74.2	10
Dartford	7986		78.1	82.7	11
Thanet	11346		82	91	12
KCC Total	89643		59.4	62.7	
Medway	19260		70.3	67	
Kent	108903		61	63.4	

The table below identifies the different categories of crime reported in Maidstone and highlights the main areas where crime has increased/decreased.

## 2.3 The table below shows the volume of crimes by type within Maidstone for October 2014 – September 2015 and the same time period in 2013-2014

Category	October 2014 to September 2015	October 2013 to September 2014	Difference	% change
Victim based crime	8483	8457	26	0.30%
Violent Crime	2945	2612	333	12.70%
- Violence Against The Person	2643	2349	294	12.50%
- Sexual Offences	224	203	21	10.30%
- Robbery	78	60	18	30%
Burglary Dwelling	361	468	-107	-22.90%
Burglary Other than Dwelling	505	568	-63	-11.10%
Vehicle Crime	601	642	-41	-6.40%
- Theft Of Motor Vehicle	129	160	-31	-19.40%
- Theft From Motor Vehicle	472	482	-10	-2.10%
Vehicle Interference	81	60	21	35%
Theft and Handling	2620	2728	-108	-4%
- Shoplifting	1056	1108	-52	-4.70%
- Theft of Pedal cycle	111	138	-27	-19.60%
- Other Theft	1453	1482	-29	-2%
Criminal Damage	1370	1379	-9	-0.70%
Crimes against society	695	953	-258	-27.10%
Drug Offences	279	431	-152	-35.30%
Possession of weapons	47	47	-	-
Public order offences	228	305	-77	-25.20%
Other crimes	141	170	-29	-17.10%
All crime	9178	9410	-232	-2.50%

The data clearly illustrates a reduction in crimes against society, theft and handling and vehicle crime; (burglary -22.90%, public order -25.20%, drug offences -35.30% & TOMV -19.40%); there has however been a significant increase in violent crime which could partly be due to new police recording measures.

Robbery and Vehicle interference has also increased by 30% and 35% compared with the previous year however this is only represented by an increase of 18 offences for robbery and 21 offences over the year for vehicle interference.

Legal definition of vehicle interference

Criminal attempts act 1981 section 9

(1) "A person is guilty of the offence of vehicle interference if he interferes with a motor vehicle or trailer or with anything carried in or on a motor vehicle or trailer with the intention that an offence specified in subsection (2) below shall be committed by himself or some other person."

(2) The offences mentioned in subsection (1) above are:

(a) Theft of the motor vehicle or trailer or part of it.

(b) Theft of anything carried in or on the motor vehicle or trailer; and

(c) The offence under Section 12(1) of the Theft Act 1968 (taking and driving away without consent).

A reduction in the offence of motor vehicle theft could be attributable to the increase in the number of offences recorded related to vehicle interference.

### 3. Violent Crime

#### 3.1 Total Violent Crime

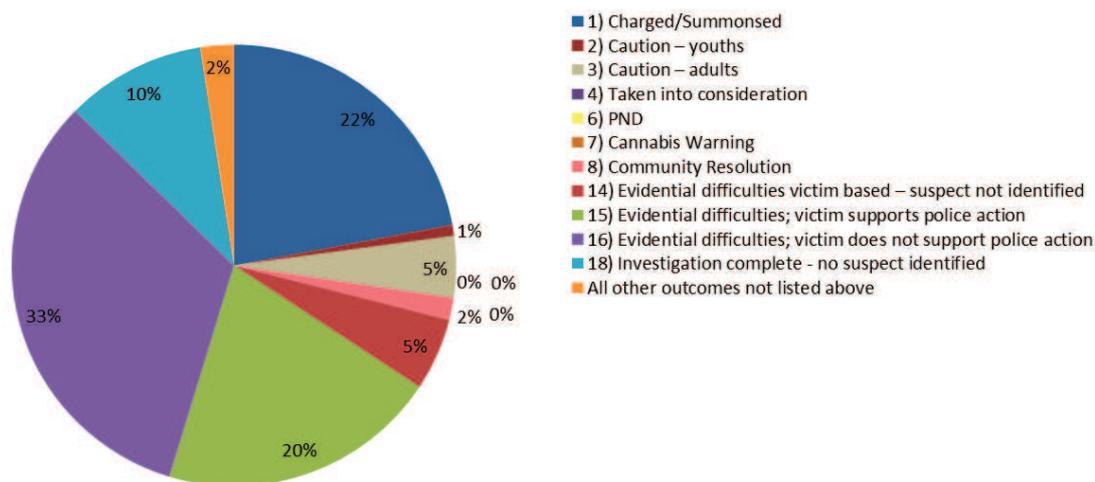
'Violent Crime' covers a wide range of offences including murder, manslaughter, GBH, ABH and other assaults without injury, threats to kill, harassment, sexual offences and robbery. Maidstone has seen an increase of 12.7% in violent crime compared with the period of October 2013 – September 2014 it is important to mention that this may be attributable to a change in police recording. Whilst Maidstone has seen the 4th highest yearly rise in Violent crime per 1,000 of the population in Kent Maidstone is still ranked 6th in the county for violent crime and is lower than the county average.

#### Violent Crime October 2014-September 2015

Area	No. of offences 2015	No. of offences 2014	% Change	2015 offences per 1,000 pop.	County Ranking
Sevenoaks	1283	1213	5.8	10.9	1
Tonbridge & Malling	1579	1376	14.8	12.7	2
Tunbridge Wells	1605	1395	15.1	13.8	3
Ashford	1893	1858	1.9	15.4	4
Canterbury	2849	2483	14.7	18.1	5
<b>Maidstone</b>	<b>2943</b>	<b>2612</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>6</b>
Swale	2843	2657	7	20.2	7
Dover	2300	2161	6.4	20.3	8
Shepway	2241	2110	6.2	20.5	9
Gravesham	2244	2278	-1.5	21.3	10
Dartford	2215	2109	5	21.7	11
Thanet	4024	3750	7.3	29.1	12
KCC Total	28026	26002	7.8	18.6	
Medway	6367	5642	12.9	23.2	
Kent	34393	31644	8.7	19.3	

The majority of violent crime offences occurring in Maidstone within the 12 months ending 30th September fell under the 'Violence against the person' (VATP) category. This category covers offences ranging in severity from assault without injury to murder, however does not include robberies or sexual offences. There were 2643 VATP offences in Maidstone spanning the same period of time. It should be noted that many VATP offences will be minor assaults and on further investigation some of these will be found to be accidental contact with no malicious intent, rather than situations where force has been used intentionally.

This is demonstrated by the low number of charges in December 2015 where only 22% of perpetrators were charged or summonsed as a result of a violence against a person offence.



### 3.2 Levels of Violence in the Borough Wards April 2015–September 2015

High street ward had the highest number of recorded violent crimes in the borough with 452 incidents reported alongside Fant with 108, Heath 103, Parkwood 100 and Shepway North 95. The Wards with the lowest levels of violent crime were Loose and Leeds with 9 reported incidents each, Barming 10 and Detling and Thurnham 12. It should be noted that for this assessment there is no differential for offences in the High Street ward, to say if they were related to residential addresses or as is most probable for the majority, to businesses, shopping areas and the night time economy in general. Future assessments will separate this data so as not to portray such a skewed view of the ward.

Maidstone has a highly active night time economy which generates around £60 million each year; this is considered to be a key contributing factor to the heightened levels of violence in the High street ward.

### 3.3 Violent Crime - Night time economy

Violent crime has seen a year on year increase in Maidstone and it is clear that greater focus needs to be provided to ensure violence is reduced. Current work undertaken to reduce the levels of violent crime in Maidstone can be seen below.

- In conjunction with Pubwatch, excluded violent individuals from the Town Centre premises.
- Shared information proactively from CCTV control room and Kent Police via MaidSafe network radios provided to door staff of key premises.
- Supported the town centre Street Pastors initiative.
- Used CCTV to protect and prevent crime.
- Enforced Alcohol Control Zones.
- Supported the county-wide Hate Crime Reporting Line.

Whilst the partnership delivers these proactive activities, further work needs to be done to ensure a reduction in violent crime. The emergence of NPS and rise in practices such as pre loading are all contributing factors that add towards the increase in violent crime.

### **3.4 Domestic Abuse**

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- *psychological*
- *physical*
- *sexual*
- *financial*
- *emotional*

Domestic abuse has and continues to account for a considerable proportion of violent crime; nationally it is acknowledged that DA attributes to 25% of all violent crime, as well as being a fundamental feature of other offences such as criminal damage. Its prioritisation is not just in response to the serious nature of the behaviour involved but is also necessitated by the volume of incidents that are being recorded – made all the more significant as this is one crime category that has historically suffered from considerable under-reporting.

Domestic abuse sits as both a local, county and national priority which is supported through local mechanisms such as the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment conference (MARAC) which provides support and protection to families and individuals in high risk domestic abuse situations. There is also the commissioning of the independent domestic violence advisor service (IDVA) which provides support and guidance to victims of DA. Each district also delivers a 'one-stop shop' where all victims of domestic abuse can receive advice and support.

#### **Recorded Incidents of Domestic Abuse and Repeat Victims**

Between the periods October 2014 - September 2015, Maidstone has recorded 2278 incidences of Domestic abuse which translates to 14.1 offences per 1,000 of the population. This is below the Kent average of 16.3 and ranks Maidstone 5th place in the county.

Area	Domestic abuse incidents			% of repeat victims	
	Oct 2014-Sept 2015			Apr 2013- Mar-14	
	Volume	Per 1,000 pop.	Ranking	Apr 2014- Mar-15	
Sevenoaks	1194	10.1	1	23.80%	22.80%
Tunbridge Wells	1319	11.4	2	25.00%	25.80%
Tonbridge and Malling	1519	12.2	3	26.20%	25.40%
Canterbury	2125	13.5	4	24.90%	23.90%
<b>Maidstone</b>	<b>2278</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>24.30%</b>	<b>26.00%</b>
Ashford	1753	14.2	6	24.20%	37.30%
Shepway	1695	15.5	7	25.00%	25.40%
Dartford	1638	16	8	24.70%	23.40%
Dover	1863	16.5	9	24.60%	25.00%
Swale	2622	18.6	10	24.90%	23.40%
Gravesham	2042	19.4	11	25.20%	23.90%
Thanet	3417	24.7	12	25.00%	25.10%
KCC Districts	23465	15.5		24.80%	25.60%
Medway	5613	20.5		25.70%	24.60%
Kent	29078	16.3		25.00%	25.30%

Whilst our incidences are lower than the average in the county our rate for repeat victims is the second highest in Kent with a 26% rate of repeat victimisation. Domestic abuse is a complex crime which puts great pressure on victims to return to their relationships on the basis of fear, low self-esteem, family ties and a hope for change.

It is widely recognised that increased recorded incidents of domestic abuse are not necessary indicators of a worsening situation. Since domestic abuse is such an under-reported crime increased reports indicate that DA victims feel more confident to come forward to report the abuse they are suffering. Many of our partners on the domestic abuse forum champion domestic abuse in their respective services encouraging clients and service users to be open about their circumstances and feel confident in the services that can support them to move out of domestically abusive relationships.

### One-Stop Shops

Domestic Abuse One Stop Shops offer free advice, information and support from a range of agencies under one roof to help victims of domestic abuse. Maidstone's one stop shop is currently hosted at the gateway and provides advice on housing, legal matters, policing and specialist DA advice.

Information regarding the take-up of One-Stop Shop services has been provided by the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy Group for the 12 month period July 2014-June 2015, and previous 12 month periods.

Table 1:

Location	No of visitors 2010/11	No of visitors 2011/12	No of visitors 2012/13	No of visitors 2013/14	No of visitors 2014/15	% increase/decrease in visitors (compared to previous year)
Ashford	75	169	239	316	317	0.0
Canterbury	169	262	214	232	253	9.1
Dartford	60	46	52	74	116	56.8
Dover	102	54	83	81	86	6.2
Gravesend	52	31	52	64	134	109.4
Herne Bay <sup>1</sup>	n/a	n/a	43	125	147	17.6
Maidstone	n/a	20	65	97	156	60.8
Medway	128	146	147	287	508	77.0
Shepway	143	120	91	165	183	10.9
Sheerness <sup>2</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	14	n/a
Sittingbourne	107	123	140	146	200	37.0
Sevenoaks <sup>3</sup>	6	12	16	25	16	46.0
Thanet	49	71	117	215	223	3.7
Tonbridge <sup>4</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	55	687.5
Tunbridge Wells <sup>5</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	n/a
<b>Total</b>	891	1054	1259	1835	2410	31.3

<sup>1</sup> Opened in November 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Converted from a drop in service in May 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Swanley opened twice a month until January 2013; weekly service thereafter. Moved to Sevenoaks in November 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Opened in April 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Opened in November 2014, closed in April 2015.

Maidstone has seen a 60% increase in attendance at the one stop shop since last year which is the 4th highest increase in the county. 86% of all visitors were from Maidstone with the remaining 14% coming from other districts, 14% of all visitors made a repeat visit compared with the previous year where 22% of attendees made a repeat visit.

80% of visitors described themselves as white British, 1% didn't mention what background they were from and 19% identified themselves as Asian or Asian British. This is the highest percentage of Asian or Asian British grouping in Kent attending the one stop shop.

According to the analysis undertaken by the Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse strategy group, 74% of all visitors were made aware of the service through local agencies, with 14% hearing about the service through family and friends.

### Multi-Agency risk assessment conference (MARACs)

MARACs are meetings where information about high-risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies. By bringing all agencies together at a MARAC, a risk-focused, co-ordinated safety plan can be drawn together to support the victim. MARACs now cover all persons aged 16 years and over.

Maidstone has had 146 MARAC cases between the periods of October 2014 - September 2015, 30 of those cases were repeat cases, this equates to 21% of all cases, which is lower than the county average of 26.37%.

### 3.5 Adolescent to Parent Violence (APV)

APV is a form of domestic abuse inflicted by a child onto their parent. APV is usually perpetrated by a male child who victimises the mother.

APV is widely recognised by practitioners who work with families across a range of support services. However, it is only very recently that policy has begun to be developed to specifically address the problem. As a result, it is not usually officially documented and therefore does not currently appear in any public records or figures. Evidence of the extent of the problem is therefore piecemeal and developing incrementally.

Reports through the local early help teams, social services and troubled families have all identified APV to be an issue in Maidstone.

Whilst there is no current evidence to suggest perpetrators of APV grow into adult offenders it is highly likely that the learnt behaviour is carried on into adult relationships. It is recommended that APV is integrated into the SMP's DA priorities as a way of reducing future and current unreported offending.

#### Violent Crime - domestic abuse

The Safer Maidstone Partnership has put considerable effort into raising the awareness of domestic abuse in the borough and has provided expert knowledge to local agencies. The SMP has also put in practical measures at the home of victims to keep them safe from their abuser. Below are the projects that have been delivered by the SMP.

- Partners have continued to run regular seasonal awareness campaigns aligned with national campaigns.
- Work Place Health employee awareness campaign launched.
- Supported the Freedom programme and Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service.
- Facilitated support for Specialist Domestic Violence Court workers.
- Promoted and supported the Community Domestic Abuse Programme (CDAP).
- Referred all High Risk cases to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).
- Provided support to male and female victims of DA through Choices DA services.
- Promoted the DA Schools Project (SAFE).
- Provided support for male offenders wishing to rehabilitate.
- Helped facilitate the Sanctuary Scheme and assisted 49 victims to stay in their properties.
- Increased referrals for domestic abuse victims who are street homeless.
- Assisted in providing a domestic abuse One Stop Shop in the borough.
- Domestic Homicide review training undertaken by Community Safety Unit.
- Delivered targeted training to internal and external teams and supported the process of creating champion roles.

**Due to the high levels of domestic abuse and repeat incidents, recommendation is made that Violent Crime (domestic abuse) remains as a priority for the partnership.**

## 4. Anti-Social behaviour

### 4.1 Anti-Social Behaviour in Maidstone

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, requires responsible authorities to consider crime and disorder (including antisocial behaviour and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment).

Under the ASB, Crime & Policing Act 2014, anti-social behaviour is described as:

- a) conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person,  
 (b) conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or  
 (c) conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

Maidstone has seen a yearly reduction in ASB largely as a result of the great partnership working that is delivered across the Borough. Currently the council and its partners:

- Identified repeat and vulnerable victims through the Weekly Partnership ASB Briefing.
- Sought ASB/Injunction orders where appropriate.
- 5 action days have been held with multiple agencies visiting 4 targeted areas as part of Operation Civic.
- Community Trigger launched as a tool to deal more effectively with ASB through improving investigation techniques.
- Engaged young people in projects, such as Zeroth Gym and Challenger Troop.
- Identified NEET's (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and referred them to Maidstone Engage programme.
- Referred perpetrators to troubled families and early help.
- PredPol launched by Kent Police.
- Worked with partners to maximise environmental protection.
- Carried out targeted substance misuse and mental health support with offenders.
- Supported vulnerable families where self-neglect has led to environmental forms of ASB
- Co-located Golding homes neighbourhood advisor within the CSU to aid information sharing and explore the use of ASB tools
- Increased use of new ASB tools by all partners including early interventions, criminal behaviour orders, injunctions, community protection notices and dispersal powers.
- Consulted on a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for the town centre
- Task and finish groups set up throughout the year to deal with specific ASB issues.

Maidstone currently has the 5th lowest rate of ASB in Kent and has seen a 1.9% reduction in the reporting of ASB. That means currently there are 22.3 offences of ASB per 1,000 of the population, this is lower than the Kent average of 26.5 offences per 1,000 of the population.

	Oct 2012- Sep-13	Oct 2013- Sep-14	Oct 2014- Sep-15	13/14 to 14/15 % change	2014/15 per 1,000 population	Ranking
Ashford	3191	1850	1641	-11.3	13.3	1
Sevenoaks	2297	2141	1970	-8	16.7	2
Tunbridge Wells	2534	2302	2236	-2.9	19.3	3
Tonbridge & Malling	2598	2533	2493	-1.6	20	4
<b>Maidstone</b>	<b>4026</b>	<b>3679</b>	<b>3608</b>	<b>-1.9</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>5</b>
Dartford	2895	2949	2592	-12.1	25.4	6
Canterbury	4755	4353	4240	-2.6	26.9	7
Shepway	3795	3163	2940	-7.1	26.8	8
Swale	4303	4088	4059	-0.7	28.8	9
Gravesham	3807	3616	3355	-7.2	31.9	10
Dover	4002	3700	3690	-0.3	32.6	11
Thanet	5988	6160	5435	-11.8	39.3	12
<b>KCC Districts</b>	<b>44191</b>	<b>40534</b>	<b>38259</b>	<b>-5.6</b>	<b>25.3</b>	
Medway	10065	9250	8998	-2.7	32.8	
<b>Kent</b>	<b>54256</b>	<b>49784</b>	<b>47257</b>	<b>-5.1</b>	<b>26.5</b>	

The wards most affected by ASB in order of number of offences recorded are High street ward (although no differential between residential reports and public), Fant, East, Parkwood and Shepway South.

In 2015 there were no applications for the Community Trigger in the Maidstone borough.

**Based on the reduction in ASB, the current legislation and partnership working that is in place; it is recommended that ASB is removed as a priority. It is advised that given the importance of ASB, support is continued and made available through the existing CSU meetings and referral pathways but that ASB is more of a service lead response than a targeted project based intervention. The sub group shall remain but will meet when a Community Trigger is prompted and if there is an emergence of new ASB powers.**

## 5. Substance Misuse

### 5.1 Substance Misuse in Maidstone

Substance misuse relates to the use of drugs, alcohol including New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) also known as 'legal highs'. Neither alcohol nor NPS are included in the recorded drug offences as they are both legal. It is however important to mention alcohol and NPS as there is a clear connection between criminal activity and the excessive use of these substances

Kent police recorded drug offences includes both offences of drug supply and possession. Under this category of crime Maidstone has seen a 35.3% reduction in drug offences when compared to last year's data. This is a reduction from 431 offences last year to 279 offences; this equates to 152 fewer crimes this year.

Despite this noticeable reduction in recorded drug offences, data from the Kent and Medway Public Health Observatory suggests a higher number of admissions to hospital for mental and behavioural disorders relating to psychoactive substances.

### 5.2 Hospital Admissions as a result of Substance Misuse

The following table details hospital admissions for mental and behavioural disorders due to psychoactive substance use, substances include alcohol, opioids, cannabinoids, sedatives, hypnotics, cocaine, hallucinogens, volatile substances and other psychoactive substances.

Data within this section refers to hospital admissions and not to Accident & Emergency attendances. Local Authority Ward references relate to the patients' place of residence.

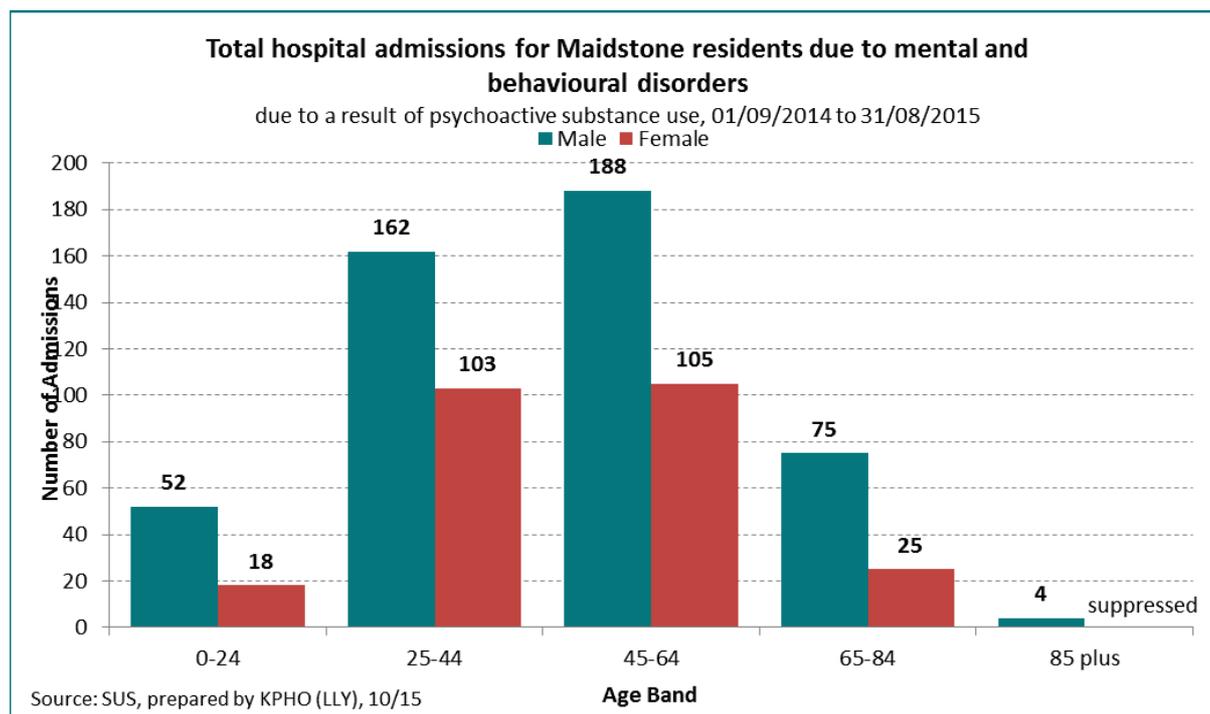
Ward Name	Total number of admissions	Ward Name	Total number of admissions
High street (no separate figures for residential or public areas)	121	South	17
Fant	59	Allington	15
East	54	Harrietsham and Lenham	15
Marden and Yalding	53	Bridge	13
Shepway North	53	Boxley	11
Shepway South	53	Barming	10
North	42	North Downs	8
Coxheath and Hunton	38	Boughton Monchelsea and	7

		Chart Sutton	
Parkwood	36	Sutton Valence and Langley	7
Heath	27	Downswood and Otham	5
Staplehurst	23	Leeds	*
Headcorn	22	Detling thurnham and	*
Bearsted	21	Maidstone	734
Loose	18		

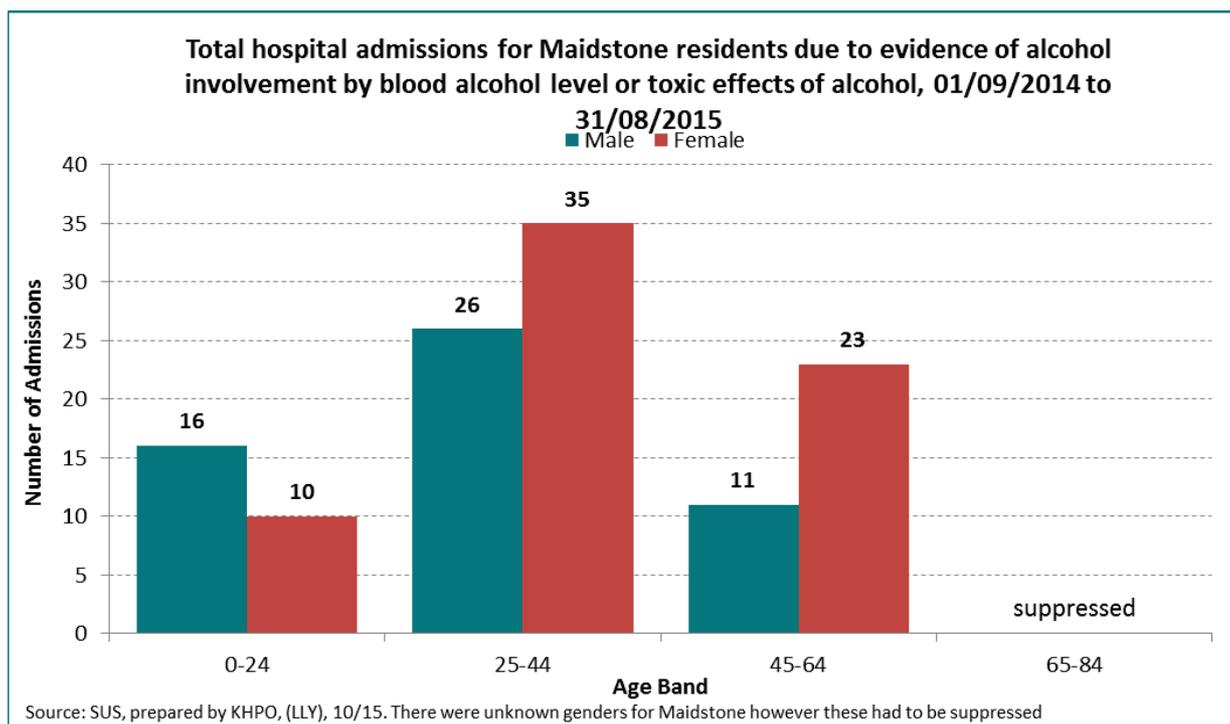
Admissions to hospital for substance related mental and behavioural conditions in the year spanning 2012-2013 where 542 and attributed to 398 individuals, when compared to this year's data where 734 admissions to hospital were made by a total of 487 individuals we can see a clear rise in substance misuse.

There is a clear connection between the wards with the highest anti-social behaviour rates and the wards with the highest substance misuse admissions.

As can be seen from the graph on the next page, men aged between 45 and 64 have the highest rates of substance misuse related hospital admissions; followed by men aged between 25 and 44. Whilst women are less prevalent in this area of substance misuse contributing 34% of all admissions, the age groups that have the highest admissions rates are similar to that of the men's group.



This is different to the number of admissions for alcohol where we see a lower number of total admissions to hospital but a higher rate of women affected by alcohol.



The rise of NPS use over the past 7 years is a potential contributor to the reduction in drug offences. Many people are misled by the term 'legal high' and consider that as the substance is legal it should also be safe. Anecdotal information from frontline practitioners, police officers and drug and alcohol support groups have suggested that NPS have played a part in violent crime in the borough as well as creating further mental health issues.

### 5.3 Substance Misuse SMP Actions:

- Targeted multi-agency evening operations have been delivered with Trading Standards, Kent Police and Borough Council teams to tackle underage sales and licensed premises.
- Partners launched An NPS awareness campaign aligned with national campaigns.
- Delivered through Addaction x 2 Professionals training days around NPS to Teachers, Police, NHS etc and 'Early Help' frontline staff.
- Bespoke NPS programme delivery by Addaction to targeted cohorts of young people through schools and temporary accommodation providers, funded through the PCC.
- Through CRI, recommenced a needle exchange scheme in a Week Street pharmacy. In Quarter 3 of 2015/6, there were 527 exchanges in this new location.
- Implementing the SMP's actions from the West Kent Alcohol Action Plan, the Kent Alcohol Strategy and continue to work closely with the West Kent Health & Wellbeing Board.
- Maidstone Substance Misuse Action Plan brings together priorities from the Community Safety Plan and Maidstone Health Inequalities Action Plan.
- Part of the evaluation panel for exploring single use 'Smart Syringes' – no needle stick injuries/sharing issues.
- Working with Licensing and Kent Police around a voluntary Reduce the Strength scheme for the town centre.
- KCC Trading Standards successfully used forfeiture orders to tackle NPS across Kent, including 'head shops' in Maidstone, who did not oppose the application and have been closed down.
- Increased number of street population referred and engaged in CRI support services as a result the Maidstone Assertive Outreach programme.

- Service provision provided by CRI has been integrated into the partnership. Outreach workers have delivered additional sessions to engage with hard to reach individuals (e.g. street population) misusing substances.
- Part funded 'Theatre ADAD' to deliver the 'WASTED – drug & alcohol education' to 29 primary schools in the borough, this highlights to year 6 pupils the dangers of substance misuse.
- Needle bin pilot launched in Brenchley Gardens, reducing needle finds by 50%.

Moving forward we will continue to:

- Discuss the latest local drug & alcohol trends and adjust our delivery accordingly.
- Work closer with the health & wellbeing board and implement their aims locally.
- Uphold the aims of the SMP subgroup under the terms of reference.

**Due to the high level of drug offences in certain wards, and the link between drug offences and other crimes it is recommended that substance misuse including alcohol and NPS (Legal Highs) remains as a priority.**

## 6. Reducing re-offending

### 6.1 Availability of 'Proven adult reoffending' data

The 'Proven adult reoffending' data in this Strategic assessment is historic data that does not relate specifically to service users subject to probation involvement. As of June 2014, the former Kent Probation divided into two organisations; National Probation Service (NPS) and Kent, Surrey & Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company (KSS CRC) that manage two separate cohorts of service users. Reoffending data related to the KSS CRC is currently unavailable, with the first publication due for release by the MOJ in October 2017.

As a result of this no information can be used in this strategic assessment that is up to date and is reflective of the current re-offending rate in Kent or Maidstone.

### 6.2 Integrated Offender Management (IOM)

Integrated Offender Management (IOM) brings a cross-agency response to the crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities. The most persistent and problematic offenders are identified and managed jointly by partner agencies working together.

IOM helps to improve the quality of life in communities by:

- reducing the negative impact of crime and reoffending
- reducing the number of people who become victims of crime
- helping to improve the public's confidence in the criminal justice system

In October 2015 there were 233 adult offenders on the IOM cohort in Kent, 120 of which were in prison, this equates to 44% of the overall cohort. From the period of January to December 2015 the members of this cohort committed 123 offences throughout the year compared with the previous year where the cohort had collectively committed 275, this is a reduction of 152 cases which equates to 55%. The main reductions were in burglary of a dwelling which saw a reduction of 63 offences.

IOM is predominantly populated by Male offenders with only 7 women subjected to the process this year.

### West division

West division had the lowest IOM cohort with only 64 offenders open to the process, this equates to 27% of the overall cohort in Kent and Medway. Despite this we made the biggest savings in Kent by reducing the cost of offending by £198,726 this year. In the west division we experienced a 56% reduction in re-offending which is well above the county average of 44%.

#### Cost of offending

Division	Cost of crime Months before joining IOM	Cost of crime 6 months after joining IOM	Difference	Number of Adults @nil cost 6 months after
East Division	£316,924	123,522	-£191,402	9
North Division	£197,312	£36,524	-£160,788	19
West Division	£441,365	£242,639	-£198,726	18
Total	£955,601	£404,685	-£550,916	46

It was stated that the predominate causes of offender behavior across Kent related to thinking and behavioral needs which accounts 85% of the attributable needs amongst the cohort, the lowest criminogenic needs mentioned were emotional wellbeing and alcohol abuse which both accounted for 36% of offenders each.

It is clear from the information provided that IOM is a successful way of supporting ex-offenders to change their lives.

### 6.3 Reducing Re-offending

- A steering group was established involving all key agencies to provide strategic direction to the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) and Deter Young Offenders (DYO) groups.
- Restorative Justice has become an embedded process within IOM. All offender managers have been briefed in relation to the process and benefits of these approaches.
- Awarded £10,000 funding from Kent PCC towards Restorative Justice programme.
- Employability and physical activity have been provided as part of the IOM process by making gym memberships and training opportunities available to IOM offenders.
- Community Payback scheme used by Maidstone Borough Council and some parish councils.
- Electronic 'Buddy' tracking is being piloted in partnership between Kent Police and Probation. At present this can only be undertaken with the agreement of the offender.
- Yes Plus and Challenger Troop commissioned to provide diversionary and personal development programmes at Kings Reach Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).
- Exploring further interventions through public health to assist ex-offenders where substance misuse and/or mental health issues are prevalent.
- Referring often homeless ex-offenders to housing providers and ensuring they have access to physical, mental and sexual health services.

Moving forward we will be looking at:

- Exploring the greater use of the 'Buddi Tag' system where an offender's movement is tracked. This allows police to effectively discount serial offenders from criminal activity which saves time, resources and helps an ex-offender to advance with their rehabilitation.

- To concentrate initiatives and services to those young people in the 'pre-conviction' stage of criminality. This will hopefully reduce the future cohort of the most prolific offenders at the highest risk of reoffending and further save costs associated with it.
- Increase the use of the Community Payback scheme in the borough, as reparation work has proven to be effective in reducing reoffending, makes an offender think about their actions and helps them to contribute to society.
- Encouraging more private sector companies into social responsibility work. This can include the training and employment of ex-offenders and the capital expenditure in community projects. A target for this could be to sign up one company a month to commit to either employing an exoffender or contribute to a community project in some way.

**The reduction of offending is a key priority of the partnership and as such reducing re-offending rates in the borough is considered a theme that spans across all of the other priorities. Therefore the recommendation is made that this continues to be a priority.**

## 7. Road Safety

### 7.1 Road Safety in Maidstone

Road traffic is still the biggest cause of unnatural death, injury and harm to the people of Kent, especially young people aged between 5 and 25. Kent County Council is the Highway Authority for Kent and has a Statutory Duty under the Road Traffic Act for road safety with the aim to reduce casualties. The Safer Maidstone Partnership has maintained road safety as priority for the partnership as it recognises the importance of making Maidstone's roads safe.

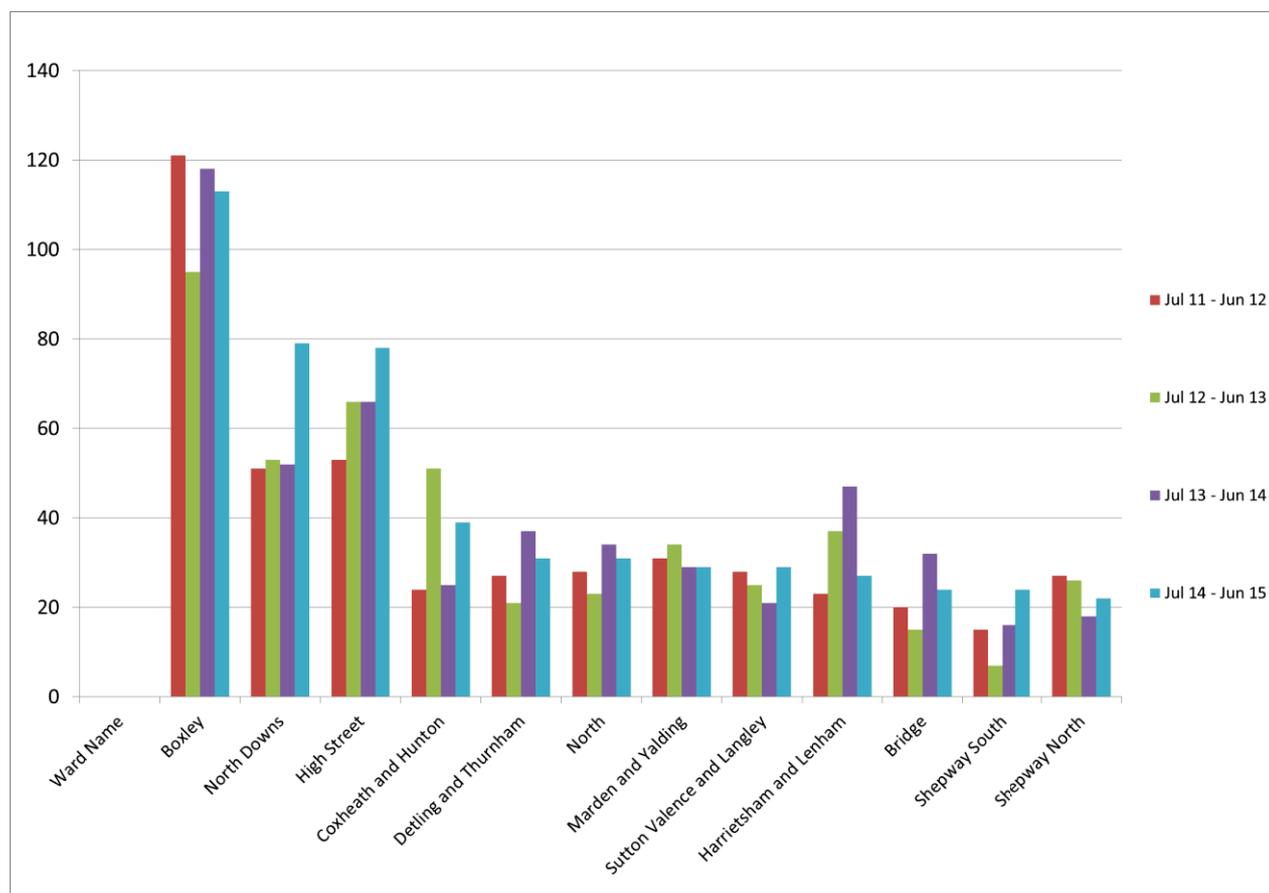
Maidstone has had the highest rate of road traffic collisions in Kent for the 5th year with 709 collisions recorded from July 2014 - June 2015. This is an increase of 2.3% from last year. We have the second highest increase in the County and are well above the Kent averages where an overall 3.2% reduction was achieved.

	Jul 2011- Jun-12	Jul 2012- Jun-13	Jul 2013- Jun-14	Jul 2014- Jun-15	% +/-	County Ranking
<b>Maidstone</b>	<b>622</b>	<b>672</b>	<b>693</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>1</b>
Dartford	550	558	642	631	-1.7	2
Swale	487	447	615	564	-8.3	3
Thanet	464	432	529	532	0.6	4
Sevenoaks	556	546	553	527	-4.7	5
Tonbridge and M	498	463	510	510	0	6
Ashford	488	524	535	504	-5.8	7
Canterbury	477	518	526	481	-8.6	8
Tunbridge Wells	383	409	465	432	-7.1	9
Shepway	376	350	352	390	10.8	10
Dover	351	395	391	354	-9.5	11
Gravesham	369	354	369	351	-4.9	12
Kent Districts	5621	5668	6180	5985	-3.2	

The wards with the highest incidents of Road traffic collisions were Boxley and North Downs and High street ward. The wards with the lowest recorded incidents were Loose, Downswood and Otham and Allington.

Ward Name	Jul 11 - Jun 12	Jul 12 - Jun 13	Jul 13 - Jun 14	Jul 14 - Jun 15
Boxley	121	95	118	113
North Downs	51	53	52	79
High Street	53	66	66	78
Loose	11	5	2	6
Downswood and Otham	3	8	5	3
Allington	2	5	9	2

As you can see from the bar chart below, Maidstone has seen a real increase in RTCs in the wards North Downs and High Street.

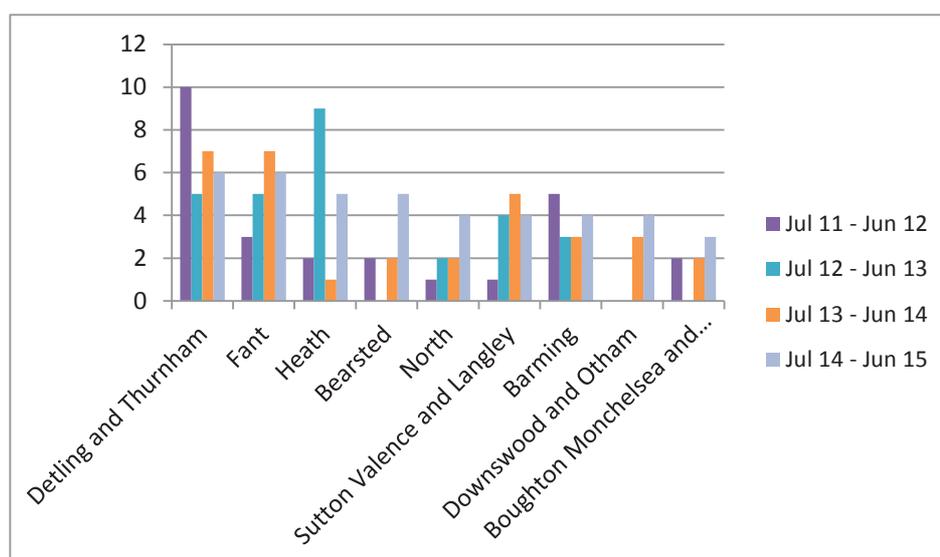


Maidstone currently has the 3rd highest rate of killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties in Kent; we have seen a reduction in the number of people KSI however compared with data from the years 2011 to 2013 KSI has stayed relatively the same in Maidstone.

Area	Jul 11 - Jun 12	Jul 12 - Jun 13	Jul 13 - Jun 14	Jul 14 - Jun 15	County Ranking
Sevenoaks	75	50	69	74	1
Swale	48	38	61	59	2
Maidstone	58	54	76	57	3
Tunbridge Wells	41	46	58	56	4

Ashford	47	72	78	55	5
Thanet	43	35	51	53	6
Shepway	31	39	47	47	7
Canterbury	56	51	72	41	8
Dartford	34	43	38	41	9
Gravesham	16	17	27	39	10
Dover	28	38	46	33	11
Tonbridge and Malling	40	45	44	32	12
KCC Districts	517	528	667	587	

The Wards most affected by incidents of KSI are Detling and Thurnham, Fant, Heath and Bearsted whilst Boxley, Harrietsham and Lenham, Shepway south and Parkwood had no incidents of casualties KSI.



When comparing the number of RTCs by ward with the number of KSI it is clear that Boxley has no KSI incidents despite its large recorded RTC incidents of 113 for this year. This is reflected consistently since July 2011.

Given the relatively low numbers relating to wards where incidents of KSI have occurred, it is difficult to reflect the true trends of KSI across Maidstone in an analytical and meaningful way.

## 7.2 Categorisation

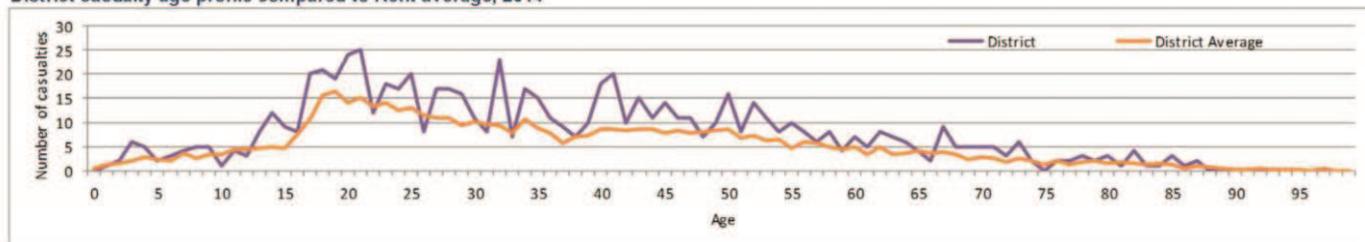
According to the Road Casualties review published by KCC in August 2015, 69% of all road casualties were car occupants compared with the Counties 67%. Maidstone's second highest road user casualty were pedestrians with 10% of all a road casualties reported in 2014 were pedestrians which is below the county average of 11%

### Road user casualty comparison, 2014

Road user casualty	2014 - Proportion of all casualties		2014 - Casualties	
	Maidstone District	Kent	Maidstone District	Kent
Pedestrian	10%	11%	77	673
Pedal cyclist	4%	8%	32	478
Motorcyclist	9%	10%	72	610
Car occupant	69%	67%	526	4192
Goods vehicle occupant	4%	3%	28	196
Other vehicle occupant	3%	2%	23	154

With regards to the age profile of residents having accidents in Maidstone we have a higher than average number of young people aged between 17 and 22 in RTC's. As you can see from the chart on the following page we also have a higher than average accident rate for residents in their 30s all the way through to the age of 42.

District casualty age profile compared to Kent average, 2014



### 7.3 Road Safety (killed or seriously injured) SMP Actions

- Identified hotspots of concern.
- Identified repeat offenders for speeding and promoted Speedwatch.
- Held multi-agency events around speed enforcement and safety.
- Delivered Safety in Action programme to all primary school children transitioning to secondary school, providing road safety education and pedestrian awareness.
- Promoted walking buses and 20 MPH zones around schools.
- Promoted bus safety driver and pedestrian awareness
- Signposted to bicycle and marking events
- Created a road safety awareness DVD for Schools
- Piloting a road safety project in partnership with Kent Fire and rescue, community wardens, parking enforcement, local schools and Kent police.

**Due to the high numbers of RTCs and KSI's it is recommended that Road safety remains a priority for the SMP.**

### 7.4 Subsidiary priority relating to Safeguarding

As part of this priority, an emergence of ASB cases relating to hoarding and self-neglect became apparent in Maidstone. ASB was caused by the lack of care residents took over their properties which increased the levels of vermin in the areas they lived in. The SMP has coordinated 17 multi-agency case conferences to address the issues highlighted by self-neglect and hoarding. Partners involved in this process include adult social services, voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations with specialism relating to mental health, housing and health, environmental health/enforcement and the CSU.

The coordination of self-neglect cases has proved effective by enabling multiple agencies to support people in the community. This has reduced the environmental health issues, ensured that an ongoing plan is in place to support local residents. Case studies can be found in appendix 2.

## **8. Counter Terrorism and Domestic Extremism**

### **8.1 National Policy – PREVENT**

For several years, work at a local level has concentrated on delivery of the Government's Prevent Strategy. Prevent is a key part of CONTEST, the Government's counter-terrorism strategy that aims to respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and those who promote it, prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation.

The CONTEST strategy is based around four key areas of work;

- Pursue: the investigation and disruption of terrorist attacks;
- Prevent: work to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism and extremism; (this is the key strand for local authorities)
- Protect: improving our protective security to stop a terrorist attack; and
- Prepare: working to minimise the impact of an attack and to recover from it as quickly as possible.

Work includes disrupting extremist speakers, removing material online and intervening to stop people being radicalised. The most significant terrorist threat is currently from Al Qai'da-associated groups and from terrorist organisations in Syria and Iraq, including ISIL. Individuals and groups associated with the 'extreme right' are also considered to pose a potential risk.

### **8.2 Channel – a Partnership Approach to Protecting Vulnerable People**

Channel is a multi-agency approach to provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorist-related activity or who are in danger of being radicalised. Channel forms part of the wider Prevent Strategy but seeks particularly to:

- Safeguard individuals who might be vulnerable to being radicalised so that they are not at risk of being drawn into terrorist-related activity;
- Ensure that individuals and communities have the ability to resist all forms of terrorism and violent extremism activity likely to lead to terrorism.

The Channel process identifies those most at risk of radicalisation and refers them via the Police or Local Authority for assessment by a multi-agency panel. Panels will consider how best to safeguard them and support their vulnerability through a support package tailored to individual needs. Partnership involvement ensures that those at risk have access to a wide range of support ranging from mainstream services, such as health and education, through to specialist mentoring or faith guidance and wider diversionary activities.

### **8.3 Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015**

Central Government has advised that the terrorism threat to the United Kingdom is considerable: in August 2014, the Independent Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre raised the UK national terrorist threat level from 'substantial' to 'severe' and it has remained at this level since.

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 received Royal Assent in February 2015 and is relevant for consideration within this Assessment as the Act concerns the role that Local Authorities

will be expected to play in reducing the risks of terrorism and particularly of the potential radicalisation of vulnerable people.

The Prevent programme relies on the co-operation of many organisations to be effective – most of those organisations that will have a role will already be actively engaged in Community Safety Partnerships.

#### **8.4 In respect of Prevent and Channel**

The relevant provisions of the Act are contained in Part 5 Chapters 1 and 2. Section 26 places a general duty on specified authorities which includes ‘a county council or district council in England’ (as listed in Schedule 6) ‘in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’. As well as applying to Local Authorities, the duty will apply to the police, prisons, providers of probation services, schools, colleges and universities. In two-tier areas such as ours, Government have advised that County and District Councils will need to agree proportionate arrangements for sharing the assessment of risk and for agreeing local Prevent action plans. The council implemented a Prevent plan in June.

#### **8.5: SMP actions (Prevent)**

- Established a multi-agency group to coordinate prevent activity and monitor the impact of prevent work. The channel multi agency group has representatives from Maidstone Borough Council, Kent police and the voluntary and community sector
- Familiarised the partnership with existing counter terrorism profiles to assess risks of individuals being drawn into terrorism.
- Mainstreamed the prevent duty into the day to day work of the authority in particular children’s safeguarding duty. The safeguarding producer is currently being reviewed.
- Provided training for internal and external staff through online and face to face training sessions.

#### **9. Community Resilience (SMP) recommendation for priority**

Over the year emerging trends in Child sexual exploitation (CSE) extremism and radicalisation, human trafficking, modern slavery and serious organised crime (SOC) have presented as significant issues across the country. To tackle these issues the police have implemented these areas into their control strategy

Given the prominence of Kent in regards to its links with Europe through Dover it is recommended that the Safer Maidstone Partnership supports the control strategy through making a priority orientated around CSE, Prevent, Human trafficking, Modern slavery and SOC. By including these areas in the strategy it is hoped that the partnership can make our communities more resilient and pre-emptive to those issues.

#### **9.1 Recommendations to Safer Maidstone Partnership**

Our priorities for this year have been extracted from a wide variety of information shared with our partners and represent the most important issues to focus on this (2015/16) year. Based on the information in this Strategic Assessment, it is recommended that the Safer Maidstone Partnership confirm the following 2016/17 priorities:

- 1. Violent Crime (specifically Domestic Abuse and Night Time Economy)**
- 2. Substance Misuse**
- 3. Reduce Re-offending**

- 4. Road Safety – Killed & Seriously Injured**
- 5. Community Resilience (emerging issues around CSE, Prevent, Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery, SOC and Safeguarding)**

As mentioned, ASB is well embedded into the service delivery of the community safety unit and as such the SMP recommends that the issue of ASB maintains as a consistent service. All the priorities will require a robust multi-agency response, but because they are important for residents and communities, achieving them will have a positive impact on people's quality of life.

## **9.2 How to get further information**

If you would like further information about the Safer Maidstone Partnership, please contact: Community Partnerships Team, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ. Tel: 01622 602000. [www.maidstone.org.uk](http://www.maidstone.org.uk)

## **Appendix 1**

### **Information sources**

The list below includes the details of those data sources used to inform this strategic assessment, including the agency supplying the data. All information was correct at time of document production.

#### **Kent Community Safety Unit crime data – Safer Communities Web Portal**

All data provided by the County CSU is using recorded crime data provided by the Business Information Unit at Kent Police. This data places the incidents at the time at which they were recorded by the Police.

#### **Kent Police Intelligence Analysis data**

Data provided by Kent Police is 'committed' data. The 'date' used is the midpoint between the earliest and latest dates that the offence could have been committed.

#### **Other data sources**

Data and information used in producing this Assessment has been provided, directly or otherwise, from the following organisations:

- Association of Chief Police Officers
- Association of Police Authorities
- Association of Public Health Observatories (PHO's)
- Choices DA Services (formerly North Kent Women's Aid)
- Home Office
- Kent Community Wardens
- Kent County Council
- Kent Fire & Rescue Service
- Kent Highways
- Kent Police
- Nomis
- ONS Labour Market Statistics
- National crime agency

## Appendix 2

### Community Wardens:

#### Case 1:

Mr B was referred to me from the CSU to visit. He was a Victim of Crime. On my visit we sat and chatted and Mr B came across as depressed. The house was very cold (12 degrees) and I encouraged him to put the heating on due to his bad health. During the chat he informed me that his benefits weren't much and looking at the paper work I gave advice and contacted MBC re: forms and helped fill them in when they arrived.

I also suggested a visit to the Doctors. Mr B recently lost his wife and died suddenly at home and this has affected him deeply. Between visits Mr B was admitted to hospital and mental health unit due to infection and depression. When he returned home equipment was installed and a Key Safe be installed. On last visit Mr B has now been given PIP / back paid and the money will encourage him to keep the heating on and feels safer with the medical help given. Weekly visits made and referral to Age UK for other suggestions for support.

Priority Target Achieved: Referral to Age UK, MBC, Doctors.

#### Case 2:

Vulnerable person living on £72 a month, Hoarder. Property unfit for habitation. Not adequately caring for dog.

I contacted the Salvation Army to arrange weekly food parcels and engaged with resident to work with AgeUK & Step Change Debt Charity to sort out her financial problems: benefits, pension, debt, probate.

I arranged for the front door to have a new lock fitted to prevent the resident from being a victim of crime and antisocial behaviour. The resident had sold items of jewellery for a far lower price than their true value to another resident. This was reported to Kent Police because it was felt that he had been taking advantage of her situation. The resident was encouraged not to sell any more.

I assisted by cleaning the kitchen and disposing of unwanted items to create space, with the resident. Resident has agreed to allow environmental health to clear property to enable a 'deep clean' to be instructed by Social Services. These actions also supported KFRS and the RSPCA.

I contacted Maidstone Borough Council Private Sector Housing to arrange for an assessment to carry out home improvements as there was no heating and water was leaking from a pipe, inside the property, near the front door. Family Mosaic are completing an assessment to apply for a new central heating system and repair the water leak.

I am continuing to work with this resident as she is very vulnerable.

Priority Target Achieved: Reduced the potential for acquisitive crime and antisocial behaviour.

### Police Community Safety Unit:

There was a family of 7 living in a 2 bedroom flat in Maidstone. Single Mum and 6 children -One has a disability, another had an illness. The family were experiencing asb from their neighbours. The flat was immaculate and Mum tried really hard, her children were spotless but she struggled with her mental health. Working with the housing association, the schools and early help we were able to support a managed move to a bigger property. Before the move took place the local PCSO regularly patrolled to provide visible presence to reassure the Mum.





# **Safer Maidstone Partnership**

## **Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013–2018**

### **'Delivering Safer Communities'**

**Refreshed February 2016**

#### **1. Introduction**

Welcome to the annual refresh of the Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP) Community Safety Partnership Plan for 2016-17. This document outlines how we are going to collectively tackle community safety issues in the Maidstone borough, how we have achieved against the targets set in the previous year and what we will prioritise this year.

#### **2. Background**

The Maidstone Community Safety Plan 2013-18 is a five year rolling document, which highlights how the SMP plans to tackle local community safety issues that matter to the local community. The plan is revised annually through reviewing information set out in the Strategic Assessment which ensures that current issues can be taken into account and used to direct the SMP's strategy.

#### **3. Priorities**

Data analysis identifies that we continue to face challenges across our district and as such this year the SMP has agreed to focus on five key issues:

- Reducing Re-offending
- Road Safety (killed or seriously injured)
- Substance Misuse
- Violent Crime (domestic abuse/night time economy)
- Community Resilience (Prevent, CSE, SOC, Modern slavery and Human trafficking)

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) has been a priority since the formation of the Safer Maidstone Partnership. It has however been removed as a priority this year as it is felt that ASB should be a service the council automatically delivers as part of its strategy. Effective protocols are embedded into the Community Safety Unit (CSU) through the weekly CSU/ASB meetings. Golding Homes, the local housing provider which has a stock of around 6000 properties in Maidstone, currently co locate within the CSU to aid information sharing and create joint solutions for ASB.

ASB is a cross cutting theme that is linked to substance misuse, road safety, domestic abuse and reducing reoffending and as such is well accommodated under the priorities selected. It is recommended that the ASB sub group will remain intact and will convene as and when issues outside of the current protocols arise. These issues will include the Community Trigger, alterations to ASB legislation and changes to the current arrangements

already embedded into the CSU. In 2015 there were no Community Trigger applications for the Maidstone borough.

#### **4. Background and Context**

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 changed the way crime and ASB was to be tackled. It recognised that in order to be effective, agencies needed to work together to address the issues collectively. Each local area formed a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) which are now called Community Safety Partnerships.

The Safer Maidstone Partnership is made up of Responsible Authorities (those bodies for whom membership of the CSP is a statutory obligation) and voluntary members. Our statutory partners are: Maidstone Borough Council, Kent County Council, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, National Probation Service, Kent Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company and the Clinical Commissioning Groups (which have the responsibility for health services locally).

We also work with a large number of public and private sector partners as well as voluntary and community groups to collectively implement and deliver initiatives that will help all areas of the Maidstone borough become a safe place to live, work and visit.

#### **5. Organisational changes – a local overview**

##### **Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP)**

The SMP brings together people from local government, the NHS, Police, Fire service, Probation, local businesses, housing providers and voluntary and community organisations. They work as a team to tackle issues such as crime, education, health, housing, unemployment and the environment in the Maidstone Borough.

SMP membership is made up of the public sector agencies including Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Kent Police, Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, NHS Health Trusts, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, National Probation Service, Kent Surrey & Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company and also incorporates members from other key partners including Maidstone Mediation, CRI, Golding Homes and Town Centre Management. The SMP is currently chaired by Alison Broom, Chief Executive of Maidstone Borough Council.

##### **Community Safety Unit**

The Maidstone Community Safety Unit (CSU) continues to grow. In recent years, existing Borough Council and Kent Police staff have been joined by partners from Kent Community Wardens and local housing Registered Providers, such as Golding Homes. In 2014, the Borough Council's licensing team relocated to the CSU. Increasing the range of partners working as part of the CSU is a key priority to ensure community safety related issues are tackled holistically.

##### **Kent Police**

Three policing divisions, North, East & West ensure local policing is at the heart of the new Policing model and there has been a significant increase in neighbourhood constables and sergeants to provide strong local leadership across the county.

##### **Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)**

PCC's are responsible for the appointment of Chief Constables, holding them to account for the running of the force, setting out a Police and Crime Plan based on local priorities, setting

the local precept and force budget and making grants to external organisations. The current PCC for Kent, Ann Barnes, was appointed in November 2012 and will remain in office for a period of four years.

The PCC has pledged to continue to support a number of agencies through the main policing grant and has announced her commitment to her wider duties around crime and community safety. Funding for Community Safety Partnerships has been confirmed for 2016/17 and will be used to address our local priorities. The PCC has announced that there will be no in year targets and that there will be a focus on encouraging sustainable improvements in performance.

The Kent Police & Crime Plan is a four year plan from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2017 and is refreshed annually. The plan sets out the Commissioner's vision and priorities for policing in the county which includes placing victims first, focusing on reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and protecting the public from harm. To achieve the aims set out in the plan the following strategic priorities are set out:

Cutting crime & catching criminals

Ensuring visible community policing is at the heart of Kent's Policing model

Putting victims and witnesses first

Protecting the public from serious harm

Meeting national commitments for policing

Delivering value for money

The plan also references a commitment to working closely with community safety and criminal justice agencies across the county to ensure that a seamless service is provided to victims of crime and anti-social behaviour, with a particular focus on:

Tackling the root causes of crime and anti-social behaviour

Reducing re-offending and repeat victimisation

Improving joined up working between agencies

### **Maidstone Families Matter**

The Government has placed a significant focus on tackling the 'Troubled Families' agenda. The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) defines a troubled family as a family with multiple and complex issues and has estimated that these families cost the tax payer £9 billion a year.

The project is now in its second phase after a very successful first three years and is set to target a further 400,000 families nationwide. To ensure this is achievable, KCC have restructured their preventative services to support families holistically. Each family referred to Early Help (the new preventative service that has been created) will be screened for the widened troubled families' criteria which are as follows:

Financial exclusion (rent arrears, claiming out of work benefits and debt)

Crime and anti-social behaviour

Educational difficulties (poor school attendance, exclusion and head teachers concern)

Health issues (Not signed up to a GP, poor mental health, Substance misuse and obesity etc)

Domestic Abuse

Children in need (open to social services or referred to early help)

Families meeting two of the above criteria will be provided with holistic support which is aimed at reducing ASB, improving school attendance, reducing rent arrears and safeguarding children.

The Troubled families' project in Maidstone which is locally known as 'Maidstone Families Matter' is delivered by the borough and county council through a district partnership manager who oversees the allocation of family intervention project workers who alongside Early Help, seek to turn families around.

### **West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group**

Since 1 April 2013, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) have become 'responsible authorities' on CSP's. Schedule 5, Paragraph 84 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 replaces primary care trusts with CCG's as responsible authorities on CSP's from April 2013. This means that the CCG's now have a statutory responsibility to work in partnership with other responsible authorities to tackle crime and disorder. The act places a duty on CCG's to:

- Participate in a strategic assessment of crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour, and drug and alcohol misuse for the CSP area or areas in which they fall.
- Contribute to the development of local strategies that effectively deal with the issues where are identified.

Joining their local CSP's gives CCG's more influence in shaping local action to tackle crime and the causes of crime, for example the delivery of action on drugs, alcohol, crime and disorder.

### **Health and Wellbeing Board**

The West Kent Health and Wellbeing Board brings together key organisations and representatives of the public to work together to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of West Kent.

It has been set up in West Kent as part of the recent national health and social care reforms. Kent Public Health, the four West Kent authorities (Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Councils), West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group, (who are responsible under the reforms for commissioning health services locally) and patient and public representatives are all part of this Board.

The key themes for health and wellbeing are drawn from the West Kent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

### **Probation Services**

The Probation services have officially separated into the National Probation Service (NPS) and the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). The NPS is a statutory criminal justice service whose supervision and support includes not only Service users who have never been in custody and have only solely been in the community, but also high risk offenders who are released into the community; this service is provided nationally by the government. The CRC supports the rehabilitation of low to medium risk offenders and is commissioned out to private companies. Kent is covered by the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community

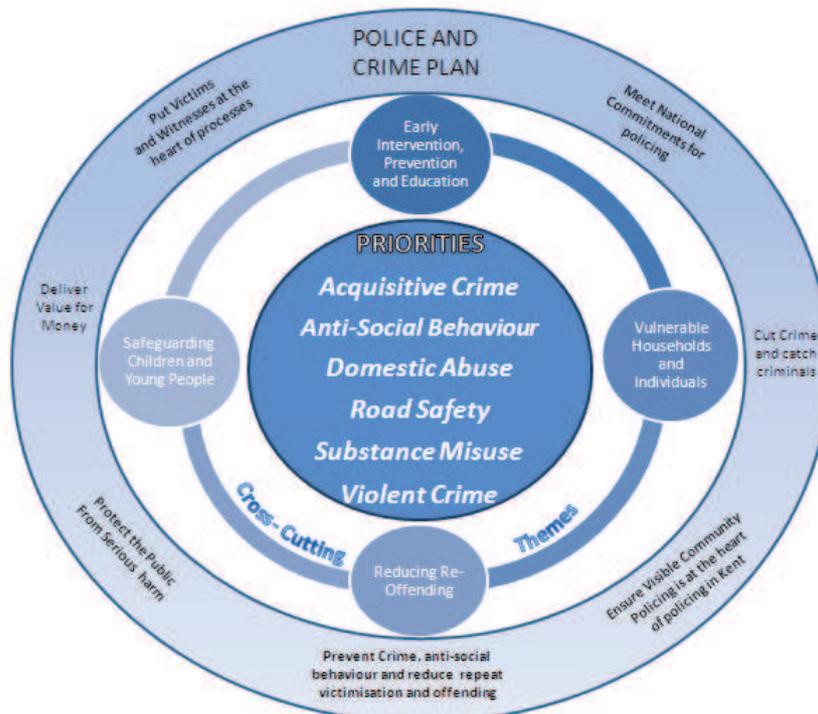
Rehabilitation Company (KSS CRC) who alongside the NPS, play an active part in the SMP's partnership.

### The Kent County Perspective

The Community Safety Agreement (CSA) for 2014-17 outlines the key community safety priorities for Kent and replaces the previous agreement which expired on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014. Data analysis, partnership consultation and examination of the most recent local strategic assessments indicated that the priorities and most of the cross-cutting themes identified in the 2011-14 Agreement should remain, and would continue to benefit from support at a county level.

The common issues and priorities from the District-level strategic assessments have been identified and key stakeholders consulted to identify any potential gaps and cross-cutting themes for inclusion in the agreement. The diagram below not only includes the priorities and cross-cutting themes for the CSA, but also shows the strategic priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan, illustrating the importance of integrating the work of all partners.

The CSA will be refreshed shortly due to emerging trends from the police and other community safety partners:



## 2016 Strategic Assessment summary

Each year the Safer Maidstone Partnership has to produce a Strategic Assessment of the district to identify any crime and disorder trends, which can then be used to inform the priority planning for the coming year. This ensures we are focusing our efforts collectively on the areas that are most in need. This is done by analysing data and intelligence reports from the previous year, which is usually 1 October 2014 to 30 September 2015 to produce recommended priority areas the data is telling us are a concern or that residents have highlighted.

The priorities are then compared with other areas and ranked against a number of factors, including volume, trend over time, resident's perception and how much it is felt the partnership can influence. This is then reviewed by our stakeholders and finally the top ranked priorities are analysed in depth, to help guide practitioners in formulating actions that they feel will have an impact on each priority. The following areas were identified by this process and recommended as emerging priorities for the 2016-17 Partnership Plan:

### **Substance Misuse – including alcohol and NPS**

Substance misuse relates to the use of drugs, alcohol and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) also known as 'legal highs'. Neither alcohol nor NPS are included in the recorded drug offences as they are both legal. It is however important to mention alcohol and NPS as there is a clear connection between criminal activity and the excessive use of these substances.

Kent police recorded drug offences include both offences of drug supply and possession. Under this category of crime, Maidstone has seen a 35.3% reduction in drug offences when compared to last year's data. This is a reduction from 431 offences last year to 279 offences; this equates to 152 fewer crimes this year.

Despite this noticeable reduction in recorded drug offences data from the Kent and Medway Public Health Observatory suggests a higher number of admissions to hospital for mental and behavioural disorders relating to psychoactive substances.

**Due to the Increasing levels of hospital admissions related to substance misuse, recommendation is made that substance misuse including alcohol and NPS remains as a priority.**

### **Current projects**

- Targeted multi-agency evening operations have been delivered with Trading Standards, Kent Police and Borough Council teams to tackle underage sales and licensed premises.
- Partners launched an NPS awareness campaign aligned with national campaigns.
- Addaction have delivered 2 well attended professionals training days around NPS to Teachers, Police, NHS and Early Help frontline staff.
- Bespoke NPS programme delivery by Addaction to targeted cohorts of young people through schools and temporary accommodation providers, funded through the PCC fund.
- Through CRI, recommenced a needle exchange scheme in a Week Street pharmacy. In Quarter 3 of 2015/6, there were 527 exchanges in this new location.
- Implementing the SMP's actions from the West Kent Alcohol Action Plan, the Kent Alcohol Strategy and continue to work closely with the West Kent Health & Wellbeing Board.
- Maidstone Substance Misuse Action Plan brings together priorities from the Community Safety Plan and Maidstone Health Inequalities Action Plan.

- The Council is part of the evaluation panel for exploring single use retractable 'Smart Syringes' – no needle stick injuries/sharing issues.
- Working with Licensing and Kent Police around a voluntary 'Reduce the Strength' scheme for the town centre.
- KCC Trading Standards successfully used forfeiture orders to tackle NPS across Kent, including 'head shops' in Maidstone, who did not oppose the application and have been closed down.
- Increased number of street population referred and engaged in CRI support services as a result the Maidstone Assertive Outreach programme.
- Service provision provided by CRI has been integrated into the partnership. Outreach workers have delivered additional sessions to engage with hard to reach individuals (e.g. street population) misusing substances.
- Part funded 'Theatre ADAD' to deliver the 'WASTED – drug & alcohol education' to 29 primary schools in the borough, this highlights to year 6 pupils the dangers of substance misuse.
- Needle bin pilot launched in Brenchley Gardens, reducing needle finds by 50%.

## 5.5 Reducing Reoffending

Reducing re-offending across the age range is a Government target for all CSP's. This is particularly important when those who have already been through the criminal justice system commit over half of all crime.

Reoffending data related to the NPS and the Kent Surrey & Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company (KSS CRC) is currently unavailable, with the first publication due from the MOJ in October 2017. This has unfortunately meant that reoffending data is unavailable.

However, the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) programme which is tasked with reducing reoffending rates of the most prolific offenders has reported a reduction of 32% in offending from the West Kent cohort compared with last year.

**The recommendation is made that Reducing Re-offending remains as a priority, being a cross cutting theme across all priorities**

### Current projects:

- A steering group was established involving all key agencies to provide strategic direction to the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) and Deter Young Offenders (DYO) groups.
- Restorative Justice has become an embedded process within IOM. All offender managers have been briefed in relation to the process and benefits of these approaches.
- Awarded £10,000 funding from Kent PCC towards Restorative Justice Programme.
- Employability and physical activity have been provided as part of the IOM process by making gym memberships and training opportunities available to IOM offenders.
- Community Payback scheme used by Maidstone Borough Council and some parish councils.
- Electronic 'Buddy' tracking is being piloted in partnership between Kent Police and Probation. At present this can only be undertaken with the agreement of the offender.
- Yes Plus and Challenger Troop commissioned to provide diversionary and personal development programmes at Kings Reach Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).
- Exploring further interventions through public health to assist ex-offenders where substance misuse and/or mental health issues are prevalent.
- Referring often homeless ex-offenders to housing providers and ensuring they have access to physical, mental and sexual health services.

## **5.6 Road Safety (killed or seriously injured - KSI)**

Maidstone has had the highest rate of road traffic collisions in Kent for the 5th year with 709 collisions recorded from July 2014 - June 2015. This is an increase of 2.3% from last year. We have the second highest increase in the County and are well above the Kent averages where an overall 3.2% reduction was achieved.

**Due to the high numbers of Road traffic collisions in Maidstone, recommendation is made that Road Safety remains as a priority.**

### **Current projects:**

- Identified hotspots of concern.
- Identified repeat offenders for speeding and promoted Speedwatch.
- Held multi-agency events around speed enforcement and safety.
- Delivered Safety in Action programme to all primary school children transitioning to secondary school, providing road safety education and pedestrian awareness.
- Promoted walking buses and 20 MPH zones around schools.
- Promoted bus safety driver and pedestrian awareness
- Signposted to bicycle and marking events
- Created a road safety awareness DVD for Schools
- Piloting a road safety project in partnership with Kent Fire and rescue, community wardens, parking enforcement, local schools and Kent police.

## **5.7 Violent Crime (domestic abuse)**

It is widely recognised that increased recorded incidents of domestic abuse are not necessary indicators of a worsening situation. Domestic abuse is an under-reported crime so that increased reports indicate that DA victims are coming forward to report the abuse they are suffering.

Between the periods October 2014-September 2015 Maidstone has recorded 2278 incidences of Domestic abuse. This is below the Kent average when compared to number of incidents per 1,000 population. Whilst our incidences are lower than the average in the county our rate for repeat victims is the second highest in Kent with a 26% rate of repeat victimisation.

**Due to the high levels of domestic abuse and repeat incidents, recommendation is made that Violent Crime (domestic abuse) remains as a priority for the partnership, focusing on those areas with frequent reports of domestic abuse.**

### **Current projects:**

- Partners have continued to run regular seasonal awareness campaigns aligned with national campaigns.
- Work Place Health employee awareness campaign launched.
- Supported the Freedom programme and Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service.
- Facilitated support for Specialist Domestic Violence Court workers.
- Promoted and supported the Community Domestic Abuse Programme (CDAP).
- Referred all High Risk cases to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).
- Provided support to male and female victims of DA through Choices

- Promoted the DA Schools Project (SAFE).
- Provided support for male offenders wishing to rehabilitate.
- Helped facilitate the Sanctuary Scheme and assisted 49 victims to stay in their properties by making home security improvements
- Increased referrals for domestic abuse victims who are street homeless.
- Assisted in providing a domestic abuse One Stop Shop in the borough.
- Domestic Homicide review training undertaken by Community Safety Unit.
- Delivered targeted training to internal and external teams and supported the process of creating champion roles.

### **Violent Crime (night-time economy)**

Violent crime covers a wide range of crimes, from assault by beating through to grievous bodily harm, and murder. Please note however, the crime types which have been most affected by changes to recording practices are violence related offences, including Assault and Violence Against the Person (VAP).

This has resulted in a significant number of crimes added back during the year. With this change in recording, it is not safe to directly compare the current year with previous years. This year has therefore seen a 12.5% increase in violent crime. Whilst Maidstone has seen the 4th highest yearly rise in Violent crime per 1,000 of the population in Kent, Maidstone is still ranked 6th in the county for violent crime and is lower than the county average.

### **Current projects**

- In conjunction with Pubwatch, excluded violent individuals from the Town Centre premises.
- Promoting the work of the Taxi Marshal Scheme and town centre Street Pastors initiative.
- Shared information proactively from CCTV control room and Kent Police via MaidSafe network radios provided to door staff of key premises.
- Used CCTV to protect and prevent crime.
- Promoted the 'Urban Blue Bus' initiative.
- Enforced Alcohol Control Zones.
- Supported the county-wide Hate Crime Reporting Line.
- Provided school based work (Don't Abuse the Booze project) with high risk individuals around violence and drugs.

Whilst the partnership delivers these proactive activities, further work needs to be done to ensure a reduction in violent crime. The emergence of NPS and rise in practices such as pre loading are all contributing factors that add towards the increase in violent crime.

**Due to the continuing rise in violent crime in the night-time economy, recommendation is made for drug and alcohol related violence in the night time economy to remain a priority for the partnership.**

**(This also links in with the cross cutting themes of substance misuse, domestic abuse and reducing reoffending).**

## Community Resilience

Over the year emerging trends in Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), extremism and radicalisation (Prevent), human trafficking, modern slavery and Serious Organised Crime (SOC) have presented as significant issues across the country. To tackle these issues the police have implemented these areas into their Kent Police Control strategy.

Given the prominence of Kent in regards to its links with Europe through Dover, it is recommended that the Safer Maidstone Partnership supports the Control strategy through making a priority orientated around CSE, Prevent, human trafficking, modern slavery and SOC.

By including these areas in the strategy it is hoped that the partnership can make our communities more resilient and pre-emptive to these issues. To ensure the SMP can respond effectively to these issues it is recommended that the sub group incorporates all of these into its action plans as the actions and responses will be similar. These actions will look at preparing, preventing and protecting against the issues highlighted in the Control strategy.

The SMP has already raised awareness of the Prevent strategy through providing internal and external training opportunities, integrating CSE into the councils new safeguarding policy and adapting internet safety training sessions around the agenda of grooming for the purpose of CSE and Prevent.

## Cross Cutting Themes

Data analysis also acknowledged that the priorities are often inter-related and has identified three distinct cross cutting themes that run through all of the priority focus areas. Actions contained within this plan are therefore built around the five identified priorities and three cross cutting themes, as shown in the chart below:

Cross cutting themes				
Reducing Reoffending	Domestic Abuse/NTE	Community Resilience	Road Safety (KSI)	Substance Misuse (including alcohol)
Targeting prolific offenders / repeat locations				
Safeguarding vulnerable and young people				
Prevention and early intervention				

## How we are going to tackle these issues

The SMP has created an action plan detailing how each priority will be addressed, which is shown in section 7. These activities range from revising current processes to ensuring that services are delivered as effectively as possible, creating value for money and also commissioning new services and projects in areas of need. The SMP is committed to achieving these priorities and has set targets against what we are planning to achieve, shown in item 8.

## Priority leads

Lead officers for each of the priorities have been identified as set out below and have the responsibility for developing and delivering, with partners, the action plans to deliver the Maidstone borough priorities.

The leads will also act as a champion for the designated priority and provide regular progress updates for the Safer Maidstone Partnership and the borough council's Community, Housing and Environment Committee as required.

<b>Priority sub-groups</b>	<b>Lead Officer/Agency</b>
<b>Anti-Social Behaviour</b>	Inspector Jody Gagan-Cook, Kent Police
<b>Substance Misuse</b>	Nic Rathbone, Maidstone Borough Council
<b>Reducing Re-Offending</b>	John Littlemore, Maidstone Borough Council
<b>Road Safety (killed or seriously injured)</b>	Sam Scales, Maidstone Borough Council
<b>Violent Crime (domestic abuse &amp; NTE)</b>	Inspector Jody Gagan-Cook, Kent Police
<b>Community Resilience</b>	TBC

## 6. Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Action Plan and Targets

The Action Plan sets out a series of actions and performance targets through which the priorities supporting the CSP Plan will be delivered for the period 2013–2018. The Action Plan makes clear arguments for building stronger and safer communities in Maidstone, with the actions identified against each priority supporting the overarching aim to reduce crime and disorder and its impacts. The plan will be reviewed annually to allow for new projects and priorities to be added.

### Priority 1: Antisocial behavior

Aim	Action	Anticipated Outcomes		Lead Agency
<p><b>To work in partnership to reduce incidents of ASB towards repeat or vulnerable victims / locations, targeting rowdy nuisance behaviour, fly-tipping and noise.</b></p> <p><b>To reduce the perception of the local community that believes ASB is a large problem in their local area, with emphasis on noisy neighbours and increase the satisfaction of those that we deal with.</b></p>	<p>Identification of ASB hotspots and multi-agency tasking through the weekly CSP Partnership Tasking and Action Group meeting and monthly ASB meeting.</p> <p>Promote the Community Trigger, ensuring an effective customer response to incidents of ASB (contact, treatment, actions and follow up)</p>	<p>Reduction in reported ASB across the borough. Quicker targeted response to priorities for CSP.</p> <p>Reduced percentage of community who consider there is a high level of ASB. Increased awareness of work undertaken to tackle ASB. Increase in customer satisfaction</p>		<p>Maidstone Community Safety Unit (CSU)</p> <p>Maidstone CSU</p>
		<b>2014/2015</b>	<b>Kent-wide comparison</b>	<b>Target (by 2018)</b>
ASB incidents per 1,000 population		22.3 Maidstone is currently ranked 5 <sup>th</sup> in Kent.	26.5	Reduce to average of best 4 Kent Districts (19/1,000 population) in the Kent-wide comparison by 2018

**Priority 2: Reducing reoffending**

97

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Anticipated Outcomes</b>		<b>Lead Agency</b>
<p><b>To work to embed the responsibility of reducing re-offending across all agencies for all age groups, including awareness raising of existing services and activities. Work will be targeted around known reasons for people to offend, included education, training and employment as well as addressing housing needs.</b></p>	<p>To concentrate initiatives and services on young people in the pre conviction stage of criminality.</p> <p>Increase the use of community payback in the borough.</p> <p>Encourage private companies into providing equal opportunities for ex-offenders. This would include work experiences, training and paid employment.</p> <p>Work with IOM and Early help teams to support the creation of tailored support plans for prolific offenders. Explore the greater use of the 'Buddy Tag' system</p>	<p>Reduce repeat offending and intervene at an early stage to reduce future offending</p>	<p>Provide employment and training opportunities that divert prolific offenders from crime.</p> <p>Reduce reoffending</p>	<p>SMP Reducing Re-offending sub-group</p> <p>SMP Reducing Re-offending sub-group</p> <p>IOM and Early Help</p>
<b>Indicator</b>		<b>Kent-wide average</b>	<b>West Kent division</b>	
<p>Reoffending data related to the KSS CRC is currently unavailable, with the first publication from the MOJ due in October 2017.</p>		<p>36% reduction in offending from adult IOM cohort in 2015</p>	<p>32% reduction in offending from adult IOM cohort in 2015</p>	

**Priority 3: Road safety - killed or seriously injured (KSI)**

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Anticipated Outcomes</b>		<b>Lead Agency</b>
<p><b>To continue multi-agency work promoting road safety awareness to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads.</b></p>	<p>Deliver a multi-agency response to dangerous parking at drop off and collection points at schools across Maidstone.</p> <p>Promote the annual road safety signs and support awareness campaigns delivered by KFRS</p> <p>Support the delivery of speed watch, a volunteer led programme to highlight the issues of speeding on Maidstone’s road</p>	<p>Improve safety for students around the school area.</p> <p>Reduced road fatalities and serious injury caused by road traffic accidents.</p> <p>Fewer Complaints of inappropriate speed in villages, Fewer road traffic accidents</p>		<p>Maidstone Borough Council</p> <p>Kent Road Safety team and Kent Public Health</p> <p>Kent Police and SMP Road safety KSI sub group</p>
<b>Indicator</b>		<b>Maidstone July 2014 – June 2015</b>	<b>Kent average July 2014 - June 2015</b>	<b>Target (by 2018)</b>
Reported Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) casualties all ages		57	49	To aim for below Kent average
Reported Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) casualties (under 16)		3	5	Maintain below Kent average
Delivery of RUSH education programme to Year 11 students		3,000	Not applicable	RUSH delivered to 3,000 Year 11 students annually

**Priority 4: Substance misuse**

66

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Anticipated Outcomes</b>		<b>Lead Agency</b>
<p><b>To continue multi-agency work to reduce the impact of drug and alcohol misuse on individuals and the local community, including drunken behaviour, binge and underage drinking.</b></p>	<p>Support Kent Alcohol Strategy and the West Kent Alcohol Action Plan, developing local, targeted projects with young people.</p> <p>Assess needle finds and needle drop locations in Maidstone and develop a targeted partnership action plan to increase outreach support and services.</p> <p>Implementation of multi-agency street outreach to support street population through CRI, GPs and other providers.</p> <p>Trial a Reduce the Strength initiative targeting town centre based off-licenses</p>	<p>Reduction in underage drinking across Maidstone.</p> <p>Raised young people’s awareness of the dangers of drugs and alcohol.</p>	<p>Reduce needle finds and increase use and provision of needle drop locations.</p> <p>Increased referrals to targeted interventions against these individuals and reduce the impact on the community</p> <p>Fewer reports of drink related ASB and violent crime, fewer admissions to hospital</p>	<p>SMP Substance Misuse sub-group</p> <p>SMP Substance Misuse sub-group</p> <p>SMP Substance Misuse sub-group</p> <p>SMP substance misuse sub-group</p>
<b>Indicator</b>		<b>Maidstone 2015</b>	<b>Kent-wide comparison</b>	<b>Target (by 2018)</b>
<p>Number of drug offences per 1,000 population</p>		<p>1.74</p>	<p>1.79</p>	<p>Maintain under Kent average</p>
<p>Alcohol related hospital admissions per 10,000 population</p>		<p>4.58</p>	<p>5.83</p>	<p>Maintain under Kent average</p>
<p>Number of discarded needles picked up</p>		<p>1,610</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Reduce to 1,200pa</p>

**Priority 4: Violent Crime (domestic abuse)**

100

Aim	Action	Anticipated Outcomes		Lead Agency
<p><b>To work to reduce repeat victimisation of domestic abuse victims and to ensure effective services are in place to support and meet the needs of victims.</b></p>	<p>Support the delivery of the Maidstone Domestic Abuse Action Plan to support the CSP Plan.</p> <p>Support the Specialist Domestic Violence Court and the work of the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors.</p> <p>Continuation of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) in Maidstone.</p> <p>Implement a robust recording process for uncovering the emergence of adolescent to parent violence (APV) by working closely with the Early help and social services team.</p>	<p>Increased access to information for agencies, victims, families and friends; improved referral routes; improved awareness and access to services for adults, children and teenage victims.</p>	<p>Increased number of domestic abuse cases seen at Court. Reduction in repeat victims.</p>	<p>Maidstone Domestic Violence Forum</p>
		<p>Increased referrals from wider range of agencies. Support to high risk victims of domestic abuse.</p>	<p>A greater understanding of APV in Maidstone.</p>	<p>HM Court Services</p> <p>Maidstone Domestic Violence Forum</p> <p>Maidstone Family Matters</p>
Indicator		Baseline Oct 2014-15	Kent-wide comparison	Target (by 2018)
Number of DA incidents per 1,000 population		16.08	18.19	Encourage reporting to match the Kent-wide comparison
% who are repeat victims		25.1%	25.2%	Maintain under the Kent-wide comparison
Number of visitors to DA One Stop Shop				
(a) Actual		156	2410	Increase to 180
(b) Per 10,000 population		9.75	15.06	Increase to 12/10,000 pop
% of repeat MARAC cases		18%	25%	Maintain current levels



**Priority 5: Community Resilience (Prevent, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Serious Organised Crime (SOC), Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery and Safeguarding)**

Aim	Action	Anticipated Outcomes		Lead Agency
<p><b>To prevent, prepare and protect the community from radicalisation, extremism, CSE, SOC, human trafficking, modern slavery and safeguarding.</b></p>	<p>To identify local vulnerabilities in Maidstone for each area of the Kent control strategy.</p> <p>To establish a multi-agency sub group to focus on the emerging issues in Maidstone. Perhaps look at a Serious Organised Crime Partnership.</p> <p>Provide training and awareness raising sessions to appropriate partners and residents on the community resilience themes.</p>	<p>An established understanding of the issues locally</p>	<p>The group will formulate an action plan based on the needs identified through multi-agency data around these evolving topics.</p> <p>To maximise opportunities for safeguarding young people, preventing SOC, CSE, modern slavery and human trafficking.</p>	<p>Community resilience sub group</p> <p>Community resilience sub group</p> <p>Community resilience sub group</p>
<b>Indicator</b>				
To train up to 200 people per year in the resilience topics.				

## 9. Consultation on Priorities and Partnership Plan

Maidstone has some clearly defined urban as well as rural areas, often with competing demands on resources and emphasis on what local priorities should be. Through the annual Strategic Assessment and future consultation events, stakeholders will be informed of progress against the Partnership Plan to ensure there are no other compelling issues that should be included in the Plan.

## 10. Further information

### **Maidstone Community Safety Unit**

Tel: 01634 602000

### **Maidstone Police Station**

Non-emergency Tel: 101

Emergency Tel: 999

### **Kent Fire and Rescue Service**

Tel: 01622 692121

### **One-Stop Shop**

Maidstone Gateway reception, Maidstone Borough Council, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6GY

Tel: 01622 761146

### **Domestic Abuse Hotline Domestic Abuse Support and Services in Kent**

Tel: 0808 2000247

[www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk](http://www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk)

### **Kent Hate Incident Reporting Line**

Tel: 0800 1381624

### **Anti-Terrorist Hotline**

Tel: In confidence on 0800 789321

### **Mental Health**

Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust

Tel: 01622 724100

[www.kmpt.nhs.uk](http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk)

### **Restorative Justice**

Maidstone Mediation

Tel: 01622 692843

Project Salus

Tel: 01303 817470

### **Text service for the deaf or speech-impaired**

If you're deaf or speech-impaired, you can text Kent Police. Start the message with the word 'police' then leave a space and write your message including what and where the problem is. Send your text to 60066 (the Kent Police communications centre) and they will reply with a message.

# Agenda Item 15

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **COUNCIL**

**13 APRIL 2016**

## **REPORT OF THE DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE HELD ON**

**17 MARCH 2016**

### **CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION**

#### **1 Issue for Decision**

The Council adopted the committee style of governance on 23 May 2015. It also adopted a new Constitution to support the committee system. It was envisaged by the Councillor Working Group for the New Constitution that there would be a review of the Constitution early in 2016. Paragraph 1.3.14 of the original report of the Councillor Working Group to Council dated 22 April 2014 stated, "It is proposed that the Democracy Committee review the operation and effectiveness of the new Constitution early in 2016, with a view to adopting and implementing appropriate changes in April/May 2016."

#### **2 Recommendation Made**

1. That all the changes and amendments to the Constitution shown in **Appendix A** to this report be agreed and implemented with effect from the Annual Meeting of the Council on 21 May 2016;
2. That the cycle of meetings for the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee increase to once a month with effect from the Annual Meeting of Council on 21 May 2016, and that the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to finalise the time and place of these meetings.

#### **3 Reason for Recommendation**

At its meeting on 28 January 2016 the Democracy Committee decided a review should be carried out focussing on procedural changes to the Constitution. It appointed a working group to consider the amendments and report back to the Committee.

The working group reported back to the Committee at its meeting on 17 March 2016.

The Committee proposed an amendment to the cycle of meetings of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee to once a month with effect from the date of the annual meeting of Council.

Other proposed changes are listed in the table below:

<b>Part</b>	<b>Para.</b>	<b>Change</b>
1	1.6	Clarity regarding the role of the Leader of the Council
2.1	2	Addition of paragraph relating to committee meeting agenda items
2.1	2.3	Changes to the terms of reference of the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee and the role of the Chairman of the Committee
2.1	2.6	Changes to the terms of reference of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee and the role of the Chairman of the Committee
3.1	2	Addition of a new point 2 (i) referring to the rule on public speaking
3.1	3.2	Addition of wording providing clarity regarding Councillors putting items on Committee agendas
3.1	5	Addition of a sentence providing clarity regarding Visiting Members speaking at Committee meetings
3.1	11	Addition of a new paragraph 11 regarding lobbying
3.1	13	Amended paragraph 13.1 adding a sentence making provision for Group Leaders/Representatives to respond to public questions at meetings
3.1	15	Addition of a new paragraph 15 regarding public speaking at Council and Committee meetings

3.1	16	Addition of a new paragraph 16 making provision for third party contributions at Council and Committee meetings
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All proposed changes to the Constitution are shown as tracked changes in **Appendix A** attached to this report.

Where any subsequent changes require further minor amendments such as re-numbering of paragraphs this will not be required to come to Council. The Monitoring Officer has delegated authority to make changes to the Constitution which are necessitated by decisions taken by the Council; which remove inconsistency or ambiguity; which are minor; or to effect changes in the law.

- Inspect the Council's accounts and question any expenditure as well as making your views known to the external auditor, currently Grant Thornton LLP, about whether what has been spent is lawful.

The local Citizens' Advice Bureau can advise on individuals' legal rights. Contact [www.maidstonecab.org.uk](http://www.maidstonecab.org.uk) or visit 2 Bower Terrace, Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, ME16 8RY.

Field Cod

The Council welcomes public participation in its work. For further information on your rights, or if you would like to inspect agendas and reports or attend any Council or Committee meetings please contact the Democratic Services Team at [committeeservices@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:committeeservices@maidstone.gov.uk)

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### **Responsibilities of Members of the Public**

Members of the public must not be violent, abusive or threatening to Councillors or Officers and must not wilfully or recklessly harm things owned by the Council, Councillors or Officers. The Council has adopted a policy for dealing with persistent and unreasonable complainants, a link to which can be found here:

[http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/26192/1301\\_UnreasonableandUnreasonablyPersistentComplainantsPolicyV1.pdf](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0020/26192/1301_UnreasonableandUnreasonablyPersistentComplainantsPolicyV1.pdf)

## **1.6. The Leader of the Council**

The Council's Procedure Rules provide for the election of a Leader which will normally happen at the Council's Annual Meeting.

As the Council operates a committee style of governance, ~~the Leader is a figurehead for the Council. Leader has no formal powers or duties vested in him/her.~~ The Council's Leader is the Council's political and elected head, the focus for political direction and the chief spokesperson for the Borough as well as an ambassador for the Council (although this is different from the civic and ceremonial duties of the Mayor – see below). The Leader will be the Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee and his/her role should be read and understood in relation to the role of this Chairman.

The Leader is normally elected each year at Annual Council for a term of one year until next Annual Council, unless the Council removes the Leader or s/he resigns from that office, or as a Councillor.

The Council's Procedure Rules provide for the appointment of a Deputy Leader which will normally happen at the Council's Annual Meeting. The Deputy Leader will exercise the duties of the Leader in his/her absence (but not as Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee unless s/he serves on that Committee and is appointed as Vice-Chairman).

current situation regarding implementation of decisions made by others (and the potential consequences of taking an alternative decision).

## 2. COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

### Committee Structure and Terms of Reference

All Committees may hold inquiries and investigate the available options for future direction in policy development and may appoint advisors and assessors to assist them in this process. They may go on site visits, conduct public surveys, hold public meetings, commission research and do all other things that they reasonably consider necessary to inform their deliberations.

Each of the four main service Committees have responsibility for **strategic performance management** across the range of their functions and shall review whether policies and approaches should be changed and whether desired outcomes are achieved, including on capital projects, within the remit of the Committee.

Any committees may consider any subject that, in the opinion of the committee is relevant to the formulation and delivery of its objectives. This is subject to approval of the business of the meeting by the Chairman, under the process set out in part 3.1, 3 "Meetings", section 3.2 "Business" below.

### 2.1 POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

#### Membership: 15 Councillors

#### Purpose:

- To make recommendations to the Council on budget and policy matters;
- To provide strategic direction to the operation of the Council, determining policies in the areas set out below and any cross-cutting policies that impact on other Committee areas;
- make decisions regarding land and property including acquisition, disposal and appropriation;
- retain a strategic overview of risk management;
- be responsible for all policy matters not otherwise allocated to any other Committee and to determine any disputes or differences between Committees.

FUNCTIONS	DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS
To be responsible for the annual budget submission to full Council (including staffing budgets).	N/A
To be responsible for significant decisions involving more than one service Committee.	N/A

- To act as Ambassador for the Council and its activities amongst external advisory and interest groups not falling within the responsibility of the other Committees
- To act as an advocate for the Council in pressing for changes in national policy
- Act as Councillor Health & Safety at Work Champion and attend Health and Safety meetings
- To foster close links with the business community and develop partnerships to achieve outcomes identified in the Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy
- To foster close links and develop partnerships with skills and education providers to achieve outcomes identified in the Economic Development Strategy
- To take responsibility for relationships with funders including KCC and the Heritage Lottery fund, service delivery partners including the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of small businesses, Locate in Kent, education and skills providers, voluntary and community groups.

## 2.2 URGENCY COMMITTEE

**Membership:** Leaders of the five largest Groups represented on the Council. Quorum 3.

**Purpose:** To take any urgent Policy and Resources Committee or Council decisions (that may be delegated by the Council, where above the level of delegation to Officers) in between scheduled meetings and where the decision needs to be taken before the next meeting in order to protect the Council's interests.

FUNCTIONS	DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS
All decision-making where in the opinion of the Chief Executive (having consulted the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer) the Council's interests require that Councillors take a decision urgently; including virement decisions and decisions to expend money from contingencies and balances that are not otherwise delegated.	Any decision that may be made by Council or the Policy and Resources Committee in between scheduled ordinary meetings may be further sub-delegated as considered appropriate.

## 2.3 STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

**Membership: 9 Councillors**

**Purpose:** To be responsible for planning, sustainability, district highways and car parking functions and transportation.

FUNCTIONS	DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS
To take the lead in ensuring that the Council delivers its strategic objectives for planning, sustainability and transportation	N/A
To pass a resolution that Schedule 2 to the Noise and Nuisance Act 1993 should apply in the authority's area	N/A
To submit to Policy and Resources (P&R) Committee all revenue estimates and capital programmes within the remit of the Committee with a view to P&R determining the budget for submission to Council	
To be responsible for all strategic budget related staffing matters within the Committee's remit	
<p><b>Strategic Planning and Performance Management</b> – to oversee the development, review and implementation of the Council's:</p>	
<p><del>Spatial Planning Strategy including the Local Plan and other Spatial Planning documents (such as the Blue and Green infrastructure Plan and Landscape Character Assessment) including Development Plan documents, Development Management policies and Development briefs (subject to approval by Council) Development Plan, including the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans (subject to approval by Council);</del></p>	<p>Head of Planning and Development</p>
<p><del>Spatial planning documents such as supplementary planning documents and planning policy advice notes;</del></p>	
<p><del>Master Plans and development briefs;</del></p>	<p><del>Director of Environment and Shared Services</del> <del>TBA</del></p>
<p><del>The Infrastructure Delivery Plan and The Community Infrastructure Levy (subject to approval by Council).</del></p>	<p><del>Director of Environment and Shared Services</del></p>
<p><del>Development Management, Enforcement, Community Infrastructure levy (CIL) and Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) Building Control.</del></p>	<p><del>Head of Planning and Development</del></p>

Car Parking Plans and Strategy	
Air Quality Management Strategy, smoke free premises and control of pollution.	<u>TBA</u>
Integrated Transport Strategy,	<u>Head of Planning and Development</u>
<u>P</u> ark and ride and district highways functioning	<u>TBA</u>

## **ROLE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT**

- Working with others in building a vision for the Council and Community
- To represent the Council on all partnerships relevant to the Committee
- To take the lead role in this Committee of fostering close links with key stakeholders including Parish Councils, the Developers Forum, English Heritage and transport interest groups such as Quality Bus Partnership, Transport Users Group, Rail Stakeholders Group
- To take the lead role within this Committee for responsibility for relationships with funders including Kent County Council and ~~The~~ Highways England. Agency
- To chair the Joint Transportation Board with Kent County Council in alternate years and be Vice Chairman in others.

### **2.4 LOCAL PLAN SUB COMMITTEE**

#### **Membership: 5 Councillors**

Responsible for Spatial Planning Strategy including the local plan and other Spatial Planning documents including Development Plan documents, Development Management policies and Development briefs (subject to approval by Council and the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee).

### **2.5 COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT**

#### **Membership: 9 Councillors**

**Purpose:** To take the lead within the Council for ensuring that the Council delivers its strategic objectives with regard to Communities, Housing and the Environment; to ensure inclusive and productive community engagement, Public Health, licensing, housing, other community services and to be the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee.

- To take the lead within this Committee for all aspects of community engagement
- To work with groups such as the Older Person’s Forum and the Voluntary Sector including organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Voluntary Action Maidstone, Maidstone Mediation and other important community organisations
- To represent the Council on all relevant partnerships including the Kent Waste Partnership, the Kent Community Safety Partnership and the Kent Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee. (Health scrutiny shall be undertaken in accordance with the agreed Kent Protocols for NHS Overview and Scrutiny from time to time.)
- To take the lead on this Committee for ensuring good relationships with funders including Kent County Council and Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP), service delivery partners including contractors, voluntary sector and community groups.

## 2.6 HERITAGE CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

### Membership: 9 Councillors

**Purpose:** To promote Maidstone as a decent place to live by providing opportunities for engagement in cultural and leisure pursuits, developing a sense of place and ensuring that everyone, no matter who they are, or where they live, has access to quality open space, sports and leisure facilities

FUNCTIONS	DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS
To take the lead within the Council for ensuring that the Council delivers its strategic objectives with respect to Maidstone as a decent place to live by providing opportunities for engagement in cultural and leisure pursuits, developing a sense of place and ensuring that everyone, no matter who they are, or where they live, has access to quality open space, sports and leisure facilities	N/A
To take the lead in ensuring that Maidstone’s Heritage and Culture together with its leisure facilities play a key role in regeneration and in improving and sustaining the Borough’s economic development and health and wellbeing	N/A
To submit to Policy and Resources Committee all revenue estimates and capital programmes	N/A

<p>within the remit of the Committee with a view to P&amp;R Committee determining the budget for submission to Council</p> <p>To be responsible for all strategic budget related staffing matters within the Committee's remit</p> <p><b>Strategic Planning and Performance Management</b> — to oversee the development, review and implementation of the Council's:</p> <p>Sports and Leisure Strategy</p> <p>Parks and Open Spaces strategy including <u>play areas and</u> allotments</p> <p><u>Festivals and Events Strategy including the Hazlitt Theatre and Arts Centre contract. Theatres, events and festivals</u></p> <p>Destination Management <u>PlanStrategy; Maidstone Culture and Leisure Business Plan and Visitor Economy Strategy including the Hazlitt Arts Centre, Maidstone Museum, Tourism, the Kent Conference Bureau and Maidstone Market Maidstone Market.</u></p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>Head of Commercial and Economic Development</p>
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## **ROLE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE**

- To take the lead on this Committee on working with others in building a vision for the Council and community
- To represent the Council on all relevant partnerships to include Town Team, Town Centre Management One Maidstone in its role producing events and Maidstone Area Arts Partnership (MAAP)
- To take the lead within this Committee for relationships with funders, service delivery partners including voluntary and community groups and Trusts including Maidstone Leisure Trust, Cobtree Manor Estate Trust and the Museum Trusts.

## **2.7 PLANNING COMMITTEE**

### **Membership: 13 Councillors**

- (b) decide the size and terms of reference for those Committees;
- (c) decide the allocation of seats to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules;
- (d) receive nominations from the Group Leaders of Councillors to serve on each Committee along with substitutes; and
- (e) appoint to those Committees and substitutes.

## 2. **ORDINARY MEETINGS**

Ordinary meetings of the Council will take place in accordance with an agreed calendar of meetings. Ordinary meetings will:

- (a) elect a person to preside if the Mayor or Deputy Mayor is not present;
- (b) receive any declarations of interest from Councillors and officers and deal with any applications for dispensations;
- (c) receive any disclosures of lobbying by Councillors;
- (d) consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the likely disclosure of confidential or exempt information;
- (e) approve and sign the minutes of the last meeting;
- (f) receive any announcements from the Mayor;
- (g) receive any petitions or deputations;
- (h) receive questions from, and provide answers to, the public in relation to matters which in the opinion of the person presiding at the meeting are relevant to the business of the Council;

(i) allow any member of the public to speak in accordance with the rule on Public Speaking;

~~(j)~~(j) the following will receive and respond to questions from Councillors in chronological order of receipt:

- Chairmen of Committees; and
- Other spokespersons nominated by the relevant Chairman.

~~(k)~~(k) receive the Leader's Report on Current Issues and the Group Leaders' responses;

~~(l)~~(l) deal with any business from the last Council meeting;

~~(h)~~(m) receive reports from the Council's Committees where there are recommendations for the Council to take a decision;

~~(m)~~(n) receive reports about the business of joint arrangements and external organisations which include matters for decision;

~~(n)~~(o) consider motions in the order in which notice has been received;

~~(o)~~(p) consider any other business specified in the summons to the meeting, including consideration of proposals from officers for debate; and

~~(p)~~(q) consider matters where confidential or exempt information may be revealed.

### 3. MEETINGS

#### 3.1 Calling and Cancelling Meetings

(a) **Council Meetings** - Those listed below may request the proper officer to call Council meetings in addition to ordinary meetings:

(i) the Council by resolution;

(ii) the Mayor;

(iii) the Monitoring Officer; and

(iv) any five Councillors. If they have signed a requisition presented to the proper officer an extraordinary meeting will be held within 21 days of receipt of the requisition.

(b) **Committee/Sub-Committee Meetings** - The Chairman of a Committee or Sub-Committee may call a special meeting of the Committee or Sub-Committee. A special meeting may also be called on the requisition of at least three Members of a Committee or at least two Members of a Sub-Committee, delivered in writing to the proper officer.

(c) **Cancellation of Meetings** - In exceptional circumstances the proper officer may cancel or alter the time or location of any meeting.

#### 3.2 Business

No business other than that specified in the summons to the meeting may be considered at a meeting of the full Council. However such issues may be considered by Committees and Sub-Committees if urgent in accordance with the Access to Information Rules.

It is not a requirement that the minutes of the previous meeting are approved at an extraordinary meeting.

At an Extraordinary meeting of the Council there may be a presentation of petitions and/or a question and answer session but all petitions, deputations or questions must relate to a matter to be discussed at that meeting.

Each committee sets its own agenda, through its Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Any Councillor may put an item on a **service** committee agenda for consideration, via the **Service** Committee Chairman and Democratic Services Team, subject to that matter being relevant to the Committee's terms of reference. The Chairman of a committee, after consulting the Vice Chairman, shall place the requested item on the next available committee agenda unless in the view of the Chairman, having consulted the legal team Head of Legal Partnership and Head of Finance and Resources and Democratic Services as necessary, the matter is defamatory, offensive or frivolous. The Councillor must attend the meeting, ~~and~~ speak on the item put forward and make clear what outcome s/he is seeking. The Councillor's report and background papers will be published with the agenda under the Access to Information Rules. Following receipt of the Councillor's report, the Committee will decide whether to take the matter further and request an officer's report on the item.

#### 4. **APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**

##### 4.1 **Allocation**

As well as allocating seats on Committees, the Council will allocate seats for substitute Members in accordance with 4.2 below. As well as allocating seats on Sub-Committees, Committees will allocate seats in the same manner for Substitute Members.

##### 4.2 **Number**

For each Committee, the Council will appoint up to six substitutes for each political group. For each Sub-Committee, Committees will appoint five substitutes for each political group.

No Councillor will be able to serve on the Planning and Licensing Committees without having agreed to undertake a minimum period of training on the policies, procedures, legislation and guidance relevant to the Committee as specified by the Committee. This training should be completed to an agreed level according to an agreed programme within an agreed time period set by the Committee and must be refreshed annually. If the specified training has not been completed by the due date, the Councillor will cease to be a Member/Substitute Member of the Committee until the training has been completed.

Other than the induction training delivered to all new Members and Substitute Members of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee, the Committee will identify its training requirements through an annual assessment of skills and knowledge and Members will undertake training as required.

##### 4.3 **Powers and duties**

Substitute Members will have all the powers and duties of any ordinary Member of the Committee but will not be able to exercise any special powers or duties exercisable by the person they are substituting.

#### 4.4 **Substitution**

Substitute Members may attend meetings in that capacity only:

- (a) if the substitution is notified when the first item is called on the agenda;
- (b) if the full Member arrives after the substitution has been made, s/he will forthwith resume his/her membership of the Committee or Sub-Committee and the substitute Member will forthwith cease to be a Member of the Committee and have the rights of a visiting Member for the remainder of the meeting;
- (c) if the full Member leaves before the conclusion of the meeting a substitution can be made if it has been notified at the first item called on the Committee agenda.

#### 5. **VISITING MEMBERS**

Any Councillor may attend any meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee of which s/he is not a Member to speak on particular items provided s/he states his/her intention when the first item is called on each agenda, except for: the Employment Committee (and any of its panels or sub-committees); Licensing Committee/Sub-Committee hearings; the Hearings Sub-Committee of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee (when it is considering allegations of misconduct); or any other panel hearing or appeal. Visiting Members speak after the officer introduction on an item, but before the general debate. Having spoken, the Councillor will not participate further unless the Chairman agrees, or it is on a motion that the Councillor moved at Council.

#### 6. **TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS**

The time and place of meetings will be determined by the proper officer and notified in the summons.

#### 7. **NOTICE OF AND SUMMONS TO MEETINGS**

The proper officer will give notice to the public of the time and place of any meeting in accordance with the Access to Information Rules. At least five clear working days before a meeting (or if a meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee is called at shorter notice, as soon as the meeting is called), the proper officer will publish on the Council's website and send a summons signed by him/her electronically to every Member of the Council (or on request by post or by leaving it at their usual place of residence/other address). The summons will give the date, time and place of each meeting and specify the business to be transacted, and will be accompanied by such reports as are available. Where not all of the reports are available with the summons they will be posted on the

Council's website as soon as they become available and e-mailed or posted to Councillors.

## 8. CHAIRING THE MEETING

- (a) The Mayor or in his/her absence the Deputy Mayor will preside at meetings of the Council;
- (b) if both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor are absent, the Councillors present at the meeting will choose another Councillor to preside.
- (c) any power or duty of the Mayor to conduct a meeting including exercising a second or casting vote, may be exercised by the Councillor presiding at the meeting;
- (d) if the Mayor or Deputy Mayor arrive after the start of the meeting the Councillor then presiding will vacate the chair and the Mayor or Deputy Mayor will take the chair.
- (e) The ruling of the Mayor as to the application of these rules shall be final unless challenged by a Councillor who gains the support of two thirds of those Councillors present and voting.

## 9. QUORUM

The quorum of a meeting will be one quarter of the whole number of Councillors provided that the quorum of a Committee is not less than four Councillors, other than the Urgency Committee which is not less than three Councillors, and the quorum of a Sub-Committee is not less than two Councillors (although some Panels and Sub-Committees may have a quorum of three). The quorum of the Cobtree Manor Estate Committee and the Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment Committee shall be three Councillors.

## 10. DURATION OF MEETING

- (a) Each unfinished meeting will adjourn at 10.30 pm unless a majority of Councillors present vote to extend the meeting to 11.00 pm at which time the meeting will stand adjourned;
- (b) The time and date of the continuation of the adjourned meeting will be decided by a majority of those Councillors present, or if no decision is reached, by the proper officer in consultation with the Mayor and group leaders/political group spokesmen, and it should normally take place within 10 working days of the meeting.

## 11.

### ~~11~~-LOBBYING

For guidance on Lobbying, Councillors are referred to (5) "Lobbying of and by Councillors" in section 4.4 "Code of Conduct for Councillors and Officers"

Dealing with Planning Matters.” This section sets out the rules on lobbying as they apply to Councillors who sit on Planning Committee. However, the rules also apply to other committees.

#### **11.12. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS TO THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**

- (a) Subject to sub-paragraph (b) below all petitions received by the Council will be reported to the Council or to the appropriate Committee or Sub-Committee.
- (b) If so required by a signatory to a petition, it may be presented in person at meetings of the Council or a Committee or Sub-Committee, subject to compliance with the following procedure:-
- (i) The wording of a petition to be presented to the Council or to a Committee or Sub-Committee must be given in writing to the proper officer at least two weeks before the day of the meeting. The Mayor or the Chairman may at his/her discretion waive this requirement. Ward Members will be notified of the wording of petitions when received;
  - (ii) Only petitions containing signatures of 100 persons living in the Borough will be eligible for submission to the Council or to a Committee or Sub-Committee but the Mayor or the Chairman may at his/her discretion waive this requirement;
  - (iii) If a petitioner has submitted a petition of at least 100 signatures (or less if agreed by the relevant Chairman) requesting a senior officer of the Council to attend, give evidence and provide information on activities for which they are responsible to that Committee, then that senior officer will attend (a senior officer is the Chief Executive, Director, or Head of Service).
  - (iv) Petitions must be presented to the proper officer at least one clear working day before the day of the meeting (i.e. two days) of the Council, Committee or Sub-Committee;
  - (v) Normally no more than three petitions may be presented per meeting, but the Mayor or the Chairman may relax this restriction;
  - (vi) Only one person may speak to a petition for a maximum of five minutes (or three minutes in the case of a petition to the Planning Committee). They should have signed the petition and be a supporter of the body submitting the petition. This may include someone acting for the petitioner in a professional capacity;
  - (vii) (a) At a Council meeting, at the conclusion of the speech of the presenter, at the discretion of the Mayor and only when a factual briefing note has been prepared by the Officers on the issues set out in the petition, a debate will take place on the petition for up to a period of twenty minutes (or if the petition has 1,500 signatures,

- (c) Petitions which are not to be presented in person at meetings of the Council, appropriate Committee, or Sub-Committee will be reported to that body.
- (d) Provision will be made for a facility to submit petitions electronically.

## **13. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

### **13.1 General**

At ordinary meetings of the Council members of the public may ask questions of the Chairman of any Committee provided written notice has been given in advance as set out below.

This question and answer session will be limited to one hour. After the Chairman of any Committee has spoken, the Mayor will ask if any Group Leader/Representative present would also like to respond.

### **13.2 Order of questions**

Questions will be asked of the relevant Chairman in the order that notice of them was received, except that the Mayor may group together similar questions.

### **13.3 Notice of questions**

A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing (including by electronic mail) to the proper officer no later than close of the office one clear working day (ignoring the date of the meeting i.e. two days) before the day of the meeting. Each question must give the name and address of the questioner and must name the Councillor to whom it is to be put.

### **13.4 Number of questions**

At any one meeting no person may submit more than one question.

### **13.5 Scope of questions**

The proper officer may reject a question if in his/her opinion:

- (a) it is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
- (b) it is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- (c) it requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information (as described in the Access to Information Rules);
- (d) a member of the public seeking to ask a question has previously withdrawn questions on three consecutive occasions, any further question

(f) The form and content of reply to an original or a supplementary question will be at the discretion of the Councillor giving the reply, unless in respect of an original question a written request has been received specifying a specific form of reply or replies. S/he may decline to give a full or any reply if in his/her opinion to do so would involve an unreasonable amount of labour or cost.

(g) The question and answer session will be limited to half an hour.

## **15 PUBLIC SPEAKING AT COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES**

**Where the meeting is open to the public, a member of the public or a representative of an organisation may speak at the invitation of the Leader/Committee Chairman in respect of an item of the agenda. However notice of a request to speak must be given to Democratic Services by no later than 5pm one clear working day before the relevant meeting. Public speaking is subject to the following time limits:**

**†(a) The total time for speaking on an item on the agenda is 12 minutes; within that 12 minute period, each speaker has a maximum of 3 minutes;**

**(b) in addition to the 12 minutes, a Parish or Town Council representative may be allocated a maximum of 3 minutes each; where there are several speakers, they will be asked to appoint a spokesperson to represent all views;**

**(c)**

**When these times have expired, speakers will not be allowed to speak further unless asked by the Leader/Committee Chairman to clarify a point of fact.**

## **16 INVITATION OF THIRD PARTIES TO COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

**16.1 An ordinary meeting of Council or a Committee may invite, through the Leader or Chairman, a third party to attend a meeting and speak and answer questions on a particular item on the agenda.**

**16.2 An item on the agenda of an ordinary meeting of Council/Committee may be deferred if Council or the Committee agrees that a third party contribution to the discussion is necessary.**

## **17 MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

**17.1** Except for motions which can be moved without notice under Rule ~~18~~ ~~15~~, written notice of every motion must be delivered to the proper officer not