

BUDGET STRATEGY 2011/12 ONWARDS

COMMENTS FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS

**Maidstone Rural West & South Neighbourhood Forum
Marden – 21 October 2010**

Present:

Kent County Council

County Councillors Hotson and Mrs Stockell

Maidstone Borough Council

Councillors Nelson-Gracie (Chairman) and Parr

Parish Council Members

Councillors Miss Brown (Yalding) and Butcher (Staplehurst)

Visiting Members

Maidstone Borough Council

Councillor JA Wilson

Parish Councils

Councillors Hollister (Loose), Sawtell (Hunton) and Mrs Reed (Marden)

Feedback/comments:

1. The Cabinet's Proposals:

- Outsource building regulations to maximize income
- Renegotiate the leisure centre contract
- Joint working/outsourcing CCTV - Police responsibility to fund
- Reduce election costs – fewer polling stations/less paperwork/all elections at the same time
- Reduce the number of civic events
- More use of consortiums to purchase goods and services
- Reschedule the capital programme
- Consider increases in planning, parking and other fees and income
- Devolve power to local councils to realise savings in some areas
- More emphasis on economic development/does it make sense to cut

2. Other Suggestions for savings

- Save money on waste and recycling services/generate income

- Save money on paper, envelopes and postage – meeting agendas and papers
- Devolve street cleaning

3. Discretionary Services

- Discretionary Service (Table 3, consultation leaflet) - Community services, environmental protection, recreation & sport, and grants
- Core Services (Table 2, consultation leaflet) - Community services, environmental protection, transport services, and recreation & sport (specifically youth)

<p style="text-align: center;">Maidstone Rural North & East Neighbourhood Forum Lenham Community Centre – 28 October 2010</p>
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Present:

**Kent County Council
Maidstone Borough Council**

County Councillor Whittle.
Councillors - Ash, Barned (Chairman),
and Horne.

Parish Council Members

Councillors - Godfrey and Greenwood
(Lenham), Stead (Vice Chairman)
(Boxley), Cathcart (Stockbury), Cobbett
(Hollingbourne), Morley (Thurnham),
McLaggan (Detling) ,Young and Street
(Bearsted), Round (Headcorn), Evans
(Broomfield & Kingswood) and Harris
(Leeds).

Feedback/comments:

4. The Cabinet's Proposals:

- Central Services – should be cut more dramatically.
- Museum, Hazlitt, Arts – not enough savings here. Museum should charge entry.
- Contracted Services – would these be better brought back in-house?

5. Other Suggestions for savings

- Nothing should be sacrosanct.
- Simplification of the Planning structure – a North and South structure could save money.
- Look at all fixed costs of all core services.
- Enforcement – introduce a levy or fine.
- Elections – 4 yearly elections will save money.
- Concessionary Fares – age is being raised so there could be savings.
- Street Cleaning – no evidence this takes place – why does it cost so much if it is not being done.
- Democratic Representation – civic events – more savings could be made.

6. Discretionary Services

- Open spaces, parks and recreation grounds
- Economic Development
- Grants to voluntary and charitable organisations
- Transport Services

**Maidstone Central and North East Neighbourhood Forum
St Philip's Church, Maidstone – 1 November 2010**

Present:

Kent County Council
(Chairman),
Maidstone Borough Council

County Councillors Chittenden,
Robertson and Daley.
Councillors Naghi, Mrs Robertson and
Vizzard

Community Groups

Hermitage Quarry Liaison Group
College Avenue Residents Association
Churches Together Maidstone
Collis Millennium Green Trust.

Visiting Members

Maidstone Borough Council

Councillors Paterson, Ms Smith, Warner
and Mrs Wilson

Feedback/comments:

7. The Cabinet's Proposals:

- What will the cuts mean for services?
- The CAB and voluntary sector will be more important because of the cuts to public services.
- The Government is asking for savings and a Big Society.
- Cabinet members should be present on these occasions.
- Some savings will reduce some services.
- Urban and rural residents are entitled to the same level of service. Rural residents might pay twice for services.
- Where does Park and Ride sit? (NB in Box 2 - a core/important service).
- CCTV is not an essential service. It is a police responsibility and serves the town centre. Are there any proposals to save money - perhaps during non peak hours?
- Where does the money come from and where could we raise more money?
- Over the past 15 years the borough council's tax rises have been pennies per week.
- The Government's cuts will be difficult to achieve.

Maidstone South & South East Neighbourhood Forum
Christ Church Hall, Park Wood – 11 November 2010

Present:

Kent County Council	County Councillors Cooke, Chell, Jennifer McDonald
Maidstone Borough Council	David Barton, Ian Chittenden, David Marchant, Adrian Brindle
Parish Councillors	Derek Mortimer (Tovil PC & South Ward), Hugh Vaux (Greenhill Otham), Sue Griffith (Otham), Simon Leonard (Otham),
Others	Paul Butcher (Parkwood Youth), Michael Heath (KHS), Christopher Morgan Jones (All Saints), Steve Charman

Feedback/comments:

8. The Cabinet's Proposals:

- Concurrent functions – savings would lead to double taxation. It should clear that parished and non parished areas are not disadvantaged. There is a risk to employment in the parishes.
- Central services – what is the impact on residents? (*These efficiency savings will be achieved for example by not filling vacancies/natural wastage and joint and shared services.*)
- Youth services – what impact?
- Council tax increase – what is it?
- Government directives – Is there anything that we will be told not to do?
- Growth money?

9. Other Suggestions for savings:

- New Income – consider new areas for income and partnering KCC and others to develop and preserve services.
- Licensing and Planning – Do they pay their way? (*The fees are set government.*)
- Debt Service? (*There is a sum of £300,000 in the budget.*)
- Empty houses/shops etc - Any new income streams?
- Elections – Four yearly elections will save money.
- New ways of delivering services – services have to be delivered in a new way, through partnership and to bring in funds. Frontline services and our most vulnerable people can be protected if we look at place based budgeting.

- Debtors – How much, what does the council do. (*We use courts and other methods to collect debts.*)
- Has the council budgeted for an increase – (*Yes.*)

10. Discretionary Services:

- Parks and open spaces – the budget is spent mainly in the urban area.
- Economic development – What's included? (*Tourism, visitor information centre, town centre management, conference venue marketing and Christmas lights.*)
- Grants to charities – the savings will be harder on charities than others.
- Toilets – These are important!
- Civic occasions + public arts – These 'nice to have' things are most at risk.