

## BUDGET STRATEGY 2011/12 ONWARDS

## ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

MY Council – What matters to ME  
Maidstone council's budget consultation 2011-2014

	Comments on the Cabinet's proposals	Suggestions for savings	Which discretionary services matter most to you
1.		<i>Make employees pay for their pension contributions, not the public you serve. Cut the executive pay perks.</i>	<i>Schools &amp; bin collections</i>
2.	<i>Re-open toilets.</i>	<i>No Christmas lights for 3 years. No sport support. Cut grass in parks less. Hold work on new library &amp; archives – KCC.</i>	<i>Toilets and grants to vol organisations. New Museum and fitting out to be a priority. Hazlitt.</i>
3.	<i>Focus on central services is the right focus. Democratic representation should be a deeper reduction – less focus on communication.</i>	<i>Democratic representation, reduction in members support, allowances, civic occasions and etc. The latter is broadly unnecessary and the former should be seriously reduced. Grants process/third sector support needs to be reviewed to ensure value for money and that grants are not "buying votes".</i>	<i>Support for young people's activities; the Museum and Arts centre/activities, green space, parks, play areas.</i>
4.	<i>NOT ENOUGH DETAIL – what percentage of total budget does each cut represent?</i>	<i>Planning/Building Control. Central Services. Transport Services.</i>	
5.	<i>Don't like the idea but if it's got to be done then fair enough.</i>	<i>Elections. Parking Enforcement. Democratic Representation. Planning &amp; Policy.</i>	<i>Housing Benefit. Street Cleansing. Economical Development. Culture &amp; Heritage.</i>
6.		<i>I suggest that Maidstone Borough Council should be the first in the country to license anyone who calls door to door in pursuit of trade. Licences to cost £5,000 p.a. Final accounts to be submitted to MBC. Lapel badges showing licence number to be worn. Badges with photo to cost £25 and updated yearly.</i>	
7.	<i>I think it disgusting that Sutton Road cemetery has not got a chapel where services can be conducted for funerals. Standing around a grave in the pouring rains is not acceptable. I know you are trying to save money but this project should be carried out and repairs done to the chapel. Think what it would be like if a loved one of a Councillor had to experience this!!</i>	<i>I think that 'L' drivers using South Park Car Park should pay an extra fee to maintain the car park. They use this as a business and often there are 5-10 'L' cars in there. If they would not agree BAN them from the car parks. It is very dangerous using them as children are often around the car parks.</i>	<i>Free bus travel. Open spaces. Environmental protection</i>
8.		<i>Ex DSO – Move to Gillingham BC when CCT arrived. Believe DSO Managers and client monitoring officers overpaid with too many perks. In general feels MBC is a good Council.</i>	

BUDGET STRATEGY 2011/12 ONWARDS

ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

9.	<i>It is not clear what the rationale is behind any of the numbers. Nor is it clear what the impact will be. Therefore, I don't feel consulted.</i>	<i>Self promotion activities. General administration. Governmental/politicking.</i>	<i>Community Services – from street cleaning, open spaces, arts, planning/building control</i>
10	<i>Bus passes should be from the age of 70 years. Most people are still working 60/65 also put us back on half fare when we go out of Kent, people on the dole should work for their money like they do in America, we are too soft in England, there are plenty of jobs without taking the park works and street cleaners jobs away.</i>	<i>The bus service should not be so many in Town every 10 minutes the 82/86 and they run with only 3/4 people on them what a waste also too many buses for Coxheath. Why I live in Marden we have good bus services we have 2 the 26/89 you should cut the services on the town buses then you would save.</i>	<i>Sort benefit money out, people I know who are on benefits can afford a car/smoke/drink/have all mod cons that are on the market, people should be watched a bit more if incapacity benefits. We have one in the village, he plays on it and gets away with it that's taking the piss he wants kicking all round England.</i>
11	<i>Making Maidstone an attractive vibrant town is important for everyone, both retail and residents. Therefore by reducing parking costs and the need for enforcement frees up more money but reducing the budget on street cleaning is not acceptable as dirty streets give the wrong impression.</i>	<i>The council could save money by setting council office lights to time switches and using 'waste/recycling' to generate electricity/heating in schools and leisure centres. Community Services – use more volunteers.</i>	<i>Open Spaces, Economic Development, Recreation &amp; Sport are essential for the youth of the town and their future pride in the area.</i>
12	<i>Parks – benches in Palace Avenue</i>		
13		<i>Redwell Lane – bus shelter light.</i>	
14	<i>I don't think nothing about it because our opinions won't happen anyway.</i>	<i>Get rid of disabled and OAP bus passes and make them pay like everybody else. It's unfair at the moment. That would save a fortune.</i>	<i>It would be nice to have all toilets open when we need to go because we have to use McDonalds when Brenchley Gardens toilet for girls is shut but men's are open.</i>
15	<i>Sadly, in the current financial circumstances, I think that MBC will for the next few years, have to save money wherever it can although I would not want to see redundancies. Individuals have to practice good housekeeping at home and similar budgeting must also extend to the council. Obviously I hope that the stated proposals do not cause too much hardship for Maidstone's residents.</i>	<i>Building regulations – Design and Construction – When renovation or new buildings are planned thought should be given to the installation of solar panels and other energy saving devices. Although initially adding to the costs, future savings would be made thus soon recouping the initial outlay. With winter approaching the lighting and heating will be on for many more hours thus creating an enormous expense especially in large/public buildings. This expense could be reduced/offset by the installation and benefits of today's technology. Whilst travelling abroad I have encountered some escalators which only move when a person approaches and travels on them thus leaving the escalators stationary for part of the time. When I spoke of this simple idea I was told that its innovation had created great savings on electricity. To reduce heat loss etc we have doors which open and close automatically by use of</i>	<i>A good public transport service which would assist in keeping the number of individual cars off the road. To ensure good environmental conditions I would like to see Waste, Recycling and Street Cleaning continued as currently carried out. Having footpaths treated in bad weather.</i>

BUDGET STRATEGY 2011/12 ONWARDS

ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

		<i>a 'magic eye' so why don't we consider installing (in suitable buildings) a similar application to escalators.</i>	
16		<i>If road cleaners and sweepers were kept on and used to manage teams of the unemployed and those due to serve community service, savings of probably the entire £2m could be made.</i>	<i>Community Services. Economic Development.</i>
17	<i>Grants to voluntary groups and charities could be cut some more.</i>	<i>Re Box 2 number 4 – concessionary fares – I thought that central government paid for bus passes!</i>	<i>Transport services, open spaces and parks, economic development (all, except the High Street makeover which is a disaster at this time of credit squeeze and downturn).</i>
18	<i>Central Services must be looked into. Community Services cuts are a concern. There seems to be a very drastic cut in waste recycling and street cleaning.</i>	<i>Civic Functions. No more concrete columns with green lights – utter waste of £9,000. More efficient allocation of contract work.</i>	<i>Our OAP bus passes. A clean county town, verges kept cut. Local PCSO presence. Waste and recycling.</i>
19	<i>I think most people would say that they are all important. I also think not many people think the work planned for the High Street at the cost of £4m is needed. This £4m could be used to make the savings we must make.</i>		<i>In days of cutbacks one thing that is guaranteed to rise is crime. How can we even think of cutting Police or CCTV.</i>
20	<i>Difficult to see where more cuts can be made across the board except generally reduce heating and light in all public offices and buildings (these are generally overheated, savings can be made), Pay less expenses to all Council staff and elected representatives. Reduce hours of libraries, museum, leisure centre etc.</i>	<i>Democratic representation – pay less expenses. Cut down on civic events/ceremonies. Council elections – hold these once only every 4 years and pay less expenses. Overall – reduce expenses paid to all council staff in time of austerity. Put up cost of fees for planning applications (to cover costs). Make cuts in tourism, visitor information centre, conference marketing and xmas lights (no-one will want to visit Maidstone in time of austerity). Reduce heating and lights in public buildings and offices.</i>	<i>Community health and safety are most important. Keep Youth activities, open spaces, rec grounds and parks – discretionary.</i>
21	<i>Community Safety – cut back on unnecessary street lighting in villages/residential areas/roads (e.g. Lenham is lit all night). Reconsider motorway lighting. CCTV – consider costing. Arts – more private funding. Cut back severely on civic events and occasions. Reassess charitable/voluntary grants.</i>	<i>Save money on street lights/CCTV. Encourage private enterprise for parks and leisure centres. Voluntary input to recycling (collection and delivery). Encourage local shops to cut out unnecessary travel concessions.</i>	<i>Rural bus services. Sports and youth activities. Economic Development of the whole area – particularly support for small town and rural businesses.</i>
22	<i>I believe the cabinet proposal to completely phase out the concurrent function grant to the rural parishes is tantamount to destroying parish councils 50% first year reduction 2010/2011 and two further cuts of 25% will</i>	<i>Cut down on officers and their large salaries. Think before injecting lots of money into projects that only improve the lives of the residents of Maidstone town.</i>	<i>Lenham PC already run their own rural bus service, CCTV system + 3 community halls, run their own children's play areas x 3, have their own picnic park, football field/recreational field, run the public toilets in the village. All this is run with the help of C/F grant</i>

BUDGET STRATEGY 2011/12 ONWARDS

ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

	<i>destroy many of the services that parish councils are expected to supply.</i>		<i>and Maidstone town residents enjoy by only paying Council tax, no PRECEPT, like the rural areas.</i>
23		<i>Scrap the £1.4m high Street Scheme. Scrap or reduce the Members' salaries and freeze officers salaries.</i>	
24	<i>I am very concerned to hear about the cuts to Parish Councils, e.g. concurrent functions. The cuts should be fair i.e. 25% overall and therefore 25% to Parish Councils. People who live in the villages should not have to pay more (or twice) for the same services received in the town. If this is not achievable then bring back the Holingbourne R.D.C!</i>	<i>Obviously <u>Central Services</u> and <u>Committee meetings</u>. Less officer workers, non-jobs etc. More people out on the ground doing essential reports.</i>	<i>Community Safety and CCTV should be maintained. Scrap civic events and occasions. Keep toilets but scrap health promotion. Keep rural bus services. Maintain open spaces but maybe reduce numbers of cuts of grass etc.</i>
25	<i>Maidstone Museum and arts should never be FREE. Admission e.g.£2 token entrance fee would help finances.</i>	<i>We don't need ANY more footbridges over the river please! A much more modest High St 'tart up' scheme would be more acceptable to the council tax payer; don't think millions should be spent in the present financial climate. Support for social housing must be capped and the cost gradually be reduced. Modest Xmas lights (good for environment).</i>	<i>Youth activities, sports, or we could catch up with Chatham 'obesity' in the future. Properly maintained and clearly signposted public toilets, as some are closed and the others seem to be falling apart, very INCONVENIENT to visiting shoppers. Keep Park &amp; Ride passes as we don't need anymore traffic in Maidstone and save our trees! CCTV is welcome.</i>
26	<i>Grants to voluntary and charitable organisation should be scrapped until such time there are surplus funds.</i>	<i>Grass cutting in public areas i.e Highcroft Green cut so regularly it's a joke, grass cutting could be 50% of its current cutting. People should be made aware of dropping litter and dumping rubbish and fined heavily, this would result in less money needed for cleaning services.</i>	<i>Community Services.</i>
27	<i>Maidstone <u>must</u> be an attractive and safe place to live for people of all ages and abilities and social levels. At the same time building and traffic are reducing its appeal so should be reduced. Safety is paramount as should be promotion of knowledge and the arts (private sector will add clubs/gyms etc). Local and voluntary groups are essential and invaluable in all areas of the community as are open spaces and multi cultural events, reduced public transport fares for all and clean and healthy streets.</i>	<i>Stop building in Maidstone over the next 5 years. We have many private sports/gyms who should offer off peak or subsidised exercise programmes for those with health needs etc supplied by the Council. Why does the private sector require grants for housing? A minimum charge for public transport may encourage misuse and leave concessions for those over 65.</i>	<i>Community Services, Transport services, open spaces etc, grants to voluntary and charitable organisations and environmental protection.</i>
28	<i>I am surprised that the Council does not repair the small church in the Sutton Road cemetery. If you could find a sponsor to help rebuild, the income for the cemetery would increase. Many people do not have their own church</i>	<i>Concessionary Bus Fares for over 60s. Perhaps they could be means tested or ask people to not apply for them if they could afford to pay the bus fare. Will probably mean people will bring their cars into town. Cut parking charges for the town – it will encourage people</i>	<i>Transport services, etc. In fact all the services are important. Everyone has a different requirement. I love walking in Mote Park and South Park but others may think they are not as important as one of the other services. An overall cut to all services would be</i>

BUDGET STRATEGY 2011/12 ONWARDS

ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

	<i>that they attend, and would prefer a church service but this is not always available. Planning enforcement could be cut- the Council do not at present provide the level of service required.</i>	<i>to come to Maidstone to shop.</i>	<i>best so we can at least have something for everyone.</i>
29	<i>Stop spending on the unsightly museum wing! Why was this development allowed?! Do not reduce street (and pavement) cleaning it is essential – as is planning enforcement.</i>	<i>Turning off street lights in Coxheath and similar estates after 11 p.m. (and in Maidstone side streets). Fewer lights on in daytime (in streets/inside shops) Don't alter the High Street. Force clubs/pubs to shut earlier in the town.</i>	<i>Street cleaning – litter removal. Protecting environment, reducing/eliminating herbicide use – let more wild flowers thrive. Stop cutting down trees just because they're big – large <u>wide</u> old trees are <u>stable</u> and cannot fall.</i>
30		<i>Box 2 - Item 1 – since this is the largest budget item, I hope this support is given, especially to people of the Borough and not to asylum seekers or other drifters who happen to appear in our community. If responsibility is forced upon the Borough, by whatever means, then we should have recourse from National Government for any monies spent.</i>	<i>Item 1 – without having a detail knowledge of these services, it's difficult to comment. Item 2 – 7 – acceptable. Item 8 – Some activities under this title may be classified 'a service'. Is there any means of charging a fee in these cases to mitigate the expense.</i>
31	<i>I think grants to voluntary organisations are important as they will probably take on tasks previously provided by councils. This will encourage more people to volunteer provided they are not penalised by being held "responsible" if things go wrong! GLAD IT ISN'T MY JOB TO DECIDE WHERE TO CUT.</i>	<i>Paper could be saved by staff being trained to, where possible, to use both sides of paper when sending/typing letters. I have often received letters with the "yours sincerely" on a 2<sup>nd</sup> page! ALSO sharing of facilities with other councils. How about encouraging ALL only to put their bins out if full (or ¾) this could save the refuse collectors time and effort.</i>	<i>The bus pass. Street cleaning/litter clearance. I feel money should still be spent on facilities for children – sports and parks/play areas. It is important for families to have places to visit, locally and free. Bus passes mean the elderly can get out and about. Otherwise they stay indoors, do not get exercise and become depressed thus increasing Health and Social costs.</i>
32	<i>If we can believe them, I think it is a reflection of the financial times we are in. The product of years of Labour possibly 'bury their hands in the sand'.</i>	<i>Scrap payments to:- Community Services, Community Safety and Community Development Grants to charitable organisations Tourism promotion Mobile Library Health promotion Democratic representation and decision making process!!</i>	<i>Planning enforcement policy. AS A COUNCIL YOU FAIL MISERABLY HERE. Maintenance of roads and footways.</i>
33	<i>It is difficult to comment on the proposals when there are not details of how savings would be made in each area. Clearly, central government need the voluntary sector to take on certain tasks they no longer will fund therefore withdrawing funding from them will not be helpful. Maidstone Leisure Centre should remain in MBC overall control as a 'sell off' to private concerns would inevitably lead</i>		<i>All box 3 services are important therefore some reduced funding will be necessary for MBC to comply with required reduction of finance.</i>

## BUDGET STRATEGY 2011/12 ONWARDS

## ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

	<i>to price rises.</i>		
34	<i>Difficult to comment without knowing the budget breakdowns.</i>	<i>Civic occasions &amp; events. Investigate housing benefit for people not entitled to claim.</i>	<i>Community policing – rural areas Transport.</i>
35	<i>Some areas have greater focus than others and with information provided difficult to give balanced steer – on a personal note savings should focused around, lean processes of shared services, procurement, muscle when utilising external providers and personally feel a tougher approach to greater accountability needed on the spend relating to social housing.</i>	<i>As outlined before, key challenge will be maintaining service levels but pitching need vs 'nice to have' ,reduced waste collection will drive greater recycling etc etc – we have become a throw away society and it needs to change.</i>	<i>All of the 8 areas have benefits to some degree – the areas that matter most to me are Community Services, Environmental Protection, Transport Services, Recreation and Sport, Open Spaces and Parks and Economic Development. For me, Community Safety is important but how many people are convicted by use of CCTV. Also charitable organisations come in many forms and should be less reliant on central funding and ultimately be what they are called – charitable.</i>
36	<i>1 in 3 Councillors should be dismissed</i>		
37			<i>Provide and charge for a hazardous waste collection service. The weekend freighter service e.g. for residents to dispose of small items. Make sure that people using the weekend freighter one from Maidstone.</i>
38	<i>The phrase 'sacred cows' comes to mind. Where the Council provides 'paid for by user' services the charges must cover all fixed and variable costs plus a 20% profit margin. Cut back on services!! In 24 years the public footpath in this cul de sac has been swept once!</i>	<i>If regulations permit charge an annual fee (frozen for 3 years) of £50 per annum. If not permissible lobby Government to change regulations. No more annual elections for Councillors. Reduce number of councillors by one third. Greater co-operation with Councils to pool resources. Increase by 20% redesign and construction regulations inspections, consent etc. Increase the number of council tax payments made by direct debit.</i>	<i>Rubbish collection Street cleaning – including leaves Freighter waste disposal service. <u>Discretionary Services</u> Environmental Protection Transport Services Open Spaces</i>
39			<i>There should be more seating in Fremlin Walk and the seating in Palace Avenue should be reinstated.</i>
40			<i>The council should do one thing at a time and do it well.</i>
41			<i>The toilets at King Street car park should be reopened as they are appropriately placed for disabled parking.</i>
42		<i>Cut street lighting.</i>	
43		<i>Cut concessionary bus passes – make it half fare only.</i>	
44		<i>Get offenders to sweep the streets for nothing.</i>	
45		<i>Charge a fee of £25 for the concessionary bus pass.</i>	
46		<i>Save money on staff uniforms.</i>	
47		<i>Install a photo booth in the Gateway to get an income and provide a service.</i>	

## BUDGET STRATEGY 2011/12 ONWARDS

## ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

48	<i>Is there a net profit on recycling services – if not, cut costs by reducing effort. This has become mantra and should be reinvestigated. We have an incinerator, use the excess as fuel.</i>	<i>Seek at least 10% savings on Democratic Representation and Central Services. Increase charge on planning applications. Charge £10 annually for bus passes. This is equivalent to 4 trips to town at full fare. Many would not then bother to apply, with further savings achieved.</i>	<i>They all matter but it is a question of degree – savings can be found, apply a rigid 10% cut.</i>
49	<i>Democratic Representation – why no savings for 2011/12? Civic occasions and events all need catering. You can always make savings in food/drink. I do at home so you guys should be able to.</i>	<i>Look at your housekeeping for staff: - Cheaper coffee in machines etc Cheaper loo paper. Remove uniform perk for staff in office buildings. Tell them dress code black and white. Cheaper cleaning materials. Concessionary fare to start at 65 not 60.</i>	<i>Important services: - Police Refuse Transport Parks Community Environment Tourism But get it right first time!</i>
50	<i>Rural bus services because no local shops, all been allowed to close when one has some sort of disability</i>	<i>Think we could put lots of new things on hold, if no money, just do the vital things like the museum such a waste – it's about people (too many of us)</i>	<i>Waste and recycling This is such a vital service and all the waste in the country is dreadful.</i>
51	<i>Reasonable</i>	<i>Bus passes</i>	<i>Waste and recycling collections. Community safety, CCTV and community development. Grants to voluntary organisations, open spaces, parks, footpaths, Maidstone leisure centre.</i>
52	<i>Cabinet's proposals for trying to return people to work rather than a lifetime of sponging on benefits – a real step in the right direction. Why are we obliged to pay family allowance benefits to immigrants working in this country – but dependents living abroad?</i>	<i>Final salary pension settlement should be scrapped for Council staff in line with the private sector – why should general public fund an ever increasing amount of money. Bus passes should only be eligible for issue when pension age attained (most people are still at work at 60 years of age). Winter fuel allowance should only be payable from pension age (65/66 years) – Central Government? Housing benefits – more limited. Rents for social housing should be more in line with commercial levels and not for life but a defined period only. Encourage people to keep their own street tidy/litter free – move verges etc.</i>	<i>Recreation and sport facilities. Building regulations etc – maintain the character of Maidstone – non intensive population explosion. Democratic representation/Council elections. Good public transport facilities at reasonable prices.</i>
53	<i>The savings to be found in years 2012-13 and 2013-14 are going to be difficult. I would like to see Environmental Protection and Waste and Recycling favoured above other areas.</i>	<i>Slim down central services with more efficiency on social housing, planning applications, Economic Development and Maidstone Museum.</i>	<i>Environmental Protection, Waste &amp; Recycling, Open Spaces, Community Safety.</i>
54	<i>All completely mind boggling to the layman! Just figures! But I do feel money is probably</i>	<i>Not go ahead with the ridiculous redesigning of the town centre High Street. It's perfectly adequate for Maidstone</i>	<i>Youth activities, sport for all, youth clubs and places to keep teenagers (bored and frustrated) occupied,</i>

**BUDGET STRATEGY 2011/12 ONWARDS**

**ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

	<p><i>wasted in all areas. Parks important, open spaces.</i></p>	<p><i>– how about developing Lower/Upper Stone Street, an eyesore and depressing! And DON'T import Chinese granite!! Keep it local, support UK jobs!! Don't cut down on the Arts.</i></p>	<p><i>involved and off the streets. Clean streets, pride in the town and NOT JUST THE CENTRE! Car parking prices! The arts and music in Maidstone. Trees and the environment.</i></p>
--	--	---	---