

LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP (LSP)

Quarter 4 update

Date: March 2011

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1.0 LSP Board

Brief update

In line with the refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Board reviewed and suggested changes to its overarching vision, priorities and outcomes.

Vision

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

2.0 Economic Development and Regeneration Delivery Group

Brief update

In line with the refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy, partners agreed to adopt the following four priorities;

- Economic prosperity
 - Housing
 - Transport
 - Worklessness
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- The group collectively agreed to focus on 'worklessness' as a key theme for the group and will investigate potential projects.
 - The group welcomed two new members; Tony March, Local Account Manager at Job Centre Plus and Jane Jones, Vice Principal at Mid Kent College.
 - The group's lead officer attended the February meeting of the LSP Environmental Quality delivery group, to develop and build cross-group links and potential joint initiatives regarding sustainable transport initiatives and travel planning.
 - The group's Chair, submitted a letter of support for a potential Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid to John Newington, the Borough Council's Senior Pollution Officer.
 - Paul Andrews was nominated as the Vice Chair of the delivery group.

Performance

Maidstone's performance has remained steady over the past 12 months. Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) data supplied by Kent County Council shows high figures with regards to the Borough's 16-24 year olds. Current data reports 2.4% of Maidstone's residents are unemployed, although the 'direction of travel' is improving and it should be noted that Maidstone records the 5th lowest levels of unemployment in the county.

Jobs in Kent reported its best performing quarter in 11 years. However, the jobs market is suffering filling vacancies due to skill shortages. There remains a wide range of work available in care work, retail, web design and social media. The growth in internet trading has seen a growth in the need for 'white van drivers'.