

Responses to 'The Council as a Business?' Survey

Q1 What can you offer the residents of Maidstone? Can you think of a 'paid for' service that yours or another department could offer?

- how about premium number residential telephone IT Helpdesk service
- The Councils Property Section used to offer a design and construction service to other public bodies and built several village halls in the surrounding villages. We stopped making a profit when the service broken up and the council housing went
- After school clubs (Assumes spare capacity, which is unlikely)
- COPYING AND SCANNING SERVICES
- On site (at Maidstone House) childminding service for Council staff and any 'left over' spaces could be offered to the public maybe in conjunction with the Department for Works and Pensions helping long term unemployed with childcare when they go back into work. 2. MBC to offer a floristry service to the public esp. to cater for Births, Deaths and Marriages. As an example, Glasgow City Council have run this service very successfully for numerous years now. 3. Start a running group(s) for Council staff and the Public. Different groups available to cater for all fitness levels. The memberships could be set up through Mote Park Leisure Centre and paid for on a quarterly basis. 4. Car parking - have a scheme where residents/businesses can purchase permits for Council owned car parks on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis
- Parks

Q2 What niche service could you offer the public and/or private sector?

- Hosted email, file and possibly web services.
- I am the Council's Conservation Architect, working on listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient monuments. Not a common skill set
- Event/conference organisation (Again, assumes spare capacity, which is unlikely)

- I AM A GRADUATE IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES AND HAVE EXPERIENCE IN MARKETING ETC I HAVE SUBMITTED IDEAS FOR THE BRIGHT SPARKS AND RECEIVED AN AWARD FOR MY IDEA
- Offer printing services to local companies. 2. Offer the 'Weight for It' scheme, currently available to MBC staff only, to members of the public and carry out the sessions in the evening and charge for this 10 week 'course'.
- Events
- Fire risk assessments - all commercial premises by law need to have a fire risk assessment. Project Management - we could sell this as a service to KCC, local housing associations. Building surveying - we have the expertise to undertake condition surveys. Clerk of works - we could undertake this for local developers or housing associations

Q3 How could Maidstone Borough Council manage their land and/or resources in a manner that could generate an income? (or in a manner that is more efficient?)

- Easy - listen to the legal and property professional's advice and stop interfering.
- Increase planning and building control fees to fully recover the cost of providing the service +10% (assuming we have the powers). Introduce road pricing/tolls/single user car pricing
- <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/2011/01/sustainable-business-model-a-seven-point-plan/> <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/2011/03/six-steps-to-significant-change>
- UTILISE ALL THE EMPTY SPACE IN THE GATEWAY ESCALATOR AREA FOR EVENTS ETC ADVERTISING.
- Utilise the space at the ground floor of the gateway building (under the stairs and escalators) by offering pitches to local small businesses.
- Search for a large event organiser and let Mote Park for big festival event such as the Radio 1 big weekend.

- I noticed that the park and ride at Willington Street was closed on a Sunday. Why not have a boot fair there? There is a boot fair at Sutton Road, where they charged £10 per pitch and there must have been circa 100 pitches. Entry was £3 and there must have been at least 200 people there across the day. The boot fair could be advertised on the councils website and via posters at the car park and also in mote park which is very popular. If the event is held once a month, you may make £15K per year? Another site could be Mote Park? If the high speed train is permanent at Maidstone west and is a success, couldn't 13 Tonbridge Road be turned in a car park?
- Charge 20p to use MBC public toilets
- utilise buildings like the town hall as a farmers market on a Sunday or to show artwork of local up and coming artists, wedding receptions, proms etc

And direct responses have included the following:

- We should look first at the cost effectiveness of the income we currently collect. Stray dog fees is one that comes to mind where we write off significant numbers of small amounts that incur the full cost of administration. Also, though it is sensitive, litter fines that are progressed to legal action are expensive too. If we can find a cost effective way of charging for small fees and fines we should elect to charge all statutory fees that we can. By the way we have a policy for the review of fees and charges.

<http://vindex/accountancy/Documents/Corporate%20Fees%20and%20Charges%20-%20February%202009.doc>

- Share our procurement or legal sections with outside organisations and develop a business section that can take on other businesses interests, prove that we are looking forward in our objectives. And strive to ensure excellence and a business to be proud of.
- Take on training and develop a training facility section that can train sections and personnel for anyone in local government or outside organisations.
- Develop the reach the summit to outside businesses and monitor their performance to ensure value for money.
- Find a way to merge our priorities with the private sector and give advice and experience.