

Maidstone Borough Council

Parish Services Scheme

1. The Parish Services Scheme has the following aims:
 - To ensure equity of council tax funded service provision between non-parished and parished areas;
 - Accountability and Transparency; and
 - To provide a mechanism to agree the local provision of services
2. Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) will provide funding via funding agreements for specific concurrent services provided by parishes in their area. Any service funded through this scheme will need to be assessed and meet MBC's corporate and service priorities.
3. MBC will meet with parishes on an individual basis to put in place a single funding agreement to cover multiple services. This agreement can be amended to include additional services or remove services at additional meetings with the parish. Funding agreements will run for several years, to be determined in each case, with annual reviews and suggestions for improved working between MBC and the parish, for example through making MBC contract prices available to a parish.
4. The services previously funded through a concurrent functions grant have been categorised as set out below. This is to enable parishes to see what sort of service they can propose for funding and the factors that will be considered in discussions with parishes on service funding.
5. Category 1 - services that would be provided by MBC in a parished area because an equivalent service provision is made in non-parished areas fall under category 1. Funding these services avoids double taxation in parish areas. Funding agreements could be put in place for these functions. Each service would be assessed based on MBC standards and costs for non-parish areas.
6. Category 2 - functions that MBC provides for either the whole borough or not at all. Therefore a parish undertaking these services is in addition to the borough level of provision and should be paid for through parish funding (i.e. raising a precept). This is to avoid non-parish council tax subsidy of parished areas. Importantly, if an exceptional case can be demonstrated, funding agreements can be considered for these functions.
7. Category 3 is for functions provided by another authority. In the two cases listed the other authority is KCC. Parishes should contact KCC regarding the services they provide in this area. MBC will be happy to help with this liaison as required but will not be funding KCC services. In the case of footway lighting that is not of a sufficient standard to be adopted by KCC, MBC will consider providing if lights are on MBC owned land or are part of another service (for example in a park) that MBC is providing funding toward.
8. Category 4 covers those functions that are considered to be out of date or defunct and are therefore removed.

Maidstone Borough Council

Parish Services Scheme

CATEGORY 1 - Functions to be assessed on a case by case basis to ensure they avoid double-taxation of parish areas

- **Administration** – These costs will be included in any agreement for provision of a service on behalf of MBC, but not paid in a lump sum.
- **Bus Shelters** – The provision of bus shelters is a discretionary service. MBC has previously assessed the provision of bus shelters in rural areas and was unable to use its agreement with a private contractor for the provision of free bus shelters as it does in some non-parished areas. Therefore there is the potential for one off payments to parishes for a bus shelter or for MBC to provide the bus shelter directly based on an assessment of the need identified and evidenced by the parish.
- **Off street car parking** – parking demand surveys would need to be conducted to confirm the need for the car park. A contribution could then be made toward the net cost of providing the car park.
- **Open spaces, Recreation Grounds and Village Greens** – These categories combined form the most significant area of expenditure by parishes and will be the subject of discussions with all parishes for funding contributions. Due to the complicated nature of the provision of open spaces, recreation grounds and village greens, including the status of land ownership, leases etc. it will be necessary to always assess these on a case by case basis. The assessments will be based on standards applied across the whole Borough and the maintenance cost of land will be calculated based on MBC's contract costs. MBC will endeavour to make its contract arrangements and prices available for Parishes to utilise where possible.
- **Play Areas** – An audit will be carried out of play areas across the borough. Where a need is identified in a parish area MBC will fund, through this scheme, the provision of the play area(s) necessary to meet that need and to MBC's standards. Additional play areas should be paid for through precepts.
- **Play Schemes** – Funding could be provided for the net cost of these – possibly through increased play scheme grants through existing system.

Maidstone Borough Council

Parish Services Scheme

- **Public war memorials** – MBC will consider a contribution toward public war memorials and will set the contribution based on how much MBC would expect to pay to maintain the war memorial were it to carry out the work itself. Where this is a one-off capital cost rather than regular maintenance this will need to be considered for funding separately to the parish services scheme.
- **Other one off functions as identified with individual parishes** – functions which the parish want to provide on behalf of the borough through a service level agreement – to be identified with each parish.

Maidstone Borough Council

Parish Services Scheme

CATEGORY 2 - Provided by MBC for whole or none of the borough – would lead to non-parished areas subsidising parishes through council tax. If extraordinary circumstances can be demonstrated funding agreements could be considered

- **Allotments** – Both parish and borough councils are responsible for provision of allotments and manage their own sites and allocations.
- **Burial Ground, Cemeteries & Crematoria (not closed churchyards)** – Vinters Park Crematorium and Maidstone Cemetery are run for whole borough not just non-parished areas, therefore additional provision should be paid for at parish discretion. The cemetery has capacity for over 50 years of burials.
- **CCTV (installation and maintenance)** – MBC provides a CCTV service for the Borough. Some parished areas pay for coverage in their area. Where the CCTV service assesses the need for additional CCTV cameras and this is technically feasible MBC will consider expanding its existing camera estate. In some cases there may be a contribution required from parishes to make this feasible.
- **Entertainment & the arts** – MBC provides central facilities for entertainment and the arts and can be contacted to discuss individual events in parishes.
- **Litter bins** – duty to remove litter falls to Borough Council and covers whole Borough, additional bins can be provided and paid for by parish at their discretion. In some cases MBC empties the additional parish bins as a service and at a cost to the parish. This cost cannot be claimed through a funding agreement.
- **Public conveniences** – MBC now offers the community facility alternative in non-parished areas and currently provides a separate public conveniences payment to parishes.
- **Street sweeping** – MBC provides Borough wide coverage, additional sweeping will need to be funded by the parish.
- **Tourism Encouragement** – MBC have a borough wide approach to tourism encouragement (visitor economy). Additional specific activities in parish areas will need to be paid for by the parish.

Version 0.5

01622 602000
www.maidstone.gov.uk



Maidstone Borough Council

Parish Services Scheme

- **Village Halls and Community Centres** – MBC would not run these facilities in the event of the parish ceasing to operate them. MBC would look to lease council owned facilities on long term leases, giving consideration to community need, where possible.

CATEGORY 3 - Functions that are the responsibility of another authority (KCC)

- Footway Lighting (see paragraph 6 above)
- Traffic Calming and Road Safety Issues

CATEGORY 4 - Headings that are out of date/defunct

- **Boating Pools**
- **Charities (must operate within parish boundary and contribution must cover one of the concurrent functions listed)** – If the donation is part of service delivery it will be covered by the funding agreement for the relevant service.
- **Conferences** – Conferences would not fall under a funding agreement as they are not a service.
- **Grants to Bus Operators** – providing grants to bus operators is not a service. Public transport issues are considered for the whole borough by MBC.
- **Information about transport** – please note that KCC provide bus information at bus stops in the town centre.
- **Notice Boards** – Parish notice boards are specifically for the use of parish councils. MBC has no interest in these.
- **Public Clocks** – the council would not pick up the costs for maintaining public clocks.
- **Subsidies for uneconomic post or telecommunication services** – Modern changes to post and communications render this far less relevant than previously.
- **Taxi fare concessions**