

**MAIDSTONE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS – SUMMARY**

**Purpose and Aims**

1. To encourage community involvement and ownership in local areas by providing a forum for community initiatives to be considered and where appropriate supported by the councils (Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council) and their partners (as members of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)).
2. To enable locally elected representatives, as leaders of their communities, to engage with and respond to local communities needs.
3. To create opportunities for residents to gain a greater voice and influence over local services, to improve the quality of their lives, their neighbourhoods and the Borough.

**Terms of Reference**

The Neighbourhood Forums will:-

1. Examine the provision and performance for the services provided by the councils and their partners which impact upon local communities and ensure that those services are what the local community require.
2. Act as a forum for consultation between the councils and their partners and the community on all policies, plans and strategies relevant to their community, including the sustainable community strategy and ensuring community interests are reflected in this strategy.
3. Consider community initiatives that meet the objectives of the LSP and where appropriate agree to support the initiatives directly or escalate them to the appropriate decision making authority for them to implemented (be that the LSP, the Councils, or their partners).
4. Be responsible for the allocation of funding within their community area for those budgets allocated to them with a view to the community determining directly how these individual funds should be allocated within their local community.
5. Take up community concerns and issues with the relevant body(ies) either through lobbying for external bodies or through references to the Councils and their partners.

Consider any decisions made by each of the respective councils and their partners and where necessary undertake an appropriate review on service performance and service providers and how it impacts on their local community.