

Neighbourhood Action Planning

Municipal Year 2011/12



Evidence Pack

Evidence	Who gave evidence	Page
14/02/2012 – Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charlie Beaumont, Effective Practice & Performance Manager, Youth Offending Service Kent County Council • Ian Summers, Kick Kent • Inspector Prodger, Kent Police Authority • Jim Boot, Community Development Manager 	3-7
13/03/2012 – Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sara Hutchinson, Manager, Fusion Healthy Living Centre • Jade Webster, Chairman, Parents is the Word • Jackie Pye, Chairman, Bulk Buy Scheme • Caroline McBride, Head of Community Development, Golding Homes • Richard Cannecot, Head of Regeneration, Golding Homes • Sarah Robson, Community Partnerships Manager • Jim Boot, Community Development Manager • Ellie Kershaw, Senior Policy and Performance Officer • Councillor Marion Ring, Cabinet Member for the Environment 	8-12
Planning for Real Methodology	Report prepared by Sarah Robson, Community Partnerships Manager	13-19
The Park Wood Neighbourhood Action Plan 2010-1015		20-21

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2012

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Blackmore (Chairman)
Councillors Brindle, Butler, Field, FitzGerald,
D Mortimer, Mrs Parvin, Paterson and Mrs Stockell

120. Safer Maidstone Partnership - Neighbourhood Action Planning

The Chairman welcomed Sarah Robson, Community Partnerships Manager, Jim Boot, Community Development Manager, Inspector Prodger, Kent Police, Ian Summer, Kick Kent and Charlie Beaumont, Youth Offending Service.

Sarah Robson, Community Partnerships Manager updated the Committee on the Safer Maidstone Partnership. She explained that the Local Strategic Partnership had dissolved in September 2011 and had been replaced with the Locality Board. The Locality Board would be reviewing and streamlining the thematic delivery groups which included the Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP). They would develop action focused work plans against the priorities set and there would be an emphasis on a task and finish approach. The Committee were informed that the SMP's priorities remained the same:

- Anti Social Behaviour;
- Domestic Abuse;
- Substance Abuse; and
- Road Safety.

In April 2010 the SMP's statutory requirements were expanded to include the formulation and implementation of a strategy for reoffending. It was explained that re offending would be considered in all work undertaken by the SMP and would become an adopted priority. The SMP were currently working on its Annual Strategic Assessment and a three year Partnership Plan which would establish the for the borough.

Inspector Prodger from Kent Police, described the changes to policing since November 2011. The Borough was now divided into three areas of command and Inspector Prodger was responsible for the western area of the borough which included Park Wood. There was a focus on neighbourhood policing with Sergeants and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) given ownership of specific areas. He informed Members that this provided Officers with the opportunity to liaise with partners and actively work with local residents to develop a local knowledge. He told Members that it was early days but he felt it was more effective approach. Statistically Crime was up on the same period the previous year but had gone down since November 2011. The Officer felt this was attributed to a combination of working with communities, intelligent units and

reactive CID (Criminal Investigations Department). Members considered the impact of Neighbourhood Action Planning on crime. Inspector Prodger told the Committee that from a Police perspective it was important to know that diversionary activities existed as Officers had an opportunity to signpost young people to them. He felt that activities were helping and had a positive effect on crime and anti social behaviour. He explained that there had been a decrease in cases of criminal damage which was largely associated with anti social behaviour and an increase in violent crime that could be related to a rise in reported cases of Domestic Abuse which was seen as a positive outcome. The Committee felt that it would be beneficial to have a breakdown of crime figures across the borough included anti social behaviour.

Jim Boot, Community Development Officer informed Members on the Park Wood Neighbourhood Action Plan 2010-1015. He explained that it was a pilot scheme that had been developed with 600 residents. Approximately 2,800 issues had been raised, many of which were associated with community safety and crime. The methodology used was 'Planning for Real' which involved creating a 3D model of the area with residents and wider engagement through road show events.

Members were informed that Kick Kent were commissioned by Maidstone Borough Council to deliver football sessions on a Wednesday evening in Park Wood, Coxheath and Shepway. This was a diversionary activity for young people. Kick Kent incorporated tackling difficult behaviours and the issues faced by young people into their sessions. Ian Summers from Kick Kent explained that the sessions had been running since September 2011 and were well attended.

The Committee were informed that boxing was a new activity to Park Wood and would be delivered jointly with the Police. Members observed that sports activities did not reach everyone and questioned whether there were any other types of interventions on offer such as arts and drama activities. Members were told that Eddie Walsh from Kent Youth Service had made a successful bid for funding to deliver arts activities at Fusion's Youth Cafe.

The Committee considered Fusion Healthy Living Centre and the Youth Cafe. Councillor FitzGerald, Chairman of Fusion, informed Members that funding was needed to keep the centre open. He explained that staffing the Youth Cafe on a Thursday evening was a problem as a minimum of two staff were required. It had been agreed that the staff would be provided by Kent Youth Service but this was not always possible due to their own staffing issues. It was highlighted that Kent Youth Service also provided detached Youth Workers in the area on a Wednesday evening but that better communication between partners was needed to as this was not widely known.

Charlie Beaumont from Youth Offending Service, explained that he dealt with young people from Shepway North and Park Wood. He told Members that he would like to see a more coordinated approach between partners in dealing with young people and was encouraged by the new requirements of the SMP to address reoffending. He explained that there would be a more joined up approach taken by Kent Youth Service and Youth Offending Service as the two areas were to be integrated. The services were going through a transformation

and there would be some delay in service provision but the result would be a more co-ordinated approach. Mr Beaumont volunteered to take forward the issues raised regarding staffing at the Youth Cafe and detached youth work in the area. It was felt that especially where young people were concerned there was need to follow through on commitments made as they could become disenchanted very quickly. Mr Beaumont informed Members that he would supply further information on youth re offending detailing age, gender, offences and interventions via the Scrutiny Officer.

Members questioned the role of the mobile Gateway. The need for this had been identified as part of the engagement with residents in Neighbourhood Action Planning. The mobile Gateway was an events unit and was being used one day a month for six months on a trial basis. Members were informed that there were on average thirty five detailed enquiries per day. The unit had Wi-Fi access which was used to demonstrate the Council's website and the services available to residents online. Detailed Benefits and Housing enquires were dealt with at the Fusion Healthy Living Centre as Wi-Fi could not be for accessing confidential information. Different venues for the mobile Gateway had been trialled including Bellwood School. It was found that the mobile Gateway was most successful when positioned at the Park Wood parade. There was involvement from a number of different agencies including Kent County Council, Golding Homes, Connexions, along with the Council's Gateway staff. At the end of the six month trial the success of the service would be evaluated. Officers explained that a consideration to be made was whether the mobile Gateway would be better used in more remote areas of the borough such as Marden and Staplehurst as Park Wood was situated close to the Town Centre. Some Members felt that 'financial ability' was part of the reason it was important to Park Wood. The return bus fare was in excess of £2 to the Town Centre which was felt to be a significant part of a resident's income.

Members queried the engagement with Housing providers such as Golding Homes in the pilot Neighbourhood Action Plan. The Committee were informed that Golding Homes held a drop-in session at Fusion Healthy Living Centre every Thursday. Mr Boot informed Members that Golding Homes had been supportive of the Park Wood Neighbourhood Action Plan and had made financial contributions. He explained that their staff were frequently involved with activities and there was already a strong level of engagement.

The Committee felt that it was important to have a representative from Golding Homes at its next meeting. Mr Summers told Members that Golding Homes had initially been involved with Kick Kent in Park Wood and had invested money in the project. He felt that it would be helpful to have their involvement with Kick Kent to provide background information on the young people involved which would assist their work.

It was felt that the issues raised by residents in the Park Wood Action Plan were problems that existed across the borough and it would remain a challenge for partners to maintain service provisions in the current economic climate. Members queried the effect of funding cuts. Mrs Robson explained that with such a significant reduction in the Home Office Grant (from £200,000 to approximately £47,000) which would impact on Kent Police, Maidstone Borough

Council and Kent County Council which is why a partnership approach was important. She informed the Committee that the setting of priorities by the Locality Board was key to avoiding duplication. Members were informed that the Community Safety Unit met on a weekly basis to address issues but larger, priority issues would be addressed by the Locality Board at its March meeting and action plans would be devised.

Mr Boot informed Members that the Council were currently building the capacity of communities to access funding and training. A Health Champions training course was currently being offered which was as a result of the consultation process with residents. Residents felt they would prefer to hear from someone they could relate to. Members felt that this example clearly demonstrated Maidstone Borough Council's role as a 'facilitator' and the Committee considered whether the Council should be developing this role further. Members were informed that part of the Council's Community Development Strategy was to build the capacity of communities. It was suggested that Fusion, for example, could in time be run by the local community.

The Committee questioned whether Neighbourhood Action Planning would be taken to other areas of the borough. The Officer explained that Park Wood was a pilot and in addition to this Parish plans offered an experience of resident led initiatives which could be translated into an urban setting. Within the Council's Strategic Plan was an ambition to develop Neighbourhood Action Plans in other areas.

Communication across the borough and the issue of the public's perception of Community Safety was discussed. Members were informed that the SMP were keen to improve public confidence through improved communication. Members felt that a communications plan was important and also commented on the 'You said, We did' update included in the Park Wood Action Plan update. It was felt that this approach could be used in a newsletter to residents as a means of letting them know what was being achieved.

Members were concerned that other areas of the borough could be overlooked with the focus on Park Wood. Mrs Robson informed Members that the Safer Maidstone Partnership responded to a variety of issues across the borough. The Officer highlighted Kent County Council wardens who were focused on the needs of rural communities. In addition to Neighbourhood Action Planning in Park Wood, youth activities were run in anti social behaviour hotspots across the borough in areas such as Headcorn and the Town Centre. They were described as responsive services that were commissioned and developed with the Community Safety Unit and Kent Police.

Members discussed communication channels. It was felt that information needed to be brought together and a collaborative approach taken. A Member highlighted Multi Agency Planning (MAPS) meetings that were taking place in Park Wood.

It was noted that the minutes of the previous Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting had not been included as an item on the agenda, having being approved by the Parent Committee at an earlier meeting. It was

noted that the protocol should be that the minutes be agreed by the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee and included in its agenda.

It was recommended that:

- a) Clarification on the staffing commitment from Kent Youth Services to supply two volunteers to the Youth Cafe held at Fusion Healthy Living Centre on a Thursday evening should be sought by the Scrutiny Officer and assurance that this requirement will be built into their future programme of services;
- b) Kent Youth Services should provide an update on detached Youth Work in Park Wood and other areas of the borough;
- c) Mr Beaumont, should supply the Committee with information on the intervention successes of Kent Youth Services and the Youth Offending Service;
- d) An analysis of the usage of the Mobile Gateway should be undertaken to help determine whether it should be used in other areas of the borough;
- e) A representative from Golding Homes should be invited to attend Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 13 March 2012 and feedback should be given to Kick Kent;
- f) Inspector Prodger should provide the Committee with crime data by ward that includes incidences of Anti Social Behaviour;
- g) Maidstone Borough Council should develop its role as 'facilitator' by encouraging and supporting community groups to access funding not available to the Council; and
- h) The Safer Maidstone Partnership should develop a communication plan to help raise the public perception of the successful way crime and other high priority issues are being dealt. This should include a 'You said, we did' style newsletter.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 13 MARCH 2012

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Blackmore (Chairman)
Councillors Field, FitzGerald, D Mortimer, Paterson,
Yates and Hinder

121. Neighbourhood Action Planning

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Sara Hutchinson, Manager at Fusion Healthy Living Centre, Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager, Sarah Robson, Community Partnerships Manager, Caroline McBride, Head of Community Development at Golding Homes, Richard Cannecot, Head of Regeneration at Golding Homes, Councillor Marion Ring, Cabinet Member for the Environment, Jackie Pye, Chairman, Bulk Buy Scheme at Park Wood and Jade Webster, Chairman, Parents is the Word.

The Chairman invited Caroline McBride and Richard Cannecott to give a presentation on behalf of Golding Homes. This detailed Golding Homes' involvement in Neighbourhood Action Planning following the Planning for Real process in Park Wood. As a strategic partner they had supported the process financially and additionally through staff involvement and consultation support. Members were informed that there had been 20 to 25 consultation sessions held at Park Wood.

The Committee were told that Park Wood was a priority area in terms of regeneration. It was explained that there had been significant regeneration in the area and the Planning for Real process had given the organisation an opportunity to engage with residents in a meaningful way and they had sought to build on this.

It was explained that Golding Homes had chosen to look at the whole of Park Wood and as a result the regeneration proposal was going to take place in 3 phases. Members were informed that Golding Homes had wanted to present the regeneration project to stakeholders and other parties. This desire had led to a recent four day exhibition. Golding Homes had used the exhibition as an opportunity to gather feedback from residents, completing 160 feedback forms. From this they were able to gauge whether the regeneration proposals were endorsed by residents. Mr Cannecot reported positive feedback in relation to the schemes design. Residents were said to favour houses to flats and the inclusion of external storage facilities with properties. CCTV was deemed to be important also.

Mr Cannecott explained that Golding Homes was focused on diversifying the tenure of its housing stock, that at present was mainly socially rented. Members were informed that if residents were living in an area they were happy they would be more likely to buy their property.

The Committee questioned the approach taken by Golding Homes with regards to setting time frames and informing residents. It was explained that in relation to the regeneration of Park Wood Golding Homes would not let areas of housing where residents would have to move after a short period of time. Residents had been informed on the entire regeneration project and the 3 phases involved so that there was an awareness of the larger plan for the area. A five year timescale was set. Phase 1 would be completed by the end of the first year, Phase 2 in 18-24 months and Phase 3 in three years. Mr Cannecott explained that Government funding had disappeared after the initial engagement with the community but at the end of 2011 the situation changed which was why Golding Homes were currently in consultation with residents. The Committee was informed that the budget for the regeneration project was to be approved on the Thursday following the meeting.

Jackie Pye, Chairman, Bulk Buy Scheme at Park Wood and Jade Webster, Chairman, Parents is the Word sought clarification on rumours circulating amongst residents on the regeneration of Park Wood. These included residents being moved out of the area during the regeneration of the area, having to go through a bidding process to return to Park Wood and payments being made to residents for the inconvenience of being relocated. Mr Cannecott confirmed that these rumours were true. He explained that Golding Homes would not be seeking to recreate what already existed in the area. He informed the Committee that a need for 2 bedroom properties rather than the one bedroom flats that currently existed had been identified. The newly build properties would be let on an affordable rent which was 80% of open market rents rather than a social rent. He confirmed that this was in line with government policy. Ms Webster and Ms Pye raised concerns regarding this, explaining to the Committee that residents wanted to escape the poverty trap and support themselves and felt that this would be perceived badly by residents. They felt residents were being shown properties as part of the regeneration consultation that they would not be able to return to. Mr Cannecott offered assurances that properties would be ring fenced for the purpose of moving households out of Park Wood as part of its regeneration project and Golding Homes would try to find houses in areas where residents wanted to be. It was felt that the meeting was not the forum to continue the discussion and it should be continued by the Regeneration and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee was keen to identify the successes of Planning for Real and the Neighbourhood Action Plan for Park Wood.

Councillor Ring felt told Members that initially £50,000 had been secured for Neighbourhood Action Planning by the Council for improvements to the area and £10,000 from the community chest which was specifically for residents and charities to spend in the area.

Ms Pye and Ms Webster addressed the Committee. They explained that they were keen to put themselves forward as representatives for Park Wood residents to engage with partners involved in Park Wood. Ms Pye and Ms Webster shared their vision with the Committee of making Park Wood and the facilities available to residents better with the aid of the many willing volunteers that they were coming forward all the time. Their ambition was to take over the running of Heather House at Park Wood. Sarah Robson, Community Partnerships Manager explained, in relation to Heather House, that there was to be a review of all community halls and areas that would be addressed would include community asset transfer and long term transfer. The Committee noted the invaluable offer of volunteer time highlighted by Ms Pye and Ms Webster. Councillor Ring advocated the resident's vision and told Members that support was needed.

Ms McBride noted that the involvement of children had been excellent and Bell Wood School had been involved in making the model of Park Wood which was then taken out on road shows to residents. This was identified as a key part of the Planning for Real process and part of its success. Members questioned the involvement of children currently. Ms Pye and Ms Webster explained that children came along to resident's meetings at the Meadows Centre and Fusion Health Living Centre and Arts and Crafts classes for children had recently started at Fusion. In addition to this 'Walk Out Wednesday's' picnics continued which residents attributed to Jim Boot's work in Park Wood in getting people together. Members were informed that Ms Pye and Ms Webster were utilising Facebook to communicate with other residents and they had just started working with Sara Hutchinson the new manager at Fusion. Ms Hutchinson told Members that Fusion's youth cafe, held on Thursday evenings attracted 25 teenagers and there were plans to extend this.

Visiting Member and Ward Member for Park Wood, Councillor Burton, felt that there was a need to scrutinise the Council and understand why actions to address the resident priorities, highlighted in the Park Wood Neighbourhood Action Plan, had not happened as quickly as the might have. Members considered the various reasons for delays in action. It was felt that often the Council and partners went into the community telling residents what they wanted rather than asking residents what they wanted. Some Members felt that developers could often be slow to deliver on section 106 agreements that would provide improvements to an area. The Committee reasoned that the correct approach would be to secure funding and then go to the community and ask them what was needed, once there was an ability to deliver.

The Committee sought to establish the lessons that had been learnt from the Neighbourhood Action Planning Pilot Scheme at Park Wood and the Planning for Real process with a view to it be rolled out to other areas. It was felt that the 20-25 consultations that had taken place demonstrated the lack of action that had been taken. Members saw this as a negative outcome of the process rather than a positive one.

The Committee addressed the priorities identified by residents as part of Planning for Real and detailed in the Park Wood Neighbour Action Plan 2010-15. One of the less successful aspects of this process highlighted to Members was the way in which the priorities of partner organisations were addressed as part

of this. Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager, who had been involved in the consultation process with residents, explained that the process had been done backwards. When residents were initially engaged with the Officers involved went in with a blank sheet and asked residents for their priorities issues. It was only at the end of the process that the evidence based priority issues such as teenage pregnancy, mortality and drugs and alcohol were addressed with residents. Ms Kershaw felt that the approach failed to inform residents on the clear parity between the issues they knew existed and the obvious links to partners who were attempting to address the same issues. Some Members disagreed, arguing that the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the resulting priorities for statutory authorities should not be dealt with by Planning for Real. They felt that that the process should simply be residents identifying the problems as they saw them. Ms Pye and Ms Webster informed Members that it was the way in which information was presented to residents by organisations that caused confusion. They often used complicated language and confusing diagrams when simple, clear information was needed.

It was felt that a more coordinated approach was needed. The Committee considered Maidstone Borough Council's role in the process going forward. It was felt that residents needed information and guidance as there was an obvious willingness from residents to get involved and improve the area they lived in. It was highlighted that Park Wood continued to hold Multi Agency Partners (MAPs) meetings and therefore communication channels existed which could be utilised.

Sarah Robson, Community Partnerships Manager felt that the Council's role was to help remove obstacles for residents so that they could have an empowered role in developing their own communities. She explained that the Community Development team could be utilised for this purpose.

Ms Pye and Ms Webster circulated a resident's newsletter to the Committee. Members felt that this was something that the Community Development Team and the Council could help produce. It was agreed that the format of a single, double sided sheet was something that could be progressed quickly. It was felt that it was important that all partners involved in Park Wood were represented on the newsletter. Mrs Robson confirmed that the Council could facilitate and assistance would be given with design and printing.

Ms Pye and Ms Webster highlighted the residents' fete they were organising. Members were informed that Councillor JA Wilson had levied the fee for the cost of the site to be used and Play Place were working with residents to help them obtain liability insurance.

Ms Hutchinson informed Members that Fusion's role was also one of facilitator. It was explained that Fusion would be used for the Bulk Buy Scheme in the summer holidays when access to the usual venue at Bell Wood School was an issue.

Members' questioned whether the lessons learnt at Park Wood would be taken on board before moving forward into other areas. Mrs Robson assured Members that they would be. She told Members any new model would include

consultation with residents and key elements from the Planning for Real process could be maintained.

Miss Kershaw informed Members that the Council would be going back to residents to evaluate the pilot scheme in Park Wood. The Officer told Members that she hoped that Ms Pye and Mrs Webster would be involved in the process as it was taken forward to other areas.

The Committee questioned the planned timescales in taking Neighbourhood Action Planning to other areas. It was confirmed that Shepway would be the next area but there were no timescales set. Members were informed that there was some budget to carry forward from Park Wood. Mrs Robson told Members that a piece of work would be completed within the current Municipal Year on this.

The Committee queried the Neighbourhood Action Planning training that had been cancelled in 2011. It had been offered widely to Members, Staff and Partners but had been postponed due to problems with the trainer. Mrs Robson informed Members that this would be offered again 2012/13. It was clarified that this was not training in the Planning for Real methodology.

It was recommended that:

- a) The Community Halls Audit report is taken to the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to address the possibility of communities running facilities like Heather House in Park Wood;
- b) Golding Homes and residents from Park Wood are invited to Regeneration and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny to address the issues that arose regarding the regeneration of Park Wood;
- c) Golding Homes clarify with residents how they can access new properties in Park Wood;
- d) The priorities arising from the Planning for Real process be coordinated better when evaluating residents' needs and the overarching priorities of the partners involved;
- e) Assistance be given by Will Solley from the Community Development Team to Park Wood residents in producing their newsletter;
- f) Case Studies should be used to convey the successes achieved in Park Wood when delivering Neighbourhood Action Planning in Shepway. This should be done with the involvement of established residents' groups in Park Wood and should include Jade Webster and Jackie Pye.

PARK WOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PLAN 2010 to 2015– THE STORY SO FAR

Background

The Park Wood Neighbourhood Action Plan was developed with local residents between October 2009 and September 2010 and adopted by Maidstone Borough Council in November 2011. Nearly 600 residents took part raising 2800 issues and ideas. Community safety and crime stood out right from the start – young people hanging around, drinking and people afraid to go out at night. Also important were dog mess and litter, housing and employment.

In the first year (November 2010 to November 2011) of the five year action plan, Maidstone Borough Council, partner organisations, local groups and residents have concentrated on delivering on these issues, on the basis of 'You said, we did' (see attached). At the same time, further work has gone on to explore in more detail underlying issues relating to health, teenage pregnancies, worklessness, skills and educational attainment, resulting in a new revised action plan.

Young people

By far the biggest issue was 'young people hanging around' the parade of shops, anti-social behaviour and intimidation. As a result, existing youth diversionary activities have been maintained or improved. Long-standing programmes such as the community football programme have been re-commissioned by MBC's Community Development Team to address anger, frustration, respect for others and team-work while still maintaining the focus on 'footie' and fun. Extra funding was found to extend the sessions so that younger kids (8-11 year olds) could take part. Using Lottery Funding, MBC Community Development and Parks and Open Spaces commissioned social enterprise Play Place Innov8 to run play activities at the park on three afternoons a week between April and September. Local residents joined in as parent volunteers or 'Play Rangers' receiving training in child protection and First Aid.

Most recently, KCC's Youth Service have just started a new detached youth project with a focus on basket ball, and strenuous efforts are being made to retain the Thursday evening youth café at Fusion, for which they are currently seeking support from MBC/Safer Maidstone Partnership. A brand new 8-12 year olds activity club has been jointly commissioned by MBC and KCC Children's Preventative Services and funded by West Kent NHS for the most vulnerable children. It started in September at New Line Learning and is run by Kent and Medway Groundwork Trust.

Litter, rubbish dumping and dog mess

Next on the list was littering, dumping of rubbish and dog mess. Visual audits and litter picks with residents and school children started even before the plan was agreed, to get everyone thinking and acting differently. MBC Environmental Services have increased their monitoring of street cleanliness from every sixteen months to quarterly, the traditional 'barrow' patrols have increased from once to

three times a week, deep cleans took place at the parade and there is now enhanced cleaning at the park and play areas by MBC Parks and Open Spaces.

There has been more enforcement by Environmental Health too, with the Foul Play dog mess campaign being launched in Park Wood in May this year. Park Wood had more fixed penalty notices issued than any area outside the town centre. The threat of enforcement action was enough to make shop keepers and the parade landlord Golding Homes secure lock ups to the rear of the shops which had become an eyesore and targeted by fly tippers and for anti-social behaviour. Letters have been written to householders above the shops and in other areas reminding them of their obligations to avoid rubbish dumping and further enforcement action promised if they don't.

Community Safety

Residents said that drug dealing and taking were a significant problem. Although the police were at first reluctant to accept the level of drug dealing identified by residents, following meetings with the police, three high profile raids were undertaken in quick succession in the summer of 2010 and pressure on drug dealers has since been maintained. Measures to address street drinking, intimidation of adults to buy alcohol for under age drinkers and drinking at the park have however, had limited success and further action and education is needed.

Healthy living and leisure activities

A significant number of issues raised by residents were already catered for in Park Wood, but people simply didn't know what was available. The problem wasn't so much duplication as fragmentation of services. To help residents find out what's available and where, MBC has published a What's On Guide and distributed it from community venues in July to October. It is already being reprinted so that every household will have a copy. New residents will receive a copy via a Welcome Pack provided by their estate agent or landlord.

Unemployment

Another key issue was unemployment. The charity Tomorrows People set up a job club and re-located their operations and a training programme for 16-19 year olds to Park Wood, all of which continue to this day. They also run a programme called Families Matter Most for people dealing with long-term unemployment. Golding Homes have recently employed an employment advisor who is working alongside Tomorrows People to expand their job club. A fact finding visit took place to Mid Kent College in September meeting with the Principle and Vice Principles for both Maidstone and Medway campuses to explore more joined up working. A follow up visit is planned to KCC's new Senacre Community and Skills Centre on 14th and 18th November.

Next steps – from neighbourhood planning to management

Resulting from a review carried out with MBC's Policy and Performance Team between April and July this year, a new programme of neighbourhood management is being trialled to maintain or increase the momentum as we approach the second year of the five year plan. This will include:

- Monthly visits to Park Wood by the Mobile Gateway to bring services and information direct to residents,
- Bi-monthly 'grime busting' estate inspections and
- Listening Days visiting community activities to update residents and get feedback.
- The whole plan – is being put onto a shared data base to ensure that regular updates can be fed back to residents and problems identified and addressed.
- Environmental improvements are being made by MBC to its land adjacent to the parade of shops and at Heather House.

All in all, many teams from across the council, partner organisations, local groups and residents have contributed and responded to the challenge of the Park Wood Neighbourhood Action Plan. A lot has been learnt, there have been set backs, some real change has been brought about as well, but there is still a lot to do. What is most encouraging, is that new resident groups such as Parents is the Word and R-Shop are emerging, getting organised, gaining confidence and taking the initiative. Overleaf is a list of the key issues identified by residents through the Planning for Real process that have already been either fully or partly addressed on the basis of 'you said, we did'.

You said	We did
1. Security cameras / CCTV needed. View is that existing CCTV is insufficient or does not work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCTV checked. Deficient CCTV removed from parade and pole re-wired ready for new camera. Two other camera's checked and confirmed to be operating. • Currently exploring whether to re-deploy mobile camera from Joy Wood with Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council's support, or else to buy new camera as part of environmental improvements.
2. Drug dealing/drug taking problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although police were at first reluctant to accept the level of drug dealing identified by residents, following meetings between the Cabinet Member and the police, three high profile raids were undertaken in quick succession in summer 2010 and pressure on drug dealers has been maintained.
3. Night noise and rowdiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new streamlined approach to neighbour noise has been agreed by MBC Environmental Health with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), a leaflet produced and promoted to residents. RSLs are being encouraged to use their full range of sanctions from loss of points to Notice of Seeking Possession to tackle persistent offenders.
4. Football pitches wanted over summer holidays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Football goals turned 90⁰ over summer to allow turf to recover, but football to continue.
5. Bullying problem - This was raised most frequently as an issue around the Parade, play areas and in the cul de sacs rather than schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAYDAG¹ funded community football programme on Wednesday nights extended from 1.5 to two hours and split into two sessions for pre-teens and 11-16 yr olds. • Extra funding found by MBC to run inside Heather House during winter. • New provider Kick Kent commissioned from September 2011 to focus on behaviour, relationships (bullying) and team work. • First inter-estate tournament took place in October half-term.
6. Permanent youth provision needed including: Youth theatre / Recording studio / rehearsal room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCC Youth Service stepped in to support the youth café at Fusion in 2010, organised a youth and community day in August 2011 and starts detached youth work in autumn 2011. • Be Free play activities for younger children

¹ Maidstone Youth Development Action Group – Sub-group of Safer Maidstone Partnership

	<p>commissioned by MBC took place at the park from April to September 2011.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAYDAG commissioned further younger (6-13) play provision through Play Place starting October 2011 until 31st March 2012.
7. Playgrounds for Under 5's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new play area was installed at Heather House/the park at the end of 2009. Golding Homes is now installing a new play area on the Island Site between Wallis Avenue, Hollingworth Road and Brishing Lane.
8. Litter problem / broken glass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular litter picks were held with residents and Tomorrow's People 'Working It Out' programme around parade, at park and at Heather House throughout 2010. Tomorrow's People have continued to carry these out in 2011 in the vicinity of Heather House. The cleaning frequency of the play area was increased, and Scarab street cleaning machinery utilised, to coincide with play activities sponsored by the Big Lottery over the summer of 2011 but this is an on-going problem.
9. Illegal dumping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents in rubbish dumping hot-spots written to reminding them of their responsibilities and collection days, problem has reduced but needs constant vigilance owing to high turn over of residents in housing above parade of shops.
10. Clean up needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of street cleanliness stepped up from every sixteen months to quarterly • Traditional 'barrow' woman now patrolling parade of shops, pavements and alleyways increased from once to three times a week. • Increased cleaning of play areas and parks and emptying of bins. MBC and Golding Homes have made significant steps towards resolving disputed responsibilities over ownership and cleaning of public land. • Increased enforcement against litter and dog mess at the parade and park led to seven fixed penalty notices being issued earlier this year. Increase in penalties from £50 to £75. Foul Play campaign launched in Park Wood on 24th May 2011. • The threat of enforcement by MBC Environmental Health against rubbish dumping has resulted in lock-ups at rear of shops being secured and rubbish dumping drastically reduced. • Two new bins installed on Wallis Avenue (October 2011).

11. Dog mess problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emptying of dog waste bins by contractors checked to ensure they are meeting their service level agreements. • Proposal to scrap dog waste bins and encourage residents to use litter bins shelved.
12. School crossing patrol/ Zebra crossings, accident spots, blind spots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two zebra crossings were installed and although subject to initial problems with electrical supply are now fully functioning. Site meetings were held with the ward member, residents and KCC Highways to address issues of compliance, signage and positioning. The signage issues have been acknowledge and addressed. The crossings now appear to be providing safe crossing of the roads for elderly residents and children.
13. Damp and condensation problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents have been encouraged to contact their landlord in the first place and then MBC's Housing Condition team if they feel they are not getting re-dress. • Fusion is organising a drop-in surgery as part of their Staying Safe Month in November 2011.
14. Tenants and residents association to be set up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although a new resident's association did emerge 2010 it sadly folded in January 2011. However, on-going support is being given to R-Shop (Bulk Buy Group) and to the new group Parents is the Word including a community chest grant of £900. The Mobile Gateway visits and Listening Day (next 15th November) are being developed as an alternative to engage with and listen to resident's issues.
15. Improve Heather House and other community facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fusion has teamed up with Golding Homes to increased its presence on the parade of shops by taking on adjacent property 5, Park Wood Parade. Tomorrows People's Families Matter Most and Job Shop now providing a 5 day a week service to residents. The Tuesday afternoon sexual health clinic has been re-located to this more private venue.
16. Local job information point / Job Search Club / support for people seeking work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Job Shop was started by Tomorrows People on Tuesday mornings before the action plan was even formally adopted. • Golding Homes have now recruited an employment advisor who is working with Tomorrows People to expand the job shop to two mornings a week. • Tomorrows People also run Families Matter Most on three days a week supporting residents to gain confidence and return to employment • Tomorrows People also run Working It Out at Heather House for 16-19 year olds not in

	education, employment or training.
17. Cookery Classes wanted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratatouille's cooking course at Fusion on Wednesdays and Little Stirrers at the Meadows Children's Centre for children and their parents.
18. After Hours School Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New 8-12 year olds activity club jointly commissioned by MBC and KCC Children's Preventative Services and funded by West Kent NHS started in September at New Line Learning run by Kent and Medway Groundwork Trust.
19. Stop smoking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared service and cross referrals with Meadows Children's Centre.
20. What's On?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant number of issues raised were already catered for in Park Wood, but people simply didn't know what was available. A What's On Guide has been published by MBC listing sixty different activities/clubs and distributed in July, August, September and October. • It is now being revised to fill gaps identified by residents and groups through a feed-back form. Reprint just about to be published and delivered to every household.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Planning for Real

Report by: Sarah Robson

February 2012

What is 'Planning for Real®'?

Planning for Real® is a nationally recognised process of community consultation. It begins with contacting the local community networks and reaches a conclusion with the formation of an action plan for taking forward the decisions made during the process. It can be revisited at any point; models are often kept and used many times.

First stages

An initial scoping meeting is held to explore requirements and the objectives for the programme. Once agreed, Planning for Real® will start by letting everyone know how Planning for Real® works and taking their advice on matters such as which venues would work - often what seems like an ideal venue to an "outsider" turns out to be one that local people know always gets a poor turnout.

Option cards are central to the Planning for Real® process and allow local people to have their say about what's happening in their neighbourhood. At this stage option cards are looked at – are there issues specific to the neighbourhood that need to be covered? Of course, there are always blank cards on the consultation days for people to write themselves.

Model-making

Next is the model-making. Starting from a large scale map (usually around 1:300), a three-dimensional model is built. It helps the local 'ownership' of the project if this is done locally, either by adults, or more commonly, in the local school. This begins the process of looking at the area as a whole - finding where your house is, tracing your regular journeys and considering what needs to be done to improve community wellbeing.

Planning for Real® events

The Planning for Real® events are held in venues and locations convenient for local people, as many as required. Sometimes an event is arranged for a specific group, perhaps young people, or Asian women. At the events, the model is laid out with cards placed around it. These show options, around 300, which people put on the model to show what they want and where they want it. There are also blank cards for people to write their own suggestions.

Action Plan

Following on from this, all the options placed on the model are prioritised into HIGH, MEDIUM, or LOW, again using visual hands-on techniques. This is then developed into an action plan looking at stakeholder involvement, actions and opportunities for progression. For neighbourhood planning projects, this is the stage when the neighbourhood development plan would be created.

Park Wood Neighbourhood action planning (Planning for Real)

A pilot Neighbourhood Action Plan, utilising Planning for Real (registered trademark) has been developed in Park Wood by the Borough Council with local residents and the support of Kent County Council, Golding Homes (formerly Maidstone Housing Trust), Kent Police and other local partners. The plan was adopted by Maidstone Borough Council's Cabinet at its meeting on 10th November 2010 and is now available: Park Wood Neighbourhood Action Plan 2010-15 (see attachment).

Since its agreement in November 2010 the action plan has resulted in improved estate cleaning, streamlined measures to tackle noisy neighbours and a job shop and training programme for young people. Additional activities have been organised for children and young people such as Be Free at the park. Further work has also been carried out to explore some of the underlying issues in the area with workshops on health, teenage pregnancy, unemployment, education and skills and new actions developed.

£50,000 was secured by the Borough Council to make some environmental improvements on council owned property within Park Wood and residents are helping to choose how the money is to be spent. The favoured projects are: new CCTV at the parade of shops, improving areas adjacent to the parade, a mini-ball park (cage) to the rear of the shops, a dog free picnic area at the community centre Heather House and motorcycle barriers to the park. There is a shortfall in the funding so residents are being asked to list their top priorities.. All the projects will provide training and volunteering opportunities for local residents and young people.

**This report is available in alternative formats.
For further information about this service please
contact the Scrutiny Section on 01622 602524.**

**The report is also available on the Council's
website:**

www.maidstone.gov.uk/osc