

Maidstone Borough Council

Communities, Leisure Services and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 11 March 2014

Health Inequalities Action Plan for Maidstone

Report of: John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee have within its terms of reference responsibility for the scrutiny of Health and Wellbeing and Health Inequalities.
- 1.2 The Committee's Chairman and Vice-Chairman were advised that a health inequalities action plan for Maidstone was being drafted and felt it important that the Committee took the opportunity to be involved in agreeing the approach and key priorities for action.
- 1.3 Following the Corporate Governance Review and the decision of Council to develop an enhanced scrutiny model, Councillor John A Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Leisure felt that the development of the action plan would provide an excellent opportunity to involve scrutiny at an early stage. The Committee's involvement is at a pre decision stage, in a strategic action plan, looking at the borough as a whole.
- 1.4 The Chairman and Vice Chairman felt it appropriate to receive a follow up report from the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services and John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services on the final draft of the health inequalities action plan for Maidstone.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee should consider the information presented and make comment on the Health Inequalities Action Plan, to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure Services.

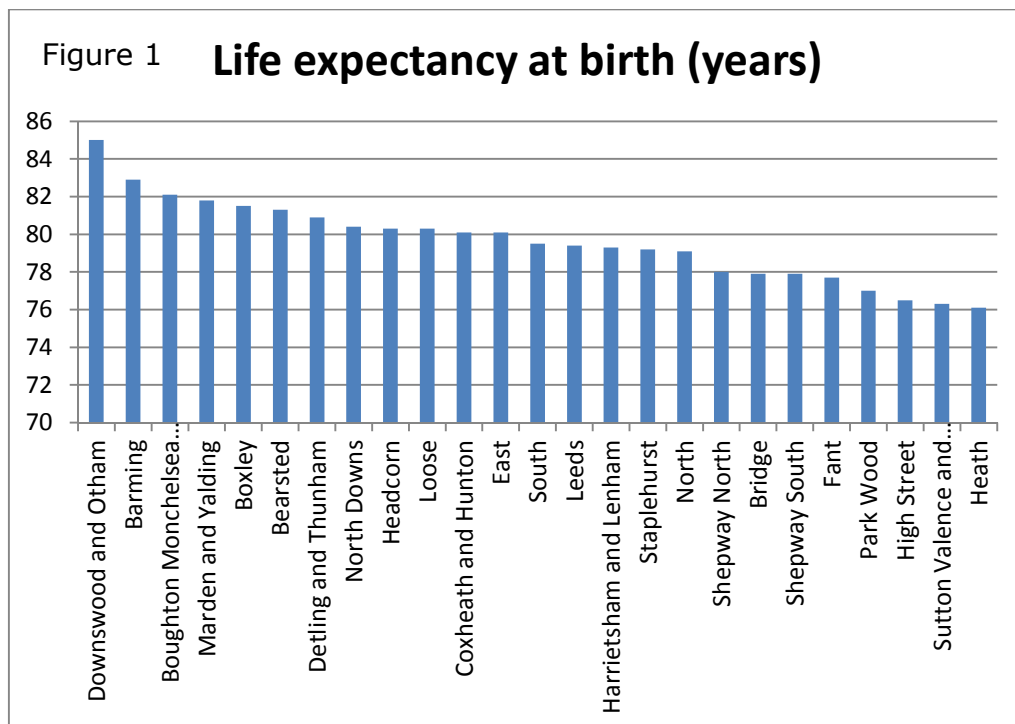
3. Maidstone Health Inequalities

3.1 What is Health Inequalities?

Health inequalities are described as the differences in health status between different groups or communities within the population. At both community and individual level, poor health is linked to social and economic disadvantage and deprivation. Differences in income, employment, education, housing, social environment and access to services all produce inequalities in health outcome. Living in areas of low income, poor employment and poor infrastructure increases the risk of ill health.

3.2 Health Inequalities in Maidstone

Levels of health and wellbeing in Maidstone are generally good, being largely above national and regional averages. This position, however, hides some pockets of deprivation and ill health. The difference in life expectancy at birth of our most affluent wards compared to our most deprived is 8.9 years (figure 1), putting us mid-table when compared to other districts in Kent.



3.3 There is a larger difference in life expectancy of men and women; 7.0 years lower for men and 4.4 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Maidstone than in the least deprived. Not only does this gap mean that those living in the most deprived areas of Maidstone have a shorter life expectancy, they also have a lower disability free life expectancy than others in our communities.

3.4 The neighbourhoods that make up the areas of higher deprivation lie particularly in the electoral Wards of:

- Park Wood
- High Street
- Shepway North
- Shepway South

3.5 Priority focus will be given to work targeting the wider determinants of health in these areas as an attempt to reduce health inequalities within and between our communities.

4. What this plan will do to tackle health inequalities in Maidstone

4.1 The Maidstone Health Inequalities Action Plan sets out aims and objectives that deliver outcomes in the short, medium and long term, based on the 6 priorities for action outlined by Professor Marmot in his 2010 report 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives'.

4.2 Maidstone Borough Council have adopted a strong multi-agency partnership approach; delivering a universal offer which is targeted both in terms of need (vulnerability) and deprivation (geography).

4.3 Maidstone Borough Council aims to reduce health inequalities by reducing the gap in health status within and between our communities, by improving health most quickly for areas with high levels of deprivation.

4.4 This action plan sets out how all partners will work together to achieve this aim, so that people will live longer in better health, and the variances in life expectancy in Maidstone will reduce.

5. Who will do what?

5.1 The Action Plan provides a framework and tools to identify, analyse and evaluate partnership actions that will contribute to reducing health inequalities in the Maidstone Borough.

5.2 Maidstone Borough Council recognises the importance of reducing health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing, a theme that runs through the 3 strategic priorities and 7 key outcomes set out in the Strategic Plan 2011-15. As such, many of the actions contained in this plan are drawn from service plans and strategies that sit across the council. This action plan seeks to draw together priorities and actions from across the authority and partners that seek to reduce health inequalities in Maidstone.

5.3 The delivery of this action plan will only be successful if delivered in partnership; crucial to this is the development of the Maidstone Health and Wellbeing Group which will have the responsibility to oversee the delivery of this plan and report progress back to the

Kent Health and Wellbeing Board, the West Kent CCG Health and Wellbeing Board and Maidstone Strategic Board. The Group will own the action plan, but will not be the sole owner of some of the actions contained within it.

- 5.4 Work on reducing health inequalities cannot be tackled alone and needs the support of a wide range of local partners. With this in mind Maidstone Borough Council held a Health Inequalities Stakeholder day in July 2013 where partners were asked to identify how they could contribute to reducing health inequalities in Maidstone. The outcomes of the workshop are the actions that are included within this plan.