



## **REPORTS FOR DECISION BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Date Issued:

1. Report of the Head of Spatial Planning - Annual Monitoring Report 2009/10

**Page Nos.**

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**A Record of Decision will be issued following the conclusion of 5 clear working days from the date of issue of the Report**

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# Agenda Item 1

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

#### **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF SPATIAL PLANNING**

**Report prepared by Louise Taylor and Sue Whiteside**

**Date Issued: 9 December 2010**

#### **1. Annual Monitoring Report 2009/10**

##### **1.1 Key Issue for Decision**

- 1.1.1 To consider the submission of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to the Secretary of State, in accordance with Regulation 48 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2004.

##### **1.2 Recommendation of the Head of Spatial Planning**

- 1.2.1 That the Annual Monitoring Report for 2009/10 (attached as Appendix A to this report) be approved for submission to the Secretary of State.

##### **1.3 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 1.3.1 The production of an AMR is required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Report covers the policy monitoring period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March and the calendar year of progress of the Local Development Scheme to date. The Council has a duty to submit the AMR to the Secretary of State by 31<sup>st</sup> December each year.
- 1.3.2 The AMR assesses whether policies and related targets or milestones in local development documents have been met and, if not, what progress is being made to address this. The AMR contains:
- Contextual Indicators that demonstrate the wider social, environmental and economic characteristics of the Borough;
  - Core Output Indicators, which are defined through national policy guidance and collected on a consistent time frame;
  - Local Indicators that address policies and local issues not covered by Core Indicators; and
  - A review of the Local Development Scheme to assess the progress of the timetable for the production of local development documents and to identify any changes required.

- 1.3.3 Since the end of the 2009/10 monitoring period the new coalition government has been elected, which has set out its intention to abolish regional strategies and to publish further changes to the planning system in due course. As a consequence of the imminent demise of the South East Plan, the Council is undertaking work that will allow it to set a locally derived housing target for the borough. Three potential housing targets for the period 2006 to 2026 of 8,200, 10,080 and 11,000 are currently being modeled and tested and, where appropriate, the AMR includes data for all scenarios.
- 1.3.4 Population in the borough is forecast to increase between 11.7% and 17.0% within the plan period. All three scenarios show the largest increases in population fall within the age group 85+, reflecting national trends of an ageing population. Overall, the population of working age is declining and retirement age population is increasing.
- 1.3.5 Unemployment levels decreased in Maidstone Borough between September 2009 and September 2010, and the percentage of resident unemployment in Maidstone remains lower than in Kent, the South East and England.
- 1.3.6 Prices of all dwelling types continued to fall during 2009/10. There has been a net loss of employment floorspace in the borough overall. 59% of employment floorspace and 86% of dwellings were completed on previously developed land. Changes to PPS3 were published in June 2010, to exclude private residential gardens from the definition of brownfield land. If this new definition had applied in 2009/10, the 86% figure would reduce to 75% (still in excess of the government's target of 60%).
- 1.3.7 Maidstone can demonstrate a minimum 5-year housing land supply for each of the three scenarios tested, in accordance with PPS3 requirements.
- 1.3.8 Maidstone continues to make best use of its available land: 88.85% of dwellings were constructed at densities in excess of 30 units per hectare. The coalition government has removed the national minimum density targets for residential development. This change is aimed at restricting inappropriate development proposals that, in some cases, have the potential to damage an area's character by increasing the density of development to unsuitable levels.
- 1.3.9 Of all planning consents granted in 2009/10, 57.30% affordable units were secured through planning consents, meeting the requirements of Policy AH1. 46.99% of all units completed in the monitoring year were affordable dwellings.
- 1.3.10 The Local Indicators explain the work that is being undertaken to protect and enhance the quality of the river and the Kent Downs AONB. Regeneration of the town centre is a key local issue and, by contrast, replacement dwellings in the countryside and conversion of rural buildings for residential purposes are closely monitored.

#### 1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.4.1 Under current plan making regulations, the Council is required to submit the AMR to the Secretary of State by 31<sup>st</sup> December each year. The format and content of future AMRs will be reviewed as new government guidance on plan making emerges.

#### 1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 1.5.1 The AMR monitors the success of a range of policies that will have an impact on corporate objectives.

#### 1.6 Risk Management

- 1.6.1 A number of factors, which are clearly set out in the AMR, have delayed the timetable for the preparation of LDF documents, namely the Core Strategy and the Gypsy & Traveller Pitch Allocations DPDs. A new programme for the production of local development documents will be published in 2011.
- 1.6.2 Further risks to the programme can to a certain extent be mitigated, but the impact of proposed changes to the plan making system can only be assessed once new guidance is published. Meantime, government advice is to continue with the preparation of Core Strategies under current regulations.

#### 1.7 Other Implications

##### 1.7.1

- |    |                                       |
|----|---------------------------------------|
| 1. | Financial                             |
| 2. | Staffing                              |
| 3. | Legal                                 |
| 4. | Equality Impact Needs Assessment      |
| 5. | Environmental/Sustainable Development |
| 6. | Community Safety                      |
| 7. | Human Rights Act                      |
| 8. | Procurement                           |
| 9. | Asset Management                      |

X
X
X
X

1.7.2 Financial

1.7.3 There will be general costs involved in the production of the AMR, such as printing, but these can be accommodated within the LDF budget.

1.7.4 Staffing

1.7.5 These can be accommodated within the existing staff structure.

1.7.6 Environmental/Sustainable Development

1.7.7 When assessing the implementation of policies, the AMR must have regard to the effects on social, environmental and economic objectives, which are the key indicators in defining sustainability.

1.7.8 Community Safety

1.7.9 Community safety is inherent in the policies that are the subject of monitoring in the document.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

Appendix A: Annual Monitoring Report 2009/10

1.8.2 Background Documents

None

**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes

☐

No

X

If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?

.....

This is a Key Decision because: .....

.....

Wards/Parishes affected: ...All.....

.....

**How to Comment**

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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## Introduction

**1.1** Maidstone's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) provides a framework with which to monitor and review the effectiveness of development plan policies that address local issues over the monitoring period 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010. The AMR is submitted to the Secretary of State by 31 December each year, so there is an inevitable time lag between 1st April 2010 and when the AMR is published and submitted. Whilst the data is a correct statement of conditions over the monitoring period, the situation may have changed in the last nine months for certain indicators, such as employment and house prices.

**1.2** The coalition government has made clear its intention to completely reform the planning system in line with the Open Source Planning and Control Shift manifesto documents. The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) will be abolished by provision in the Localism Bill. In July government urged local planning authorities to continue to progress Core Strategies in the meantime, taking into account the intention as a material consideration to review the RSS housing targets.

**1.3** The South East Plan required 11,080 dwellings to be built in Maidstone Borough between 2006-2026. As a consequence of the demise of the South East Plan, the Council is currently testing three different housing provision scenarios of 8,200, 10,080 and 11,000 dwellings to establish a replacement requirement for the period 2006-2026. However, the dwellings built between 1st April 2006 and 31st March 2010 (2,728 units) count towards any target set. Similarly, a number of dwellings had planning permission but had not been completed at 1st April 2010 (3,077 units). So, whichever dwelling target is agreed for the plan period, the Council will be able to deduct over 5,000 dwellings from the target and will need to find land for the balance only.

**1.4** This AMR assesses whether the policies in the development plan and related targets or "milestones" set out in the Local Development Scheme have been met or whether progress has been made in meeting them. Where targets are not being met or are not on track to be achieved, the AMR sets out the reasons why and the appropriate action to be taken. Chapters 2 to 4 of this document cover the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010, whilst chapter 5 reviews the Local Development Scheme programme for the calendar year January to December 2010.

**1.5** The AMR is a vital part of the "plan, monitor, manage" process, providing a review of whether policies are working. The AMR addresses the impact of local policies on national and local policy targets, with a particular emphasis on demonstrating how policies will deliver new housing. The document considers whether local policies need adjusting or replacing, and if they need to be reviewed to reflect changes in national policy. If changes are necessary, then the AMR must set out the actions needed to achieve this. The policies subject to this review include saved Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan policies (September 2007) and policies contained in adopted LDF documents.

**1.6** The Report does not set out the detail of how policies might be revised or amended, but it explains the steps that will be taken to address any concerns.

**1.7** The AMR is structured as follows:

- Contextual indicators demonstrate the wider social, environmental and economic characteristics of the borough.
- Core Output Indicators are defined through national policy guidance and the indicators must be collected on a consistent time frame.

# 1 . Introduction

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Annual Monitoring Report 2009/10

- Local Indicators address policies and local issues not covered by Core Output Indicators.
- The review of the Local Development Scheme assesses the progress of the timetable for preparing local development documents. It demonstrates whether or not the Council has met its key milestones (or targets) for the production of documents. If the Council has failed to meet any of its milestones, the AMR should explain why, and new priorities should be reflected in any review of the Local Development Scheme and the impending Core Strategy.

### Contextual Indicators

**2.1** Contextual indicators establish the broader descriptive character of Maidstone Borough in terms of the social, environmental and economic characteristics of Maidstone. The following section includes statistics and commentary used to analyse each indicator. Many of the indicators illustrate historic trends and compare Maidstone Borough with Kent, the South East region and England. The contextual indicators focus on key characteristics of the area and local issues, setting the scene for planning the future development of Maidstone Borough. Any issues that arise in this section are addressed through Core Indicators and Local Indicators, which monitor the development of the Borough in more detail.

**2.2** Maidstone is the County Town of Kent and an important administrative and commercial centre. In 2006 the Borough had a population of 148,460 projected to grow to 157,242 in 2011 <sup>(1)</sup> and a dwelling stock of 64,494 (as at 2010). The Borough comprises one main urban area, located to the north west of the Borough, together with a considerable number of large and small villages located in its extensive rural hinterland. The characters of the built and natural environments vary considerably.

**2.3** The protection of Maidstone's rural environment and biodiversity are important issues for the Council because the Borough is the subject of a number of environmental constraints that include Metropolitan Green Belt, the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Special Landscape Areas and Areas of Local Landscape Importance. Furthermore, parts of the borough adjacent to its rivers lie within a floodplain and contain nature designations, such as the Special Area of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Wildlife Sites. Strategic policies also restrict development through defined strategic gap and southern anti-coalescence policies. These constraints are illustrated on figure 2.1. It may appear from this map that there are some areas of the borough that are unconstrained but Maidstone comprises large swathes of best and most versatile agricultural land, including areas of grades 1 and 2 agricultural land.

**2.4** National policies require local authorities to make the best use of previously developed land in urban areas before releasing greenfield sites for development, so the quality and protection of the built environment is also an important consideration for the Council to avoid "town cramming". The borough has a range of important heritage assets that must be protected, including over 2,000 historically listed buildings, 41 conservation areas and 28 scheduled ancient monuments.

**2.5** Maidstone Borough has direct rail links to London and the proximity of the capital is a factor in shaping the local economy, house prices and travel. Two designated growth areas, Thames Gateway to the north and Ashford to the east, will also have an increasing effect on the economy, environment and growth of Maidstone Borough.

**2.6** Whilst Maidstone has transport links to London and the coast via two railway lines and the M20 motorway, it suffers from congestion in the town. Further and improved infrastructure will be necessary for Maidstone to grow and to sustain the quality of life and assist movement. Issues relating to air quality are being addressed by the Maidstone Town Air Quality Action Plan.

## 2 . Contextual Indicators

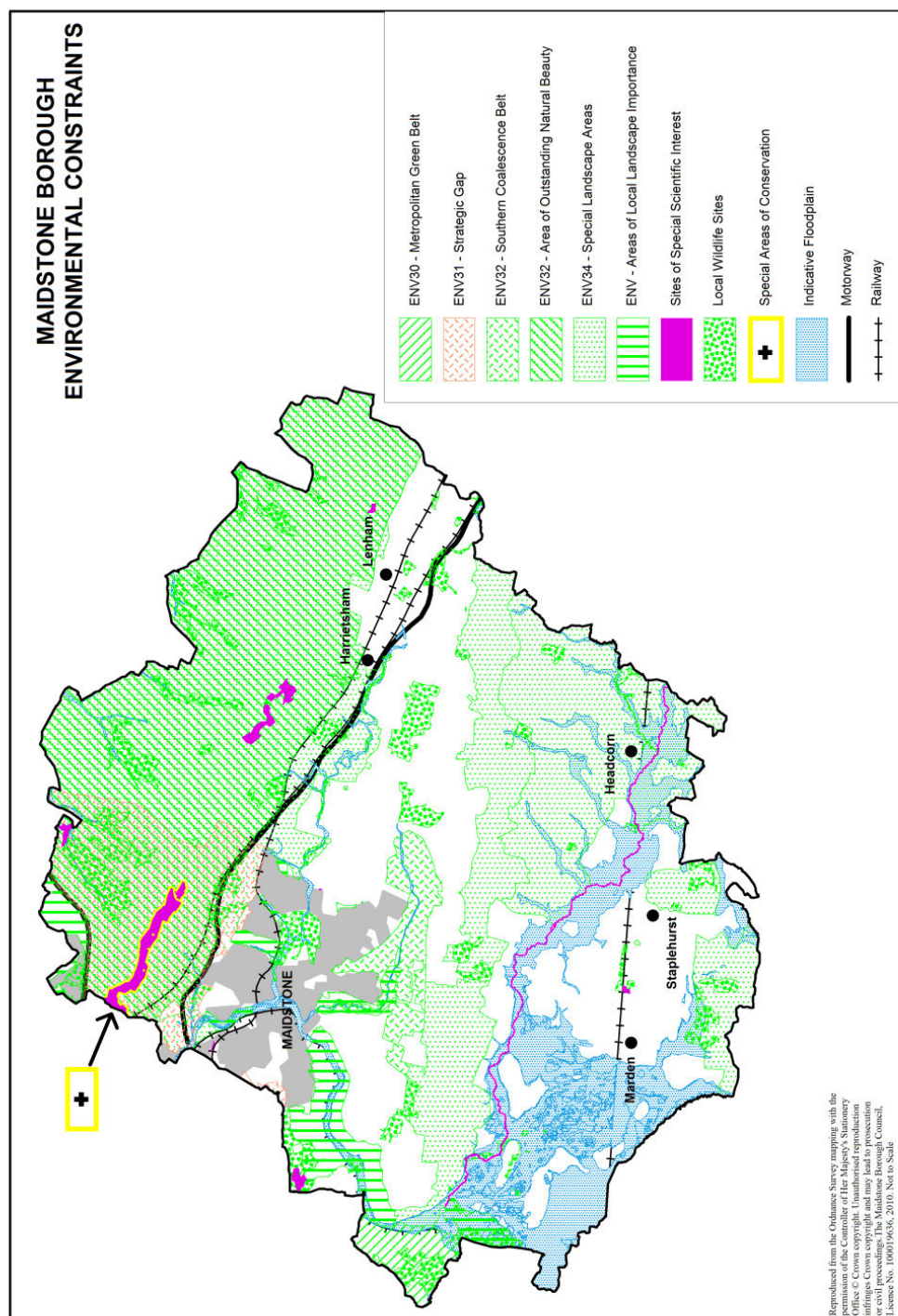


Figure 2.1 Maidstone Environmental Constraints

### Demographic Structure

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#### Population change from 2006-2026

**2.7** In the absence of a regionally prescribed housing target for the borough, the Council is giving consideration to setting a local housing target. The population statistics in figure 2.2, table 2.1 and figure 2.3 are forecasts based on three scenarios of 8,200, 10,080 and 11,000 dwellings for the period 2006 to 2026 that are currently being modelled and tested.

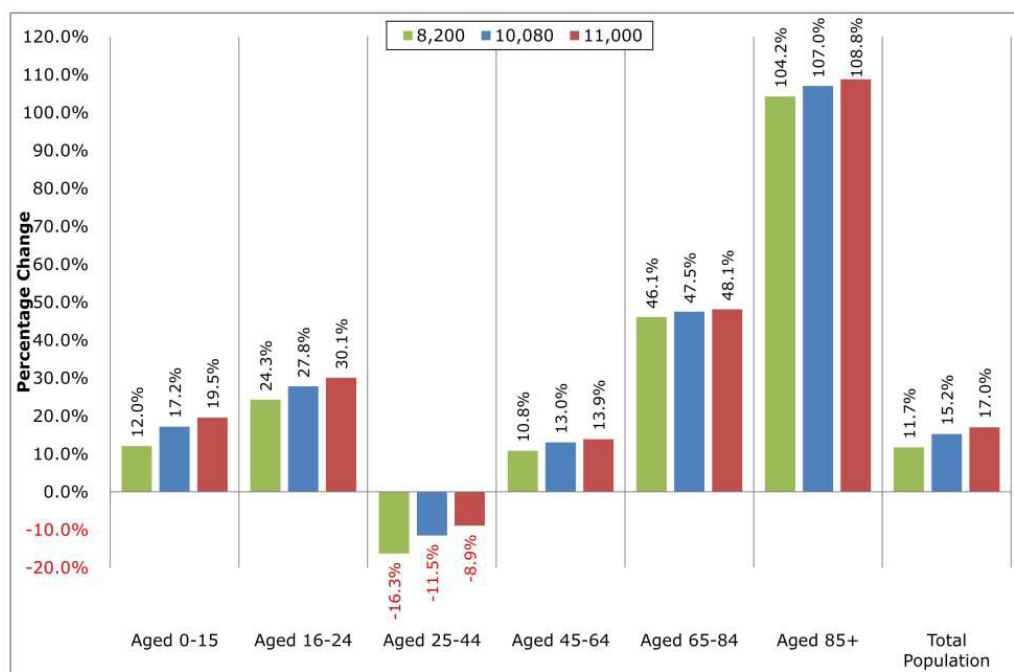


Figure 2.2 Population change in Maidstone Borough 2006-2026 based on 8,200, 10,080 and 11,000 dwelling options

**2.8** All three scenarios show the largest increases in population in the age group 85+, which is a reflection of an ageing population. Increases are seen in the other age groups, apart from the 25-44 age group where the population declines in all three scenarios. Overall, the population of working age is declining and the retirement age population is increasing.

## 2 . Contextual Indicators

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### Change in number of households and size 2006-2026

Scenario		2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	Change
8,200	Households	60,974	64,290	67,591	68,257	69,089	
	Household Change		+3,316	+3,301	+666	+832	+8,115
	% Change		+5.4%	+5.1%	+1.0%	+1.2%	13.3%
10,080	Households	60,974	64,290	67,847	69,349	70,959	
	Household Change		+3,316	+3,557	+1,502	+1,610	+9,985
	% Change		+5.4%	+5.5%	+2.2%	+2.3%	+16.4%
11,000	Households	60,974	64,290	67,533	69,510	71,876	
	Household Change		+3,316	+3,243	+1,977	+2,366	+10,902
	% Change		+5.4%	+5.0%	+2.9%	+3.4%	+17.9%

Table 2.1 Household projections in Maidstone Borough 2006 to 2026 based on 8,200, 10,080 and 11,000 dwelling options

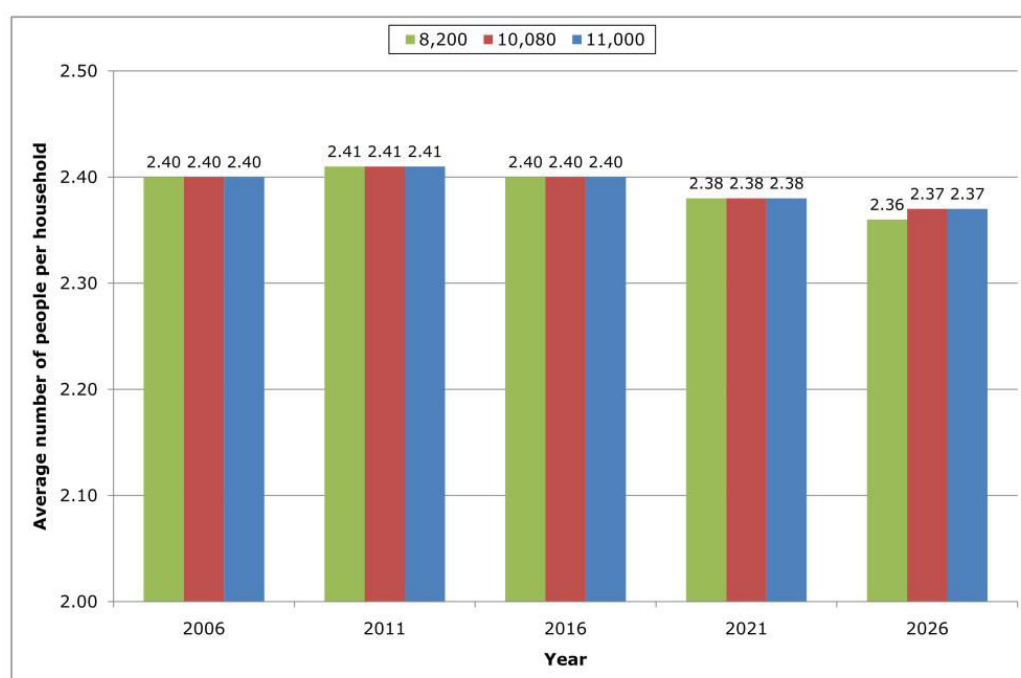


Figure 2.3 Change in average household size in Maidstone Borough 2006-2026 based on 8,200, 10,080 and 11,000 dwelling options

**2.9** The number of households is forecast to rise more than the level of population growth in the same period. The contrast in population and household increases is due to a predicted continued decrease in household size caused by an increase in single person households as elderly people live longer, people separate and divorce, and young people form single person households.

### Socio-Cultural Issues

#### Crime

Crime type	Maidstone Borough			Kent (including Medway)	South East	England
	2008/09	2009/10	% change	% change	% change	% change
Violence against person	2,137	1,898	-11.18	Not Comparable		
Robbery	72	59	-18.06	-15.68	8.47	-5.92
Burglary (dwelling)	304	294	-3.29	-5.20	-6.45	-5.64
Theft of a motor vehicle	419	374	-10.74	-23.81	-18.55	-19.98
Theft from a vehicle	784	638	-18.62	-19.81	-12.27	-14.57

Table 2.2 Crime Statistics (Source: National Statistics) Note: Kent figures totalled from individual districts statistics

**2.10** Between 2008/09 and 2009/10 there has been a fall in the number of crimes for all offences shown in table 2.3 above. The fall in robbery offences is greater in Maidstone Borough than in Kent, the South East and England but the decline in thefts from a vehicle is greater in Maidstone Borough compared to the South East and England. Kent, the South East and England have had greater reductions in the number of burglary (dwelling) and theft of a motor vehicle offences than Maidstone Borough.

**2.11** The Council addresses local crime and disorder through the Safer Maidstone Partnership, which has published the Maidstone Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (2008-2011) and the Review and Action Plan 2011/12. In Maidstone Borough there is a robust approach to tackling domestic violence and in managing the largest and most dynamic night time economy in the county. It is also important to "design out" crime in all new developments, and this issue is addressed throughout LDF policy documents.



## 2 . Contextual Indicators

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### Unemployment

	Maidstone Borough	Kent (including Medway)	South East	England
No. Unemployed September 2010	2,166	30,996	130,442	1,381,106
% Rate Unemployed (Residential)	2.3	2.9	2.4	3.5
No. Change since 2009	-330	-4,027	-24,760	-156,514
% Change since 2009	-13.2	-11.5	-16.0	-10.2

Table 2.3 Unemployment Statistics September 2010(Source: Kent County Council)

**2.12** Unemployment has decreased in Maidstone Borough between September 2009 and September 2010. Also, the percentage of resident unemployment in Maidstone remains lower than in Kent, the South East and England.

### Earnings

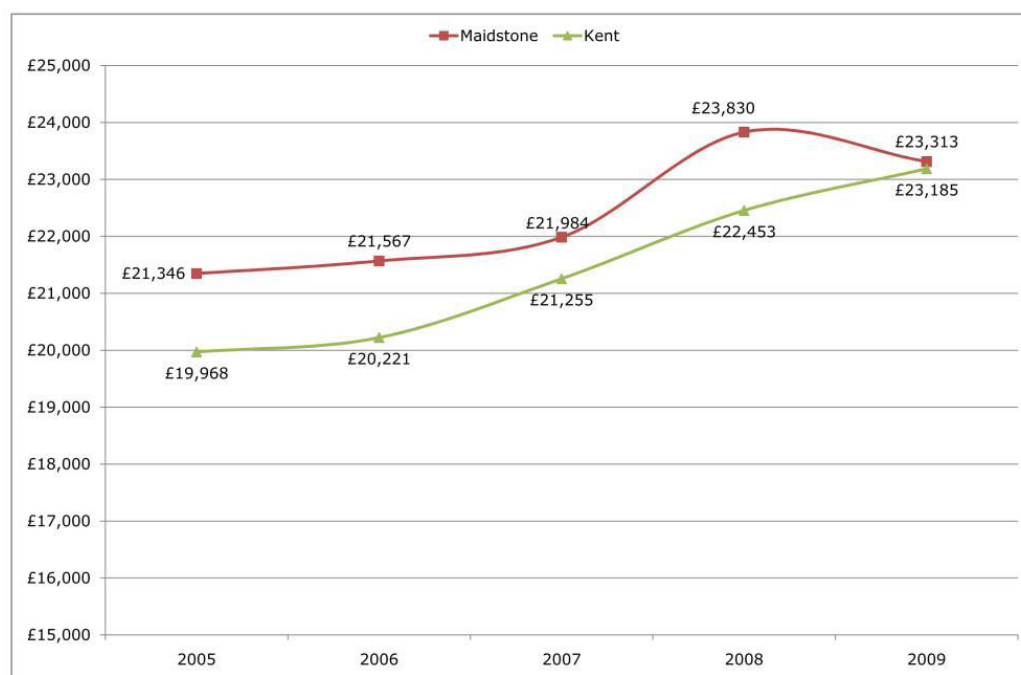


Figure 2.4 Residents Annual Earnings figures from 2005-2009 - Maidstone Borough compared to Kent (excluding Medway) (source: Office of National Statistics)



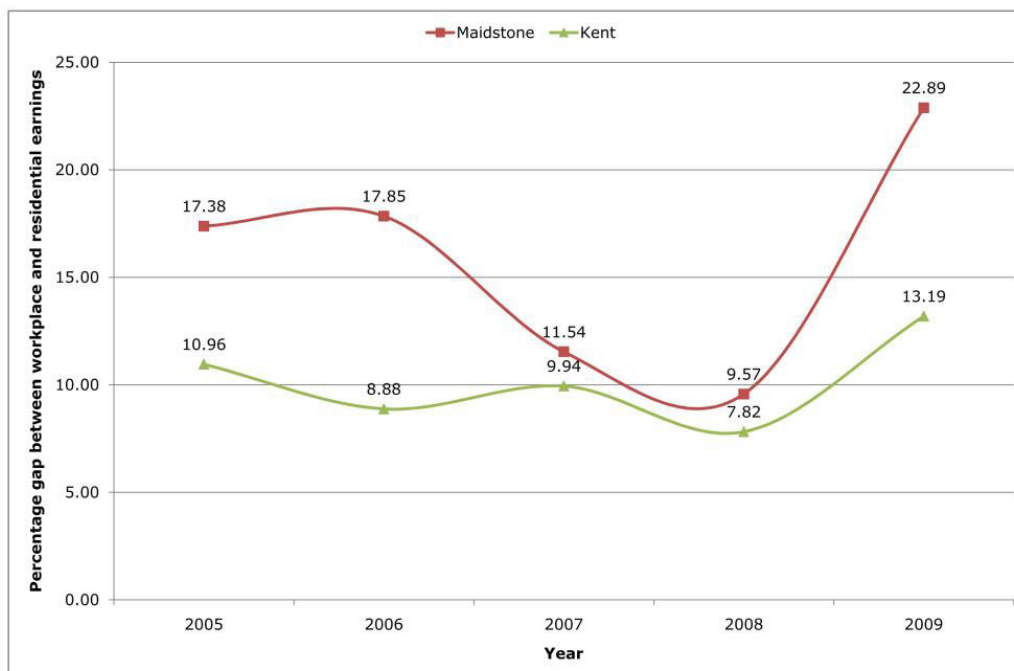


Figure 2.5 The percentage difference between Resident and Workplace Based Annual Earnings (2009) Maidstone compared to Kent

**2.13** Resident earnings in Maidstone Borough decreased between 2008 and 2009 (latest data shown in figure 2.4). In contrast, the earnings of people resident in Kent have increased to a similar level to Maidstone Borough. Figure 2.5 shows that there is a marked disparity (22.89%) between those who work in Maidstone and those who commute to London or elsewhere. In 2009, the average Maidstone resident earned £23,313 and the average person who worked in Maidstone earned £18,971. The gap between residential and workplace earnings in Maidstone was greater than in Kent where the difference was 13.19% in 2009. The disparity between workplace and residential earnings has widened since 2008 in Maidstone and Kent.

**2.14** Kent County Council has estimated journey to work figures as at 2010. Caution should be used when interpreting these figures as they modify the 2001 census data by applying post 2001 growth in population and employment in order to produce an updated journey to work matrix. It is estimated that in 2010, there were 71,755 people in employment who are resident in Maidstone. Estimates suggest that 60.79% of Maidstone Borough residents work in Maidstone Borough, 9.86% work in Tonbridge and Malling, 1.62% work in Ashford, 5.54% work in Medway and 10.22% work in Greater London, the remaining residents working elsewhere.

**2.15** Maidstone's direct rail links to London and the proximity of the capital are factors in shaping the local economy, house prices and travel. Designated growth areas in Thames Gateway and Ashford, together with restraints on employment in Maidstone, could encourage greater commuting on a congested transport network.

### GCSE results

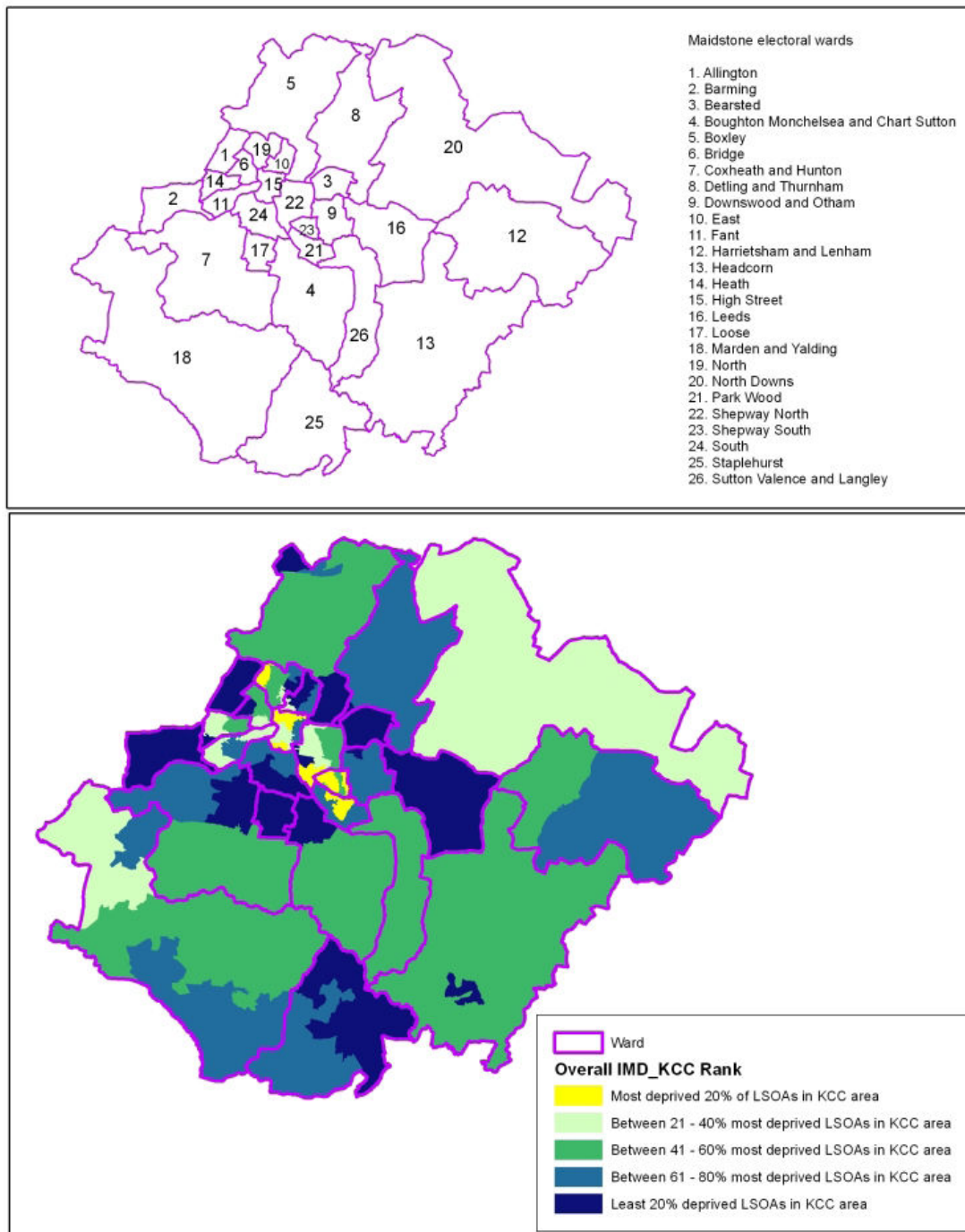
	Maidstone Borough		Kent (including Medway)		South East		England	
Including or Excluding Mathematics and English	Excl.	Incl.	Excl.	Incl.	Excl.	Incl.	Excl.	Incl.
September 2008 to August 2009	78.9%	59.1%	71.8%	50.7%	70.2%	53.8%	69.8%	50.7%
September 2007 to August 2008	71.6%	55.0%	66.4%	48.9%	66.1%	51.8%	65.3%	47.6%
September 2006 to August 2007	68.4%	54.5%	63.4%	47.0%	62.1%	49.5%	62.0%	46.7%
September 2005 to August 2006	65.0%	N/A	59.6%	N/A	59.5%	N/A	58.5%	N/A
September 2004 to August 2005	64.9%	N/A	57.6%	N/A	57.6%	N/A	56.3%	N/A

Table 2.4 GCSE and Equivalent Results for Young People Achieving 5+ A\* - C (excluding and including Mathematics and English) Note: Results excluding Mathematics and English from 2006/07 onward are not comparable with previous years due to a shift from age-based reporting to stage based reporting. Results including Mathematics and English are only available from 2006/07 onwards (Source: Government Neighbourhood Statistics)

**2.16** Maidstone's GCSE results overall show a greater achievement in gaining 5 or more subjects at grades A\* to C when compared to county, regional and national statistics. The results also demonstrate an upward trend in achievements.

### Multiple Deprivation

**2.17** Maidstone's urban wards contain the highest levels of deprivation in the borough. The most deprived lower super output areas are located in North, High Street, Shepway North, Shepway South and Park Wood wards. However, North ward and Shepway North ward also contain lower super output areas of least deprivation. An objective of Maidstone's Sustainable Community Strategy adopted in 2009 is to tackle health, education and employment inequalities in areas of disadvantage. The central lower super output area in Park Wood is within the 10% most deprived in England. In Park Wood residents have taken a lead in facilitating 'Planning for Real' community involvement exercises which are informing a Neighbourhood Action Plan. Maidstone Borough Council is working in partnership with Maidstone Housing Trust, Kent County Council and the police to co-ordinate this exercise.



Source: Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007, Communities and Local Government (CLG)  
 Map produced by The Analysis and Information Team, Kent County Council  
 (C) Crown Copyright. All rights reserved, 100019238, 2008



Figure 2.6 County rank (excluding Medway) of Lower Super Output Areas in Maidstone Borough based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 (source: Kent County Council)

### House Prices and Sales

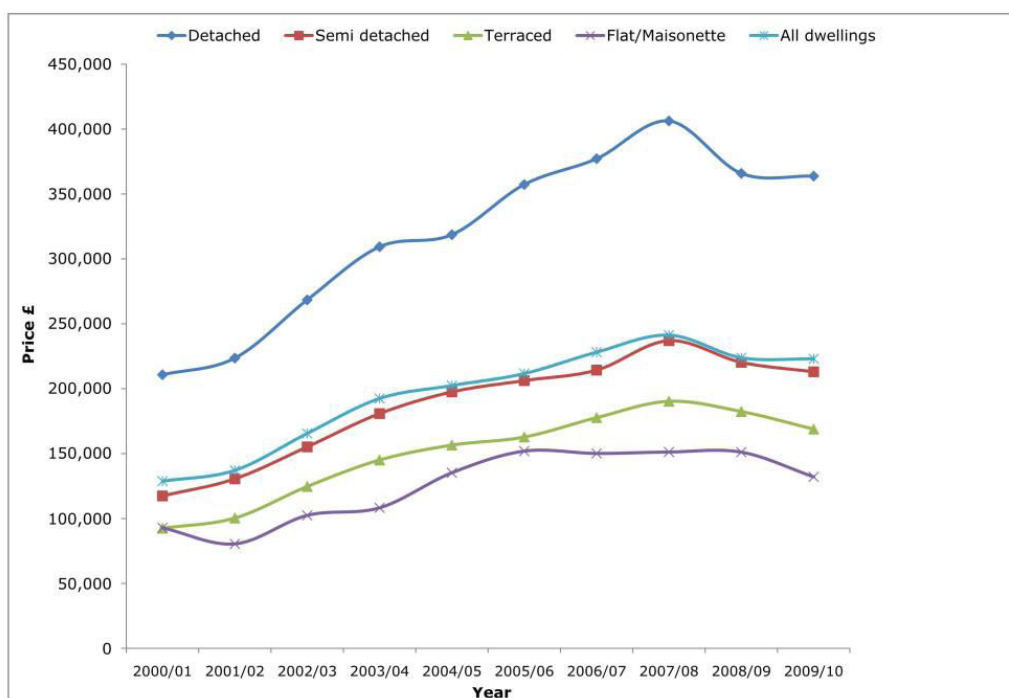


Figure 2.7 Maidstone Annual House Price Change (source: Land Registry)

**2.18** House prices rose steeply in Maidstone until 2007/08. During 2008/09 house prices decreased for all types of dwellings especially detached houses. Prices of all dwelling types continued to fall during 2009/10. In 2009/10, the price of flats fell the most, followed by terraced houses and then semi-detached houses. The price of detached houses fell the least.

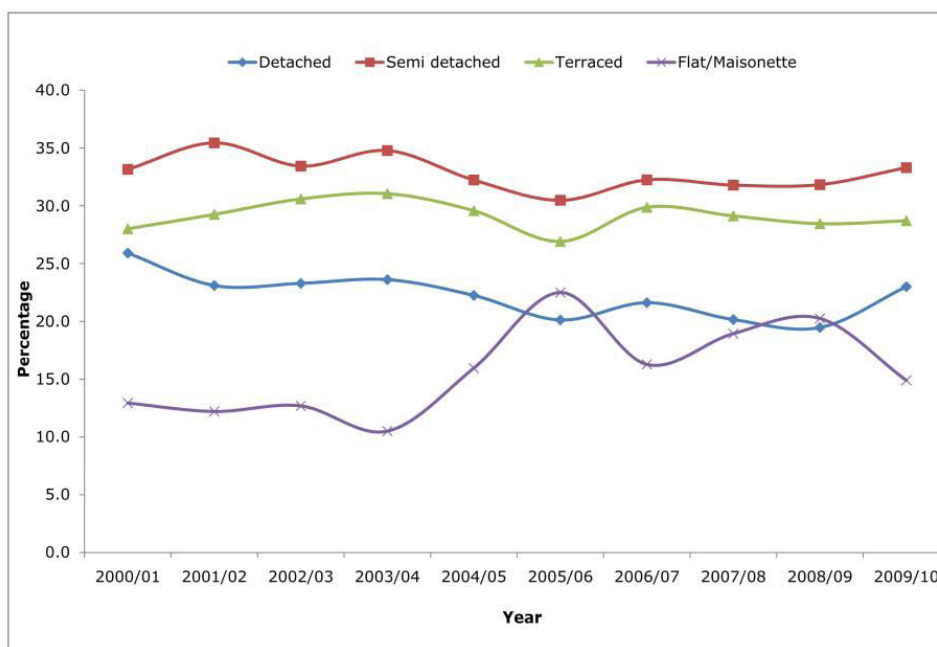


Figure 2.8 Maidstone house sales as a percentage of total sales by type of property (source: Land Registry)

**2.19** Total sales declined dramatically during 2008/09 from 3,379 in 2007/08 to 1,659 in 2008/09 (Land Registry). In 2009/10 total sales increased to 2,015. During 2009/10 flats/maisonettes accounted for only 15% of sales down from 20% in 2008/09. Sales of semi-detached houses accounted for a third of all sales in 2009/10.

**2.20** The average cost of a property in Maidstone in 2009/10 was £222,995 compared to £223,848 in 2008/09. The average cost of a flat was £132,116 in 2009/10 compared to £151,119 in 2008/09. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (March 2010, p25) states that buyers are usually required to have at least a 10% deposit, and often between 15-20%. Based on an 80% mortgage and a 3.5 times gross income to lending ratio (SHMA, 2010, p36 ), a person would have to be earning nearly £31,000 to buy a flat in an averaged priced area of Maidstone and to save more than £26,000 for a 20% deposit. The average annual salary of a worker in Maidstone is £18,971<sup>(2)</sup> and a resident £23,313. A large proportion of the population does not earn enough to purchase a flat, even in the cheapest areas of Maidstone. Restricted mortgage lending during the recession has made purchasing a house even more unattainable for the average person. The provision of affordable housing is a key priority for the Council.

### Environment

#### Natural Environmental Assets

Natural Environment Assets	km <sup>2</sup>	%	Number
Total Area of Borough	393.40		
Metropolitan Green Belt	5.29	1.34	
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	107.19	27.25	
Special Landscape Areas	200.21	50.89	
Areas of Local Landscape Importance	15.01	3.82	
Floodplain	47.72	12.13	
Ancient Woodland (semi-natural and replanted)	31.24	7.94	
Special Area of Conservation	1.37	0.35	1
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	2.70	0.69	9
Local Wildlife Sites (formerly Sites of Nature Conservation Interest)	24.15	6.14	59
Roadside Verges of Nature Conservation Interest			34
Local Nature Reserves			2

Table 2.5 Key Assets of the Natural Environment (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

**2.21** Much of Maidstone's rural area is constrained by its high quality landscape and strategic policy constraints (see figure 2.1), as well as being rich in biodiversity. An additional Local Wildlife site was designated in Mote Park in 2009. Special Landscape Areas and Areas of Local Landscape Importance were not supported in the South East Plan, which instead supported a criteria based approach to protecting local areas of landscape in line with Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas. However, with the intention to abolish the South East Plan, Maidstone Borough Council is currently in the process of considering the future of local landscape designations.

**2.22** Ancient woodland (recorded on the Provisional Ancient Woodland Inventory for England, published in 1991, and held by Natural England) refers to woodlands which have been in continuous existence since 1600 that were recorded in surveys carried out at the end of the 1980s. One failing of previous surveys is that many smaller woods under 2ha in size were not identified. To rectify this, a new ancient woodland survey is currently underway in Kent which will identify woodlands under 2ha, and new figures should be available for the 2010/11 AMR.

**2.23** Environmental constraints must be taken into account in the Council's plans for growth and a balance struck between the need for growth and the need to protect a high quality environment.

## Local Nature Reserves

ADOPTED Local Nature Reserves	Location
Vinters Valley Park	Maidstone
Boxley Warren	Boxley

Table 2.6 Adopted Local Nature Reserves

**2.24** There are two formally designated local nature reserves (LNR) in the borough. The Council is considering the designation of further LNRs as set out below, although no formal decisions on future designations have yet been made. The River Len reserve is currently an informal reserve which is intended to be formally declared as an LNR in future. The River Len is an informal reserve, with a habitat for a rare fauna including water vole, white-legged damselfly and Desmoulin's whorl snail.

- Admiral and Gorham Wood, Bicknor
- Dove Hill Wood, Boxley
- Horish Wood, Boxley/Detling
- Bredhurst Wood, Bredhurst
- Fant Wildlife Area, Maidstone
- Five Acre/Wents Wood/Weaving Heath, Maidstone/Boxley
- Hayle Place Stud Farm, Maidstone
- Mote Park, Maidstone
- Palace Wood, Maidstone
- River Len Reserve, Maidstone
- Senacre Wood, Maidstone
- Sandling Park, Maidstone
- Bell Lane Nature Area, Staplehurst
- Lime Trees Open Space Ponds, Staplehurst
- Poyntell Ponds, Staplehurst
- Four Oaks Wood, Sutton Valence

### Housing and the Built Environment

#### Vacant private sector property

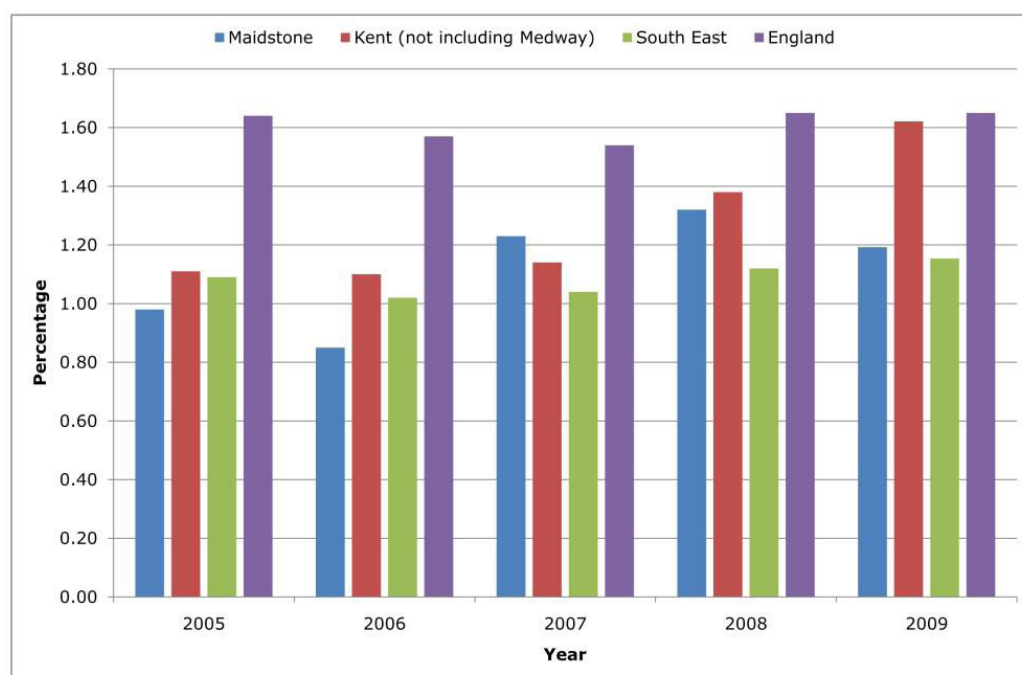


Figure 2.9 Vacant private sector property as a percentage of all private sector

**2.25** There were 660 vacant private sector properties in 2009, which had been empty for six months or more. This figure has now reduced to 509 vacant units as at 1st April 2010. There were a total of 1,985 empty properties at 1 April 2009, most of which were unsold flats, and the number of empty properties has reduced to 1,192 at 1 April 2010.



### Number of Households on the Housing Register (Waiting List)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Maidstone	1,764	2,079	2,290	2,863	3,222
Kent (including Medway)	42,576	36,888	38,408	38,722	Not yet available
South East	195,700	208,419	203,161	205,371	Not yet available

Table 2.7 Number of Households on the Housing Register (Waiting List) (source: Kent County Council/Maidstone Borough Council)

**2.26** The number of households on the Housing Register has increased since 2009 which is an indication of the need for affordable housing in the borough. During 2009/10, 718 people were housed from the housing register.

### Homeless households

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Maidstone	174	53	41	37	7
Kent (not including Medway)	1,607	1,241	1,260	973	Not yet available
South East	9,330	6,660	5,510	4730	Not yet available

Table 2.8 Homeless Households (source: Kent County Council/Maidstone Borough Council)

**2.27** The number of homeless households has decreased since 2009, as during 2009/10 substantial numbers of new affordable dwellings became ready for occupation.

**2.28** In November 2009, there were 927 housing register cases awarded overcrowding points, this has decreased to 904 cases in November 2010. During 2009/10, 533 households were prevented from becoming homeless, an increase from 376 homeless household preventions in 2008/09.

### Built environment assets

Built Environment Assets	Numbers
Conservation Areas	41
Listed Buildings	2,018
Grade I	42
Grade II*	103
Grade II	1,873
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	28
Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest	6
Important Historic Parks and Gardens	9

Table 2.9 Assets of the Built Environment (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

**2.29** The quality and protection of the built environment are important considerations for the Council. The Borough has a range of designated heritage assets, including a large number of historically listed buildings and 41 Conservation Areas, of which 6 are located in or adjacent to the urban area.

**2.30** Since April 2009, the following buildings have been listed:

- The Peugeot car showroom, Mill Street, a white tiled art deco building located next to the old millpond was grade II listed (June 2009).
- The former London and County Bank at 18 High Street, an 1860s Edwardian Art-Nouveau-style building was grade II listed (July 2009).
- The Monckton War Memorial in All Saints Churchyard was grade II listed (May 2010).
- Little Snowfield, Bearsted, believed commissioned by Baroness Orczy in 1912 as a residence for her mother, was grade II listed (June 2010).

### Maidstone Borough Profile

**2.31** Whilst the contextual indicators highlight a number of the borough's important features, the protection, enhancement and regeneration of Maidstone's key assets need to be carefully monitored and managed. These socio-economic and environmental issues are interdependent but they can be broadly grouped into the following themes: housing, employment, transport, the built environment and the countryside. These themes are monitored and evaluated in greater detail in the Core Output Indicator and Local Indicator chapters.

## Core Output Indicators

**3.1** Core Output Indicators are set by national policy guidance, which cover issues of business development and town centres, housing and environmental quality.

### Business Development and Town Centres

#### Core Output Indicator BD1: Total amount of additional floorspace - by type

To show the amount and type of completed employment floorspace (gross and net).

	B1a (offices not within A2) m <sup>2</sup>	B1b (Research & Development, studios, laboratories, hi-tech) m <sup>2</sup>	B1c (Light industry) m <sup>2</sup>	B2 (General Industry) m <sup>2</sup>	B8 (Storage or distribution) m <sup>2</sup>	Total m <sup>2</sup>
Gross	2,187	0	1,222	9,324	4,853	17,586
Net	109	0	-692	8,234	-10,362	-2,711

Table 3.1 Total amount of additional floorspace 2009/10 (source: Maidstone Borough Council) The gross figures do not take account of losses, the net do.

**3.2** During 2009/10 there has been a net loss in completed employment floorspace: 2,711m<sup>2</sup> (net loss) compared to 17,249m<sup>2</sup> (net gain) during 2008/09. Most of the net loss has been in use class B8 (storage or distribution). A large proportion of the total net loss was at the former Leonard Gould site in Loose (6,423 m<sup>2</sup> net loss), which is now being redeveloped for residential. The erection of forty new commercial units in the Park Wood Industrial Estate contributes towards the net gain in use class B2. The quantity and quality of employment land throughout the borough is subject to analysis as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy and other Local Development Documents.

## 3 . Core Output Indicators

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### Core Output Indicator BD2: Amount of employment floorspace on previously developed land - by type

To show the amount and type of completed employment floorspace (gross) coming forward on previously developed land (PDL).

	B1a (offices not within A2) m <sup>2</sup>	B1b (Research & Development, studios, laboratories, hi-tech) m <sup>2</sup>	B1c (Light industry) m <sup>2</sup>	B2 (General Industry) m <sup>2</sup>	B8 (Storage or distribution) m <sup>2</sup>	Total m <sup>2</sup>
Gross	1,694	0	352	9,324	4,315	15,685
% gross on PDL	77.46%	0%	28.81%	100%	88.91%	59.04%

Table 3.2 Amount of Floorspace on Previously Developed Land 2009/10 (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

**3.3** 59.04% of employment floorspace (gross) was completed on previously developed land in 2009/10. This compares to 52.15% in 2008/09 and 97.09% in 2007/08. This significant decline of completed development on previously developed land during 2008/09 and 2009/10 is because more employment floorspace has come forward on agricultural land. Maidstone cannot sustain very high percentages of development on brownfield sites, particularly given a need for better placed new sites that are located to suit modern employment needs. A proportion of greenfield land will be required in future for new sites that will be allocated for development in Local Development Documents.

## Core Output Indicator BD3: Employment land available - by type

To show the amount and type of employment land available.

	A2/B1 (Offices)	B2 (General Industry)	B8 (Storage or distribution)	Total
Remaining Allocations m <sup>2</sup>	25,000	10,000	0	35,000
Hectares	2.50	1.00	0	3.50

Table 3.3 BD3(i) Sites allocated for employment uses in the Local Plan 2009/10 (source: Maidstone Borough Council) NB: Use class categories will be refined in future AMRs

	B1a (offices not within A2)	B1b (Research & Development, studios, laboratories, hi-tech)	B1c (Light industry)	B2 (General Industry)	B8 (Storage or distribution)	Total
Sites for which planning permission has been granted (net) m <sup>2</sup>	31,068	187	6,079	16,408	-4,117	49,625
Hectares	3.11	0.02	0.61	1.64	-0.41	4.96

Table 3.4 BD3(ii) Site for which planning permission has been granted for employment uses, but not included in (i) 2009/10 (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

**3.4** The greatest proportion of planning permissions has been granted for B8 storage or distribution. The Council will address the need for suitable employment sites in the Core Strategy and and other Local Development Documents.

## 3 . Core Output Indicators

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### Core Output Indicator BD4: Total amount of floorspace for 'town centre uses'

To show the amount of completed floorspace (gross and net) for town centre uses within (i) town centre areas and (ii) the local authority area.

	A1 (Shops) m <sup>2</sup>	A1 (Shops) m <sup>2</sup>	A2 (Financial and Professional Services) m <sup>2</sup>	A3 (Restaurants and Cafés) m <sup>2</sup>	A4 (Drinking Establishments) m <sup>2</sup>	A5 (Hot food Take-aways) m <sup>2</sup>	B1a (Offices not within A2) m <sup>2</sup>	D2 (Assembly and Leisure) m <sup>2</sup>	Total
	<b>Net Tradeable Floorspace:</b> Sales space which customers have access to (excluding areas such as storage)	<b>Gross Internal Floorspace:</b> The entire area inside the external walls of a building and includes corridors, lifts, plant rooms, mezzanines, services accommodation e.g. toilets but excludes internal walls							
Gross	2,085	2,085	350	579	72	16	65	0	5,252
Net	1,538	1,377	300	563	-210	16	-1,682	0	1,902

Table 3.5 BD4(i) Town Centre uses 2009/10 within the draft town centre boundary (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

	A1 (Shops) m <sup>2</sup>	A1 (Shops) m <sup>2</sup>	A2 (Financial and Professional Services) m <sup>2</sup>	A3 (Restaurants and Cafés) m <sup>2</sup>	A4 (Drinking Establishments) m <sup>2</sup>	A5 (Hot food Take-aways) m <sup>2</sup>	B1a (Offices not within A2) m <sup>2</sup>	D2 (Assembly and Leisure) m <sup>2</sup>	Total
	<b>Net Tradeable Floorspace:</b> Sales space which customers have access to (excluding areas such as storage)	<b>Gross Internal Floorspace:</b> The entire area inside the external walls of a building and includes corridors, lifts, plant rooms, mezzanines, services accommodation e.g. toilets but excludes internal walls							
Gross	2,274	2,405	350	679	72	91	2,187	363	8,421
Net	1,265	1,050	132	663	-335	91	109	363	3,338

Table 3.6 BD4(ii) Town Centre uses in Maidstone Borough 2009/10 (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

**3.5** The definition of 'town centre' use is specified in the Core Output Indicators guidance (update 2/2008) published by Communities and Local Government. This definition excludes use classes A3 (restaurants and café), A4 (drinking establishments) and A5 (hot food take-aways). However, to gain an understanding of all use classes, these uses have been monitored in addition to use classes A2, B1a and D2 specified in the BD4 Core Indicator.

**3.6** Maidstone does not yet have an adopted defined town centre area for planning policy purposes. Members have approved a draft town centre boundary subject to public consultation through the Core Strategy process.

**3.7** Overall, there has been a net gain in the total amount of floorspace for the defined town centre uses in the draft Town Centre area and throughout the borough during 2009/10. There have been net losses in use class A4 (drinking establishments), for

example, the Wheelers Arms and the Greyhound pubs have been lost to residential use. There has been a net loss of offices in the town centre, many of these are also losses to residential use.

## Housing

### Core Output Indicator H1: Plan period and housing targets

To show the planned housing period and provision.

**3.8** The South East Plan (2009) set a housing target for Maidstone Borough of 11,080 dwellings for the period 2006 to 2026. The intended abolition of regional strategies means the Council must now set a local housing target for this period. Three options for the period 2006 to 2026 are currently being modelled and tested by the Council: 8,200, 10,080 and 11,000 dwellings. However, there is no presumption at this stage that the Council's preferred target will be set at one of these options.

### Core Output Indicator H2

#### (a): Net additional dwellings - in previous years

To show recent levels of housing delivery.

#### (b): Net additional dwellings - for the reporting year (2009/10)

To show levels of housing delivery for the reporting year.

#### (c): Net additional dwellings - in future years

To show likely levels of housing delivery

This information should be accompanied by the **(i) area (in hectares)** and **(ii) the annualised plan target applying to each of the 5 years**. *NB: (i) data for area (in hectares) is unavailable.*

#### (d): Managed delivery target

To show how likely levels of future housing are expected to come forward taking into account the previous years performance.

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Net additional dwellings - in previous years	816	756	714	992	441	581

Table 3.7 Core Output Indicator H2a & b: Number of Net Additional Dwellings

**3.9** The 2007/08 monitoring period had the highest ever housing completion figure at 992, due to the high volume of flats completed in that year. The economic downturn probably contributed to a reduction in completions to 441 in 2008/09, but there was an upturn in 2009/10 when 581 units were completed.

## 3 . Core Output Indicators

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Housing Target Scenario	8,200	10,080	11,000
Residual target (after deducting 2728 completions from 2006/07 to 2009/10)	5,472	7,352	8,272
Annual (residual target divided by 16 years 2010/11 to 2025/26)	342	460	517
5-year target (annual target x 5 years)	1,710	2,298	2,585
5-year housing land supply 2010/11 to 2014/15 (including planning consents and adopted local plan brownfield housing allocations only and excluding all other elements of supply)	2,957	2,957	2,957
5-year supply of housing land (expressed as a percentage) at 1 April 2010	172.9	128.7	114.4
Number of years of housing land supply at 1 April 2010	8.6	6.4	5.7

Table 3.8 Calculating 5 year housing land supply based on 8,200, 10,080 and 11,000 dwelling options

**3.10** When the borough's housing target is confirmed, the Council will prepare its housing trajectory. Meanwhile, table 3.8 demonstrates that the Council has a minimum 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites for all three development options currently being tested.

**3.11** The number of years of housing land supply at 1 April 2010 takes into account deliverable non-implemented planning consents and the potential from allocated local plan brownfield sites. Developers were consulted to establish the phasing of sites with 10 dwellings or more, and to confirm sites are readily available for development and are not subject to constraint. These figures take no account of windfall sites, identified SHLAA potential or frozen local plan greenfield allocations.



## Core Output Indicator H3: New and converted dwellings - on previously developed land

To show the number of gross new dwellings being built upon previously developed land (PDL)

	% Brownfield	% Greenfield
2005/06	94.5	5.5
2006/07	96.6	3.4
2007/08	86.8	13.2
2008/09	88.9	11.1
2009/10	86.2	13.8
2004/05 to 2008/09	90.6	9.4

Table 3.9 Percentage of Completed Dwellings on Previously Developed Land (brownfield sites) (source: Maidstone Borough Council) based on the former PPS3 definition in place during 2009/10

**3.12** Table 3.9 shows that a consistently high proportion of units in the borough have been completed on previously developed land (brownfield sites) since 2005/06. During 2009/10, a total of 551 dwellings (gross) were built on brownfield sites. On 9<sup>th</sup> June 2010, the Coalition Government issued changes to the definition of previously developed land in Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing, so private residential gardens are now classed as greenfield sites. If this new definition had been applied in 2009/10, the percentage of development on previously developed land would fall from 86.2% to 75.1%, still in excess of the government's 60% target.

**3.13** High levels of housing development on previously developed land are expected to continue in advanced of allocating greenfield sites through Local Development Documents.

## 3 . Core Output Indicators

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### Core Output Indicator H4: Net additional pitches (Gypsy and Traveller)

To show the number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches delivered.

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Pitches with permanent consent	10	0	9	11
Pitches with permanent consent and personal condition	2	3	0	2
Total	12	3	9	13

Table 3.10 Net additional gypsy and traveller pitches (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

**3.14** The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) revealed a gross need for an additional 47<sup>(3)</sup> pitches in the borough for the period 2006 to 2011. Table 3.10 shows that significant progress has been made towards meeting this need.

**3.15** Now that it is intended to abolish the South East Plan, local authorities have the responsibility for setting their own target for the number of pitches to be provided in their areas. The Core Strategy will set the target pitch figure for the borough for the period 2006 to 2016.

### Core Output Indicator H5: Gross affordable housing completions

To show affordable housing delivery.

**3.16** Maidstone's Housing Needs Survey (2005) demonstrated that local plan policies were not meeting its need for affordable housing. The survey showed that affordable housing need represented 173% of the borough's total housing supply at that time. Despite the success of the Council's affordable housing policy AH1 (adopted December 2006), the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (March 2010) shows this need has risen, and that affordable housing need (1,081 affordable homes p.a.) now represents double the Council's total land supply.

**3.17** Adopted policy AH1 seeks 40% affordable housing on sites yielding 15 units or more, or of 0.5 hectare or greater. It further seeks 60% of the total affordable housing requirement for each site to provide for socially rented units, the balance to provide for intermediate housing.

3 The GTAA assumed that 15 pitches would become available through turnover on the Council's two public Gypsy and Traveller sites between 2006 and 2011. In the GTAA this supply of 15 pitches was deducted from the gross borough need figure of 47 pitches to give a net need figure of 32 pitches which was the figure referenced in the 08/09 AMR.

Social rent homes provided	Intermediate homes provided	Affordable homes Total (gross)
130	143	273
47.62%	52.38%	

Table 3.11 Gross Affordable Housing Completions 2009/10 (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

**3.18** During 2008/09, 90.78% of the affordable units completed fell into the socially rent category due to the high proportion of dwellings purchased by Registered Social Landlords. Table 3.11 shows that during 2009/10 this percentage decreased to 47.62%, indicating that the high percentage achieved in 2008/09 was unsustainable.

	All dwellings completed (net)	Affordable dwellings completed (net)	Percentage of affordable dwellings completed
2005/06	758	56	7.39%
2006/07	714	147	20.59%
2007/08	992	205	20.66%
2008/09	441	204	46.25%
2009/10	581	273	46.99%

Table 3.12 Affordable Dwellings Completed as a Percentage of All Completed Units (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

	No. all units (net) secured through new planning consents for sites of 15+ units	No. affordable housing units (net) secured on new planning consents for sites of 15+ units	Percentage of affordable housing units secured
2006/07	58	23	39.70%
2007/08	247	132	53.44%
2008/09	509	202	39.69%
2009/10	267	153	57.30%

Table 3.13 Affordable Dwellings Secured as a Percentage of New Planning Consents determined according to Policy AH1 (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

**3.19** 273 affordable dwellings (gross) were completed during 2009/10. New Build Homebuy/Shared ownership properties are incorporated into the figures because these properties are included in the Affordable Housing DPD definition of intermediate housing. Affordable housing completions exceeded the policy AH1 requirement of 40% during 2009/10, but the number of affordable dwellings completed falls short of the 1,081 net annual need identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

**3.20** Completion rates fluctuate according to market conditions and construction rates for property types. Often the affordable housing element of a larger site is associated with a particular phase of the development, so affordable units are not built evenly over the construction period. Consequently, to measure the success of the Council's affordable housing policy, the number of affordable housing units secured on new planning permissions are monitored. On sites of 15+ units or 0.5+ hectare, 153 (net) affordable dwellings (57.30%) have been secured in 2009/10 in accordance with Policy AH1. In addition, 17 affordable dwellings have been granted during 2009/10 on sites of less than 15 units.

### **Core Output Indicator H6: Housing Quality - Building for Life Assessments**

To show the level of quality in new housing development.

**3.21** This information is not available for 2009/10. The inclusion of a design policy in the draft Core Strategy to require the application of Building for Life Assessments is currently under consideration. If included, this indicator will be monitored after the adoption of the Core Strategy. The Building for Life tool will be used to assess and score developments at the pre-planning discussion stage. Upon completion of development the site would be visited; at this stage the original assessment can be referred to and, providing the site has not changed from pre-planning discussions, the score will still apply. The site may require re-assessment and a new score applied upon completion.

## **Environmental Quality**

### **Core Output Indicator E1: Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality**

To show numbers of developments which are potentially located where (i) they would be at risk of flooding or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and, (ii) adversely affect water quality.

**3.22** The Environment Agency initially objected to four applications granted during 2009/10 on flood defence grounds. The objections were subsequently withdrawn for these applications, subject to the submission of further information and/or conditions.

**3.23** An additional three planning applications were approved contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency. Two of the proposals were allowed because they were considered to comply with Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25). The other application allowed was within flood zone 3a, defined by PPS25 as having a high probability of flooding. This application was initially refused but then subsequently allowed at appeal. The inspector did not refer to the Environment Agency's objection in the decision notice, however, the permission is only for a temporary period of two years.

**3.24** There was one EA objection to a planning application granted during 2009/10 on water quality grounds, however, following clarification of the animal housing arrangements they were satisfied that the proposed development would not involve slurry production and therefore removed their objection.

**3.25** The Council will continue to monitor the number of planning permissions that are granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency, and will include conditions in the interest of flood defence where appropriate.

## Core Output Indicator E2: Change in areas of biodiversity importance

To show losses or additions to biodiversity habitat.

**3.26** Areas of biodiversity importance across the borough of Maidstone include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and Ancient Woodland.

**3.27** The borough currently does not have any National Nature Reserves (NNR), Special Protection Areas (SPA) or Ramsar Sites (RS).

**3.28** There has been an additional LWS designated in Mote Park.

Areas of biodiversity importance	Number of Sites	Area (Ha)	Loss (No.)	Loss (Ha)	Addition (No.)	Addition (Ha)
<b>SAC</b>	1	137	0	0	0	0
<b>SSSI</b>	9	270	0	0	0	0
<b>LWS</b>	59	2415	0	0	1	2
<b>LNR</b>	2	116	0	0	0	0
<b>Ancient Woodland (semi-natural and replanted)</b>	N/A	3124	N/A	0	0	0

Table 3.14 Areas of biodiversity importance across the borough 2008/09

## Core Output Indicator E3: Renewable energy generation

To show the amount of renewable energy generation by installed capacity and type

Including wind onshore, solar photovoltaics, hydro and biomass (landfill gas, sewage sludge digestion, municipal and industrial solid waste combustion, co-firing if biomass with fossil fuels, animal biomass and plant biomass)

**3.29** A list of the borough's renewable energy schemes to date, together with their status, is set out below.

- A 150kw biomass plant building powered from the burning of wood chippings was installed in July 2009. This new biofuel system in West Farleigh replaced the existing fossil fuel system that serves a sizable group of listed buildings that have a greater demand for energy than the average rural home.
- The 5kw wind turbine given planning permission in 2008/09, in Harrietsham, is due to be installed in December 2010.
- The 5.67kw solar photo-voltaic panels given planning permission in 2008/09, at Downswood Community Centre, have not been installed during 2009/10 because there was no funding available.
- A building to house a biomass electricity plant at the Apiary Park, generating electricity from burning coppice wood chips sourced from the by-products associated with the local coppicing industry was granted planning permission in 2008/09. During

2009/10, planning permission has been granted for a similar scheme in Grafty Green. It is expected that the new scheme at Grafty Green will go ahead instead of the scheme at Apiary Park, where there is a lack of demand. The plant will produce 100kW of instantaneous power and is capable of providing almost 800MWh over a year of carbon neutral electricity to the national grid, equivalent to the average annual electricity demand of approximately 170 homes.

**3.30** This core output indicator is designed to pick up planning permissions granted for large installations. It excludes schemes installed under the General Development Order and does not incorporate measures under Code for Sustainable Homes and BRE Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) included as part of a larger planning applications. However, such schemes are becoming more common as the number of developments achieving the Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 increases. For example, during 2009/10, 40 photo-voltaic cells have been installed on the roof of the residential development at the site of the former Parkwood Tavern. The new housing estate under construction on the site of the former Senacre School is also installing photo-voltaic cells on many of the roof slopes.

**3.31** The Council only started specifically monitoring planning applications for renewable energy since 2007/08. As the database of planning applications is built up, the methodology for monitoring this indicator will become more refined. In the future, planning applications granted for renewable energy generation will be surveyed to establish when the application is implemented. The Council will facilitate further schemes throughout the borough, particularly through planning conditions to secure additional provision. For example, there is a condition for a biomass boiler at the new Kent Library and History Centre under construction at James Whatman Way.

**3.32** Policies and appropriate indicators for renewable energy will be developed through the Local Development Framework, and will respond to requirements set out in the Planning and Energy Act.

## Local Indicators

**4.1** Local indicators address policies and local issues not covered by Core Output Indicators. Local policies referred to are contained in the adopted Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan (2000), saved from 28 September 2007. In December 2006 the Affordable Housing DPD and Open Space DPD were adopted. The effectiveness of policy AH1 is monitored in Core Output Indicators and OS1 is monitored in this chapter. Themes reviewed in this chapter include the built environment, the countryside, employment and transport.

### OS1 - Open Space Development Plan Document

The amount of Open Space that should be provided on residential developments.

**4.2** Policy OS1 delivers open space to achieve the objectives of the Green Spaces Strategy, as required by PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation. The success of the policy is monitored through 8 categories of open space provision within the urban and rural areas of the borough. Minimum standards set for Natural and Semi-Natural Green Spaces will be monitored for 2009/10. Currently there are no minimum standards for Green Corridors. Where current provision is below standards set per 1000 population or hectareage, figures show a minus sign.

**4.3** During 2009/10 six planning applications secured open space. Two of the decisions have conditions requiring open space contributions that will be secured through legal agreements. Three have legal agreements securing nearly £250,000 in off site open space contributions. Finally, the new Library and History Centre at James Whatman Way will be providing off-site open space in perpetuity, maintenance and footpath widening.

	Total population (people)	Current provision (hectares)	Hectares per 1000 population (ha/1000)	Local minimum standard (ha/1000)	Above/below standard per 1000 population (ha/1000)	Above/below standard (hectares)
<b>Parks and Gardens</b>						
Urban	98,500	213.37	2.17	2.30	-0.13	-1.28
Rural	45,000	0	0	0	0	0
Borough	143,500	213.37	1.49			

Table 4.1 Policy OS1 Categories of Open Space Provision 2006

## 4 . Local Indicators

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	Total population (people)	Current provision (hectares)	Hectares per 1000 population (ha/1000)	Local minimum standard (ha/1000)	Above/below standard per 1000 population (ha/1000)	Above/below standard (hectares)
<b>Natural and Semi-Natural Green Spaces</b>						
Urban	98,500	812.76	8.25	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rural	45,000	2,095.44	46.57	N/A	N/A	N/A
Borough	143,500	2,908.20	20.27			
<b>Green Corridors<sup>(4)</sup></b>						
Urban	98,500	16,688	169.42	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rural	45,000	91,556	2,034.58	N/A	N/A	N/A
Borough	143,500	108,244	754.31			
<b>Amenity Green Space</b>						
Urban	98,500	65.19	0.66	0.70	-0.04	-3.94
Rural	45,000	68.65	1.53	0.80	0.73	32.85
Borough	143,500	133.84	0.93			
<b>Provision for Children - Equipped Play</b>						
Urban	98,500	6.98	0.07	0.12	-0.05	-4.93
Rural	45,000	3.46	0.08	0.09	-0.01	-0.45
Borough	143,500	10.44	0.07			
<b>Outdoor Sports Facilities</b>						
Urban	98,500	145.91	1.48	1.40	0.08	7.88
Rural	45,000	119.90	2.66	2.70	-0.04	-1.80
Borough	143,500	265.81	1.85			
<b>Allotments and Community Gardens</b>						
Urban	98,500	19.86	0.20	0.21	-0.01	-0.99
Rural	45,000	10.59	0.24	0.18	0.06	2.70
Borough	143,500	30.45	0.21			
<b>Cemeteries and Churchyards</b>						
Urban	98,500	36.62	0.37	0.66	-0.29	-28.57
Rural	45,000	19.88	0.44	0.59	-0.15	-6.75



	Total population (people)	Current provision (hectares)	Hectares per 1000 population (ha/1000)	Local minimum standard (ha/1000)	Above/below standard per 1000 population (ha/1000)	Above/below standard (hectares)
Borough	143,500	56.50	0.39			

Table 4.2 Policy OS1 Categories of Open Space Provision 2006

**Maidstone's Rivers**

To enhance the quality of the riversides.

**4.4** Rivers and the landscapes they form are unique and can be sensitive to change. The planning process needs to embrace these facts and base planning principles on solid evidence gathered from relevant borough-wide studies.

**4.5** The Town Centre Study completed in 2010 identifies the rivers in Maidstone as a key asset and recommends improvements to riverside access. The draft Local Biodiversity Action Plan is expected to be adopted later in 2010 and will put in place a number of projects specifically associated with riverside areas. The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and the Maidstone Borough Landscape Character Assessment continue to be progressed.

**4.6** In 2009/10 Maidstone Borough Council commissioned an initial scoping study that was followed by an Outline Water Cycle Study (WCS). A WCS is a means for establishing what sustainable water infrastructure within a defined area is required (such as water treatment works and sewerage networks), as well as where and when it is needed. The study process is broken into three main stages – scoping, outline and detailed. Not all WCS need go to the detailed stage if there are no identified issues. In the case of Maidstone, only scoping and outline studies have been undertaken to date.

**4.7** The Outline WCS gathered and assessed available data from stakeholders such as water companies and the Environment Agency. It identifies environmental and major infrastructure risks and constraints; and whether future development can be accommodated. The Outline WCS report was published in June 2010 and provides evidence to support the emerging Core Strategy. It identifies wastewater as a particular issue for Maidstone, particularly the sewerage network. Water resources are not seen to be a limiting factor but the report does highlight the fact that the borough lies within a water-stressed area, and measures need to be taken to improve efficiency in the use of water.

### **Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

To resist development that would have a detrimental effect on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

**4.8** The Kent Downs AONB Management Plan First Revision was endorsed as supplementary guidance to the LDF by Maidstone Borough Council in 2009. It covers the period between 2009 and 2014. An Action Plan supporting delivery of the Management Plan objectives is expected to be published later in 2010. This is currently being prepared in consultation with local authorities.

**4.9** The appeal against Maidstone Borough Council's decision to refuse planning permission for the Kent International Freight Depot proposal to the north east of Maidstone was dismissed by the Secretary of State in August 2010. Reasons for the dismissal included the level of harm the proposal would have had on the setting of the AONB as well as to the character, quality and appearance of the open countryside in general.

### **Conversion of Rural Buildings for Residential Purposes**

Criteria for the reuse and adaptation of rural buildings for residential purposes.

**4.10** During 2009/10, 5 rural buildings were granted planning permission for residential conversion, 1 supersedes previous applications granted for the conversion of rural building for residential purposes. Two planning applications for the conversion of rural buildings were refused in accordance with saved local plan policy ENV45, demonstrating that this policy is being effectively implemented.

### **Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside**

Replacement dwellings in the countryside should be no more visually intrusive than the original dwelling and the new dwelling should not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity.

**4.11** Seven applications for replacement dwellings in the countryside were granted in 2009/10, of which five superseded previous applications for replacement dwellings. The majority of applications granted have a condition which requires the original dwelling to be demolished. However, such conditions are unnecessary if either the new build is on the footprint of the existing building or demolition was clearly stated in the plans.

**4.12** Three applications for replacement dwellings located in the countryside were refused and went to appeal. Reasons for the initial refusals were that the proposed dwellings were too visually intrusive. Two of the refusals were dismissed at appeal and one was allowed. It was concluded that even though the house allowed would be more visible, it would not be more intrusive in the landscape, especially if planting is undertaken. The proposal would therefore meet the relevant requirements of policy H32.

**Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)**

**4.13** The Maidstone Borough Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2010) is a necessary part of the council's planning evidence base that takes a wider look at the area's housing market. Although housing markets often cross local authority boundaries, the SHMA confirmed that the housing market in Maidstone Borough is relatively self-contained. The SHMA demonstrates that there is a need for further family-sized housing (3-4 bed homes) and, in terms of affordable housing, identifies a current need for 1,081 affordable homes each year. All of this information is used to help prepare the housing policies within the emerging Core Strategy.

**Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)**

**4.14** The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)(2009) is a broad assessment of sites that are potentially available for housing development in Maidstone Borough. The assessment judges sites on the basic principles of whether they are available, deliverable and developable – no further planning judgements are made at this stage. The document, which does not allocate sites, allows the council to make a considered judgement when producing its overall planning strategy as to whether there is enough land available to deliver the housing target and where this land might be.

**Amount of eligible open spaces managed to Green Flag Award standard.**

**4.15** In 2010 an additional Green Flag was awarded for Whatman Park, to add to the Green Flag Award that was retained for Clare Park.

**Retention of Employment Sites**

Designated employment land resists the loss of employment land to other uses, unless the retention of the employment use has been fully explored without success.

**4.16** During 2009/10 one planning consent has been granted for a non-employment use on designated employment land. Permission was granted for change of use from motor vehicle repairs and MOT workshop to small plant and tool hire, sales, repairs and delivery. The site is located within an allocated employment site as identified under policy ED2 of the Local Plan and the Lodge Road industrial estate is identified for use classes B1 and B2. The proposed use is a sui generis use but is nearest in character to a retail type use, where there are visiting members of the public to the premises who hire machinery. Whilst this does not strictly accord to a B1 or B2 use it would still provide full-time employment for 4 staff and part-time for 1. Policy ED2 states that permission will not be granted to use vacant business/industrial sites for non employment purposes. In this case it was concluded that employment would be provided and it was also of note that the company already operate from another unit at the estate. This type of use is not uncommon at industrial estates. Overall, the proposed use was not considered contrary to the aims of policy ED2 of the Local Plan and was granted permission.

### Employment Land Review Update

**4.17** The Employment Land Review (ELR) update report was published for the borough in September 2009. The report was updated to take into account changed economic and policy circumstances, including the adoption of the Maidstone Economic Development Strategy in November 2008 and the impacts of the recession. The ELR will help guide the development of the Core Strategy policy for economic development, in particular employment targets, locations and implementation measures.

### Retail Need Assessment Study Update

**4.18** The retail need assessment for the borough was updated in 2009. This assessment updated the 2007 report and was primarily undertaken to better understand the potential impacts of the recession on retail need for both convenience and comparison goods. It tested key sensitivities relating to expenditure growth rates and special forms of trading (mainly internet spend). It was undertaken as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy, and will help inform town centre and economic development policies and guide the planning of retail space.

### Integrated Transport Strategy

An Integrated Transport Strategy is followed. All new developments should be safely and securely related to movement networks.

**4.19** An Integrated Transport Strategy was adopted by the Council in 2005. The Strategy is currently being updated to support the emerging Core Strategy. Public consultation on the Transport Strategy is expected to take place alongside that for the Core Strategy.

**4.20** The priorities of the Transport Strategy are the efficient management of the existing network through the Urban Traffic Management and Control system, the encouragement of all forms of sustainable transport, and the management of future demand for travel. Key elements are the Borough's Park and Ride services, the Quality Bus Partnership with Kent County Council and Arriva, the management of the town centre car parks, liaison with Network Rail and the Highways Agency, and the Maidstone Cycle Forum.

**4.21** New developments are expected to be as sustainable as possible. Travel Plans are sought from large commercial and residential developments, together with appropriate contributions to facilitate and support sustainable transport.

**4.22** The future transport strategy is being developed through transport modelling to assess the impact of Core Strategy options for the size and location of potential development. The effectiveness of the measures that form part of the future Transport Strategy will be monitored through the Local Transport Plan.

## Percentage of new dwellings completed at:

i. less than 30 dwellings per hectare;

ii. between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare; and

iii. above 50 dwellings per hectare.

	Year	Large Sites (5+ dwellings)	Small Sites (1-4 dwellings)	All Sites
Less than 30 dwellings per hectare	2006/07	14.16%	50.62%	21.08%
	2007/08	11.53%	43.75%	15.53%
	2008/09	8.15%	46.97%	17.64%
	2009/10	2.99%	55.34%	11.42%
Between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare	2006/07	41.33%	17.90%	36.89%
	2007/08	34.29%	22.22%	32.79%
	2008/09	31.89%	12.88%	27.27%
	2009/10	42.72%	13.59%	38.03%
Above 50 dwellings per hectare	2006/07	44.51%	31.48%	42.04%
	2007/08	54.19%	34.03%	51.68%
	2008/09	59.95%	40.15%	55.09%
	2009/10	54.29%	31.07%	50.55%

Table 4.3 Percentage of new dwellings completed at less than 30 dph, 30-50 dph and above 50 dph

**4.23** Overall, 88.58% of dwellings completed on all sites in 2009/10 were constructed at a density greater than 30 dwellings per hectare (38.03% between 30 and 50 units plus 50.55% at greater than 50 units), which demonstrates that Maidstone is making best use of its available development sites.

**4.24** In 2009/10, 97.01% of dwellings on large sites were constructed at a density of greater than 30 units per hectare (42.72% + 54.29%). 55.34% of dwellings on small sites were built at a density of less than 30 dwellings per hectare, which is a reflection of the nature of small site development in rural areas, for example, replacement dwellings or the conversion of rural buildings.

**4.25** These figures relate to the average density of each development site, rather than individual applications where there may be several applications for a single site at varying densities. Densities are calculated using net site areas, i.e. after subtracting hecтарage for other land uses associated with the planning consent.

**4.26** On 9<sup>th</sup> June 2010, the Coalition Government removed the national minimum density targets for residential development. This change is aimed at restricting inappropriate development proposals, that in some cases have the potential to damage

an area's character by increasing the density of development to unsuitable levels. Maidstone Borough Council will continue to judge all development proposals on their individual merits and will use the changes to help it restrict schemes which on balance it considers inappropriate.

### **Maidstone Town Centre**

Maidstone town centre is identified as a regional scale comparison goods centre. Proposals for retail development which would undermine the strategy for, or the vitality and viability of, the town centre will not be permitted. The Borough Council will implement and support initiatives to enhance the attraction of the town centre.

**4.27** A Town Centre Study has been completed as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy, and this work will be developed into an Area Action Plan (AAP) that will guide the redevelopment and regeneration of the town centre in terms of land use, design, phasing and the implementation of schemes. The aim of the AAP for the central area will be to enhance the vitality and character of the town, and to identify different character "quarters" and to define their respective roles. Opportunities for appropriate mixed use development for town centre uses - retail, office, leisure, culture and tourism - will be identified and highways, transport, cycle and pedestrian routes will be improved. Conservation, environmental protection and enhancement of the town centre are also important aspects of this study, which also considers access to the riverside and the need for public realm improvements community, leisure and/or tourism facilities.

## Local Development Scheme Review

### Introduction to the LDS

**5.1** The Maidstone Borough Council Local Development Scheme (LDS) identifies the range of Local Development Documents (LDD) the Council will produce between 2009 and 2015, together with a work programme for the various stages of document preparation. Specifically, the LDS records the Council's intentions to prepare Development Plan Documents (DPD) and Area Action Plans (AAP) that comprise part of its Local Development Framework (LDF).

**5.2** The latest revision to the Local Development Scheme approved by the Secretary of State came into effect on 7th September 2009. A copy of the Scheme can be viewed and downloaded from the Local Development Framework page of the Council's website.

**5.3** The LDS explains how the Council will manage the preparation of documents, the timescale within which they will be produced, how documents are resourced, and the main risks to the production timetable including how those risks will be addressed. The LDS ensures that the LDF is kept up-to-date and that the community is actively involved in the process. Delivery of the programme is monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), which highlights the need to review the LDS if required.

**5.4** Whereas the monitoring period for reviewing policies through the AMR covers the period 1st April to 31st March, the review of LDS "milestones" relates to the calendar year (January to December). This section of the AMR therefore compares the progress of document production during 2010 against the targets set out in the approved LDS.

**5.5** Government legislation and advice on the LDF plan making process is set out in:

- Planning Policy Statement 12: creating strong safe and prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning (June 2008)
- Plan Making Manual (a continually updated web-based manual that accompanies PPS12)
- Statutory Instrument 2008 No. 1371 Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2008 (June 2008)
- Planning Act (November 2008) - Part 9
- Statutory Instrument 2009 No. 401 Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2009 (April 2009).

**5.6** PPS12 focuses on the Core Strategy as the key element of the LDF, emphasising the value of community engagement in the plan making process and the importance of a sound evidence base. This involves a wide and continual form of consultation with stakeholders and the public, although the extent of public engagement should reflect the scale of the issues being addressed by the DPD or AAP. The consultation process gives local authorities flexibility in deciding the extent of consultation according to the complexity of the document and local circumstances. Following public consultation, objectors can appear at an Independent Examination into the DPD or AAP.

**5.7** Under the plan making regulations, there are four project milestones for the production of a DPD or AAP that comprise:

- Consultation of statutory bodies on the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal for the DPD

## 5 . Local Development Scheme Review

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- Publication of the DPD for public consultation (Regulation 27)
- Submission of the DPD to the Secretary of State (Regulation 30)
- Adoption of the DPD (Regulation 36).

**5.8** In previous years the achievement of LDS milestones assisted in securing government funding through housing and planning delivery grant but this is no longer the case. However, the adoption of a sound Core Strategy is a priority for the Council. Core Strategy policies form the framework for the decision making process and provide the essential “hook” on which a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) can be prepared. An SPD can expand or add detail to an adopted DPD or AAP but it cannot create new policy or allocate land. Whilst an SPD involves stakeholder and community participation and consultation, documents are not subject to Independent Examination.

### Review of the LDS

**5.9** The approved LDS sets out the timetable for the production of 5 DPD/AAP documents over a 7-year period January 2009 to December 2015, clearly identifying the stakeholder and public engagement stages of plan production and highlighting document milestones. The milestones for 2010 are set out below.

Document	Stage	Target date	Date Achieved	Target met?
Core Strategy DPD	Publication for consultation	December 2010	Programme delayed	No
Gypsy & Traveller Pitch Allocations DPD	Publication for consultation	July 2010	Programme delayed	No
Gypsy & Traveller Pitch Allocations DPD	Submission to the Secretary of State	October 2010	Programme delayed	No
Annual Monitoring Report 2009	Submission to Secretary of State	December 2009	December 2009	Yes

Table 5.1 LDS milestones (2010)

**5.10** The Annual Monitoring Report submission target was successfully achieved in December 2009, as it has been in previous years, and this AMR is on target for submission in December 2010. However, the programme for preparing both the Core Strategy DPD and the Gypsy & Traveller Pitch Allocations DPD has been delayed for a number of reasons.

**5.11** The government announced its intention to revoke regional strategies in May 2010 and actioned their abolition in July 2010. This decision was subject to challenge by the development industry and on 10 November 2010 the High Court upheld the challenge. While the Secretary of State will not appeal the decision, he has indicated that he will progress the Localism Bill to abolish regional strategies in totality, and the South East Plan is expected to be formally abolished in summer/autumn 2011. Nonetheless, for the present, the South East Plan remains part of the development plan and, where relevant, is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.



**5.12** However, there will no longer be a regional prescription to determine local authority housing targets and this is now for local decision. Maidstone Borough Council is in the process of setting its own housing target together with the distribution pattern of development in the Core Strategy in preparation for public consultation. A revised Core Strategy programme will be published once the target has been approved for consultation.

**5.13** The proposed abolition of the South East Plan also means that the target for the number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches to be provided in the borough will be set locally. The Council has already confirmed that this target will be set for a 10 year period from 2006 to 2016 and has agreed a methodology for calculating the target. The resultant target figure will be included in the Core Strategy.

**5.14** The Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment identified a need to provide for public as well as private gypsy and traveller pitches. The Council is currently considering a number of options for public site provision and will publish a revised programme for the preparation of the DPD once this matter is resolved.

**5.15** The Council's prime focus for plan production is its Core Strategy, and the evidence base for this document was expanded in 2010 through the publication of the following documents.

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (March 2010)
- Town Centre Study (February 2010)
- Water Cycle Study (June 2010)
- Population sensitivity tests (October 2010)

**5.16** Additionally, the Interactive Proposals Map was launched in February 2010, which allows the public to search for LDF policies that apply in any given area of the borough or at a specific location.

**5.17** The Council will publish further evidence as it is completed over the forthcoming months, prior to public consultation on the draft Core Strategy in 2011. The Core Strategy evidence published to date has been prepared in accordance with government policy and guidance and is available on the Council's website.

**5.18** Whilst it is no longer a requirement to include a programme for SPDs in the LDS, the Scheme explains that once the Core Strategy is adopted it will provide the higher tier policies necessary to facilitate the production of a number of important SPDs for Landscape Character Areas, a Parking Strategy, Air Quality Management, and further Special Character Areas. The proposed Planning Tariff SPD is likely to be superseded by the need to incorporate a Community Infrastructure Levy policy in the Core Strategy to comply with emerging government legislation. The Council will give consideration to prioritising the publication of SPDs following the adoption of the Core Strategy.

**5.19** Meanwhile, the Council has set up a cross-district/county working group under the umbrella of the Kent Design Initiative to produce guidance on Inclusive Design and Place Making (formerly referred to as Access and Facilities for Disabled People). The document will be published as a supplement to the Kent Design Guide and ultimately endorsed as supplementary guidance to Maidstone's LDF.

## Risk Analysis

**5.20** If the Council is to keep on track with the revised programme for preparing the Core Strategy and other LDF documents in 2011 and beyond, it is imperative that any risks to the programme are identified and addressed as far as practicable.

### Housing Delivery

**5.21** Government advice makes clear that local authorities must demonstrate that they have a five year supply of deliverable sites available for housing, and should identify a further 10 years supply of developable sites suitable for residential development. Local authorities should also illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery through a housing trajectory in their Annual Monitoring Reports.

**5.22** In the absence of a confirmed housing target for the period 2006 to 2026, the Council has considered its 5-year position for three development targets currently being modelled: 8,200 dwellings, 10,080 dwellings and 11,000 dwellings (table 3.8). Taking account of deliverable non-implemented planning consents and the potential from allocated brownfield sites, all scenarios demonstrate the Council has a minimum 5-year supply of housing land at April 2010. Deliverable sites are those that are readily available for development and are not subject to constraint. These figures take no account of windfall sites, the identified potential from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, or frozen greenfield allocations in the adopted Maidstone Borough-wide Local Plan.

**5.23** The Council will demonstrate a 10-year supply of developable housing sites through the Core Strategy and subsequent land allocation DPDs.

### Core Strategy DPD

**5.24** It is clear that regional strategies are proposed to be abolished before Independent Examination into the Maidstone Core Strategy, although potentially after the Core Strategy is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. It is therefore reasonable to progress the Core Strategy on the basis of the proposed abolition of regional strategies, whilst acknowledging the risks and likelihood of objections to the draft Core Strategy from those finding favour in aspects of the South East Plan.

### Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Allocations DPD

**5.25** The Council is preparing a dedicated DPD to meet the identified needs of the gypsy and traveller community. The Core Strategy will contain the criterion-based policy to determine planning applications on unidentified (windfall) sites, and the the Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Allocations DPD will allocate sites for development. The Gypsy and traveller Pitch Allocations DPD will follow the timetable for the Core Strategy DPD to ensure consistency between the two DPDs.

**5.26** The main risk to the programme will be the identification of public site provision and a number of options are currently under consideration.

### Sound Evidence Base

**5.27** The evidence base for the Core Strategy and other documents is, to a large extent, reliant on the expertise of various consultants. Whilst the evidence base is nearing completion, the Council is mindful that deliverability of evidence within set time scales is a risk. This risk has been and will continue to be mitigated by the appointment of several consultants to carry out a variety of tasks as opposed to one or two major contributors. The consultants are closely managed and monitored by officers to make sure that agreed programmes are met.

**5.28** The government has published a number of policy and advice documents over the past few years that set out what evidence is required to support Core Strategies, and how such evidence should be produced. The Council has met with the Planning Inspectorate and the Government Office for the South East to confirm that its approach to producing its evidence base for the Core Strategy and other DPDs and AAPs is sound, in terms of quantity and quality.

### Resources

**5.29** Since the introduction of the LDF plan making system in 2004, government requirements for the production of the Core Strategy evidence base have expanded and have proved to be onerous for District Councils in terms of financial and staff resources. Maidstone Borough Council sets an annual budget for the LDF, and budgetary and staff resources are closely monitored to minimise risks to the programme.

**5.30** Given the economic constraints on local authority services in general, the same levels of past budgetary provision for preparing LDF documents cannot be sustained, especially with the loss of housing and planning delivery grant and the withdrawal/reduction of other government grants before new funding measures are in place. Nonetheless, the production of the LDF, and in particular the adoption of the Core Strategy, remains a high priority for the Council, as does the focus on value for money. The recruitment and retention of staff is critical in reducing the risk to the Council of producing the LDF and also completing the process within planned timescales.

Acronym	Term	Description
	The Act	The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the Planning Act 2008.
AAP	Area Action Plan	AAPs target specific areas of development or change. AAPs have the status of DPDs.
-	Affordable Housing	Affordable housing is that which is provided with subsidy, for rent and intermediate market housing, for people who are unable to resolve their housing requirements in the local private sector housing market because of the relationship between housing costs and incomes. This definition covers housing for social rent and intermediate housing, i.e. shared ownership, low cost home ownership and sub-market rent. (Affordable Housing DPD 2006)
AMR	Annual Monitoring Report	The AMR provides a framework with which to monitor and review the effectiveness of local policies, and to establish whether policy targets or milestones for LDDs set by the LDS have either been met or progress made towards meeting them.
CABE	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment	The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) is the government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space. It encourages policy makers to create places that are safe, beautiful and efficient to run. ( <a href="http://www.cabe.org.uk">www.cabe.org.uk</a> )
CLG	Communities and Local Government	The Department of Communities and Local Government sets policy on local government, housing, urban regeneration, planning and fire and rescue. It has responsibility for all race equality and community cohesion related issues in England and for building regulations, fire safety and some housing issues in England and Wales. The rest of its work applies only to England. ( <a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk">www.communities.gov.uk</a> )
-	Core Strategy	The Core Strategy is a Development Plan Document. Once adopted it will set out in general terms, how, where and when development will take place in Maidstone Borough over a 20-year period 2006 to 2026.
-	Development Plan	In accordance with legislation all planning applications should normally be determined in accordance with Development Plan policies. Maidstone's development plan comprises the South East Plan until its revocation, adopted DPDs and saved local plan policies.
DPD	Development Plan Document	A DPD is a spatial planning document that is subject to independent examination. DPDs form part of the development plan for a local authority's area, and include the Core Strategy. AAPs have the same status as DPDs.
EA	Environment Agency	The Environment Agency is the leading public body for protecting and improving the environment in England and Wales, with particular responsibilities for river, flooding and pollution. ( <a href="http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk">www.environment-agency.gov.uk</a> )

Acronym	Term	Description
GOSE	Government Office for the South East	GOSE represents central government in the south east region. Its role is to promote better and more effective integration of government policies and programmes at a regional and local level. ( <a href="http://www.go-se.gov.uk">www.go-se.gov.uk</a> )
-	Index of Multiple Deprivation	The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 combines a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area in England. This allows each area to be ranked relative to one another according to their level of deprivation. The Indices of Deprivation are produced at Lower Super Output Area level. (Definition from <a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk">www.communities.gov.uk</a> )
KCC	Kent County Council	The first tier of local government for the County. Responsible for highways, children's services and education, social services, minerals and waste planning etc. This AMR uses statistics from various sources collated by KCC.
LDD	Local Development Document	LDDs comprise statutory Development Plan Documents (DPD), Area Action Plans and the LDF Proposals Map, and non statutory Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD).
LDF	Local Development Framework	Introduced by the Planning Act 2004, the LDF is a folder of documents containing DPDs, AAPs, saved local plan policies, SPDs, the Proposals Map, the SCI, the LDS and the AMR. Together these documents provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the borough.
LDS	Local Development Scheme	The LDS is a business programme or timetable listing the documents the Council will produce under the LDF within a minimum 3-year time frame, explaining how documents will be prepared and when they will be published.
LNR	Local Nature Reserves	Local Nature Reserves are formally designated areas for both people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. They offer people special opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it. ( <a href="http://www.naturalengland.org.uk">www.naturalengland.org.uk</a> )
LSOA	Lower Super Output Area	This is the name for Lower Layer Super Output Areas used for census outputs. In England and Wales Super Output Areas (SOAs) are a geographical hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics. Unlike electoral wards, the SOA layers are of consistent size across the country and will not be subject to regular boundary change. Lower Layer SOAs have a minimum population of 1,000 and are used as the building blocks for Middle Layer SOAs. ( <a href="http://www.ons.gov.uk">www.ons.gov.uk</a> )

Acronym	Term	Description
MBC	Maidstone Borough Council	A second tier local authority. The local planning authority responsible for producing the LDF and the determination of most planning applications.
MBWLP	Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000	The Local Plan was adopted by the Council in 2000 and it set the policy framework for determining planning applications. The MBWLP contains planning policies for protecting the environment and proposals for allocating sites for new development in the Borough. From 28 September 2007 only some of the policies in the MBWLP continue to form part of the Development Plan: such policies are called "saved" policies. LDF documents will gradually delete or replace saved local plan policies. MBWLP policies that have NOT been saved, or have been replaced by LDDs, will NOT be used in the determination of planning applications.
ONS	Office for National Statistics	The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the executive office of the UK Statistics Authority, a non-ministerial department which reports directly to Parliament. ONS is the UK Government's single largest statistical producer and is responsible for the production of a wide range of economic and social statistics. ( <a href="http://www.ons.gov.uk">www.ons.gov.uk</a> )
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance	Published by the government, PPGs set out national guidance for the determination of planning applications. They are gradually being replaced by Planning Policy Statements.
PPS	Planning Policy Statements	Published by the government, PPSs set out national policy to guide development. PPSs are gradually replacing Planning Policy Guidance.
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy /South East Plan	Until its revocation, the RSS sets out the region's policies for the development and use of land, and it forms part of the development plan. The South East Plan (2009) is the RSS for the south east, setting a framework for the sustainable development of the region for the period 2006 to 2026, and ensuring development plans conform to the regional planning framework.
S106	Section 106 legal agreements	Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a Local Planning Authority to enter into a legally binding agreement or planning obligation with a land developer. The obligation is termed a Section 106 Agreement. Such agreements can cover almost any relevant issue and can include sums of money. ( <a href="http://www.idea.gov.uk">www.idea.gov.uk</a> )
SA	Sustainability Appraisal	The SA is a tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives, including social, economic and environmental objectives. Under the Act, an SA must be undertaken for all DPDs or AAPs.
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement	The SCI specifies how and when the community and stakeholders will be involved in the process of preparing LDF documents.

Acronym	Term	Description
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment	SEA is a generic term used to describe the environmental assessment of policies, plans and programmes. The European SEA Directive requires a formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes, including those in the field of planning and land use.
	South East Plan	See Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) - due to be revoked
SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	MBC published its SHLAA in May 2009. The primary role of the SHLAA is to identify sites with potential for housing within and adjacent to defined settlements; to assess the housing potential on sites; and to determine if or when sites are likely to be developed. The SHLAA aims to identify as many sites with housing potential in and around as many settlements as possible in the study area, and the Council then undertakes public consultation on which sites should be developed in accordance with its development strategy. ( <a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk">www.communities.gov.uk</a> )
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment	A Strategic Housing Market Assessment aims to estimate housing need and demand, and indicate how the distribution of need and demand varies across the plan area. It considers future demographic trends and identifies the accommodation requirements of specific groups. ( <a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk">www.communities.gov.uk</a> )
SoS	Secretary of State	Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document	An SPD provides detailed supplementary guidance about how adopted planning policies will be implemented. Unlike a DPD or AAP, an SPD does not have to undergo Independent Examination, but it is still subject to stakeholder and public participation and consultation.
SCS	Sustainable Community Strategy	The Sustainable Community Strategy is produced by a partnership of the local public, private, voluntary and community sector with the aim of improving the social, environmental and economic well being of their areas. Local authorities must have regard to the SCS when preparing LDF documents. Maidstone's Community Strategy was adopted in 2009.
	Supplementary Guidance	Supplementary Guidance was introduced as part of the plan making system in June 2008 (PPS12:creating strong safe and prosperous communities). Local authorities can endorse publications prepared by regional or strategic bodies as supplementary guidance to their LDF. The Guidance is not part of the LDF but, if documents are subject to adequate stakeholder and public consultation, it carries commensurate weight to an SPD in decision making processes.
-	Unidentified Sites or Windfall Sites	Sites which become available for development which were not previously identified as allocations in a local

Acronym	Term	Description
		plan or LDD, nor identified as commitments through previous planning permissions.

Table 6.1 Glossary