



**REPORTS FOR DECISION BY THE  
CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY AND LEISURE SERVICES**

Date Issued: 27 October 2011

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K= Key Decision

**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**

### **CABINET MEMBER FOR LEISURE AND CULTURE**

#### **REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT AND REGULATORY SERVICES**

**Report prepared by: Jason Taylor**  
**27 October 2011**

#### **1. MAIDSTONE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**

##### 1.1 Issue for Decision

- 1.1.1 To consider the adoption of the Maidstone Local Biodiversity Action Plan

##### 1.2 Recommendation of the Assistant Director for Environment and Regulatory Services

That the Maidstone Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) is adopted and that the Biodiversity Projects be instigated.

##### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 1.3.1 Biodiversity (Biological Diversity) describes the amazing richness and variety of life around us. Biodiversity refers to diversity between and within ecosystems and habitats, the variety of different species and also to genetic variation within individual species. The intricate network of ecosystems, habitats and species comprising biodiversity provides the support systems that sustain human existence. It is the most important indicator of the state of our environment.

- 1.3.2 Maidstone borough is rich in biodiversity and contains 10% of the county broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland representing 12% of the borough's land cover. Maidstone's landscapes have influenced and shaped local culture. Maidstone borough is made up of characteristic areas defined by differences in rock type, topography, soils, slope and drainage, which in turn resulted in a great variety of habitats. Most of Maidstone falls in to the North Downs, Wealden Greensand and the Low Weald landscape natural areas. In both rural and urban areas wildlife makes an important contribution to the quality of life. Biodiversity conservation is

central to maintain a healthy countryside and townscape.

1.3.3 The past ten years have seen significant changes relating to the environment particularly in terms of planning policy, legislation, and practical action and the need to balance social, economic and environmental aspirations. This Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan provides the opportunity to review current activities and issues, identify aims and set specific objectives and targets for action by a wide range of internal and external partners. It provides a much-needed overarching strategy for everyone involved in safeguarding and enhancing Maidstone's natural environment.

#### 1.4 The Biodiversity Framework

1.4.1 The National Response: In 1992 Biodiversity became a global agenda when 150 governments signed the Convention on Biological Diversity at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. It called for national strategies and action plans to be created and enforced which would conserve, protect and enhance biological diversity and was the first time a legal framework was applied to biodiversity.

1.4.2 In 1994 the 'UK Biodiversity Action Plan' (UK BAP) was launched endorsing a multi-organisational approach to biodiversity conservation with an agreed set of targets and objectives. The overall goal of the UK BAP is to conserve and enhance biological diversity within the UK and to contribute to the conservation of global biodiversity through all appropriate mechanisms.

1.4.3 The UK BAP main objectives are:-

1. To conserve and enhance:
  - The overall populations and natural ranges of native species and the quality and range of wildlife habitats;
  - Internationally important habitats and species;
  - Habitats and species (natural and managed) that are characteristic of local areas;
  - Natural and semi-natural areas that have declined in recent years.
2. To increase public awareness of, and involvement in, conserving biodiversity.
3. To contribute to the conservation of biodiversity on a European and global scale.

1.4.4 The following principles apply to the national UK action plan and are also applicable at a local level:

- The sustainable use of biological resources;
- The cautious use of non-renewable resources;
- The promotion of a multi-agency approach to biodiversity conservation, including individuals and communities and not just government led. This is being championed through Local Biodiversity Action Plans;
- Biological conservation should be based upon a sound knowledge base;
- The conservation of biodiversity should be integrated within government programmes, policy and action
- Decisions should be guided by the precautionary principle, that is, where decisions are complex or insufficient knowledge or information exists to understand biodiversity impact, then precautionary conservation measures are necessary.

- 1.4.5 Following the publication of 'Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan', the UK Biodiversity Steering Group was established to advise the government on how to fulfil its commitment to delivering the Plan.
- 1.4.6 In 1995 'Biodiversity: the UK Steering Group Report – meeting the Rio challenge' was produced, which set out how to achieve this through the Local Biodiversity Action Plan process. The most recent list of priority species and habitats was produced in 2007 and contains 1149 species and 65 habitats. The Steering Group also set up guidelines, with the Local Authority Association and the Local Government Board that could be used at a local level. Maidstone Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) is one of 152 Local Biodiversity Action Plans in England.
- 1.4.7 The Regional Response:  
The Maidstone borough forms part of the County of Kent in the South-East region. The Kent Biodiversity Partnership support biodiversity conservation via the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan (Kent BAP). The Kent Biodiversity Partnership forms part of the larger South-East England Biodiversity Forum (SEEBF).
- 1.4.8 The South-East Biodiversity Strategy targets and strategic biodiversity opportunity map and the Kent BAP targets and actions are currently under revision, however through consultation the Maidstone LBAP will contribute towards these in a local context hierarchy linking into county, regional and national action plans.
- 1.4.9 In 2003 the Kent Biodiversity Partnership released an audit of the distribution of UK priority habitats in Kent. This audit contributed to the Kent BAP and listed 28 priority habitats of importance to the County, of which 27 were of UK priority importance.

1.4.10 Eight Local performance Indicators have been developed to examine Biodiversity with respect to Local Authority actions by the National Audit Office and the Development and Improvement Agency. The Maidstone LBAP would improve on four of these local performance indicators.

## 1.5 Maidstone LBAP

1.5.1 This strategy and action plan for biodiversity allows the council to be strategic in determining where to apply its own resources in delivery. The development of the Maidstone's Biodiversity Project Plan is a leading and novel approach at local authority level, in that it clearly defines a programme of projects that cover a range of work including research, monitoring, protocol development and capital one-off site projects. These projects show how the Council will lead and be directly involved in protecting and enhancing the borough's biodiversity and raising awareness of the issues. Maidstone's Biodiversity Projects Plan clearly describes the localness of our approach as a governing body in the biodiversity framework highlighting our innovative approach to delivering better services to local people

1.5.2 The complete LBAP comprises of the following sections:

- I. Background and Introduction (**Appendix 1**)
- II. HAP 2: Lowland and Dry Acid Grassland and Heath
- III. HAP 3: Lowland Meadows
- IV. HAP 4: Lowland Beach and Yew Woodland
- V. HAP 5: Wet Woodlands
- VI. HAP 6: Lowland Wood Pasture and Parkland
- VII. HAP 7: Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- VIII. HAP 8: Traditional Orchards
- IX. HAP 10: Ponds
- X. HAP 11: Rivers
- XI. HAP 12: Urban Green Space
- XII. Biodiversity Projects (**Appendix 2**)

Due to the large size of this document only the two most important sections have been enclosed as appendices with this report. A copy of the complete LBAP document is on the Parks Pages of the MBC website

([http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/leisure\\_and\\_culture/parks\\_and\\_op\\_en\\_spaces.aspx](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/parks_and_op_en_spaces.aspx) )

1.5.3 The Maidstone LBAP has been produced jointly by Maidstone Borough Council Parks and Leisure Section and Medway Valley Countryside Partnership (MVCP). MVCP are partly funded by Maidstone Borough Council and provide expertise and project management in biodiversity and environmental projects. As MVCP

possess the relevant expertise and experience it is proposed that they continue to manage the LBAP and also implement the Biodiversity Projects on behalf of the Council. Much of the work carried out will be through volunteers, these are currently recruited locally by MVCP. There will be opportunities for local residents to get involved with the management and maintenance of their local wildlife sites.

- 1.5.4 The mapping used in the LBAP showing Local Wildlife Sites was produced in 2008 and consequently some sites are not shown. Kent Wildlife Trust are currently updating this series of maps and these will be added to the LBAP once available.
- 1.5.5 The production and implementation of a LBAP was an objective of the Green Spaces Strategy 2005, and as such £15,000 was kept in reserve from the Capital budget to enable the implementation of the LBAP and Biodiversity Projects. It is proposed that this money is used by MVCP to not only carry out the projects but also to attract additional funding. A number of other longer term projects are identified in the LBAP and if additional funding could be found in the future these projects would also be initiated.
- 1.5.6 The table below identifies the projects that the £15,000 MBC funding will be used to implement. Projects identified in 2010 have already been completed and funded from existing budgets.
- 1.5.7 As well as identifying how available funding with partnership funding will be used to implement projects in the borough, the table also shows how other projects such as the Mote Park Regeneration Project are contributing towards reaching Biodiversity targets.
- 1.5.8 Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) invited the Cabinet Member for Communities and Leisure Cllr John Wilson and Parks and Leisure Manager Jason Taylor to discuss the Bio Diversity Action Plan following its inclusion in the Forward Plan (May to August 2011) on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2011. To enable any feedback received from COSC to be included in the LBAP the decision to adopt the report was delayed until now. Following the discussion the following recommendations came from COSC:
- The Maidstone Local Biodiversity Action Plan should be adopted; and
  - The work and achievements of the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership should be promoted in the Borough Update.

Project	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
<b>MBC Funding</b>					
Weaving Heath					
TAVR Nature Area	£500				<b>£500</b>
Dove Hill Woods					
Ponds Project	£3,000				<b>£3,000</b>
Biodiversity Monitoring	£500	£500	£500	£500	<b>£2,000</b>
Communication Plan					
Bird Feeder scheme					
Insect Box scheme					
Events and MBC staff volunteer days		£750	£750	£750	<b>£2,250</b>
Whatman Park Lowland Meadow Area	£500	£1,600	£400		<b>£2,500</b>
<b>Part Funded by MBC - Look for external funding sources</b>					
Senacre Wood		£140			<b>£140</b>
River Len Nature Reserve		£140			<b>£140</b>
Five Acres and Wents Wood		£137			<b>£137</b>
<b>Already Funded by MBC</b>					
Free Tree Scheme					<b>£0</b>
Pond and Tree Warden Scheme					<b>£0</b>
Bird Nesting Box Scheme					<b>£0</b>
<b>Partner led projects to be supported financially</b>					
Orchards for Everyone	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	<b>£8,000</b>
Ponds on the Downs	£1,000	£1,000			<b>£2,000</b>
Wildlife on the Downs	£500	£500			<b>£1,000</b>
Kent Habitat Survey	£1,333	£1,333			<b>£2,666</b>

Funding required to implement LBAP	2010	Minimum 2011	2012	2013	MBC Total 2011-13
	£9,333 Already committed from existing budgets	£8,100	£3,650	£3,250	£15,000
<b>Funded by another project stream within MBC</b>					
Mote Park Restoration project					<b>£15,000</b>
<b>Developer Contributions</b>					
Palace Wood					<b>£16,000</b>
Working towards good biodiversity management					

## 1.6 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.6.1 Alternative action could be to not adopt the LBAP or instigate the Biodiversity Projects, this is not recommended because the opportunity to lead and be directly involved in protecting and enhancing the borough's biodiversity and raising awareness of biodiversity issues would be lost.

## 1.7 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.7.1 The corporate objectives which the adoption of the LBAP and the instigation of the Biodiversity Projects has the most impact on are:

- Reduce the council's carbon footprint and improve the use of other natural resources, whilst ensuring that the council is adapting to climate change;
- Enhance the council's parks, green spaces and natural habitats;
- Maintain a clean and pleasant environment for people who live in and visit the borough.

1.7.2 Using Medway Valley Countryside Partnership's expertise and experience to administer the LBAP on MBC's behalf is a good example of partnership working being used to "save money and improve services".

## 1.8 Risk Management

1.8.1 The risks that are involved with the decision or actions resulting from the decision are:

- The Council could be criticised for not leading by example and showing land owners in the borough how to manage its land in a way which encourages biodiversity;
- The Maidstone LBAP forms part of the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan which was produced by the Kent Biodiversity Partnership, this in turn contributes to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, if Maidstone were to fail to contribute towards the LBAP it could be seen by its partners in the Kent Biodiversity Partnership to not take Biodiversity seriously;
- Failure to implement the LBAP could result in opportunities being missed not only to improve habitats for diversity on

council land, but also to influence others to do the same on their own land.

1.9 Other Implications

1.9.1

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

1.9.2 Financial Implication – The Council already contributes ££6000 to the Medway Valley Conservation Partnership. The £15,000 in the Green Spaces Strategy Capital Budget has been allocated to implement the LBAP. Further projects will only be undertaken when additional external funding is identified.

1.9.3 Staffing – The implementation of Biodiversity Projects would be done using existing Parks and Leisure Team members and through partnership working with Medway Valley Conservation Partnership, using the existing identified budget.

1.9.4 Environmental/Sustainable Development – The LBAP would provide direction and be an example to developers.

1.10 Relevant Documents

1.10.1 Appendices

**Appendix 1** – Maidstone’s Biodiversity Strategy Phase 1: 2009-2014. Background and Introduction.

**Appendix 2** - Biodiversity Strategy Phase 1: 2009-2014.  
Biodiversity Projects.

- 1.10.2 Background Documents  
UK Biodiversity Action Plan  
Kent Biodiversity Action Plan  
Maidstone LBAP

**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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**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes

No

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

This report first appeared in the forward plan in June 2011 but was delayed due to Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee invitation to discuss at their meeting.

This is a Key Decision because: More than 1 ward in the borough will be affected

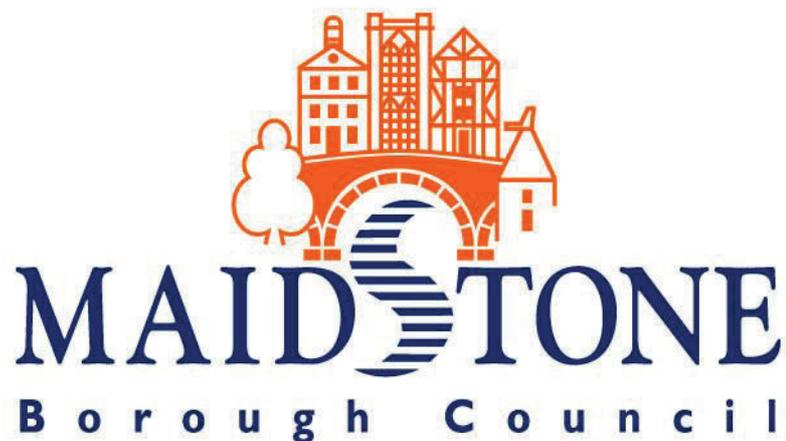
Wards/Parishes affected: All.....

.....

# **Maidstone's Biodiversity Strategy**

A Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Phase 1: 2009 – 2014



## **Introduction and Overview**

## Introduction and Overview

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## Introduction and Overview

### Executive summary

#### Biodiversity – What does it mean?

Biodiversity (Biological Diversity) describes the amazing richness and variety of life around us. Biodiversity refers to diversity between and within ecosystems and habitats, the variety of different species and also to genetic variation within individual species. The intricate network of ecosystems, habitats and species comprising biodiversity provides the support systems that sustain human existence. It is the most important indicator of the state of our environment.

#### Maidstone's biodiversity

Maidstone borough is rich in biodiversity and contains 10% of the county broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland representing 12% of the borough's land cover. Maidstone's landscapes have influenced and shaped local culture. Maidstone borough is made up of characteristic areas defined by differences in rock type, topography, soils, slope and drainage, which in turn resulted in a great variety of habitats. Most of Maidstone falls in to the North Downs, Wealden Greensand and the Low Weald landscape natural areas. In both rural and urban areas wildlife makes an important contribution to the quality of life. Biodiversity conservation is central to maintain a healthy countryside and townscape.

#### Purpose of this strategy

The past ten years have seen significant changes relating to the environment particularly in terms of planning policy, legislation, and practical action and the need to balance social, economic and environmental aspirations. This Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan provides the opportunity to review current activities and issues, identify aims and set specific objectives and targets for action by a wide range of internal and external partners. It provides a much-needed overarching strategy for everyone involved in safeguarding and enhancing Maidstone's natural environment.

#### Direct action and delivery

The strategy and action plan for biodiversity allows the council to be strategic in determining where to apply its own resources in delivery. The development of the Maidstone's Biodiversity Project Plan is a leading and novel approach at local authority level, in that it clearly defines a programme of projects that cover a range of work including research, monitoring, protocol development and capital one-off site projects. These projects show how the Council will lead and be directly involved in protecting and enhancing the borough's biodiversity and raising awareness of the issues. Maidstone's Biodiversity Projects Plan clearly describes the localness of our approach as a governing body in the biodiversity framework highlighting our innovative approach to delivering better services to local people.

## Introduction and Overview

### Background to biodiversity

#### What is biodiversity?

- 1.1 The word biodiversity was first officially cited as the title of the proceedings<sup>1</sup> of the 1986 National Forum on Biological Diversity organized by the National Research Council (NRC) and is derived from biology and diversity.
- 1.2 The definition of the word biodiversity often relates to three forms of diversity: 1. Ecosystem diversity, 2. Species diversity and 3. Genetic diversity. In 1992 at the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro defined "biodiversity" as "the variability among living organisms from all sources, including, 'inter alia', terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part: this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems" and it is this definition that has been adopted by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

#### Why is biodiversity important?

- 1.3 Biodiversity is vital to life; in its simplest term biodiversity supports life itself and has an intrinsic value that should be cherished and preserved for its own sake.
- 1.4 Biodiversity includes a range of ecosystem services and resources, such as the production of oxygen, processing carbon, nutrient storage and recycling, pollution breakdown and absorption, climate stability, reducing flooding, pollination, pest control, food, clothing, medicinal resources and pharmaceutical drugs, wood products, and ornamental plants.
- 1.5 A stimulating and biological diverse environment has social positive impacts on mental and physical health, education and well-being. The natural environment can motivate, inspire and enrich our quality of life and has aesthetic and spiritual values.
- 1.6 There is an array of economic benefits that can be gained from a 'green environment' by setting an attractive setting for business, representing quality and prosperity. Recreation and tourism provide a range of investment opportunities within 'eco-tourism'.

#### The current status and need to conserve biodiversity

- 1.7 The recent ICUN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List of Threatened Species<sup>2</sup> indicates that 75% of plant species, one in three amphibians, one in four mammals and one in eight birds have so far been assessed are at risk of extinction.
- 1.8 The Red List includes a total of 16,000 species across the world currently at risk of extinction. This estimation is considered to be an underestimate of the true figure.
- 1.9 The main causes of man-made species extinction are habitat loss and hunting. For example, over 40% of mammals are currently at risk due to the loss and fragmentation of habitats<sup>2</sup>.

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1.10 A recent project highlighted the need for action to prevent habitat fragmentation in Kent due to estimated changes in the distributions of species as predicted by climate change<sup>3</sup>.

### Environmental sustainability

1.11 Sustainable development can be defined as “development, which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” and encompasses three elements; society, economy and the environment all of which need to be considered and balanced to achieve sustainable development.

1.12 Biodiversity is dependent upon and an indicator of a sustainable and healthy environment. Species lost can never be replaced and habitats can not simply be recreated. A clearer understanding of the way in which development may affect biodiversity, will better inform decisions relating to the capacity of the environment to accommodate our growing needs, without adverse effect.

1.13 Maidstone's Local Strategic Partnership has a clear vision of sustainable growth and prosperity for the Borough, as described in the draft of the Borough's sustainable communities strategy 'Maidstone Matters, Partnership in Action'<sup>4</sup> and 'The Draft Issues and Choices Report'<sup>5</sup>. Both acknowledge the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) and the enhancing and creating of habitats to meet targets.

### Shared priorities and a shared commitment

1.14 The new Local Area Agreement (Kent - Phase 2) has a strong emphasis on environmental excellence and includes an indicator specifically for biodiversity (NI197), the delivery of which will be driven by county-wide strategies and plans, and working in partnership. Specifically, work towards NI197 targets will be co-ordinated with the overall vision, aims, objectives and actions of the LBAP.

1.15 The LBAP paints a detailed picture of the Borough's biodiversity, the issues affecting it and proposes a series of conservation actions, to achieve specific outcomes and outputs within a certain time-frame. This underpins the duty placed on all local authorities towards biodiversity protection, as set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006<sup>6</sup>, and at a strategic level will ensure that biodiversity principals are;

- Adopted into approaches regarding the delivery of services and function and involve all Partner landholdings
- Promoted in urban design and regeneration/development plans and projects
- Incorporated into land management practices in rural regeneration/development schemes
- Encourage to help engender local pride and environmental stewardship

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### The biodiversity framework

#### The national response

2.1 In 1992 Biodiversity became a global agenda when 150 governments signed the Convention on Biological Diversity at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. It called for national strategies and action plans to be created and enforced which would conserve, protect and enhance biological diversity and was the first time a legal framework was applied to biodiversity.

2.2 In 1994 the 'UK Biodiversity Action Plan'<sup>7</sup> (UK BAP) was launched endorsing a multi-organisational approach to biodiversity conservation with an agreed set of targets and objectives. The overall goal of the UK BAP is to conserve and enhance biological diversity within the UK and to contribute to the conservation of global biodiversity through all appropriate mechanisms.

2.3 The UK BAP main objectives are;

1. To conserve and enhance:
  - The overall populations and natural ranges of native species and the quality and range of wildlife habitats
  - Internationally important habitats and species
  - Habitats and species (natural and managed) that are characteristic of local areas
  - Natural and semi-natural areas that have declined in recent years
2. To increase public awareness of, and involvement in, conserving biodiversity
3. To contribute to the conservation of biodiversity on a European and global scale

2.4 The following principals apply to the national UK action plan and are also applicable at a local level;

- The sustainable use of biological resources
- The cautious use of non-renewable resources
- The promotion of a multi-agency approach to biodiversity conservation, including individuals and communities and not just government lead. This is being championed through Local Biodiversity Action Plans
- Biological conservation should be based upon a sound knowledge base
- The conservation of biodiversity should be integrated within government programmes, policy and action
- Decisions should be guided by the precautionary principal, that is, where decisions are complex or insufficient knowledge or information exists to understand biodiversity impact, then precautionary conservation measures are necessary.

2.5 Following the publication of 'Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan'<sup>7</sup>, the UK Biodiversity Steering Group was established to advise the government on how to fulfil its commitment to delivering the Plan. In 1995 'Biodiversity: the UK Steering Group Report – meeting the Rio challenge'<sup>8</sup> was produced, which set out how to achieve this through the Local Biodiversity Action Plan process. The most recent list of priority species and habitats was produced in 2007 contains 1149 species and 65 habitats<sup>9</sup>. The Steering Group also set up guidelines, with the Local Authority Association and the Local Government Board that could be used at a local level. Maidstone Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) is one of 152 Local Biodiversity Action Plans in England.

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### The regional response

- 2.6 Maidstone Borough forms part of the County of Kent in the South-East region. The Kent Biodiversity Partnership support biodiversity conservation via the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan<sup>10</sup> (Kent BAP). The Kent Biodiversity Partnership forms part of the larger South-East England Biodiversity Forum (SEEBF).
- 2.7 The South-East Biodiversity Strategy<sup>11</sup> targets, the strategic biodiversity opportunity map and the Kent BAP<sup>10</sup> targets and actions are currently under revision, however through consultation the Maidstone LBAP will contribute towards this in a local context hierarchy linking into county, regional and national action plans.
- 2.8 In 2003 the Kent Biodiversity Partnership released an audit of the distribution of UK priority habitats in Kent<sup>12</sup>. This audit contributed to the Kent BAP and listed 28 priority habitats of importance to the County, of which 27 were of UK priority importance.
- 2.9 Eight Local performance Indicators have been developed to examine Biodiversity with respect to Local Authority actions by the National Audit Office and the Development and Improvement Agency. The Maidstone LBAP would improve on four of these local performance indicators.

### The legal framework

- 2.10 The United Kingdom has a series of national and international obligations in relation to the conservation of biodiversity. These are often imposed through statutory designations, structured around;
- The protection of specific sites or areas
  - The protection of habitats of nature conservation significance, or specific issues affecting them
  - The protection of important populations of species or groups of species, or specific issues affecting them
  - The conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and amenity, wildlife (fauna and flora), cultural heritage, and natural heritage (including geological and geomorphological features).
- 2.11 The Local Government Act 2000<sup>13</sup> places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to prepare Community Strategies, and recognises Local Biodiversity Action Plans as examples of 'good practice' within this framework.
- 2.12 Section 74 of The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000<sup>14</sup> places a duty on Local Authorities to conserve biodiversity in accordance with the Convention. Whilst Section 78 deals with duties in relation to Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSIs).
- 2.13 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006<sup>6</sup> places a duty on every public authority to, "in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity."
- 2.14 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended<sup>15</sup>, is the statutory basis for species and habitat protection within the UK. The Act sets out the protection afforded to wild plants (Schedule 8) and animals (Schedule 5) in the UK, and reviews the species to which it applies every

## Introduction and Overview

5 years. The protection can be connected to the actual species, or its habitat (resting or breeding). Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are also notified under the Act. These sites are nationally important and are intended to reflect the best examples of particular features of interest (biodiversity, geodiversity and/or physiographical) across the country. Maidstone Borough has 9 sites of Species Scientific Interest.

2.15 Adopted in 1992, the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora<sup>16</sup>, (commonly known as the Habitats Directive), requires each member state to make legislative and administration provision to enable them to maintain or restore natural habitats and wild species at favourable conservation status, through site and species protection objectives. Of particular interest in Maidstone Borough is the Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designation under the Habitats Directive. SACs are designated for their importance as natural habitat types and as the habitats supporting international species of importance listed within the Directive. Along with Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which are designated under the Birds Directive, these sites form a European network of designated sites called 'Natura 2000'. In Maidstone part of the North Downs is designated SAC and are therefore of international conservation status.

2.16 The Habitats Directive is applied in the UK via the Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations (England) 1994 (as amended), commonly shortened to the Habitats Regulations. These build upon the existing provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended<sup>15</sup>, Town and Country Planning Acts and others, to define and protect 'European sites'. The Regulations require development plans and decisions to contribute to biodiversity conservation through the inclusion and application of policy, conditions and compensatory measures to sustain the Natura 2000 network. Plans or projects, which are likely to have a significant affect on a European site, are required to undergo Appropriate Assessment, and be assessed according to their implications for the site's conservation objectives. Under the Regulations all Planning Authorities must have proper regard to the protection and enhancement of these sites in the formulation of development plans.

### The planning framework

2.17 Planning Policy Statement 9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation<sup>17</sup> further strengthens the importance of habitat; wildlife and geological features in planning policy and development control decisions and embodies the government's commitment to sustainable development. The key principals are summarised below;

- Development plan policies and planning decisions should be based upon up-to-date information about the environmental characteristics of their areas
- Plan policies should aim to maintain, and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests
- Plan policies should take a strategic approach to the conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geology.
- Plan policies should promote opportunities for the incorporation of beneficial biodiversity and geological features
- The aim of planning decisions should be to prevent harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests. Where granting planning permission would result insignificant harm to those interests, local planning authorities will need to be satisfied that the development cannot be reasonably located on any alternative sites that would result in less or no harm

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- 2.18 Under the current planning system, introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004<sup>18</sup>, the term “statutory development plan” has particular importance to biodiversity and requires under section 38 to consider sustainability. The system is plan-led which means most planning decisions have to take as their starting point the content of the Statutory Development Plan before any other considerations are taken into account. The Statutory Development Plan (more commonly referred to as the Development Plan) is not a single document consisting of documents at both regional and local levels; including Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks (LDF). In practice this means Regional Planning Policies are as relevant as the LDF that Maidstone produces itself. The draft South-East Plan<sup>19</sup> section D5 policies NRM4 and NRM5 relate directly to biodiversity and UK priority habitat conservation, enhancement and creation.
- 2.19 Maidstone's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) will replace the Local Development Plan (LDP) as the new system that determines the use of land in Maidstone. The LDF contains a number of components, including strategic policies, development control policies and site allocations.
- 2.20 The LDF and a suite of complementary Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are currently being developed. The LBAP and in particular spatial maps contained in this document highlighting UK priority habitats and areas that could increase linkage between these sites should be consulted in conjunction with the development of these plans to ensure that statutory biodiversity duties are fulfilled.
- 2.21 Within the Annual Monitoring Report that is produced by Planning Policy is required by legislation to report on core output indicator E2 which monitors change in area of biodiversity, in addition to providing contextual supporting data when available on biodiversity, for example change in area of UK priority habitats.

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### Baseline information on habitats and species in Maidstone

- 3.1 Up-to-date habitat information is most readily available for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). Designated sites of such standing are subject to management plans, studies and assessments for the species or habitats of conservation concern and annual condition monitoring and reporting is also an important means to assess their conservation status. In addition to routine survey, such sites are more likely to attract local naturalists, and conservation volunteers who provide regular biological records.
- 3.2 Both the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Forestry Commission (FC) award Environmental Stewardships for the management, enhancement and creation of habitats which can be used to understand the distribution of conservation efforts in the Borough.
- 3.3 Data on ancient woodland and lowland deciduous woodland distribution is available from Natural England woodland inventory.
- 3.4 Biological records have been centrally stored in Kent since 2003 by the Kent and Medway Biodiversity Records Centre (KMBRC) and the biological records held date back to 1854.
- 3.5 The Kent Habitat Survey (2003)<sup>12</sup> used Aerial Photographic Interpretation Methods and some Selected ground surveying of sites to map the ground cover of Kent using the Integrated Habitat Classification system.
- 3.6 The Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT) holds information on Local Wildlife Sites designations. The local site selection criteria are administered by KWT on behalf of the Kent Biodiversity Partnership following guidance from DEFRA. Management plans for these sites, studies and assessments for the species or habitats of conservation concern, and routine condition monitoring and reporting are all performed by KWT on behalf of the partnership.
- 3.7 A recent Orchard Project ran by Mid-Kent Downs collected data on priority orchards within the Maidstone Borough to feed into the wider National Project on Orchards ran by People's Trust for Endangered Species.
- 3.8 Several of Maidstone's owned natural and semi-natural sites have phase 1 survey data collected as part of the Borough's Green Space Strategy<sup>20</sup>.
- 3.9 There are a number of natural history/wildlife organisations within the county who record data on specific species/species groups and send these data to KMBRC.
- 3.10 As with all data of this type limitations exist relating to the availability, accuracy and completeness of the information presented, which is often specialist and heavily reliant upon the survey interests and efforts of the voluntary sector. Variation in data exists between different habitats and species. Data can be 'gappy' in coverage, age, detail, and our own understanding, and therefore open to misinterpretation. The information collated does however represent a comprehensive gathering of reliable biodiversity data and an important baseline upon which further efforts in biodiversity conservation should be based. This data enables us to provide the following general overview of the Borough's Biodiversity.

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### Biodiversity of Maidstone borough – An overview

#### Natural areas

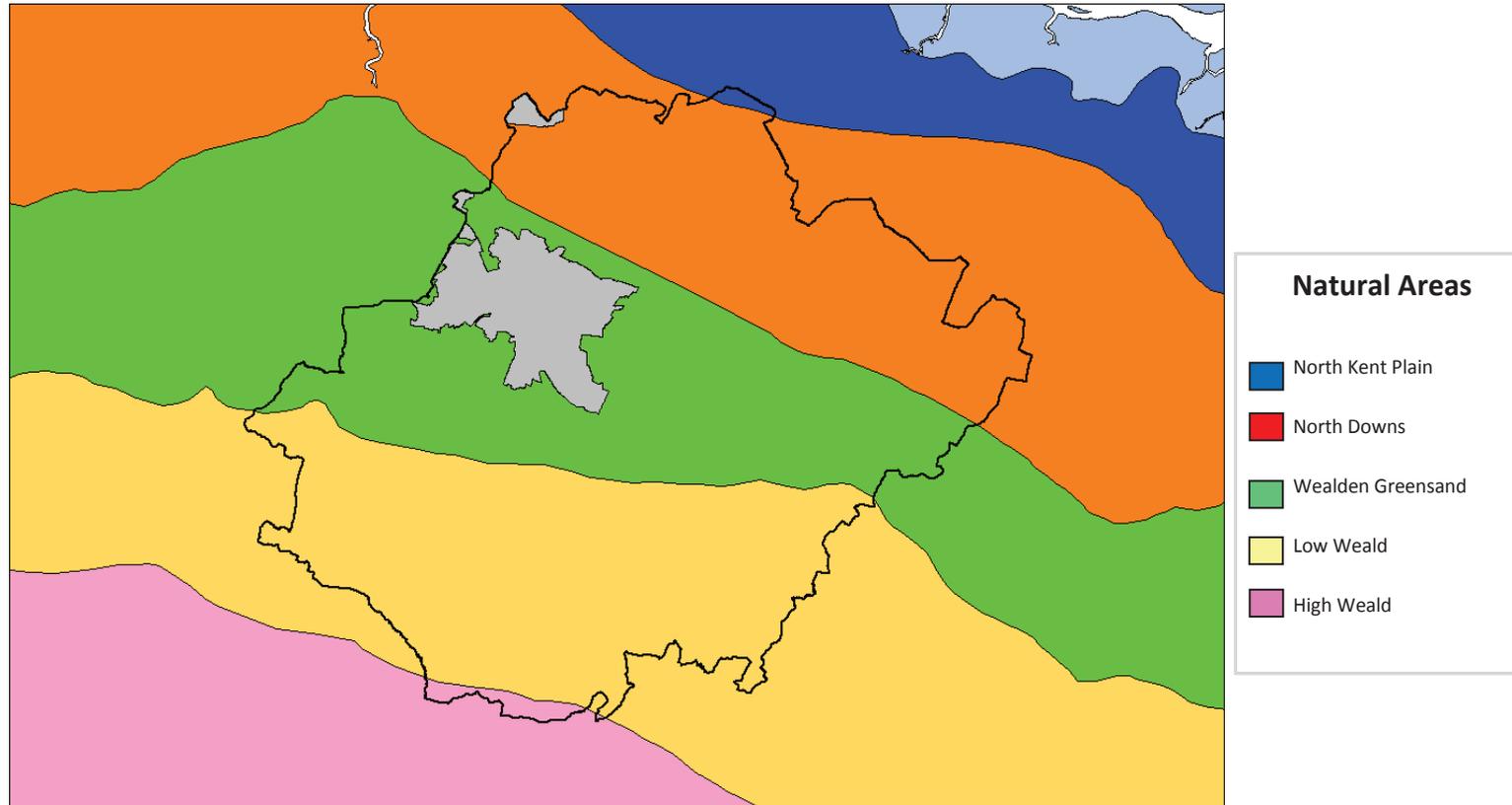
4.1 In response to 'Biodiversity challenge' initiative ran by Government after the Convention on Biodiversity meeting in 1992, English Nature (succeeded by Natural England in 2006) developed the Natural Areas concept. A Natural Area has been defined as a 'biogeographic zones which reflect the geological foundation, the natural systems and processes and the wildlife in different parts of England, and provide a framework for setting objectives for nature conservation' in a report on Biodiversity by the UK Biodiversity Steering Group in 1995<sup>21</sup>. These features give a Natural Area a "sense of place" and a distinctive natural character with associated targets and issues. The concept is based on the premise that, as wildlife rarely pays regard to administrative boundaries, an alternative sub-division of the countryside is necessary for identifying conservation priorities and co-ordinating action. Natural Areas offer an effective framework for translating national level targets into Local Biodiversity Action Plans and are also recognised in National Planning Policy Statements.

The following 5 Natural Areas occur in Maidstone Borough and can be seen in Figure 1:

- North Kent Plain
- North Downs
- Wealden Greensand
- Low Weald
- High Weald

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Figure 1 Natural Areas in Maidstone Borough



[Data Source: Natural England Natural Areas GIS Data (2008)]

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- 4.2 Maidstone borough is made up of characteristic areas defined by differences in rock type, topography, soils, slope and drainage, which in turn have resulted in a great variety of habitats. Most of Maidstone falls in to the North Downs, Wealden Greensand and the Low Weald.
- 4.3 The North Downs is a distinctive chalk downland with a continuous and steep scarp giving extensive views across Maidstone and the rest of Kent. Chalk soils support areas of high-quality unimproved chalk grassland. Clay-with-flints soils on the upper parts of the dip-slope supports oak/ash woodland and scrub with beech/ash/maple is common on the valley sides. Land use includes a few pockets of traditional downland grazing however land is largely dominated by arable fields.
- 4.4 The Wealden Greensand area within Maidstone is characterised by old orchards and woodland. The fruit belt is dissected by two rivers, the Loose and Len. The landscape is generally a varied and pleasant mix of winding lanes and mixed farmlands with a high percentage of fruit, scattered small woodlands and grasslands interspersed with larger arable fields. Orchards and hops used to be more frequent but now the landholdings are fragmented and much of the land use converted to arable.
- 4.5 The Low Weald generally includes an abundance of ponds and small stream valleys often with wet woodlands of alder and willow and scattered orchards. Traditionally, however, orchards and hops were widespread as the soils are well drained. These crops were most prosperous in the late 19th century, the 20th century seeing a conversion of orchards and hop gardens to horticultural and arable crops.

### Local biodiversity and climate change

- 4.4 The geographic position of Maidstone in the British Isles also introduces an interesting climatic influence. Several species from Europe are able to extend their ranges in warm summers. The milder climate of the South means that there are plenty of species that are only found in the South of England.
- 4.5 Changing climatic conditions will affect the ability of residential wildlife to survive locally and is also likely to result in species shifting their geographical distribution from parts of Europe, like the Mediterranean into the South-East. Both of these scenarios mean that planning co-ordinated conservation effort across the South-East and connected regions will play an important factor in the success to conserve biodiversity from both a local and global perspective.
- 4.6 BRANCH a project to examine the effects of climate change on biodiversity in Kent reported<sup>3</sup> that there is an urgent need to ensure greater connectivity of habitats across Kent to ensure that species shifting geographical distributions due to climate change affects are possible.

### Designated nature conservation sites

- 4.7 A great number of sites have been recognised throughout the borough for their biodiversity value, and a series of designations (statutory and non-statutory) have been awarded to acknowledge their importance and offer varying degrees of protection through a variety of different controls.
- 4.8 Maidstone Borough holds a variety of Statutory Nature Conservation sites. At the highest level, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are designated to provide a network of protected

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sites, holding important wildlife and geological features that are threatened or rare in a European context. Within Maidstone Borough one area of the North Downs is designated SAC, due to its existing and regenerating chalk grassland, and mature beech and yew woodland.

4.9 Similarly, at a national level, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) represent Britain's finest sites for fauna, flora, geology and physiographical features. Some of our nationally important SSSI sites are also designated SPAs or SACs. SACs, SPAs and SSSIs are all protected by legislation, thus ensuring the continuity of these irreplaceable features of our heritage. These sites are also protected by policies within the Local Development Framework.

4.10 In Maidstone there are 9 SSSIs (as listed below); each supporting what is considered to be one of the finest examples of their respective habitats and geological features;

Purple Hill	~	Chalk grassland, scrub and woodland
Hollingbourne Downs	~	Chalk grassland, beech, oak, ash woodland
Wouldham to Detling Escarpment	~	Chalk grassland, scrub and woodland
Oaken Wood	~	A geological SSSI
River Beult	~	Clay River
Lenham Quarry	~	A geological SSSI
Marden Meadows	~	Unimproved neutral grasslands
Allington Quarry	~	A geological SSSI
Spot Lane Quarry	~	A geological SSSI

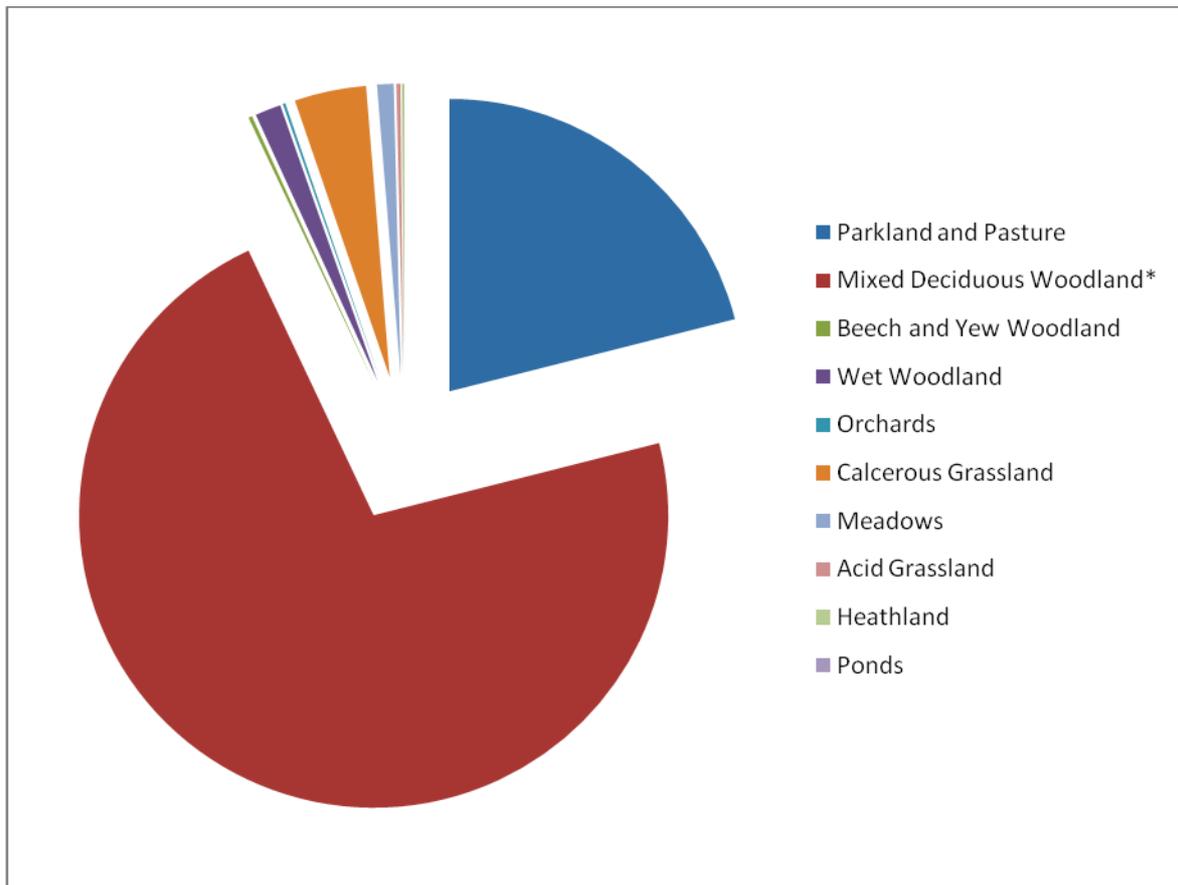
4.11 Maidstone also holds 4 Local Nature Reserves (LNR), 4 Wildlife Trust Reserves (WTR) and two community nature areas (CNA) which are publicly accessible reserves of local/regional wildlife value where enjoyment by the public is actively promoted. These reserves are owned and maintained either by Maidstone Borough Council, Kent Wildlife Trust or Community Groups and are listed below;

Boxley Warren (LNR)  
 Vinters Valley (LNR)  
 River Len (LNR)  
 Sandling Park (LNR)  
 Marden Meadows (WTR)  
 Kiln Wood (WTR)  
 Quarry Wood (WTR)  
 Westfield Wood (WTR)  
 Fant (CNA)  
 Bell Lane (CNA)

4.12 Non-Statutory Nature Conservation Sites, known in Maidstone as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) (figure 3), are regionally and locally important nature conservation sites. Maidstone borough has approximately 59 sites that occur within its boundary, which cover approximately 2629 hectares (ha). The majority of habitat found in LWS within the borough is Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland (Figure 2).

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Figure 2 Priority habitats (ha) found in LWS within the Maidstone borough



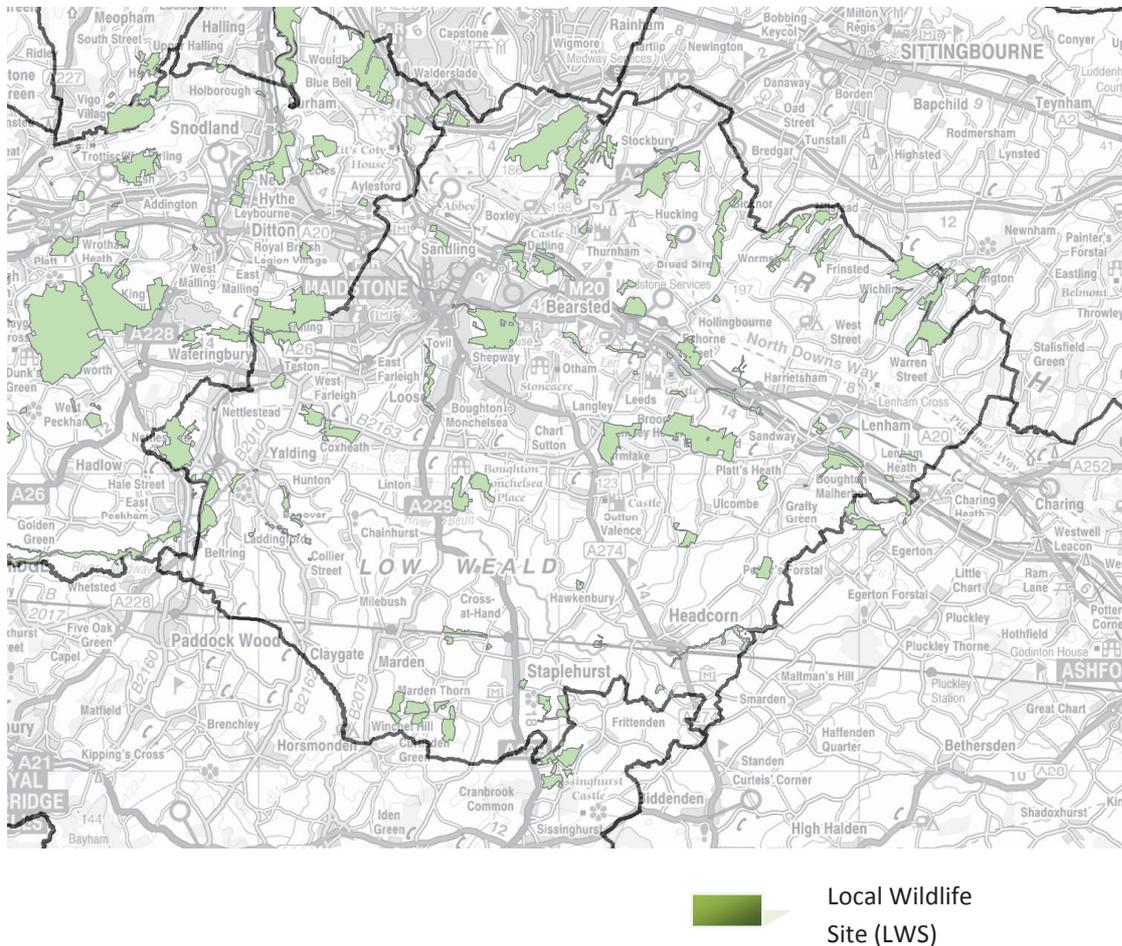
\*Mixed deciduous woodland does not include woodland that falls into other woodland categories already represented within the pie chart.

*[Data Sources: Natural England Deciduous Woodland Inventory (2008), Kent Habitat Survey (2003), Mid-Kent Orchard project (2008), Kent and Medway Records Centre Pond data (2008), Kent County Council Parkland Inventory (2008) and Kent Wildlife Trust Local Wildlife Sites (2008) Under recording of certain habitats including, heathland, lowland acid, calcareous grassland and wet woodland is possible as a result of reliance on aerial photographs for historic survey work. The Atlas of the Kent Flora (E.G. Philp Kent Field Club) also provides a useful guide to vegetation and therefore habitat types. This issue of under-recording should be addressed in the on-going Kent Habitat Survey – commencing 2010 – which will use aerial photography allied to a substantial amount of ground truthing].*

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4.13 Maidstone's 59 LWS represent a substantial nature conservation resource. Currently 31 (59%) of these LWS are under or have been under management within the last five years. The Map in figure 3 shows the distribution of LWS in Maidstone Borough.

**Figure 3 Local Wildlife Sites in the Maidstone Borough**



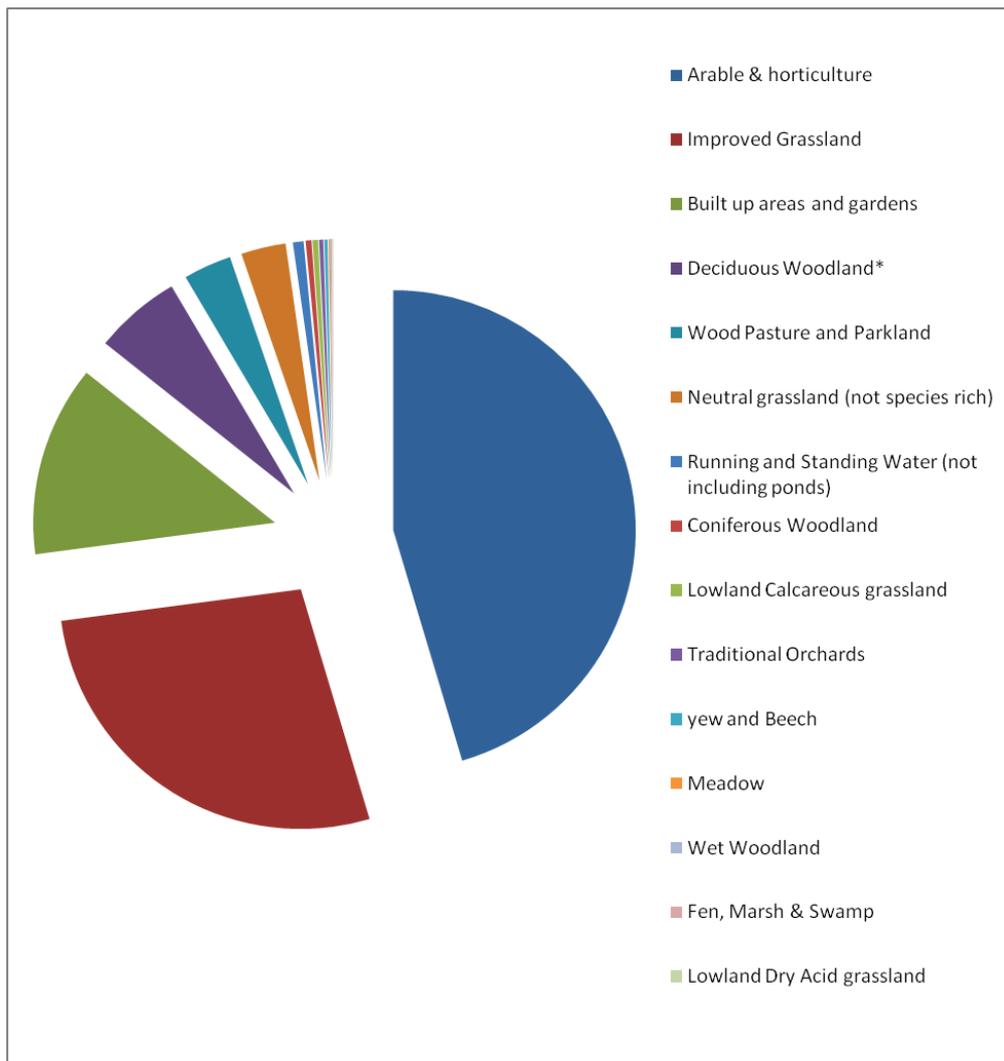
[Data Source: Kent Wildlife Trust. Local Wildlife Sites (2010)]

### An overview of habitats in Maidstone

4.14 The majority of the borough is covered by arable and horticulture land practices, however Maidstone holds a large amount of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, a UK priority habitat. A large amount of calcareous grassland, representing 9% of the county resource is found in the borough. A summary of land cover found within Maidstone can be seen in Figure 4.

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**Figure 4 Habitats (Ha) occurring in the Maidstone borough**



\*Mixed deciduous woodland does not include woodland that falls into other woodland categories already represented within the pie chart.

[Data Sources: Natural England Deciduous Woodland Inventory (2008), Kent Habitat Survey (2003), Mid-Kent Orchard project (2008), Kent and Medway Records Centre Pond data (2008) and Kent County Council Parkland Inventory (2008)]

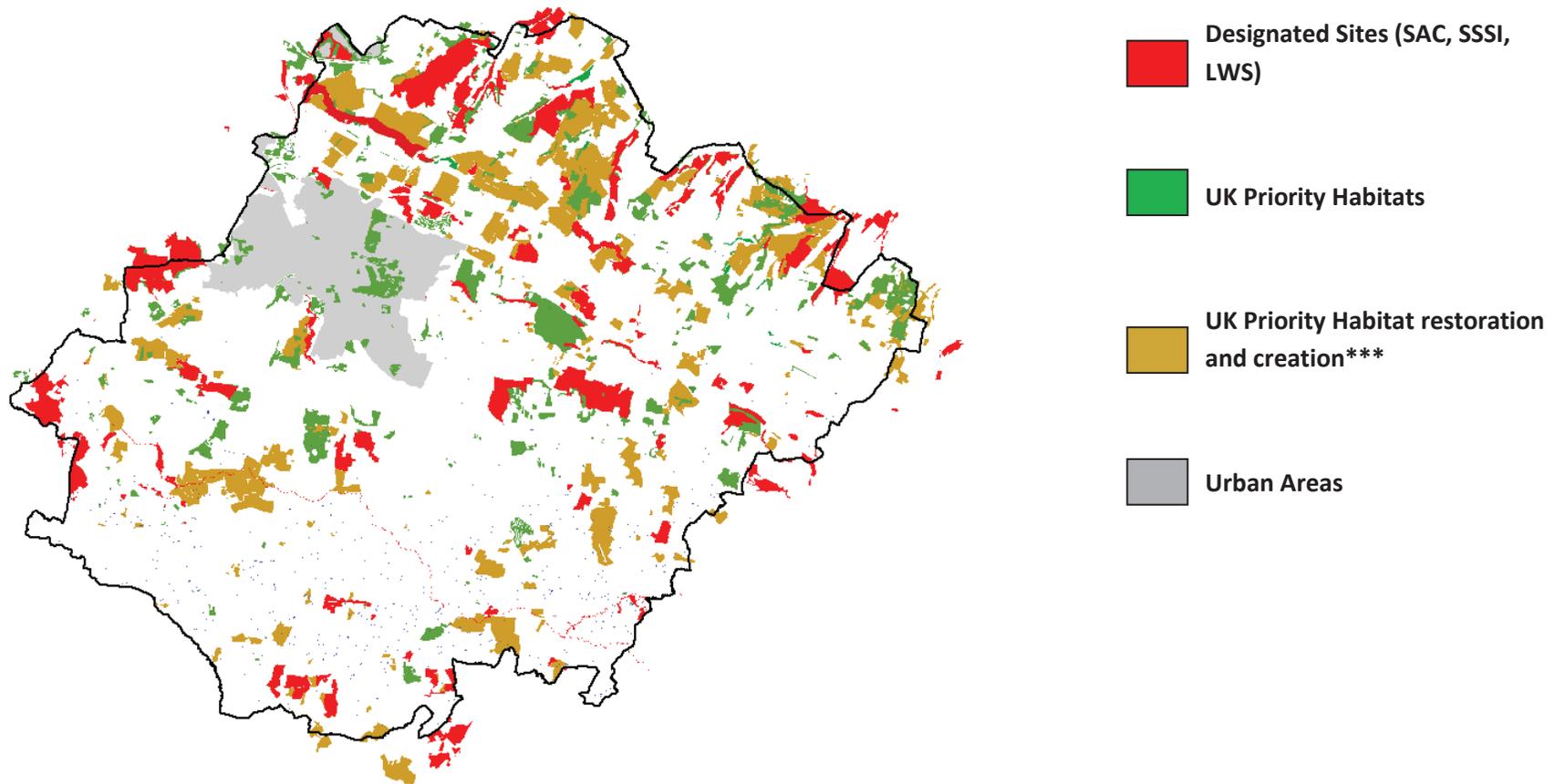
## Introduction and Overview

### Current biodiversity action in Maidstone

- 4.15 Through environmental stewardship schemes run by Natural England (NE) and the Forestry Commission (FC) a significant area of Maidstone is currently managed to promote biodiversity, a summary of this alongside designated sites and priority habitats can be seen in Figure 5.

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Figure 5 Distribution of current biodiversity action, site designations and priority habitats in Maidstone



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[Data Sources: Natural England Deciduous Woodland Inventory (2008), Kent Habitat Survey (2003), Mid-Kent Orchard project (2008), Kent and Medway Records Centre Pond data (2008), KCC Parkland Inventory Data (2008) Kent Wildlife Trust Local Wildlife Sites (2008), Forestry Commission: English Woodland Grant Scheme (2008), Woodland Grant Scheme (2008), and Natural England: Countryside Stewardship Agreement (2008), Environmental Stewardship Scheme (2008)]

\*\*\*Estimated distributions of creation and restoration of UK priority grassland and woodland habitats active in the last 5 years using Natural England (Countryside Stewardship Agreement, Environmental Stewardship Awards) and Forestry Commission (Woodland Grant Scheme and English Woodland Grant Scheme) data.

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### Common issues effecting local biodiversity

#### Agricultural intensification

5.1 Land is under increasing pressure for use in agriculture. Changes in agricultural practices have a major influence on both habitats and species. There has been a trend towards predominantly arable agriculture, loss of hedgerows, habitat fragmentation, land drainage, improvement of grassland and widespread use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers. All of which decrease biodiversity on farmland.

#### Development pressure

5.2 There is a continuing pressure for expansion of the urban areas for economic and social needs. Within towns there is pressure to build on open areas, such as gardens, school fields, allotments, open spaces and on urban fringes, leading to a loss of urban wildlife habitats and fragmentation. Infilling within and between rural settlements is also a threat to habitats such as unimproved pastures, wetlands and scrub. Conversion of old farm buildings to residential uses can result in the loss of roosting habitats for both bats and for birds such as the barn owl.

#### Air quality

5.3 Increasing development and urbanisation inevitably lead to increasing amounts of fossil fuel consumption and hence greater emissions into the air. These arise from the direct use of fuel in homes and factories, during the production of materials used in constructing and furnishing our homes, and in the manufacture and transport of the products which we use and consume every day. The emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels are thought to be responsible for changes in the world's climate. Changes in average temperatures, rainfall and sunshine will alter the biodiversity of Maidstone and the UK as a whole.

#### Groundwater and surface water abstraction and pollution: Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)

5.4 In recent years the availability and quality of water has been a major issue. Increased abstraction from aquifers causes reduced water levels in many wetlands. Increased urban development, requiring additional water supplies, puts mounting pressure on the water resource. Agriculture, industry and residential areas all produce pollutants which can affect the quality of wetlands, open water bodies and flowing waters. Nutrient enrichment, or eutrophication, stimulates the growth of aquatic algae to the detriment of other wetland and aquatic plants. Bacterial growth also reduces the amount of oxygen available to fish and other aquatic animals.

5.5 The European Water Framework Directive (WFD) came into force in December 2000 and became part of UK law in December 2003. The Environment Agency are the competent authority for carrying out the Directive and gives an opportunity to plan and deliver a better water environment, focusing on ecology. The Directive will help to protect and enhance the quality of:

- surface freshwater (including lakes, streams and rivers)
- groundwaters
- groundwater dependant ecosystems

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- estuaries
- coastal waters out to one mile from low-water.

5.6 The Thames River Basin which includes the River Medway and its tributaries was the second river basin in England to be consulted on under the WFD and the Thames River Basin Management Plan is due to be published in 2009. The latest WFD categories for Maidstone's rivers are as published by the Environment Agency at <http://wfdconsultation.environment-agency.gov.uk/wfdcms/en/thames/Intro.aspx>. It is worth noting that the River Medway is listed as (Moderate), River Beult (Poor) and the River Len (Bad). All other tributaries can be reviewed at this website.

5.7 Sustainable drainage is a concept that includes long term environmental and social factors in decisions about drainage. It takes account of the quantity and quality of runoff, and the amenity and environmental value of surface water in the urban environment. Many existing urban drainage systems can cause problems of flooding, pollution or damage to the environment and are not proving to be sustainable. In order to meet the WFD new developments need to include SUDS as part of their water management and this is highlighted within Planning Policy Guidance 25: Development and Flood Risk<sup>23</sup> (2001).

### Transport

5.8 Transport is an increasingly important issue in today's society. Commuting by car from rural settlements to work in towns and cities is increasing, and the amount of freight carried by road has never been higher. This leads to increasing pressure to build new roads and improve existing ones. Whilst vehicles directly contribute to air, noise, and water pollution; road improvements and new roads have direct effects on habitats by causing disturbance to, or loss of, roadside verges, hedgerows, trees, ditches and farmland. Large numbers of street trees have been lost across Maidstone Borough to road widening, cable damage, wind-blow and disease.

### Woodland management

5.9 The decline of markets for woodland products has led to the abandonment of traditional woodland management such as coppicing and pollarding. Replanting with non-native tree species, particularly conifers, has a detrimental effect on the ground flora by preventing sunlight reaching the woodland floor. Similarly a cessation of traditional rotational coppicing management allows dense undergrowth to shade out herbaceous species including spring flowers. Newly developed Woodland Management Plans will draw upon these traditional silvicultural techniques; areas of coppice with standards have already been started in several woods. Longer term management will see Ancient Woodlands restored to their native composition through the removal of the non-native components, and by actively encouraging natural regeneration. This will benefit the ground flora and will help stimulate the migration of existing flora throughout the woods.

### Climate change

5.10 The ability of those animal and plant species existing at the limit of their climatic range, to prevail locally, will be a key concern. The general range and distribution of species may change, in

## Introduction and Overview

response to the change in climatic conditions and to prevent localised extinctions connectivity of habitats is essential. For example; a changing climate may alter the nature of the woodland that is able to survive. Warmer summer conditions may mean that some tree species can set more seed whilst others could fail to propagate and eventually die out. Spring and winter droughts may lead to drought stress in other species.

### Light pollution

5.11 Light pollution is caused by artificial light such as street lighting, advertising and display lighting, floodlights for sporting events and building illumination. Light pollution can impact on biodiversity in a variety of ways including; causing migratory birds to collide with lighted buildings, cause a false dawn which disrupts bird's behaviour, cause moth deaths, and disrupt tree and plant biological mechanisms that are controlled by day length.

### Noise pollution

5.12 Noise pollution comes from a range of sources including road, rail and air traffic, intensive agriculture, construction work and factory machinery. Noise can cause stress to animals, interfere with delicate predator-prey interactions, and cause detrimental effects on mating behaviour of animals.

### Invasive species

5.13 Invasive species can cause problems for biodiversity as they are often faster growing/populating species in comparison to endemic flora and fauna; this often means that they displace endemic flora and fauna causing a loss of biodiversity.

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### Developing Maidstone borough Biodiversity Action Plan

#### Primary conservation aims

6.1 In accordance with the UK BAP, the Partnership's primary aims for biodiversity conservation are:

- Maintain and enhance the populations and natural ranges of species and the quality and extent of wildlife habitats and ecosystems.
- Conserve internationally, nationally and regionally important species, habitats and ecosystems and to enhance their conservation status where possible.
- Conserve species, habitats, and natural and managed ecosystems that are locally characteristic and to enhance their conservation status where possible.
- Maintain the genetic variation within species and hence habitats and ecosystems.
- Contribute to the conservation of biodiversity on a local, regional, national, European and global scale.
- Ensure that current policies and practices which affect the environment do not damage global biodiversity, but instead contribute towards conserving and enhancing it.
- Increase public awareness of, and involvement in, conserving biodiversity

#### Key conservation objectives

6.2 To achieve these aims the Partnership has developed Maidstone's Local Biodiversity Action Plan to deliver the following broad objectives;

- To develop and consolidate a sound biological knowledge base.
- To consistently translate national biodiversity targets into effective action at the local level.
- To examine local biodiversity status and issues, and identify conservation targets for locally important habitats.
- To develop sustainable local partnerships to help deliver programmes for biodiversity conservation, education and environmental stewardship.
- To increase public awareness of, and participation in, conserving biodiversity locally.
- To ensure that opportunities for biodiversity conservation and enhancement are identified and fully considered via all statutory and local processes and initiatives.
- To provide a basis for measuring and monitoring progress in biodiversity conservation at a local level, and contributing to national efforts.

#### The partnership approach

6.3 The objectives underpinning the LBAP have been identified and incorporated into the Local Biodiversity Action Planning process, based upon the following approach.

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6.4 Maidstone LBAP's conservation objectives are based upon a series of protection, restoration and, re-creation and expansion, and public stewardship measures. The fundamental means of conserving habitats and species is through the protection of existing biodiversity, often on a site basis, and the implementation of appropriate management to maintain the feature of interest in a favourable condition. Site, species and habitat protection is heavily reliant upon a supporting legislation and policy base, and agreed protocols and management practices. Restoration and enhancement measures are often applied to degraded habitats, to re-address their condition and wildlife value, whilst re-creation and expansion, where possible, seeks to expand the habitat resource. Suitable site conditions and other necessary variables mean that habitat re-creation and expansion opportunities can be few and far between, therefore every prospect should be thoroughly explored. Each measure offers opportunities for environmental education and public participation.

### Criteria of habitat selection

6.5 Habitats are defined by the assemblage of plants and animals that are found together, along with the geology and soils they occur on, and the climate of the area. Maidstone LBAP first developed a **long LBAP list** based on the following criteria;

#### Long List LBAP

- Any UK BAP priority habitat that occurs in Maidstone Borough
- Any semi-natural habitat that occurs in Maidstone Borough
- Any habitat that is characteristic or locally distinctive of Maidstone Borough

The long LBAP list was then shortened using the following criteria;

For a habitat to be selected from **Long List** and onto the **Priority List** at least one criteria from 1 and either 2, 3, 4 or 5 must be met or the habitat was specifically recommended by a partner organisation for conservation.

#### Priority List Criteria:

1. The habitat is a UK-BAP priority habitat that occurs in Maidstone Borough  
And is also one of:
  - a) Locally present and threatened
  - b) Potential for habitat to be restored or extended
  - c) The habitat is locally and regionally important
2. Specific actions for Maidstone have been identified within the Kent BAP/South-East England Biodiversity Action Plan and Opportunity Mapping for this habitat
3. Easy to identify and engage public interest for non-specialist volunteering/monitoring
4. Easy to obtain reliable monitoring data from organisations
5. Able to work in partnership with an Organisation with a specific focus on the habitat

In addition, Urban Green Space was considered a priority habitat for Biodiversity Action within Maidstone Borough despite not meeting the above criteria as it is not a UK priority habitat. Urban Green Space connects people with wildlife which is a fundamental objective of the UKBAP.

6.6 The following 13 habitats have been considered a priority within the Borough;

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### Grassland:

1. Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
2. Lowland Calcareous Grassland
3. Lowland Meadow

### Woodland:

4. Lowland Pasture and Parkland
5. Wet Woodland
6. Lowland Beech and Yew Woodland
7. Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

### Water Habitats:

8. Ponds
9. Rivers
10. Urban Green Space
11. Lowland Heath
12. Traditional Orchards

All are UK priority habitats except Urban Green Space.

## The action plans

6.7 Each Habitat Action Plan(HAP) within the LBAP follows a similar format, which includes; a description of the habitat, followed by details of national status, local status, current factors causing loss or decline, current local action, funding resources, national and local plans and targets, and Maidstone's objectives and proposed actions. The Habitat Action Plans also provide distribution maps, which broadly indicate habitat coverage within the Borough (when data is available).

6.8 Conservation status maps have been created specifically to aid and target further conservation efforts in the Borough in a strategic and coordinated manner, ensuring that current habitat links are maintained and created.

6.9 A conservation status map showing where woodland and grassland UK priority habitats are being maintained/enhanced/restored/created, areas that were identified as UK priority habitats in the 2003 Kent Habitat Survey, and designated sites can be seen in figure 3. Conservation status maps have also been developed individually for woodland and grassland habitats and are within the habitat statement documents.

6.10 The conservation status map developed in this LBAP shows that areas of the borough current biodiversity action areas tend to be areas highlighted as biodiversity opportunity areas (BOA) within the SEEBF biodiversity opportunity map and the two maps show high spatial correlation. This indicates that a large amount biodiversity action in the borough is currently achieving connectivity of key UK priority habitats in a strategic and co-ordinated manner.

6.11 To monitor biodiversity action the conservation status map developed and contained within this document will be updated annually to compare spatial changes over time. This map will inform Development Control decisions via developing a Planning Biodiversity toolkit and Protocol and allow partnership organisations to target schemes in strategic areas to ensure connectivity of habitats across the borough.

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6.12 Partner organisations involved in the development and implementation of the LBAP are listed below:

British Trust of Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)	Kent County Council (KCC)
Environment Agency (EA)	Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre (KMBRC)
Forestry Commission (FC)	Medway Valley Countryside Partnership (MVCP)
National Farmers Union (NFU)	Mid-Kent Downs Project (MKDP)
Natural England (NE)	
Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT)	

### Setting Maidstone LBAP targets

6.13 The most common methodology used to set targets for the Maidstone Borough habitats was calculated on the basis of the UK BAP habitat targets and are proportional contributions based on the quantity of the habitat found in Maidstone. Although, in some cases a target has been set due to specific targets for Maidstone borough being outlined within the Kent BAP.

6.14 The UK BAP has the following three main objectives for each habitat:

1. Maintain current distribution and extent.
2. Achieve favourable condition or recovering favourable condition.
3. Restore priority habitat.
4. Create priority habitat by expansion of current distribution.

However, there are also additional objectives for some habitats which specify connectivity conditions for creation/re-establish/expand objectives; these have been included when required within objective for these habitats within the Habitat Action Plans.

6.15 UK BAP targets have been set until 2030 for most habitats and are split into the following phases 2005-2010, 2010-2015, 2015-2020 and 2020-2030 and so the targets for 2026 within the Maidstone LBAP proportionally correspond to the UK BAP targets for 2030.

6.16 The Maidstone LBAP targets are set until 2026 to coordinate with the Borough's LDF, Core Strategy, and the South-East Plan<sup>19</sup> however, the document will be reviewed across three time periods; 2009-2014 (Phase 1), 2014-2019 (Phase 2) and 2019-2026 (Phase 3).

6.17 As some habitats in the Maidstone LBAP are new UK BAP habitats (Rivers, Ponds, Traditional Orchards) national targets have not yet been set.

6.18 Data on Rivers and Ponds is currently limited and so numerical targets for some of these habitats have not be made, other than to maintain the area of these habitats at current levels if current levels are known.

## Introduction and Overview

- 6.19 Targets for Traditional Orchards have been based on targets set for the Maidstone area in the revise Kent BAP Traditional Orchard habitat action plan.
- 6.20 The draft UK habitat action plan for this Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland habitat<sup>22</sup> has been consulted when setting targets for this and related woodland habitats and realistic targets have been calculated for Maidstone.
- 6.21 Lowland Wood Pasture and Parkland is set on a site basis, however no-where within the UK action plan for this habitat is the term site defined. As there is no definition of what can be considered a site for this habitat it has been difficult to set targets. Targets have therefore been determined on a site basis to reflect Kent BAP targets and also ensuring they are realistically achievable.
- 6.22 The baseline data used to calculate targets were collected in the Kent Habitat Survey 2003, Ancient Woodland Inventory (2008), Kent County Council Parkland Inventory (2008) and Orchards for Everyone Project (2008).
- 6.23 Maidstone's LBAP habitat targets as a percentage of how much of that habitat is found in Maidstone can be seen in Table 1.
- 6.24 Maidstone's LBAP habitat targets in hectares can be seen in Table 2.

## Introduction and Overview

**Table 1 Setting Maidstone's LBAP targets as a percentage of the habitat area in the borough**

UK Priority Habitat	Targets based on	Ha	2014				2019				2026			
			maintain	achieve	restore	expand	maintain	achieve	restore	expand	maintain	achieve	restore	expand
Calcareous Grassland	UK	143	100%	83%	2%	20%	100%	84%	2%	20%	100%	86%	3%	21%
Lowland Dry Acid Grassland	Kent	9	100%	56%	12%	50%	100%	64%	12%	60%	100%	65%	12%	60%
Lowland Meadows	UK	45	100%	77%	21%	4%	100%	80%	24%	4%	100%	82%	26%	4%
Lowland Beech and Yew	UK	84	100%	53%		13%	100%	57%		15%	100%	58%		16%
Wet Woodland	UK	39	100%	53%		13%	100%	57%		15%	100%	58%		16%
Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland *	UK	2259	100%	53%		13%	100%	57%		15%	100%	58%		16%
Lowland Heathland	UK	4	100%				100%				100%			
Traditional Orchards	Kent	107	100%			14%	100%	100%		16%	100%	100%		18%
Lowland Wood Pasture and Parkland	UK	1250	100%				100%				100%			
Lowland Wood Pasture and Parkland (sites)	Kent				1 site	1 site			2 sites	2 sites				

\*Mixed deciduous woodland does not include woodland that fits into other woodland categories

[The baseline data used to calculate targets was collected in the Kent Habitat Survey 2003, Ancient Woodland Inventory, Kent County Council Parkland Inventory (2008) and Orchards for Everyone Project]

LBAP targets are based on the quantity of the habitat in Maidstone borough reflecting UK targets proportionally or, Kent specific targets for the Maidstone borough.

**Table 2 Maidstone's LBAP habitat targets (hectares)**

UK Priority Habitat	Ha	2014				2019				2026			
		maintain	achieve	restore	expand	maintain	achieve	restore	expand	maintain	achieve	restore	expand
Calcareous Grassland	143	143	119	3	29	143	120	3	29	143	123	4	30
Lowland Dry Acid Grassland	9	9	5	1	5	9	6	1	5	9	6	1	5
Lowland Meadow	45	45	35	9	2	45	36	11	2	45	37	12	2
Lowland Beech and Yew	84	84	45		11	84	48		13	84	49		13
Wet Woodland	39	39	21		5	39	22		6	39	23		6
Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland *	2259	2259	1207		287	2259	1279		347	2259	1317		352
Lowland Heathland	4	4				4				4			
Traditional Orchards	107	107			15	107	107		17	107	107		19
Lowland Wood Pasture and Parkland	1250	1250				1250				1250			
Lowland Wood Pasture and Parkland (sites)				1	1			2	2				

\*Mixed deciduous woodland does not include woodland that fits into other woodland categories

Targets are cumulative across the time periods i.e. the totals for restore in 2019 include habitat that was restored in 2014.

## Introduction and Overview

### Assessing progress on Maidstone LBAP targets

- 6.24 Assessing progress towards Maidstone LBAP targets is possible using data on Environmental Stewardship such as the agri-environmental and forestry schemes. These schemes are the main method for implementing and delivering Biodiversity Action Plan Targets within the UK. However, to fully examine whether targets have been met in the borough would require repeated habitat surveys at regular time periods and a comparison of the these data sets over time with respect to habitat change and land cover analysis.
- 6.25 An INTEREG bid is currently in progress via the Kent Biodiversity Partnership to repeat the Kent habitat survey of 2003 and analyse habitat change and land cover analysis at a county and district level. Data on Environmental Stewardship schemes is patchy and does not cover all habitats within the UK BAP framework.
- 6.26 Agri-environmental stewardship schemes include the Countryside Stewardship Agreement (CSA) which was replaced in 2004 by the Environmental Stewardship Scheme (ESS). These schemes give funds to meet the UK BAP objectives for Species-Rich Grasslands (Lowland Calcareous Grassland, Lowland Meadows and Lowland Dry Acid Grassland), Lowland Heathland, Traditional Orchards and Ponds. The CSA gives funds to meet these objectives for 10 years and the ESS for 5 years.
- 6.27 The Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) replaced by the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) in 2003 gives funds to meet the UK BAP objectives for all woodland habitats within the UK BAP framework. Both forestry schemes give funding for 5 years.
- 6.28 By examining stewardships that have been active in the last 5 years on land that has been identified as a UK BAP priority habitat it is possible to assess the amount of this habitat which is in or will reach a favourable condition in the next 5 years.
- 6.29 By examining stewardships that have been active in the last 5 years and do not occur on identified BAP habitat it is possible to make the assumption that a UK BAP priority habitat is being created, restored and/or expanded.
- 6.29 The ESS data does not distinguish between different species-rich grassland. The WGS and EWGS data does not distinguish between woodland types. When these schemes do not occur on identified BAP habitat the data suggests that this broad habitat that is being restored, expanded or created.

### Progress towards Maidstone LBAP targets

- 6.30 Progress towards Maidstone LBAP targets can be seen in Table 3 as the amount of UK BAP priority habitat under environmental stewardship and therefore achieving condition or recovering condition.

## Introduction and Overview

**Table 3 Current progress towards 2014 achieving condition targets for Maidstone's priority habitats**

UK Priority Habitat	Amount in the borough (Ha)	Achieving condition (Ha)
Calcareous Grassland	143	123
Lowland Dry Acid Grassland	9	0
Lowland Meadow	45	5
Lowland Yew and Beech	84	76
Wet Woodland	39	1
Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland *	2259	1414
Lowland Heathland	4	3
Traditional Orchards	107	66
Lowland Wood Pasture and Parkland	1250	106

\*Mixed deciduous woodland does not include woodland that fits into other woodland categories

*[Data use from the Kent Habitat Survey (2003), Kent County Council Parkland Inventory, Ancient Woodland Inventory, Orchards for Everyone Project, 2008 data for Countryside Stewardship Scheme, Environmental Stewardship Scheme, Woodland Grant Scheme and English Woodland Grant Scheme]*

6.31 If a comparison is made with the 2014 targets set for the Maidstone LBAP as seen in Table 1 it is possible to observe that targets for meeting favourable condition are being met for three priority habitats: Calcareous grassland, Yew and Beech Woodland and Deciduous Woodland (not including woodland in other categories). Traditional orchards habitat is showing good progress towards meeting targets for area in favourable condition by 2019. All other habitats are showing limited progress towards meeting targets for 2014 and a strong emphasis on targeting these habitats with stewardship should be made in the next few years.

6.32 Progress towards targets on restoration, expansion and creating priority habitats can be seen in Table 4 as the amount of land that has not been classified as a UK BAP priority habitat but is under environmental stewardship.

6.33 Progress towards 2014 targets on restoration, expansion and creating habitats is currently exceeding requirements for all habitats except traditional orchards. Good progress has been made towards traditional orchard expansion target. However, within a biodiversity hierarchy it is more important to protect established habitats than create new ones.

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**Table 4 Current progress towards 2014 targets on restoration, expansion and creation of priority habitats**

Habitat	Ha	Restoring + Expanding + Creating	LBAP Targets: Restoring + Expanding + Creating
Species-rich grassland	197	238.37	48
Woodland	3632	1045	303
Traditional Orchards	107	4	15

*[Data use from the Kent Habitat Survey (2003), Kent County Council Parkland Inventory, Ancient Woodland Inventory, Orchards for Everyone Project, 2008 data for Countryside Stewardship Scheme, Environmental Stewardship Scheme, Woodland Grant Scheme and English Woodland Grant Scheme]*

### Conclusions from target setting and progress analysis

- 6.34 It is essential that regular habitat surveys are performed in order to examine whether targets are being met, understand changes in biodiversity and assess current efforts.
- 6.35 By using data on environmental stewardship it is possible to understand how targets are progressing, however a number of assumptions are made in performing this analysis.
- 6.36 Developing more detailed data collection when awarding stewardships would benefit the monitoring of habitats considered a priority for biodiversity action. Suggested data collection, such as specifying the UK priority habitat on the land, assessing its current condition and predicted condition at the end of the stewardship would be of a great benefit for the LBAP framework.

### Reporting on the LBAP delivery

- 6.37 Accurate reporting on numerical habitat target outcomes within the LBAP will rely on future habitat surveys and analysis. However, if data collection on environmental stewardships is made more detailed then this could provide a useful aid to examine outcomes for certain habitats.
- 6.38 The Maidstone LBAP will report on numerical target outcomes when data is available to do so, and will focus on reporting LBAP outputs when this data is not available. Output reporting will primarily focus on projects lead by MBC and MBC contributed partner projects.
- 6.39 Biodiversity is currently recognised within the draft Strategic Plan 2009-2011 and Key Performance Indicators are currently being developed. These indicators will reflect biodiversity effort and enhancement on MBC owned land.

## Introduction and Overview

- 6.40 KMBRC are currently developing a biodiversity indicator composed of data from a number of key species, to estimate historic, current and future biodiversity levels at a county and borough level. The Biodiversity Index should provide an additional measure to report in Annual Monitoring Report to monitor the success of biodiversity efforts in relation to PPG9<sup>17</sup>, in addition to monitoring habitat changes via regular habitat surveys.
- 6.41 Encouraging local people to share their knowledge and observations on a particular area's wildlife or of a specific habitat or species, with KMBRC is especially important in achieving this understanding.
- 6.42 The LBAP's delivery is a partnership undertaking and partners will not be held responsible if the proposed targets are not met. Furthermore aspects of plan delivery will be reliant upon the development of relationships and agreements with private stakeholders, businesses and funding providers, which often cannot be guaranteed, or tied into the timeframes proposed by the LBAP.
- 6.43 MBC commitment to the LBAP will be outlined within the 'Biodiversity Projects' document and it is proposed will be monitored by associated Key Performance Indicators.

### The LBAP format

- 7.1 Maidstone's Local Biodiversity Action Plan is made up of a series of linked documents. As a complete set, the LBAP will provide a comprehensive insight into all aspects of Maidstone's biodiversity and its conservation, although specific components can also be referred to as stand-alone documents.
- 7.2 The LBAP is an evolving document, as policy and data are updated regularly, and will be used for a variety of purposes including; a planning and conservation tool, an educational resource, and by a wide range of users including the local authority, other agencies, businesses, local interest groups and the public.
- 7.3 The main components of Maidstone Local Biodiversity Action Plan are;
- This document: 'Maidstone's Biodiversity Strategy: A Local Biodiversity Action Plan – An Introduction & Overview'
  - A Funding Strategy For Maidstone's Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2009-2014)
  - 12 Habitat Action Plans (HAPs)
  - 2 Habitat Statements: Habitat overview of Grassland and Woodland (including conservation status maps)
  - 'Biodiversity Projects' – summarising MBC led and supported projects, showing our commitment to NERC 2006 duty on biodiversity
  - A 'Further Information' document which contains useful bibliography and useful web addresses in relation to biodiversity
  - An annual update on the biodiversity action that has occurred in the borough within the MBC Update Green Section of the Downs Mail
  - A Biodiversity Web Page on the MBC Environmental Services Section Pages, which will contain all associated LBAP documents, information on events and projects
  - Maidstone Biodiversity in Action – A leaflet and poster summarising the LBAP and how to get involved

## Introduction and Overview

- 7.4 Currently the LBAP does not contain specific Species Action Plans, however UK priority and protected species should be considered when implementing management practices for each habitat. Animal and plant species tend to be associated with specific habitats and are often included within the definition of 'habitat'. Currently, the regional perspective on conservation of biodiversity is via habitat action plans rather than species action plans. Most species that are at threat of extinction are at threat due to a decrease in quantity, quality or connectivity of their habitat and so theoretically by conserving a variety of well connected and high quality habitats the risk of species extinction should reverse. The issues affecting biodiversity in Maidstone often have a direct impact on the habitats of the Borough, which in turn affects the species associated with those habitats. Each Habitat Action Plan will include details of associated animal and plant species that occur in the Borough and are of importance conservation status, however for a full list of associated animal and plant species reference to the UK BAP should be made.
- 7.5 Conservation efforts via habitat management must consider all associated animal and plant species and the term 'favourable' to describe the desired condition of a habitat within this LBAP defines the ability of the habitat to provide ecological provision within a balanced network of ecological interactions for all associated flora and fauna; in particular all associated UK BAP species as described and determined within the UKBAP.

## Introduction and Overview

### Views on biodiversity

#### Maidstone and biodiversity

- 8.1 Currently monthly surveys are completed in four of MBC parks (Whatman, Clare Park, South Park and Brenchley Gardens). The questions on biodiversity and the importance of biodiversity to people in Maidstone Borough included were based on questions designed by Kent Wildlife Trust for as part of their Wildlife Survey of 2008.
- 8.2 Between November 2008 and February 2009 a total of 141 people were questioned regarding biodiversity. The questionnaire and responses can be seen in Appendix 1.
- 8.3 People in Maidstone are most familiar with the term Wildlife (56%) rather than Natural History (14%), or Biodiversity (13%). Effort should be made to communicate the meaning of biodiversity and how this relates to wildlife and natural history.
- 8.4 Sixty-nine percent of people in Maidstone consider areas for wildlife very important or important to their quality of life and 91% of people in Maidstone think it is very important or important to ensure areas for wildlife are protected and enhanced. This further supports the theory that biodiversity enhances quality of life either directly or indirectly.
- 8.5 When people in Maidstone were asked what things they would like improving/changing with respect to biodiversity the majority of people requested for more wildlife places they could visit for free (25%), however nearly an equal number of people did not respond to this question (24%). Other suggestions were more spaces for wildlife in town (18%) and more of Maidstone protected for wildlife (15%).

#### Kent and biodiversity

- 8.6 Kent Wildlife Trust completed a survey across Kent and Medway on people's view on wildlife in 2008 and they have kindly shared their data with MBC. Over 2,500 people responded and the results are similar to findings found during the surveys completed in Maidstone Borough Council parks. The full report from KWT can be seen in Appendix 2.
- 8.7 The survey found that 91% of people viewed wildlife places being important to them and 30% of people visit a wildlife place at least once a week. In addition 63% of people wanted more information on wildlife places they could visit. This reflects communicating where biodiversity action is taking place and encouraging community engagement on these projects as being vital to public relations.
- 8.8 The majority of people surveyed (94%) think it is very important that Local Authorities protect and enhance places for wildlife, with 80% of people wanting greater protection through the Development Control procedures.

## Introduction and Overview

8.9 The greenness of a political party is a key factor for voters with over 90% of respondents citing this as an important factor.

### Conclusions

8.10 It is clear that people consider places to visit wildlife to be very important. However effective communication is vital, whether this is to give details on places they can visit or explaining the relationship of biodiversity, wildlife and natural history. The surveys strongly suggest that controls on wildlife protection need to be strong and they would like to see more done within the development control process to ensure this happens. Finally, it is clear that people enjoy spending time at places for wildlife and more emphasis should be made to make more use of public areas of natural and semi-natural space by enhancing these sites and making them accessible.

## Introduction and Overview

### Play your part in biodiversity

9.1 Everyone can play a part in conserving biodiversity, and contributing on a personal level will help to meet and address the bigger targets and issues that present us.

9.2 Some of the most important contributions to be made are in the hands of Maidstone's communities, and people are encouraged to;

- Use the LBAP to learn about local nature conservation sites and natural areas.
- If you have a garden look to make it wildlife friendly, using wildflowers and creating a variety of micro-habitats.
- Record and share wildlife observations with KMBRC or local natural history group.
- Take advantage of and enjoy the environmental activities provided by Maidstone Borough Council, natural history and local interest groups.
- Keep abreast of environmental initiatives, through Biodiversity related web pages and other bulletins and contribute wherever possible.
- Examine the individual Action Plans and contribute wherever possible.
- Report environmental incidents and/ or abuse to the appropriate body.
- Give and seek support to help deliver local biodiversity projects.
- Enjoy local, accessible, nature conservation sites and support their aims.
- Report and celebrate conservation efforts.

9.3 A number of the planned biodiversity projects will be utilising volunteers and it is hoped that local communities will become involved and take these projects forward.

9.4 If you are an educational establishment or a local community group and would like to become more involved with a biodiversity project in your area please contact Maidstone's Biodiversity Action Plan Lead Officer who will discuss local projects and different funding options available.

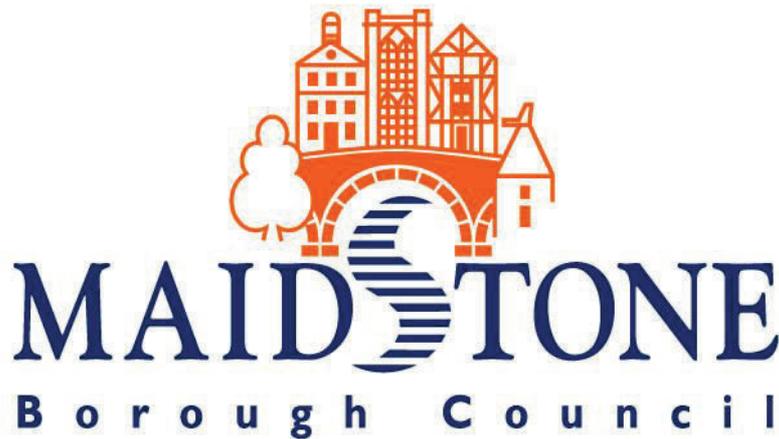
## Biodiversity Projects

# Maidstone's Biodiversity Strategy

A Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Phase 1: 2010 – 2014

## Biodiversity Projects



## Biodiversity Projects

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## Biodiversity Projects

### Overview & Introduction

- 1.1 In addition to supporting the actions of our partners Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) is committed to fulfilling our duty to biodiversity.
- 1.2 This document gives a more detailed summary of the planned projects for phase 1 of the LBAP (2010-2014) that will be:
1. Led by MBC
  2. Are on MBC owned land
  3. That MBC will look to financially support
- 1.3 This document includes summaries of general management/restoration/creation techniques for specific UK priority habitats that occur on MBC owned land.
- 1.4 The overall aim of the biodiversity projects described link to the key conservation objectives of the LBAP and are to;
- Protect and restore Maidstone Borough's semi-natural habitats through practical actions
  - Increase biodiversity and wildlife within urban and rural areas
  - Work with the Environment Agency and others to restore riparian and wetland habitats across Maidstone Borough
  - Connect people to wildlife and promote life-long learning
  - Raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity and give an understanding to the techniques used to enhance biodiversity.
  - Seek appropriate site protection via designation
  - Collate data on biodiversity within the borough
- 1.5 The document highlights how these projects link in with the wider Maidstone Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).
- 1.6 Estimates of costs are included within this document, however there a number of external funding opportunities for biodiversity and community based projects. The LBAP should seek to secure funding for biodiversity projects and increase community involvement as the success of the LBAP is highly dependent on both.
- 1.7 A funding strategy will be developed for the LBAP, which will estimate costs for meeting habitat targets and means of delivery, in addition to avenues for external funding for the projects summarised within this document.
- 1.8 In addition to external funding streams and capital bids funding via section 106 should be sought to implement key improvement and projects plans for priority sites identified within this document (section 3).

## Biodiversity Projects

### Habitat management, restoration and creation techniques

#### Habitats that are important to Maidstone Borough Council

- 2.1 Maidstone Borough Council owns large areas of land across the borough which has been categorised using PPG17<sup>28</sup> methodology within the Maidstone's Green Space Strategy<sup>20</sup>. Using the most updated version of these data all natural and semi-natural open space that is under Maidstone Borough Council ownership has been examined alongside data on the different UK priority habitats in the borough.
- 2.2 Key natural and semi-natural sites containing UK priority habitats or expected to contain remnants of these habitats have been selected for improvement and project development to ensure a direct positive contribution can be made towards Maidstone's LBAP by the council.
- 2.3 The UK priority habitats found on MBC owned land are; Acid Grassland, Heathland, Meadow, Wet Woodland, Wood Pasture and Parkland, Deciduous Woodland and Ponds. Below are brief summaries explaining key management techniques that can be applied to these different habitats to enhance and conserve biodiversity.
- 2.4 It is expected that projects on MBC owned land will focus on implementing appropriate management techniques, increasing accessibility, and encourage community involvement and environmental stewardship.

#### Acid Grassland/Heathland Mosaic Techniques

- 2.5 Prevent tree encroachment; however a scattering of trees and shrubs of various ages is beneficial to all sorts of species, particularly insects and birds.
- 2.6 Removal of some trees from site when felled is recommended. Fallen boughs and other dead wood within open acid habitats may be important for a range of uncommon invertebrates and can provide a protected "nursery area" for some plant species such as common heather. 'Brash' such as branches and trunks left to rot down would enrich the soil and create an advantage for non-heathland species.
- 2.7 Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) is a native plant which forms dense stands on many heathland sites and shades out less vigorous plants. The litter created by dead bracken forms a dense carpet, also inhibiting other plant growth. Whilst being an important part of a heathland flora in small quantities, large stands of dense bracken are undesirable and bracken growth should be limited on site.
- 2.8 The mosaic of different ages of acid grassland/heathland is optimum for biodiversity. Grazing is the optimum management tool for lowland acid grassland (including by wild rabbits), however, where this is not possible or rabbit populations are too small to be effective, mowing regimes

## Biodiversity Projects

may be effective. Rotation of mowing different areas should give the desired differing age structure. Removal of cuttings is essential to allow growth of the lesser plant species.

2.9 Many rare animals are found on heathland sites and management needs to also maintain habitats for these animals. This may in practice lead to conflicts between the management requirements of individual species and the need for overall successional management of the area. Balancing these two aims can be difficult and it may not be possible to maintain dense populations of a rare species in conjunction with long term management of the overall heathland/acid grassland, however a species rich site should be the ultimate aim of any land management applied.

2.10 Areas of heathland persist within woodland rides and glades on the sandy substrates prevalent across areas of the Borough (such as at Kings Wood). Some of these woodlands revert to heathland following coppicing work. Sectional rotation of coppicing if maintained would allow populations of heathland species to recover and subsequently thrive.

### Lowland Meadows techniques

2.11 Ensure that no fertilizer has been used on site for a few years and the area is unlikely to be walked on/trampled.

2.12 The best method of establishing a meadow is by starting with on newly prepared bare ground and sowing of locally collected seeds. If a lawn already exists and contains fine-leaved grasses and a variety of meadow herbs it can provide the starting point for a meadow, and so floristic survey data is essential to assist in choosing the appropriate method for creation.

2.13 It is always best if trying to create a natural lowland meadow to use seed from a local natural source. Seed collection is simple and should be carried out between June and September to ensure a variety of plants which have different flowering times.

2.14 Aftercare of a Meadow will require hand-digging removal of certain species and protection of seedlings from slugs (using barriers/repellents). Fertilisers should not be used. New Meadow should be cut in the first year every time the height reaches between 10-15 cm and all cuttings should be removed from site.

2.15 From the second year on or for more established meadows cutting should start in late June until the end of August to a height of around 5 cm. Parts of the Meadow should be left uncut each year, however, this part of the meadow should then be cut the following year. The area that is left uncut ensures that plants are available to allow completion of life-cycles and allow over-wintering by insects. Cuttings from areas that are cut between June and August should be left a few days to dry and turned occasionally to allow seeds, insects and small animals to escape and then the cuttings should be collected and removed from site so they do not smother and cause a build up of nutrients.

2.16 A useful and essential guide on wildflower meadow creation has been published by English Nature (now Natural England) in 2004 called "Wildflower meadows: how to create on in your garden"<sup>38</sup>. Habitat Management for Invertebrates: A Practical Handbook" by Peter Kirby ISBN

## Biodiversity Projects

1901930300 carries detailed management prescriptions for increasing biodiversity in lowland meadows.

### Wet Woodland techniques

- 2.17 Coppice rotation of wet woodland areas which have been coppiced in the past should be performed at appropriate time intervals for the tree species.
- 2.18 Management should aim to retain some large trees and large coppice stools.
- 2.19 Log piles should be created on wet woodland sites to encourage associated decaying wood fauna.
- 2.20 Control of invasive species such as Indian balsam, rhododendron, laurel, Japanese knotweed. And giant Hogweed. They should be controlled by cutting and spraying with herbicides approved for use near water, preferably before substantial areas are colonised. Repeated applications may be required to deal with major infestations. Extreme care and vigilance over approved contractors only, must be adopted to prevent unwanted damage to native species.
- 2.21 The developing Invasive Species Policy and Monitoring Programme should address the problem of associated invasive species with wet woodland habitats.
- 2.22 The great majority of wet woods are even-aged. They either owe their origin to a single event which permitted natural regeneration (e.g. a change of land-use), or they were cut and allowed to regenerate without any attempt at systematic silviculture.
- 2.23 Photographic monitoring of the site is a good method to assess management practices and plan future management.
- 2.24 A useful guide to the management of wet woodland produced by the Forestry Commission 'The Management of Semi-natural Woodlands: 8. Wet Woodlands' (2003) should be followed when writing and implementing management plans for such sites<sup>38</sup>.

### Wood Pasture and Parkland techniques

- 2.25 The priority for this type of habitat is to conserve the mature and ancient trees and the associated dead-wood niches that support the rare saproxylic fauna which includes some of the most threatened British invertebrates.
- 2.26 A major problem at many sites is that there is a gap in the age structure of trees, so recruitment of new pollards and large trees is vital if the specialist invertebrate fauna is to survive.
- 2.27 All old trees should be retained wherever possible.
- 2.28 Dead wood of all ages, both standing and fallen, should be retained.
- 2.29 Trees with sap runs resulting from wounds and damage such as that resulting from an attack by wood-boring beetles should be retained.

## Biodiversity Projects

- 2.30 Dead leaves and decaying vegetation should not be tidied away, but left undisturbed to provide potential breeding sites for invertebrate species.
- 2.31 Where Sycamore is present, it may be providing food for insects in the form of the honeydew secreted by aphids. Where Sycamore must be removed, this should be done sequentially over a long period (10 years) and the cut wood retained. Coppicing or pollarding should be considered instead of complete removal of the plant because the fermenting sap on the cut ends is an important microhabitat for invertebrates.
- 2.32 Open areas are essential in this habitat, providing sunny sheltered places for flowering plants and shrubs which produce the nectar and pollen required by adult flies and beetles whose larvae develop in dead wood. Suitable nectar sources include hawthorn, hogweed, cow parsley and elder. Low-level grazing (including by wild rabbits) and rotational cutting will ensure the habitat is maintained in a reasonably open state.
- 2.33 Wood pasture is a particularly suitable habitat for recreation as it is both aesthetically pleasing and also provides a variety of woodland, grassland and scrub habitats.

### Lowland Deciduous Woodland techniques

- 2.34 Investigation on the implementation of a sustainable wood for fuel scheme in Maidstone borough is underway, so that funds could be used to manage MBC owned woodlands and increase biodiversity at the same time provide a sustainable fuel source.
- 2.35 Removal of all human activity within woodland will often result in the development of dark, dense woods and decrease the biodiversity of the habitat. However, in larger and remote inaccessible woodlands non-intervention areas can be preserved to allow natural woodland cycles to unfold. Grazing and browsing activity by larger wild animals will introduce structural diversity into unmanaged woodland.
- 2.36 Structural diversity such as scalloped edges, rides and glades within the woodland will increase biodiversity.
- 2.37 Canopies may be opened up by thinning to create glades. This will allow more light to reach the woodland floor. This in turn encourages the development of field and ground layers within the wood.
- 2.38 Coppicing is the process of cutting trees down, allowing the stumps to regenerate for a number of years (usually 7 - 25) and then harvesting the resulting stems. This gives the woodland a varying age structure and differing ecological conditions increase biodiversity. However, coppicing should not be introduced to woodland with no history of this management technique
- 2.39 Coppicing makes use of the natural regeneration properties of many tree species, including Oak, Hazel, Maple, Sweet Chestnut, Lime and Ash.

## Biodiversity Projects

- 2.40 Control of invasive species such as Indian balsam, rhododendron, laurel and Japanese knotweed. They should be controlled by cutting and spraying substantial areas are colonised. Repeated applications may be required to deal with major infestations. This process must be very closely monitored and only approved contractors used in order to prevent unwanted damage to other flora.
- 2.41 Dead wood stands and fallen timber should be left unless dangerous and woodpiles should be created as this habitat is essential for certain species.
- 2.42 Dead leaves and decaying vegetation should not be tidied away, but left undisturbed to provide potential breeding sites for invertebrates.
- 2.43 Where Sycamore is present, it may be providing food for insects in the form of the honeydew secreted by aphids. Where Sycamore must be removed, this should be done sequentially over a long period (10 years) and the cut wood retained. Coppicing or pollarding should be considered instead of complete removal of the plant because the fermenting sap on the cut ends is an important microhabitat for some species of invertebrate.

### Pond techniques

- 2.44 Survey several times in the year as different species will be present and this will give a better indication on the overall biodiversity of the habitat.
- 2.45 The best time for pond management is late September and October.
- 2.46 Shallow ponds and groups of water bodies are more generally valuable to wildlife than deep solitary ones. Ponds support different assemblages of wildlife dependent upon their aspect, underlying substrates and geographic location. For example, shaded woodland ponds support different wildlife than water bodies in open habitats. The edge of a pond is more productive in biodiversity terms than open water and therefore the length and diversity of this habitat should be optimised in new water bodies through adoption of "armed ponds" or a sinuous outline.
- 2.47 During autumn, falling leaves should be skimmed off the pond surface before they sink and overload the nutrient balance of the pond. Winter freezing is a problem for many small pond creatures.
- 2.48 In late spring, the pond may be in danger of choking due to the occurrence of blanket weed and duckweed. Blanket weed and duckweed can be skimmed from the surface. When clearing out ponds, leave any plants and debris along the edge for a few days or so, before removing.
- 2.49 Remember that many animals that live in ponds use other habitats as well. Provide areas near ponds where amphibians and insects can hibernate or shelter - these include rotting log piles and rockeries.

## Biodiversity Projects

2.50 Algae blooms should not be a problem in a well-balanced pond, however if it should occur the most frequent method of controlling is to use barley straw. A chemical reaction between the straw and algae slows new algae growth, preventing replenishment of the old algae as it dies naturally.

2.51 Cutting back of vegetation if required, around the pond should be carried out in sections on annual rotation. Where possible leave areas of undisturbed vegetation right up to the water's edge and do not over-mow surrounds.

2.52 Ponds should usually be allowed to develop their own flora through natural colonisation. However, in some environments planting may be required and only native species should be used. Suitable plants for a wildlife pond include:

- Edge and marsh plants - Water Mint, Yellow Flag Iris, Marsh Marigold, Brooklime, Rushes, Bogbean, Water Plantain.
- Shallow plants - Spearwort, Mare's Tail, Water Forget-me-not.
- Deep water plants - Water Crowfoot, Water Starwort, Water Milfoil, Hornwort, Willow Moss, and Curled Pondweed.
- Floating-leaved plants - White and Yellow Water lily, Floating Sweet-grass, Broad-leaved Pondweed, Water Soldier, Arrowhead.

2.53 Plants should be introduced slowly and monitored as plants will increase the rate of silting.

2.54 Control of invasive species is essential to the success of a pond habitat.

2.55 Fish should not be introduced to an established or new wildlife pond.

2.56 The Pond Conservation Trust publishes a range of advice on excavating new ponds and their maintenance.

## Biodiversity Projects

### Biodiversity improvement and projects plan on our land

- 3.1 A number of sites and areas of land owned by MBC contain UK priority habitats or contain conditions suitable for UK priority habitat creation. These sites can be deemed priority sites for council led biodiversity action.
- 3.2 Some sites have been surveyed on ground in the last 5 years others require ground level data collection prior to developing improvement plans.
- 3.3 Table 1 summarises the current status of key sites that have been selected for Improvement and Project Plan (IPP) development and implementation in Phase 1 of LBAP (2010-2014).

**Table 1 Current biodiversity status of priority MBC owned natural and semi-natural sites**

Site Name	UK BAP Priority Habitat	Biodiversity Survey	Next Steps
Weaving Heath	Heathland Acid Grassland Woodland	Phase 1 completed 2006	Develop and implement IPP
TAVR site (due to be MBC land shortly)	Possible acid grassland  Woodland  Parkland	Underway in 2009 completion in 2010	Develop management recommendations Develop and Implement IPP Seek appropriate designation (LWS or/and LNR)
Whatman Natural Areas	None	Underway in 2009 completion in 2010	Develop and Implement IPP
Senacre Wood	Deciduous Woodland (Wet Woodland)	Full Phase 2 extended with management guidelines in 2008	Develop and Implement IPP
River Len	River  Pond  Deciduous woodland	Species lists ongoing	Maintain and refine management plan.

## Biodiversity Projects

	Wet woodland		
Mote Park	Standing Open Water Wet Woodland Wood Pasture and Parkland Pond	Conservation Plan Developed with KWT - 2008	Implement Conservation Plan ensuring all aspect of good management techniques for the different UK priority habitats have been considered and LBAP HAP objectives and targets are included within the plan Seek appropriate designation

## Biodiversity Projects

Site Name	UK BAP Priority Habitat	Biodiversity Survey	Next Steps
Dove Hill Woodland	Deciduous Woodland (Ancient)	2009. Completion in 2010	SWOT analysis Develop and Implement IPP Seek appropriate designation
Five Acres and Wents Wood	Deciduous Woodland (Ancient)	Tree Survey – 2007 Phase 1 – 2008	Develop and implement IPP Seek appropriate designation
Lime Tree Ponds	Ponds	None	Commission survey and SWOT analysis Develop and Implement IPP Seek appropriate designation
Poyntell Ponds	Ponds	None	Commission survey and SWOT analysis Develop and Implement IPP Seek appropriate designation
Palace Wood	Deciduous Woodland	Phase 1 – 2008	Develop and Implement IPP Seek appropriate Site Designation

## Biodiversity Projects

### Weaving Heath Biodiversity Project

- 3.4 Weaving Heath was surveyed in 2006 and recommendations for the management of the natural area were suggested, in addition planned general parks improvements for the site have been made.
- 3.5 Currently the nature area in Weaving Heath is managed by implementing one conservation cut per year over part of the site with cuttings left in situ; additionally there is limited information on the importance of this area within the park
- 3.6 It is essential that issues raised within the original survey document are addressed and implemented for the successful restoration of gorse and broom scrub/heathland/acid grassland mosaic to UK BAP priority habitat standards at this site. It will take between 5-10 years to achieve a reasonable level of biodiversity at this site.
- 3.7 Key milestone stages and estimated costs can be seen in table 2.

**Table 2 Key Milestones for the Weaving Heath Biodiversity Project**

Ref	Date	Action	Costs
WH1	May 2010	Review and develop the current management plan for the site to create a Projects and Improvements Management Plan. Implement the above techniques within the plan for the site for the next 5 years (2010-2014).	Officer Time
WH2	June 2010	Consult local residents regarding the development of the natural area within Weaving Heath to meet UK BAP standards and look to develop a friends/volunteer group.	Officer Time
WH3	July 2010	Implement consultation feedback from local residents into the project and improvement plan.	
WH4	July 2010	Evaluate costs of any new maintenance techniques needed on site and determine whether these will be implemented by holding volunteer days or using internal contractors.	£2000 max spend across 4 years
WH5	August 2010	Consult grounds maintenance team to co-ordinate remaining management/maintenance for the area	Officer Time Current Grounds Maintenance Budget
WH6	Sept 2010	Interpretation Board: Explaining Management Techniques Used and Importance of the site	£1000

**Total Costs = £3,000**

## Biodiversity Projects

### TAVR site Biodiversity Project

3.8 The TAVR site is a new site that MBC has gained and the site has been allocated as a possible Local Nature Reserve. This site is also called Sandling Park. Surveys are underway cataloguing the biodiversity of the site and so information needs to first be gathered to inform future management of the site. The invertebrate fauna at this site appears to be significant and vegetation structure is currently maintained through rabbit grazing.

3.9 This site is currently part of a section 106 agreement and so timings will depend on when the land is passed to appropriate ownership.

3.10 Key milestone stages and estimated costs can be seen in table 3.

**Table 3 Key Milestones for the TAVR site Biodiversity Project**

Ref	Date	Action	Costs
T1	May 2010	Continue site surveys on biodiversity/nature conservation. Seek expansion of the reserve to incorporate adjoining semi natural habitats.	£500
T2	June 2010	Write Projects and Improvements Management Plan based on survey data (2010-2015).	
T3	Nov 2010	Consult local communities on their views of the site and include within developing plans	
T4	Nov 2010	Evaluate costs of any maintenance techniques needed on site and determine whether these will be implemented by holding volunteer days or using MBS	Current Grounds Maintenance Budget
T5	Dec 2010	Look for external funding to implement projects and improvements management plan	
T6	2010-2015	Implement a volunteer day per year	£1000
T7	Jan 2010	Design and Erect Interpretation Board	£1000

**Total Costs = £2,500**

## Biodiversity Projects

### Whatman Natural Areas Biodiversity Project

3.11 Currently the natural area designated as a meadow area at Whatman Park is managed by performing one conservation cut per year with cuttings left in situ; additionally there is limited information on the importance of this area within the park.

3.12 This area would benefit from more detailed prescriptions in the existing management plan for the natural area, however with limited information on the current biodiversity of this site; a floristic survey would aid a decision on whether the site should be cleared and seeded with locally collected meadow seeds or if the site would benefit from selective management and planting of specific species. This is now scheduled for 2010.

3.13 Key milestone stages and estimated costs can be seen in table 4.

**Table 4 Key Milestones for Whatman Natural Areas Biodiversity Project**

Ref	Date	Action	Costs
WA1	June 2010	Organise a floristic diversity Survey/s containing recommendations to improve the biodiversity	£500
WA2	October 2010	Develop the current management plan for this area of Whatman Park to include recommendations from the survey and the management techniques described above to naturalise and enhance vegetation structure and wildlife habitats. Formulate an Improvement and Projects Plan for this area.	
WA3	Oct 2010	Evaluate costs of any maintenance techniques needed on site and determine whether these will be implemented by holding volunteer days or using MBS	
WA4	Nov 2010	Erect information on boards explaining the improvements plans	No cost board already at site
WA5	March 2011-Sept 2011	<p>Either depending on survey /management outcomes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Order meadow plugs/collect seed from site and selectively remove certain dominant species (soil scrape and seed would be most effective)</li> <li>2. Collect seed from natural local lowland meadow site and prepare ground for sowing</li> </ol> <p>Implement in 2 phases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sept 2010</li> <li>2. Sept 2011</li> </ol>	<p>£400 (2 days total)</p> <p>Plugs £5,000</p>
WA6	Sept 2010/2011	Make final preparations on site and then plant/sow the meadow area	£400
WA7	Nov 2010	Contact local schools to introduce them to	

## Biodiversity Projects

		biodiversity and the importance of the meadow at Whatman Park	
WA8	Sept 2011 – March 2015	Continue to create and then maintain the meadow using appropriate techniques – arrange at least 2 volunteer days per year	£1200

**Total Costs = £7,500 – Whatman Park Riverside Budget (if seed plugs), £2,500 if soil scrape and seeds.**

## Biodiversity Projects

### Senacre Wood Biodiversity Project

3.14 Senacre Wood has survey data and management recommendations which have been developed.

3.15 Future plans should be to encourage local community stewardship of the site and also secure sustainable funding resource for the management of the site in order to increase biodiversity and usage.

3.16 New Line Learning have been in contact regarding conservation projects they could be more involved with and it maybe that a partnership with young people on this project could help secure specific funding streams and meet key objectives within the LBAP.

3.17 Key milestone stages and estimated costs can be seen in table 5.

**Table 5 Key Milestones for the Senacre Wood Biodiversity Project**

Ref	Date	Action	Costs
S1	Nov 2010	Develop Improvement and projects Plan in accordance to management guidelines and survey data. Consult local community (customer survey). Establish Friends of Group.	Staff Time
S2	June 2011	Encourage the local schools to use the woodland site for educational purposes. Look to implement a young people task-force for the site and seek external funding to implement.	
S4	Oct 2011	Implement management plan of an appropriate coppice cycle glad and ride creation and improve accessibility/interpretation where required – depending on funding	£25,000 (seek external funding)
S5	Oct 2011	Improve accessibility and interpretation	£5000

**Total Costs = £30,000 – Seek external funding**

**MBC financial input towards this project = £3300 (11% costs)**

## Biodiversity Projects

### River Len Biodiversity Project

3.18 Develop an Improvement and projects Plan link to key conservation objectives and habitat targets in the LBAP alongside current management prescriptions developed by the River Len LNR Management Committee.

3.19 Key milestone stages and estimated costs can be seen in table 6.

**Table 6 Key Milestones for the River Len Biodiversity Project**

Ref	Date	Action	Costs
RL1	June 2010	Develop and implement site management plan	£18,000 (10 years)
RL2	By April 2010	Seek appropriate designation of the site	
RL3	July 2010	Consult local communities and include feedback within the management plan	
RL4	2010-2015	Seek external funding	
RL5	2010-2015	Implement photographic monitoring of the wet woodland area to monitor management	
RL6	2010-2015	Ensure that species data collected is in a format that allows analysis for biodiversity index on site	
RL7	2010-2015	Organise volunteer days (1 per year)	
RL8	2010-2015	Arrange river surveys (including fish and invertebrates) to collate biodiversity data of this section of the river	Liaise with EA and Len Management Team. Liaise with Internal Drainage Board BAP plan.

**Total Costs = £18,000– Seek external funding**

**MBC financial input towards this project = £2,000 (11% costs)**

## Biodiversity Projects

### Mote Park Improvement and Projects Plan

3.20 Mote Park currently received funding through the Lottery scheme and a detailed management and conservation plan has been developed which includes biodiversity enhancement recommendations.

The main focus of the biodiversity improvement and projects plan for this site are to work with the relevant officers involved in implementing the funding via the management and conservation plan to ensure that biodiversity consideration is a priority. Enhanced management of aquatic habitats within the park are one priority, including the naturalisation of connections to the River Len to allow movement of wildlife through the river system and lake. The naturalisation and re-introduction of vegetation to engineered sections of lake margins are also desirable. The impacts upon biodiversity of the current level of stocking with coarse fish needs to be examined.

3.21 Key biodiversity measures for this site are highlighted in table 7.

**Table 7 Key Milestones for the Mote Park Improvement and Projects Plan**

Ref	Date	Action	Key Partner/s	Costs
MP1	April 2010	Seek appropriate designation of Mote Park natural areas that are of UK BAP priority habitat status and where UK BAP priority species are present	KWT	Liaise with Mote Park Audience Development Officer
MP2	2011-2016	<p>Ensure the following are implemented in the priority habitat areas of Mote Park and comments from KWT on the management of these areas are followed:</p> <p>Develop a Tree Planting and Monitoring Programme</p> <p>Ensure that a native tree planting programme for the next 5 years is formalised for Mote Park to ensure that trees of differing age structure persist in the future. Continue the tree planting programme in future years, reviewed at 5 year intervals.</p> <p>Create log piles within the wetland area</p> <p>Creation of a mosaic of habitats and</p>	KWT/MBC	5 years – £15,000

## Biodiversity Projects

		microhabitats to increase species diversity e.g. invertebrate diversity.  Examine the feasibility of grazing as a form of pasture management.		
MP3	2011- 2016	Organise wildlife volunteer days and encourage wildlife monitoring and reporting.		
MP4	2011- 2016	Hold wildlife events to raise the profile of biodiversity in Maidstone (1 event per year)		

**Total Costs = £18,000 – Mote Park Lottery Bid**

## Biodiversity Projects

### Dove Hill Woods Improvement and Projects Plan

3.22 Currently no active management occurs at Four Oaks or Dove Hill woodland sites, in addition there is limited information on the current biodiversity of these sites.

3.23 Action for these sites should aim to collect and use survey data to inform management/maintenance plans for these sites. Initial surveys conducted in 2009, more scheduled fro 2010.

3.24 It is likely that tree works to create rides and glades will be needed at both sites to increase light levels into the woodland and in turn increase ground level biodiversity, and so it is essential that a sustainable or initial funding resource for this work is secured.

3.25 Community involvement and encouraging environmental stewardship of these sites is important for biodiversity monitoring and education. Involvement of the local community and in particular schools in future events/volunteer days should be encouraged. The need for such recording/monitoring system to be set up as determined by Steering Group.

3.26 The actions in table 8 highlight the key steps to realising the biodiversity potential of these sites.

**Table 8 Key Milestones for the Dove Hill Woods Improvement and Projects Plan**

Ref	Date	Action	Key Partner/s	Costs
DH1	Summer 2010	Perform comprehensive survey/s on site to monitor current condition and biodiversity. Complete a SWOT analysis on biodiversity value.	MVCP	£3,000
DH2	Summer 2010	Write improvement and projects plan to increase the biodiversity and community value of these sites based on SWOT analysis and survey data. Estimate costs for implementation.	Officer Time	
DH3	Summer 2010	Review and obtain a funding source for initial management as a UK BAP priority habitat and a community open space.	Officer Time	
DH4	Summer 2011	Seek appropriate designation for sites	Officer Time	

**Total Costs = £3,000**

## Biodiversity Projects

### Five Acres and Wents Wood Improvement and Projects Plan

3.28 This is an ancient woodland site located adjacent to a larger ancient woodland local wildlife site within an urban area and is vital in connecting people to the natural environment and creating a larger connected habitat network across the borough.

3.29 The overall biodiversity project for the site is to develop a community woodland site, whereby local communities would recreationally visit the site and in turn monitor species, hold picnics and use the woodland for educational purposes.

3.30 The proposals in table 9 are the key components of the improvement and projects plan for this site and are dependent on the availability of funding.

**Table 9 Key components of Five Acres and Wents Wood Improvement and projects plan**

Ref	Date	Action	Key Partner/s	Costs
FW1	June 2010	Using information from a recent habitat survey, tree management plan and techniques described above write an improvements and project plan for the site to increase biodiversity. Estimate costs for this plan.	Officer Time	
FW2	June 2010	Consult local community on proposals (survey)		
FW3	Summer 2010	Seek designation as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS)	KWT	
FW4	Summer 2010	Obtain approval from Kent Biodiversity Partnership on the plan ensuring it is appropriate to qualify as a managed site according to NI 197	Kent Biodiversity Partnership	
FW5	Summer 2010	Develop the community woodland biodiversity project and apply for funding for its initial creation		
FW6	Winter 2010 - 2026	Implement management of creating glades and coppice cycles to increase biodiversity		£20,000 over 16 years.
FW7	Winter 2010	Develop appropriate pedestrian access routes through the woodland		£5000
FW8	Winter 2010	Place interpretation boards on site explaining management techniques used and biodiversity value		£2000

## Biodiversity Projects

FW9	2011-2015	Volunteer days (1 per year)	MVCP	£800
FW10	Summer 2011	Woodland Opening Event: Teddy Bears Picnic and Wildlife Walk	Marketing	£1000
FW11	2011-2015	Hold regular wildlife recording events with local schools	MVCP	£2000

**Total Costs = £15,800**

**Approximate 11% Cost = £2,000**

## Biodiversity Projects

### Lime Trees Open Space and Poyntell Ponds Improvement and Projects Plan

3.31 MBC ponds have not yet been surveyed.

3.32 The overall aim of this project is to gather information on the current biodiversity of some of MBC owned ponds and develop management and improvement plans implementing the management techniques described previously.

3.33 It is hoped that the project will encourage environmental stewardship within the local community.

3.34 Table 10 highlights the key steps in the ponds improvement and projects plan.

**Table 10 Key actions for the ponds improvement and projects plan**

Ref	Date	Action	Key Partner/s	Costs
PP1	Summer 2011	Carry out detailed surveys of the 3 ponds in April, June and August. Conduct SWOT analysis on the biodiversity survey results.	MVCP EA	£3000
PP2	October 2011	Examine data and write a improvement and management plan for these ponds to enhance biodiversity and investigate associated costs		Staff time.
PP3	October 2011	Consult with the existing local community groups on the planned management to encourage environmental stewardship.		
PP4	October 2011	Look to seek funding to implement biodiversity improvements via community involvement	MVCP	
PP4	2011-2015	Implement improvement and management plan		

**Total Cost = £3000**

## Biodiversity Projects

### Palace Wood Improvement and Projects Plan

3.35 Palace wood was surveyed in 2008 and was found to be of local biodiversity value in that it provided a place for recreation and learning.

3.36 The woodland is isolated from other natural habitats and so limited potential for biodiversity, however plays a vital role in connecting people to nature.

3.37 This site falls into a recent section 106 contribution and it is hoped that funding for this project will be allocated from this developer contribution.

3.38 Table 11 highlights the key steps in the Palace Wood improvement and projects plan

**Table 11 Key actions for Palace Wood improvement and projects plan**

Ref	Date	Action	Key Partner/s	Costs
PP1	Summer 2010	Examine data and write a improvement and management plan for palace wood to enhance biodiversity, connect people with nature and investigate associated costs		
PP2	October 2010	Introduce low level coppice cycle and ride creation to allow access and remove garden plant species		£8000
PP3	October 2010	Create new circular walk		£5000
PP4	October 2010	Erect interpretation boards		£1000
PP5	October 2010	Erect bat boxes		£400
PP6	2010-2014	Look to work with local schools to organise wildlife walk and monitoring		£1000
PP7	Summer 2011	Consult local community (including schools) planned projects and improvement plan encourage environmental stewardship		
PP8	2010-2015	Look to seek funding to implement biodiversity improvements via community involvement		
PP9	2010-2015	Implement improvement and management plan		

**Total Cost = £16,000**

## Biodiversity Projects

### **Working towards good biodiversity management – protecting and enhancing biodiversity reservoirs within urban areas project**

3.39 In addition to the key sites identified for Improvement and Project plans there are a number of smaller sites that are considered natural and semi natural habitat across the borough that MBC own.

3.40 These sites should be examined alongside current maintenance plans. Appropriate measures to enhance biodiversity should be taken and documented via an Improvement and Projects Plan.

3.41 These sites are not key priority sites. However, the role of these sites in creating habitat reservoirs; in particular for invertebrates and birds within urban areas is significant.

3.42 Improvement and projects plans for these sites are not likely to require significant action. However these measures should be documented, implemented and monitored to ensure sustainability and protection of these sites now and in the future.

3.43 Such sites that should be considered for such action include:

- Fant & Tovil Open Space
- Gleneagle Drive
- Lombardy Drive and Alkham Road
- Foxden Drive
- Land Next to Tesco's
- Gore Court Road
- Upper Fulling Pits

(note: this is not a complete list)

3.44 This project will be implemented gradually during phase 1 of the LBAP and is dependent on biodiversity monitoring of land to inform appropriate management techniques.

## Biodiversity Projects

### Biodiversity monitoring of MBC owned land to inform management

3.45 A number of MBC owned sites have been surveyed and SWOT analysis on biodiversity undertaken to inform improvement and projects plans.

3.46 There are still a number of sites that require this data collection prior to developing improvement and projects plans.

3.47 Table 12 outlines the key actions in collating biodiversity data on MBC owned land

**Table 12 Key actions for biodiversity monitoring of MBC owned land**

Ref	Date	Action	Key Partner/s	Costs
SB1	April 2010	Develop a survey plan – listing remaining natural sites to survey in order of importance/urgency over the next three years		
SB2	Autumn 2010	Create a survey database to ensure all survey data is stored and accessible. Share knowledge of data base to relevant external and internal partners		
SB3	May 2010-Sept 2013	Commission surveys	MVCP	£500 per year for 3 years

## **Biodiversity Projects**

### **Maidstone Borough Council led biodiversity research projects**

#### **Investigate Wood for Fuel: Sustainable Woodland Management Project for Maidstone**

- 4.1 Examine the feasibility of using wood from our woodland as fuel to encourage further funding for woodland management to increase biodiversity by the application of coppice cycles and creation of glades.
- 4.2 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has been investigating a wood for fuel scheme and so it is possible that this could be a joint project with other local authorities on the boundary of MBC.
- 4.3 Key partnership organisations are linking with the sustainable communities' strategy climate change partnership.
- 4.4 It is key that this is examined early in the LBAP implementation as the success of a number of the improvement and projects plan for woodland priority sites depend on finding long term funding to manage.
- 4.5 This research project needs to be completed before December 2010.

#### **Pond monitoring in the Low Weald to inform future biodiversity projects**

- 5.1 Investigate and work in partnership to obtain funding for the excavation of new ponds in the Low Weald area of the Borough plus a research monitoring programme of all ponds in the Low Weald.
- 5.2 The Low Weald has a high number of ponds, however little data is available on their biodiversity.
- 5.3 This project will require working across authority boundaries and work with private land owners.
- 5.4 The time plan for this project is as follows:
  1. Develop partnership with key local authorities and relevant organisations – April 2010
  2. Scope project, delivery mechanisms and estimate costs in partnership – April 2011
  3. Look to secure funding to implement – April 2012
  4. Work alongside Pond Conservation Trust "Million Ponds Project" to achieve delivery.

#### **Invasive Plant Species Policy and Monitoring Project**

- 6.1 Invasive plant species are a real problem for biodiversity. Currently management of invasive plant species on council owned land is on a reactive basis.
- 6.2 The aim of this project is to review current control measures used, the national framework, current legislation, the range of possible invasive plant species currently present in the borough, and future threats from invasive flora due to climate change in order to:

## Biodiversity Projects

1. Write an invasive non-native invasive plant species policy ensuring that:
  - a) Non-native invasive species definition for the borough is appropriate with consideration of predicted change in species natural range through climate change.
  - b) All current methods of control are summarised.
  - c) Costs of current measures to control non-native invasive plant species are included.
  - d) New technologies and control methods available are summarised.
  - e) National and local policy frameworks and legislation on non-native invasive plant species are examined and local relevance is explained.
  - f) Maidstone Borough Council to publicise and explain their standard planning conditions on use of native plant species.
  
2. The policy should lead to the development of a monitoring programme for non-native invasive plant species presence and control measures in the borough using GIS. This data collection will allow us to examine the following;
  - a) Long-term cost effectiveness of measures taken
  - b) The spread of non-native invasive speciesThis will assist in adjust policy and control measures to delivery best-value control.
  
3. Investigate funding resources available to local authorities for control of non-native invasive plant species
4. Link to National Invasive Species Forum.

6.3 This research project should take approximately 13 weeks of officer time to develop and implement.

6.4 This should be completed before the end of 2011.

### Rare Tree and Shrub Restoration Project

7.1 A pilot project to restore and expand historic native tree and shrub coverage across the Borough. Propagation from cuttings, seed and other methods would be utilised – building on experience gleaned at Boxley Warren LNR and the Lynch Bank, Detling where native box, juniper and small-leaved lime is being restored to the landscape.

7.2 Declining tree and shrub species found (or formerly found) within Maidstone Borough include box, juniper, small-leaved lime, large-leaved lime, aspen, black poplar, gorse, broom, sweet gale and crab apple. All these species could be the focus of a propagation project to provide local provenance tree and shrub stock for re-introduction projects across the Borough.

## **Biodiversity Projects**

### **Developing cross-team biodiversity policies and protocols to ensure delivery across council directorates**

#### **Biodiversity Planning Protocol and Guidance Development**

7.6 Develop the current GIS biodiversity data into a biodiversity spatial toolkit and guidance protocol

7.7 Ensure biodiversity toolkit and guidance protocol is available to all team members and Development Control (DC).

7.8 Explain the biodiversity toolkit and guidance to Development Control by holding two short workshops.

7.9 The biodiversity planning protocol should take approximately 4 weeks of officer time to develop.

7.10 This project should be completed by December 2010.

#### **Biodiversity Performance Indicator Development**

7.11 By examining the eight available local performance indicators (LPI) available on Biodiversity that have been developed by the Audit Office and the Improvement and Development Agency a review will be undertaken to see which of the LPI could be developed to monitor the success of the Maidstone LBAP.

7.12 The work will result in a Biodiversity KPI or collection of KPI with associated target/s to be identified within the Strategic Plan and reported annually to monitor the success of the LBAP at a strategic level.

7.13 Progress on timing on this means that the indicator/s should be developed and adopted within the Strategic Plan (2010-2011) before the adoption of the LBAP.

7.14 It is expected that 3 days of officer time will be required annually to report on this indicator.

#### **Organic Allotment Plan**

7.15 Work with the Allotment Committee to ensure that any future allotment site is organic.

7.16 Encourage biodiversity enhancement measures at allotment sites including compost heaps and wood piles.

7.17 Implement via the Allotment Strategy currently being developed.

## **Biodiversity Projects**

7.18 This will take 2 weeks of officer time to develop and implement. It is expected that this should be delivered before 2014.

### **Introduce biodiversity concepts to Landscape and Conservation Planning**

7.19 Work with the Landscape and Conservation team produce a summary document on biodiversity and PPG9 with respect to planning applications and highlighting areas where they could mitigate the application of biodiversity enhancements.

7.20 It is expected the summary biodiversity planning fact sheet should be used in conjunction with the biodiversity toolkit and protocol guidance to assist with processing of planning applications processing to meet all biodiversity duties.

7.21 This work should take 2 weeks of officer time and should be developed before December 2010

## Biodiversity Projects

### Encouraging and connecting people to wildlife within the Urban Area of Maidstone

8.1 There are specific projects aimed at encouraging wildlife within Maidstone's urban areas, raising awareness of biodiversity and measuring progress towards enhancing biodiversity on our land holdings; these projects are:

1. Biodiversity Communication Plan
2. Bird-feeder Scheme
3. Insect Box Scheme
4. Local Nature Reserve Development

#### Biodiversity Communication Plan

8.2 Develop links with the community and communicate the importance of conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

8.3 Key actions ensuring community awareness of biodiversity can be seen in table 13

**Table 13 Key actions to ensure community awareness of biodiversity in the borough**

Ref	Date	Action	Key Partner/s	Costs
WPL1	April 2010	Create a LBAP summary leaflet and posters to send to schools, parish councils and interested customers explaining the LBAP and how they can become more involved		£1000
WPL2	May 2010	Develop a LBAP webpage which will contain all LBAP documentation, links to partner organisation websites, upcoming events, progress on projects and contact details		
WPL3	May 2010	Formalise agreements with Maidstone Museum for at least 2 workshops/presentations on natural history to be held each year		
WPL4	Jan 2011	Organise school visits to discuss biodiversity including wildlife walks.		

## Biodiversity Projects

		Ensure that the National Curriculum is crossed reference when designing school visits.		
WPL5	2010-2015	Include a biodiversity update in the borough green section of local newspaper annually.		
WPL6	2010-2015	Arrange wildlife events and volunteer days	MVCP	£1000 per year

**Costs = £6000**

### Bird-feeder Scheme

8.4 Feeding birds with wild bird food is a critical source of food for birds during the breeding season and the winter months. With the recent changes in climate producing unseasonable weather birds are always under pressure to find food.

8.5 This project will target 10 schools within urban areas of Maidstone and introduce these schools to wildlife with a presentation on biodiversity linked to the national curriculum, a bird-feeder making exercise, an initial supply of bird food and a bird-spotters poster.

8.6 The bird-feeders are made with old plastic bottles and so this educational day will also encourage the re-using of waste materials.

8.7 Key actions for the bird feeder project can be seen in table 14

**Table 14 Key actions for the bird feeder project**

Ref	Date	Action	Key Partner/s	Costs
BF1	Jan 2011	Contact schools and seek participation in the biodiversity educational day		
BF2	Jan 2011	Order bird-feeder recycle making kit, bird food and bird identifying posters		£400
BF3	2011-2012	Visit schools		

**Total Costs = £400**

## Biodiversity Projects

### Woodpile and Insect Box Scheme

8.8 Insect boxes provide additional habitats for insects such as solitary bees and also are excellent for over-wintering Ladybirds and Lacewings. Woodpiles create a range of niches for a diverse assemblage of invertebrates and other wildlife

8.9 Woodpiles should be placed in partial shade while insect boxes should be placed in a sheltered spot, preferably to catch the morning sun.

8.10 This project aims to enhance biodiversity in our parks and open spaces and the key actions to implement can be seen in table 15.

**Table 15 Key actions to implement insect box project**

Ref	Date	Action	Key Partner/s	Costs
IB1	May 2011	Examine and find suitable parks and open space sites where the woodpiles and insect boxes can be placed		
IB2	May 2011	Order insect boxes. Describe the locations for woodpiles and insect boxes to be placed with the grounds maintenance team		£500
IB3	May 2011	Erect insect boxes		

**Total Cost = £500**

### Local Nature Reserve Working Group and Action Plan

8.11 There has been considerable debate on the current status of Local Nature Reserve (LNR) designated sites within the borough and little progress has been made to develop and plan for appropriate provision of accessible natural open space in the borough. A target for designation the number of new Local Nature Reserves per annum should be set

8.12 This developmental project will work with planning policy, legal and property teams to form a Local Nature Reserve working group to ensure development of this process to meet current and future standards via the development of a Local Nature Reserve designation plan.

8.13 The Local Nature Reserve designation plan should examine the following:

1. Current designated sites
2. Proposals for future designated sites
3. Area of LNR designation required in the future to ensure standards are met

## **Biodiversity Projects**

- 8.14 It is hoped that the formation of cross-directorate working group will allow for strategic planning and the inclusion of LNR provision and targets to be set within the council's Strategic Plan in 2010 with an associated key performance indicator.
8. 15 The working group should be developed by May 2010 and action plan developed by December 2010.

## Biodiversity Projects

### Biodiversity projects already supported by MBC

- 9.1 A number of biodiversity projects are already funded by MBC, these include:
1. Free-Tree Scheme
  2. Pond/Tree Warden Scheme
  3. Bird box scheme
  4. Invertebrate box scheme
  5. Native planting conditions for new developments
  6. Cordwood retention conditions for new developments
  7. Biodiversity site management plan conditions for new developments
  8. Swift Brick, herptile hibernacula and bat box informatives and conditions for all suitable new developments
  9. Cordwood arising from MBC tree surgery is left in situ or taken to River Len LNR to provide a habitat for saproxylic organisms

#### Free Tree Scheme

- 9.2 The free tree scheme has been supported by MBC since 2005.
- 9.3 The Kent Free Tree Schemes offers up to 25 trees completely free of charge to individuals within the Maidstone Borough.
- 9.4 The overall aim of this project is to plant 10,000 trees in Maidstone by 2010. (Target was reached in 2009).

#### Pond/Tree Warden Scheme

- 9.5 MBC has supported the pond and tree warden scheme run by BTCV for several years through the Community Development Section.

#### Bird Box Scheme

- 9.6 A number of bird boxes have been erected within our parks and open spaces in the last two years in partnership with MVCP. More than thirty sites throughout the borough have been selected and bird boxes targeting a variety of species, erected.

## **Biodiversity Projects**

## Biodiversity Projects

### Secure support for partnership organisations led key projects

10.1 MBC should seek to support in kind and financially when possible, partner led projects that deliver key objectives within the LBAP.

10.2 Priority to partnership led projects will be given to those that focus on priority habitats that are not extensively covered via stewardship schemes or when there is a significant lack of data on the condition of these habitats in the borough.

10.3 Projects that MBC should seek to financially contribute towards in Phase 1 of the LBAP are:

1. Orchards for Everyone
2. Ponds on the Downs
3. Wildlife on the Downs
4. Kent Habitat Survey and Monitoring
5. Pond Conservation Trust's Million Ponds Project.

#### Orchards for Everyone

10.4 The Orchards for Everyone project is run by KCC Countryside Management Partnerships (CMPs) and proposes a holistic approach to the regeneration of the landscape and rural economy. It focuses on restoration/creation of community orchard sites, management plan development and sustainable end-uses for the fruit.

10.5 The project was initially funded from 2006 until 2008 and so far the project has generated a useful GIS map layer highlighting the location of traditional orchards in Maidstone, developed a community orchard in Lenham and raised the profile of traditional orchards as an important habitat for biodiversity.

10.6 Future extension (additional 5 years) for the project will look to examine genetic mapping, heritage mapping, develop a centre for information exchange and an orchards trust.

10.7 It is hoped that MBC will contribute £10,000 towards this project

#### Ponds on the Downs

10.8 The Ponds on the Downs project aims are as follows and will focus on the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) 2010-2011:

- Survey ponds for protected flora and fauna and record using GIS format
- Assess areas for the potential of pond creation
- Produce summary notes on targets and management for the landowner
- Share the data collected using KMBRC

## Biodiversity Projects

- Write a summary report to raise awareness of ponds in the landscape and their biodiversity value

10.9 It is hoped that MBC will give £3000 financial support towards this project.

### Wildlife on the Downs

10.10 Wildlife on the Downs is a project that will deliver a series of events on the North Downs and encourage a greater understanding and engagement of communities with the Natural Environment.

10.11 A minimum of 15 events will be held within the Maidstone Borough during the course of this project (2010-2011).

10.12 It is hoped that MBC will support £1500 towards this project.

### Kent Habitat Survey/Monitoring and Planning Toolkit Project

10.13 The Kent Habitat Survey was last conducted in 2003. To assess changes in habitat use and also have the most up-to-date data on UK priority habitat distribution is essential if connectivity of habitats via creation and enhancement schemes is to be addressed at a local, regional and national level.

10.14 The project is likely to start in 2010 and take three years to complete and it is hoped that data will be available to use in MBC Land Allocations Development Plan Document.

10.15 This project will be supported across 3 teams within the council including Planning Policy, Development Control, and Parks and Leisure. Total financial support given to the project will be £12,000.

## Biodiversity Projects

### LBAP Implementation Costs to MBC for 2010-2014

11.1 A summary of estimated costs to implement the LBAP, not including officer time can be seen in Table 1. The minimum funding required to implement core projects highlighted in this document for five years is approximately £40,000, however funding required is not distributed evenly across years with more funds required in earlier than latter years.

11.2 The amount of funding required has been kept to a minimum and one of the aims of the LBAP is to work in partnership to secure funding resources to enhance biodiversity in the borough at key locations.

11.3 External funding available for biodiversity projects requires a percentage contribution from one of the main partners. It is hoped that if external funds can be found to expand on the skeleton projects outlined in this document some of the budget will be used to support external funding to enable larger biodiversity projects to be implemented.

11.4 In addition to the costs outlined in Table 1 the LBAP will also need officer time to act as Biodiversity Lead for the LBAP. It is expected that this will be approximately 50% of a full-time officer for the 5 years.

11.5 The LBAP is an action within the GSS and correlates to a large proportion of the Green Space Strategy (GSS)<sup>18</sup> Phase 3. Due to the correlated interests of the GSS Phase 3 and LBAP it is expected that the officer leading on the LBAP will also:

- 1) Work and lead on the remaining actions within the GSS Phase 3
- 2) Reviewing the current GSS and examining the need for a new GSS action plan
- 3) Co-ordinating the GSS and the LBAP with the developing:
  - a) Green Infrastructure Strategy
  - b) Land Allocations DPD
  - c) Open Spaces DPD
  - d) Landscape Character Assessments

11.6 During the review period for the LBAP which will take approximately 3-6 months in 2014 it is expected that the officer will need to work full-time to review the action plan and then prepare phase 2 of the LBAP (2014-2019). This will utilise information on successes from Phase 1, new legislation and policy, will look to continue projects, and should include any new externally and internally collected data when developing objectives, targets and action plans.

## Biodiversity Projects

Table 16 Summary of Estimated Costs to MBC to Implement LBAP projects

Project	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
<b>Funded entirely by MBC</b>					
Weaving Heath					
TAVR Nature Area	£500				<b>£500</b>
Dove Hill Woods					
Ponds Project	£3,000				<b>£3,000</b>
Biodiversity Monitoring	£500	£500	£500	£500	<b>£2,000</b>
Communication Plan					
Bird Feeder scheme					
Insect Box scheme					
Events and MBC staff volunteer days	0	£750	£750	£750	<b>£2,250</b>
Whatman Park Lowland Meadow Area	£500	£1,600	£400		<b>£2,500</b>
<b>Part Funded by MBC - Look for external funding sources</b>					
Senacre Wood	0	140	0	0	<b>0</b>
River Len Nature Reserve	0	140	0	0	<b>0</b>
Five Acres and Wents Wood	0	137	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Already Funded by MBC</b>					
Free Tree Scheme					<b>£0</b>
Pond and Tree Warden Scheme					<b>£0</b>
Bird Nesting Box Scheme					<b>£0</b>
<b>Partner led projects to be supported financially</b>					
Orchards for Everyone	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	<b>£8,000</b>
Ponds on the Downs	£1,000	£1,000			<b>£2,000</b>
Wildlife on the Downs	£500	£500			<b>£1,000</b>

### Biodiversity Projects

Kent Habitat Survey	£1,333	£1,333			<b>£2,666</b>
<b>Minimum funding required to implement LBAP</b>	<b>2010</b> £9,333 Already committed	<b>2011</b> £8,100	<b>2012</b> £3,650	<b>2013</b> £3,250	<b>MBC Total 2011-13</b> £15,000
<b>Funded by another project stream within MBC</b>					
Mote Park					<b>£15,000</b>
<b>Developer Contributions</b>					
Palace Wood Working towards good biodiversity management					<b>£16,000</b>

# Biodiversity Projects

06

# Agenda Item 2

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES**

### **REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND COMMUNITIES**

**Report prepared by: Jim Boot & Sarah Shearsmith**

**Date Issued: 27 October 2011**

- 1. KCC Youth Service provision in Maidstone Borough**
  - 1.1 Key Issue for Decision
    - 1.1.1 To consider Kent County Council's (KCC) proposed changes and reductions to youth provision within the borough, particularly the proposals to withdraw from two of its three youth centres, and to feedback to KCC the views of stakeholders, young people and residents.
  - 1.2 Recommendation of the Director of Regeneration and Communities
    - 1.2.1 That KCC is asked to re-consider its proposals for Maidstone regarding the reduction in the number of youth centres from three to one and the decrease in detached youth work.
    - 1.2.2 That the Manor, Shepway Youth and Community Centre rather than Infozone be identified as the "hub" for Maidstone if youth centre reductions are made.
    - 1.2.3 That KCC ensure that MBC is given the opportunity to jointly commission youth services in future, from voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises.
  - 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation
    - 1.3.1 Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) acknowledges the challenging financial climate for all councils following the Comprehensive Spending Review 2010. The proposed changes to the youth service amount to an overall £900,000 funding reduction across Kent commencing in April 2012. However, MBC is concerned that cutting youth services at a time when youth unemployment is rising, will have a lasting and negative impact on Maidstone Borough's young people and communities. In addition, Maidstone has the second largest youth population in Kent and the proposed reductions will therefore have a disproportionately adverse impact on the borough's young people.
    - 1.3.2 There is strong support from residents for increasing rather than reducing youth provision. MBC's Community Development Team has recently consulted young people, parents and other

stakeholders on-line and at a number of youth events in the borough since August.

- There were 916 respondents with 81% currently users of a youth facility in the borough.
- 59% use youth centres to hang out/meet friends or to have fun and only 7% to get advice. Although the percentage for getting advice is lower than expected, they do get information while having fun/meeting friends.
- When asked the question: 'KCC are proposing to withdraw from Shepway Youth and Community Centre and Lenham Youth Centre and operate from a hub at Infozone. Do you agree with this proposal?' 74% either 'strongly disagreed' or 'disagreed' with the proposal, 6% either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed', while the remaining 18% stated 'don't know'.
- When asked the question: 'Do you think you would use the proposed hub Infozone', 27% said they would, while 47% said they wouldn't.
- Asked about alternative uses for the buildings that KCC would be withdrawing from, 44% supported them being taken over by or sold to another youth organisation or charity.
- Nearly 90% of the respondents were under 18 years old.

1.3.3 These results are reflected in previous consultations that have informed other plans and strategies within the borough including the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Maidstone Borough 2009-20:

- In the SCS, 43% of respondents listed 'Increase youth facilities and services' (p27 4.4.4) within their top three priorities, more than any other objective.
- 41% of respondents to the Place Survey identified activities for teenagers as 'most in need of improving', placing this priority only third behind road and pavement repairs and traffic congestion.
- 'Youth issues and ASB' were the highest priority (27%) for residents responding to PACT surveys carried out by the police in 2007/8.

1.3.4 The SCS also states (p40): 'During 2008 Maidstone had the fourth highest number/rate of entrants into the youth justice system of any district in Kent, and experienced a significant increase in numbers between 2007 and 2008. There are some areas which have significantly higher numbers of young offenders. High Street ward has the highest rates, followed by South and Park Wood wards. Park Wood and High Street had respectively the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> highest rate of any wards in Kent of young people known to the

Youth Offending Service (May 2007). Shepway North and Shepway South Wards also appear in the worst 10% of wards in Kent.'

- 1.3.5 These priorities are reflected in KCC's report 'Transforming Kent's Youth Service' Appendix 6<sup>1</sup> which states: 'The Draft Local Children's Trust Board Children and Young People's Plan 2011 - 2014 for Maidstone identifies the rate of teenage conception, the proportion of NEETs and the engagement of young offenders in suitable education and training as key issues under the theme of Adolescent Engagement.'
- 1.3.6 MBC is concerned that cutting youth services in Shepway and Lenham may exacerbate anti-social behaviour by young people, youth unemployment and teenage conceptions, undermining the ability to achieve key shared priorities.
- 1.3.7 When reviewing the approach that KCC took to scoring the current youth centre provision as set out in its Frequently Asked Questions paper<sup>2</sup> (p6), the difference in the scores was minimal with Infozone scoring 69 and Shepway 67. In other parts of Kent a score of 67 would have been sufficient to be chosen as a hub. Further, it is felt that the scoring failed to take account of a number of advantages that the Manor, Shepway Youth and Community Centre has over Infozone not least that it is the only significant youth facility on the estate. According to information provided by KCC, Shepway also has slightly lower running costs £88,500 compared to Infozone £92,600. It is also felt that the 'availability and quality of youth work space' at Shepway is greater than at Infozone. There is also greater security of tenure with Shepway as the facility is owned by MBC whereas Infozone has been earmarked for disposal by KCC - albeit that disposal may not take place for a while during the current property recession. The facilities at Shepway that aren't available at Infozone include:
- a substantial sports hall;
  - an outdoor multi-use games area/ball court;
  - access to open space including football pitches;
  - substantial free off-street car parking;
  - as well as youth club facilities that are at least equal in scope and size to those offered at Infozone.
- 1.3.8 Further, while MBC would rather KCC maintain both facilities, on balance it feels that there is already significant alternative and improving provision within the town centre where Infozone is based. It is felt that the commissioning budget could be better

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<sup>1</sup> <https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/education-and-learning/kent-youth-service/KYS%20Transformation%20Consultation%20Full%20Document.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/education-and-learning/kent-youth-service/Kent%20Youth%20Service%20Transformation\\_FAQ.pdf](https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/education-and-learning/kent-youth-service/Kent%20Youth%20Service%20Transformation_FAQ.pdf)

utilised in the town centre to enhance existing provision and detached youth work. These facilities include:

- Switch Youth Café;
- Connexions;
- Porchlight (homeless charity);
- VSU (volunteering agency for young people) at the Howard de Walden Centre, Blewett Street;
- A range of commercial and not-for profit outlets catering for young people including a multi-plex cinema, coffee shops, bowling alley, recording studio/rehearsal rooms, theatre and youth theatre.

1.3.9 KCC's proposals also include a commitment to retain a street based/detached youth work team in Maidstone Borough. While this is a reduction from the current two teams (rural and urban), the council will continue to support the work of this team and support the proposal to have a Community Youth Tutor – possibly based at the Senacre Skills and Community Centre – encouraging young people from the neighbouring deprived areas to access this centre with its focus on skills and training.

1.3.10 It should be noted that a petition has been submitted to MBC by 421 residents from Shepway stating: 'We the undersigned petition the council to re-consider its proposal to withdraw services to the Manor, Shepway Youth and Community Centre, Maidstone. This facility is vital to the youth of the area and it is envisaged withdrawal would lead to increased anti-social behaviour.'

1.3.11 While the formal closing date for the submission is 29<sup>th</sup> October 2011, KCC have said that they will give an extension until 4<sup>th</sup> November to allow for our decision making process to take its course.

#### 1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 The council acknowledges that as it owns the Manor, Shepway Youth and Community Centre, it may be possible, to commission a third party provider to continue to run and even expand the centre potentially utilising some of the proposed KCC commissioning budget. However, this is not considered to be the best use of the reduced resources available for Maidstone borough.

1.6.2 There is concern that KCC's proposed commissioning budget of £1.2 million will not be allocated appropriately across the Kent districts. Maidstone Borough has the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest population of young people of any district in Kent which does not even represent 1/12<sup>th</sup> of the total budget (12 Kent Districts). It is anticipated that the commissioning budget is likely to be in the region of £80-

90,000. There is a also concern that commissioning budgets will be vulnerable to future cuts as local authority budgets are further squeezed. Positively KCC officers have stated that their ideal commissioning framework is that youth services will be commissioned with a minimum three year Service Level Agreement as commissioning on an annually renewable contract/SLA will not give third party providers the security to enable them to employ staff, seek grants or provide certainty to users and local communities. This intention has not yet however been confirmed.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 Given that 'Increase youth facilities and services' was the most highly prioritized action within the Sustainable Community Strategy for Maidstone Borough 2009-20 (p27 4.4.4),adequate youth service provision is critical to achieving this priority.

1.5.2 MBC's Strategic Plan states that 'people should not be disadvantaged by where they live and deprivation reduced'. The proposed changes to the youth service which could lead to the closure of the Manor, Shepway Youth and Community Centre would be contrary to that objective.

1.6 Risk Management

1.8.1 The key risks are that reducing youth provision at a time of high unemployment will have a substantial and negative impact on community safety, educational attainment, teenage conception, substance misuse and risk taking behaviour by young people. Retaining the Manor, Shepway Youth and Community Centre and allocating the commissioning budget properly to enhance existing voluntary and community provision in the town centre and in rural service centres will allow the relatively small amount of commissioning budget to stretch further and could potentially be used to draw in additional funding from sources that KCC or MBC would not be able to access (as public sector bodies).

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

1.	Financial	X
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

1.7.2 MBC may see increased costs if the risks identified at 1.8 materialise. Strong links have in particular been identified between the quality and quantity of youth work and facilities in an area and young people’s health and well-being.

1.7.3 There is a potential impact on community safety through reduced youth services and facilities in the borough leading to increased incidents of anti-social behaviour and crime.

1.7.4 While KCC’s withdrawal from Shepway would only have a very limited impact on MBC’s income – currently £75 per year – the requirement to maintain the building would fall back on MBC when there is no budget provision for this.

1.8 Conclusions

1.10.1 The consultation that MBC and its partners undertook in August and September shows that an overwhelming percentage of the young people who took part are in opposition to the proposed reduction in youth services. Also, that the proposed reduction goes against the shared priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy for Maidstone Borough 2009-20. MBC’s considered view is that if there is only to be one centre, the ‘hub’ should be the Manor, Shepway Youth and Community Centre as it has better facilities and greater security of tenure than Infozone. The central location of Infozone may be considered to provide better access for young people, but this is more than offset by the alternative and developing youth provision that is in the town centre. In regard to the proposed commissioning budget, MBC believes that this should be based on the population of young people in the borough as well as the levels of deprivation relevant to young people’s services. Finally, that KCC should involve MBC in jointly commissioning youth services in future and that the available budget should be used to enhance existing voluntary and community sector service providers in the areas of need including in the town centre and rural service centres.

1.9 Relevant Documents

- 1.9.1 Appendices
- 1.9.2 Maidstone Borough Council Youth Consultation Results
- 1.9.3 Background Documents
- 1.9.4 The Sustainable Community Strategy for Maidstone Borough 2009 to 2020.
- 1.9.5 Transforming Kent's Youth Service, a Vision for the Future, KCC, August 2011 <https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/education-and-learning/kent-youth-service/KYS%20Transformation%20Consultation%20Full%20Document.pdf>

**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes

No

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

.....

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

.....

Wards/Parishes affected: .....

.....

**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.

Cllr John A Wilson

Cabinet Member for Community Services  
Telephone: 01622 602242

E-mail: [JohnAWilson@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:JohnAWilson@maidstone.gov.uk)

Jim Boot

Community Development Manager  
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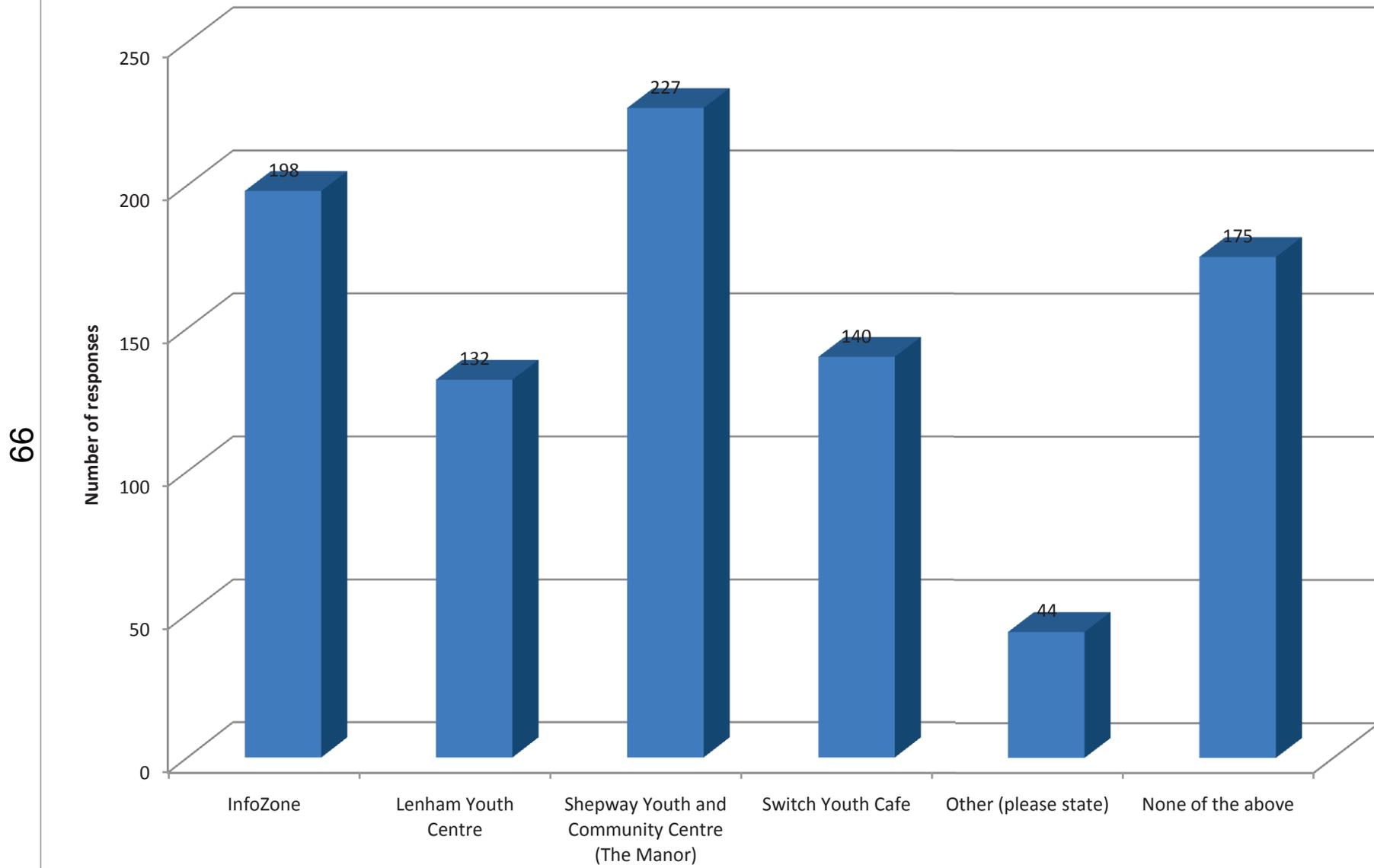
## Maidstone Borough Council Youth Consultation

**Do you use any of the following youth centres in Maidstone? (tick any that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
InfoZone	21.62%	198
Lenham Youth Centre	14.41%	132
Shepway Youth and Community Centre (The Manor)	24.78%	227
Switch Youth Cafe	15.28%	140
Other (please state)	4.80%	44
None of the above	19.10%	175
<b>answered question</b>		<b>916</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>11</b>

Number	Response Date	Other (Name of Youth Club)	Categories
1	Oct 11, 2011 9:22 AM	SNAP	5
2	Oct 6, 2011 1:13 PM	o yay :)	
3	Oct 6, 2011 1:09 PM	unit 1 skatepark	
4	Oct 6, 2011 1:02 PM	dont go	
5	Oct 6, 2011 1:02 PM	the rec	
6	Oct 6, 2011 1:02 PM	The Rec	
7	Oct 6, 2011 1:01 PM	Refresh Youth Club (Church run) in Larkfield	
8	Oct 5, 2011 1:08 PM	loose ymca	
9		Sutton Valance	
10		New Line Learning (8-12s)	
11		Fusion Youth Club	5
12		Chatham Youth Club	1
13		Kingswood	

## Do you use any of the youth centres in Maidstone?



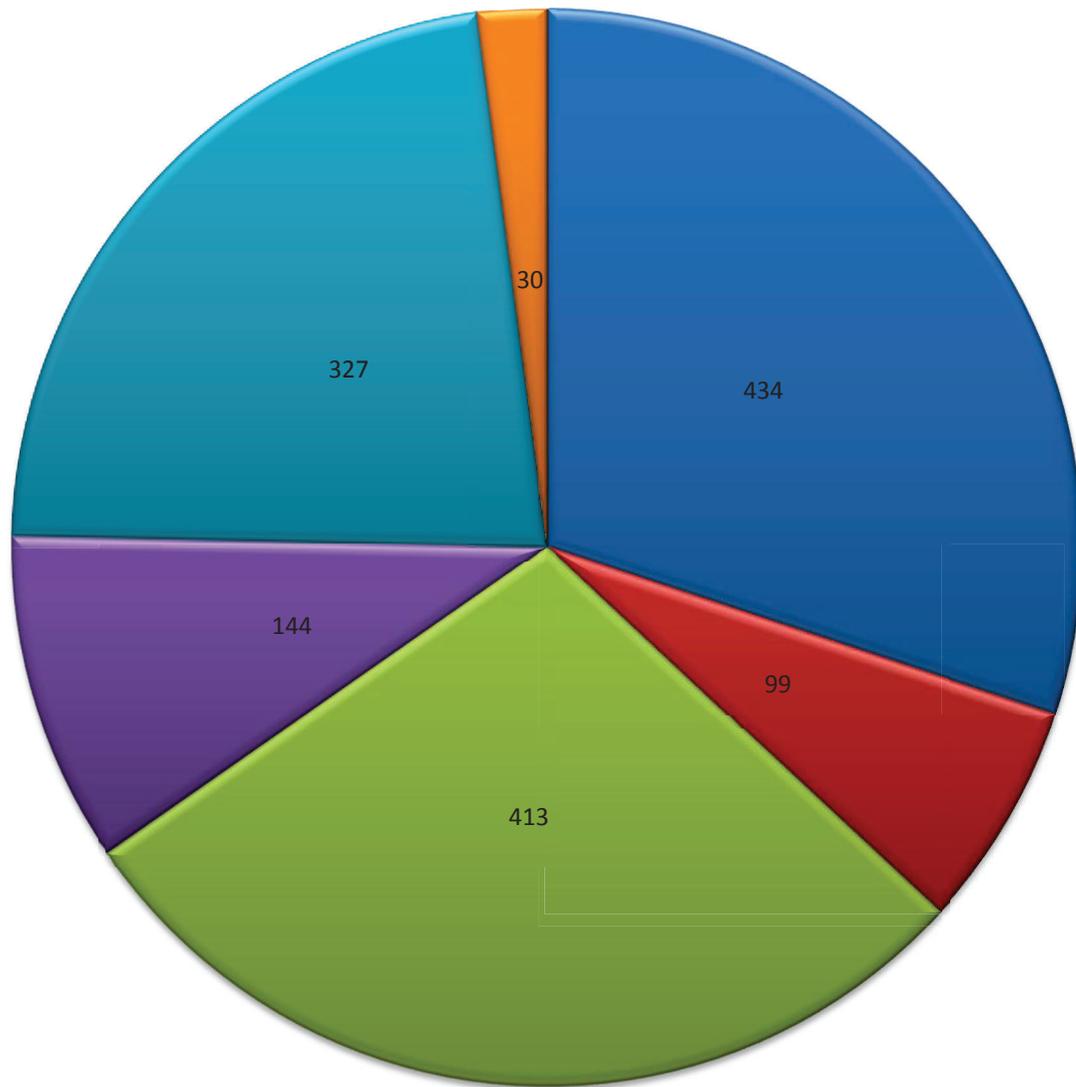
## **Maidstone Borough Council Youth Consultation**

**What is the reason you use the above youth centre(s):**

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
To hang out / meet friends	30.0%	434
To get advice	6.8%	99
To have fun	28.5%	413
Cheap Food and Drink	10.0%	144
Nothing else to do	22.6%	327
Other	2.07%	30
<b>answered question</b>		<b>1447</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>42</b>

<b>Number</b>	<b>Response Date</b>	<b>Other (What reason do you use a youth club)</b>	<b>Categories</b>
1	Oct 13, 2011 2:35 PM	Volunteer Opportunities	
2	Oct 11, 2011 2:23 PM	To learn things and to be a better person	
3	Oct 11, 2011 2:06 PM	To get away from my parents	
4	Oct 11, 2011 9:22 AM	Because its the onloy thing to do in 10 miles around here!	
5	Oct 6, 2011 1:13 PM	I don't have any fwriends	
6	Oct 6, 2011 1:02 PM	dont go	
7	Oct 6, 2011 1:01 PM	I Don't	
8	Oct 6, 2011 1:01 PM	It's good for social bonding and friendship building	
9	Oct 6, 2011 1:00 PM	Youth clubs are pointless	
10	Oct 5, 2011 1:14 PM	i dont use youth clubs	
11	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	i dont	
12	Oct 5, 2011 1:08 PM	i don't do it	
13	Oct 5, 2011 1:08 PM	i dont	
14	Oct 4, 2011 6:27 PM	get more skills in particular music	
15	Oct 4, 2011 5:45 PM	to be around people and meet new people	
16	Oct 4, 2011 12:31 PM	To keep fit & to go on organised trips.	
17	Sep 30, 2011 1:41 PM	Work Experience	
18	Sep 27, 2011 7:21 PM	to meet other people and get to know them and get a new experience and loads of information	
19	Sep 27, 2011 6:36 PM	Avoids hanging around in places in town where we are not wlcome	
20	Sep 27, 2011 6:35 PM	the only place i can be me and let my emotions and feeling out!	
21	Sep 27, 2011 5:46 PM	meet new people and have new experiances	
22		To make n do stuff	
23		Keep out of trouble	
24		Young carers	
25		Keep off the street	5
26		Get away from life	

# What is the reason you use the youth centre(s)?



■ To hang out / meet friends ■ To get advice ■ To have fun ■ Cheap Food and Drink ■ Nothing else to do ■ Other

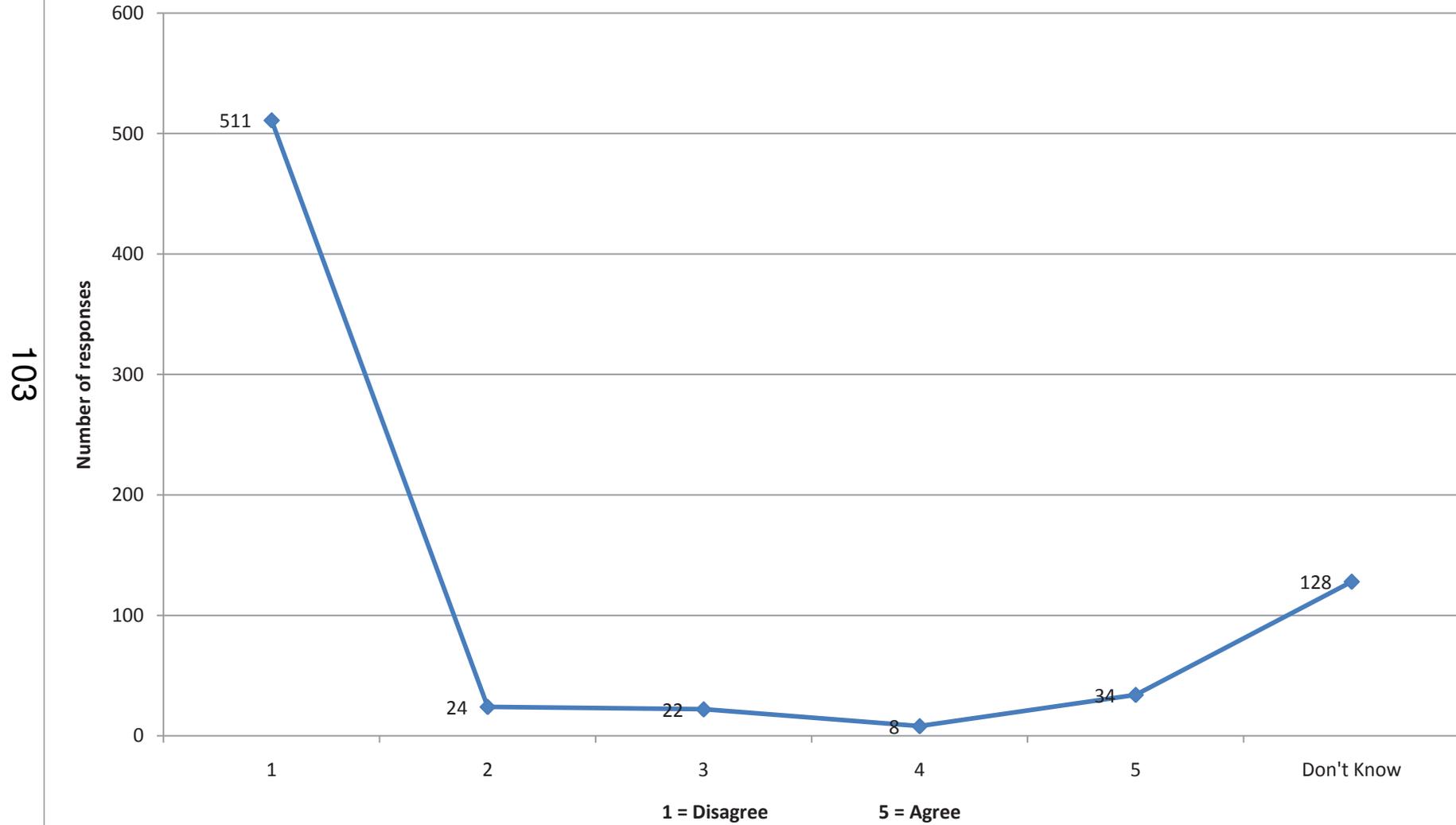
**Maidstone Borough Council Youth Consultation**

**Kent County Council are proposing to withdraw from Shepway Youth and Community Centre (The Manor) and Lenham Youth Centre and operate from a 'hub' at Infozone. Do you agree with this proposal?**  
**5 = Agree 1 = Disagree**

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know	Rating Average	Response Count
Your views	511	24	22	8	34	128	1.00	727
Your Comments								43
						<b>answered question</b>		<b>727</b>
						<b>skipped question</b>		<b>2</b>

Number	Response Date	Your Comments
1	Oct 13, 2011 2:38 PM	The plan to close KYS centres around the district is ridiculous, however if youth provisions are still run at those places, then the most beneficial choice for the KYS hub is InFo-ZoNe because of its existing networks and communications with other agencies.
2	Oct 11, 2011 2:25 PM	My parents fought to have a youth centre here in Lenham because it is a rural village they wanted somewhere safe, dry and warm where we could go to get out of their hair for a while.
3	Oct 11, 2011 2:08 PM	I think its a stupid idea and they should keep the youth centres open otherwise there is nowhere else for us to go when it is cold and dark.
4	Oct 11, 2011 2:04 PM	Info Zone is too far away for me to go.
5	Oct 11, 2011 9:23 AM	Lenham is the best youth centre around for miles so why do they have to close it?
6	Oct 6, 2011 3:58 PM	Increase youth crime
7	Oct 6, 2011 1:14 PM	sounds ssssspectacular
8	Oct 6, 2011 1:10 PM	dont know where they are so dont care
9	Oct 6, 2011 1:09 PM	Sorry I don't know where they are or kn ow what they are like and therefor do not care about them
10	Oct 6, 2011 1:06 PM	Never heard of the place
11	Oct 6, 2011 1:05 PM	sorry
12	Oct 6, 2011 1:05 PM	I dont use the youth center so im not bothered really what they do with it because it wont effect me in any kind of way.
13	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	Don't really care, doesn't affect me
14	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	cant say because i dont go to a youth club
15	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	Nyan
16	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	I dont know anything about the Shepway Youth and community centre
17	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	dont know what it is
18	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	sorry?
19	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	Closing Services... Making unnecessary cuts is not acceptable. You are compromising the youth of this area. Shameful. Bear in mind none of this is the Tory's fault. Labour spending for 13 years has meant this. I hate it!!!
20	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	I believe that this would make it so more people have further to travel. Some already walk and it might make them difficult to get to if they have full time working parents etc.
21	Oct 6, 2011 1:02 PM	its rubbish :(
22	Oct 6, 2011 1:02 PM	I can't give an opinion on this because I do not attend either youth club
23	Oct 6, 2011 1:01 PM	yes
24	Oct 6, 2011 1:00 PM	No comment
25	Oct 5, 2011 1:14 PM	i dont really know about shepway youth center
26	Oct 5, 2011 1:12 PM	why would you do this its a bit pointless and costs money to be closed and to revamp surely it would be alot easier to either leave it or make your own buildings to house the operations probably making twice the price of the average youth club and help more people become aware of your facilities i hope you think about this for i have never been to a youth club and i am becoming quite interested
27	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	i don't know how good they are
28	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	i don't mind because i don't go there
29	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	i like this idea
30	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	that sounds great
31	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	some people want to take a braek
32	Oct 5, 2011 1:09 PM	i go to lenham
33	Oct 5, 2011 9:12 AM	Never used the youth service.
34	Oct 4, 2011 5:46 PM	yes because info zone is coser to me and thats the only claser place for me and i cant get to the other places
35	Oct 4, 2011 12:33 PM	I disagree with this proposal. It means we won't have a safe place to meet & will have to hang around on street corners. I am worried that I will lose touch with my friends & become isolated.
36	Sep 30, 2011 1:47 PM	i like the lenham youth centre!
37	Sep 30, 2011 1:42 PM	There is no need for it to be closed down.
38	Sep 27, 2011 6:38 PM	Although i do not use this centre I think if it was closed down then infozone would becoe too overcrowded
39	Sep 27, 2011 6:36 PM	i dont go shepway!
40	Sep 27, 2011 6:03 PM	Its great fun , you can hang out , meet up with friends and there is alot to do for example darts , pool , air hockey , table tennis and lots more.
41	Sep 27, 2011 5:54 PM	Info zone is amazing and its the asyest place to get too! :D please dont leave us :(
42	Sep 27, 2011 5:47 PM	info zone should be the main hub because they are in the town centre and many people use it, it would be a shame to see it go!
43	Sep 5, 2011 11:32 AM	I think that Shepway should stay open and Infozone/Switch should work together to provide town centre provision for young people. don't close any of them

**Kent County Council are proposing to withdraw from Shepway Youth and Community Centre (The Manor) and Lenham Youth Centre and operate from a 'hub' at Infozone. Do you agree with this proposal?**



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**Maidstone Borough Council Youth Consultation**

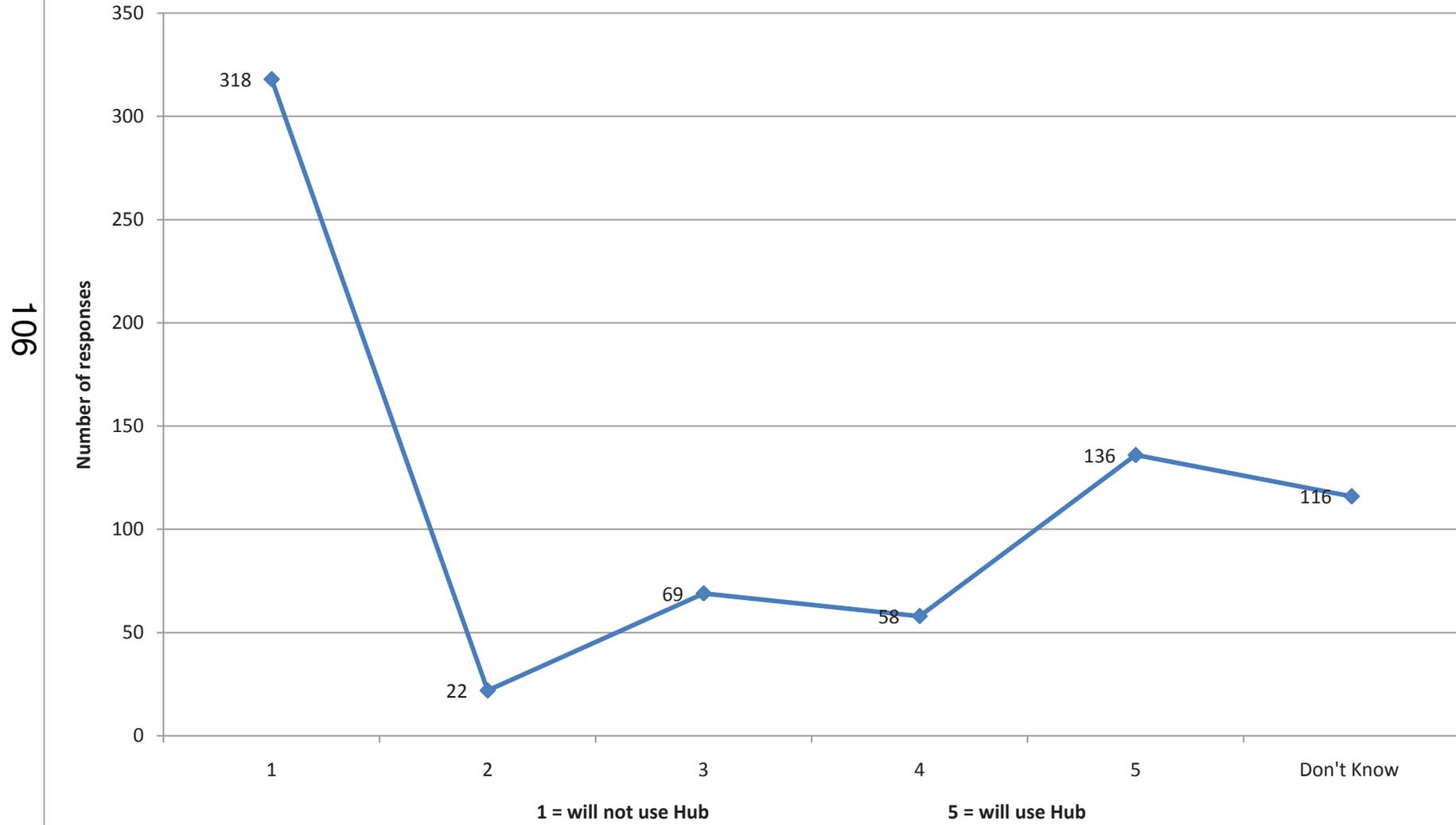
The Hub 'InfoZone' will focus on positive activities such as creative arts, cookery, physical activities, do you think you will use the proposed hub 'InfoZone'? (Activities may include: sports, music and performing arts, issued-based fun activities, life skills development, health and relationship awareness, volunteering and accredited skills development).  
5 = Agree 1 = Disagree

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know	Rating Average	Response Count
Your views	318	22	69	58	136	116	1.00	719
Your Comments								30
<b>answered question</b>								<b>719</b>
<b>skipped question</b>								<b>1</b>

Number	Response Date	Your Comments
1	Oct 13, 2011 2:38 PM	InFo-ZoNe already runs far more activities than is preposed for it to run, most of which other do not and cannot run even if they are the future hub.
2	Oct 11, 2011 2:25 PM	My parents will never let me go to Maidstone
3	Oct 11, 2011 2:08 PM	I will never go to Info Zone because I live in Harrietsham not <Maidstone.
4	Oct 11, 2011 2:04 PM	I am not allowed to catch the train to Maidstone in the evenings.
5	Oct 11, 2011 9:23 AM	I can't get there as its to far and my poaretns wont let me
6	Oct 6, 2011 1:14 PM	will there be any fwiends?
7	Oct 6, 2011 1:10 PM	oh dear
8	Oct 6, 2011 1:09 PM	ok but should have an ULTRA COOL! skate park
9	Oct 6, 2011 1:05 PM	I DONT KNOW!!!!
10	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	once again, i dont care
11	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	expand switch
12	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	i love music
13	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	Nyan
14	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	youth centres are not in my interest.
15	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	No. Not after you've betrayed me and my services that need to be retained
16	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	I'm not sure about this as I do not attend a youth centre
17	Oct 6, 2011 1:02 PM	This sounds better than a youth club and more fun and interesting, however, I still won't go, sorry
18	Oct 6, 2011 1:01 PM	may do depends where it is
19	Oct 6, 2011 1:00 PM	No comment
20	Oct 5, 2011 1:14 PM	All the activaties sound great
21	Oct 5, 2011 1:12 PM	i change my views slightly because of the activities but im still strong to my point
22	Oct 5, 2011 1:11 PM	its a good idea but i dont have time
23	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	I think InfoZone will be like a Fun, learning zone, a bit like a school.
24	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	it will be fun and we could learn
25	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	that sounds fun and eiting
26	Oct 4, 2011 12:33 PM	I don't know where the 'InfoZone' is
27	Sep 27, 2011 6:36 PM	i dont really care as long as i have somewhere to go!
28	Sep 27, 2011 6:03 PM	Yes i would use it , because it is fun and it helps you later on in life
29	Sep 27, 2011 5:54 PM	Its AMAZING! :D
30	Sep 15, 2011 12:21 PM	I wont go to Info Zone
31		it's too far away.



**The Hub 'InfoZone' will focus on positive activities such as creative arts, cookery, physical activities, do you think you will use the proposed hub 'InfoZone'?**



**Maidstone Borough Council Youth Consultation**

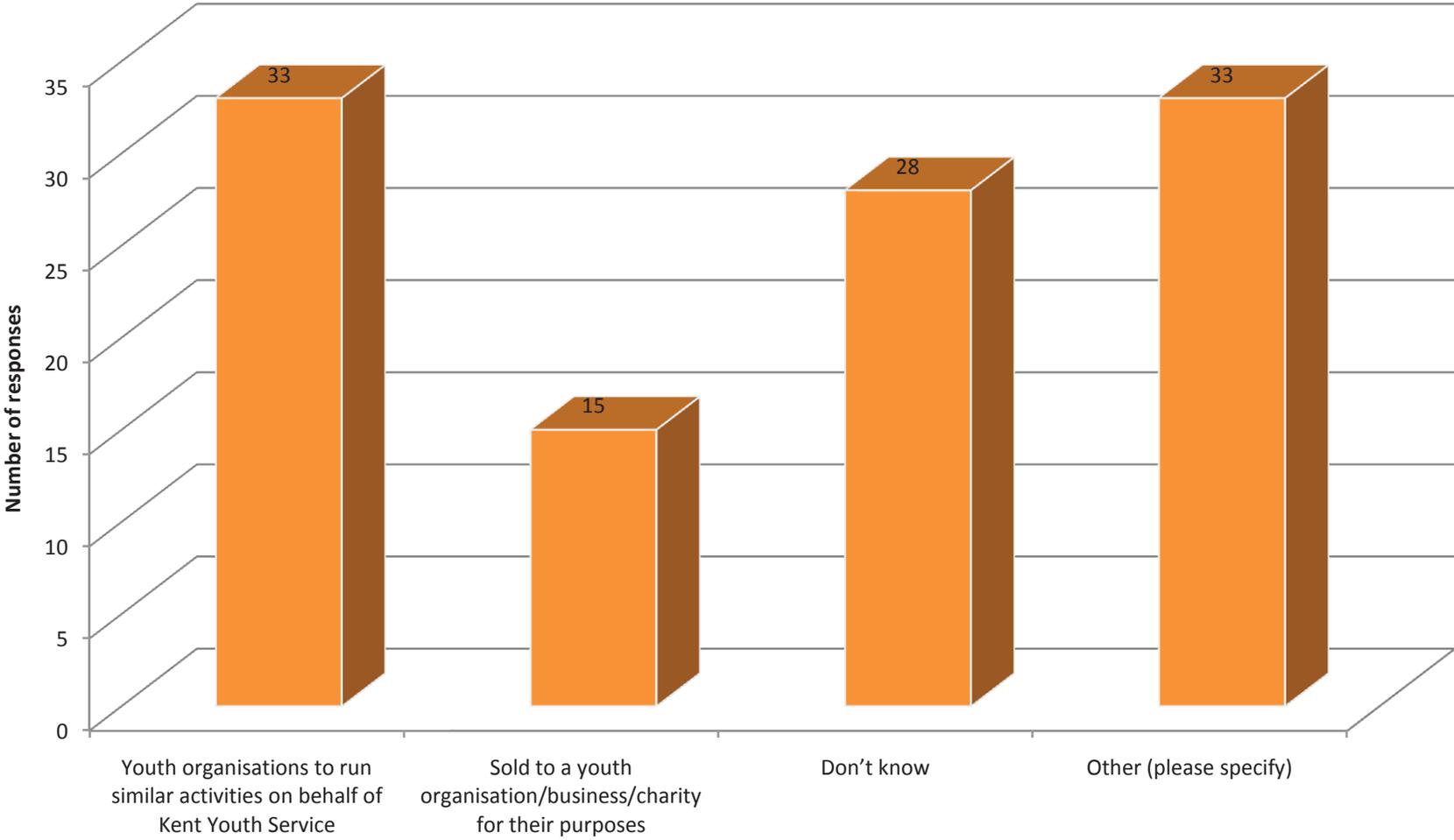
**Some building's (Shepway Youth and Community Centre (The Manor) / Lenham Community Centre may no longer be required by Kent Youth Service. What do you think should happen to them:**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Youth organisations to run similar activities on behalf of Kent Youth Service	30.28%	33
Sold to a youth organisation/business/charity for their purposes	13.76%	15
Don't know	25.69%	28
Other (please specify)	30.28%	33
<b>answered question</b>		<b>109</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>7</b>

Number	Response Date	Other (please specify)
1	Oct 13, 2011 2:39 PM	Unfortunately you would still need KYS trained staff to train other agencies for them to run even a half decent youth club.
2	Oct 11, 2011 2:25 PM	Give them to the local community to take on and use as youth centres as they are needed and should not be closed down.
3	Oct 11, 2011 2:08 PM	Give them to the young poeple to use for free
4	Oct 11, 2011 2:04 PM	Give them to the staff who work there as they know what works.
5	Oct 11, 2011 9:23 AM	Just keep it opne to us.
6	Oct 6, 2011 1:14 PM	don't be mean house the tramps!
7	Oct 6, 2011 1:11 PM	destroy it
8	Oct 6, 2011 1:10 PM	indoor skate park
9	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	sell them and use the money to upgrade borough green skate park
10	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	Nyan
11	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	Dont close them. It's stupid!
12	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	keep them
13	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	sell them and the money made put towards borough green skatepark
14	Oct 6, 2011 1:01 PM	Knock it down and build a WORKING BUS STATION!
15	Oct 5, 2011 1:13 PM	used as something else like flats or apartments for the homeless
16	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	knocked down
17	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	Used to build houses for the people of Britain
18	Oct 5, 2011 1:09 PM	Used as kings reach school
19	Sep 27, 2011 6:37 PM	dont care!

**Some building's Shepway Youth and Community Centre (The Manor) / Lenham Community Centre may no longer be required by Kent Youth Service. What do you think should happen to them?**

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**Maidstone Borough Council Youth Consultation**

Please use the space provided below to add any other comments about Kent County Council's proposal for reducing its youth services.

Answer Options	Response Count
	99
<b>answered question</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>skipped question</b>	<b>46</b>

Number	Response Date	Response Text
1	Oct 13, 2011 2:42 PM	It is extremely unfortunate that it is adults making the decisions on the future of young people. They have no idea how it will affect them and how else it will impact on other costs. If the KCC are so worried about cuts and money money money, they should consider the impact, not only on other agencies when they would end up having to pay out for more police, counselling, NHS, emergency services, YOS, but on the future impact on the cost for the KCC. It would cost far more to set up the Youth Service again in the future, which will happen, so in the long term it is saving no money at all.
2	Oct 11, 2011 2:26 PM	I think it is a silly idea to close down youth centres if they are being used, otherwise we will just hang around the streets and be a nuisance to other people, not on purpose but just because we are kids being kids.
3	Oct 11, 2011 2:09 PM	Please don't close lenham youth centre as its the only place where my parents will let me go to see my friends that I dont go to school with anymore.
4	Oct 11, 2011 2:05 PM	Why not raise the retirement age and reduce pensions instead of taking away our youth centre!!
5	Oct 11, 2011 9:24 AM	Please dont close down lenham youth centre because it is the only decent thing to do around here and my parnets wont let me go to Maidstone on the train.
6	Oct 6, 2011 3:59 PM	Will increase boredom and therefore crime rates and violence
7	Oct 6, 2011 1:14 PM	I hate it!
8	Oct 6, 2011 1:11 PM	build a EPIC SKATEPRK OF EPIC PROPORTION
9	Oct 6, 2011 1:11 PM	I think it provides essential services to some youths and should maybe have some
10	Oct 6, 2011 1:08 PM	I think it is a good idea as long as the support is the same
11	Oct 6, 2011 1:08 PM	Ummmmmm.... ☐ I think getting rid of the youth servces is a bad idea but at the end of the day this choise will not effect me in any kind of way atall but if it did i would like the youth centers to remain as they are for the benefit of only children. It is a chance for only children to make friends and have fun and improve their social life.
12	Oct 6, 2011 1:07 PM	if there was a youth center in my town(bean) i probably wouldn'ty go to it
13	Oct 6, 2011 1:06 PM	EXPAND SWITCH OR MAKE A COOL PLACE TO HANG OUT WITH MY MATES
14	Oct 6, 2011 1:06 PM	any nmoney made from reducing youth services shoud be put towards skateparks (borough green?)
15	Oct 6, 2011 1:06 PM	I don't think they should reduce them but increase them all over Kent, they should make these youth clubs more relevant to what youths enjoy doing, for example, put in a skate park or x box's, cheers :)
16	Oct 6, 2011 1:05 PM	make them better and people would go!
17	Oct 6, 2011 1:05 PM	i dont use them and neither do lots of people so just make skate parks
18	Oct 6, 2011 1:05 PM	i dont really mind to be honest
19	Oct 6, 2011 1:05 PM	dont use any so i dont mind
20	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	close them down, they encourage gang's of youths to gather together.
21	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	im perplexed.☐David otunga☐Michael migilligutty☐Alex riley
22	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	Nyan
23	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	Rubbish. LABOUR'S FAULT. Cameron makes the cuts because he has no other options
24	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	I think it isnt good as there are more young people in kent and the council are reducing these opportunities for young people
25	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	They should not close too many because it is a place where chavs hang around instead of on the streets
26	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	none really not to bothered☐david otunga☐michael migillicutty ☐alex riley
27	Oct 6, 2011 1:02 PM	it will cause more crimes and problems and larger groups hanging around in town
28	Oct 6, 2011 1:02 PM	give money to allready established youth groups such as the air/army cadets
29	Oct 6, 2011 1:02 PM	Couldn't care less.
30	Oct 6, 2011 1:02 PM	I don't know anything about the youth services in kent so any changes in the system would not affect me
31	Oct 6, 2011 1:02 PM	I dont need these knock them down and build more bus stations
32	Oct 6, 2011 1:02 PM	None
33	Oct 6, 2011 1:01 PM	Don't close other centres but still open the hub
34	Oct 5, 2011 1:15 PM	I dont really like the idea of youth clubs being disposed of because they must help a lot of peoples lifes including the m in different activities
35	Oct 5, 2011 1:14 PM	i dont think they should close it down because it provides opotunities for other people
36	Oct 5, 2011 1:14 PM	i think people should incouridge others to use youth clubs

37	Oct 5, 2011 1:11 PM	There are not many places for youths like me to go. You need to wait AGES for the bus to come so it is a good idea to have a cafe to pass the time that is not crowded like switch cafe.
38	Oct 5, 2011 1:11 PM	GRRR
39	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	more thigs to do
40	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	its not right
41	Oct 5, 2011 1:09 PM	i dont like youth clubs
42	Oct 5, 2011 1:09 PM	i dont like youth clubs
43	Oct 5, 2011 1:09 PM	it's bad
44	Oct 5, 2011 2:56 AM	You run the risk of more anti- social behaviour in the area's that you are reducing
45	Oct 4, 2011 12:36 PM	I think it is completely wrong that Lenham Youth Club is being closed. There is nothing else for us to do in this area.
46	Sep 30, 2011 1:50 PM	your plan isnot very sustainable as if you close the other two centres how can the youth workers get more work done.
47	Sep 30, 2011 1:43 PM	There is no need to reduce any of kents youth services. They provide a vaulable service for the youth of today.
48	Sep 27, 2011 6:03 PM	INFO ZONE IS AMAZING !!!!
49	Sep 27, 2011 5:56 PM	KEEP INFO ZONE! ITS AMAZING AND FUN AND REALLY CLOSE FOR MOST PEOPLE WHO COME HERE :D also its close to the bus station so people could still easily get here! :D
50	Sep 15, 2011 12:24 PM	I think it sucks as there is no where else to go in Lenham were it is warm and safe.
51		We need the youth centres.
52		Keep doing SNAP disco's.
53		There won't be anything for us to do.
54		Children from Langley can not get anywhere, no buses for them at weekends or sometimes evening.
55		Youngsters need the centres on their doorsteps.
56		Want a youth club for over 18's.
57		Severe lack of youth services already in the borough, keep provision local.
58		There should be no more cuts, there is not enough for youngsters to do as it is.
59		Keep the club so other companies can book it out e.g. family parties
60		It gives children time to themselves.
61		Don't close any of the youth centres then no young people will be affected by it.
62		Don't really care as long as you don't close Infozone.
63		Can you please keep Lenham one open as I live there.
64		The plan is stupid. i use it for young carers so i dont want it closed.
65		i think the head of youth services should come and speak to us about closure.
66		st simon stock needs a community youth tutor.
67		keep then open. Don't close it.
68		leave all centres open at least one night a week.
69		all the people who go to Lenham Youth Centre are great fun to be with.
70		Please don't close.
71		It's a good place to be, have fun and I like it cause we get certificates for doing stuff.
72		it keeps us off the streets, its fun, keeps with school work and we see our friends there.
73		it's a good place to be, you can meet new people, reunite with old friends, you also have freedom and you have loads of fun.
74		I can see people from my old school in a safe environment that my mum and dad trust. The staff are nice and it is nice to have somewhere to go when it gets too dark outside.
75		gets me off the streets.
76		there is nothing else to do within 10 miles!
77		it keeps us off the streets, which stops terrorising and makes the area better.
78		it brings friends together and its fun.
79		it's unfair on us because this is where I meet my friends that I don't go to school with.
80		it's like where we go to hand out like older people go to the pub.
81		decrease pensions and put retirement age up.
82		Nothing else at all to do in the area.
83		streets will be unsafe with kids around hanging about.
84		it's not fair as will not be able to go to infozone.
85		it's very unfair that you close Lenham down as we will have nothing to do and we will all be on the streets causing trouble.
86		I don't think they should close it because everyone comes and the people hear are good it is easy to get to and its in my local area and I will be upset if it goes and also we will be on the streets getting ourselfs into trouble.
87		I don't really care as long as you don't close Infozone.
88		You shouldn't be closing ANY youth clubs because no kills will be missing out that way!
89		If you close infozone we will have no where for advice, help and friendship.
90		Don't close infozone down.
91		infozone is brillant.
92		Where are we going to play football
93		I'm not allowed in town at night
94		Infozone is too small
95		Shepway has more rooms and space
96		Shepway is central to the four largest housing estates in Maidstone we will not travel to town
97		We need more youth services didn't they learn anything from the riots

98		If we're not in Shepway we will be walking around the estate or hanging around the shops and the police keep moving us on. On to where?
99		We want our club to stay as it is.

### Maidstone Borough Council Youth Consultation

These details were only recorded using survey monkey and not at outside events.

<b>Are you male or female?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Male	82.1%	78
Female	17.9%	17
<b>answered question</b>		<b>95</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>1</b>

<b>What is your age?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Up to 13 years old	33.7%	32
13 - 15	41.1%	39
16 - 18	14.7%	14
19 - 24	4.2%	4
25 - 44	3.2%	3
45 - 64	1.1%	1
65+	2.1%	2
<b>answered question</b>		<b>95</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>1</b>

<b>Do you identify yourself as: (tick any that apply)</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Having a disability	6.9%	6
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender	12.6%	11
Belonging to an ethnic minority group	3.4%	3
None of these	87.4%	76
<b>answered question</b>		<b>87</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>9</b>

<b>Which of the following best describes your current work status?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Full-time education at school, college or university	83.7%	77
Government-supported training	0.0%	0
Employee in full-time job (30 hours + per week)	4.3%	4
Employee in part-time job (less 30 hours per week)	3.3%	3
Self-employed - full or part time	1.1%	1
Unemployed and available for work	2.2%	2
Wholly retired from work	0.0%	0
Looking after home/ family	0.0%	0
Permanently sick/ disabled	2.2%	2
Doing something else	3.3%	3
<b>answered question</b>		<b>92</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>4</b>

**Maidstone Borough Council Youth Consultation**

These details were only recorded using survey monkey and not at outside events.

What is your home postcode?	Response Count
Answer Options	69
answered question	69
skipped question	27

Number	Response Date	Response Text
1	Oct 13, 2011 2:42 PM	ME17
2	Oct 11, 2011 2:27 PM	ME17 2hq
3	Oct 11, 2011 2:10 PM	me17 2dy
4	Oct 11, 2011 2:06 PM	ME17 2LS
5	Oct 11, 2011 9:25 AM	ME17 2QJ
6	Oct 6, 2011 4:00 PM	ME15 9FX
7	Oct 6, 2011 1:15 PM	ME186XT
8	Oct 6, 2011 1:13 PM	ur mum
9	Oct 6, 2011 1:12 PM	ME20 6FN
10	Oct 6, 2011 1:09 PM	ME16 8AH
11	Oct 6, 2011 1:08 PM	tn15..
12	Oct 6, 2011 1:08 PM	ME729AH
13	Oct 6, 2011 1:08 PM	me15.....guess the rest.
14	Oct 6, 2011 1:07 PM	ME168AH
15	Oct 6, 2011 1:07 PM	Me16 8AH
16	Oct 6, 2011 1:07 PM	ME168AH
17	Oct 6, 2011 1:06 PM	tn15 8dx
18	Oct 6, 2011 1:06 PM	tn15 ... you can guess the rest because im not telling you
19	Oct 6, 2011 1:06 PM	me19 5qx
20	Oct 6, 2011 1:06 PM	ME169LW
21	Oct 6, 2011 1:05 PM	ME16 8AH
22	Oct 6, 2011 1:05 PM	ME16 0EA
23	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	ME168AH
24	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	ME168AH
25	Oct 6, 2011 1:04 PM	ME16 8AH
26	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	me172la
27	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	me14 1qx
28	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	me19 5qn
29	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	ME15
30	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	ME16 8AH
31	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	ME16 8AH
32	Oct 6, 2011 1:03 PM	None of your business
33	Oct 5, 2011 1:17 PM	me206hs
34	Oct 5, 2011 1:14 PM	ME16 OEJ
35	Oct 5, 2011 1:14 PM	TN12 9NX
36	Oct 5, 2011 1:13 PM	me174qj
37	Oct 5, 2011 1:13 PM	TN27 8LS
38	Oct 5, 2011 1:13 PM	TN125JU
39	Oct 5, 2011 1:13 PM	me168tr
40	Oct 5, 2011 1:12 PM	me15 6rz
41	Oct 5, 2011 1:12 PM	me174qj
42	Oct 5, 2011 1:12 PM	ME207JU
43	Oct 5, 2011 1:12 PM	ME15 8UD
44	Oct 5, 2011 1:12 PM	ME174DN
45	Oct 5, 2011 1:12 PM	ME15 6EF
46	Oct 5, 2011 1:12 PM	TN12 0PQ
47	Oct 5, 2011 1:12 PM	ME14LH
48	Oct 5, 2011 1:12 PM	ME20 6TP
49	Oct 5, 2011 1:12 PM	ME206TZ
50	Oct 5, 2011 1:11 PM	ME16 8TR
51	Oct 5, 2011 1:11 PM	Me16 8TR
52	Oct 5, 2011 1:11 PM	me19 6ln
53	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	me6 5jn
54	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	tn120ps
55	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	me1 3xn
56	Oct 5, 2011 1:10 PM	Me15 OHN
57	Oct 5, 2011 12:59 PM	me15 9uq
58	Oct 5, 2011 9:13 AM	ME168TR
59	Oct 5, 2011 2:57 AM	ME157DB
60	Oct 4, 2011 6:29 PM	ME14 2TY
61	Oct 4, 2011 5:54 PM	me16 9pr
62	Oct 4, 2011 12:36 PM	ME17 2AF
63	Sep 30, 2011 1:51 PM	me171nz
64	Sep 30, 2011 1:44 PM	ME15 7SN
65	Sep 27, 2011 6:39 PM	ME145NN
66	Sep 27, 2011 6:38 PM	ME16 0RE
67	Sep 27, 2011 5:48 PM	ME16 9PN
68	Sep 15, 2011 12:24 PM	ME17 2HH
69	Sep 2, 2011 4:19 PM	Me2 1ab

InfoZone	198
Lenham Youth Centre	132
Shepway Youth and Community Centre (The Manor)	227
Switch Youth Cafe	140
Other (please state)	44
None of the above	175

To hang out / meet friends	434
To get advice	99
To have fun	413
Cheap Food and Drink	144
Nothing else to do	327
Other	30

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Your views	511	24	22

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Your views	318	22	69

Youth organisations to run similar activities on behalf of Kent Youth Service	33
Sold to a youth organisation/business/charity for their purposes	15
Don't know	28
Other (please specify)	33

<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
8	34	128

<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
58	136	116

**Compatibility Report for Combined youth consultation results (1).xls**

**Run on 17/10/2011 19:24**

The following features in this workbook are not supported by earlier versions of Excel. These features may be lost or degraded when opening this workbook in an earlier version of Excel or if you save this workbook in an earlier file format.

**Significant loss of functionality**

**# of occurrences**

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Some formatting on charts in this workbook is not supported in earlier versions of Excel and will not be displayed.
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4

**Version**

Excel 97-2003