AGENDA

ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 24 September 2013
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors: Ash, Barned (Chairman), Cox, Cuming, Hogg, Naghi, Newton, Paterson and Mrs Stockell

MAIDSTONE Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny

Continued Over/:

Issued on 13 September 2013

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone Kent ME15 6JQ

12. Future Work Programme **53 - 60**

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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Economic and Commercial Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 27 AUGUST 2013

Present: **Councillor Barned (Chairman), and Councillors Ash, Cox, Cuming, Hogg, Naghi, Newton and Paterson**

10. THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER WHETHER ALL ITEMS ON THE AGENDA SHOULD BE WEB-CAST.

It was resolved: That all items be webcast.

11. APOLOGIES.

There were no apologies.

12. URGENT ITEM

Resolved:

The committee agreed to take appendix A to Item 8 Update on the Market review 2007/08 as an urgent item.

13. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members.

14. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no visiting members.

15. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures.

16. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION.

It was agreed that all items be taken in public as proposed.

17. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JUNE 2013

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June be agreed as a correct record and duly signed.

18. UPDATE ON THE MARKET REVIEW 2007/08

The Chairman welcomed Steve Goulette, Head of Environment and the Public realm and Robert Holmes, Market Manager to the meeting. Mr Holmes explained to the Committee that since the 2007/08 Scrutiny review of the Market there had been another review in 2010. Mr Holmes than gave the Committee a brief overview of the financial standing of each of the Markets functions (attached at Appendix A).

The Committee considered that despite the tough economic conditions the income at the market had remains relatively stable. This combined with the general downturn in market use nationally was positive.

In response to a question from the Committee about incentives for traders Mr Holmes told the Committee that they had offered incentives both for new traders and if an existing trader introduces a friend. When asked about the state of the Market facilities Mr Holmes said that the site could be improved in particular the decor internally and externally of the Market Hall and the floor of the gentlemen's toilets.

The idea of moving the market to Jubilee Square was put to the Market Manager. Mr Holmes responded that he thought a niche market such as an arts and crafts or farmers market would perform well in the High Street however, the presentation of the stalls would need to be standardised if the Council wanted stalls to have a consistent look. At present Mr Holmes was aware that Canterbury Council required their stall holders to use particular coloured awnings.

The Committee queried the marketing budget for the market and discovered that a third of this budget was spent on subsidising the shuttle bus which ran on market days from the Chequers Centre. They also learnt that the Market was advertised weekly in the Kent Messenger and in the free ads paper, part of the budget was for the marketing of the events such as the Easter and Summer Fairs. It was noted that the Market Manager was in the process of obtaining a banner advertising the Market for Week Street. It was agreed that there should be marketing plan for the Market and asked if the Market Manager could prepare a business case for this. The Committee requested that this plan include investigation into transport and possibility of bringing new services to the market such as demonstrations, a mobile clinic and mobile gateway to make the market more of a destination and one stop shop.

The Committee noted that there had been previous attempts in the Town Centre to hold a regular farmers market, one at County Hall and one in the Royal Star Arcade, both had failed. When questioned about the involvement of the Market Manager in setting up a specialist market for Jubilee Square the Committee was informed that Mr Holmes was not involved and had not been consulted. The Committee considered that the experience that the Market Manager had could only be beneficial to this project.

The Committee thanked Mr Goulette and Mr Holmes for their update.

Resolved: To recommend that

a) The Market Manager in conjunction with the Town Team look at the feasibility of introducing a regular specialist market in Jubilee Square; and

b) The Market Manager prepare a business case identifying how best to promote Maidstone Market.

19. UPDATE ON THE VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE REVIEW

The Committee welcomed Laura Dickson, Visitor Economy Manager to the meeting. Mrs Dickson provided an overview of the progress made towards achieving the recommendations from the Scrutiny Visitor Information Centre Review.

The Committee was informed that the use of technology for engaging with and providing information for visitors was especially relevant as analytics showed that visitors to the visit Maidstone website had increased by 99%. The data showed that in January 2013 58% of web visitors accessed the site from a desktop computer, 26% from mobile devices and 16% from tablets. The latest figures for July 2013 showed that mobile and tablet access was now over 50%. Those who were accessing from a desktop were more likely to be looking at the 'Where to Stay' section of the website. The analytics showed that the most visited pages were the 'what's on' and 'things to do' pages.

Mrs Dickson told the Committee that at present there was limited wi-fi hotspots in the Town Centre. It was noted that the Town Team was looking at how best to extend the wi-fi in the town centre. It was also noted that using social media they were able to reach 58,000 people at once through facebook and twitter.

In relation to the second recommendation on staff training and undertaking the visit England training programme Mrs Dickson explained to the Committee that support provided from visit England was no longer available due to changes in how they were funded. The Committee heard that Tourism South East ran specific tourism training including a city and guilds qualification which all staff would be undertaking. Mrs Dickson also advised the Committee that the Town Team Marketing sub-group was looking to develop a project over the next year to make Welcome to Kent training available for local businesses.

Mrs Dickson explained to the Committee that they had not yet found a solution for logging visitor numbers to the Museum and Visitor Information Centre accurately and consistently. Currently a manual process was in place, which was affected by the workload of the staff. It was noted that a mat counter was being investigated for the Museum.

On recommendation six – that there should be a visitor information centre presence at the Town Hall- the Committee was told that Mrs Dickson was in the process of arranging job shadowing with Voluntary Action Maidstone (VAM) staff.

The Committee was disappointed to learn that the Town Hall foyer was closed when VAM did not have sufficient staffing. They Committee queried if this was allowed as part of the terms and conditions of the lease. Mrs Dickson was unable to comment on this and the Committee agreed that a copy of the lease should be circulated to all members of the Committee.

The Committee thanks Mrs Dickson for her update.

Resolved: That a copy of the lease for Town Hall Foyer be requested from the relevant officer and circulated to the committee.

20. WRITTEN UPDATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEW STRUCTURE

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Communities. They noted the risks to Maidstone's future wellbeing in particular unattractive development. The Committee were concerned that this was very subjective. The Committee queried if there was any criteria about what an unattractive development was requested a copy of said criteria if available. If this criteria was not available they requested further explanation about how this would be judged.

It was resolved that

a) The report was noted; and
b) The Regeneration & Economic Development Plan be added to the committees future work programme.

21. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the list of forthcoming decisions. Consequently they requested that the report on the Enterprise Hub.

The Committee considered the future work programme and items due at the next meeting on the 24 September 2013. It was agreed that they would consider the State of Maidstone Economy Report and requested Cllr Greer to attend to discuss the vision for tourism in the borough with particular reference to the Visitor Information Centre.

The Committee agreed a small task and finish panel to meet prior to October's meeting to scope the committees review topic – events.

It was resolved that

a) The future work programme be noted;
b) Cllr Greer be invited to the committees September meeting; and
c) The task and finish group meet prior to October's committee meeting to discuss the scope for the Events Review.

22. DURATION OF THE MEETING

18:30 to 20:58

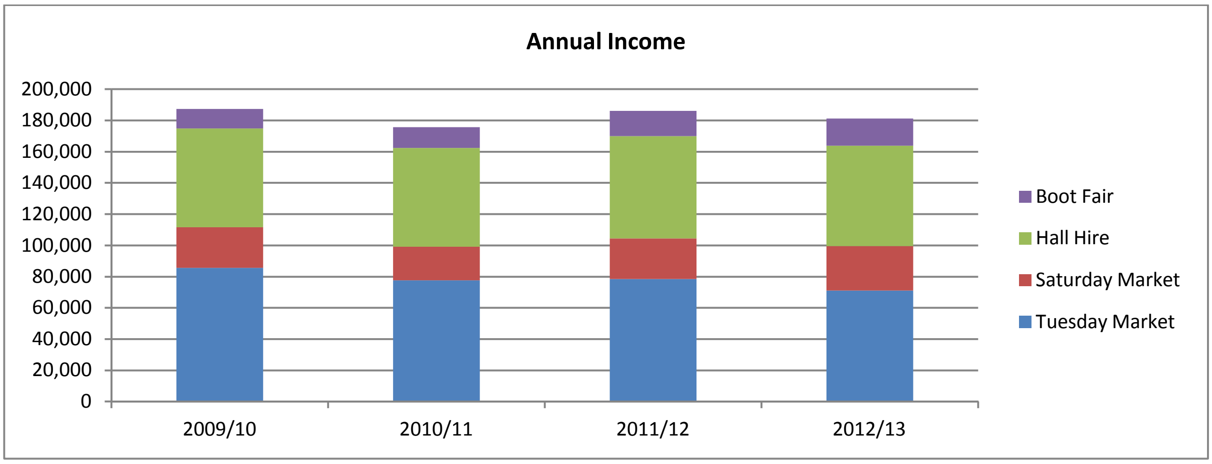
5

Maidstone Market

Income comparison

The following is a comparison of income for the period 2009/10 to 2012/13

	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	Growth
	£	£	£	£	%
Tuesday Market	85,666	77,564	78,535	71,180	-17.91
Saturday Market	25,934	21,634	25,995	28,283	+ 9.06
Hall Hire	63,345	63,251	65,427	64,397	+ 1.66
Boot Fair	12,448	13,358	16,219	17,424	+39.97
Total	187,393	175,807	186,176	181,284	- 3.26



The Tuesday Market income decreased by £8,176 in 2012/13, of which £6,288 was lost from January 2013 until the end of March due to adverse weather conditions also the loss of three markets over the course of the year, which fell on the Jubilee celebrations, Christmas Day and New Year's Day with an estimated loss of £5k. If these factors were to be taken in to consideration then instead of the recorded loss in income we possibly would have shown an increase of approximately £3k

The following is a comparison of service users over the past four years – the Market Trader figures being an average attendance for each market

	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	Growth
Tuesday Market	47	50	47	45	0
Saturday Market	19	16	20	22	15.79
Hall Hirers	88	82	107	97	10.23
Boot Fair	925	1040	1280	1395	50.81

The sudden jump in hall hire figures in 11/12 was due to the weekly use of the hall for Zumba classes but unfortunately this did not prove to be successful for the organiser, we also face the problem where due to lack of entries some of the Dog clubs now only hold one show a year when in the past they have held two. Although the average number of Tuesday Market Traders has remained fairly static over the years the drop in income is due to high rent paying traders leaving and new traders starting but with smaller pitches and paying less rent. We also have traders who have reduced the size of their pitches due to their sales not supporting the rent that they were paying.

While the whole of the retail industry has been affected by changes in the economy none more so than the "Independent Trader" and I would put Markets and Market Traders in to this category.

In the past 5 to 10 years, the traditional retail industry which includes Markets has been replaced by supermarkets, department stores, specialty stores, shopping centres, and a host of "Budget Stores" ie Primark, Pound shops, Wilkinson's, "99p" stores and direct buying via the various internet sites. There are still independent retailers, and again I would place Markets and Market traders in this category, but they can no longer compete as customers are being price selective.

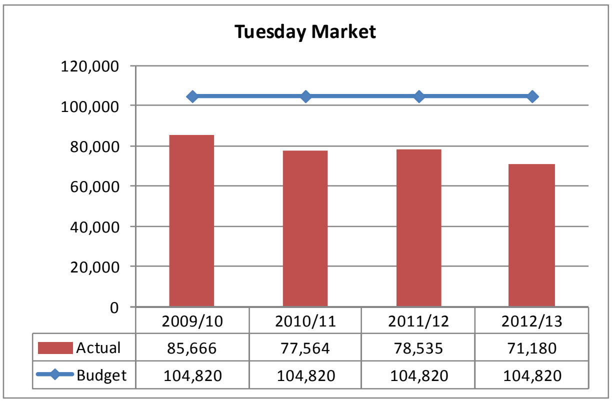
The retail industry has not only been affected by changes in economy but also by a change in society lifestyle wherein customers demand a more comfortable " one stop" shopping experience, the shopping centres and supermarkets provide free parking spaces, a clean and comfortable environment, free delivery and accept phone orders. The "out of town centre" market cannot offer these luxuries. This leads to one of the greatest challenges that Maidstone Market faces - how to attract the new generation of market shoppers.

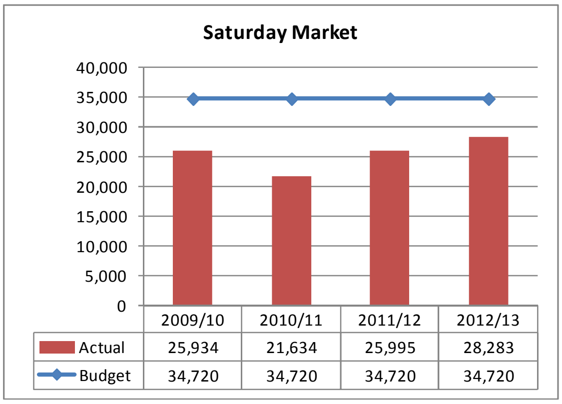
It is my opinion that with prudent management Maidstone Market can and will have a role to play in the local community, while we will not be a market with a great "eye appeal" for more discerning customers the market as it now stands meets the needs of the public that it serves. That is not to say that we cannot continue to work at presentation standards but to have any great impact it would take investment from both Maidstone Borough Council and the Market traders which cannot be justified at this time.

Should consideration ever be given to relocating the Market to a town centre location i.e. Jubilee Square and the bottom of the High Street, this would be the opportunity to insist on optimum standards from the traders in terms of standardizing the canopies, gazebos, colours and presentation on the stalls to provide the Borough with a Market to be proud of and offer a destination point to visitors to the area.

One of the more concerning aspects of the Market is the failure for the past few years to achieve the unrealistic income budget expected from the two markets.

<u>The following is a comparison between the Budget forecast and the actual Market income achieved</u>





You will also see the note at the bottom of the attached Budget Report sheet which identifies that growth of £35,750 was applied to the 08/09 base income budget in order to compensate for falling revenues. The Budget expectation in 08/09 for income on the Tuesday Market was £100,750 which we did not achieve but was still increased to £104,820 the following year, and the Saturday Market budget which we again did not achieve rose from £33,560 to £ 34,720.

Despite the large bottom line shortfall against budget for 2012/13, the table below indicates the financial contribution that the market makes within MBC. This shows that the market still more than covers its direct costs and contributes an additional £75,607 to the council in excess of its costs or £42,513 if street cleansing and toilet cleaning costs which are allocated to the market are included. These figures exclude contributions from parking at Lockmeadow.

Central recharges and income from the Lockmeadow complex are also applied to the market's cost centre. Whilst these affect the bottom line of the market's cost centre, these are out of the market manager's control and will exist regardless of whether a market service operates.

2012/13	Cost/Income	Sub-total	Notes
Direct Costs	123,727		Costs directly linked to running a market and which would be avoided if there was no market
Market Income	-199,334 (income)	-75,607 (income)	Direct market income **This sub-total represents the total contribution the market makes to MBC finances**
Toilet Cleaning, Street Cleansing and Refuse Costs Apportioned to Market	33,094	-42,513 (income)	Costs which are charged to the market, some of which apply to market activities directly but costs would have to be reduced from street cleansing service to realise actual savings. **This sub-total represents an alternative contribution figure covering some avoidable costs.**
Income from Ex Leisure	-123,534 (income)		This is an uncontrollable income and relates to occupancy levels of Lockmeadow complex according to agreement with MBC
Indirect Costs (e.g. rates and corporate recharges)	229,498	63,451	These are costs which would be retained by MBC regardless of whether MBC operates a market or not. **This sub-total includes costs which are independent of whether MBC operates a market.**

Conclusions

In conclusion, this analysis shows the following:

- Total income from the market has remained relatively stable between 2009 to 2013 with a slight decline of 3.26% over the period.
- Whilst income for the Tuesday market has declined over the period, some of this decline has been offset by slight growth in the Saturday market and hall hire and significant growth in income from car boot traders.
- The market budget has consistently under performed against its budget target throughout this period which indicates that there is an unrealistic budget is set for this service.
- The operation of the market more than covers its costs and makes a positive financial contribution of at least £42.5k and up to £75.6k depending on which costs are included.

Robert Holmes

May 2013

Maidstone Borough Council

Economic & Commercial Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 24 September 2013

The State of Maidstone's Economy

Report of: Clare Wood

1. Introduction

1.1 The Economic & Commercial Development Overview & Scrutiny committee's role is to consider reported that deliver against the priority for Maidstone to have a growing economy. The state of Maidstone's Economy presentation aims to provide members with an overview of how Maidstone's economy is performing compared to the other Kent districts.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is recommended to listen to the presentation of John Foster, Economic Development & Regeneration Manager (Appendix A).

3. The State of Maidstone's Economy

3.1 It is important that the committee are aware of the current state of Maidstone's economy, how this compares to the rest of Kent and the challenges around economic development the borough is likely to face.

3. Impact on Corporate Objectives

3.1 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following Council priority:

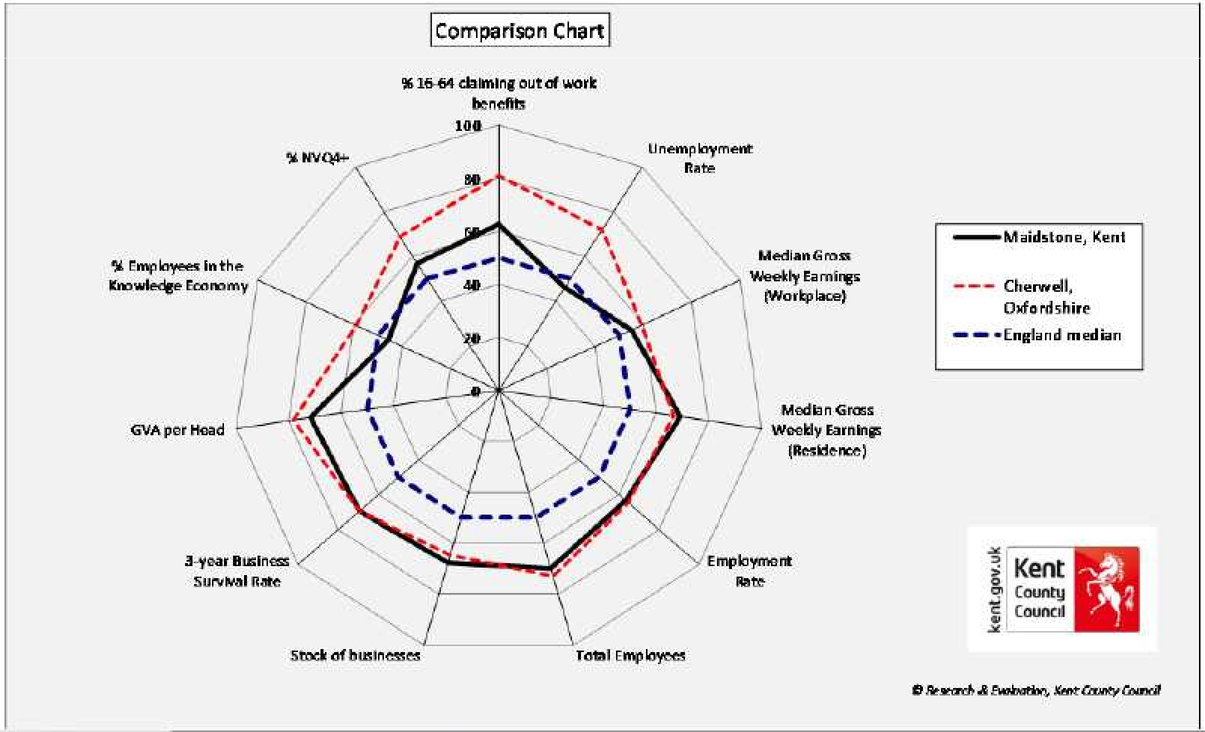
- 'For Maidstone to have a growing economy.'

3.2 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities. Actions to deliver these key objectives may therefore include work that the Committee will consider over the next year.

Maidstone Borough Economic Indicators

Data values - actual indicator values for the selected area

Maidstone, Kent	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
% 16-64 claiming out of work benefits	7.1	8.4	8.9	8.6	8.7
Unemployment Rate (%)	1.2	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5
Median Gross Weekly Workplace Earnings (£)	454.9	445.2	474.3	461.9	480.6
Median Gross Weekly Resident Earnings (£)	508.7	521.6	558.4	535.3	543.0
Employment Rate (%)	70.5	75.8	81.0	83.6	76.8
Total Employees	74,700	70,900	68,800	69,400	68,400
Stock of businesses	6,715	6,735	6,770	6,600	6,685
3-year Business Survival Rate (%)	68.0	64.0	67.0	62.4	62.4
GVA per Head (£)	21,108	22,168	21,356	20,803	20,757
% Employees in the Knowledge Economy	13.2	12.8	12.9	13.6	13.4
% NVQ4+	27.9	31.4	34.3	37.2	30.8

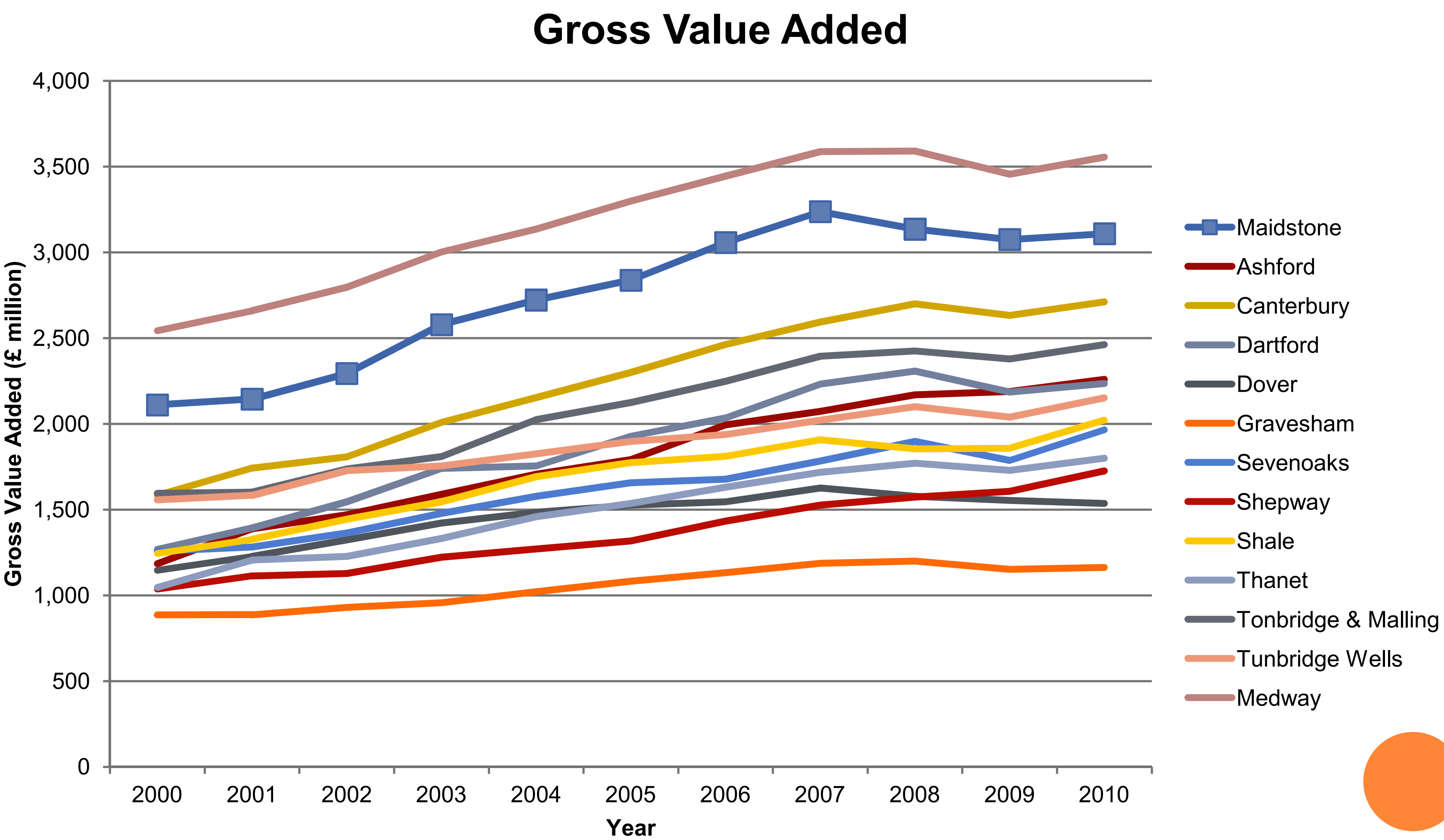


OVERVIEW

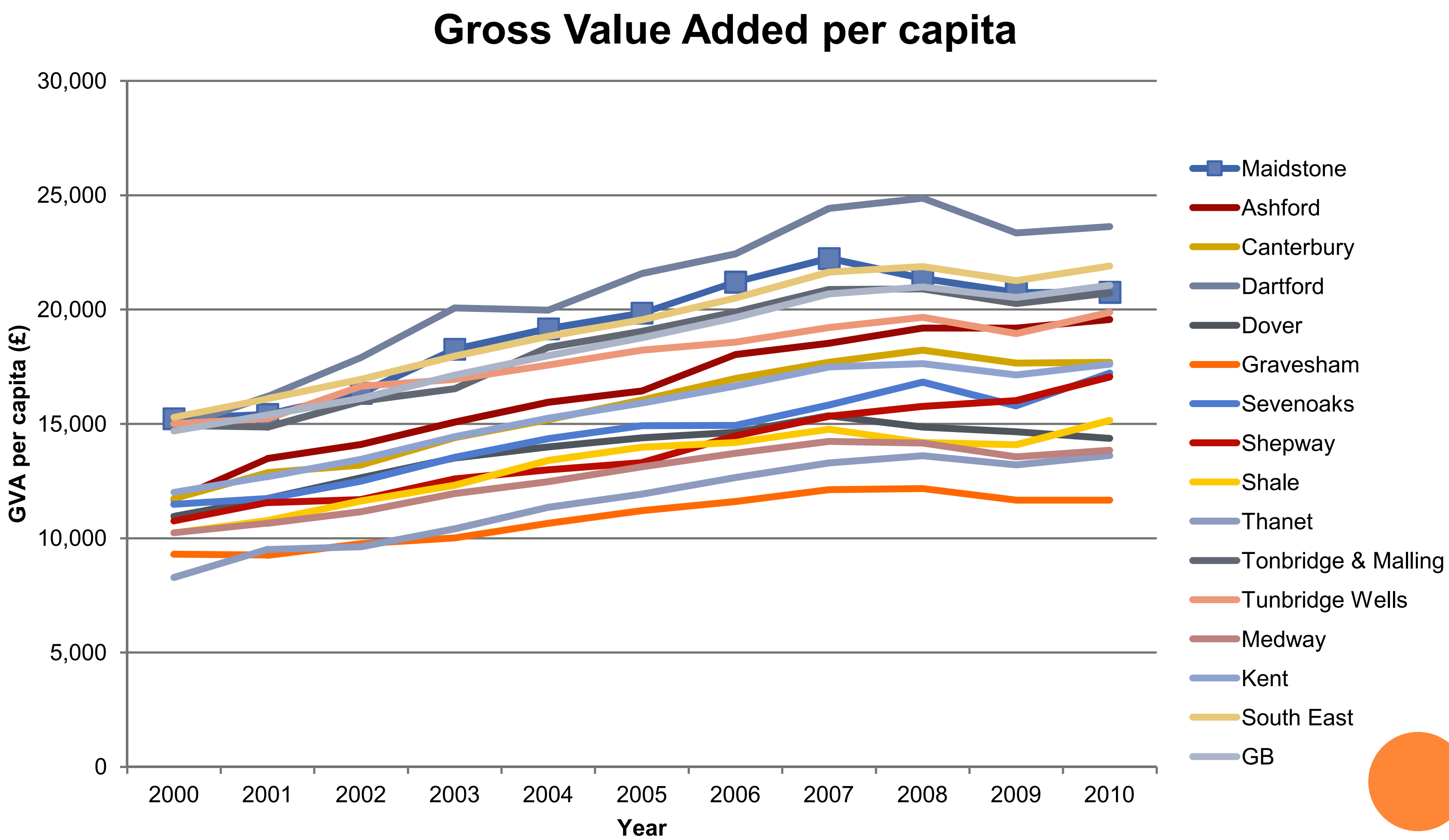
Indicators for Maidstone Borough can be divided into the following sections:

- Productivity
- Business Demography
  - Including Business Survival Rates
- Employment and Unemployment
- Labour Force Characteristics

PRODUCTIVITY

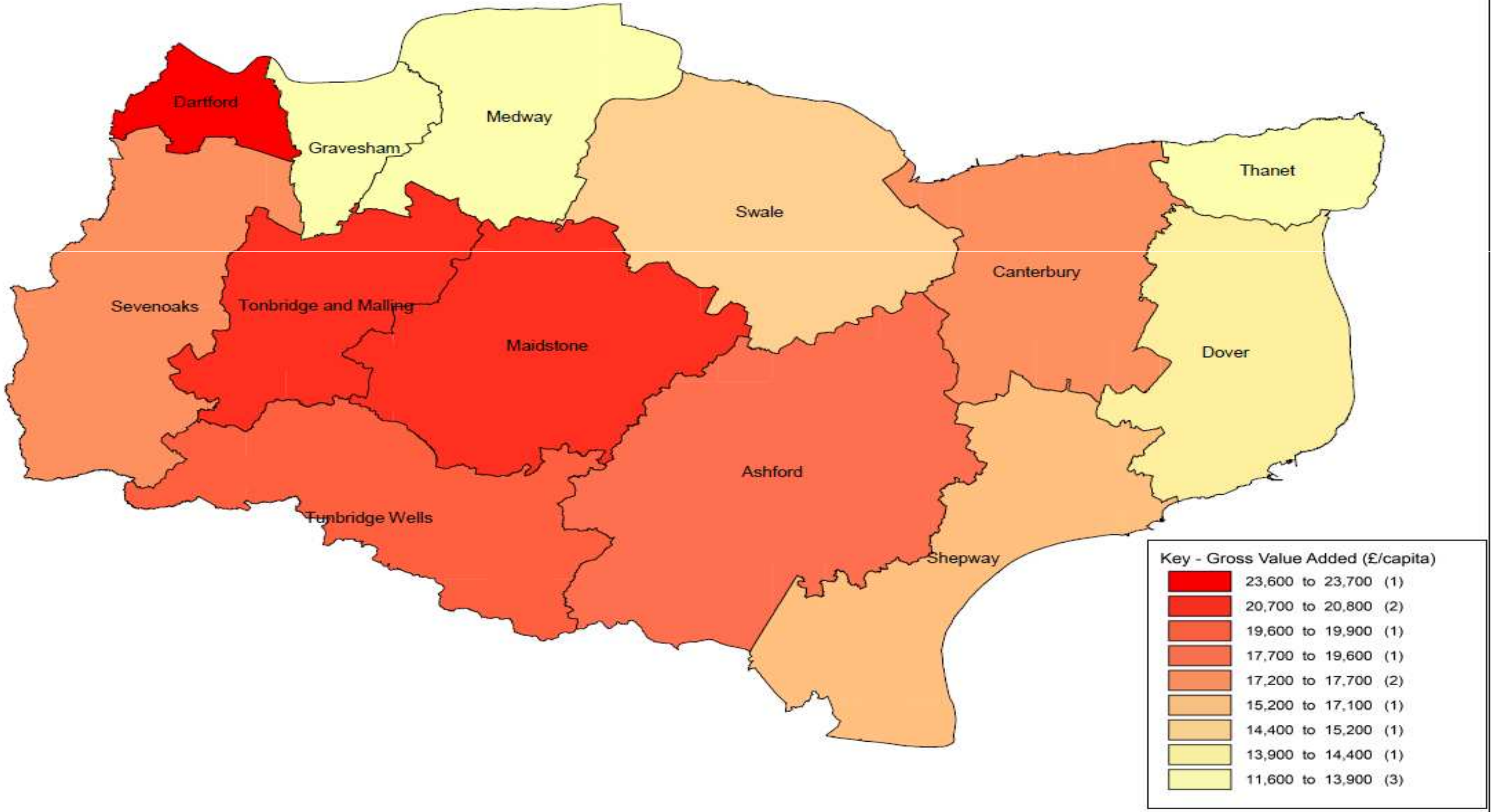


PRODUCTIVITY



PRODUCTIVITY

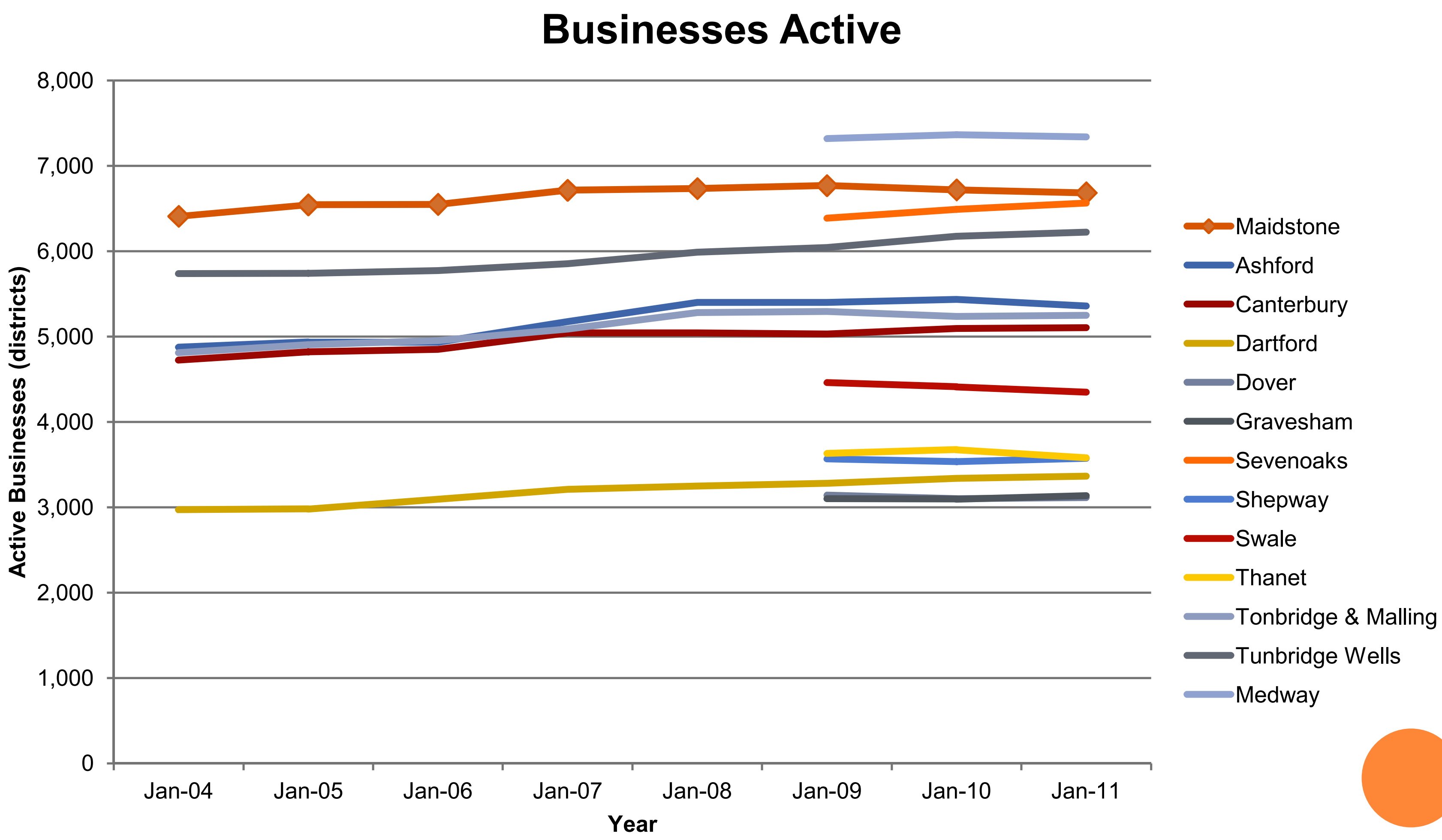
Gross Value Added per capita 2010



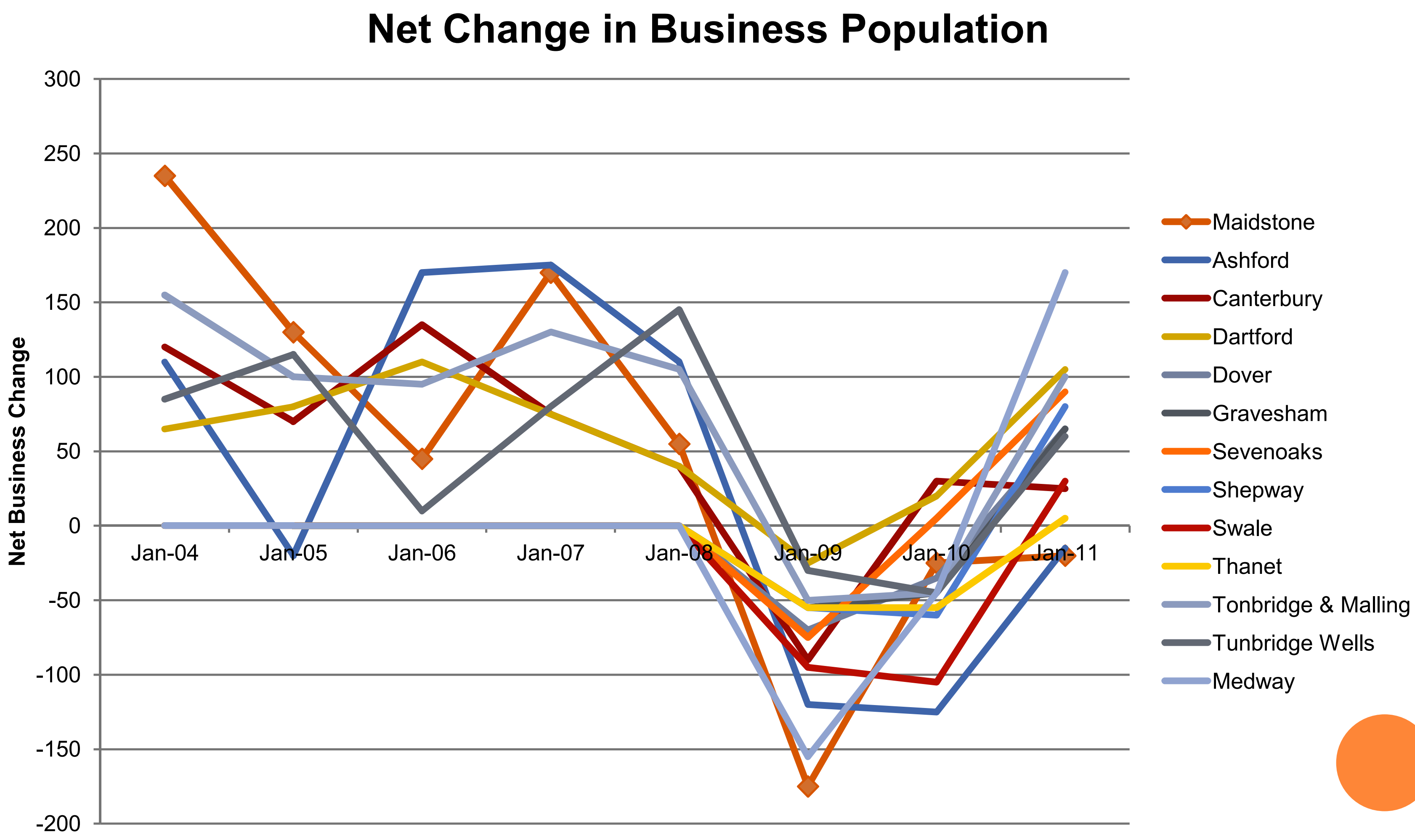
Business Demography

- Looking at the life-cycle of Maidstone Borough businesses:
  - Population size
  - Births
  - Deaths
  - Survival Rates

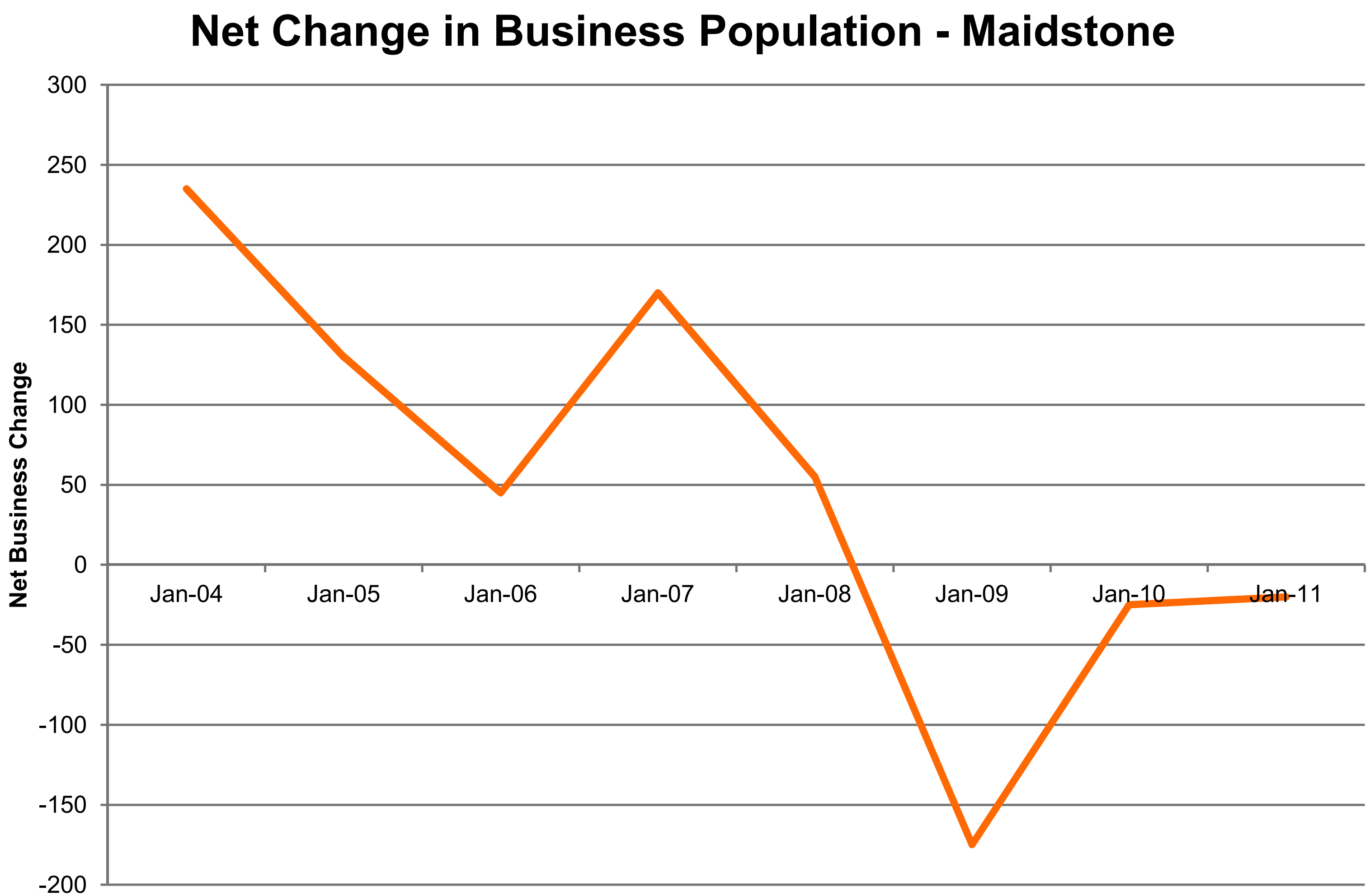
BUSINESS DEMOGRAPHY – POPULATION SIZE



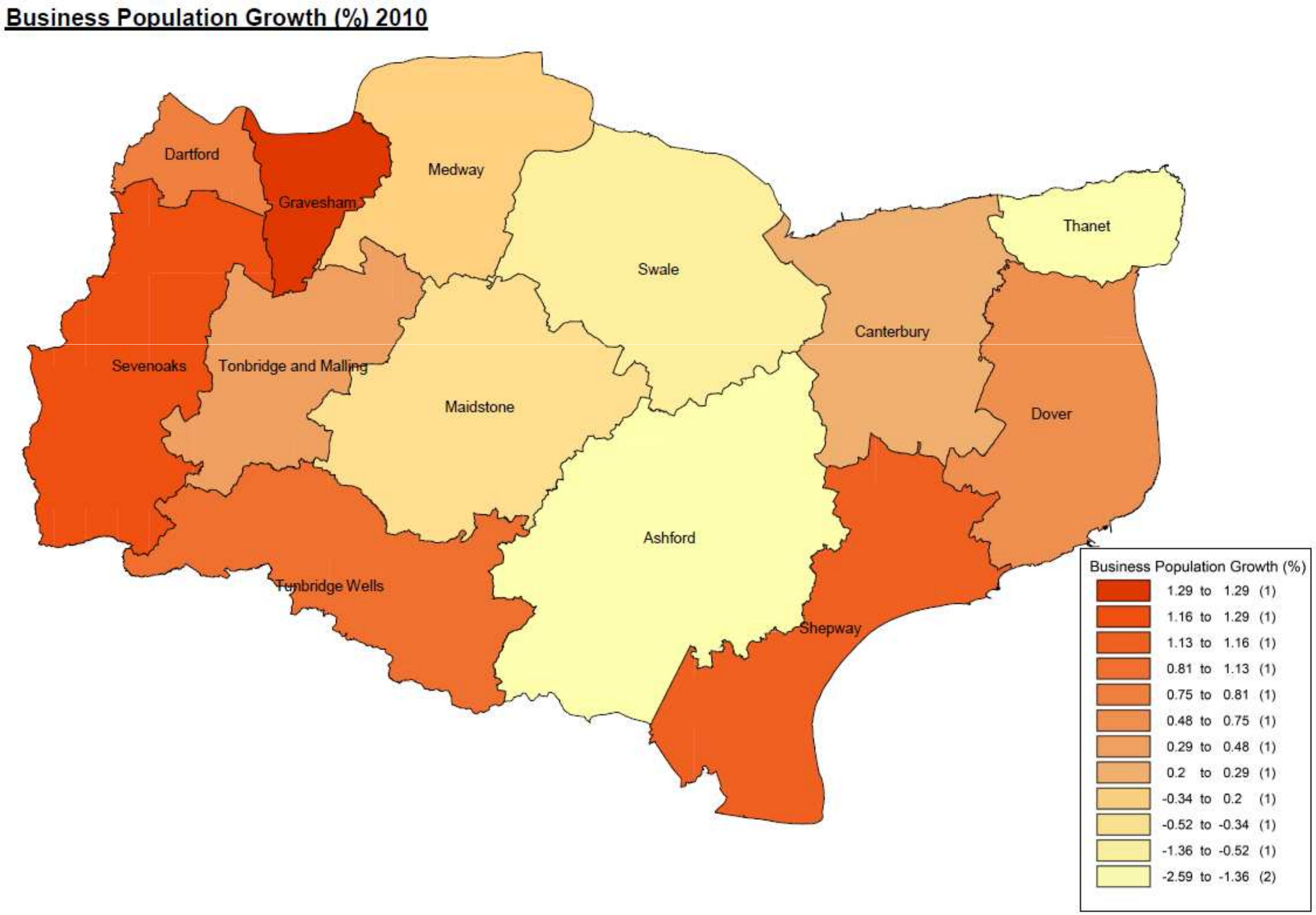
BUSINESS DEMOGRAPHY – POPULATION SIZE



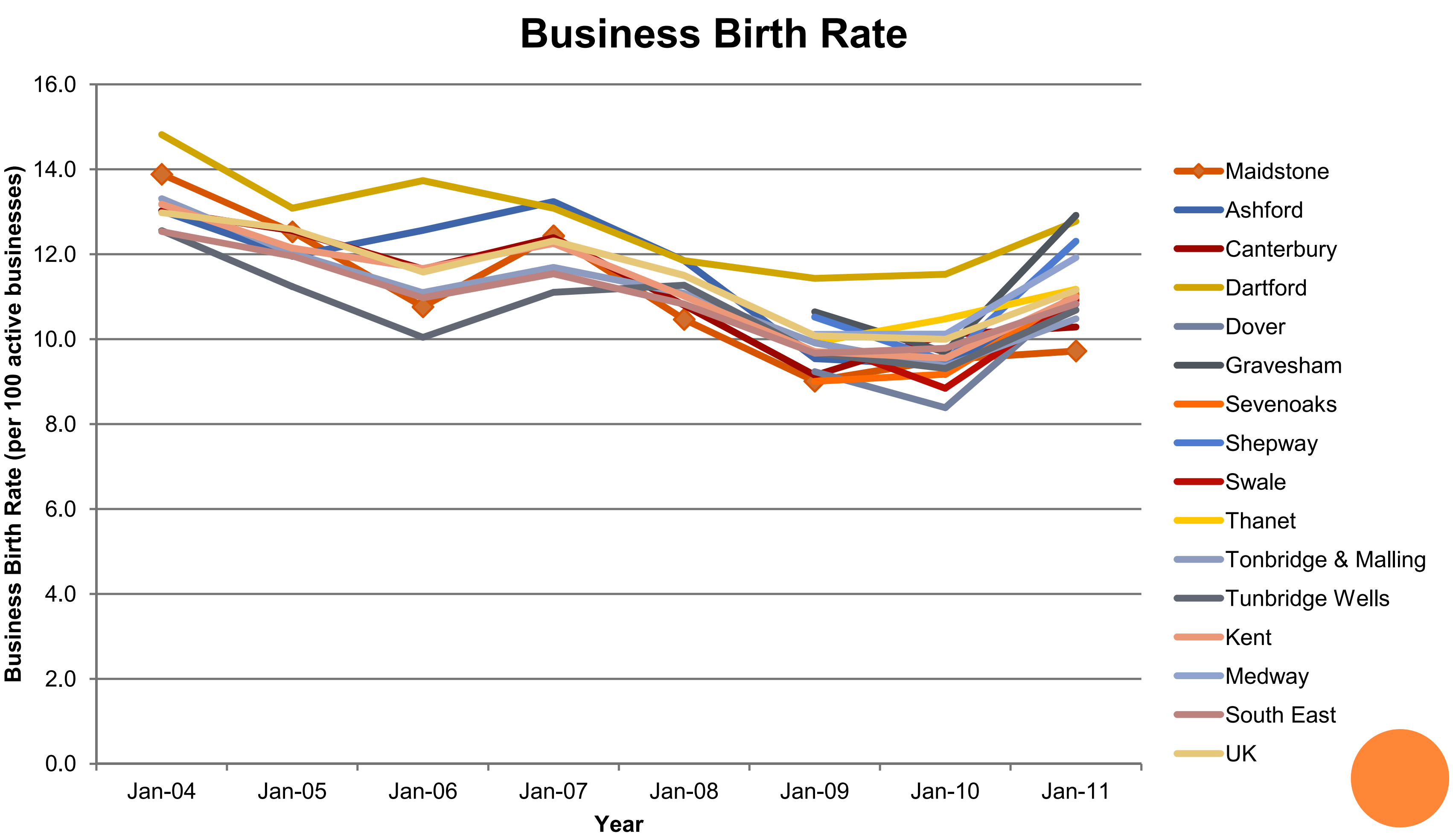
BUSINESS SURVIVAL RATES



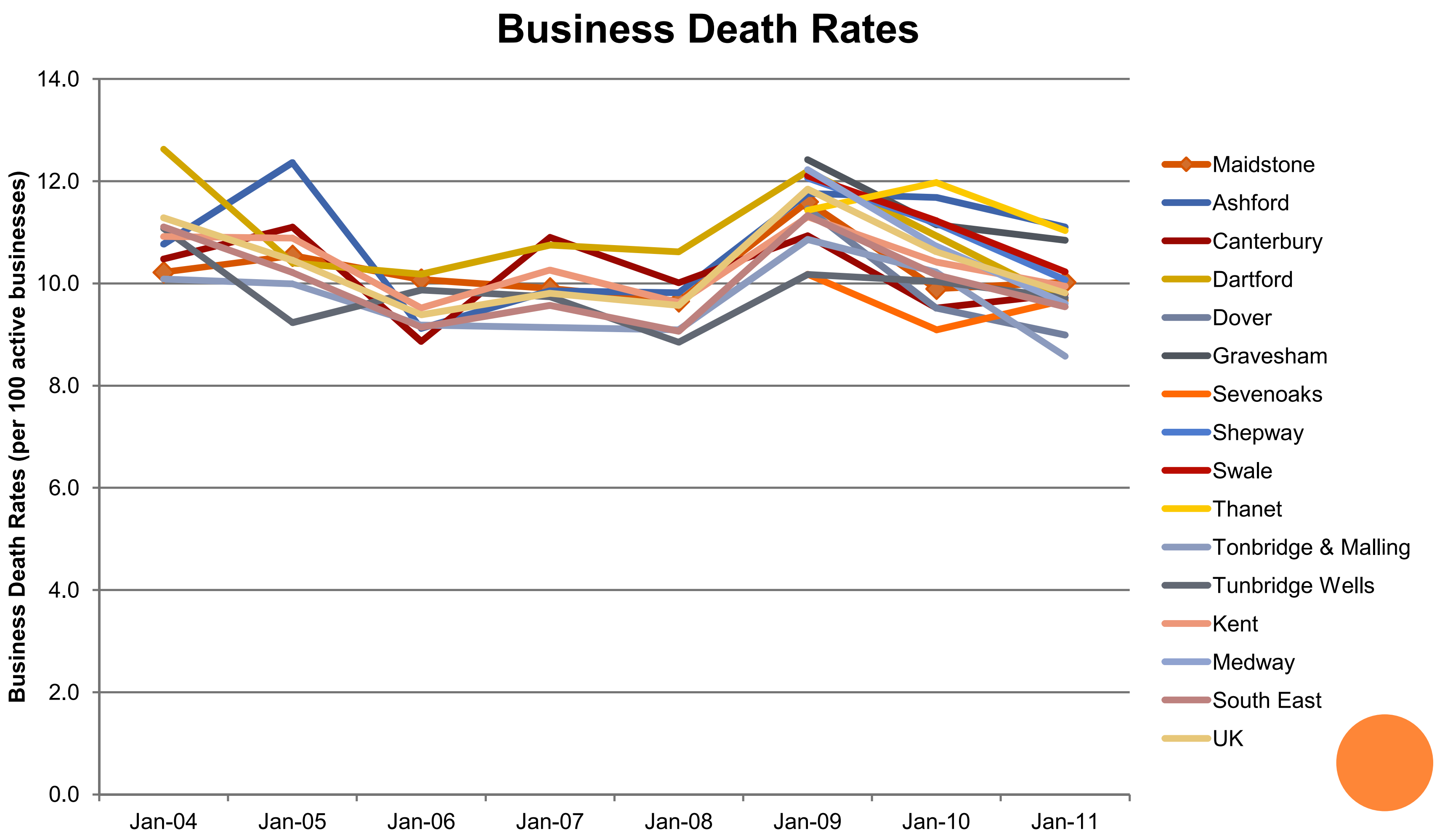
Business Demography – Population Size



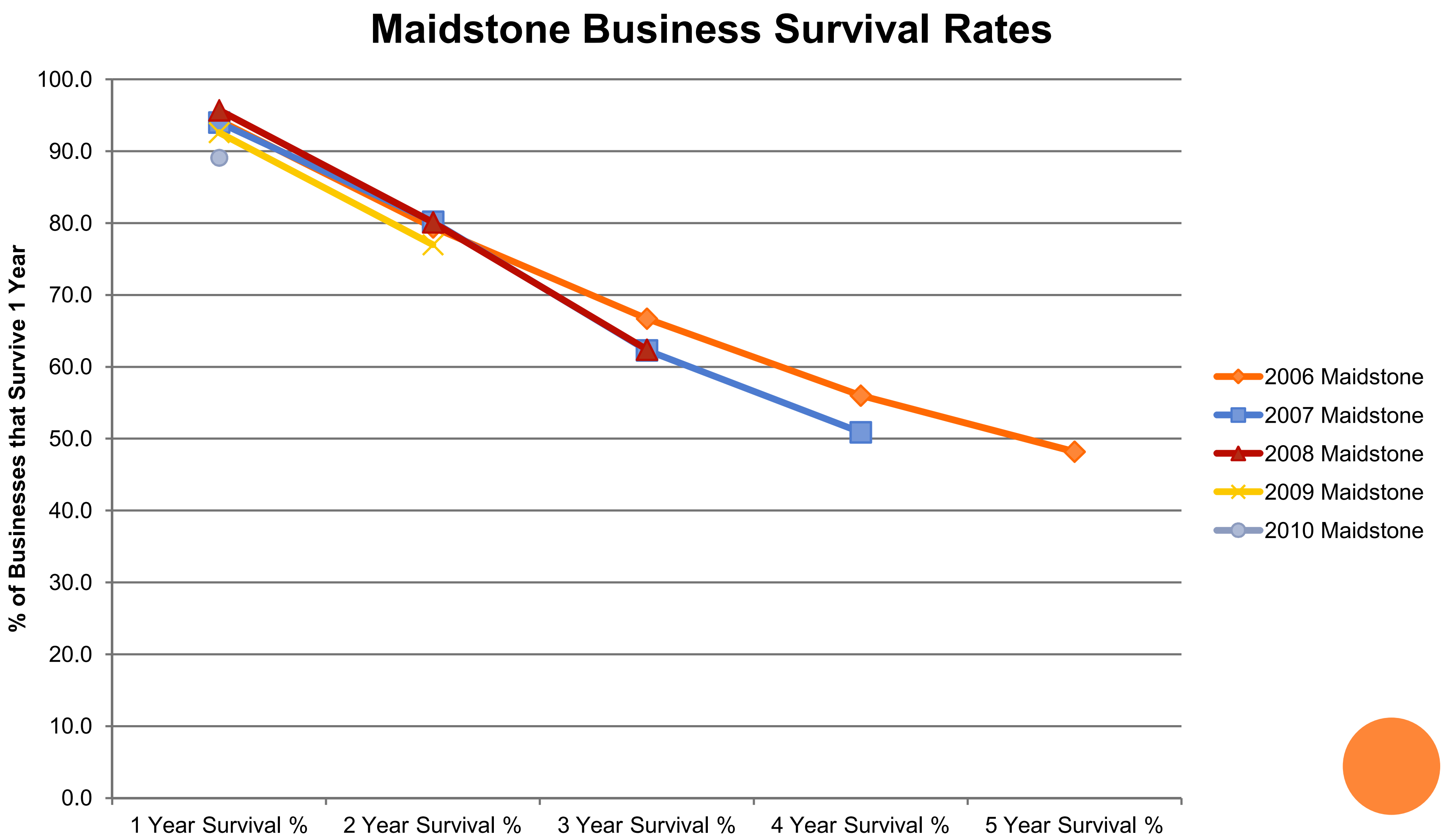
BUSINESS DEMOGRAPHY - BIRTHS



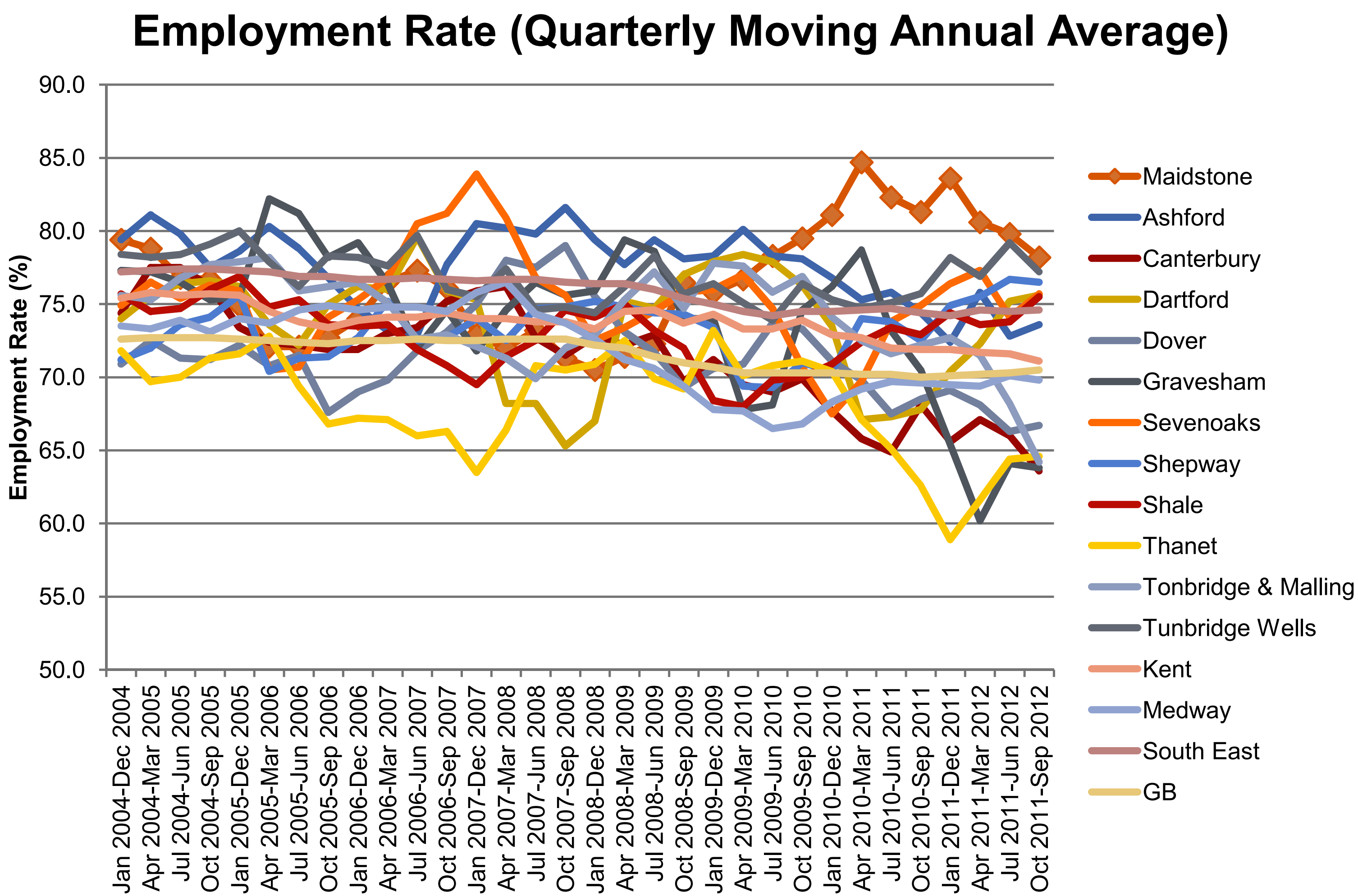
Business Demography - Deaths



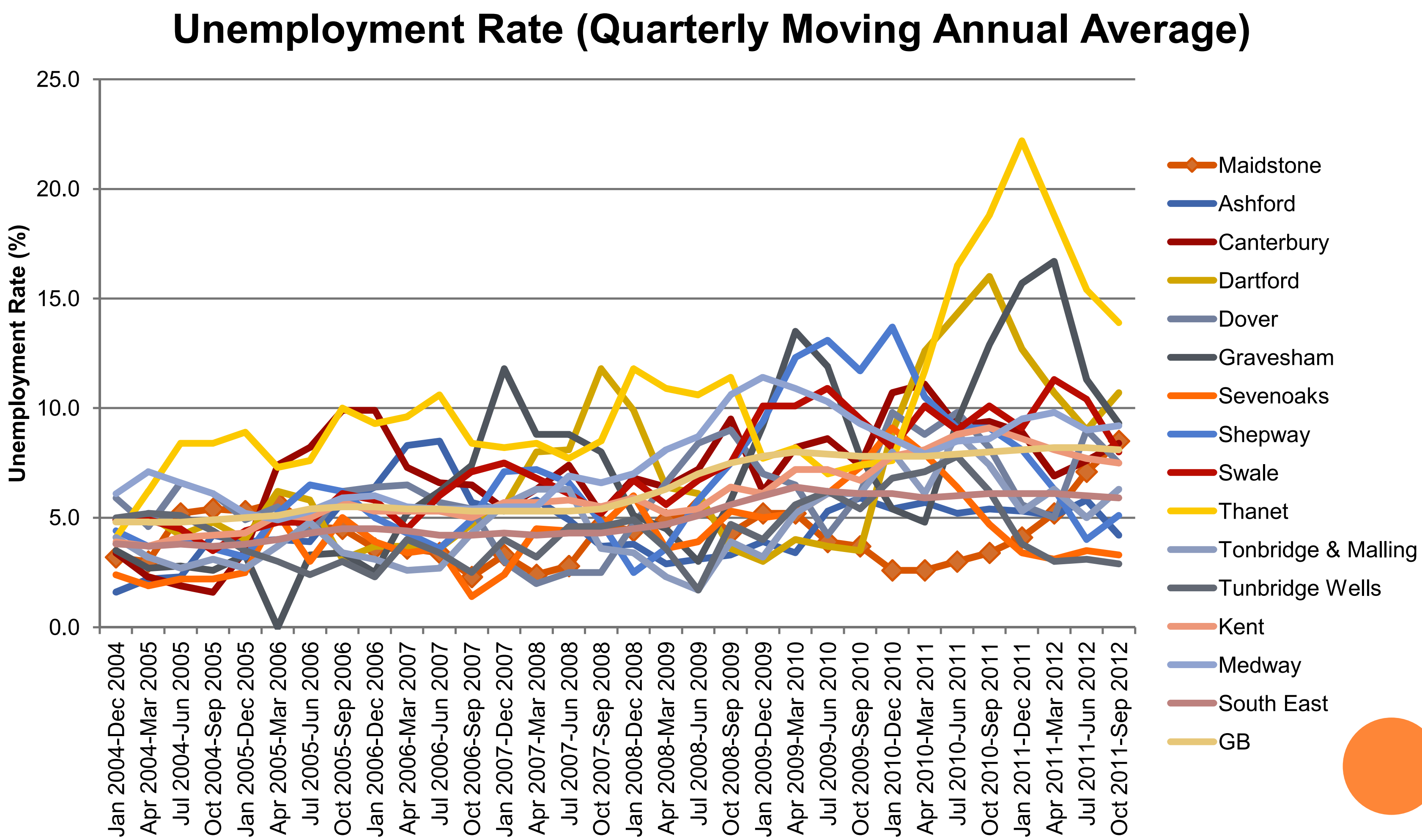
Business Demography – Survival Rates



Employment and Unemployment – Employment Rate

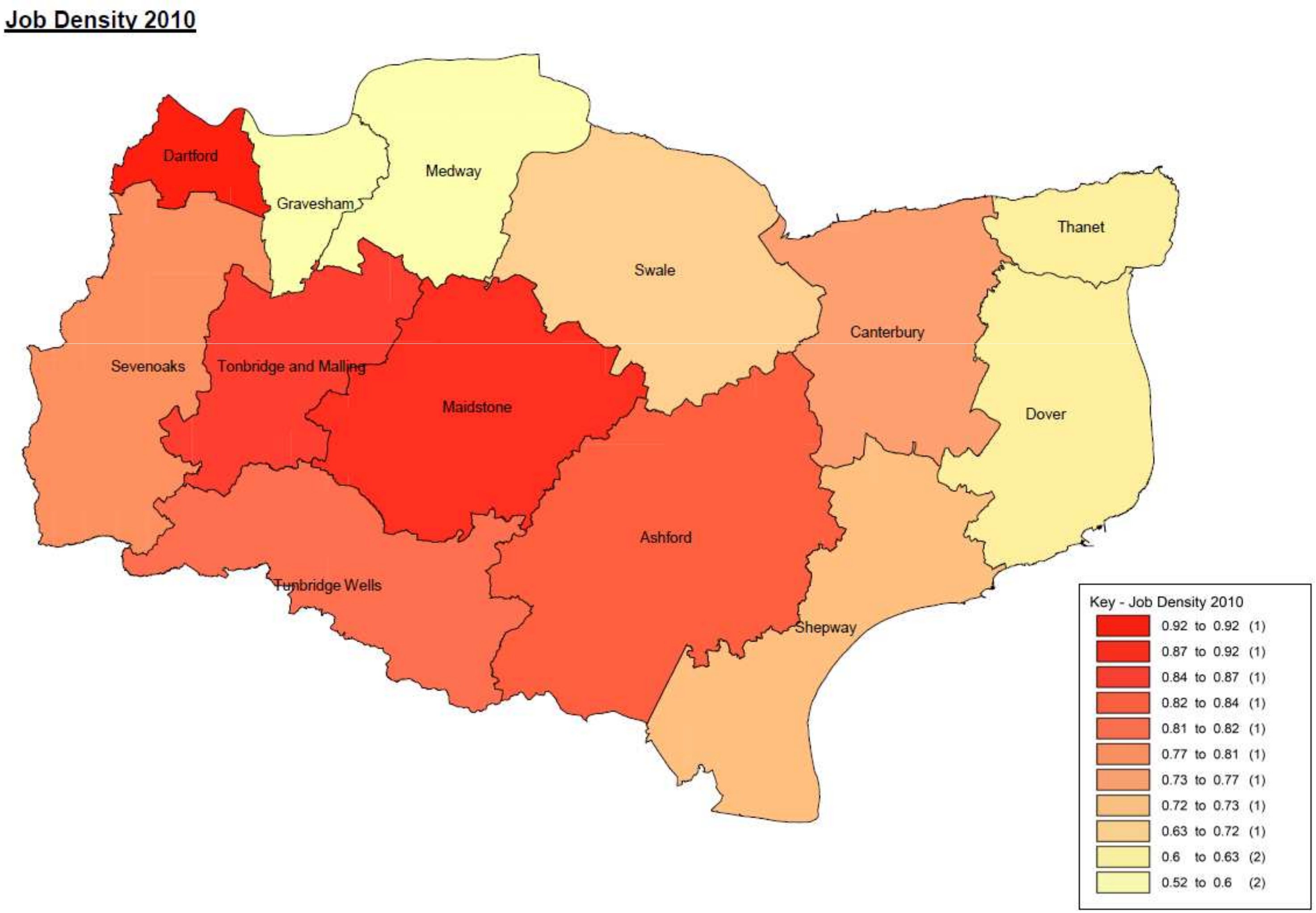


EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT – UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

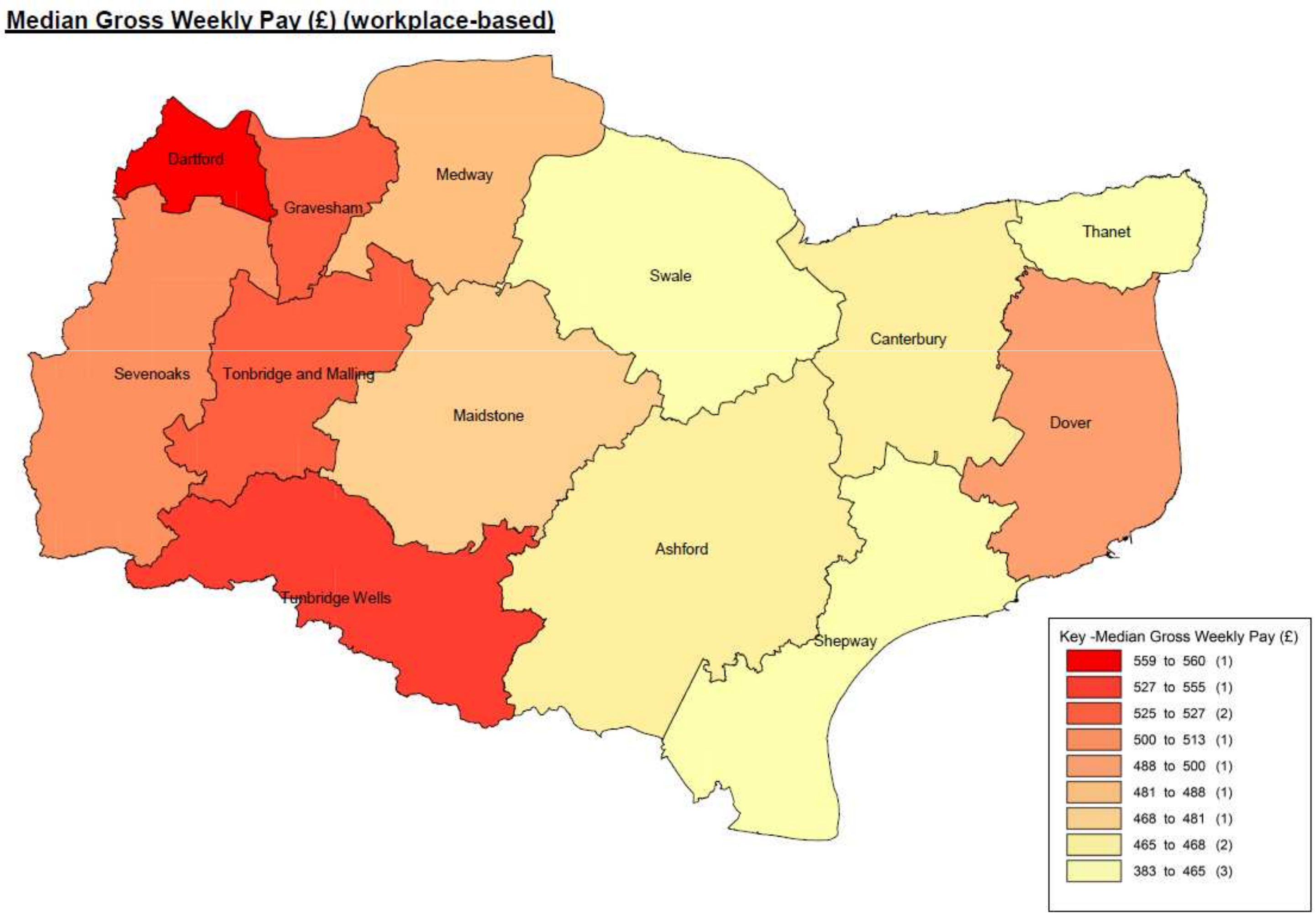


EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT – JOB DENSITY

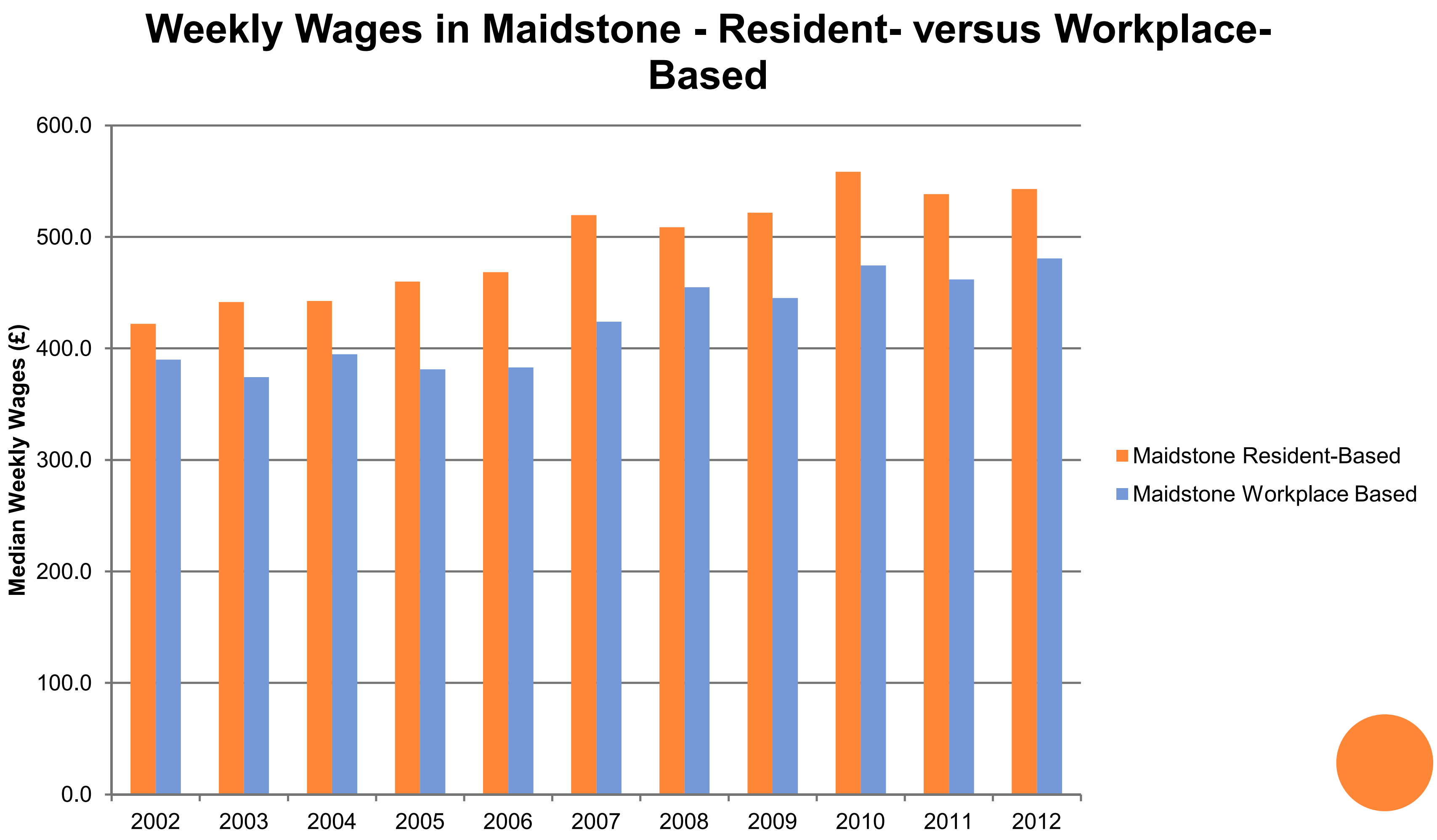
JOB DENSITY


Job Density 2010
Dartford
Gravesham
Medway
Swale
Thanet
Canterbury
Dover
Sevenoaks
Tonbridge and Malling
Maidstone
Ashford
Tunbridge Wells
Shepway
Key - Job Density 2010
0.92 to 0.92 (1)
0.87 to 0.92 (1)
0.84 to 0.87 (1)
0.82 to 0.84 (1)
0.81 to 0.82 (1)
0.77 to 0.81 (1)
0.73 to 0.77 (1)
0.72 to 0.73 (1)
0.63 to 0.72 (1)
0.6 to 0.63 (2)
0.52 to 0.6 (2)

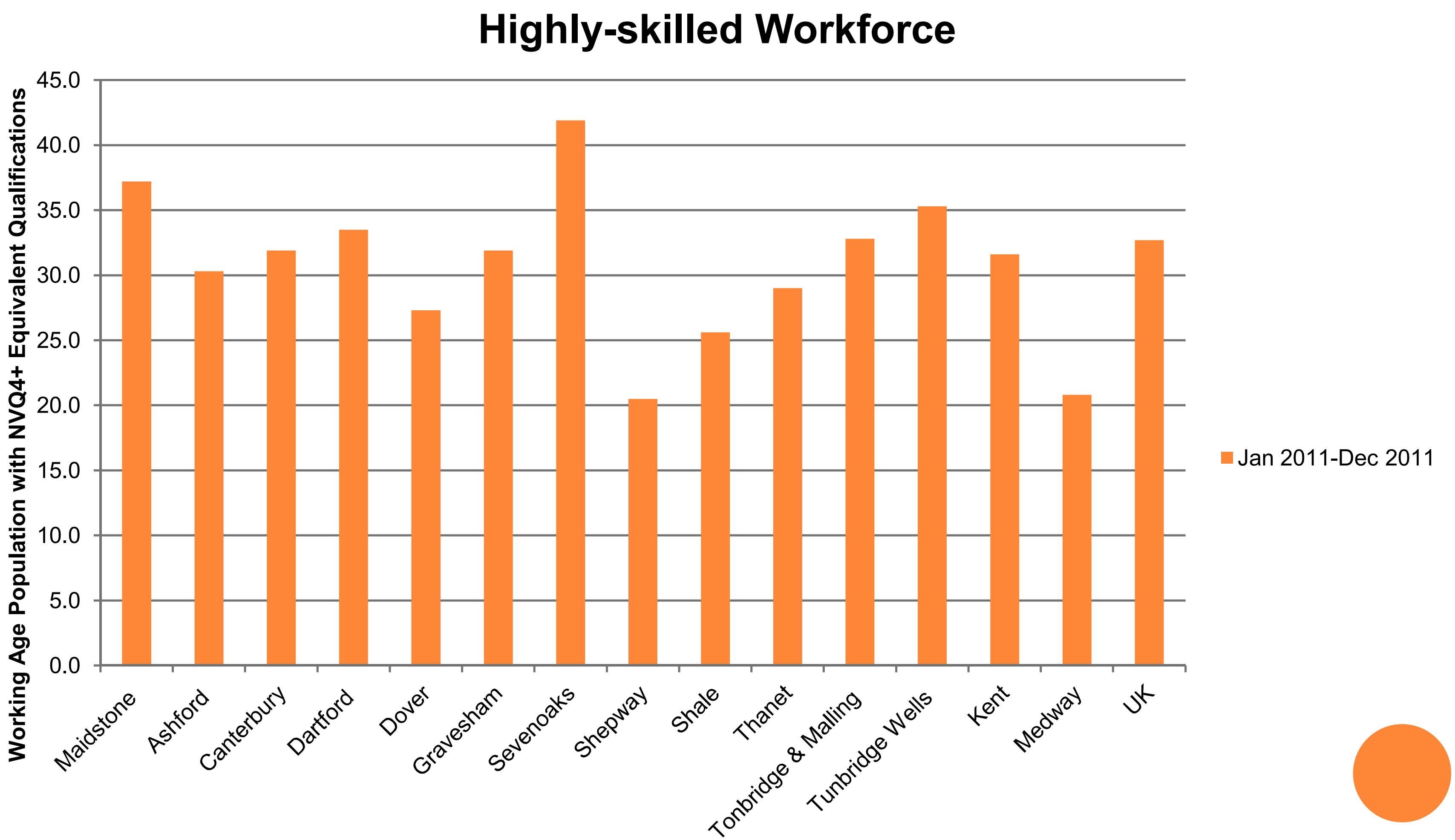
LABOUR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS – GROSS WEEKLY PAY



Labour Force Characteristics – Workforce versus Resident Reporting



Labour Force Characteristics - Highly-Skilled Workforce



Highest level of Qualification (resident population aged 16+), 2011

Source: 2011 Census Table KS501EW

		All People
Maidstone	**Number**	**% of all people 16+**
Population aged 16+	**125,476**	**100%**
No qualifications	25,915	20.7%
Level 1 qualifications	18,336	14.6%
Level 2 qualifications	22,108	17.6%
Apprenticeship	5,112	4.1%
Level 3 qualifications	15,246	12.2%
Level 4 qualifications and above	32,154	25.6%
Other qualifications	6,605	5.3%

CONCLUSIONS

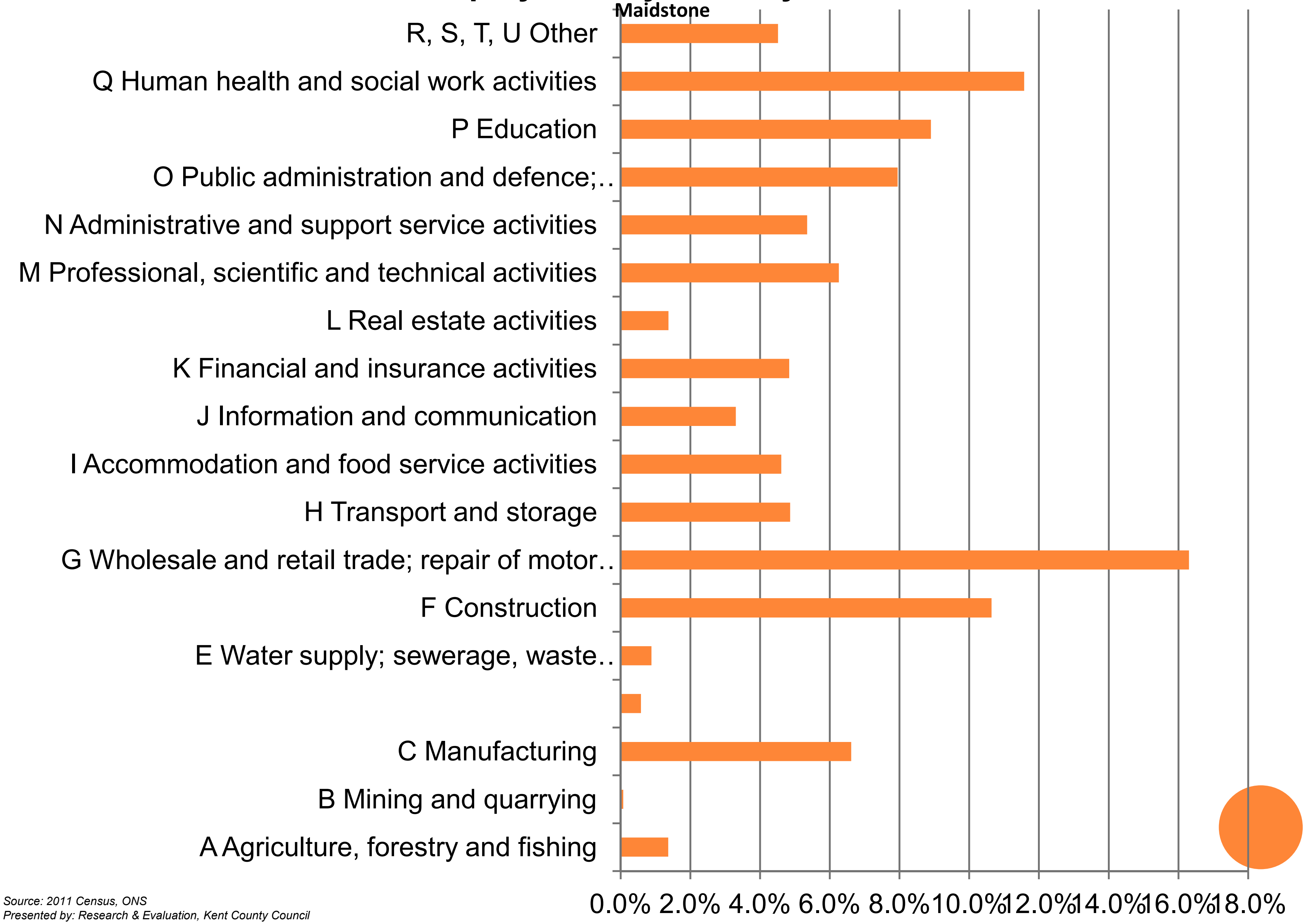
- High-productivity services in Maidstone
- Attracting employees from outside the area
- Problems with encouraging starting new businesses – once they start however, they are reasonably likely to be successful
- Decline in local employment despite steady number of jobs (in-commuters taking lower-wage, local jobs?)
- Growth in tourism and retail? (attracting more employees?)
- Some problems with decline where other districts are recovering

VAT and/or PAYE based enterprises - 2012

Source: UK Business Survey, ONS

2012	**Maidstone**	**Kent**	**Great Britain**
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	295	2,170	125,620
Production	395	3,420	145,550
Construction	1125	7,985	263,000
Motor trades	255	2,050	75,365
Wholesale	365	3,055	120,730
Retail	680	6,430	277,480
Transport & storage (inc. postal)	250	2,045	80,385
Accommodation & food services	380	3,900	163,440
Information & communication	405	3,465	165,750
Finance & insurance	180	1,515	63,520
Property	225	1,885	88,490
Professional, scientific & technical	1045	8,555	366,050
Business administration and support services	560	4,445	176,930
Public administration and defence	75	515	24,880
Education	180	1,585	65,215
Health	420	3,625	146,605
Arts, entertainment, recreation and other services	480	4,015	178,645
TOTAL	**7315**	**60,660**	**2,527,655**

Employment by Industry 2011



Source: 2011 Census, ONS
Presented by: Research & Evaluation, Kent County Council

Maidstone Borough Council

Economic & Commercial Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 24 September 2013

Economic Development & Regeneration Plan

Report of: Clare Wood

1. Introduction

1.1 The Economic Development & Regeneration Plan sets the Council's approach to economic development in the borough and defines the work programme for the economic development team for the period of the strategy.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is recommended to listen to the verbal update on the progress of the plan from John Foster, Economic Development & Regeneration Manager.

3. Economic Development & Regeneration Plan

3.1 The draft Economic & Regeneration plan is due to be considered by Cabinet on 13th November prior to its release for public consultation. This Committee will be consulted as part of this process.

3. Impact on Corporate Objectives

3.1 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following Council priority:

- 'For Maidstone to have a growing economy.'

3.2 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities. Actions to deliver these key objectives may therefore include work that the Committee will consider over the next year.

Maidstone Borough Council

Economic & Commercial Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 24 September 2013

Maidstone Enterprise Hub

Report of: Clare Wood

1. Introduction

1.1 The Council is proposing an Enterprise Hub to provide flexible workspace for small and new start-up business.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is recommended to consider the project overview at Appendix A from John Foster, Economic Development & Regeneration Manager and make recommendations accordingly.

3. Maidstone Enterprise Hub

3.1 The Cabinet Member is due to make a decision about funding for Maidstone's Enterprise Hub in October. The establishment of a Maidstone Enterprise Hub directly relates to the Council's strategic priority 'for Maidstone to have a growing economy' as it would assist start-up businesses, those who want to develop and could encourage more business to the borough.

3. Impact on Corporate Objectives

3.1 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following Council priority:

- 'For Maidstone to have a growing economy.'

3.2 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities. Actions to deliver these key objectives may therefore include work that the Committee will consider over the next year.

Overview

This project is to establish a dynamic, affordable flexible business workspace providing an inspiring and highly supportive environment to grow and sustain new start-ups and existing micro businesses across Maidstone.

Once established the Enterprise Hub could benefit upwards of 1000 entrepreneurs a year through a combination of affordable workspace, flexible time-based and virtual memberships, peer to peer business support, and high quality, bespoke mentoring, events, seminars and workshops. This approach has proven highly successful elsewhere in the UK and Europe leading to five year survival rates of 80%+ compared to typical rates of 35-40%.[1]

Start-ups and young businesses are a driving force for job creation and increases in productivity: in this way the Hub will also have the potential to create job opportunities for residents and work experience for students.

It will be a hybrid model combining best practice and innovation from both flexible rented space and gym-style workspaces and workhubs to establish a leading-edge Enterprise Hub more suited to the aspirational and identified needs of the borough.

Benefits of the Hub Membership Model include maximum density of businesses benefiting and potential income streams:

- Hub facilities are not sector specific and achieve higher space utilisation (businesses benefiting per sq ft) by providing desk space, with businesses paying a membership fee rather than letting or leasing fixed spaces. As not all users spend 100% of their working time at their work space, this enables the Hub to achieve higher utilisation rates and maximise income
- They offer a range of highly flexible entry tariffs with space for expansion as businesses grow.

The Maidstone Hub will also provide a suite of meeting rooms, seminar, events and networking spaces: vitally important for businesses to offer impressive hosting facilities for clients, which could lead to them winning more sales and investments. This also offers the potential for maximising revenue by competing in the events market adding to the Town Centre offer.

The Overarching Need

The impact of the recession has been particularly severe in Maidstone leading to a decline in the numbers of jobs and firms worse than national and regional averages.

The Borough continues to have one of the highest rates of business failure in Kent with more business deaths than births. The UK Business Survey[2] shows that this is in stark contrast to a noticeable post recession decrease (-4.5%) in the overall ratio between births and deaths across Kent.

[1] European Commission Enterprise Directorate: “Benchmarking of Business Incubators February 2002 updated 2012
[2] KCC Research & Evaluation Statistical Bulletin January 2013: Business Demography 2011

There has been a 3% increase in active businesses – less than Kent (4.6%), the South East (4.6%) and England (6.2%) – but this represents an actual fall over the last decade.[3] Maidstone is also highly exposed to wider job losses through the government's continuing austerity measures as it has the second highest dependency on public sector jobs in the South East: 19,700 representing 27.9% of the workforce.[4]

Maidstone is forecast to lose a further 2000 jobs by 2015 through a combination of direct (1490) and indirect (510) public sector job losses. This is on top of an overall -4.4% drop in the number of private sector jobs between 2008 and 2010 (Kent 2%).

ONS Business Demography also shows one, two and three year survival rates continue to fall in Maidstone: between 2008 and 2010 the number of new businesses surviving three years dropped to 62.4% from 66.7% between 2006 and 2008. These statistics also show that with 28.4% (1740) of businesses less than three years old, and with a declining survival rate, the situation could worsen dramatically unless action is taken.

Strategic Need

Reversing these trends is a Strategic priority for Maidstone which has put in place a number of inter-dependent actions designed to support growth that is both sustainable and inclusive; and creates the conditions enabling businesses to start-up, survive and attract new businesses into the area.

Establishing a business-led start-up affordable workspace is an economic priority for Maidstone to address identified specific and generic barriers to business formation and survival across the borough. These include:

- The high cost and inflexible terms of premises in Maidstone: there is no shortage of 'generic' start-up' or move-on space, but there is a lack of premises available on flexible enough terms and costs are comparatively high - particularly for those without start-up capital such as first time entrepreneurs, recent graduates and residents starting in business from low income backgrounds

- Too many micro businesses working in isolation with few natural clusters or opportunities for developing local supply chains: 76% of businesses have fewer than five employees
- A lack of business skills: with little awareness of what is available, and the perceived high cost of engaging help
  Feedback from businesses, through the Chamber and council customer surveys highlights businesses' frustration that the business support landscape is too fragmented and/or irrelevant to their needs
- Pockets of persistent deprivation in and around the town centre including High Street Ward in which the proposed Hub will be located. Six of the 92 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)[5] in the borough are in the 20% most deprived in England. A further four are in the bottom 30%.

This flagship hub will lead on:

- Identifying and supporting entrepreneurs, fledgling and micro businesses within the Enterprise Hub and helping them move on after three/five years to larger premises within Maidstone

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3 ONS (2011) Business Demography

4 KCC Research & Intelligence: Public Sector Dependency and an assessment of public sector jobs in Kent. January 2011

5 ONS (2010) The English Indices of Deprivation 2010

- Instilling and encouraging an enterprise agenda across the borough
- Providing work experience for, and supporting ambitious students to become entrepreneurs and helping them grow their businesses
- Providing networking and collaboration opportunities for home-based businesses and those thinking of starting a business or becoming self employed
- Partnering with all key business support providers ensuring a joined up approach and removing duplication in a landscape where business support at all levels is seen as fragmented by the business community

Small entrepreneurial companies play a vital role in the health of the UK economy, providing jobs; helping diversify the economy and contributing to wealth creation. But they are especially vulnerable in their early/start-up years.

What is a hub?

A building providing facilities designed to suit modern micro businesses including those that are home-based. Unlike managed workspaces, innovation centres and business centres, hubs offer a very flexible use of space – including occasional use (membership). They can act as a beehive for isolated home-based businesses encouraging networking, collaboration and skills sharing.

How do Hubs differ from managed workspace?
Incubators, innovation centres and business/science parks generally have three things in common: they support a traditional approach to business growth; are usually (but by no means always) sector specific, and more often than not target businesses which will rent space full time, often on a standard 9-5 basis.
Hubs have an emphasis on users/members not tenants. They do need core income from tenants as well as users/members to remain sustainable. However, research for the Government shows tenants actively value sharing the building with other users/members.

- The ability to collaborate is an essential appeal of hubs both to casual and tenanted users.
- The diversity of businesses using a hub is another strength that can help sustainability in both good and bad financial times by allowing users to scale up or down in terms of their membership and use/space needed.

Do hubs work?

European and UK research evidence shows hub projects with highly flexible, "easy-in/easy-out" terms, and high quality, wrap-around support for the first two-three years, can increase survival rates dramatically.

The most successful models have been enabled by the public sector working in partnership with the private sector and local support providers. Common critical success factors include:

- **Volume** of companies is important, creating natural networking and collaboration
  Entrepreneurs **learn more from each other**, and other businesses, than consultants
- **Combining start-ups with more mature companies** in the same building further encourages collaboration
- **Mixed use (diversified)** models keep programmes sustainable and independent.
- **Entry criteria** can ensure high success rates
- Investors/entrepreneurs seeking to make new equity investments can be **leveraged as mentors**

- A manager who has **entrepreneurial experience** and can 'relate' and act as champion for the centre and business.

The brief was to assess the viability of setting up a hub in terms of:

- Cost of delivery (purchase, conversion and management) against
- Potential return on any investment from the revenue generated.

This means the assessment does not include the wider business benefits that can accrue from the hub, such as assistance and support for pre starts, increased collaboration and networking, and economies of scale from joint purchasing.

However the wider benefits of work hubs are well documented, both in the role they play in stimulating local enterprise and, if targeted correctly, to community regeneration activities and initiatives.

If investment in a hub is to be taken forward; the measurement of its "success" should also be assessed in much broader terms focusing on the less immediately tangible economic benefits together with the financial returns on any investment. These include the number of:

- Pre start businesses assisted
- New businesses taking on employees
- Micro businesses increasing their profitability.

These important wider benefits should be given due weight in assessing the success of a hub, though it is recognised that the imperative is demonstrating the financial case for investment.

There are a number of drivers for managed workspace that apply across the UK, but which are more evident in Maidstone. These include:

- The growth in home based businesses and freelance workers, with their need to interact, network and collaborate
- Micros wanting space to grow on and expand their operations
- People, businesses and organisations seeking greater flexibility in their working lives in terms of tenancy, use of space and cost
- The increasing importance of business interaction and collaboration, specifically for micros and SMEs
- The strong desire to reduce or remove the impacts, particularly on time, cost and carbon, of commuting to work
- Public sector spending cuts, driving smarter investment in, and rationalisation of assets (reducing liability) and co-locating private, public and VCS and
- The increasing recognition of buildings themselves providing a service, with businesses paying only for the time used.

Maidstone Borough Council

Economic & Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 24 September 2013

Update on Skills and Employability Projects

Report prepared by Jennifer Sibley, Employability and Skills Project Officer

1. Update on Skills and Employability Projects

1.1 Maidstone Borough Council appointed a Skills & Employability Project Officer in October 2012 to develop the council's work in tackling youth unemployment, in partnership with KCC, Jobcentre Plus, businesses and a range of other partners.

1.2 The work is overseen by the "Tackling Worklessness and Poverty Board", formerly a sub group of the Locality Board.

1.3 Youth unemployment (18-24 year olds) currently stands at 585 people (August 2013, NOMIS) out of 2,135 people overall who are unemployed.

1.4 The council has undertaken various projects since October 2012 to tackle youth unemployment:

1.4.1 Work experience – the council has made 24 placements to young people aged between 16 and 24. Twelve of these young people have found paid employment, four with the council.

1.4.2 Mentoring – the council runs the Steps to Employment mentoring programme to young people. So far seven young people have joined the programme with six now in employment. The opportunity to be mentors has been extended to council staff, with fourteen staff members coming forward to volunteer regular support to young people, and a further four offering ad hoc support (such as mock interviews and CV checks).

1.4.3 Business visits – Cllr Greer together with the Employability & Skills Project Officer have visited five of Maidstone's businesses to discuss them offering work experience and Apprenticeships to Maidstone's young people. These have overall been very positive. Where businesses have identified skills shortages, the council will work with them and Jobcentre Plus to train up local people.

1.4.4 Inspiring the Future – the council has teamed up with Inspiring the Future which operates a website that links businesses and schools, with business people volunteering to go into schools to talk to students about their job and the route they took to get there. The council is running a campaign to get 100 business people to sign up in 100 days.

1.4.5 Training providers website – as a member of the Maidstone Employment and Skills Forum, the council has commissioned a website that will link training providers with people looking for training opportunities. This will ensure people can find training that suits their needs first time, and this will empower people to be able to access training direct, rather than rely on others to tell them about opportunities. The website should launch in November 2013.

1.4.6 Skills Exchange Hub – the council is exploring the possibility of establishing this in Maidstone. It is a website that facilitates secondments of staff rather than making redundancies from companies experiencing decline to companies experiencing growth.

1.4.7 The papers attached to this report demonstrate the evidence base for these projects in Maidstone. Each report has a series of recommendations. In summary, national research indicates that:

- Young people identify work experience as a barrier to work – it is not possible to get a job without experience, it is not possible to get experience without a job.
- Apprenticeships and vocational education/employment routes should be promoted to young people and employers as they give young people experience and valuable skills about the workplace.
- Young people suffer from a lack of awareness of the world of work, the jobs available, and what employers want from their new recruits.
- Whilst employers can be wary of recruiting young people, overall when they do employ young people, they are generally positive about the experience.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the recommendations given on each briefing paper.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 The recommendations in the briefing papers provide an evidence-based framework for the skills and employability projects the council and its partners pursue going forward.

3.2 It would ensure that skills and employability projects have two priorities:

- Ensuring that Maidstone’s unemployed young people receive interventions that support them into work.

- Ensuring that Maidstone’s business community can support the local economy, meet their needs, recruit local people and address suitable skills shortages.

4. Impact on Corporate Objectives

4.1 These recommendations will support the achievement of Maidstone Borough Council’s priorities relating to Great Opportunity by ensuring that Maidstone’s residents are ready for work and have the skills businesses need from them. Addressing skills shortages and helping Maidstone’s businesses recruit local people will boost the employment rate.

Overall Trends and Predictions

- The proportion of pensioners in poverty has fallen by 17% over the previous two decades.
- The proportion of working age adults with children in poverty has remained stable, at about 25%, since 1991.
- The proportion of working age adults without children in poverty has increased from 7% to 20% since 1981.
- Maidstone ranks 11th out of 13 districts in Kent for the proportion of houses in poverty.
- 16.2% of households are in poverty in Maidstone. This is estimated to be 9,900 households.
- 15.2% of Maidstone's children under 16 are living in 'poverty'.
- This amounts to 4,250 children.
- Long term projections show that overall poverty rates will have increased by 2015, including large rises in child poverty, and working age adults without dependent children being in poverty. This is primarily due to out of work benefits being linked to the CPI rate of inflation (and a 1% capped rise for 2013-2014 for all working age benefits, announced since the publication of this report, will also have a significant impact on these figures)
- The introduction of Universal Credit should lift around 450,000 children out of Poverty, however;
- Leaving pensioners aside, there is now more in work poverty than out of work poverty.
- The concerns about Universal Credit have centred on the ability for the IT system to deliver the project. IT systems procured by central government have a poor track record of success.
- People generally dip in and out of poverty, both in and out of work.
- Only one in ten claimants of out of work benefits have never worked.
- Within this number a very large proportion are under 25s, so have had limited opportunities to work due to high levels of youth unemployment.
- There are 595 young people aged 18-24 claiming Jobseekers Allowance. This is 5% of the youth population.
- There are 2,220 people in total claiming JSA, 2.2% of the working age population.
- This means young people make up 27% of JSA claimants in Maidstone.
- When considering poverty focusing on income alone, at the expense of health, housing or education, can skew priorities or result in too much of a narrow focus.
- The replacement of Disability Living Allowance with Personal Independence Payment will have a significant impact on the incomes of disabled people, as the government aims to cut the caseload by 20% (and therefore the amount of people claiming).
- Even with Disability Living Allowance, disabled people are more likely to lack everyday items than other families suggest that Disability Living Allowance may actually be insufficient itself.
- 4,570 people in Maidstone are claiming Employment Support Allowance and related incapacity benefits; 1,060 people are claiming Disability Living Allowance.
- The proposed welfare reforms, many of which contain lots of small cuts to various benefits and freezes to others, may hit some people several times over. Whilst some may be able to take a small cut in benefit, those who are affected by several cuts at once may find it difficult to cope.
- Private renters spend the greatest proportion of their income on housing, and the number of people having to claim housing benefit in order to meet their rent payments has increased across the country.
- In Maidstone, approximately 12,000 people are being supported by the Council through Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit.
- A study by the Building and Social Housing foundation found that 93% of the rise of housing benefit claimants between 2010-2011 was among working households.

Implications of this Study for Maidstone

- The commitment by the government to maintain the link between inflation/wages to pension benefits; and the total amount of pensioners in poverty falling is good news for Maidstone due to the aging population.

- However the predictions for overall poverty levels show a danger that the working age population in Maidstone will come under significant financial pressure over the next two years at least. This could put services delivered by the council under considerable pressure. The most obvious services that will be under pressure will be housing and homelessness services and revenues and benefits, which the council has already started to see.
- It will be critical that a smooth transition from previous benefit arrangements to Universal Credit is made, to lessen the impact on the borough's residents.
- The findings that there are now more in work poverty than out of work poverty, and that most people dip in and out of poverty holds important lessons for the council. These findings mean that it could be an important strategy for the council to support working people who have dipped into poverty to improve their situation and get out of poverty again. The most obvious examples of this could be supporting people into extra training to improve job prospects or supporting parents to get back into the workplace.
- As the majority of those who are in out of work benefits that have never worked are under 25, it demonstrates the importance of programmes targeting under 25s who are NEET.
- Even though the level of financial support for disabled people will be maintained or increased when Disability Living Allowance moves over to Personal Independence Payment; there will be a caseload of about 20% of Disability Living Allowance payments who will no longer be supported. This could put extra financial strain on some disabled people who may be deemed 'not disabled enough' for Personal Independence Payment, yet not ready for the labour market due to years of being out of work or under employed. There may need to be extra support schemes available for these people for such as:
    - Help to get them back into the labour market;
    - Additional training or education;
    - Advice on what other benefits that could be claimed as an alternative.
- The council should keep in mind that some people will be faced with several small cuts and freezes in benefit awards simultaneously. This will affect those on out of work benefits most, but will also affect those on in work benefits.

Recommendations

Issue	Recommendation	Key partners
4,250 children in Maidstone are living in poverty.	Ensure take-up of Free Schools Meals by all eligible children.	KCC, schools – Pupil Premium.
	Promote budgeting and money management courses for families struggling with debt.	MBC, KCC, schools, JCP, voluntary sector organisations.
	Promote the value of appropriate employment to improving the family situation.	JCP, MBC, KCC, voluntary organisations.
	Enable families to calculate the benefits of working by directing families to the gov.uk calculator.	JCP, MBC, KCC, training providers, voluntary organisations.
High number of under 25s have never worked.	Continue to engage businesses in offering work experience through effective marketing and communication of its value.	MBC, KCC, JCP, business forums and community.

	Promote the wage incentive and the apprenticeship grants available to employers. Launch Inspiring the Future campaign to help young people understand their career options and what employers want from recruits.	MBC, KCC, JCP, business communications. MBC.
The incomes of disabled people claiming Personal Independence Payment are likely to fall.	Ensure that disabled people are signposted to suitable training providers who can support them in finding suitable employment. Educate employers about the benefits of employing people with a disability.	MBC, JCP, KCC. (Training providers website) MBC website – add text and links. KCC, JCP, voluntary organisations e.g. RBLI.
Changes to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support mean private renters are seeing their incomes fall.	Ensure that working people are signposted towards opportunities for training and budget management.	MBC, KCC, JCP, voluntary organisations.
Increase in 'in work' poverty.	Signpost people towards training opportunities for up-skilling and budget management courses. Support parents to re-enter the workplace through specialist provision and tackling barriers relating to childcare provision and cost.	MBC, KCC, JCP, voluntary organisations. KCC, MBC.
Businesses need to grow to recruit more staff.	Promote growth and job creation through the planning system.	MBC.

The Business Case for Employer Investment in Young People

This briefing note gives details of a CIPD report on the Business Case for employing young people. The evidence comes from the Learning of Work survey of 780 HR professionals, 11 employer interviews and an employer roundtable.

Benefits for businesses

- Young people bring skills such as greater flexibility and willingness to learn; innovation and energy; optimism.
- Workforce development and growth such as enhanced loyalty, reduced turnover, shared organisational culture, attracting talent and preparing for the future.
- Workforce diversity including insights, ideas and connections to the market and customer base.
- Cost-effectiveness due to lower recruitment and lower wages.

Reasons businesses recruit young people

- Growing talent and workforce planning.
  '[Employers of young people] do so because they know how growing their workforce helps to secure future growth and give them a competitive advantage.'

- Young people's unique skills, attitudes and motivation.
  'So many young people submitted project ideas with great potential… This is why we decided to make an investment in young people. We can't put a number on [it] yet but we know it's an investment that will pay off.'

- Workforce diversity.
  'Young people think outside the box, and ask managers "Why do you always do it that way?" They teach managers not to take what they say as a challenge but a learning opportunity'

- Employer brand.
  'A strongly employer brand also has a positive impact on competitiveness, as it can differentiate organisations from their competitors.'

- Cost effectiveness.
  'The younger age at which an employer begins investing in the training and development of an employee, the more they can benefit from this investment.'

- Low wages and government incentives were not a main reason for employing younger people. They were viewed as an unsustainable false economy by companies.

The national picture

- In Maidstone 4.9% of young people aged 18-24 are unemployed (585 people).
- Nationally it is 6.2% (357,630 people).
- 74% of HR professionals believe there is a business case for employing young people.
- Only 1 in 10 companies will recruit 16-18 year olds directly from education.

- Less than 1/4 employers recruit anyone under 24 directly from education.
- Young people seen as a risk:
  - Almost half of employers were fairly or very nervous that a school leaver with A Levels would have the skills for their business.
- Only half of employers planned to recruit a young person in the next year.
- Only 41% provide any access routes, such as apprenticeships for young people.
- Less than a third of organisations visit schools or highlight local career opportunities to young people.
- Managers see themselves as customers rather than actors within the education system. They expect education to produce job-ready workers.
- Short term interests dominate. Only 6% of companies look five years or more ahead when planning their workforce.
- Concern about the aging workforce with potential staff losses as high as 25 to 30% over the next 10 to 15 years.

Problems recruiting young people

- HR professionals don't know how to talk to young people – for example asking those who have never worked about their work history.
- Managers have 'lost the skill to manage young people' and worry about the level of care they need to provide.
- Employers ask for graduates, even if the job doesn't require graduate level qualifications.
- Employers prefer to employ people who can hit the ground running.

Experience of employing young people

When asked why they recruited young people HR professionals' top answers were 'to grow the workforce' and to 'build the talent pipeline' (40% & 38% respectively.)

Employers who recruited young people were overwhelming satisfied (91%) with their recruits.

Nonetheless, 53% of employers think the young people they recruited did not get adequate careers guidance and 63% think that the young people they recruited lacked insight into the working world.

Top benefits of employing young people were:

- Willingness to learn (47%).
- Fresh ideas and new approaches (43%).
- Motivation, energy and enthusiasm (42%).

Remaining challenges

Main issues that employers had with government assistance:

- The lack of a 'joined up' skills and employment system of support for young people.
- The lack of direct support for employing young people.
- The need for better careers advice for young people, including alternatives to university like apprenticeships.

61% of employers believe that government support to recruit young people is too fragmented. Only 17% believed it joined up.

Recommendations

- Provide informal opportunities for managers and young people to come together to discuss opportunities, to avoid awkward conversations about work history – business breakfast networking events; work experience events.
- Provide work experience opportunities so that young people are able to show commitment and experience of the workplace.
- Use business case studies of success stories, to assuage employers' fears of recruiting young people – Locate in Maidstone, MBC website.
- Educate young people in what employers expect from recruits, through employer engagement in schools and Jobcentre Plus preparing people for interviews – Inspiring the Future, National Careers Service, Jobcentre Plus.
- Promote Apprenticeships and other alternatives to university – using Inspiring the Future and the National Careers Service.

UCU NEETs survey – July 2013

ComRes interviewed 1,004 16-24 year olds not in education, employment or training. The findings indicate that unemployment for young people is categorised by social exclusion and isolation, and they are more likely to suffer from depression and other limiting illnesses than those in education or work. The report also finds that young people do not have low aspirations; the vast majority want to work and contribute to society. Many have high-level skills and qualifications.

NEETs working history

- 28% of NEETs have been out of work, education or training for 1-2 months.
- However, a further quarter (26%) have been NEET for over three years, rising to 58% of those with no qualifications.
- 52% of NEETs with no qualifications have never worked in a paid or unpaid role.

NEETs and their skills

- 92% of NEETs nationally say their computer skills are good or excellent.
- 89% say the same about their English skills.
- 73% consider their maths skills to be good or excellent. Women are less likely to rank their maths skills as good or excellent (69%) than men (79%).
- Half of all UK NEETs (51%) agree their education has provided them with the appropriate skills for working life. 73% of young people out of work for less than three months agree with this.
- It falls to 37% for those out of work for over a year.
- With regards to *confidence* about working life, over 42% believe their education has provided them with this. One in ten of those with no qualifications disagree.

Personal wellbeing

- Stress and anxiety are mentioned most frequently as being the most common negative effects of being out of work.
- 39% mention stress and anxiety. 40% of those aged 22-24 claim to have suffered from stress and anxiety, compared to 29% of those aged 16-18. This could be the result of older young people having been unemployed for longer. These figures mirror almost exactly to the young people suffering stress who have been unemployed for three months or longer.
- 37% rarely leave the house.
- 33% mention depression.
- 26% discuss eating unhealthy foods.

Young people NEET want to work

- 68% say they want to be working a year from now but only 41% believe they will be.
- Young people out of work for more than a year are both less likely to want to work (63%) and less likely to believe they will be (32%). 22% want to go into full or part time education.
- 75% of NEETs in the UK believe that 'whatever politicians do, there will always be people in my position'. 71% do however believe that 'with the right support, people like me could contribute a lot to this country'. This rises to 84% amongst young people with special educational needs.
- There is a lack of optimism amongst young people.
- 54% believe their 'potential is being wasted'; 46% agree they 'feel in control of how their lives will turn out'; and 36% believe they have 'no chance of ever getting a job'.

Barriers to work, education or training for NEETs

- Lack of work experience is mentioned by 47% of young people as the main barrier preventing them getting into work, education or training.
- Lack of suitable well-paid jobs is mentioned by 28% and confidence is mentioned by one quarter of NEETs.
- There are distinct differences, however.

- A lack of work experience is cited by 62% of graduates and those out of work for less than 3 months (61%).
- 57% of the 16-18 age group also mention it; compared to 43% of those aged 22-24.
- 22% of women compared to 5% of men mention 'family life being too demanding' as the main obstacle to work. 20% of those aged 22-24 compared to just 4% of 16-18 cite this.

- To tackle the barriers to work, 46% of NEETs chose 'boosting my self-confidence' and 36% chose 'boosting my motivation' as the two best ways to help them get into work or education.
- These factors are chosen over the more hard-nosed (and easier to provide) 'advice on applying for jobs' (cited by 29%) or 'clear information about education and training opportunities' (23%).
- This suggests general feelings of negativity and emotional barriers that need to be overcome to help NEETs enter/re-enter the world of work.

Government action on NEETs

- A job or training guarantee is seen by 38% of NEETs as the best idea from politicians to help them get a job or appropriate training opportunities. 43% of men compared to 35% of women feel this way.
- Financial support to get to/from college or work is cited by 17% as the best idea from politicians.
- Just 2% of NEET identify classes in numeracy, literacy and computer skills as an idea that would help them most.
- Unsurprisingly, only 1% believe reducing benefit payments to give people a greater incentive to work is a helpful idea.

Recommendations for Maidstone:

- Ensure NEETs know about the free courses available to help them improve their maths, English and ICT skills.
- Ensure NEETs know where to go to get help on personal wellbeing, including depression.
- Signpost young people to volunteering and work experience opportunities, to help them build confidence and a work history for their CV.
- Identify and promote sources of help for boosting self-esteem and confidence.

Maidstone Borough Council

Economic & Commercial Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 24 September 2013

Future Work Programme & List of Forthcoming Decisions

Report of: Clare Wood, Policy & Performance Officer

1. Introduction

1.1 To consider the Committee's future work programme and the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

1.2 To consider the update on the work programme given by the Policy & Performance Officer.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the Committee considers the draft future work programme, attached at **Appendix A**, to ensure that it is appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.

2.2 That the Committee considers the sections of the List of forthcoming decisions relevant to the Committee at **Appendix B** and discuss whether these are items require further investigation or monitoring by the Committee.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 Throughout the course of the municipal year the Committee is asked to put forward work programme suggestions. These suggestions are planned into its annual work programme. Members are asked to consider the work programme at each meeting to ensure that remains appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.

3.2 The Committee is reminded that the Constitution states under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules number 9: Agenda items that 'Any Member of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Sub-Committee shall be entitled to give notice to the proper officer that he wishes an item relevant to the functions of the Committee or Sub-Committee to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting. On receipt of such a request the proper officer will ensure that it is included on the next available agenda.'

4 List of Forthcoming Decisions

4.1 The List of Forthcoming Decisions for September 2013 to March 2014 (**Appendix B**) contains the following decisions relevant to the Regeneration and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee' s current work programme and terms of reference:

- Regeneration and Economic Development Plan Consultation

5. Impact on Corporate Objectives

5.1 The Committee will primarily consider reports that deliver against all the Council priority: 'For Maidstone to have a growing economy.'

5.2 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities. Actions to deliver these key objectives may therefore include work that the Committee will consider throughout the coming year.

Appendices

- Draft work programme – Appendix A
- Forward Plan of Key Decisions – Appendix B

Appendix A

Economic & Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2013-14

Meeting Date	Agenda Items	Details and desired outcome
25 June 2013	• Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman • Cabinet Member Priorities for 2013/14 Municipal Year • Work Programming Workshop 2013-14	• Appoint Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2013-14 • Ascertain work plan for the year and strategic direction for the Council & Select and develop review topics focusing on achievable outcomes.
30 July 2013	Cancelled	Cancelled
27 August 2013	• Market Update • VIC Update • Economic Development Staff Structure	• To review outcomes from previous scrutiny reviews • To understand to new structure for Economic Development
24 September 2013	• The State of Maidstone Economy • Regeneration and Economic Development Plan Update • Maidstone Enterprise Hub • Employability & Worklessness Projects Update	• Contextual information to aid understanding • Update on Regeneration & Economic Development Plan • To provide the committee with an overview of the project and expected outcomes.
22 October 2013	• Interview with Cllr Greer – vision for Visitor Information centre • Agree review Scope	
26 November 2013	• Events review – Interviews TBC	
24 December 2013		
28 January 2014		
25 February 2014		
25 March 2014	• Events Review Draft Report	
22 April 2014	• Evaluations of Cabinet Member Priorities for 2013/14 Municipal Year	• Ascertain progress made on Cabinet member Priorities.

LIST OF FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

Democratic Services Team
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Publication Date: **6 September 2013**

List of Forthcoming Decisions

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the decisions to be taken by the Executive and various Committees of Maidstone Borough Council on a rolling basis. This document will be published as updated with new decisions required to be made.

KEY DECISIONS

A key decision is an executive decision which is likely to:

- Result in the Maidstone Borough Council incurring expenditure or making savings which is equal to the value of £250,000 or more; or

- Have significant effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in Maidstone.

At Maidstone Borough Council, decisions which we regard as “Key Decisions” because they are likely to have a “significant” effect either in financial terms or on the community include:

(1) Decisions about expenditure or savings which equal or are more than £250,000.
(2) Budget reports.
(3) Policy framework reports.
(4) Adoption of new policies plans, strategies or changes to established policies, plans or strategies.
(5) Approval of portfolio plans.
(6) Decisions that involve significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether Borough-wide or in a particular locality.
(7) Changes in fees and charges.
(8) Proposals relating to changes in staff structure affecting more than one section.

Each entry identifies, for that “key decision” –

- the decision maker
- the date on which the decision is due to be taken
- the subject matter of the decision and a brief summary
- the reason it is a key decision
- to whom representations (about the decision) can be made

- whether the decision will be taken in public or private
- what reports/papers are, or will be, available for public inspection

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Cabinet collectively makes its decisions at a meeting and individual portfolio holders make decisions independently. In addition, Officers can make key decisions and an entry for each of these will be included in this list.

DECISIONS WHICH THE CABINET INTENDS TO MAKE IN PRIVATE

The Cabinet hereby gives notice that it intends to meet in private after its public meeting to consider reports and/or appendices which contain exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). The private meeting of the Cabinet is open only to Members of the Cabinet, other Councillors and Council officers.

Reports and/or appendices to decisions which the Cabinet will take at its private meeting are indicated in the list below, with the reasons for the decision being made in private. Any person is able to make representations to the Cabinet if he/she believes the decision should instead be made in the public Cabinet meeting. If you want to make such representations, please email janetbarnes@maidstone.gov.uk. You will then be sent a response in reply to your representations. Both your representations and the Executive's response will be published on the Council's website at least 5 working days before the Cabinet meeting.

ACCESS TO CABINET REPORTS

Reports to be considered at the Cabinet's public meeting will be available on the Council's website (www.maidstone.gov.uk) a minimum of 5 working days before the meeting.

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS?

The Council actively encourages people to express their views on decisions it plans to make. This can be done by writing directly to the appropriate Officer or Cabinet Member (details of whom are shown in the list below).

Alternatively, the Cabinet are contactable via our website (www.maidstone.gov.uk) where you can submit a question to the Leader of the Council. There is also the opportunity to invite the Leader of the Council to speak at a function you may be organising.

List of Forthcoming Decisions

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary:**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable):**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private** ***(if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted (*other relevant documents may be submitted*)**
Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development Due Date: October 2013	Maidstone Enterprise Hub To allocate up to £700,000 from Capital Programme to establish an Enterprise Hub in Maidstone Town Centre.	KEY Reason: Expenditure > £250,000	John Foster, Economic Development Manager johnfoster@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Maidstone Enterprise Hub
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 13 Nov 2013	Regeneration and Economic Development Plan Consultation To consider the draft Regeneration and Economic Development Plan for the Borough and agree its release for public consultation.	KEY Reason: Affects more than 1 ward	John Foster, Economic Development Manager, johnfoster@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Regeneration and Economic Development Plan Consultation