

AGENDA

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING



Date: Tuesday 16 February 2016

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Town Hall, High Street,
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors D Mortimer, Newton, Mrs Parvin,
Perry, Mrs Ring (Chairman),
Mrs Robertson, Webb, Webster and
J.A. Wilson

Page No.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Urgent Items
4. Notification of Visiting Members
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers

Continued Over/:

Issued on Monday 8 February 2016

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact Caroline Matthews on 01622 602743**. To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk

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

6.	Disclosures of Lobbying	
7.	To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.	
8.	Minutes of the Meeting Held on 19 January 2016	1 - 6
9.	Presentation of Petitions (if any)	
10.	Questions and answer session for members of the public (if any)	
11.	Report of the Head of Environment and Public Realm - Mitigation for the Withdrawal of the Saturday Freighter Service	7 - 22
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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY **19 JANUARY 2016**

Present: Councillor Mrs Ring (Chairman), and
Councillors D Mortimer, Newton, Mrs Parvin, Perry,
Mrs Robertson and Webb

Also Present: Councillor Sargeant

93. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor J Wilson.

94. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no substitute Members.

95. **URGENT ITEMS**

The Chairman indicated that she would take the revised Appendix to the Report of the Head of Policy and Communications – Strategic Plan 2015-20 Refresh as an Urgent Update.

96. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

It was noted that Councillor Sargeant was present as a Visiting Member and reserved his right to speak on any item.

97. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures from Members and Officers.

98. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

99. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

RESOLVED: That the item on Part II of the agenda be taken in private as proposed.

100. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2015**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed.

101. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

102. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)

There were no questions from members of the public.

103. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS - STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-20 REFRESH

Members considered the report of the Head of Policy and Communications relating to the Strategic Plan 2015-20 Refresh.

In response to questions from Members:-

- (i) the Head of Policy and Communications advised that there would be links to the emerging Local Plan in terms of affordable housing in the final document;
- (ii) the Head of Housing and Community Services advised that there was a definition within the national framework for affordable housing. However, Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting in March could choose to break down the affordable housing category further to make it clearer; and
- (iii) the Head of Housing and Community Services agreed that the definition of a 'homeless person' is unclear. This term is used to cover a lot of scenarios, however efforts would be made to make this clearer for the future.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the projects under the priority action areas be noted; and
- 2) That the action plan, milestones and outcomes be agreed.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

104. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES - MAIDSTONE HOUSING STRATEGY 2016-2020

Members considered the report of the Head of Housing and Community Services which gave an update following the consultation process that had been undertaken with relevant stakeholders through two workshops held in December 2015.

In response to Members' questions:-

- i) The Head of Housing and Community Services advised that the NHS were not among those consulted. However, KCC's Health

Commissioning Services and the West Kent Health and Wellbeing Board were consulted;

- ii) It was noted that 102 people responded on line to the consultation; and
- iii) The onus is on Developers to determine what would be categorised as a starter home.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) The Committee noted that a consultation process had been undertaken with relevant stakeholders. A summary of these consultations and responses were included in the report and Appendix B to the report of the Head of Housing and Community Services. The Government changes to National Policy in the Housing and Planning Bill were also noted;
- 2) The Committee agreed that following extensive research, analysis and consultation, the Key Priority Themes and stated outcomes identified for the new Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020 be approved;
- 3) The Committee gives delegated authority to the Head of Housing and Community Services to develop the Action Plan (as attached at Appendix A to the report of the Head of Housing and Community Services) and final Maidstone Housing Strategy document, before it is presented to Policy and Resources Committee and full Council for adoption; and
- 4) The Committee endorses the first phase of actions that the Council can commence in order to address the current housing situation in the first year of the new Maidstone Housing Strategy.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

105. **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES - MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2016-17 ONWARDS - FEES AND CHARGES**

Members considered the report of the Head of Finance and Resources which set out proposals for the level of fees and charges for 2016/17 for services under the responsibility of this Committee.

Members were reminded that the Licensing Committee would be considering the fees and charges relating to Licences.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) The proposed fees and charges for 2016/17, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Head of Finance and Resources, be approved; and

- 2) The budget increase, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Head of Finance and Resources and summarised in Table 1, paragraph 2.6 in the report be approved.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

106. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES - MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2016-17 ONWARDS - FINAL UPDATE

Members considered the report of the Head of Finance and Resources on the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 Onwards – Final Review which gave a final opportunity for the Committee to consider resources available to provide the services that are under its responsibility and comment to Policy and Resources Committee on any matters for their consideration before a recommendation would be made to Council in March 2016.

The Head of Finance and Resources advised Members on the current financial position that the Council faces, with some £627,000 savings to be delivered immediately.

He also advised that since the papers had been published there was an additional proposal to be put forward for this Committee in terms of capital. However, Members were concerned that they should not approve additional capital to be put forward without more detail being given to them.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Perry and seconded by Councillor Webb that the Committee expresses its concerns to Policy and Resources Committee that it cannot agree the capital programme 2016/17 to 2020/21 relating to this Committee until it is given more information.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

Recommendation Carried.

Members also expressed concerns that should the freighter service be withdrawn, that an alternative arrangement should be put in place to ensure that residents are not disadvantaged.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Perry and seconded by Councillor D Mortimer that Officers bring a report back to the next meeting on proposals to mitigate the loss of the freighter service.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) The additional savings and efficiencies set out in Appendix B to the report of the Head of Finance and Resources be approved;

Voting: For: 5 Against: 0 Abstentions: 2

- 2) The budget proposed for 2016/17 as set out in Appendix C to the report of the Head of Finance and Resources be approved and confirms the decision to Policy and Resources Committee;

Voting: For: 5 Against: 0 Abstentions: 2

- 3) The Committee expresses its concerns to Policy and Resources Committee that it cannot agree the capital programme 2016/17 to 2020/21 relating to this Committee until it is given more information; and

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

- 4) The Committee requests that Officers bring a report back to the next meeting on proposals to mitigate the loss of the freighter service.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

107. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reason specified having applied the Public Interest Test:

Head of Schedule 12A and Brief Description

Exempt Report of the Head of Housing and Community Services - Property Acquisitions - Temporary Accommodation

Paragraph 3 – Info re business/financial affairs

108. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES - PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS - TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

Members considered the exempt report of the Head of Housing and Community Services.

It was noted that the proposed acquisition of two properties for the provision of accommodation for homeless households would increase the number of properties already designated for this use and reduce the reliance and cost of bed and breakfast accommodation.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Ring and seconded by Councillor Webb that Officers regularly update the Committee on progress of these purchases.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

Recommended Carried.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) The purchase of two properties subject to contract, valuation and survey, for use as accommodation for homeless households be approved as set out in the exempt report of the Head of Housing and Community Services;
- 2) The Housing Capital (Support for Social Housing) Programme funds for 2015/16 (£1,664,500) are carried forward into 2016/17, in order to adequately fund these property acquisitions and also leave sufficient capital resources for the Council to consider buying additional properties should further opportunities arise in the market place;
- 3) The Head of Legal Services be authorised to complete the purchases on the agreed terms;
- 4) The Head of Housing and Community Services commissions the appropriate management service provision as set out in the report of the Head of Housing and Community Services; and
- 5) Officers regularly update the Committee on progress of these purchases.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

109. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.45 p.m.

Communities, Housing and Environment Committee

16 February 2016

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

Mitigation for Withdrawal of Saturday Freighter Service

Final Decision-Maker	Communities, Housing and Environment Committee
Lead Head of Service	Head of Environment & Public Realm
Lead Officer and Report Author	Head of Environment & Public Realm
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:-

That the Committee approves the proposed mitigation measures for the removal of the Saturday Freighter Service

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – the mitigation for the removal of the Saturday Freighter Service will ensure that residents are able to deal with their waste responsibly and will promote recycling.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Community, Housing and Environment Committee	16 February 2016

Mitigation for Withdrawal of Saturday Freighter Service

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Report of the Head of Finance and Resources for the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 Onwards – Final Review set out the proposal to generate £40,000 savings from the withdrawal of the Saturday Freighter Service.
 - 1.2 This Committee requested further information regarding measures to mitigate the withdrawal of this service, which this report outlines.
-

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Weekend Freighter Service was originally introduced in 1991, predating the introduction of wheeled bins and mainstream recycling. The purpose of the service was to enable residents to dispose of any form of waste including bulky items.
- 2.2 Over the past 10 years the Service has been reviewed and adapted to reflect the changing needs of the Borough and improve efficiency of the Service. Monitoring of the Service during this time has shown a steady decline in usage and due to increased emphasis on recycling within the Borough, the items which can be disposed of through this route have also been restricted. This is outlined in Appendix A.
- 2.3 The service now consists of a single Saturday freighter which visits 99 sites across the Borough every 10 weeks and collects bulky items and general home de-cluttering waste, such as old furniture, children's toys and DIY waste.
- 2.4 The Saturday Freighter Service currently costs £45,000 per annum and in 2014/15 collected approximately 300 tonnes of waste, which was sent to landfill as it could not be separated for recycling. This tonnage has a negative impact of 0.27% on the Council's recycling rate.
- 2.5 It is noted that there is an inequality of service across the Borough through the provision of the Saturday Freighter Service, with only those living in close proximity or with transport being able to use it. A recent survey with householders living near a freighter site and those living away from a site, indicated a declining use of the service and supported the results from the monitoring in 2014. This confirms that small pockets of residents are benefiting from a service which is paid for by all taxpayers. The results of the survey are shown in Appendix B.
- 2.6 The Council also offers a Bulky Collection Service to residents to dispose of waste which does not fit in a wheeled bin. For this service there is a very reasonable charge of £23 for 1-4 items and £33 for 5-8 items, with charges scheduled to rise by just 50 pence in 2016/17. In 2014/15, there were approximately 4,350 bulky collections made.

- 2.7 The Bulky Collection Service costs £68,500 per annum and generates approximately £80,000 income per year. However as the number of bulky collections increases, the cost for the Service also increases. Any surplus generated contributes to other contract costs.
- 2.8 The Saturday Freighter Service currently provides an inequality of service to Maidstone residents as it enables abled-bodied people to dispose of bulky waste free of charge; however those who are unable to transport their waste would be required to pay for a bulky collection. Stage 1 of an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out based on the planned changes and shows that the proposal removes these inequalities and the detrimental impact the current service has on some residents. The Equality Impact Assessment is included in Appendix C.
- 2.9 The Saturday Freighter Service has also been found to be used frequently by commercial businesses that are unable to access Tovil Household Waste Recycling Centre and would be required to travel to Sittingbourne to dispose of their waste responsibly.

Proposed Mitigation for Service Withdrawal

- 2.10 Monitoring has shown that people generally use the Freighter Service because it's free, it's convenient, they cannot use Tovil Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) or they do not want to use Tovil HWRC.
- 2.11 Whilst the Bulky Collection Service is undoubtedly more convenient as there is not a requirement to wait for up to 10 weeks and the items are collected from the resident's property, the issue of cost and use of the Tovil HWRC can be mitigated to some extent.
- 2.12 There is no evidence to suggest the Saturday Freighter Service is more frequently used by those on low incomes or that it reduces fly-tipping. Nonetheless, it is sensible for changes to be made to other services to ensure the withdrawal of the Service does not have a negative impact on low-income groups and/or the incidence of fly-tipping.
- 2.13 Firstly it is proposed that an annual subsidised Bulky Collection is offered to low income households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction Discount as a recognisable assessment of need. This subsidy would equate to the Service being offered once a year at cost i.e. £16 for 1-4 items.
- 2.14 It is recommended that a six month trial of the subsidy is carried out to determine usage and assess the benefit to residents and the Council.
- 2.15 By offering the subsidy at this level there will not be an impact on the cost of the Bulky Collection Service. It is also only proposed to offer one subsidised collection per year as evidence from a comparator local authority suggests that free or limitless collections are often misused. Appendix D shows the services offered by neighbouring authorities.
- 2.16 Effort is already being made to refer residents to furniture reuse and other charitable organisations where possible and greater emphasis will be placed

on this through the Bulky Collection booking process and through customer service advisors in the Gateway. The Council will also continue to work with charities to identify opportunities to divert more waste to reuse and recycling.

- 2.17 A significant concern for some years has been the level of commercial waste illegally disposed of through the Saturday Freighter Service. However without a facility locally, the nearest being in Sittingbourne, it is understandable why this route has proved popular with small businesses. Initial discussions have been held with the County Council about opportunities for accepting this waste at a facility in Maidstone. This could be a commercial opportunity for the Council, working in partnership with the County to access existing waste disposal routes.
- 2.18 In the meantime it is proposed that the Council publicise businesses' responsibilities and promote the Council's existing commercial waste service to SME's.
- 2.19 The Council will continue to work pro-actively with the County Council to see what improvements can be made at Tovil HWRC or elsewhere to improve the customer experience.
- 2.20 Overall a combination of introducing mitigation measures alongside ongoing education work around the importance and benefits of recycling would ensure that the withdrawal of the Saturday Freighter does not have an overall negative impact on communities and increases recycling rates within the Borough.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 **Option 1:** The Committee could chose to agree the mitigation measures as set out in this report. This will enable a more equitable access to the Service and promote higher levels of reuse and recycling, contributing to the Council's environmental objectives.
- 3.2 **Option 2:** The Committee could propose alternative mitigation measures or focus on specific measures such as signposting to existing reuse and recycling routes.
- 3.3 **Option 3:** The Committee could decide that no mitigation measures are required.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Option 1 is the preferred option as it reduces the potential impact of the Service withdrawal, whilst offering a low level of financial risk to the Council.
- 4.2 The proposed mitigation measures ensure that those who currently use the Saturday Freighter are provided with viable alternative routes to dispose of waste responsibly.

- 4.3 The introduction of a bulky collection subsidy would benefit all residents on a low income as opposed to just able-bodied residents who currently benefit from the Saturday Freighter Service.
- 4.4 Alternative mitigation measures are unlikely to deliver the level of saving required to balance the budget in 2016/17 or provide any additional benefits above those set out in this report and therefore are not recommended.
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5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 The Committee, at the January 2016 meeting, considered and agreed the proposal to withdraw the Saturday Freighter Service to generate a saving of £40,000 per annum, however requested that actions to mitigate the withdrawal of the Service are considered.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 The Saturday Freighter Service will be withdrawn from the end of April 2016, following a full 10 week cycle. This will enable residents using the Service to be notified and notices to be displayed.
- 6.2 Information will also be published on the Council's website, through the customer contact centre and the Borough Update.
- 6.3 Promotion of bulky reuse and recycling schemes is already being carried out through roadshows and the Council's website.
- 6.4 The introduction of an annual subsidised bulky collection to residents in receipt of Council Tax Reduction Discount would start at the beginning of May 2016 if agreed. This will be reviewed after 6 months to determine its effectiveness.
- 6.5 Discussions are being held with the County Council to explore opportunities for accepting commercial waste at the Council's depot in Park Wood. The imminent installation of the weighbridge at this site will facilitate this proposal. In the meantime, the Council will ensure information is available to local businesses to ensure that they are aware of how to deal with their waste responsibly.
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7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – the mitigation for the removal of	Head of Environment & Public

	the Saturday Freighter Service will ensure that residents are able to deal with their waste responsibly and will promote recycling.	Realm
Risk Management	<p>Failure to secure £40,000 saving from this service will pose a significant risk to the MTFS. This report identifies the mechanisms in place to support the withdrawal of the Saturday Freighter Service.</p> <p>Failure to meet the EU target of recycling 50% by 2020 is also likely to have a financial impact on the Council through issuing of fines. The withdrawal of the freighter service will help the Council to achieve 50% recycling through reducing the amount of waste disposed of.</p>	Head of Environment & Public Realm
Financial	The Council's medium term financial strategy requires the identification of £2.4m in savings and efficiency to maintain a balanced budget for 2016/17. Each service committee has made such savings and efficiencies and this Committee has contributed £98,000 (4%) to the delivery of that target. The removal of the freighter service represents £40,000 of that contribution.	Head of Finance & Resources
Staffing	None identified	Head of Environment & Public Realm
Legal	The Council does not have a statutory obligation to provide this service.	Head of Environment & Public Realm
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	Stage 1 of the process has been completed and has not identified any potential impacts. However it has been identified that the current Service provides some inequality as not all residents, particularly the elderly and disabled will be able	Policy & Information Manager

	to access the Service.	
Environmental/Sustainable Development	The withdrawal of this Service will have a positive effect of around 0.2% on the Borough's recycling rate and supports the Council's Waste Strategy.	Head of Environment & Public Realm
Community Safety	None identified	Head of Environment & Public Realm
Human Rights Act	None identified	Head of Environment & Public Realm
Procurement	None identified	Head of Environment & Public Realm
Asset Management	None identified	Head of Environment & Public Realm

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Weekend Freighter Service - Comparison of Data 2005-2014
- Appendix B: Saturday Freighter Service – Survey Results 2016
- Appendix C: Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix D: Neighbouring Bulky Collection Services

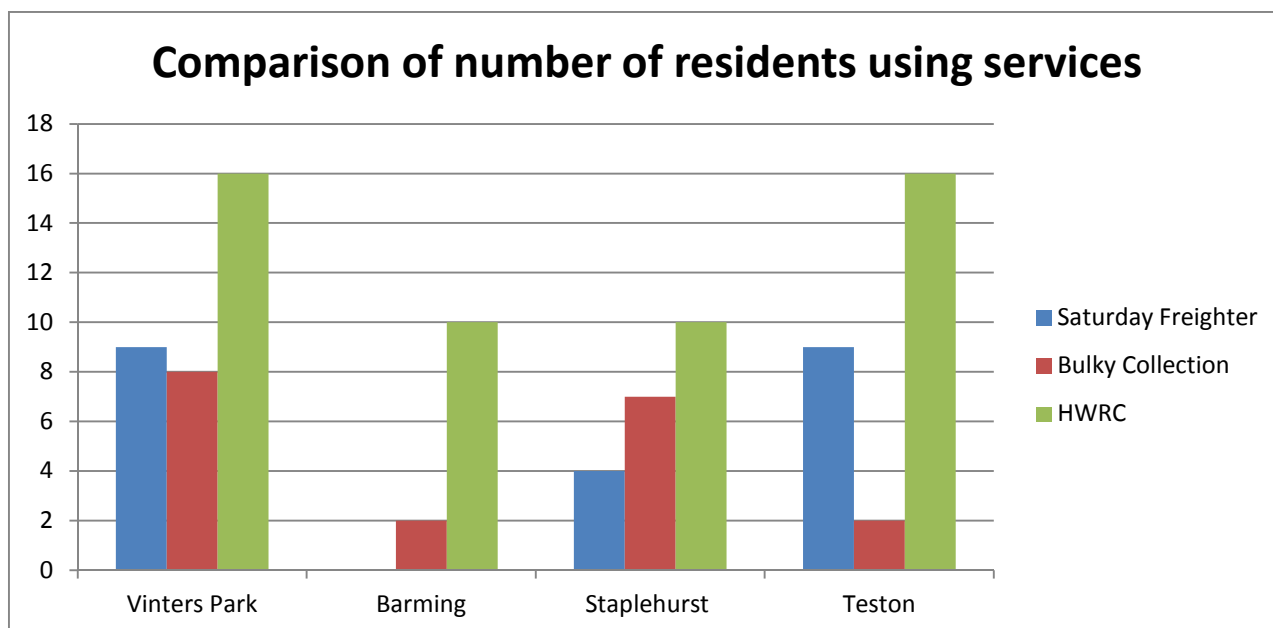
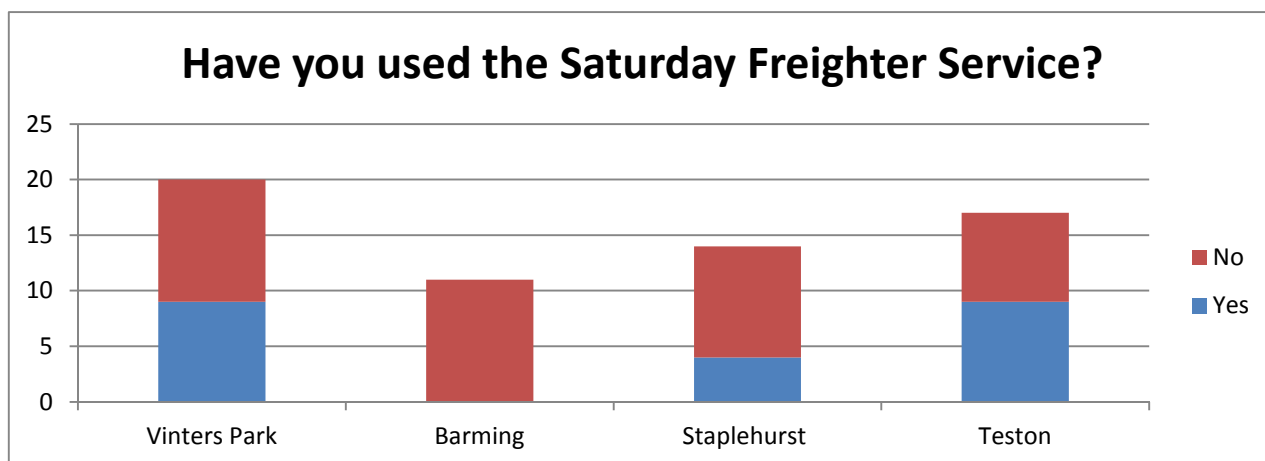
9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

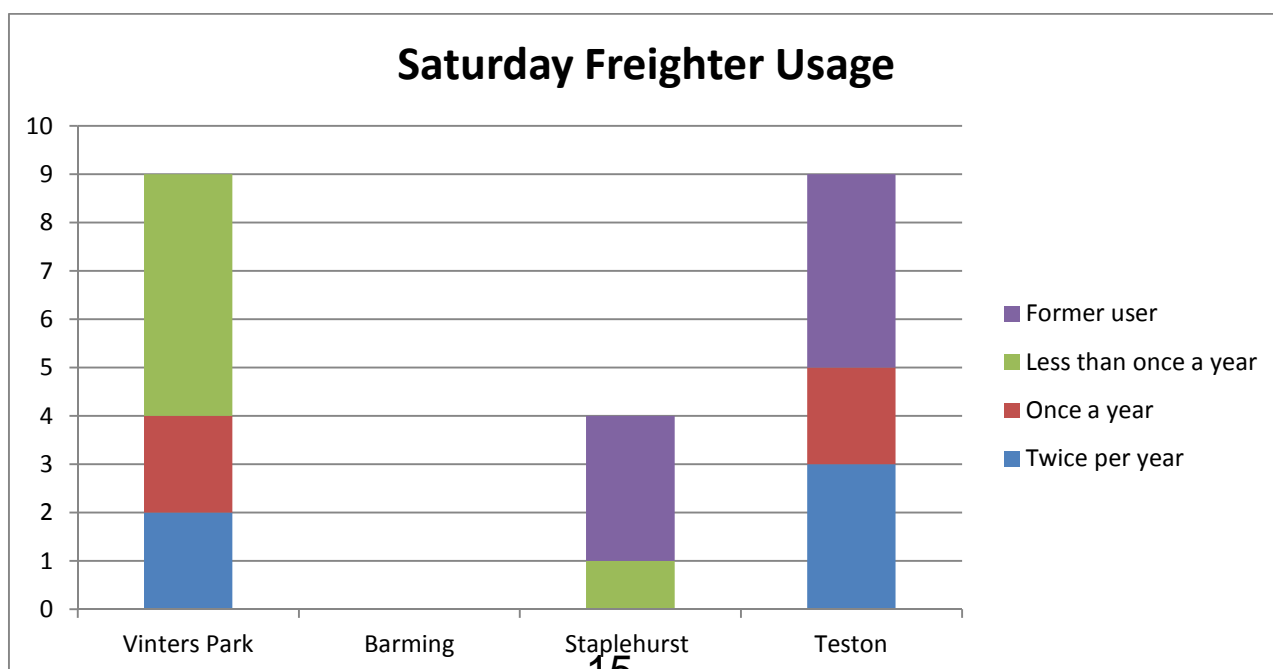
APPENDIX A: Weekend Freighter Service - Comparison of Data 2005-2014

	2005	2007	2010	2013	2014
Weeks monitored	50	37	6	6	3
Service provided	2 x Saturday / 1 x Sunday	2 x Saturday / 1 x Sunday	1 x Saturday / 1 x Sunday	1 x Saturday	1 x Saturday
No. of visitors	12744	19482	1474	387	156
Average per week	254.88	526.54	245.67	64.50	52.00
Average per vehicle	84.96	175.51	122.83	64.50	52.00
Total number of visitors	12744	26327	12283	3225	2600
Population estimate	145644.40	149017.60	152000.00	157297.00	161800
Percentage of population	9%	18%	8%	2%	1.60%
No. of households	60000	62000	64492	66687	67443
Percentage of households <i>assuming only visit once</i>	21%	42%	19%	5%	4%
Total Tonnage (Bulky + Saturday Freighter)	2030.38	1589.41	2837.46	1380.14	541.31
Narrative	Please note usage figures collected by operatives rather than direct monitoring	Please note usage figures collected by operatives rather than monitoring. Free collection of fridges alongside freighter service. Lower uptake in bulky collection service compared with later years.	Monitored prior to the changes to acceptable items i.e. this still includes garden waste, construction waste etc.	Garden waste no longer accepted on freighter. High uptake in bulky collection compared with previous years.	Cardboard, textiles, small electrical items not accepted on freighter due to other recycling options available from households

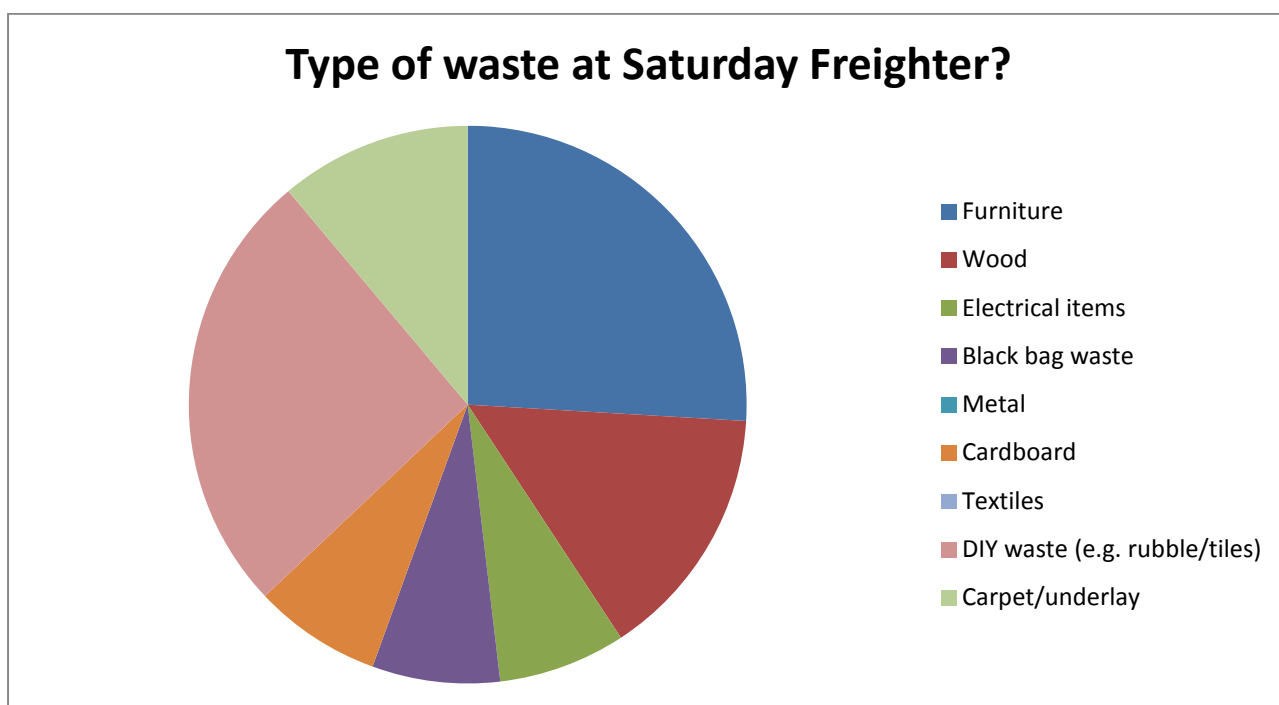
APPENDIX B: Survey of Householders (Results Summary)



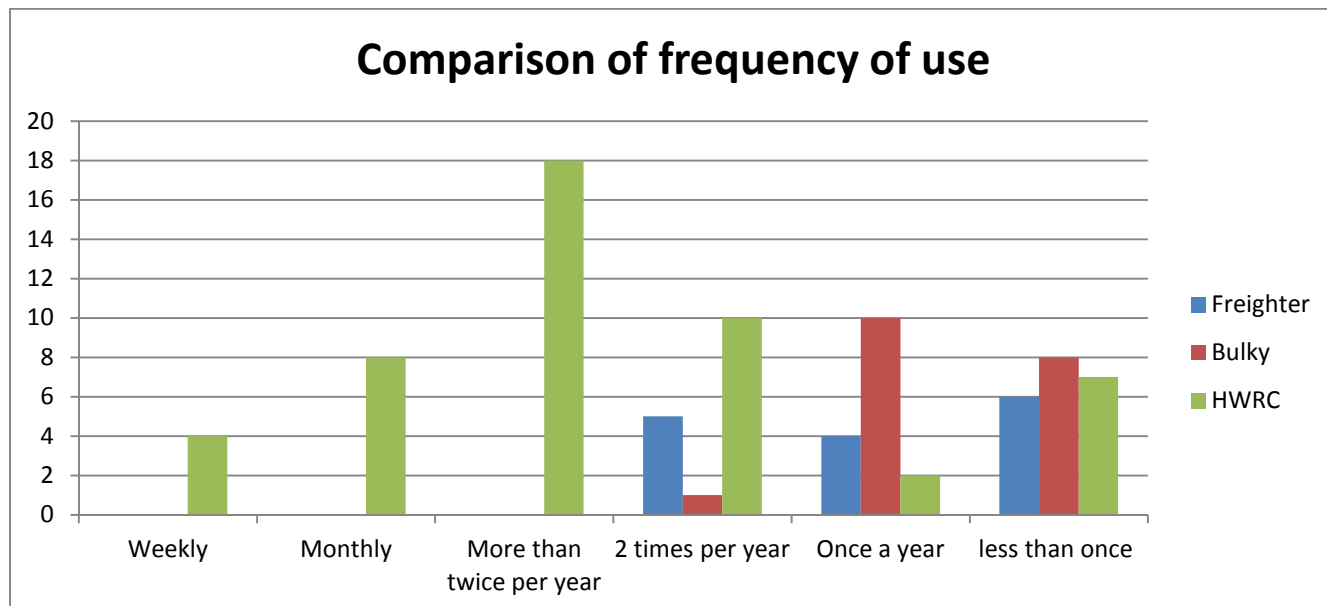
This comparison shows that those living near a freighter site will use it whereas those who do not (i.e. Barming) do not travel to another location. The convenience of the HWRC is clearly demonstrated by the number of people who chose to use this to dispose of waste.



Whilst nearly half of the residents questioned in Vinters Park have continued to use the Saturday Freighter, only 2 indicated they use it twice per year. The results from Staplehurst and Teston have shown people have changed their behaviour, moving away from the Service.

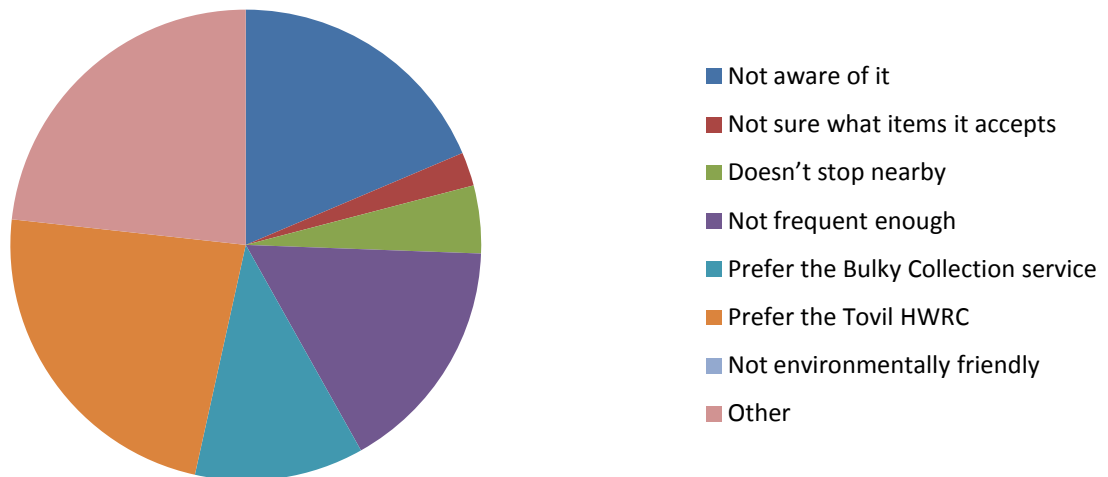


The majority of the waste taken to the Freighter either should not be accepted via this service i.e. black bag waste, cardboard and textiles, or could be recycled or reused if disposed of via an alternative route i.e. electrical items, wood, metal and furniture.

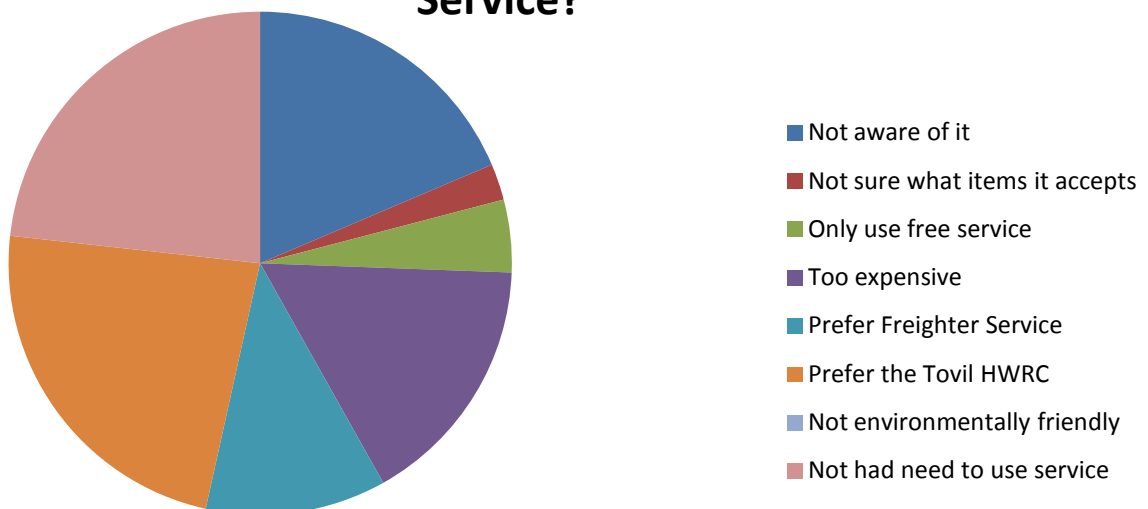


Overall the HWRC was shown to be used most frequently by residents. The Bulky Collection Service and Saturday Freighter have similar usage with 9 residents stating they use the Freighter once or twice per year compared to 11 using the Bulky Collection Service.

Why have you NEVER used the Saturday Freighter Service?



Why have you NEVER used the Bulky Collection Service?



The graphs above show the reasons why residents choose not to use the Saturday Freighter and Bulky Collection Services. Additional comments were:

"still have to transport items to the freighter...use BHF & Demelza House charities and small electrical items collected at kerbside" (Freighter)

"It is an eye sore." (Freighter)

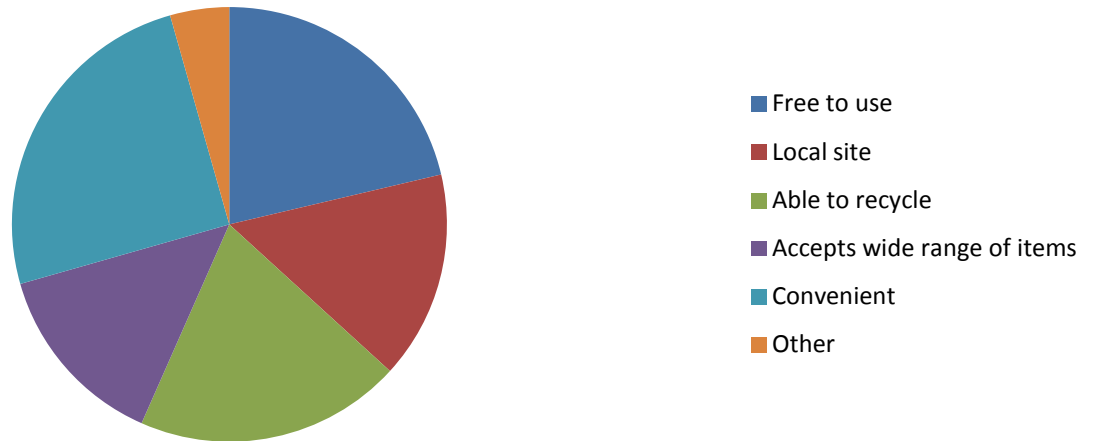
"Don't want to store waste until the freighter is coming" (Freighter)

"I'm 95 and cannot take items to the freighter" (Freighter)

"use freecycle for items, also John Lewis take away old appliances when delivering the new ones" (Bulky)

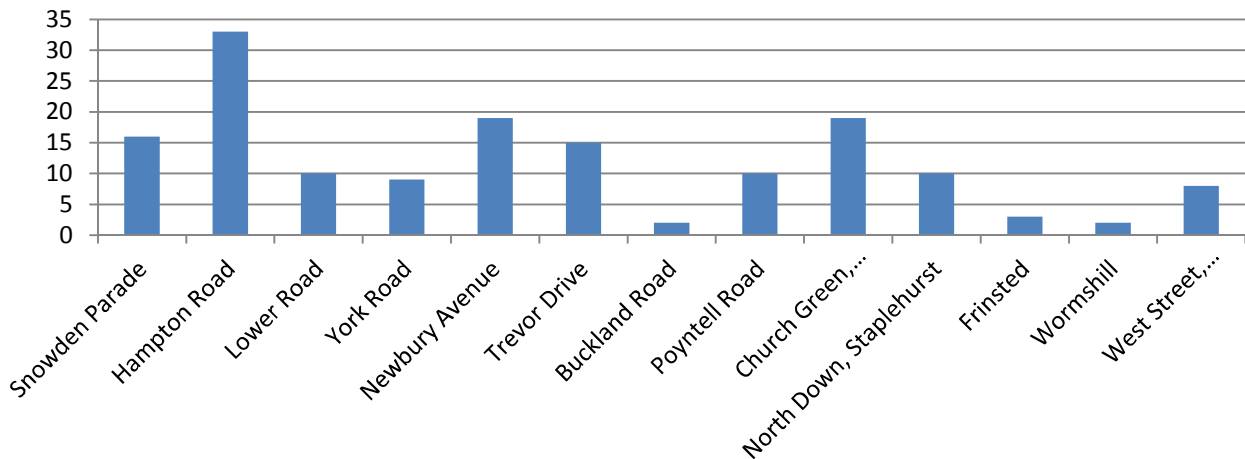
"too expensive for just 1 item but good value for 4" (Bulky)

Why do you use the HWRC?

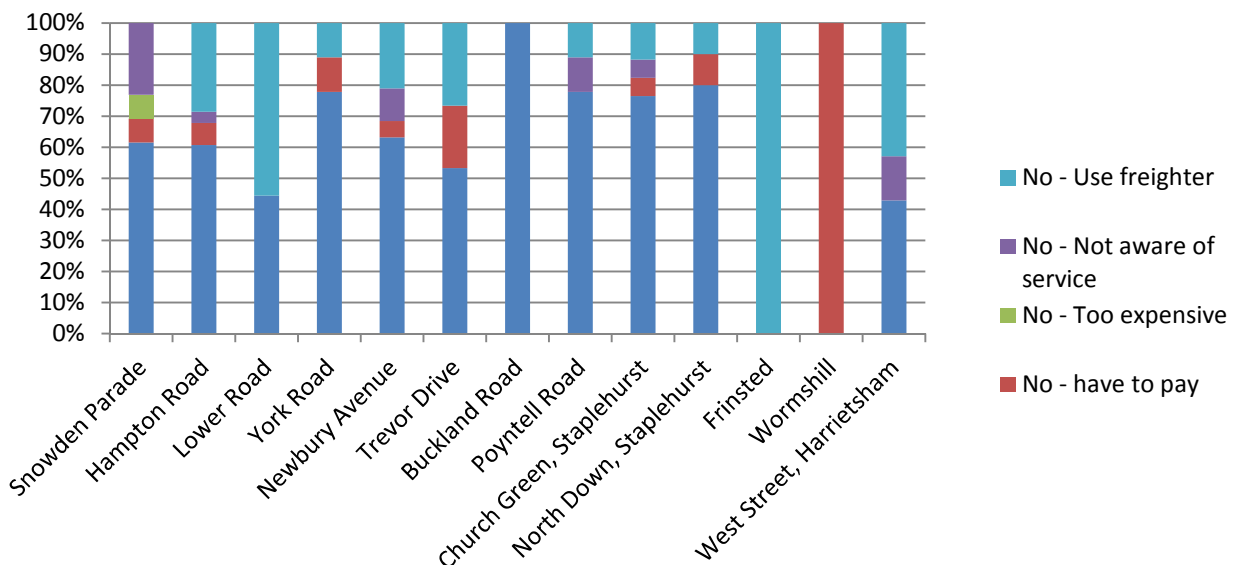


Results from 2014 survey of residents visiting Saturday Freighter

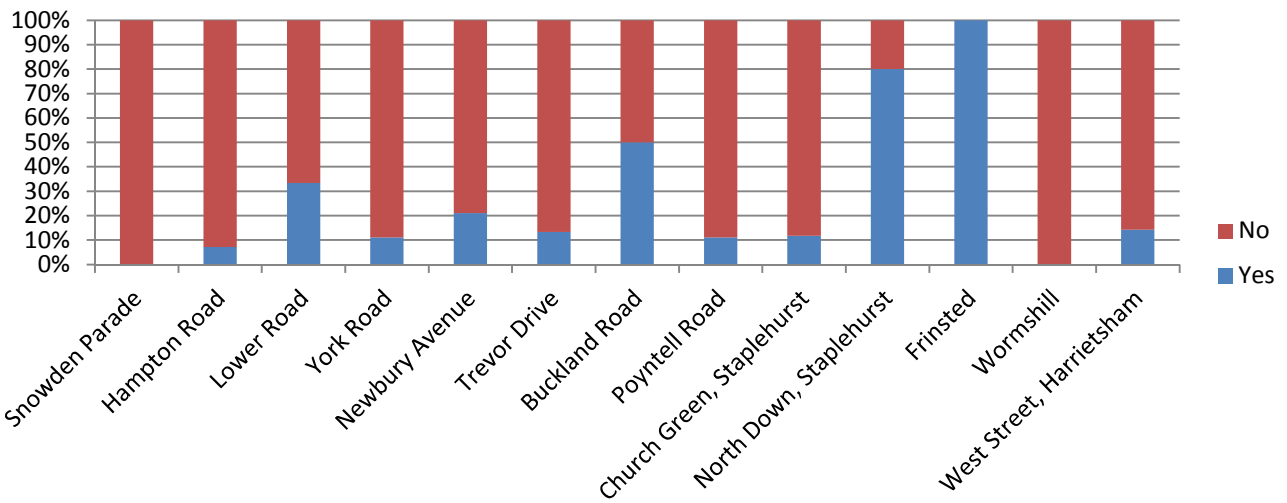
Number of Visitors



Have you used the Bulky Collection Service?



Do you know where the waste goes?



APPENDIX C – EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Stage 1: Equality Impact Assessment

1. What are the main aims purpose and outcomes of the Policy and how do these fit with the wider aims of the organization?

Why are we doing this, what do we hope to be achieved

Proposal to cease provision of the freighter service in order to:

- Save £40,000 per annum (as part of MBC's MTFS response to the Government's local government settlement)
- Increase MBC's recycling percentage by 0.2% per annum, thus assisting the legal requirement to achieve the EU 50% recycling target by 2020 (noting that not doing so would incur probable further financial penalties). (**NB** MBC achieved 49.1% in 2014/15.)
- Bring MBC in line with the practice of the vast majority of district councils in Kent
- Address the inequality whereby only a tiny proportion (4%) of the borough's 162,000 residents (regardless of protected characteristic) benefit from a virtual kerbside bulky waste removal service at the 99 freighter sites currently in use, effectively subsidised by the vast majority of council tax payers
- Remove the opportunity for abuse of this supposedly residential service by commercial entities

These targeted outcomes address the MBC wider aims of maintaining financial stability for the council and achieving our headline Recycling KPI.

2. How do these aims affect our duty to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the act.**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**
- **Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

The second of the three duties is engaged in that we will eliminate the random untargeted nature of the current Freighter Service and have a greater focus on offering a competitive rate Book a Bulky Service to all residents regardless of protected characteristics. Additionally we will review the policy options for offering a discounted Book a Bulky service to targeted groups of residents in receipt of specific benefits (which are by implication far more likely to positively affect aged and disabled residents).

3. What aspects of the policy including how it is delivered or accessed could contribute to inequality?

The current service – with very few exceptions – reinforces inequality, as it is still largely reliant on people being mobile and/or able-bodied.

Consideration of discounted options for targeted groups would at least give MBC the chance to review what more they could do to assist those with protected characteristics.

Cessation of the service will reduce inequality.

4. Will the policy have an impact (positive or negative) upon the lives of people, including particular communities and groups who have protected characteristics ? What evidence do you have for this?

Removal of the freighter service will not have a particularly negative impact on particular communities across MBC as a whole. (Excepting those able-bodied individuals with their own transport who make up the vast majority of users of the service will be slightly more inconvenienced by potentially having to drive further to the Tovil tip.)

If the answer to the second question has identified potential impacts and you have answered yes to any of the remaining questions then you should carry out a full EQIA set out as stage 2 below.

APPENDIX D – Neighbouring Bulky Collection Services

Council	Freighter Service	Bulky Collection	Charge £ 2015/16	Comments	Free provision
Ashford	N	Y	£23 (1-4 items); £33 (5-8 items)		N
Medway	N	Y	£19 (or £35 for express collection)		Y (One annual free collection, up to 3 items)
Swale	N	Y	£18.60 (up to 4 items)	Fridges/freezers are £18.60 each	N
TMBC	Y	Y	£48.20 (up to 6 items)	Fridges/freezers free but standard charge is much higher thus offsetting the limited free provision. TMBC does not have a KCC household waste site within their borough – hence the freighter service provision.	Y (Quarterly, may be eligible if on CT Reduction Benefit)
TWBC	Y	Y	£30 per item	Current weekly freighter site provision is currently under review	Y (Monthly if on one of 6 benefits)
Maidstone	Y	Y	£23 (1-4 items); £33 (5-8 items)		N

Communities, Housing and Environment

16th February 2016

Is this the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

KCC Mobile Library Consultation

Final Decision-Maker	Communities, Housing and Environment
Lead Head of Service	John Littlemore
Lead Officer and Report Author	Yasmin Gordine
Classification	Public
Wards affected	Borough

This report makes the following recommendations to the final decision-maker:

1. That the committee endorses the response to the KCC Mobile Library Consultation attached as appendix 1

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Communities, Housing and Environment	16 th February 2016

KCC Mobile Library Consultation

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The following report includes Maidstone Borough Council's official response to KCC's Mobile Library consultation which ends on Friday 4 March, 2016.

KCC operate 99 library buildings and currently operates 11 mobile libraries and one additional vehicle for use when others are off the road for maintenance. Mobile libraries currently visit 651 locations across Kent.

KCC are looking into how they can make their Mobile Library service more efficient and provide a better service for residents across Kent. Over the next few years KCC are facing significant financial challenges and reviewing all services to see where they can achieve greater efficiencies. Libraries, Registration and Archives service are facing savings of £1.3million.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 KCC are look at redesigning the Mobile Library Service they currently offer as well as introducing additional services. They have provided a full list of mobile library stops for Maidstone which can be found within the Appendix. For the majority of users KCC believe that the proposed changes will ultimately result in a better service. However there will be a number of users who will no longer be able to visit the mobile library at their current locations.

KCC maintain this will not mean a loss of service as they will be providing alternative access to library services through;

"Home Library Service – will bring library materials directly to your door. A trained volunteer will visit your home and discuss your reading tastes and requirements or you can simply request specific titles. Books and other materials will then be chosen based on your preferences. A volunteer will then drop them off and collect them at a time that is convenient for you."

"Touch a New World – will aim to get people online through the help of volunteers and if required a loan of an iPad for 10 weeks. Once the knowledge and education has been established around the internet and has become a permanent means to go online customers can then use their library card and pin to reserve items. Joining up with the Home Library Service items are then dropped off and collect from your home."

The Mobile library service was used by around 5,400 people across Kent during 2014-15 and demand has declined with overall visits falling by 20% over the last three financial years (from 2012-13) and item issues falling by 23% over the same period.

The average numbers of visitors across all mobile stops were 2.5 in the period of October 2014 to September 2015. The busiest stop averaged 27 visitors over the same period. In the financial year 2014/15 the service cost £368,172 to run which was made up of staff salaries, maintenance costs and fuel.

- 2.2 The service changes KCC are proposing are predicted to still maintain and deliver 80% of current visits and 77% of the current book issues. The table below shows a summary of mobile stops that will remain in each district;

District	Number of Static Libraries	Current number of stops	Proposed number of stops
Ashford	6	92	50
Canterbury	5	86	42
Dartford	9	20	5
Dover	6	80	30
Gravesham	10	17	5
Maidstone	11	85	43
Sevenoaks	11	39	17
Shepway	8	58	30
Swale	7	55	23
Thanet	8	42	11
Tonbridge	9	47	15
Tunbridge Wells	9	30	12
Total	99	651	283

If the proposed changes were to be implemented KCC estimate that they would be able to deliver the service with 5 mobile libraries which is predicted to save a potential £150,000 per annum.

The redesigning of the routes will allow a number of proposed improvements and changes to the stops;

- Each stop would be on a new, fortnightly schedule
- Increasing the minimum stop time from 10 minutes to 30 minutes, improving the stop length for more than half of the stops
- Changing the days operated to Tuesday through to Saturday to mitigate the impact of Bank holiday Mondays on our current schedules and to increase opportunity for wider use.
- In addition, KCC expect the redesigning of the routes will result in better fuel efficiency and improve the environmental impact the Mobile Libraries have
- It will also deliver a cash saving for KCC

As can be seen from the table the impact on Maidstone will mean that 50% of the mobile library service will be stopped.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The council can decide not to respond to the consultation but to do so would miss the opportunity to represent our residents as some of the information given within the consultation and the proposed changes to Mobile Library stops may affect our rural communities. For example currently there are three mobile library stops around Boughton Monchelsea and KCC are proposing that these are all removed due to the lack of visitors that county recorded; between October 2014 and September 2015 were less than two visitors per session. This will now mean people within the area who wish to use library provisions will need to visit their static libraries which are located in Coxheath, Marden and Staplehurst. Although the distance is not extensive this has the potential to isolate residents who do not have access to a car.
- 3.2 The council can provide a response to include concerns around the lack of the provision within areas of deprivation, as well as isolated areas due to the new proposed routes and locations. Although the new proposed locations will not totally put any member of the community at a disadvantage, individual's ability to access this resource will be limited. The additional services that are on offer, like the home library service, will be a positive more as people will receive a more personalised and tailored service. This indeed does have the potential to reduce isolation and loneliness due to a visit from a volunteer. However concerns remain around the awareness of this service to communities and how well they will be publicised and explained.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is to respond to the consultation outlining concerns around the lack/reduced service within areas of deprivation and isolated areas of the borough. Although the documents circulated by KCC show their reasons for reducing the number of stops across Kent, in relation to Maidstone there are certain areas, particular North Downs ward that are more heavily affected by the new proposed changes. Feedback provided by the ward councillor brought to the council's attention that there is a lack of public transport within this area of the borough and with an aging population this could pose issues around their ability to access library provisions. Although KCC has outlined that public transport provisions and the increase in car ownership has increased within the last five years, this has not been universal and public transport is limited due to the regularity of services provided. This suggests that mobile library services in specified areas would be a benefit. In Addition are areas that are situated just outside of the town centre that are equally at a disadvantage. Places like Sandling who's residents wish to access the provision may also find it difficult to access the service should the proposed changes to the stops be implemented. On this occasion there is a static library situated within Maidstone town centre, public transport again is infrequent especially if the journey was specifically to drop off a book so that no late fee charges were incurred.

- 4.2 In addition members of the public that class themselves as disabled might find it difficult to access a static library and the mobile library might be the only way in which they can access the service. KCC has clearly outlined new provisions that are available which would reduce the affect the new proposed timetable for mobile libraries would have. However a home service might not be what members of the public would like, some people are not keen on people entering their home and might feel uneasy should a volunteer visit them at their property. In addition getting out and about locally might be the only form of social engagement they would have in a week.
- 4.3 Including the above feedback within the council's response to the consultation might impact on their proposed changes and some mobile stops are re-instated as a result. Without our feedback and input into the consultation we wouldn't be representing our borough and taking into consideration the impact the service cuts would have rurally.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 When we received the notification of KCC's consultation around their proposed changes to the mobile library services all parish councils and ward councillors were emailed to inform them of this report and were given the opportunity for their responses to be included within this report. Unfortunately due to the committee deadlines the majority of the parishes were unable to respond to the council in time but they have confirmed that the parishes who wish to submit a response will do so, on their own merit through individual parish councils. Ward and Parish councillors' feedback was also welcomed and their responses are outlined below;

- Lack of public transport in remote areas can pose an issue for the elderly community being able to access library provisions.
- Although some stops may have only had 2 visitors this isn't a true representation as some residents are house bound and rely on neighbours and friends to collect and return books.
- A lot of elderly residents within the North Downs ward do not have access to vehicles and public transport is limited or doesn't run at all.
- Elderly community are not computer savvy and their for the additional provisions in place would not be suitable
- The locations of the mobile library stops are key as there was a scheduled stop in Teston which was suitable for the nursery group that operates out of the village hall. Going forward these needs to be taken on board and reflected in our report.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Once a decision has been reached as to how to respond to the consultation it will then need to be submitted to KCC before Friday 4 March, 2016.

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	Promoting a range of employment opportunities and skills required across our borough	John Littlemore
Risk Management	Not Applicable	
Financial	Not Applicable	
Staffing	Not Applicable	
Legal	Not Applicable	
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	Not Applicable	
Environmental/Sustainable Development	Not Applicable	
Community Safety	Not Applicable	
Human Rights Act	Not Applicable	
Procurement	Not Applicable	
Asset Management	Not Applicable	

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: MBC response to KCC
- Appendix II: KCC Consultation
- Appendix III: Mobile Library Stops across Maidstone

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Consultation Home Page

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/mobilelibraries/consultationHome>

Mobile Library stops broken down into district

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/mobilelibraries/viewContent?contentid=278099>

KCC Consultation document
Mobile Library Stops in Maidstone

Questionnaire

Tell us what you think by 4 March 2016

Please tell us your postcode to help us understand who is responding to our consultation:

Data Protection

Kent County Council collects and processes personal information in order to provide a range of public services. Kent County Council respects the privacy of individuals and endeavours to ensure personal information is collected fairly, lawfully, and in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Q1. Are you completing this questionnaire on behalf of:

Please select one option

- ☐ Yourself (as an individual)
- ☐ Yourself (as a relative or friend of a Mobile Library Service user)
- ☐ Yourself as a member of Kent County Council staff
- ☐ A District/Town/Parish Council
- ☐ A Business
- ☐ A Voluntary or Community Sector Organisation (VCS)
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Q1a. If you are responding on behalf of a Council / Business / VCS, please tell us the name of the organisation:

Maidstone Borough Council

Q2. Do you currently use the Mobile Library Service?

Please select one option

☐

Yes

☐

No

Q2a. If 'yes', please give the name of the Mobile Library Stop that you currently use

Q3. When did you last use the Mobile Library Service?

Please select one option

☐

Within the last month

☐

Within the last three months

☐

Within the last year

☐

More than a year ago

Q4. We are proposing to use one criterion to assess the future of mobile library stops:

Criterion: Stops that have had 2 or less visitors on average over the period October 2014 to September 2015

To what extent do you agree or disagree with these proposed criteria? Please indicate by placing an X in appropriate box below:

☐

Strongly Agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Agree

☐

Strongly disagree

☐

Neither agree nor disagree

☐

Don't Know

Q4a. Are there alternative or other criteria you think we should use?

When assessing whether or not a stop would be removed there should be evidenced consideration of the area composition in relation to age or deprivation; and accessibility to library provisions should be taken into consideration. Rural areas around Maidstone suffer from a lack of public transport and regularity to be able to access a static library or another mobile library in a neighboring village or ward. In addition having to travel to access static libraries could have a financial impact that will affect lower income households more disproportionately.

Q5. Frequency of visits to each location

We are proposing to change the frequency of visits to each location to every two weeks.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed change?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know

Q6. Changing the days we operate

We are proposing to change the days we operate the Mobile Library Service from Monday to Friday to Tuesday to Saturday

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed change?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

Q7. Increasing the minimum stopping time

We are proposing to change the minimum stop time, increasing this from 10 minutes to 30 minutes.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed change?

☐

Strongly agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Agree

☐

Strongly disagree

☐

Neither agree nor disagree

☐

Don't know

Q7a. Please tell us the reasons for your answers in response to questions 5, 6 and 7

Q6. Changing the working pattern of the mobile library should reduce the impact in which bank holidays have in addition would increase the provision to working individuals.

Q7. The increase in stoppage time is welcomed as the service can be accessed for a longer period. It is not clear what provision will be made to review usage and what discretion there will be to extend the waiting time if a service proves to be very popular.

Q8. Having read about the different ways to access KCC library services, which of the following options would be best for you?

(please select as many as you wish)

☐

Home Library Service

☐

Online Library Services

☐

Touch a New World

☐

Visit to a library building

☐

None of the above

Q8a. After considering our proposal will you still be able to access library services?

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Don't know

(Information on these services can be found on page 10 and 11 of the consultation document)

Q9: Equality Impact Assessment

We have completed an Equality Impact Assessment on the review of the Mobile Library Service, and we welcome your views on the assumptions we have made. To view the document, go to kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice or ask to see a copy on your mobile library. Please write your comments here:

Using the homes service provision is a positive solution but this might be something that is universally popular or may not be a viable solution if the individual works or had family commitments.

Q10. Anything Else?

If you still have concerns about how you would access the library service in the future, or have any other comments, please let us know.

About You...

If you are responding as an individual, please answer the following questions:

We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally, and that no one gets left out. That's why we're asking you these questions.

We won't share the information you give us with anyone else. We'll use it only to help us make decisions, and improve our services.

If you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don't have to.

Q11. Are you....? *Please select one box.*

☐

Male

☐

Female

☐

I prefer not to say

Q12. Which of these age groups applies to you? *Please select one box.*

☐

0 - 15

☐

25 - 34

☐

50 - 59

☐

65 - 74

☐

85 + over

☐

16 - 24

☐

35 - 49

☐

60 - 64

☐

75 - 84

☐

I prefer not to say

Q13. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong? (Source: 2011 census) *Please select one box.*

White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British
English <input type="checkbox"/>	White & Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>	Indian <input type="checkbox"/>	Caribbean
Scottish <input type="checkbox"/>	White & Black African <input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/>	African
Welsh <input type="checkbox"/>	White & Asian <input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/>	Other*
Northern Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	Other* <input type="checkbox"/>	Other* <input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say
Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	Arab <input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese <input type="checkbox"/>	
Gypsy/Roma <input type="checkbox"/>	*If your ethnic group is not specified in the list, please describe it here:		
Irish Traveller <input type="checkbox"/>			
Other* <input type="checkbox"/>			

The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted, or is likely to last, at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS, for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

Q14. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010? *Please select one box.*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I prefer not to say

Q14a. If you answered Yes to Q14, please tell us the type of impairment that applies to you. You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all that apply. If none of these applies to you, please select Other, and give brief details of the impairment you have.

☐ Physical impairment
 ☐ Mental health condition
☐ Sensory impairment (hearing, sight or both)
 ☐ Learning disability
☐ Longstanding illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy.
☐ Other*
 ☐ I prefer not to say

*If Other, please specify:

Making best use of the Mobile Library Service

Q15. Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion or belief? *Please select one box.*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I prefer not to say

Q15a. If you answered Yes to Q15, which of the following applies to you? *Please select one box.*

☐ Christian

☐ Hindu

☐ Muslim

☐ Any other religion, please specify:

☐ Buddhist

☐ Jewish

☐ Sikh

Q16. Are you? *Please select one box.*

☐ Heterosexual/Straight

☐ Gay woman/Lesbian

☐ Other

☐ Bi/Bisexual

☐ Gay man

☐ I prefer not to say

Q17. If you would like to receive updates about the development of our proposal and future engagement activities or would like us to contact you regarding alternative library service options please provide your contact details below. *Please select one box.*

Our preferred method of communication is by email, however if you do not have an email address then please provide your postal address.

Full Name

Yasmin Gordine

Email Address

yasmingordine@maidstone.gov.uk

Postal Address

Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone,
ME15 6JQ

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Please post your complete questionnaire to:
Freepost LRA Consultation

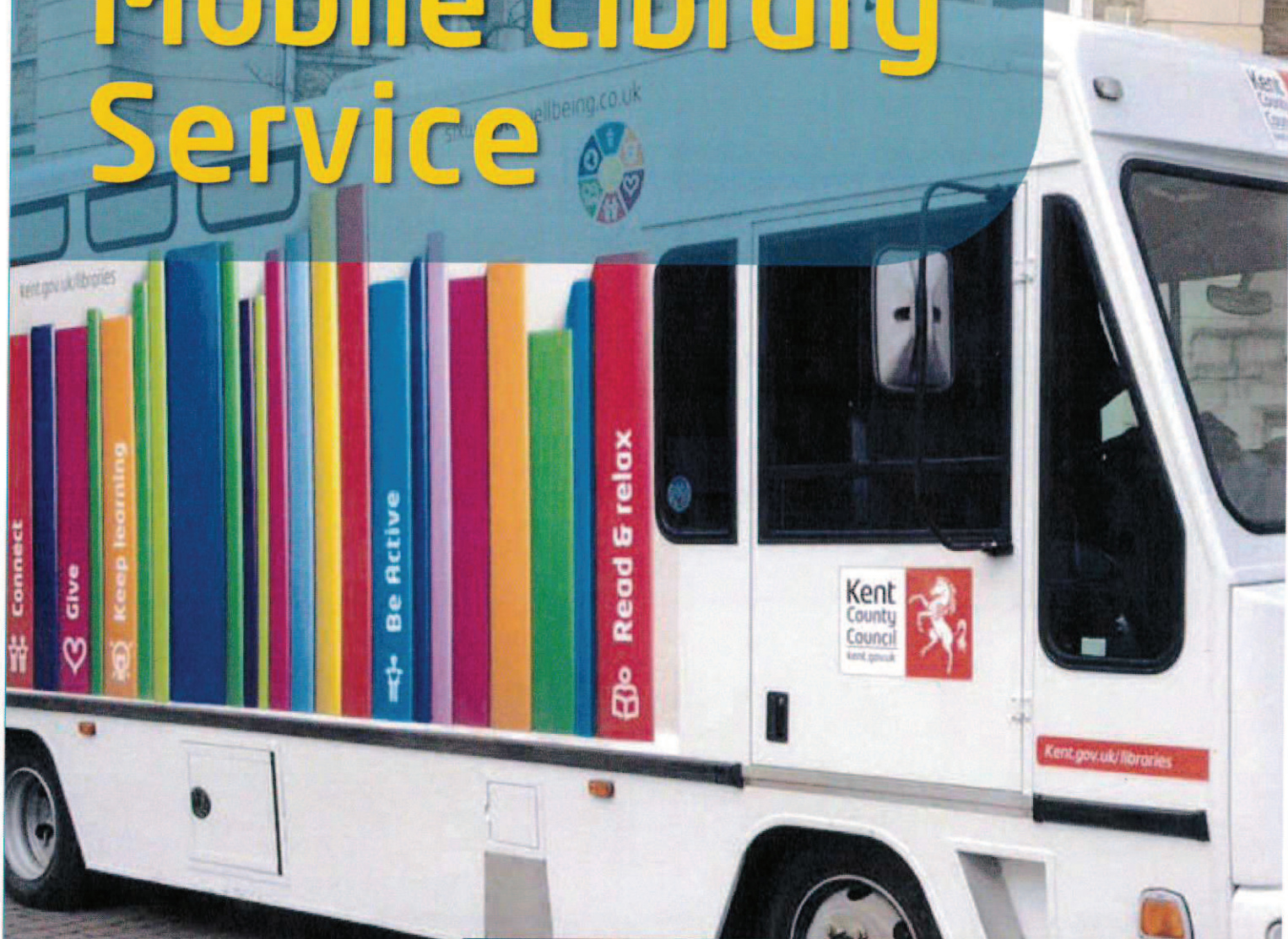
Or return it to your mobile library driver.



Alternative formats

If you require this document in any other format or language, please email alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or call: 03000 421553 (text relay service number: 18001 03000 421553). This number is monitored during office hours, and there is an answering machine at other times.

Making best use of the **Mobile Library Service**



Have your say

**Tell us your views about the
Mobile Library Service across Kent**

Kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice
Tell us what you think before 4 March 2016



We have sent all our current mobile library customers details of all stops in their district. However, if you would like information about stops in other districts, this is available at local libraries, on mobile libraries and at kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice

For alternative formats, see the back page of this document.

Introduction

Kent County Council (KCC) has been looking at how we can make our Mobile Library Service more efficient and provide a better service for residents across Kent.

KCC is facing a significant financial challenge over the next few years, and all services need to look at areas where they can make savings. Libraries, Registration and Archives must save £1.3million over the next three financial years.

In recent years improved public transport links, growth of car ownership, as well as greater access to services available via the internet have meant that the way people access all KCC services, including library services, is changing and we need to adapt to meet our customers' needs.

We want to make sure that our Mobile Libraries stop in the places where they benefit our customers most.

Within this document we have included details of how and why we are redesigning this service, plus a list of all mobile library stops, so that you can easily find the stop that you use and see how the proposals could impact on you. For the majority of our users, we believe these proposed changes will result in a better service. However there are a number of users who will no longer be able to visit the mobile library at the current stop. This will not mean a loss of a library service – there are excellent alternative services available and these are also outlined in this document.

Please take time to read the information and then answer and return the questionnaire enclosed within this booklet.

What could this mean for you?

It is important that we know the views of our customers when reviewing and making changes to services.

- We want to hear your views on the criterion we would like to use when planning how to make best use of our mobile libraries
- We would like to hear your views on the other changes we are proposing
- We want to hear any other comments you have about our proposals

Your responses will all be used to inform the KCC Cabinet Members decision on how we deliver this service in the future.

What is the consultation timeline?

This consultation will **start** on Friday 22 January 2016 and **finish** at 5pm on Friday 4 March 2016.

Background and context

As well as operating 99 library buildings, KCC currently operates 11 mobile libraries and one additional vehicle for use when others are off the road for maintenance. Our mobile libraries visit 651 locations across Kent. They offer a book lending service for people living, working and studying in the county, including those who live some distance from a traditional library building. Our vehicles do not provide access to computers or the internet.

The current Mobile Library Service has evolved over a number of years and there are differences in the service across Kent. Stopping times vary from 10 minutes to 90 minutes. Frequency of visits varies between two stops per week and once a month. The service was used by around 5,400 people during 2014-15 and demand has declined, with overall visits falling by 20% over the last 3 financial years (from 2012-13), and issues falling by 23% over the same period. For these reasons, we are reviewing all our routes so that we can be sure we are making the best use of our mobile libraries and providing the most efficient service across the county to all our customers.



Key Facts

Unless otherwise stated, facts are for the period October 2014 to September 2015.



The average number of visitors across all mobile stops was **two and a half**



In the financial year 2014-15 the service cost ...

£368,172

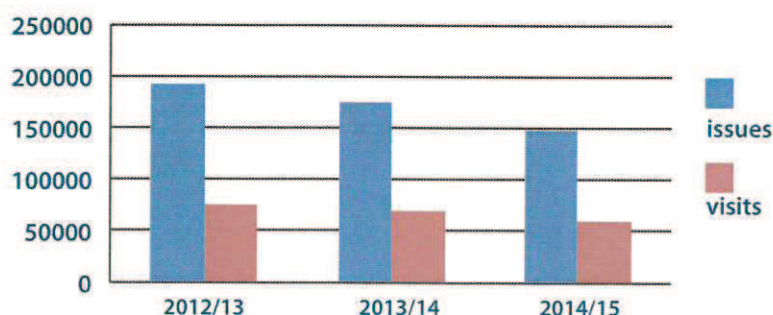
...to run. This is made up of staff salaries, maintenance costs and fuel.

50%

of all mobile library users also use one or more of our **library buildings**

Overall book issues for the mobile library service over the same period were **145,839** which equates to **2.8%** of total library issues.

Mobile issues and visits over the last three financial years



The average cost per customer visit of the mobile service is **£6.11** which compares to the static library average of **£3.83** (in 2014-15).

How we reviewed our routes

KCC has looked at a range of information for the period October 2014 - September 2015 (which is the most up-to-date data we had available to us) about the current Mobile Library Service. This included:

- number of recorded visitors at each stop
- number of items borrowed at each stop
- how long the vehicles stop at each stop
- how often vehicles visit each stop
- who our customers are
- the current routes that the vehicles travel
- which days of the week the service is currently offered

As part of this redesign we considered applying a range of criteria to all stops to help us assess the benefit they provide to local residents and considered a number of alternative options.



Proposed criterion and impact

In redesigning the service we have selected one criterion to assess usage:

Criterion: Stops that have only had, on average, 2 or less visitors over the period October 2014 - September 2015.

Under our current proposals, stops that meet this criteria will be withdrawn.

From the data, we are proposing that we reduce the number of stops by 368:

Criteria	Number of Stops
Stops that have received 2 or less visitors on average over the specified year period	368
Stops that have received over 2 visitors on average over the specified period.	283
Current total number of stops	651

Options we have considered

Criteria	Reason rejected
Take out stops within a mile of a static library	It is proposed to keep stops that had received over 2 visitors on average between October 2014 - September 2015. We decided actual usage of stops was key irrespective of their distance from the nearest static library.
Number of issues during 2014-15	We wanted to reflect the number of people actually using the service, rather than simply the number of books that are issued.
Only have one stop in a community	We propose to keep all stops that were performing above the minimum level as actual usage of stops was key.
Five visitors or less on average in October 2014 - September 2015.	The impact of this criterion was felt to be too high (580 stops in total would meet this criterion) to cover via alternative service. We felt that this would result in an imbalance of demand to the services we provide.

Redesigning the routes will allow us to implement a number of proposed improvements and changes to the stops;

- Each stop would be on a new, fortnightly schedule
- Increasing the minimum stop time from 10 minutes to 30 minutes, improving the stop length for more than half of the stops
- Changing the days we operate to Tuesday through to Saturday to mitigate the impact of Bank Holiday Mondays on our current schedules and to increase opportunity for wider use
- In addition, we expect the redesigned routes will result in better fuel efficiency and improve the environmental impact of the Mobile Library Service.
- It will also deliver a saving for KCC.



The impact of the proposed changes

Based on our proposed changes, we predict that **80%** of the current visits and 77% of the current book issues would still be delivered through the proposed mobile network. The table below shows a summary of the number of mobile stops that will remain in each district if we apply the proposed criterion.

To see what this means for your specific stop please see the A - Z list of stops sent with this document or visit www.kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice where an A-Z list of stops is available to download.

District	Number of static libraries	Current number of stops	Proposed number of stops
Ashford	6	92	50
Canterbury	5	86	42
Dartford	9	20	5
Dover	6	80	30
Gravesham	10	17	5
Maidstone	11	85	43
Sevenoaks	11	39	17
Shepway	8	58	30
Swale	7	55	23
Thanet	8	42	11
Tonbridge	9	47	15
Tunbridge Wells	9	30	12
Total	99	651	283

The cost of the service in 2014-15 is **£368,172**

If we were to implement the proposals we estimate that we would be able to deliver the service with 5 mobile libraries which we predict would mean potential savings of £150,000 per annum.

Providing alternative access to library services

Underused mobile library stops do not offer good value for money for Kent residents particularly where there are alternative ways for local residents to access library services. We have considered whether these services could expand to meet demand, and we believe that this would be feasible. These include:

Home library service

Our very popular Home Library Service brings library materials directly to your door. One of our trained volunteers can visit your home to discuss your reading tastes and requirements or you can simply request specific titles that you want. Books and other materials will then be chosen based on your preferences, and a volunteer will drop off and collect these at a time and frequency that is convenient to you.

Touch a New World

Following a trial with some of our Home Library Service customers, we now offer the Touch a New World scheme. The aim is to get people online through the help of a volunteer and, if required, the loan of an iPad for ten weeks. Once able to use the internet and with a permanent means to go online, customers can use their library card and pin number to reserve items of their choice from our online catalogue. Home Library Service customers items are then dropped off and collected from your home.



Static libraries and services available online

KCC has 99 library buildings across Kent. Each of the 12 districts in Kent has a district hub library. These are located in the town centres and are open a minimum of six days per week. Each district has at least one library that is open until 8pm one evening per week, and four libraries in Kent are open seven days per week. We know that half of mobile customers use a static library as well as a mobile already.

There are a number of static libraries in each district. Information about the location, the opening hours and the services offered at each of the Kent libraries can be found at kent.gov.uk/libraries and clicking on 'find your library'.

Many of our services can be accessed online either at one of our libraries or using your home computer, laptop, tablet or smart phone. If you have a library card and pin number you can access items held in our own and partner libraries, including e-books. You can also request and renew items online.

Our online reference library offers more than 50 free online subscriptions. These include encyclopaedias, newspapers and e-learning resources. Many of these are accessible remotely using your library card and pin number.

All online Kent library services can be found by visiting kent.gov.uk/libraries and clicking on 'online reference library'.



Have your say

We want to make sure that the Mobile Library Service continues to meet our customers' needs, is well used and offers Kent residents the best value for money. Following this review, we plan to use the same criterion to look at our routes on an annual basis to make sure our service stays cost-effective and relevant to our customers.

We have carried out an Equality Impact Assessment as part of this review, and have published this along with all the consultation documents at kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice. There is a question about this at the back of this booklet and we will use the feedback we receive about our assumptions to update this following the completion of this engagement process.

We are redesigning the Mobile Library Service and your views are important to us in shaping this process.

We want to hear what you think of the criterion and changes we have outlined in this document. Please let us know by visiting kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice and **completing the online consultation questionnaire.**

Alternatively, complete the questionnaire enclosed with this document and send it back to us in a marked envelope using the freepost address below:

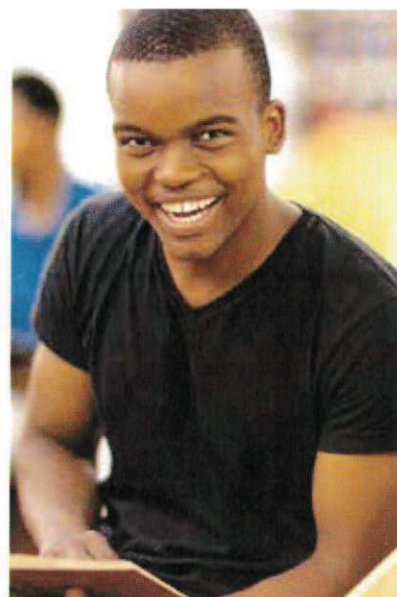
Freepost LRA Consultation

(this is all the detail you need to put on the envelope)

You can also contact us by:

Telephone: 03000 41 31 31 Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Email: LRAconsultation@kent.gov.uk



What happens next?

This consultation will start on 22 January and finish on 4 March 2016 at 5pm (inclusive). Your responses will help us complete our review of the Mobile Library Service, and better understand the impact of any proposals on our customers. Following the consultation the findings will be put into a report that will be available from the library service and the website.

This report will inform the decision to be taken by the KCC Cabinet Member, who will consider all the responses provided about the proposed criterion and changes before making the decision on how to redesign the Mobile Library Service.

Notes

Questionnaire

Tell us what you think by 4 March 2016

Please tell us your postcode to help us understand who is responding to our consultation:

Data Protection

Kent County Council collects and processes personal information in order to provide a range of public services. Kent County Council respects the privacy of individuals and endeavours to ensure personal information is collected fairly, lawfully, and in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Q1. Are you completing this questionnaire on behalf of:

Please select one option

- ☐ Yourself (as an individual)
- ☐ Yourself (as a relative or friend of a Mobile Library Service user)
- ☐ Yourself as a member of Kent County Council staff
- ☐ A District/Town/Parish Council
- ☐ A Business
- ☐ A Voluntary or Community Sector Organisation (VCS)
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Q1a. If you are responding on behalf of a Council / Business / VCS, please tell us the name of the organisation:

Q2. Do you currently use the Mobile Library Service?

Please select one option

☐

Yes

☐

No

Q2a. If 'yes', please give the name of the Mobile Library Stop that you currently use

Q3. When did you last use the Mobile Library Service?

Please select one option

☐

Within the last month

☐

Within the last three months

☐

Within the last year

☐

More than a year ago

Q4. We are proposing to use one criterion to assess the future of mobile library stops:

Criterion: Stops that have had 2 or less visitors on average over the period October 2014 to September 2015

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed criteria? Please indicate by placing an X in appropriate box below:

☐

Strongly Agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Agree

☐

Strongly disagree

☐

Neither agree nor disagree

☐

Don't Know

Q4a. Are there alternative or other criteria you think we should use?

Q5. Frequency of visits to each location

We are proposing to change the frequency of visits to each location to every two weeks.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed change?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know

Q6. Changing the days we operate

We are proposing to change the days we operate the Mobile Library Service from **Monday to Friday to Tuesday to Saturday**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed change?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

Q7. Increasing the minimum stopping time

We are proposing to change the minimum stop time, increasing this from 10 minutes to 30 minutes.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed change?

☐

Strongly agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Agree

☐

Strongly disagree

☐

Neither agree nor disagree

☐

Don't know

Q7a. Please tell us the reasons for your answers in response to questions 5, 6 and 7

Making best use of the Mobile Library Service

Q8. Having read about the different ways to access KCC library services, which of the following options would be best for you?

(please select as many as you wish)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home Library Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Library Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Touch a New World | <input type="checkbox"/> Visit to a library building |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above | |

Q8a. After considering our proposal will you still be able to access library services?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

(Information on these services can be found on page 10 and 11 of the consultation document)

Q9: Equality Impact Assessment

We have completed an Equality Impact Assessment on the review of the Mobile Library Service, and we welcome your views on the assumptions we have made. To view the document, go to kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice or ask to see a copy on your mobile library. Please write your comments here:

Q10. Anything Else?

If you still have concerns about how you would access the library service in the future, or have any other comments, please let us know.

About You...

If you are responding as an individual, please answer the following questions:

We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally, and that no one gets left out. That's why we're asking you these questions.

We won't share the information you give us with anyone else. We'll use it only to help us make decisions, and improve our services.

If you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don't have to.

Q11. Are you....? *Please select one box.*

☐

Male

☐

Female

☐

I prefer not to say

Q12. Which of these age groups applies to you? *Please select one box.*

☐

0 - 15

☐

25 - 34

☐

50 - 59

☐

65 - 74

☐

85 + over

☐

16 - 24

☐

35 - 49

☐

60 - 64

☐

75 - 84

☐

I prefer not to say

Q13. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong? (Source: 2011 census) *Please select one box.*

White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British
English <input type="checkbox"/>	White & Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>	Indian <input type="checkbox"/>	Caribbean
Scottish <input type="checkbox"/>	White & Black African <input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/>	African
Welsh <input type="checkbox"/>	White & Asian <input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/>	Other*
Northern Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	Other* <input type="checkbox"/>	Other* <input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say
Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	Arab <input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese <input type="checkbox"/>	
Gypsy/Roma <input type="checkbox"/>	*If your ethnic group is not specified in the list, please describe it here:		
Irish Traveller <input type="checkbox"/>			
Other* <input type="checkbox"/>			

The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted, or is likely to last, at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS, for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

Q14. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010? *Please select one box.*

☐ Yes
 ☐ No
 ☐ I prefer not to say

Q14a. If you answered Yes to Q14, please tell us the type of impairment that applies to you.

You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all that apply. If none of these applies to you, please select Other, and give brief details of the impairment you have.

<input type="checkbox"/> Physical impairment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental health condition
<input type="checkbox"/> Sensory impairment (hearing, sight or both)	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning disability
<input type="checkbox"/> Longstanding illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other*	<input type="checkbox"/> I prefer not to say

*If Other, please specify:

Making best use of the Mobile Library Service

Q15. Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion or belief? *Please select one box.*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I prefer not to say

Q15a. If you answered Yes to Q15, which of the following applies to you? *Please select one box.*

☐ Christian

☐ Hindu

☐ Muslim

☐ Any other religion, please specify:

☐ Buddhist

☐ Jewish

☐ Sikh

Q16. Are you? *Please select one box.*

☐ Heterosexual/Straight

☐ Gay woman/Lesbian

☐ Other

☐ Bi/Bisexual

☐ Gay man

☐ I prefer not to say

Q17. If you would like to receive updates about the development of our proposal and future engagement activities or would like us to contact you regarding alternative library service options please provide your contact details below. *Please select one box.*

Our preferred method of communication is by email, however if you do not have an email address then please provide your postal address.

Full Name

Email Address

Postal Address

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Please post your complete questionnaire to:

Freepost LRA Consultation

Or return it to your mobile library driver.

Alternative formats

If you require this document in any other format or language, please email alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or call: 03000 421553 (text relay service number: 18001 03000 421553). This number is monitored during office hours, and there is an answering machine at other times.

Maidstone District mobile stops - current and proposed

Location	Stop name	District	Current day	Current time	Duration of stop (mins)	Current frequency	2 or less visitors on average over the period October 2014 - September 2015	New proposed indicative day	New proposed indicative time	New proposed indicative duration of stop (mins)	New proposed frequency
Barming Heath	St Andrews Road	Maidstone	Wednesday	1000-1100	60	Weekly		Wednesday	0905-1005	60	Fortnightly
Barming Heath	Terminus Road	Maidstone	Wednesday	1105-1200	55	Weekly		Wednesday	1015-1110	55	Fortnightly
Barming	Apple Tree Close	Maidstone	Tuesday	1705-1720	15	Weekly		Tuesday	1450-1520	30	Fortnightly
Barming	Fant Lane, Harbledown House	Maidstone	Tuesday	1400-1430	30	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Barming	Heath Road	Maidstone	Tuesday	1725-1815	50	Weekly		Tuesday	1610-1640	30	Fortnightly
Barming	Matterdale Gardens	Maidstone	Tuesday	1630-1700	30	Weekly		Tuesday	1525-1555	30	Fortnightly
Boughton Monchelsea	The Cock PH	Maidstone	Tuesday	1400-1415	15	Fortnightly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Boughton Monchelsea	The Green	Maidstone	Thursday	1145-1215	30	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Boughton Monchelsea	Village Hall	Maidstone	Tuesday	1345-1410	25	Fortnightly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Bredgar	outside Church	Maidstone	Thursday	1410-1440	30	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Bredhurst	Hurstwood Road	Maidstone	Monday	1045-1100	15	Weekly		Wednesday	1040-1110	30	Fortnightly
Marden	Chainhurst Farm, Hunton Road	Maidstone	Wednesday	1435-1450	15	Fortnightly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			

Location	Stop name	District	Current day	Current time	Duration of stop (mins)	Current frequency	2 or less visitors on average over the period October 2014 - September 2015	New proposed indicative day	New proposed indicative time	New proposed indicative duration of stop (mins)	New proposed frequency
Chart Sutton	opposite Buffalos Head PH	Maidstone	Thursday	1330-1355	25	Weekly		Tuesday	1405-1435	30	Fortnightly
Staplehurst	Cross at Hand, Maidstone Road	Maidstone	Tuesday	1230-1240	10	Fortnightly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Detling	The Street (bus layby)	Maidstone	Thursday	1735-1750	15	Bi-weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Detling	The Street (bus layby)	Maidstone	Monday	1000-1030	15	Bi-weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
East Farleigh	Hartridge Farm	Maidstone	Wednesday	1600-1630	30	Weekly		Wednesday	1355-1425	30	Fortnightly
East Farleigh	Priory Close	Maidstone	Wednesday	1700-1730	30	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
East Farleigh	The Bull PH	Maidstone	Wednesday	1635-1655	20	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Egerton	Post Office	Maidstone	Wednesday	1445-1505	20	Weekly		Tuesday	1220-1250	30	Fortnightly
Grafty Green	Kings Head PH	Maidstone	Wednesday	1630-1650	20	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Grove Green	Community Centre	Maidstone	Friday	1345-1445	60	Weekly		Friday	1450-1550	60	Fortnightly
Grove Green	St John's School, Provender Way	Maidstone	Friday	1500-1600	60	Weekly		Tuesday	1455-1555	60	Fortnightly

Location	Stop name	District	Current day	Current time	Duration of stop (mins)	Current frequency	2 or less visitors on average over the period October 2014 - September 2015	New proposed indicative day	New proposed indicative time	New proposed indicative duration of stop (mins)	New proposed frequency
Harrietsham	Church Lane	Maidstone	Wednesday	1105-1120	15	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Harrietsham	East Street	Maidstone	Wednesday	1125-1140	15	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Harrietsham	West Street	Maidstone	Wednesday	1035-1100	25	Weekly		Wednesday	1310-1340	30	Fortnightly
Hollingbourne	Church Approach	Maidstone	Thursday	1655-1715	20	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Hollingbourne	Eyhorne Street	Maidstone	Thursday	1630-1650	20	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Hollingbourne	Village Hall	Maidstone	Thursday	1600-1625	25	Weekly		Wednesday	1410-1440	30	Fortnightly
Hunton	Bensted Close	Maidstone	Wednesday	1410-1425	15	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Hunton	nr School	Maidstone	Wednesday	1335-1405	30	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Hunton	Village Hall	Maidstone	Wednesday	1435-1450	15	Fortnightly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Kingswood	Holly Tree Close	Maidstone	Monday	1530-1700	90	Weekly		Saturday	1250-1420	90	Fortnightly
Laddingford	Outside School	Maidstone	Tuesday	1455-1535	40	Weekly		Wednesday	1445-1525	40	Fortnightly
Langley	Shepherds Way	Maidstone	Friday	1115-1155	40	Weekly		Saturday	1035-1115	40	Fortnightly
Langley	Village Hall	Maidstone	Friday	1200-1230	30	Weekly		Saturday	1120-1150	30	Fortnightly

Location	Stop name	District	Current day	Current time	Duration of stop (mins)	Current frequency	2 or less visitors on average over the period October 2014 - September 2015	New proposed indicative day	New proposed indicative time	New proposed indicative duration of stop (mins)	New proposed frequency
Leeds	Brogden Crescent	Maidstone	Thursday	1450-1505	15	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Leeds	Farmer Close	Maidstone	Thursday	1430-1445	15	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Leeds	opp. School	Maidstone	Thursday	1515-1545	30	Weekly		Saturday	0905-0935	30	Fortnightly
Leeds	Burgess Hall Drive	Maidstone	Thursday	1410-1425	15	Weekly		Saturday	0945-1015	30	Fortnightly
Lenham Forstal	The Forstal	Maidstone	Wednesday	1400-1415	15	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Linton	Almshouses	Maidstone	Tuesday	1205-1220	15	Fortnightly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Linton	Wheeler Lane	Maidstone	Tuesday	1210-1230	20	Fortnightly		Wednesday	1555-1625	30	Fortnightly
Loose	Car Park, Boughton Lane	Maidstone	Thursday	1000-1130	90	Weekly		Thursday	1405-1535	90	Fortnightly
Loose	Carlton Gardens	Maidstone	Tuesday	1000-1015	15	Weekly		Thursday	1625-1655	30	Fortnightly
Loose	Chequers PH	Maidstone	Tuesday	1115-1130	15	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Loose	Hildenshaw	Maidstone	Tuesday	1020-1035	15	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Loose	Lancet Lane	Maidstone	Tuesday	1040-1110	30	Weekly		Thursday	1550-1620	30	Fortnightly
Loose	Salts Avenue	Maidstone	Tuesday	1135-1200	25	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Maidstone	Barden Court	Maidstone	Tuesday	1050-1105	15	Weekly		Wednesday	1500-1530	30	Fortnightly

Location	Stop name	District	Current day	Current time	Duration of stop (mins)	Current frequency	2 or less visitors on average over the period October 2014 - September 2015	New proposed indicative day	New proposed indicative time	New proposed indicative duration of stop (mins)	New proposed frequency
Maidstone	St Annes Court, Buckland Road	Maidstone	Tuesday	1220-1240	20	Weekly		Wednesday	1135-1205	30	Fortnightly
Maidstone	Hengist Court	Maidstone	Tuesday	1020-1040	20	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Maidstone	Mandeville Court	Maidstone	Tuesday	1000-1015	15	Weekly		Tuesday	1615-1645	30	Fortnightly
Maidstone	Rocky Hill Terrace	Maidstone	Monday	1430-1445	15	Weekly		Wednesday	1550-1620	30	Fortnightly
Maidstone	Rycault Close	Maidstone	Monday	1410-1425	15	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Nettlestead	Village Hall	Maidstone	Tuesday	1550-1620	30	Weekly		Friday	1205-1235	30	Fortnightly
Otham	White Horse PH	Maidstone	Monday	1505-1520	15	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Parkwood	Acorn Place	Maidstone	Monday	1000-1015	15	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Parkwood	Bicknor Road	Maidstone	Monday	1205-1230	25	Weekly		Thursday	0920-0950	30	Fortnightly
Parkwood	Jenkins Drive	Maidstone	Monday	1020-1045	25	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Parkwood	Shops	Maidstone	Monday	1050-1200	95	Bi-weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Parkwood	Shops	Maidstone	Tuesday	1510-1645	95	Bi-weekly		Thursday	0955-1125	90	Fortnightly
Parkwood	Tree Tops Academy	Maidstone	Tuesday	1425-1505	40	Weekly		Thursday	1140-1220	40	Fortnightly
Penenden Heath	Faraday Road	Maidstone	Monday	1055-1120	25	Weekly		Thursday	1625-1655	30	Fortnightly

Location	Stop name	District	Current day	Current time	Duration of stop (mins)	Current frequency	2 or less visitors on average over the period October 2014 - September 2015	New proposed indicative day	New proposed indicative time	New proposed indicative duration of stop (mins)	New proposed frequency
Penenden Heath	The Bull PH	Maidstone	Monday	1025-1050	25	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Platts Heath	Green Lane	Maidstone	Wednesday	1150-1205	15	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Sandling	Old Chatham Road	Maidstone	Wednesday	1000-1015	15	Weekly		Wednesday	0855-0925	30	Fortnightly
Sandling	Woodcut, Sandling Lane	Maidstone	Monday	1000-1020	20	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Sandway	Headcorn Road	Maidstone	Wednesday	1210-1230	20	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Senacre	Echo Close	Maidstone	Tuesday	1025-1045	20	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Senacre	Longparish Close	Maidstone	Tuesday	1050-1130	40	Weekly		Thursday	1230-1310	40	Fortnightly
Senacre	Woolley Road	Maidstone	Tuesday	1000-1020	20	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Stockbury	Village Hall	Maidstone	Thursday	1000-1020	20	Weekly		Thursday	0910-0940	30	Fortnightly
Sutton Valence	Bottom South Lane	Maidstone	Monday	1610-1655	45	Weekly		Saturday	1600-1645	45	Fortnightly
Sutton Valence	Maidstone Road Bungalows	Maidstone	Monday	1740-1800	20	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Sutton Valence	Swan PH	Maidstone	Monday	1700-1730	30	Weekly		Saturday	1525-1555	30	Fortnightly

Location	Stop name	District	Current day	Current time	Duration of stop (mins)	Current frequency	2 or less visitors on average over the period October 2014 - September 2015	New proposed indicative day	New proposed indicative time	New proposed indicative duration of stop (mins)	New proposed frequency
Sutton Valence	Village Hall	Maidstone	Monday	1530-1605	35	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Teston	Church Street	Maidstone	Wednesday	1140-1220	40	Weekly		Tuesday	1355-1440	40	Fortnightly
Tovil	Outside School	Maidstone	Tuesday	1125-1200	35	Weekly		Wednesday	1310-1345	35	Fortnightly
Ulcombe	outside School	Maidstone	Monday	1350-1515	25	Weekly		Saturday	1430-1500	30	Fortnightly
Vinters Park	Community Centre	Maidstone	Monday	1125-1220	55	Weekly		Friday	1330-1425	55	Fortnightly
Vinters Park	Snowdon Parade	Maidstone	Monday	1225-1255	30	Weekly		Friday	1610-1640	30	Fortnightly
West Farleigh	Goulston Bungalows	Maidstone	Wednesday	1500-1530	30	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
West Farleigh	Oliver North House	Maidstone	Wednesday	1535-1555	20	Weekly	X	Proposed that stop is withdrawn			
Wormshill	The Street	Maidstone	Friday	1030-1045	15	Weekly		Wednesday	1135-1205	30	Fortnightly

Agenda Item 13

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

16th JANUARY 2016

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

No

THIRD QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING 2015/16

Final Decision-Maker	Policy & Resources Committee
Lead Head of Service	Head Of Finance & Resources
Lead Officer and Report Author	Head Of Finance & Resources
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee notes the revenue budget position as at 31st December 2015 and the predicted outturn to 31st March 2016.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

The medium term financial strategy and the budget are a re-statement in financial terms of the priorities set out in the strategic plan. It reflects the Council's decisions on the allocation of resources to all objectives of the strategic plan.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Communities, Housing & Environment Committee	16 th February 2016
Policy & Resources Committee	17 th February 2016

THIRD QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING 2015/16

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides a financial analysis of the Committee's services in the third quarter of 2015/16. The information is provided specifically for the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee.
- 1.2 The intention of the report is to ensure the Committee is regularly informed of performance and to enable it to take timely action where it is appropriate.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Head of Finance & Resources is the Responsible Financial Officer, and has overall responsibility for budgetary control and financial management. In practice, day to day budgetary control is delegated to service managers, with assistance and advice from their director and the finance section.
- 2.2 Best practice provides for there to be updates to the Committee on performance and this report is the third of four updates for 2015/16.

Revenue

- 2.3 The budget used in this report is the revised estimate for 2015/16 including the carry forward resources agreed by Cabinet in April 2015. While this estimate has not yet received approval from Policy & Resources Committee it is now more accurate than the original estimate approved by Council in February 2015. Actual expenditure to December 2015 includes all major accruals for goods and services received but not paid for by the end of the quarter.
- 2.4 An analysis that is summarised at service level, of the full year budget, the profiled budget to December 2015 and expenditure to December 2015 is attached as **Appendix A**. The financial analysis is based on direct expenditure only. This removes the influence of internal recharges and accounting adjustments upon the variance analysis. An indicative projected year end outturn figure is also shown.
- 2.5 Appendix A shows that actual spend is reporting a net adverse variance of £84,759 against the profiled budget to 31st December 2015, reflecting the pressure on the Committee's budget. The most significant issue is the rising cost of temporary accommodation.
- 2.6 The predicted outturn figures show only the major variances and these suggest a likely adverse variance of £210,000 by year end (£190,000 at quarter two). This will be tempered by all the smaller positive variances within the Committee's services. A brief explanation of the issue and /or action taken is included against each significant variance in the Appendix.

Capital

- 2.7 The Committee has capital funding for housing services that relates to the provision of social housing and support through grant aid for private sector landlords.
 - 2.8 An analysis of the capital programme is attached at **Appendix B** showing the full year budget, expenditure to date, expected expenditure in the final quarter of 2015/16 and any budget that now needs to be carried forward into 2016/17.
 - 2.9 Proposals have been agreed to utilise some of this budget to acquire additional accommodation for families currently in temporary accommodation. The programme has been amended but it may yet be necessary to carry forward the acquisition costs into the first quarter of 2016/17.
-

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 **Option 1** – The Committee could chose not to receive quarterly budget monitoring reports or receive the reports at a more regular frequency. However the current frequency is considered good practice and has been in place for many years at this Council, enabling an appropriate level of monitoring and timely action where necessary.
 - 3.2 **Option 2** - The committee could consider the details set out in Appendix A and propose alternative actions to those set out. However the details set out in this report follow on from previous monitoring reports. The current report shows that the planned actions are being implemented with the expected effect on resources.
 - 3.3 **Option 3** - The committee could consider the details set out in Appendices A and B and agree to note the details and actions reported by officers.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The recommended option is Option 3. The Committee should note the budget performance set out in Appendices A & B to this report and the actions that have been taken.
- 4.2 The year-end revenue variance reported at £210,000 adverse in Appendix A, will be partly mitigated by the minor budget variances that have been projected to be zero in the appendix, the most likely result would be a reduction in the predicted adverse variance when all of these services areas are combined.
- 4.3 This information has been collated into an overarching report of the strategic budget position to Policy and Resources Committee. The strategic position is currently close to a balanced position and it is likely that Policy

and Resources Committee will agree the retention of positive variances in some committees to mitigate the adverse variances within others.

- 4.4 The Council will follow good practice and officers will continue to control expenditure against budget to reduce the currently predicted year end over spend where this is occurring.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 This is the third report to this committee on the 2015/16 performance against budget. The adverse position is increasing in line with expectations of increase costs of temporary accommodation.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Officers will continue to take all possible actions to control the budget and utilise resources effectively.
- 6.2 The high level details contained in this report will be reported to Policy & Resources Committee as a strategic overview of budget monitoring across the organisation.

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The medium term financial strategy and the budget are a re-statement in financial terms of the priorities set out in the strategic plan. It reflects the Council's decisions on the allocation of resources to all objectives of the strategic plan.	Head of Finance & Resources
Risk Management	A regular and timely awareness of the budget position assists the Committee to prepare for and control the risk of insufficient resources to achieve the Council's priorities.	Head of Finance & Resources
Financial	The financial implications are summarised in the report and set out in more detail in the Appendices.	Head of Finance & Resources

	It is important that the committee gives consideration to any specific services areas that are at variance and any actions officers are taking at this time.	
Staffing	None identified	Head of Finance & Resources
Legal	None identified	Head of Finance & Resources
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	None identified	Head of Finance & Resources
Environmental/Sustainable Development	None identified	Head of Finance & Resources
Community Safety	None identified	Head of Finance & Resources
Human Rights Act	None identified	Head of Finance & Resources
Procurement	None identified	Head of Finance & Resources
Asset Management	None identified	Head of Finance & Resources

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2015/16 to December 2015
- Appendix B: Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2015/16 to December 2015

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

COMMUNITIES HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO DECEMBER 2015

Cost Centre	Full Year Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Expenditure	YTD Variance	Projected Outturn	Projected Full Year Variance	Comment
Community Safety	56,440.00	38,080.00	30,755.00	7,325.00	56,440.00	0.00	
Building Safer Communities (BSC)	0.00	-9,680.00	5,286.00	-14,966.00	0.00	0.00	
C C T V	243,270.00	182,930.00	241,479.00	-58,549.00	293,270.00	-50,000.00	Additional costs are at present consistent with prior years and relate to equipment maintenance and rental costs. The contract sum is on budget.
Drainage	31,700.00	23,780.00	10,149.00	13,631.00	31,700.00	0.00	
Licences	-7,370.00	-5,120.00	-7,724.00	2,604.00	-7,370.00	0.00	
Licensing Statutory	-61,040.00	-37,820.00	-77,481.00	39,661.00	-111,040.00	50,000.00	Additional income from licenses will be above target. This matter will be considered by the Licensing Committee when it sets its charges for 2016/17.
Licensing Non Chargeable	7,030.00	5,270.00	5,441.00	-171.00	7,030.00	0.00	
Dog Control	24,150.00	18,110.00	24,003.00	-5,893.00	24,150.00	0.00	
Health Promotion	33,000.00	33,000.00	31,250.00	1,750.00	33,000.00	0.00	
Health Improvement Programme	1,000.00	1,250.00	4,526.00	-3,276.00	1,000.00	0.00	
Pollution Control - General	25,820.00	17,090.00	9,952.00	7,138.00	25,820.00	0.00	
Contaminated Land	0.00	0.00	-616.00	616.00	0.00	0.00	
Environmental Enforcement	11,080.00	5,840.00	-22,138.00	27,978.00	11,080.00	0.00	FPNs for littering are expected to generate a surplus. This surplus was pre-allocated by Council in March 2015 and is not reported here as a projected variance.
Food Hygiene	8,840.00	5,800.00	53.00	5,747.00	8,840.00	0.00	
Sampling	3,300.00	2,200.00	0.00	2,200.00	3,300.00	0.00	
Occupational Health & Safety	24,240.00	16,180.00	-6,475.00	22,655.00	4,240.00	20,000.00	Variance from underspend
Infectious Disease Control	800.00	600.00	600.00	0.00	800.00	0.00	
Noise Control	-1,210.00	-2,130.00	-90.00	-2,040.00	-1,210.00	0.00	
Pest Control	-12,000.00	-9,000.00	-7,531.00	-1,469.00	-12,000.00	0.00	
Public Conveniences	139,190.00	106,460.00	107,334.00	-874.00	139,190.00	0.00	
Licensing - Hackney & Private Hire	-69,180.00	-53,730.00	-63,432.00	9,702.00	-69,180.00	0.00	
Street Cleansing	1,004,230.00	772,280.00	917,479.00	-145,199.00	1,004,230.00	0.00	
Household Waste Collection	1,097,090.00	815,940.00	851,513.00	-35,573.00	1,097,090.00	0.00	
Commercial Waste Services	-61,520.00	-46,140.00	-51,985.00	5,845.00	-61,520.00	0.00	
Recycling Collection	672,610.00	360,240.00	216,247.00	143,993.00	592,610.00	80,000.00	Income from Garden Waste Bin fee.
Switch Cafe Project	15,060.00	11,300.00	16,658.00	-5,358.00	15,060.00	0.00	
Community Development	19,350.00	14,510.00	11,724.00	2,786.00	19,350.00	0.00	
Social Inclusion	21,540.00	4,910.00	8,878.00	-3,968.00	21,540.00	0.00	

COMMUNITIES HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO DECEMBER 2015

Cost Centre	Full Year Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Expenditure	YTD Variance	Projected Outturn	Projected Full Year Variance	Comment
Troubled Families	46,140.00	-40,990.00	-22,762.00	-18,228.00	46,140.00	0.00	
Public Health - Obesity	21,670.00	16,250.00	6,574.00	9,676.00	21,670.00	0.00	
Public Health - Physical Activity	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Public Health - Misc Services	0.00	-5,000.00	-21,376.00	16,376.00	0.00	0.00	
Grants	217,270.00	217,270.00	221,520.00	-4,250.00	217,270.00	0.00	
Delegated Grants	2,100.00	0.00	645.00	-645.00	2,100.00	0.00	
Parish Services	199,800.00	199,800.00	194,041.00	5,759.00	199,800.00	0.00	
Strategic Housing Role	13,500.00	10,500.00	9,149.00	1,351.00	13,500.00	0.00	
Housing Register & Allocations	10,000.00	9,500.00	8,096.00	1,404.00	10,000.00	0.00	
Private Sector Renewal	2,630.00	1,970.00	0.00	1,970.00	2,630.00	0.00	
HMO Licensing	-2,380.00	-2,380.00	-4,670.00	2,290.00	-2,380.00	0.00	
Homeless Temporary Accommodation	266,530.00	199,900.00	530,493.00	-330,593.00	666,530.00	-400,000.00	Continued high levels of demand against an increased budget. Planned actions will not now occur before year and the expected variance has increased.
Homelessness Prevention	95,275.00	70,830.00	63,951.00	6,879.00	95,275.00	0.00	Use of this resources is effected by demand for temporary accommodation.
Homelessness - Admin	0.00	0.00	1,476.00	-1,476.00	0.00	0.00	
Aylesbury House	28,940.00	22,470.00	6,967.00	15,503.00	13,940.00	15,000.00	Use of this resources is effected by demand for temporary accommodation.
Magnolia House	60.00	-210.00	-21,184.00	20,974.00	-14,940.00	15,000.00	Use of this resources is effected by demand for temporary accommodation.
Marden Caravan Site (Stilebridge Lane)	18,080.00	14,610.00	7,898.00	6,712.00	18,080.00	0.00	
Ulcombe Caravan Site (Water Lane)	6,030.00	-780.00	9,326.00	-10,106.00	6,030.00	0.00	
Head of Environment and Public Realm	84,850.00	63,640.00	47,740.00	15,900.00	84,850.00	0.00	
Street Scene Section	229,760.00	172,850.00	154,989.00	17,861.00	229,760.00	0.00	
Waste Collection Section	210,600.00	158,000.00	151,716.00	6,284.00	210,600.00	0.00	
Environmental Operations Enforcement Section	305,680.00	229,260.00	203,035.00	26,225.00	305,680.00	0.00	
Community Safety Co-ordinator Section	61,420.00	45,770.00	48,195.00	-2,425.00	61,420.00	0.00	
Licensing Section	95,880.00	71,910.00	68,838.00	3,072.00	95,880.00	0.00	
Environmental Health & Pollution Control Section	0.00	0.00	330.00	-330.00	0.00	0.00	
Environmental Protection Section	236,650.00	177,490.00	163,511.00	13,979.00	236,650.00	0.00	
Food and Safety Section	281,070.00	226,570.00	199,072.00	27,498.00	281,070.00	0.00	
Community Development & Partnerships Section	35,190.00	26,820.00	60,749.00	-33,929.00	35,190.00	0.00	
Head of Housing & Community Services	96,740.00	72,560.00	71,110.00	1,450.00	96,740.00	0.00	

COMMUNITIES HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO DECEMBER 2015

Cost Centre	Full Year Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Expenditure	YTD Variance	Projected Outturn	Projected Full Year Variance	Comment
Housing Services Manager	0.00	0.00	19.00	-19.00	0.00	0.00	
Policy & Development Section	9,010.00	6,910.00	8,986.00	-2,076.00	9,010.00	0.00	
Private Sector Housing Section	17,780.00	13,870.00	17,137.00	-3,267.00	17,780.00	0.00	
Housing Options Section	34,960.00	27,070.00	41,174.00	-14,104.00	34,960.00	0.00	
Housing & Enabling Section	291,720.00	188,790.00	168,400.00	20,390.00	291,720.00	0.00	
Housing & Inclusion Section	274,935.00	206,200.00	177,030.00	29,170.00	274,935.00	0.00	
Housing & Communities Section	301,530.00	226,150.00	205,536.00	20,614.00	301,530.00	0.00	
Fleet Workshop & Management	703,590.00	527,690.00	525,547.00	2,143.00	703,590.00	0.00	
MBS Support Crew	-80,080.00	-60,060.00	-41,997.00	-18,063.00	-80,080.00	0.00	
Grounds Maintenance	1,287,210.00	951,070.00	886,093.00	64,977.00	1,227,210.00	60,000.00	
Communities, Housing & Environment	8,631,560.00	6,318,450.00	6,403,209.00	-84,759.00	8,841,560.00	-210,000.00	

**COMMUNITIES HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
BUDGET MONITORING - THIRD QUARTER 2015/16**

Capital Programme 2015/16 to 31st December 2015

Capital Programme Heading	Adjusted Estimate 2015/16 £	Actual to December 2015 £	Budget Remaining £	Q4 Profile £	Projected Total Expenditure £	Slippage into 2016/17 £	Budget not required £
Housing Incentives	326,880	126,250	200,630	100,000	226,250	100,630	
Housing - Disabled Facilities Grants Funding	450,000	218,489	231,511	100,000	318,489	131,511	
Support for Social Housing	264,500		264,500	264,500	264,500	0	
Housing Investments	1,400,000		1,400,000	1,400,000	1,400,000	0	
Brunswick Street Housing Development	75,000	13,376	61,624	61,624	75,000	0	
Communities, Housing & Environment Total	2,516,380	358,115	2,158,265	1,926,124	2,284,239	232,141	0