



PROVIDE A SAFE TOWN CENTRE: *A Space to Feel Safe*

Why is this important?

Maidstone is the County Town of Kent hosting one of the largest retail centres in the southeast. It has excellent rail and road networks to London and the County. Many of our residents utilise the town for retail, leisure and work. As a transportation hub the Town Centre also welcomes large numbers of commuters and children travelling to and from school. It also hosts a large night-time economy that brings its own challenges and rewards. The town benefits from a Business Improvement District, One Maidstone, which provides the MaidSafe radio network and works in partnership with the police, local authorities and local businesses to reduce crime, increase trade and make Maidstone a safer environment for its staff, customers and visitors.

Recent surveys highlight that both adults and young people feel the Town Centre at times is unsafe. A minority of isolated but unacceptable incidents have further tarnished the Town's reputation. Analysis shows that there are hotspots within the Town Centre where violent crime and ASB is most prevalent.

We must remain realistic to the fact that the Town Centre attracts a variety of people and as a result, there will be occasional incidents.

What is the SMP's Objective?

The SMP will work to restore the reputation of the town as a place where people feel safe and are safe.

What is our focus?

SMP Partners will:

- develop a multi-agency task force to address concerns, such as:
 - anti-social behaviour
 - violence, particularly in the night-time economy
 - substance misuse and illegal supply of drugs and alcohol, particularly to children
 - vulnerable people who live in the town, including domestic abuse
- ensure businesses develop a culture in the town that keeps people safe in both day-time and night-time economies
- protect young people by challenging behaviour and ensuring safeguarding opportunities are provided for those in need of support
- work to improve the reputation of the town by sharing successes and publicising initiatives that make people feel safe when in the town

What will we do?

The SMP will bring together statutory and non-statutory partners to form a dedicated Town Centre Task Force to develop a new multi-agency strategy.