

MAIDSTONE LOCALITY BOARD MEETING

**1 October 2012, 2.00 - 4.20 pm, Town Hall, High Street,
 Maidstone**

Present:	<p>Cllr Chris Garland (CG) Cllr Paulina Stockell (PS) Cllr Stephen Beerling (SB) Cllr Marion Ring (MR) Cllr Fran Wilson (FW) Cllr John A Wilson (JAW) Cllr Paul Carter (PC) Cllr Alan Chell (AC) Cllr Ian Chittenden (IT) Cllr Gary Cooke (GC) Cllr Dan Daley (DD) Cllr Eric Hotson (EH) Cllr Paul Butcher (PB) Martin Adams (MA) Jon Bumpus (JB) Jay Edwins (JE) Charlotte Osborne-Forde (COF) John Taylor (JT) Lynne Coveney (LC) Alison Broom (AB) Zena Cooke (ZC) John Littlemore (JL) Sarah Robson (SR) Duncan Bruce (DB) Debra Exall (DE) Abi Jessop (AJ)</p>	<p>Leader of Maidstone Borough Council (MBC), and Chair of the Maidstone Locality Board Maidstone Rural West Division, Kent County Council (KCC) and Vice-Chair of the Maidstone Locality Board Fant Ward, MBC Cabinet Member for Environment, MBC Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, High Street Ward, MBC Cabinet Member for Community Services and Leisure, MBC KCC Leader, Maidstone Rural North Division Maidstone South Division, KCC Maidstone South Division, KCC Maidstone North East Division, KCC Deputy Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills, Maidstone South East Division, KCC Maidstone Central Division, KCC Chairman, Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee, Maidstone Rural South, KCC Maidstone Area Committee, Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) (representing Cllr John Hughes) Area Manager, Kent Fire and Rescue Service District Commander, Kent Police Head of Strategic Partnerships, NHS West Kent Chief Executive, Voluntary Action Maidstone Director, Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce Jobcentre Plus (representing Dave Ashdown) Chief Executive, MBC Director of Regeneration & Communities, MBC Head of Housing and Community Services, MBC Community Partnerships Manager, MBC Community Partnerships Officer, MBC Strategic Relationships Adviser, KCC Community Engagement Officer</p>
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	Eddy Walsh Anthony J	(Maidstone), KCC Kent County Council Youth Service Kent Apprentice Youth Worker
Substitutes:	Cllr Paul Butcher, substituting for Cllr John Hughes, representing Kent Association of Local Councils KALC Lynne Coveney, Senior Operations Manager, substituting for Dave Ashdown, representing Jobcentre Plus	

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21.	Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gooch, Greer, Mortimer, Paine, Mrs Whittle, Hughes and Mr Dave Ashdown.	
22.	Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 June 2012 Cllr Garland welcomed everyone present to the meeting of the Maidstone Locality Board, 1 October 2012. Apologies for absence and substitutes were noted as listed above. Minutes of the last meeting 25 June 2012 were agreed as a true record with no amendments.	
23.	Matters and Actions Arising ZC noted the following updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined amount has been agreed for youth service provision; • Youth Services transformation update – paper attached; • Work progressing to define libraries funding approach – to bring back to December meeting; • Locality Board approach to housing associations – to be taken forward; • Libraries Focus Group meeting now set up and in place; • MLB priorities updates – incorporated into today’s presentations. 	
24.	Maidstone Locality Board priorities and dashboard update The paper circulated to the MLB sets out three priorities endorsed by the Locality Board on 25 June 2012. Sub-groups to be set for each of the three priorities, with the strategy, action plan and dashboard ensuring there are measurable outcomes against each priority. The priorities are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Budgets; • Tackling worklessness and poverty: with a focus on unemployed young people in the Maidstone borough and lessening the gap for those defined as living in poverty. GC suggested inviting the Margate Task Force to present at a future Locality Board meeting, who have developed focused work supporting tackling worklessness and poverty. • Local Environmental Improvements. 	

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Recommendation: for the Maidstone Locality Board to endorse the strategy and action plan for delivering the Tackling Worklessness and Poverty priority.

Discussion:

DE: KCC circulated the performance dashboard supported by two report cards for the priorities; tackling worklessness and poverty and local environmental improvements. As some indicators can only be measured annually, KCC is proposing to update the dashboard once a year (and not six-monthly as stated in the report).

IC: Could we highlight/incorporate empty retail/office properties based in Maidstone town centre?

JT: This information is available and collated by Maidstone Town Centre Management and can be circulated by the Chamber of Commerce.

GC: Unclear how this information could be used and represented – no direct correlation between empty properties and employment rates. Both rates can be extremely variable. Our focus needs to be on growing the employment base.

FW: Need to fully understand the Local Environmental Improvements priority – how do we propose to develop the outcomes more broadly. With regards to Tackling Worklessness and Poverty, we need to ensure that skills and training reflect the job market/job creation.

Decisions:

The Maidstone Locality Board approved the following:

- The draft strategy and action plan included in the Tackling Worklessness and Poverty Report Card;
- Margate Task Force to be invited to present at a future Locality Board meeting;
- Development of the Local Environmental Improvements Report Card;
- Development of the Locality Board dashboard and regular reports for the Board on how these indicators are changing for Maidstone;

Set up sub-groups for the 3 priorities to agree, progress, monitor and report on actions.

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Priority: Tackling Worklessness and Poverty

Overview:

Background: youth offender, peer pressures, resided in an ex-offenders' hostel, young family/dependents.

Challenges: Value not recognised by adults and peers, lack of positive activities to develop life skills and give options, false aspirations from school, no support from local peers, lack of 'on the job' education and training opportunities – academic route is not the only way, Jobcentre Plus too prescriptive – deterrent to work.

Opportunities: Allocation of a key worker providing one to one support, KCC apprenticeship scheme, support by Kent Youth Service, volunteering - building self-esteem, confidence, better understanding of the working world, local/wider, develop long term aspirations and goals.

Discussion:

LC: Young People are a priority for JCP things have improved – see young people every week, training and volunteering should not affect benefits.

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GC: Agreed that there needs to be a more joined up approach across agencies and unemployed young people.

COF: VAM working with JCP – developed a volunteering champion with support from KCC to help promote volunteering and a good understanding between agencies/members of the public re. benefits and unemployment. Guidelines need to be made clearer.

JB – agencies need to be involved and engaged in understanding the needs and supporting the aspirations of young people.

MR – young people need to be able to tell agencies what their needs are and agencies need to listen.

MA – 60 volunteers supporting KFRS over next few months – see it adding value and a valuable resource, enables a different level of service and different perspective to the delivery of the service.

MR – How can we support 15 year olds, who are due to leave school and would benefit from volunteering to help support them into the work place, rather than wait until they are 18 years old because of legal barriers.

Actions:

To support actions/dashboard, DE/AJ/EK to;

- Identify which agencies present issues/ barriers etc. and how these can be addressed.
- Identify how schools and young people (particularly 14-19 year olds) can be supported with volunteering placements.

Presentation: Maidstone's offer to co-ordinate support into employment, Zena Cooke and Ellie Kershaw, Maidstone Borough Council

Overview:

Maidstone Borough Council is keen to co-ordinate and map all of the employment support available, linking closely with Kent County Council, ascertaining what makes it difficult for young people to get work and stay in work.

- Barriers and proposed actions - through consultation with local young people, Youth Forum, schools and local networks, EK has identified a number of barriers to young people entering the job market (from qualifications, experience and skills development, CV writing to travel barriers e.g. costs);

There are five wards in the borough where the unemployment rate/NEETs are higher than the county average. Progress has been made against the four actions agreed at the previous Locality Board meeting; Jobcentre Plus and Mid Kent College have agreed to support the four actions.

Recommendations:

- Create a matching website for skills training, volunteer and apprenticeship opportunities;
- Work with business to create a starter guide to setting up your own business;
- Identify and prioritise employment, education and training needs with young people and business;
- Identify and secure external funding for projects that improve access to

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employment;

- Investigate issues around transport costs – set up a task and finish group.

Discussion:

Anthony: qualifications can only take you so far. CV development – need to understand what skills you have and can promote if you do not have qualifications or previous employment. Knowing what job opportunities are available is essential – particularly if you volunteer and want to know what work is out there.

PB: Transport issues in rural areas remains a priority, particularly around travel costs.

LC: If a young person is registered with Jobcentre Plus and has secured employment, they can apply for a bridging grant from JCP to pay their travel fares to work until they get their first pay.

PC: KCC Apprenticeships / Kent Jobs for Young People – schools should not just focus on the academic qualifications route, when there are young people who have an appetite to enter the job market. Troubled Families initiative is pivotal – in discussion re. a dispensation from central government. Need to ensure that young people leave school motivated and can stand up in the job market, irrespective of whether they have a Level 2 qualification at key stage 4 or not – this needs to be captured.

GC: Agrees that needs co-ordination is essential, but questioned whether Maidstone Borough Council is the suitable organisation to undertake this role.

ZC: This set of actions has come out from the priority sub-group and will look at what is already happening in the borough to ensure there is better co-ordination and understanding of what services exist and how they can provide a matching service.

GC: Keen to retain existing sub-group, with additional members invited where necessary.

Decision: The Maidstone Locality Board approves the recommendations, incorporating the specific actions agreed at the 25 June meeting and ensuring transport issues are incorporated. The Locality Board supported the need to set and agree clear targets and broker the public subsidy between employers and agencies.

Presentation: *Maidstone Integrated Local Area Workforce Strategy, Karen Morse, Skills for Care and Julie Cudmore, Workforce Development Manager, Kent County Council.*

Overview:

The project looked at the demographic changes and the impact of social care and health needs in Maidstone. Looking ahead, there will potentially be 7,000 vacancies in the social care sector in Maidstone – skills development and training needs to be addressed. The project highlighted the need to have a local workforce that could support these changes and needs. There are a number of challenges, including workforce skills development to support this localised workforce going forward. Working age and ageing carers (paid and unpaid) continue to grow and play a vital role. The turnover rate in paid social care remains high.

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Discussion:

Need to look at how agencies work together both at county and district level. Greater work needs to be done around economic impact, working with employers to support skills and training in the health and social care sector and how this can be developed as an attractive career pathway – employer provision, working arrangements, flexibility with working patterns, transport, skills development etc. – could help support higher retention within social care.

Recommendation:

- Support hosting a Self Care Event as part of Self Care Week (12-18 November);
- Support an initiative to inform housing, leisure and other public facing service staff about community support for vulnerable adults;
- Support a 'We Care in Maidstone' initiative to recruit and incentivise young people into social care (apprenticeships, work experience, work with young people's community services).

Decision: The Maidstone Locality Board endorsed the recommendations in principle and supports the recommendations being taken forward as a specific Task and Finish Group through the Tackling Worklessness and Poverty priority sub-group.

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Priority: Local Environmental Improvements

Groundwork is a community charity, which works alongside communities, public bodies, private companies and voluntary sector organisations to create and improve the local environment (safer streets, greener spaces). Groundwork supports people to gain confidence and skills to get involved in what's going on around them, to ensure they have a say in decisions made by the local council, the housing association and the business community. Groundwork focuses its activity on disadvantaged communities where it can make most difference. As part of its remit Groundwork can help improve job prospects by offering training and employment opportunities.

Presentation Case Studies: industrial estate, business park, shopping centre. Generic characteristics – high crime, degradation of area, businesses moving out of area.

Planning for success: partnership involvement (public and private) and investment (new and existing), agreed plan, creation of training and employment opportunities within areas regenerated, ongoing leadership, work with local people.

Discussion:

MR: Provides a good example of local environmental improvements at a grassroots level and highlighted the work Groundwork undertook in Park Wood ward through the Neighbourhood Action Planning programme.

SB: Concern around the number of groups providing the same service in the borough.

Recommendation: For the Maidstone Locality Board to support a Task and Finish Group to finalise/agree a set of priorities and actions that link into the Environmental Improvements priority.

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	<p>Decision: The Maidstone Locality Board endorsed the recommendation to establish a Task and Finish Group to incorporate, develop and support the priorities and actions for Environmental Improvements.</p>
27.	<p>Discussion Item: Youth Services Transformation Update</p> <p>Paper circulated.</p> <p>CG: Two issues raised at previous meeting; to incentivise schools to open their doors at evenings and weekends and to tackle rural isolation in terms of transport.</p> <p>Action: AJ to follow up.</p> <p>PH: No consultation or work with KALC which covers 49% of the Maidstone area.</p> <p>AJ: KALC nominated a representative to be included in the Task and Finish group.</p>
28.	<p>Any Other Business, including Information Items:</p> <p>Information Items</p> <p>The following papers had been circulated with the agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCC’s Draft Commissioning Plan for Education Provision (2012-17) update – the Board noted the latest position; • Future Kent Libraries Provision update – the Board noted the work done to date and the progress being made; • Review of Local Strategic Partnership thematic groups – Decision: The Maidstone Locality Board endorsed the recommendations outlined in the report as follows; <p>Phase 1: Implemented by October 2012</p> <p>The Health and Wellbeing group and Safer Maidstone Partnership (the statutory crime and disorder reduction partnership for Maidstone) will retain their existing chair arrangements, continuing a direct governance and reporting line into Maidstone Borough Council. Where appropriate, the groups and their sub-groups can be tasked to attend, undertake actions and projects arising through the Maidstone Locality Board Priorities Focus Group. The groups can utilise the Locality Board to champion and provide strategic support for their work programmes.</p> <p>The Economic Development and Regeneration group will dissolve in order to make way for the establishment of a strategic independent Borough-wide Maidstone Business Partnership, potentially incorporating existing partnership arrangements for example, the Economic Development and Regeneration delivery group, Maidstone Economic Development Forum, Business Group and the Developer’s Forum.</p> <p>The Environmental Quality group will re-establish itself as a task and finish group with a direct reporting line into the Maidstone Locality Board, supporting, if and when required, key actions arising from the Maidstone Locality Board priority to support Local Environmental Improvements. Links to be made to the Borough Council’s neighbourhood action planning programme.</p>

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	<p>Phase 2: Implemented April 2013 onwards</p> <p>Due to the changing national and local environment, the Local Children’s Trust Board chair arrangements, governance and reporting are currently being reviewed across the county by Kent County Council. Consultation is due to be completed in October 2012, with a clearer approach for local arrangements being implemented in the new financial year (April 2013).</p> <p>The new Health Act and the establishment of Health and Wellbeing boards at county level, together with future changes to the delivery of public health will require the existing Health and Wellbeing group to be reviewed in April 2013 to ensure it reflects the changing health landscape.</p> <p>Review as a future discussion item, the potential to incorporate the advisory function of the Joint Transportation Board, an established forum for consultation between Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council on policies, plans and strategies related to capital and revenue funded works programmes relating to highways, road traffic and public transport with the Maidstone Locality Board priorities as a sub-group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make Kent Quicker Campaign update – the Board noted the latest position regarding the campaign; • Household Waste Recycling Centres – the Board noted KCC’s policy changes affecting household Waste Recycling Centres to be implemented from 1 October 2012.
29.	<p>Duration of Meeting</p> <p>2.00 p.m. to 4.20 p.m.</p>