

Portfolio Holder Priority Statement
Councillor J A Wilson, Cabinet Member for Community Services and Leisure - March 2014

Housing and Communities Service update, John Littlemore

The priorities held by Councillor John A. Wilson, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services for 2013/14:

- Young People
- Road Safety (Killed or seriously injured)
- Health Inequalities (including families with 0-5 years)
- Housing Services
- Parks and Leisure Services

Priority 1: Young People: 2013/14 Action Plan

Action	Description	Update
Support the Switch Youth Cafe in running Maidstone Youth Forum	Increase youth participation in the Forum and develop the Forum's link across initiatives key priorities including, alcohol and substance misuse, positive relationships and health and wellbeing	Maidstone Youth Forum now solely run the Maidstone Youth Forum and it goes from strength to strength, increasing its membership and reach across Maidstone. Together with Switch we have also supported 4 parishes in the rural areas to come together to share best practice and pooled resources to make effective use of rural youth clubs.
Support the organisation of the Youth Sport Achievement Awards	Working in partnership with Active Maidstone to improve sports/club partnerships and deliver YSAA	The Active Maidstone Awards (previously YSAA) were held in January 2014. Having reviewed this year's awards, it has been agreed that the budget will be re-profiled to utilise the awards existing business support to develop a targeted programme to increase physical activity to reduce obesity.
Encourage youth engagement via our social media channels	Promote and develop In the Stone website and social media platforms e.g. Twitter and Facebook	At present, we are working with Switch to refresh the In the Stone website. Events and activities are fully promoted through social media networks, for example the SNAP disco (a partnership between MBC and Kent Police), which attracts more than 600 young people to Maidstone Leisure Centre.
Encouraging young people to take more of an active role in the council's democratic services process.	Working in partnership with Democratic Services during Local Democracy week to run a programme of activities for young people	Key contacts were provided to enable Democratic Services to engage with young people through a variety of routes and organisations.

Priority 2: Road Safety (killed or seriously injured): 2013/14 Action Plan

Action	Description	Update
Support a town centre road safety poster campaign	Promote Maidstone Road User targeted messages through the town centre and Urban Blue bus.	A Drink Driving poster campaign now covers the rear of the Urban Blue bus and is clearly a visible campaign. Drink Driving beer mats and posters were distributed to town centre based pubs and restaurants over the Christmas period.
Support a parishes road safety poster campaign	Work with Kent Road Safety team to promote their 'Drinking and Driving' poster in the parishes	The Christmas Drink Driving campaign posters were circulated across all wards and parishes in December 2013. The team is working with Kent Police to launch a parish speed watch campaign with local schools during this summer's World Cup football.
Promote a road safety activity to promote road safety issues to schools	<p>Primary schools Road Safety Test</p> <p>Deliver Safety in Action 2013 - Safety in Action is an annual, two-week programme to help year 6 students to develop their competence and confidence in responsible citizenship and safety skills.</p>	<p>Commissioned the KM Charity team to delivery road safety awareness to 7 primary schools across Maidstone in which they work towards bronze, silver and gold accreditation.</p> <p>Kent County Council Road Safety Team have confirmed their commitment towards the 2013 and 2014 event by delivering ditch the distraction campaign.</p> <p>A school bus safety DVD is being developed to support the work of Safety in Action 2014 and showcase at school open days for new year 7 students and their parents.</p>
Improve Arriva bus driver behaviour in pedestrianised areas	Driver education workshops delivered in partnership with Kent Road Safety team.	Driver education workshops delivered to Arriva staff in the staff canteen. DVD to be produced to reinforce the messages given to staff at training and up skill the drivers to see the road from different points of view.
Using the Borough Update as a means of publicising the road safety message	Targeted promotional campaign.	Road Safety messages have been distributed through the MBC Communities newsletter, rather than the Borough Update.
Ensure Police are consulted with regard to new large developments to identify potential road safety problems	Kent Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor advised by MBC Planning at pre-application stage of proposed large developments	John Grant, the Crime Prevention Officer for Kent Police is currently advised of and responds to any large developments.

Priority 3: Health Inequalities (incorporating 0-5 years)

Action	Description	Update
Develop the strategic direction and priorities for action to tackle health inequalities in Maidstone	Host a Health Inequalities Stakeholder event	The event was held in June 2013, chaired by Dr Tony Jones and Professor Chris Bentley. The feedback has been incorporated into the draft Health Inequalities Action Plan.
	Draft a Health Inequalities Action Plan for the Maidstone Borough	The Plan is currently in the process of being approved by the Cabinet Member.
Work with Maidstone partners, including the Kent Public Health, West Kent CCG, PPG and Healthwatch, to encourage better joint working and develop funding opportunities	Re-establish a Health and Wellbeing delivery group in Maidstone	The Health and Wellbeing delivery group has been re-established, with the Cabinet Member being voted as the group's Chair and Paul Coles, Age UK as it's Vice Chair. The delivery group provides the strategic lead for the Health Inequalities Action Plan and has excellent partnership support, particularly through Kent Public Health and local GPs representing the West Kent CCG.
Work with Maidstone partners to develop a joint action plan to allow better joint working and pooling of resources and funding	Host a task and finish group to develop a 0-5 years Action Plan to support key areas including; literacy and reading, road safety, healthy weight and eating and practitioner training	The task and finish group was established in 2013 and developed an Action Plan to support 0-5 years in collaboration with partners. Family and literacy and reading events have been held in partnership with Kent Libraries and Golding Homes and road safety and healthy weight initiatives are being developed.

Additional Focus Areas**Kent Partner's Compact**

Information on the compact with voluntary and community sectors – what is it? which organisations are involved?

Maidstone Borough Council and Voluntary Action Maidstone (the umbrella organisation for Maidstone's Voluntary and Community sector) is aligned to the Kent Partner's Compact (web link: <http://www.bigsocietycooperative.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Kent-Partners-Compact-Final-Jan-2012.pdf>)

The agreement is for mutual benefit between the Voluntary and Community Sector and the Public Sector in Kent. In January 2009 a single Kent Partners' Compact was launched to establish consistency in the relationship between the public and the voluntary sectors. In December 2010, the National Compact was renewed and this has been recognised within the refreshed Kent Partners' Compact.

The Kent Partners' Compact sets out a shared vision with commitments from both sides to make sure the agreement works. It is a set of principles which will help our businesses work better for everyone – especially Kent's residents. This is particularly important at a time when the country is facing significant financial challenges.

The Compact:

- Supports the development of a strong, diverse and independent voluntary and community sector.
- Improves outcomes for the people of Kent through effective engagement and communication.
- Involves the voluntary sector and service users in the design, development and changes to policies and services.
- Provides mutual advantage to all partners through meaningful representation and partnership working.
- Provides a mutually agreed framework on which to base discussions if any partner feels the other has not met their commitments to the Compact.
- Promotes a fair and equal society by contributing to a better understanding of minority groups and their distinct and diverse needs. Ensure a voice for under-represented and disadvantaged groups.

Update on MBC representation at the Local Children's Trust

In March 2014, a decision was taken by Kent County Council, meaning that Local Children's Trust Boards no longer exist as part of the county council's children's partnership arrangements. However, the role of partnership arrangements for promoting joint working between key partners which is designed to improve the wellbeing and protection of all children will continue. Children's partnership arrangements have been moved to become part of the local Health and Wellbeing Board's partnership arrangements, which includes the establishment of Children's Operational Group.

Alison Broom, Chief Executive of Maidstone Borough Council is a member of the West Kent Health and Wellbeing Board and is currently Chair of the Children's District Advisory Board.

At a local level, Maidstone Borough Council has supported a transitional group, the Local Children's Partnership, which consists of core members from the previous Maidstone Local Children's Trust Board and will ensure at an agency and operational basis, children and young people services are still networking and sharing good practice.

Update on the relationships with parish councils and the parish services scheme

All the parish councils have signed their agreements for the parish services scheme, which has now been operating successfully in its first 12 months. The settlement figure for 2014/15 has been issued using the same criteria as in the previous year.

Information on specific achievements during the past year.

- Maidstone Armed Forces Covenant signed and £31,000 funding secured from the Armed Forces Covenant Grant towards a Futures for Heroes

veterans up skilling employment scheme in partnership with Mid Kent College and Stoneham Housing

- Delivery of the Armed Forces transition fairs, to support those Maidstone service personnel leaving or made redundant from the army.
- Establishment of the Street Population Task Force partnership working which led to the Killing with Kindness street begging poster campaign, establishment of the Night Shelter and the appointment of a contracted Street Population Outreach Officer.
- Delivery of Safety in Action 2013, over achieving sponsorship and school attendance.
- £100,000 fund secured from Kent Public Health and Tomorrow's People to pilot Engage, a support into work programme with 16-24 year olds who are not in education, employment or training.

Housing Service achievements during past year

Housing Strategy:

Priority 1: Develop sustainable communities

Action	Description	Update
Provide a range of affordable housing	Maidstone has an annual need for 1,081 new affordable homes. This includes shared ownership and affordable rented homes.	Enabled the delivery of 180+ affordable homes comprising a mix of units and tenures. Directly funded the delivery of 63 affordable homes at a grant rate of just over £9k per unit.
Engage in the development of the planning policy	Working in partnership with the planning service to develop the Local Plan	Assistance provided to Planning Policy Team together with consultants GL Hearn on the completion of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Priority 2: Increase choice and improve the quality of life for vulnerable households

Action	Description	Update
Provide good quality emergency housing for homeless families	Acquire emergency temporary accommodation to promote good quality accommodation that provides value for money	Purchased Aylesbury House to deliver 11/12 rooms of emergency temporary accommodation for use in July 2014
Tackle instances of begging in the Town Centre	Following complaints from members of the public a multi agency task group was established to understand the emerging issue and put in place solutions	Delivered the 'Your Kindness Could Kill' campaign to raise awareness of street population and rough sleeping issues and to promote responsible donations to support local charities working with rough sleepers

Priority 3: Improve our existing homes

Action	Description	Update
Bring empty homes back into use	The council successfully bid to the Homes and Communities Agency's Empty Homes Programme and	Magnolia House purchased as part of the council's commercialism project in conjunction with the HCA Empty Homes

Appendix D

	received a significant capital sum to bring empty homes back into use	Programme. The development will bring 12 empty properties back into use to provide affordable homes
Bring empty homes back into use	The council has refreshed its Empty Homes strategy	As a result of direct intervention the council brought back 99 empty homes to use since April 2013
Tackle poor housing conditions	Where landlords do not comply with offers of assistance to improve private rented properties the council will take action	We have served 62 legal enforcement notices on private landlords to improve housing conditions in the private rented sector since April 2013
Improve the condition of private dwellings	Poor quality housing negatively affects peoples health, education and emotional well being	Improved 276 private sector dwellings through interventions by the Private Sector Housing team since April 2013

Priority 4: Improve access to housing advice and work to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping in Maidstone

Action	Description	Update
Implement a new Allocation Scheme	The new Allocation Scheme was adopted in April 2013 to provide a more transparent and fairer system to access affordable housing	The new Allocation Scheme has encouraged more households into employment and voluntary work. We have housed 415 families through the scheme since April 2013.
Tackle rough sleeping	Provide assistance to help people come off the streets	Worked to reduce the number of rough sleepers identified in the annual rough sleeper estimate from 19 in 2012 to 14 in 2013 (compared with an average 7% increase outside of London)
Ensure vulnerable households are assisted during severe weather periods	The council worked together with partner agencies to identify a more effective assistance that helps with housing and long term problems that stops people from being street homeless	Provided funding and support for the Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter which has assisted rough sleepers both in terms of temporary accommodation, but also to find employment and sustainable accommodation

List of achievements this year in the Parks and Open Spaces part of my Portfolio

- Strive awards for Mote Park Team and Derek Whitehead
- Mote Park achieving top Green Flag points upon first time of applying

- Mote Park voted as the UK's third favourite park in Green Flag's people choice awards
- Volunteering: Number of volunteer hours for the year valued at £100,000; Duke of Gloucester visiting the Fellowship to commend their work; Events and activities at Mote Park supported by the volunteers.
- CBBC's Mr Bloom and Stargazing events
- Development of the Play Areas Strategy
- Cobtree project with the restoration of the park, new pathways, opening out new views, new car park, new Maidstone Zoo play area and Sculpture Trail.
- Mote Park Facebook group has 3267 members, the most successful post has been viewed 68,000 times, and the first annual photo competition attracted 450 entries from across the UK.
- Two more Green Flags awarded to Whatman Park and Clare Park
- Maidstone Leisure has had it's highest number of visits, 714,000, in over 10 years, 43,000 more visits than the previous year.
- Installation of the 321 5k running route at Cobtree
- The Big Tree plant 1000s of whips planted across 6 parks across Maidstone
- Bulb planting at Penenden Heath and Brenchley Gardens