

## **Appendix B: Equalities Impact Assessment for the Draft Commercialisation Strategy**

### **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?**

This strategy is about protecting the democratic rights and influence of the people of Maidstone, and ensuring that the services they receive from their Local Authority are maintained at the quality they have a right to expect.

The abolition of the Revenue Support Grant is well documented and widely understood. The challenges of this reduction in income to Maidstone Borough Council are those faced by local government across the United Kingdom. What is less widely understood are the implications of failing to effectively deal with this deep cut to funding (in Maidstone Borough council's case the reduction in Revenue Support Grant by financial year 2018/19 represents 18% of the actual operational budget of financial year 2013/14). Failure to balance the books could easily result in remedial measures being imposed by The Secretary of State; resulting in:

- Deep cuts to all types of resource within MBC, resulting in a reduction of standards of services provided to customers and possible.
- Enforced sale of MBC assets resulting in a reduction of facilities for the people of Maidstone.
- Imposition of a merger with other authorities (such as Kent County Council) which would erode the power of the Maidstone electorate to influence the affairs of their Borough.

Maidstone Borough Council acknowledges the challenges that it faces, but also views the current funding picture as an opportunity to affect fundamental changes to how it does business; with dramatic improvements delivered for the people it represents as a result.

The abolition of the Revenue Support Grant is counter balanced with the adoption of the Localism Act 2013. The Power of General Competence contained within the Act gives councils a freedom to operate in ways which were denied them previously. Maidstone Borough Council intends using these new freedoms to start a Strategy of Commercialisation (meaning Business Improvement; more efficient charging; trading; and investment) in order to:

- Bridge the funding gap with self-driven revenue by financial year 2018/19.
- To work towards generating sufficient net revenue so that the Council is no longer reliant on local taxation or central government grant to meet its operating costs.

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This Strategy is designed to provide simple measures, in a clear and concise manner in order that Maidstone Borough Council can move with purpose towards these outcomes.

### **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.**

No impact is anticipated, but no data is available to support this. The roll-out of the strategy will be monitored through existing measures Services have in place to measure Equality Impact, and reviewed annually as per para.4.3.2 of the Strategy.

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

No impact is anticipated, but no data is available to support this. The roll-out of the strategy will be monitored through existing measures Services have in place to measure Equality Impact, and reviewed annually as per para.4.3.2 of the Strategy.

### **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?**

No impact is anticipated, but no data is available to support this. The roll-out of the strategy will be monitored through existing measures Services have in place to measure Equality Impact, and reviewed annually as per para.4.3.2 of the Strategy.