

## **Relationship with Other Authorities**

In Kent, as with most other Shire areas, there are two tiers of local government – county councils, which are responsible for county-wide functions such as education and social services and borough or district councils which are responsible for more local services such as refuse collection and planning applications. In addition, since 1990, 47 unitary authorities have been created which combine the functions of county and district councils. In Kent, Medway is a unitary authority.

<b>A Brief Summary of Local Government Functions</b>		
<b>County Councils</b>	<b>District Councils</b>	<b>Parish Councils (in Parish areas only)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Highways</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Recreation, Arts and Museums</li> <li>• Social Services</li> <li>• Strategic Planning</li> <li>• Trading Standards</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Waste Disposal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates</li> <li>• Environmental Health</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Local Plans and Planning Applications</li> <li>• Public Conveniences</li> <li>• Recreation, Arts, Museums</li> <li>• Car Parks</li> <li>• Waste Collection</li> <li>• Benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus Shelters and Public Benches</li> <li>• Footpaths and Car Parks</li> <li>• Public Conveniences</li> <li>• Recreation, Arts and Museums</li> </ul>

For further information relating to Kent County Council please go to their website which is at [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk).

## **Parish and Town Councils**

There is of course a further tier which exists in some (but not all) areas regardless of whether an area has a County/District or Unitary structure – that of the Town and Parish Councils.

<b>Parish Councils and Parish Meetings*</b>			
Barming	Coxheath	Langley	Stockbury
Bearsted	Detling	Leeds	Sutton Valence
Bicknor*	Downswood	Lenham	Teston
Boughton Malherbe	East Farleigh	Linton	Thurnham
Boughton Monchelsea	East Sutton	Loose	Tovil
Boxley	Frinsted*	Marden	Ulcombe
Bredhurst	Harrietsham	Nettlestead	West Farleigh
Broomfield & Kingswood	Headcorn	Otham	Wichling*
Chart Sutton	Hollingbourne	Otterden*	Wormshill*
Collier Street	Hunton	Staplehurst	Yalding

*\*Parish meeting only*

## **Police Authority**

Kent Police Authority is responsible for the provision of the Police Service in the Kent area. Further information regarding this Authority can be found at [www.kent.police.uk](http://www.kent.police.uk).

## **Kent Fire Authority**

Kent Fire Authority is responsible for the provision of the Fire Service in the Kent area. Further information regarding this Authority can be found at [www.kent.fire-uk.org](http://www.kent.fire-uk.org).

## **Local Strategic Partnership**

The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) brings together councils and key local partners, including the police, health services, the private, voluntary and community sectors. The LSP develops a long-term vision to improve the quality of life and services in the local area. The LSP also delivers the improvements in the Local Area Agreement (LAA). In an LSP the council take the leading role.

The LSP is a non-statutory body, although a few are organised as companies limited by guarantee. Although it may involve many partners and local organisations, LSPs generally hold a regular meeting involving all partners, hold sub-meetings looking at specific issues with relevant partners and in some cases organise local neighbourhood forums.

In two-tier authorities, the LSP normally exists at both county and district levels and in a few places the LSP is shared between more than one council.

The four key areas for LSP activities are:

- Preparing and implementing a Sustainable Community Strategy
- Bring together local plans, partnerships and initiatives
- Working with local authorities in developing and implementing Local Area Agreements (LAA) (see below)
- Developing and delivering a local neighbourhood renewal strategy

Maidstone Borough's LSP was formed in 2001 and developed the first community strategy for the borough "Maidstone Matters" adopted in April 2003. This was revised in 2005 and following the Local Government White Paper "Strong and Prosperous Communities" in 2007 is the subject of a major revision currently underway (March to November 2008). The LSP comprises policy and operational groups as well as the full LSP which meets on a quarterly basis. The structure is being reviewed. The meetings of the full LSP are open and councillors receive notification of the meetings, the minutes and are invited to attend the meetings as

observers. Each of the four political groups in Maidstone has a formal representative on the LSP, agreed at the borough council's annual general meeting.

More information on the above contact the Community Planning Co-ordinator on 01622 602246 or can be found at [www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk/community/community\\_strategy.aspx](http://www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk/community/community_strategy.aspx) or on the Communities and Local Government website at [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk), the IDeA website at [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk) and from the P+P website at [www.progressthroughpartnership.org.uk](http://www.progressthroughpartnership.org.uk).

### **Local Area Agreements**

A Local Area Agreement ("LAA") is a three year agreement that sets out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government (represented by the Government Office) and a local area. The local area is represented by the local authority, Local Strategic Partnership and other key partners at a local level.

LAAs represent a new approach to improving co-ordination between central government, local authorities and their partners. They aim to deliver national outcomes in a way that reflects local priorities identified in Sustainable Community Strategies, and which will be agreed through negotiation with the Government Office for the South East (GOSE).

Where there is no more than one tier of local government in an area, the agreement will be between all of the councils in that area as well as other major local partners. The new Local Government Act provides a statutory framework for LAAs. Local authorities are also under a "duty to co-operate" in agreeing local improvement targets. The Act defines an LAA as a document specifying local improvement targets, the organisations to whom each target is to relate and the period for which the LAA is to have effect.

Local authorities and partners will negotiate with Government Offices which 35 indicators, from the National Indicator set, they propose should have targets set against them and these will be agreed with central Government. Authorities with partners may also agree to include any other additional indicators and targets (either from the National Indicator set of 198 indicators or otherwise) in the LAA as local priorities for implementation of the Sustainable Community Strategy. These will have the same legal status as targets negotiated with the Government Offices but will not need to be reported to Government. The performance of councils and their LAA partners will be measured against a new system of 'Comprehensive Area Assessment'.

More information on the above can be found on the Communities and Local Government website at [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk) and the IDeA website at [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk).

### **Electoral Registration Officer/Returning Officer**

The Council appoints both of these roles and both posts are held by the Borough Council's Chief Executive, David Petford. These roles are separate from the Local Authority although the Council actually makes the appointment to these positions. The role of the Electoral Registration Officer is to compile the Electoral Register and to publish it in accordance with the legislation. The Returning Officer's role is to conduct all elections including Parliamentary, European, County Council, Borough Council and Parish Council Elections and any referenda that are held. Councils, in addition to appointing these roles, also have to provide staff in order that their functions can be undertaken.

### **Monitoring Officer**

The Monitoring Officer is appointed by the Council and his role is set out within the Council's Constitution in Article 12. In addition the Monitoring Officer has a number of roles in relation to members' compliance with the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct. In addition, he also undertakes this role for the Parish Councils within the Authority's area. Kent County Council has its own Monitoring Officer and deals with all issues relating to the County Council.