

To: Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services

From: Rebecca Spore , Director of Infrastructure

Subject: Re-location of KCC services from Maidstone Gateway

Classification: Non Exempt

**Future Pathway of Paper:** Cabinet Member Decision

**Electoral Division:** Maidstone Central – Mr Bird  
Maidstone North East – Mr Chittenden  
Maidstone Rural East – Leader of Kent County Council  
Maidstone Rural South – Mr Hotson  
Maidstone Rural West - Mrs Stockell  
Maidstone South – Mr Clark  
Maidstone South East – Mr Cooke

**Summary:**

To make sure every pound spent in Kent is delivering better outcomes for our customers, communities and businesses, we must review the services we provide and where we provide them from to ensure we are getting value for money. As part of this KCC have undertaken a review of Gateway Services.

We are now considering whether the Maidstone Gateway is the right location from which to provide KCC services. Since Maidstone Gateway opened in King Street, Maidstone, people have visited the Gateway to access a range of Kent County Council (KCC), Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) and partner services. We know that customers frequently visit Maidstone Gateway to access services provided by both MBC and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) partners. However, they rarely use Maidstone Gateway to access KCC services.

While the services that KCC provides will not change, it is possible that they could be accessed from alternative locations in the future including other KCC buildings in Maidstone. This could deliver property savings.

KCC provides or commissions the following services from Maidstone Gateway:

- Age UK helpdesk
- Deaf Services drop in clinic
- Health Trainer service
- Kent Supported Employment clinics
- General KCC enquiries

**Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services is asked to agree that KCC relocates its services and commissioned services from Maidstone Gateway to other properties in Maidstone.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The proposal to relocate KCC services from Maidstone Gateway follows a series of KCC Service Review's of the Gateway programme which were carried out between 2012 and 2014. The reviews considered the effectiveness of Gateways predominately from KCC's perspective.
- 1.2 The initial review, which looked at the overarching Gateway programme, found that although Gateways provided the potential to generate significant savings for KCC through rationalisation of processes and premises, realisation of this potential has been limited. Transactional data showed that the take up of KCC service provision at Gateways (other than for Library provision and Adult Education) by visiting customers generally had been consistently low. In addition, there was perceived to be limited opportunity across KCC to increase service provision in Gateways going forward.
- 1.3 Following the conclusions of the review into KCC's presence at the Gateways it was recommended that further analysis was required into each Gateway to consider the KCC service provided and whether the Gateway continues to be the best place from which to deliver KCC services. Given the partnership arrangements and the levels of current use it was proposed that the initial prioritisation should be given to the Maidstone, Tonbridge, Dover, Tunbridge Wells and Gravesham Gateways respectively.
- 1.4 It is proposed that there will be a separate consultation for each Gateway and key decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services. Each consultation will put forward one or more options for relocation of the relevant KCC Gateway services, and will offer the opportunity for the public and Gateway partners to comment on this. There will be an open question in each consultation to allow for any unidentified issues to be raised. The feedback from each consultation will be considered as part of the decision making process. Public consultation on the relocation of KCC services from Tonbridge Gateway went live on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and a key decision will be taken in March 2016. Public consultation on Dover Gateway is expected to launch in March 2016 with a decision anticipated to be taken by July 2016. Timelines for Tunbridge Wells and Gravesham are yet to be confirmed.

## **2. Maidstone Gateway**

- 2.1 The review of Maidstone Gateway, which analysed a year's transactional data, found that whilst the Gateway is well received by partners and those customers who utilise the service, the placement of KCC services within the Gateway and take up of those services that are provided by visiting customers has been consistently low. Customers frequently visit the Maidstone Gateway to access services provided by both MBC and the VCS partners; however, data shows that customers rarely use the Maidstone Gateway to access KCC services. Out of 50,406 recorded visits to the Gateway in 2014, only 4% of total customer transactions (2,919 visits) were for KCC services or those we commission.
- 2.2 The indicative face to face transactional costs for KCC at Maidstone Gateway are just under £56 per customer visit. These are significantly higher than the national

channel costs which based on public service surveys, such as SOCITM's channel benchmarking survey are:

- £8.62 Face-to-face
- £2.83 Telephone
- £0.15 Website<sup>1</sup>

2.3 In addition, it found that there were several public facing buildings in Maidstone delivering KCC services and that there may be opportunities to deliver property savings through the relocation of services currently delivered from Maidstone Gateway.

2.4 To capture the views and understand the potential impact to our customers, KCC held a 12 week public consultation on the relocation of the KCC services from Maidstone Gateway. The consultation questionnaire (Appendix C) contained a question inviting feedback on the assumptions made. Following the consultation a full Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed (Appendix B). Following the consideration of the feedback at this Policy and Resource Cabinet Committee meeting, the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded services will take a decision regarding KCC's future within Maidstone Gateway.

2.5 The proposals focus on the four specific KCC delivered or commissioned services, which run either pre-booked or drop-in face to face clinics with customers from the Maidstone Gateway. These services are present in the Gateway at fixed times during the week, and utilise either a desk or a room in the Gateway. Each clinic is run by one or two members of the relevant service teams. The KCC delivered or commissioned services provided from Maidstone Gateway are:

- Age UK helpdesk (135 customer transactions in Maidstone Gateway in 2014)
- Deaf Services clinic (20 customers transactions in Maidstone Gateway in 2014)
- Health Trainer service (64 transactions in Maidstone Gateway in 2014)
- Kent Supported Employment clinics (363 customer transactions in Maidstone Gateway in 2014)

We are proposing to relocate the four service clinics listed above to a number of possible buildings in Maidstone which are as follows:

- Kent History and Library Centre
- Maidstone Adult Education Centre
- Allington Library
- Coxheath Library

2.6 Each of the service clinics listed above have relatively low customer footfall (the highest being Kent Supported Employment who saw 363 customers between January and December 2014.) No service utilises more than one meeting room at any one time, and Age UK, Deaf Service and the Health Trainer service do not run service clinics every day. It is therefore estimated that there would be a low

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<sup>1</sup> SOCITM Customer Access Improvement Service Briefing, 2012

impact on the selected building(s), should KCC decide to relocate these service clinics from Maidstone Gateway.

2.7 In addition to the building options listed above, we have also considered the possibility of the following:

- Relocating the Age UK clinic to Age UK's Maidstone Head Office in Mill Street;
- Relocating the Kent Supported Employment clinics to Invicta House, County Hall,
- Relocating the Deaf Services British Sign Language Clinic to Hi Kent's Maidstone Head Office in Brewer Street.

This is due to the synergies between the relevant service clinics and the other services and support available in each location.

2.8 Sessions House, County Hall and the Kent History and Library Centre are both properties which are owned by KCC. Sessions House, County Hall has a publicly accessible reception. The reception currently provides Blue Badge Application forms for the public to complete, in addition to a number of other forms. The public already can, and do, visit the Kent History and Library centre to carry out a number of different transactions in addition to what might be considered as 'typical' library services. These include registering a birth or death and registering for most types of bus passes. There are also computers in the library which members of the public can use for one hour per day.

2.9 In both locations staff members can assist with other general enquiries about KCC services by signposting to the relevant team or department where possible. If a decision is taken to relocate KCC services from Maidstone Gateway, customers who wish to ask about KCC services face to face will continue to be able to do this from Sessions House, County Hall or the Kent History and Library Centre. We are also considering the option of commissioning KCC general enquiries from other locations in the future.

2.10 All VCS partners in the Gateway were invited to attend pre-consultation engagement sessions jointly held by KCC and MBC. These sessions were attended by Migrant Helpline, Hi Kent and Citizens Advice Maidstone. These organisations expressed concern about how a decision to relocate KCC services from Maidstone Gateway might impact on their service delivery. The continued presence of these parties in the Gateway depends on how MBC would operate the Gateway in the future, should KCC relocate its services from this location. KCC have been engaging with MBC before and throughout the consultation period, MBC have expressed their interest in continuing to accommodate as many VCS partners as possible without raising charges, should a decision be taken by KCC to relocate its services to other locations in Maidstone.

2.11 During the consultation period, Citizens Advice Maidstone also expressed an interest being commissioned to deliver KCC general enquiries from the Gateway in the future. This would allow KCC to maintain a presence in the Gateway whilst still making property savings, if a decision is taken to relocate the four specific

KCC services to other locations in Maidstone. As Citizens Advice Maidstone put forward this option during the consultation period, it did not form part of the consultation proposals. It could, however, circumvent some of the issues raised as part of the consultation feedback (discussed in Appendix A), such as the possibility of customers being disadvantaged by needing to visit the Gateway for MBC and partner services and then Sessions House or Kent History and Library Centre to ask about KCC services. We are therefore considering the option of commissioning other providers to deliver KCC general enquiries from the Gateway in the future.

### 3. Public Consultation feedback

3.1 The consultation focussed on identifying how customers and our partners would be impacted if KCC decided to relocate services from Maidstone Gateway in October 2016. The consultation proposed continued face to face service provision; a number of options were given as to the possible locations in Maidstone.

3.2 The consultation consisted of six drop in sessions in Maidstone Gateway and a questionnaire, which was also produced in an Easy Read version and available in electronic and paper formats. Stakeholders, including Gateway customers were invited to respond to the consultation using various communication methods.

3.3 66 consultation responses were received in total. A number of detailed responses were received to the open consultation questions which asked for feedback on the proposals. These responses have been grouped into themes; the most frequently discussed theme being the location of the KCC alternative buildings which were proposed. The second and third most popular themes discussed the economic benefits of relocating KCC services from the Gateway, and the benefits of the current colocation of services in the Gateway respectively.

3.4 The Consultation Report sets out the consultation process and provides detailed analysis on the consultation feedback. The table below is extracted from the consultation report and lists the main response themes.

| Theme of comments                                   | Number of online comments | Number of paper comments | Most popular comments ranked |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Location feedback                                   | 13                        | 3                        | 1 <sup>st</sup>              |
| Economic sense of using other KCC buildings         | 9                         | 1                        | 2 <sup>nd</sup>              |
| Benefits of one stop shop/ colocation of services   | 6                         | 1                        | 3 <sup>rd</sup> =            |
| Getting value for money from KCC Gateway investment | 6                         | 1                        | 3 <sup>rd</sup> =            |

|  |    |   |                   |
|--|----|---|-------------------|
| Service specific responses   | 5  | 1 | 4 <sup>th</sup> = |
| Lack of knowledge about current Gateway set up / services in Gateway | 5  | 1 | 4 <sup>th</sup>   |
| Parking concerns of new locations                                    | 5  | 0 | 5 <sup>th</sup> = |
| Value of having face to face services                                | 4  | 0 | 6 <sup>th</sup>   |
| No response  | 12 | 3 | n/a               |

3.5 An EqlA was carried out to accompany the proposals and shape the consultation.

This has been updated following consultation feedback to include a full action plan. Table 3 of the EqlA lists the key issues which will need to be novated if KCC is to relocate services from Maidstone Gateway. Table 4 of the EqlA sets out action plan to novate the identified issues The key actions are as follows:

- Ensure all locations are accessible
- Look at feasibility of introducing hearing loops to alternative locations
- Look a feasibility of introducing baby changing facilities to an alternative site
- Raise awareness of the bus and transport routes to alternative locations
- Consideration of additional disabled parking at alternative sites
- Consideration of reducing crossing hazards at KHLC
- Consideration of commissioning another provider to deliver KCC general enquiries from Gateway

#### **4. Financial Implications**

4.1 The annual KCC property budget for Maidstone Gateway is £162,600. It is possible that if KCC were to relocate its Gateway services to other KCC buildings, £162,600 could be saved each year. If KCC chose not to exercise the break provisions in the partnership agreement and lease. KCC will be tied into the agreements for a further 7 years.

#### **5. Legal implications**

5.1 KCC and MBC have a number of partnership agreements which govern the usage of the Gateway. KCC's decision on whether to relocate its services from the Gateway will be taken in accordance with the overarching partnership agreements. MBC have been fully engaged in advance of and throughout the consultation period.

#### **6. Other corporate implications**

6.1 The consultation was carried out in line with the VCS Policy 2015 and Kent Compact agreement, as it was identified that KCC's proposals may impact the VCS partners in the Gateway.

## 7. Recommended Future Service Locations

7.1 The table below shows the KCC services currently delivered in the Gateway and the recommended future locations for each:

| KCC service or commissioned service | Recommended future location   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Kent Supported Employment           | Invicta House, County Hall  |
| Deaf Services                       | Hi Kent Offices, Brewer St.   |
| Age UK Helpdesk                     | Kent History and Library Centre   |
| Health Trainer Service              | Kent History and Library Centre and/or Maidstone Adult Education Centre                 |
| Meet and Greet (general enquiries)  | Continued delivery from Kent History and Library Centre and Sessions House, County Hall |

7.2 This takes into account the feedback from the consultation, as set out in detail in the consultation report (Appendix A, sections 7-9.)

## 8 Next Steps

8.1 The consultation report and full EqIA will be used to inform the decision on whether to relocate KCC services from Maidstone Gateway. A decision will be made following recommendations made at Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee and information will be made available online and in the Gateway. If KCC decides to relocate the KCC services in the Gateway, any changes will be in place from October 2016.

### Recommendations(s)

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services is asked to agree that KCC relocates its services and commissioned services from Maidstone Gateway to other properties in Maidstone.

## 10. Background Documents

10.1 The documents which support this report are as follows:

- Maidstone Gateway Consultation Document (Standard and Easy Read versions)
- Consultation report (Appendix A)
- Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix B)

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# **Appendix A - Maidstone Gateway Public Consultation Report**

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## **1. Acknowledgement**

1.1 On behalf of Kent County Council (KCC), we would like to say thank you to Rachel Coppins and all of the Gateway Volunteers who went above and beyond to promote the consultation in Maidstone Gateway and encourage service users and potential customers to take part. Their input has been invaluable and their efforts have been greatly appreciated.

## **2. Executive summary**

2.1. A 12 week public consultation on the proposed relocation of KCC services from Maidstone Gateway ran from 21st September to 13th December 2015. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) was conducted prior to the development and delivery of the public consultation. This has been updated and finalised following the consultation (Appendix B).

2.2. The EqIA helped to shape the engagement and participation action plan; identifying protected characteristics which had the potential to be negatively or positively impacted by the proposed policies.

The consultation consisted of a questionnaire (Appendix C), which was also produced in an Easy Read version and available in electronic and paper formats, and six drop in sessions at the Gateway where KCC staff were available to answer questions.

2.3 A variety of consultation methods were used to promote the consultation, they included:

- Consultation page on KCC website and link from Gateway Service page
  - Emailed consultation documentation to KCC Gateway service leads
  - Press statements sent to Maidstone Newspapers
  - Consultation pull up banner and consultation document displayed in the Maidstone Gateway
  - Promotional postcards and consultation documents displayed in other KCC buildings in Maidstone including Libraries
  - Briefing of Gateway staff to direct customers to consultation material
  - Briefing of KCC Maidstone Members and Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services
  - Community Liaison Officers and Community Wardens asked to promote the consultation at local meetings they attended during the consultation.
- Information was also sent to each of the eight partner organisations operating from Maidstone Gateway, who were actively encouraged to distribute this to their service users.

2.3. In addition, the Gateway partners were invited to attend pre consultation engagement sessions run by KCC and Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) officers. These were attended by Hi Kent, Migrant Helpline and Citizens Advice Maidstone.

2.4. A total of 66 consultation responses were received.

2.5. This report sets out the background of the consultation, the consultation process, equality and accessibility considerations, and discusses the consultation responses and key themes.

### 3. Introduction

- 3.1. Since Maidstone Gateway opened in King Street, Maidstone, people have visited the Gateway to access a range of Kent County Council (KCC), Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) and partner services. To make sure every pound spent in Kent is delivering better outcomes for our customers, communities and businesses, we must review the services we provide and where we provide them from to ensure we are getting value for money.
- 3.2. We are now considering whether the Maidstone Gateway is the right location from which to provide KCC services. We know that customers frequently visit Maidstone Gateway to access services provided by both MBC and the VCS partners. However, data collected over recent years has shown that customers rarely use Maidstone Gateway to access KCC services.
- 3.3. Out of 50,406 recorded visits to the Gateway in 2014:
- 88% were for Maidstone Borough Council services
  - 8% were for other partner services
  - 4% (2,919 of visits) were for KCC services (or those that we commission or partly fund)

At the same time, KCC contributes 50% of running costs of the Gateway each year, which is £162,600 in property costs alone. This amounts to an average cost to KCC of just under £56 per customer transaction in the Gateway. Whilst we would never have expected that the KCC services would account for 50% of the transactions, in the current economic climate we have a responsibility to test our service offer to ensure that we are effectively using the resources that we have available.

Between 21st September and 13th December 2015, a public consultation was held on the future location of these KCC services currently accessed in Maidstone Gateway.

- 3.4 The consultation focussed on identifying how customers and our partners would be impacted if KCC decided to relocate services from Maidstone Gateway in October 2016. The consultation proposed like for like service provision and a number of options were given as to the possible locations in Maidstone. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was carried out to assess the potential impact of the proposals on our customers with identified protected characteristics.
- 3.5 The consultation aimed to:
- Identify how stakeholders (including: all service users, potential service users and VCS partners) could be impacted if KCC decides to withdraw from the Gateway.
  - Present possible options for the re-provision of KCC services and those commissioned by us and welcome feedback on their suitability.

The responses to the consultation have been used to review and update the EqIA, which will be considered along with the consultation responses before any final decision is made.

3.6 Following discussion of the feedback received and recommendations from Members of the Policy and Resources Committee, a decision will be taken by the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services, Bryan Sweetland. If the decision is taken to withdraw, a delegated decision taken by a KCC officer is required on the enactment of the break clause to withdraw from the Gateway.

## **4. Background**

### **4.1 Current Service Provision**

KCC provides or commissions the following services from the Maidstone Gateway:

- 4.1.1 **Kent Supported Employment clinics - 2 days per week**  
Kent Supported Employment help people who face additional barriers to employment. This service uses the Gateway to hold pre-booked face-to-face clinics with customers. These take place in the Gateway every Wednesday and Friday.
- 4.1.2 **Kent Deaf Services - 1 day per month**  
Kent Deaf Services provides help, support and advice to deaf people aged over 18 whose first language is British Sign Language. Customers can visit the service's desk in Maidstone Gateway on the second Monday of each month from 9.30am - 1pm.
- 4.1.3 **Age UK -1 day per week**  
Age UK provides an information and advice service from a desk in Maidstone Gateway. Customers can also visit the Age UK desk to pick up an application form for the Disability Travel Voucher scheme. The Age UK helpdesk is open in the Gateway every Tuesday from 8.30am - 3.30pm.
- 4.1.4 **Health Trainer service - 2 days per week**  
A Health Trainer is in the Gateway every Monday from 09:30am – 2.30pm and all day every Wednesday for pre-arranged appointments. Health Trainers carry out health checks on patients who have been referred by their doctor.
- 4.1.5 **'Meet and Greet' General Enquiries - weekdays**  
People can also come into the Maidstone Gateway with a general service enquiry. For example this could be to find out how to apply for a bus pass or Blue Badge or to report a problem on Kent's roads. Gateway staff can help by signposting to the right team, or member of staff at KCC. In many cases, they will give customers the KCC website address or a telephone number to contact the team directly.
- 4.1.6 **The breakdown of KCC customer transactions within the Gateway is shown below:**

| Service (KCC or commissioned by KCC)  |  | Total transactions recorded (January – December 2014) |
|---|--|---|
| General Enquiry<br>Re-direction by reception staff to other buildings, staff phone numbers or website address or providing customers with application forms for services etc. | KCC General Enquiry (unspecified)                | 1,719   |
|   | Blue Badge Application forms enquiry/ collection | 191   |
|   | Kent Highways enquiry                            | 71  |
|   | Kent Support and Assistance enquiry              | 59  |
| Service specific helpdesk in Gateway, run by service representatives  | Age UK Helpdesk visit                            | 135   |
|   | Deaf Services Helpdesk visit                     | 20  |
| Pre-booked clinic and /or drop in sessions run by service representatives   | Kent Supported Employment                        | 589   |
|   | Health Trainer Service                           | 135   |

## 5. Consultation Process and Activities

### 5.1 Stakeholder groups

5.1.1. The proposals outlined in the consultation had the potential to affect a number of different stakeholders. It was therefore important to devise engagement mechanisms to provide the opportunity for participation across stakeholder groups, being mindful of communication preferences and accessibility of information.

5.1.2. The following stakeholder groups were identified and targeted as part of the consultation:

- Age UK service users
- Kent Deaf Services users
- Kent Supported Employment service users
- KCC Gateway meet and greet customers
- All Gateway customers
- KCC Maidstone Members
- Member for Commercial and Traded Services, KCC
- Voluntary Community Sector organisations in Maidstone Gateway
- KCC meet and greet staff
- Maidstone Borough Council front desk staff
- Gateway volunteers
- Potential future Gateway customers living in Maidstone area
- Maidstone residents
- All other KCC staff members and managers

## 5.2 Consultation and engagement activities

- 5.2.1 All voluntary sector partners in the Maidstone Gateway were invited to attend pre-consultation engagement sessions prior to the public consultation. These were jointly held by KCC and MBC officers with them aim of engaging partners and updating them of KCC's proposals. The sessions also explored how to maintain partnership working going forwards regardless of whether a decision is taken to relocate from Maidstone Gateway. These were attended by Hi Kent, Migrant Helpline and Citizens Advice Maidstone.
- 5.2.2 Consultation and engagement activities included the following:
- A consultation document setting out the proposals accompanied by a consultation questionnaire to capture feedback.
  - The questionnaire was available on our website and in hard copy.
  - Easy Read and Word versions of the consultation document and questionnaire were also produced and available online and in hard copy.
  - Six drop in sessions were held at the Gateway with staff from KCC's Property and Consultation teams available to answer questions.
  - Verbal feedback from service leads and customers during the consultation.
- 5.2.3 The consultation document was downloaded from the website 358 times (PDF version 277 times and Word version 81). The Easy Read consultation document was downloaded 69 times.

## 5.3 Promotional activities

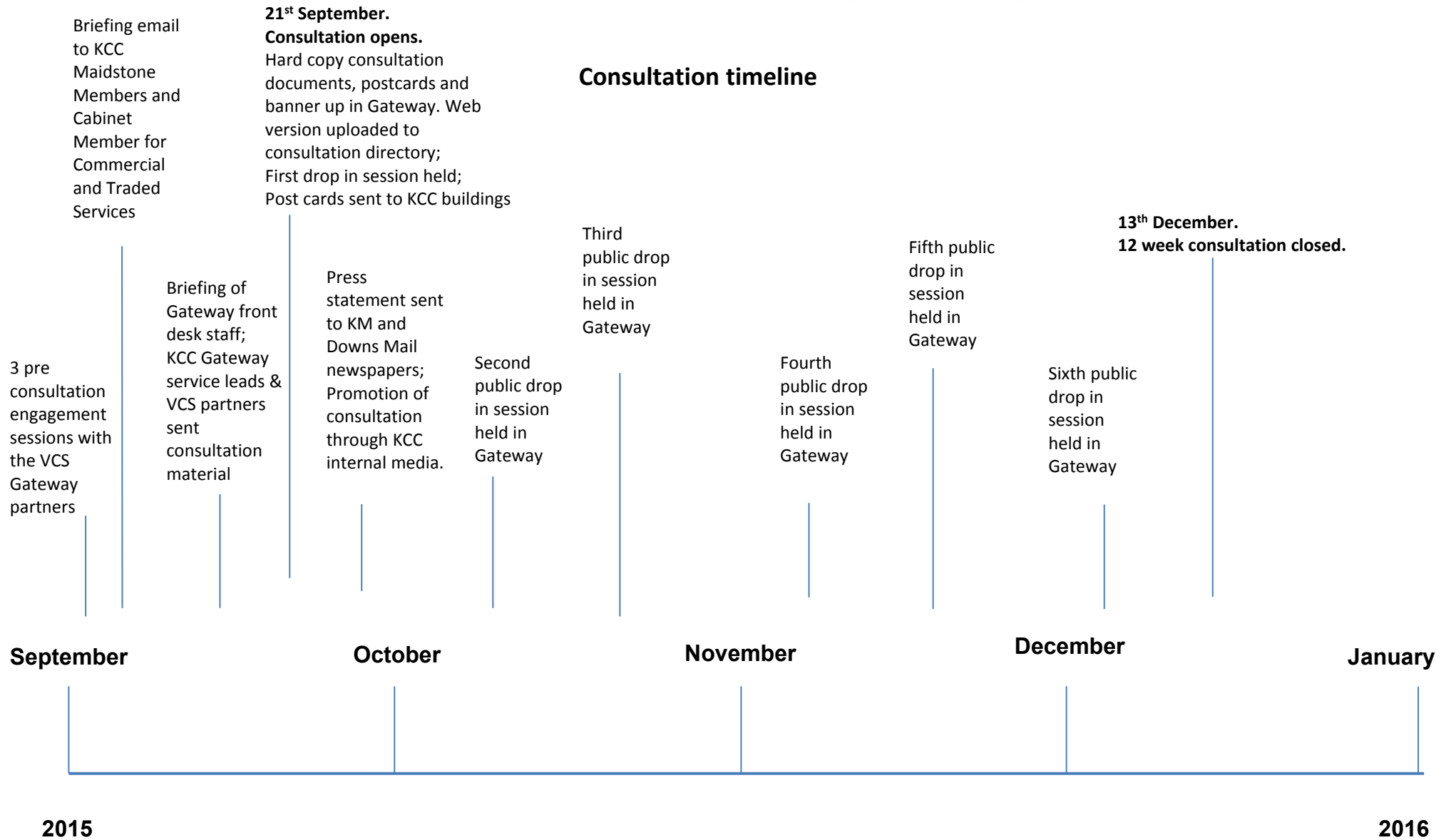
- 5.3.1 Promotional activity for this consultation was targeted at those who are potentially most impacted by the proposals, including KCC customers who access our services via Maidstone Gateway, Maidstone residents and VCS partners.
- 5.3.2 Promotional activities included the following:
- Hard copies of the consultation document, pull up banner and promotional postcards displayed in the Maidstone Gateway.
  - Hard copies of the consultation material displayed in Sessions House reception, the Kent Library and History Centre, the Maidstone Adult Education Centre and other Maidstone Libraries.
  - Entry on KCC's consultation directory ([www.kent.gov.uk/maidstonegateway](http://www.kent.gov.uk/maidstonegateway)) and a link from the Gateway service page on Kent.gov.uk
  - Consultation promotion uploaded to television screens in the Gateway.
  - Press statement sent to the local Maidstone newspapers (KM and Downs Mail)
  - Promotion of consultation to KCC staff through the intranet, email newsletters and building television screens.
  - Consultation material provided to KCC Members for promotion at local events.
  - KCC Community Liaison Officers and Community Wardens asked to promote the consultation to their Maidstone contacts and at local meetings they attend during the consultation.
  - All KCC's Gateway service leads were emailed the consultation document and asked to distribute them to their customers and staff.

- Email sent to all VCS services notifying them of the launch of the public consultation and inviting them to feedback
- Staff in the Gateway, including those on the front desk, volunteer service and CAB briefed and agreed to direct customers to the consultation material.
- Briefing email to KCC Maidstone Members and Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services.

5.3.3 A timeline of the consultation and engagement activities and the promotional activities is shown on the next page.



## Consultation timeline



**December 2015**

## **6. Equality and accessibility considerations**

Equality and accessibility considerations relating to the consultation process were as follows:

### **6.1 Produced Easy Read versions of consultation document**

- In addition to standard versions of the consultation document, Easy Read versions were produced. Maidstone Gateway volunteers used the Easy Read version when discussing the consultation with customers over the course of the 12 weeks. KCC Gateway service leads were given copies of the Easy Read version of the consultation document, in addition to the standard format document. Age UK requested an additional 200 copies of the Easy Read consultation document. This considerably increased the awareness of the consultation among customers who may have had difficulty in understanding the standard format consultation document.

### **6.2 Provided Microsoft Word versions of consultation material to ensure that documentation is accessible to consultees using audio transcription software.**

### **6.3 Uploaded consultation document onto kent.gov website, in addition to displaying hard copies in Gateway**

- Both the Easy Read version of the consultation document and the standard format were made available online and in hard copy versions to improve accessibility of the consultation.

### **6.4 Alternative formats and languages could be requested**

- In the consultation document it was stated that alternative formats could be requested through either an email or telephone number.

### **6.5 Holding face to face engagement sessions**

- The consultation process also included six drop in sessions where KCC representatives would be present in the Gateway to answer any questions customers have. The aim of these sessions were to improve accessibility for people to participate in the consultation, raise concerns or ask questions during the consultation process in a face to face environment.

### **6.6 Capture of protected characteristics**

- As part of the consultation process the questionnaire included KCC's standard 'About You' questions to collect information to identify issues raised by customers who have recognised protected characteristics and ensure any additional equalities issues raised could be taken into consideration.

**Updated 04/02/2016**

**KCC/EqIA2015/September**

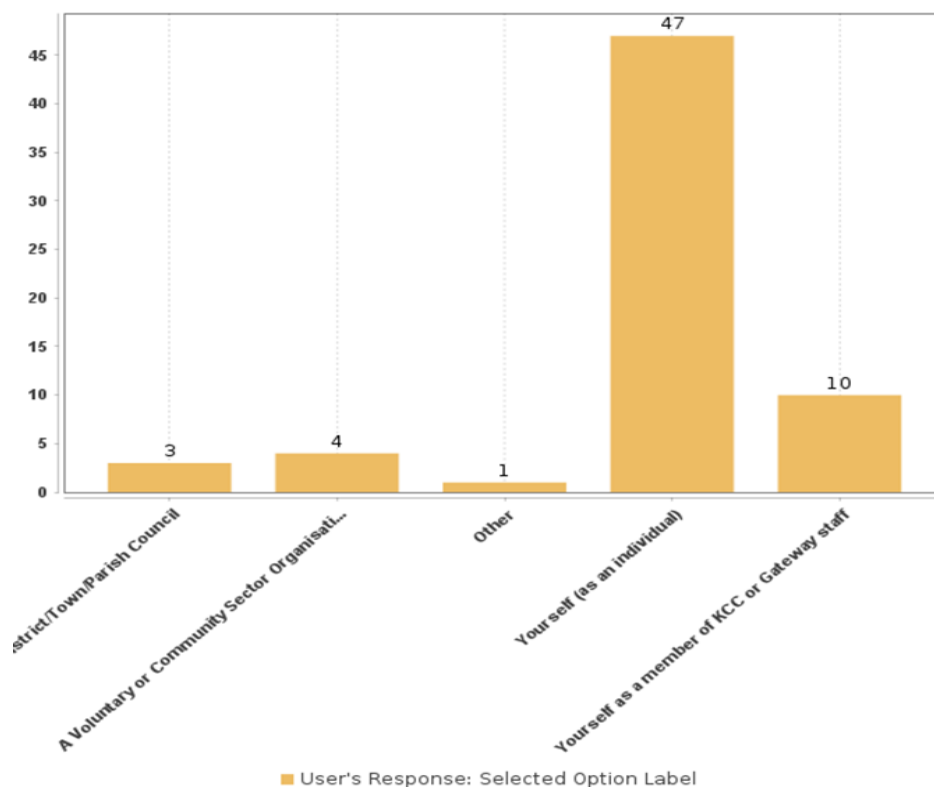
## 7. Consultation responses

7.1 A total of 66 consultation responses were received to the consultation, consisting of 18 hard copy responses and 48 online responses.

7.2 Question one of the consultation questionnaire asked whether respondents were giving feedback on behalf of themselves or another as a representative from another organisation; such as a District Council, Voluntary Sector Organisation or Business. A graph setting out the breakdown of responses is shown below. The largest respondent group were completing the questionnaire on behalf of themselves.

Questionnaire: Maidstone Gateway Consultation Questionnaire

Question: Are you completing this questionnaire on behalf of:



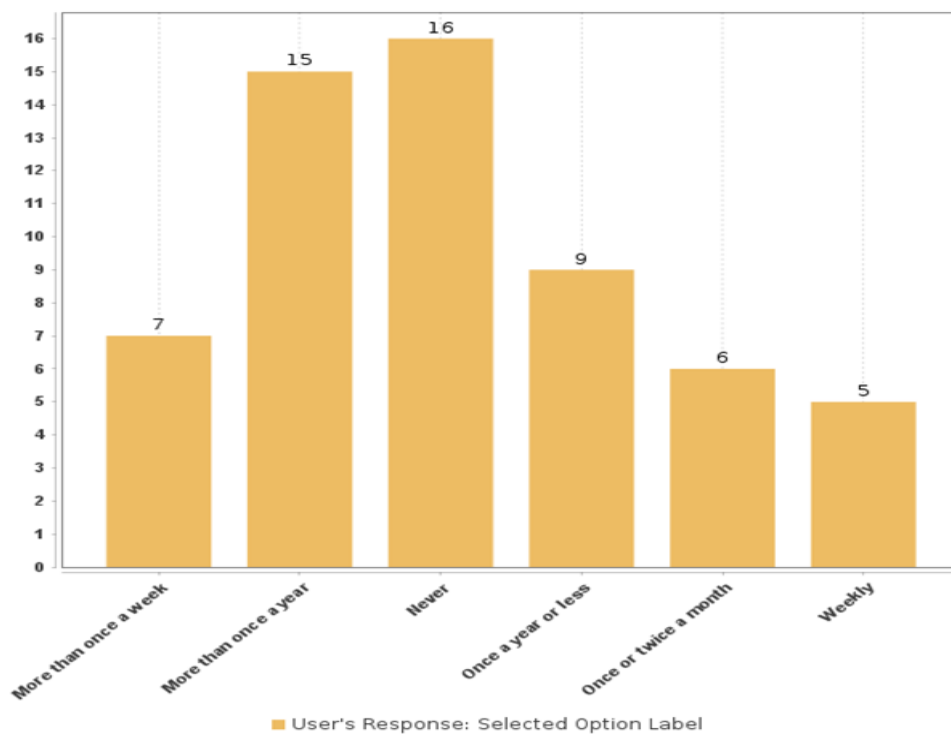
7.3 Question two of the consultation questionnaire asked respondents for their postcode. 45 responses to this question were received, 29 of which indicated that the respondent live in Maidstone. Other respondents were from other locations in Kent, including Medway and Dover. 21 people did not respond to this question.

## December 2015

7.4 Question three of the consultation questionnaire asked 'How often do you visit the Maidstone Gateway?' A graph showing the breakdown of responses is shown on the next page. If each of the respondents shown in the table is multiplied by their reported frequency of visiting the Gateway, this equates to approximately 1,144 visits in a year (equivalent to just under 40% of all KCC visits recorded in 2014.) The largest respondent group on Q3 uses the Gateway 'Never.' Some of the respondents who indicated that they had never visited the Gateway were KCC staff or businesses, whilst others were individuals not from the Maidstone area.

### Questionnaire: Maidstone Gateway Consultation Questionnaire

#### Question: How often do you visit Maidstone Gateway?

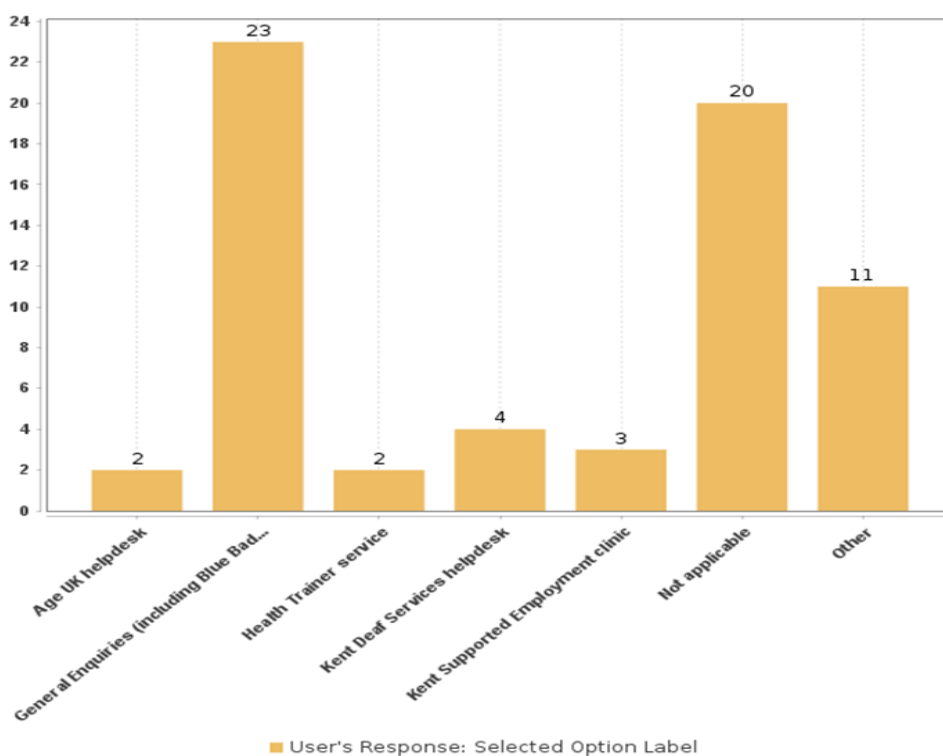


## December 2015

Question four of the consultation questionnaire asked 'Do you visit Maidstone Gateway for any KCC services, or those services partially or fully funded by KCC?' A graph showing the breakdown of responses is shown below. In line with the data on KCC service users, the largest group of respondents to question four reported that they visit the Maidstone Gateway for 'General enquiries about KCC services'. 'Other' responses often included services not delivered by KCC such as council tax payments, and bus timetables.

### Questionnaire: Maidstone Gateway Consultation Questionnaire

#### Question: Do you visit Maidstone Gateway for any Kent County Council...



## December 2015

7.5 Question five of the consultation questionnaire stated that the consultation document provides details of the possible options for accessing KCC services in future, and asked the question 'Do you have any comments on these proposals?' A number of detailed responses to this question were received. Some respondents raised a number of issues in their comments. These have been split and put under the relevant themes, which means that there are more comments counted than respondents to the questionnaire. These responses have been analysed and grouped into the themes shown below:

Table 1: Themes of responses to open consultation questions, ranked by frequency

| Theme of comments  | Number of online comments | Number of paper comments | Most popular comments ranked |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Location feedback  | 13                        | 3                        | 1 <sup>st</sup>              |
| Economic sense of using other KCC buildings                          | 9                         | 1                        | 2 <sup>nd</sup>              |
| Benefits of one stop shop/ colocation of services                    | 6                         | 1                        | 3 <sup>rd</sup> =            |
| Getting value for money from KCC Gateway investment                  | 6                         | 1                        | 3 <sup>rd</sup> =            |
| Service specific responses   | 5                         | 1                        | 4 <sup>th</sup> =            |
| Lack of knowledge about current Gateway set up / services in Gateway | 5                         | 1                        | 4 <sup>th</sup> =            |
| Parking concerns of new locations                                    | 5                         | 0                        | 5 <sup>th</sup> =            |
| Value of having face to face services                                | 4                         | 0                        | 6 <sup>th</sup>              |
| No response  | 12                        | 3                        | n/a                          |

## 8. Main consultation response themes

### 8.1 Theme 1 – Location feedback

| <u>Example Comments</u>   |
|---|
| <p><i>Positive:</i></p> <p>“I particularly like the option of utilising Allington library to provide at least some of the facilities - as a local resident to Allington the more use made of the library that supports it's continued opening the better.”</p> <p>“The Kent History &amp; Library Centre is in a more convenient location and is more naturally associated with KCC services.”</p> <p>“Some of the proposed locations are located near the town which are ideal.”</p> <p><i>Negative:</i></p> <p>“[The Gateway] is currently in a very convenient location in the town centre.”</p> <p>“Customers will have difficulty in accessing the proposed sites...try getting to the KHLC if you are old or disabled”</p> <p>“My husband couldn't possibly walk the 15 minutes to these places and he doesn't count as disabled”</p> <p>“I believe the alternative sites are not readily accessible for any persons who rely on public transport or have difficulty walking.”</p> <p><i>Neutral:</i></p> <p>“Needs to be within walking distance of the Town Centre.”</p> <p>“Buildings need to be close to the centre of town or on bus routes”</p> |

A key trend from the responses received was the accessibility of the proposed alternative locations. These responses were mainly submitted by individuals (13 comments), with one comment a member of Gateway staff and one comment from a District or Borough Council staff member. The accessibility issues for each location are considered below:

#### 8.1.1 Kent History and Library Centre, Maidstone

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There is a bus stop for routes 101, 150 and 155 situated just beyond the right-hand side of the library building and on the opposite side of the dual-carriage way. The 101 bus goes directly from the Maidstone Gateway to the library. The library is a 0.2mile walk from Maidstone East Railway Station.

### 8.1.2 Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone (general enquiries only)

There is a bus stop for routes 79, 88, 101, 130, 150 and 155 outside Sessions House. On the opposite site of the road there is a stop for routes 101, 135, 150, 155 and 508. The 101 bus goes directly from the Maidstone Gateway to Sessions House, County Hall. Sessions House, County Hall is 160 yards from Maidstone East Railway Station.

### 8.1.3 Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone

There is a bus stop for routes 79, 88, 101, 130, 150 and 155 right outside Invicta House. On the opposite site of the road there is a stop for routes 101, 135, 150, 155 and 508. The 101 bus goes directly from the Maidstone Gateway to Invicta House, County Hall. Invicta House, County Hall is 160 yards from Maidstone East Railway Station.

### 8.1.4 Maidstone Adult Education Centre

The 506 bus goes directly from King Street to Brenchley Gardens. The Brenchley Gardens bus stop is 200ft from the Maidstone Adult Education Centre.

### 8.1.5 Allington Library

The nearest bus stop to the Allington Library is on 0.2 miles away on Allington Way. The 60 bus goes directly from The Mall bus stop to Allington Way.

### 8.1.6 Coxheath Library

The nearest bus stop to the Coxheath Library is on 0.1 miles away on Pembroke Road. The 89 bus goes directly from The Mall bus stop to Pembroke Way.

8.1.7 It is useful to also note that for customers who wish to enquire about KCC services, face to face is not the only way of doing this. Customers can telephone the main KCC helpline contact number or visit the KCC website address [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk). In fact, just over 75% of those who responded to the consultation did so online. However, we recognise that some respondents may be responding on behalf of others.

## 8.2 Theme 2 – Economic sense of using other KCC buildings

### Example Comments

#### *Positive*

“Withdrawing from the Gateway facility seems like a no brainer - the cost [sic] to KCC of it's contribution to the Gateway far outweigh the benefits”

“It is too sparsely used to justify a KCC presence so in this time of austerity this is a good area



to make savings with minimal impact on customers.”

“Cost effectiveness of using KCC buildings”

“Good idea to move these”

“It make economic sense to use current KCC buildings”

“The low usage of Maidstone Gateway indicates that it is not good value for money.

“Increase in privacy and money saved in times of austerity can only be seen as positive”

“It makes sense to relocate the KCC services to the Kent History Centre or another library in the area”

“We need to be saving money so should be prepared to consider all options”

- 8.2.1 The above consultation feedback notes the value for money associated with Kent County Council relocating KCC services from Maidstone Gateway to other KCC buildings in Maidstone.
- 8.2.2 This feedback was received mainly by individuals (6 comments), with feedback two comments submitted by support workers and two comments from members of Gateway staff.
- 8.2.3 This feedback supports KCC’s commitment to continually reviewing our services to ensure we deliver value for money to our customers. This includes looking at how and where our services should be provided from.

### 8.3 Theme 3 – Benefits of one stop shop / colocation of services

#### Example Comments

*Negative:*

“Beneficial to the community to have one location for them to visit.”

“Moving services will fragment a joined up service for the residents.”

“Physical access to co-located MBC and KCC services is more efficient for the public.”

“Would prefer them all together to prevent confusion.”

“I feel that the services offered are better located in a single facility.”

“We don’t care who provides the service – we just want to be able to access it and it continues to make sense that these are provided in the same place.”

8.3.1 The third most frequent response theme discussed focussed on the benefits of having a number of KCC, MBC and voluntary sector services collocating in the same physical building.

8.3.2 These comments were mostly submitted by individuals (5 comments), with 2 comments received from District of Parish Council staff members.

8.3.3 We recognise that links between the KCC services and other partners services in the Gateway exist and are valued. Below are some examples:

- Age UK link with MBC functions such as assisting customers with Council Tax payments
- Deaf Services link with MBC functions such as assisting customers with Council Tax payments
- Kent Supported Employment work with Involve Gateway volunteers

8.3.4 In order fully to address the consultation feedback on cross-referrals and the benefits of colocation of KCC services with MBC and partner services, it is useful to reiterate how the current KCC services operate within the Gateway.

8.3.5 Each of the identified KCC service helpdesks or clinics which are in the scope of this consultation are only in the Gateway on a part time basis. The Health Trainer service

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and Kent Supported Employment operate on a pre-booked appointment basis, with customers usually referred through the KCC Contact Point or from a GP respectively. This means it is less likely that customers who visit the Gateway for other services (for example housing or council tax payments) would be offered same day cross-referrals to the Health Trainer or Kent Supported Employment (KSE) service.

- 8.3.6 However, customers who do visit the Gateway for pre-booked visits with KSE or the Health Trainer service may be referred from these advisors to other partner services, such as Citizens Advice Maidstone or housing. If KCC decides to relocate its services from the Gateway, it will be important to look at how to maintain these service links going forward and ensure customer journeys do not get fragmented.
- 8.3.7 The other two KCC services in the Maidstone Gateway, Deaf Services and Age UK, operate on a drop-in basis and are in the Gateway half day per month and a half day per week respectively. If customers do come to the Gateway at other times and request these services face to face, they would be advised to return during the times of the above drop in sessions.
- 8.3.8 As noted above, customers who visit the Gateway for the Age UK helpdesk or Deaf Services clinic, may benefit from being cross-referred to the MBC or partner services which are present or being assisted with carrying out these transactions.
- 8.3.9 KCC service provision in Maidstone Gateway is low and, as a result, opportunities for customers to engage directly with KCC staff at the time of their visit is limited. However, those who visit the Maidstone Gateway for KCC services do benefit from having other partner services located in the same building.

### 8.4 Theme 4 – Getting value for money from KCC Gateway investment

#### Example Comments

##### *Neutral/ Suggestions:*

“Why not expand the KCC service offer in the Gateway?”

“Can I suggest that you move the majority of your drop-in-type services to Maidstone Gateway (which is a most accessible, friendly place) and get up to 50% usage that way?”

“There are many services which KCC offer which could be accessed from the gateway but are scattered around Maidstone.”

##### *Negative:*

“Much money was spent on opening the Gateway network - it seems such a waste to actually start to close these.”

“A lot of money was spent on setting up the Gateways, and to pull out of it would be a retrograde

step on behalf of KCC, I think.”

- 8.4.1 The fourth theme discussed the initial investment made by KCC into the Maidstone Gateway and the feasibility of delivering a greater number of KCC services from this building to achieve value for money.
- 8.4.2 These comments were all submitted by individuals, except for one comment which came from a member of KCC or Gateway staff.
- 8.4.3 Prior to these proposals being developed a detailed scheme of work looked at the scope to expand the KCC service offer from Maidstone Gateway. The findings perceived there to be limited opportunity across KCC to increase service provision in the Gateway going forward. Representatives from Education services could see little scope to use the Gateway as their customers usually transact via their local school or directly with the small central KCC team. Specialist Children’s Services also saw little scope to use the Gateway other than signposting to Children’s Centres. Introducing Social Care assessments into the Gateway was deemed as unsuitable due to its open plan layout. Another KCC service, the community wardens, found that time was better spent working directly in the community. Whilst Gateway staff can advise customers on how to report a Highways Enquiry, the KCC Highways representative found limited use for Gateway interaction, other than to notify customers if any major road schemes were forthcoming.

#### **8.5 Theme 4 – Service specific responses**

##### Example Comments

*Positive:*

“Any locations for Age UK would be ok as long as they are in Maidstone.”

“I think it is a great idea for Deaf Services to move to Hi Kent as this will develop and maintain good positive links to get a better service.”

“I think Deaf Services would be better at Hi-Kent as people will be able to communicate with them, and as its small - its more accessible”

“Invicta House for Kent Supported Employment seems the best option. The reception service is very good and any new venue should meet this high level of standard.”

- 8.5.1 There have been a small number of service specific responses to the consultation, with positive feedback encouraging a relocation of the Deaf Services Maidstone

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Gateway helpdesk to the Hi Kent Head Office in Brewer Street. Another response suggested that a relocation option for Age UK would need to be near to the Maidstone town centre.

8.5.2 Further feedback suggested that Invicta House would be the best option for relocating Kent Supported Employment.

8.5.3 Other than one response which was submitted by a VCS organisation, these responses were all submitted by individuals.

### 8.6 Theme 5 – Lack of knowledge about current Gateway services

#### Example Comments

##### *Neutral/ Observations:*

“If you ask the general public if they know that some KCC services are available in Maidstone Gateway, I bet that no more than 1 in 100 will know you are there.”

“You cannot complain if you do not get enough callers at the Gateway if you do not advertise it well!!”

“Services aren't advertised - especially for the elderly. They come in to pay council tax and might not know what else is available. Even CAB is not used/ people don't know what it is for.”

“I don't think many people know KCC is in that building.”

“KCC services do not particularly advertise that residents can access KCC services from Gateways and this is why their footfall seems so low everywhere”

8.6.1 Consultation feedback has raised the issue of the lack of public awareness regarding KCC's services and involvement in the Maidstone Gateway.

8.6.2 Three of these comments were received from individuals, whilst the remaining two came from Gateway staff members or volunteers.

8.6.3 It is possible that this is a contributing factor towards KCC's low customer throughput in the Gateway, although this may also be due to the fact that there are only a small number of KCC services who operate from the Gateway. The Gateway operating agreement stipulates that advertising of the Gateway services will be primarily through word of mouth and from visibility to passing foot traffic.

8.6.4 It will be necessary to notify customers if any changes are made, to ensure they are aware of the new location of KCC services. It is important to consider using a number of modes of communication.

### 8.7 Theme 6 – Parking concerns of new locations

Updated 04/02/2016

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Example Comments

*Negative:*

“Parking may be an issue”

“An aging population a lot of people struggle to use the internet and get around.”

“Very little parking and being away from the centre of town KHLC would not be reasonably accessible.”

“There is no car park NEAR the new library or County Hall.”

8.7.1 We recognise that the Maidstone Gateway benefits from having a car park behind it and take on board the feedback about this. All of this feedback was submitted by individuals. There is parking at each of the suggested locations, which is set about below:

8.7.2 Kent History and Library Centre, Maidstone

There are 27 Pay and Display parking spaces by the riverside near the library on James Whatman Way and three free designated parking spaces for Blue Badge holders at the front of the building. Further short term Pay & Display spaces are across the road in the White Rabbit car park, or the nearest long term car park is Fremlin’s Walk.

8.7.3 Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone (general enquiries only)

There are a number of meter parking spaces on County Road to the right of the County Hall offices, including three designated parking spaces for Blue Badge holders. The Maidstone East Station Car Park is located opposite Sessions House and offers long term parking. This Car Park does get busy. There are also a number of car parks in the town centre including Fremlin’s Walk.

8.7.4 Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone

As with Sessions House, there are a number of meter parking spaces on County Road to the right of the County Hall offices, including three designated parking spaces for Blue Badge holders. The Maidstone East Station Car Park is located opposite Invicta House and offers long term parking. There are also a number of car parks in the town centre including Fremlin’s Walk.

8.7.5 Maidstone Adult Education Centre

The Fremlin Walk multi-storey car park is located near to the Maidstone Adult Education Centre. There is no designated disabled parking at St Faiths Street, but the Adult Education Centre can arrange a drop off for customers.

8.7.6 Allington Library

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There are a number of free parking spaces within the site boundary. Currently none of these spaces meet the necessary specifications of disabled parking spaces.

### 8.7.7 Coxheath Library

There are a number of free parking spaces within the site boundary. Currently none of these spaces meet the necessary specifications of disabled parking spaces.

## 8.8 Theme 7 – Value of maintaining face to face services

### Example Comments

*Neutral:*

“My parents are 78 and 80 and do not know how to use the internet.”

“I feel it is important to maintain access to KCC services face to face in Maidstone due to the size of the population and the high percentage of elderly people who live there”

“not phone or website suits everyone.”

“[Face to face service provision] is important for people who are unable to communicate with Local Govern meant [Sic] in any other ways”

8.8.1 These comments were all submitted by individuals. This consultation is not about changing or discontinuing the face to face services we provide from the Gateway – we understand these are important services to many people.

8.8.2 Whilst a number of other KCC services are accessed in alternative ways, such as through the telephone or internet, we recognise that the KCC services currently in the Maidstone Gateway are delivered face to face because this is most appropriate for their customers.

8.8.3 Whether the Key Decision is taken to keep these KCC services in the Maidstone Gateway or move these other locations in Maidstone in the future, following this consultation, customers will still be able to access these services face to face.

## 9. Equality Impact Assessment Summary

9.1 Table 4 of the full EqIA (Appendix B) shows a summary of the consultation responses according to the protected characteristics. This takes into account both feedback from the questionnaire “About You” closed questions, and any additional equalities feedback received in the open questions and is shown below.

| Details of Individuals Responding | Consultation response and potential impact  |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Age</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 25 % of respondents who completed this question indicated their age was 65 and over (13 people).</li> <li>- Older people may be more reliant on face to face service provision and less able to use the internet</li> <li>- Older people may be disadvantaged services are relocated to buildings which are not on bus routes or near to the town centre</li> <li>- Older people may be disadvantaged from having to make more than one trip to access council services if KCC services relocate from the Gateway</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Disability</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 28 % of respondents who completed this question said they had a disability (15 people). Of the respondents who said they had a disability 36% (5 people) had a physical disability, 36% had a sensory impairment, whilst the remainder had another type of disability.</li> <li>- Wheelchair users may be disadvantaged if proposed locations are not fully accessible</li> <li>- As there is a hearing loop in the Gateway, it will be beneficial if alternative locations could be hearing loop equipped to promote inclusiveness to deaf people.</li> <li>- Disabled people may be disadvantaged if there are insufficient numbers of disabled parking bays near to proposed locations</li> </ul> |
| <b>Pregnancy/ Maternity</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- N/A</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Race</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 84% of respondents (42 people) classified themselves as White English, 4% classified themselves as White (Other), 4% were Chinese. The remainder identified with other ethnic groups.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Gender</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 53 responses were received to this question. Of those 49% were male, 47% female and 4% preferred not to say.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Gender Identity</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- N/A</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Religion</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 46 % of respondents who completed this question indicated that they were religious (25 people). Of the respondents who said they belonged to a religion or belief, 83% were Christians, 8% were Buddhists and 8% were Jewish; the remaining 2% identified</li> </ul>   |



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|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
|                           | with other religions.   |
| <b>Sexual Orientation</b> | - 53 responses were received to this question. Of those, 83% (45 people) described themselves as Heterosexual/ Straight, 6 % preferred not to say, 2% identified as gay men and 2% identified as another sexual orientation not listed. |
| <b>Carers</b>             | - N/A   |

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9.2 There was also an open question inviting customers to add comments to the Equality Impact Assessment. The consultation responses have reiterated the importance of considering centrally located future service locations, so that customers who are less able to walk long distances are still able to access KCC services. As one respondent noted “buildings need to be close to the town centre or on bus routes.” All the suggested locations are either near to the town centre or are located on bus routes, however it will may be helpful to raise awareness of the public transport routes to these locations.

9.3 The second equality implication which has been noted from the consultation responses is that future locations should have disabled access for wheelchair users. The consultation document outlined the accessibility of proposed locations. If a decision is made to relocate KCC services to other buildings in Maidstone, any location used will need to be accessible to wheelchair users, as noted in the EqIA.

9.4 Table 5 of the EqIA sets out an action plan relating to the identified issues. The key actions are as follows:

- Ensure locations are accessible
- Look at feasibility of introducing hearing loop
- Look at feasibility of introducing baby changing facilities to alternative site
- Raise awareness of bus and transport routes to alternative locations
- Consideration of additional disabled parking
- Consideration of reducing crossing hazards at KHLC
- Consideration of commissioning another provider to deliver KCC general enquiries from Gateway

## **10. Next Steps**

10.1. The consultation report and full EqIA will be used to inform the decision on whether to relocate KCC services from Maidstone Gateway. A decision will be made following recommendations made at Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee and information will be made available online and in the Gateway.

10.2. If KCC decides to relocate the KCC services in the Gateway, any changes will be in place from October 2016.

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## Appendix B - Equality Impact Assessment

Directorate: KCC Infrastructure, KCC Customer Relationship

### Name of policy, procedure, project or service

Implementation of Gateway service review outcomes (for Maidstone Gateway)

### What is being assessed?

Re-locating the KCC services from Maidstone Gateway

### Responsible Owner/ Senior Officer

Rebecca Spore

### Date of Initial Screening

April 2015

### Date of Full EqIA :

December 2015

| Version | Author                   | Date       | Comment  |
|---------|--------------------------|------------|--|
| 0.1     | Catherine Murphy         | 06.04.2015 | Initial draft  |
| 0.3     | Catherine Murphy         | 21.04.2015 | Updated draft including initial feedback from Pascale Blackburn-Clarke |
| 0.3     | Pascale Blackburn-Clarke | 28.04.2015 | Updated draft with additional comments.                                |
| 0.4     | Catherine Murphy         | 18.08.2015 | Updated following service re-location options being understood         |
| 0.5     | Clive Lever              | 19.08.15   | E&D team comments added  |
| 0.6     | Catherine Murphy         | 09.09.15   | Amends following E&D team comments                                     |
| 0.7     | Akua Agyepong            | 11.09.15   | Review following CM amends, plus additional comments                   |
| 0.8     | Catherine Murphy         | 11.09.15   | Amends following AA review   |
| 0.9     | Anne Wynde               | 18.09.15   | Minor comments/ final amends before consultation                       |
| 0.10    | Catherine Murphy         | 18.09.15   | Update following AW comments   |
| 0.11    | Catherine Murphy         | 18.09.15   | Consultation stage sign off from Donald Farquharson and Rebecca Spore  |
| 0.12    | Catherine Murphy/        | 14.12.15   | Final EqIA following consultation feedback                             |
| 0.13    | Clive Lever              | 16.12.15   | E&D team comments  |

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Action plan – pre consultation

Table 1

| Protected Characteristic | Issues identified  | Action to be taken   | Expected outcomes  | Owner                  | Timescale              | Cost implications   |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|------------------------|------------------------|---|
| <b>Age</b>               | <p>1) No Gateway data available on the number of customers accessing services with protected characteristic</p> <p>2) A number of services in the Gateway are directly applicable to older or younger users. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Age UK</li> <li>- Health Trainer Service</li> </ul> | <p>1) Consultation questionnaire used to capture number of customers accessing services with protected characteristics</p> <p>2) Worked with service leads to understand re-location requirements of service users completed. Work with property colleagues identified re-location options to meet specified requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Held public consultation with proposals for options for future service re-location</li> <li>- KCC staff to hold drop in sessions in Gateway to answer any questions and note any concerns.</li> <li>- Engaged with non-KCC partner organisations in Gateway to identify any potential issues on their service users within the Age characteristic.</li> </ul> <p>3) Confirmed that staff in another location can assist service users in completing Blue Badge Application forms if needed.</p> | <p>1) Statistical data ascertained volume of customers that are accessing services with protected characteristics</p> <p>2) Property re-location options proposed which meet identified needs of service users as advised by service leads. Consultation feedback on property options and engagement with non-KCC partner organisations in Gateway captured any unidentified issues.</p> <p>3) Confirmed that reception staff in Sessions House can and do assist customers to complete Blue Badge Applications forms (in addition to assisting with general enquiries / signposting).</p> | Catherine Murphy       | July 2015 – April 2016 | <p>1) Included in consultation costs circa. £2,000</p> <p>2) Staff time in identifying property options. Possible cost of necessary adaptations if identified as part of consultation (currently unknown)</p> <p>3) Possible cost to KCC Reception Staff Time in assisting with completing Blue Badge Applications if needed, however only 191 enquiries in 2014. Likely that this will be absorbed by normal capacity.</p> |
| <b>Disability</b>        | <p>1) No Gateway data available on the number of customers</p>   | <p>1) Used consultation questionnaire to capture number of customers accessing services with protected</p>   | <p>1) Statistical data ascertained the volume of customers that are</p>  | Catherine Murphy (TBC) | July 2015 – April 2016 | <p>1) Included in consultation costs</p>  |

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|  |   |   |   |  |   |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
|  | <p>accessing services with protected characteristics</p> <p>2) A number of services in the Gateway are directly applicable to users with disability characteristic. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kent Support Employment</li> <li>- Deaf Services</li> </ul> <p>3) Requirement of property re-location options being accessible (maintaining face to face services)</p> <p>4) Users with disability characteristic may be more likely to need or ask for help in completing Blue Badge application forms.</p> <p>5) Service users with disabled characteristic may face barriers in completing usual consultation documentation.</p> | <p>characteristics</p> <p>2) Worked with service leads to understand re-location requirements of service users. Worked with property colleagues to identify re-location options to meet specified requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Held public consultation with proposals for options for future service re-location</li> <li>- KCC staff held drop in sessions in Gateway to answer any questions and note any concerns.</li> <li>- Engaged with non-KCC partner organisations in Gateway to identify any potential issues on their service users within the disabled characteristic.</li> </ul> <p>3) KCC confirmed accessibility of potential future service locations prior to beginning public consultation (including hearing loops etc.)</p> <p>4).Produced easy read version of consultation document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Provided contact address and phone number for alternative formats of consultation material</li> <li>-Briefed Gateways staff (KCC and MBC) in advance of consultation to</li> </ul> | <p>accessing services with protected characteristics</p> <p>2) Property re-location options proposed which meet identified needs of service users as advised by service leads. Consultation feedback on property options to capture any unidentified issues.</p> <p>3) Accessible buildings proposed in service re-location options as part of consultation.</p> <p>4) Reduced barriers to participating in consultation.</p> |  | <p>circa. £2,000</p> <p>2) Staff time in identifying property options.</p> <p>3) Possible cost of necessary adaptations if identified as part of consultation (currently unknown)</p> <p>4) Possible cost to KCC Reception Staff Time in assisting with completing Blue Badge Applications if needed, however only 191 enquiries in 2014. Likely that this will be absorbed by normal capacity.</p> |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|

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|                              |  |  |   |                  |                        |   |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|------------------|------------------------|---|
|                              |  | provide support in completing consultation material  |   |                  |                        |   |
| <b>Pregnancy / Maternity</b> | - No Gateway data available on the number of customers accessing services with protected characteristics   | 1) Held public consultation to capture any unidentified issues on pregnancy/ maternity characteristic<br>- Engaged with non-KCC partner organisations in Gateway to identify any potential issues on their service users within the pregnancy/ maternity characteristic.   | 1) Consultation feedback on property options and engagement with non-KCC partner organisations in Gateway aimed to capture any unidentified issues.   | Catherine Murphy | July 2015 – April 2016 | 1) Included in consultation costs circa. £2,000<br><br>2) Included in consultation costs circa. £2,000  |
| <b>Race</b>                  | 1) No Gateway data available on the number of customers accessing services with protected characteristics<br><br>2) Service users with race characteristic may face barriers in completing usual consultation documentation. | 1) Used consultation questionnaire to capture number of customers accessing services with protected characteristics<br><br>2) Provided contact address and phone number for alternative formats of consultation material<br><br>3) Held public consultation to capture any unidentified issues on the race characteristic<br>- Engaged with non-KCC partner organisations in Gateway to identify any potential issues on their service users within the race characteristic. | 1) Statistical data aimed to ascertain the volume of customers that are accessing services with protected characteristics<br><br>2) Reduced barriers to participating in consultation.<br><br>3) Consultation feedback on property options and engagement with non-KCC partner organisations in Gateway to capture any unidentified issues. | Catherine Murphy | July 2015 – April 2016 | 1) Included in consultation costs circa. £2,000<br><br>2) Currently unknown – dependent on demand.<br><br>3) Included in consultation costs circa. £2,000 |
| <b>Gender</b>                | - No Gateway data available on the number of customers accessing services with protected   | 1) Held public consultation to capture any unidentified issues on the gender characteristic<br>- Engaged with non-KCC partner organisations in Gateway to identify   | 1) Consultation feedback on property options and engagement with non-KCC partner organisations in Gateway sought to capture   | Catherine Murphy | July 2015 – April 2016 | 1) Included in consultation costs circa. £2,000<br><br>2) Included in   |

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|                           |  |   |   |                  |                        |  |
|---------------------------|--|---|---|------------------|------------------------|--|
|                           | characteristics  | any potential issues on their service users within gender characteristic.   | any unidentified issues.  |                  |                        | consultation costs circa. £2,000   |
| <b>Gender Identity</b>    | - No Gateway data available on the number of customers accessing services with protected characteristics | 1) Held public consultation to capture any unidentified issues on the gender identity characteristic<br>- Engaged with non-KCC partner organisations in Gateway to identify any potential issues on their service users within gender identity characteristic.  | 1) Consultation feedback on property options and engagement with non-KCC partner organisations in Gateway sought to capture any unidentified issues.  | Catherine Murphy | July 2015 – April 2016 | 3) Included in consultation costs circa. £2,000<br><br>4) Included in consultation costs circa. £2,000 |
| <b>Religion</b>           | - No Gateway data available on the number of customers accessing services with protected characteristics | 1) Used consultation questionnaire to capture number of customers accessing services with protected characteristics<br><br>2) Held public consultation to capture any unidentified issues on the religion characteristic<br>- Engaged with non-KCC partner organisations in Gateway to identify any potential issues on their service users within the religion characteristic. | 1) Statistical data sought to ascertain the volume of customers that are accessing services with protected characteristics<br><br>2) Consultation feedback on property options and engagement with non-KCC partner organisations in Gateway aimed to capture any unidentified issues. | Catherine Murphy | July 2015 – April 2016 | 1) Included in consultation costs circa. £2,000<br><br>2) Included in consultation costs circa. £2,000 |
| <b>Sexual Orientation</b> | - No Gateway data available on the number of customers accessing services with protected characteristics | 1) Used consultation questionnaire to capture number of customers accessing services with protected characteristics<br><br>2) Held public consultation to capture any unidentified issues on the sexual orientation characteristic<br>- Engaged with non-KCC partner  | 1) Statistical data aimed to ascertain the volume of customers that are accessing services with protected characteristics<br><br>2) Consultation feedback on property options and engagement with non-KCC   | Catherine Murphy | July 2015 – April 2016 | 1) Included in consultation costs circa. £2,000<br><br>2) Included in consultation costs circa. £2,000 |

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|               |  |  |  |                  |                        |  |
|---------------|--|--|--|------------------|------------------------|--|
|               |  | organisations in Gateway to identify any potential issues on their service users within the sexual orientation characteristic.   | partner organisations in Gateway aimed to capture any unidentified issues.   |                  |                        |  |
| <b>Carers</b> | - No Gateway data available on the number of customers accessing services with protected characteristics | 1) Held public consultation to capture any unidentified issues on the carers characteristic<br>- Engaged with non-KCC partner organisations in Gateway to identify any potential issues on their service users within the carers characteristic. | 1) Consultation feedback on property options and engagement with non-KCC partner organisations in Gateway sought to capture any unidentified issues. | Catherine Murphy | July 2015 – April 2016 | 1) Included in consultation costs circa. £2,000<br><br>2) Included in consultation costs circa. £2,000 |



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## **Initial Screening**

**Proportionality** - Based on the answers in the above screening grid what weighting would you ascribe to this function – see Risk Matrix

| <b>Low</b>   | <b>Medium</b>  | <b>High</b>  |
|--|--|--|
| Low relevance or Insufficient information/evidity to make a judgement. | Medium relevance or Insufficient information/evidence to make a Judgement. | High relevance to equality, /likely to have adverse impact on protected groups |

### **Medium**

Maidstone Gateway provides a face to face outlet for 4 KCC service or commissioned service drop in clinics: Deaf Services, Kent Supported Employment and Age UK and the Health Trainer Service (along with a number of partner services and Maidstone Borough Council Services).

Whilst considerable effort was taken to understand the needs and requirements of the user groups listed above, and KCC endeavoured to suggest a number of appropriate re-location options which meet these needs, this exercise alone did not provide sufficient information to make a decision. As there is no data recorded on the breakdown of these service users by protected characteristics, there was a possibility that re-locating the services listed above would have impacts on the protected characteristics which had not been identified.

In addition, customers can access general information about KCC services from Maidstone Gateway by speaking to the meet and greet staff. Again there is no data recorded on the breakdown of general enquiry transactions by protected characteristics. We could have used mosaic modelling to estimate the likely composition of KCC customers who access our services face to face, and cross reference this against the demographics of Maidstone; however this would be subject to some degree of generalisation and inaccuracy. In addition, there may have been some specific attractions of Maidstone Gateway to people with protected characteristics, which could not be captured by generalised modelling. Whist Sessions House and Kent History and Library Centre are both located nearby in Maidstone and field general enquiries for the public, and KCC can advise customers that they can go to these locations instead, KCC held a public consultation to understand any unidentified impacts arising from a potential relocation of services or any accommodations which would need be put in place elsewhere.

To ensure customers are not negatively affected the following internal action was required;

- Distribution of consultation documentation from KCC service leads to service users
- Holding of 12 week public consultation on options to re-locate KCC services; allowing customers, potential customers and stakeholders the opportunity to feedback on the impact a number of service re-location options.
- Engagement with directly with non-KCC partners in the Gateway to understand any unidentified impacts on their service users

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## **Context**

In 2008 Maidstone Gateway opened in King Street, Maidstone. The purpose of the Gateway is to offer public and voluntary sector services in a town centre location, which is accessible to all our customers. Some of these services can be accessed by customers through face to face clinics. The Gateway staff can also signpost customers to the most appropriate services that could help them with their enquiry regardless of where they are based.

The purpose of the Gateway is to create a more efficient approach to responding to the complex needs of customers. By bringing a number of services and parties together physically, Kent County Council (KCC), the local district council and partners, we can offer a range of services under one roof, enabling customers to see a number of different but related services at the same time.

Customers frequently visit Maidstone Gateway to access services provided by both Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) and the voluntary and community sector partners. However, customers rarely opt to use Maidstone Gateway to access KCC services. Out of 50,406 recorded visits to the Gateway in 2014, only 4% of total customer transactions (2,919 visits) were for KCC services or for those services we commission.

A full list of services is shown in the information and data section.

## **Aims and Objectives**

Our mission is to improve lives by ensuring every pound spent in Kent is delivering better outcomes for Kent's residents, communities and businesses. This has meant reviewing the services we provide, and where we provide them from to achieve the best value for KCC's customers.

We believe that keeping KCC services in Maidstone Gateway doesn't represent best value for money for KCC and our customers (please see 'Information and Data' section).

Should the decision be taken to relocate KCC services from the Gateway, we would deliver our face to face services from other KCC buildings within Maidstone. This would ensure that anyone who uses the Gateway to meet with our staff for specific services and clinics (such as Kent Supported Employment or Deaf Services) will still be able to access these services face to face in the future. We will look at the best ways of communicating any changes to customers.

The consultation considered options for re-locating the KCC services and commissioned services currently delivered from Maidstone Gateway and signposted customers to where they can go for general enquiries about KCC services.

The proposals focussed on relocating the four service clinics listed above to a number of possible buildings in Maidstone which are as follows:

- Kent History and Library Centre
- Maidstone Adult Education Centre
- Allington Library
- Coxheath Library

In addition to the building options listed above, the proposals also considered the possibility of the following:

- Relocating the Age UK clinic to Age UK's Maidstone Head Office in Mill Street;

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- Relocating the Kent Supported Employment clinics to Invicta House, County Hall,
- Relocating the Deaf Services British Sign Language Clinic to Hi Kent's Maidstone Head Office in Brewer Street.

Public transport options to these locations are set out in the consultation report (Appendix A).

## Beneficiaries

The main beneficiaries are:

- Kent County Council customers

The consultation with customers aimed to understand which of the alternative locations are most suitable for them, in addition to any potential negative impacts from our proposals.

## Information and Data

KCC used the transactional data from Maidstone Gateway which indicates the number of enquiries by service each year. This data showed a breakdown of each partner's services which are provided from Maidstone Gateway, and the number of enquiries that were logged for each service each year.

The data showed that:

- Out of 50,406 recorded visits to the Gateway between January and December 2014, 88% of these were for MBC services, whilst 8% were for other partner services.
- However, during this period only 4% of transactions - 2919 visits - were to access KCC services or those services which we commission or partly fund.

Of the KCC services and commissioned services in the Gateway, the enquiries were as follows:

**Table 2**

| Service (KCC or commissioned by KCC)   |                                   | Total transactions recorded (January – December 2014) |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| General Enquiry<br>Non-intensive, re-direction by reception staff to other buildings, staff phone numbers or website address   | KCC General Enquiry (unspecified) | 1,260   |
|  | Adult Education                   | 3   |
|  | Kent Community Engagement         | 1   |
|  | Kent Highways                     | 71  |
|  | Kent Support and Assistance       | 59  |
| Collecting and completing Blue Badge Application Form. Reception staff can help with completion of forms if needed; currently no presence of Blue Badge assessments/ services in Gateway | Blue Badge Applications           | 191   |
| Service specific helpdesk in Gateway, run  | Age UK Helpdesk                   | 135   |

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|   |                           |     |
|---|---------------------------|-----|
| by service representatives  | Deaf Services Helpdesk    | 20  |
| Pre-booked clinic and /or drop in sessions run by service representatives | Kent Supported Employment | 589 |
|   | Health Trainer Service    | 135 |

Whilst the number of enquiries for each service provided from KCC is recorded, this data does not include statistics against protected characteristics this is not recorded.

We looked to capture the demographics for the population of the service users of Maidstone Gateway during the public consultation. We aimed to achieve this through issuing a questionnaire with the consultation document.

### Involvement and Engagement

- The public consultation on Maidstone Gateway ran from 21<sup>st</sup> September - 13<sup>th</sup> December 2015. This lasted 12 weeks in total.
- Public consultation information included options for re-locating KCC services and commissioned services currently delivered from Maidstone Gateway, and any potential implications arising from this.
- Questionnaire was issued with consultation material
- Public consultation material was displayed in Maidstone Gateway, along with exhibition banner
- Service leads were issued consultation material to distribute to service users
- Public consultation included 6 drop in sessions where KCC staff were in the Gateway to answer questions. These were held on the following dates:

|                                    |            |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> September  | 9am – 12pm |
| Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> October    | 1pm – 4pm  |
| Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> October | 9am - 12pm |
| Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> November  | 1pm - 4pm  |
| Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> November   | 9am - 12pm |
| Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> December    | 1pm - 4pm  |

- All information was included on Consultation Directory
- The Equality Impact Assessment was made available shared as part of the consultation
- The Equality Impact Assessment has been amended and reviewed following the consultation, to show actions arising from feedback
- Easy Read version of consultation document and questionnaire were made available.
- Engagement sessions with Voluntary and Community Sector partners in the Gateway were carried out in advance of the public consultation.

### Potential Impact

The results of the initial screening/ full impact analysis indicated that there were potential positive and adverse impacts from the proposals. Therefore a 12 week consultation was

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undertaken to fully understand the potential impact and help to understand how to mitigate any adverse impact.

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**Table 3**  
**Summary of consultation responses according to protected characteristics – December 2015 (66 responses in total)**

| Protected Characteristic | Consultation response and potential impact   |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Age</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 25 % of respondents who completed this question indicated their age was 65 and over (13 people).</li> <li>- Older people may be more reliant on face to face service provision and less able to use the internet</li> <li>- Older people may be disadvantaged services are relocated to buildings which are not on bus routes or near to the town centre</li> <li>- Older people may be disadvantaged from having to make more than one trip to access council services if KCC services relocate from the Gateway</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Disability</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 28 % of respondents who completed this question said they had a disability (15 people). Of the respondents who said they had a disability 36% (5 people) had a physical disability, 36% had a sensory impairment, whilst the remainder had another type of disability.</li> <li>- Wheelchair users may be disadvantaged if proposed locations are not fully accessible</li> <li>- As there is a hearing loop in the Gateway, it will be beneficial if alternative locations could be hearing loop equipped to promote inclusiveness to deaf people.</li> <li>- Disabled people may be disadvantaged if there are insufficient numbers of disabled parking bays near to proposed locations</li> <li>- Disabled people may be disadvantaged if the proposed locations are not within easy reach of public transport. This includes safe crossing points.</li> <li>- Disabled people may be disadvantaged from having to make more than one trip to access council services if KCC services relocate from the Gateway</li> </ul> |

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|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Pregnancy/ Maternity</b> | - N/A  |
| <b>Race</b>                 | - 84% of respondents (42 people) classified themselves as White English, 4% classified themselves as White (Other), 4% were Chinese. The remainder identified with other ethnic groups.  |
| <b>Gender</b>               | - 53 responses were received to this question. Of those 49% were male, 47% female and 4% preferred not to say.   |
| <b>Gender Identity</b>      | - N/A  |
| <b>Religion</b>             | - 46 % of respondents who completed this question indicated that they were religious (25 people). Of the respondents who said they belonged to a religion or belief, 83% were Christians, 8% were Buddhists and 8% were Jewish; the remaining 2% identified with other religions. This is unlikely to have a bearing on the respondent's experience of the service itself. |
| <b>Sexual Orientation</b>   | - 53 responses were received to this question. Of those, 83% (45 people) described themselves as Heterosexual/ Straight, 6 % preferred not to say, 2% identified as gay men and 2% identified as another sexual orientation not listed. This is unlikely to have a bearing on the respondent's experience of the service itself.   |
| <b>Carers</b>               | - N/A  |

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An action plan (Table 4) has been drawn up to mitigate any potential negative impacts identified should the decision be taken to withdraw from Maidstone Gateway

### **Adverse Impact:**

Without mitigating action, it is possible that there could be adverse impacts with regards to age and disability as there are a number of services delivered from Maidstone Gateway which may be directly applicable to, or utilised by, these groups. These services include Age UK services, Kent Deaf Services, Kent Supported Employment and Health Trainer Service. Whilst a range of options for re-location were proposed and outlined in the consultation document, feedback was welcomed from customers on the suitability of these options. This feedback is discussed in detail in the consultation report (Appendix A).

The consultation also aimed to pick up any additional potential adverse impacts on other protected characteristics.

The impact on the third sector organisations (which are not commissioned by KCC but are currently working within Gateway) and their service users are currently unknown. This is largely dependent on any potential action taken by the District Partner following KCC's potential re-location of services, and as a result, withdrawal of funding. KCC and Maidstone Borough Council held joint engagement sessions with these organisations in advance of the public consultation. These aimed to identify any wider impact of KCC's proposals on these organisations.

### **Positive Impact:**

Providing a range of options for re-locating KCC services allowed service users to offer feedback a number of locations.

## **JUDGEMENT**

**Option 1 – Screening Sufficient** **NO**

**Justification:** Further work undertaken to consult with customers who will be affected by these changes.

**Option 2 – Internal Action Required** **YES**

Consultation held with customers, partners and staff to understand which particular customer groups could be adversely impacted by the changes. This feedback will inform the final decision.

**Option 3 – Full Impact Assessment** **YES**

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Following the completion of the consultation, a full impact assessment has been undertaken as the policy has a potential to affect residents with particular protected characteristics.

KCC aims to ensure that if the decision is taken to the re-locating of our services and as a result the withdrawal of our funding from Maidstone Gateway, this would not adversely impact any groups which have protected characteristics.

The initial Action Plan, shown below, was started at the consultation stage. Following the completion of the consultation the action plan has been updated as part of a full impact assessment, with detailed actions set out to mitigate the issues raised as part of the consultation feedback.

### **Action Plan**

Please see the action plan on the following page for details of how the issues raised in the judgement above will be dealt with.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The action plan demonstrates how the issues identified will be undertaken. This document was monitored and reviewed throughout the public consultation and afterwards. This assessment has now been updated to reflect unidentified issues arising from the proposals.

### **Sign Off**

I have noted the content of the equality impact assessment and agree the actions to mitigate the adverse impact(s) that have been identified.

#### ***Senior Officer***

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **DMT Member**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Table 4 – Final Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan - December 2015**

This action plan has been updated following the completion of the consultation to reflect the potential impacts should the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services adopt some or all of the policies proposed.

| Protected Characteristic | Issues identified   | Action to be taken  | Expected outcomes  | Owner         | Timescale                    | Cost implications  |
|--------------------------|---|---|--|---------------|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Age</b>               | <p>25 % of respondents indicated their age was 65 and over</p> <p>Older people may be more reliant on face to face service provision and less able to use the internet</p> <p>Older people may be disadvantaged services are relocated to buildings which are not on bus routes or near to the town centre</p> <p>Older people may be disadvantaged from having to make more than one trip to access council services if KCC services relocate from the Gateway</p> <p>Older people may need additional help in completing blue badge applications and forms.</p> | <p>Maintain face to face provision of KCC Gateway services that are currently provided in the Gateway at alternative locations if proposals are endorsed.</p> <p>Having suggested options for consultation which are near to town centre or on bus routes; raise awareness of public transport routes to proposed locations (if proposals are endorsed)</p> <p>Explore possibility for KCC staff at alternative locations to assist customers in completing online transactions.<br/>Explore possibility of KCC commissioning another provider to deliver KCC 'general enquiries' from the Maidstone Gateway.'</p> <p>If proposals are endorsed, hold 'pilot' time period where other KCC locations adopt KCC Gateway meet and greet/ general enquiries</p> | <p>Reduced adverse impact on age characteristic of relocation of KCC Gateway services to alternative locations</p> | Rebecca Spore | January 2016 – December 2016 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Print costs of raising awareness of bus routes to proposed locations – circa £1000.</li> <li>2. Possible cost of additional staff training on assisting with 'gateway' enquiries – if required.</li> <li>3. Possible cost to KCC Reception Staff Time in assisting with completing Blue Badge Applications if needed, however only 191 enquiries in 2014. Likely that this will be absorbed by normal capacity.</li> <li>4. Costs associated with commissioning another provider to</li> </ol> |

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|                   |   |   |  |               |                             |  |
|-------------------|---|---|--|---------------|-----------------------------|--|
|                   |   | customer model. If required, carry out additional staff training on assisting customers (although many functions are already carried out by staff in other KCC buildings)   |  |               |                             | deliver KCC 'general enquiries' from the Gateway,<br>5.  |
| <b>Disability</b> | <p>28% of respondents indicated they had a disability. Of those respondents with disabilities 36% had a physical disability, 36% had a sensory impairment and 28% had another type of disability.</p> <p>Wheelchair users may be disadvantaged if proposed locations are not fully accessible</p> <p>There is a hearing loop in the Gateway. It will be beneficial if alternative locations could have a hearing loop installed to promote inclusiveness to deaf people.</p> <p>Disabled people may be disadvantaged from having to make more</p> | <p>The consultation document outlined the accessibility of proposed locations. If a decision is made to relocate KCC services to other buildings in Maidstone, any location will need to be accessible to wheelchair users.</p> <p>Look at feasibility of installing fixed or portable hearing loop into suggested locations if decision is taken to relocate.</p> <p>Explore possibility of KCC commissioning another provider to deliver KCC 'general enquiries' from the Maidstone Gateway.'</p> | Reduced adverse impact on disability characteristic of relocation of KCC Gateway services to alternative locations | Rebecca Spore | January 2016 – October 2016 | <p>Possible costs associated with hearing loop installation.</p> <p>Possible time / costs associated with increased disabled parking provision.</p> <p>Costs associated with commissioning another provider to deliver KCC 'general enquiries' from the Gateway,</p> <p>Possible time / costs associated with reducing hazards at KHLIC.</p> |

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|                                     |  |   |   |                      |                                    |   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|----------------------|------------------------------------|---|
|                                     | <p>than one trip to access council services if KCC services relocate from the Gateway</p> <p>Disabled people may be disadvantaged if there are insufficient numbers of disabled parking bays near to proposed locations<br/>The crossings between KHLC and bus stops carrying services to and from Maidstone may be confusing and hazardous for blind and partially-sighted people</p> | <p>Consideration of looking at feasibility to increase disabled parking at suggested sites, if required, if decision is taken to relocate.</p> <p>Look at feasibility of improving crossing and reducing crossing hazards for blind and partially-sighted people.</p> |   |                      |                                    |   |
| <p><b>Pregnancy / Maternity</b></p> | <p>Whilst not noted as part of consultation, there are baby changing facilities in Maidstone Gateway in female WCS (although difficult for people with mobility difficulties to access.)</p>   | <p>Consideration of looking at feasibility to provide baby changing facilities at suggested sites, if required, if decision is taken to relocate.</p>   | <p>Reduced impact on pregnancy/ maternity characteristic of relocation of KCC Gateway services to alternative locations</p> | <p>Rebecca Spore</p> | <p>January 2016 – October 2016</p> | <p>Possible costs associated with baby changing facilities where not currently available.</p> |

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|                           |   |  |                          |               |                             |     |
|---------------------------|---|--|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-----|
|                           | There are baby changing facilities in the KHLC, but not all other venues.   |  |                          |               |                             |     |
| <b>Race</b>               | None identified   | N/A  | N/A                      | N/A           | N/A                         | N/A |
| <b>Gender</b>             | None identified   | N/A  | N/A                      | N/A           | N/A                         | N/A |
| <b>Gender Identity</b>    | None identified   | N/A  | N/A                      | N/A           | N/A                         | N/A |
| <b>Religion</b>           | None identified   | N/A  | N/A                      | N/A           | N/A                         | N/A |
| <b>Sexual Orientation</b> | None identified   | N/A  | N/A                      | N/A           | N/A                         | N/A |
| <b>Carers</b>             | No identified issues for carers group, although issues and responses for Age or Disability characteristic may apply to Carers characteristic. | None specific to carers – see Age and Disability action to be taken. | None specific to carers. | Rebecca Spore | January 2016 – October 2016 | N/A |

## Appendix C - Maidstone Gateway Questionnaire

**Q1. Are you completing this questionnaire on behalf of:**

Please select **one** box.

- Yourself (as an individual)
- Yourself as a member of KCC or Gateway staff
- A Voluntary or Community Sector Organisation (VCS)
- A Service partially or fully funded by KCC
- A District/Town/Parish Council
- A Business
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q1a. If you are responding on behalf of a VCS organisation/Council/Service/Business, please tell us the name of the organisation:**

***If you are responding as an Individual or as a member of KCC staff please continue to answer questions 2, 3 and 4. If you are responding on behalf of an Organisation please go straight to question 5.***

**Q2. What is your postcode?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Q3. How often do you visit Maidstone Gateway?**

Please select **one** box.

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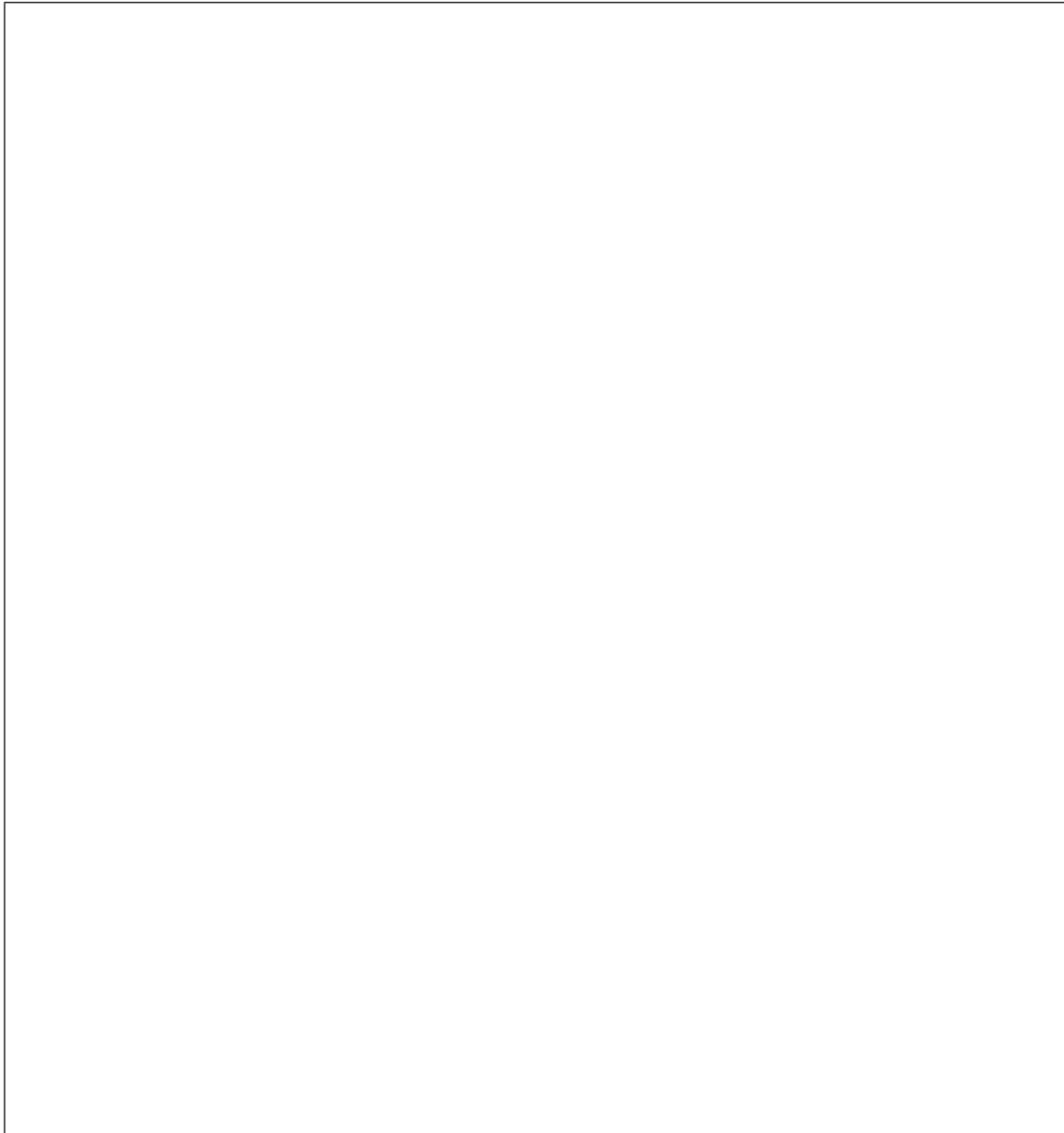
- More than once a week
- Weekly
- Once or twice a month
- More than once a year
- Once a year or less
- Never

**Q4. Do you visit Maidstone Gateway for any Kent County Council (KCC) services, or those services partially or fully funded by KCC?**

Please select **all boxes** that apply.

- General Enquiries (including Blue Badge applications, Highways services, and Kent Support and Assistance services)
- Kent Deaf Services helpdesk
- Kent Supported Employment clinic
- Age UK helpdesk
- Health Trainers service
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q5. The Consultation Document provides details of the possible options for accessing KCC services in future. Do you have any comments on these proposals?**



**Q6. We have drafted an Equality Impact Assessment on the relocation options.**

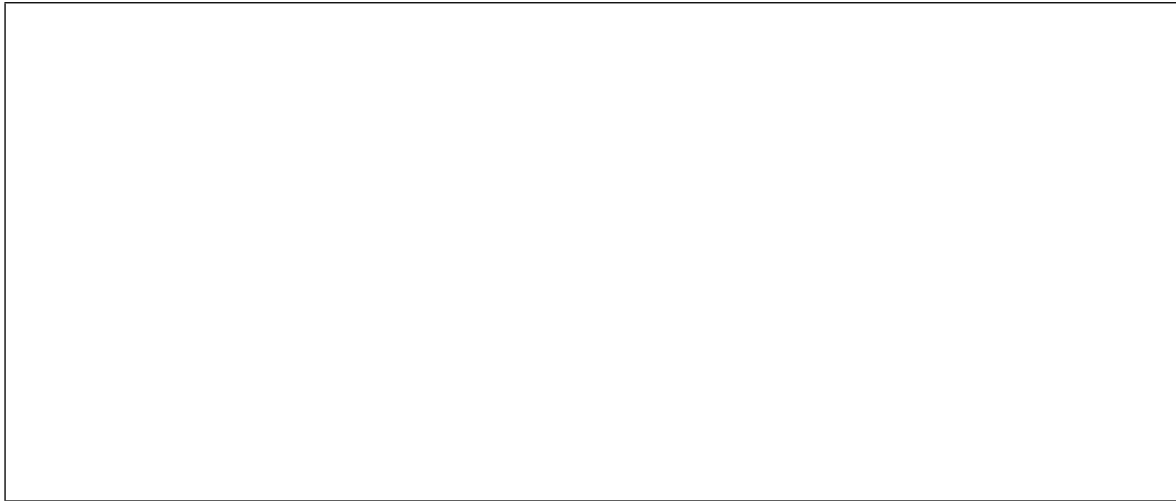
An EqIA is a tool to assess the impact any policies or strategies would have on race, age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief and carer's responsibilities. **We welcome your views.**

To view the document, go to [kent.gov.uk/maidstonegateway](http://kent.gov.uk/maidstonegateway) or ask a member of staff at the Maidstone Gateway.

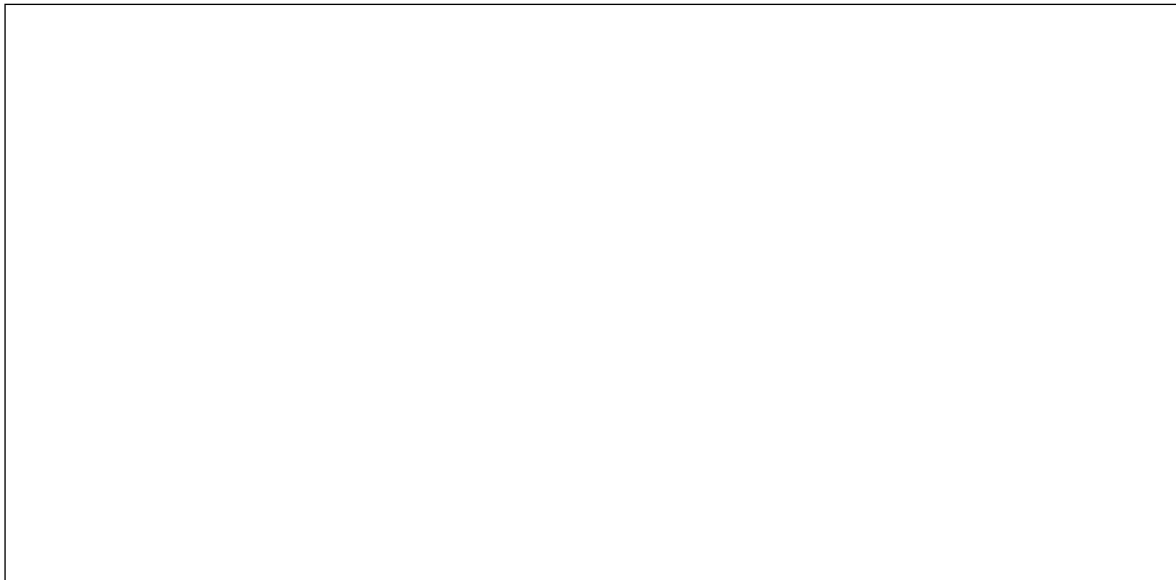
**Please add comments below:**



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**Q7. Do you have any other comments you would like to make on our proposals?**



## Future Engagement and Communication

If you would like to receive feedback on the outcome of the consultation please provide your contact details below. Our preferred method of communication is by email, however if you do not have an email address then please provide your postal address.

Name:

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Email:

---

Postal address:

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***You only need to answer these questions if you have responded as an Individual or as a member of KCC staff. It is not necessary to answer these questions if you are responding on behalf of an Organisation.***

## About You

We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally, and that no one gets left out. That's why we're asking you these questions.

We won't share the information you give us with anyone else. We'll use it only to help us make decisions, and improve our services.

If you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don't have to.

### Q8. Are you.....?

Please select **one** box.

Male

Female

I prefer not to say

**Q9. Which of these age groups applies to you?**

Please select **one** box.

- |                                 |                                |                                |                                |  |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 - 15 | <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-59 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65-74 | <input type="checkbox"/> 85 + over           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16-24  | <input type="checkbox"/> 35-49 | <input type="checkbox"/> 60-64 | <input type="checkbox"/> 75-84 | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer not to say |

**Q10. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong?** (Source: 2011 census)

Please select **one** box.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White English                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British Indian      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White Scottish                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British Pakistani   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White Welsh                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White Northern Irish            | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British other*      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White Irish                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British Caribbean   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White Gypsy/Roma                | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British African     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White Irish Traveller           | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British other*      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White other*                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Arab                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed White and Black Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed White and Black African   | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer not to say                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed White and Asian           |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed other*                    |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other ethnic group*             |   |

\*If your ethnic group is not specified in the list, please describe it here:

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The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a long-standing physical or mental condition that has lasted, or is likely to

last, at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS, for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

**Q11. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?**

Please select **one** box.

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say

**Q11a. If you answered Yes to Q11, please tell us the type of impairment that applies to you. You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all that apply. If none of these apply to you, please select Other, and give brief details of the impairment you have.**

- Physical impairment.
- Sensory impairment (hearing, sight or both).
- Longstanding illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy.
- Mental health condition.
- Learning disability.
- I prefer not to say.
- Other\*

\*If Other, please specify:

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**Q12. Do you regard yourself to belonging to any particular religion or belief?**

Please select **one** box.

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say

**Q12a. If you answered Yes to Q12, which one applies to you?**

Please select **one** box.

- Christian
- Hindu
- Muslim
- Buddhist
- Jewish
- Sikh
- Any other religion, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q13. Are you...?**

Please select **one** box.

- Heterosexual/Straight
- Gay woman/Lesbian
- Other
- Bi/Bisexual
- Gay man
- I prefer not to say