

Social and Community Worksheets

WORKSHEET S1: POPULATION

Task: to identify the population profile of the town and surrounding countryside

1: Introduction to the task

The basic data collected will be important for many of the other assessments required in other worksheets. Much of the data can be obtained from the Census of Population 2001 and is very easy to get from National Statistics On-line.

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/default.asp> provides information at national, regional and Local Authority level.

Click on "Neighbourhood" or go directly to <http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/default.asp> to view, compare or download statistics for your local area on a wide range of subjects including population, crime, health and housing.

2: Getting the following information will help you establish how the population of your town and surrounding countryside compares with the national picture

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
Census of Population	<p>Q 1 Local populations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is the total population of both town and surrounding countryside? b. What proportion of the total population live in the town as compared to the surrounding countryside (hinterland)? c. Whereabouts do they live? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Population of 6200 based on 2001 census and allowing for growth from house-building. There is no significant change as a result of population turnover/migration. b. 85% live within the main village envelope with others scattered in small clusters or isolated properties and farms. c. As above. 97% live in residential households with only 3% in communal establishments.
Census of Population	<p>Q 2 Retired population: How many of the population are of retirement age (that is, 65/60 or over)? What is this as a proportion of the total population? Is this higher or lower than the regional and national averages?</p>	<p>928 people are of retirement age, which is 15% of the population. This is 1% higher than the regional average and 0.1% higher than the national average.</p>
Census of Population	<p>Q 3 Younger population: How many of the population are under 16? What is this as a proportion of the total population? Is this higher or lower than the regional and national averages?</p> <p>(Worksheets EC1 Q6,7; EC3; EC4; T2 Q2; T3 Q18,19 also refer to children and young people)</p>	<p>1296 people are under 16; this is 21% of the population which is in line with regional and national averages.</p>

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
Census of Population	<p>Q 4</p> <p>Employed population:</p> <p>How many people are employed?</p> <p>How many of this population have professional and managerial jobs?</p> <p>How many of these have semi-skilled manual and unskilled jobs?</p> <p>What are these figures as proportions of the total number employed?</p> <p>Are these figures higher or lower than the regional and national averages?</p> <p>(Worksheets EC1; EC4 Q3,9; EC5 Q1; EC7 Q2 also refer to employment)</p>	<p>3191 people are employed, that is 53% of the population.</p> <p>1481 people or 46.4% of the employed population have professional and managerial jobs. This is 1% lower than the regional average and 3% higher than the national average.</p> <p>2039 people or 50% of the employed population have semi-skilled manual and unskilled jobs. This is the same as the regional average but 7% lower than the national average.</p>
Census of Population	<p>Q 6</p> <p>Household population:</p> <p>a. How many households are there</p> <p>b. What proportion of households are there elderly people living alone?</p> <p>c. Is this higher or lower than the national average?</p>	<p>a. There are 2216 households based on the 2001 census.</p> <p>b. 10% have a pensioner living alone.</p> <p>c. This is 4% lower than the national average.</p>
Census of Population (Compare population levels from the 1991 and 2001 Censuses)	<p>Q 7</p> <p>Population trend:</p> <p>Has the population of the town and hinterland grown or declined in the last ten years?</p> <p>By how much?</p>	<p>Approximately 100 new houses have been are or being built in the last 10 years so the town and hinterland has grown by around 5%.</p>

3: This part is called a SWOT analysis, where you identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Once you have the information, use this table to show the Strengths and Weaknesses in the population profile of the area. Also flag up where there are Opportunities to improve things or where there might be Threats in the future. The conclusions give the basis for a summary that can go forward to the Healthcheck Report.

You may need to tick more than one column for each question.

You need to consider what the information you have gathered tells you in the light of these questions:	Write your answers here. Base them on the information you have gathered:	Conclusion					
		It's a Fact	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Need more info
How does the population profile of the town and surrounding countryside compare with regional and national profiles?	The local population does not differ markedly from regional or national profiles.	X					
Is there a growth or decline in numbers or the location of population categories, and what are they?	The population is growing generally due to continued house building. This is a threat because local infrastructure and services are not developing in line with the growing population.	X				X	

WORKSHEET S2: HOUSING

Task: to find out the basic information needed to assess the housing situation in the town and surrounding countryside

1: Introduction to the task

If there is not enough information available to answer the questions, it may be possible to work with the district council to do an up to date housing needs assessment

*Guidance on housing needs assessment is given in Data Sources and Survey Methods and on the Market Towns' Learning Network
Cross reference this to Worksheet S1: Population*

2: Getting the following information will help you assess the housing situation in your town and surrounding countryside.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
Sub-section 1: Housing Availability and Need		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local estate agents (for general information on housing market) District Council & Local Housing Associations (for information on their housing stock) 	<p>Q1 Currently available housing: What types of properties are there? Look at type, size and tenure (freehold, leasehold, rented). Where are they located? For example, are they clustered in the town centre, town edge or hinterland settlements? Is there an under- or over-supply of housing of different types?</p> <p>(Worksheets EN1; EN2; EN3 Q4; EC6 Q1; EC6 Q18 also refer to the built environment)</p>	<p>The majority of properties are freehold. There is no particular clustering of any one type.</p> <p>There is an undersupply of low-cost housing for young people and an undersupply of sheltered, semi-sheltered and private housing for the elderly. Otherwise there is a broad range of housing types available.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Council Planning Dept Local Plan 	<p>Q 2 New housing: a. How much new housing is being planned in the area? b. What type is it? c. Where is it?</p> <p>(Worksheets EN1 Q7,14; EN3 Q4; EC6 Q1,8,9; T1 Q3 also refer to development)</p>	<p>a. In the period from 2006 to 2008, planning permission for 100 new dwellings has been granted. Approximately half of these have been built or are being built. Planning applications for over 20 more properties are in progress.</p> <p>b. This ranges from two-bedroom flats to 5 bedroom houses. Some are Housing Association properties.</p> <p>c. Developments are mainly as in-fill on various green spaces and larger former gardens around the village.</p>

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local estate agents • County council 	<p>Q 3</p> <p>Housing costs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is the cost of buying or renting property? b. Can local people afford to buy houses in the area? c. Where is there a supply of affordable (social) housing at below-market prices? d. Where is there a supply of starter homes? e. Does supply meet local needs based on current statistics? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. House prices range from £150,000 to £2million+. Flat prices range from £100,000 to £150,000. Rental prices for flats and houses range from £400 to £8000 per month. b. Yes. There is evidence of people moving within the village. c. None. d. There is no specific supply of starter homes. One-bedroom houses on the estates within the village occasionally come on the market. There is planning permission for two developments containing 2-3 bedroom flats, but development of these has not yet commenced. e. At the time of writing (December 2008), the market is stagnant due to the credit crunch / recession.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council figures for Housing Investment Programme • Local charities • Local survey 	<p>Q 4</p> <p>Homeless people:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How many people are homeless in the area? b. How many of these are formally counted as homeless by local authorities compared with those that may be staying with friends and are without a home of their own? c. How does this compare with regional and national averages? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. There is no evidence of any homelessness in the area. There are no hostels in the locality for homeless people. b. As above. c. Below the national average.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council (ask for waiting list allocation rules) • Nomination Agreement between Council & Housing Associations 	<p>Q 5</p> <p>Housing priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Does the local council give local people priority in accessing affordable housing? b. What provision is there for people who may want to move back to their local area following time away to train or study? c. Does this differ in settlements in the surrounding countryside and in the town? <p>(Worksheets EC2 Q18; T2 Q11,12; T3 Q16 also refer to local government services)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes. The Borough Council prioritizes people with a specific interest/reason for living in the borough as a whole. People may express an interest in living in a particular part of the borough, but they may have to wait longer for suitable housing to become available in that area. b. No specific provision for those wanting to move back into the area after training or studying away other than general provision as outlined above. c. No. It is a borough-wide policy and the neighbouring borough operates a similar policy.

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Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Council and Housing Association (ask for comparisons of demand for specialist housing with current and planned) 	<p>Q 6 Supported housing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What supported housing is available to those who need it through special units (for example, for the elderly or disabled)? Does this meet current or projected demands? <p>(Worksheets EC7 Q8T2 Q4,5; T3 also refer to disability issues)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Association McCabe Close for the elderly. Sobell Lodge for those with disability. No. There is insufficient supported housing available.
<p>District Council and Housing Associations (ask for comparisons of demand for specialist housing with current and planned)</p>	<p>Q 7 Housing for older people:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Does the housing provision and cost provide for older people who may want to move to smaller/more manageable homes or from villages to market towns? Is this provision sufficient? 	<p>a/b – No. There is insufficient housing for the elderly who want to downsize.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Council Social Services 	<p>Q 8 Housing for elderly/disabled people:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What support is provided for people such as the elderly or disabled in their own homes? Does this meet current or projected demand? <p>(Worksheets EC7 Q8T2 Q4,5; T3 also refer to disability issues)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> There is a wide range of services available, provided by both social services and privately. There is no evidence of a shortage of such services. Availability is anecdotally limited by means testing and the allocation of benefits to buy in such services.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Census of Population • Council Tax records (compare number of 2nd/holiday homes with total number of households) 	<p>Q 9 Availability of homes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are there a high number of homes not available to the local population? b. Is there a high level of second home ownership or holiday lets locally? c. Are these confined to particular parts of the area? (for example, those attractive to tourists or near business centres, etc)? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. No. There is diversity in both housing stock and the economic status of the local population. b. No. c. Not applicable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council Housing Investment Programme or Housing Needs Surveys • Local survey of premises 	<p>Q 10 Empty houses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Is there a high level of vacancy or empty houses? b. Where are these located? c. Are there opportunities to make redundant housing and additional homes available to local people? d. What opportunities are there to bring housing into the town centre (for example, flats over shops) back into use? <p><i>(compare number of vacant houses with total number of premises)</i></p> <p>(Worksheets EN1; EN2; EN3 Q4; EC6 Q1; EC6 Q18 also refer to the built environment. Worksheets EN1 Q7,14; EN3 Q4; EC6 Q1,8,9; T1 Q3 also refer to development)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) No. The 2001 census shows only 2% of un-occupancy which is below the national average. (b) N/A. (c) N/A. (d) N/A.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		

Sub-section 2: Quality of Housing

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">District CouncilHousing condition survey	Q 11 Housing conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. What is the condition of existing local housing?b. How many properties suffer from damp, lack of central heating, external and structural problems, or disrepair?c. Where are they located?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Generally good.b. There is no evidence of any significant quantity of housing in poor condition.c. n/a.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">District Council	Q 12 Where there is poor quality housing, how is this being addressed through improvement/investment programmes? (Worksheets EN1; EN2; EN3 Q4; EC6 Q1; EC6 Q18 also refer to the built environment. Worksheets EN1 Q7,14; EN3 Q4; EC6 Q1,8,9; T1 Q3 also refer to development)	n/a.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">District Council	Q 13 Are there areas of poor quality private housing that are not being addressed? (Worksheets EN1; EN2; EN3 Q4; EC6 Q1; EC6 Q18 also refer to the built environment. Worksheets EN1 Q7,14; EN3 Q4; EC6 Q1,8,9; T1 Q3 also refer to development)	No.

3: This part is called a SWOT analysis, where you identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Once you have the information, use this table to show the Strengths and Weaknesses in the local housing stock. Also flag up where there are Opportunities to improve things or where there might be Threats in the future. The conclusions give the basis for a summary that can go forward to the Healthcheck Report.

You may need to tick more than one column for each question.

You need to consider what the information you have gathered tells you in the light of these questions:	Write your answers here. Base them on the information you have gathered:	Conclusion					
		It's a Fact	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Need more info
Is there sufficient housing available to meet the needs of all sectors of the population? If there are shortfalls, where are they? Do current housing strategies and plans take these areas into account?	There is insufficient provision of affordable housing for young people and insufficient housing suitable for the elderly. There is no apparent housing strategy which takes this into consideration.	X		X	X		
Is the available housing stock in good condition? Where is the poor housing stock? What is being done to improve it?	All housing stock is generally in good condition.	X					

WORKSHEET S3: HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Task: to assess public health and community safety in the town and surrounding countryside

1: Introduction to the task

Residents of market towns and their surrounding countryside need access to adequate healthcare and emergency services including ambulances, police and fire services. Community safety is also an important consideration. Local authorities are required under the Crime and Disorder Act 1999 to produce a strategy for fighting crime. Audits of community safety issues including crime and the fear of crime may have been undertaken to inform these strategies.

Guidance on carrying out a fear of crime survey is given in Data Sources and Survey Methods Directory on the Market Towns Learning Network.

2: Getting the following information will help you assess the healthcare and emergency services provision for your town and surrounding countryside

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
Sub-section 1: Health and Social Care		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Health Authority Register of Doctors & Dentists LHA target levels Local Authority for transport information 	<p>Q 1 Doctor and dentist provision:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How many doctors and dentists surgeries are there? How do these figures compare with Local Health Authority target levels and local needs? Where are they located? Will any future planned changes to service provision increase or decrease access to doctors and dentists? What transport is there (either public, a suitable community transport scheme, or both) to surgeries from outlying areas? <p>(Worksheets EN1 Q9; EC7 Q7,15; T1; T2; T3 also refer to public transport)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One health centre comprising 4 doctors. 3 Private dental practices. Doctors – centre of Staplehurst, 2 dentists centre of Staplehurst, other dentist towards station. New NHS dentist at Health Centre. None.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Health Authority Local voluntary & charity groups 	<p>Q 2 Clinics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What specialist clinics and out patient clinics are available locally (for example, family planning, drugs and drink advice)? Where are they? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All local medical health provision is centred in the recently developed Health Centre. This provides a broad range of clinics including smoking, obesity, childcare, etc. There are numerous private practices based in and visiting the area including physiotherapy, chiropody and sports clinics. There are no local drugs and drinks addiction clinics other than a commercial rehabilitation centre which is geared for wealthy out-of-area clients. As above.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Health Authority 	<p>Q 3 Mobile units:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Which local health clinics, doctors and dentists operate mobile service units? What areas do they cover? Are there any plans to increase the coverage by mobile units? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> None. n/a. n/a.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Health Authority, Local transport survey 	<p>Q 4 Non-emergency hospital services:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How easy is it for residents to get access to non-emergency hospital services as a user or visitor? b. What services are available? c. How far away are they? d. Are they accessible by public transport? e. Can patients pre-book appointments? f. What are the waiting times for getting appointments? g. How long are people on waiting lists? <p>(Worksheets EN1 Q9; EC7 Q7,15; T1; T2; T3 also refer to public transport)</p>	<p>Local district general hospitals usually accessed by Staplehurst residents are (1) Maidstone Hospital (2) Kent & Sussex Hospital, Tunbridge Wells (3) Pembury Hospital, Pembury and (4) William Harvey Hospital, Ashford.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) All 4 hospitals receive referrals from local GP's. (b) Maidstone Hospital and Kent & Sussex and Pembury provide most non-emergency services, BUT routine Gynaecology surgery is only undertaken at Pembury Hospital + routine vascular surgery is either undertaken at Kent & Sussex or Medway Hospitals. There is ongoing lack of clarity as to where routine orthopaedic surgery will take place – either at both Maidstone and Kent & Sussex or just the Kent & Sussex Hospital. These changes and uncertainty will inevitably impact on our local residents. (c) Maidstone Hospital = 11 miles; Kent & Sussex Hospital = 19.2 miles; Pembury Hospital = 15.8 miles and William Harvey Hospital, Ashford = 30.8miles. (d) Maidstone Hospital = 2 buses (change at the bus station); Kent & Sussex Hospital = trains x 2 (change at Tonbridge) followed by approx 1 mile walk up hill to the hospital (it's a steep and long hill!); Pembury – train x 2 (change at Tunbridge) then bus, and William Harvey Hospital = train to Ashford and bus from the station. (e) Some GP organised appointments can be made on line or by phone.....at this time (Jan '09) this is only used for a minority of appointments. (f) Routine waiting time = 6 -12 weeks. (g) Varies, but waiting times are reducing at present (Jan 09).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Health Authority • County Council • Social Services • Local voluntary 	<p>Q 5 Home services:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What social and health care services are available in the home for those needing them (for example, community nurses, health visitors, home help, etc)? 	<p>(a). The GP practices that provide care for the residents of Staplehurst all have attached district nurses and health visitors. The provision of home help, carers, etc., is organised and coordinated by Social Services (Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells) with limited input from GP's and more input from district nurses.</p>

groups & charities for informal support	<p>b. What informal support is available for those not using statutory services?</p> <p>(Worksheets EC7 Q8; T2 Q4,5; T3 also refer to disability issues)</p>	(b) Staplehurst Health Centre provides and promotes a range of health and wellbeing activities and meetings and some health related services and information are publicised at the local library.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Health Authority (ask for local & national statistics) 	<p>Q 6 Health:</p> <p>a. How do local mortality rates for heart disease, stroke, cancer, suicide and accidents compare with regional and national averages?</p> <p>b. If they are high, what health service provision is being targeted in these areas?</p>	<p>(a) Local rates are generally lower than regional and national averages.</p> <p>(b) n/a.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Council Environmental Health Dept Environment Agency (ask for statistics on background pollution levels) 	<p>Q 7 Pollution levels:</p> <p>a. Do background levels of noise, air quality and water quality meet or exceed national standards?</p> <p>b. Are there any blackspots where national levels are exceeded?</p> <p>(Worksheets EN1; EN2; EN3; EC7 Q10,17,18 also refer to environmental quality)</p>	<p>a. Yes.</p> <p>b. No.</p>
Sub-section 2: Emergency services		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Health and Police authorities Internet Local council surveys 	<p>Q 8 Response time targets:</p> <p>a. What are the ambulance, police and fire services response time targets?</p> <p>b. How well are these targets being met?</p> <p>c. What are the problem areas if targets are not met?</p> <p>d. What plans are there to improve these?</p>	<p>a – d. There is no evidence of persistent issues with emergency service response times. All services have headquarters on the south side of Maidstone with access to the neighbourhood via the A229 main road. There are no emergency service bases locally. There have been a few individual reports of perceived poor response or non-attendance by police to non-emergency incidents.</p>

Sub-section 3: Community Safety

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local Police Authority (ask for local, regional & national crime statistics & policy)	Q 9 Crime: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. What are the crime rates for the locality?b. How do incidences of crime compare with regional and national rates?c. Are incidences higher for specific types of crime (for example, shop theft, burglaries, personal assault, criminal damage, car theft, and theft from vehicles)?d. Does geographical location play a part in this?e. How will future policing strategies address these problems?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Crime rates are very low for the locality with less than 10 incidents per month on average, mainly of minor theft and anti-social behaviour.b. Lower than national average.c. Theft is the more notable of the crimes that do occur.d. No.e. There has been an improved police presence in the locality over the last 3 - 4 years which has reduced crime and anti-social behaviour in the area. The community survey includes a number of requests for better policing although some of these pre-date the very recent increase in police presence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local Police Authority for local crime statisticsFear of crime survey for comparison with actual statistics	Q 10 Fear of crime: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Is the fear of crime significantly worse than actual crime rates?b. If yes, what factors are contributing to these fears?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">c. The most frequent complaint is anti-social behaviour in the shopping parade, at Surrenden Field and other sites in the village.d. The occasional gathering of youths in the area.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local survey 	<p>Q 11 Which areas show visible evidence of vandalism, unlit streets, litter or graffiti?</p> <p>(Worksheets EN1; EN2; EN3; EC7 Q10,17,18 also refer to environmental quality)</p>	<p>There are occasional problems where young people congregate from time to time; Surrenden playing field, Jubilee playing field, Nicolson Walk, Parade toilets, village youth centre.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Police Authority District Council 	<p>Q 12 Crime prevention measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Where crime prevention measures are in place? Which other areas would benefit from the introduction of crime prevention measures? <p><i>Measures may include CCTV, street lighting, more police officers, community policing and Neighbourhood Watch.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> CCTV, increased police presence, neighbourhood watch, consulting parents of youths behaving anti-socially. Partners and Communities Together (PACT) initiative. Its Action plan in place focusing on reducing anti-social behaviour and improved community safety information.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Police Authority 	<p>Q 13 What is the level of local police presence (for example, police stations/mobile stations/local or community police officers/community support)?</p>	<p>1 x Police Constable, 1 x Rural Warden, 1 x Police Community Support Officer, monthly police surgery and mobile police station. Partners and Communities Together (PACT) action plan.</p>

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You need to consider what the information you have gathered tells you in the light of these questions:	Write your answers here. Base them on the information you have gathered:	Conclusion					
		It's a Fact	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Need more info
Is there adequate access to a range of healthcare and social care services? Where could access to, or the quality of provision, be improved?	There is good access to an improving range of health services at the recently built medial centre, but access to hospital-based services is difficult other than by car.			X			
Do all areas provide a safe and healthy environment to live in?	There is occasional anti-social behaviour mainly at the Parade and at Surrenden playing field. Other areas are safe and healthy.				X	X	
Is a good standard provided by the emergency services?	Yes.	X					
Is there a good strategy to fight crime and is the community protected? What opportunities are there to improve provision?	Yes.	X					

WORKSHEET S4: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Task: to find out about the level of community involvement in local decision-making and activity in both the town and surrounding countryside

1: Introduction to the task

It is important to assess the level of involvement of the local community when researching the well-being of a market town and when planning for the future. Effective local government is important to the well being of a town, and the numbers of people voting in national and local elections is one measure of community involvement.

In a healthy democracy every seat should have more than one candidate. An effective Parish/Town Council is crucial to the success of the Healthcheck and Action Plan. However, there is often much less democratic involvement at this tier of local government, and many Parish Councils attract only just enough candidates to fill the seats; some even have vacant seats after an election. In such cases the election is 'uncontested', and no poll is required. Organising a poll is expensive, so it is arguably better value for money to avoid a poll, especially in small parishes. If, however, your Parish/Town Council was uncontested or has vacancies, there is clearly scope for improving residents' involvement in local affairs and there may be things that could be done to increase participation in local democracy.

When considering election data you should bear in mind that:

- In general elections the number of voters in market towns may be higher than the national average
- In district or borough elections you should make sure that any turnout figures you request are for a poll which was not combined with other elections. This is because combined polls may show a slightly greater turnout.

There are also many other ways in which the community can have a voice in local planning and decision-making. Support and encouragement for community involvement should ensure that there is a representative sample of local people covering all interests and abilities.

2: Getting the following information will help to assess the extent of community involvement in local decision-making.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
Sub-section 1: Local Government Structure & Access		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Council 	<p>Q 1 Councils: a. What councils are there in the area? <i>Identify County, District or Borough, Town and Parish Councils</i></p> <p>b. What services do they cover (for example, planning, payments, environmental health, social services, youth, school)?</p> <p>(Worksheets EC2 Q18; T2 Q11,12; T3 Q16 also refer to local government services)</p>	<p>(a) Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Staplehurst Parish Council.</p> <p>(b) Standard two-tier local authority system plus parish.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town, Parish, District/Borough and County Councils Individual councillors 	<p>Q 2 Council access: a. How can local residents access these Councils? b. Where are the Councils' offices? c. Where are Council information points located (for example, the library or town hall)? d. Where and when do councillors hold local surgeries?</p>	<p>(a) in person at offices, on 'phone, website, Staplehurst monthly surgeries.</p> <p>(b) Parish Office in centre of village. No district or county offices locally.</p> <p>(c) Library, notice boards around village, Parish Office.</p> <p>(d) Monthly at Staplehurst library.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Council LSP 	<p>Q 3 Is there a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the County and/or District (or for the unitary authority area)? If so: a. Who are the co-coordinators of the LSP(s)? b. What agencies are involved? c. Which of these agencies have a presence locally? d. What thematic or local sub-groups do the LSP(s) have, and who chairs and administers them? e. What local issues are being addressed by the LSP(s)?</p> <p>(Worksheets EN2 Q11; EN3 Q1; EC2 Q5; EC3 Q19 also refer to community involvement)</p>	<p>a. Maidstone Borough Council is the coordinator of the LSP.</p> <p>b. Maidstone mediation, M&TW NHS Trust, Maidstone Town Centre Management, Kent Police, Maidstone Housing Trust, Kent Association of Councils, Maidstone BC, KCC, Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, West Kent PCT, YMCA, Churches in Society, ASB law (Professional Hub), Federation of Small Businesses, Mid Kent College, Volunteer Action Maidstone, Mobility Focus group, Kent Police, Kent Wildlife Trust, Church is Society, Maidstone Community Support Centre,</p> <p>c. All of these agencies have an operational interest in Staplehurst. None has an office operation in the locality.</p> <p>d. Themes being pursued by the LSP are Community Safety;</p>

		<p>Community Health; Climate Change, Quality Place, Children's Services, Community Cohesion. All themes and groups involved are generic to Maidstone rather than specific to Staplehurst.</p> <p>e. As above.</p>
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Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Strategy 	<p>Q 4 Community Strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What does the Community Strategy specifically say about the town or local parishes? b. Where is your area mentioned by name? c. Where are your local issues mentioned? d. How well have your needs and aspirations been taken into account? e. What commitments in the Community Strategy of both the District and County Councils, or unitary authority, may have an impact on your town and surrounding countryside? f. When they are planned to take effect? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Staplehurst not specifically mentioned in the Community Strategy. b. n/a c. n/a d. Not at all. e. None f. n/a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District and County Councils • LSP 	<p>Q 5 Future action plans:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How do the LSP or local authorities intend to 'bridge the gap' between the Community Strategy and your future action plan? b. What protocols, guides, discussion forums or templates are there for drawing together research and actions? c. How would the local authority or LSP like you to liaise with them during preparation of your action plan and afterwards? 	<p>a - c. The LSP does not specially focus on Staplehurst. LSP arrangements may be altering in 2009 as a new consultation is taking place "Local people Know Best and Sustainable Communities in Control".</p>

Sub-section 2: Community Involvement		
Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District/Borough Council's Electoral Services Unit 	<p>Q 6</p> <p>These questions will help assess how thriving democracy is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What was the turnout in the last General Election? How does this compare with the 2001 national average of 59%?¹ What was the turnout at the last District/Borough election? How does this compare with the 2003 national average for Shire Districts of 35%?² How many seats were contested at the last Parish/Town Council election? Has the local Town or Parish council been awarded Quality Parish status? <p><i>This recognises councils that have a full electoral mandate and a high standard of management by qualified staff.</i></p> <p>(Worksheets EN2 Q11; EN3 Q1; EC2 Q5; EC3 Q19 also refer to community involvement)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 65%. Better. 37%. Better. None as there were insufficient contestants for the seats available. yes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County, District, Town & Parish Councils 	<p>Q 7</p> <p>Local community representation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What representation does the local community have on partnership and council committees or sub-committees? How many representatives are there? How active are they? Which committees or sub-committees do they sit on? Which groups of the community do they represent? <p>(Worksheets EN2 Q11; EN3 Q1; EC2 Q5; EC3 Q19 also refer to community involvement)</p>	<p>The local community does not have direct representation on the LSP. See answer to Q3.</p>

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council • Local Community groups 	<p>Q 8 Community influence: What mechanisms do community groups have to influence developing policies or strategies?</p> <p><i>Look, for example, at what influence they have in preparing Village Design Statements, Supplementary Planning Guidance, or delivering local services.</i></p>	<p>Parish Council participating in Borough and County initiatives and lobbying relevant officers on key issues.</p> <p>A Village Design Statement was produced in 2004, but this is not now an adoptable document.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council • District Council • Local Housing Association 	<p>Q 9 Are there any active neighbourhood forums, residents' or tenants' associations?</p>	<p>Annual Parish Meetings, Neighbourhood Watch, Staplehurst Society, PACT, Speedwatch, Access Group (disability), Friends of Health Centre.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council 	<p>Q 10 Involvement in community development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What opportunities have local people had to experience being actively involved in community development? b. What community consultation programmes have been run in the last year? <p>(Worksheets EC2 Q18; T2 Q11,12; T3 Q16 also refer to local government services. Worksheets EN2 Q11; EN3 Q1; EC2 Q5; EC3 Q19 also refer to community involvement))</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Skatepark development, PACT, Staplehurst Partnership, Neighbourhood Watch, Speedwatch, Access Group. (b) None other than for this project.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council • Rural Community Council 	<p>Q 11</p> <p>What support is there to help develop community involvement or co-ordinate building capacity in the community?</p> <p><i>Is there, for example, a dedicated local authority or rural community council officer?</i></p>	<p>There is no dedicated Local Authority or Community Council Officer. Most community involvement with the Borough and County councils is via or promoted by the Parish Council.</p>

3: This part is called a SWOT analysis, where you identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Once you have the information, use the tickboxes in this table to show the Strengths and Weaknesses in the level of community involvement in local decision-making. Also flag up where there are Opportunities to improve things or where there might be Threats in the future. The conclusions give the basis for a summary that can go forward to the Healthcheck Report.

You may need to tick more than one column for each question.

You need to consider what the information you have gathered tells you in the light of these questions:	Write your answers here. Base them on the information you have gathered.	Conclusion					
		It's a Fact	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Need more info
How easily can local people gain access to local government officials or members?	Good access to members; two live locally and regular surgeries are held. No local office or outreach surgery by local govt. officials.		X		X		
How well is the community represented in, or consulted by, local government?	Reasonably well through surgeries, KLLC, Parish Council and local KCC member is a resident.		X				
How well are local issues fully considered in local strategies and community planning?	Formal consultation is limited and local opinion does not often feel reflected in outcomes.					X	
How active and influential is the community in local decision-making?	Very active for major issues, such as the running of the local Health Centre, but otherwise there is apathy.			X			
How well is the community encouraged and supported to become involved in decision-making/development issues?	Good encouragement by Parish Council through its newsletter (Village Update) and informally. No youth council at present.		X		X		

WORKSHEET S5: SPORT, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACE

Task: to find out basic information about the use and quality of sport and leisure facilities in both the town and the surrounding countryside

1: Introduction to the task

Access to sport, leisure and open space facilities contributes to a healthy community. In order to assess what is already available and what residents would like to see you can:

- Undertake a survey of people who use existing facilities
- Carry out an open space character assessment
- Ask local people what they think about the range and quality of existing provision through an attitude survey

Sport and leisure clubs will be an important source of information. Local schools, youth groups or the Groundwork Trust, for example, might be interested in helping with surveys of what people like/dislike about an area of open space. Guidance on undertaking an open space character assessment is given in the Data Sources and Survey Methods Directory.

2: Getting the following information will help you to assess the quality and use of sport and leisure facilities in your area.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
Sub-section 1: Sport & Leisure Facilities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local sports groups • User surveys • User attitude surveys 	<p>Q 1</p> <p>Sports and leisure facilities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Where are local sports and leisure facilities located? b. Are they in good condition? c. How well used are these facilities? d. How affordable are these facilities for local residents? <p>(Worksheets EN3 Q6,7; EC7 Q13, T3 Q17 also refer to recreation & leisure)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Jubilee Field, Surrenden Road park, Tennis & Cricket Club, Diagrit Football Pitch and Golf Course, Golf park all within 1 mile of the village centre. (b) Yes. (c) Well used. (d) Affordable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local sports groups • Library 	<p>Q 2</p> <p>Shared facilities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Which local school/college facilities are open for public use? b. Which are available inside or outside school hours/term time? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The primary school is available for use by local clubs and societies on a bookable basis. b. It is used by some clubs and societies in the evenings and on Saturdays. It is used by the village play-scheme in the summer holidays. It is used by a local church every Sunday morning.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local sports and leisure facilities • Clubs and groups 	<p>Q 3</p> <p>Use of facilities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What proportion of the eligible population belongs to a sport or leisure club? b. How do membership numbers of sports groups compare with the area's total population in appropriate age groups? 	<p>The local cricket and golf parks are the only sports clubs and are small establishments. There is an active football club for young people. Estimated that less than 10% are involved in a local sports club. Staplehurst is not perceived as a 'sports-rich' locality and many residents will travel outside the area for sports interests. There is no indoor sports centre. 57% of respondents to the community survey consider there are insufficient facilities or activities for young people.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey local knowledge • Local Tourist Board • Yellow pages • County Council (ask for information on Rights of Way) 	<p>Q 4</p> <p>Where can residents pursue outdoor sporting activities (for example, walking, horse riding, hire bikes, and rock climbing) or use outdoor activity centres?</p> <p>(Worksheet EN3 Q6 also refers to open space)</p>	<p>There is a local Footpath Walking Club which has produced maps of a variety of local walks. There are many local public footways and bridleways.</p> <p>57% of respondents to the community survey consider there are insufficient facilities or activities for young people.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local sports groups • Local survey 	<p>Q 5</p> <p>Unmet needs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. In which locations are demands for specific sports or leisure facilities not met? b. Why are these needs not met? c. How many people have to travel outside the town to take part in certain sports d. Which sports are they? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Responses to the community survey demonstrate that there are insufficient sporting facilities to meet the needs of the local population. Many people consider the village centre premises to be inadequate to meet the needs of the village. New changing rooms are being built at the local football/playing field. 57% of respondents to the community survey consider there are insufficient facilities or activities for young people. b. No dedicated multi-purpose sports centre. c. The majority of those interested in sport will have to travel outside Staplehurst to take part in their sport. d. Swimming, rugby, football, karate, judo, keep-fit, athletics, 5-a-side football (community survey responses).

Sub-section 2: Open Spaces

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local user surveys • Local plan proposal maps • Parish, District & County Councils • Tourist Information 	<p>Q 6 Open space:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Where are there areas of open space? b. What facilities do they contain? For example, do they have safe play areas and toilets? c. What activities do they allow? For example, do they allow specific sports only, leisure only, or a mixture? d. How well are these open areas/facilities used? e. Which areas or facilities are the most popular? f. What do people find most attractive about these areas? g. Which areas of open space need, and get, continued maintenance or protection? h. Which areas of open space suffer from poor maintenance, litter, graffiti or vandalism? <p><i>Include village greens, recreation grounds, parks, country parks, historic parks, common land and local nature reserves</i></p> <p>(Worksheets EN1; EN2 also refer to environmental features)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Surrenden playing field, Jubilee playing field, plus other small play/grassed areas in estates. b. Two have playgrounds, one has a skate park. One has toilets. c. Mixed use as open fields + skatepark. d. Well used generally by the community though more for general leisure, dog walking, play, than for specific sports. e. See a. f. General use open spaces. g. All the above within the capabilities of the Parish and Borough Councils. h. Surrenden Field suffers most.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council (ask about formally designated open space) 	<p>Q 7 How well does the provision of open space meet the National Playing Fields Association Standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population?</p>	<p>The provision is well below the national standard with only 1 hectare per 1000 population. 57% of respondents to the community survey consider there are insufficient facilities or activities for young people.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local plan proposal maps 	<p>Q 8 Which, if any, residential areas are over 400 metres away from an area of open space?</p> <p>(Worksheets EN1; EN2;EN3; EC6 Q1; EC7 Q18 also refer to the built environment)</p>	<p>Houses in the northern- and southern-most extents of the village, approximately 30% of the households, are not within 400 metres of a playing field, although there are some small public grassed areas in the built-up areas.</p>

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town or Parish Council • National Association of Allotments and Leisure Gardeners 	<p>Q 9 Allotments and settlements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Where is space allocated for allotments in the town, and in the surrounding countryside? b. What is the take up/length of waiting list for them? c. How many are under-used? d. Is there a local allotment forum or similar body? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The land used as allotments was sold by Maidstone Borough Council to Maidstone Housing Association which then evicted the tenants and allocated the land for development. b. Previous to the eviction there were 8 allotment users and a waiting list of 6. c. n/a. d. The Parish Council is attempting to identify alternative sites.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council (ask for Local Plan development proposals) • Current planning applications • Private sector sports and leisure providers 	<p>Q 10 What are the known threats of loss of open space, parks and allotments, or closure of facilities, due to either development proposals or reduction in budgets?</p> <p>(Worksheets EN1 Q7,14; EN3 Q4; EC6 Q1,8,9; T1 Q3 also refer to development. Worksheets EC2 Q18; T2 Q11,12; T3 Q16 also refer to local government services)</p>	<p>The previous allotment site has been targeted for development by the local Housing Association. Open spaces within the main shopping area are being considered for development by the landowners. Some open spaces used as general play areas have been considered as alternative sites for allotments. There has been a high occurrence of infill development in recent years; therefore all green/open spaces are potential sites for commercial development and as such are under threat.</p>

3: This part is called a SWOT analysis, where you identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Once you have the information, use the tickboxes in this table to show the Strengths and Weaknesses in the provision of or access to sports, leisure or open space facilities. Also flag up where there are Opportunities to improve things or where there might be Threats in the future. The conclusions give the basis for a summary that can go forward to the Healthcheck Report.

You may need to tick more than one column for each question.

You need to consider what the information you have gathered tells you in the light of these questions:	Write your answers here. Base them on the information you have gathered.	Conclusion					
		It's a Fact	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Need more info
Are there sufficient sports, leisure and open space facilities to meet the needs of residents? Where are there any gaps or shortfalls?	No. No indoor sports provision other than new changing rooms currently under development. Village Hall (Village Centre) is inadequate. No play facilities at Church Green. 57% of respondents to the community survey consider there are insufficient facilities or activities for young people.	X		X	X		
How well maintained are these areas and facilities? Where is additional management or maintenance needed?	Surrenden Field well maintained locally. Staple Drive play area in need of updating.				X		
Are the facilities accessible and affordable for residents?	No, as all indoor sports facilities are out of area.	X		X			
Are any of these facilities or spaces under threat? What plans are there to ensure that provision is sufficient to meet future demand?	No major schemes planned. Upgrade of Staple Drive play area in process. Maintenance of other facilities could be better.			X	X		

WORKSHEET S6: CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Task: to find out about the breadth of cultural facilities and activities taking place in the town and surrounding countryside

1: Introduction to the task

A rich culture and heritage or distinctive historical and cultural links can add to the attractiveness of a town both for residents and visitors. This task will help you discover how rich and diverse is the cultural life in your town and assist you in determining if more venues, facilities, events, involvement or promotion would be beneficial. Existing local arts and amenity groups will be an important source of information. Where there are gaps in your information you could:

- Carry out an audit of existing cultural and heritage facilities, and the numbers and types of active community groups
- Involve members of the community to undertake an attitude survey to see if current provision and facilities are of good quality and meet the needs of local people

Your town may already have a town trail or other guide to cultural and heritage locations and events. If you haven't, you might want to consider producing a map to record your findings. Some of the information you need on community groups could come from Worksheets S4 and S5. Some of the answers to this worksheet could help you with the Tourism worksheets.

2: Getting the following information will help you to identify the range of cultural and heritage facilities, activities and venues that are available to the community and visitors to the area. It will also help you identify any associations that give the area distinction.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local knowledge • Tourist Information • Yellow Pages • Local website 	<p>Q 1 What range of cultural facilities is available?</p> <p><i>For example, does the town have a theatre, cinema, art gallery, museum and library?</i></p> <p>(Worksheets EN3 Q6,7; EC7 Q13; T3 Q17 also refer to recreation & leisure)</p>	<p>Brattle Farm Museum (selected opening only), Public Library, historic parish church, Village (community) Centre, Weald Tour, Maidstone Driving Tour, public footpath network.</p> <p>No theatre, no cinema, no art gallery, no public museum.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local knowledge • Tourist Information 	<p>Q 2 Local events:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What local events have the potential to draw the whole community together? b. What types of events are these (for example, fairs, festivals, and carnivals)? c. How regular are they? d. How well attended are they? e. What opportunities are there to develop such events? <p>(Worksheets EN2 Q11; EN3 Q1; EC2 Q5; EC3 Q10 also refer to community involvement)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Carnival and Fete for the whole community and, to a lesser degree, horticultural events, drama productions, music school, church events, school events, railway exhibition, arts events. b. As above. c. Once per year for each mentioned. d. Well attended. e. Village carnival used to have a parade but this no longer operates. Future development of all such events is largely dependent on increased volunteer activity and funding available.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
Local knowledge Town and Parish Councils	<p>Q 3</p> <p>Community venues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What community venues are there in the area? Where are the community centres, village halls and other venues? How does the number and location of available venues in the town and surrounding villages compare to the population and number of local community groups? What is the quality of these community venues and their facilities? <p>(Worksheets EN3 Q6,7; EC7 Q13; T3 Q17 also refer to recreation & leisure)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Village Centre, Margaret Howard Hall, Youth Club Centre, Church School Room, Parish Rooms, Scouts Centre, Guides Centre, Public Library, Primary School, three churches. Generally spread around the village. There is a reasonable spread of facilities which are generally currently well used by community groups. With the exception of the public library and school, all the other community venues are old and antiquated. Responses to the community survey show that the Village Centre building is perceived to not be fit for its purpose as it is in a poor state of disrepair and is poorly configured and inadequate for Staplehurst's burgeoning population. 68% of community survey respondents believe the current Village Centre should be updated or redeveloped on the current site. There is frequent comment that events and activities at the Village Centre are poorly advertised. There is confusion about who is responsible for running the Centre.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local arts groups Library (see local directory) 	<p>Q 4</p> <p>Arts-based community groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How many people are involved in arts-based community groups? What is this figure as a proportion of the local population? What facilities are there to meet the needs of the local arts groups? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> There is an active drama society and there have been two individuals who, with support from others, have developed annual creative arts events. Less than 5% are involved in arts-based community groups, though more will get involved in/attend annual events. Hire of community buildings. The Village Centre is known to be inadequate for drama productions due to its size and lack of dedicated stage.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local knowledge • Local history groups • Tourist Information • Library • Internet 	<p>Q 5</p> <p>Associations and links</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What strong associations or links does the area have? b. What locations are involved? c. How well are these associations promoted? <p><i>Look at cultural associations (for example, famous people and events, literary links, famous products, and local foods), and historical associations (for example, battles, historic ruins, houses and parkland).</i></p> <p>(Worksheets EN1; EN2 also refer to environmental features and local distinctiveness)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Brattle Farm Museum is a record of local history, but this is privately run on a very limited opening basis. The Staplehurst Society has a round-village walk of historic properties, but this is not particularly promoted; the parish church door is one of the oldest relics in the country. Charles Dickens was involved in rescuing people from a local train crash. Staplehurst is on the route of a Wealden tour, but not as a stopping destination. b. See above. c. Not well.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local religious organisations • Library • Tourist Information 	<p>Q 6</p> <p>Religious establishments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What religious establishments are active in the community? b. Which denominations are served? c. How well attended are the religious establishments? d. How do religious establishment groups work with other groups and the local authorities on social issues? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Staplehurst All Saints Parish Church, Staplehurst United Reformed Church, Staplehurst Free Church, and Staplehurst Strict Baptist Church. b. Church of England, United Reformed Church, Evangelical Free, Strict Baptists. c. Well attended. d. Mainly by involvement of church-going individuals in local activities according to personal interests. Many church-run voluntary and outreach programmes.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
	<p>Q 7 Local reportage:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What mechanisms does the local community have to report and comment on local events and issues? b. Where are they based? c. Who contributes to them? d. How effective are they in reaching their intended audiences? <p>Is there, for example, a local paper, radio station, TV station, web-based forum, or town website?</p> <p>(Worksheets EN2 Q11; EN3 Q1; EC2 Q5; EC3 Q10 also refer to community involvement)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Village Forum (on Parish Council website), Kent Messenger newspaper, Parish Magazine, notice boards, Parish Council meetings, Parish Council quarterly update news-sheet, monthly surgeries with Councillors and Police, mobile police station, Borough Council newsletters b. Various locations around the locality. c. Wide variety of local organisations, clubs, societies, traders and residents. d. Variable. Not everyone receives the Parish Magazine, buys a local paper or uses the Village Forum. Information does not necessarily reach everyone or with sufficient repetition and frequency for all mechanisms to be fully effective.

3: This part is called a SWOT analysis, where you identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Once you have the information, use the tickboxes in this table to show the Strengths and Weaknesses in the breadth of culture and heritage facilities and activities. Also flag up where there are Opportunities to improve things or where there might be Threats in the future. The conclusions give the basis for a summary that can go forward to the Healthcheck Report.

You may need to tick more than one column for each question.

You need to consider what the information you have gathered tells you in the light of these questions:	Write your answers here. Base them on the information you have gathered.	Conclusion					
		It's a Fact	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Need more info
Are there are sufficient cultural and heritage venues and facilities to meet the community's needs?	No, virtually no cultural and heritage facilities.	X		X	X		
How well do current events and activities reflect the area's culture, heritage and strong historical or cultural associations? Have any distinctive or famous links been ignored?	Poorly. Staplehurst is not a destination for anything, either for local residents or potential visitors.			X			
Are members of the community actively engaged in the area's culture and heritage?	Community engagement is limited; Staplehurst Society but little else.			X			
Are the local culture and heritage sufficiently promoted?	No.			X	X		

WORKSHEET S7: THE COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

Task: To evaluate whether the information, advice and other civil legal services available to people in your town and its hinterland are appropriate to their needs.

1: Introduction to the task

The sort of issues that might cause people to need legal help include those to do with housing, welfare benefits, debt, and employment. These are common needs of people all over the country. In some towns there may also be issues about immigration, mental health, health and community care, consumer rights, and education. You may have identified particular problems with some of these areas elsewhere in your Healthcheck (for example, the number of children being excluded from school) and should now be thinking more about what help these people might need to address their problems.

Community Legal Service Direct

Community Legal Service Direct is a key part of the Legal Services Commission's strategy to improve access to justice and to combat social exclusion. It helps people deal with their legal problems by providing:

- free information, help and advice on a range of common legal issues
- assistance and guidance in finding other sources of help

In addition, those people eligible for legal aid can get free telephone advice from a qualified legal adviser about welfare benefits, debt and education.

Many people prefer to use telephone advice, even when face-to-face help is available. Community Legal Service Direct (CLSD) is available via a national helpline (0845 345 4 345) and a website (www.clsdirect.org.uk). Telephone advice is particularly welcomed by people who have difficulty accessing traditional legal services, such as those living in remote areas or with reduced mobility. The Internet also is an accessible channel for the delivery of legal information and help, and the CLSD website is one of the most popular UK-based legal information websites, with around 50,000 visitors a month. When face-to-face help is more appropriate, CLSD will provide a valuable entry point to this type of service.

For more information about the Community Legal Service you can contact the Regional Planning and Partnership Team in the Legal Services Commission regional office.

The local Community Legal Service Partnership (CLSP) and their Strategic Plan should be able to help answer some of these questions. The Legal Services Commission's regional office can tell you how to get hold of your local CLSP's Strategic Plan. (Contact details are shown below.)

2: Getting the following information will help you assess how effectively community legal services are provided in the area.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
Sub-section 1: Strategic Framework for Community Legal Services		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local CLSP Strategic Plan 	<p>Q 1 What are the particular demographics and the needs of different communities of your town and its hinterland that the CLSP Strategic Plan takes into consideration?</p> <p><i>Look at groups such as: young people, older people, ethnic minorities, disabled, etc.</i></p>	<p>No evidence or knowledge of awareness or availability of CLSP locally.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local CLSP Strategic Plan 	<p>Q 2 How does the CLSP Strategic Plan take into consideration travel access issues for people?</p>	<p>No evidence or knowledge of awareness or availability of CLSP locally.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local CLSP Strategic Plan 	<p>Q 3 What are the priorities in the CLSP Strategic Plan for improving access to legal services?</p>	<p>No evidence or knowledge of awareness or availability of CLSP locally.</p>

Sub-section 2: Ease of Obtaining Legal Help		
Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
	<p>Q 4 How many solicitors are there in your town, and how many of them have contracts with the Legal Services Commission?</p> <p>(Worksheets EC4 Q2,3; EC5; T2 Q12; T3 q16 also refer to retail and service sector)</p>	<p>There are two local solicitors. Neither have contracts with LSC.</p>
	<p>Q 5 Civil legal services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Which 'Not for Profit' organisations provide civil legal services in your town and how many have contracts with the Legal Services Commission? b. Are the opening times of these services adequate for the needs of your communities? <p><i>Examples of organisations that might be providing civil legal services are the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and Shelter.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A debt advice centre is in the process of being established by the local churches partnership. There are no existing not-for-profit operations. b. n/a.
	<p>Q 6 Does the local council(s) have offices where people can access services in the town?</p> <p>(Worksheets EC2 Q18; T2 Q11,12; T3 Q16 also refer to local government services)</p>	<p>No. Only enquiries to/advice from Parish Council.</p>

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
	<p>Q 7 Where are the Community Legal Service Information Points?</p> <p><i>These may be in the library or other easy access building. They should clearly display the Community Legal Service Quality Mark.</i></p> <p>(Worksheets EC4 Q2,3; EC5; T2 Q12; T3 Q16 also refer to retail and service sector)</p>	None.
	<p>Q 8 Which outlets in the town carry a full range of the Community Legal Service Information Leaflets on aspects of civil law?</p>	No evidence or knowledge of awareness or availability of CLSP locally.
	<p>Q 9 How are the following national services advertised locally?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Legal Service Direct National Helpline (0845 345 4345)? • Community Legal Service Direct website (www.clsdirect.org.uk)? 	No evidence or knowledge of awareness or availability of CLSP locally.
	<p>Q10 Where can people go to get access to the Community Legal Service Direct National Helpline and Community Legal Service Direct website?</p> <p><i>Is there, for example, a library (or other building that is easily accessible to the community) that provides public access to such facilities as a public telephone point, internet point, or kiosk?</i></p>	Library. No other public access/information points.

3: This part is called a SWOT analysis, where you identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Once you have the information, use the tickboxes in this table to show the Strengths and Weaknesses in the provision of community legal services. Also flag up where there are Opportunities to improve things or where there might be Threats in the future. The conclusions give the basis for a summary that can go forward to the Healthcheck Report.

You may need to tick more than one column for each question.

You need to consider what the information you have gathered tells you in the light of these questions:	Write your answers here. Base them on the information you have gathered.	Conclusion					
		It's a Fact	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Need more info
Does the local CLSP Strategic Plan accurately reflect the need for civil legal service in your town and its hinterland?	No evidence or knowledge of awareness or availability of CLSP locally.			X			
Are there particular issues or priorities regarding access to civil legal services by residents of your town and its hinterland that you think the CLSP has missed?	No evidence or knowledge of awareness or availability of CLSP locally.			X			
How easy is it for people to get access to community legal services and help?	No evidence or knowledge of awareness or availability of CLSP locally.			X			