

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET

Decision Made: Wednesday 11 March 2015

Report of the Joint Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) Task and Finish Group - Joint Mid Kent Improvement Partnership

Task and Finish Group Report on Governance and Communication

Issue for Decision

To consider the recommendations within the 'Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group report on governance and communication' and Cabinet's draft responses to these recommendations.

Decision Made

1. That the draft responses to the recommendations made within the 'Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group report on governance and communication' be agreed.
2. That the Leader and Chief Executive be instructed to initiate a review which would include the MKIP terms of reference and range of shared service arrangements.

Reasons for Decision

A special meeting of the three Overview & Scrutiny Committees of Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils was held on 7 July 2014 to review the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP). At this meeting, it was recommended that a Joint Task & Finish group be established to consider how MKIP's governance arrangements should be taken forward and how an MKIP communications plan should be developed.

A review was conducted by the Joint Task and Finish group through a number of question and answer sessions which involved speaking to members of the MKIP Board, Shared Service Managers, client Heads of Service from each of the authorities, Heads of Communication, S151 officers, Monitoring officers and external partners.

The Joint Task and Finish group carried out detailed analysis of the governance arrangements for MKIP and questioned witnesses on the methods of communication currently used internally and externally. The key findings of this review were presented in a report and highlighted

where enhancements could be made to improve current procedures and strengthen the practices of MKIP.

A second special meeting of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees of Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils was held on 12 January 2015 to consider the report of the Joint Task and Finish group and the recommendations made.

Draft responses to the Overview and Scrutiny recommendations were set out in an appendix to the report for consideration by Cabinet.

Several of the recommendations related to improvements in the engagement of Overview and Scrutiny in the decision making arising from the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership and scrutiny of MKIP shared services. The current MKIP governance arrangements were reviewed in 2012. The draft responses reflect the fact that Maidstone Council will change its governance arrangements from May 2015 from which point a Committee system will replace the current Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny arrangements.

A number of recommendations from the Joint Overview and Scrutiny group stepped outside the agreed scope of the review and related to management arrangements for MKIP shared services; these are identified in the draft responses.

The responses from the Cabinets from Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells will be available when the MKIP Board meets in late March.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

The Cabinet could decide not to consider the recommendations within the Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group report, however the recommendations are based on evidence from a wide range of sources and delivers against the Council priority: 'Corporate and Customer Excellence' outlined in paragraph 1.5 of the report to Cabinet.

Background Papers

None

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Head of Finance and Resources by: 19 March 2015.
--