

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION

Decision Made: 10 July 2009

CONSIDERATION OF GROWTH POINT REVENUE EXPENDITURE

Issue for Decision

To consider the expenditure of Growth Point revenue funding in activity to support the local economy.

Decision Made

1. That the expenditure of Growth Point revenue funding is approved and that delegated authority be given to the Director of Prosperity and Regeneration, in consultation with me, to fund activity in support of the local economy and regeneration up to a total of £25,000.
2. That an annual report on Growth Point revenue funded projects is presented to me at the end of each year.
3. That a report to consider the rest of the Growth Point revenue funding be presented to me later in the year.

Reasons for Decision

Growth Point revenue funding of £403,338 is allocated to pay for staff and activity to support growth (September 2008 Cabinet Report on the Reprioritisation of Growth Point Expenditure).

Two specific areas of activity have been identified. The first offers excellent insights and local intelligence into the state of the property market in the Borough and the second aims to support the independent retail sector. These are:

1. Co-star Focus Property database
2. "Make It Maidstone - Make It Independent" campaign

Co-Star is the UK's first and most comprehensive supplier of online commercial property information. Information is updated every 30 days and includes:

- Background, details of each and every property in the Borough
- Comparables, information on market rents and analysis of recent deals done.
- Availability of property, details of properties that are currently on the market
- Demand, establishes market demand of a town through being able to know which operators are already in situ (together with information on the rent and terms of the lease/purchase) and a list of those companies which have an active requirement for the given location
- Occupier Analysis, identify which firms are located in the surrounding area
- Photographs & Maps, displays what the property looks like and where it is

The purchase of this information for a year costs £2,424 for three licenses. The information will aid the Corporate Property Manager obtain best consideration on property sales and purchases and also the Economic Development Manager develop initiatives to promote the local economy. The Development Control team will find the information useful when negotiating S106 agreements with developers and the Spatial Planning team will find the information useful in gathering evidence to support the Local Development Framework and Core Strategy. Maidstone Local Strategic Partnership aims to monitor the state of the local economy and a report summarizing key movements in the property market i.e. vacancy levels etc..., on a monthly or quarterly basis could form part of this intelligence gathering process.

The License fee needs to be renewed annually. A process of evaluating the usefulness of the data will be built into the first year to test the value of it to the Council.

"Make It Maidstone – Make it Independent" is a promotional campaign to support independent retailers in the town centre, in partnership with the KM Group and Town Centre Management. A four week campaign in the KM paper, Extra, kmfm and online will allow independent retailers to advertise themselves and each receive advertising with a media value worth over £1,200 at today's trading prices for £260 plus VAT (£65 per week). TCMi have also negotiated with Dempson Crooke Ltd, a local paper products manufacturer, a supply of 10,000 paper bags. Each participating retailer will receive around 300 to 400 of these paper bags in support of the campaign and to continue to press the message surrounding the impact on the environment of non recyclable plastic bags. The Council's contribution will be £3,000 which helps keep costs down for the retailers. The Council will have an advertising section in the paper each week as well.

Other activity which requires small scale expenditure will inevitably arise during the year. It was proposed therefore that delegated authority is given to the Director of Prosperity and Regeneration, in consultation with me, to fund such activity where it supports local economic development and regeneration up to £25,000 in total. A report on Growth Point revenue funded activity will be presented to me at the end of each year.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

An alternative approach would be not to fund this activity which would result in a significant lost opportunity to become better informed about the state of the property market in Maidstone. It would also mean the loss of the partnership funding provided by TCMi and the KM group in a campaign that will support the town's independent retailers, a sector of the economy which is under particular pressure during this recession.

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 Scrutiny Manager by: 17 July 2009
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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR
REGENERATION**

Decision Made: 10 July 2009

**RESPONSE TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORT: THE
ENFORCEMENT OF PLANNING CONDITIONS AND
COMPLIANCE WITH SECTIONS 106 AGREEMENTS**

Issue for Decision

To consider the Scrutiny Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan (SCRAIP) that has been completed in response to the Overview and Scrutiny report on the Enforcement of Planning Conditions and Compliance with Section 106 Agreements.

Decision Made

That the responses set out in the Scrutiny Committee Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan, attached as Appendix A, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

It is a constitutional requirement that a response is given to Overview and Scrutiny reports. The reasons for the responses are given in the attached SCRAIP where appropriate.

It is important to note that following the restructure many changes are already underway or have been implemented in Enforcement since February 2009. Therefore a number of the responses are listed as ongoing or have already been auctioned.

The response also needs to be considered in the context of the Internal Audit Report on Planning Enforcement that considered and will raise a number of issues that overlap with the recommendations made in the Scrutiny report. As a result both reports will need to be considered before a full response on those issues can be given. The response to the Audit report will therefore be made available to the Scrutiny Committee.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

An alternative set of responses could be agreed but this is not recommended as the attached SCRAIP has been completed with the responses given taking into account the feasibility of the proposed actions,

the workloads of officers and the existing timetable for changes in Enforcement.

Background Papers

None

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