

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET

Decision Made: 13 October 2010

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Issue for Decision

To inform cabinet of the proposed timetable for strategic planning for 11/12.

Decision Made

1. That a new Strategic Plan be written for 2011-14.
2. That the strategic planning process and timetable, as set out below, be agreed:-

Date	Action
13 October 2010	Cabinet consider the strategic planning proposals
October-November 2010	Development of the Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy
December 2010	Cabinet consider strategic plan update and/or agree the draft Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy for consultation
December-January 2011	Consultation with members, residents and partners
January 2011	Overview and Scrutiny consider draft Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy
February 2011	Cabinet consider draft Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy including recommendation from scrutiny.
March 2011	Council agree and adopt the Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy
April 2011	Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2010-11 update

Reasons for Decision

The corporate planning process within the council ensures the overall vision for the borough is delivered. The medium term key objectives in the Strategic Plan are developed alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy to ensure a consistent approach between service delivery and budgets. Service planning allows the council to convert high level objectives from the Strategic Plan into actions for each directorate, service or team across the council, which then feeds into individual staff appraisals.

The Strategic Plan 2009-12 was developed alongside the Sustainable Community Strategy for Maidstone. To ensure that the Council's objectives were clearly aligned with those for the borough, the Council adopted the vision for Maidstone which was set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

In the report of 12 August 2009 it was agreed that Cabinet would decide annually whether to update the existing Strategic Plan or to create a new one.

There is significant change in progress for the public sector as a consequence of economic change at a national level. As a consequence, the Council's Strategic Plan requires full scale review and therefore it is proposed to rewrite the strategic plan for the period commencing 2011/12.

In order to inform this, Cabinet has already given informal consideration to the authority's objectives and priorities for the future, alongside developing the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. Over the summer both the Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet have undertaken a pairwise analysis to prioritise 12 of the Council's main service areas into high, medium and low priority. Both Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet, when considering these services, identified an overarching priority. For Cabinet this was identified as achieving economic prosperity in the context of focusing on directly provided services. Shadow Cabinet identified achieving a good quality of life for residents with a good quality environment as the focus for its prioritisation of services.

Cabinet Service Prioritisation Table

REVENUE	High	Medium	Low
Invest	Economic Development		
Maintain	Parking and Transport Housing		Environmental Health
Reduce	Planning and Building Control	Community Safety Waste Collection and Recycling Community Development Recreation, Sport and Open Spaces	Culture and Heritage Tourism Street Cleansing

Once Cabinet had carried out this exercise, they reviewed the services to determine which should be invested in, which should be maintained and where investment should be reduced. It should be noted that services identified to be maintained does not mean maintaining the cost of the service, for example with the planning service it was identified that the service level should be maintained but the service should be more efficient. Where the service has been identified to be reduced, this refers

to the cost of the service and also does not necessarily mean a reduction in the service.

Following this exercise, as part of the Council's medium term financial planning process, where there was synergy between Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet in terms of service priorities and savings, joint meetings have been held to consider savings and priorities for those service areas.

In light of the exercise undertaken two clear priorities have emerged for the Council from the Cabinet: Achieving Economic and Environmental prosperity which is where Cabinet wants Maidstone to be and Corporate and Customer Excellence in how services are delivered which is how we will get there. The next stage of the process in relation to strategic planning will be to identify the outcomes the Council wishes to achieve over the next three years, what actions are needed to achieve these and how success will be measured. The focus at this stage will be to ensure we have a focused and streamlined set of actions and measures for the next three years.

Heads of Service, as part of the medium term financial and strategic planning process, will be tasked with identifying savings and service changes in-light of Cabinet's prioritisation. Public budget consultation is currently underway asking residents "what matters to them" in relation to our discretionary services. The outcome from this consultation will also feed into the Strategic Plan.

Strategic planning process

As agreed at the Cabinet meeting of 12 August 2009, the Strategic Plan will be updated or rewritten for 2011/2012 to take account of changes in circumstances and shifts in priorities. This is particularly important as this will be the first update since the change in Government.

An update would include:

- A review of all the key objectives and associated actions;
- An update of what was achieved in the year (in 2010/11 we...);
- An update to any local or national context where relevant;
- An update to the foreword;
- An update of the Sustainable Community Strategy refresh.

An update would not include:

- A change to the design of the document
- A change to the structure of the document
- A re-writing of the document

A complete rewrite could involve changing all of the above if required.

The Head of Change and Scrutiny and the Head of Finance will meet with Heads of Service and Cabinet members to ensure a streamlined approach to strategic planning, ensuring that Cabinet priorities are identified whilst taking into account service plans and budgets.

The recommendations from these meetings will be presented to the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December before being presented to the Cabinet in the draft Strategic Plan Report in December.

Timetable for developing the Strategic Plan 2011/12 update

The following timetable is proposed for the development of the 2011/12 update.

Date	Action
13 October 2010	Cabinet consider the strategic planning proposals
October-November 2010	Development of the Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy
December 2010	Cabinet consider strategic plan update and/or agree the draft Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy for consultation
December-January 2011	Consultation with members, residents and partners
January 2011	Overview and Scrutiny consider draft Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy
February 2011	Cabinet consider draft Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy including recommendation from scrutiny.
March 2011	Council agree and adopt the Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy
April 2011	Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2010-11 update

Alternatives considered and why rejected

The Cabinet could decide not to produce any form of updated or rewritten plan. Due to the change in Government and the associated policy and service changes this was not thought appropriate.

Background Papers

The following are useful background documents and are available on request from the Policy and Performance team, via e-mail on policyandperformance@maidstone.gov.uk, by phone on 01622 602262 or on the Council's website

- The Strategic Plan 2009/12
- The Strategic Plan update 2010/11
- The Sustainable Communities Strategy

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 Change and Scrutiny by: **22 October 2010**