

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL
RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET

Decision Made: 09 March 2011

HIGH STREET IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Issue for Decision

To consider whether to approve the final designs and budget for the High Street Improvement project.

Decision Made

1. That the final design, as illustrated in Appendix 1 of the report of the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Cultural Services, be agreed.
2. That phase 1a and 1b, as illustrated in Appendix 3 of the report of the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Cultural Services, be implemented in 2011/12.
3. That the changes to the Lower High Street, as set out in Appendix 4 of the report of the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Cultural Services, be implemented.
4. That delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Cultural Services, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Regeneration, to agree design changes during the construction period to keep the project within budget if unforeseen circumstances arise.
5. That a further report is brought to Cabinet to consider the implementation of Phase 2 when capital resources become available.
6. That the resources for the High Street project be released in accordance with the details set out under the heading Capital Programme to 2014/15 below and the funding for schemes during 2013/14 and 2014/15, as detailed in table 2 below, be dependent upon receipt of future resources and consideration in accordance with the principles set out in the medium term financial strategy.
7. That Ringway be appointed to undertake stage 2 of its contract, limited to Phase 1a and Phase 1b, following its successful completion of the Stage 1 Professional Services contract.
8. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Legal Services to enter into a contract (on terms to be agreed by the Director of Regeneration and Communities) with Ringway to undertake the construction phase of the Stage 2 contract limited to Phase 1a and 1b.

9. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Legal Services to enter into a contract (on terms to be agreed by the Director of Regeneration and Communities) with Letts Wheeler Architects to undertake the Project Management function of the contractor and Focus to act as Quantity Surveyor on behalf of the Council.
10. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Legal Services to enter into a Section 278 agreement with Kent County Council to undertake works to the public highway.
11. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Legal Services to enter into an appropriate legal agreement (on terms to be agreed by the Director of Regeneration and Communities) with Kent County Council to secure their £600,000 contribution to the scheme and their funding of the CDM Coordinator.

Reasons for Decision

In May 2009, following a Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) managed international design competition, the Cabinet agreed to appoint Letts Wheeler Architects to take forward their winning design to a detailed design stage.

Letts Wheeler led a consortium of consultants including Martin Stockley Associates (Civil Engineers), Sutton Vane Associates (lighting designers) and Chris Tipping, a public realm artist. Maidstone Borough Council has also appointed Focus Consultants as the Council's quantity surveyors and cost consultants.

Kent County Council has agreed to fund the appointment of Jacobs UK to act as CDM Coordinator (Health and Safety) and contribute £600,000 towards the project.

Project Description

The project aims to reduce the amount of physical space dedicated to vehicular traffic in the High Street by relocating the carriageway to the north side of the street. In doing so two large pedestrian "squares" will be created around the Cannon in the Lower High Street and around the Queen Victoria Monument in Upper High Street. The carriageway will have a kerb to delineate its route. This is not a shared surfaces scheme such as the one in Ashford. As much street clutter as possible will be removed and a mixture of granite colours used to surface the pavement and new public squares – with darker bands of granite setts, highlighting the old burgher plots in the High Street and creating a more pedestrian friendly environment. The carriageway will be surfaced with a black asphalt to ensure a clear distinction between the road and pedestrian areas. Asphalt is easy to repair and maintain and offers cost savings for the project.

Two-way traffic will be maintained to enable buses to access the town centre and taxis will be allowed both up and down the High Street, which is an improvement on the current situation.

New trees hide some of the poorer quality buildings and add to the spaces "liveability" whilst the rest of the street is kept clear to expose the many beautiful listed buildings. The plan proposes to remove 9 existing trees and plant 15 new trees. 3 trees at the bottom of the High Street will be retained. Of some sensitivity is the proposed removal of the Plane Tree in front of the Town Hall. This Plane Tree obscures the historic Town Hall and the root system has lifted, and continues to lift, the paving slabs surrounding it, creating a trip hazard. Staff at the Visitor Information Centre in the Town Hall, have had to attend a number of incidences where elderly and infirm pedestrians have headed for the wooden seating around the trunk of the tree and tripped. The bench seat itself has moved, because of the buckling paving, and is no longer flat.

The Maidstone Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (February 2009) reinforces this view stating that "Trees outside the Town Hall and Nos 8/9 are now too large and too close to the building, obscuring views of its fine architecture and deeply overshadowing it". The design proposes to remove the tree and seat and replace it with three new semi mature trees around which new seating will be introduced to create meeting points and places for social interaction as part of a new town square between the Town Hall and the Queen's Monument, see Appendix 2 of the report of the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Cultural Services.

A new lighting scheme has been designed to create better, safer overall lighting of the street, whilst avoiding sky glow, and make features of the trees, seats and cannon plinth at night. The area is a focus for the night time economy with visitors and residents attending the many bars, pubs, nightclubs and restaurants.

A visual interpretation of the High Street's history, its people and businesses will be illustrated at points throughout the scheme by honing and scoring decorative patterns and shapes in to the granite paving.

The temporary toilets normally put out on a Friday and Saturday night outside the Town Hall will be retained. The Butterfly toilet in the Lower High Street will be removed and stored in pristine condition. All underground drainage and ducting will be retained so that the toilet can be reinstalled at little cost if needed.

The subway under Fairmeadow will not be closed and the proposed new steps up to the crossing will not be constructed due to issues of cost. However the visual approach to the bridge gyratory from the High Street will be improved.

Consultation

The final design has been influenced by feedback from a programme of consultation with stakeholders undertaken over the last 18 months, including bus operators, taxi representatives, disabled groups, Kent County Council, retailers and Town Centre Management.

The issue of access for all, including disabled persons in to the town centre has been taken very seriously from the beginning. The new carriageway will have a kerb to delineate its route. Public transport

including buses and taxis will be able to serve the High Street. This is not a shared surfaces scheme such as the one in Ashford. A number of meetings have been held with representatives of the visually impaired, including Kent Association for the Blind, Guide Dogs for the Blind, as well as those representing physically disabled groups to understand their needs. Age Concern and Kent County Council's Mobility Management Project Officer have also been involved and consulted. An RNIB Pan Disability Advisor has been appointed and has produced an Access Audit on the scheme. A significant number of design alterations have been made as a result of these discussions which have been particularly welcomed by the Guide Dogs for the Blind and the Kent Association for the Blind.

The design team and Council officers held a public exhibition in the The Mall Chequers on the 28th January 2010 and 60 comments forms were filled in and returned. The overwhelming feedback from this event was positive and in favour of the proposals. The designs were also exhibited in the Maidstone Gateway from the 8th February to the 13th February. A website with an online feedback form was established linked directly from the home page of the Borough Council's website www.maidstone.gov.uk. Feedback from consultation events has resulted in alterations and refinements to the design.

Through the planning process the plan was advertised and the Planning Committee made a number of proposals to improve the designs including the addition of more trees. Planning Permission and Listed Building consent were granted in June 2010.

This work has been successfully concluded. The design team has given careful consideration to, and been able to respond to, the needs of all groups. The project now has the support of bus operators, taxi representatives, the disability focus group and most retailers. Consultation with the public has generated widespread support.

Regeneration Benefits

The public realm is a key backdrop which provides the setting to the character of our towns, particularly in areas of recognized importance such as Conservation Areas. Their design and management is therefore of crucial importance. The High Street falls within the Maidstone Centre Conservation Area. This area scored very poorly on English Heritage's annual conservation area survey 2010, due in part to the poor quality of the public realm and the rate of vacancies at upper floor levels. Unless improvements are made the Conservation Area is likely to be placed on the annual 'Heritage at Risk' register. The new designs and investment planned for the High Street will overcome and deliver many of the improvements needed and recommended in the Maidstone Centre Conservation Area Appraisal, adopted by the Council in February 2009. This should mean that, if implemented, the Conservation Area should not remain at risk for long.

Furthermore, economic competitiveness and quality of place are closely linked. The Government recognises that quality of life factors, including quality of place appear increasingly important in attracting private sector

investment and skilled workers. If Maidstone is to continue as the commercial and retail hub of Kent, the Borough Council must invest in its public realm to ensure that the County Town can compete successfully with other areas.

The Borough Council has therefore taken the lead in proposing this investment, and is determined to create the right conditions for economic development in the town. This objective is being fully supported by Kent County Council.

The project will regenerate the centre and rebalance the commercial heart of Maidstone – broadening the shopping appeal from just Fremlins Walk, Week Street and the Mall. The project area contains many independent retailers which add to Maidstone's distinctiveness as a place. It will attract more visitors, it will increase footfall and will increase the viability of existing shops and attract new shops into the area.

The need for the project, and the potential economic benefits, has been set out in an independent report by leading consultants, Colin Buchanan and Partners ("CB"). CB has previously demonstrated how to value the economic and financial value associated with investments in good street design in research for both Transport for London (TfL) and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE). This report quantified the quality of the existing town centre using the Pedestrian Environment Review System (PERS); an audit tool for measuring the quality of the pedestrian environment by placing scores on a number of established characteristics e.g. quality of the surfaces, legibility, lighting etc. The research findings enable an evidence-based approach to the design, appraisal and funding of high street improvement works.

The research found that the quality of environment within the study area is currently poor, with all 15 characteristics scoring negatively, the only exception being 'effective width' of footpaths with a score of zero, indicating an average standard in the PERS evaluation and therefore still necessitating significant improvement. This is particularly significant considering it falls within the Maidstone Centre Conservation Area.

The report goes on to state that the project, if implemented, will increase footfall and generate £4.5 million of additional visitor expenditure in the town and create nearly 100 new jobs in both the day and night time economy. This is particularly important as the High Street Ward is one of the most deprived wards in Kent and England (top 20%) with an unemployment rate of 5.7% (July 2010).

The new designs and investment will overcome and deliver many of the improvements needed and recommended in the Maidstone Centre Conservation Area Appraisal, adopted by the Council in February 2009.

This type of investment has been proved to work elsewhere. In New Road in Brighton a public realm project resulted in a 22% increase in cycling and a 162% increase in pedestrian activity.

Contractor

Following the Cabinet decision of 14th April 2010, regarding the High Street Improvement project, an OJEU restricted tendering procedure resulted in Ringway being appointed as the main contractor in May 2010. This appointment was separated into two stages. Stage 1 required Ringway to work in a professional services role alongside the design team for a period of 4 months.

This period has been used to obtain the full benefit of Ringway's experience in construction sequencing, value engineering, programming and general viability.

The appointment of the contractor to undertake Stage 2, the construction phase, is dependent upon funding being available and on the contractor's satisfactory performance during Stage 1. Ringway's performance has been good and their team has been proactive and made significant contributions to the work of the design team.

Kent County Council has approved the Stage 1 Highway Technical Audit and Safety Audit. The Stage 2 Highway Technical Audit is being progressed as is the Section 278 agreement required by KCC to undertake works in the Highway. Importantly KCC has agreed to waive Commuted Sum payments to cover the long term maintenance of the road.

Maintenance

Granite has been selected as the dominant paving material for the scheme. It is hardwearing and durable material that will be easy to clean and maintain. A strong grout will be used which will enable the surface to be cleaned with a jet wash. Four types of granite will be laid to create an attractive mix and varying pattern. This rich mix of colours will help camouflage everyday urban scuffs and stains making them less visible. The granite is extremely dense material and capable of resisting oily stains from vehicles (e.g. Bank Street loading and unloading) and fast food outlets. A trial of the granite has taken place on a small patch laid down in front of the Town Hall. It has resisted staining and even paint has been successfully removed. The use of black asphalt in the carriage way will mean repairs are quick and cheap to undertake.

KCC will be requested to designate the High Street one of Special Engineering Difficulty (SED) and raise a Section 58 notice. Utility companies will be obliged to carry out planned work within 3 months of the notice being issued i.e. either before or during the works to lay the new granite surfaces. There after only emergency repairs and new customer connections will be allowed to take place in the first 5 years of the street being completed. This notice will ensure materials are reinstated by the utility companies and the quality of the work will be controlled by KCC.

Post construction events and activity

The construction specification has taken into account the desire to animate the new town squares with events and music. Electricity

connection points will be installed in the paving around the new Town Square and around the Cannon Plinth. Water supplies have been specified too, if required, for specialist/occasional markets and other events. Event organisers will be encouraged to use the new space e.g. Town Centre Management's Jazz Festival.

The Christmas Lights display in the new street will have to be very different to the current one. The Lighting Canopy, supported by temporary large steel columns, will not be continued and the existing lights hung in the trees will be discontinued. A specification for new lighting sockets and power cables has been designed and will be installed to enable new Christmas Lights to be erected.

Opportunities for events and performances in the centre of town will be created. The design will give the High Street back to the community, for social interaction, to linger and meet up by increasing the space available to pedestrians. Spaces will be created for people to perform, dance, play music, hold specialised markets and other events. For those in the community who want to do this for charity or in support of a local group, MBC will offer to facilitate the event through the Council's Town Centre Premises License.

Main Changes

Since April 2010 a number of changes have been made following consultation with stakeholders, as a result of the planning process and to keep the project costs within budget. The main changes to the design since April 2010 are as follows:

- Signalised crossing points will be retained at the bottom of Lower Stone Street, at the junction of Mill Street and Bank Street and in King Street opposite the entrance to the Mall. All other signalised crossing points will be removed in favour of the courtesy crossing points.
- Additional trees will be added to the scheme and a mix of Field Maple, Hornbeam and Cherry will be planted.
- Trees will be introduced to the north side of King Street rather than the south side as previously shown and planted between the bus shelters. This change was necessary in response to a safety audit concern.
- The proposed courtesy crossing at the junction of Mill Street and Bank Street has been removed in favour of the signalised crossing point.
- The location of some of the courtesy crossing points has been changed to increase the space available for buses to pass each other and access bus stops. Bus lay bys have been lengthened and the distance between bus stops widened.
- The temporary toilets normally put out on a Friday and Saturday night outside the Town Hall will be retained. The Butterfly toilet in the Lower High Street will be removed and stored in pristine condition. All underground drainage and ducting will be retained so that the toilet can be reinstalled at little cost if needed.
- The lighting scheme has been reduced, however the following elements have been kept: under seat lighting, up lighting of trees, lighting of Cannon Plinth and Queens Monument, improved street lighting.
- The subway will no longer be filled in and surface level crossing improvements will not be made to the Bridge.

- The carriageway will now be black asphalt and not Granite.

Despite these changes most of the objectives originally set out for the project will still be achieved with the exception of improving the connectivity between the High Street and the River.

Project Phasing.

Pressure on the Council's capital resources has meant that a phased approach to the project's implementation will be necessary. It is recommended that Phase 1a and 1b, illustrated in Appendix 3 of the report of the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Cultural Services, be implemented in 2011/12. Phase 2 can be implemented later when capital funding become available. Some immediate changes to the Lower High Street is proposed to enable the full implementation of the Traffic Regulation Orders and also to provide loading/disabled parking bays on the High Street. These changes are set out in Appendix 4 of the report of the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Cultural Services.

Each of the three phases are self contained. 1a is defined by the need to relocate bus stops from the upper High Street to Middle Row and King Street. 1b is Bank Street.

1a includes the junction of Week Street, High Street, King Street and Gabriel's Hill. It is this point within the whole project area which will be seen by the most people (shoppers, visitors) and consequently will have the most visual impact. It will leave a lasting impression of quality on most people.

Bank Street, one of the oldest streets in Maidstone, is in need of regeneration. The viability of some retailers is not strong as evidenced by the frequent churn of retailers starting up but not surviving long.

How much of the full benefits of the project will be captured if only a partial scheme is implemented is difficult to assess. There are still vacant units in the phase 1a and 1b areas. Strengthening this area will help increase footfall and make shops more viable. Job creation is still likely even if only 1a and 1b are delivered.

Undertaking phase 2 first would leave the area isolated. Most of the shoppers and visitors travelling between Fremlin Walk, Week Street and the Mall will not see or know that phase 2 has been implemented and will draw them down to the Lower High Street.

The regeneration benefits of undertaking phase 1a and 1b and not phase 2 as set out in the Colin Buchanan study, will clearly be reduced in the short term. That said, a survey of this area on 25th February 2011 identified 10 vacant units totalling circa 1790 sq.m. of ground floor retail space. If the project results in an increase in footfall and visitor expenditure, the job creation potential of these units is considerable. At 1 job per 20 sq.m. of net retail floor space (as suggested in Arup Economics + Planning/ English Partnerships in their report Employment Densities: A full guide (July 2001)) circa 85 jobs could be created if this vacant space is fully occupied.

Project Costs

The final design has been priced by Ringway in conjunction with the Quantity Surveyor on the basis of the rates in their original tender and a re-measured Bill of Quantities following design changes post tender.

The Council's Capital Programme has allocated £2.25m to the project. £50,000 of expenditure will be incurred in 2010/11 leaving a budget of £2.2m. It is expected that the bulk of this expenditure will be incurred in 2011/12 leaving approximately £200,000 to be spent in 2012/13.

The cost estimates for phase 1a and 1b are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Project costs

Main Contract Works	£1,752,965
Additional Works	
Bus stop relocation	£22,900
Cellar and Dilapidation Survey	£9,700
Traffic Signal Civils & electrical Works	£54,505
Lower High Street Works	£25,492
Relocation of CCTV	£25,000
Fees	
Archaeologist Watching Brief Fee	£2,500
Section 278 agreement	£52,000
Post contract design team fees	£58,200
Post contract QS fees	£24,250
Project Management (LW)	£31,040
Legal	£15,000
Clerk of Works	£10,000
Additional design fees (LW etc, Focus, Ringway)	£19,400
Contingency	£97,048
Total Costs	£2,200,000

N.B. CDMC (Health and Safety) Coordinator is being funded by KCC.

The contingency figure is low because of Ringway's early contractor involvement and the significant amount of site investigative work already carried out.

Capital Programme to 2014/15

The High Street Improvement project is currently identified in the capital programme 2011/12 to 2014/15 and, in accordance with the medium

term financial strategy (MTFS), is therefore a scheme to which the Council is committed.

The Council's MTFS also requires the identification of funding in advance of formal commencement of any capital programme or project. Funding assumed in the capital programme but not yet available to the Council totals £3.55m and, as this is a greater value than the resources required for this scheme, it is necessary to consider appropriate prioritisation of the capital programme.

It is for Cabinet to determine the prioritisation of schemes within the capital programme. Uncommitted schemes and projects in the capital programme include the High Street and those listed in Table 2 below. Legislative requirements regarding capital expenditure are not included in the table and are funded. If all of these expenditure items were to be committed the Council would need to borrow £3.9m by 2014/15.

A commitment to the High Street at this time assumes that the capital receipts from the disposal of assets will be forthcoming over the next 3 years.

A significant disposal is close to contractual commitment and, together with unallocated revenues from the Homes Bonus Scheme and revenue outturn under spend 2010/11, it would be possible to delay the risk and cost of borrowing to 2013/14 if contracts concerning the High Street project were not signed until after this is confirmed, which is expected to be by the 31st March.

Table 2

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
	£,000	£,000	£,000
Asset Management	150	100	100
Software / PC Upgrade	180	180	180
Improvements to Play Areas	50	50	50
Housing Grants (Net)	770	855	505
Support for Social Housing		210	190
Total	1,150	1,395	1,025

If this approach is followed expenditure set out in Table 2 in 2012/13 can be funded, together with the High Street. Expenditure from 2013/14 can only be funded by future receipts or borrowing up to £2.4m.

Measuring and Evaluating Outcomes

When complete, it will be important to measure the success of the project against its key objectives and desired outcomes. It is proposed that the following is monitored:

1. Vacancy levels and jobs created: A retailer survey will be carried out before the project commences and one year after opening.
2. Footfall: A footfall survey will be carried out in the Town Centre one year after the opening.

3. Monitor access issues for disability groups: The disability focus group will be assembled and consulted on their experiences of the new street.
4. Monitor and, if necessary, enforce new traffic regulation orders to encourage behavioural changes and ensure deliveries and other drivers adhere to the new regulations. MBC parking services will focus on the High Street for the first 6 months from opening.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

1. The do nothing option:

The need for the project and the benefits, have been set out in the report by Colin Buchanan and Partners. If the project does not go ahead the project area will remain in a poor physical state and opportunities to attract new footfall and visitor expenditure will be diminished. The Disability Focus Group and Access Audit have identified a number of existing access concerns which will have to be addressed with Kent County Council. The Conservation Area will be in danger of being added to English Heritage's at risk register.

2. Reduce the size of Project:

It may be possible to reduce the size of the project or phase it. Whilst elements of the project may be achieved e.g. the creation of a new public square in front of Town Hall, if only part of the Street were to be improved the visual impact may be lessened and the consequential projected visitor expenditure and increase in footfall may be reduced.

3. Reduce Capital Costs Option:

Changing the specification of the materials may offer some savings on capital costs. However a vital element of the scheme is to provide a 'wow' factor to the environment of the entire High Street complementing the existing historic architecture and features. Cheaper materials would significantly reduce this effect and may not lead to the desired increase in footfall and visitor numbers. Some savings may be possible if cheaper materials are used on the edges of the project area focusing the high quality materials in the centre.

4. Delay the Project option:

Any delay to the project exposes it to the risk of fluctuations in material costs, which invariably only go up. A delay would only be warranted if there was a realistic prospect of bidding for or attracting new sources of finance into the project.

5. Use Prudential Borrowing:

The Council has approved, as part of its prudential indicators, a maximum limit for prudential borrowing of £4m. The capital programme, as currently approved, requires the sale of assets valued at £3.55m and the identification of a source for further

funding totalling £0.35m. The total of these sums is £3.9m which is within the prudential borrowing limit approved by Council. It would therefore be possible to utilise borrowing to achieve the programme and remain within the agreed principles set out in the MTFS. If Cabinet were to consider borrowing to deliver the programme before the asset sales are achieved the effect on revenue resources must be considered. Borrowing at this level would incur an annual cost in the region of £0.3m to repay principle and interest over 25 years. The current MTFS is developed around the assumption that only the balance of £0.35m will be borrowed and resources are not currently set aside in the revenue projection to meet this level of repayment.

Background Papers

Economic Impact Assessment of the High Street Improvement Project by Colin Buchanan and Partners 2010.

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: **18 March 2011**

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET

Decision Made: 09 March 2011

CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Issue for Decision

To consider the progress made on actions within the Corporate Improvement Plan at Appendix A of the report of the Head of Change and Scrutiny.

Decision Made

1. That the progress against the objectives set in the Corporate Improvement Plan be noted.
2. That the actions which are out of date and the reasons for this be noted.
3. That criterion for extending target dates in exceptional circumstances be put in place.
4. That the responses to the recommendations made by the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting on 01 March 2011(attached at Appendix A) be agreed.

Reasons for Decision

The purpose of the Corporate Improvement Plan (CIP) is to identify and monitor progress on key areas for improvement. The way the plan is laid out makes it easy to see where work is not progressing in a timely manner.

Appendix A of the report of the Head of Change and Scrutiny shows the current status of the CIP. There are 31 completed actions, 10 that are ongoing and have not yet reached their target date and 8 that are out of target.

It was noted that the number of actions contained in the plan is variable as it is a living document and new actions will be added as they are identified from service reviews, peer reviews and any other source.

In areas of poor performance there are often instances where this is due to policies awaiting approval or information being needed from partners. In some cases it would be reasonable for the target date of the action to be extended.

Areas of strong performance

The vast majority of actions are either completed or on target to be completed within the timescale.

One of the key actions identified in the IdEA peer review was that the Council's priorities should be streamlined and used to inform strategies and policies as well as staff learning and development. An exercise has recently been undertaken to reduce the priorities to 3. Staff and residents were consulted on these priorities and they will be used to inform next year's staff learning and development programme.

Another area that was identified as part of the peer review was that complaints should be analysed for trends to enable the Council to learn from them. This work is now being undertaken by the Policy and Performance Team and is reported to Maidstone Borough Council's Corporate Management Team meeting and to the Standards Committee.

The Waste and Recycling Strategy has been approved and implementation has begun. Various aspects of the strategy will be implemented over the next five years such as the food waste collection that is currently being implemented.

Areas of poor performance

CIP 003.01 Create action plan of outstanding L&D issues to be implemented before reassessment; this has been completed and MBC remains accredited.

CIP 010.01 Carry out assessments of key partnerships; it has proved problematic getting responses from partners as many of them are going through significant structural and organisational change. This action has been escalated to the Director of Regeneration and Communities.

CIP 011.01 Work with KCC to co-ordinate the effects of savings on inter-organisations; this action has been started. The financial information from KCC has been considered but was judged to be somewhat out of date. This information will therefore be updated and returned to the Kent Finance Officers meeting in March.

CIP 011.02 Expand the consultation on the budget strategy and the MTFS to include the impact of the identification savings with partners; consultation with the voluntary sector and the LSP has proved successful. However, MKIP partners do not yet have a protocol for considering the impact that MBC savings would have on them. The Head of Finance will continue working with partners to agree a way forward.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

A decision could be made not to produce a CIP or consider its progress but not considering progress against the plan could mean improvement work is not progressed. This would have a detrimental impact upon service delivery and the reputation of the Council.

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 Change and Scrutiny by: **18 March 2011**