

# AGENDA

## CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING



Overview and Scrutiny

Date: Tuesday 5 April 2011  
Time: 6.30 pm  
Venue: Town Hall, High Street,  
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors: Harwood (Chairman), Hinder, Lusty  
(Vice-Chairman), Ross, Bradshaw,  
Parr and Mrs Wilson

---

Page No.

1. **The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be web-cast.**
2. **Apologies.**
3. **Notification of Substitute Members.**
4. **Notification of Visiting Members.**
5. **Disclosures by Members and Officers:**

**Continued Over/:**

---

**Issued on 21 March 2011**

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact Christina Chemsì on 01622 602463**. To find out more about the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, please visit [www.maidstone.gov.uk/osc](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/osc)

*Alison Broom*

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council,  
Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone Kent ME15 6JQ**

- a) Disclosures of interest.
- b) Disclosures of lobbying.
- c) Disclosures of whipping.

**6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.**

**7. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2011** **1 - 3**

**8. Interview with Leader of the Council - Progress Over the Year** **4 - 5**

Interview with Councillor Christopher Garland, Leader of the Council.

**9. Interview with Cabinet Member for Corporate Services - Progress Over the Year** **6 - 16**

Interview with Councillor Marion Ring.

**10. Future Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2011-12** **17 - 18**

## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 1 MARCH 2011

**PRESENT:** Councillor Harwood (Chairman)  
Councillors Hinder, Lusty, Ross, Bradshaw and Daley

**102. The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be web-cast.**

**Resolved:** That all items on the agenda be web-cast.

**103. Apologies.**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Parr.

**104. Notification of Substitute Members.**

It was noted that Councillor Daley was substituting for Councillor Parr.

**105. Notification of Visiting Members.**

There were no visiting Members.

**106. Disclosures by Members and Officers:**

There were no disclosures.

**107. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.**

There were no disclosures.

**108. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2011**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2011 be agreed as a correct record and duly signed by the Chairman.

**109. Corporate Improvement Plan Update**

The Chairman welcomed Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Review Officer to the meeting.

Ms Kershaw informed the Committee that since the previous update six months ago the Corporate Improvement Plan (CIP) had been updated to include additional actions identified as part of the Improvement and Development Agency Peer review.

Ms Kershaw asked that the Committee agree to criteria being set whereby officers can ask for an extension to their actions in extenuating circumstances. The Committee considered whether it was useful seeing which targets had been completed, and concluded that this information was a means of recognising and documenting improvement.

The Chairman noted the response regarding the Carbon Reduction Action Plan, and expressed concern that the opportunity to receive funding from Central Government would pass should the information not be available by the beginning of the next financial year. The Committee agreed that funding should be sought, and therefore requested this be highlighted to the officers concerned.

The Committee enquired about the number of actions on the report and why comments had not been provided for all actions. Ms Kershaw confirmed that the plan had been through the Committee and then approved by Cabinet. Cabinet determined which actions should be included on the plan. It had been agreed previously that comments would only be given for those actions which were not on target. The Committee suggested that the Cabinet be asked to streamline the actions, in a bid to keep the report process as simple as possible for staff.

**Resolved:** That Ms Kershaw be thanked for the information and it be recommended that:

- a) The Cabinet be requested to reduce the number of actions in the Corporate Improvement Plan;
- b) Cabinet agree that all actions should include comments; and
- c) The Carbon Reduction Action Plan information be finalised by the beginning of the new financial year, in order to ensure funding from Central Government.

#### **110. Update on Local Strategic Partnership Economic Development & Regeneration Delivery Group**

The Committee considered the written report provided and noted that the report from John Foster, Economic Development Manager would be circulated to Members prior to the next meeting.

**Resolved:** That the update on Local Strategic Partnership Economic Development & Regeneration Delivery Group be noted and that Mr Fosters' report be provided via the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

#### **111. Customer Service Review**

The Chairman welcomed the final draft of the Customer Service Review, and thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Officer for compiling the report in

a well presented and readable format. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer thanked the Committee and highlighted the hard work contributed from colleagues, Esther Bell and Clare Wood.

The Committee discussed the proposed recommendations and concluded that they were all displaying a vision for the way forward for the Gateway. They approved the report subject to a minor amendment to the first recommendation.

**Resolved:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Officers be thanked for the review, the report be approved and sent to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, subject to the amendment on page 42, recommendation 1 "5.1 –Reduce opening hours from 8.30am-5.30pm to 9-5.30pm, whilst maintaining *the opportunity for staff* to start at 8.30am, to allow for training, setting up, etc."

## **112. Future Work Programme**

The Committee considered the future work programme, it was noted that the next meeting would be the last for this municipal year. The Committee noted the Quarter 3 Corporate Services Key Performance Indicator Report. The Committee requested an update on the Council Diaries be circulated to Members prior to the next meeting. The Committee thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Officer for collating and distributing the answers for budget questions following the informal meeting on Monday 21 February 2011.

**Resolved:** That the work programme be noted and an update on the Council Diaries be circulated to Members prior to the next meeting.

## **113. Duration of meeting**

6.30pm to 7.10pm.

# Agenda Item 8

## Maidstone Borough Council

### Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 5 April 2011

#### The Leader of the Council Progress Over the Year

**Report of:** Overview & Scrutiny Officer

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 As the meeting on 30 November 2010 was cancelled due to snow, the Committee heard part of his mid-year update in the meeting on January 10 2011. The purpose of this item is for the Leader of the Council to update the Committee on the progress made over the year, and highlight future activities within their portfolio.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Committee interview the Leader of the Council with regard to progress that has been made on the priorities within the Corporate Services portfolio.

#### **3. Progress Over the Year**

- 3.1** The Committee interviewed the Leader on 6 July 2010, the relevant extract from the minutes is set out below:

"The Committee considered the Leader of the Council's vision statement for 2010/11. Members were surprised and concerned that the Local Development Plan did not feature on the Leaders vision statement given that he had recently transferred the responsibility of this role to his portfolio. The Committee therefore agreed to contact the Leader to ask that this be added to his priorities to ensure that local policy documents were delivered.

Members noted that the Local Development Plan came under the remit of the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee but felt that scrutiny of the Local Development Plan should also be undertaken by the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee from a corporate standpoint. The Committee noted that the Leader's portfolio was currently scrutinised by three of the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees and agreed that there would be benefit in aligning the Scrutiny Committee remits to Cabinet Member portfolios.

Resolved: That

- a) The Leader of the Council add the Local Develop Plan to his list of priorities for 2010/11;
- b) The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the Local Development Plan from a corporate aspect; and

c) The remits of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees be reviewed to consider aligning them to Cabinet Member portfolios.”

3.2 The Committee could choose not to interview or receive written statements from the Leader of the Council, however in doing so they would not be fulfilling the crucial role of holding the executive to account.

#### **4. Impact on Corporate Objectives**

4.1 The Committee should seek to review whether the Leader of the Council’s achievements are aligned to the Council’s corporate objectives as set out in the strategic plan.

# Agenda Item 9

## Maidstone Borough Council

### Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 5 April 2011

#### Cabinet Member for Corporate Services Progress Over the Year

**Report of:** Overview & Scrutiny Officer

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 As the meeting on 30 November 2010 was cancelled due to snow, the Committee heard the service areas in particular that they wanted the Cabinet Member to address via email. The purpose of this item is for the Cabinet Member to update the Committee on the progress made over the year, and highlight future activities within their portfolio. **Appendix A** shows a written report showing the progress made over the year.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee interview the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services with regard to progress that has been made on the priorities within the Corporate Services portfolio.

#### 3. Progress Over the Year

- 3.1 The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for holding to account those Cabinet Members whose portfolios fall within the remit of the Committee. The Committee interviewed the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services in July 2010, an extract of the minutes is set out below:

"The Committee thanked the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Mrs Ring for a succinct written vision statement outlining her portfolio's priorities for 2010/11 and for attending to respond to questions.

Members highlighted the importance of engaging local residents to provide them the opportunity to participate and noted that it had been historically more difficult to engage poorer residents living in places that were not defined as areas of deprivation. The Committee agreed that Councillor Mrs Ring consider methods to identify hidden areas of deprivation across the Borough, including in rural areas, to ensure that opportunities were not lost. Members considered possible opportunities to assist in this task included using the indices of multiple deprivation and the 2001 census data.

The Committee noted that it was going to be a challenging year given the impact of the recession leading to higher demands in housing and benefits. Members agreed that it was therefore critical that Councillor Mrs Ring ensured procurement opportunities were



sought to save money and also requested that she maintain a watching brief on housing and council tax benefits to ensure their efficient delivery during this period.

In response to a question, Councillor Mrs Ring agreed to provide a written response with regard to her following priorities:

- "To have a Council that is fit for purpose with the right people in the right place at the right time" – A Member asked whether she felt there were any people currently in the wrong place;
- "Ensure that we concentrate on what we as a council have in our powers to deliver to ensure residents have effective and efficient services that deliver value for money" – Members queried what was not in our power to deliver; and
- "Ensure that the Budget Setting process for 2011-12 clearly meets our priorities as a Council and therefore delivers the priorities of local people" – Members queried how she was going to ensure that the process met the Council's priorities.

The Committee was concerned about the impact of the increasing demand for savings on the Council's decisions regarding its assets. Members urged Councillor Ring to ensure all options were fully considered rather than just electing to sell them. Members also considered the Council's maintenance of its assets and highlighted the increased need for cleaning and painting of buildings as a result of increasing pollution levels. The Committee agreed that it was important that the Council's asset maintenance programme was not neglected to save money as this was likely to lead to costly problems in the future. Furthermore, the Committee noted that a tree was growing out the side of the Town Hall and agreed this be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Ring for attending the meeting.

**Resolved:** That the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

- a) Identify hidden areas of deprivation across the Borough, including in rural areas, to ensure that opportunities to engage poorer residents were not lost, including the possible use of the indices of multiple deprivation and the 2001 census data;
- b) Maintain a watching brief on housing and council tax benefits to ensure their efficient delivery for customers;
- c) Ensure procurement opportunities were sought to save money;
- d) Clarify the following to the Committee with regard to her priorities:
  1. Whether she felt there were any people currently in the wrong place;

2. What was not in our power to ensure residents have effective and efficient services that deliver value for money; and
    3. How she was going to ensure that the Budget Setting process met the Council's priorities
  - e) Ensure that all options be fully considered prior to the disposal of any assets;
  - f) Ensure the Council's asset management programme was adequate and not neglected to save costs; and
  - g) Address the issue of the tree growing out the side of the town hall."
- 3.2 The Committee could choose not to interview or receive written statements from the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, however in doing so they would not be fulfilling the crucial role of holding the executive to account.

#### **4. Impact on Corporate Objectives**

- 4.1 The Committee should seek to review whether the Cabinet Member's achievements are aligned to the Council's corporate objectives as set out in the strategic plan.

### Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5 April 2011

Year end update, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

#### Introduction

This has been a busy year and I have enjoyed getting to grips with my new portfolio. As a Council we have had to achieve significant budget savings and there has been a huge amount of change nationally which has impacted on our services and how we deliver them. This report sets out my areas of responsibility, achievements and progress against priorities in 2009-10.

#### Areas of Responsibility

- Legal and Human Resources
- Risk Management
- Council tax and Housing Benefits
- Property, Procurement and Projects
- Asset Management
- Regulatory (Freedom of Information and Data Protection)
- Customer Contact and Complaints
- ICT and E-Government
- Democratic Services
- Land Charges
- Budget Monitoring
- Planning for Real

#### Portfolio Priorities for 2010-11

- To have a Council that is fit for purpose with the right people in the right place at the right time.
- Ensure we concentrate on what we as a council have in our power to deliver to ensure residents have effective and efficient services that deliver value for money.
- Ensure that the Budget Setting process for 2011-12 clearly meets our priorities as a Council and therefore delivers the priorities of local people.
- Ensure that local people have the opportunity to participate and have a real say in what happens in their local area by continuing neighbourhood planning in areas such as Shepway North, Shepway South and High Street Wards. This will be achieved through working with local ward councillors and local residents.
- Continue to progress shared services within the portfolio.
- Ensure that people can access a wider range of services in ways that suit them. This will be delivered through reviewing our website, using tools such as MOSAIC to profile our customers to ensure we deliver services appropriately.

## Progress on Priorities and Achievements 2010-11

### Effective and Efficient Services

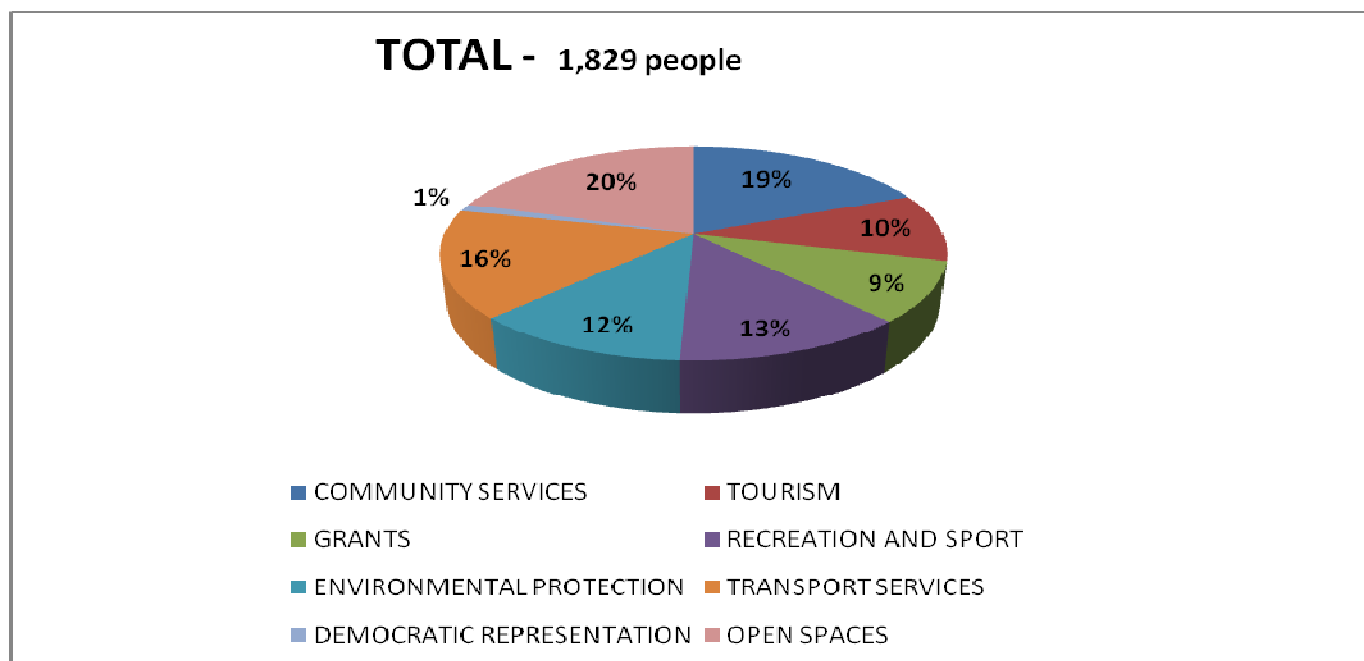
We have continued to make progress in terms of getting the right people in the right place at the right time and delivering efficient value for money services. It was identified during a peer review last year that the Council needed to reduce its priorities so resources were more focussed and we worked more effectively. The new Strategic Plan has reduced our 5 priorities to 3 and 23 key objectives to 6 outcomes. The plan contains a focused set of actions for each outcome and as a result we have significantly reduced our performance indicators by two thirds. One of the three priorities is corporate and customer excellence which is focussed on delivering value for money services that the public are satisfied with.

In March this year we gained re- accreditation of Investors in People giving a recognition of the work that the organisation continues to do to ensure that people are clear about the priorities of the organisation, how they fit into delivering these priorities and the training, development and support they will be given to undertake their role

The HR service has taken on the payroll for Swale Borough Council including the full roll-out of Employee Self Service on the new itrent system.

### Budget

As part of the budget setting process this year we have consulted over 1800 people asking them to vote for their most important discretionary services. These are the services the council is not required by law to deliver.



The three services rated by the public as lowest priority were democratic representation, grants to voluntary organisations and tourism. Democratic representation includes the Mayor's events, twinning, parades and civic events. As a consequence of the public

consultation, the Council will be reviewing our budgets for these areas and this has been reflected in the budget strategy.

During the budget consultation the public were asked for additional suggestions for savings; staffing costs were identified as an important area for the public. The Council has already taken action that will reduce management costs and will take further action to reduce staffing costs. This will include reviewing the back office functions to make savings which will include a shared HR service.

### Shared Services

#### HR

As well as taking on the payroll service for Swale we have also agreed to move a full HR shared service with Swale.

### Revenues and Benefits

The decision to enter into a shared service with Tunbridge Wells was made in October 2010 and followed significant work to consider the different options to provide efficiencies within the service, including a review by the Business Transformation team and a private sector benchmark. The final business case was presented at a joint Cabinet meeting held at Maidstone and identified a range of benefits:

- Financial savings
- Increased resilience
- Service improvement
- Commercial viability
- Performance and customer service

Following decision to progress with the shared service a formal consultation process was undertaken with staff and trade unions, with the views put forward taken into account in defining the final structure and implementation process. The first phase of the implementation then commenced, with a number of key appointments – Head of Service, Revenues Manager, Benefits Managers, Assistant Managers and the Business Support team.

The second phase of the restructure will begin in April 2011 and along with the savings from the first phase, is expected to provide a total staff saving of 14.9 FTE. Through voluntary redundancies, holding of vacant posts, ending of fixed term contracts and a number of changes to individual working hours, total savings of 14.85 FTE have already been achieved, putting the project ahead of schedule and on target to deliver the proposed savings.

In addition to the reviewing the staffing requirement, negotiations have taken place to draw together the key IT contracts that support the service, with Maidstone to host a new IT system for Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells and Swale. This is to deliver an additional £74,500 for Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells. The new IT system will facilitate and release other efficiencies within the service and in total will provide a total revenue saving for the two councils of £437,190 in 2011-12 and £587,900 each year after. This will allow for the cost of implementing to be repaid and a cashable savings achieved from 2012/13.

Looking beyond the shared service, the Revenues and Benefits team have a difficult task ahead with a host of short-term changes to the housing benefit system and longer term prospect of wider welfare reform through the introduction of Universal Credit. In preparation for these changes the service has been working with colleagues in other parts of the council

to prepare customers and landlords for the changes ahead. As well as providing training for all front line staff, the service has started the process of writing to every household affected by these changes to explain what to expect and what they can do to prepare. These changes and the longer term plans for the introduction of Universal credit represent a significant amount of work and will be the focus of the service going forward.

### Accessing Services and Mosaic

The customer must always be the starting point in looking at how services are delivered. The Council has used Mosaic to profile customers who contact us for different services, which has allowed us to form a better picture of how the people who use our services would like them to be delivered. This information, along with other important data like volumes of calls, Gateway visits, visits to the website and avoidable contacts, is being used to inform our Channel Shift Strategy and help us prioritise where we should make improvements and changes to deliver services in the most appropriate ways.

In the last year we have seen overall use of the website increase by about 10%. We have seen increase used of our map information pages, particularly during the roll out of the Food Waste Scheme, with people using them to get information or to request advice. Several new waste and recycling forms have been launched or revamped over the last year, with on line reporting of missed bins accounting for over 66% of the total reported over the Christmas and New Year period.

### Property and Procurement

After a number of successful years working almost exclusively for Maidstone, the procurement section is becoming increasingly busy procuring services through the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership, generating considerable savings for ourselves as well as our partners. Recent successes include banking contracts for Swale and Tunbridge Wells, and parking enforcement for Maidstone and Swale.

Current projects include joint pest control tenders across a number of districts, building maintenance for Tunbridge Wells and environmental enforcement for Maidstone. A more comprehensive range of opportunities across MKIP is currently under development. An e-tendering package has recently been purchased which will become a cornerstone for tendering activity across the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership, streamlining and standardising tendering procedures as well as significantly reducing the amount of paper normally produced.

Scaffolding will soon be coming down from around the Old College Southern Gateway on the corner of College Avenue and College Road. For years this was an ivy covered deteriorating ruin, formerly part of the College of All Saints originally constructed in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, and a Grade II listed building and scheduled ancient monument. A combination of Council funding and a £40,000 grant from English Heritage has enabled the Council to carry out much needed restoration and repair. Landscaping of the surrounding grounds will provide a fitting setting for an important example of Maidstone's heritage.

Support for the Council's capital programme continues through a careful and considered land and property disposal programme. Sales of a number of properties are in various stages of the process, with our former offices in Tonbridge Road in the fore.

After a comprehensive survey of the Council's bus shelters a three year programme of refurbishment and repair has been prioritised which, in many cases, involves replacement of

rather scruffy looking perspex panels with smart metal mesh which is much more resistant to vandalism and can easily be re-sprayed to remove graffiti. This will contribute to our objective of Maidstone being a decent place to live.

Before



After



### **Customer Services Progress April 2010 to March 2011**

There are three areas within Customer Services: the Gateway, the Contact Centre and Corporate Support.

#### **Gateway**

The Gateway has continued to grow during the last year and overall there has been a 15% increase in the number of customers. The busiest service continues to be Benefits where over 17,000 customers have been served in the last year, followed by Housing where over 12,000 customers have been seen. Some new Partner Organisations have joined the Gateway, for example Connexions Kent, and others have left like the Children's & Families Information Service. The Citizens Advice Bureau are the busiest partner and have seen over 3,500 customers while in the Gateway in the last year.

A Volunteer Scheme was created as a joint venture with Voluntary Action in Maidstone and this is lottery funded. A Project Officer was appointed by VAM using the lottery funding and volunteers have worked in the Gateway since the beginning of September 2010. There are on average around 15 volunteers working in the Gateway at various times of the day and they assist customers with a variety of enquiries like helping them to use the payment kiosks, assisting with the self help PC's and generally helping with any queues at the Meet & Greet desk. The scheme is a success and has not only helped provide a good service to customers but has also provided work opportunities to those who had found finding employment difficult.

Some basic statistics are shown in the table below:

	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>
<b>Overall Totals:</b> (note these figures are based on Apr to Feb data only)		
Total Customers seen by MBC & Partners	46,605	43,532
Total Casual Callers	22,025	16,270
% Customers seen within 20 minute target	75.21%	72.06%
Average Wait Time	00:13:56	00:13:46
Average Transaction Time	00:19:54	00:20:04
<b>MBC Major Service Enquiries:</b> (note the 2010 to 2011 figures are based on Apr-Feb data only)		
Benefits	17,120	18,134
Housing	11,957	10,423
Parking Services	5,271	5,919
Revenues	3,803	4,147
Planning	1,913	2,713
Others	3,986	3,955
<b>Partner Enquiries:</b> (note the 2010 to 2011 figures are based on Apr-Feb data only)		
Total number of Partner enquiries	5,605	5,479

## Contact Centre

The Contact Centre has had a busy year although overall there has been a decrease in the overall number of calls offered of around 5%. This decrease could be attributed to a channel shift in more customers now using the website and emails to contact the Council. There has also been a decrease of around 9% of calls to the switchboard.

During the year the Contact Centre have introduced some new services and have started taking calls for Registration Services, Planning Enforcement and Community Safety. In addition, the Contact Centre has started dealing with more in-depth enquiries for benefits and council tax.

To assist with channel shift, more development work of the website has been completed and there are now more self service processes available especially for Environmental Services and the new Food Waste scheme. The number of emails coming in from the website that the Contact Centre have dealt with in the last year has increased by 58% overall with a 118% increase just in February 2011 compared to February 2010.



Some basic statistics are shown in the table below:

	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>
<b>Overall Totals:</b> (note the 2010-2011 figures are based on data to 15 March only)		
Total Calls Answered	180,479	191,551
Total Calls Abandoned	11,099	10,151
% Calls Answered	94.21%	94.97%
Average Wait Time	00:01:09	00:00:59
Average Call Handle Time	00:04:25	00:03:22
Total Switchboard Calls Answered	105,870	116,638
Total Number of Emails Received	8,166	5,164
<b>Calls for Major Services:</b> (note the 2010- 2011 figures are based on Apr-Feb data only)		
Environmental Services & Waste	31,469	38,046
Revenues	40,989	48,996
Benefits	22,952	28,102
Housing	13,270	13,971
Parking Services	15,860	20,089
Planning	11,703	14,310
Some Others	17,338	9,595

### **Corporate Support**

The Corporate Support Team have continued to provide a full incoming and out-going mail service, an internal print room function, a document scanning and indexing for all major functions, processing and printing of all cheques and the administration of the Concessionary Bus Pass scheme.

Promotion of the use of Cleanmail has continued and an average of 62% is going out as Cleanmail which has resulted in an overall saving to the Authority of over £7,200 so far in the last year.

The Corporate Support Team have continued to promote the work that can be done within the internal print room function and are currently in the process of printing and issuing Annual Billing for Council Tax which has always been done externally in the past.

Some basic statistics are shown in the table below:

	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>
<b>Overall Totals:</b> (note the 2010- 2011 figures are based on Apr-Feb data only)		
DIP Pages Scanned	535,613	49,225
Items of Post In	122,758	165,072
Items of Post Out	344,285	415,324
Average % Mail going out as Cleanmail	62%	n/a
Cleanmail Saving to the Authority (only up to January for 2010-2011)	£7,263	£8,338
Number of Internal Print Jobs Processed	1,253	928
Number of Cheques Processed	0,177	47,856
Number of New Bus Passes Issued	2,182	n/a

## Neighbourhood planning update

Between the autumn 2009 and summer of 2010, Maidstone Borough Council worked with residents and partner organisations to produce a pilot Neighbourhood Action Plan in Park Wood utilising Planning for Real®. Nearly 600 residents took part raising 2800 issues and ideas. Community safety and crime stood out right from the start – young people hanging around, drinking problems at the parade of shops and people afraid to go out at night. Also important were dog mess and litter. In relation to housing – damp and condensation and noisy neighbours were the top issues. Other ideas and issues included a skate park, parking problems, road safety, bullying on the estate and a job search club. Measures to address all of these issues are already underway.

The plan was formally adopted by the council in November 2010. However, there were some key issues that weren't widely identified by residents in the initial consultation:

- Health
- Educational attainment and qualifications
- Unemployment
- Teenage pregnancy

The council and its partners including Kent County Council, Golding Homes, the police and health services, have therefore asked that further work be carried out with residents to examine these issues. Discussion groups are being held with residents, a resource mapping exercise undertaken and a roundtable meeting to identify actions to address these issues is to be held. Having learnt the lessons of the pilot, it is intended for the new Community Development Unit to roll out neighbourhood planning to other areas in 2011/12.

## **Maidstone Borough Council**

### **Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**Tuesday 5 April 2011**

#### **Future Work Programme 2011-12**

**Report of:** Overview & Scrutiny Officer

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 For the Committee to consider its future work programme for 2011-12.

#### **2. Recommendation**

2.1.1 That the Committee suggests items for next years overview and scrutiny work programme, within the Committee's remit.

2.1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be meeting in June 2011 to agree their work programmes for the next municipal year. At each Committee meeting, Members will consider the work programme suggestions from officers, members of the public, Councillors and the 2010-11 Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

#### **3. Future Work Programme**

3.1 Throughout the course of the municipal year the Committee is asked to put forward work programme suggestions. These suggestions are planned into its annual work programme. Members are asked to consider the work programme at each meeting to ensure that it remains appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.

3.2 Topics for the work programme must not include individual complaints or have been reviewed in the two years previously. Reviews carried out by Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny in the last two Municipal Years included:

- Customer Service Gateway review
- Railways
- Junk Mail
- Disabled Facilities Grants
- Mental Health Services (joint with Tunbridge Wells)
- Best Value Review of waste and recycling; and
- Overview and scrutiny Function.

3.3 The Committee could choose not to consider items for 2011-12 however this would mean that a valuable opportunity to suggest items from experienced scrutiny members would be lost.

#### **4. Impact on Corporate Objectives**

4.1 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following Council priority:

- 'For Maidstone to have a growing economy'; and
- 'Corporate and Customer Excellence'.

4.2 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities. Actions to deliver these key objectives may therefore include work that the Committee will consider over the next year.