

# AGENDA

## CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING



Overview and Scrutiny

Date: Tuesday 6 September 2011

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Town Hall, High Street,  
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors: Harwood, Mrs Wilson, Mrs Gooch  
(Chairman), Barned, Mrs Gibson,  
Hogg, Paine (Vice-Chairman), Pickett  
and de Wiggondene

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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.**

**Continued Over/:**

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**Issued on 24 August 2011**

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*Alison Broom*

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

<b>5. Disclosures by Members and Officers:</b>	
a) Disclosures of interest.	
b) Disclosures of lobbying.	
c) Disclosures of whipping.	
<b>6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.</b>	
<b>7. Minutes of the meeting held on 2 August 2011</b>	<b>1 - 7</b>
<b>8. Quarter 1 Performance Report</b>	<b>8 - 25</b>
Interview with Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager	
<b>9. Quarter 1 Complaints Report</b>	<b>26 - 34</b>
Interview with Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager.	
<b>10. Corporate Improvement Plan Update</b>	<b>35 - 50</b>
Interview with Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Manager	
<b>11. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2010-2011</b>	<b>51 - 71</b>
<b>12. 'The Council as a Business?' Survey Results</b>	<b>72 - 84</b>
<b>13. Future Work Programme and Scrutiny Officer Update</b>	<b>85 - 93</b>

## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 2 AUGUST 2011

**PRESENT:** Councillors Mrs Gooch (Chairman), Barned, Mrs Gibson, Hogg, Paine (Vice-Chairman), Pickett and de Wiggondene.

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

That all items be web-cast

**38. Apologies.**

Councillors Harwood and Mrs Wilson sent their apologies

**39. Notification of Substitute Members.**

Councillor English substituted for Councillor Harwood.

**40. Notification of Visiting Members.**

There were no Visiting Members.

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

There were no disclosures.

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

It was agreed that all items should be taken in public as proposed.

**43. Minutes of the meeting held on 05 July 2011**

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2011 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chairman.

**44. Complaints Policy**

Angela Woodhouse, Head of Change and Scrutiny was welcomed to the Meeting. Mrs Woodhouse was returning to update the Committee following the July meeting at which she had presented the Annual Review

of Complaints 2010/11, along with her colleague Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Officer.

Mrs Woodhouse was able to provide the Committee with an update in response to a number of Members' questions and recommendations by presenting the Committee the revised Complaints Policy. The Officer explained that it had been revised for a number of reasons; for staff, to clarify the approach that should be taken with complaints and to ensure the policy was focused on service improvement. Mrs Woodhouse advised Members that once the revised policy had been agreed by Cabinet, procedures would be revised and staff would receive training on how to deliver the policy.

The Committee was advised that since the last meeting a small focus group had been held which allowed customers to share their experience of the complaints process and provide suggestions on how it could be improved.

Whilst the policy had been shortened from 5 pages to 3 pages the Officer informed Members that a briefer document would be designed and made available to customers, in the form of a leaflet. The Committee questioned whether training would be mandatory for all staff. It was explained that it would begin with front-line staff and customer services. Members felt that it was important that those who had been with the organisation for a long period of time were given a refresher, where necessary, in this area. The Officer agreed that this would be possible and would be something that would have to be addressed with Heads of Service and Managers.

In response to Members' questions regarding residents not having the opportunity to speak to an Officer regarding their complaint as part of the process, the Officer explained that the complaint process was a 2 stage process. The Committee was assured that at the first stage the complainant would be able to contact the appropriate Head of Service. If the complainant was unhappy with the response received at stage 1 it would become a stage 2 complaint which would be dealt with by the Head of Legal Services. After this stage it could be progressed on to the Local Government Ombudsman by the complainant if they remained unhappy with how the complaint had been dealt with. Members felt that dependent on the nature of the complaint there were other bodies that may be consulted before the complaint reached the ombudsman such as the Planning Inspectorate and this should be highlighted to the customer. The Committee questioned the complaints policy in terms of accessibility. The Officer informed Members that efforts had been made to make it as easy as possible to make a complaint to the council; the policy outlined that complaints could be made by telephone or through an advocate and stage 2 complaints no longer needed to be made in writing.

Members were informed that any recommendations made would be taken to Cabinet the following week for approval. The Committee felt that Complaints was an area that would continue to develop and something that they would like to have continued input with. Finally Members asked

that 'MEPs' be added to the section 7 to read: 'Complaints from Councillors, MPs and MEPs.'

**It was resolved that:**

- a) MEPs should be added to section 7. of the Complaints Policy to read 'Complaints from Councillors, MPs and MEPs';
- b) Staff Training should be extended to include long serving Officers as well as front-line customer services;
- c) Members should be advised by email when the updates were made to the website and the leaflet being designed for customers would be circulated electronically; and
- d) That the Committee should be updated on the implementation of the Complaints Policy in 6 months time.

**45. 'The Council as a Business?' The Executive's Outlook**

The Chairman welcomed Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Steve Goulette, Assistant Director Environment & Regulatory Services and David Edwards, Director of Change, Planning and the Environment.

The Committee was taken through a presentation which focused on the council's business planning, the medium term financial strategy, how cost centres were managed, services which generate or could capture income and commercial services. Mrs Broom advised that when identifying new areas that could trade and demand an income it was essential to prioritise and allow a period of planning and experimentation before planning too ambitiously as this would impact on the council's baseline budget. The Chief Executive identified particular projects in the Council's current business that were being addressed, these included the review of fees and charges, the local setting of planning application fees and the future governance of the Hazlitt Theatre. Human Resources was highlighted to the Committee as an area providing commercial opportunity with their experience and implementation of the Midland system. Mrs Broom explained that the current methodology used for identifying new opportunities began with the categorisation of all Council services as to whether they could be delivered in-house, shared or through partnership and trade. Research to establish experience and good practice would follow this along with consideration being given to the impact of competition with local employers or service providers. The Chief Executive advised that part of this process was establishing whether the Council should be abstracting from business that already exists or offering something new. The final area addressed in the presentation was the Council's finance information project, the aim of which was to deliver 'an enhanced recharge and budget management culture across the council supported by efficient processes.' It was explained that this would result in an improved budget management culture; the three main work streams of the project would be budget monitoring, recharges and the account code structure. A completion date of April 2012 was given.

Members questioned the Chief Executive on the Leader of the Council's outlook for the authority the previous year which was to describe the Council's future as that of a commissioning body. Mrs Broom explained that the Council had limitations, there were statutory instruments in place and case law was used to help exemplify all decisions made. This put the authority in a position where, for example, the cost of market pitches could only be enough to cover costs. With regards to commissioning and commercial activity, Mrs Broom explained that both types of activity required different skills to those usually applied to regulatory services; a shift in attitude and approach would be required by the Council, Members and the public. Members questioned whether a commissioning route would impact on the Council's ability to generate an income. Mrs Broom explained that with the advent of Localism and the government's White Paper on Public Services there would be diversity in the way in which services were delivered. The Chief Executive told Members that one activity did not prevent the other but the Council did have to be very clear on what it was doing.

Members raised questions on the general power of competency in relation to the Public Services White Paper and the action the Council was taking in relation to this. Mrs Broom explained that the Local Government Act 2000 had introduced wellbeing powers but the legal environment had remained unchanged. In order to exploit these powers and to give them foundation the Council had used the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Chief Executive informed Members that the Council did not need the general power of competency to be responsive to the needs of the community and once the vision and ambition of the organisation was set, a way would be found to achieve this.

The Committee's questioning moved on to the Council's assets and areas that could provide an income. Members were interested in determining the executive's outlook on hiring out parks such as Mote Park for events and charging for venues such as the newly vacant Town Hall. Mrs Broom told Members that event management was something the Council had limited experience of other than Shakespeare and Proms in the Park. The Committee was told that this would be an area that their research could add value.

Some Members of the Committee raised questions surrounding parking and enforcement activity. Members were assured that parking enforcement was to ensure compliance and not to raise an income. Mr Goulette informed Members that the annual review into parking charges was taking place. It was agreed that Councillor Barned would undertake research in this area and report back to the Committee.

Members raised concerns regarding the public's perception of the council operating as a business and felt that there was a difference between being a business and being businesslike; with the latter being where emphasis should be placed. Members and Officers were in agreement that a businesslike culture should be fundamental to the council's approach.

Mr Edwards, Director of Change Planning and the Environment told the Committee that resources were required to adapt and change to provide services that residents want. The Director felt that there were opportunities to move forward and provide good value for money and the resilience could be found within partnership arrangements. The Committee was informed that the first shared service had been borne out of another authority's need for expertise. The resilience of partnership arrangements was said to be the key to service delivery. Members questioned the issue of ownership when entering into partnership arrangements and the importance of this in order to maintain excellence. Officers informed Members that this was addressed at the formative stages of any partnership arrangement. Mrs Broom told Members that there was often a contrast in the cultures of authorities coming together to form partnership arrangements, she informed the Committee that cultural interfacing was important. Members questioned the partnership model suggesting that the arrangement was structured to reduce cost to each of the partners and would therefore reduce the scope for income generation. Mrs Broom explained that the current shared services; Legal, HR and Revenues and Benefits were 'transactional activities' and the economies of scale were there.

Members asked the Officers to identify areas that had potential to develop commercially, the waste strategy was said to be an area that offered opportunities as well as planning fees, HR and Revenues and Benefits. Mr Goulette identified the Crematorium and the Leisure Centre as two areas already generating an income and providing a local need. Mrs Broom highlighted consultancy and advice as areas to address, planning pre application advice helped eliminate legal challenges, saving money and time.

The Committee queried the way in which the organisation evaluated and sought to improve itself with 'value for money' no longer in existence. The Chief Executive informed Members that the authority was keen to be put forward for peer reviews and was open minded in this area.

Members praised the recent budget strategy training that has been arranged with Paul Riley and noted its value to the Committee as part of its ongoing responsibilities as the overarching Overview and Scrutiny Committee as well as its relevance to the review topic and the benefit of an increased understanding of this. The Committee felt that their engagement with the budget strategy at its most formative level would be of most benefit to them. Members felt that this could be achieved by appointing a smaller working group who would take on additional involvement and report back to the Committee as a whole.

**It was resolved that:**

- a) Councillor Pickett should investigate the Parking review and charges with Steve Goulette and report back to the Committee on his findings;

- b) The Committee should investigate event management on behalf of the authority and report back to the officer group on this area of research; and
- c) A budget strategy working group should be established; volunteers would be sought via email by the Scrutiny Officer.

**46. 'The Council as a Business?' Staff/Councillor Survey interim report**

The Committee discussed the interim report on the staff/Councillors survey. Members had designed a survey with the Scrutiny Officer to be circulated to all staff and Councillors which sought their ideas on efficiency and income generation. Members felt that there were definite possibilities to explore once all the responses had been received and collated. The Committee resolved that they would begin by categorising the suggestions. Individual Members of the Committee would then take ownership of a suggested efficiency or idea for income generation, undertake some research and report back to the Committee. Members discussed taking this forward with staff and Councillors at a workshop, similar to the world café approach taken with the Strategic Plan Consultation.

The Committee discussed the meeting with Communications attended by Councillor Paine and Councillor English. Members were updated on the progress of this and the outcomes. They were informed that a press release had been sent out asking residents for their ideas to contribute to their exploration of the review topic 'The Council as a Business?' Members were also informed that Morrison's Supermarket, Lenham Farmer's Market and the Switch Café had been discussed as possible venues for the Committee to engage with residents on the review topic and seek their ideas and input. A further meeting would be arranged with Communications Team to decide how best to take this forward.

**It was resolved that:**

- a) Councillors Paine, Pickett and English would continue working on behalf of the Committee with the Communications team to explore community engagement and a meeting would be arranged by the Scrutiny Officer; and
- b) Once all the results from the staff/Councillor survey had been collated Members of the Committee would be assigned a topic to research, this is to be agreed at the September meeting.

**47. Future Work Programme and Scrutiny Officer Update**

The Committee reviewed their future work programme and the suggested topics from the Forward Plan.

The Scrutiny Officer updated Members on suggested expert witness Debbie Hague, Interim Commercial Services Director at Kent County



Services. The Committee was informed that the witness was not prepared to give evidence in the public domain. Members discussed additional witnesses who they felt could be interviewed as part of the review topic.

Members were informed that they would be evaluating the first quarter Performance Monitoring Report. The Scrutiny Officer advised Members of a training session organised by the Policy and Performance Officer, Clare Wood that would aid their understanding of this area of their remit.

**It was resolved that:**

- a) Debbie Hague should be invited to attend an informal meeting with the Committee;
- b) Witnesses from the executive of another authority should be invited to attend to give an alternative perspective of a council operating as a business; and
- c) The Scrutiny Officer should arrange Members training for performance management.

**48. Duration of Meeting:**

6.30 p.m. to 8.38 p.m.

# Agenda Item 8

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**10 AUGUST 2011**

#### **REPORT OF HEAD OF CHANGE & SCRUTINY**

**Report prepared by Clare Wood**

#### **1. QUARTER 1 KPI REPORT 2011/12**

##### 1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 Cabinet are asked to consider progress made in the first quarter of 2010/11 for the authority's key performance indicators (KPIs) at Appendix A.

##### 1.2 Recommendation of Head of Change & Scrutiny

1.2.1 It is recommended that the Committee considers the report and the recommendations for Cabinet.

1.2.2 It is recommended that Cabinet

- a) Note the progress and out-turns of the Key Performance Indicators (Appendix A), definitions are included for reference at Appendix B;
- b) Note the pressures on the housing department;
- c) Note the change in frequency for LVE 001 Number of business enquires to locate in Kent and decide whether or not to adopt the alternative measure suggested; and
- d) Agree action to be taken where appropriate.

##### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.2 The Council has set 59 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), as part of the Strategic Plan 2011-15; there are 25 indicators that can be monitored on a quarterly basis to ensure the Council is on track to meet its annual performance targets.

1.3.3 The Council's quarterly performance reporting cycle is aligned with financial reporting to enable it to effectively oversee financial performance against corporate priorities and assess whether value for money is being achieved in the delivery of services.

1.4 Context

1.4.2 The Key Performance Indicators which are set in the Strategic Plan were reviewed and reduced last year by the Cabinet and we will continue to review these annually to ensure that they are aligned with the Council's priorities.

1.5 Performance Summary

1.5.2 The appendix shows out-turn data for all indicators that can be collected quarterly. Some indicators are collected bi-annually or annually, these indicators have not been included in this report.

1.5.3 Where an indicator is new and there is no quarterly 2010/11 data, no direction of travel can be given. The direction of travel for pre-existing indicators direction of travel compares the current out-turn for quarter 1 with the 2010/11 quarter 1 out-turn.

1.5.4 The following tables show the status of performance indicators in relation to target and direction of travel.

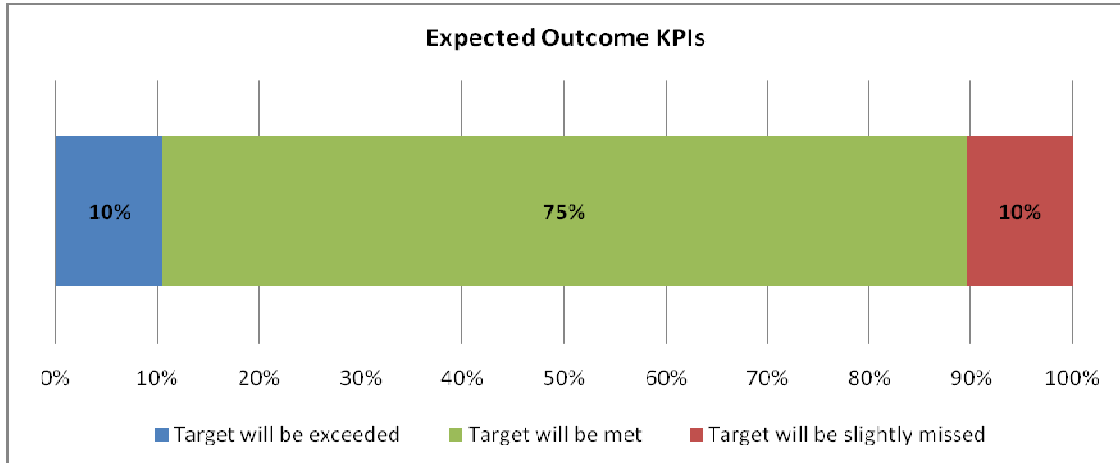
	<b>Green</b>	<b>Yellow</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>N/A<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Data<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>KPIs</b>	14 (74%)	3 (16%)	2 (10%)	2	4	25

	<b>Improved</b>	<b>Declined</b>	<b>N/A<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Data<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>KPIs</b>	5 (36%)	9 (64%)	7	4	25

1.5.5 The following graph shows the expected outcome of the performance indicators based on the information available to date. Managers are asked to update this each quarter so that early intervention can be taken where necessary.

<sup>1</sup> Indicators rated N/A are not included in percentage calculations

<sup>2</sup> Indicators that are data only are not included in percentage calculations



1.5.6 Overall, 75% of performance indicators have been rated green (currently on target) compared to 71% of all performance indicators at quarter 1 in 2010/11. Currently 90% of KPIs are currently projected to meet or exceed the year end target compared to 87% of indicators at same point in 2010/11.

1.5.7 Comparing this quarter’s out-turns to the same period in 2010/11, 64% of all indicators that can be given a direction of travel, have declined. When setting targets for 2011/12 onwards managers were asked to consider any impacts on performance such as available resources rather than focusing on continuous improvement as they have done in previous years. The picture of performance compared to last year is reflective of the economic climate with indicators around housing and homelessness over performing and lower number of planning applications received. In addition we have also reduced the number of indicators we have which means that each indicator is equivalent to approximately 5%.

**Outcome: A transport network that supports the local economy**

1.5.8 Under this outcome the Number of onboard Park & Ride bus transactions (SPT 002) is currently expected to slightly miss the annual target. Performance for quarter 1 is almost 2% down on 2010/11. It is thought that the additional Bank Holiday in April for the Royal Wedding and the general slowing down for many around this period impacted on the number of people using the Park & Ride service. The majority of business for the service occurs during quarter 3 in the lead up to Christmas however last year this was affected by the snow.

**Outcome: A growing economy with rising employment, catering for a range of the skill sets to meet the demands of the local economy**

- 1.5.9 100% of commercial planning applications were processed within the appropriate statutory timescales (DCV 001). There is a data quality issue with the data collection for the number of business enquires to locate in Kent (LVE 001), the Economic Development manager is in the process of querying these with locate in Kent and an update will be provide when the figures have been confirmed.
- 1.5.10 The number of people claiming job seekers allowance (LVE 002) has increased slightly from March. The Economic Development Manager has noted an increase in the number of females JSA claimants compared to this time last year, which may be the result of weakening retail and public sector employment which traditionally has higher proportion of female workers. It is expected at present that this indicator will slightly miss the annual target. This could impact on other areas including benefits and housing.
- 1.5.11 The data for the unemployment rate (model based) (LVE 004) is not available quarterly, an annual update will be provided at quarter 4. The Economic and Development Manager has suggested that an alternative measure could be the number of unfilled job seeker vacancies.

**Outcome: Decent, affordable housing in the right place across a range of tenures**

- 1.5.12 Although all the indicators, for which a direction of travel can be given, in the outcome 'Decent, affordable housing the right place across a range of tenures' have declined slightly compared to 2010/11, five out of the six that can be rated have met the quarterly target.
- 1.5.13 There is only one indicator under this outcome that did not achieve the quarterly target; this was the percentage of residential planning applications processed within statutory timescales (DCV 003). There were 41 of these applications processed in quarter 1 of these 11 went over the statutory timescales, eight of these went to Planning Committee which extended the determination process.

**Outcome: Continue to be a clean and attractive environment for people who live in and visit the Borough**

- 1.5.14 During the fourth quarter of 2010/11 the food waste recycling collection was rolled out. This has improved our recycling performance (WCN 001) and puts us on the right track to achieve 45% recycling by 2015, if not sooner. This year we also introduced a new indicator on responding to fly-tipping (DEP 007) which is performing well with 99.10% of all fly-tipping reports responded to within one working day. Both of these indicators show positive progress for the outcome:

Continue to be a clean and attractive environment for people who live in and visit the Borough.

1.5.15 The indicator that measures visits and uses of the museum (MUS/LVE 001) did not meet the quarterly target; this was to be expected with the refurbishment work and while many galleries remain closed. It is thought that the annual target is still achievable at present as once the new wing opens the launch and surrounding publicity will attract visitors.

**Outcome: Residents in Maidstone are not disadvantaged because of where they live or who they are, vulnerable people are assisted and the level of deprivation is reduced**

1.5.16 All of the indicators that relate to this outcome have met the quarterly target. Although benefits processing times (R&B 004) have increased since the end of 2010/11 due to the partnership they are currently below the target level.

1.5.17 The housing service remains under pressure as there continues to be a significant number of people presenting as homeless. It should be noted there has been an 84% increase in the numbers of people prevented from becoming homeless (HSG 005) driven by demand for housing advice. The increase is thought to be the aftermath of the recession, where people have exhausted all other options such as friends and family before approaching the council for advice and assistance.

**Outcome: The Council will continue to have and demonstrate value for money services that residents are satisfied with**

1.5.18 The value of fraud identified by the fraud partnership is over halfway to achieving the annual target already. The target was revised to take into account the reduced resources but is likely to be exceeded.

1.5.19 The percentage of council tax collected (R&B 006) has marginally missed the quarterly target. Action is being taken when non-payment occurs and the quarterly position is similar to that of other authorities in Kent. It is expected that the target will be met. To date no savings have been delivered through reviews for 2011/12. It is expected that there will be some saving from shared services to report later in the year however, there are no best value reviews planned for this year and it is too early to tell if the current overview and scrutiny reviews will result in any savings.

## 1.6 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.6.2 KPIs reflect local priorities and measure progress towards the Council’s key objectives. They are the Council’s top level indicators and are linked to the Council’s strategic plan.

1.6.2 Not monitoring progress against the KPIs could mean that the Council fails to deliver its priorities and would also mean that action could not be taken effectively to address performance during the year.

1.7 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.7.2 The Key Performance Indicators are part of the Council’s overarching Strategic Plan 2011-15 and play an important role in the achievement of our corporate objectives as well as covering a wide range of service and priority areas; for example, waste and recycling.

1.8 Risk Management

**1.8.2** The production of robust performance reports contributes to ensuring that the view of the authority’s approach to the management of risk and use of resources is not undermined and allows early action to be taken in order to mitigate the risk of not achieving targets and outcomes.

1.9 Other Implications

1.9.2

1.	Financial	X
2.	Staffing	X
3.	Legal	
4.	Equality Impact Needs Assessment	
5.	Environmental/Sustainable Development	X
6.	Community Safety	X
7.	Human Rights Act	
8.	Procurement	
9.	Asset Management	

**Financial**

- 1.9.3 Performance targets are closely linked to the allocation of resources and are taken into account in the budget setting process, ensuring that resources are allocated in the most efficient and economic way.
- 1.9.4 The progress of performance indicators could have an effect on the authority's savings and efficiency targets.
- 1.9.5 Considering progress against targets at this stage, and throughout the financial year, will identify potential areas of concern where intervention may be required.

### **Staffing**

- 1.9.6 Having a clear set of targets enables staff objectives to be set and effective action plans to be put in place.

### **Legal**

- 1.9.7 Failure to monitor performance indicators and set targets could impact on the authority's governance arrangements.

### **Environmental/Sustainable Development and Community Safety**

- 1.9.8 The performance indicators cover and are used to monitor progress in these areas.

### 1.9.9 Appendices

- Appendix A – Quarter 1 Key Performance Indicator Out-turns
- Appendix B – Key Performance Indicator definitions

### 1.9.10 Background Documents

- Key performance Indicator definitions (attached at Appendix B)
- Strategic Plan 2011-15
- Report of the Head of Change & Scrutiny – Performance Indicator targets 2011-15



**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes

No

If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?

.....

This is a Key Decision because: .....









.....

Wards/Parishes affected: .....

.....





## Key Performance Indicator Out-turns 2011/12- Quarter 1

Appendix A

PI Status		Direction of Travel (DoT)	
	Alert		Improving
	Warning		No Change
	OK		Getting Worse
	Unknown		
	Data Only		

### For Maidstone to have a growing economy















**Outcome: A transport network that supports the local economy**

PI Ref	Indicator Description	Q1 2010/11	Q1 2011/12		Q2 2011/12	Q3 2011/12	Q4 2011/12	Year to date	Annual Target	Responsible Officer	Expected Outcome	DoT	Status
			Value	Target									
SPT 002	Number of onboard Park & Ride bus transactions	104,014	102,093	108,000				102,093	450,000	Sue Whiteside	Target will be slightly missed		
	The figure for quarter 1 is lower than expected. This appears to be due to additional bank holiday in April for Royal Wedding which reduced operational days by one. Performance has also declined compared to quarter 1 last year by 1.8%. Improvement to the Park & ride service will form part of the Integrated Transport Strategy.												
PKG 002	Income from pay and display car parks per space <b>(New)</b>		£254.62	£251.54				£254.62	£1,115.37	Jeff Kitson	Target will be met		
	The targets for this indicator have been profiled to take into account seasonal variations.												

## Key Performance Indicator Out-turns 2011/12- Quarter 1

Appendix A

**Outcome: A growing economy with rising employment, catering for a range of the skill sets to meet the demands of the local economy**















PI Ref	Indicator Description	Q1 2010/11	Q1 2011/12		Q2 2011/12	Q3 2011/12	Q4 2011/12	Year to date	Annual Target	Responsible Officer	Expected Outcome	DoT	Status
			Value	Target									
LVE 002	Percentage of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance	2.7%	2.5%	2.4%				2.5%	2.4%	John Foster	Target will be slightly missed		
	There has been a slight rise in female JSA claimants compared to this time last year, which may be the result of weakening retail and public sector employment which traditionally has higher proportion of female workers. It is possible that the annual target will be slightly missed but this will be assessed again at quarter 2.												
LVE 001	Number of business enquires to locate in Kent <b>(New)</b>			30					120	John Foster			
	The data for this indicator is currently being checked for accuracy.												
DCV 001	Percentage of commercial planning applications completed within statutory timescales <b>(New)</b>		100.00%	89.50%				100.00%	89.50%	Rob Jarman	Target will be met		
LVE 004	Unemployment rate (model based) <b>(New)</b>			>5%					>5%	John Foster			
	Issues have been discovered with the release of the data for this indicator. The model based unemployment figure is provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), it is released on a quarterly rolling year basis however this is subject to a considerable time delay with the latest figures available relating to December 2009 to December 2010.												

## Key Performance Indicator Out-turns 2011/12- Quarter 1

Appendix A


### For Maidstone to be a decent place to live

**Outcome: Decent, affordable housing in the right place across a range of tenures**








PI Ref	Indicator Description	Q1 2010/11	Q1 2011/12		Q2 2011/12	Q3 2011/12	Q4 2011/12	Year to date	Annual Target	Responsible Officer	Expected Outcome	DoT	Status
			Value	Target									
DCV 004	Processing of planning applications: Major applications (NI 157a)	100%	88.89%	86.50%				88.89%	86.50%	Rob Jarman	Target will be met		
DCV 005	Processing of planning applications: Minor applications (NI 157b)	90.32%	88.46%	85.00%				88.46%	85.00%	Rob Jarman	Target will be met		
DCV 006	Processing of planning applications: Other applications (NI 157c)	97.28%	96.21%	95.50%				96.21%	95.50%	Rob Jarman	Target will be met		
HSG 001	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	46	36	25				36	100	John Littlemore	Target will be met		
Of the 36 affordable homes delivered in quarter 1, 18 were funded by the Council.													
HSG 002	Number of homes occupied by vulnerable people made decent	45	40	38				40	150	John Littlemore	Target will be met		
SPT 003a	Percentage of residential planning applications granted in the Urban area <b>(New)</b>		52.78%	N/A				52.78%	N/A	Sue Whiteside	N/A		
SPT 003b	Percentage of residential planning applications granted in the Rural area <b>(New)</b>		47.22%	N/A				47.22%	N/A	Sue Whiteside	N/A		

## Key Performance Indicator Out-turns 2011/12- Quarter 1

## Appendix A

PI Ref	Indicator Description	Q1 2010/11	Q1 2011/12		Q2 2011/12	Q3 2011/12	Q4 2011/12	Year to date	Annual Target	Responsible Officer	Expected Outcome	DoT	Status
			Value	Target									
DCV 003	Percentage of residential planning applications processed within statutory timescales <b>(new)</b>		73.17%	85.50%				73.17%	85.50%	Rob Jarman	Target will be met	?	
	There were 41 residential applications processed between 1 <sup>st</sup> April and 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2011/12. Of these 11 were processed outside of the statutory timescale, and eight were reported to Planning Committee which had a significant impact on the determination time of the applications. The annual target is still considered achievable at this time however this will be reassessed at the end of quarter 2.												

**Outcome: Continue to be a clean and attractive environment for people who live in and visit the borough**




PI Ref	Indicator Description	Q1 2010/11	Q1 2011/12		Q2 2011/12	Q3 2011/12	Q4 2011/12	Year to date	Annual Target	Responsible Officer	Expected Outcome	DoT	Status
			Value	Target									
WCN 001	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (NI 192)	33.01%	45.58%	43.00%				45.58%	43.00%	Jennifer Gosling	Target will be met		
MUS/LVE 001	Visits or uses of the museum per 1,000 population	205.2	160	195				160	725	John Foster	Target will be met		
	The East Wing refurbishment continues and 40% of the museums galleries remain closed. The project is expected to be completed in October and it is thought that the annual target is still achievable as the launch and opening will generate interest and additional visits.												
HLD 002	Number of Tree Preservation Orders granted <b>(New)</b>		8	N/A				8	N/A	Deanne Cunningham	N/A		
DEP 007	Percentage of fly-tipping reports responded to within one working day		99.10%	95.00%				99.10%	95.00%	Jonathan Scott	Target will be met	?	

## Key Performance Indicator Out-turns 2011/12- Quarter 1

Appendix A

PI Ref	Indicator Description	Q1 2010/11	Q1 2011/12		Q2 2011/12	Q3 2011/12	Q4 2011/12	Year to date	Annual Target	Responsible Officer	Expected Outcome	DoT	Status
			Value	Target									
	<b>(New)</b>												









**Outcome: Residents in Maidstone are not disadvantaged because of where they live or who they are, vulnerable people are assisted and the level of deprivation is reduced**

PI Ref	Indicator Description	Q1 2010/11	Q1 2011/12		Q2 2011/12	Q3 2011/12	Q4 2011/12	Year to date	Annual Target	Responsible Officer	Expected Outcome	DoT	Status
			Value	Target									
R&B 004	Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events (NI 181)	9.68	11.75	15.00				13.15	15.00	Steve McGinnes	Target will be met	↓	
	The introduction of the Revenues and Benefits Partnership with Tunbridge Wells means that performance has declined slightly compared to the same quarter in 2010/11. The outstanding workload across the two authorities has been reduced to within 12 days and whilst service expects some disruption to performance during July and August whilst the new IT arrangements are implemented, improvement in processing times is expected from that point.												
HSG 005	Number of households prevented from becoming homeless through the intervention of housing advice	128	235	100				235	400	John Littlemore	Target will be exceeded	↑	
	It is likely that performance will exceed the target for this indicator. The council is receiving significantly more presentations from households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Compared to quarter 1 in 2010/11 there has been a 84% increase in performance due to demand.												
HSG 004	Average time taken to process and notify applicants on the housing register (days) <b>(New)</b>		3.2	20.0				3.2	20.0	John Littlemore	Target will be met	?	

## Key Performance Indicator Out-turns 2011/12- Quarter 1

## Appendix A

**Outcome: The Council will continue to have and demonstrate value for money services that residents are satisfied with**

PI Ref	Indicator Description	Q1 2010/11	Q1 2011/12		Q2 2011/12	Q3 2011/12	Q4 2011/12	Year to date	Annual Target 2011/12	Responsible Officer	Expected Outcome	DoT	Q1 2011/12 Status
			Value	Target									
R&B 005	Percentage of Business Rates Collected (BV 010)	33.87%	34.26%	33.17%				34.26%	97.00%	Steve McGinnes	Target will be met		
R&B 006	Percentage of Council Tax collected (BV 009)	30.70%	30.10%	30.14%				30.10%	98.70%	Steve McGinnes	Target will be met		
<p>Whilst a robust recovery timetable in place and progressive action is taken in response to non payment, the service has experienced an increased number of people struggling to maintain the required payment. A similar position has been reported by other Authorities in Kent. It is still likely that the annual target will be met however; this will be reviewed at quarter 2.</p>													
21 R&B 007	Value of fraud identified by the fraud partnership	£202,958.08	£260,524.27	£125,000.00				£260,524.27	£500,000.00	Steve McGinnes	Target will be exceeded		
<p>The annual target was reduced to reflect the reduction in the number of benefit visiting officers within the new shared service structure. The fact that the service has exceeded the target for the first quarter is encouraging.</p>													
BIM 001	Savings delivered through reviews ( <b>New</b> )		£000.00	N/A				£000.00	N/A	Georgia Hawkes	N/A		
<p>Savings for Maidstone for shared services in 2011/12 will be confirmed later in the year. There will be significant savings from the shared Revenues and Benefits service with Tunbridge Wells. There are currently no Best Value reviews being undertaken and Overview and Scrutiny reviews for this year have not yet started. Savings in the region of £21K from the Waste and Recycling Best Value review undertaken in 2009/10 are likely to be delivered in 2011/12, but these have not yet been confirmed.</p>													

REF	Indicator	Frequency	Details
<b>Outcome: By 2015 Maidstone has a transport network that supports the local economy</b>			
PKG 001	Percentage of parking spaces used <b>(NEW)</b>	Annual	To ensure the provision of off street parking spaces effectively meets customer demand. Surveys will be conducted within each pay and display car park to record the number of vehicles occupying parking spaces during both morning and afternoon peak periods. Car park occupancy will be defined as a percentage against the number of parking spaces available.
SPT 001	Percentage change in bus usage on services from Maidstone depot <b>(NEW)</b>	Annual	This data is provided by Arriva and is the change in the number of ticket sales compared to the previous year. It is reported as a percentage change due to commercial sensitivity.
KCC 001	Average journey time per mile for key routes (Congestion)	Annual	To monitor the level of congestion during morning peak times. Congestion impacts on people's quality of life, imposes significant and increasing economic costs as identified in the Eddington Report, and relates to other important priorities including air quality and climate change. The indicator contributes to the evidence about how well the authority is performing its network management duties.
SPT 002	Number of Park and Ride transactions	Quarterly	The Indicator compares the on bus transaction figure (these are the cash sales to passengers boarding buses) on Park and Ride with the same period of the previous year. The Council receives electronic copies of daily print outs from Its Park and Ride contractor (currently Arriva) on a monthly basis. These show the number of on bus transactions on each of the three services by ticket type. Allowances are made for the use of free bus passes (OAP tickets /2 and ten trip tickets *5).
PKG 002	Income from pay and display car parks per parking space <b>(NEW)</b>	Quarterly	This indicator is designed to assess income efficiency and usage. Pay and Display income is monitored closely - data is collated daily and will be used to calculate the income per parking space at each quarter of the financial year. Parking monitoring systems are used to monitor Income and reconciled against cash counted.
<b>Outcome: By 2015 Maidstone has a growing economy with rising employment, catering for a range of skill sets to meet the demands of the local economy.</b>			
LEV 001	Number of business enquires to locate in Kent <b>(NEW)</b>	Quarterly	This is a measure of the attractiveness of the Borough as a business location. Locate in Kent is the investment agency for Kent and Medway. It receives corporate relocation enquiries directly and through referrals from Government sources.
DCV 001	Percentage of commercial planning applications processed within statutory timescales <b>(NEW)</b>	Quarterly	To ensure that local planning authorities determine planning applications in a timely manner. This indicator measures the processing of commercial applications across all types of application (major, minors, others)
LEV 002	Number people claiming Job Seekers Allowance <b>(KPI 006)</b>	Quarterly	This indicator measures the health of the local economy. JSA Claimant Count records the number of people claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and National Insurance credits at Jobcentre Plus local offices.
LEV 003	Percentage of vacant units within the town centre <b>(NEW)</b>	Quarterly	Maidstone is a shopping centre of regional significance. Its continued attractiveness for businesses, visitors and shoppers is important to the prosperity of the Borough. Economic Development Services subscribes to Co-star, a recognised provider of commercial property information which has a GIS facility. A search on a defined area can be set up which identifies all the retail units on the market in a given area. This will be set up to mirror the Town Centre boundary proposed by the Planning Policy section of the Council.
LEV 004	Unemployment rate (model based) <b>(NEW)</b>	Quarterly	This indicator measures unemployment. The model-based estimate improves on the APS estimate by borrowing strength from the claimant count to produce an estimate that is more precise (i.e. has a smaller confidence interval). The claimant count is not itself a measure of unemployment but is strongly correlated with unemployment, and, as it is an administrative count, is known without sampling error. The gain in precision is greatest for areas with smaller sample sizes.
LEV 005	Percentage of economically active people in Maidstone	Annual	This indicator measures the level of worklessness in the Borough Economically active: People who are either in employment or unemployed aged 16-64.
LEV 006a	Completions of business space gained a) <b>Office (NEW)</b>	Annual	To show the amount and type of completed employments floor space (net). Net additional employment floor space is calculated as new floor space completions, minus permitted losses e.g. change of use, conversions etc.



REF	Indicator	Frequency	Details
LEV 006b	Supply of ready to occupy completions b) Industrial <b>(NEW)</b>	Annual	completions, minus permitted losses e.g. change of use, conversions etc. Floor space must be available for use and includes extensions made to existing floor space, where identified through development management process and surveys. Employment floor space type is defined by Use Class Orders B1 (a) B1 (b) B1 (c) and B2 and B8 - simplified for reporting to Office, Industrial, Logistics.
LEV 006c	Supply of ready to occupy completions c) Logistics <b>(NEW)</b>	Annual	
R&B 001	Cost of Revenues & Benefits Service <b>(NEW)</b>	Annual	This is a key measure of the council's performance in relation to the objective of corporate and customer excellence, providing a baseline against which value for money can be monitored. The total gross cost of the revenues and benefits service (council tax, business rates, benefit fraud and benefit administration) divided by the population, as provided by the ONS mid- year estimate.
R&B 002	Value of business rateable floor space <b>(NEW)</b>	Annual	The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) is an executive Agency of HM Revenues and Customs (HMRC). The work of the VOA includes compiling and maintaining lists of rateable values of the non-domestic properties in England to support the collection of business rates.
R&B 003	Supply of business rateable floor space <b>(NEW)</b>	Annual	The rateable value represents the open market annual rental value of a business/non-domestic property. This means the rent the property would let for on the valuation date, if it was being offered on the open market. It is the combined value of that rateable value that will be reported as part of
DCV 002	a) Percentage of major business planning applications taking-up pre-application advice	Bi-annual	These indicators measure the take-up and quality of pre-application advice. Pre-application advice is being promoted by the team and is a measure in ensuring that developments are high quality and well designed.
	b) Percentage of those taking pre-application advice where the applications were approved <b>(NEW)</b>		
<b>Outcome: By 2015 Maidstone has decent, affordable housing in the right places across a range of tenures</b>			
SPT 003a	Percentage of residential planning applications granted a) Urban area <b>(NEW)</b>	Quarterly	Maidstone Borough is divided in terms of rural and urban communities. These indicators provide contextual information on where new residential homes are being built. Allowing the urban rural split to be assessed.
SPT 003b	Percentage of residential planning applications granted a) Rural area <b>(NEW)</b>	Quarterly	
DCV 003	Percentage of residential planning applications processed within statutory timescales <b>(NEW)</b>	Quarterly	To ensure that local planning authorities determine planning applications in a timely manner. This indicator measures the processing of residential applications across all types of application (major, minors, others)
DCV 004	Percentage of planning applications determined within statutory timescales a) Majors	Quarterly	To ensure local planning authorities determine planning applications in a timely manner.
DCV 005	Percentage of planning applications determined within statutory timescales b) Minors	Quarterly	This indicator measures the percentage of planning applications dealt with in a timely manner. Averaging out performance across very different types of application would render any target as meaningless. Therefore it has been broken down into three broad categories: major, minor and other
DCV 006	Percentage of planning applications determined within statutory timescales c) Others	Quarterly	
HSG 001	Number of affordable homes delivered	Quarterly	To promote an increase in the number of affordable homes. Affordable housing is as set out in PPS3 (Planning Policy Statement 3), "The Government defines affordable housing as including social-rented and intermediate housing". Note this can include pitches on Gypsy and Traveller sites owned and managed by local authorities or registered social landlords.
HSG 002	Number of homes occupied by vulnerable people made decent	Quarterly	This is the number of homes occupied by vulnerable persons that have been made decent by various means throughout the year. The means are: (A) Our own Home Repair Grants (HRA'S). (B) By the national "Warmfront" scheme. (C) Our own Energy Efficiency grants administered by Creative Environmental Networks (CEN) on our behalf. (D) Homes made decent by enforcement action/negotiation.
SPT 004	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land	Annual	To encourage the provision of additional housing on previously developed land and through conversions of existing buildings in order to minimise development on green fields.
HSG 003	Average grant per MBC funded affordable home unit <b>(NEW)</b>	Annual	This indicator covers the supply of all affordable dwelling completions built or acquired by RSLs (or other bodies) with financial support (grant) directly from the Council. This indicator is the figures that MBC contributes in grant form for the development of affordable homes.
DCV 007	Cost of planning per application <b>(NEW)</b>	Annual	This indicator is to assess value for money in the planning processing expressed per application. Costs will exclude enforcement work.

REF	Indicator	Frequency	Details
<b>Outcome: By 2015 Maidstone continues to be a clean and attractive environment for people who live in and visit the Borough</b>			
HLD 001	Number of listed building consents granted <b>(NEW)</b>	Annual	This indicator shows the number of listed building consents that have been granted within the year and allows us to assess the amount of development to older/historic properties.
WCN 001	Percentage of waste recycled (NI 192)	Quarterly	The indicator measures percentage of household waste arising which have been sent by the Authority for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion. This is a key measure of local authorities' progress in moving management of household waste up the hierarchy, consistent with the Government's national strategy for waste management.
MUS 001	Visits/Uses of the Museum per 1,000 population	Quarterly	This includes Number of in-person visits; unique user visits to the museums' website; the number of schoolchild visits, the number of schoolchildren visited in outreach sessions; the number of schoolchildren using museum objects outside the museums; the number of adult, community and business groups visited outside the museums; the number of users reached by video-conferencing; the number of people engaged at outside exhibitions and events; the number of enquiries.
HLD 002	Number of Tree Preservation Orders granted <b>(NEW)</b>	Quarterly	This indicator is contextual data showing how many tree preservation orders have been granted.
DEP 001	Percentage of relevant land assessed with unacceptable levels of a) litter	Annual	This is reported as the percentage of relevant land and highways that is assessed as having deposits of litter and detritus that fall below an acceptable level. The Street Cleansing indicator (bespoke Ni195) is reported as two parts, one for each element of environmental and street cleanliness: (a) Litter, (b) Detritus, This indicator was previously collected as BVPI 199 in 2007/08.
DEP 002	Percentage of relevant land assessed with unacceptable levels of b) detritus		
EEF 001	Percentage of fly-tipping reports responded to within 1 working day <b>(NEW)</b>	Quarterly	Fly-tipping is the common term used to describe waste illegally deposited on land as described under Section 33 of the Environment Protection Act 1990. The removal of illegal dumping of waste on relevant land and highways should be removed the next working day following the report.
PKS 001	Cost of maintaining the Borough's parks & green spaces per hectare <b>(NEW)</b>	Annual	This indicator measures the cost of maintaining the boroughs parks and green spaces enabling the authority to assess value for money.
WCN 002	Cost of waste collection (per household)	Annual	To monitor cost of municipal waste disposal, to ensure that good value for money is achieved while delivering a high quality service.
DEP 003	Cost of street cleaning per head of population <b>(NEW)</b>	Annual	The cost of street cleansing per head of the residents of Maidstone is an accurate indicator to show any changes in the cost of street cleansing. The population count to be used is the ONS mid-year estimate.
CMP 001	Percentage reductions in CO2 emissions from local authority operations (Tonnes)	Annual	The aim of this indicator is to measure the reduction of CO2 emissions from the relevant buildings and transport used to deliver its functions and to encourage them to demonstrate leadership on tackling climate change. This indicator is part of the carbon reduction action plan.
<b>Outcome: By 2015 residents in Maidstone are not disadvantaged because of where they live or who they are, vulnerable people are assisted and the level of deprivation is reduced</b>			
INT 001	Percentage of the Borough covered by Broadband <b>(NEW)</b>	Annual	This indicator assesses the percentage of the borough covered by broadband with a speed of 2 megabytes or higher.
HSG 004	Average time taken to process and notify applicants on housing register	Quarterly	Average time taken to process and notify housing register applicants per month, is measured using the date the application is processed, minus the date the application is received. A letter of notification is automatically sent on date of processing the production of which is included in this indicator. Only working days are counted.
CDP 001	Number of individual volunteers registered on the Voluntary Action Maidstone Database of volunteers	Annual	The data for these indicators is provided by Volunteer Action Maidstone (VAM). They assess the level of volunteering in the borough and the growth of third sector (voluntary) organisations.
CDP 002	Number of volunteer organisations registered with VAM	Annual	
CDP 003	Number of residents participating in Neighbourhood planning as a percentage of the ward population	Annual	This indicator measure the level of community involvement in the Neighbourhood Planning process which helps communities identify and resolve local issues through Neighbourhood action Plans.
R&B 004	Average time taken to process new benefit claims and changes of circumstances (NI 181)	Quarterly	HB/CTB of £19bn is paid to over 5 million low income households. Delays in the administration of these benefits can impact on some of the most vulnerable people in our society by. This indicator measures the average time taken to process these elements calendar days.
HSG 005	Number of households presented from becoming homeless through intervention	Quarterly	This number of households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the local authority's housing advice service, housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation.

REF	Indicator	Frequency	Details
LEV 007	Gap between median wage of employee (residents) and the median wage of employees (workplace) (salary differences)	Annual	This indicator measures increases in standard of living but also is a measure of economic competitiveness with knowledge driven industries requiring higher skilled labour force and able to pay higher wages. Resident based wage levels in Maidstone are higher than the workplace based levels suggesting lower skilled and lower wage level local economy.
<b>Outcome: By 2015 the Council will continue to have and demonstrate value for money services that residents are satisfied with</b>			
COM 001	Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things <b>(bi-annual survey)</b>	Biennial	All of these indicators will be gathered through a resident based survey to be carried out in the third quarter. The methodology will be comparable to the Place Survey but has yet to be confirmed.
WCN 003	Satisfaction with Council's recycling service <b>(bi-annual survey)</b>	Biennial	
WCN 004	Satisfactions with Council's refuse collection service <b>(bi-annual survey)</b>	Biennial	
PKS 002	Satisfaction with Council's parks and open spaces <b>(bi-annual survey)</b>	Biennial	
DEP 004	Satisfaction with Street Cleansing <b>(bi-annual survey)</b>	Biennial	
PKS 003	Satisfaction with the Leisure Centre <b>(bi-annual survey)</b>	Biennial	
R&B 004	Percentage of business rates collected	Quarterly	These two indicator monitor the collection of Council Tax and NDNR against the target.
R&B 005	Percentage of Council tax collected	Quarterly	
C&S 001	Savings delivered through reviews (Value for Money)	Quarterly	This indicator demonstrates the levels of savings that's has been agreed and shows progress towards overall savings targets. Reviews include: Best Value Reviews, Business Transformation Reviews (savings achieved for Maidstone only), Overview & Scrutiny Reviews (of Maidstone Services) and service specific reviews.
R&B 006	Value of fraud identified (Housing benefits)	Quarterly	To demonstrate the efficiency of the Revenues and Benefits team in identifying fraud.

# Agenda Item 9

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

**6 SEPTEMBER 2011**

### **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CHANGE AND SCRUTINY**

**Report prepared by Ellie Kershaw**

#### **1. REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS APRIL-JUNE 2011**

##### 1.1 Issue for Decision

- 1.1.1 To consider the Council's performance in dealing with complaints during April –June 2011 and to note the areas identified for improvement.
- 1.1.2 To consider the Council's performance in dealing with complaints sent via the Ombudsman for the year 2010-2011.

##### 1.2 Recommendation of the Head of Change and Scrutiny

- 1.2.1 That the Committee notes the performance in relation to complaints and agrees action as appropriate.
- 1.2.2 That the contents of the Ombudsman report are noted.
- 1.2.3 That any recommendations made by the Standards Committee on 25 August are noted.

##### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 1.3.1 In order to ensure that complaints are being handled effectively and within corporate timescales it is important that a monitoring mechanism is in place.
- 1.3.2 Details of the complaints received broken down by service area, category and performance can be found at Appendix A.
- 1.3.3 During the period April-June 2011 there were a total of 97 complaints of which 87% (84) were responded to in time.
- 1.3.4 Of those complaints responded to outside of the target times, six concerned council tax/business rates and four concerned housing. No other department had more than one out of target. Whilst the closure

rate for housing complaints was still below target at 67% this is an improvement on the 50% closure rate achieved in the previous quarter.

- 1.3.5 The services with the highest numbers of complaints were;
- Waste collection had 14 complaints, five of which related to non collection of waste or recycling;
  - Council tax/business rates with 13, six of which related to the withdrawal of payment slips;
  - Development control had 13 complaints with no particular trend;
  - Housing options/private sector housing had 12 complaints, four of which concerned the allocations policy; and
  - Pollution had 12 complaints, five of which related to the behaviour of litter enforcement officers.
- 1.3.6 13 stage two complaints were processed in this quarter of which 12 (92%) were answered within timescale. Three of these concerned development control, three related to planning enforcement and two related to housing.
- 1.3.7 During the same period in 2010/11;
- 68 stage one complaints were processed of which 99% were processed in time;
  - The services with the most complaints were parking enforcement (16), council tax/business rates (12) and development control (8).
  - 11 stage two complaints were processed, all within time.
  - There is no correlation between complaints over the two years.
- 1.3.8 75 complaints surveys were sent out, 34 (45%) of which were returned. There were also four that came back as addressee unknown- these were housing complaints and customers may therefore have moved since making their complaint. A breakdown of the returned surveys can be found at Appendix B.
- 1.3.9 Seven of the returned surveys resulted in further correspondence with customers who were still unhappy and had made specific comments as to why on their surveys.
- Building surveying- wrote and explained that what they were still unhappy with was a service provided by Hyde Housing. Hyde was made aware of the issue.
  - Council tax- customer was sent a payment booklet and advised again of his right to take the complaint to stage 2. He has not done so.
  - Development control (2) - one customer had not received the response letter, copy sent. Another made a comment about a member of staff being unhelpful- this was fed back to the manager.

- Housing – customer was written to inviting her to provide more detail to enable us to carry out a subject access request for her.
- Waste (2) - arranged for one customer to have the hire of their garden waste bin extended further as compensation for the purchase of green sacks that were not needed. Another customer was written to explaining that he was not entitled to a larger waste bin.

#### 1.4 Other issues

1.4.1A new complaints policy has been drafted with customer and staff involvement and approved by Cabinet. This has been covered in detail in a separate report. The policy is intended to make the process clearer for staff and customers. A new set of web pages will now be created to make it easy for residents to see how to make a complaint and what the process involves. Information about making a Subject Access Request and Freedom of Information will also be included to make navigation as easy as possible. We will be asking for customer feedback on the pages.

1.4.2 The customers who were consulted on the policy were ones who had been through the complaints process themselves. As a result of the consultation, one of these customers has offered to fund an award for staff who to deal with a complaint in such a manner that the complainant ends the process satisfied even if the outcome is not what they wanted. It was agreed at CMT that MBC does not have a protocol to accept the money offered, however, the idea will be taken forward and incorporated into the STRIVE awards. Satisfaction surveys and customer comments will be used to determine who should be rewarded.

1.4.2 Whilst the housing allocation scheme drew a number of complaints, this could be due to the frustration of applicants not being able to access housing. MBC is experiencing a noticeable increase in demand for social housing as a result of the prevailing economy, particularly for larger family accommodation. However, a review of the allocation scheme is taking place in readiness for changes being brought about by the proposals in the Localism Bill. Whilst housing had a low response rate, this was due to the complexity of the issues and the customers were contacted throughout the investigations.

1.4.3 When Council tax payment slips were withdrawn it was done without any notice to the taxpayer or any alternative being put in place. In hindsight it could have been dealt with in other ways, such as delaying the decision to withdraw them for a year and giving more notice. This will be taken into consideration in future policy decisions and other options will be considered for next year.

There was also an issue with a low response rate in time within this service. In future it has been requested that the complaints are sent to

the Revenues Manager instead of the Head of Revenues and Benefits Partnership in an effort to address this.

1.4.4 16 of the 34 returned surveys stated that their complaint had not been understood correctly. Seven of these were the customers detailed in 1.3.9 who had been contacted following their survey responses. In seven of the other cases the Policy and Review Officer was satisfied that the questions had been answered. In one the section has been contacted as the complaints policy was incorrectly quoted. In the final case the customer has been contacted asking if they would like to escalate their complaint to stage 2. However, since the survey was returned, their outstanding issue has been satisfactorily resolved. It is important that when signing off responses, Heads of Service ensure that the original complaint has been properly addressed and that corporate information contained in the response is correct.

1.4.5 The Policy and Review Officer is working with Learning and Development to create customer care training for staff and a session on writing complaints responses.

#### 1.5 Ombudsman report

1.5.1 The Ombudsman has only provided a limited amount of information this year. Only Councils who have had over 50 complaints, poor response times or who have been issued a report have received a tailored letter. The complaints the Ombudsman received about MBC compared to our nearest neighbours is shown in the table below.

<b>Council</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Local settlement</b>	<b>No Maladministration, no report</b>	<b>Ombudsman's discretion</b>	<b>Outside jurisdiction</b>
<b>Maidstone BC</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>
Ashford BC	23	5	11	4	3
Basingstoke & Dearne BC	16	0	12	3	1
Braintree DC	12	2	8	1	1
Chelmsford BC	9	2	3	4	0
Colchester BC	23	6	13	4	0
Mid Sussex DC	13	1	2	8	2
Stafford BC	8	0	5	2	1
Test Valley BC	7	1	4	1	1
Tonbridge & Malling BC	9	0	7	1	1
Warwick DC	8	2	1	4	1
Wychavon DC	6	1	3	1	1

1.5.2 The Ombudsman considered 23 complaints about the Council. Of these five were closed with a local settlement and a further five were judged

to be outside the Ombudsman's discretion. There were no maladministration findings against the Council.

1.6 Alternative action and why not recommended

1.6.1 The Council's complaints management follows the Local Government Ombudsman's best practice. Managing complaints is a key means of ensuring the Council's objectives are delivered to a consistently high standard.

1.7 Impact on corporate objectives

1.7.1 Customer service is a core value and management of complaints is critical to the success of this objective.

1.8 Risk Management

1.8.1 Failure to manage complaints in a robust fashion represents both a financial and reputational risk to the Council. Regular reports are produced for CMT and Heads of Service are reminded of their responsibilities. Monitoring is carried out by the Policy and Review Officer overseen by the Head of Change and Scrutiny.

1.9 Other Implications

1.9.1

1. Financial	x
2. Staffing	
3. Legal	
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment	
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development	
6. Community Safety	
7. Human Rights Act	
8. Procurement	
9. Asset Management	

1.9.2 Two lots of compensation, for £50 and £150 were paid in this quarter on the recommendation of the Ombudsman. These both related to poor communication from private sector housing.



1.9.3 The four financial Ombudsman local settlements in 2010/11 were;

- £525.65 with regards to housing benefit
- £50 with regards to planning enforcement
- £50 with regards to private sector housing
- £50with regards to development management

1.9.4 Not all settlements are cash payments. The fifth settlement was an undertaking that we would monitor anti-social behaviour problems at a play area and liaise with the police and complainant.

1.10 Relevant Documents

1.10.1Appendices

<b><u>IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?</u></b>			
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan? .....			
This is a Key Decision because: ..... .....			
Wards/Parishes affected: ..... .....			

Appendix A- complaints breakdown  
Appendix B- surveys

Appendix A- Complaints breakdown

Service	Total	On Time	Late	% in time	Lack of info/contact
Bereavement Services	2	2	0	100%	0
Building surveying	2	2	0	100%	0
Communications	1	1	0	100%	0
Community safety	1	0	1	0%	0
Conservation and landscape	1	1	0	100%	0
Contact centre	4	3	1	75%	0
Council tax/Business rates	13	7	6	53%	0
Customer services	1	1	0	100%	0
Democracy/democratic support	1	1	0	100%	0
Development control	13	13	0	100%	3
Economic development	1	1	0	100%	0
Environmental enforcement	3	3	0	100%	0
Food & safety	1	1	0	100%	0
Housing & council tax benefits	1	1	0	100%	1
Housing options/PSH	12	8	4	67%	1
Leisure	1	1	0	100%	1
Other	1	1	0	100%	0
Parking enforcement	6	5	1	83%	0
Planning enforcement	6	6	0	100%	0
Pollution ( inc litter enforcement)	12	12	0	100%	0
Registration	1	1	0	100%	0
Waste collection	14	14	0	100%	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>8</b>

Time taken	Policy	Discrimination	Service	Staff
0	0	0	2	0
0	0	0	0	2
0	1	0	0	0
0	0	1	0	0
0	1	0	0	0
0	0	0	2	2
0	7	0	4	2
0	0	0	1	0
0	0	0	1	0
0	4	0	5	1
0	1	0	0	0
0	1	0	0	2
0	0	0	0	1
0	0	0	0	0
0	4	2	4	1
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	1	0
0	2	0	4	0
0	0	0	5	1
0	2	0	5	5
0	0	0	1	0
0	3	0	8	1
<b>0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>18</b>

Appendix B- surveys

Service	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total
Bereavement Services			1			1
Building surveying				1	1	2
Conservation and landscape					1	1
Contact centre		1			3	4
Council tax/Business rates		1	1	1	1	4
Development control	1	1	1		1	4
Economic development		1				1
Housing & council tax benefits			1	1		2
Housing options/PSH				1	1	2
Other	1					1
Parking enforcement		2			1	3
Pollution ( inc litter enforcement)				4		4
Waste collection	2		1	1	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>34</b>

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**6 SEPTEMBER 2011**

#### **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CHANGE AND SCRUTINY**

**Report prepared by Ellie Kershaw**

#### **1. Corporate Improvement Plan update**

##### 1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider progress made on the actions within the Corporate Improvement Plan (CIP).

##### 1.2 Recommendation of the Head of Change and Scrutiny

1.2.1 That the Committee considers the recommendations for Cabinet.

1.2.1 That the progress against the objectives set in the CIP is noted.

1.2.2 That where actions are out of target responsible officers are asked to provide reasons as to why these have not been completed and plan for how they intend to complete the action as quickly as possible.

1.2.3 That requests for the removal of some actions from the plan are agreed.

1.2.4 That the target date extension request is agreed.

1.2.5 That undertaking a corporate peer review is agreed.

1.2.6 That undertaking a planning peer review is agreed.

##### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The purpose of the CIP is to identify and monitor progress on key areas for improvement.

1.3.2 Fourteen actions have been completed since the last report in March.

1.3.3 Appendix A shows the ongoing actions within the plan. There are currently five outstanding actions of which four are out of target.

1.3.4 It has been requested that the following actions are removed from the plan:

**12.03 Assess the appropriateness of the actions within action plans in relation to 2010 results**

**12.04 Identify any patterns or trends following the completion of the second survey**

The Place survey is no longer a requirement. A residents' survey will be conducted to replace this. However, options for methodology are still being discussed. These actions are therefore no longer relevant. Replacement actions will be included in the plan once the new customer satisfaction survey has been agreed and carried out.

1.3.5 An extension has been requested on the following action;

**020.05 Explore options for a more specialised central project management or project support function**

Requested target 30 September 2011

Recently an officer has temporarily been acting as Corporate Project Manager, providing project management expertise for a number of projects across the Council. This post sits within the Change and Scrutiny Team and has recently been extended until March 2012. At present the Head of Business Improvement coordinates the Council's approach to projects and provides reports to management team. Project management for the Hazlitt capital works is currently being provided by another officer not based in the Hazlitt team. Moving the deadline for this action to 30 September 2011 will allow a report to be prepared for Management Team by the Head of Business Improvement that considers how well these arrangements have worked and suggests a way forward.

1.3.5 Continuous Improvement

It is recognised that with the abolition of the Audit Commission and inspection regime the Council has made a commitment to be proactive in how it monitors performance and seeks improvement going forward. There will be other additions to the plan following peer reviews. The Council will be undertaking a Corporate Peer Review in September 2012 to consider how we are meeting the needs of residents and addressing the Corporate and Customer Excellence Priority. An additional Peer Review is also planned for Planning in January 2012, to consider how we meet our corporate priority For Maidstone to have a

growing economy. Both of these reviews will result in actions being added to the improvement plan.

The corporate approach to improvement at the Council was discussed at the Cabinet away day on 13 July 2011. It was identified that improvement and change should be driven by efficiency and customer satisfaction. A report summarising the discussion and options for implementing change will be taken to the next away day on 24 August 2011. This should result in a number of actions that will be added to the CIP.

#### 1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 Cabinet could decide not to produce a CIP or consider its progress. If not properly monitored improvement actions may not be delivered. This would have a detrimental impact upon service delivery and the Council's reputation.

#### 1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 Having a CIP supports Priority 3 in the Strategic Plan, Corporate and customer excellence.

#### 1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There are risks to the reputation and performance of the authority associated with not responding to recommendations made through inspections such as IIP. Now that there is no formal inspection regime it is more important than ever that the Council has a mechanism for driving improvement.

#### 1.7 Other Implications

##### 1.7.1

1. Financial
2. Staffing
3. Legal
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
6. Community Safety
7. Human Rights Act
8. Procurement


9. Asset Management


1.8 Relevant Documents

<p><b><u>IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?</u></b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan? .....</p> <p>This is a Key Decision because: ..... .....</p> <p>Wards/Parishes affected: ..... .....</p>
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1.8.1 Appendices

- Appendix A- CIP outstanding actions
- Appendix B- CIP completed actions



Appendix A-Corporate Improvement Plan outstanding actions





Icon	Panic Icon	Name
		012 Progress and monitor action plans to improve satisfaction on those services where one in five people were dissatisfied with the service.
CIP 012.03	Assess the appropriateness of the actions within action plans in relation to 2010 results	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 20px; margin-right: 10px;">0%</div> <div style="text-align: center;">30-Jun-2011</div> <div style="margin-left: 20px;">Angela Woodhouse</div> <div style="font-size: small;">The Place survey is no longer a requirement and was not carried out in 2010, following national changes.</div> </div>
CIP 012.04	Identify any patterns or trends following the completion of the second survey	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 20px; margin-right: 10px;">0%</div> <div style="text-align: center;">30-Sep-2011</div> <div style="margin-left: 20px;">Angela Woodhouse</div> <div style="font-size: small;">The Place survey is no longer a requirement. However the Council will be monitoring customer satisfaction with services as part of monitoring the Corporate and Customer Excellence priority as identified in the Strategic Plan 2011-15.</div> </div>



Icon	Panic Icon	Name				
		019 Use customer and staff feedback to improve the way the Council delivers services				
Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 019.01	Hold focus groups to explore how people want to be engaged and develop a robust plan to deliver this	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 80px; height: 20px; background-color: #add8e6; position: relative;"> <span style="position: absolute; right: 5px; bottom: 5px; font-size: small;">85%</span> </div> </div>	30-Apr-2011	Roger Adley	Our experience from budget, Planning for Real, local development framework and many other consultations suggests that people want to be engaged on the issues and in the ways that interest them - often face to face at venues that are convenient to them. Our consultation tool kit includes this advice. Further focus groups are planned to keep this subject under review.	





Icon	Panic Icon	Name				
		020 Determine the top priorities of the Council and ensure that plans, policies and strategies link to these				
CIP 020.05	Explore options for a more specialised central project management or project support function	<input type="text" value="0%"/>		30-Apr-2011	Georgia Hawkes	Recently an officer has temporarily been acting as Corporate Project Manager, providing project management expertise for a number of projects across the Council. This post sits within the Change and Scrutiny Team and has recently been extended until March 2012. At present the Head of Business Improvement coordinates the Council's approach to projects and provides reports to management team. Project management for the Hazlitt capital works is currently being provided by another officer not based in the Hazlitt team. Moving the deadline for this action to 30 September 2011 will allow a report to be prepared for Management Team by the Head of Business Improvement that considers how well these arrangements have worked and suggests a way forward



Icon	Panic Icon	Name				
		021 Ensure equality issues are considered and addressed across the organisation				
Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 021.01	All staff to undertake equalities training to ensure awareness of the new legislation	<input type="text" value="30%"/>		31-Mar-2011	Tina Edwards	194 staff have completed the e learning module which is 60% those with access to a pc. Reminders will be sent to staff to encourage them to complete the training.

## Appendix B-Corporate Improvement Plan completed actions



001 Developing a clear view of where partnership resources can be focused to improve service outcomes (LINKED TO AGS 2)						
Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 001.01	Resource Mapping exercise undertaken and presented to LSP board			31-Aug-2011	Sarah Robson	Phase two of the resource mapping exercise was presented to the LSP Board and Delivery Group at the LSP Away Day on 1 April 2011.
CIP 001.02	Decisions made by the LSP on the future allocation of resources			30-Apr-2011	Sarah Robson	

002 Monitoring effectiveness of counter fraud partnership with Tunbridge Wells						
Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 002.01	Provide the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the operation of the counter fraud partnership			31-Aug-2010	Steve McGinnes	Following a request from the Audit Committee and further to discussion with the Overview and Scrutiny Manager, it was agreed that an update would be provided to the Audit Committee instead of Overview and Scrutiny. A presentation was made to the Committee on the 20.09.2010, with agreement for future updates to be provided annually.

003 Addressing the outstanding learning and development issues from the IIP reassessment and equality impact assessments						
Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 003.01	Create action plan of outstanding L&D issues to be implemented before reassessment			31-Jan-2011	Tina Edwards	Re-accreditation for IIP was gained in March 2011. Tina is currently on leave- further update awaited
CIP 003.02	Undertake child protection training			30-Apr-2010	Claire Hayes	



Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 003.03	Include Transgender training on the new corporate training calendar			30-Jun-2011	<del>Claire Hayes</del>	Sessions added in quarterly for 2010/11







004 Improve areas of weakness where Audit reports have shown a level of assurance lower than substantial one area remains outstanding since March 2009: Aspects of section 106 Agreements







Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 004.01	Undertake six monthly follow-up review by Internal Audit on these areas to ensure recommendations have been implemented			30-Sep-2010	Brian Parsons	This is an ongoing process. All reports are followed-up after six months. Where action has not been taken, the Head of Service is made aware in a report, with a copy to the Director and the Chief Executive. If this occurs in an area where only limited control assurance was in place at the time of the original audit, the lack of action will be reported to a meeting of the Audit Committee.







42










005 Further work is required to build on work currently undertaken by the Council with partners on delivering outcomes for the public.





Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 005	Further work is required to build on work currently undertaken by the Council with partners on delivering outcomes for the public.			30-Sep-2010	Zena Cooke	The work to incorporate the Safer Maidstone Partnership and the Local Children's Trust Board into the Local Strategic Partnership arrangements has been completed. Further work in relation to partnership working and delivering outcomes with partners will be undertaken as part of the Locality Board arrangements and will also be monitored as part of the Community Partnerships Team Service Plan.







006 Develop and implement a Waste and Recycling Strategy						
Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 006.01	Research existing strategies, particularly amongst waste partnerships			30-Apr-2010	Jennifer Gosling	Existing strategies have been researched and reference visits to Southend on Sea and Tunbridge Wells have been undertaken to learn about different recycling strategies. Maidstone's Waste and Recycling Strategy has now been drafted and links with the existing Kent Waste Strategy and Sustainable Community Strategy.
CIP 006.02	Develop a short strategy for the Cabinet Member for Environment to approve			30-Apr-2010	Jennifer Gosling	The Waste and Recycling Strategy 2010 - 2015 was approved on Friday 24th September 2010.
CIP 006.03	Implement Waste and Recycling Strategy			31-May-2010	Jennifer Gosling	The strategy was approved on 24th September 2010 and implementation has started on the new food waste collection service. The strategy will be implemented over the next 5 years.

007 Ensure that the finance section has the appropriate skill mix to meet the more challenging reporting requirements of IFRS.						
Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 007.01	Annual Training Programme of Seminars and Workshops			31-Mar-2010	<del>Claire Hayes</del> ; Paul Riley	
CIP 007.02	Undertake Internal Development of team members through cross training			30-Jun-2010	<del>Claire Hayes</del> ; Paul Riley	
CIP 007.03	Enhance team through filling vacancy			28-Feb-2010	Paul Riley	

008 Implement strategies for managing the expectations of consultees						
Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 008.01	Review of consultation handbook and toolkit carried out as part of communication strategy			31-Dec-2009	Roger Adley	Review was completed in December 2009 and the revised handbook and tool-kit has been rolled out to staff.
CIP 008.02	Present handbook and toolkit to members and officers			31-Mar-2010	Roger Adley	The revised consultation handbook and tool-kit have been rolled out. A presentation on the handbook has been given to section managers and was also undertaken with the staff forum.
CIP 008.03	Actions developed to manage the expectations of consultees			31-Jul-2010	Roger Adley; Angela Woodhouse	The consultation toolkit includes advice to ensure that this is considered at the onset.

009 Demonstrating improved service delivery and customer satisfaction from Council initiatives (e.g. Gateway)						
Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 009.01	Evaluate results from the 2009 mystery shopping exercise			30-Jun-2010	Sandra Marchant	The results from the 2009 Mystery Shopping programme have been analysed and a report was submitted to Corporate Management Team and agreed on 3 August 2010.
CIP 009.02	Undertake mystery shopping exercise and evaluate results			30-Jun-2011	Sandra Marchant	The final report from the 2010 Kent Wide Mystery Shopping exercise has been issued.
CIP 009.03	Benchmark performance of Contact team through KCSNG			31-Oct-2010	Sandra Marchant	Another Measurement and Benchmarking exercise was completed in November 2010 and results form across Kent will be available at the end of January. The KCSNG have agreed to continue to run the exercise on a quarterly basis.
CIP 009.04	Undertake benchmarking with the national one stop shop benchmarking group			28-Feb-2011	Sandra Marchant	Data for the annual National One Stop Shop (NOSS) benchmarking exercise was submitted in June 2010 for the year 2009 to 2010. The overall results have now been issued to members of the group submitting data.
CIP 009.05	Review customer care charter			30-Apr-2010	Sandra Marchant	A Customer Care Charter has been drawn up but still requires agreement from the Head of Communications and then reported to Management Team for final approval.





010 Ensuring evolving partnerships maintain principles of good governance						
Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 010.01	Carry out assessments of key partnerships	 100%		30-Apr-2010	Sarah Robson	The LSP delivery groups and partners was finalised in June 2011. However, the next stage will be to manage the transition from LSP to Locality Board.
CIP 010.02	Review partnership protocol	 100%		30-Sep-2010	Sarah Robson	The partnership protocol has been completed and endorsed at Committee. SR to upload onto Community Partnerships Sharepoint site and promote internally.

011 The council considers and tracks with its significant partners the impact on users when making decisions on reducing costs.						
CIP 011.01	Work with KCC to coordinate the effects of savings on inter-organisations	 100%		31-Oct-2010	Paul Riley	Development work completed through the MTFS at a strategic level, ongoing dialogue and coordination now part of relevant managers' service plans
CIP 011.02	Expand the consultation on the budget strategy and the MTFS to include the impact of the identification savings with partners	 100%		31-Dec-2010	Paul Riley	This work has been completed as part of the MTFS. Ongoing consultation on savings targets will be a formal part of the annual budget strategy process
CIP 011.03	Work with the LSP on the resource mapping project and feed into the MTFS	 100%		31-Dec-2010	Paul Riley	LSP resource mapping project on track, initial results received, further work progressing.

45



012 Progress and monitor action plans to improve satisfaction on those services where one in five people were dissatisfied with the service.						
Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 012.01	Assess the possible use of mosaic to raise satisfaction			30-Sep-2010	Georgia Hawkes	The 2008 Place survey results have been submitted for analysis using Mosaic Public sector and the results are expected shortly. This will give information on how different types of people answered the questions in the Place Survey, including satisfaction with specific services and overall satisfaction with the way the Council runs things. These results could then be used to try and influence people's perceptions of the Council and the services it provides. However, as central government has removed the requirement to undertake the Place Survey and the Council has taken a decision not to undertake a similar survey for the present, there is no way of measuring this and comparing with the original Place Survey results.
CIP 012.02	Continue to monitor the action plans and present reports to Cabinet			31-Oct-2010	Angela Woodhouse	Report went to Cabinet May 2010

46



013 The authority has made a commitment to carbon reduction and has established a Climate Change Strategy. Ensure that the Strategy is successfully implemented over the next three years.						
Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 013.01	To develop the Carbon Reduction Action Plan in conjunction with the Energy Saving Trust One-to-One Programme			30-Apr-2010	Jenny Hunt	The Carbon Reduction Action Plan was developed and 15 actions were taken forward. Although this was never developed into published action plan due to delays with the Climate Change Framework amid central government policy changes, these have now all been delivered. The Carbon Reduction Action Plan will be updated in due course to reflect the work undertaken and to move this forward.
CIP 013.02	To implement the actions of the Carbon Reduction Plan and report back progress and update the action plan on a yearly basis			30-Mar-2011	Jenny Hunt	The 15 actions that were chosen to form part of the Carbon Reduction Action Plan have now been delivered. The Carbon Reduction Action Plan will now be updated to reflect this progress and to move this action plan forward.





014 Seek technical advice when accounting for complex capital transactions, discuss proposed action with the external auditor early on so that the accounting treatment can be agreed prior to productions of draft financial statements

Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 014.01	Ensure that all future quarterly review meetings with Auditor include an agenda item on issues that may involve complex accounting transactions.			30-Mar-2011	Paul Riley	This has now been achieved

015 The Council should review asset valuations at each year-end considering both impairment and other material changes in asset values



Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 015.01	Request, as part of annual review of 20% of assets, an assessment of material changes in all asset values.			31-May-2010	Chris Finch; Paul Riley	complete

016 Once the Council has taken a decision to dispose of an asset this should be re-categorised from operational assets to non-operational assets, surplus for resale, and revalued to market valuation obtained prior to sale in accordance with the SORP







Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 016.01	Identify process in closedown procedure and formally reconcile actions with asset sales detailed in usable capital receipts / cabinet member decisions			31-May-2010	Paul Holland; Gill West	

47













017 Prime council tax records should be retained until completion of the annual audit, and otherwise in accordance with the Council's document retention policy.

Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 017.01	Set up share point site accessible to revenues team to hold records of VO balancing	 100%		28-Feb-2010	Steve McGinnes	An area has been created within the existing Revs and Bens team site to provide a full audit trail.

018 Promoting the role of the Audit Committee in ensuring action plans are implemented and contributing to risk identification

Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 018.01	Consideration given to a review being carried out across the four MKIP authorities of the audit committees.	 100%		30-Mar-2010	Brian Parsons	Review agreed by all four MKIP authorities in September 2010
CIP 018.02	Commission the IDEa to carry out a review of the Council's Audit Committee The role of the Committee in ensuring action plans are implemented and risk identification will be considered as part of the review.	 100%		30-Jun-2010	Brian Parsons	The IDEa commissioned via proposal in August 2010
CIP 018.03	Present findings to the Audit Committee on the options for future development.	 100%		30-Jun-2010	Brian Parsons	The report arising from the LGID review was presented to the Audit Committee on the 17 January 2011. The Committee agreed to create an action plan and will meet informally to agree the detail to be included. The Plan will be endorsed at the next formal meeting of the Committee on 21 March 2011, and will be implemented over the coming months.

48

019 Use customer and staff feedback to improve the way the Council delivers services						
Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 019.02	Involve staff in the service planning process	 100%		04-Mar-2011	Angela Woodhouse	Staff events have been held to discuss the new priorities. New guidance and support has been issued to managers
CIP 019.03	Carry out consultation on the Strategic Plan	 100%		31-Jan-2011	Angela Woodhouse	Consultation carried out with staff and customers
CIP 019.04	Learn from complaints by spotting trends at first stage	 100%		31-Jan-2011	Ellie Kershaw; Ellie* Kershaw	Complaints are analysed for their reasons and then reported to CMT and the Standards Committee
CIP 019.05	Consider staff engagement as part of the Councils Communication Strategy	 100%		30-Apr-2011	Roger Adley	
CIP 019.06	Create an intranet site with information on the demographics etc of those living in the borough	 100%		30-Jun-2011	Georgia Hawkes	New intranet page created under Business Improvement site with links to KCC's facts and figures pages and other useful links e.g. Kent Police, health statistics etc. Unit Managers will now be asked for any other useful links they are aware of.
CIP 019.07	Service specific reviews supported by business improvement to include the use of customer feedback & insight	 100%		30-Apr-2011	Georgia Hawkes	When Business Improvement support other teams in making improvements customer feedback and customer insight e.g. Mosaic is always used. For example, Mosaic has been used to support Waste and Recycling - maximising take up of services and maximising volunteers for the Mote Park improvements. In 2011 work will also start with Private sector Housing and customer feedback through complaints and surveys will be considered and the customers of the service will be examined and profiled using Mosaic.

020 Determine the top priorities of the Council and ensure that plans, policies and strategies link to these

Code	Title	Progress Bar	Status Icon	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
CIP 020.01	Define the Council's top three priorities and use these to determine the focus of the Council in terms of members, staff, finances and partnership working.			31-Jan-2011	Angela Woodhouse	
CIP 020.02	Develop a budget strategy action plan to show where efficiencies and savings will be delivered			31-Jan-2011	Paul Riley	
CIP 020.03	Project management toolkit presentation at unit managers meeting			31-Mar-2011	Georgia Hawkes	Presentation on the Project Management Toolkit made to Unit Managers meeting in March 2011.
CIP 020.04	Research project sponsor training for management team			31-Mar-2011	Georgia Hawkes	Project Sponsor training will be carried out with Senior Management Team in November 2011.

## **Maidstone Borough Council**

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

**Tuesday 6 September 2011**

#### **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2010-2011**

**Report of:** Overview & Scrutiny Officer

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 In the 2010-2011 Municipal Year there were four Overview and Scrutiny Committees; Corporate Services, Partnerships and Well-Being, Leisure and Culture and Environment and Transportation. In addition to these four Committees the work of the newly established Maidstone and Tunbridge Well Joint Health Sub Committee continued, addressing the joint issues faced by Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells under the governance of the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to agree the report subject to the insertion of the statement from the Chairman of Partnerships and Well-Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee and recommendations as appropriate to enable the report to be seen by Cabinet on 14 September 2011 for approval.

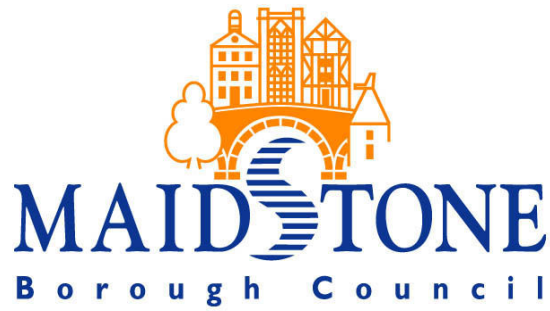
#### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2010-2011 summarises the work and achievements of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 3.2 Successful Scrutiny outcomes are governed by four principles:
- Ensures scrutiny provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers;
  - Enables the voice and concerns of the public and its communities;
  - Makes an impact on the delivery of public services; and
  - Is carried out by independent minded governors who take the lead and own the scrutiny process.

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

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

- 'Corporate and Customer Excellence'



Keeping an eye on  
Maidstone

# **Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report**

## **2010-11**

# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction from the Leisure &amp; Prosperity and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman's (2010-11)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Scrutiny at Maidstone Borough Council</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Successful Scrutiny</b>	
• <b>Ensures scrutiny provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers</b>	<b>3</b>
• <b>Enables the voice and concerns of the public and its communities</b>	<b>4</b>
• <b>Makes an impact on the delivery of public services</b>	<b>5</b>
• <b>Is carried out by independent minded governors who take the lead and own the scrutiny process</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Partnership Working</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Looking Forward</b>	<b>8</b>



## **Introduction to Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2010-11**

### Leisure & Prosperity

This work programme was made up of two major items this year - the Leisure and Culture Strategy and the Rural Economy - with many smaller but no less significant pieces of work running parallel (e.g. looking at the robustness of data used in the Core Strategy, an assessment of work to date from the Local Strategic Partnership's (LSP) Economic Development committee, and a call in dealing with the funding for Childrens' play equipment). Along the way our committee have experimented with new ideas for good practice, and revisited some old ones. For example, we held meetings outside Town Hall - in the Museum and Hazlitt Theatre - and took tours of the Leisure Centre and new East Wing extension. I also consider it good practice that we went on a field trip around various rural businesses. Something that could be improved for next year is better involvement of officers in meetings. We MUST also find ways to engage with non-scrutiny members more effectively. It has been particularly sad to see the Independent Group become disenfranchised from scrutiny, and I hope this will be rectified in the new year.

Stephen Paine ,  
Chair, Leisure and Prosperity Overview & Scrutiny Committee

### Corporate Services

Inevitably, against a backdrop of municipal austerity, the main focus for the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been the identification of potential corporate financial savings. To this end a small task and finish group was established to work with the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive to explore potential for savings, alternative approaches and prioritisation within the capital budget.

The Committee scrutinised the draft new model MBC Strategic Plan and though broadly supportive raised the need to be seen to champion the whole Borough, not just the town, and to provide balance through promoting protection and celebration of what is best about our area and not just focus on the faults.

A further key role has been to ensure a high level of awareness of the flurry of new initiatives and policies emanating from the incoming Coalition Government and seeking reassurance that Council staff and relevant partnerships are alive to the opportunities that change may present.

Tony Harwood,  
Chair, Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

### Partnerships and Well-Being

**Awaiting statement from Councillor Stockell, to be included before submission to Cabinet.**

Paulina Stockell  
Chairman, Partnerships and Well-Being Overview & Scrutiny Committee

## Environment and Transportation

During the municipal year 2010/11 the Committee were very keen to scrutinise the draft Integrated Transport Strategy which forms part of the Core Strategy. This item was taken from our agenda at the last minute and our input has been delayed. The Integrated Transport Strategy is a key part of the new Core Strategy for Maidstone.

The Committee received an update about the Food Waste Initiative which was available to the majority of households in the Borough and had helped to increase recycling rates to an acceptable level.

We looked at the Supply of Water to our Borough and it is clear that this piece of work needs much co-ordination between the water companies and the different local authorities and a further in-depth study. Our water levels are stressed within the county and we need long term planning to avoid a water crisis.

The Climate Change Framework which is the overarching document was reviewed during the year and the Committee showed much support for the work already undertaken to date.

During our busy year we were given updates relating to the Air Quality Action Plan and also dog fouling and the new pilot schemes which are helping to reduce the fouling which takes place around the Borough.

Annabelle Blackmore

Chairman, Environment and Transportation Overview & Scrutiny Committee

# Overview and Scrutiny at Maidstone Borough Council

## Vision for Scrutiny

To have an effective and well respected service that ensures the council's services are delivered equitably, effectively and efficiently for our residents.



## Centre for Public Scrutiny Principles of Effective Scrutiny

1. Ensures scrutiny provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision makers
2. Enables the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
3. Drives improvement in public services
4. Is carried out by independent minded governors who lead and own the scrutiny role



Three Overview and Scrutiny Committees supported by 2.5 officers

## Overview and Scrutiny 2010-11 – A Summary

- 48 formal meetings
- 54 councillors
- 43 officers
- 30 external witnesses
- 2 major reviews
- 27 one-off topics
- 14 Commenting and Developing Budget, Policy and Strategy Docs
- 3 call-ins
- 1 working group

## Ensures scrutiny provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers.

### Car Parks & Park & Ride

Environment and Transportation OSC sought to evaluate the Park and Ride service throughout the 2010/11 Municipal year. The Committee pursued a holistic approach to this and were keen to consider air quality issues, the town's problem with congestion, and the importance of a transport system that would support and help the town's economy to grow. The Committee looked to the emerging Core Strategy, Maidstone's Growth Point Status and remained steadfast in their pursuit of the facts, hoping to have a valid input into what would become the Integrated Transport Strategy. The absence of the Core Strategy meant that the Committee did not have the opportunity to impact on the decision making process in 2010/11. The Environment and Transport Committee interviewed Jeff Kitson, Parking Services Manager, Clive Cheeseman, Transport Policy Officer, Brian Morgan, Assistant Director of Regeneration and Cultural Services and Paul Crick, Director of Integrated Strategy and Planning at Kent County Council. Members addressed the issue of Car Parks versus the Park and Ride in an attempt to evaluate the Council's outlook for the transport needs of Maidstone. It was established that Maidstone had excellent car parking facilities, attractively priced which on balance did not strengthen the position of the Park and Ride Service.



Members expressed concerns at the rental costs of the Sittingbourne Road Park & Ride which they were told was in excess of £140,000 per annum. Though it contributed to easing congestion in the Town Centre, there were issues relating to the structure, cost and the volume of car parking available. In their choice of witnesses Members sought to establish the strategic outlook as well as an overarching county perspective. Paul Crick discussed the Local Transport Plan 3 for Kent and gave frank and open responses to Members questions. Mr Crick was able to advise on how Maidstone's Integrated Transport Strategy would fit beneath the Local Transport Plan 3. The Committee were kept up to date throughout the year with emerging documents such as 'Growth Without Gridlock' Kent Country Council aspirational vision for an Integrated Transport System. A visit to the Traffic Management Centre in Maidstone helped the Committee in their understanding of methods available to manage traffic in Maidstone and tackling air quality, another area of concern. Members were then able to explore these ideas with Mr Crick and gauge his opinion on the use of 'gating' for example to ease congestions as well

as discuss how to make the Park and Ride a viable, long term solution for Maidstone. Towards the end of the municipal year the Committee were invited to an all Members 'Transport Modelling Workshop' which gave them the opportunity to understand the requirements of the emerging Core Strategy. It was expressed that an Integrated Parking Strategy was needed and a holistic approach should be taken; an Integrated Transport Strategy would then feed into the Local Development Framework (LDF).

### **National Proposed changes to Housing Benefits**

As national changes with Housing Benefit were looming, Scrutiny were concerned as to how this change was being dealt with, both internally with staff (as team changes due to partnership working with Tunbridge

Wells Council were imminent) and externally to the public. The Committee heard that Benefits, Revenues, Housing, Finance, Maidstone Borough Gateway and Citizens Advice Bureau were being trained both by external and internal staff ensuring that training was completed prior to April 2011. Other agencies such as HM Revenues and Customs, Job Centre Plus and Department for Working Pensions worked closely together to ensure that transitions were made smoothly. Claimants who were on discretionary benefits were contacted by phone to have their individual situation explained. All letters sent out to the public were written clearly in plain English.

### **Use of Play Area Improvement Capital Programme 2010/11:**

Consideration of a call-in by the Leisure and Prosperity OSC led to a change in the capital programme and agreement from the Cabinet that £50,000 of the available capital budget would be allocated to carry out works to play areas with the highest priority. This ensured that £75,000 was returned to capital budget for 2010/11.

## Enables the Voice and Concerns of the Public and Its Communities

This year has seen excellent public involvement in the scrutiny process, with meetings held outside of the Town Hall and a variety of public speakers attending meetings.

### Leisure & Culture Strategy



Following the new refurbishment of the Maidstone Leisure Centre, Members from the Leisure & Prosperity OSC took a tour with Parks and Leisure Manager, Jason Taylor. Facilities such as new dance studios, new member changing rooms and new gym equipment were visited, as well as the facilities provided in Mote Hall. This was reviewed as part of looking at the culture offer provided by the leisure centres and despite a feeling that more emphasis was on leisure, than culture, it was clear to see the facilities that served both aspects well.



Whilst the museum was undergoing an extension of the East Wing the Leisure & Culture OSC visited the site, enabling a true visual of the facilities that will be accommodated within the extension.

An OSC meeting was held at the museum on 12 October, when external speaker John Holden, professor at City University and Associate at Demos, gave an academic view of the value of culture informing the committee that it was now seen as a 'pick and mix' approach, rather than being something for the elite and covered a broad range of activities and work making the Committee rethink what the Leisure & Culture Strategy will mean to Maidstone.

### Domestic Violence

On 12 November 2010 the Stakeholder Event 'Exploring Violence Provision in Maidstone' was held at Lenham Community Centre.

The Partnerships and Well-Being OSC meeting followed soon after this event with Domestic Violence as its focus. Statistics had shown that Domestic Violence cases were on the increase but with only an estimated 35% of incidents reported and Maidstone's 5,000 cases exceeding the national average of 1,700 it was felt that it should be addressed

The meeting included witnesses from Women's Support Services, the Police, Housing (Maidstone Borough Council) and the Safer Maidstone Partnership. It was quickly established that Maidstone was

leading the way in supporting and dealing with Domestic Violence offering victims support through to prosecution (where appropriate). It was understood that the increase in reported cases should be viewed as an achievement for Maidstone and the organisations offering help, advice and support. The main area of concern for the Committee was the uncertainty surrounding funding and the impact that this would have on the high level of support and provisions available in Maidstone. The Committee made a recommendation to raise the profile of Women's Support Services through the Borough Update and to revisit this area again in the near future.

### **Community Watch**

The Partnerships and Well Being OSC have interviewed a number of voluntary groups over the past year as they have investigated provisions for Domestic Violence, Youth Justice and Obesity in the borough.

Women's Support Service's and Maidstone Mediation, to name a few, impressed the Committee with their dedication and work which they felt could set the precedent nationally. Obvious concerns were voiced by the groups with regards to funding which prevented long term planning or growth.

The Committee resolved to raise the profile of the organisations so their Scrutiny Officer met with the Communications team and they devised a 'Sunday supplement' style short, standard interview to be completed by a different organisation on a bi monthly basis which would feature in the Borough Update.



## Drives Improvement in Public Services

Overview and Scrutiny in 2010-11, has impacted on the delivery of a number of public services in Maidstone. The Committees have looked at a range of public services, plans and strategies and made recommendations for improvement.

### Rural Economy

The Leisure & Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed the Council's approach to supporting business in the rural areas. The Committee took part in a field trip to identify any problems and consider improvements that could be made, and as a result of the review, 16 recommendations were presented to Full Cabinet.

The following are the key recommendations made in the final report:

- The Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Environment should lobby support to the Growth Without Gridlock team on the major priorities concerning Maidstone in the Rail Action Plan for Kent Strategy.
- As the new plan is being devised, the Committee would like to see a stronger recognition of the rural transport issues and provide detail on how the Council intend to overcome the current obstacles.
- Following the announcements of the first successful round of applications for the Superfast Broadband Pilot Fund in mid May 2011, the Committee see

which applicants have been successful within the borough, and what the next procedure is before this can be implemented.

- The Cabinet Member for Regeneration seeks methods to educate Maidstone residents in renewable energy benefits, perhaps with the help of Distributed Generation Ltd at possible community and town events.
- The Cabinet Member seeks the possibility of creating a 'bank roll' service, using Cornwall Council as an example, in order to support applicants in the Leader Programme.
- The Cabinet Member liaises with the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment and the Head of Development Management to reduce the time taken for planning to write confirmation that no planning permission was required on the site concerned. This may include highlighting to the Leader Programme team the process to apply for Certificate for Lawful Developments on sites concerning the Leader Programme.
- That the Cabinet Member and Leader of the Council should ensure planning policies reflect the contemporary needs of Maidstone's agricultural businesses. Spatial planning policies should be pro-active in encouraging planning applications for renewables



and polytunnels (where appropriate and done in a sensitive manner) to help our agricultural community compete.

- That the neighbourhood forum meets with the business forums from time to time to help lobby the council with issues as a community.
- The Cabinet Member should review the possibility of adapting the boroughs neighborhood forums using Merton Council as an example.



### Budget

Following the budget scrutiny session in January, Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up a working group to consider the capital programme in-depth. This was a difficult task but has enabled the Council to make savings over the next four years.

### Customer Services – The Gateway

The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee has reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of services provided in

the Maidstone Gateway, since it first opened in 2009.

Recommendations arising from the review focussed on the best value for money whilst still providing a quality service, ensuring that partnerships with other organisations were supported.



### CCTV

The Partnerships and Well-Being OSC examined the proposed changes to CCTV at their meeting on 8 February 2011. The Committee interviewed John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services on the decision made on 20 December 2010 to consider a partnership arrangement with Medway Council for the Council's CCTV service, including staffing, maintenance and management. Members had requested that they be included in the stakeholder events prior to the meeting which had included a visit to the CCTV centre in Medway and a

Questions and Answers Session with Officers and the Cabinet Member. The outcome from the Stakeholder Question and Answer session was discussed and the Committee were supportive of this: there would be a stakeholder steering group who would be involved in the specification for the CCTV monitoring service and recommended that a statement on behalf of the Committee be sent to the Cabinet Member in support of this.

### **Tackling Obesity**

The Partnerships and Well-Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee looked at 'Tackling Obesity' at a one off meeting in February 2011. The focus was the Healthy Lifestyles Programmes run by Maidstone Borough Council as part of a 2 year Service Agreement with the Primary Care Trust. Jill Maynard from Zeroth Active Zone attended as a witness along with Donna Kavanagh and Sara Matthews from Maidstone Leisure Centre. Members had visited Zeroth Active Zone in preparation for the meeting and met with those on the "Weight for Life" Programme, described as an adult programme for those with a BMI of over 28. The "Weight for Life" Programme at Zeroth was found to be more successful than the version run at the Leisure Centre and those

participating in the programme at Zeroth told visiting members that they enjoyed the privacy that they did not feel they would have at a public gym. Along with Jane Coombes, Healthy Lifestyles Coordinator and Jim Boot, Community Development Manager the Committee explored the Healthy Lifestyles Programmes and ways in which obesity could be tackled, reviewing Maidstone's Health profile against the rest of the Country and the current GP referral process.

Following on from the meeting the Scrutiny Officer met with Jill Maynard from Zeroth, Jim Boot and Kate Pomphrey from the Community Development team. All discussed the way forward for the Healthy Lifestyles Programmes they looked at the referral form that would be used by GP's. On behalf of the Committee the Scrutiny Officer observed that the addition of a simple flow chart, answering simple questions on patient preference as well as identifying their needs could help the GP make a decision about the right facilitator for the patient. It would also overcome the problem of letting GP's know what was on offer without bombarding them with information; Zeroth for those craving a friendly, intimate space and the Leisure Centre for those preferring a modern, hi-tech facility.

## Carried out by independent-minded governors who lead and own the scrutiny process

Scrutiny in Maidstone has a national reputation for best practice and an integral part of this is the ownership members have of the scrutiny committees and the work they carry out.

### Select Committee Visit

On 10 November 2010 the scrutiny officers had the opportunity to go to Parliament and view a Select Committee along with Councillors Butler, Paine, Vizzard and Yates. They chose the Works and Pensions Select Committee who were scrutinising the work of the Future Jobs Fund in relation to Apprenticeships and Youth Unemployment. They found the structure and the format of the meeting very similar to our Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The time frame of the meeting was strictly two hours and drew to a close in anticipation of the Parliamentary bell that rang moving business along.



### Working Groups

A Member working group gave councillors the opportunity to lead and own the scrutiny process by carrying out their own research and

review work in small groups. This year working groups covered the capital budget and air quality issues.

### Alternative sentencing powers of magistrates

The Partnerships and Well-Being OSC set the topic 'alternative sentencing powers of magistrates' at the start of the Municipal Year. On 7 December 2010 the Ministry of Justice published a green paper 'Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders' which formed a timely basis for the Committee to explore the subject.



Ministry of  
**JUSTICE**

The Committee invited witnesses from The Youth Offending Service (YOS) and Maidstone Mediation Centre to investigate Youth Justice and Referral Orders, as part of an overarching theme; reparation and restorative justice. The Committee were presented with the performance measures and the outcomes used by the YOS by Charlie Beaumont, Effective Practice and Performance Manager with the YOS. The outcomes measured were the number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System and the rate of reoffending. The Statistics provided showed a 31.9% reduction in offenders for Maidstone. For first time entrants it showed a 43.3% reduction for Maidstone since October 2008. The YOS processes

used to achieve this included Kent Police's commitment to diversion and the use of restorative processes, prevention and multi agency partnership working which linked criminal justice, social care and education. In terms of Restorative Justice it was the provision of support for victims through Victim Liaison Officers, community based reparation to achieve 'payback' and the opportunity for victim/offender mediation. The 43.4 drop in reoffending by first time entrants was reemphasised in relation to the proposals set out in the Green Paper as it was said that the further young people went into the system the more likely it was for them to reoffend.

Annette Hinton, Manager of Maidstone Mediation Centre explained that the broad use of terminology used: mediation; restorative justice; restorative conferencing; restorative practice; reparation; victim/offender mediation; and neighbourhood panels were all mediation/restorative practice. Neighbourhood panels (an element discussed in the Green Paper) had been in place in Maidstone for 20 years using members of the community. Ms Hinton explained peer mediation and that there were 36 schools now trained in Maidstone, the use of Restorative Justice Conferencing for minor assaults was common and the police were also trained in and used mediation techniques.

An enquiry made by the Scrutiny Officer on behalf of the Committee to the Magistrate in the Community Project (MIC) regarding the use of Restorative Justice resulted in a statement being presented at the meeting by Visiting Member (and local Magistrate) Councillor Vizzard

from John Fassenfelt, Chairman of the Judicial Policy Committee. The response cited the Green Paper as a Liberal Democrat Proposal taken from their Manifesto. The response questioned the example given in the Green Paper in relation to the Neighbourhood Justice Panel set up in Chard stating that 'it is rather ironic that this Panel was set up under pressure from the local people after the local court house was closed some years back.' Mr Fassenfelt wrote that as Chairman of the Judicial Policy Committee he would be asking members to look at this issue as part of their review of the Green Paper.

It was concluded that a lot of the proposals set out in the Green Paper were already being achieved in Maidstone. Members decided that they would respond to the questions in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 of the Green Paper: Youth Justice and Working with communities to reduce crime on the basis of the discussion and information presented as a way of letting Government know of the good work being done in Maidstone.

### **Work Programme Setting**

This year we held a work programming workshop within each committee to gather ideas for the scrutiny work programmes for 2011-12. Councillors had the opportunity to speak with officers and reviewed scrutiny suggestions from the public, members and officers. A full list of ideas put forward for reviews was researched by the scrutiny team prior to each Committee agreeing its work programme for the year.



themselves that is at the root of health inequalities.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny held a conference on 28 February 2011 which was attended by a Scrutiny Officer. It provided a background on their Resource Kit which is being developed as part of a 2 year programme 'to raise the profile of overview and scrutiny as a tool to help councils and partners understand and address health inequalities within their local community.' The programme was commissioned by Local Government Improvement and Development in response to the increasing need to develop and strengthen the role of Local Government in tackling Health Inequalities.

The two main outputs of the programme are the Scrutiny Development Areas and the Scrutiny Resource Kit. 10 areas across the Country have had the role of using their live scrutiny reviews to develop approaches to using scrutiny to help to understand and tackle Health Inequalities. This will then help build the Scrutiny Resource Kit using key attributes: leadership, local understanding, effective engagement and partnership working.

Many reviews were discussed by delegates on the day and they included veteran health, life expectancy and the effect of the night time economy on health. Attempting to differentiate and separate contributing factors to health inequalities proved difficult. The fundamental cause, with reference to the Marmot review and social gradients, proved to be that it was how people feel about



## Partnership Working

### Health with Tunbridge Wells

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's share a common Primary Care Trust and with the success of the Mental Health review, decided to establish a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April 2010, when details were beginning to emerge that major changes to Health services were on their way. The Committee began by scrutinising the Trust's Quality Report for the previous year, making recommendations to improve the clarity of the report.



It was in September that the Committee really proved its value, meeting to consider a joint response to the various Department of Health consultations grouped under the 'Liberating the NHS' White Paper. We hoped that we could achieve a shared response across the two authorities (in the event, both authorities adopted the Committee's response), providing a stronger response to the Consultation than if the two authorities had responded separately. By considering the consultation papers through a scrutiny committee, we were also able to feed in a wider range of

external viewpoints than we would otherwise have been able to. The process was fairly intense, with the Committee meeting for a day to consider the various consultation papers and the written evidence submissions we had obtained from Officers and residents. Following the publication of the Public Health White Paper and subsequent Strategy Documents clarifying many of the issues, the Committee is set to reconvene to provide responses to the current Department of Health consultation documents.

### Mental Health Review

The Joint Adult Mental Health Services Review led to a desire to explore other aspects of Mental Health provisions and hear from all sectors, Public Sector, Voluntary and Community Organisations. On 10 December 2010 a roundtable event was hosted by William Benson, Chief Executive at Tunbridge Wells and chaired by Greg Clark MP this was the second in a series of meetings following on from a joint scrutiny review into Adult Mental Health Services. On the agenda was:

- a) Update on Live it Well and access to primary care psychological therapies services, Laretta Kavanagh, Director of Commissioning for Mental Health and Substance Misuse, Kent and Medway PCTs

- b) West Kent Service Redesign and First Response [FRIS], Erville Millar, Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust
- c) Supported Volunteering – A Proposal, Chris Grogan, Kent Supported Employment and Kate Anker, VAWK
- d) Exercise on Prescription for Mental Health – Helen Wolstenholme, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Stewart Wild, Fusion Lifestyle

The issues identified to take forward were employment and creating a networking opportunity for voluntary and community groups.

It was Maidstone’s turn to host on Friday 20 May at the Blackthorn Trust in Barming. Helen Grant MP and Cabinet Member John A Wilson attended the networking part of the event which was followed by presentations from the Blackthorn Trust, MCCH , Job Centre Plus and a joint presentation by Job Centre Plus and Lynn Marchant from Mindful Employer on ‘Integrated Pathways’. The discussion was chaired by Dr Kulvinder Singh, Chairman of the GP Consortium.

The Blackthorn Trust was a fitting venue as it is renowned in Maidstone for providing ‘medical care, specialist therapies and rehabilitation through work placements in the Blackthorn Garden, offering help to people with mental or physical health difficulties or learning disabilities based on the work of Rudolf Steiner, aiming to assist individuals to progress towards their potential.’

The meeting focused on employment and the effect of the current economic climate was clear. The integrated pathway and ‘passport’ for employment was a particularly noted as having value in the workplace and contact details were circulated to all those invited as part of the minutes. The meeting served to increase the awareness of Adult Mental Health and widen the network of stakeholders.

Maidstone felt that they would use the meeting to seek the feedback of all those involved to provide direction. It was recommended that the original 13 recommendations made in Adult Mental Health Services report should be revisited to establish what progress had been made.

### Joint Health Scrutiny – Responding to National Consultations

Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone Councillors met on 16 March to form a response to the White Paper: Healthy Lives, Healthy People making their recommendations through the consultation process which ended on 31 March 2011.



Meradin Peachey, Director of Public Health, working across Eastern and Coastal Kent, Helen Wolstenholme, Healthy Lifestyles Coordinator at Tunbridge Wells and Jim Boot, Community Development Manager attended the meeting held in Tunbridge Wells. With their expert witness knowledge the Committee

were able to formulate a response to both consultation documents.

Both authorities sought the permission of their respective Cabinet Members and once their decisions had been made a joint response was sent to the Department of Health on behalf of both Councils.



## Looking Forward

### 2011-12 Work Programme

The Overview and Scrutiny function has been in operation at Maidstone Borough Council for 10 years. It was agreed at April's Annual Council, following a review of all Committees, that Overview and Scrutiny would begin the New Year with three Committees; Corporate Services, Communities and Regeneration and Economic Development, rather than the previous four. Overview and Scrutiny would also include the Local Development Document Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel which would replace the Local Development Document Advisory Group, and a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.



### Overview & Scrutiny

The Strategic Plan 2011-15 sets out Maidstone Borough Council's three new priorities; For Maidstone to have a growing economy, For Maidstone to be a decent place to live and Corporate and Customer Excellence. This is reflected in the structure and terms of reference of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees to ensure a cohesive approach is taken when scrutinising the Council's policies, plans and actions on behalf

of the local community. This will maintain a strong work programme for each Committee continuing the 'critical friend' role of Scrutiny in challenging the decisions of the executive and monitoring the Council's performance.

### Contacting Scrutiny

Any Councillor can ask for an issue to be placed on a scrutiny agenda if they feel that it needs looking into, and the scrutiny team always welcomes feedback and ideas to keep improving.

Members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and groups from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors can also contribute to scrutiny reviews and suggest items for the work programme.

The team can be contacted at [osc@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:osc@maidstone.gov.uk) or on 01622 602524. Further information on the Scrutiny process and past reports are available at:

[www.maidstone.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/scrutiny)

# Agenda Item 12

## Maidstone Borough Council

### Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 6 September 2011

#### 'The Council as a Business' Review – The Council's Outlook

**Report of:** Overview & Scrutiny Officer

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 At the meeting held on 6 July 2011 the Committee decided to engage with staff and Councillors on the review, 'The Council as a Business?' by conducting a bespoke survey. At their August meeting the Committee evaluated the interim report prepared which showed the response so far.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That Members individually take ownership of an idea to research on behalf of the Committee. The responses made to the survey questions should be evaluated and selected on the strength of the following:
- The quality of the responses given; what benefit would the suggestion made have to the organisation and residents of Maidstone;
  - How the idea could be implemented;
  - Does the suggestion fit with the council's strategic outlook demonstrated in the 3 priorities; 'For Maidstone to have a growing economy', 'For Maidstone to be a decent place to live' and 'Corporate and Customer Excellence';
  - Would the idea generate income;
  - Would the idea increase efficiency; and
  - Would the idea result in a saving

#### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Committee decided that an anonymous staff/Councillor survey would be the best way to find out individual's ideas for the council to generate an income. Councillors Paine, English and Wilson helped the Scrutiny Officer put together the following survey and questions:
- 3.2 Many of you will have seen Alan Sugar's 'The Apprentice' and understand we are again in an age when we must embrace our entrepreneurial spirit! We all sit there watching and come up with far better money making ideas, why not share them with us!

The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee have begun their major review of the year 'The Council as a Business?'

The Committee would like to explore the possibility of generating an income for the Council which might substantially reduce the need for service cuts and savings in the current economic climate.

Your idea could relate to your skills and ambitions not currently being utilised, your current role, any role or department in the Council or any of the Council's resources...

What can you offer the residents of Maidstone? Can you think of a 'paid for' service that yours or another department could offer?

What niche service could you offer the public and/or private sector?

How could Maidstone Borough Council manage their land and/or resources in a manner that could generate an income? (or in a manner that is more efficient?).

3.3 Staff and Councillors were sent an email with a link to the electronic survey and it was advertised to staff via the Wakey Wakey newsletter. Staff working off site at the Museum, the Depot and the Hazlitt Theatre were sent a paper copy to complete and the Communications team adapted the survey and included it on the Council's Facebook page. The responses have been collated at appendix a and b.

3.4 A press release was also made to begin public engagement. The Kent Messenger picked up on this and an edited version appeared in the Maidstone edition on Friday 5 August:

'Council ideas

Maidstone council's corporate services committee is asking for money-making ideas. Chairman Cllr Fay Gooch said that suggestions could help the council's financial situation. The town hall being used as a wedding venue is one idea. To submit an idea, call Orla Sweeney on 01622 602524.' The responses are included at appendix c.

3.5 The Bright Sparks staff innovation scheme have recently agreed a new theme; 'Future Income Generation' with particular reference to the Town Hall and Mote Park. Previous themes have included 'Giving Something Back' and 'Efficiency Savings'. There will be an opportunity for the suggestions put forward to the scheme to be shared with the Committee to feed into the review.

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

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

- 'Corporate and Customer Excellence'.

**1. What can you offer the residents of Maidstone? Can you think of a 'paid for' service that yours or another department could offer?**

Providing a scribe service that would enhance ideas that a resident wanted to put down, i.e. when he/she wanted to air a grievance with either a paper or with a outside body (excluding legal matters).

**2. What niche service could you offer the public and/or private sector?**

Us IT to help people starting up computer access.

**3. How could Maidstone Borough Council manage their land and/or resources in a manner that could generate an income? (or in a manner that is more efficient?)**

Consider using MBS vehicles to help movement of awkward items

**1. What can you offer the residents of Maidstone? Can you think of a 'paid for' service that yours or another department could offer?**

we are developing the potential for providing personal travel planning advice.

**2. What niche service could you offer the public and/or private sector?**

we are developing the potential for providing travel planning advice for small businesses.

**3. How could Maidstone Borough Council manage their land and/or resources in a manner that could generate an income? (or in a manner that is more efficient?)**

The Council could set up a work hub facility for small businesses either on the first floor gateway area or in the 6th floor which I understand is being looked at being got rid of. Instead of getting rid of it, it could be made available to small businesses to use as a work hub and printing facilities retained for their use (at a fee of course). This would benefit local small business the council.

**1. What can you offer the residents of Maidstone? Can you think of a 'paid for' service that yours or another department could offer?**

How about getting our IT department to develop a free smartphone application, working with the Visit Maidstone team, to say 'What's on in Maidstone'. This could be done in conjunction with the KM's 'What's On' as well as Downs Mail's 'What's On' service which is currently printed in their newspapers. They could pay a small fee to get their services online, and we could fund the service (and make a small margin) from selling adverts to pubs, hotels etc. People can add their own events to allow pubs to advertise band nights, for example, but anyone wanting to advertise an event could pay a small fee, e.g. £2, to stop abuse of the service (e.g. people advertising house parties etc!). Hopefully this means the app looks after itself, rather than needing a member of staff to run it. Apps are supposed to be very easy to make in this day and age, so there is probably someone on the IT team who can do it - or who knows someone who can do it. This ties up with the Communication and Leisure and Culture strategies. It could be modelled on the 'Time out' website for London. If nothing else, it'll get some good press for the council - especially if it is done with the papers as partners. Can be used to highlight events at the Theatre and Leisure centre, to help drive up revenue there.

**2. What niche service could you offer the public and/or private sector?**

As above

**3. How could Maidstone Borough Council manage their land and/or resources in a manner that could generate an income? (or in a manner that is more efficient?)**

Make it clearer how community groups can hire out facilities, e.g. parks, for events. Could the council loan out equipment to manage grounds to RSLs and even private households and businesses?

**1. What can you offer the residents of Maidstone? Can you think of a 'paid for' service that yours or another department could offer?**

I'm required to fill in this box to proceed. My suggestion relates to box two. But, while I'm here how about premium number residential telephone IT Helpdesk service

**2. What niche service could you offer the public and/or private sector?**

Hosted email, file and possibly web services.

**3. How could Maidstone Borough Council manage their land and/or resources in a manner that could generate an income? (or in a manner that is more efficient?)**

Not my area. Sorry

**1. What can you offer the residents of Maidstone? Can you think of a 'paid for' service that yours or another department could offer?**

The Council's Property Section used to offer a design and construction service to other public bodies and built several village halls in the surrounding villages. We stopped making a profit when the service broken up and the council housing went.

**2. What niche service could you offer the public and/or private sector?**

I am the Council's Conservation Architect, working on listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient monuments. Not a common skill set.

**3. How could Maidstone Borough Council manage their land and/or resources in a manner that could generate an income? (or in a manner that is more efficient?)**

Easy - listen to the legal and property professional's advice and stop interfering.

**1. What can you offer the residents of Maidstone? Can you think of a 'paid for' service that yours or another department could offer?**

After school clubs (Assumes spare capacity, which is unlikely)

**2. What niche service could you offer the public and/or private sector?**

Event/conference organisation (Again, assumes spare capacity, which is unlikely)

**3. How could Maidstone Borough Council manage their land and/or resources in a manner that could generate an income? (or in a manner that is more efficient?)**

Increase planning and building control fees to fully recover the cost of providing the service +10% (assuming we have the powers). Introduce road pricing/tolls/single user car pricing

**1. What can you offer the residents of Maidstone? Can you think of a 'paid for' service that yours or another department could offer?**

See Q3 below

**2. What niche service could you offer the public and/or private sector?**

See Q3 below

**3. How could Maidstone Borough Council manage their land and/or resources in a manner that could generate an income? (or in a manner that is more efficient?)**

<http://sd.defra.gov.uk/2011/01/sustainable-business-model-a-seven-point-plan/>

<http://sd.defra.gov.uk/2011/03/six-steps-to-significant-change/>

**1. What can you offer the residents of Maidstone? Can you think of a 'paid for' service that yours or another department could offer?**

COPYING AND SCANNING SERVICES

**2. What niche service could you offer the public and/or private sector?**

I AM A GRADUATE IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES AND HAVE EXPERIENCE IN MARKETING ETC I HAVE SUBMITTED IDEAS FOR THE BRIGHT SPARKS AND RECEIVED AN AWARD FOR MY IDEA.

**3. How could Maidstone Borough Council manage their land and/or resources in a manner that could generate an income? (or in a manner that is more efficient?)**

UTILISE ALL THE EMPTY SPACE IN THE GATEWAY ESCALATOR AREA FOR EVENTS ETC ADVERTISING.

**1. What can you offer the residents of Maidstone? Can you think of a 'paid for' service that yours or another department could offer?**

1. On site (at Maidstone House) childminding service for Council staff and any 'left over' spaces could be offered to the public maybe in conjunction with the Department for Works and Pensions helping long term unemployed with childcare when they go back into work. 2. MBC to offer a floristry service to the public esp to cater for Births, Deaths and Marriages. As an example, Glasgow City Council have run this service very successfully for numerous years now. 3. Start a running group(s) for Council staff and the Public. Different groups available to cater for all fitness levels. The memberships could be set up through Mote Park Leisure Centre and paid for on a quarterly basis. 4. Car parking - have a scheme where residents/businesses can purchase permits for Council owned car parks on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis.

**2. What niche service could you offer the public and/or private sector?**

1. Offer printing services to local companies. 2. Offer the 'Weight for It' scheme, currently available to MBC staff only, to members of the public and carry out the sessions in the evening and charge for this 10 week 'course'.

**3. How could Maidstone Borough Council manage their land and/or resources in a manner that could generate an income? (or in a manner that is more efficient?)**

1. Utilise the space at the ground floor of the gateway building (under the stairs and escalators) by offering pitches to local small businesses

**1. What can you offer the residents of Maidstone? Can you think of a 'paid for' service that yours or another department could offer?**

Parks

**2. What niche service could you offer the public and/or private sector?**

Events

**3. How could Maidstone Borough Council manage their land and/or resources in a manner that could generate an income? (or in a manner that is more efficient?)**

Search for a large event organiser and let Mote Park for big festival event such as the Radio 1 big weekend

**1. What can you offer the residents of Maidstone? Can you think of a 'paid for' service that yours or another department could offer?**

-

**2. What niche service could you offer the public and/or private sector?**

Fire risk assessments - all commercial premises by law need to have a fire risk assessment.  
Project Management - we could sell this as a service to KCC, local housing associations.  
Building surveying - we have the expertise to undertake condition surveys. Clerk of works - we could undertake this for local developers or housing associations.

**3. How could Maidstone Borough Council manage their land and/or resources in a manner that could generate an income? (or in a manner that is more efficient?)**

I noticed that the park and ride at willington street was closed on a sunday. Why not have a bootfair there? There is a boot fair at sutton road, where they charged £10 per pitch and there must have been circa 100 pitches. Entry was £3 and there must have been at least 200 people there across the day. The boot fair could be advertised on the councils website and via posters at the carpark and also in mote park which is very popular. If the event is held once a month, you may make £15K per year? Another site could be mote park? If the high speed train is permanant at maidstone west and is a success, couldnt 13 tonbridge road be turned in a car



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park?

**1. What can you offer the residents of Maidstone? Can you think of a 'paid for' service that yours or another department could offer?**

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**2. What niche service could you offer the public and/or private sector?**

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**3. How could Maidstone Borough Council manage their land and/or resources in a manner that could generate an income? (or in a manner that is more efficient?)**

Charge 20p to use MBC public toilets

**1. What can you offer the residents of Maidstone? Can you think of a 'paid for' service that yours or another department could offer?**

unknown

**2. What niche service could you offer the public and/or private sector?**

unknown

**3. How could Maidstone Borough Council manage their land and/or resources in a manner that could generate an income? (or in a manner that is more efficient?)**

utilise buildings like the town hall as a farmers market on a sunday or to show artwork of local up and coming artists, wedding receptions, proms etc

**1. What can you offer the residents of Maidstone? Can you think of a 'paid for' service that yours or another department could offer?**

Test

**2. What niche service could you offer the public and/or private sector?**

Test

**3. How could Maidstone Borough Council manage their land and/or resources in a manner that could generate an income? (or in a manner that is more efficient?)**

Test

The following responses were made directly:

How about joining up the Maidstone borough council electronic news letter with the Maidstone town mail this will then have more news.

Joint cooperation with the town centre initiative and the council seems to be the right way forward.

- Getting rid of the parking tickets and having it done electronic. So you just pay your money, plug your reg number into the machine and then the warden can just plug the reg number into a machine to determine whether you've paid or not. Would save money on paper and constantly having to restock the machines in all the car parks
- Or can the above be a text service, similar to those in London?
- Getting the waste collection people to help deliver things that have to go to all households – as the visit every home throughout the week anyway. for example teaming up with elections etc.
- If the depot has refuse lorry facilities can it be opened up as a car wash?
- Turning the town hall into an exhibition space

How about getting our IT department to develop a free smartphone application, working with the Visit Maidstone team, to say 'What's on in Maidstone'. This could be done in conjunction with the KM's 'What's On' as well as Downs Mail's 'What's On' service which is currently printed in their newspapers. They could pay a small fee to get their services online, and we could fund the service (and make a small margin) from selling adverts to pubs, hotels etc. People can add their own events to allow pubs to advertise band nights, for example, but anyone wanting to advertise an event could pay a small fee, e.g. £2, to stop abuse of the service (e.g. people advertising house parties etc!). Hopefully this means the app looks after itself, rather than needing a member of staff to run it. Apps are supposed to be very easy to make in this day and age, so there is probably someone on the IT team who can do it - or who knows someone who can do it. This ties up with the Communication and Leisure and Culture strategies. It could be modelled on the 'Time out' website for London. If nothing else, it'll get some good press for the council - especially if it is done with the papers as partners. Can be used to highlight events at the Theatre and Leisure centre, to help drive up revenue there.

We should look first at the cost effectiveness of the income we currently collect. Stray dog fees is one that comes to mind where we write off significant numbers of small amounts that incur the full cost of administration. Also, though it is sensitive, litter fines that are progressed to legal action are expensive too.

If we can find a cost effective way of charging for small fees and fines we should elect to charge all statutory fees that we can.

Share our procurement or legal sections with outside organisations and develop a business section that can take on other businesses interests, prove that we are looking forward in our objectives. and strive to ensure excellence and a business to be proud of .

Take on training and develop a training facility section that can train sections and personnel for anyone in local government or outside organisations .

Develop the reach the summit to outside businesses and monitor their performance to ensure value for money.

Find a way to merge our priorities with the private sector and give advice and experience.

**Email response:**

Dear Orla,

I hope that you don't mind me emailing you with my idea.

I noticed in last week's Kent Messenger that people are annoyed that KCC have been cutting down trees and not replacing them all, and now say that it's up to individual councils to replace them. I've also seen in this week's KM that you are collecting ideas for money-generating schemes for the Council.

This idea wouldn't make money - unless the Council would like to collect trees etc and then sell them, which I'm sure would also be workable - but it would save the Council having to spend money on new plants.

For some time now I've been thinking that maybe Maidstone Borough Council might like to ask people whether they have any trees or shrubs that they might like to donate?

For example, the previous owners of the house where we now live (40 Bell Meadow, Maidstone) planted a spreading juniper tree right next to the neighbour's boundary. It is about 10 feet high and 6 feet across, and the neighbours have had to cut it back on their side to stop it interfering with their fence and their tree, and every year I have to cut it back too. It's totally the wrong type of plant for this type of garden, and absolutely in the wrong place! What it really needs is to be in a wide open space, such as part of the landscaping for the new Library, or maybe in Mote Park as part of its regeneration scheme, or other parks or alongside roads. Then it could grow to its heart's content and become a magnificent specimen - there's one at Maidstone Hospital that is really impressive.

All it would need is a couple of men with a digger and a lorry to take it from here and transport it to its new site with a big enough rootball so that (with a bit of attention such as watering for the first week or so) it would continue to grow happily in the space which nature meant it to have. We also have a laurel tree, two decorative conifers and a couple of other things that they could have as well, all for free. The times I've looked at them and thought - if only they could be in the right space, they'd look wonderful! But they are just not in the right place here.

I'm sure that there will be lots of people in the same position as us, living with things that they or others before them have planted in ignorance of the size to

which these trees and shrubs will grow, and that will never reach their full potential unless they have the proper space in which to flourish. If you were to advertise for them you will probably receive lots of offers!

This would save the Council having to spend any money at all in purchasing new trees/shrubs for their own planting schemes, at whatever cost they would normally be, and if they can sell them to other places (such as businesses who are landscaping their surrounding land), so much the better.

It would also be a good way of recycling plants which would leave small, over-crowded front gardens and instead enhance Council and public areas, provide a haven for wildlife and also make sites instantly look more 'established' because the trees and shrubs would already be mature.

I hope that you think that this idea would be a workable one; please feel free to contact me if you would like further details or if the Council would like to have our juniper and any other shrubs to start with, to see whether or not the scheme would work.

Thank you for considering it.

All best wishes,

Mrs. Linda Weeks

My apologies - in my previous email I rather overestimated the height of our juniper, it's more like 6 or 7 feet high, not ten! (But it would be much higher if we didn't have to keep pruning it.)

## Facebook responses:



Hi Maidstone,

Lucy Reed also commented on Maidstone Borough Council's status.

Lucy wrote "I'm not keen on this idea. Who would want to get married or have a reception here? No parking close by and the residents of Maidstone at the bus stops having a good old beak. The town hall is nice inside if you don't mind the boards with the councillors listed in your photos. There's no opportunity for photos outside. In comparison the Archbishops palace has nice grounds, the palace itself is lovely, close convenient parking and is away from the hustle and bustle in the town, plus it sounds a bit more salubrious on the invitations. I really don't think many brides would want to be outside the town hall for any length of time with all the Maidstone chavs watching. Having said that I did see a stretch hummer outside the Archbishops palace for a wedding the other week, classy!"

## Maidstone Borough Council

### Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 6 September 2011

#### Future Work Programme and Scrutiny Officer Update

**Report of:** Overview & Scrutiny Officer

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 To consider the Committee's future work programme and the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.
- 1.2 To consider the information update given by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Committee considers the draft Future Work Programme, attached at **Appendix B**, to ensure that it is appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.
- 2.2 That the Committee considers the sections of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions relevant to the Committee and discuss whether these are items requiring further investigation or monitoring by the Committee.

#### **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.

#### **4 Forward Plan of Key Decision**

- 4.1 The Forward Plan for September to December 2011 contains the following decisions relevant to the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
  - Budget Strategy 2012/13 onwards
  - ICT Partnerships
  - Data Quality Policy
  - Parish Services Scheme
  - Council Tax 2012/13 – Collection fund adjustments

## **6. Impact on Corporate Objectives**

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

- 'Corporate and Customer Excellence.'

6.2 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.



## Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Future Work Programme 2011-2012

Date	Items to be considered
24 May 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman</li> <li>• Work Programming 2011/12</li> </ul>
7 June 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman</li> <li>• Work Programming 2011/12</li> </ul>
5 July 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman</li> <li>• <b>The Marketing of Council Buildings</b></li> <li>• Interview with Councillor Rob Field</li> <li>• <b>Annual Review of Complaints 2010-11</b></li> <li>• <b>Interviews with Angela Woodhouse, Head of Change and Scrutiny and Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Officer</b></li> <li>• <b>The Council as a Business – Scoping Document for Review</b></li> <li>• <b>The Leader and Cabinet members – Written Updates</b></li> </ul>
02 August 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Complaints Policy</b></li> <li>• Interview with Angela Woodhouse, Head of Change and Scrutiny</li> <li>• <b>The Council as a Business? Review</b></li> <li>• Interviews with Chief Executive and Directors and</li> <li>• Interim report on Staff Survey results</li> </ul>
06 September 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>1<sup>st</sup> quarter performance monitoring report</b></li> <li>• Interview with Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Officer</li> <li>• <b>Complaints Quarter 1 Report</b></li> <li>• Interview with Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Officer</li> <li>• <b>Corporate Improvement Plan Update</b></li> <li>• Interview with Ellie Kershaw, Policy and Performance Officer</li> <li>• <b>The Council as a Business? Review</b></li> <li>• Written updates from Committee Members on best practice and evaluation of Staff Survey results</li> </ul>
4 October 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Council as a Business? Review</b></li> <li>• Interview with Leader and Cabinet – mid year progress report</li> <li>• <b>Budget Strategy</b></li> <li>• Interview with Paul Riley</li> </ul>
01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>One off item (Community Halls)/The Council as</b></li> </ul>

November 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>a Business? Review</b></li> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter performance monitoring report</li> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter complaints monitoring report</li> </ul>
29 November 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget Strategy</li> <li>• Strategic Plan</li> <li>• LSP thematic quarterly performance report</li> </ul>
10 January 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Agree report for The Council as a Business? Review</b></li> <li>• <b>One off item /Community Halls</b></li> </ul>
7 February 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Council as a Business? Review</b></li> <li>• LSP thematic quarterly performance report</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter performance monitoring report</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter complaints monitoring report</li> </ul>
6 March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Agree report The Council as a Business? Review</b></li> <li>• Interview with Leader and Cabinet Progress Over the Year</li> </ul>
3 April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

# **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# **FORWARD PLAN**

68

**1 September 2011 to  
31 December 2011**

**Councillor Christopher Garland  
Leader of the Council**



## **Forward Plan September 2011 - December 2011**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This is the Forward Plan which the Leader of the Council is required to prepare. Its purpose is to give advance notice of all the “key decisions” which the Executive is likely to take over the next 4 month period. The Plan will be up-dated monthly.

Each “key decision” is the subject of a separate entry in the Plan. The entries are arranged in date order – i.e. the “key decisions” likely to be taken during the first month of the 4 month period covered by the Plan appear first.

Each entry identifies, for that “key decision” –

- the subject matter of the decision
- a brief explanation of why it will be a “key decision”
- the date on which the decision is due to be taken
- who will be consulted before the decision is taken and the method of the consultation
- how and to whom representations (about the decision) can be made
- what reports/papers are, or will be, available for public inspection
- the wards to be affected by this decision

### **DEFINITION OF A KEY DECISION**

A key decision is an executive decision which is likely to:

- Result in the Maidstone Borough Council incurring expenditure or making savings which is equal to the value of £250,000 or more; or
- Have significant effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in Maidstone.

**Forward Plan  
September 2011 - December 2011**

<b>Decision Maker, Date of Decision/Month in which decision will be made and, if delayed, reason for delay:</b>	<b>Title of Report and Brief Summary of Decision to be made:</b>	<b>Consultees and Method:</b>	<b>Contact Officer and deadline for submission of enquiries:</b>	<b>Relevant Documents:</b>
<b>Cabinet</b>  Due Date: 14 Sep 2011	Budget Strategy 2012/13 Onwards  To give initial consideration to a Budget Strategy for 2012/13 and beyond.	Management Team Heads of Service Members Internal communication/report to Management Team	Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services  <a href="mailto:paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk">paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk</a>  Internal communication by 30 June 2011	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Budget Strategy 2012/13 Onwards
<b>Cabinet</b>  Due Date: 14 Sep 2011  Original Date: 15 Jun 2011	Data Quality Policy  To agree the revised data quality policy	Members & Unit Managers, Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Change and Scrutiny  <a href="mailto:angelawoodhouse@maidstone.gov.uk">angelawoodhouse@maidstone.gov.uk</a>  07/062011	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Data Quality Policy
<b>Cabinet</b>  Due Date: 14 Sep 2011	ICT Partnership  Report detailing the business case for a MKIP ICT shared service/partnership	Staff, Heads of Service, Members Questionnaire	David Lindsay, Head of IT Services  <a href="mailto:davelindsay@maidstone.gov.uk">davelindsay@maidstone.gov.uk</a>  31/7/2011	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for ICT Partnership

**Forward Plan  
September 2011 - December 2011**

<b>Decision Maker and Date of Decision/Month in which decision will be made:</b>	<b>Title of Report and Brief Summary of Decision to be made:</b>	<b>Consultees and Method:</b>	<b>Contact Officer and deadline for submission of enquiries:</b>	<b>Relevant Documents:</b>
<b>Cabinet</b>  Due Date: 21 Dec 2011	Budget Strategy 2012/13 Onwards  To agree a draft Council Tax and Budget Strategy for 2012/13 onwards.	Management Team, Heads of Service, Members, Internal - Management Team External - Options as agreed by Cabinet in August 2010	Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services  <a href="mailto:paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk">paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk</a>  25 November 2011	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Budget Strategy 2012/13 Onwards - Cabinet
<b>Cabinet</b>  Due Date: 21 Dec 2011	Council Tax 2012/13 - Collection Fund Adjustments  To agree the levels of Collection Fund Adjustment	Management Team Heads of Service Members Internal communication/report to Management Team	Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services  <a href="mailto:paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk">paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk</a>  25 November 2011	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Council Tax 2012/13 - Collection Fund Adjustments - Cabinet

**Forward Plan  
September 2011 - December 2011**

<b>Decision Maker and Date of Decision/Month in which decision will be made:</b>	<b>Title of Report and Brief Summary of Decision to be made:</b>	<b>Consultees and Method:</b>	<b>Contact Officer and deadline for submission of enquiries:</b>	<b>Relevant Documents:</b>
<p><b>Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services</b></p> <p>Due Date: October 2011</p>	<p>Parish Services Scheme</p> <p>To consider the outcome of the concurrent functions review and agree the new Parish Services Scheme</p>	<p>All Parish Councils. The review began in January 2011 and has had consultation throughout including with parishes and KALC. The main consultation for the report will commence in August with a presentation and question and answer session for all Parish Councils, followed by a formal consultation document on the new scheme which is planned to close on 30 September 2011</p>	<p>Ryan O'Connell</p> <p><a href="mailto:ryanoconnell@maidstone.gov.uk">ryanoconnell@maidstone.gov.uk</a></p> <p>30 September 2011</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Report for Parish Services Scheme</p>