

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2013

Present: Councillor Mrs Gooch (Chairman), and
Councillors Black, Butler, Mrs Grigg, Hotson,
D Mortimer, Nelson-Gracie, Pickett and Yates

Also Present: Councillors Burton, Garland and Moss

61. THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER WHETHER ALL ITEMS ON THE AGENDA
SHOULD BE WEBCAST

Due to technical difficulties, the meeting was not able to be webcast.

62. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

63. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

64. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS/WITNESSES

Councillor Burton indicated his wish to speak on Agenda Item 9.

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services were present as witnesses for Agenda Item 9, Mid Kent Improvement Partnership.

65. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

66. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on the Agenda be taken in public as proposed.

67. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 OCTOBER 2013

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 October 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed.

68. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its future Work Programme. The Chairman updated Members as follows:-

- The Bankruptcy Proceedings report has been delayed and will come to the December meeting.
- 2nd Quarter Complaints Report – the new Waste Collection service has been highlighted in this report and it was proposed that Jennifer Shepherd, Waste Manager and Sandra Marchant, Customer Services manager, be asked to attend the December meeting to update the Committee
- 2nd Quarter Performance Monitoring Report – this will come to the Committee's December meeting after it has been to Cabinet
- The recommendations from the Budget Working Group will come to the December meeting.

In response to a question, the Chairman informed the Committee that the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice Chairmen is taking place on 28 November and that the Director of Environment and Shared Services has been given the lead on the subject of Maidstone House.

RESOLVED: That the future Work Programme be noted.

69. MID KENT IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP (MKIP)

The MKIP Programme Manager gave a presentation to the Committee (copy attached at Appendix A) setting out what the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership ("MKIP") has achieved since its inception, the current Work Programme and the objectives for the future.

The Leader of the Council stated that it is predicted that Local Authorities will need to save much more between now and 2021 and that MKIP is one of the key tools for delivering savings.

In response to questions from Members, the MKIP Partnership Manager and the Leader stated:-

- Environmental Health shared service was about resilience and not savings for Maidstone;
- If the business case for the operational model shows that it will not deliver what MKIP would like it to, then other options will be looked at;
- A lot of work has been done on the relationship of the 3 current authority partners in MKIP. Bringing in other partners at this stage could slow down the impetus, but will not prevent other small partnerships;
- The current Audit Partnership Manager is retiring which gives an opportunity to look at how that service is run;
- There are no government or legal restrictions to MKIP becoming one entity;
- Those services that impact directly on the public (e.g. planning, public realm) should remain outside MKIP. Only back office functions should be looked at for shared services;

- There are risks to staff being employed by MKIP and that is what the employment model is looking at and taking specialist advice;

The Chairman then invited Councillor Hills from Tunbridge Wells to address the Committee. He informed the Committee that there are a few members at Tunbridge Wells who do not have confidence and trust in MKIP. He said MKIP is a business model, it does not set policy. He felt it was a good opportunity for joint Scrutiny by 2 or all 3 of the Councils involved. He stated that Tunbridge Wells have lost 50% of their Government grant and that in the next 2, 3 or 4 years will probably have no Government grant at all.

Members felt it was important for them to scrutinise the Operational Model at the earliest opportunity and that joint Scrutiny with Tunbridge Wells and, hopefully, Swale to look at MKIP itself and the delivery of services would be beneficial.

RESOLVED:

- a) That a special meeting of this Committee be arranged to consider the Operational Model of MKIP.
- b) That the Scrutiny Officer be asked to liaise with Tunbridge Wells and Swale and the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Chairman of all 3 Councils to agree a format for joint scrutiny arrangements.

70. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.20 p.m.