

AGENDA

CABINET MEETING



Date: Wednesday 11 March 2015
Time: 6.30 pm or at the conclusion of
the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity
Committee whichever is the later
Venue: Town Hall, High Street,
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Mrs Blackmore (Chairman), Burton,
Greer, McLoughlin, Perry and Mrs Ring

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1. Apologies for Absence
2. Urgent Items
3. Notification of Visiting Members
4. Disclosures by Members and Officers
5. Disclosures of lobbying
6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information

Continued Over/:

Issued on 3 March 2015

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

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| 7. | Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 February 2015 Adjourned to 4 February 2015 | 1 - 2 |
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NON-KEY DECISION REPORTS

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| 10. | Oral Report of the Head of Planning and Development - Update on Planning Support Performance | |
| 11. | Report of the Joint Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) Task and Finish Group - Joint Mid Kent Improvement Partnership Task and Finish Group Report on Governance and Communication | 33 - 95 |
| 12. | Report of the Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Twilight Economy Review | 96 - 112 |

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 2 FEBRUARY ADJOURNED TO WEDNESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2015

Present: Councillor Mrs Blackmore (Chairman), and
Councillors Burton, Greer, McLoughlin, Perry and
Mrs Ring

Also Present: Councillors Ash, Chittenden, Mrs Gooch,
McKay, B Mortimer, Newton, Round,
Springett, Thick, Willis and Mrs Wilson

103. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

104. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items, although it was noted that the Chairman intended to take Agenda Item 9 before the Petition which was tabled at Agenda Item 8.

105. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillors Ash, Chittenden, Gooch, McKay, B. Mortimer, Newton, Round, Mrs Springett, Thick, Willis, Mrs Wilson attended the meeting and indicated their wish to speak to Agenda Item 9.

106. DATE OF ADJOURNED MEETING - 4 FEBRUARY 2015

The Chairman advised that in the event that business was not concluded at this meeting, an adjourned date had been arranged for Wednesday, 4th February 2015.

107. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Burton indicated that he had originally disclosed a pecuniary interest in Site H1 (10) Sutton Road but had received further advice and would now be disclosing an Other Significant Interest in this site and would not participate in any debate on this issue and would leave the room when it was being discussed.

Councillor Mrs Springett indicated that she too had an Other Significant Interest in Site H1 (17) – Land at Barty Farm and would not take part in any discussions on this issue.

108. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

All Cabinet Members stated that they had been lobbied in regard to Agenda Item 8 – Petition – Fant Farm and Agenda Item 9 – Maidstone Borough Local Plan – New and Amended Site Allocations.

109. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all agenda items be taken in public as proposed. Although the Chairman indicated that there may be times when the meeting may have to be adjourned to take legal advice.

110. PETITION

The Petition relating to Fant Farm was not discussed at this meeting as the Chairman had indicated her wish to take it after the business relating to Agenda Item 9 had been concluded.

111. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN - NEW AND AMENDED SITE ALLOCATIONS

Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to Maidstone Borough Local Plan – New and Amended Site Allocations. The Decision Notice forms part of the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2015 and can be found in the body of those minutes.

Members received various urgent updates from Officers and worked through the two tables which detailed the recommendations from the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee, together with Officer comments in order that they could reach their decision on each site.

During discussions on H1 (39) Ulcombe Road and Mill Bank, Headcorn Members felt that they needed further information from Officers before they could reach a decision on this particular site. It was therefore agreed to adjourn the meeting until 4 February 2015.

RESOLVED: That the meeting be adjourned until 4 February 2015 in order that Officers could provide further information relating to the infrastructure issue concerning the site at Headcorn.

112. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

During consideration of an item relating to Headcorn (H1 (39) Ulcombe Road and Mill Bank, Headcorn, Members wished to receive further clarification from Officers on an issue relating to infrastructure and **RESOLVED** that the meeting be adjourned to 4 February 2015.

113. DURATION OF MEETING

9.30 a.m. to 7.05 p.m.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4 FEBRUARY ADJOURNED FROM MONDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2015

Present: Councillor Mrs Blackmore (Chairman), and
Councillors Burton, Greer, McLoughlin, Perry and
Mrs Ring

Also Present: Councillors Ash, Edwards-Daem, Powell, Round
and Thick

114. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

115. **URGENT ITEMS**

It was noted that the Petition relating to Fant Farm, originally on the Agenda from the Cabinet Meeting held on 2 February 2015, had been omitted from this Agenda and would therefore be taken as an Urgent Item after Agenda Item 7.

116. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillors Ash, Edwards-Daem, Powell, Round and Thick indicated their wish to speak in regard to Agenda Item 7 – Maidstone Borough Local Plan – New and Amended Site Allocations.

117. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

Councillor Burton reiterated his statement from the Cabinet Meeting held on 2 February 2015 in that he had originally disclosed a pecuniary interest in Site H1 (10) Sutton Road but had received further advice and would now be disclosing an Other Significant Interest in this site and would not participate in any debate on this issue should it be discussed again at the adjourned meeting and would leave the room.

118. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

All Members stated that they had been lobbied.

119. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

120. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN - NEW AND AMENDED SITE ALLOCATIONS

Following on from their meeting held on 2 February 2015, Cabinet continued to consider the Report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to Maidstone Borough Local Plan – New and Amended Site Allocations.

DECISION MADE:

- (1) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to the new sites as set out in Appendix D agreement agreed by the Committee with no changes to go to Regulation 18 Consultation and made the following decisions:-

H1 (52) – Dunning Hall off Fremlin Walk, Week Street, Maidstone (14 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation.

6 - Agreed

H1 (53) – 18-21 Foster Street, Maidstone (5 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (54) – Slencrest House, 3 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone (10 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (55) – Russell Hotel, Boxley Road, Maidstone (14 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (59) - Bearsted Station Goods Yard (20 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (63) - Land at Boughton Mount, Boughton Lane, Boughton Monchelsea (25 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation subject to clarification of there being any legal covenants in place that would prevent matters proceeding.

6 – Agreed

H1 (69) – Land at Lodge Road, Staplehurst (60 units)

RESOLVED: That the recommendation of the Committee be rejected and that this new site should not be taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that the site should be retained for employment use given the economic upturn and that infrastructure must be improved to enable this to happen and the cumulative impact of residential development in Staplehurst on social balance.

6 - Agreed

H1 (72) – Land adj. The Windmill PH, Eythorne Street, Hollingbourne (15 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation.

6 - Agreed

H1 (73) – Land at Brandy’s Bay, South Lane (40 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation.

6 – Agreed

- (2) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to new sites set out in Appendix D agreed by the Committee with some changes to go to Regulation 18 Consultation and made the following decisions:-

H1 (51) – Bridge Industrial Centre, Wharf Road, Tovil (15 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to

Regulation 18 Consultation subject to the following amendments:-

Amend Criterion 5 to:

'Vehicular access will be taken from Wharf Road only. A secondary pedestrian and cycle access capable of being used as an emergency access will be provided from Lower Tovil'.

Amend Criterion 9 to:

'Appropriate contributions towards community infrastructure including improvement to medical facilities in Tovil Parish will be provided where proven necessary'.

6 - Agreed

H1 (56) – Land at 180-188 Union Street, Maidstone (30 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation subject to the following amendment:-

Amend Criterion 10 to:

'Appropriate air quality mitigation measures to include appropriate planting and landscaping within the site will be implemented as part of the development'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (58) – Tovil Working Men's Club, Tovil Hill, Tovil (20 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation subject to the following amendment:-

Amend Criterion 13 to:

'Appropriate contributions towards community infrastructure including improvement to medical facilities in Tovil Parish will be provided where proven necessary'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (66) – Land South of the Parsonage, Goudhurst Road, Marden (50 units)

RESOLVED: That the recommendation of the Committee be rejected and that this new site not be taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that the site is too peripheral to Marden and on the grounds that the cumulative impact of sites already considered in the draft Local Plan would be unacceptable to

the community in terms of highways and water infrastructure and social balance.

5 – Agreed
1 – Abstained

H1 (70) – Land at Junction of Church Street and Heath Road, Boughton Monchelsea (40 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation subject to the following amendment:-

Amend Criterion 9 to:

'Appropriate contributions towards community infrastructure including improvement to medical facilities in Boughton Monchelsea Parish will be provided where proven necessary'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (71) – Lyewood Farm, Green Lane, Boughton Monchelsea (25 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation subject to the following amendment:-

Amend Criterion 13 to:

'Appropriate contributions towards community infrastructure including improvement to medical facilities in Boughton Monchelsea Parish will be provided where proven necessary'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (74) – Wren's Cross, Upper Stone Street, Maidstone (60 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation subject to this site and others in the town centre and the locality benefiting from a comprehensive assessment as part of a wider master planning exercise.

6 – Agreed

- (3) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to the new sites set out in Appendix D agreed by the Committee which required further information before acceptance to go to Regulation 18 Consultation and made the following decisions:-

H1 (62) – Land at Boughton Lane, Loose/Boughton Monchelsea (75 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation subject to written confirmation on junction improvements being sought from the Highway Authority.

6 – Agreed

- (4) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to the new sites set out in Appendix D, rejected by the Committee and made the following decisions:-

H1 (57) – Land at former Astor of Hever Community School, Maidstone (60 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be rejected and not be taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that the site is retained for education use and development would be unacceptably compromised by the lack of adequate access.

6 – Agreed

H1 (60) – Fant Farm, Maidstone (225 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be rejected and not taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that the site is valuable for agriculture use, and would have an unacceptable impact on the landscape, including the overall shape of the urban area of Maidstone and the unacceptable highways impact for the local community.

6 – Agreed

H1 (61) – Land at Cross Keys, Bearsted (50 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be rejected and not taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that development of this site would have an unacceptable impact on hydrology and local flood risk.

3 – Agreed

3 – Against

(Chairman had the casting vote)

H1 (64) – Bell Farm North, East Street, Harrietsham (80 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be rejected and not taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that the cumulative impact of development having a detrimental effect on the character, size and shape of the village and community due to the increase in size and footprint of the village and unacceptable cumulative impact for the community for education provision, transport and other community infrastructure.

6 – Agreed

H1 (65) – Land at Lenham Road, Headcorn (50 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be rejected and not taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that development is in reality impractical due to current water conditions and community perception of failure of infrastructure providers to deliver infrastructure identified as required in the past, local knowledge of flood risk and community concern about the cumulative impact on local education provision and highways.

6 – Agreed

H1 (67) – Land to South of Marden Road, Staplehurst (100 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be rejected and not taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that it has not been demonstrated to the community's satisfaction that current foul water problems can be resolved and these will be exacerbated by any further development in this part of Staplehurst and the unacceptable cumulative impact for the community and highways.

6 – Agreed

H1 (68) – Land to the North of Henhurst Farm, Staplehurst (60 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be rejected and not taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that it has not been demonstrated to the community's satisfaction that current foul water problems can be resolved and these will be exacerbated by any further development in this part of Staplehurst and the unacceptable cumulative impact for the community and highways. In addition of community concerns that suitable highways access arrangements cannot be achieved at this point in time.

6 – Agreed

- (5) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to Regulation 18 Sites set out in Appendix D which Committee agreed for Regulation 19 Consultation with no changes and made the following decisions:-

H1 (2) – East of Hermitage Lane, Maidstone (500 units)

RESOLVED: Members noted that this site was the subject of an appeal and whilst keen not to prejudice any outcome of the appeal, they were in agreement that the draft allocation should proceed to Regulation 19 consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (14) – American Golf, Tonbridge Road, Maidstone (60 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (15) – 6 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone (15 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (18) - Whitmore Street, Maidstone (5 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (23) – New Line Learning, Boughton Lane (220 units)

RESOLVED: Members noted that this site was the subject of an appeal and whilst keen not to prejudice any outcome of the appeal, they were in agreement that the draft allocation should proceed to Regulation 19 consultation.

H1 (27) – Mayfield Nursery, Ashford Road, Harrietsham (50 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (35) - Marden Cricket & Hockey Club, Stanley Road, Marden (125 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (46) – Vicarage Road, Yalding (65 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to additional references to traffic analysis and provision of a community centre where proven necessary and adjustment of the housing yield should this become necessary.

6 – Agreed

H1 (47) – Hubbards Lane/Haste Hill Road, Boughton Monchelsea (20 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the addition of appropriate contribution improvements at the junction of the B2163 Heath Road with the A229 Linton Road/Linton Hill at Linton Crossroads.

6 – Agreed

H1 (49) – East of Eyhorne Street, Eyhorne Street, Hollingbourne (10 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation.

6 – Agreed

- (6) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to Regulation 18 Sites set out in Appendix D which Committee agreed for Regulation 19 Consultation with changes recommended by Officers and made the following decisions:-

H1 (1) – Bridge Nursery, London Road, Maidstone (165 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being reduced to 140 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (3) – West of Hermitage Lane, Maidstone (300 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being increased to 330 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (5) - Langley Park, Sutton Road, Maidstone (600 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the following new criterion:-

'A separate cycle and pedestrian access will be provided to site H1 (10) South of Sutton Road subject to agreement with the highways authority and the Borough Council'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (6) – North of Sutton Road, Otham (285 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being increased to 286 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (16) – Laguna, Hart Street, Maidstone (55 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being increased to 76 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (19) – North Street, Barming (35 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the amended site plan which clarifies the linear development as set out in the papers.

6 - Agreed

H1 (21) – Kent Police HQ, Sutton Road (115 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being reduced to 112 as per the papers.

6 - Agreed

H1 (22) – Kent Police Training Centre, Sutton Road, Maidstone (70 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being increased to 90 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (28) – Church Road, Harrietsham (95 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being decreased to 80 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (32) – Howland Road, Marden (55 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being decreased to 44, from 55 as per Appendix B of the original agenda. Members noted that the supplementary papers contained a typing error and that the yield should have stated 44 instead of 80.

6 - Agreed

H1 (33) – Stanley Farm, Plain Road, Marden (170 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being decreased to 85 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (34) – The Parsonage, Goudhurst Road, Marden (200 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being decreased to 144 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (38) – Old School Nursery, Station Road, Headcorn (5 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being increased to 9 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (50) – West of Eyhorne Street, Eyhorne Street, Hollingbourne (35 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being decreased to 14 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

- (7) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to Regulation 18 Sites set out in Appendix D which Committee agreed with changes recommended by Officers for further Regulation 18 consultation and made the following decisions:-

H1 (10) – South of Sutton Road (930 units)

RESOLVED: That the recommendations of the Committee for this site to go forward to further Regulation 18 consultation be rejected and that this site go forward to Regulation 18 consultation for deletion on the grounds that:-

- (a) in the opinion of the Cabinet the eastern boundary of site H1 (5) forms a natural boundary to the edge of the urban area of Maidstone;
- (b) there should be no further encroachment of residential development into the countryside which would result in the loss of green space and a leisure facility;
- (c) there would be an unacceptable cumulative impact on traffic generations in the Sutton Road corridor;
- (d) there would be an unacceptable impact on conditions in the surrounding area where the environmental and amenity consequences for the community are unacceptable now; and
- (e) that development here would not command the consent of local people as reflected in the consultation response.

4 – Agreed

1 – Against

(Councillor Burton left the meeting at the start of this item after disclosing an other significant interest).

H1 (11) – Springfield, Royal Engineers Road and Mill Way (950 units)

RESOLVED: That the recommendation of Committee for this site to be put forward to Regulation 18 be rejected and instead go forward to Regulation 19 consultation on the revised reduced yield of 500 units and subject to an amendment to Criterion 10 as set out in the Urgent Update Report which is as follows:-

Provision of publicly accessible open space to include the provision of a pocket park to the rear (west) of the existing Springfield Mansion on the former tennis court/car park area in addition to the existing area of public open space shown on the proposals map which shall be retained as part of the development and/or contributions.

4 – Agreed
2 – Against

H1 (40) Grigg Lane and Lenham Road, Headcorn (120 units)

RESOLVED: That Members opted to debate the allocated site as two separate considerations as follows:-

Southern portion of the site, consisting of two granted planning consents for 45 units go forward to Regulation 19 consultation; and

That the remaining northern portion of the site, where no consents exist, go back to Regulation 18 consultation for deletion, on the grounds that it has not been demonstrated to the community's satisfaction that current foul water problems can be resolved and these will be exacerbated by any further development in this part of Headcorn and the unacceptable cumulative impact for the community and highways. In addition of community concerns that suitable highways access arrangements cannot be achieved at this point in time.

4 – Agreed
2 – Abstained

H1 (48) – Heath Road, Boughton Monchelsea (25 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go back to Regulation 18 for deletion.

6 - Agreed

- (8) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to Regulation 18 Sites set out in Appendix D which Committee agreed for Regulation 19 consultation with changes and made the following

decisions:-

H1 (4) – Land at Oakapple Lane, Barming (240 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation, if necessary reconsidered in the light of the outcome of the Public Inquiry for Site H1 (2) and continuing dialogue with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

6 - Agreed

H1 (7) – Land North of Bicknor Wood, Otham (190 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation, with the criterion amended as set out in the papers and that the following be added to Criterion 12 as follows:-

`strategic transport requirements, adding in point vii:

strategic road infrastructure to significantly relieve traffic congestion on Sutton Road and Willington Street'

5 – Agreed
1 – Against

H1 (8) – Land West of Church Road, Otham (440 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation with the criterion amended as set out in the papers and that at Criterion 10, paragraph vii be added:

`strategic road infrastructure to significantly relieve traffic congestion on Sutton Road and Willington Street'.

4 – Agreed
2 – Against

H1 (9) – Bicknor Farm, Sutton Road (335 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation with the criterion amended as set out in the papers and that at Criterion 12, paragraph vii be added:

`strategic road infrastructure to significantly relieve traffic congestion on Sutton Road and Willington Street'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (12) – Haynes, Ashford Road (250 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation with a revised reduced yield of 200 units and incorporating the

changes to the policy criterion as follows:-

'Provision will be made for publicly accessible open space within the development site as part of the development layout and contributions off-site where proven necessary'

And adding criterion:

'The layout will be designed to ensure built development is set-back from the Ashford Road frontage'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (13) – Medway Street, Maidstone (40 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation incorporating an additional criterion as follows:-

'The development layout will include significant landscaping including tree planting'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (24) – West of Eclipse Park, Sittingbourne Road (35 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation incorporating amended criterion 2 as follows:-

'A minimum 15 metre landscape buffer shall be provided along the site's western boundary adjacent to the ancient woodland and no footpath, cycle or track-way shall be provided within this safeguarded area'.

Additional criterion:

'The layout and landscaping of the site shall be designed to minimise the impact of development on the adjacent ancient woodland to the west of the site through appropriate siting of the built development'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (29) – Tanyard Farm, Old Ashford Road, Lenham (155 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the amended and additional criterions as per the papers and subject to Ward Members being consulted on the landscaping issues:-

'The hedgerow and line of trees along the northern and southern

boundaries of the site will be retained and substantially enhanced by new planting in order to protect the setting of the Kent Downs AONB, and to provide a suitable buffer between new housing and the A20 Ashford Road and Old Ashford Road’.

‘The development proposals shall be designed to maintain existing vistas and views of the Lenham Cross from Old Ashford Road, through the site and along PROW KH433.

Development proposals shall incorporate substantial areas of internal landscaping within the site to provide an appropriate landscape framework for the site to protect the setting of the Kent Downs AONB. Development proposals will be of a highway standard of design and sustainability reflecting the location of the site as part of the setting the Kent Downs AONB incorporating the use of vernacular materials and demonstrating compliance with the requirements of policies DM2, DM3 and DM4.

The development proposals are designed to take into account the results of a landscape and visual impact assessment undertaken in accordance with the principles of current guidance that particularly addresses the impact of development on the character and setting of the Kent Downs AONB’.

6 – Agreed

H1 (36) – Hen and Duckhurst Farm, Marden Road, Staplehurst (370 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation on a revised reduced yield of 250 units as per the papers. In addition amend the Criterion 11 to:

‘appropriate contributions towards community strategic infrastructure in particular foul water drainage will be provided where proven necessary so that there is nil detriment to existing infrastructure capacity’.

4 – Agreed

1 – Against

1 – Abstained

H1 (37) – Fishers Farm, Fishers Road, Staplehurst (535 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation on a revised reduced yield of a maximum of 400 units. In addition amend the Criterion 11 to:

‘appropriate contributions towards community strategic infrastructure in particular foul water drainage will be provided where proven necessary so that there is nil detriment to existing

infrastructure capacity’.

An additional criterion as follows:-

‘The proposals will be designed to include areas of open space that retain the integrity and connectivity of the existing framework of ponds, hedgerows and trees within the site’.

6 - Agreed

H1 (43) – Linden Farm, Stockett Lane, Coxheath (85 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation on a revised reduced yield of 40 with an additional criterion as per the papers of appropriate contributions towards improvements at the junction of the B2163 Heath Road, with the A229 Linton Road/Linton Hill at Linton Crossroads and a cascade criterion for community infrastructure with investment in Coxheath first unless proven otherwise.

6 – Agreed

H1 (44) – Heathfield, Heath Road, Coxheath (130 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to amended criterion as per the papers and a cascade criterion for community infrastructure with investment in Coxheath first unless proven otherwise.

H1 (26) – South of Ashford Road, Harrietsham (70 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation on the revised increased yield of 117 units and that an additional criterion be added as follows:-

‘The site layout is designed to fully integrate the development and the proposed improvements to the A20 Ashford Road to ensure a comprehensive approach to the improvements of the public realm and highways safety’

4 – Agreed

2 – Against

- (9) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to Regulation 18 Sites set out in Appendix D which Committee recommended for further Regulation 18 consultation on deletion of the site from the Local Plan and made the following decisions:-

H1 (17) – Barty Farm, Roundwell (122 units)

RESOLVED: That Members rejected the recommendation of the Committee and that the site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to amendment of the site policy to respond to concerns about future primary education provision and an additional criterion that Section 106 contributions are spent in Thurnham and Bearsted first unless proven otherwise.

5 – Agreed
1 – Against

H1 (20) – Postley Road, Tovil (80 units)

RESOLVED: That Members rejected the recommendation of the Committee and that the site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation on the revised reduced yield of 62 as per the papers.

4 – Agreed
1 - Against
1 - Abstained

6 – Agreed

H1 (25) – Tongs Meadow, West Street, Harrietsham (100 units)

RESOLVED: That Members, whilst noting the concerns about ecology, were satisfied that there was sufficient protection in the site policy and moved to reject the recommendation of the Committee and that the site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation with the amendments to criterion 4 as per the papers and for a revised increased yield of 105.

5 – Agreed
1 – Against

H1 (30) – Glebe Gardens, Lenham (10 units)

RESOLVED: That Members rejected the recommendation of the Committee and that the site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation. It was noted that the current planning application for this site provided details of the proposed works to the pond and its environs and other ecological surveys. These will be considered as part of the application process by appropriate consultees including the Environment Agency and KCC Ecology, to-date no fundamental objections have been raised to the principle of development as set out in the policy.

6 – Agreed

H1 (31) – Ham Lane, Lenham (80 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be rejected and go back to Regulation 18 consultation for deletion on the grounds of unacceptably adverse impact on the AONB and on the character of the village because it is peripheral to the settlement and beyond the open space occupied by Swadelands School playing field.

4 – Agreed
2 – Against

H1 (39) – Ulcombe Road and Mill Bank, Headcorn (240 units)

RESOLVED: That Members reject this site after further information was received at the adjourned meeting which related to a drainage survey undertaken by Headcorn Parish Council that detailed all the pipework across the Headcorn area. It was noted that a copy had been passed to Southern Water. It was agreed to go back to Regulation 18 consultation for deletion on the grounds that local infrastructure is insufficient, in particular for foul water sewerage, flood risk and highway congestion .

3 – Agreed
3 – Against

(Chairman had the casting vote)

H1 (41) – South of Grigg Lane, Headcorn (55 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be rejected and go back to Regulation 18 consultation for deletion on the grounds that local infrastructure is insufficient, in particular for foul water sewerage, flood risk and highway congestion.

3 – Agreed
2 – Against
1 – Abstained

H1 (42) Knaves Acre, Headcorn (5 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be rejected and go back to Regulation 18 consultation for deletion on the grounds that local infrastructure is insufficient, in particular for foul water sewerage, flood risk and highway congestion.

3 – Agreed
2 – Against
1 – Abstained

H1 (45) – Forstal Lane, Coxheath (195 units)

RESOLVED: That Members rejected the recommendation of the

Committee and that the site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation with the amended criterion as per the papers of appropriate contributions towards improvements at the junction of the B2163 Heath Road, with the A229 Linton Road/Linton Hill at Linton Crossroads and a cascade criterion for community infrastructure with investment in Coxheath first unless proven otherwise.

3 – Agreed

2 – Against

1 – Abstained

- (10) That the shortfall of 2,556 homes against the already agreed housing objectively assessed need of 18,600 was noted (for clarity attached as Appendix A to this decision is a table setting out the decision for the yield on each site) and Officers were asked to bring a further report to Cabinet as soon as possible which outlines the associated risks to the delivery of a sound Local Plan; and

That Officers urgently progress dialogue with infrastructure providers, particularly in relation to foul water, specifically for Headcorn and Staplehurst, to ensure that existing infrastructure concerns are addressed and works are progressed with the utmost urgency.

121. PETITION

A petition relating to Fant Farm was presented by Councillor Mrs Fran Wilson which stated “We the undersigned support the Liberal Democrat campaign to oppose housing development at Fant Farm. We strongly feel that housing development of this land would not be sustainable. It would result in the loss of agricultural land of the highest quality. It would also have a devastating effect on the open landscape of this irreplaceable part of the Medway Valley and an adverse impact on Fant’s already inadequate roads”.

Councillor Mrs Wilson in presenting this petition reiterated the concerns that had been raised by Members of all the Political Groups about this site at the recent Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting and that Members of the Committee voted unanimously to recommend to Cabinet that Fant Farm be removed from the list of new site allocations. On 2 February 2015 Cabinet upheld that recommendation.

However, on behalf of the residents of that area, Councillor Mrs Wilson asked that the petition be put on record as evidence of the Fant community’s grave concerns about the consequences of allowing development at Fant Farm now and in the future.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted the comments made relating to the Petition and confirmed that it would go on record.

122. DURATION OF MEETING

9.30 a.m. to 4.05 p.m.

Agenda Item 9

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2015

Present: Councillor Mrs Blackmore (Chairman), and
Councillors Burton, Greer, McLoughlin, Perry and
Mrs Ring

Also Present: Councillors Mrs Gooch, Newton and
Sargeant

123. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

124. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

125. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Mrs Gooch indicated her wish to speak on Agenda Item 11 – Report of the Joint Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) Task and Finish Group. Councillors Newton and Sargeant indicated that they were just observing the meeting.

126. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

127. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

128. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on Part II of the agenda be taken in private as proposed.

129. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2015

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed.

By way of an update from the last minutes, the Chief Executive appraised Cabinet of the performance figures for Planning Support for January.

Determination of Planning Applications – 1 Major (within timescale)
22 Minor (86% within timescale)
93 Other (91% within timescale)

Validations – average of 11 days for larger applications
average of 8 days for smaller applications

It was noted that a further update would be given at the next Cabinet meeting in March.

130. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND LEADER - DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN 2015/2020

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive and Leader regarding the draft Strategic Plan 2015-2020.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the draft Strategic Plan 2015-2020 be approved for submission to Council.
- (2) **To RECOMMEND to COUNCIL:**
 - (a) That the draft Strategic Plan 2015-2020 be approved; and
 - (b) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to make minor amendments to the document as required.

131. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND COMMUNITIES - BUDGET STRATEGY 2015 16 ONWARDS

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Communities regarding the Budget Strategy for 2015/16 onwards.

Following consideration of the financial risks over the medium term, as set out in the report, the Cabinet resolved to recommend to Council a budget based upon a 1.99% increase in the level of Council Tax.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to COUNCIL:

- (1) That the revised estimates for 2014/15 as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Cabinet be agreed;
- (2) That the minimum level of General Fund Balances be set at £2m for 2015/16;
- (3) That the proposed Council Tax of £235.71 at Band D for 2015/16 be agreed;

- (4) That the revenue estimates for 2015/16 incorporating the growth and savings items set out in Appendix A be agreed;
- (5) That the Statement of Earmarked Reserves and General Fund Balances as set out in Appendix A be agreed;
- (6) That the Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix A be agreed;
- (7) That the Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix A be agreed;
- (8) That the funding of the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix A be agreed;
- (9) That the Strategic Revenue Projection, as set out in Appendix A as the basis for future financial planning be endorsed;
- (10) That it be noted that the Council's Council Tax base for the year 2015/16 has been calculated as 56974.3 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) regulations 1992;
- (11) That it be noted that in accordance with Governance guidance the yield from business rates has been calculated as £58,252,075;
- (12) That it be noted that the individual parish area tax bases set out in Appendix B are calculated in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations and are the amounts of the Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of the Council's area to which a special item relates;
- (13) That the distribution of Local Council Tax Support funding to parish councils, as set out in Appendix C, be approved;
- (14) That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2015/16 (excluding Parish precepts) is £13,429,412;
- (15) That the following amounts now be calculated by the Council for the year 2015/16 in accordance with Section 31A, 31B and 34-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011:-
 - (a) £80,506,490 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
 - (b) £65,683,120 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

- (c) £14,823,370 being the amount by which the aggregate at 16(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 16(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31A(4) of the Act).
- (d) £260.18 being the amount at 16(c) above (Item R), all divided by the figure stated at 11 above (Item T in the formula in section 31A(4) of the Act), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including parish precepts).
- (e) £1,393,958 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached Appendix B).
- (f) £235.71 being the amount at 16(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 16(e) above by the tax base given in 11 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

- (16) That it be noted that for the year 2015/16 Kent County Council, the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner and the Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

<u>Valuation Bands</u>	<u>KCC</u> <u>£</u>	<u>KPCC</u> <u>£</u>	<u>KMFRA</u> <u>£</u>
A	726.66	98.10	47.10
B	847.77	114.45	54.95
C	968.88	130.80	62.80
D	1,089.99	147.15	70.65
E	1,332.21	179.85	86.35
F	1,574.43	212.55	102.05
G	1,816.65	245.25	117.75
H	2,179.98	294.30	141.30

- (17) That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 16 (d), and 17 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets out in Appendix D, the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2015/16 for each of the categories of dwellings shown.

132. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR MOTE PARK (ADVENTURE ZONE)

Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Commercial and Economic Development – A Sustainable Future for Mote Park (Adventure Zone).

DECISION MADE:

- (1) That the creation of a pay-to-use leisure facility in Mote Park be approved. This will include an internal belayed high course, internal belayed high course for children, climbing wall, adventure gold course and Segway hire facility;
- (2) That a capital budget of £790,000 be approved to deliver the project and that authority to spend the project budget is delegated to the Head of Commercial and Economic Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Community and Leisure Services and Corporate Services, including the purchase and installation of the necessary equipment for the Adventure Zone;
- (3) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Commercial and Economic Development to obtain the necessary approval and consents for the Adventure Zone;
- (4) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Commercial and Economic Development to finalise and implement an operating model for the Adventure Zone in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services;
- (5) That Officers report back detailing proposals for the provision of a café and toilets in Mote Park; and
- (6) That Officers report back on detailed proposals for the provision of an ice rink to form part of the Council's Festivals and Events Strategy.

To review full details of this decision, please follow this link:

<http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/meetings/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=906>

133. REPORT OF THE JOINT MID KENT IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP (MKIP) TASK AND FINISH GROUP - REPORT ON GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNICATION

Cabinet considered the report of the Joint Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) Task and Finish Group relating to Governance and Communication.

Following some concerns from Members about the lack of clarity within the report of decision making processes when this Council moves forward to new governance arrangements in May 2015 and other more specific points, it was moved by Councillor Burton and seconded by Councillor Mrs Ring that the whole report be deferred until the next meeting which would be held within 28 days.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet defer this report and request that further information comes back within the next 28 days to give clarity on future decision making arrangements and specific proposals that reflect the new governance arrangements.

Voting

For – 5

Abstained - 1

134. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND COMMUNITIES - BUDGET MONITORING 3RD QUARTER 2014/15

Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Communities regarding Budget Monitoring 3rd Quarter.

DECISION MADE:

- (1) That the satisfactory revenue position at the end of the third quarter of 2014/15 be noted;
- (2) That the proposals for slippage and re-profiling in the capital programme to 2015/16 be approved;
- (3) That the detail in the report on the collection fund, general fund balances and treasury management activity be noted;
- (4) That approval be given to utilising £106,500 of the projected underspend for the advancement of the review of office accommodation; and
- (5) That approval be given to set aside £400,000 of the projected underspend for 2014/15 to fund specific projects which support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities.

To view full details of this decision, please follow this link:

<http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/meetings/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=907>

135. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND COMMUNITIES - TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2015 16

Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Communities regarding Treasury Management Strategy 2015-16 including the Treasury and Prudential Indicators.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to COUNCIL:

- (1) That the Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16 and related appendices be adopted.

136. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS - 2014/15 QUARTER 3 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REPORT

Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Policy and Communications regarding 2014/15 Quarter 3 Key Performance Indicator Report.

DECISION MADE:

- (1) That the out-turns of the KPIs as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Head of Policy and Communications and the definitions set out in Appendix B be noted;
- (2) That the following indicators that are unlikely to achieve the annual performance target be noted:
 - DCV 005 Processing of minor planning applications within statutory timescales (reported at Q3).
 - DCV 006 Processing of other planning applications within statutory timescales.
 - WCN 006 Missed bins.
 - HSG 005 Number of households prevented from becoming homeless through the intervention of housing advice.
 - PIT Satisfaction with complaint handling
 - BIM 004 Change in the number of outgoing post items.
 - HRO 001 Working days lost to sickness absence (rolling years).
- (3) That the new monitoring KPI for Development Enforcement: DCE 004 Percentage of enforcement cases investigated within 21 days be agreed; and
- (4) That it was agreed that there were no other areas where further action was required.

To view full details of this decision, please follow this link:

<http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/meetings/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=908>

137. EXEMPT APPENDIX TO THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND COMMUNITIES - A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR MOTE PARK (ADVENTURE ZONE)

Cabinet did not need to refer to the information in the exempt Appendix to the report of the Head of Commercial and Economic Development as there was sufficient information in the main report on Part I of the agenda for them to reach their decision.

138. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND SHARED SERVICES - REVIEW OF COMMERCIAL PROJECT - EXPANSION OF BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

**Head of Schedule 12A/
Brief Description**

**Paragraph 3 –
Information
re financial/business
affairs**

Report of the Director of Environment and Shared Services – Review of Commercial Project – Expansion of Bereavement Services

Having discussed the information contained in the exempt Report of the Director of Environment and Shared Services in private, Cabinet:

RESOLVED: That the public be re-admitted to the meeting.

DECISION MADE:

- (1) That the expansion of Bereavement Services to offer a pet cremation service to the public in line with the three strands of the business, as stated in paragraph 1.3.2 of the exempt report of the Director of Environment and Shared Services, be approved;
- (2) That authorisation be given to the Director of Environment and Shared Services in consultation with the portfolio holder for Environment and Housing to implement the expansion of service subject to assessing and confirming the viability of key stages;
- (3) That approval be given to more detailed stakeholder consultation and studies to be undertaken as part of developing the service;

- (4) That approval be given for the service to use existing land at Vinters Park Crematorium which totals 0.6 acres;
- (5) That approval be given for the service to be directly provided by the Council and it be noted that an exit strategy has also been developed; and
- (6) That approval be given to set aside a sum as detailed in the exempt report as part of the capital programme to establish a pet crematorium.

139. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.

Maidstone Borough Council

CABINET

Wednesday 11 March 2015

Report of the Joint Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) Task and Finish Group

Report of Poppy Brewer, Democratic Services Officer

1. Joint Mid Kent Improvement Partnership Task and Finish Group report on governance and communication

1.1 Issue for Decision

- 1.1.1 To consider the recommendations within the 'Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group report on governance and communication' attached at appendix (i) and the draft responses to these recommendations set out at appendix (ix)

1.2 Recommendation of the Joint Mid Kent Improvement Partnership Task and Finish Group

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for Maidstone Borough Council, Swale Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council each request that their individual Cabinets should jointly consider and respond to the following recommendations that have arisen from the joint scrutiny of governance and communications:

MKIP Governance

- a) That opportunities for pre-scrutiny should be provided within existing governance arrangements at each authority prior to any new shared service proposals being considered at a tri-Cabinet meeting (i.e. after MKIP Board consideration, if not before);
- b) That joint Overview & Scrutiny task and finish groups should be convened by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee(s) of the individual authorities, as necessary, to jointly review any major issues that arise in regard to shared service delivery and also any new options, such as the possibility of contracting to deliver a shared service for an authority outside the partnership;
- c) That the MKIP Board will notify the Overview and Scrutiny functions of each authority when there are potential items of interest that a joint task and finish group could review on their behalf;
- d) That the creation of the Mid Kent Services Director post should be favourably considered in light of the value already placed on this role by members of the Shared Services Boards and others, as it

provides a single point of contact for the MKIP Board and Mid Kent Service Managers;

- e) That the role of the MKIP Programme Manager should be re-examined and aligned with the reporting arrangements arising from the appointment of a Mid Kent Services Director (if the post is confirmed);
- f) That early consideration should be given to transferring the management of the Planning Support and Environmental Health shared services under the Mid Kent Services umbrella as soon as possible;
- g) That a toolkit is created to assist managers in their role as internal clients of shared services;
- h) That (where appropriate) shared services create a service catalogue for their service that will help internal clients to better understand the extent of the service they provide;

Communication

- i) That a joint communications plan is developed to improve staff and member awareness and understanding of MKIP (shared service development) and MKS (shared service delivery);
- j) That the MKIP Board has responsibility for the effective implementation of an agreed communications plan and ensures its delivery is resourced appropriately;
- k) That communication should be improved between the newly created Shared Service Boards and the MKIP Board to ensure the latter is fully aware of any major service issues and any suggested options for change;
- l) That client representatives on the Shared Service Boards should ensure the outcomes of their meetings, including any related direction coming from the MKIP Board, are effectively cascaded to relevant staff within each authority;
- m) That future MKIP Board meetings should be held and papers published in accordance with the appropriate local authority access to information regulations;

Corporate governance

- n) That given the change in Maidstone Borough Council's governance arrangements in May 2015, that consequential amendments will be made to reflect the absorption of the Overview and Scrutiny function within the Policy and Resources and the three other service Committees.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 1.3.1 A special meeting of the three Overview & Scrutiny Committees of Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils was held on 7 July 2014 to review the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP). At this meeting, it was recommended that a Joint Task & Finish group be established to consider how MKIP's governance arrangements should be taken forward and how an MKIP communications plan should be developed.
- 1.3.2 A review was conducted by the Joint Task and Finish group through a number of question and answer sessions which involved speaking to members of the MKIP Board, Shared Service Managers, client Heads of Service from each of the authorities, Heads of Communication, S151 officers, Monitoring officers and external partners.
- 1.3.3 The Joint Task and Finish group carried out detailed analysis of the governance arrangements for MKIP and questioned witnesses on the methods of communication currently used internally and externally. The key findings of this review are presented in the attached report and highlight where enhancements could be made to improve current procedures and strengthen the practices of MKIP.
- 1.3.4 A second special meeting of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees of Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils was held on 12 January 2015 to consider the report of the Joint Task and Finish group and the recommendations made.
- 1.3.5 Draft responses to the Overview and Scrutiny recommendations are set out in appendix (ix) for consideration by Cabinet.
- 1.3.6 Several of the recommendations relate to improvements in the engagement of Overview and Scrutiny in the decision making arising from the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership and scrutiny of MKIP shared services. The current MKIP governance arrangements are set out in appendix (iv); these were reviewed in 2012. The draft responses reflect the fact that Maidstone Council will change its governance arrangements from May 2015 from which point a Committee system will replace the current Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny arrangements.
- 1.3.7 A number of recommendations from the Joint Overview and Scrutiny group step outside the agreed scope of the review and relate to management arrangements for MKIP shared services; these are identified in the draft responses.
- 1.3.8 The responses from the Cabinets from Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells will be available when the MKIP Board meets in late March.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.4.1 The Cabinet could decide not to consider the recommendations within the Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group report, however the recommendations are based on evidence from a wide range of sources and delivers against the Council priority: 'Corporate and Customer Excellence' outlined in 1.5.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 1.5.1 Seven shared services are delivered through the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership. Five shared service managers currently report to the Mid Kent Services Director – a role that is currently being trialled. Maidstone is a partner in all seven MKIP shared services and "hosts" five of these services by virtue of being the employer for the shared service manager and in several cases being the employer for the whole team. The work of MKIP is therefore vital to ensuring the delivery of a number of key services and the corporate priorities for Maidstone Borough Council.

1.6 Financial Implications

- 1.6.1 The majority of the recommendations made by Overview and Scrutiny do not have any direct financial implications. For example improvements to communications could be achieved within existing resources.
- 1.6.2 The recommendation to favourably consider creation of a Mid Kent Services Director, if followed through, would have financial implications. However this recommendation strays beyond the remit of the Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. This post is currently being trialled and will be considered by the MKIP Board on an evidential basis before any conclusions are reached or decisions made by partners through their individual governance arrangements. These considerations will take into account the report due from the MKIP independent review group set up for the purpose and take into account the resources available to fund the post.

1.7 Relevant Documents

- 1.7.1 Appendix i – Mid Kent Improvement Partnership Joint Task and Finish Group report on governance and communication
Appendix ii - Scoping Report
Appendix iii - Witness Sessions and Papers Reviewed
Appendix iv - MKIP Governance Arrangements
Appendix v - Diagram of governance arrangements for MKIP and MKS
Appendix vi - Summary of survey findings
Appendix vii - Draft Communications Plan
Appendix viii - Glossary

1.8 Background Documents

1.8.1 None

1.9 Other Implications

1.9.1

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

<u>IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?</u>	<u>THIS BOX MUST BE COMPLETED</u>
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, this is a Key Decision because:	
.....	
Wards/Parishes affected:	
.....	

Mid Kent Improvement Partnership

Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group report on governance and communication

Report date:	22 December 2014
Task and Finish Group Chairman:	Councillor Andy Booth (Swale BC)
Task and Finish Group Members:	Councillors Fay Gooch and Paulina Stockell (Maidstone BC) Councillor Mike Henderson (Swale BC) Councillors Bill Hills and Chris Woodward (Tunbridge Wells BC)
O&S support officers:	Poppy Brewer, Democratic Services Officer (Maidstone BC) Bob Pullen, Policy and Performance Officer (Swale BC) Holly Goring, Policy and Performance Manager (Tunbridge Wells BC)
Service liaison officers:	Paul Taylor, Director (Mid Kent Services) Jane Clarke, Programme Manager (Mid Kent Improvement Partnership)

1 Report summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the findings of the Joint Task and Finish Group (JTFG) which was established to review the governance and communication arrangements of the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership.

2 List of recommendations

2.1 The Task and Finish Group recommends:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for Maidstone Borough Council, Swale Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council each request that their individual Cabinets should jointly consider and respond to the following recommendations that have arisen from the joint scrutiny of governance and communications:

Governance

- a) **that opportunities for pre-scrutiny should be provided within existing governance arrangements at each authority prior to any new shared service proposals being considered at a tri-Cabinet meeting (i.e. after MKIP Board approval, if not before);**
- b) **that joint Overview & Scrutiny task and finish groups should be convened by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee(s) of the individual authorities, as necessary, to jointly review any major issues that arise in regard to shared service delivery and also any new options, such as the possibility of contracting to deliver a shared service for an authority outside the partnership;**
- c) **that the MKIP Board will notify the Overview and Scrutiny functions of each authority when there are potential items of interest that a joint task and finish group could review on their behalf;**
- d) **that the creation of the Mid Kent Services Director post should be favourably considered in light of the value already placed on this role by members of the Shared Services Boards and others, as it provides a single point of contact for the MKIP Board and Mid Kent Service Managers;**
- e) **that the role of the MKIP Programme Manager should be re-examined and aligned with the reporting arrangements arising from the appointment of a Mid Kent Services Director (if the post is confirmed);**
- f) **that early consideration should be given to transferring the management of the Planning Support and Environmental Health shared services under the Mid Kent Services umbrella as soon as possible;**
- g) **that a toolkit is created to assist managers in their role as internal clients of shared services;**
- h) **that (where appropriate) shared services create a service catalogue for their service that will help internal clients to better understand the extent of the service they provide;**

Communication

- i) **that a joint communications plan is developed to improve staff and member awareness and understanding of MKIP (shared service development) and MKS (shared service delivery);**

- j) that the MKIP Board has responsibility for the effective implementation of an agreed communications plan and ensures its delivery is resourced appropriately;**
- k) that communication should be improved between the newly created Shared Service Boards and the MKIP Board to ensure the latter is fully aware of any major service issues and any suggested options for change;**
- l) that client representatives on the Shared Service Boards should ensure the outcomes of their meetings, including any related direction coming from the MKIP Board, are effectively cascaded to relevant staff within each authority;**
- m) that future MKIP Board meetings should be held and papers published in accordance with the appropriate local authority access to information regulations.**

3 The review

3.1 The Joint Task and Finish Group (JTFG) was established to:

- consider how the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership's (MKIP) governance arrangements should be taken forward and how an MKIP communications plan should be developed.

3.2 The review was instigated by a joint meeting of the Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells Scrutiny Committees on 7 July 2014.

3.3 One of the JTFG's first tasks was to scope how to conduct the review. The final version of the Scoping Report is at Appendix i.

3.4 The review was conducted principally through a number of question and answer sessions with a range of Cabinet members and senior officers from the three authorities and/or external partners. The JTFG also reviewed a number of reports, agendas and minutes of meetings and other papers. A schedule of who gave evidence to the Group and the literature reviewed is at Appendix ii.

3.5 The planning support review is outside the remit of the JTFG, however a preview summary report was included as part of our evidence base.

3.6 The JTFG would like to thank all those who agreed to meet with us to answer questions and for providing information. The JTFG would also like to thank the O&S support officers and service liaison officers who are listed above as well as Roger Adley (Maidstone BC) and Adam Chalmers (Tunbridge Wells BC) for their advice on communications and Clare Wood (Maidstone BC) for her assistance in designing the survey and for analysing the results. A lot has been achieved in a very short space of time.

4 Background

4.1 The Mid Kent Improvement Partnership was formed in 2008 between Ashford, Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils. Ashford subsequently withdrew from the partnership (although they are still part of the Audit shared service) and it now comprises Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils. The first MKIP shared service was Mid Kent Audit which went live as a four-way shared service in 2009. There are now seven shared services within the MKIP family. They are as follows, with the host authorities highlighted in bold:

- Audit (Ashford, **Maidstone**, Swale and Tunbridge Wells);
- Environmental Health (**Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells – no host**);
- Human Resources (**Maidstone** and Swale);
- ICT (**Maidstone**, Swale and Tunbridge Wells);
- Legal (Maidstone, **Swale** and Tunbridge Wells);
- Planning Support (**Maidstone**, Swale and Tunbridge Wells); and
- Revenue and Benefits (**Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells – no host**).

4.2 The main objectives that MKIP seeks to deliver are:

- to improve the quality of service to customers;
- to improve the resilience of service delivery;
- to deliver efficiency savings in the procurement, management and delivery of services;
- to explore opportunities for trading in the medium to long-term;
- to share best practice; and
- to stabilise or reduce the environmental impact of service provision.

4.3 Nationally, a great many councils are involved in sharing services. In 2012, 219 councils were involved in shared services. By 2013, that number had risen to 337 councils. The Government is strongly encouraging local councils to share services and staff. The MKIP constituent authorities are clearly early adopters of the shared service agenda.

5 Findings

Governance

Key findings

- 5.1 The MKIP governance arrangements have evolved gradually since the partnership was first established in 2008. The MKIP governance arrangements are at Appendix iii and were last updated in May 2012.
- 5.2 The JTFG heard that all major decisions regarding MKIP, including the creation of new shared services, or significant changes to existing ones, were taken by each constituent authority according to their respective constitutions. In practice, decisions had been taken at co-located but separate meetings of the three constituent Cabinets, with agendas, reports and minutes of meetings published separately on their own website.

MKIP Board

- 5.3 The MKIP Board consists of the Leader and Chief Executive of each of the three MKIP councils and meets quarterly. Its role is:
- To approve and own the MKIP Programme and provide direction to the MKIP Programme Manager;
 - To initiate shared service projects and appoint project and shared service boards;
 - To set MKIP objectives and direction;
 - To join together strategic plans and form a MKIP strategic plan;
 - To take decisions on specific project/service issues outside of the remit of the project and shared service boards;
 - To receive Audit reports with limited assurance on follow-up;
 - To monitor MKIP performance and finance and agree actions to resolve performance and finance issues; and
 - To review these arrangements from time to time and make recommendations to the Parties for improvement.
- 5.4 The JTFG was provided with a sample agenda, reports and minutes of a Board meeting and it was clear to see from these that the role of the Board is to maintain a strategic oversight on the constituent elements of the shared service partnership and of MKIP as a whole.

Shared Service Boards

- 5.5 Below the MKIP Board, seven Shared Service Boards have been established. The Shared Service Boards are comprised of client-side representatives from each of the partnership authorities, generally at Director level, the MKS Director, the MKIP Programme Manager and the Shared Service Manager.
- 5.6 The Terms of Reference of the Shared Service Boards are:

- Shared Service Boards will provide the following governance actions:
 - agree the Service Plan for each Financial Year;

- advise on the management of and agree variations to the budgets for the shared service including approving items of savings and growth to go forward to each partner authority to form part of their annual budgeting process and consideration in setting their budgets for the service;
- advise the relevant Head of Paid Service (or nominee) on the appraisals of the Joint Head of Service;
- receive reports on and consider the finance and performance of the shared service;
- provide strategic direction as required;
- provide reports to the MKIP Board when requested, when the Shared Service Board wish to raise a general MKIP issue or when the service underperforms (i.e. fails to meet the majority of targets over 3 quarters) or the Shared Service Board wish to make significant changes to the agreed service plan.

5.7 The JTFG heard that matters such as service planning and performance management were being addressed and the creation of reporting forms enabled key information to be reported to the Shared Service Boards on these matters. Further clarity may need to be added to the terms of reference to strengthen the Shared Service Board's responsibility in reviewing performance and finance, as their role evolves.

Mid Kent Services (MKS)

5.8 A new directorate called Mid Kent Services (MKS) has been established within the MKIP partnership which is governed slightly differently. Five services fall within the MKS Directorate and two (Environmental Health and Planning Support) fall outside of MKS. The key differences are explained in paras 5.18 to 5.27 below and the diagrams at Appendix iv set out the respective reporting lines, with the main one being that the MKS Director is the 'line manager' for all MKS Services.

Effectiveness

5.9 The JTFG heard from virtually all members of the MKIP Board as well as the Monitoring Officers and Section 151 (i.e. Chief Finance) Officers of the three authorities at various points during the review.

5.10 The evidence the JTFG heard from all quarters was that the governance arrangements were working well.

5.11 The governance arrangements had evolved over the years and were deliberately designed to be flexible, enabling the nature of the partnership and the services within it to expand and develop in an organic way.

5.12 The JTFG were also advised that the collaboration agreements for each of the shared services were currently being reviewed, which would further strengthen the governance under which these services worked. Each collaboration agreement would need to reflect the size of the service and its complexity and cover areas such as financing, staffing, roles and responsibilities and exit arrangements.

Accountability

- 5.13 Two elements of governance which did concern the JTFG were accountability and transparency. The latter is dealt with in the Communications section below at paras 5.45 to 5.49.
- 5.14 As mentioned in para 5.2, major decisions regarding MKIP would be taken by the respective Cabinets of each partner authority. However, it is only when Cabinet papers are published that overview and scrutiny members have any opportunity to scrutinise planned actions, unless Cabinets have proactively sought the views of overview and scrutiny in advance.
- 5.15 This is in stark contrast to some shared service partnerships elsewhere in the country which are governed by, for example joint committees. Proposals for significant change are likely to have been considered in advance and agendas, reports and minutes of these committees published. The MKIP Board, where any proposals for significant change in respect of MKIP will be considered initially, is not a joint committee in the formal sense. Therefore, there does not appear to be any ready mechanism under which overview and scrutiny committees, whether individually from within each authority, or jointly, can be alerted to significant proposals for change and to be able to consider any proposals. The JTFG questions whether this is good governance.
- 5.16 There have been instances where decisions on shared services taken by tri-Cabinet meetings (co-located meetings of the three individual Cabinets) have resulted in formal call-in procedures being instigated on at least three occasions.
- 5.17 The JTFG considers that overview and scrutiny, both individually at a partner authority level and jointly, is an important element of good governance and therefore recommends:

Recommendation:

- a): that opportunities for pre-scrutiny should be provided within existing governance arrangements at each authority prior to any new shared service proposals being considered at a tri-Cabinet meeting (i.e. after MKIP Board approval, if not before);
- b): that joint Overview & Scrutiny task and finish groups should be convened by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee(s) of the individual authorities, as necessary, to jointly review any major issues that arise in regard to shared services delivery and also any new options, such as the possibility of contracting to deliver a shared service for an authority outside the partnership;
- c): that the MKIP Board will notify the Overview and Scrutiny functions of each authority when there are potential items of interest that a joint task and finish group could review on their behalf;

Mid Kent Services

5.18 Mid Kent Services (MKS) is a shared service directorate that brings together the majority of shared services under an organisational structure that includes a Mid Kent Services Director, who was appointed on a one year trial in 2014. The shared services that currently fall under MKS are:

- Audit;
- Human Resources;
- ICT;
- Legal; and
- Revenue and Benefits.

5.19 MKS's current tasks are:

- to lay the ground to make HR/Payroll a three-way partnership rather than the current two-way arrangements between Maidstone and Swale;
- develop an MKIP communications plan;
- ensure services have up to date collaboration agreements, service level agreements and risk registers;
- create a vision and culture for MKS staff; and
- to resolve a long list of 'snagging issues' that are impeding productivity for shared service staff.

5.20 The work of the JTFG reinforced the importance of a cohesive vision for Mid Kent Services and the positive work that the MKS Director was doing to address this.

5.21 The JTFG observed that other shared service partnerships elsewhere in the country of similar size to MKIP had appointed an officer at Director level to oversee their services. An example included the Anglia Revenue Partnership, the Director of which had met with the Group, and comprised of seven local authorities sharing a common Revenue and Benefits service.

5.22 The Heads of MKS Shared Services told the Group how much they valued the role of the MKS Director since it had been established. For example, it provided shared service managers with a conduit to convey information between themselves and the MKIP Board and to gain, in return a more complete perspective of the views of the MKIP Board via the MKS Director; helping to overcome some long-standing snagging issues that had served to frustrate the objectives of establishing the partnership in the first place.

5.23 The JTFG is therefore recommending that the creation of the MKS Director post is looked upon favourably and, whilst this is being considered, that the MKIP Programme Manager post, which was established in advance of the Director post, is reviewed, even more importantly in the event that the MKS Director role is confirmed.

5.24 The JTFG recommends:

Recommendation:

- d): that the creation of the Mid Kent Services Director post should be favourably considered in light of the value already placed on this role by members of the Shared Services Boards and others, as it provides a single point of contact for the MKIP Board and Mid Kent Service Managers;**
- e): that the role of the MKIP Programme Manager should be re-examined and aligned with the reporting arrangements arising from the appointment of a Mid Kent Services Director (if the post is confirmed);**

5.25 The MKS was formed largely around the needs of the five 'back office' or 'transactional' shared services – i.e. Audit, HR, ICT, Legal, Revenues and Benefits. At the time of the establishment of MKS, the Environmental Health and Planning Support shared services had only just been created and a decision was taken not to include them in MKS at that stage.

5.26 From the evidence the JTFG had seen, it would be advantageous from a consistency and good governance perspective to bring the Environmental Health and Planning Support shared services under the MKS umbrella as soon as possible. It would also assist with communication when explaining the organisational structure of the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership.

5.27 The JTFG recommends:

Recommendation:

- f): that early consideration should be given to transferring the management of the Planning Support and Environmental Health shared services under the Mid Kent Services umbrella as soon as possible;**

Facilitating access to shared services

5.28 The JTFG heard on two separate occasions from Heads of Service who were clients of MKIP services during the review.

5.29 On both occasions, the client Heads of Service were complimentary about the improvements they had witnessed as a result of the creation of shared services including the ability to provide a broader range of specialisms and greater expertise, increased capacity and better resilience of services.

5.30 However, client Heads of Service also referred to their need to gain a greater understanding of their role as shared service clients, such as what it is they need to know and what to ask for from service providers in order to deliver their own services effectively. Some spoke of a lack of clear signposting and the fact that some shared services had the appearance of delivering a 'one size fits all' approach. It was felt that this could affect the prioritisation of projects that were important corporate objectives to each of the individual authorities.

5.31 The JTFG considered and discussed this feedback and thought that some sort of toolkit or catalogue could be produced for each of the shared services (especially so for the back-office ones) which could address this.

5.32 The JTFG recommends:

Recommendation:

g): that a toolkit is created to assist managers in their role as internal clients of shared services;

h): that (where appropriate) shared services create a service catalogue for their service that will help internal clients to better understand the extent of the service they provide;

Communication

Key findings

5.33 It was evident that the MKIP Board was already aware that more needs to be done to improve knowledge and awareness of MKIP/MKS issues amongst councillors, staff and residents. The development of a Communications Plan was a key objective for the Mid Kent Services Director. In addition, the survey [summary provided at Appendix v] the JTFG commissioned of councillors confirmed that awareness of the MKIP/MKS arrangements was low.

5.34 It was noted that the key stakeholders regarding communications were staff and councillors. The general public were not thought to be particularly interested in how shared services were delivered – particularly ‘back office’ services – only whether they received a good service which was delivered cost effectively.

5.35 With three separate councils involved in MKIP, with their different cultures and ways of doing things, it was important for both staff and members that messages about MKIP were consistent, recognising that each council had its own systems for communicating corporate messages to staff and councillors. It was noted that MKIP/MKS did not have a specific presence on each council’s website or intranet.

Communications plan

5.37 One of the JTFG’s terms of reference was to review how a MKIP communications plan should be developed.

5.38 The JTFG heard from communications experts at the councils, that the essence of a good plan was to decide: who the message was intended for and how the message would be conveyed; what the overall aim and objectives were; and how the effectiveness of the plan could be reviewed and evaluated, with the overarching aim of keeping things simple.

5.39 Communications officers at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils, in consultation with officers at Swale BC, have produced a draft outline communications plan at [Appendix vi] which the JTFG commends to the MKIP Board to develop further and implement.

5.40 The JTFG recommends:

Recommendation

i): that a joint communications plan is developed to improve staff and member awareness and understanding of MKIP (shared service development) and MKS (shared service delivery);

j): that the MKIP Board has responsibility for the effective implementation of an agreed communications plan and ensures its delivery is resourced appropriately ;

Disseminating information

5.41 The JTFG heard that the implementation of the new Shared Service Boards had gone smoothly and that the respective roles of the new Boards and the MKIP Board were clearly defined. The Shared Service Boards had assisted in reviewing the detail of shared services (in terms of performance, finance or operation) and enabled matters of concern to be referred up to the MKIP Board for further discussion. A reporting form had been created since the establishment of the Shared Service Boards which had enabled each Shared Service Manager to advise the Mid Kent Services Director and client representatives of the above. These reporting forms had been found to be particularly useful and provided a detailed audit trail of the development and operation of their shared service. This feedback was welcomed by the JTFG and it was considered useful to continue this work to further strengthen the role of the Shared Service Board.

5.42 The JTFG looked at the role of the client representatives on the Shared Service Boards. This role has to fully understand the balance of business in terms of the authority requirements of individual services where issues were arising and be able to report back on operational matters affecting the shared services. At present the 'client representative' tended to be a Director from each of the individual authorities. Despite these individuals having great oversight of matters affecting their individual authorities both operationally and financially, the JTFG felt it would be more beneficial to have officer(s) attend the Shared Service Board meetings who had specific expertise and knowledge of each of the MKS Services. For example if an issue were to occur in respect of ICT, would the client representatives be best placed to communicate these issues, a specialist from the individual authority or a direct user of the service?

5.43 The JTFG recognised that to invite further 'client representatives' to the Shared Service Board meetings could place added pressure on limited staff resources so were prepared to accept that the current 'client representatives' were best placed to sit on the Shared Service Boards provided that communication with specialists or internal clients of those services was strengthened, and to ensure the requirements of each authority were adequately reflected in the Shared Service Board meetings.

5.44 The JTFG recommends:

Recommendation

k): that communication should be improved between the newly created Shared Service Boards and the MKIP Board to ensure the latter is fully aware of any major service issues and any suggested options for change;

l): that client representatives on the Shared Service Boards should ensure the outcomes of their meetings, including any related direction coming from the MKIP Board, are effectively cascaded to relevant staff within each authority;

Transparency

5.45 One of the JTFG's key findings was that members and staff felt they were kept in the dark about the operation of the MKIP Board. Whilst the JTFG recognised that the MKIP Board had not been deliberately clandestine in its work, and it was recognised that services operating and undertaking normal business within the individual authorities were not always subject to this level of attention, the fact that MKIP Board agendas, reports and minutes of meetings were not published is in sharp contrast to some other shared services partnerships, including the Anglia Revenue Partnership and the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership.

5.46 Both of these partnerships have governance arrangements which are overseen by Joint Committees comprised of the constituent authorities. As Joint Committees established under the Local Government Act 1972, these Committees are required to abide by the normal Access to Information rules which apply to all local authority committees with requirements to publish agendas, reports and minutes of meetings unless these contain confidential or exempt information.

5.47 It should be noted that paragraph 8.2 of the MKIP governance arrangements (see Appendix iii) states that:

“notice of the management board meetings and access to agendas and reports will be applied as if the meeting was covered by the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Amendment Regulations 2000 and 2002 or Section 100 A-K and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as appropriate.”

But it is not clear why papers are not published.

5.48 The JTFG is not advocating that the MKIP Board is necessarily reconstituted as a Joint Committee, but steps should be taken to increase the transparency of its operations.

5.49 The JTFG recommends:

Recommendation

m) that future MKIP Board meetings should be held and papers published in accordance with the appropriate local authority access to information regulations.

Appendices

- Appendix i Scoping report
- Appendix ii Witness sessions and papers reviewed
- Appendix iii MKIP governance arrangements
- Appendix iv Diagram of governance arrangements for MKIP and MKS
- Appendix v Councillors knowledge of MKIP – summary of survey results
- Appendix vi Draft communications plan
- Appendix vii Glossary

**Mid Kent Improvement Partnership Joint Task and Finish Group – 10 September
2014**

Scoping Report

1. Aim of the Review

To consider how Mid Kent Improvement Partnership's (MKIP) governance arrangements should be taken forward and how a MKIP communications plan should be developed.

2. Why has this review been selected?

Over the last 12 months scrutiny members have taken a keen interest in shared services and the development of MKIP. Committee members, across the three authorities, have raised a number of important issues relating to:

- Governance arrangements;
- Seeking clarity on the role of O&S to be able to scrutinise the decisions of the MKIP Management Board, if it so wished;
- The objectives of the Mid Kent Services Director and how these would be measured; and
- Communication.

With that in mind, a joint meeting was arranged on 7 July 2014 to enable further consideration of these issues. It was at this meeting that the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Maidstone Borough Council's Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee formally agreed (with Swale Borough Council's Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 23 July 2014) to establish a joint Task and Finish Group to consider how MKIP's governance arrangements should be taken forward and how a MKIP communications plan should be developed.

It was further agreed that the Task and Finish Group report back to a joint meeting of these three Committees in December 2014.

3. Who will carry out the review?

The review will be carried out by a Task and Finish Group including:

- Maidstone - Councillors Fay Gooch and Paulina Stockell
- Swale – Councillors Andy Booth and Mike Henderson with substitutes Councillors Lloyd Bowen and/or Peter Marchington
- Tunbridge Wells – Councillors Bill Hills and Chris Woodward

4. Officer Support

The main officer support will be the Scrutiny Lead Officer from the same authority as the Chair of the Task and Finish Group. However, the Scrutiny officers from the other two authorities will provide assistance when and where required.

5. How the review will be carried out

It is suggested that the Task and Finish Group takes a number of steps to work through the evidence and reach some conclusions. It is recommended that the Group should undertake the following activities:

1. Session 1 - 10 September 2014

- A. To receive evidence from the Mid Kent Services Director and the MKIP Programme Manager on the current and future proposals for the governance arrangements for the partnership and development of a communications plan. This will include an opportunity to learn about lessons learnt from good practice elsewhere.

The aim of this session is to get all members of the group to the same level of background knowledge so that the group can plan its programme of work.

- B. To consider this scoping report and amend it accordingly following the evidence at 1A above.

2. Session 2 - Mid/Late September 2014

- A. To receive evidence from a mix of Heads of Service from across the three authorities that covers a range of services with different expectations and delivery options i.e. from internal and external facing departments.

The aim of this session is to get an understanding from the Heads of Service as clients using MKIP services, and as providers of shared services themselves, on how MKIP affects their work, whether it is clear who does what and where and whether changes to services are clearly communicated, internally and externally.

- B. Governance Part

To receive evidence from at least one of the Council's Monitoring Officers and one of the Council's Section 151 Officers.

The aim of this session is to get an understanding from the Monitoring Officer(s) on what they consider good governance for the partnership, what constitutes openness, transparency and accountability, what legal powers fall to which body and how to ensure appropriate oversight.

- C. Communications Part

To receive evidence from the Head of Communications from each of the three authorities.

The aim of this session is to get an understanding of what constitutes a good communications plan, the differences between internal and external communications, how to engage stakeholders and the public and how to deal with feedback.

3. Start a Members Survey – October 2014

To survey the non Executive members of the three authorities on how much they know about MKIP, what decisions it takes and what would be the best method of influencing decision-making and whether they know who to contact if a member of the public has a query about an MKIP service.

4. Session 3 - October 2014

A. To invite representatives of the MKIP board to give evidence with a request that minimum representation be provided of one Leader and one Chief Executive.

The aim of this session is to get an understanding from the MKIP board on what their role is, how they make decisions, where the limits of their decision making are and how their decisions are communicated.

B. To receive evidence from a local authority good practice example(s).

This will enable the group to hear first hand from a local authority on how they dealt with the governance and communication issues and what has worked, what the pitfalls are and how to overcome them.

5. Session 4 - Early November 2014

A. Feedback from Members Survey

To consider the implications from the Members Survey for the governance and communications aspects of the partnership.

B. To receive evidence from a national perspective with input from, for example, the Department for Communities and Local Government, Local Government Association or Local Government Information Unit.

The aim of this session is to get an understanding from national bodies on what is considered best practice for the governance and communications of a shared service and to understand any future national plans.

6. Session 5 - Mid/Late November 2014

To receive the draft report that details the evidence received and proposes some recommendations.

To consider the contents of the draft report, agree the Group's final report and recommendations for submission to the joint meeting of the Scrutiny Committees.

7. Joint Committee Meeting - December 2014

Report back to joint Committee meeting of the three authorities with final report/recommendations.

6. Cost/Community Implications

The financial implications will be staff time in:

- supporting the review,
- presenting evidence to the Task and Finish Group,
- undertaking a members survey exercise.

Non Executive members and the community need effective governance arrangements to provide appropriate assurance about the performance and delivery of shared services. The need for openness, transparency and accountability is important for these services and the work of Overview and Scrutiny can help to further these areas.

Similarly, key messages properly communicated are essential to ensure members of the public are well informed by changes to services on which they rely.

7. What are the expected outputs?

It is expected that the Task and Finish Group will produce a report, summarising the evidence they have gathered and containing specific recommendations for a Joint Committee meeting of the three authorities to consider. The Scrutiny Committees would then submit recommendations to their respective decision makers.

8. Timescale

It is anticipated that the group will conclude the outcomes of the review in time for a joint meeting of the three authorities in December 2014.

Witness sessions and papers reviewed

Witness sessions

10 September 2014: Overview of Mid Kent Improvement Partnership and Mid Kent Services

- Paul Taylor, Mid Kent Services Director
- Jane Clarke, Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) Programme Manager

3 October 2014: Monitoring and Section 151 Officers

- John Scarborough, Head of Legal Partnership and Monitoring Officer for Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils
- Nick Vickers, Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer for Swale Borough Council

3 October 2014: Heads of Mid Kent Services

- Rich Clarke, Head of Audit Partnership, Mid Kent Audit Services
- Andy Cole, Head of Mid Kent ICT Services
- John Scarborough, Head of Legal Partnership, Mid Kent Legal Services

3 October 2014: Head of Service (clients)

- Dawn Hudd, Head of Commercial and Economic Development, Maidstone Borough Council

20 October 2014: Mid Kent Improvement Partnership Board members

- Councillor Annabelle Blackmore, Leader of Maidstone Borough Council
- Councillor David Jukes, Leader of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
- William Benson, Chief Executive, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

20 October 2014: Heads of Communication

- Roger Adley, Communications Manager, Maidstone Borough Council
- Adam Chalmers, Democratic and Community Engagement Manager, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

4 November 2014: External focus

- Ed Hammond, Head of Programmes, Local Accountability, Centre for Public Scrutiny
- Paul Corney, Head of Anglia Revenue Partnership
- Dr Wim van Vuuren, Canterbury Christ Church University

20 November 2014: Revenues and benefits

- Steve McGinnes, Head of Mid Kent Revenues and Benefits Partnership

20 November 2014: Mid Kent Improvement Partnership Board Members and Monitoring Officers

- Councillor Andrew Bowles, Leader of Swale Borough Council
- Mark Radford, Director of Corporate Services, Swale Borough Council
- John Scarborough, Head of Legal Partnership and Monitoring Officer Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils

20 November 2014: Heads of Service (clients)

- Amber Christou, Head of Housing Services, Swale Borough Council
- Val Green, Head of Organisational Development, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
- Dave Thomas, Head of Commissioning and Customer Contact, Swale Borough Council

8 December 2014: Programme and project governance

- Rich Clarke, Head of Audit Partnership, Mid Kent Audit Services

Papers reviewed

- Governance Arrangements – MKIP Shared Services: updated May 2012
- MKIP ICT Collaboration Agreement
- Tri-Borough Review – Critical Friends Board Report to the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
- South Thames Building Control Partnership – Screen grab from website and sample agenda and minutes of Joint Committee meeting

- Investigation reports on Political Proportionality and Members Allowances and Options for Strengthening Future Governance Arrangements at the London Borough of Barnet
- MKIP Board - Sample agendas, reports and minutes
- MKIP Shared Service Boards - Sample agendas, reports and minutes

**GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS – MID KENT IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP
(MKIP) AND MKIP SHARED SERVICES**

UPDATED MAY 2012

MID KENT IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP (MKIP) - GOVERNANCE

These arrangements relate to Maidstone Borough Council, Swale Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and are made pursuant to the Local Government Act 1972, Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

1. Key Principles

- 1.1 Each of the Parties has determined by resolution to establish a collaborative partnership to become effective from September 2008 for the purposes of developing joint and shared services across their administrative areas.
- 1.2 The partnership was established as the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) and operated for an initial period of four years. It has now been agreed to extend the partnership for a further four years. A minimum of six months notice is required for any Party to leave the MKIP (see clause 16).
- 1.3 The Parties are committed to establishing an MKIP Board and which will consider the co-ordination of selected services and partnership activities across the combined administrative area through mutual co-operation.
- 1.4 The Parties are committed to open and transparent working and proper scrutiny through the arrangements in each authority and this will challenge and support the work of the MKIP.
- 1.5 Any new parties to these arrangements after they become effective will have all the same rights and responsibilities under these arrangements.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 'Administrative Area' means the local government areas of the Parties.
- 2.2 'Decisions' means those decisions taken by each authority under their individual governance arrangements.
- 2.3 'Host Authority' means the local authority appointed by the Parties under these arrangements to service MKIP or to lead on a specific matter as set out in Clause 12.

- 2.4 'Joint Service' is one where each of the Parties will retain their own dedicated team but the teams will work alongside each other, unless other arrangements are agreed.
- 2.5 'MKIP Board' means the Leaders and Chief Executives of each of the Parties.
- 2.6 'Parties' means Maidstone Borough Council, Swale Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
- 2.7 'Proposal' means a business case to be developed for initial consideration by each of the Parties.
- 2.8 'Recommendation' means a Proposal agreed by the MKIP Board and put forward for decision by each of the Parties individually or collectively.
- 2.9 'Shared Service' means a service delivering functions as agreed by two or more of the Parties where all or part of the service is managed by a single Party.

3. Objectives

- 3.1 The objectives of the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership are to work together in partnership-
- (a) To improve the quality of service to communities;
 - (b) To improve the resilience of service delivery;
 - (c) To deliver efficiency savings in the procurement, management and delivery of services;
 - (d) To explore opportunities for trading in the medium to long-term;
 - (e) To share best practice; and
 - (f) To stabilise or reduce the environmental impact of service provision.

4. Functions

- 4.1 An MKIP Work Programme covering 4 years shall be established and owned by the MKIP Board who may appoint a Programme Manager who shall have the role set out in Annex E to manage and deliver the programme. The programme will be developed and delivered using the Gateway Decision Making Process set out in Annex A.

5. Terms of Reference

- 5.1 The terms of reference for the MKIP Board are set out in Annex B.
- 5.2 The terms of reference for the Project Boards are set out in Annex C.
- 5.3 These terms of reference will be reviewed annually by the Parties.

6. Membership and Meeting Procedures

- 6.1 The MKIP Board shall comprise the leaders and chief executives of each of the Parties. Named substitutes will be identified for the Leader (Cabinet Member) and for the Chief Executive (Director) to attend when necessary.
- 6.2 Kent County Council may send a non-voting representative (or substitute) to the MKIP Board meetings

7. Frequency of Meetings

- 7.1 The MKIP Board will meet quarterly at a time and place agreed by its members, who may change the frequency of meetings and call additional meetings as required.

8. Agenda Setting and Access to Meetings and Information

- 8.1 The agenda of the MKIP Board shall be agreed by the Chairman following a briefing by officers of the Parties. Any member of the Management Board may require that an item be placed on the agenda of the next available meeting for consideration, and may call for a meeting to be held.
- 8.2 Notice of the Management Board meetings and access to agendas and reports will be applied as if the meeting was covered by the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Amendment Regulations 2000 and 2002 or section 100 A-K and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as appropriate.

9. Project Boards

- 9.1 Project Boards will be established, on a project basis, by unanimous agreement of the MKIP Board. The Project Board must put a Project Team in place with adequate Project Management support put in place.
- 9.2 When establishing additional projects the MKIP Board will agree:-
 - (a) The terms of reference for the project, including outline scope and timescales;
 - (b) Size and membership of the board including any external advisors;
 - (c) Period of operation;
 - (d) Budget for the project*;
 - (e) Tolerances for cost, quality and timescales*
 - (f) Success criteria for the project*
 - (g) Mechanisms for hosting the project and sharing the cost amongst the various Parties, as appropriate.*

9.3 The process for the production and consideration of business cases will follow the Gateway Decision Making process (Annex A). In the first instance a Project Board including Lead Director (or other senior officer) will be appointed with the MKIP Board receiving a Business Case at a later date on which to make a decision to commit to the project and establish (d), (e), (f) and (g) marked * above

9.4 Projects will be carried out in accordance with any agreed project framework that the MKIP Board has adopted. Whether in line with any adopted framework or not the MKIP Board may request an update and/or take decisions relating to a project if it determines that changes need to be made or it is not satisfied with project performance.

10. Meetings and Chairing of Meetings

10.1 The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the MKIP Board will be the Leaders of the Parties appointed on the basis of the position being rotated annually, as follows:

<u>Chairman</u>	<u>Vice Chairman</u>
Tunbridge Wells	Maidstone
Maidstone	Swale
Swale	Tunbridge Wells

10.2 In the absence of the Chairman and the Vice Chairman at a meeting the meeting will elect a chairman for that meeting who shall be a Leader.

10.3 The quorum for the MKIP Board will be five with at least one person present from each of the Parties.

10.4 The MKIP Board may approve rules for meetings and procedures from time to time. The Chairman will also act as the 'Host' authority for the MKIP (see clause 12).

11. Decision Making

11.1 Recommendations from MKIP Board will normally be made by consensus. Alternatively a vote shall be taken when requested by the Chairman. The vote will normally be by way of a show of hands. A simple majority will be required.

11.2 The MKIP Board may make Proposals and Recommendations for partnership working between two or more of the Parties. When this is the case, consensus will only be required by the Parties involved.

- 11.3 The MKIP Board may make proposals and recommendations for the establishment of Shared or part Shared Services between two or more of the Parties. Where this is the case consensus will only be required by the Parties involved.
- 11.4 The Parties that did not take part in an initial Shared Service or partnership arrangement may do so at a later date subject to a Recommendation from the MKIP Board and agreement by all the Parties involved in the service. Any costs associated with joining later would be agreed between the Parties involved.

12. Host Authorities and Allocation of Roles

- 12.1 In order to achieve the objectives of the MKIP, the Parties will appoint a Host Authority which is, for the time being, the Authority providing the Chairman pursuant to clause 10.1.
- 12.2 Staff from the Host Authority who provide services to the MKIP Board as part of the administration of the MKIP will, at all times, be deemed to be employees of the Host Authority with the exception that in the case of a secondment of a member of staff from one partner to MKIP their pay and terms and conditions shall remain as those of the employer of their substantive role.
- 12.3 Any external support to develop business cases may be funded from the MKIP budget with a Lead Director for each business case appointed from amongst the Parties. The Business Case will need to be approved by the MKIP Board.

13. Budgetary Arrangements

- 13.1 A dedicated budget will be established to take forward the work of MKIP and will be overseen by the MKIP Board who may appoint a Programme Manager or other officer as appropriate for the day to day management of the budget.
- 13.2 Each Party will make a per-head-of-population contribution to MKIP. This funding will be used to establish a budget to enable external advice to be sought (when required) to ensure initiatives are progressed in a timely manner and to explore external funding. The payment will be made on (1 April) of each year.

The initial contribution will be 30p per head of population per annum using the most up to date population estimates (current population estimates of Maidstone 142,800, Swale 128,500 and Tunbridge Wells 104,600). Any funds that are not spent or committed at the year end will be returned based on the proportions outlined above or carried over, as agreed by MKIP Board.

- 13.3 Maidstone Borough Council will be the accountable body for MKIP and will manage the financial arrangements and will hold the budget. This administration will not be funded from the MKIP budget at this stage as the annual cost is expected to be minimal, but will be subject to review on an annual basis.
- 13.4 The cost of implementing any recommendation will be dealt with separately between the Parties who are taking the initiative forward.
- 13.5 The development of a shared or joint service will offer many advantages and these include:-
- (a) To improve the quality of service to communities;
 - (b) To improve the resilience of service delivery;
 - (c) To deliver efficiency saving in the procurement, management and delivery of services;
 - (d) To explore opportunities for trading in the medium to long-term;
 - (e) To share best practice;
 - (f) To stabilise or reduce the environmental impact of service provision;
 - (g) To assist with recruitment and retention;
 - (h) To improve value for money;
 - (i) To improve public satisfaction ratings; and
 - (j) To impact and improve on external assessments and measures.

How these elements will be accounted for in apportioning the costs of any Joint or Shared Services will be considered as part of the final recommendations to each of the Parties involved in delivering the new service.

- 13.6 MKIP will actively seek external funding to progress joint and shared services. This funding would be sought at both the business case development phase and also the implementation phase.
14. Scrutiny Arrangements
- 14.1 Overview and Scrutiny arrangements will be undertaken individually by each of the Parties when the Parties consider the Proposals and Recommendations from the MKIP as part of their decision making processes. However, it is envisaged that joint scrutiny meetings may be considered when appropriate as the Partnership develops. The Lead Director/Project Manager for a particular project would attend meetings as required.
15. Amendments to these Governance Arrangements
- 15.1 These arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis and may be amended by a unanimous recommendation of the MKIP Board and subsequent agreement by all of the Parties.

16. New Membership and Cessation of Membership

- 16.1 Other councils, or public bodies, may join the Mid-Kent Improvement Partnership provided that the Executive/Council of the joining Council and that of all of the Parties are unanimously in agreement.
- 16.2 Any of the Parties may cease to be a party to these arrangements following a notice of cessation made subsequent to a decision of that authority. A minimum of six months notice is required for any Party to leave the MKIP.
- 16.3 On any of the Parties ceasing to be a party to these arrangements, these arrangements shall continue unless the remaining Parties unanimously determine that those arrangements shall terminate. The benefits and burdens of such termination shall be agreed between the Parties and in default of such agreement shall be determined in accordance with 17.1
- 16.4 Termination of these arrangements may occur by agreement of all of the Parties.

17. Dispute Resolution

- 17.1 In the event of one or more of the authorities being dissatisfied with any aspect of a shared service or element of joint working to the extent that they wish to take or would wish to have another authority take remedial action this will first be discussed by the Heads of Paid Service involved in the relevant Shared Service having consulted with the Chair of the relevant Shared Service Board. Leaders of the Council shall be kept informed of the discussions and any authority may request that the issue be brought to the next MKIP Board meeting for resolution.

If agreement on the matter cannot be reached between those parties or at the MKIP Board meeting then if there is one authority who is not involved in the dispute or an agreement can be reached on an external (to MKIP) party they will act as an independent mediator to resolve the issue. In the event that agreement cannot be reached having followed those procedures then the arbitration clause below will be followed (see flowchart in Annex F)

17.2 Arbitration

Any dispute between the Parties arising out of these arrangements which has not been resolved in accordance with the MKIP dispute resolution procedure where appropriate may on written notice from any party to the dispute to the other party be referred to a single arbitrator to be agreed between the Parties or where no agreement can be reached and having regard to the nature of the dispute by an arbitrator nominated by the chairman of the Local Government Association and will be carried out in accordance with the

provisions of the Arbitration Act 1996 as amended modified and in force for the time being.

18. Claims and Liabilities

18.1 The purpose of these arrangements and any actions taken under them is to assist all of the Parties (or those of the Parties as are engaged in any particular Joint or Shared Service). The Parties therefore have agreed that:-

- (a) all of the costs attributable to the provision of any Shared or Joint Service shall be apportioned between those of the Parties that are engaged in the service and in such proportions as they shall agree (and if not otherwise then in equal shares).
- (b) where one of the Parties takes responsibility for leading on a particular business case and undertakes actions or incurs liabilities in that respect then it shall be entitled to be indemnified by the other Parties for the appropriate proportion of all of its costs and liabilities incurred in good faith.

18.2 Each of the Parties shall at all times take all reasonable steps within its power to minimise and mitigate for any loss for which it is seeking reimbursement from any of the other Parties.

19. Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Information sharing and Confidentiality

19.1 Subject to the specific requirements of this clause, each of the Parties shall comply with its legal requirements under data protection legislation, freedom of information and associated legislation, and the law relating to confidentiality.

19.2 Each Party involved with the development of a business case or delivery of a Shared or Joint Service will ensure compliance with any legislative or legal requirements.

19.3 Each of the Parties shall:-

- (a) treat as confidential all information relating to:
 - (i) the business and operations of the other Parties and/or
 - (ii) the business or affairs of any legal or natural person in relation to which or to whom confidential information was held by that Party ('Confidential Information')
- (b) not to disclose the Confidential Information of any other of the Parties without the owner's prior written consent

19.4 Clause 19.3 shall not apply to the extent that:

- (a) such information was in the possession of the Party making the disclosure, without obligation of confidentiality, prior to its disclosure; or
 - (b) such information was obtained from a third party without obligation of confidentiality; or
 - (c) such information was already in the public domain at the time of disclosure otherwise than through a breach of these arrangements; or
 - (d) disclosure is required by law (including under Data Protection Legislation, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).
- 19.5 Subject to Clause 19.4, The Parties may only disclose confidential information of another of the Parties to staff who need to know by reason of their work. Each of the Parties shall ensure that such staff are aware of, and comply with, these confidentiality obligations and that such information is not used other than for the purposes of MKIP.
- 19.6 If any of the Parties receives a request for information relating to the partnership activity under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and/or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 then the other Parties shall (at their own expense) assist and co-operate to enable the request to be dealt with.
- 19.7 If a request for information is received then the Party receiving it shall copy it to the other Parties and consider when making its decisions any views of the other Parties and ensure that the request is dealt with within the statutory period.
- 19.8 Notwithstanding the provisions of 19.6 and 19.7 it shall be the Party receiving the request that is responsible for determining at its absolute discretion how to reply to the request.

20. Press and Public Relations

20.1 Publicity in relation to the work of MKIP will be published jointly and agreed with the Chairman of the MKIP Board following discussions with the Parties. Press and public relations will be considered as part of each management board agenda. Any press enquiries will be circulated initially to the Chief Executives in consultation with Leaders for consideration.

21. Exercise of Statutory Authority

21.1 Without prejudice to these arrangements, nothing in these arrangements shall be construed as a fetter or restriction on the exercise by any of the Parties of their statutory functions. The Parties may continue to provide the whole or any part of a service at their own cost notwithstanding that this service is also a Shared Service or a Joint Service.

22. Conduct and Expenses

22.1 Members of each of the Parties will be required to follow their own Member and Officer Code of Conduct at all times and in particular if any individual is speaking on behalf or representing the views of the MKIP.

22.2 Any expenses in relation to the MKIP Board will be met by the individual Parties.

23. Audit

23.1 Internal audit of MKIP will be carried out by the Mid-Kent Audit Service and MKIP audit reports will be presented to the MKIP Board for consideration. Shared service audit arrangements are set out separately below and in shared service collaboration agreements.

24. Complaints

24.1 The Parties will co-operate in relation to complaints made about the Joint or Shared Services and respond to them expeditiously.

25. Business Continuity

25.1 The Parties will ensure that business continuity arrangements are in place, as part of the service plan for any Joint or Shared Service.

SHARED SERVICE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

1. Collaboration Agreements

Each shared service shall have an adopted collaboration agreement between the partners in the shared service which will set out the specifics for that service. In order to provide a statement of MKIP's governance intentions and to provide a framework while collaboration agreements are not in place or where they do not set out an aspect of governance the following arrangements shall apply as set out from clause 2. onwards. Where there is a conflict between these arrangements and those set out in the specific collaboration agreements, the collaboration agreement takes precedence.

2. Shared Service Boards

2.1 For each shared service a board shall be appointed to govern the service. The board will have the terms of reference set out in Annex D and the following membership unless otherwise specified:

- One director from each partner (or approved representatives)
- Assurance provided by a lead accountant for shared service as well as other officers for specific assurance needs (legal, performance, audit etc.)

3. Audit

3.1 Each shared service will form part of the Mid-Kent Audit's 3 year audit plan and will be the subject of audit arrangements in each of its partner authorities. Mid-Kent Audit will carry out 1 audit for a shared service that will cover, and be reported to, all partners and to the Shared Service Board for consideration and action as appropriate. Copies of agreed audit responses to limited audit reports will be circulated to the MKIP Board. If a follow-up audit remains limited then this audit report will be presented to the MKIP Board.

4. Performance monitoring

4.1 MKIP will undertake 2 levels of performance monitoring. Shared service level performance and overall level MKIP Performance including finance performance. Shared service performance reports will produced quarterly to the shared service Board whilst an overall performance report will be presented to the MKIP Board. Should the MKIP Board wish to request further information on the performance of a particular service it can do so. Continuous poor performance (over 3 quarters with majority of performance indicators being missed) will be reported to the MKIP Board by the shared service board as a matter of course.

5. Finances

- 5.1 Finance monitoring will take place in 2 forms. MKIP finance performance will be measured with actual savings delivered versus predicted savings as well as with individual finance performance indicators relating to a shared service as agreed in the service plan. Additionally the MKIP budget will be monitored and reported to the Board on a quarterly basis.
- 5.2 Finances will also be considered in all projects including an investment profile, including an investment score for an investment over 5 years. This will be used for existing services and for potential future services and will produce an overall investment score for MKIP to show the value and return partners receive from the MKIP partnership.

6. Overview and Scrutiny

- 6.1 Each shared service will be subject to the Overview and Scrutiny procedures at its partner authorities and officers will be subject to the Overview and Scrutiny procedure rules of the authorities. Where more than one authority wishes to scrutinise a shared service or aspect of a shared service, every effort will be made to avoid duplication, for example through holding a joint Overview and Scrutiny meeting or sharing Overview and Scrutiny reports.

7. MKIP Work Programme

- 7.1 Once operational each shared service shall remain part of the MKIP Work Programme which will be updated with ongoing shared service improvements and projects.

8. Other

- 8.1 Unless otherwise specified here or in its collaboration agreement a shared service will remain subject to the governance arrangements of any employing authorities in the partnership. This includes external audit or other inspections. The collaboration agreements for each shared service set out the agreements on access to information between partners for a given service, but in the absence of specific terms, a Head of a Shared Service shall make information relating to the running of a shared service available to partners in that shared service on request as though the service were part of the requesting partner's organisation, whether or not this remains the case (for example where the service is wholly being provided by one authority to another) subject to clause 19 in the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership section of the governance arrangements.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE MID KENT IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP
BOARD

1. To approve and own the MKIP Programme and provide direction to the MKIP Programme Manager
2. To initiates Shared Service projects and appoint project and shared service boards
3. To sets MKIP objectives and direction
4. To join together strategic plans and form an MKIP strategic plan
5. To take decisions on overarching MKIP issues and policies
6. To take decisions on specific project/service issues outside of the remit of the project and shared service boards
7. To receive Audit reports with limited assurance on follow-up
8. To monitors MKIP Performance and Finance and agree actions to resolve performance and finance issues
9. To review these arrangements from time to time and make recommendations to the Parties for improvement.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE MID KENT IMPROVEMENT
PARTNERSHIP PROJECT BOARDS

To be responsible for the delivery of a shared service project as set out by the MKIP Board and in accordance with any project framework adopted by the MKIP Board, including:

1. To identify and appoint appropriate project team members, ensuring that all parties' interests and areas of expertise are adequately covered;
2. To be responsible for any budget provided to the project by the MKIP Board and to report any variance from the budget to the MKIP Board;
3. To report any variations from the tolerances set by the MKIP Board, specifically those that relate to quality, cost and timescales;
4. To provide updates to the MKIP Board at quarterly MKIP Board meetings as a minimum;
5. To ensure that all projects have appropriate levels of project assurance at all times;
6. To raise any project issues with the MKIP Programme Manager in good time
7. To ensure a robust communications plan is in place and to ensure regular liaison with partners and that partners and all stakeholders are informed on project progress at all times; and
8. To ensure the project follows and meets all legal and statutory requirements for example relating to Human Resources processes or changes

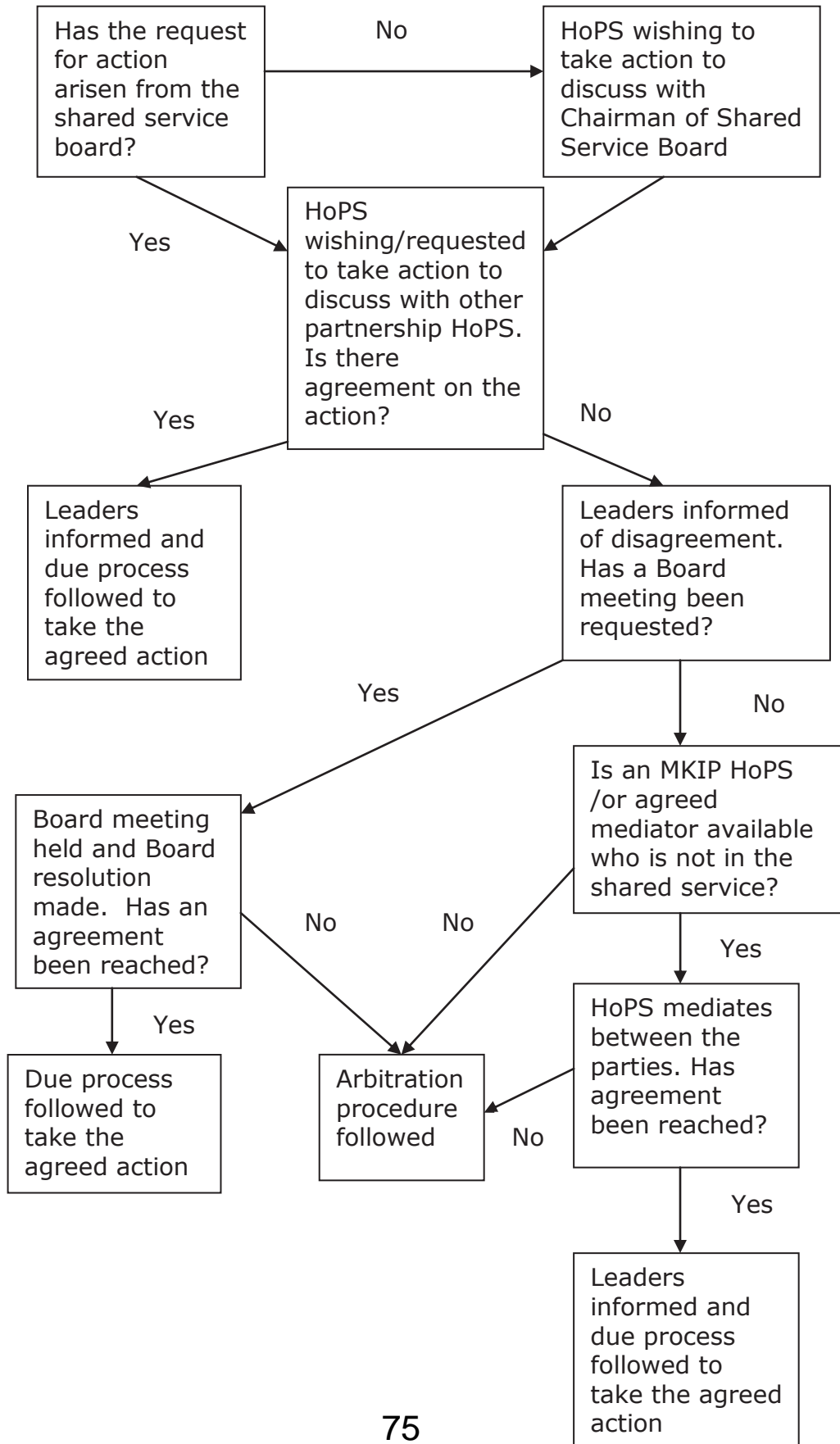
TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE MID KENT IMPROVEMENT
PARTNERSHIP SHARED SERVICE BOARDS

Shared Service Boards will provide the following governance actions:

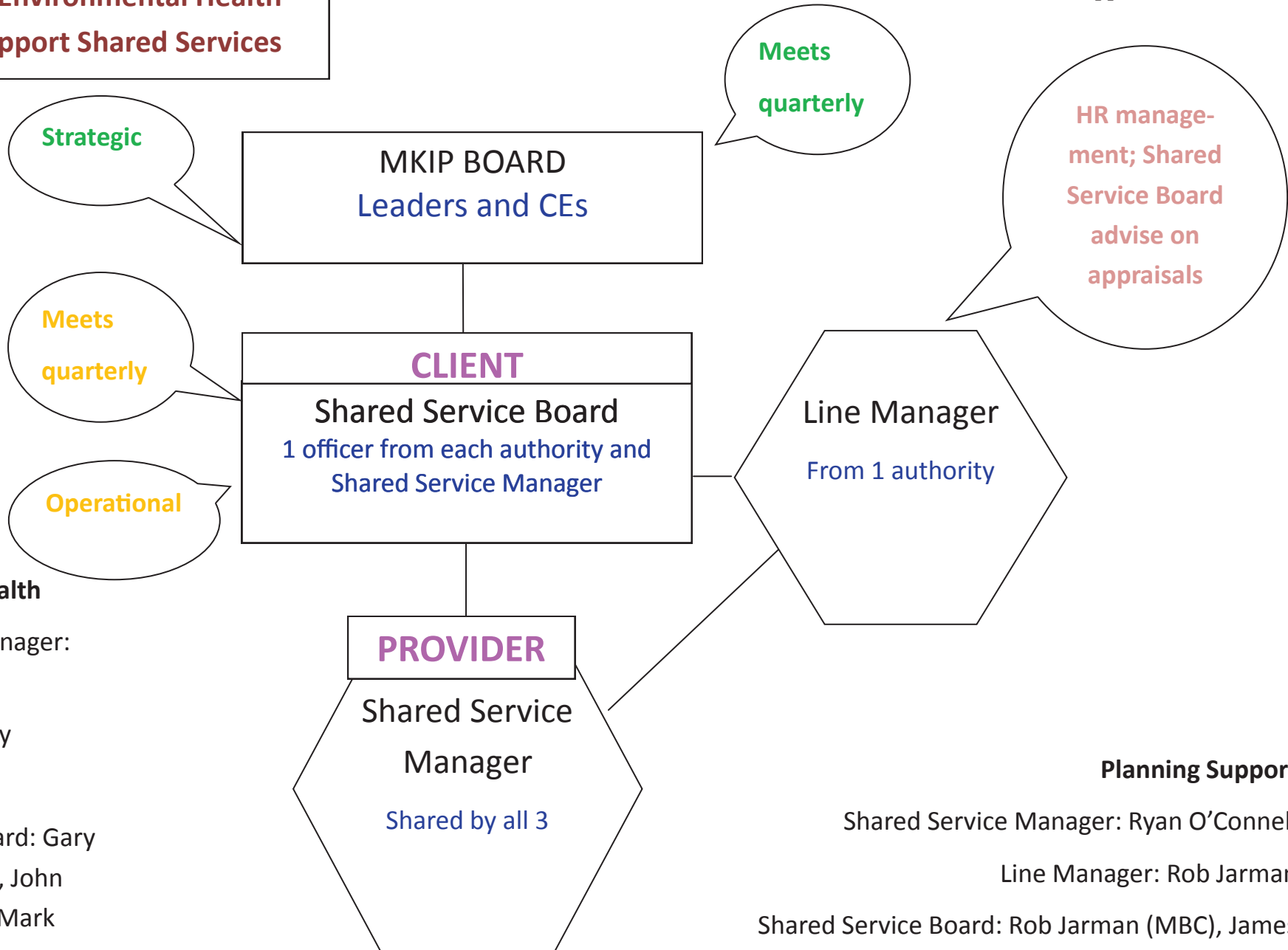
- a Agree the Service Plan for each Financial Year
- b Advise on the management of and agree variations to the budgets for the shared service including approving items of savings and growth to go forward to each partner authority to form part of their annual budgeting process and consideration in setting their budgets for the service
- c Advise the relevant Head of Paid Service (or nominee) on the appraisals of the Joint Head of Service
- d Receive reports on and consider the finance and performance of the shared service
- e Provide strategic direction as required
- f Provide reports to the MKIP Board when requested, when the Shared Service Board wish to raise a general MKIP issue or when the service underperforms (i.e. fails to meet the majority of targets over 3 quarters) or the Shared Service Board wish to make significant changes to the agreed service plan

Role of the MKIP Programme Manager

1. To create and hold the MKIP programme on behalf of the MKIP Board and as directed by them
2. To manage and deliver the MKIP Programme
3. To liaise with senior officers (including s151 officers, monitoring officers, and Directors) to provide assurance for the MKIP programme
4. To commission internal and external teams to deliver the MKIP work programme
5. To be responsible for MKIP Communications and deliver the MKIP Communications Strategy
6. To manage any MKIP budgets and the receipt of partner contributions
7. To advise and raise any issues with the MKIP Chief Executives and MKIP Board as required
8. To liaise with Shared Service Boards and managers to identify issues and problems impacting on shared services
9. To follow any MKIP Project Management framework adopted by the MKIP Board and to ensure that all MKIP Projects are delivered in accordance with that framework
10. To provide project management assurance as required by MKIP Project Boards
11. To represent the interests of all MKIP Partners equally and to ensure that partnership working is considered in decision making at all three authorities
12. To promote MKIP and increase awareness of the objectives and activities of MKIP at all times



**Governance for Environmental Health
and Planning Support Shared Services**



Environmental Health

Shared Service Manager:

Tracey Beattie

Line Manager: Gary

Stevenson

Shared Service Board: Gary

Stevenson (TWBC), John

Littlemore (MBC), Mark

Radford (SBC)

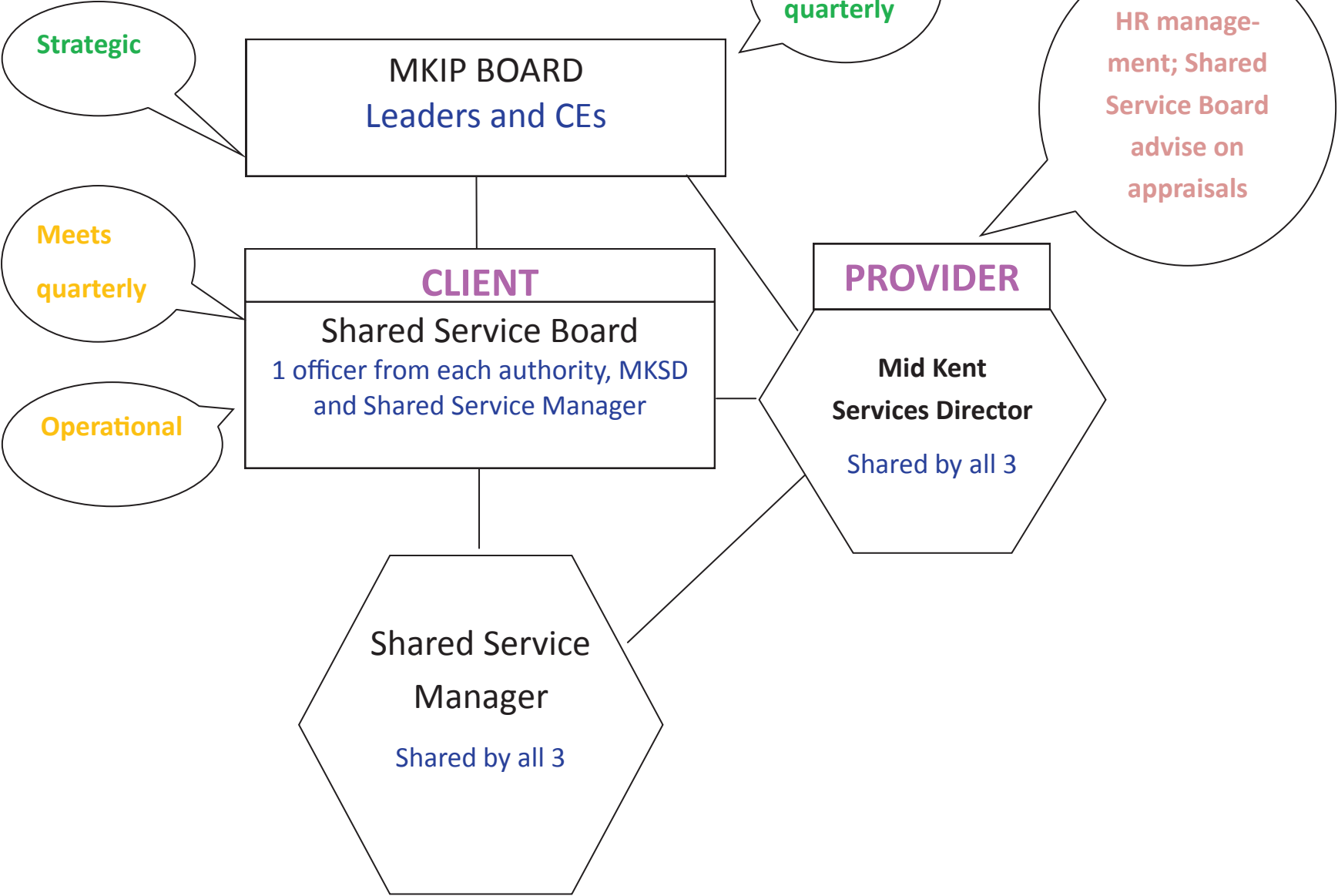
Planning Support

Shared Service Manager: Ryan O’Connell

Line Manager: Rob Jarman

Shared Service Board: Rob Jarman (MBC), James
Freeman (SBC), Jane Lynch (TWBC)

Governance for MKS:
Audit, HR, ICT, Legal, Revs and Bens



Internal Audit (4-way also shared with Ashford)

Shared Service Manager: Rich Clarke

Line Manager: Paul Taylor

Shared Service Board: David Edwards (MBC), Mark Radford (SBC), Lee Colyer (TWBC), Paul Naylor (ABC)

**Governance for MKS:
Shared Service Board Arrangements**

HR and Payroll (2-way MBC and SBC)

Shared Service Manager: Dena Smart

Line Manager: Paul Taylor

Shared Service Board: David Edwards, Mark Radford

ICT (3-way)

Shared Service Manager: Andy Cole

Line Manager: Paul Taylor

Shared Service Board: David Edwards, Mark Radford, Lee Colyer

Legal (3-way)

Shared Service Manager: John Scarborough

Line Manager: Paul Taylor

Shared Service Board: David Edwards, Mark Radford, Lee Colyer

Revenues and Benefits (2-way MBC and TWBC)

Shared Service Manager: Steve McGinnes

Line Manager: Paul Taylor

Shared Service Board: David Edwards, Mark Radford, Lee Colyer

Summary of findings from the Member survey

Purpose

As part of the scoping report, the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Task & Finish Group agreed that it would be helpful to survey the non Executive members of the three authorities on how much they know about MKIP, what decisions it takes, what would be the best method of influencing decision-making and whether they know who to contact if a member of the public has a query about a shared service.

Methodology

The survey was produced on online survey software, Survey Monkey. Elected members in each of the three authorities of Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells were informed that the survey was taking place and provided with a link to access the online questionnaire. Provision was also made for those without computer/internet access with hard copies being circulated to members where necessary prior to or after meetings.

Response rate

The survey was open for a period of two weeks and received a total of 35 responses. With a total of 150 elected ward members across the three authorities (this equates to a 23.3% response rate). Of the 35 responses, 13 responses were received from Maidstone, 5 from Swale and 17 from Tunbridge Wells.

Members of the Task & Finish Group acknowledged that there had been a low response rate but agreed that the information received had provided some insight into members' understanding and would be considered as one source within a wealth of information gathered during the witness sessions of the Task & Finish Group's work.

Findings – awareness of the Mid Kent Shared Services

There are seven shared services provided under the umbrella of the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership, with five reporting to the Mid Kent Services Director.

- 69% of respondents thought there were five shared services
- 14% of respondents thought there were six shared services
- The remaining respondents recorded responses of 4, 8 or 9 shared services

When asked to name the five Mid Kent Shared Services that report to the Mid Kent Services Director, only four respondents managed to name all five correctly, two from Maidstone and two from Tunbridge Wells.

Of the responses provided, those which were not Mid Kent Services were sharing or partnership arrangements for service delivery such as licensing and planning support.

Four of the Mid Kent Shared Services featured in the top five responses. Overall, 80% of respondents thought that Legal was an Mid Kent Services shared service and 69% said that ICT was an MKS shared service. Just over half of respondents identified Audit (54%) and the Revenues & Benefits shared services as being part of the Mid Kent Services group (51%).

Findings – confidence in understanding the difference between a Mid Kent Services shared service and other shared services provided by MKIP

- 36% of respondents were confident in their understanding of the shared services provided under the umbrella of the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership
- 21% of respondents provided a neutral response
- 42% of respondents did not feel confident

Findings – confidence in knowing where to get information about what is being discussed by the MKIP Board

- 33% of respondents felt confident in obtaining this information
- 18% of respondents provided a neutral response
- 48% of respondents did not feel confident

Findings – understanding of the MKIP governance arrangements

- 30% of respondents felt confident and understood these arrangements
- 18% of respondents provided a neutral response
- 51% of respondents did not feel confident in understanding these arrangements

Findings – which authority is the current lead for MKIP

This question could have been confused to members as the question asked who was the lead for 2014/15. The lead authority changes on an annual basis and changed to Tunbridge Wells BC in September 2014.

- 21% of respondents correctly named Tunbridge Wells
- 21% of respondents thought it was Maidstone
- 9% of respondents thought it was Swale
- 45% of respondents reported that they did not know

Findings – who is the Mid Kent Services Director

Paul Taylor is the Interim Mid Kent Services Director.

- 45% of respondents correctly named Paul Taylor
- 48% of respondents reported that they did not know

Findings – obtaining information on MKIP

The most popular option for gaining information about what was happening with MKIP was member email bulletins (39%), the second most popular answer was to speak to officers with 33% of respondents selecting this option.

Findings – confidence in explaining shared services to the public

- 39% of respondents felt confident in their ability to explain shared services
- 30% of respondents provided a neutral response
- 27% of respondents did not feel confident

Findings – how would members influence a cabinet decision about MKIP before it was made

Overall, 30% of respondents said that if they wanted to influence a decision about MKIP before it was made they would raise it with their group leader. 25% would speak to the relevant officer. A further 18% of respondents would raise the matter with the relevant portfolio holder and 15% said they would raise it with their Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Most importantly, 77% of respondents said that they were aware that all key decisions in relation to MKIP remained with the individual cabinets of the three authorities. 23% of respondents were not aware of this.

Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) and Mid Kent Services (MKS) Communications Plan 2015/16

Aim: for members and staff to understand and trust MKIP and MKS.

Our objectives are:

- Members to understand the aims of MKIP/MKS
- Members to understand the governance arrangements of MKIP/MKS
- Members to feel that they are involved in the MKIP/MKS decision making process

- Staff to understand the aims of MKIP/MKS
- Staff to understand the difference between MKIP/MKS
- Staff to feel informed of the MKIP/MKS decision making process

Who do we need to talk to?

1. Members
2. Staff

Key messages: 2015/16 is focussed on raising awareness of MKIP and MKS so that members and staff understand what they are, how they work and how they can get involved should they wish to do so. Depending on how this progresses, it may be appropriate to start using some key messages to emphasise the benefits of working in partnership these are:

Working in partnership:

- Makes the best use of residents' Council Tax
- Saves money in the long term
- Makes services more resilient
- Increases job variety and security

How will we know our plan is a success?

The following measures will be used:

Members	Staff
66 per cent understand MKIP/MKS	70 per cent understand MKIP/MKS
66 per cent understand MKIP's/MKS' governance	70 per cent understand MKIP's/MKS' governance
66 per cent feel that they are involved in the decision making process	70 per cent feel that they are informed of the decision making process

How will we review success and what will we do with it?

The actions outlined in the table below will be implemented in 2015/16 and will be reviewed using the following methods:

- Member survey
- Staff surveys (using the MKIP/MKS survey and the internal surveys of the parent authorities)

The results will be fed back to Members, the MKIP board and communications and HR teams in the three authorities. This will then form part of an annual action plan.

Action	Audience	Date (when it is to be delivered)	Method / Media for delivery (e.g. presentation, informal meeting, e-mail and so on)	Who (who will deliver)	Progress
Members					
MKIP board paperwork	All members	Agenda - prior to each MKIP board meeting Minutes - following each MKIP meeting	Emailed to all Members Hard copies placed in Members' Rooms	Jane Clarke	
MKS annual report	All members	Tbc	Emailed to all Members Hard copies placed in Members' Rooms	Jane Clarke	
MKIP Who's who	All members	May 2015 – as part of induction	Emailed to all Members Hard copies placed in Members' Rooms	Jane Clarke	
Member Briefing	All members	Tbc	Presentation from MKIP Boards	Relevant Chief Executive Relevant Lead Members and or MKS Director	
Member Briefing	All members	May 2015 – as part of induction	Presentation from Heads of Service	Jane Clarke to coordinate with relevant democratic services teams	
Member survey	All members	March 2016	Hard copy, email and possibly other electronic means	Paul Taylor/Jane Clarke	

Action/Message	Audience	Date (when it is to be delivered)	Method / Media for delivery (e.g. presentation, informal meeting, e-mail and so on)	Who (who will deliver)	Progress
Staff					
MKS Newsletter	All staff	Quarterly	Email from communications team and/or distributed in monthly staff newsletters	Paul Taylor/Jane Clarke to prepare. Communications	First edition issued in December 2014.

Action/Message	Audience	Date (when it is to be delivered)	Method / Media for delivery (e.g. presentation, informal meeting, e-mail and so on)	Who (who will deliver)	Progress
				Teams to distribute	
MKIP Who's who	All staff	Annually	Email from communications team and/or distributed in monthly staff newsletters	Paul Taylor/Jane Clarke to prepare. Communications Teams to distribute	
Intranet updates	All staff	May 2015	Intranets	Paul Taylor/Jane Clarke to prepare. Communications Teams to distribute	
Explore capacity for dedicated partnership webpage	All staff	March 2016	Intranet	Jane Clarke	
Staff survey	All staff	March 2016	Hard copy, email and possibly other electronic means	Paul Taylor/Jane Clarke to prepare and to discuss distribution with communications teams	

Term	Description
Client representative (Lead Client)	The officer at each authority who sits on the Shared Service Boards and has responsibility for ensuring the Shared Service is performing well and meeting the requirements of the Service Level Agreement.
Gateway	'Gateway' has two different meanings in the context of MKIP: (i) 'Gateway' is a common term used within project management systems such as PRINCE 2 and refers to different stages of a project which must be completed before moving onto the next stage; (ii) 'Gateway' in regards to MKIP relates to a slimmed down methodology to ensure the efficient development of a business case.
Internal client	Any member of staff from across the individual authorities who is accessing/in receipt of services provided by the shared service.
MKIP	Mid Kent Improvement Partnership: the arrangement where Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils have shared service delivery for certain functions and services.
MKIP Board	Comprised of the Leaders and Chief Executives of Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils, plus the Mid Kent Service Director and MKIP Programme Manager. The MKIP Board meets quarterly to oversee the operation of shared services at a strategic level.
MKS	Mid Kent Services: a group of shared services established under the umbrella of the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership including Audit; Human Resources; ICT; Legal; and Revenue and Benefits.
MKS Director	An interim Director has been appointed to oversee Mid Kent Services for a trial period of a year.
Monitoring Officer	Each council is required by statute to have a Monitoring Officer who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § reports on matters he/she believes are, or are likely to be, illegal or amount to maladministration; § is responsible for matters relating to the conduct of councillors and officers; and § is responsible for the operation of a council's constitution.
Provider	The officer directly responsible for the provision of services back to the individual authorities.
Section 151 officer	Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires every council in England and Wales to "... <i>make arrangements for the proper administration of their Finance affairs and shall secure that one of their Officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs</i> ".
Shared Service Boards	Shared Service Boards have been established for each of the seven shared services. They approve and review the annual service plans, monitor performance and finances and provide operational direction. Reporting forms are presented to the Shared Service Boards which capture the above information. Any key issues arising from the Shared Service Boards are reported up to the MKIP Board.
Shared Service Managers	The direct line manager of a Shared Service who is sometimes a Head of Service and sometimes a Service Manager.
Tri-Cabinet	Specially convened joint meetings of the individual Cabinets from each of the authorities (<i>e.g. Maidstone Borough Council, Swale Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council</i>). If an arrangement were to take place with another authority outside of MKIP, a special meeting would be convened of the individual Cabinets to review the proposal.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (SCRAIP)

Committee: Joint Mid-Kent Improvement Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Group

Meeting Date: 12th January 2015

Minute N^o: 109

Topic: Mid Kent Improvement Partnership Governance and Communication

Recommendationⁱ	Cabinet Memberⁱⁱ	Responseⁱⁱⁱ	Timetable^{iv}	Lead Officer^v
<p>It was recommended that:</p> <p>a) Opportunities for pre-scrutiny should be provided within existing governance arrangements at each authority prior to any new shared service proposals being considered at a tri-Cabinet meeting (i.e. after MKIP Board approval, if not before);</p>	<p>Leader</p>	<p>The principle of pre-decision consideration of significant decisions is fully supported.</p> <p>Pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions is currently achieved through Overview and Scrutiny Committees. From May 2015 the Committee governance system will be in place; pre-decision "scrutiny" can be achieved in a variety of ways within this system. It will be for the Policy and Resources Committee to ensure that this is undertaken.</p>	<p>Continuing</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>

APPENDIX (ix) - DRAFT RESPONSES

<p>b) That Joint Overview & Scrutiny task and finish groups should be convened by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee(s) of the individual authorities, as necessary, to jointly review any major issues that arise in regard to shared service delivery and also any new options, such as the possibility of contracting to deliver a shared service for an authority outside the partnership;</p>	<p>Leader</p>	<p>The principle of joint review of the performance of or alternative models for shared services is supported.</p> <p>The convening of task and finish groups by Overview and Scrutiny is a matter for Overview and Scrutiny and not for Cabinet.</p> <p>From May 2015 the Committee governance system will be in place. It will be for the Policy and Resources Committee to decide whether or not to convene/participate in any joint task and finish group; this could be achieved by nominating Members of the Committee or other members of the Council to participate</p>	<p>Continuing</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>
<p>c) That the MKIP Board will notify the Overview and Scrutiny functions of each authority when there are potential items of interest that a joint task and finish group could review on their</p>	<p>Leader</p>	<p>In our current governance arrangements it is for Overview and Scrutiny to consider the potential items that it wishes to review and it is not for Cabinet to presume what they might be.</p> <p>It is essential that the business</p>	<p>Continuing</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>

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<p>behalf</p>		<p>of the MKIP board is transparent and accessible so that any Member can see what is under consideration.</p> <p>The Maidstone representatives on the MKIP Board are the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive. From May 2015 the Leader will also chair the Policy and Resources Committee and will be in a position to ensure that the Committee is briefed enabling potential items of interest to be identified for review or pre-decision scrutiny.</p>		
<p>d) That the creation of the Mid Kent Services Director post should be favourably considered in light of the value already placed on this role by members of the Shared Services Boards and others, as it provides a single point of contact for the MKIP Board and Mid Kent Service Managers;</p>	<p>Leader</p>	<p>The terms of reference of the Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group covered governance arrangements, communication and the objectives of the MKS Director and how these would be measured. This recommendation falls outside the remit of the Group.</p> <p>The Cabinet while noting the view of O&S believes that it is essential that the position of MKS Director, which is currently a trial arrangement, is properly evaluated before any decision about the future of the role is</p>		<p>Chief Executive</p>

APPENDIX (ix) - DRAFT RESPONSES

		<p>made. This should take place in accordance with the timetable agreed by the MKIP Board and be conducted on an evidential basis including the assessment and conclusions from the independent review group which is chaired by Zena Cooke (MBC Director of Regeneration and Communities) as well as giving consideration the resources available to fund the post and the consequences for the senior management structure of the partner authorities.</p>		
<p>e) That the role of the MKIP Programme Manager should be re-examined and aligned with the reporting arrangements arising from the appointment of a Mid Kent Services Director (if the post is confirmed);</p>	<p>Leader</p>	<p>This recommendation is related to management issues and not issues of governance or communications and therefore lies outside the remit of the task and finish group.</p> <p>The remit of the MKIP Programme Manager is clear and was established at the outset of the partnership specifically to support the MKIP partnership particularly the MKIP Board, MKIP Chief Executives and previously the MKIP Management Board and now provides support to the Shared Service Boards</p>		<p>Chief Executive</p>

APPENDIX (ix) - DRAFT RESPONSES

		<p>If MKIP is to continue to develop positively then this support is essential and is not affected by confirmation of the MKS Director role.</p>		
<p>f) That early consideration should be given to transferring the management of the Planning Support and Environmental Health shared services under the Mid Kent Services umbrella as soon as possible</p>	<p>Leader</p>	<p>This recommendation is related to management issues and not issues of governance or communications and therefore lies outside the remit of the task and finish group</p> <p>The Planning Support service is "hosted" (inasmuch as the Shared Service manager is employed) by Maidstone and Environmental Health by Tunbridge Wells. Therefore the line management of these services are a matter for each of the host authority.</p> <p>It has been the practice of MKIP partners to work collaboratively and establish consensus in terms of management arrangements. We would expect to have constructive and meaningful discussions about any changes in current arrangements.</p> <p>It would be prudent to review the current arrangements in the</p>		<p>Chief Executive</p>

APPENDIX (ix) - DRAFT RESPONSES

		light of any future decision concerning the MKS Director role (which could continue as a trial, become a permanent arrangement or discontinue). Changing reporting lines while this outcome remains uncertain would be premature.		
g) That a toolkit is created to assist managers in their role as internal clients of shared services	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services	<p>This recommendation is related to management issues and not issues of governance or communications and therefore lies outside the remit of the task and finish group</p> <p>Nevertheless we recognise the need to further improve the clienting arrangements for shared services. The Director of Environment and Shared Services has taken the lead on this from a Maidstone perspective and will continue to work with CLT and SLT colleagues to achieve this.</p>		Director of Environment and Shared Services
h) That (where appropriate) shared services create a service catalogue for their service that will help internal clients to better understand the extent of the service they provide	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services	Cabinet is clear that clients for shared services have responsibility for defining the services required in terms of scope and standards at a cost that is affordable. The process for establishing the service to be provided is clear and reflected in a service level		Director for Environment and Shared Services

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		<p>agreement and the shared services' service plans.</p> <p>There is a number of ways in which internal clients can improve their understanding of services provided by MKS. Current examples include regular surgeries eg between Planning and Legal Services. A directory of services may also assist</p>		
i) That a joint communications plan is developed to improve staff and member awareness and understanding of MKIP (shared service development) and MKS (shared service delivery)	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services	Cabinet support this recommendation	Continuing	Head of Policy and Communications
j) That the MKIP Board has responsibility for the effective implementation of an agreed communications plan and ensures its delivery is resourced appropriately	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services	Cabinet agrees that there is a need to significantly improve communication with respect to the MKIP partnership – both internally and externally and that the MKIP Board should contribute at a strategic level eg agreeing the objectives for a communications plan while the MKIP Chief Executives actively monitor the impact of the plan	Continuing	Head of Policy and Communications

APPENDIX (ix) - DRAFT RESPONSES

		and day to day implementation is undertaken by the MKIP Programme manager working closely with the communications teams in all three authorities		
k) That communication should be improved between the newly created Shared Service Boards and the MKIP Board to ensure the latter is fully aware of any major service issues and any suggested options for change	Leader	Clear reporting arrangements between Shared Service Boards and the MKIP Board are in place. Although these arrangements are relatively recent they have quickly become embedded and are working well.	Continuing	Chief Executive with the Director of Environment and Shared Services
l) That client representatives on the Shared Service Boards should ensure the outcomes of their meetings, including any related direction coming from the MKIP Board, are effectively cascaded to relevant staff within each authority	Leader	Cabinet supports this recommendation. At Maidstone BC there is a regular briefing meeting led by the Director of Environment and Shared Services with SLT colleagues which enables two way communication	Continuing	Director of Environment and Shared Services
m) That future MKIP	Leader	Cabinet agrees that MKIP	Continuing	Chief Executive

APPENDIX (ix) - DRAFT RESPONSES

<p>Board meetings should be held and papers published in accordance with the appropriate local authority access to information regulations</p>		<p>papers should be openly available and through a process which reflects the spirit of the access to information legislation.</p>		
<p>n) That given the change in governance arrangements at Maidstone BC from May 2015, consequential amendments be made to reflect that the Overview and Scrutiny function will be absorbed within the Policy and Resources and three other service committees</p>	<p>Leader</p>	<p>The new Maidstone BC constitution is currently being drafted. Please also see responses (a) and (b) above</p>	<p>April 2015</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>

Notes on the completion of SCRAIP

ⁱ Report recommendations are listed as found in the report.

ⁱⁱ Insert in this box the Cabinet Member whose portfolio the recommendation falls within.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box either the acceptance or rejection of the recommendation.

If the recommendation is rejected an explanation for its rejection should be provided. The 'timetable' and 'lead officer' boxes can be left blank

APPENDIX (ix) - DRAFT RESPONSES

If the recommendation is accepted an explanation of the action to be taken to implement the recommendation should be recorded in this box. Please also complete the 'timetable' and 'lead officer' boxes.

^{iv} The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box when the action in indicated in the previous box will be implemented.

^v The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box the Officer responsible for the implementation of the action highlighted in the 'response' box.

Agenda Item 12

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH 2015

REPORT OF HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Report prepared by Sam Bailey

1. ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OSC: TWILIGHT ECONOMY REVIEW

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 Cabinet is asked to consider the findings of the Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny's Twilight Economy Review and make a decision on whether to accept the recommendations from the review.

1.2 Recommendation of the Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1.2.1 The following recommendations were made in the Twilight Economy Review Report:

- 1) That the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development be recommended to negotiate a deal with Kent County Council to ensure broken streetlights in the town centre are fixed at a faster timescale than 28 days.
- 2) That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development should ensure there is appropriate lighting for approaches to council owned town centre car parks.
- 3) That the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development invest in, or encourage businesses to invest in, floodlighting of appropriate buildings in the town centre. Floodlighting of buildings could be included into existing regeneration plans and funded through section 106 money.
- 4) That the Cabinet Member of Economic and Commercial Development, as well as the Head of Commercial and Economic Development, be recommended to support the new Town Centre

Manager, help them to engage with local businesses and if required support the BID process.

- 5) That the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development work with the business community in the town centre to find a 'champion' for the twilight economy. This person could be the new Town Centre Manager, or could be a separate representative of the businesses who operate in twilight hours.
- 6) That the Head of Commercial and Economic Development be recommended to investigate the costs and possibility of bringing the MyCanterbury app to Maidstone, with a particular focus on twilight economy businesses.
- 7) That the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development make the proposed regeneration work in Week Street, Earl Street and Gabriel's Hill a priority.
- 8) That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development be recommended to negotiate that park and ride tickets be valid on local bus routes after park and ride services finish, and to keep the park and ride car parks unlocked in the evenings. This could be trialled at the London Road car park, as it has the best local bus services, and the passenger numbers be monitored. If successful, this could be expanded to all Park and Ride sites.
- 9) That the interaction between Park and Ride sites and local bus services in the evening be considered by the Cabinet Member for Planning Transport and Development, as well as the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee, when considering the Integrated Transport Strategy.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 1.3.1 The reasons for recommendation are outlined in the Twilight Economy Review Report which is attached as Appendix A.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.4.1 The council could chose not to take action to improve the Twilight Economy. However, this might mean an opportunity to improve the vibrancy of the Town Centre is missed.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 1.5.1 The review impacts on the following corporate objectives:

- 'For Maidstone to have a growing economy'

- 'For Maidstone to be a decent place to live'

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 The recommendations contained within this report will need to be risk assessed as part of viewing whether they should be accepted or not.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

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

1.7.2 **Financial**

Some of the recommendations may have financial implications, for example the recommendation to invest in floodlighting of appropriate building in the town centre.

1.7.3 **Staffing**

Some of the recommendations may have staffing implications, for example the recommendation not to lock park and ride car parks after 6.30.

1.7.4 **Procurement**

Some of the recommendations may have procurement implications, for example the recommendation around adopting the 'MyCanterbury' app for Maidstone.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

Appendix A- Twilight Economy Review Report

1.8.2 Background Documents

None

<u>IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?</u>		<u>THIS BOX MUST BE COMPLETED</u>	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, this is a Key Decision because:			
.....			
Wards/Parishes affected:			
.....			

Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Twilight Economy Review

December 2014

Report Prepared by Sam Bailey, Research and Performance Officer



Chairman's Foreword

First of all I would like to thank all officers and members of the committee for their contributions in producing this review.

I would also like to thank our witnesses for taking time to join us and share their knowledge and expertise. Thanks must also go to the representatives from Canterbury Connected BID who organised and led our early evening visit to the city to see what was happening there.

When we set out on this review it was with some uncertainty as to where we were going. An early answer to our stated objectives as to whether there was a need, or indeed the will, for a more vibrant twilight economy in Maidstone was critical as to how, or whether, the review was progressed.

I hope readers will see that there is an enthusiasm for a vibrant twilight economy that needs to be harnessed and championed in a similar way to our existing (and successful) night time economy. Much is in place already, for example our excellent restaurant offering and an exciting early evening dining experience. This can be built on not only by the retail sector in the town centre, but by leisure and cultural facilities such as the Hazlitt Theatre and the Museum. The Borough Council can play a critical part by making the town a welcoming and attractive place and offering a supportive and encouraging hand when requested.

I believe that given the will and a concerted effort by us all that Maidstone can have a vibrant twilight economy that will be to the mutual benefit of everyone.

Councillor Jenni Paterson

Chairman of the Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee



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Introduction

In 2002/2003, the Strategic Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee carried out a review of the night time economy in Maidstone. Within this review, there was a section titled 'Interplay between the Night Time Economy and Day-Time Economy'. In this section, it was stated that there was unmet potential for delivering what became known as the 'twilight economy'. One of the main recommendations from this report was that 'the Economic Development Section should conduct analysis of whether there is potential to develop the 'twilight economy' and, if so, how this might be achieved and what action, if any, might be required'.

Following this Scrutiny Review, in 2007 the Economic Development Team commissioned a piece of research (produced by Bone Wells Associates in association with the University of Westminster) on the Night Time Economy called 'Maidstone by Night'. This report contained a section on the Twilight Economy. The report's findings were that:

- Late night shopping on a Thursday was a non-event;
- Maidstone lacks a town centre market which could add to the evening economy; and
- Cafes tended to close in the early evening.

During the committee's future work programme workshop, held in July 2014, a suggestion was put forward for the committee to look into the Night Time Economy. Members of the committee were conscious that this review topic could overlap with the terms of reference of other Overview and Scrutiny Committees, namely Community Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and therefore wished to narrow the scope of the review. After revisiting previous work that had been carried out on this subject, the committee decided to carry out a further investigation into the 'twilight economy'.



Terms of Reference

Once the committee had decided to carry out a review into the twilight economy, a working party was set up to agree terms of reference for the review.

The committee agreed that the twilight economy would be defined as:

'Economic activity that occurs in the town centre after ordinary shop and workplace closing times (around 5.30pm) but before the usual pub closing times (around 11.30pm).'

The stated objectives of the review were:

- To assess whether there is a need for a more vibrant twilight economy;
- To investigate whether there is a will for town centre stakeholders to provide for a more vibrant twilight economy; and
- If the answer to both of the above is yes, what can be done to improve the twilight economy



Methodology

Evidence was gathered for the review in the following ways:

- Two committee meetings in which evidence was taken from witnesses;
- A walk around Maidstone Town centre in order to see the current twilight economy in Maidstone; and
- A visit to Canterbury, to see their approach to the twilight economy and to see whether there was any best practice that could be applied in Maidstone.

During the committee meetings, the following witnesses were interviewed:

- Dawn Hudd, Head of Commercial and Economic Development at Maidstone Borough Council;
- Laura Case, Cultural Services Manager at Maidstone Borough Council;
- Bill Moss, Maidstone Town Centre Manager; and
- John Barnes, Manager of Wonderland Nightclub.



Evidence Gathered from Witnesses

October

Dawn Hudd, Head of Commercial and Economic Development, and Laura Case, Cultural Services Manager, gave evidence at the meeting in October. These witnesses explained that the problem of the town centre being quiet in the early part of the twilight economy period was common to many towns. It was suggested to the committee that what was needed was a 'champion' for the twilight economy, who was independent of the council.

Two key pieces of work were underway at the time that would be relevant to the Twilight Economy, and that this report could contribute to. The first was the Town Centre Vision, which would set out the future of the Town Centre including where various activities would take place. The second was the Destination Management Plan, which would develop how Maidstone should look as a destination. These witnesses also explained that cross promoting different events that were happening in the early evening could go some way to improving the twilight economy.

Finally, Mrs Hudd gave the committee an example of where efforts had been made to improve the twilight economy. Mrs Hudd had previously worked at Canterbury City Council, and they had seen some success in their efforts on this subject.

Prior to the October meeting, members of the committee had attended the Night Time Economy Forum to request members of this forum give evidence for this review. John Barnes, manager of the Wonderland Night Club, attended the October committee meeting to give evidence. Mr Barnes made several useful suggestions of how assets in the town could be used differently, including Lockmeadow car park and Jubilee Square, as well as capitalising on seasonal events such as Bonfire Night. Mr Barnes also suggested that street lighting was a real issue for the twilight, as well as night time, economies- especially during the winter. Mr Barnes noticed that the town could be very dark, with patchy light coverage due to streetlights being out of order. Mr Barnes also stated that the river could be better lit to make it more inviting.

During this meeting, the committee identified that Maidstone had a strong music offer. The committee felt that this could be capitalised on to improve the twilight economy. Mr Barnes agreed with this assertion, as he knew that night club customers in Maidstone demanded a high standard when it came to music in his clubs.

November

At the November meeting Bill Moss, Town Centre Manager, gave evidence on this topic.

Mr Moss highlighted that Maidstone had an excellent offer in terms of restaurants and places to eat. He considered this was a sector that had gone from strength to strength in the time he had been Town Centre Manager. He stated this was very positive when it came to the twilight economy, as it was a vibrant sector that was active during the twilight hours.

Continued Overleaf

Mr Moss also informed the committee that despite several initiatives, other than at Christmas time, late night shopping had never been a success in Maidstone. It was therefore reasonable to conclude that there was little demand for late night shopping in Maidstone.

Mr Moss also stated that the lighting situation had improved since he had become Town Centre Manager, and particularly since the regeneration of the Town Centre. However both Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council could be slow to replace blown bulbs. Kent County Council's service standard for replacing blown bulbs was 28 days, which Mr Moss felt was too long, particularly in the town centre.

Mr Moss thought that the music offer in the town centre was strong. However more live music could be staged in Jubilee Square.

During the October meeting, sketches of the proposed regeneration of other areas of the town centre (including Earl Street, Week Street and Gabriel's Hill) had been circulated to the committee. Mr Moss was asked whether these proposed regeneration projects would be welcome to the twilight economy. Mr Moss confirmed that they would be very welcome, and the regeneration of the upper and lower high street (now complete) had been very positive for the town.

When asked what the council could do to improve the twilight economy, Mr Moss responded that greater marketing of the twilight economy should be a priority. Mr Moss suggested that cross promotion could really help businesses in this sector, for example combined cinema and meal offers.

The committee were informed, prior to the meeting, that Mr Moss would be retiring in the near future. The committee thanked Mr Moss for his years of service to the town, and wished him well for his retirement. Mr Moss confirmed that there would be a new Town Centre Manager appointed, following his retirement.



Evidence Gathered from Field Trips

During the course of the review, the committee conducted two field trips. The first was in Maidstone, between 17.30 and 18.15. The purpose of this trip was to observe and assess the current state of the twilight economy.

The second field trip was to Canterbury. The purpose of this was to see what work had been undertaken to improve the twilight economy in this area, and see if there were any lessons that could be transferred to Maidstone.

Maidstone Field Trip

The committee walked around Maidstone Town Centre during the twilight hours. Following this, their observations, comments and thoughts were reported back to the committee during the meeting in November.

The committee noted there were large areas of darkness, possibly due to blown street light bulbs. This was particularly noticeable on Earl Street, which was the focal point for restaurants in the town.

The committee noticed that the town became more run-down as you headed towards Maidstone East Station along Week Street. However despite this there were plenty of eating establishments and restaurants at this end of town. The committee also noticed several new eating venues being fitted out.

The committee also noticed an increase in the street population, particularly beggars and street drinkers, as they approached Maidstone East station. The committee observed that this gave the town an unwelcome feel, particularly if it was the first thing people saw as they left the train station.

It was noted how good the Christmas lights looked, and also how smart the town hall, and other buildings around Jubilee Square, looked when they had been floodlit.

The committee also discussed from their own experiences how dark approaches to car parks were. This was seen as unappealing for those who may be parking in the town centre during the twilight hours.

Canterbury Field Trip

Following on from Dawn Hudd's suggestion during the committee meeting in October, the committee organised a field trip to Canterbury. Bob Jones, who was the Chief Executive Officer of Canterbury Connected Business Improvement District (BID), facilitated this trip.

The trip consisted of a briefing about the Business Improvement District, a tour of Canterbury during the early evening and then a post tour debrief.

During the briefing, the committee learned about Canterbury's Business Improvement District (BID) - including what it was, how it came about and its plans for the future – and the MyCanterbury app.

Continued Overleaf

A Business Improvement District is a defined area within which businesses have to pay an additional levy in order to fund projects within the district's boundaries. In order for a BID to come into being, a ballot of businesses in the area must take place. To win the ballot, over 50% of businesses by rateable value as well as by absolute number must be in favour of the creation of the BID. This ensures support from both independent businesses and national chains.

Canterbury went to ballot in July 2014, and was successful. The BID got underway in October 2014 and had a five year term. The BID had already provided the following:

- Additional Street Cleansing;
- Christmas lights; and
- Hanging floral displays.

Following these initiatives, the BID would be providing three 'Street Ambassadors' who would liaise with levy payers and statutory authorities, help resolve issues and meet and greet visitors. The BID would also be providing energy consultations to help local businesses save money on their energy bills.

The activity of the BID was not designed to replace the responsibilities of the local authority, but to provide additional services above and beyond what would normally be received by businesses within the BID area. For example, Canterbury City Council is still providing street cleansing services in the City Centre, however an additional street cleansing team provided by the BID was carrying out pressure washing on pavements and buildings to improve the image of the area.

One of the most innovative initiatives the BID was taking forward was the MyCanterbury app. This app was the successor to the 'Canterbury Card', which was a card that gave local residents access to special offers and promotions within Canterbury. This card was formerly run by the City Council, and had a large membership. The administration of the scheme had been passed on to the BID, and the existing database of users had been used to create an app called MyCanterbury. The app allowed local businesses to send promotions to users of the app. The app was able to distinguish between visitors and residents and build up a picture of each user based on their previous purchases. This allowed businesses to tailor their messages to their target audience (e.g. residents, visitors, frequent customers, those who made similar purchases). Businesses within the BID area received a free listing on the directory for this app, and could use the app to generate flexible promotional opportunities on a paid for basis.

The creator of the MyCanterbury app had plans to expand the app. A major component of these plans was to use existing users as 'visitors' for other areas. The app had the capability to recognise when users were in other locations that had an app using the same platform. For example if a MyMaidstone app was created, MyCanterbury users would automatically become visitors to Maidstone. This would allow businesses in these locations to push their promotions to app users from other areas if they were to visit Maidstone.

When it came to public transport, an interesting initiative had been trialled in Canterbury for their Park and Ride services. Previously, Park and Ride buses had been provided by the County Council's operator. However there had been a change of contract and services were now provided by Stagecoach, who also provided the majority of local bus services in Canterbury. A deal had been agreed with Stagecoach for them to accept Park and Ride bus tickets on their local bus services for times after Park and Ride services had ended. Park and Ride car parks were also not locked overnight. This allowed an extension of the Park and Ride service into the evening for little to no additional cost.

It was noted by the committee that the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee had visited a BID in Croydon, and were similarly impressed with the BID.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Following the evidence gathered by the committee, the cConommittee has drawn several conclusions, resulting in recommendations.

Lighting

The committee noticed the poor lighting within parts of the town centre in the twilight hours. This was not necessarily due to a lack of lighting, but due to lights being out of order. The committee also heard evidence from witnesses that Kent County Council's service standard for replacing street light bulbs that may have blown was 28 days. The committee felt that this was too long, and the areas of darkness created gave the town centre an unappealing feel.

Recommendation 1: That the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development be recommended to negotiate a deal with Kent County Council to ensure broken streetlights in the town centre are fixed at a faster timescale than 28 days.

The committee also felt that lighting on the approach to car parks was poor. This made it unappealing for visitors, who may feel unsafe returning to their car in the twilight hours.

Recommendation 2: That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development should ensure there is appropriate lighting for approaches to council owned town centre car parks.

The committee noticed that those buildings in Maidstone town centre that had been floodlit really improved the look of the area. The committee also noticed this had the same effect in Canterbury.

Recommendation 3: That the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development invest in, or encourage businesses to invest in, floodlighting of appropriate buildings in the town centre. Floodlighting of buildings could be included into existing regeneration plans and funded through section 106 money.

The committee felt that if the problems with lighting could be improved in the town centre, it would make it a more desirable place to pursue leisure activities in the twilight economy.

Engagement

The committee was impressed with the work already carried out by the Canterbury Connected BID, as well as their proposed future projects. The Planning, Transport and Development OSC had also visited a BID in Croydon as part of their review of the alternatives to using a car and was similarly impressed.

The committee had identified that with a new town centre manager there may be a new opportunity to engage with local businesses; particularly those whose trading hours may fall within the twilight hours. If it is something that is desired by the business community in the town centre, the council should support the creation of a BID for Maidstone. The committee felt that creation of a BID in Maidstone town centre would not just be beneficial to businesses in the twilight economy. All other businesses in the town centre would also benefit from BID status.

Recommendation 4: That the Cabinet Member of Economic and Commercial Development, as well as the Head of Commercial and Economic Development, be recommended to support the new Town Centre Manager, help them to engage with local businesses and if required support the BID process.

From the evidence provided to the committee, the committee felt that it would be important for a 'champion' for the twilight economy to be found. This person would be responsible for lobbying for improvements to help the Twilight Economy, and to drive forward the agenda for the twilight economy.

Recommendation 5: That the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development work with the business community in the town centre to find a 'champion' for the twilight economy. This person could be the new Town Centre Manager, or could be a separate representative of the businesses who operate in twilight hours.

Marketing

The committee heard evidence that businesses within the twilight economy would benefit from an increased level of marketing, and a more sophisticated way of reaching their customers. When the committee visited Canterbury, the committee were particularly impressed with the MyCanterbury app. This platform appeared to be an appropriate solution to the problem that had been identified.

Recommendation 6: That the Head of Commercial and Economic Development be recommended to investigate the costs and possibility of bringing the MyCanterbury app to Maidstone, with a particular focus on twilight economy businesses.

It was felt by the committee that having this tool, and engaging with local businesses on how to use it for the promotion of events (for example music, seasonal events and festivals) and the cross promotion of different businesses could help to solve many of the problems that had been identified in this review.

Regeneration

The committee noted that there was a positive response regarding the proposed regeneration plans of Earl Street, Week Street and Gabriel's Hill.

The committee felt that these regeneration plans would make the town a more inviting place to spend an evening. The committee particularly welcomed the proposed regeneration of Week Street. This was because the end of Week Street that was closest to Maidstone East Railway Station had a particularly run down feel, with a large number of the street population (beggars, street drinkers and rough sleepers) congregating in this area. There were several independent food businesses at this end of town, and the unwelcoming feel from the street scene was probably a detriment to their business. If this area was regenerated, and the lighting situation improved, it was felt that this would improve this end of town.

Recommendation 7: That the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development make the proposed regeneration work in Week Street, Earl Street and Gabriel's Hill a priority.

Park and Ride

The committee was concerned that a lot of people depend on the Park and Ride service to get to their place of employment in the town centre. This service finishes at around 6pm and the car parks are locked at 6.30pm. The committee felt that this was a barrier for people wishing to stay in the town centre to pursue leisure activities after work.

Although not minuted, during one of their committee meetings a former Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development noted that he had tried introducing a later park and ride service for late night shopping at Christmas time. This had not been a success, and had been relatively costly for the council as they had to spend money on extra bus services.

However the committee had heard about a relatively simple solution to this problem when they visited Canterbury- negotiating that Park and Ride tickets be valid on local bus services and not locking car parks at night.

Recommendation 8: That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development be recommended to negotiate that park and ride tickets be valid on local bus routes after park and ride services finish, and to keep the park and ride car parks unlocked in the evenings. This could be trialled at the London Road car park, as it has the best local bus services, and the passenger numbers be monitored. If successful, this could be expanded to all Park and Ride sites.

Recommendation 9: That the interaction between Park and Ride sites and local bus services in the evening be considered by the Cabinet Member for Planning Transport and Development, as well as the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee, when considering the Integrated Transport Strategy.