

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and
Scrutiny Committee**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 7 OCTOBER 2014

Present: Councillor Mrs Gooch (Chairman), and
Councillors Ash, Black, Butler, Edwards-Daem,
English, Mrs Grigg and Mrs Stockell

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

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be webcast.

67. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Long and Pickett.

68. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitute members were noted:-

Councillor English for Councillor Pickett.

69. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no visiting Members.

70. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

71. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

72. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 SEPTEMBER 2014

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

73. MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2014

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

74. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR MONITORING QUARTER 1

The Policy and Performance Officer, Clare Wood, introduced the Key Performance Indicator Monitoring Quarter 1. The Committee heard that of 35 KPIs, 17 had been achieved, making an increase of 2 on the same time last year. The number of KPIs showing red had halved from 10 to 5, and of the amber rated KPIs all were within 5% of target, with 7 within 1.5% of target.

The Committee was advised that Homeless figures were set to improve in the next quarter with the opening of Aylesbury House accommodation facility. In response to questions the Head of Finance and Resources told members that:

- Temporary accommodation was provided for as long as necessary where a need was identified according to legislation, however there were targets set by Central Government which stipulated regular reporting;
- Due to the inability to predict the numbers of those who would present as homeless on the day - as opposed to those who were at risk of homelessness - a continuous improvement approach to targets was undertaken. Data on the percentage increase in numbers of people who were presenting as homeless would be provided to the Committee;
- Emergency housing provision was currently and would continue to be provided in cooperation with third sector organisations such as the Salvation Army and Maidstone Christian Care;
- Temporary accommodation was one facet of an overall approach to homelessness, which also included preventative measures and affordable housing delivery. In response to a question it was confirmed that Golding Homes did not provide temporary accommodation, but that Maidstone BC did have nomination rights to some properties. The Budget 1st Quarter report would detail the possibilities and potential resources needed to take alternative actions to provision of temporary accommodation.

The Committee discussed Customer Services and reference was made to the following:

- The aim of the channel shift programme was that all channels were providing the same services and achieving the same result. This would ensure that customers were directed to the most appropriate channel, and that those who are not IT literate would still be able to access Customer Services and experience equality of end result. The Business Improvement Manager would be presenting a Channel Shift report to the November Committee.

- The ideal call answering target for the Contact Centre would be 90 seconds but this was unachievable. The target had therefore been set at 120 seconds as this was not prohibitive, with the understanding that a longer wait than this would be considered unacceptable for Customers.
- Additional resources were provided to the Contact Centre when a new service was taken on by them.
- There had been a 50% turnover of staff in the Contact Centre, but figures could be provided for the numbers who had moved into other Council departments.
- There had been a decline in reported instances of fly tipping over a four year trend, the figures for which would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

With particular reference to the implementation of the Planning Support Shared Service it was stated that:

- Issues experienced with the Planning Portal could not be rectified at Local Authority level as this was a national product. In contrast, the online forms for Council services provided by Maidstone BC were regularly tested.
- The implementation of a new system had meant that reports were unavailable at the time and that quarter one data could not be reported on at Committee. There would instead be a double report to Committee at quarter two.
- Customer responses to Stage 2 complaints evidenced that Customers are being advised of extended timescales.

RESOLVED:

1. That the progress and out-turns of the KPIs at quarter 1 be noted;
2. That the areas where performance was strong and on track to achieve annual targets be noted;
3. That the areas where performance had declined and required further monitoring be noted;
4. That a detailed briefing note on performance indicators HSG 005 and HSG 009 (homelessness) be prepared by the Financial Inclusion and Maidstone Families Matter Programme Manager for inclusion in the Mid-Year Performance Report, for consideration by Committee on 2 December 2014.
5. That the figures with regard to the four year decline in reported instances of fly tipping be provided to the Committee.

75. BUDGET STRATEGY 2015-16 ONWARDS - REVENUE

The Head of Finance and Resources presented the Budget Strategy report, and explained to the Committee that the Revenue Support grant from Central Government was expected to decrease to zero by 2020, and that Business Rates were anticipated to grow as per an assumption based upon the business growth index. The Administration Grant that was put in place to assist with welfare reform was also expected to be removed.

The Committee heard that at the current spend there would be a £1 million shortfall, and that there was a £3.3 million savings target in all by 2020. Half of the required savings were expected to be accrued through corporate initiatives, for which consultations and staff reviews were in progress. The Commercialisation programme was expected to make £1 million through the ideas and projects that would be developed.

In response to questions the Committee were advised that:

- The Enterprise Hub would be funded 50% by Maidstone BC and 50% by KCC. Maidstone BC's funding had been earmarked and would be resourced by the Capital Programme;
- Comparison with Local Authorities across Kent took place and data was collated with other members of CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) family group. Maidstone BC's stability was based upon high Council Tax which provided resilience. However the Tax Base would be impacted by a number of properties that had been demolished and not yet replaced with new rateable properties.

The Chairman of the Budget Working Group reported back to the Committee on the discussions of the last meeting, and advised that:

- Three items had been identified for consideration: the link between resources available and priorities; proposed savings; and fees and charges;
- During this meeting it was decided that further information was required from the Commercialisation Manager regarding propositions related to parking, debt recovery and charging for events;
- An introduction to the budget for Maidstone Culture and Leisure would be discussed by Economic and Commercial Development OSC in November, and the information from this would be considered at a future meeting of the Committee;
- The next meeting of the Budget Working Group would take place on 27 October 2014 at 5 p.m. and all members were invited to attend.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Budget Strategy 2015-16 Onwards – Revenue updated information and amended report be noted.
2. That information regarding priorities, fees and charges and departmental savings be circulated to Members outside of the Meeting.
3. That a Budget Strategy Update report be provided to the November meeting of the Committee.

76. **FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME AND SCRAIP UPDATE**

Senior Corporate Policy Officer, Christian Scade, asked the Committee to consider the Future Work Programme. Members discussed the Irrecoverable Business Rates and Debt Recovery Policy, and it was noted that the Audit Committee had recently considered this matter. As such it was suggested that steering may be required to prevent duplication of work, and that the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services OSC had scope through its terms of reference to examine the policy, operational and revenue matters arising from these items.

The matter of complaints received with reference to the Social event was raised, and greater detail was requested on this issue alongside the Complaints Quarter 2 report in December.

The Chairman provided an update on the MKIP Joint Task and Finish Group, and explained that the remit of the Group was to examine Communication and Governance. The work would include interviewing Heads of Service, Senior Officers and Council Leaders, and the Group expected to report back to Committee in January.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Future Work Programme be noted with the following amendments: that the Financial Inclusion and Maidstone Families Matter Programme Manager be requested to attend to speak on the Mid-Year Review in December; that the Parks and Leisure Manager be requested to attend to speak on the Complaints Quarter 2 report.
2. That the List of Forthcoming Decisions be noted.
3. That the SCRAIP update be noted.
4. That it be noted that, subject to further discussion with Tunbridge Wells BC and Swale BC, the Committee agree to hold a co-located, simultaneous meeting in January to consider the final report of the Joint Mid Kent Improvement Partnership Task and Finish Group.

5. That the continuous professional development of the Committee be considered and noted.

77. DURATION

6.31 p.m. to 8.24 p.m.