

Maidstone Borough Council

Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 5 October 2010

Local Enterprise Partnerships

Report of: Head of Change and Scrutiny

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny has a clearly defined role in relation to helping Cabinet to shape its priorities and corporate planning. The abolishment of Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and creation of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) will have an impact on a key priority for the Council, economic prosperity. Economic and Environmental prosperity have been identified by the Cabinet as draft priorities for the next Strategic Plan. It is therefore pertinent for the Committee to be briefed on the current position with the LEP and how Maidstone will be positioned in relation to this.
- 1.2 In light of the importance of environmental prosperity speakers from Kent County Council (KCC) have been invited to attend the meeting to discuss present green initiatives relating to business and the economy and how Maidstone could be involved with these.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to interview the Leader of the Council and representatives from Kent County Council on the progress of LEPs and how Maidstone can be best placed to maximise any opportunities arising.

3 Local Enterprise Partnerships

- 3.1 Attached at Appendix A, is a house of commons briefing report on LEPs. The responsibilities from RDAs to be given to the new LEPs will include planning, housing and enterprise. The indication, with regard to the potential size of the partnerships, is that LEPs should include groups of upper tier authorities if they are to be large enough to be sufficiently strategic. The list of the 56 bids received by the Government for LEPs is outlined at 1.4 of Appendix A, there are a number of bids affecting/involving Kent authorities including:
 - Kent and Medway
 - Kent-Essex
 - Bexley, Dartford and Gravesham
- 3.2 Legislation to abolish RDAs will be introduced as part of the Decentralisation and Localism Bill in Autumn this year with LEPs scheduled to start in March 2012.

3.3 Kent County Council have been involved in a number of green enterprise initiatives and have been invited to the meeting to discuss these initiatives with the Committee in relation to the LEP and how Maidstone can maximise green enterprise opportunities.

4. Impact on Corporate Objectives

4.1 As set out in the introduction, the Council is currently reviewing its priorities and any recommendations from the Committee on business and the green economy could be used to inform this work.