

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

8 OCTOBER 2008

**REPORT OF CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Report prepared by Louise Smith

1. Strategic Plan 2009-12

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider the recommendations arising out of the Overview and Scrutiny Strategic Plan Workshop.

1.2 Recommendations of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1.2.1 That two versions of the Strategic Plan should be produced – a detailed version for internal use and for partners, and a summary version for residents;

1.2.2 That limited hard copies of the detailed Strategic Plan should be produced – this should be accessed primarily online by officers. The budget should be focussed on producing a readable, attractive Summary Plan for residents;

1.2.3 That a clear, adequately detailed Table of Contents should be included in the Strategic Plan to ensure the required sections can be found with ease;

1.2.4 That consideration be given to the order of sections in the Plan to ensure that this is logical;

1.2.5 That performance indicators should be listed under their relevant Corporate Priority for clarity and ease of use by officers;

1.2.6 That a diagram be included in the Strategic Plan demonstrating how the Council's plans and strategies fit together;

1.2.7 That information on where to find the Council's other plans and strategies be included; and

1.2.8 That the Strategic Plan should not include detailed delivery information, but focus on high-level strategic considerations to guide and inform action plans and service plans.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 On Monday 1 September 2008, the Overview and Scrutiny Team held a workshop for all Scrutiny Members to consider the presentation and content of the Strategic Plan.

1.3.2 A key issue raised by all Councillors at the Workshop was the need to establish the intended audience for the Strategic Plan. All Members agreed that the Plan for officers, partners and Members should look very different from that intended for residents. It was suggested that a detailed version of the Plan be produced for internal use and for partners, whilst a short summary version should be produced for residents. To keep costs down, the number of hard copies of the detailed version should be limited and the budget should be focussed on producing a document more likely to be read by residents. A style similar to the recent Maidstone Museum leaflet was suggested.

1.3.3 When considering the Strategic Plans of other Councils, Members felt that some of these were laid out more logically than Maidstone Borough Council's plan. It was commented upon several times that in some other plans, it was easy to find what you were looking for and to see how everything fitted together, whereas this was not considered to be the case with our own plan. It was also suggested that grouping performance indicators under their relevant corporate priorities would improve the clarity of the plan.

1.3.4 In terms of clarity, Members also highlighted that it needed to be clear how the Strategic Plan fitted together with other plans and strategies, for example the Sustainable Community Strategy. The use of flowcharts or diagrams, with details of where to find more information, was agreed to be useful. Examples of such diagrams are attached to this report at Appendix A and B for information.

1.3.5 Members discussed the level of detail in the Plan and agreed that while the Plan needed to be clear on the direction of the Council, how the Council's priorities would be delivered, and the context in which the Council was working, the Plan needed to be strategic; detailed information should be kept to action plans and service plans.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 Cabinet could choose not to endorse the recommendations of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee; however this

would undermine the role of Overview and Scrutiny Members in the development of the Strategic Plan.

1.4.2 Additionally, the recommendations of the Committee intend to improve the clarity and presentation of the Plan, and therefore rejecting the recommendations could result in a document that was less user-friendly and accessible.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 There is no impact on the Council's Corporate Objectives.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There are no risks associated with accepting the recommendations of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

- 1. Financial
- 2. Staffing
- 3. Legal
- 4. Social Inclusion
- 5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
- 6. Community Safety
- 7. Human Rights Act
- 8. Procurement
- 9. Asset Management

1.8 Background Documents

1.8.1 None.

NO REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS BOX BEING COMPLETED

Is this a Key Decision? Yes No

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

Is this an Urgent Key Decision? Yes No

Reason for Urgency

n/a