

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

14 SEPTEMBER 2011

REPORT OF HEAD OF CHANGE AND SCRUTINY

Report prepared by Angela Woodhouse

1. RESPONSE TO THE OPEN PUBLIC SERVICES WHITE PAPER

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 Cabinet is asked to agree the proposed response from the Council to the open public services white paper and actions to be taken.

1.2 Recommendation of Head of Change and Scrutiny

1.2.1 That Cabinet Agree:

(i) The attached response to the white paper set out at Appendix A; and

(ii) The proposed actions outlined at paragraph 1.3.4

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The Government has recently launched the much anticipated Open Public Services White Paper. A summary of the white paper is attached at Appendix A.

1.3.2 The Government has stated that the paper will be subject to a listening period from July until September, they have set up a website about the changes which invites responses from all sectors including the public. Following the consultation there will be a programme of work undertaken from November this year.

1.3.3 The paper reiterates much of the information and initiatives covered by the Localism Bill rather than introducing new policies. The paper contains ambitions for public service delivery rather than concrete policy proposals and states that the Government will be consulting on these ambitions. The principles within the white paper fit with our own

priorities and our service design principles as identified in the Strategic Plan 2011-15.

1.3.4 The white paper has highlighted a number of potential actions and issues for the Council these are outlined below under the three headings used in the paper:

Individual Services - Actions and Issues:

- Resident/Customer focused and what action we should be taking as a Council to achieve this.
- Agreements to develop a local accountability framework – and ensure residents are engaged in this process.
- The changing role of the Ward Councillor in the community and any support they require.
- Ensure the work on the future shape of the organization identifies how services will be delivered and models of service delivery.

Neighbourhood Services - Actions and Issues:

- Continuing to develop our relationship and understanding of parish councils and community groups who may want to deliver services, also the support they may require to do this.
- Reviewing the appetite for urban parishing.
- If appropriate piloting a community budget with the Government (prospectus inviting pilots out in September).

Commissioned Services -Actions and Issues:

- Identifying services we may want to deliver on behalf of others as part of the work on the future shape of the organisation.
- Ensuring we know how we would like our services delivered and by whom.
- Setting and agreeing criteria for results from commissioned services i.e. resident satisfaction.
- Having an agreed approach to publishing procurement and contract data.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 The Council could choose not to respond to the white paper and not to act proactively in respect of its implications. The intentions of the paper and the proposed actions however fit well with the Council's priorities and service design principles.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The Council has agreed the corporate priority to achieve Corporate and Customer Excellence the actions identified accord with this priority.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 The actions identified aim to ensure we are prepared for the implications of the white paper and fulfil our own ambitions as a Council.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

- 1. Financial
- (iii) Staffing
- (iv) Legal
- (v) Equality Impact Needs Assessment
- (vi) Environmental/Sustainable Development
- (vii) Community Safety
- (viii) Human Rights Act
- (ix) Procurement
- (x) Asset Management

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

- Appendix A – Summary of the Open Public Services White Paper
- Appendix B – Proposed Response

IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

Yes

No

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

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This is a Key Decision because:

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Wards/Parishes affected:

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