

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 JANUARY 2012

REPORT OF HEAD OF BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT

Report prepared by Georgia Hawkes

1. DRAFT IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2012-15

1.1 Issue for Consideration

1.1.1 To consider the Council's improvement journey detailed in the draft Improvement Plan 2012-15 (Appendix A).

1.2 Recommendation of Head of Business Improvement

1.2.1 That Overview and Scrutiny note:

- i. The objectives of the draft Improvement Plan (paragraph 1.3.3);
- ii. The workstreams and priority services and projects for improvement (paragraphs 1.3.4 and 1.3.5) ; and
- iii. The governance and monitoring arrangements (paragraphs 1.3.6 and 1.3.7).

1.2.2 That Overview & Scrutiny consider the draft Improvement Plan 2012-15 and make any recommendations to Cabinet.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The Council has set the priorities and outcomes for the borough of Maidstone in its Strategic Plan. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out what will be spent and where savings will be made. In order to deliver the priority outcomes and the savings required, a number of key pieces of work and projects will be carried out. These are detailed in the draft Improvement Plan 2012-15, which ensures the improvement work is aligned with the Strategic Plan and the MTFS.

1.3.2 The draft Improvement Plan will be considered again by Cabinet in February 2012 alongside the MTFS and Strategic Plan.

1.3.3 The draft Improvement Plan has three objectives:

1. A reduction in net cost, through making savings or increased income
2. Improving or maintaining quality: ensuring we deliver excellent services, which means delivering what is promised to agreed standards
3. Identifying and responding to opportunities aligned with the Strategic Plan

1.3.4 The four corporate workstreams (1-4) and enablers (5-7) of the draft plan are:

1. Incremental improvement
2. Asset management
3. Transformation
4. External challenge
5. Organisational culture
6. Good information and knowledge management
7. Councillor assurance

1.3.5 The priority services and projects for improvement have also been identified in the draft Improvement Plan, based on priorities in the Strategic Plan, our current knowledge of any external or internal opportunities and potential for improvement and/or reduction in net cost. These are as follows:

- Waste and Recycling
- Customer Services delivery
- ICT
- Parking transport management
- Hazlitt Arts Centre
- Planning
- Revenues and Benefits
- Housing
- Finance
- Building Control
- Future use of Town Hall
- Community asset transfer
- Major assets review
- More proactive use of Covalent
- Management & Admin recharges review
- Other shared services and Mid Kent Improvement Partnership work
- Cross-organisational collaboration
- Better internal collaboration

- Corporate peer review

1.3.6 Compiling a draft Improvement Plan allows the key workstreams to be brought together and monitored. It is proposed that a working group made up of officers responsible for each of the workstreams and enablers and Cabinet members (the Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services) make up a monitoring group to ensure the plan progresses and benefits are delivered. It is proposed the group would include:

- Leader – provides political leadership and councillor assurance (as defined in the draft Improvement Plan)
- Chief Executive - accountable for delivery of Improvement Plan
- Assistant Director of Environmental & Regulatory Services – responsible for Asset management workstream
- Head of Change & Scrutiny – responsible for Incremental improvement and External challenge workstreams
- Head of Business Improvement – responsible for Transformation workstream and Good information and knowledge management enabler
- Head of HR – responsible for Organisational culture enabler
- Head of ICT – responsible for Use of technology, which is not a workstream or an enabler but a critical tool for improvement

1.3.7 It is recommended that the Plan is updated annually and progress is reported to Cabinet on a six-monthly basis.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 Overview and Scrutiny could decide not to consider or make recommendations on the draft Improvement Plan. This is not recommended as the draft Improvement Plan is essential for allowing oversight of a number of different pieces of work across the organisation. It is aligned with the Strategic Plan and MTFS and it is recommended that it is consulted on in the same way as these documents.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The draft Improvement Plan contains projects that will have a positive effect on all the priorities and outcomes for Maidstone set out in the Strategic Plan. However, the priority that it aligns with most is Corporate and Customer Excellence, outcome “the Council will continue to have value for money services that residents are satisfied with”, because of the objectives in the Improvement Plan of reducing net cost whilst improving or maintaining quality.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 The draft Improvement Plan and associated governance minimises the risk that important projects will not be undertaken or will not deliver and that new opportunities are missed.

1.6.2 There is still a risk that the Council does not have the resources, both in terms of staff time or money to undertake the projects envisaged in the draft Improvement Plan. However, the plan minimises the risk that effort will be put into pieces of work that are not deemed to be a priority and will allow corporate resources to be devoted to the priorities stated in the draft Improvement Plan.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

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

Financial and staffing

1.7.2 An objective of the draft plan is to reduce net cost. This could be by reducing cost, including possibly reducing numbers of staff, or by increasing income, which would have an effect on the work that staff carry out.

Legal

1.7.3 A number of the projects are likely to require legal advice and support.

Procurement and asset management

1.7.4 Asset management is a workstream in the draft Improvement Plan and procurement is an important tool in achieving improvement.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

Appendix A – Improvement Plan 2012-15

1.8.2 Background Documents

None.

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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