

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

8 FEBRUARY 2012

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND COMMUNITIES

Report prepared by Sarah Robson

1. Changes to the county-wide partnership architecture and proposals for the establishment of the Maidstone Locality Board

1.1 Key Issue for Decision

1.1.1 This report updates Cabinet on the changes to the county-wide partnership architecture and sets out proposals for formally establishing a Locality Board for Maidstone borough.

1.1.2 In September 2011, the Maidstone Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Board Members supported the recommended dissolution of the LSP to make way for establishing a Maidstone Locality Board.

1.2 **Recommendation of the Director of Regeneration and Communities**

Cabinet are asked to:

1.2.1 Note the changes to the county-wide partnership architecture.

1.2.2 Note the dissolution of the Maidstone Local Strategic Partnership.

1.2.3 Approve the proposals for the formal establishment of a Locality Board for Maidstone Borough.

1.3 **Reasons for Recommendation**

1.3.1 The coalition Government has set out plans in the Localism Act to devolve power from Whitehall down to local government and communities. It is intended that local authorities will be given more power to deliver what is really needed for the local community.

1.3.2 In response to this, a revised structure for partnership working across Kent has been agreed by Kent County Council and key partners as follows:

Kent Forum

- 1.3.3 The Kent Forum assumes the '*Overall responsibility for co-ordinating and agreeing shared priorities and progress, encouraging community leadership, and supporting new initiatives.*'

Kent Joint Chief Executives Group

- 1.3.4 The Joint Chief Executives Group has replaced the Kent and Medway Chief Executives Group and the Public Service Board. Chief Executives have set out that they will '*use the collective expertise, knowledge and resources of the Chief Executives and other staff to pro-actively support the Leaders so that they have the right information at the right time to enable good judgment and decision making.*'

Ambition Boards

- 1.3.5 There are three Ambition Boards, one for each of the three countywide ambitions (as detailed in the Vision for Kent 2011-21). They will be managed through the Kent Joint Chief Executives and be accountable to the Kent Forum.

Locality Boards

- 1.3.6 The Kent Forum proposed that there be 12 Locality Boards, one at each district or borough level. The proposal is that Locality Boards will have the same role as the Kent Forum, but at a local level. They will play a key role in:
- a) Advising county, district/borough councils on the public service priorities for the locality;
 - b) Advising county, district/borough councils on service provision in the locality;
 - c) Improving the local accountability of residents for public services in their totality and;
 - d) Overseeing public services in each locality in terms of direct oversight of local government services and through community leadership for non-local government services.

1.4. Maidstone Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

- 1.4.1 The partnership structure across the county has changed and to ensure that Maidstone Borough moved with these changes, the Maidstone LSP Board was consulted on the creation of a Maidstone Locality Board. Feedback was sought from the individual agencies

represented on the Board and was taken into account in the final design of the Locality Board and its sub-group architecture.

- 1.4.2 It was agreed by the members of the Maidstone LSP Board to dissolve the partnership with effect from 28 September 2011 in order to facilitate the establishment of a Locality Board for Maidstone borough.
- 1.4.3 The LSP structure included five thematic delivery groups tasked with identifying priorities arising from the Sustainable Community Strategy and developing action plans to deliver those priorities. The 5 delivery groups previously reported via their Chairs to the LSP Board. It is recognised that the changes being proposed will need to include a review of the current groups and their priorities.

1.5 **Development of a Maidstone Locality Board**

- 1.5.1 The Kent Forum recommends that the strategic priorities for the Kent-wide partnership architecture should be complemented by Locality Boards set up at district level so as to be close enough to individual neighbourhoods to allow actions to be determined at a community level. The Locality Boards will become the district-based locality equivalent of the Kent Forum.
- 1.5.2 The Kent Forum recommends that Locality Boards consist of District Council Cabinet members, local County Councillors and the relevant County Council Cabinet Member. Additional local representatives may be agreed.
- 1.5.3 In 2010, the Maidstone LSP Board undertook a resource mapping exercise, identifying a total of £611 million was being spent per year in Maidstone by 23 public sector organisations. The largest spenders included Maidstone Borough, Kent County Council, NHS West Kent, Kent Police, Department of Work and Pensions, Mid Kent College, University for the Creative Arts and Kent Fire and Rescue Service.

Membership

- 1.5.4 Based on the Kent Forum model and taking the resource mapping exercise into account, the proposed core membership of the Maidstone Locality Board is set out below:

District Councillors

- Cllr Chris Garland, Leader of Maidstone Borough Council
(Chair)
- Cllr Eric Hotson, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
- Cllr Marion Ring, Cabinet Member for Environment
- Cllr Malcolm Greer, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Transport

- Cllr John A. Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Leisure Services
- Cllr Fran Wilson, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
- Cllr Derek Mortimer, Shadow Cabinet Member for Communities and Leisure Services
- Cllr Stephen Beerling, Liberal Democrat (Fant Ward)
- Cllr Mike Fitzgerald, Spokesperson for the Independents

County Councillors

- Cllr Gary Cooke, Deputy Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills (**Vice Chair**)
- Cllr Paul Carter, Leader of Kent County Council
- Cllr Jenny Whittle, Cabinet Member for Specialist Childrens Services
- Cllr Dan Daley, Liberal Democrat (Maidstone Central)
- Cllr Alan Chell, Conservative (Maidstone South)
- Cllr Ian Chittenden, Liberal Democrat (Maidstone North East)
- Cllr Malcolm Robertson, Liberal Democrat (Maidstone Central)
- Cllr Paulina Stockell, Conservative (Maidstone Rural West)
- Cllr Eric Hotson, Conservative (Maidstone Rural South)

Parish Council representative

- John Hughes, Kent Association of Local Councils

Partner agency representatives

- Matthew Nix, Chief Superintendent, Mid Kent Police
- Martin Adams, Area Manager, Kent Fire and Rescue Service
- Dr Garry Singh, Chair of Maidstone and Malling GP Consortia/
Jay Edwins, Head of Strategic Partnerships, NHS West Kent

Business sector representative

- John Taylor, Chair of Maidstone Chamber of Commerce (non-voting)

Voluntary and community sector representative

- Charlotte Osborn-Forde, Chief Executive, Voluntary Action Maidstone (non-voting)

Delivery Groups

- 1.5.5 The five existing thematic delivery groups will continue in the short term, to operate in their current form. It is recognised, however, that substantial changes are occurring and this could affect one of more of the delivery groups. Pivotal to the success of the Locality Board will be to review and streamline the existing thematic delivery

groups and develop action focused partnership work plans against priorities, with an emphasis on a task and finish approach.

1.5.6 Consideration could also be given to whether other 'delivery groups' should report to the Board. This could be included as part of the review of the delivery groups. The groups to be considered could include:

- Joint Transportation Board
- Business Forum
- Community Engagement/Neighbourhood Forums

1.5.7 The review of the delivery groups will be undertaken as part of the Locality Board's work programme and the changes required and agreed by the Board will be implemented during 2012/13.

Governance and Working Arrangements

1.5.8 The high level governance arrangements agreed by the Locality Board and recommended to Cabinet are set out below.

1.5.9 The Maidstone Locality Board will be chaired by Cllr Chris Garland, Leader of Maidstone Borough Council supported by a Vice Chair, Cllr Gary Cooke, Deputy Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills, Kent County Council.

1.5.10 A quorum of a minimum of 15 board members will be required at each meeting.

1.5.11 The Maidstone Locality Board meetings will be on a quarterly basis.

1.5.12 An Agenda Planning Steering Group will agree and set the Board's agenda and work programme at least one month in advance of the quarterly meeting. The group will consist of Cllr Chris Garland, Cllr John A. Wilson, Cllr Gary Cooke and Cllr Jenny Whittle, supported by lead officers from Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council.

1.5.13 The Maidstone Locality Board and Agenda Planning Steering Group will be serviced by Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council officers.

1.5.14 The priorities for the Board will be considered by a small sub group with recommendations made to the next Board meeting in April.

1.5.15 Agenda papers and related documents will be sent out to Locality board members ten days in advance of meetings.

1.5.16 For specific meetings other people may be invited, such as the County Council Cabinet Member responsible for any topics being

discussed, relevant officers from district and county councils and partner agencies.

- 1.5.17 The Maidstone Locality Board currently has no budgetary responsibility. However, its role will be developed to consider moving to a joint commissioning environment, which will support locality prioritisation, service design, redirection of resources and a co-ordinated approach to community engagement with residents. The Board will be the key interface with public service providers and will encourage locality based resourcing across all public services.
- 1.5.18 The Board will be provided with a range of performance information to ensure effective oversight and monitoring of priorities.

1.6 Consultation Undertaken

- 1.6.1 The individual organizations/agencies on the Maidstone Local Strategic Partnership have been consulted on the creation of Maidstone Locality Board. Feedback was sought from the individual agencies represented on the Board and was taken into account in the final design of the Locality Board and its sub-group architecture, particularly recognizing the points raised about the role and involvement of the business and voluntary and community sectors in delivering the Board's priorities.

1.7 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.7.1 The Council could choose not to establish a Locality Board for the borough. However, the council would then not have a formal mechanism for delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities. The lack of a Locality Board would present a significant missed opportunity for district and county Members to collectively focus on the needs of the locality in a holistic way and work together to make an impact by delivering more innovative and better services, at less cost.

1.8 Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 1.8.1 Maidstone Borough Council's Strategic Plan makes specific reference to supporting Maidstone Local Strategic Partnership to deliver its contribution to the Sustainable Community Strategy and Vision for Kent. With the replacement of the Partnership, this reference will now relate to the Locality Board.
- 1.8.2 The establishment of the Maidstone Locality Board will support the three priorities in the Strategic Plan; Corporate and Customer Excellence; for Maidstone to be a decent place to live and; For Maidstone to be a growing economy.

1.9 Risk Management

1.9.1 There is a risk in terms of the size of the group to ensure it does not become unmanageable. It has therefore been proposed that the proposed membership should not exceed 25 individual board members – this will not include the lead support officers and support team. In addition the current thematic groups will be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose to support the Locality Board in delivering its priorities.

1.9.2 There is a risk of the agenda becoming unfocused. It has therefore been proposed that an Agenda Planning Steering Group be set up to agree the Board’s agenda and work programme against set priorities. In addition a performance information “dashboard” is being developed to ensure the Board receives regular relevant information to monitor the achievement of priorities.

1.10 Other Implications

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

Financial

- 1.10.1 There are currently no direct financial implications arising from the establishment of the Locality Board. There is no dedicated budget to support the Maidstone Locality Board, the support is provided from within existing resources. However, as one of the future considerations for the Board is to advise on service provision moving towards combined place based commissioning, there will be financial implications that will need to be quantified and assessed.

Legal

- 1.10.2 The Locality Board will not have an independent legal status. If the Locality Board subsumes the Maidstone LSP responsibilities it becomes the governance body for any amendments, updates and progress monitoring of the Sustainable Community Strategy. There will be consequential amendments to the Constitution to include a reference to the new body and its Terms of Reference. Any future changes to enable a commissioning role or function will need to be assessed in terms of their legal implications for the Board and individual members.

1.11 Conclusion

- 1.11.1 The county partnership architecture is changing. Locality Boards are seen as an essential part of the revised partnership architecture that will bring more democratic accountability to local services. These changes will bring about different ways of working between Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council and between the family of Local Government and other partners. The Maidstone Locality Board provides an essential mechanism to allow actions to be determined at a community level, whilst supporting the three countywide ambitions and the local priorities outlined in the Borough Council's Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Community Strategy.

1.12 Relevant Documents

None

1.13 Appendices

None

1.14 Background Documents

Kent Recommitment/Kent Forum Terms of Reference and Governance/Kent Forum Architecture

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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How to Comment

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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