

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES

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

Report prepared by Acting Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Date Issued: 21 May 2009

1. Consultation Process

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider the proposed Consultation Protocol for the Council.

1.2 Recommendation of Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1.2.1 That the proposed Consultation Protocol be adopted by the Council.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The Council receives many requests to participate in, and opportunities to respond to, consultation exercises on a range of issues. These come from a wide range of partners and agencies and can impact upon the Council's aspirations, services and processes.

1.3.2 There is currently no formal process within the Council to ensure that consultations are forwarded to the appropriate officers, responded to or highlighted to Members.

1.3.3 The proposed Consultation Protocol puts in place processes to ensure that consultations are logged and tracked in a central consultation database and dealt with in a consistent manner. The Protocol also ensures that Members are given the opportunity to participate in consultations if they so wish, and that the process for responding to consultations is open and transparent.

1.3.4 To ensure that the Council does not miss the opportunity to respond to important consultation, it will be up to the appropriate Head of Service to ensure that all consultations are logged on the database and dealt with appropriately. The Policy and Performance Team will also regularly review up and coming consultations and refer these to Heads of Service when necessary.

1.3.5 The appropriate Head of Service will consider whether each consultation requires a response from the Council to ensure that those consultations that are not relevant or would offer little value to the Council are filtered out. This will also be noted on the database. Where a response is considered appropriate, the relevant Cabinet Member will be notified.

1.3.6 The consultation database will be reported to all Overview and Scrutiny Committees on a monthly basis to establish whether they wish to be involved.

1.3.7 Freedom of Information requests or other requests seeking factual information on council services will not need to be logged on the database: these will continue to be dealt with through their existing mechanisms.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services could decide that the development of responsibilities for identifying and responding to consultation is not necessary; however, this is not recommended for the following reasons:

- Opportunities to be involved with important consultations may be lost;
- There will be no unified way of responding to consultations; and
- Members may miss the opportunity to be involved in the consultation process.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The Council's Corporate Plan states: "[i]t is also important that we listen to partners and take government policy into account." The proposals outlined within the report support this.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There are no risks associated with the proposed Consultation Protocol.

1.7 Other Implications [Insert an 'X' in the boxes below to indicate if the recommendations will have any implications in the specified area]

1.7.1

1. Financial
2. Staffing
3. Legal

4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
6. Community Safety
7. Human Rights Act
8. Procurement
9. Asset Management

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 ☒

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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