

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 JANUARY 2013

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT

Report prepared by Georgia Hawkes

1. REFRESH OF THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR 2013-16

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider the Council's improvement journey detailed in the draft Improvement Plan 2013-16 (Appendix A).

1.2 Recommendation of Head of Business Improvement

1.2.1 That Overview & Scrutiny consider the draft Improvement Plan 2013-16 and make any recommendations to Cabinet.

1.2.2 That Overview & Scrutiny note the progress made on the key services and projects for improvement April – October 2012 (Appendix B).

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 2013-16, which ensures the improvement work is aligned with the Strategic Plan and the MTFS and looks at the work required to 2016.

1.3.2 The Improvement Plan 2012-15 was adopted in February 2012. As the objectives and the workstreams of the Improvement Plan remain sound and much of the work detailed in the previous version of the Improvement Plan is ongoing, there has not been much change to the

draft Improvement Plan for 2013-16. Appendix A shows anything that has been deleted in this new refresh of the Improvement Plan as crossed through and anything that has been added is in italics. The main changes are:

- Corporate support, Environmental Health and Economic Development have been added to the priority services for improvement
- Parking Transport Management has become Integrated Transport Strategy
- The emphasis of improvement for Planning has become sharing the Planning Support function with local authority partners
- Management & Admin recharges review has been removed from the priority projects list as it has been completed
- Appendix 1 of the Improvement Plan has been updated to show the more detailed actions planned for 2013/14
- Appendix 2 of the Improvement Plan sets out the plans for the different phases of work to be carried out for each of the priority services and projects

1.3.3 Good progress has been made on most of the priority services and projects from April – October 2012 compared to the plans for 2012/13 set out in the Improvement Plan 2012-15. This is shown in Appendix B. Some highlights are:

- Completion of the procurement of the new waste and recycling contract, which will produce significant savings
- Customer centricity review almost completed – good information has been gained on who our customers are and why they transact with the Council in different ways. Recommendations are being formulated on how we can improve our customer service delivery model and engage with residents better
- New website being designed which is managed by Customer Services; beta version to be launched for public testing in January 2013
- Progression of the ICT shared service with Swale and Tunbridge Wells borough councils which is expected to 'go live' in April 2013
- Tenders to outsource the work of the Hazlitt Arts Centre are being evaluated and a recommendation for future delivery will be made this financial year
- Peer review of Planning completed and recommendations being implemented

1.3.4 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

1.3.5 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

1.3.6 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
- ICT
- Hazlitt Arts Centre
- Planning
- Revenues and Benefits
- Housing
- Corporate Support
- Environmental Health
- Finance
- Building Control
- Economic Development
- Customer Service delivery
- Integrated Transport Strategy
- Cross-organisational collaboration
- Future use of Town Hall
- Major assets review
- Community asset transfer
- More proactive use of Covalent

- Corporate peer review
- Other shared services and Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) work

1.3.7 Our main priorities for 2013/14 are:

- Waste and Recycling – implementing new household waste and recycling contract and launching new commercial waste service
- Customer services delivery – implementing improvements in customer service delivery recommended in the customer centricity review
- ICT – Embedding new shared service structure and consolidating ICT systems across the partnership in Planning and Environmental Health
- Hazlitt – implementing the preferred option for delivery
- Planning – progressing shared Planning Support with our MKIP partners
- Economic Development – adopting the Regeneration and Economic Development Plan and put in place the necessary skills and resources to deliver the plan
- Revenues & Benefits – implementing the Local Council Tax Delivery Scheme and responding to the anticipated issues this scheme plus welfare reform changes will cause
- Corporate Support – investigating commercialisation of Print Services and the viability of sharing our Corporate Support service with other local authority partners
- Environmental Health – investigate and implement (if agreed) sharing the service with MKIP partners
- Building Control – investigating commercial options and implementing the agreed option
- Integrated Transport Strategy – adopting our Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS)
- Major assets review – replacing the existing King Street car park with a new surface level car park
- Corporate peer review – completing this and beginning to implement any recommendations
- Future use of Town Hall – review options and make recommendations

1.3.8 Compiling a draft Improvement Plan allows the key workstreams to be brought together and monitored. A working group made up of officers responsible for each of the workstreams and enablers, the Chief

Executive and the Leader make up a monitoring group to ensure the plan progresses and benefits are delivered:

- 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
- Head of Finance & Customer Services – essential to ensure that any improvement work is aligned with the MTFS

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

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 Cabinet could decide not to agree the draft Improvement Plan for consultation with Overview & Scrutiny. 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.

1.4.2 Cabinet could decide to alter the draft Improvement Plan 2013-16 more fundamentally from the Plan for 2012-15. This is not recommended as it is felt that the few changes already incorporated are sufficient to ensure the Improvement Plan is relevant for the next three years.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The draft Improvement Plan 2013-16 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 (also contains appendices 1 and 2)

Appendix B – Progress made on priority workstreams and projects

1.8.2 Background Documents

Improvement Plan 2012-15

IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

Yes

No

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

November 2012.....

This is a Key Decision because: It is a corporate plan.....

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Wards/Parishes affected:

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