

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

13 FEBRUARY 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 Improvement Plan 2013-16 (Appendix A).

1.2 Recommendation of Head of Business Improvement

1.2.1 That Cabinet adopt the Improvement Plan 2013-16.

1.2.2 That Cabinet note the recommendations made by Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting on 8 January 2013 (Appendix B).

1.2.3 That Cabinet agree to receive six monthly progress reports on the Improvement Plan.

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 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 Improvement Plan for 2013-16. 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 was reported to Cabinet and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2012 and January 2013 respectively. Some highlights include:

- Completion of the procurement of the new waste and recycling contract, which will produce significant savings
- Review of customer centred services almost completed – good information has been gained on the types of people who contact us about different things and why they transact with the Council in different ways. Recommendations are being formulated on how we can make our services more customer focused and engage with residents better
- New website being designed which is managed by Customer Services; beta version to be launched for public testing in February 2013
- Progression of the ICT shared service with Swale and Tunbridge Wells borough councils which is expected to 'go live' in April 2013
- Peer review of Planning completed and recommendations being implemented

1.3.4 The 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 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 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 the performance management software system
- 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 review of customer centred services
- 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 Support 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 an 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 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 The draft Improvement Plan 2013-16 was discussed with Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 8 January 2013. Several recommendations were made and these have been incorporated into the Plan.

1.3.10 It is recommended that the Plan continues to be updated annually as a rolling programme 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 adopt the Improvement Plan. This is not recommended as the Improvement Plan is essential for allowing oversight of a number of different pieces of work across the organization and is aligned with the Strategic Plan and MTFS.

1.4.2 Cabinet could decide to alter the 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 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 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 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 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 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 Improvement Plan and procurement is an important tool in achieving improvement.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

Appendix A – Improvement Plan 2013-16 (also contains appendices 1 and 2)

Appendix B – SCRAIP from Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 January 2013.

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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