

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

12 AUGUST 2009

REPORT OF MANAGEMENT TEAM

Report prepared by David Edwards

1. Strategic Planning Process

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 The Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy are key elements of the planning framework for the Council. They are also a key part of the 'golden thread' which runs from the priorities for the borough set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy through to targets for individuals.

1.1.2 Cabinet is asked to agree the timetable and additional proposals associated with strategic planning for 2010-11.

1.2 Recommendation of Management Team

1.3 It is recommended that Cabinet agree:

- i. That the Council produces a 2010-11 update to the Strategic Plan 2009-12;
- ii. The strategic planning process and timetable; and
- iii. To review the approach to the Strategic Plan on an annual basis.

1.4 Reasons for Recommendation

1.4.1 The corporate planning process within the Council ensures the overall vision for the borough is delivered. The medium term key objectives in the Strategic Plan are developed alongside the medium term Financial Strategy to ensure a consistent approach between service delivery and budgets. Service planning allows the Council to convert high level objectives from the Strategic Plan into actions for each directorate, service or team across the authority, which then feeds into individual staff appraisals.

1.4.2 The Strategic Plan 2009-12 was developed alongside the Sustainable Community Strategy for Maidstone. To ensure that the Council's objectives were clearly aligned with those for the borough, the Council adopted the vision for Maidstone which was set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

1.4.3 As part of the 2009-12 Strategic Plan the Council agreed five new priorities:

- A place to achieve, prosper and thrive;
- A place which is clean and green;
- A place which has strong, healthy and safe communities;
- A place to live and enjoy; and
- A place with efficient and effective public services.

1.4.4 These themes have also been reflected in the Council's Performance Plan for 2009-12.

1.5 Proposed process for the development of the Strategic Plan 2010 onwards

1.5.1 The Strategic Plan is a rolling three year document and over the past three years the Council has opted to produce a new Strategic Plan each year. This approach was adopted to ensure that the Strategic Plan took account of any important developments annually and to ensure that every administration's priorities were properly reflected in the document.

1.5.2 Cabinet has highlighted that its overall priorities are prosperity and regeneration.

1.5.3 This year it is proposed that an update to the existing 2009-12 plan for the year 2010/11 is produced. This will have the following benefits:

- Whilst a three year plan demonstrates continuation and stability the annual update will enable Cabinet to take account changes in circumstances and shifts in priorities e.g. the economic downturn;
- This will be more cost effective as the document doesn't need to be reproduced in its entirety; and
- It will be less resource intensive for officers and members.

1.5.4 The update will include:

- A review of all the key objectives and associated actions;

- An update of what we achieved in the year (in 2009/10 we...);
- An update to any local or national context where relevant; and
- An update to the foreword;

1.5.5 The update will not include:

- A change to design of the document;
- A change to the structure of the document; or
- A re-writing of the document.

1.5.6 If this new approach to the Strategic Plan is agreed it is also recommended that Cabinet review annually whether to produce a new Strategic Plan or an update.

1.5.7 At its meeting in July 2009, Cabinet requested a full review of the Medium Term Financial Strategy to ensure that it is in line with currently accepted best practice and fit for the future corporate objectives of the Council.

1.5.8 A simple definition of the medium term Financial Strategy is that it is a financial translation of the Strategic Plan. The future developments of the medium term Financial Strategy will need to include feedback from the development of the Strategic Plan. The two documents have always been produced alongside each other however, this year the Policy and Performance Manager and the Head of Finance will be working together to further improve this process.

1.5.9 The Policy and Performance Manager and the Head of Finance will be working with officers to ensure that the medium term Financial Strategy and the Council's key objectives reflect the Cabinet's priorities. Outcomes from these meetings will be discussed with members and an outline timetable appears on the following page.

1.5.10 Strategic planning training session was also carried out with members in July 2009. Following suggestions made by members at this meeting, it is proposed that a special working group of eight members is set up to consider the key objectives.

1.5.11 The group will be made up of two members of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ensure a good cross section of knowledge and political balance.

1.5.12 The member working group will help ensure that members are able to have a greater involvement in the strategic planning process. The recommendations from this group will be presented to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December before being presented to the Cabinet in the draft Strategic Plan Report in December.

1.6 Timetable for developing the Strategic Plan 2010-11 update

1.6.1 The following timetable is proposed for the development of the 2010-11 update.

Date	Action
12 August 2009	Cabinet consider the strategic planning proposals
August – November 2009	Development of the draft Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of progress against key objectives in 2009 (report presented to Cabinet October 2009) • Informal discussions with Cabinet • Meetings with Heads of Service and officers • Identification of savings and growth • Development of supporting performance indicators • A working group of Councillors to look at the key objectives
December 2009	Recommendations from member working group presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
December 2009	Cabinet consider recommendations from the member working group and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny and agree the draft Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy
December - January 2010	Consultation with members, residents and partners
January 2010	Overview and Scrutiny consider Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy
February 2010	Cabinet consider Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy
March 2010	Council agree and adopt the Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy
April 2010	Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2010-11 update

1.7 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.7.1 This report has set out an alternative to the production of another full Strategic Plan and has set out the benefits of this new approach.

Cabinet could decide to produce a full new Strategic Plan for 2010-13. This is not recommended due to the additional staff time and financial costs associated with this approach.

1.7.2 Alternatively, Cabinet could decide that the Council already has a three year plan in place and that therefore there is no reason produce either an update or another full document. This is not recommended as the local and national context is constantly changing and the Council needs to be able to demonstrate how it is planning and managing these issues.

1.8 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.8.1 The Strategic Plan is a key part of the Council’s planning process and the golden thread that sets out the delivery of the Council’s corporate objectives.

1.9 Risk Management

1.9.1 Risks associated with the delivery of the Strategic Plan will be set out in the Strategic Risk Register and, operationally, through the service planning process.

1.10 Other Implications

1.10.1

- 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

1.11 Background Documents

1.11.1 The Following are useful background documents and are available on request from the Policy and Performance team, via email on policyandperformance@maidstone.gov.uk , by phone on 01622 602253 or on the Council's website .

- The Strategic Plan 2009-12
- The Sustainable Community Strategy

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

Reason for Urgency

[State why the decision is urgent and cannot wait until the next issue of the forward plan.]