

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET

Decision Made: 13 February 2013

REFRESH OF THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR 2013-16

Issue for Decision

The Improvement Plan 2012-15 explains the key workstreams for the Council's improvement journey, the drivers for improvement as well as priority services and projects for improvement. It allows work to be planned, sufficiently supported and monitored to ensure savings needs and the improvements required for the Council to meet its priority outcomes are delivered. In line with the Strategic Plan, the Improvement Plan 2012-15 is being retained for 2013/14 but refreshed to take account of any changes. Progress made in priority services and projects for improvement in the first half of 2012/13 was also reported.

Decision Made

1. That the Improvement Plan 2013-16, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Head of Business Improvement, be adopted.
2. That the recommendations made by Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting on 8 January 2013 (as set out in Appendix B to the report of the Head of Business Improvement) be noted.
3. That Cabinet receive six monthly progress reports on the Improvement Plan be agreed.

Reasons for Decision

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.

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 on-going, 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

Alternatives considered and why rejected

The Cabinet could have decided not to adopt the Improvement Plan. This was not thought appropriate 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.

The Cabinet could have decided to alter the Improvement Plan 2013-16 more fundamentally from the Plan for 2012-15. This was not thought appropriate as it was felt that the few changes already incorporated were sufficient to ensure the Improvement Plan is relevant for the next three years.

Background Papers

Improvement Plan 2012-15

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Head of Change and Scrutiny by: 21 February 2013
