

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL
RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET

Decision Made: 18 December 2013

REFRESH OF THE CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR 2014-17

Issue for Decision

To consider the draft Corporate Improvement Plan 2014-17 before consultation with the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2014 and adoption of the plan by Cabinet in February 2014. The Corporate Improvement Plan details the Council's improvement journey in terms of the key improvement workstreams and the priority services and projects for improvement.

Decision Made

That the draft Corporate Improvement Plan 2014-17, attached as Appendix A to the report of the Head of Finance and Resources, be approved for consultation with the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

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 draft Corporate Improvement Plan 2014-17, which ensures the improvement work is aligned with the Strategic Plan and the MTFS and looks at the work required to 2017.

The Improvement Plan 2012-15 was first adopted in February 2012 and refreshed as the Improvement Plan 2013-16 in February 2013. Progress on the Improvement Plan 2013-16 was reported to Cabinet with the Strategic Plan Performance Report in November 2013. Some key improvements implemented in the first 6 months of this year are:

- Launch of a new more customer focussed website
- Embedding of the new ICT shared service
- Launch of the new waste contract
- Commercial waste service on target to achieve 150 customers in first 12 months of operation
- Business cases for Environmental Health and Planning Support agreed
- Transfer of Hazlitt Arts Centre to Parkwood Leisure

In this current refresh of the plan, the title has been changed to Corporate Improvement Plan to reflect the need for input from across the Council to deliver the improvement work required. Text from the previous version of the Improvement Plan that has been deleted in the new draft version of the Corporate Improvement Plan attached as Appendix A to the report of the Head of Finance and Resources is shown as crossed through and any text that has been added is shown in italics.

The three objectives of the draft Corporate Improvement Plan shown below remain sound:

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

However, the workstreams have been changed to reflect the growing need for the Council to become more self-sufficient and viable for the future through being more efficient and effective, bringing in additional income, using our assets wisely and helping our residents and customers to do more for themselves. The enablers have also been revised slightly to make them clearer and align better with the aims and strategic direction of the Council set out in the Strategic Plan and to include appropriate recommendations from the recent Corporate Peer Review. Therefore, the following improvement workstreams (1-4) and enablers (5-8) are proposed:

1. Efficiency and effectiveness
2. Income generation
3. Asset management
4. Empowerment and self sufficiency
5. Organisational culture
6. Councillor assurance
7. Commissioning and procurement
8. Effective use of technology

The other main changes in the draft Corporate Improvement Plan 2014-17 from the previous version are:

- Maidstone Culture and Leisure, Bereavement Services and Environmental Services have been added to the list of priority services for improvement and ICT and Hazlitt Arts Centre have been removed as the ICT shared service is now embedded and the Hazlitt services will now be delivered by Parkwood Leisure
- The major assets improvement project has been broadened to include considerations of long term options for Council accommodation in the future and future use of the Town Hall
- Cross-organisational collaboration has been removed from the improvement projects as arrangements like the Troubled Families joint programme are now in place
- Exploring Right to Bid has been added to the community asset transfer improvement project

- Corporate peer review has been removed as a priority improvement project as the review has been carried out and the recommendations have been reflected in this draft version of the Corporate Improvement Plan
- Information and knowledge management has been added as a priority project rather than an enabler because of the need to focus on the delivery of recommendations from the recently completed Information Management review
- Commercial property investment has been added as a priority project
- Digital inclusion and financial inclusion have been added as priority improvement projects to reflect the need for the Council to support its residents in becoming more self-sufficient

The priority services and projects in the draft Corporate Improvement Plan 2014-17 are 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. The full list is as follows:

- Waste and Recycling
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Maidstone Culture and Leisure
- Customer Services
- Revenues and Benefits
- Planning
- Environmental Services
- Bereavement Services
- Finance
- Building Control
- Corporate Support
- Integrated Transport Strategy
- Major assets review
- Right to bid and community asset transfer
- Mid Kent Improvement Partnership shared services and operational model
- Information and knowledge management
- Commercial property investment
- Digital inclusion
- Financial inclusion

Compiling a Corporate 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, Director of Environment and Shared Services 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
- Head of Finance and Resources – responsible for efficiency and effectiveness and asset management workstreams and commissioning and procurement enabler

- Head of Commercial and Economic Development – responsible for income generation workstream
- Head of Housing and Communities – responsible for empowerment and self-sufficiency workstream
- Head of HR – responsible for organisational culture enabler
- Head of ICT – responsible for use of technology enabler
- Head of Policy and Communications – essential to ensure alignment to the Strategic Plan and corporate direction of the Council

Alternatives Considered and Why Rejected

The Cabinet could have decided not to agree the draft Corporate Improvement Plan for consultation with Overview & Scrutiny. This was not considered appropriate as the 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 intended that it is consulted on in the same way as these documents.

The Cabinet could have decided to alter the draft Improvement Plan 2014-17 more fundamentally from the Plan for 2013-16. This was not considered appropriate as it was felt that the few changes already incorporated are sufficient to ensure the Improvement Plan is relevant for the next three years.

Background Papers

Improvement Plan 2012-15

Improvement Plan 2013-16

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 Policy and Communications by: **2 January 2014.**