

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL
RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET

Decision Made: 13 August 2014

ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14

Issue for Decision

To consider the Council's Annual Report for 2013-14.

Decision Made

That the Council's Annual Report 2013-14, attached as a draft at Appendix A to the report of the Head of Policy and Communications, be approved for publication on the Council's website and for collection at Council receptions, Maidstone Museum and local libraries, subject to the following amendments to the Performance Highlights section:

Great Opportunity

Delete bullets about planning applications, TPOs and neighbourhood planning.

Add bullets:

- Helped 161 families on the Maidstone Families Matter initiative with employment and other advice.
- Made another 17 Tree Preservation Orders - the Council has more than 1,000 TPOs, covering trees and woodlands in the Borough.
- Prevented 358 families from becoming homeless through housing advice, and brought back into occupation 107 empty properties.

Great Place

Delete bullets on footfall in Mote Park and school visits to Maidstone Museum.

Add bullets:

- More than 1 million people visited Mote Park.
- Recycled more than 25,000 tonnes of waste.
- More than 13,000 children took part in education and workshop activities at Maidstone Museum.

Reasons for Decision

Whilst there is no duty on the Council to publish an Annual Report the Council's own Local Code of Corporate Governance sets out how we will engage with and are accountable to our residents.

The Code, based on best practice advice from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, includes a number of core principles and actions. Core principle 1 is: 'Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community creating and implementing a vision for the local area'. One of the actions under this priority is to publish on the Council's website an Annual Report on the Council's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance.

At its meeting in July the Audit Committee considered the Local Code of Corporate Governance. The Committee suggested that printed copies of the Annual Report should be displayed and available for collection at Council receptions and Maidstone Museum, and distributed to libraries in Maidstone Borough. The report and these arrangements will be publicised in Borough Update and elsewhere.

The Head of Policy and Communications has also sought advice from the Council's external auditors about the content of local authority Annual Reports. Grant Thornton advised that the Report should look back at what was spent and achieved, and look forward at the Council's plans.

The Report is not intended to be a complete record of the Council's year. It sets out the main achievements in 2013-14 towards the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities, and some of the key activities for 2014-15. It includes performance highlights and a summary of the Council's finances. Wherever possible, graphics and illustrations have been used to make the information easy to understand.

The Cabinet made some amendments to improve the range of Performance Highlights included in the report.

Alternatives Considered and Why Rejected

The decision could be made not to publish an Annual Report, but it is an opportunity to inform residents about the Council's performance.

Background Papers

None

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: **22 August 2014.**