

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES

Decision Made: 06 April 2011

CUSTOMER SERVICES - GATEWAY REVIEW

Issue for Decision

1. To consider the recommendations within the report of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 'Customer Services - Maidstone Gateway Review'.
2. To complete the Scrutiny Committee Recommendation Implementation Plan as set out at Appendix B to the report of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee within 28 days of publication.

Decision Made

That the responses set out on the SCRAIP as attached at Appendix A be agreed.

Reasons for Decision

At its meeting on 1 June 2010, the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to carry out a review of the Council's approach with regard to Customer Services and the Maidstone Gateway, as it had been in operation since January 2009. This review focused on the operation of the Maidstone Gateway.

The Committee has carried out both select-committee style interviews and formal meetings with both internal officers and the Gateway partners, sent a questionnaire to Gateway staff and considered desktop research to identify alternative ways of providing a premium service to the public whilst maintaining value for money services.

Having considered the evidence, the Committee approved a wide range of recommendations for the Gateway service, and felt that it was a starting point in attempting to address perceived issues in the Maidstone Gateway.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

The recommendations could not be endorsed, however the recommendations are based on evidence from a range of sources and support the Council's objectives with regard to being a place with efficient and effective public services.

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 Change and Scrutiny by: **13 April 2011**

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (SCRAIP)

Report Title: Customer Services - Maidstone Gateway Review

Report of Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Publication: March 2011

Dates to report back to Committee:

Update	Date	Completed ?	Note
1 st	Sept 2011		6 months after publication
2 nd	March 2011		12 months after publication
3 rd			

Recommendation ⁱ	Cabinet Member ⁱⁱ	Response ⁱⁱⁱ	Timetable ^{iv}	Lead Officer ^v
Reduce opening hours from 8.30am-5.30pm to 9-5.30pm, whilst maintaining the opportunity for staff to start at 8.30am, to allow for training, setting up, etc.	Corporate Services	Although the number of visitors to the Gateway in this half hour appears low, on a regular basis the numbers are in line with the average turnover throughout the day. In addition: * A half hour delay to the opening hours will not enable training of staff. The administrative duties required by the role are currently completed during the day at the most appropriate low turnover times. * Not all staff start work at 8:30 as the hours extend at both end of the day. There is insufficient evidence of a benefit that outweighs the loss of service for me to consider reducing opening hours at this time.	No Action Proposed	-
The Mall to provide a car park pay machine by the Gateway entrance level to the car park.	Corporate Services	Agreed that this would be useful and a written request to The Mall will be sent. It should be noted that the service has a small supply of	By 30/04/2011 with copy to Chairman of	Assistant Director of Regulatory

		passes available to users of the disabled facilities in the car park.	CSOSC.	Services
Investigate whether it is possible to have a presence from Social Services on a Saturday.	Corporate Services	The Kent Adult Social Services provision in the Gateway is under review as part of the proposed move of the OT Assessment Service. This may incorporate a presence on Saturdays and a recommendation will be made during the review. The Kent Contact and Assessment Service is currently not present in the Gateway every weekday and it would initially be more beneficial to investigate the possibility of a full Monday to Friday service before proposing Saturdays.	30/06/2011 Response copied to Chairman of CSOSC	Director of Regeneration & Communities
Cabinet Member to pursue if registered social landlords will pay and provide a free-phone within the Gateway for customers.	Corporate Services	Golding Homes, the major landlord active in Maidstone, provides a freephone number for all customer contact and the Gateway could make available a phone for visitors to use. Where it can be confirmed that other landlords have a similar free-phone number it will also be enabled. Where this is not the case, letters will be sent requesting consideration of this option.	30/04/2011 Any necessary letters to be copied to Chairman of CSOSC	Head of Housing & Community Safety
KCC Registrar services to cease providing services within the Gateway, due to its own office location being close.	Corporate Services	The KCC Registrars Service operates part time from the Gateway through one of the meeting rooms. The service is happy with the facilities in the Gateway and has requested access for a further day each week. The Gateway objective is to provide access to the maximum number of services in one place. Removal of any service because of the location of other facilities means acting against that objective. The KCC Registrar will not be requested to vacate the space they use in the Gateway at this time.	No Action Proposed	-
In order for the CAB to maintain its independence, investigate the possibility of branding the CAB within the Gateway.	Corporate Services	Gateway branding is consistent across all Gateways in Kent. In order to agree this request it would be necessary to put this request to the Gateway Delivery Board for consistency.	Request to Board by 31/05/2011 Response copied to Chairman of	Head of Finance & Customer Services

			CSOSC	
IT should prioritise improving the Parking Services information available online and this should also be accessible through mobile phone technology.	Corporate Services	The improvement of the parking services online processes are a priority for IT and work is ongoing.	30/06/2011	Head of IT Services
Parking Officer to be 'on-call' with the gateway staff equipped and trained to deal with initial enquiries.	Corporate Services	The Gateway's Customer Services Assistants are all fully trained and deal with all parking services enquiries. The parking services team do not attend the Gateway to meet customers.	No Action Required	-
To remove the weekly late night Thursday.	Corporate Services	The removal of the late night on Thursday will not generate a staff saving as Thursday mornings are operated at short staff levels to enable some staff to start and end late. The number of enquiries in the Gateway during the late night represents only 25% of the hourly flow of that of an average day. However, over the last quarter of 2010/11 this is in the region of 100 visitors who may not be able to visit the Gateway at other times. If there was evidence of savings that would be of significant assistance to the Council's financial pressures I would agree with closure. However without the evidence of savings I will review the benefit to visitors over the forthcoming quarter before reaching a decision.	Survey Commence 01/05/11 Report to Cabinet Member August 2011	Head of Finance & Customer Services
Planning Duty Officer to be 'on-call' for queries, with all minor enquiries primarily dealt with by Gateway staff.	Corporate Services	This proposal is already in place.	No Action Required	-
Regular training be given to Gateway staff from all in-house qualified Planners.	Corporate Services	This proposal has been set in motion during March 2011.	No Action Required	-
A fee to partners be introduced to help cover cost of facilities provided in the Gateway.	Corporate Services	The Gateway Manager's Forum is assessing a Kent wide charge for use of any Gateway. I will await a report back on this before considering options.	Report by end September 2011	Head of Finance & Customer Services
Investigate new ways of working to avoid duplication of advice and money looking at what is being spent and	Community Services	The work on this issue has been referred to the Cabinet Member for Community Services	Assessment to be completed	Head of Housing &

where with CAB and neighbouring boroughs.		who is considering this issue for all grant aided organisations.	for 2012/13 Budget setting	Community Safety
Carbon Footprint figures to be shared where applicable with Partners including KCC and the Chequers Mall Corporation.	Corporate Services	Agreed.	Annually as reported	Head of Housing & Community Safety
Cabinet Member to investigate issues surrounding the wood burning central heating, ensuring that coppicing in local woodlands is incorporated.	Corporate Services	The response from officers concerned with management of the facility has confirmed to me that coppicing in local woodlands forms part of the fuelling activity. 'Local' equates to within 10 miles of Maidstone.	Complete	-
Voluntary Action Maidstone to cease providing its services within the Gateway due to its own office location being so close.	Corporate Services	Voluntary Action Maidstone do not provide services from the Gateway. The Gateway has, in partnership with VAM, a volunteering scheme designed to provide experience in customer services for the volunteers. This partnership is the only presence VAM has in the Gateway.	No Action Required	
The ground floor foyer be equipped for notices to the public, available to all departments and partners.	Corporate Services	The cost of installing suitable equipment on the ground floor that is vandal proof will be obtained and considered as soon as affordable.	Unknown due to budget constraints	Assistant Director of Environment & Regulatory Services
A pillar-box at the King Street entrance to the Gateway be installed allowing a secure and safe way leave mail within office hours without the need to enter the Gateway itself.	Corporate Services	The pillar box has recently been removed following continued vandalism and as a health and safety risk to staff due to the nature of items being placed in the box. In addition the genuine content of the box was damaged by fire or liquid on more than one occasion.	No Action Proposed	-
Signage within the Gateway displaying the services and partners available should indicate the days and times that they are available.	Corporate Services	Some partners do not maintain fixed times and it would be impossible to provide variable times for a single partner sign and maintain a professional look. All partners will be asked if they wish to have additional information regarding times of attendance displayed.	By September 2011 Any responses from Partners copied to Chairman of CSOSC	Head of Finance & Customer Services
Cabinet Member to pursue the opportunity to work with Job Centre Plus within the Gateway.	Corporate Services	Agreed.	30/4/2011	Director of Regeneration &

			Letter copied to Chairman of CSOSC	Communities
Cabinet Member to pursue the opportunity to have Kent Social Children's Services providing in the Gateway, due to their local offices being closed down.	Corporate Services	Agreed.	30/4/2011 Letter copied to Chairman of CSOSC	Director of Regeneration & Communities

Notes on the completion of SCRAIP

ⁱ Report recommendations are listed as found in the report.

ⁱⁱ Insert in this box the Cabinet Member whose portfolio the recommendation falls within.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box either the acceptance or rejection of the recommendation.

If the recommendation is rejected an explanation for its rejection should be provided. The 'timetable' and 'lead officer' boxes can be left blank

If the recommendation is accepted an explanation of the action to be taken to implement the recommendation should be recorded in this box. Please also complete the 'timetable' and 'lead officer' boxes.

^{iv} The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box when the action in indicated in the previous box will be implemented.

^v The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box the Officer responsible for the implementation of the action highlighted in the 'response' box.