

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 2 DECEMBER 2014

Present: Councillor Mrs Gooch (Chairman), and
Councillors Ash, Butler, Pickett, Mrs Stockell and
Mrs Wilson

78. THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER WHETHER ALL ITEMS ON THE AGENDA SHOULD BE WEBCAST

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be webcast.

79. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Black, Edwards-Daem, Mrs Grigg and Long.

80. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitute members were noted:-

Councillor Mrs Wilson for Councillor Long.

81. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no visiting Members.

82. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

83. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

84. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2014

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed.

85. COMPLAINTS REPORT QUARTER 2 2014/15

Research and Performance Officer, Sam Bailey, introduced the Parks and Leisure Manager, Jason Taylor, and the Cultural Services Manager, Laura

Case, as witnesses and presented a report detailing the complaints received during the 2nd quarter. Members were advised that there had been a high overall number of complaints with 215 in total. Of the complaints received, 14 were responded to outside of the target time of ten days. In order to resolve this issue the Head of Policy and Communications had issued guidance to unit managers to ensure that complaints were closed on time and complainants were kept updated where this was not possible.

The Committee were informed that Planning Support Shared Service received 15 complaints in addition to those received by Development Management, and it was explained that as Mid Kent Planning Support Shared Service was now an individual service it would have its own category in future complaints reports. Members expressed concern at the time taken to resolve issues arising from the Planning Support Shared Service, and noted that internal Audit were finalising a report on the issues experienced within Planning Support.

Electoral Registration received seven complaints in quarter 2, five of which were in response to a technical error which led to incorrect information being provided in letters to residents regarding the new individual registration system.

Of the complaints received by Parks and Leisure, nineteen were noted as regarding The Social festival held in Mote Park on 13 September 2014. The Committee heard that Ward Members of the areas surrounding Mote Park had surveyed residents and escalated their concerns to the relevant officers. It was explained that lessons had been learned and work had been carried out to resolve future issues by developing systems of contacting residents in advance of events by email and letter, implementing additional portaloos and bins, and making surrounding areas no-parking zones with pick up and drop off points.

The Parks and Leisure Manager detailed that The Social attracted 7000 attendees. The event was professionally managed by the organisers with 3 meter high fences around the periphery, and a staffed entrance and exit used to age check visitors and monitor alcohol use. Letters had been sent to complainants to outline actions that would be taken to minimise future disruption.

The Cultural Services Manager explained that the event organisers had been efficient in their litter picking and clear up operation, working both after the event and again early the next morning. During the day-long event Mote Park received its usual number of visitors making use of the surrounding areas without disruption, including young families and dog walkers.

RESOLVED:

1. That the quarter 2 Complaints briefing at appendix A to the report be noted.

2. That the report of Audit regarding the Planning Support Shared Service be considered at Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the earliest opportunity.

86. MID-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN PERFORMANCE UPDATE 2014 15

The Policy and Performance Officer, Clare Wood, presented the Mid-year Strategic Plan Performance Update 2014/15 which outlined progress updates against all Strategic Plan actions and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to assess if the Council was on track achieve its outcomes and priorities.

Out of the 34 key Performance Indicators that could be reported at the mid-year point, the Committee were advised that 16 had been rated green (currently on target), and 11 had been rated amber. Of the 29 Strategic Plan Actions, 14 had been completed and resulted in improvements or efficiencies to services, with the majority of the remaining actions expected to be completed by March 2015.

Highlights noted in the report included the increase in income from pay and display car parks by £13 per space, the meeting of quarterly targets in relation to the number of affordable homes delivered and private sector homes improved, and Mote Park's achievement of second place in the People's Choice Green Flag Nation's Favourite Park competition.

Reference was made to several low lights including the Planning Support Shared Service having achieved quarterly targets only against the major processing indicator. In order to monitor this, Cabinet had requested an update on this service to be provided to them at each meeting of the Cabinet, with the first of these to be reported in December. It was also noted that the annual target for total waste arisings was unlikely to achieve annual target.

The channel shift indicators for Customer Services were characterised as amber however were expected to be on track for annual target. Members wished to gain insight into the nature of the queries that were received by the Gateway in face to face contacts segmented by service. A Member also described an instance where they had waited over five minutes on the phone to the Council and unable to get through to the person they required, however this was unable to be investigated due to there being no record of the incoming call. This was recognised as a data quality issue.

The Committee expressed interest in the Engagement and Participatory Appraisal workshop that would form part of the review of the Community Development Plan, and more information on this workshop was requested.

The Programme Manager for Financial Inclusion and Maidstone Families Matter, Ellie Kershaw, spoke on homelessness indicators as per the recommendation of the October Committee. It was explained that Maidstone reflected the national trend towards an increase of people reporting as homeless. There had been a decreased ability to focus on

homelessness prevention due to this increase in presentations but with the same number of Officers. To address this, a triage system had been adopted at the Gateway which allowed prioritisation of those who were homeless on the day, with appointments for those who were at future risk of homelessness, and advice for those who were not at risk. The temporary accommodation facility at Aylesbury House had full tenancy, although it was explained that 100% occupancy may not always be achievable due to it being designed to accommodate single people and couples rather than families. It was clarified that Magnolia House would provide a temporary accommodation facility for families once launched. It was proposed that Members may appreciate a training session on housing legislation.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the progress made against the Strategic Actions be noted;
- 2) That the out-turns of the Key performance Indicators at Appendix A of the report be noted;
- 3) That the annual performance targets that were unlikely to be achieved, namely the processing of planning applications within statutory timescales and total waste arisings per household indicators, be noted;
- 4) That further actions requested by Committee be taken as follows:
 - a) That the details of the Engagement and Participatory Appraisal Workshops be circulated to Members outside of the Committee by the Community Development & Partnerships Manager.
 - b) That data regarding visitors to the Gateway segmented by nature of enquiry be provided to Members outside of the Committee by the Business Improvement Manager.
 - c) That the Policy and Performance Officer notes the Committees concern regarding the waiting times for calls to the Contact Centre, and will audit said indicator as a data quality issue, to report back to Committee when complete.
 - d) That the Chairman convene with The Programme Manager for Financial Inclusion and Maidstone Families Matter outside of the Committee to discuss staffing requirements within the Housing, first results from new projects implemented, and the potential for a training session in housing legislation for Members; the Chairman to report back to the January meeting of the Committee.
 - e) That the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services be invited to address the January meeting of the Committee regarding the

Planning Support Shared Services Update to Cabinet in December.

87. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME AND SCRAIP UPDATE

The Democratic Services Officer, Poppy Brewer, provided the Committee with an update on the Future Work Programme and SCRAIP report - with particular reference to the reallocation of items that were due to be considered during the cancelled November meeting – and addressed Committee with a verbal update report provided by the Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Services regarding the Local Council Tax Discount Scheme. It was stated that review be proposed to complete by the end of 2014, with development of options in early 2015 for consultation in mid-2015, and agreement by the end of 2015 for implementation in April 2016. The Head of Finance and Resources and the Director of Regeneration and Communities would represent Maidstone Borough Council on a working group set up through the Kent Finance Officers Group, the initial meeting of which was scheduled to take place on 11 December 2014, with a mandate to report back to Kent Chief Executives in January 2015.

The Chairman updated the Committee on the progress of the MKIP Joint Task and Finish Group, and notified Members that the Group would present a report of the key findings to a simultaneous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees on 12 January 2015 in Tunbridge Wells. A Member requested sight of the terms of reference of the Task and Finish Group, to be provided outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the future work programme attached at Appendix A to the report be noted.
2. That the Future Work Programme Update be noted.
3. That the List of Forthcoming Decisions be noted.
4. That, subject to further discussions with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Swale Borough Council, a co-located simultaneous meeting be held on Monday 12 January 2015 to consider the final report of the Joint Mid Kent Improvement Partnership task and Finish Group.
5. That the SCRAIP update be noted.
6. That the continuous professional development needs of the Committee be considered and noted.

88. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m to 8.40 p.m.

