AGENDA

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Overview and Scrutiny

Date: Monday 23 February 2015
Time: 7.00 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors: Ash, Black, Butler, Edwards-Daem, Mrs Gooch (Chairman), Mrs Grigg, Long, Pickett and Mrs Stockell (Vice-Chairman)

Continued Over/:

Issued on 13 February 2015

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone Kent ME15 6JQ

Board will provide a response to the implementation review (appendix b)

The MKIP Board comprises of:

- Councillor Annabelle Blackmore, Leader of Maidstone Borough Council

- Alison Broom, Chief Executive of Maidstone Borough Council

- Councillor Andrew Bowles, Leader of Swale Borough Council

- Abdool Kara, Chief Executive of Swale Borough Council

- Councillor David Jukes, Leader of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

- William Benson, Chief Executive of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

- Sandra Fryer, Interim Head of Planning Support Services

(c) Update on the latest position – A verbal update will be given by the MKIP Board and the Interim Head of Planning Support Services

10. **Next steps**

11. **INFORMATION ONLY: Minutes of Tri-Cabinet meeting on 12 July 2013 held at Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone, Kent**   48 - 50

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact Orla Sweeney on 01622 602524**. To find out more about the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk/osc

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 6 JANUARY 2015

Present: Councillor Mrs Gooch (Chairman), and Councillors Black, Butler, English, Mrs Grigg, Mrs Stockell and Mrs Wilson

Also Present: Councillors Mrs Blackmore and McLoughlin

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

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be webcast.

90. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ash, Edwards-Daem, Long and Pickett.

91. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitute members were noted:

Councillor English for Councillor Pickett

Councillor Mrs Wilson for Councillor Long

92. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Mrs Blackmore was in attendance and indicated a wish to speak on item 8 – Strategic Plan 2015/2020.

Councillor McLoughlin was also in attendance.

93. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

94. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

95. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 2 DECEMBER 2014

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2 December 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed.

96. STRATEGIC PLAN 2015/2020

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Blackmore, introduced the draft Strategic Plan 2015/2020 and explained that the two priorities and seven specific issues had been agreed following consultation with residents through road-shows and online correspondence. As a result of the consultation a clean and safe environment and transport improvements have been identified as the top two priorities for the council. Efforts had been made to ensure that the document was streamlined, easier to read and user friendly.

It was noted that:

- Where respondents had asked a question face to face, or through correspondence and provided contact details, a reply had been provided.

- Members expressed appreciation of the mission statement 'Putting People First'.

- There had been a large response in favour of the clean and safe environment priority from Headcorn respondents. The Leader of the Council explained that this may be due in part to the community having experienced an incident not long in advance of the consultation which had created a focus on community safety.

A number of suggestions were made for inclusion within the Strategic Plan which aimed to show the link between the leisure and retail offer and the town centre, give emphasis to the heritage of the Borough, highlight the variety of markets and festivals offered across the Borough, and make reference to the river.

Cllr Mrs Blackmore left the meeting at 7.20 p.m. following the approval of the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That the Draft Strategic Plan be noted, and the following amendments referenced in discussion between Members, the Leader of the Council and Head of Policy and Communications be requested:

1. A reference to be made to the river within the 'Ensuring there are good leisure and cultural attractions' priority.

2. Under the heading Respecting the Character of our Borough, delete 'which aside from Tovil are rural' at the end of the second sentence, and for the third point under 'We Mean' be amended to read 'Respecting our Heritage and Natural Environment'

3. Under 'Ensuring there are good Leisure and Cultural Attractions', to include reference to the river and for the sentence to read '…a well-used leisure centre, a castle, various markets and a variety of festivals and events held throughout the year and across the Borough'.

4. Under 'Enhancing the Appeal of the Town Centre for Everyone' to include the phrase 'for leisure' after 'popular place' and before 'to live' in the last sentence.

5. In the background data provided, the results of academic year 2011/2012 to be replaced and updated with the most recently available data, and for the graphs to be made larger with the colour labelling made clearer.

6. For Maidstone's rating within the 'Halifax Best Places to Live' survey to be referenced in the introduction to the Strategic Plan 2015/2020.

97.   BUDGET STRATEGY 2015/16 ONWARDS - CAPITAL

The Head of Finance and Resources, Paul Riley, presented the future Capital Programme report, produced as part of the consideration of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Mr Riley highlighted the Capital Funding 2014/15 onwards and Capital Programming 2015/16 onwards figures, which summarised the current position.

The Committee was advised that the provisional calculation of New Homes Bonus receipts for 2015/16 was based upon an additional 431 dwellings the figure in the programme represented 65% of the £4.2m settlement that had now been given by government Since the report was written the Government had confirmed the New Homes Bonus figure at £4.3 million. This figure would be amended for the report to Cabinet in February. Within Planning, Transport and Development, it was explained that the figures estimated for the Bridges Gyratory and Sustainable Transport Scheme represented the maximum value of possible funding.

In response to questions the Committee heard that:

- The Improvements to Play Areas scheme was likely to be progressed in stages, and included improvements throughout urban and rural areas.

- The matter of prudential borrowing would be accounted for within the business plan of each project when presented for decision to Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

98.   BUDGET STRATEGY 2015/16 ONWARDS - REVENUE

The Head of Finance and Resources presented the Revenue report as part of the Budget Strategy 2015/16 onwards. The report was produced annually following the publication of the provisional finance settlement figures, however, on this occasion the provisional settlement had not been received at the time the report was written. The finance settlement details had been released at the time of the Committee, and included the following:

- The referendum limit for council tax increases was confirmed at 2%.

- Comparing the settlement values to the 2015/16 estimate used in the Cabinet report on 17th December 2014 there was a reduction of £8,000. This would require funding on top of the savings already proposed.

- The value of New Homes Bonus for 2015/16 would be £4,306,285 which was £68,811 greater than the Council's current estimate.

Members were advised that the Budget Working Group had completed an in-depth review of the provisional business plans and proposals that would be brought forward to achieve the objectives of the Commercialisation Strategy. This was completed in order that the Group could be confident that the assumptions built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy were achievable. The Group had also considered a number of other aspects of the Medium Term Financial Strategy including the savings and efficiencies included with the report. The Chairman of the Budget Working Group explained that the Group had been generally positive with regard to the commercial projects presented, and noted the importance of speedy implementation.

In response to questions the following was noted:

- An exercise had been conducted by departments to identify underused budgets and hold them aside. A large amount of underspend had been identified as slippage occurring due to staff employment. As the number of staff were reduced this reduced the expectation of slippage.

- The Commercialisation Strategy aimed to attain an income of £1m over 5 years. Five business cases had been developed, and all would need to be agreed and implemented in order for the £1m income to be accrued. Where income could not be generated savings would be required instead. When the programme was established £500,000 was set aside to ameliorate risk.

- The Council had purchased Aylesbury House Bed and Breakfast to be utilised as temporary accommodation for some of those to whom the Council had a housing duty. Members expressed that they would actively support officers to explore options that mitigate the financial risk to the Council while achieving strategic objectives when acquiring properties for residential purpose. The Cabinet

Member for Corporate Services stated that when the Council managed its own housing stock maintenance of properties could be costly, and that this would need to be given due consideration when looking at the matter of acquisitions.

The Chief Executive, Alison Broom, informed the Committee that professional development on strategic risk would be provided for all Members, as an emphasis on commercial projects signalled the need for a collectively agreed approach to risk.

RESOLVED:

1.   That the report be noted.

2.   That it be noted that Members were in active support of Officers in finding options that mitigate the financial risk to the Council while achieving strategic objectives, and request an update from the Head of Housing and Community Services on this issue.

3.   That Officers be requested to produce Member Development sessions on strategic risk with a view to these being incorporated into new Member inductions commencing from elections in May 2015, and rolled out to all members.

99.   BUDGET STRATEGY 2015/16 - FEES & CHARGES

The Head of Finance and Resources, Paul Riley, introduced the report which discussed the setting of the level of fees and charges for 2015/16, and the impact of the proposed fees and charges on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. It was explained that the Council adopted a Corporate Fees and Charges Policy in May 2009 covering charges for services where the Council raised income by charging the user of the service and where the setting of the fee or charge was discretionary. The Policy did not apply to services where the Council was prohibited from charging, such as collection of household waste, or services where the change is currently determined by Central Government such as planning application fees. The Cabinet had agreed the fees and charges for 2015/16 totalling an additional £76,300.

A Member asked whether there was income generated from taking photographs of artefacts in the Museum, and was advised by the Head of Finance and Resources that this would be looked into and an answer provided outside of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

1.   That the report be noted.

2.   That the Head of Finance and Resources be requested to ascertain whether income was generated through photography of artefacts in

the Museum and for this information to be circulated to the Committee.

100. USE OF REVENUE UNDER SPEND - UPDATE

The Committee was provided with an update on the progress of schemes that received funding from the revenue under spend in 2011/12 and 2012/13 by the Head of Finance and Resources, Paul Riley. This had been requested by the Committee in July 2014. The report detailed that Cabinet had proposed a bidding process in order to bring forward schemes that delivered on the Council's objectives.

With regard to Planning & Development schemes, a member asked for clarification as to why there had been a delay in employing Planning Conservation Officers. The Chief Executive advised that specific projects had been identified which required a structured and paced implementation, but that now the project had commenced it was expected that the work would be completed reasonably quickly.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

101. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee was invited to consider the future work programme, the List of Forthcoming Decisions, and the SCRAIP report. It was noted that there were no SCRAIP updates to be provided at the current time.

The Chairman highlighted the upcoming co-located simultaneous meeting to be held at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council on 12 January 2015, and clarified that this meeting would hear the findings of the Joint MKIP Task and Finish Group on communication and governance.

A Member expressed concern that the term 'training' was used in some circumstances to describe learning opportunities for Members, and explained that a preferred term for adult learning would be 'professional development'. The Committee expressed an interest in participating in any future professional development regarding strategic risk activities.

RESOLVED:

1. That the future work programme be noted.

2. That the List of Forthcoming Decisions be noted.

3. That it be noted that there are no SCRAIP updates to be provided at this time.

4. That the Committees approval of, and interest in undertaking, the proposed professional development session on strategic risk be noted.

102. <u>DURATION OF MEETING</u>

6.30 p.m. to 8.42 p.m.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 12 JANUARY 2015

Present: Councillor Mrs Gooch (Chairman), and Councillors Black, Butler, English, Mrs Stockell and Mrs Wilson

Also Present: Councillors Mrs Blackmore

103.   APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies had been received from Councillors Ash, Edwards-Daem, Mrs Grigg, Long and Pickett.

104.   NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitute members were noted:

Councillor English for Councillor Long
Councillor Mrs Wilson for Councillor Mrs Grigg

105.   NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no visiting members.

106.   DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

107.   EXEMPT ITEMS

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

108.   MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 JULY 2014

It was noted that the last meeting of the three Committees took place on 7 July 2014, and that these minutes were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman at the following meeting of the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee which took place on 5 August 2014.

109.   REPORT OF THE JOINT MID-KENT IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP (MKIP) TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Chairman of the Joint Task and Finish Group, Councillor Booth from Swale Borough Council, introduced the Group's report and recommendations. He began by reiterating the Group's remit, namely: to consider how the Mid-Kent Improvement Partnership's (MKIP) governance arrangements should be taken forward and how an MKIP communications plan should be developed.

Councillor Booth thanked his fellow members of the Task and Finish Group, as well as the Overview and Scrutiny support officers, service liaison officers and all those who had given up their time to meet with the Group and assist with the review.

Councillor Booth explained the methodology followed by the Group, with a number of question and answer sessions having taken place with: members of the MKIP Board; shared service managers; client heads of service from each of the authorities; heads of communication; S151 officers; monitoring officers; and external partners. He added that the Group had undertaken a detailed analysis of the governance arrangements for MKIP and questioned witnesses on the methods of communication currently used, internally and externally.

Councillor Booth advised that the key findings of the Group were set out in their report; these highlighted where it was felt that enhancements could be made to improve current procedures and to strengthen the practices of the Mid-Kent Improvement Partnership, within the two areas of the study, governance and communication.

The Chairman of the meeting, Councillor Rankin, invited other members of the Task and Finish Group to comment, before the discussion was opened up to wider debate:

- Councillor Gooch (Maidstone BC) stressed how strong the collaboration had been amongst the three authorities in examining this issue. She added that this also reflected the view of the three council leaders in terms of the level of trust that existed.

- Councillor Hills (Tunbridge Wells BC) endorsed that view. He advised that, initially, the MKIP joint delivery of services had been viewed with suspicion amongst some councillors in the three authorities; he added that, while that same attitude might continue, he was very hopeful that the findings and recommendations would help to build confidence in MKIP, if approved by the MKIP Board and respective Cabinets.

- Councillor Woodward (Tunbridge Wells BC) fully supported the findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group, adding that it had been an interesting project and a good learning experience. However, he also voiced some outstanding concerns, caused by the complexity of the issue and the time pressures the Task and Finish Group had been required to operate under.

The Chairman then opened up the issue for general debate:

- Councillor English (Maidstone BC) welcomed the report, which he felt was timely and well-written. He proposed the following additional recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Wilson (Maidstone BC), which was of particular relevance to his authority at this stage, due to its plan to revert to a committee structure from May this year:

  (n) That, given the change in governance arrangements at Maidstone BC from May 2015, consequential amendments be made to reflect that the Overview and Scrutiny function will be absorbed within the Policy and Resources and three other service committees.

- In response to that proposal, Councillor Mrs Gooch, Chairman of Maidstone's Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, said she felt that this aspect would be covered by the proposed new Policy and Resources Committee anyway, adding that the necessary wording and procedure was currently being worked on. However, she acknowledged the importance of protecting the Overview and Scrutiny position under the new governance arrangements.

- Councillor Henderson (Swale BC) advised that he had been a fully-active member of the Task and Finish Group throughout its work but that he was absent from the meeting at which the recommendations had been brought together. He proposed four minor amendments, as follows:

  o Recommendation (a) – Councillor Henderson stressed the importance of Overview and Scrutiny consideration <u>before</u> MKIP Board approval of any proposal;

  o Recommendation (e) – Councillor Henderson felt that this special meeting should resolve to recommend that the post of MKIP Programme Manager should be confirmed without delay. (Subsequently, Councillor Henderson acknowledged that the wording "if the post is confirmed" within recommendation (e) actually referred to the Mid-Kent Services Director post, so he withdrew this proposed amendment.)

  o Recommendation (f) – Councillor Henderson proposed that the transfer of the management of the Planning Support and the Environmental Health shared services 'under the Mid-Kent Services umbrella' should be worded more strongly than "…early consideration should be given…".

  o Recommendation (k) – Councillor Henderson proposed that the following should be added at the end of the sentence: "…before it happens".

      o   In summary, Councillor Henderson advised that the rationale behind his proposed amendments was both to strengthen and provide greater clarity to the recommendations.

The Chairman of the meeting invited the remaining members to comment on the proposed amendments:

- Councillor Hills felt that: (a) a certain point of agreement had to be reached first, which he believed should be at the MKIP Board; (e) there remained a need first of all to define more clearly the Programme Manager's role; and (f) placing these two services within the Mid-Kent Services remit should be supported. Councillor Woodward added that perhaps in relation to (e) it could be phrased to recommend 'the need to re-examine the role of the MKIP Programme Manager'.

- In the wider discussion which followed, Councillor Wilson (Maidstone BC) voiced her appreciation for the quality of the Task and Finish Group's report. She proposed one amendment, relating to recommendation (f) – the 'early consideration' of the transfer of the Planning Support and Environmental Health shared services – under which she suggested that this issue should be deferred until the next special meeting of the three Committees, due to take place in February. Councillor Wilson felt that, at that stage, Committee members would be able to consider MKIP Planning Support in the light of the independent audit undertaken from project implementation.

- Councillor Booth (Swale BC), Chairman of the Task and Finish Group, felt that, based upon the very careful consideration of the wording amongst the Group's members, the proposal set out under (e) was the best way forward. Councillor Rankin supported this view. Councillor English added that, while he would prefer deferral, he could accept the wording as set out.

- Councillor Henderson responded to the points made, arising from his proposed amendments. On recommendation (f), he acknowledged that, provided there was only a short delay before a decision on bringing Planning Support (in particular) and Environmental Health within Mid-Kent Services, then he would withdraw his amendment. With recommendations (a) and (k), he still urged that these be strengthened.

The Chairman of the meeting, Councillor Rankin, summed up the discussion and proposed that recommendation (a) be amended to read:

"That opportunities for pre-scrutiny should be provided within existing governance arrangements at each authority prior to any new shared service proposals being considered at a tri-Cabinet meeting (i.e. after MKIP Board *consideration*, if not before)."

This was accepted by Councillor Henderson and supported by all present.

With recommendation (k), Councillor Rankin, having listened to the comments made, proposed that the existing wording should remain unaltered. This too was supported by all members present.

Councillor Mrs Gooch firmly believed that, with recommendation (k), the outcome was beneficial for all councillors, as all would have improved access to what was happening at both a Shared Service Board and MKIP Board level. Councillor Mrs Stockell (Maidstone BC) endorsed that point and signalled her full support for the set of recommendations, as an effective action plan.

The following represents the decision of the Tunbridge Wells members present. (Maidstone BC and Swale BC undertook their own, separate, voting processes.)

RESOLVED:

That Maidstone Borough Council Cabinet be requested to consider and respond to the recommendations which have arisen from the joint study of MKIP governance and communications which were approved by the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee subject to the following amendments:

  i. That recommendation (a) be amended to read: That opportunities for pre-scrutiny should be provided within existing governance arrangements at each authority prior to any new shared service proposals being considered at a tri-Cabinet meeting (i.e. after MKIP Board *consideration*, if not before);

  ii. That an additional recommendation be added under the 'governance' section, namely: *(n) That given the change in governance arrangements at Maidstone Borough Council from May 2015, that consequential amendments be made to reflect the absorption of the Overview and Scrutiny function within the Policy and Resources Committee and three other service committees.*

110. ROLE OF THE MID-KENT SERVICES DIRECTOR

The Chairman, Councillor Rankin, explained how it had been agreed to invite the Mid-Kent Services Director, Paul Taylor, to this meeting, in order for him to provide an update on the extent to which he was meeting his agreed objectives in the role.

Mrs Zena Cooke, the Director of Regeneration and Communities at Maidstone Borough Council, had also been invited to address the Committees, in her capacity as Chairman of the cross-authority project team, established to undertake an independent review of the Mid-Kent Services Director role. The project team's assessment criteria, against which it was possible to judge progress, had been appended to the agenda.

Mr Taylor presented his update report. He explained how, since his appointment in May 2014, he had focused on three elements: (a) consolidation; (b) delivery; and (c) planning for the future.

Mr Taylor explained that, with four out of five operational services, there were signed 'collaboration agreements' in place; he added that 'service level agreements' existed in three of the services out of five. With 'key performance indicators', it was noted that a shared set was in place and a reporting template had been produced which reflected each authority's service targets.

Mr Taylor also advised that a shared template had been put in place for service plans and that a shared risk log had been produced.

With service delivery, Mr Taylor advised members that all budgets were currently on target and agreed savings had been delivered. He drew attention to the recent completion of the Legal 'one team' under which staff were all now employed by Swale BC.

Mr Taylor also reported that the ICT partnership infrastructure was in place, which allowed staff to work across all three sites as well as from home.

For the future, Mr Taylor advised that a three-year business plan was being produced, to set out their strategic direction. He added that there would also be even greater engagement with staff, through team meetings, by providing a visible presence at each site and through partnership surveys.

Mrs Cooke provided her report. She explained how, following the decision to trial a single lead director model of operation for Mid-Kent Services for a period of twelve months, a project team had been asked to measure its effectiveness. Members were reminded that the project team consisted of: Phil Wilson, Chief Accountant (Swale BC); Jonathan MacDonald, Deputy Chief Executive (Tunbridge Wells BC) and herself. Mrs Cooke added that the assessment of the effectiveness of the role was based on the original assessment criteria; she added that the project team would provide recommendations for the MKIP Board to consider and discuss at its meeting in March 2015.

Mrs Cooke also advised that support for the project team continued to be provided by Val Green, Head of Organisational Development (Tunbridge Wells BC), Holly Goring, Policy and Performance Manager (Tunbridge Wells BC) and Jane Clarke, MKIP Programme Manager.

Mrs Cooke advised members that the project team's assessment would be based on evidence gathered during the period May 2014 to March 2015, adding that this would form the basis of the recommendations to the MKIP Board.

The Chairman of the meeting, Councillor Rankin, invited members to comment on the update report:

- Councillor Woodward (Tunbridge Wells BC) drew attention to recommendation (e) under the previous item. This stated: "that the role of the MKIP Programme Manager should be re-examined and aligned with the reporting arrangements arising from the appointment of a Mid Kent Services Director (if the post is confirmed).

- Councillor Woodward felt the future role of the MKIP Programme Manager remained an element of uncertainty, as there was no specific mention of 'change-related directions', which would have a direct impact. This, he thought, might have some implications for the Director role, a point which Mr Taylor acknowledged.

- Councillor Henderson (Swale BC) asked Mr Taylor whether he felt his objectives could still be achieved if the Planning Support service were brought under Mid-Kent Services. Mr Taylor advised that, should that decision be made, the objectives set out for him would still be achieved within the same timeframe.

- Councillor Mrs Gooch (Maidstone BC) pressed for Mr Taylor's views on the proposal to bring Planning Support services within the remit of Mid-Kent Services. Mr Taylor endorsed the proposal on operational grounds, adding that he would welcome the opportunity to be responsible for this area.

In summing up, Councillor Rankin reminded members that the work would continue, with a further meeting being arranged for the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees to meet to consider an independent audit of the project implementation of MKIP Planning Support.

RESOLVED:

1.   That the members of all three authorities thank Mr Taylor and Mrs Cooke for their reports; and

2.   That the reassurance provided by the Mid-Kent Services Director over achieving his objectives for the year be noted.

111.   DURATION OF MEETING

7.05 p.m. to 8.10 p.m.

Maidstone Borough Council

Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

23 February 2015

MKIP Planning Support

While reading the following report you may want to think about:

- What you want to know from the report;

- What questions you would like answered.

Make a note of your questions in the box below.

As you read the report you may think of other questions.

Questions I would like to ask regarding this report:

-

-

-

-

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Guidance note - Making Quality Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations

Scrutiny recommendations should seek to make a real difference to local people and the services provided. Recommendations that note a change or request further information fail to resolve problems or make changes. The scrutiny team have identified the following criteria for quality recommendations, they:

- affect and make a difference to local people;
- result in a change in policy that improves services;
- identify savings and maintain/improve service quality; or
- objectively identify a solution.

One way of checking the usefulness of recommendations is to evaluate them against the 'six Ws' set out below:

Good recommendations should answer these questions:

Why does it need to be done?	This will help ensure the outcome is relevant and in the right context – if a meeting is being requested it will ensure the correct people are invited to attend
Who is being asked to do it?	Without this nothing will get done (no one will take ownership)
What needs to be done?	Needs to be clear and specific
HoW will it be done?	Again, needs to be clear and specific, what is the expected output- for example a report to be written or a meeting to be arranged
Where does it need to be done/go?	If it's a meeting – where is it needed If it's a report – where is it to go, who needs to see it
When does it need to be done?	Crucial to have a timescale – without a deadline it will never get done

Thinking about these points will help ensure the outcomes of scrutiny are effective and will aid monitoring.

Maidstone Borough Council

**Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Monday 23 February 2015

Mid Kent Improvement Partnership – Planning Support

Report of: Poppy Brewer, Democratic Services Officer

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of the meeting is to consider the Audit Report on the implementation of the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) Planning Support and the MKIP Board's response to the recommendations made by the Audit Report.

1.2 Following the joint work that the Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees had undertook on MKIP governance and communications, it follows that the Committees should jointly review MKIP Planning Support implementation.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The joint Committees of the Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells Overview and Scrutiny Committees are invited to consider the reports and appendices (a) and (b) and decide if any further action as necessary (see recommendations below):

2.2 That the Committee receives the Audit Report on MKIP Planning Support Implementation (Appendix a).

2.3 That the Committee receives the response of the MKIP Board to the Audit report on MKIP Planning Support Implementation (Appendix b).

2.4 That the Committee considers the issues raised by Appendix (a) and (b).

3. Background

3.1 The respective Cabinets of Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils decided to introduce a joint Planning Support function under the auspices of MKIP in 2013. The joint service went live in June 2014. Since then, the service has suffered numerous and wide ranging difficulties resulting in delays, a backlog and poor service to customers.

4. Planning Support Project Implementation Review

4.1 The Mid Kent Audit Service was commissioned in August 2014 to undertake an independent review of the project with the following objectives:

- analyse the project plan and assess whether it was appropriately configured to deliver the aims of the project;

- review the implementation of the project plan, in particular to establish a timeline and assess whether the delivery stage was completed in a manner sufficient to deliver the aims of the project; and

- consider what lessons can be taken from the design and delivery of the project to inform any future similar actions and continued improvement of the planning support service.

4.2 The full report and recommendations of the Audit, which was completed in December 2014, is at Appendix (a).

5. Planning Support Implementation

5.1 The MKIP Board have responded to the report and recommendations of the Audit Review and this response is at Appendix (b).

6. Impact on Corporate Objectives

6.1 The Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee will primarily consider reports that deliver against the Council priority: 'Corporate and Customer Excellence'.

6.2 Seven shared services are delivered under the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership, with five of these services sitting under the directorate of Mid Kent Services. The work of MKIP is therefore vital to ensure delivery of a number of key services and the corporate priorities of each individual authority.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 None.

8. Relevant Documents

8.1 Appendix (a) – Planning Support Project Implementation Review
Appendix (b) – Response from MKIP Board

9. Background Documents

9.1 Minutes of Tri-Cabinet meeting on 12 July 2013 held at Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone, Kent. This document can be found at Item 10, INFORMATION ONLY, on the agenda.

MID KENT AUDIT

PLANNING SUPPORT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

FINAL REPORT

DECEMBER 2014

Code	n/a		Service	Planning
Review Author	Rich Clarke		Review Sponsor	William Benson

Executive Summary Report

Introduction

1. In June 2013 a joint Cabinet meeting of the three MKIP local authorities (Maidstone BC, Swale BC and Tunbridge Wells BC) agreed to enter into a planning support shared service. This new service would combine the administrative functions of the three councils' planning departments, leaving the development control and policy functions remaining in house. Bringing the services together also involved installing a single software package (IDOX) to replace the three previously in use, together with new document and workflow management software.

2. Although the councils did recognise the scope for benefits in the resilience of the larger service, as well as the opportunity to share best practice to continue to improve quality, the principal motivation was to achieve savings. The original business case quoted savings of around £150k per year.

3. Due to begin in April 2014, the service actually went live in June 2014. Since that time the service has suffered numerous and wide ranging difficulties resulting in delays, a backlog and poor service to customers. As a result we were commissioned in August 2014 to undertake an independent review of the project with the following objectives:

   - Analyse the project plan and assess whether it was appropriately configured to deliver the aims of the project.

   - Review the implementation of the project plan, in particular to establish a timeline and assess whether the delivery stage was completed in a manner sufficient to deliver the aims of the project.

   - Consider what lessons can be taken from the design and delivery of the project to inform any future similar actions and continued improvement of the planning support service.

4. The review scope explicitly excludes examination of the original business case and decision to embark upon a shared service. Initial document review began in September 2014, with interviews across October 2014 as listed in Appendix II.

Summary conclusions

5. To portray the project as a complete failure would be to misrepresent and also do a disservice to the hard work and dedication of many individuals striving to deliver a successful outcome. Indeed, the underlying logic of the plans and the improvement brought about by the software package (at its full potential) and the public portals are widely acknowledged. Also, some of the significant tasks required for success of the project, such as building a new team on a single location on unified terms, went largely to plan.

6. However, across the lifespan of the project there were a significant number of missed opportunities, miscommunications and tasks not well completed. We set out in appendix I an overall timeline of the project that highlights some of these events, but in summary these issues can be set out in three major types.

Not employing a recognised project methodology

7. The project ran as a Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) project. The MKIP authorities (but not, specifically, MKIP itself) have well-developed in-house methodologies for project management that build upon more formal techniques such as PRINCE II. However this project only employed a very weak shadow of those approaches and employed it inconsistently.

8. At the outset this could be explained by the project following a 'Project Gateway' approach, whereby the MKIP board requested a streamlined business case building on existing partnership agreements. However, post approval the project failed to build on this base and the project was not managed to a recognised methodology leaving some key missing features. These missing features include lacking a clear detailed project plan until relatively late in the process, inconsistent assignment and understanding of roles and responsibilities and not creating or monitoring a project risks register.

9. Of course, not following a set methodology is only an issue insofar as it either causes problems or prevents resolution of matters as they arise and I believe this project suffered both consequences. Since Project Board meetings were not minuted it is unclear why the Board failed to select and pursue a methodology and why key documentation such as a detailed plan and risk register were not created and maintained. The lack of clear, detailed planning meant that tasks happened late in an uncontrolled manner that impaired their effectiveness (such as the late decision on how to build the Enterprise software). Failure to identify and manage risks also meant that issues that could have been anticipated and mitigated, such as the increase in planning applications in mid 2014, had significant adverse impacts.

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Not fully establishing the project's scope and complexity

10. During interviews, many parallels were drawn between this project and previous work undertaken by the three councils, in various configurations, to create shared services. Such sharing had been successful in Revenues & Benefits, Audit, Human Resources, Legal Services and ICT. Consequently, many involved in the project and the broader decision to create the combined service regarded planning support as just another shared service, but this failed to acknowledge and account for several matters that added significantly to the complexity of the task. These included:

    - Involving all three partners physically moving to a single site.

    - Simultaneously commissioning and procuring a new software package (Uniform) only previously used in an earlier version at TWBC, and extending the scope of ICT reliance (by employing Enterprise for workflow management and moving to paperless working).

    - Splitting an existing service and combining the remnants. Planning support had not been clearly viewed previously as a distinct task to planning – indeed the reliance planning has on effective support is crucial - and the question of where planning began and planning support ended was not consistent across the three.

    - Complete re-organisation of business processes from cradle to grave to accommodate new software (including, crucially, new mapping software) and new approaches, leading to an approach new to all three councils and affecting planning support, planning and external agencies such as applicants and parishes. This includes a redistribution of work between planners and planning support.

    - Combining the services under a single manager whose experience of being a functional manager in planning support was not extensive with no direct experience of planning.

    - The simultaneous parallel delivery of a shared Environmental Health service that put pressure on availability of project management and especially ICT resources.

    - The overall novelty of the approach; contrary to something like ICT or Audit, there are very few authorities currently sharing planning services. My research identified only two such arrangements, both two-way and with the benefit of building on existing similarities (such as shared software suppliers).

11. Consequently, the decision to take a lead from other shared service projects in both the resources and timescales dedicated to the project left it substantially underpowered.

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12. Also, the view to regard the 'ICT project' (the software implementation) as wholly separate, although clear throughout scoping, was difficult to sustain, even when considering that project broader in scope than simply Planning Support. This was evident right from the joint Cabinet meeting, where most questions were IT related and fielded by officers only from the 'main' project. Up until February 2014, links between the two projects were opaque and characterised by misunderstandings, differing priorities and timescales and several fundamental (and unrecognised) misapprehensions on what tasks were necessary.

Attempting delivery within existing resources

13. The original Cabinet paper, in listing the roles and responsibilities of the Project Board, highlighted the role of Project Manager as 'to be appointed'. The MKIP Programme Manager eventually, de facto, filled this role but throughout 2013 (which was most of the project's lifespan) he retained his then current role of MKIP Programme Manager. This was a full time role with a workload including a large-scale feasibility study relating to the future of the partnership. While this was recognised to some degree, and provision made to appoint a temporary Planning Support Manager to assist, this recruitment was not undertaken. This lack of capacity, as well as delay from April to November in appointing to the role undoubtedly contributed to the delay in building on the 'Project Gateway' approach with detailed plans. Similarly, the Project Sponsor retained his existing responsibilities as Deputy Chief Executive of TWBC in addition to leading the parallel Environment Health project, and MKIP responsibilities were additional to day-to-day responsibilities right through the project, from ICT, to Heads of Planning, to planners themselves who made up the core group. Consultants provided the only wholly additional resource added to the project from the software supplier and that was delivered almost exclusively to support the 'ICT project'.

14. As a consequence, in addition to increasing the pressure on key individuals, crucial project tasks were delivered without the level of expertise or time required for success. An example here is work on tailoring and building the Enterprise workflow software. After a misunderstanding with ICT on timing and responsibility for this task (itself a consequence of the first two points above), responsibility was handed to planners who worked to the best of their ability but were ultimately given an impossible task. The impact of additional work on planners especially was significant, with additional requests (such as this example) arriving often with very little notice or support.

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Overall conclusions

15. It is clear with hindsight that the decision to proceed with go live in June 2014 was a mistake. On whether it would have been apparent at the time is a different, and more mixed, question. The period immediately prior to go-live is characterised by inconsistent and mixed communication within the project, with no-one apparently having sufficiently detailed oversight of the full picture to make a decision to pause; a decision that, significantly, had been accepted without major concern by Senior Management and Members only a few months earlier when the original April go-live date was moved back to June.

16. The Project Sponsor sought, and obtained, assurances from key individuals in the project board including the MKIP Programme Manager and IT Project Lead that supported the go-live decision. However the people providing those assurances did not, in turn, have full insight into the difficulties and issues that were persisting on the frontline in the project. The lack of clear overall project plan, even at this late stage, meant that there was no overall checklist or independent analysis to verify progress and certain key tasks – such as end user testing – did not have their absence felt because they weren't clearly part of any one individual's responsibility.

17. The problems caused by failures in the project's management persist as some of the reasons for continuing difficulties in the service. However it is also true that matters arising since go-live, such as the increase in workload, lack of customer confidence, weaknesses in management and growing backlog have been laid upon an already shaky base and further destabilised the service. Its most pressing need at present is to reach, and then sustain, a period of 'normal' operation and only after that can the underlying merit of the shared service be fully evaluated.

Independence

18. We are required by Audit Standards to act at all times with independence and objectivity. Where there are any threats, in fact or appearance, to that independence we must disclose the nature of the threat and set out how it has been managed in completing our work. We have no matters to report in connection with this review.

Acknowledgements

19. This work has been supported by the time and engagement of a wide range of individuals, listed in appendix II. We would like to extend our thanks to all involved in contributing to this review, including those who took the time to complete the survey and individuals within planning support who took me through, in detail, the processes and workflows.

Report against review objectives

Analysis of the Project Plan

20. Although part of the original brief, it quickly became clear when beginning the work that this objective would be hampered by the lack of detail present in project planning. All through 2013, including in the lead up to securing Member approval and when identifying the time and resources the project would require, the most detailed project plan was little more than a high level summary.

Key Date	ICT	HR	Finance	Service/Support Manager	Planning Officer	Comms
Jan-13 CABINET DECISION	PROCUREMENT		AGREE COST SPLIT METHOD	DETERMINE LOCATION	USER SPECIFICATION	DECISION TO ALL
Jul-13	PROCUREMENT	MANAGER CONSULTATION			USER ASSESSMENT	
Aug-13 PROC DECISION	INSTALL AND TRAINING	APPOINT MANAGER	APPOINT ACCOUNTING GROUP		USER ASSESSMENT	DECISION TO ALL
Sep-13	INSTALL AND TRAINING		ACCOUNTING GROUP WORK	AGREE LOCAL FUNCTIONS/ APPOINT ICT GROUP	ICT GROUP APPOINTMENT	
Oct-13	INSTALL AND TRAINING		ACCOUNTING GROUP WORK	SLAS AND CA START	SLA CONSULTATION	HEADS OF SERVICE CONSULTATION
Nov-13	INSTALL AND TRAINING	STAFF STRUCTURE	ACCOUNTING GROUP WORK	AMEND PROPOSED STRUCTURE	TRAINING AND INVOLVEMENT	
Dec-13	INSTALL AND TRAINING	STAFF CONSULTATION	ACCOUNTING GROUP WORK	ALIGN PROCESSES, POLICY AND TARGETS	TRAINING AND INVOLVEMENT	
Jan-14	INSTALL AND TRAINING	STAFF CONSULTATION	ACCOUNTING GROUP WORK	ALIGN PROCESSES, POLICY AND TARGETS	TRAINING AND INVOLVEMENT	
Feb-14	INSTALL AND TRAINING	AMEND STRUCTURE	ACCOUNTING GROUP WORK	CONFIRM NEW STRUCTURE	TRAINING AND INVOLVEMENT	DECISION TO ALL
Mar-14	INSTALL AND TRAINING	STAFF APPOINT	ACCOUNTING GROUP WORK	SLAS AND CA SIGN OFF	TRAINING AND INVOLVEMENT	
Apr-14 MODEL COMMENCE	INSTALL AND TRAINING	STAFF APPOINT	ACCOUNTING GROUP WORK	ALIGN PROCESSES, POLICY AND TARGETS	TRAINING AND INVOLVEMENT	COMMENCEMENT TO ALL
May-14	SHARED SERVICE DELIVERY SUPPORT	TEAM BUILDING AND SUPPORT	ACCOUNTING GROUP WORK	DELIVERY	SUPPORT	
Jun-14	SHARED SERVICE DELIVERY SUPPORT	TEAM BUILDING AND SUPPORT	ACCOUNT AGREEMENT SIGN OFF	DELIVERY	SUPPORT	
Jul-14	SHARED SERVICE DELIVERY SUPPORT	TEAM BUILDING AND SUPPORT		DELIVERY	SUPPORT	
Aug-14 PROJECT REVIEW	ONGOING SUPPORT	TEAM BUILDING AND SUPPORT		DELIVERY	SUPPORT	POST PROJECT BOARD REPORT

Figure 1: Project Plan January 2013

21. It is unclear on what basis tasks have been assigned timing and duration which consequently, as became clear, made it difficult to assess how the project's overall needs would be affected by missed deadlines. An example here is when the ICT procurement was delayed from June to November (see timeline for this and other details). The project plan above did not allow for ready analysis of the impact of that delay and so there was no subsequent discussion about whether the project was still on course for overall delivery.

22. Also, on the basis of the above, it is immediately apparent that some key tasks are missing. The most notable absence is end user testing of the new processes and systems that some in the project assumed (but did not confirm) would be an ICT responsibility, but that would have been unusual in a project of this nature. It is also unclear from the above how the project intended on communicating to service users both internal and external.

23. By September there was a more detailed project plan in existence, see below, but this iteration also omitted testing. Also missing from both versions was clarity on who had responsibility for each task:

Figure 2: Project Plan September 2013

24. The more standard style of project plan did not emerge until January 2014, when the SBC Project Consultant of the core team drew up the first analysis that sought to break down and assign responsibility for individual tasks. It was also at this point that the MKIP Programme Manager, having been appointed MKPS Planning manager in late 2013, was able to devote more time to the project. This plan also included a view on resource requirements, including time requirements, but by this late stage the project had become deadline led. Furthermore, it became apparent that even the initial plan of five months to design new processes would be challenging as the scope of change required began to become clear in early 2014. However, the Project Board did not apparently consider adjusting the overall timescale for this realisation; tasks were scoped to fit the deadlines, rather than the other way around, so that what had been initially envisioned as five months of designing new processes became barely three, even as the increased size of the task became clear.

25. It is also by this point that the role of Project Manager has become fractured. The MKIP Programme Manager, by this time Planning Support Manager, was clearly focussed on

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staffing and structure, leaving design of the new processes to the core group led by the TWBC Executive Support Manager. Meanwhile, the SBC Project Consultant was leading on consultation with parishes and ICT had its own project lead. Therefore, at this time, depending on how the question was referenced, any one of four individuals might have been described as 'Project Manager'.

Figure 3: Project Plan January 2014 (extract)

26. This meant that even project plans such as the above that sought to encompass the scope of the work were limited in the detail that they could provide. The above example, completed by the SBC Project Consultant, lacks detail in the ICT and process re-engineering tasks which were outside of his direct scope.

27. The 'ICT project' meanwhile had been provided with an indicative project plan from the supplier, which was detailed in its timelines and requirements. This plan was, however, not adopted in part because of it being 'too complicated' and in a format that was not easily read within the councils. In a sense though, this was moot as the supplier plan envisioned a start in June 2013 and so was substantially out of date by the time it became necessary.

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28. Instead, the ICT Project Lead produced a new project plan in Excel that was used to track the ICT project. This plan included plenty of ICT detail but was hazier on the process for training staff (seen as largely outside ICT's scope) and again omitted testing, which was seen as being a service responsibility. In particular, on the question of data transfer, ICT were clear that responsibility for testing and acceptance of the transferred data lay with the service, not least because ICT would not be in an expert position to be able to identify errors.

29. However, the 'main project' appears to have had a much more expansive view of what constituted 'an ICT issue'. This meant that when the 'main project' received updates from ICT, indirectly through the MKIP Programme Manager or directly from February 2014, the Board misunderstood the nature and extent of the assurances being offered.

30. Another key element of successful project management is the identification and tracking of risks. Where the project plan enables completion of tasks, a risk register allows the board to track issues, inside and outside of the project, that could have impact and allow for the project to remain live and agile to changes.

31. However, the 'main project' never operated with a clear risk register. This is contrary to the established project management methodologies, but its absence does not appear to have been noted by the board. This deficiency was also present in the 'ICT Project', even though there remains a belief among some on the project board that the 'ICT Project' was fully tracking risks. In reality, the 'risk register' was sketchy and not a source of continuing reference:

Figure 4: ICT Project risks register

32. This left the project unreasonably vulnerable to changing circumstances as it had failed to identify any factors outside of its immediate task list. A prominent example of a risk that might have been identified was the changing workload that would be faced by the service. Although it is not especially seasonal, the numbers and nature of planning applications can fluctuate significantly over time driven by wider economic circumstances. The original business case in December 2012 quoted planning numbers from 2011/12, at the time the most recent full year available.

33. However, even though 2012/13 data will have become available during the project, these 2011/12 numbers remained in use as the basis for forecasting workload and therefore staffing need. Therefore, when planning applications increased significantly

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(including a disproportionate increase in major applications) in mid-2014[1] as the economy moved forwards it came as a shock to an already fragile service attempting to introduce a whole new way of working with unfamiliar staff in a new location. A risk register would, at the least, have prompted discussion of application numbers at Project Board and so allowed for consideration of whether staffing and workload levels anticipated at the outset remained valid.

34. We also note that there was at no stage an independent assessment of the project's management while it is in progress. This is an important and, in some environments, standard element of major projects to give the Sponsor and the Board assurance that its plans are sound and reasonable.

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[1] This increase is difficult to verify with certainty given the different ways in which authorities categorised applications and workload before the shared service. National figures show a marginal increase in overall activity but the increase in local planning income (which would point towards more major applications as well as overall activity increase) and reports of people working in and with the service suggest an increase of up to 25% in Mid-Kent.

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Project Plan Implementation

35. The lack of detailed plan meant that implementation could appear to those involved as disorganised, even haphazard. People were handed tasks with little notice and with only a limited understanding of what was required. There are specific examples of this, such as with the creation of workshops (and later a core group) tasked with redesigning business processes. Partly due to late organisation, these workshops suffered from inconsistent membership that hampered progress and limited the amount of information that could be reliably passed back to planners. It was only really after a couple of month's work, when the task at hand had clarified and a more consistent structure, leadership and membership had developed, that the group really started to function effectively. That lost time could have been avoided with better advance planning.

36. The lack of effective planning is also apparent in the results of the staff survey run as part of this review. Upwards of two thirds of respondents did not feel well informed or confident that they understood the changes to their day-to-day work. More than 4 in 5 did not perceive the project as well planned and under control.

37. A further example is the planned simultaneous implementation of paperless working. Until the SBC Project Consultant's project plan in January 2014, this seemed not significantly further developed than an idea, even though planning teams had taken their own initiative to visit other authorities (such as Eastbourne). However, there was little attempt to progress this element of the project during 2013, including uncertain engagement with ICT (paperless working was not a feature of any ICT project planning) and not connecting with the wider user base until early 2014. This included parishes, many of whom were (and are) simply not equipped to adopt a paperless approach. While this limitation was, to an extent, considered in project planning (for instance by restricting paperless in the first instance to correspondence only) it is clear that parishes understood this as a late, awkward and imposed change.

38. The lack of clear consultation within the service and with ICT meant that when the sample hardware for paperless working was delivered it was soon apparent that it could not be used. The tablet computer software could not integrate with the main planning software and the devices themselves were also not sufficiently robust for field use. Consequently the move to paperless working, which was such a feature of the project in its initial discussion with planners, was at first postponed to September then indefinitely.

39. Above all else though, the lack of control in implementation is evident in the amount of testing conducted. In early April the core group concluded its work and produced a new and revised set of procedures, with this milestone welcomed across the project group. At this stage, with training also beginning to get underway and the two-month delay to June from April giving some breathing space, it appeared that successful go-live lay

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ahead. However, events of the next few weeks undermined that position and meant that revisions to the processes were required right up to, and in to June. In particular, the following challenged the assumptions under which the revised processes were created:

- The move back to a paper based planning system,

- Using a non-standard build of Uniform, which was still in early April under construction,

- The Enterprise workflow management software, not clearly understood by any in the core group, was still being built by TWBC planners and would be under construction until early June,

- The GIS mapping function, crucial to planning, was not developed.

40. Consequently the training that was possible was delivered against the 'standard' Uniform and Enterprise systems, which did not exactly resemble the versions that would come to be used. Similarly, the test systems being used for training were incomplete, owing to a lack of mapping information but also the continuing data transfer work. This data transfer was completed by ICT broadly in line with agreement, but there was then confusion between the 'main' and 'ICT' projects on where responsibility lay. The ICT project was clear that checking the transfer was the service's responsibility, and that would indeed be the usual approach. However, it is unclear what expectations existed around the work necessary by the service to check the data and consequently when the MKPS Manager accepted the transfer the two parties had different expectations on what that acceptance meant. Those two perceptions did not collide until after go-live when gaps and errors became apparent.

41. Insofar as testing had ever been a part of the plan (which was itself unclear, see above) this continued task of attempting to manoeuvre a variety of independently moving strands alongside one another to arrive at a unified, workable system meant that any testing that had been done would have been of limited use. The system in all its components, Uniform, Enterprise, scanning, document management, business processes, did not exist in a single form until the very point at which it was required to move directly into use.

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Lessons Learned

42. In reviewing the Planning Support Project we have identified a number of key lessons that should be learned to take forward to future projects. We present these below as a ten-question checklist for projects.

Ten Questions for Projects	Satisfied?
1. Have we selected a clear and appropriate project methodology?	
2. Do we have a detailed project plan, which includes a comprehensive task list with reasonable time allocated to each task?	
3. Do we have a risk register in place consistent with the Council's policy?	
4. Have we clearly identified roles and responsibilities, both for the project's management and individual tasks within the plan?	
5. Is the level of responsibility and extent of role required of each individual deliverable alongside his or her wider role?	
6. Have individuals with key responsibilities on the project sufficient understanding and experience in those roles?	
7. Do we have the full scope of the project represented at (or reported fully into) this Board? Does that include any associated or parallel project?	
8. Has anything like this project been undertaken here or elsewhere before and, of so, have we investigated and understood the lessons from that past experience?	
9. Have we sought independent assurance on the project management?	
10. Have we arranged a project closure report so that other projects can learn from our experience?	

43. Although these are not formal audit recommendations, it is important in ensuring the lessons from this project are learned that each council, individually and as a partnership, acknowledges the findings of this report and commits to incorporating its conclusions appropriately within future projects. This might be by including these ten key questions clearly within their project methodology documents, perhaps as a standing item for Project Boards or as an item to be considered as part of project initiation and then periodically reviewed and updated.

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44. There is also a clear role outside of the Project Board for the relevant executive function, be that the MKIP Board, senior management of the authority or even Member Overview and Scrutiny or Cabinet. Those bodies must seek assurance at the outset, and perhaps at key defined points thereafter, that the Project Board is functioning effectively and retains appropriate oversight of the project, perhaps using an update or extract of the key questions above as a framework for that discussion. It is also important that assurance, insofar as is practical, looks beneath the headline messages and understands the underpinning evidence. For significant projects it may be that the answer to question nine – seeking independent review – will become the key vehicle to provide those outside the Project Board with reliable assurance.

45. We were also asked to consider messages that support continuing improvement in the service. At this point, although many of the issues have stemmed from problems in implementation, many are new inefficiencies arising since. Many of these come from the dissipation of what was originally a fair amount of goodwill and support for the project as problems have persisted. Therefore the system has had further inefficiencies imposed upon it, as planners feel it necessary to double check work and even users objecting to planning applications as they are unconvinced that appropriate documentation will be made available on time.

46. In order to restore that trust and confidence the service must move quickly to a 'normal' working practice, with standard and agreed procedures and trained, supported staff. It is clear from the staff survey that confidence in the service and its management is low (only one in ten felt current management was effective). Restoring that confidence will be crucial to establishing a successful service, but it is unclear the extent to which that can be achieved with current management, given their involvement in the project implementation. Consequently, the councils should consider, if only temporarily, introducing a new dedicated Head of Service, to work above the operational manager, and provide an independent assessment of the service's current limitations and challenges and give to stakeholders a clear, consistent and trusted recovery plan.

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Appendix I: Project Timeline

The scope of our review formally begins with the joint Cabinet decision to go ahead with the shared service project on 12 June 2013. Therefore events before this date are noted only in general terms and where necessary to the understanding of the project.

Early 2012	Administration of planning applications identified by MBC Members away day as potential further service to put into MKIP. There is no appetite for merging planning as a whole; view shared by all three councils that 'executive' functions remain sovereign. Separately, ICT 10 year development plan identifies potential efficiencies from procuring and managing a single planning software package (to also support Environmental Health).
Summer 2012	Initial exploratory work with staff and Heads of Service on the notion of sharing planning support.
November 2012	ICT project to deliver single software package approved by MKIP Board. Envisions procurement in April 2013 and implementation by December 2013 with 4 months for data migration, testing and training. ICT saving estimated at £75k-£175k over 5 years.
December 2012	MKIP Board approves Planning Support shared service, under a single manager at a single site. The outline project plan at this time borrows the ICT timescales (so delivery in January 2014) but adds HR and service strands. Key dates are appointing manager in April 2013, and eight months of service re-design. The report is authored by the MKIP Programme Manager and identifies key members of project board.
April 2013	ICT procurement begins, three months later than originally scheduled. At the same time (though apparently unconnected) April 2014 is mooted as start date. Separately, TWBC planners begin to be aware of extent of change that will be necessary and push for early involvement, but not taken up at this stage.
12 June 2013	Joint Cabinet decision approves shared service project on single site – Maidstone. TWBC had received previous full Council approval ahead of Cabinet decision. The outline project plan presented gives April 2014 as start date, with now 2 months for service re-design. Assumes procurement decision in August 2013 and 6 months training ahead of go live. The report is clear that the ICT project is separate, a point also made clearly in discussion (although ICT is the focus of a majority of Members questions in the discussion and there are no ICT officers present).
June 2013	ICT procurement drops to single supplier as 3 of 4 companies who had expressed interest decline to bid. Two of the companies who withdrew cite, among other reasons, concerns on the feasibility

of implementation within desired timescales.

Project board begins regular meetings. There is no regular ICT attendance and the Project Manager role is still formally vacant, although the MKIP Programme Manager is effectively operating in that role. No decision is taken, or discussed, on project management methodology. The high-level plan and risk register presented to Cabinet are not elaborated.

July 2013	SBC planners, having been uncertain of the changes that the project will bring about for some time, take these concerns to an opposition Member. In meetings following, though accounts differ, SBC planners are apparently told that there will be no changes to how they undertake their work. As part of a tender, the supplier produces a detailed implementation project plan (which includes 131 days for data migration, 100 days for training and 10 days data testing) but this project plan is not adopted.
August 2013	Actions envisioned within the high-level project plan this month; ICT procurement, beginning install, appointing shared service manager. All are delayed but the project plan and deadlines are not revised at this stage.
September 2013	Procurement concludes with award of contract to IDOX for their Uniform system (an earlier version of which is used in TWBC) and Enterprise task management system (new to the shared service). However, owing to ongoing legal negotiations no contract is signed – and IDOX do not supply the product – until November.
October 2013	The MKIP Programme Manager is appointed Mid Kent Planning Services (MKPS) Manager, to take up the role in November. No other candidates were considered. He retains the role and responsibilities of MKIP Programme Manager until January. Workshops begin to examine process re-design, attended by representatives of each authority. Initial progress is slow, with the group hampered by inconsistent membership, uncertainty of objectives and lack of clear leadership.
November 2013	ICT arm of the project begins in detail following delivery of IDOX product. However, within the ICT project there is a disconnect with the main project on required outcomes, in particular what is part of Phase I and what is part of Phase II. Accounts, and documented evidence, show different expectations exist and begin to harden. Also at around this time the project board begins to consider June as implementation date rather than April. The reasons for the decision at this time are unclear but possibly reflective of the delayed start of the ICT project. However, the 'decision' is not

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consistently communicated at this time, with project board members seemingly working to different deadline expectations as late as February 2014.

December 2013	Workshops continue, with output quality increasing as initial issues resolve. ICT continues server building, which began in October.
January 2014	Formal consultation with affected staff begins. The 'HR process' proceeds largely as expected from this point onwards.

Consultation begins with parishes on paperless working, first formal notification of the project to service users (although informal contact with key agents and developers had continued through 2013).

Workshops evolve into a 'core team' developing shared business processes. Under the direction of TWBC Executive Support Manager, reported that this arm of the project becomes significantly more directed and productive. Heads of Service and MKPS Manager receive reports of outputs and are involved in key decisions but largely leave the core team to define processes itself.

SBC Project Consultant produces the first detailed project plans, initially targeting April go live date, but these plans do not go into detail on ICT elements.

February 2014
The different expectations under which ICT and the main project are operating become apparent, as the ICT Project Lead becomes the first direct ICT attendee at project board (previously ICT updates were delivered through MKIP Programme Manager, although invitations had been extended previously to ICT to attend in person). Although already discussed, decision formalised at this stage to delay implementation to June to allow for issues to be resolved. This delay is accepted by senior decision makers without significant adverse comment, the prevailing view being that if extra time is needed to ensure success then it should be granted.

The service insists, in line with ICT's project plan that Enterprise is delivered as part of Phase I. However ICT does not have resource to deliver, and so the task of rebuilding the out-of-the-box Enterprise software is allocated to TWBC planners.

At the same time, the project agrees that some elements originally intended to be delivered at this time will move to Phase II (for example Land Charges) at request of ICT.

A new MKIP Programme Manager, replacing the officer now working as MKPS Manager, but she has limited detailed involvement in the project.

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March 2014	Training of 'superusers' delivered by IDOX. Reports differ on the quality of training, some describing it as little more than a demo of a system that will not be used (as ICT are rebuilding Uniform to shared service spec) but others satisfied they were equipped to broadly understand experience. No further superuser training is arranged.
March 2014 (cont)	ICT take receipt of sample hardware (mainly tablet computers) for paperless working, but these reportedly lie untouched for some weeks after breakdown in communications.
	Staff are interviewed for roles in the new planning support team structure.
April 2014	Core group workshops conclude with revised business processes and agreed templates (these are, however, based on an understanding of paperless working and compiled without reference to the software as it will exist as bespoke building of Uniform and Enterprise is ongoing).
	ICT begin data migration, now condensed down to three weeks in order to meet June go live.
	The IT hardware for paperless is identified and established as unsuitable. The decision is taken to postpone paperless working until September.
	At project board, the Project Sponsor seeks, and receives, specific verbal assurance from ICT that the project is on track for delivery in June.
May 2014	Staff are appointed to the new structure and moved to MBC terms and conditions (although physical move not until June).
	Staff training on Uniform (the out of the box version) continues.
	Data migration complete, and data signed off by MKPS Manager.
	Test environment constructed to allow training, but it is incomplete lacking the still-under-construction Enterprise build and having no mapping function, plus limited or no availability of revised templates. Also the test data is limited and so does not allow users to examine the entire process (in response, some planners make the unauthorised move to place test data in the live environment to help them understand the new system).
	Procedures originally completed in April, are redrafted in the light of changes to software build and decision to continue with paper files.
	Immediately before go live, the Project Sponsor again seeks, and receives, specific verbal assurance from MKPS Manager and others that all is ready for go live.
June 2014	Go live on 2 June.
	Enterprise build completed just in time, but without ability to

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undertake detailed training or testing (outside of the build team). Revised procedures are delivered, untested, directly to planners and planning support staff.

At end of week one, action log kept by ICT runs to 131 issues, but general reports are of a service suffering no more than expected glitches and teething problems. However, it is acknowledged that some of these issues could quickly become serious if not addressed quickly, in particular access to GIS Mapping software, constraints data, printing and the interface between Uniform and scanning.

By late June, begins to emerge that there are both more serious issues impairing performance and continuing issues with matters identified in the first week, which are then communicated to Members and the public.

The scheduled final Project Board meeting is cancelled so as to not draw resource away from continuing implementation. Partly as a consequence of this calculation, but also similarly to other shared service projects there is no formal project close report.

Events beyond go-live are not specifically within the scope of the review and hence not included on this timeline. However, given the remit includes consideration of whether matters arising through the project are instructive of how to achieve improvement in the service, we did gather information about the period after June 2014 with key messages noted throughout this report where appropriate.

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Appendix II: Interview schedule

We are grateful to the following individuals who gave up their time to interview in person or answer queries via telephone or email.

Cllr Richard Barnicott	Planning Committee Chair, SBC	Rob Jarman*	Head of Planning, MBC
Stephen Baughen+	Development Manager, TWBC	Andrew Jeffers+	Development Manager, SBC
William Benson	Chief Executive, TWBC	Deborah Jenkins	Parish Clerk, FPC & HPC & Assistant Clerk, SPC
Cllr Annabelle Blackmore	Leader, MBC	Abdool Kara	Chief Executive, SBC
Amanda Broadhurst	Parish Clerk, WFPC	Matthew Kennard+	Information & Research Officer, TWBC
Alison Broom	Chief Executive, MBC	Cllr Gerald Lewin	Planning Portfolio Holder, SBC
Geraldine Brown	Chair, YPC	Dave Lindsay	Chief Information Officer, MKS
Anna Burchett+	Validation Team Leader, MKPS	Jane Lynch*	Head of Planning, TWBC
Cllr David Burton	Planning Portfolio Holder, MBC	Cllr Alan McDermott	Planning Portfolio Holder, TWBC
Jane Clarke*	Programme Manager, MKIP (2014)	Jonathan MacDonald*	Deputy Chief Executive, TWBC. Project Sponsor
Nicky Carter*	HR Manager, TWBC	Ryan O'Connell*+	Manager, MKPS (2014) and Programme Manager, MKIP (2013)
Andy Cole*	Head of ICT, MKS	Ray Philpott	Procurement, MBC
Cllr Derek Conway	Planning Committee Member, SBC	Caroline Pieri+	Technical Team Leader, MKPS
Daniel Docker+	Tree Preservation Officer, TWBC	Tony Potter*+	Project Consultant, SBC
David Edwards	Director of Environment & Shared Services, MBC	Pete Raine	Director of Regeneration, SBC
Emma Eisinger+	Planning Officer, SBC	Cllr Julia Soyke	Planning Committee Chair, TWBC
Cllr David English	Planning Committee Chair, MBC	Cllr Val Springett	Planning O & S Chair, MBC
James Freeman*	Head of Planning, SBC (& former TWBC)	Rachael Stratton+	Technical Liaison Officer, SBC
Angela Gent	Parish Clerk, YPC	Michelle Tatton	Parish Clerk, TPC
Cllr Fay Gooch	Corporate Services Scrutiny Chair, MBC	Paul Taylor	Director, MKIP
Georgia Hawkes	Improvement Manager, MBC	Graham Thomas+	Area Planning Officer, SBC
Denise Haylett*+	Executive Support Manager, TWBC	Roger Wood*	ICT Project Lead, MKS

MBC = Maidstone Borough Council; SBC = Swale Borough Council; TWBC = Tunbridge Wells Borough Council; MKIP = Mid Kent Improvement Partnership, MKS = ,Mid Kent Services; MKPS = Mid Kent Planning Services; WFPC = West Farleigh Parish Council; YPC = Yalding Parish Council; FPC = Frittenden Parish Council; HPC = Harrietsham Parish Council; SPC = Staplehurst Parish Council, TPC = Teston Parish Council
* = Member of (or attended) Project Board; += Member of (or attended) Core Group

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Appendix III: Glossary

In the course of this report we use a variety of project management terms and concepts that bear some additional explanation or clarification in particular with regard to general expectations of particular roles and the functions of certain key documents. The glossary below is drawn chiefly from the Maidstone BC project management approach but the descriptions do not vary materially from standard definitions of these terms seen elsewhere. However it is important to note, as referenced elsewhere in this report, that the Project did not follow a recognised methodology. As a consequence, the descriptions below are not necessarily how the roles and documents were perceived by those involved.

Project Manager: The person given the authority and responsibility to manage the project on a day-to-day basis to deliver the required products within the constraints agreed with the Project Board.

Project Sponsor: This is the Executive in PRINCEII terms; the person with overall responsibility for ensuring that a project meets its objectives and delivers the projected benefits. This individual should ensure that the project maintains its business focus, that it has clear authority, and that the work, including risks, is actively managed. The Project Sponsor is the chair of the Project Board. He or she represents the customer and is responsible for the Business Case.

Project Plan: A high-level plan showing the major products of the project, when they will be delivered and at what cost. An Initial Project Plan is presented as part of the Project Initiation Documentation. This is revised as information on actual progress appears. It is a major control document for the Project Board to measure actual progress against expectations.

Risk Register: A record of identified risks, relating to an initiative, including their status and history. Registers more generally (including Issue, Risk and Quality Registers) are formal repositories managed by the Project Manager that require agreement by the Project Board on their format, composition and use.

User Acceptance: A specific type of acceptance by the person or group who will use the product once it is handed over into the operational environment.

Project Assurance: The Project Board's responsibilities to assure itself that the project is being conducted correctly. The Project Board members each have a specific area of focus for Project Assurance; business for the Executive, user assurance from Senior User, supplier for Senior Supplier.

Planning Support Project Implementation Review – MKIP Board Response Mid Kent Audit Findings

In light of the significant concerns with performance, in August 2014 the MKIP Board commissioned the attached review undertaken by Mid Kent Audit of the implementation of the Planning Support Shared Service.

As such the MKIP Board welcome unequivocally the findings of the review and apologise to everyone affected by the delays in validating and processing planning applications. We are working hard to address the situation.

It is also important for contextual purposes to recognise that the vast majority of services being delivered in partnership are working well and have delivered considerable savings and efficiencies and improved our resilience during a period when our grant funding from central government has been cut by more than 40 per cent.

Attached is the response of the MKIP Board to the specific recommendations of the review.

It is in the nature of such responses that, in places, the undertakings of the MKIP Board as set out in this response go beyond the findings of the Audit, which understandably were restricted to the terms of reference that were set. This is because it is the responsibility of the MKIP Board to take an overview of the 'end to end' process of investigating, commissioning, and implementing shared services.

This response focusses on what we will do in the future for the "implementation" phase of shared service projects (which includes trial and testing of operational arrangements), rather than the "business case" phase that precedes it. Whilst it is important to run both phases according to good project management methodologies, it is the implementation phase that holds the greatest risks to successful project delivery.

Work has already commenced on implementation of the actions, though clearly some will take longer than others.

In closing, we thank Mid Kent Audit for their work in undertaking the review, and the joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees for providing the MKIP Board with the opportunity to set out its positive response to the Audit.

We will of course be more than happy to respond to any questions during the meeting scheduled for 23 February.

Cllr David Jukes
Current Chair of the MKIP Board

MKIP Board response to Planning Support Project Implementation Review – Mid Kent Audit Findings

Report Finding		MKIP Board Response
1.	**Not employing a recognised project methodology**	
1.1	Lack of clear, detailed project plan	The MKIP Chief Executives will appoint a project sponsor and project manager (which could be based upon a recommendation from the project sponsor or elsewhere). The expectation is that both will be trained and experienced in project management methodologies.
1.2	Inconsistent assignment and understanding of roles and responsibilities	The appointed project sponsor will follow the project methodology of the nominated host council, taking into account the checklist set out in the Audit of the implementation of the Planning Support Shared Service.
1.3	Lack of project risk register and lack of monitoring of risks	The project sponsor will ensure that the respective project methodology is followed, including as a minimum appointing the project manager and the wider project board, building a project plan, developing a risk register and issues log, and minuting of project board meetings. It will be the project sponsor's responsibility to ensure that all project documents are maintained and up-to-date.
1.4	Lack of minuting of project board meetings	As part of project inception, specific project tolerances, eg related to finance and timescales, are to be proposed by the project team. The final tolerances are to be agreed by the relevant MKIP chief executives.
		The host local authority chief executive, or his/her appointee, or if the host authority has not been identified then the lead authority chief executive, or his/her appointee, will regularly check with the project sponsor and project manager whether the project is running smoothly.
		Progress with the project will be formally reported to the MKIP Chief Executive's meetings using a project report reporting form, an example of which is attached.
		Progress with the project will also be formally reported on the same form to the MKIP Board.

		Any emerging issues of a substantive nature that risks the delivery of the project on time and/or to budget to be raised by the Project Sponsor with the host chief executive as soon as they come to light; the host chief executive will share this with the other chief executive(s) involved in that shared service.
2.	**Not fully establishing the project's scope and complexity**	
2.1	Failure to recognise the complexity of simultaneously running an ICT project, and attempting to view that project as separate when it was intrinsically linked	As part of the Gateway model, the presentation of the business case for a new shared service or extension of a shared service at Stage 2, to explicitly include a commentary about the novelty and complexity of the shared service, including its linkages and dependencies on other services, shared or otherwise.
2.2	Failure to clearly define the service; what was planning support and what was planning?	As part of the Gateway model, the presentation of the business case for a new shared service or extension of a shared service at Stage 2, to explicitly include a commentary on the scope of the shared service. This does not have to be definitive, as it may include the pros and cons of various options for inclusion/exclusion, pending a decision.
		This proposal to be ratified or subsequently amended once the implementation project board has been set up.
		In exceptional circumstances, the MKIP chief executives may invite in external challenge to combat any possibility of group think and optimism bias.
		The project plan to set out and highlight all dependencies identified.
		The final version to be agreed by relevant heads of service and MKIP chief executives.
		Any substantive changes in the project scope to be referred to the MKIP Chief Executives for agreement.
2.3	Appointment of a manager whose experience of planning was not extensive	The chief executives of the other party(ies) to that shared service are to be invited to participate in any recruitment and selection processes that take place, so that recruitment and selection is undertaken on a partnership basis, and they will take up that offer or

		delegate it or decline it as they see fit.
		As a result of this recruitment and selection, the host local authority will need to satisfy itself that it has the necessary management capacity in place to implement the new service and then run it in normal operating mode. This must reflect the complexity of the implementation project and service as set out in 2.1 above.
		Arrangements are in place both informally and formally through the respective collaboration agreement to raise matters of concern regarding management capacity and capability in any particular shared service.
3.	**Attempting to deliver within existing resources**	
3.1	Parallel running of EH which put pressure on the same resources	Establishing the project scope and a project board that fully represents all responsibilities within that scope will enable good decisions to be made about the use of resources, the dependencies with other projects, and the likely critical pathway for delivery, as captured in the project plan.
		The project plan and risk register should also raise any issues regarding the availability of technical and financial resources necessary to the successful completion of the project. Where there are any issues then additional resources will need to be identified.
		For larger and more complex projects, the MKIP chief executives will request a wider analysis of the level of demand upon the support services necessary for delivery of the new project, eg ICT and HR, such that any risks or issues can be identified and mitigated.
3.2	Failure to quickly appoint a project manager	The project sponsor must ensure that there is a project manager in place within four weeks of the commencement of the project to implement the shared service.
3.3	Failure to consistently identify the project manager for the project	This may or may not be the same as the intended manager of the shared service, depending on the particular circumstances.
		The project sponsor will ensure the audit checklist is completed at the first meeting of the project board, which includes a requirement to define and determine roles and responsibilities within the project.

3.4	No additional resources put into the project aside from consultancy for the ICT installation	As per 2.1 and 2.2 above, part of the Gateway model, namely the presentation of the business case for a new shared service or extension of a shared service at Stage 2, to explicitly include a commentary about the complexity and scope of the shared service, including its linkages and dependencies on other services, shared or otherwise. Given this, the chief executives and nominated project sponsor to determine the necessary timescale for implementation, and the resources necessary to meet that timescale.
3.5	Lack of an individual with sufficiently detailed oversight of the project	Adopting formal project management arrangements will resolve this, in particular the formal appointment of the project sponsor and project manager, clarity over the scope of the project, and establishment of clear accountabilities and formal reporting arrangements.
4.	**Additional issues/ actions**	
4.1	Project budget/timescales at risk	Based upon project tolerances agreed (as set out under the response to Recommendation 1 above), if there is any risk to project delivery to budget and/or timescale, the project sponsor is to formally raise this with the respective shared service chief executives, along with a formal recommendation on how to proceed. The chief executives will consider the appropriate action to take.
4.2	Project interactions	It may be that there are multiple projects in train at any one time, which call upon the same support services, in particular HR (eg for TUPE) and ICT. The heads of those services, the MKSD, and the MKIP Programme Manager will actively keep an overview of these calls upon resources, and will raise any issues of prioritisation and risk with the MKIP chief executives at the earliest opportunity.
4.3	Training	Where relevant staff, primarily those on the Project Board, are not familiar with project management techniques, the host authority for the shared service will arrange for urgent training to be carried out, as soon as practicable.
4.4	Review of the Gateway Model	A full review of the Gateway Model to be undertaken during 2015/16 – to be led by the MKIP Programme Manager with the input of the BDU/BIT and the project sponsors and shared service managers who have used it

MKIP BOARD: PROJECT UPDATE REPORT

Project title	
Report date	

1.	**Standard project information**

Information in this section does not change from one update report to the next.

Project sponsor		Project manager	

Business need and project deliverables

This is a summary of the project inception document.

2.	**Summary project status**

Select the one status which best applies.

X	**Green**	*Both*: No changes to timescales, budget or quality since last report. *And*: No future changes to timescales, budget, quality or risks envisaged.
X	**Amber**	*Either*: Minor deviation from timescales, budget or quality since last report. *Or*: Minor future changes to timescales, budget, quality or risks envisaged.
X	**Red**	*Either*: Significant deviation from timescales, budget or quality since last report. *Or*: Significant future changes to timescales, budget, quality or risks envisaged.

Where the status is Amber or Red, full details should be provided in section 4 below.

3.	**Backward look**

Summary of progress since last update report

This should be a brief narrative summary, highlighting key milestones met or missed. A short list of bullet points is sufficient if the project status in section 2 is Green.

4.	Issues and deviations from PID or from last update report	
Completion of this section is **not mandatory** if the status is Green.		
Finance issues (PID part B section 2)	*Narrative on issues including costs, funding and procurement.*	
Personnel issues (PID part B section 3)	*Narrative on issues including capacity, capability and the availability of necessary personnel who are not managed by the project manager.*	
Risk issues (Project risk register)	*Narrative on project risks.*	
Project creep (PID part B section 4)	*Narrative on project exclusions, including any pressure for the project to deviate from the original business case and deliverables.*	

5.	Forward look
Summary of progress expected before next update report	
This should be a brief narrative summary, highlighting key upcoming milestones. A short list of bullet points is sufficient if the project status in section 2 is Green.	

6.	Recommendations
Completion of this section is **not mandatory**.	
This section should list any decisions the report author needs the MKIP Board to take, and provide appropriate recommendations.	
Decisions taken by the MKIP Board should be recorded in change control and/or issues logs.	

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 JUNE 2013

Present: **Councillor Garland (Chairman), and
Councillors Greer, Moss, Paine, Mrs Ring and
J.A. Wilson**

11.   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

12.   URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

13.   NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

14.   DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

15.   DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

All Cabinet Members declared they had been lobbied with regard to
Agenda Item 8 – Environmental Health Shared Service.

16.   EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on the Agenda be taken in public as promised.

17.   MKIP - PLANNING SUPPORT SHARED SERVICE

DECISION MADE:

1.   That Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils enter
into a planning support shared service with the identified planning
support functions (as set out at Appendix 2 of Appendix A to the
report of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment).

2.   That the single site model identified in the business case be used
for the shared service (as set out at Appendix 6B - Model 2 of
Appendix A of the report of the Director of Change, Planning and
the Environment)

3.	That Maidstone be chosen as the location for the service as a result of the location criteria assessment (as set out at Appendix 5 of Appendix A of the report of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment) and that delegated authority be given to Chief Executives to consider whether and how TUPE should apply to this particular service.

4.	That a Shared Planning Support Manager be appointed to manage the shared service and to lead on the implementation and delivery of the service as part of the MKIP Planning Support Shared Service project team (as set out at Appendix 3 of Appendix A of the report of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment)

5.	That the principle of a single team structure be agreed and the Chief Executives be given delegated authority to finalise the structure, including consideration of a technical officer at each site within cost limits set out at Appendix 4 of Appendix A of the report of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment, for union and staff consultation.

6.	That the initial savings split for the shared service be on an investment basis, as set out in Appendix 4 of Appendix A of the report of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment, with the costs of service moving toward a volume based costing model as further savings are identified and the volumes of work through the new team can be accurately measured.

7.	That Section 151 Officers appoint lead accountants from each authority to form a finance group to support the project board and team in developing the setup of the budgets for the Shared Planning Support Service.

8.	That the treatment of the predicted efficiencies in planning officer time for Maidstone and Swale, estimated at £27k-£32k, from transferring validation to the support team be noted as being outside of the scope of this project and for each authority to determine.

To view full details of this Decision, please click here:-
http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=696

18.	MKIP - ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SHARED SERVICE

DECISION MADE:

1.	That approval be given in principle for the creation of a shared Environmental Health Service between Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.

2.	That a two site model, located at Swale and Tunbridge Wells, with a single shared Environmental Health Manager be developed as the preferred model, with the stipulation that Maidstone be treated as a

single territory for the delivery of its food and commercial premises inspections.

3. That an interim Shared Environmental Health Manager be appointed for a period of 6 months to develop the organisational and operational arrangements for the shared service, including identifying the financial implications of the model and reviewing the service delivery arrangements for premises inspections and environmental permitting for the partnership as a whole.

4. That Overview and Scrutiny be invited to comment on the proposed operational model for the shared service before final approval and that delegated authority for this decision be given to the respective portfolio holders for Environmental Health at each authority.

To view full details of this Decision, please click here:-
http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=697

19. DURATION OF MEETING

3.00 p.m. to 3.56 p.m.