

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 9
APRIL 2013**

PRESENT: Councillors Butler, Mrs Gooch (Chairman), English,
Mrs Gibson, Pickett, Moss and Mrs Stockell

86. The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be web-cast.

It was resolved that all items be webcast.

87. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Councillor Hogg and Councillor Yates.

88. Notification of Substitute Members.

Councillor Butler substituted for Councillor Hogg.

89. Notification of Visiting Members.

There were no Visiting Members.

90. Disclosures by Members and Officers.

There were no disclosures.

91. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2013.

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February be agreed as a correct record and duly signed.

92. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.

It was agreed that all items be taken in public as proposed.

93. Quarter 3 Key Performance Indicator Report

Clare Wood, Performance and Scrutiny Officer gave an overview of the Quarter 3 Key Performance Indicator report, highlighting two red rated indicators, unlikely to reach the annual target by more than 10%.

Sandra Marchant Contact Centre Manager and Neil Coles, Housing Manager were invited to update the Committee on the indicator relating to

their service areas and progress made on the action plans for the underperforming indicators.

In response to Members questions on measures to improve wait times for calls into the contact centre, Ms Marchant informed the Committee that the automated switchboard was now available to test. Ms Marchant invited the Committee to test the system by dialling 8999 on an internal phone and feed back to her.

Members felt that a 60 second call wait would be a more realistic target for the Contact Centre going forward.

The Committee raised concerns about the project timescales. Ms Marchant assured Members that the automated switchboard would go live to the public in June 2013 and this could be confirmed by the head of ICT.

Members were satisfied that the action plans that had been put in place for Customer Services and Housing were delivering.

It was recommended that:

- a) It be noted in the next quarter performance report to Cabinet that the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee had reviewed the KPI action plans for the Contact Centre and Housing and were satisfied with the progress of the actions being taken;
- b) The Committee endorse a review of the Contact Centres KPI CTC001 Average wait for call, and propose a revised 60 second call wait time; and
- c) That the Committee test the automated switchboard by dialling 8999 form an internal telephone and feedback to the Contact Centre Manager.

94. Unreasonable and Unreasonably Persistent Complainants Policy

The Head of Change and Scrutiny gave an overview of the Unreasonable and Unreasonably Persistent Complainants Policy. Mrs Woodhouse highlighted the following points:

- The policy followed the guidance of the Local Government Ombudsman;
- If the policy was to be applied the complainant would be informed, and a copy of the policy provided; and
- The number of people currently affected by the policy was very small, approximately 5.

The Committee suggested the following amendments to the policy:

- That the option for the complainant to take their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman if they were unhappy after stage 2 of the complaints process as stated in paragraph 3.1 be reiterated in section 8 of the policy;

- That it be stated that it was an option rather than a requirement for a Director to respond to a complaint; and
- That the wording of paragraph 6.3 be changed from warn to advise.

A member of the Committee highlighted a current Ombudsman consultation that could have an effect on the Local Government Ombudsman Service. The Committee asked that this be noted by the Officer.

It was recommended that the following amendments be made by the Head of Change and Scrutiny to the policy and it be approved going forward:

- That the option for the complainant to take their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman if they were unhappy after stage 2 of the complaints process as stated in paragraph 3.1 be reiterated in section 8 of the policy;
- That it be stated that it was an option rather than a requirement for a Director to respond to a complaint; and
- That the wording of paragraph 6.3 be changed from warn to advise.

95. Customer Service Improvement Strategy

Georgia Hawkes, Head of Business Transformation and Anna Collier provided an overview of the Customer Service Improvement Strategy. It was highlighted that the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) had been carried out in consultation with disability forums as recommended by the Committee at its last meeting.

In response to concerns raised by a Member regarding barriers to online access for vulnerable people, Ms Collier informed the Committee of the Digital Inclusion Project. The aim of the project was to identify where organisations and training in Information Communication Technology (ICT) was available in the borough and map these services so that gaps in provisions could be identified.

Member's stressed the importance of understanding the type of training and support on offer, i.e. 1 to 1.

In section 6 of the strategy, Measuring Progress, the Committee highlighted the absence of email communication monitoring. Ms Hawkes explained that performance measures were already in place for this but it would be pertinent to review this as part of this strategy.

It was recommended that:

- a) In relation to section 6 of the Customer Service Improvement Strategy, Measuring Progress, a review of the way in which email communication is monitored should be undertaken and if appropriate this should be included as part of the monitoring and

performance measures in the Customer Service Improvement Strategy; and

- b) A list of partner organisations (including the private sector) offering support and training in ICT be compiled. This should include organisations with the ability to support individuals with low literacy, learning difficulties and mental illness. The information should be specific to the type of support on offer i.e. 1 to 1 and be used to signpost residents to these services.

96. Future Work Programme

The Committee considered its future work programme and the list of forthcoming decisions.

The Committee agreed to hold an additional meeting on 30 April to consider end of year updates from the Leader and Cabinet and to agree its report on the Capital Programme Review.

It was recommended that a meeting be arranged for 30 April 2013.

97. Duration of meeting.

6.30 p.m. to 8.35 p.m.