

## **Leader's Statement to Full Council Wednesday 24 September 2014**

### **MKIP Update**

One of the quarterly MKIP Board meetings was held on 9 September, with the Leaders of all three authorities being updated and informed of progress on a number of fronts.

Feedback from the existing MKIP services areas was largely positive, with savings targets being met, and performance in most areas on track. All shared services now have Shared Service Boards which have been designed to provide assurance to the MKIP Board about progress against the agreements that have been put in place for each service area via annualised service level agreements. The Shared Service Boards have now been scheduled to meet approximately three weeks before the MKIP Board, and each service has been asked to complete a reporting template, to provide the Board with updates on issues such as finance, project management, risk management, and performance on key indicators.

Specific updates included: the new "One Team" approach for Legal Services, for which Swale will be the host authority; agreement to move HR from a two-way shared service between Maidstone and Swale, to a three way service to include Tunbridge Wells, kicking off with the payroll service before moving onto the wider HR function; an update on the Mid Kent Service Director trial period; the inception of a major new project looking at redesigning customer services across all three authorities; and work on setting up new collaborative arrangements for responding to emergencies across all three authorities. A new joint Overview & Scrutiny review has begun, in which I know some members in the Chamber are already participating, which will look at the governance arrangements and communications strategy for MKIP.

Lastly, we signed off the 2013/14 MKIP Annual Report, which sets out the achievements during the year, and highlights the priorities for the year ahead. I will be circulating a copy to all members for their information and update.

### **Health Update**

The Swale Health and Well Being Board is going from strength to strength, with real commitment from an interesting mix of partners round the table to work together to improve health outcomes for the residents of Swale. The Canterbury and Coastal Health and Wellbeing Board is also developing at a pace, with priorities agreed mirroring those for the Swale Board and the Kent Board. This really helps members and officers to ensure synergy across both Boards, and to push for equal quality access to health services across the Borough. Recent Board agendas have featured the Kent alcohol strategy, improving mental health services, tackling physical inactivity, the Kent housing and health inequalities strategy, dementia friendly communities work, and Health and Social Care Integration.

We have been fully engaged in the refresh of the Kent Health and Well-Being strategy, and are working with KCC Health and Wellbeing Board and the Children's Health and Wellbeing board to influence the shape of the new Children's Operational Groups, which may well report to local Health and Well Being Boards. As you will be aware, this is an incredibly important piece of work and goes beyond the usual realm of health and well-being, and it is therefore vital that the shape of this new group is fit for purpose.

Following on from the intensity of the resources required from both members and officers in working with Health Overview and Scrutiny at KCC to insure the vital resource of the Faversham MIU was not lost, we found ourselves once again challenging both Medway Foundation Trust and East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust (EKHUFT), on behalf of the residents of Swale, following their extremely disappointing CQC ratings which has put them into Special Measures. I have personally pushed for KCC HOSC to call-in EKHUFT, and invited the interim chief executive of MFT to regularly update the Swale Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that we have up-to-date information on their progress toward improving the hospital.

### **Finance Update**

This Council has a history of sound financial management and I am very pleased to report for the second year running that Grant Thornton independent auditors have stated that the Council's key financial indicators for 2013/14 demonstrate continuing strong performance and a healthy financial position.

The working capital ratio is within the recommended range and the Council does not have any external borrowing. Useable reserve levels are healthy and budgetary control is strong.

Grant Thornton stated that: "We are pleased to report that based on the review of the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources we give an unqualified value for money conclusion".

The Council continues to review the cost effectiveness of services in the context of the Medium Term Financial Plan, delivering the necessary financial savings to ensure that we meet our statutory obligations.

I am also pleased to state that this Council has robust systems to secure a stable financial position for the foreseeable future, and that processes are in place to effectively manage financial risks and opportunities.

**Cllr Andrew Bowles**  
**Council Leader**