

## Democracy Committee

28 January 2016

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

### Outside Body Review – part one

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Democracy Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Paul Riley, Head of Finance and Resources
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Tessa Ware, Democratic Services Officer
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

#### **This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. That the Democratic Services Committee continues with the review of Outside Bodies and establishes which Outside Bodies link with the Council's priorities and Service Committees of the Council and consider withdrawing Member involvement where links are tentative or unproductive for both parties. The review could also create a formal communication process between the Council, Member representatives of Outside Bodies and the Outside Body. For example by providing a regular item on the agenda for the relevant committee for Outside Body updates.

#### **This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all and Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough – by working with external bodies in promoting the borough as a place to live, work and visit.

#### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Democracy Committee	28 January 2016

# Outside Body Review – part one

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At their meeting of 3 November 2015 the Democracy Committee agreed to carry out a review of Outside Bodies with a view to aligning them with the relevant Service Committee.
- 1.2 The Committee agreed to an initial review being carried out to establish how useful Councillor membership was to the Outside Bodies. Once this stage had been reported back the Committee would decide on the appropriateness of Member involvement in continuing the review, for example through a working group.
- 1.3 This report provides details of the responses to a questionnaire sent to Outside Bodies as well as other information to help the Committee decide how and if they wish to proceed with the review.

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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A survey of Outside Bodies was carried out during November and December 2015 to establish how useful Councillor membership was to the Outside Bodies. Two reminders to respond to the survey were sent.
- 2.2 Maidstone Borough Council supports 41 Outside Bodies. Of the 41 the following were not included in the survey:

**Table 1**

<b>Outside Body</b>	<b>Reason not surveyed</b>
Bentliff Wing Trust	Automatic membership for the Mayor Administered by the Council
Brenchley Charity	Administered by the Council
Cutbush and Corral	Administered by the Council
Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee	Administered by the Council
Mid Kent Downs Steering Group	Administered by the Council
Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee	The Chairman of the Mid Kent Downs Steering Group is automatically appointed – if an MBC chairman is not appointed we have no provision to administer this
Relief in Need Charity	Administered by the Council
Kent County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Partner – Chairman of Communities, Housing and Environment Committee is automatically appointed
Kent County Council Youth Advisory Group	Partner

Kent and Medway Crime Panel	Partner – Leader automatically appointed
Kent Partnership	Partner – Leader automatically appointed
Local Government Association General Assembly	Partner – Leader automatically appointed
South East Employers	Partner
Youth and Community Charity	Partner
Quality Bus Partnership	Partner
Maidstone Sea Cadets	Building leased from Council until 2019 – Cabinet decision 4 December 2009

2.3 The following table shows the 22 Outside Bodies that were surveyed and whether or not they responded to the survey. Of the 22, 14 responded:

**Table 2**

<b>Outside Bodies surveyed</b>	<b>Response received Y/N</b>
Action with Communities in Rural Kent	Yes
Age UK	No
Allington Millennium Green Trust	Yes
Citizens Advice Bureau	Yes
Hermitage Lane Liaison Group	No
Howard de Walden Centre	Yes
Kent County Playing Fields Association	Yes
Maidstone Area Arts Partnership	Yes
Maidstone Mediation	No
Maidstone Street Pastors	Yes
Maidstone Town Centre Management/Maidstone Town Centre Liaison Group	Yes
Maidstone YMCA	No
Maidstone-Beauvais Twinning Association	Yes
Maidstone MIND	Yes
Parking And Traffic Regulations Outside London Joint Committee (PATROLJC)	Yes
Relate West and Mid Kent	No
Rochester Bridge Trust	Yes
Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board	Yes
Vinters Valley Park Trust	Yes
Kent Community Rail Partnership	No
Maidstone Cycling Forum	No
South East Rail passenger Group	No

2.4 The results of the responses received are attached as **Appendix A**. The full response from Citizens Advice Bureau is attached as **Appendix B**.

- 2.5 Where the Outside Body's Councillor member is different in Appendix B to our records this had been noted in brackets in the final column. The Outside Body has been contacted to highlight this.
- 2.6 The Constitution provides details of some links that Chairmen of Service Committees should make with Outside Bodies. These are outlined below:

**Table 3**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Links with Outside Bodies in Constitution</b>
Policy and Resources Committee	Kent Health and Wellbeing Board
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	Transport interest groups such as Quality Bus partnership, transport users groups and rail stakeholder groups
Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	Citizens Advice Bureau, Maidstone Mediation, Kent Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Heritage Culture and Leisure Committee	Town Centre Management, Maidstone Area Arts Partnership

- 2.7 The Council provides financial support to the Citizens Advice Bureau and provides premises for Maidstone Sea Scouts at a significantly reduced rent. The Council provides administrative support to six Outside Bodies shown in Table 1.
- 2.8 To date the following Outside Bodies have vacancies, the numbers in brackets indicates the total number of Member places on the Outside Body:
- Action with Communities in Rural Kent – one (2)
  - Maidstone-Beauvais Twinning Association – two (4)
  - Relate West and Mid Kent – one (1)
  - South East Employers – one (2)
- 2.9 The Constitution states that the Council has responsibility for appointing councillors to sit on Outside Bodies, except for those appointments which are delegated to the Democracy Committee. The functions of the Democracy Committee include "To appoint Council nominees to outside bodies...as appropriate". There is therefore no clarity in the Constitution about which Committee has responsibility for the appointments. However, it is recommended to the Committee for the purposes of this review, that if it recommends that the Council withdraws support for particular Outside Bodies, it refers the final decision to Council.

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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The Committee could decide to do nothing. The administration of Outside Bodies is minimal in terms of officer time except at the beginning of the municipal year. However, at the present time there is no formal process linking the Outside Bodies and the work of the Committees or the Council as a whole. This could have an adverse effect on the Council's relationships

with Outside Bodies and the effectiveness of the relationship. There is also lack of clarity in the Constitution about responsibility for appointing councillors to Outside Bodies.

- 3.2 The Committee could decide to continue with the review and establish which Outside Bodies link with the Council's priorities and Service Committees of the Council and consider withdrawing Member involvement where links are tentative or unproductive for both parties. The review could also create a formal communication process between the Council, Member representatives of Outside Bodies and the Outside Body; for example by providing a regular item on the agenda for the relevant committee for Outside Body updates.
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#### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The preferred option is 3.2 above.
  - 4.2 It would appear there is a considerable amount of Member time and energy is spent supporting Outside Bodies with no formal reporting process between the Member and the rest of the Council. Setting up a formal, non-onerous, reporting process would benefit both the Council and the Outside Body.
  - 4.3 A continuation of the review would provide further information to help the Committee decide which, if any, Outside Body memberships are dormant or unproductive and perhaps warrant the withdrawal of Council support. The absence of a response to the survey should not necessarily be considered a lack of engagement on the part of the Outside Body.
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#### **5. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 5.1 If the Committee decide to extend the review this could be carried out and the results reported back to the Committee at a meeting in March. If the Committee decide to withdraw support for any Outside Bodies this would allow time for any recommendations to be presented to Full Council on 13 April 2016
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## 6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all and Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough – by working with external bodies in promoting the borough as a place to live, work and visit.	Head of Finance & Resources
<b>Risk Management</b>		[Head of Service or Manager]
<b>Financial</b>	The Council does not support outside bodies through grant aid. Only the Citizen’s Advice Bureau receives a grant of this type. It is not expected that the recommendations in this report will have financial implications.	Head of Finance & Resources
<b>Staffing</b>		[Head of Service]
<b>Legal</b>	The Legal comments are incorporated into the report	Deputy Head of the Legal Partnership
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	Some outside bodies are aimed at groups of people with protected characteristics however there are no equality implications in continuing with the review.	Clare Wood, Policy & Performance Officer
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>		[Head of Service or Manager]
<b>Community Safety</b>		[Head of Service or Manager]
<b>Human Rights Act</b>		[Head of Service or Manager]
<b>Procurement</b>		[Head of Service & Section 151 Officer]
<b>Asset Management</b>		[Head of Service & Manager]

## **7. REPORT APPENDICES**

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A – Outside Body Responses to survey
- Appendix B – Full survey response from Citizens Advice Bureau