

## **TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **RECORD OF DECISIONS**

(in terms of Access to Information Rule 18)

### **CABINET**

**Thursday 18 June 2009**

**Present: Councillor Roy Bullock (Chairman)  
Councillors Paul Barrington-King, Len Horwood, Mrs Catherine Mayhew, Mrs  
Elizabeth Thomas and Frank Williams.**

**Officers in Attendance:** William Benson, Director of Change and Business Support; Nigel Bolton, Head of Leisure and Wellbeing; Lee Colyer, Financial Services Manager; Ian Cumberworth, Internal Audit Manager; Paul Cummins, Legal Services Manager/Monitoring Officer; Kat Hicks, Interim Overview and Scrutiny Partnership Manager; Holly Goring, Research and Information Officer; Andrew Goy, Overview and Scrutiny Officer; Samantha Timms, Senior Committee Administrator; Raymond Warren, Interim Head of Community and Corporate Planning; and Sheila Wheeler, Chief Executive.

**Other Members in Attendance:** None.

#### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

CAB003/09 No apologies were reported.

#### **DECLARATIONS OF PREJUDICIAL INTEREST**

CAB004/09 No declarations of interest were made.

#### **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS WISHING TO SPEAK**

CAB005/09 No visiting members were present.

#### **MINUTES OF THE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD DATED 20 APRIL 2009**

CAB006/09 The minutes of the Joint Transportation Board dated [20 April 2009](#) were submitted for members' approval.

**RESOLVED** – That the recommendations of the Joint Transportation Board dated 20 April 2009 be agreed.

#### **APPROVAL OF CABINET MINUTES DATED 16 APRIL AND 20 MAY 2009**

CAB007/09 The minutes of the Cabinet meetings dated [16 April](#) and [20 May 2009](#) were considered and were confirmed as correct records.

#### **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

CAB008/09 There were no questions submitted from members of the Council.

#### **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

CAB009/09 There were no questions submitted from members of the public.

Cabinet: 18 June 2009

## **CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEES – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 2009/2010**

CAB010/09 Corporate Services Select Committee submitted a late report relating to the Performance Indicators for 2009/2010 which they had discussed at their meeting dated 16 June. The Select Committee asked Cabinet to approve the following recommendation:

“That Corporate Services Select Committee be permitted to undertake investigation into the list of performance indicators in order to identify where reductions can be made and which indicators are of key priority to the Council.”

Cabinet after consideration agreed the recommendations below and stated that service plans and performance indicators would need to be refreshed in line with the new Sustainable Community Plan.

### **RECOMMENDED –**

- (1) That all Heads of Service, in consultation with their respective Portfolio Holders, refresh their service plans and performance indicators in line with the new Sustainable Community Plan once it has been published; and
- (2) That once the new Sustainable Community Plan is published in November 2009, the Corporate Services Select Committee comment upon the new Performance Indicators.

## **CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEES – PLANNING APPLICATION BY FAIRVIEW HOMES**

CAB011/09 The Corporate Services Select Committee submitted a second late report relating to a planning application by Fairview Homes.

The Chief Executive informed Members that Cabinet could not discuss this report as the application had been submitted. She added that the planning application would be considered by the Western Area Planning Committee in July 2009. However the Cabinet is aware of the implications for the Council if the new application is successful.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning & Economic Development also stated that a Joint Eastern and Western Area Planning Committee could only meet if the planning application in question was a departure from the Local Plan; this particular application was not.

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### **CABINET DECISIONS**

**DECISION NO. CAB012/09**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:**

**POLICY & PARTNERSHIPS**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**

**Councillor Williams**

Cabinet: 18 June 2009

**REPORT TITLE:** **Community Grants Programme Applications 2009/2010 (09618/CAB006)**

**PRIORITIES:** Confident: the Community Grants programme contributes primarily to the Council's aim of developing safer and stronger communities.

**DISCUSSION:**

Cabinet was informed that a further application had been submitted for a revenue grant in 2009/10 from the Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society in respect of marketing and promoting Heritage Open Days events across the Borough due to be held in September this year. The amount requested by the applicant was £2,000; the Grants Assessment Panel, after considering the application, had recommended £2,000.

It was noted that should the £2,000 be approved, it would leave an unallocated budget of £8,740 for a further round of small grant applications in the second half of the financial year and any emergency funding requests that may arise during 2009/2010.

Members after giving due consideration agreed to grant the application of £2,000 to the Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society.

Cabinet congratulated Civic Society on the expansion of the Open Days this year.

**DECISION MADE:** That the application be approved for the amount of £2,000 to the Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:** The application meets the criteria for the scheme and contributes to achieving the Council's corporate priorities and the borough's Sustainable Community Plan.

**Contact Officer: Nick Green, Community Development Officer**  
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**DECISION NO. CAB013/09**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:** **FINANCE & GOVERNANCE**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** **Councillor Horwood**

**REPORT TITLE:** **Consideration of the Forward Plan (090618/CAB001)**

**PRIORITIES:** Confident – Developing the Government’s ‘localism’ agenda.

**DECISION MADE:** That the Forward Plan be approved, subject to the following additions:  
  
30 July 2009 – Loss of Front Gardens to Parking and the Use of Article 4 Directors – Planning & Economic Development Portfolio Holder  
30 July 2009 – Results of the Place Survey and detailing any outstanding actions from the Community Plan – Policy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder

**REASONS FOR DECISION:** To comply with Access to Information Procedure Rule 14.

**Contact Officer: Samantha Timms, Senior Committee Administrator**  
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**DECISION NO. CAB014/09** **NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:** **THE LEADER**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** **Councillor Bullock**

**TITLE OF REPORT:** **Start Time of Cabinet Meetings ([090618/CAB002](#))**

**DECISION MADE:** That the start time of meetings of the Cabinet during the current municipal year remains at 10.30am.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:** To establish a start time for future meetings of the Cabinet.

**Contact Officer: Samantha Timms, Senior Committee Administrator**  
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**DECISION NO. CAB015/09** **NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:** **THE LEADER**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** **Councillor Bullock**

**REPORT TITLE:** **Appointments to Outside Bodies – LGA Rural and Urban Commissions ([090618/CAB003](#))**

**PRIORITIES:**

Confident: Delivering the Government's 'localism' agenda.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Council had been asked to nominate a representative on the Local Government Association – Rural Commission, following the resignation of one of the current representatives. The Rural Commission provided the forum within the LGA for member authorities with an interest in rural affairs. The LGA also sought two representatives on the LGA – Urban Commission.

Cabinet after giving due consideration, agreed to appoint the councillors as listed in the decision below. Cabinet thanked all other councillors for their nominations.

**DECISION MADE:**

- (1) That Councillor Edwards be appointed as one of the representatives to the Local Government Association – Rural Commission for a period of one year; and
- (2) That Councillors Elliott and Rusbridge be appointed as representatives to the Local Government Association – Urban Commission for a period of one year each.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

To ensure that Tunbridge Wells Borough Council continues to have representations on the organisation.

**Contact Officer: Samantha Timms, Senior Committee Administrator**  
**Tel: 01892 526121 or e-mail: [sam.timms@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:sam.timms@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)**

**DECISION NO. CAB016/09**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:**

**THE LEADER**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**

**Councillor Bullock**

**REPORT TITLE:**

**Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2011 and Kent Agreement Two 2008-2011: Annual Review**  
**(090618/CAB004)**

**PRIORITIES:**

The Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2011 sets the vision for the borough and specifically focuses on nine themes, which meet all of the Council's Corporate Priorities and cross cutting commitments. Kent Agreement Two also aligns with these themes and that of the countywide Vision for Kent.

**DISCUSSION:**

The report set out the performance of the current Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2006-2011 action plan and the 35 national indicators prioritised within Kent Agreement Two (2008-2011), over the past financial year.

Members noted that there were 152 actions within the SCS action plan and at present 62% of those actions were on target or had already been achieved, with a further 19% making some progress. 8% of actions were still due to commence within the five-year plan and could not be reported at the time of the meeting. 10% of the plan was awaiting updates.

Appendix A to the report provided Cabinet with further detail on the overall progress and outlined the performance of each theme and aligned this with indicators within Kent Agreement Two.

Three themes that had achieved high levels of performance during the 2008/2009 year were: maintaining a thriving economy; maintaining community safety and reducing fear of crime; and enabling people to take part in and enjoy leisure activities.

The officer went on to say that there were 35 national indicators prioritised within the Kent Agreement Two, six of which were measured through the biennial Place Survey or annual Active People's Survey. Cabinet noted that at this stage within the Kent Agreement Two, great attention would be given to the delivery of plans partners had been developing and risks to delivery as well as the data available.

Cabinet was reminded that the refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy had been previously approved and the plan would be called The Tunbridge Wells Community Strategy 2009-2026 and would take a long term view to 'Enhancing the quality of life for all'.

It was suggested to Cabinet that the next six month performance report would focus on the performance of Kent Agreement Two and highlight the progress thematic delivery groups have made towards setting future priority objectives for the refreshed Community Strategy. It was hoped that the refreshed Strategy would be submitted to Cabinet and full Council in October 2009 with the intention of it being launched in November 2009.

**DECISION MADE:**

- (1) That the progress made between September 2008 and March 2009 be noted;

- (2) That the next monitoring report be focused mainly on the performance of indicators within Kent Agreement Two, in the light of the planned Sustainable Community Strategy refresh;
- (3) That a further report be submitted to the 30 July Cabinet meeting outlining the outstanding National Indicator scores from the Place Survey for Kent Agreement Two and detailing progress on any remaining actions from the Community Plan where data has been obtained; and
- (4) That a detailed report be submitted to September Cabinet on the key findings from the Place Survey.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

To provide members with the progress made between September and March.

**Contact Officer: Holly Goring, Research and Information Officer**  
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**DECISION NO. CAB017/09**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:**

**FINANCE & GOVERNANCE**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**

**Councillor Horwood**

**REPORT TITLE:**

**Governance Report Update (090618/CAB008 to 090618/CAB014)**

**PRIORITIES:**

The report and the reports to which it relates support all of the Council's priorities by ensuring that it is well governed, that the Council's financial position is sound, and that key performance indicators are on track and that risks above tolerance are being proactively managed.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Director of Change and Business Support introduced a range of reports for Cabinet's attention, detailing the way in which the Council was performing and being governed.

The key message arising from this quarter's reports, particularly those relating to performance, financial management and risks, was the continued impact of the economic downturn on the Council. This was having a profound impact on Council services, a number of key performance indicators, income streams and key strategic risks.

**DECISION MADE:**

That the report be noted.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

To inform Cabinet of the performance.

Contact Officer: William Benson, Director of Change and Business Support  
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**DECISION NO. CAB018/09****NON-EXEMPT****PORTFOLIO:****HEALTH & WELLBEING****PORTFOLIO HOLDER:****Councillor Mrs Mayhew****REPORT TITLE:****Assembly Hall Theatre – Capital Expenditure  
(090618/CAB005)****PRIORITIES:**

**Prosperous** - Regenerating our town centres: This investment will ensure the Assembly Hall Theatre continues to directly address rising customer expectations, ensuring an economically vibrant night time economy for local businesses.

**Healthy** - The Assembly Hall Theatre provides positive activities that are known to improve mental well-being and have a positive effect on health.

**Confident** - By improving the lighting and house stage curtains the theatre will continue delivering positive activities to all sections of the local community, both residents and visitors.

**Corporate Commitments** - The improvements will contribute to the delivery of high quality services and improved customer service and satisfaction.

**DISCUSSION:**

Cabinet was informed that in February 2009, a capital allocation of £85,000 was made for the replacement of the tiered seating; however, given a potential 4-year operating horizon, full replacement at a cost of £85,000 would not deliver value for money. It was suggested that a capital allocation of £35,000 be used for urgent repair work to the auditorium lighting, upgrading the wiring and switchgears, excluding the light fitting; the remaining £50,000 be retained for repairs to the existing seating, subject to a future report to Cabinet.

Members were also informed that the theatre house curtains would be removed and assessed with a view to repair and reuse, not replace, although spending up to the existing allocation of £50,000 be approved should replacement prove to be unavoidable.

All the works would be carried out in summer 2009 to ensure that the theatre continues to safely operate.

**DECISION MADE:**

- (1) That capital expenditure up to £85,000 for the works as detailed in the report, be approved; and
- (2) That the Head of Leisure and Wellbeing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder be authorised to procure suitable experienced contractors to carry out the works during summer 2009.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

If the stage curtains or auditorium lighting fail during a performance additional cost may be incurred should shows/performances have to be cancelled.

**Contact Officer: Brian McAteer, Assembly Hall Manager**

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**DECISION NO. CAB019/08**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:**

**HEALTH & WELLBEING**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**

**Councillor Mrs Mayhew**

**REPORT TITLE:**

**Grants to Parishes and Voluntary Organisations for Play Areas (090618/CAB007)**

**PRIORITIES:**

The award of grants for play areas supports the Prosperous, Green, Healthy and Confident priorities as well as the Council's three corporate commitments. This is expanded further in the table in paragraph 4 of the report.

**DISCUSSION:**

Cabinet was reminded that over the past five financial years, the Borough Council had grant funded eight town and parish councils or voluntary organisations in order to enable eleven different play projects to be realised, with the total amount awarded over that period being £50,599. There was currently £20,000 for play area grants in the Capital Programme for 2009/2010.

The Head of Service informed Cabinet that there were currently two grant applications, Frittenden and Pembury Parish Councils. Frittenden Parish Council sought £10,000 which was necessary if the Playbuilder project were to go ahead and Pembury Parish Council had applied for £8,831. The applications were appended to the report for members' information.

Cabinet asked that a more robust attitude be carried out when receiving parish grant applications by asking whether the parish council had been pro-active in raising funds to contribute to the project(s).

**DECISION MADE:**

That the grant applications of £10,000 from Frittenden Parish Council and £8,831 from Pembury Parish Council be approved.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

To approve the grant applications for Frittenden and Pembury Parish Councils.

**Contact Officer: Nigel Bolton, Head of Leisure & Wellbeing**  
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**DECISION NO. CAB020/09**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:**

**FINANCE & GOVERNANCE**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**

**Councillor Horwood**

**REPORT TITLE:**

**End of Year Performance Report 2008/2009**  
**([090618/CAB009](#))**

**PRIORITIES:**

This report supports all four of our Corporate Priorities and three Corporate Commitments

**DISCUSSION:**

The Head of Community and Corporate Planning submitted a report (090618/CAB009) advising Members of the Council's performance for 2008/09.

It outlined the progress being made towards the Council's Corporate Priorities through national indicators and local performance indicators. Appendix A to the report contained the end of year 'dashboard' summary of the Council's performance; Appendix B illustrated the full list of performance indicators outlined by portfolio area, alongside their current performance. Appendix C outlined progress against a number of key performance indicators.

Cabinet was pleased to note that the annual performance data from the Audit Commission had shown that the Council was performing strongly in the core services. The Council had continued to set even more challenging targets year-on-year to drive continuous performance and set more locally-based performance indicators to analyse progress against the Strategic Plan.

Key performance indicators that were currently 'red' would require further detailed reporting and action plans to the next Corporate Services Select Committee.

Cabinet noted that sickness absence was down to 8 days; previously it had been 10 plus days and was now in the top quartile compared to previous years.

**DECISION MADE:**

- (1) That the progress of the Council's performance be noted; and
- (2) That key performance indicators that were currently 'red' will require further detailed reporting and action plans to the next Corporate Services Select Committee meeting.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

To inform members of the Council's performance for 2008/09.

**Contact Officer: Raymond Warren, Performance and Improvement Manager**  
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**DECISION NO. CAB021/09**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:**

**FINANCE & GOVERNANCE**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**

**Councillor Horwood**

**REPORT TITLE:**

**Quarter 4 Revenue Management to 31 March 2009  
(090618/CAB010)**

**PRIORITIES:**

The report supports the priority of "Ensuring that we are well managed, proactive and deliver value for money services".

**DISCUSSION:**

The Financial Services Manager submitted a report (090618/CAB010) advising members that there was a net overspend on continuing services but expenditure on one-off projects to be financed from earmarked reserves had slipped and both budgets and resources would be carried forward to 2009/2010.

The Council gained an additional £870,000 from investment interest over the budget of £1.3 million which had been transferred to the Strategic Plan Reserve. An additional £1.1 million was received from the reclaiming of VAT, and of this £770,000 was transferred to the Strategic Plan Reserve.

It was noted that there was a net deficit for the year of just over £1m, which was funded by a reduction in the General Fund, of which £300,000 related to under-spends on various revenue projects in the 2008/2009 budget.

The overall revenue outturn position as at 31 March 2009 was detailed for members' information in the report, along with details of the key variances between the approved budget and the unaudited outturn.

Members were advised that, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule (FPR) 17.1.1, the Section 151 Officer had written-off three council tax debts totalling £6,217.51, and that all avenues of recovery had been exhausted.

Members noted that the Statement of Accounts was currently being prepared and would be submitted to the Audit Committee on 23 June 2009.

**DECISION MADE:**

- (1) That Cabinet acknowledge the variances in the report, in particular those variances that would have an impact on future years; and
- (2) That the write-off of debts totaling £6,217.51, which are each in excess of £1,000, be approved.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

To inform members of the revenue outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2009.

**Contact Officer: Lee Colyer, Financial Services Manager**

**Tel: 01892 526121 or e-mail: [lee.colyer@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:lee.colyer@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)**

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**DECISION NO. CAB022/09**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:**

**FINANCE & GOVERNANCE**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**

**Councillor Horwood**

**REPORT TITLE:**

**Quarter 4 Capital Management to 31 March 2009  
(090618/CAB011)**

**PRIORITIES:**

The report supports the priority of "Ensuring that we are well managed, proactive and deliver value for money services".

**DISCUSSION:**

The Financial Services Manager submitted a report (090618/CAB011) illustrating the actual capital expenditure as at 31 March 2009 and highlighting progress on individual schemes.

The report advised members of the actual expenditure to 31 March 2009 and the funding of the 2008/09 programme was appended to the report for information.

With the capital spend was £5.267 million against the revised budget of £8.771 million which was lower by £3.504m It was noted that under spend was due to a number of factors including schemes which were no longer planned to go ahead.

Appended to the report were the actual expenditure and the funding of the 2008/2009 Capital Programme.

The Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder asked whether or not the tenancy agreements for Cinderhill had been renewed; the Financial Services Manager agreed to seek the information and inform the Portfolio Holder direct.

**DECISION MADE:**

That the actual expenditure to 31 March 2009 of the Capital Programme be noted.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

For members and officers to work towards delivering the required outcomes from the various strategies and plans and demonstrate value for money.

**Contact Officer: Lee Colyer, Finance Manager**

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**DECISION NO. CAB023/09**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:**

**FINANCE & GOVERNANCE**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**

**Councillor Horwood**

**REPORT TITLE:**

**Quarter 4 - Treasury and Prudential Indicator Monitoring to 31 March 2009 (090618/CAB012)**

**PRIORITIES:**

The report supports the priority of "Ensuring that we are well managed, proactive and deliver value for money services".

**DISCUSSION:**

The Financial Services Manager presented a report (090618/CAB012) advising the Cabinet of the Council's compliance with the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy.

Cabinet noted that the bank base rate had fallen from 5.25% at the start of April 2008 to just 0.5% at the end of the financial year.

Details of the targets and indicators compared to the position at 31 March 2009 were set out in Appendix A of the report. It was noted that none of the prudential indicators were breached in the period.

Members noted that the Council's return on investment of 5.75% was in the upper quartile and well above the average achieved by fund managers of approximately 3.9%. The investment interest was £2,167,825 which was an increase of £347,825 on the Treasury Management Strategy forecast.

Cabinet was informed that the credit rating of a number of institutions with whom the Council had invested had since been downgraded resulting in £13,000,000 of investments held at 31 March 2009 being held with institutions outside the Treasury Management Policy. £8 million of these had already been returned during 2009/2010.

**DECISION MADE:**

- (1) That the year-end position be acknowledged;
- (2) That it be acknowledged that a significant number of the Council's investments fell outside the minimum required by the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy during 2008/09 but to date all those due to mature have been repaid in full;
- (3) That the increased authorised limit for the Debt Management Office Account of £10 million be approved; and
- (4) That the maximum investment limit for the top two tiers within the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy be increased from £5m to £10m.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

Under its Financial Procedure Rules, Council delegates responsibility for implementation and monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices to Cabinet.

The Council is having difficulties in placing investments and therefore needs to increase the limit it has for its UK Government Account as this offers a secure place to invest short term cash.

**Contact Officer: Lee Colyer, Finance Manager**  
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**DECISION NO. CAB024/09**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:**

**FINANCE & GOVERNANCE**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**

**Councillor Horwood**

**REPORT TITLE:**

**Annual Risk Management Report 2008/2009  
(090618/CAB013)**

**PRIORITIES:**

The report supports the priority of "Ensuring that we are well managed, proactive and deliver value for money services".

**DISCUSSION:**

Cabinet was provided with a Risk Management report (090618/CAB013), which gave an update on the Council's Strategic Risk Register.

The report and its appendices set out the Risk Management Strategy and the Strategic Risk Register. Appendix B to the report set out the authority's current risk profile, whilst Appendix C showed all action plans previously agreed by the Management Team and Executive Members.

Cabinet raised concern relating to risk CSR-03 and agreed that this risk would need to be modified to reflect the reduction in Corporate Management resource and potential employee reduction.

**DECISION MADE:**

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) That a further report be brought forward to a future Cabinet meeting.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

To provide assurance of the control environment.

**Contact Officer: Ian Cumberworth, Internal Audit Manager**

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**DECISION NO. CAB025/09**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:**

**FINANCE & GOVERNANCE**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**

**Councillor Horwood**

**REPORT TITLE:**

**Complaints Data – 6 Monthly Report (October 2008 to March 2009)(090618/CAB014)**

**PRIORITIES:**

Delivering high quality services to our customers; improving customer service and satisfaction; and ensuring that we are well-managed, proactive and deliver value-for-money services.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Director of Change and Business Support submitted a report (090618/CAB014) that provided a review of complaints received by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council from October 2008 to March 2009.

It was noted that the total number of complaints received in quarters 3 and 4 had increased from the amount received in quarters 1 and 2. However, the number of complaints escalating beyond stage 1 had reduced, showing that complaints were being resolved at the earliest opportunity.

Service trends showed that the Assembly Hall was the highest area for complaints, most related to acts that had appeared on stage and misunderstandings when reserving and receiving tickets. Client Services' complaints were in relation to missed refuse collections.

Communications about Parking were varied, included poor lighting in Meadow Road car park, ticket machines not providing change and displeasure with the lack of 'residents' parking' in certain areas of the Borough. Planning complaints had halved from those reported in the first two quarters; this followed an overall trend in reduction of planning applications being received.

It was noted that the target for responding to complaints was achieved. The target timescale for complaints was 15 working days for stages 1 and 2 and 20 working days for stage 3 of the Complaints' Procedure.

Complaints recorded against each service area were highlighted to Cabinet for their information.

Cabinet was informed that further to the Cabinet agenda being published, the Ombudsman Letter had been received and had indicated that there was no evidence of maladministration made by the Council.

**DECISION MADE:**

That the contents of this report be noted.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

It provides a review of complaints received by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council under the Council's Complaints Procedure, from October 2008 to March 2009.

Contact Officer: Paul Kitson, Customer Care Manager,  
Tel: 01892 526121 or e-mail: paul.kitson@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

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**DECISION NO. CAB026/09**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:**

**FINANCE & GOVERNANCE**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**

**Councillor Horwood**

**REPORT TITLE:**

**Basket of Economic Indicators for Tunbridge Wells  
Borough Council – March to April 2009  
(090618/CAB015)**

**PRIORITIES:**

The monitoring of these economic indicators will help the evaluation of strategic risk across all services and therefore supports all corporate priorities and commitments.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Interim Head of Community and Corporate Planning submitted a report updating members on the economic performance of the Borough. The report covered the latest data available and aimed to help members evaluate and mitigate strategic risks.

A selection of performance indicators, known to be sensitive to economic conditions, had been put together, including a number that were new.

Members expressed concern that the current economic conditions were now affecting a number of areas of performance. It was noted that these were subject to close monitoring by officers and members and would allow early indications to be viewed of local conditions and trends.

The indicators relating to attendance at sports centres should be dropped from the basket of economic indicators in future reports as they do not appear to respond to the recession in the same way as other measures.

**DECISION MADE:**

- (1) That the report shown in Appendix A be noted and no further indicators be identified for future monitoring at this time; and
- (2) That the indicators be dropped relating to attendance at the borough's sports centres from the basket of economic indicators.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

In response to previous Cabinet recommendations. It is apparent that attendance at sports centres has not served well as a guide to the economic situation in the borough.

Contact Officer: Raymond Warren, Performance and Improvement Manager  
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**DECISION NO. CAB027/09**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:**

**FINANCE & GOVERNANCE**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**

**Councillor Horwood**

**REPORT TITLE:**

**Value for Money (VFM) Strategy (090618/CAB016)**

**PRIORITIES:**

The report fully supports the Council's commitment to "ensure that we are well-managed, proactive and deliver value for money services".

**DISCUSSION:**

Cabinet was asked to consider and agree the revised Value for Money Strategy as circulated within the agenda. It was noted that the Strategy provides a framework against which future savings could be made. The Strategy would continue to be a 'live' document and be reviewed at least annually as part of the Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

It was noted that Value for Money continued to be an important issue for central government and would form a key aspect of the new Value for Money in the Use of Resources Assessment Framework.

**DECISION MADE:**

- (1) That the Strategy be adopted and, if appropriate, referred to the Corporate Services Select Committee for consideration into their work programme; and
- (2) That the Director of Change and Business Support, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, be given delegated authority to make any minor amendments where necessary.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

The Strategy very much supports the delivery of the Council's key priorities and business objectives.

Contact Officer: Matthew Vincent, Corporate Policy and Improvement Officer  
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**DECISION NO. CAB028/09**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:**

**FINANCE & GOVERNANCE**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**

**Councillor Horwood**

**REPORT TITLE:**

**Performance Indicators for 2009/2010 (090618/CAB018)**

**PRIORITIES:**

This report supports all four of our Corporate Priorities and three Corporate Commitments

**DISCUSSION:**

Members were informed that as part of the annual strategic, portfolio and service planning process, it was necessary to review the measures by which the Council monitors success against its priorities. Some were developed as new indicators and other indicators were dropped where they were no longer seen as useful or appropriate.

Outlined to Cabinet were details of the local performance Indicators which were dropped; those indicators were as follows: LP C&CP 01, LP C&CP 03, LP C&CP 04, LP Cust Ser 09, LP Facilities 04, and LP ICT 05. The reasons for dropping the above indicators were highlighted in the report.

Appendix A to the report listed all performance indicators for 2009/2010 by Portfolio Holder for members' information.

Officers advised the Cabinet of the comments made by the Corporate Services Select Committee at its meeting on 16 June 2009 and these were identified for members' information as previously circulated.

**DECISION MADE:**

That the 2009/10 performance indicators be noted.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

To inform Members of the dropped LPs with reasons and to list all other PIs.

**Contact Officer: Raymond Warren, Head of Community and Corporate Planning**  
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**DECISION NO. CAB029/09**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:**

**FINANCE & GOVERNANCE**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**

**Councillor Horwood**

**REPORT TITLE:**

**Mid-Kent Internal Audit Partnership (090618/CAB017)**

**PRIORITIES:**

The report fully supports the Council's commitment "Prosperous" in that they reflect that the Council is well managed, proactive and deliver value for money services.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Director of Change and Business Support provided some background to the set up of the Mid-Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) and the proposal for an Internal Audit Partnership between Ashford, Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils. Members were asked to agree the Partnership in principle.

Cabinet was informed that an initial programme of work had been established which involved exploring opportunities for four borough partnerships. Some partnerships were already in place between boroughs both within and outside the Mid-Kent Improvement Partnership area. The benefits of such a partnership were outlined to members.

A draft business case had now been considered by Maidstone, Ashford and Swale Borough Councils and the proposals would offer benefits to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in terms of flexibility, resilience and cost. It was noted however, that further work would need to be done to ensure that local 'corporate' work was not adversely affected by the partnership.

Cabinet was informed that Internal Audit saved in the region of £20,000 within the 2008/2009 budget.

Officers advised the Cabinet of the comments made by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 27 May 2009 and these were identified for members' information at Appendix 2 to the report.

Cabinet welcomed Audit Committee's caveats and agreed the Internal Audit Partnership be agreed in principle.

**DECISION MADE:**

That the proposed Internal Audit Partnership, in consultation with Management Board and the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee or in his/her absence, the Vice-Chairman, be agreed in principle.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

To provide assurance on the internal control environment.

**Contact Officer: William Benson, Director of Change and Business Support**  
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(NOTE:

- (1) Item 12 was taken out of sequence from the agenda; the order of reports taken was 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 12. Following Item 12, the meeting then followed the order of reports as set out on the agenda until Item 10(C). Item 13(A) was then taken out of sequence from the agenda; the order of reports taken was 13(A), 11(A) and 11(B). Following Item 11(B), the meeting then followed the order of reports set out on the agenda;
- (2) In accordance with Cabinet Procedure Rule 5.2 on public speaking at Cabinet meetings, Mrs Woodfield, on behalf of Heritage Open Days, spoke on decision CAB012/09; and
- (3) The meeting closed at 12.31pm.)