

# AGENDA

## PARTNERSHIP AND WELL BEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING



Overview and Scrutiny

Date: Tuesday 12 April 2011  
Time: 6.30 pm  
Venue: Town Hall, High Street,  
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors: Butler, Ms Griffin, D Mortimer,  
Mrs Parvin, Paterson (Vice-Chairman)  
and Mrs Stockell (Chairman)

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1. **The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be web-cast**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Notification of Substitute Members**

**Continued Over/:**

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**Issued on 31 March 2011**

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*Alison Broom*

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

<b>4. Notification of Visiting Members</b>	
<b>5. Disclosures by Members and Officers:</b>	
a) Disclosures of interest	
b) Disclosures of lobbying	
c) Disclosures of whipping	
<b>6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information</b>	
<b>7. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 14 March 2011</b>	<b>1 - 7</b>
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Interview with Councillor Chris Garland.	
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## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE PARTNERSHIP AND WELL BEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 14 MARCH 2011

**PRESENT:** Councillors Butler, Ms Griffin, D Mortimer, Mrs Parvin and Paterson (Vice-Chairman)

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

**Resolved:** That all items be web-cast.

**95. Apologies**

Councillor Heather Langley, Councillor Paulina Stockell and Michael Hill, Kent Police Associations Co-opted Member sent their apologies.

**96. Notification of Substitute Members**

It was noted that Councillor Adrian Brindle was substituting for Councillor Heather Langley and Councillor Nelson-Gracie was substituting for Councillor Paulina Stockell.

**97. Notification of Visiting Members**

Councillor Brian Vizzard attended as a Visiting Member, interested in agenda item 8 and 9 on the agenda, Update from the Safer Maidstone Partnership and Update from Kent Police. Councillor Ian Chittenden attended as a Visiting Member as the co-opted Member from the Kent Police Association was not able to attend.

**98. Disclosures by Members and Officers:**

There were no disclosures.

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

**Resolved:** That all items be taken in public as proposed.

**100. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 8 February 2011**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2011 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chairman.

**101. Update from the Safer Maidstone Partnership**

The Chairman welcomed Martin Adams, Chair of the Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP) and Zena Cooke, Director of Regeneration and Communities to the meeting.

Mr Adams began by addressing the issues faced by the SMP including the future economic environment and local needs. He explained that they had taken the opportunity to look at their 9 priorities and rationalise them. The 9 priorities, he explained, had now been reduced to 4: Anti Social Behaviour; Domestic Violence; Road Safety; and Drug & Substance Misuse. He explained that the group's decision was supported by the strategic assessment which had looked at all areas of the partnership; data and information. Mr Adams felt that the SMP now had a clear direction for the next 12 months. The composition of the SMP was described as a good mixture of committed people with a range of expertise, coming from various organisations including Highways.

Members confirmed that alcohol misuse was picked up under the priority: Drug and Substance misuse. Mr Adams explained the importance of the Town Centre to this priority and that there would be a focus on this area. Members questioned the responsibility of the Partnership to the Rural Areas if there was to be this emphasis placed on the Town Centre and the High Street Ward. Mr Adams explained that in terms of Road Safety rural areas were a priority and by the same measure the High Street ward's issues were focused around relevant priorities chosen by the SMP. There was no intention that this would compromise the SMP's support of other areas in the borough. Mr Adams explained that he had chaired a working group which included many organisations such as Maidstone Mediation and Golding Homes and it was on this basis with the input from other organisations that it was felt that the regard for issues in the High Street ward should not be lost, with statistics proving the need for focus as it was disproportionately generating more anti social behavioural issues but again he emphasised that the 4 priorities were borough based.

Members questioned the spending cuts and how they would affect the work of the SMP. They queried whether the left over funds could be carried forward. Zena Cook responded by explaining to the Committee that the funding came from Kent County Council and they were in dialogue with them about keeping money left over from the current year as there would be less expected next year. The Officer went on to explain that the partnership had recently provided funding for Porchlight and for Crime Prevention initiatives at their last meeting and as such were not waiting for April, they were continuing to make decisions and funding allocations. A 20% reduction in funding was expected. The Officer emphasised to Members that they would have less money but would still have money and went on to explain the work already completed by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) on Resource Mapping. Resource mapping identified public money coming into Maidstone and how it was spent which put them in good stead for the future. The Committee was told that Mr Adams was coordinating activities and the stakeholder events organised by Sarah Robson that had been held on Domestic Violence and most recently Road Safety had brought partners together as a means of

combining resources. Ms Cook told Members that it would be a difficult year in terms of being able to plan but the principles agreed put them in a good position for when funding was allocated.

Members asked whether the Partnership had a viewpoint on the proposed changes to CCTV in Maidstone and also asked the witnesses present if they felt there were links to drug and alcohol misuse and burglary. Matthew Nix, Chief Superintendent at Kent Police responded to the question on burglary and confirmed that there were national statistics that proved the link to drug and alcohol misuse which was taken into account by the police and was backed by academic research. Members raised concerns about the rise in gold exchange organisations that could make it easier for stolen goods to be sold. The officer explained that there was little that could be done with regard to the postal companies. With regard to local organisations the Officer explained that close working relationships with local organisations were maintained to counter the criminal element but this only worked with those with fixed premises. Members were told that this intervention proved successful in Maidstone. With reference to CCTV, Mr Nix told members that the priority was to provide 24/7 cover with a wider reference than the Town Centre and stressed the importance of rural areas. He said that whilst the 24/7 coverage was a priority it was the quality of service and public safety and how this could be maintained and increased that was of importance. Ms Cook gave the Committee the perspective of the SMP on CCTV, explaining there was no collective view on CCTV but that there had been consultation with all Members. She told the Committee that it was an exceptionally good service that should be maintained. There were divergent views on how outcomes were achieved but overall the opinion was that we must not lose the proactive effective elements of the service. Members questioned the real time issue and queried whether or not this was a problem and if it would be referred to in the report. Ms Cook explained the analogue and digital comparison and the delay between the two being a short 2-3 second delay. Delays could be eliminated in time but at a cost and it would be for the Cabinet Member to consider this in the report. The current system was analogue and video tapes were used so there was a technological issue to consider. Members discussed with Mr Nix his preference for maintaining a local CCTV service. He explained that it was about building relationships and a rapport with business but that this could still be achieved with the proposed move with visits. He explained his involvement with Swale who were already working in partnership with Medway on CCTV and he felt had a better service as a result. Reference was made to Maidstone being a regional centre for shopping and with a vibrant night time economy having different needs to an area like Swale. Ms Cook expressed her opinion that CCTV was not there solely to prevent crime and by holding on to all elements of CCTV we were narrowing what we could achieve. It was the partnership between the local retailers that made it work.

Members raised questions about Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOS) Mr Nix responded to this by explaining that there appeared to be a desire by the coalition government to move away from ASBOs as they were seen as a badge of honour and not effective.

Members questioned what the SMP were doing in terms of engaging the wider community with the 4 revised priorities. Officers explained that there were 4 working groups and they would be meeting with the Cabinet Member, John A Wilson to equate the priorities across the groups. In terms of community engagement and publicity the officers reflected on the recent Road Safety Event and the ideas that had been brought forth which included advertising on buses, to target scooter and motorcyclists via social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook and a general desire to be more inventive in terms of engagement.

Councillors raised the 'Fit for the Road' Review that had previously been carried out by Scrutiny and suggested that this was revisited to ensure that the recommendations that had been made had been implemented. This suggestion was echoed by the SMP who were also keen to take this forward. Councillors emphasised the use of local knowledge in relation to speed limits in rural areas. The SMP were told that Parish Councils had requested 30 and 40mph speed limits in some areas where 50mph limits had been imposed emphasising the need for local knowledge and consultation with local people Mr Nix spoke from an enforcement perspective and explained that cameras based around hotspots were effective and agreed that flexibility to work with the local community was important. Members asked that the information regarding the 4 priorities was sent to Parish Councils; Ms Cook agreed that the SMP would be happy to do so and that the plan was to engage widely. She asked the Committee to consider the Local Strategic Partnership's input when looking at their work programme in the future.

The Chairman thanked Martin Adams and Zena Cook for attending.

**It was resolved** that the Committee would revisit the Fit for the Road review working in conjunction with the Safer Maidstone Partnership.

## **102. Update from Kent Police**

The chairman formally welcomed Chief Superintendent Matthew Nix to the meeting, joining Mrs Cook and Mr Adams.

Mr Nix began by referring to Ian Learmouth, the newly appointed Chief Constable, explaining that his priorities for Maidstone and Kent demonstrated a clear steer on Public Services.

Mr Nix explained the Change Programme which would accommodate the 20% reduction in budget over the next four years. He informed Members that there would be an operational policing model and that it was important to get this right first but also made reference to the 'back office' and said that no individual would be unaffected; everyone would have to think differently. There would also be a freeze on recruitment. Neighbourhood policing would be the bedrock of everything they were

doing, he was pleased to say. They would be broadening frontline duties and there would be a crucial sense of ownership for your 'patch'.

Maidstone would stay as a custody centre and the centre of divisional headquarters which he said he felt it needed to be as the county town. He expressed there needed to be senior management liaison at all levels and included Inspector David Coleman, and a cross-cutting relationship between the Town Centre and Councillors in this.

In his presentation Mr Nix, showed the new geographic police structure for Kent which would be divided into three areas; north, west and east. As Chief Superintendent of West Kent Division he would be a single point of contact and accountable for everything that happened in the vicinity. He explained the proposed new shift pattern which would provide local flexibility with Officers on shift, when needed. He spoke of the 24/7 response based at Maidstone as something that had wanted to achieve from a managerial point of view for sometime and would be based on demand. Mr Nix highlighted the reduction in crime in Maidstone over the past 4 years. He explained that Maidstone had the lion's share of resources and would have ownership of 1<sup>st</sup> line response with no artificial boundaries, it would benefit from the closest response. This was highlighted as a big, structural change. He described a back to basics, core business approach in response to the budget cuts that would keep the impact minimum. Members were complimentary on the approach described and the idea of local ownership. They questioned the implementation timescale and were told that it would be in place by the end of the calendar year. Members questioned the Officer on staff awareness of the changes. Mr Nix responded that there was a huge amount of communication with weekly open meetings and questions and answer sessions with staff. Members questioned whether the cutbacks would result in greater powers for Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). The Officer explained that it was a discretionary power that the new Chief Constable, Ian Learmouth, was in favour of enhancing. With regard to the spending review, he explained that the budget for PCSOs was ring fenced. The officer explained the huge amount of background work completed over the past year in line with the changes and that those selected to command would be developing over the next nine months. Kent Police Association Member (KPA), Councillor Chittenden, spoke of his involvement and his role in scrutinising the work of the Police which would continue over the next 12 months until they were replaced with Police Commissioners. Mr Nix returned to the changes and explained neighbourhood policing and its principles. The number of officers would depend upon the demand with details to come in April which would include implementation time. Once the details were known it would be communicated to the public.

Members congratulated Mr Nix on his appointment as Chief Superintendent of the West Kent Division particularly as positions were to be halved across Kent. Members questioned the capabilities of the new ways of working. The Officer explained that there would be the same capability in response policing and that he as well as front line Officers were confident that it would work. There would be less senior managers

which would make communication and accountability easier and reinforce links between the control room and staff.

Links with other counties were explored by Members, Essex in particular. Mr Nix explained that Kent were not looking to merge with Essex but that there was collaboration on IT and procurement and that Kent could make use of their helicopter. The Serious Crime Directorate was based in Ebbsfleet and this shared service also saved Kent money, making the back office function cheaper to run with no significant impact on Maidstone. Councillor Chittenden reiterated this opinion and explained that the Serious Crime Directorate was similar to Maidstone Borough Council's partnership working. Members questioned staff morale. Mr Nix explained that whilst people wanted to live and work in the right place in order to have a quality of life there was an enormous sense of goodwill within the police with the job being something of a vocation.

In response to Members questions Mr Nix explained that there had been an increase in PCSOs due to the freeze on recruitment and because the role was seen as a stepping stone in to the Police. Members referenced the crime statistics which showed a 5.7% reduction in crime in Kent. Mr Nix told members that Maidstone's Basic Command Unit (BSU) was the best performing in Kent and overall for Maidstone there had been a 2% reduction in crime which was the 5<sup>th</sup> continuous year. The Committee asked Mr Nix what his personal ambitions were. He told members that despite the changes he was confident the right ethos was in place to provide continuity for local people and to provide ownership on local issues.

Mr Nix discussed with Members the possibility of magistrate's courts harmonising to accommodate the new policing boundaries. Mr Nix felt that it would be better if this was to happen for the victim and witnesses so everything could be dealt with, within 'the patch' but he said he did not feel that this would happen across all partnerships. With regard to the new divisional boundaries of north, east and west Kent Members asked if the patrols and shifts had changed. Mr Nix explained that they had but they had work to do to ensure the model was correct and that once that happened there would be force wide changes across the county. He explained that the police federation was currently engaged with the force on working out shift patterns. Members were told that Maidstone would see an increase in staff and that the night time economy would benefit from the same officers building relationships with business and door staff.

The Officers were all thanked for attending the meeting.

**It was resolved that:** the Committee should be updated on the Change Programme at the time of implementation which will coincide with the Crime and Disorder Committee's next meeting.

**103. INFORMATION: Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Scrutiny Protocols**

**104. Duration of Meeting**



6.30pm to 8.25pm.

# Agenda Item 8

## **Maidstone Borough Council**

### **Partnership and Well Being Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**Tuesday 12 April 2011**

#### **End of Year Progress Update from the Leader of the Council**

**Report of:** Overview & Scrutiny Officer

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Committee are advised to consider the report of the Leader of the Council on the progress made with the priorities set for 2010-11.
- 1.2 The Committee should consider the statement made by the Leader of the Council at the beginning of the year with reference to his mid year update at their meeting on 11 January 2011 and ask questions with regard to progress that has been made on those issues highlighted as priorities. The Partnerships and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for holding to account those Cabinet Members whose portfolios fall within the remit of the Committee. The Cabinet Members whose portfolios relate to the Committee are the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Community Services.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Committee interview the interview the Leader of the Council with regard to progress that has been made on the priorities within his portfolio over the last municipal year.

#### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The areas of the Leader's portfolio that are relevant to the Committee are as follows:

##### **Licensing**

- To ensure the delivery of an efficient and effective licensing regime.

##### **Local Strategic Partnership**

- Improve the delivery of community services to local people through an effective local strategic partnership.

##### **Sustainable Community Strategy**

- To take responsibility for the Sustainable Community Strategy and to work with the LSP in delivering its objectives.

### **Mid-Kent Improvement Partnership**

- Working with partners to deliver more efficient and effective council services

3.2 The Committee interviewed the Leader of the Council on 13 July 2010, the relevant extract from the minutes is set out below:

"The Chairman welcomed Councillor Chris Garland, Leader of the Council, to the meeting.

The Leader referred to the earlier discussion on maternity services in the Borough and informed the Committee that he had just received an emailed letter from Steve Phoenix [West Kent Primary Care Trust]. The letter confirmed the Secretary of State had not referred the decision for review.

The Leader said that partnership working would be increasingly important over the coming years. The financial situation meant the way services were delivered would have to change and the Borough would need to use partnership working to help deliver savings and services. In many cases the Council may become a facilitator instead of a service provider.

In response to questions concerning investment in the Borough, the Leader said that Homes and Communities Agency funding had been cut by half. This would affect housing and community development. Indications earlier in the year that the recession was ending now appeared less likely and it was becoming increasingly difficult to obtain grants. The Museum Trust was required to raise £1.3 million for the development of the Museum, but that may not be achievable.

A Member asked about the relevance of the Local Development Framework (LDF) now the Regional Strategy had been abolished. The Leader replied there were rumours the LDF would be replaced in time, but the Council would continue working with it until that occurred. Whilst centrally imposed housing targets had been abolished, the Leader believed the Borough needed to deliver new housing that reflected the local infrastructure, which in places was under pressure. Another major element of the LDF was the provision of gypsy and Traveller sites. The Borough was now only required to provide the sites it needed, so there may be a change in plans once the detail of the announcement is known.

Members asked how the Leader intended to increase the transparency of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). He agreed there was a need for improved transparency and communications. He believed minutes of LSP meetings should be circulated more

widely, and suggested the Committee could consider calling the Chairman of the LSP to scrutiny twice a year. Members agreed that the Chair and Vice chair of all Committees should receive a copy of LSP meeting minutes and that this Committee should have a standing item on the LSP.

A member asked if the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) would need re-writing as a result of the government scrapping National Indicators [performance indicators set by central government]. The Leader said he did not believe the SCS would need major changes as it reflected the goals of the Council, but acknowledged more relevant indicators may need to be developed.

The Chairman thanked the Leader for assisting the Committee.

**Resolved:** That:

- a) The Chairman and Vice Chairman of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee should receive a copy of the minutes of LSP meetings;
- b) Regular updates on the progress of the LSP be received; and
- c) The Leader's plans and priorities for 2009-10 be noted."

- 3.3 The leader provided the Partnerships and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a Mid-Year Update on 11 January 20. The relevant extract from the minutes is set out below:

"The Chairman welcomed the Leader of the Council, Councillor Chris Garland to the meeting to update the Committee on the relevant areas of his portfolio.

The Leader began by updating the Committee on the Mid-Kent Improvement Partnership. He explained that Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells had now entered into a formal arrangement to share the back office functions for Revenues and Benefits. The original arrangement had included Ashford, Swale, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells as the partnership had progressed two of the partners had withdrawn so it was now a joint venture with Tunbridge Wells. The savings will be £250,000 year on year but did involve an initial investment of £500,000 for set up costs which was shared between the two partners, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells. The Leader responded to the Committee's questions about how the service works explaining that Maidstone were equal Partners with Tunbridge Wells. Councillor Garland also confirmed that the service was monitored to ensure it was working well the service delivery was not reduced. Other areas of MKIP were also reported to be working well including the Audit Partnership. Ashford had withdrawn from MKIP but Swale, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells were all committed to driving the partnership forward.

The Leader referred to the last meeting and Maternity Services moving to Pembury. He confirmed that Maidstone did not approve

of the recent decision and that they would be writing a joint letter with Paul Carter, Leader of Kent County Council (KCC), to the Secretary of State. The Committee discussed the issue of a decision being made without GP's formal support and possible financial implications being the main reason for the scheme to go ahead. It was suggested that there would be £6 million costs incurred if it did not. KCC had urged the Secretary of State to wait until there has been a review. The Committee agreed to discuss the matter further under Item 9 on the agenda.

The Leader moved on to Localism and suggested to the Committee that it would be development issues that people would come together on as they had done with the Kent International Gateway. He said he envisaged groups forming within communities with referendums on planning issues. His concerns were with the lack of power that would remain with the Council if Localism arrived via the Planning System. He warned that communities could become divided and this could create fragmented communities with disparate goals. The financial implications were also discussed and it was suggested that the referendums that come forward would be paid for by the local authority but the 'New Burdens' grant from central government would be available to finance this.

Cllr Garland updated the Committee on the progress of The Local Strategic Partnership. He explained that the last year had been taken up with governance issues and refocusing which had resulted in four main delivery groups: health and well-being; the Safer Maidstone Partnership; Economic Development; and Regeneration and Environmental Quality. He explained that the groups' priorities were relevant to Corporate and Strategic Issues. The groups had considered any exceptions and National Indicators that were not present. The task of Resource Mapping had been completed which was analysing where public money was being spent to avoid duplication.

The Leader informed the Committee that The Local Development Framework would come to Cabinet in January. He explained that the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives had worked closely on this and there would be Public Consultation. The Leader felt a Political consensus had so far been achieved and suggested that the figure for new housing would be 10,080, 1000 less than under the last government. He explained that this would maintain the growth point status and make use of the existing infrastructure as there was no more money for development in this area. This would be a Dispersal option rather than an Urban Extension. It was emphasised that this could change during the consultation process.

In terms of current funding issues the Committee brought to the Leader's attention matters arising from the previous meeting regarding the future of voluntary organisations such as Women's Support Services. Councillor Garland could only confirm that funding was tight and highlighted to the Committee the 93m reduction in funding at the County Council which would have an

affect on the Voluntary Sector. His advice was to lobby hard as money would have to be found from other sources.

Finally Licensing was addressed; the partnership with Sevenoaks was working well with a shared back office. Another example the Committee were told of where shared services are working well.

The Chairman thanked the Leader for attending.”

- 3.4 The Committee could choose not to interview or receive written updates from the Leader however in doing so they would not be fulfilling the crucial role of holding the executive to account

#### **4. Impact on Corporate Objectives**

- 4.1 The Committee should seek to review whether the Leader’s priorities for his portfolio are aligned to the Council’s corporate objectives as set out in the strategic plan.

## **Maidstone Borough Council**

### **Partnership and Well Being Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**Tuesday 12 April 2011**

#### **End of Year Progress Update from the Cabinet Member for Community Services**

**Report of:** Overview & Scrutiny Officer

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Committee are advised to consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Community Services (Appendix A) on the progress made with the priorities set for 2010-11.
- 1.2 The Committee should consider the statement made by the Cabinet Member at the beginning of the year and ask questions with regard to progress that has been made on those issues highlighted as priorities with reference to written update (Appendix A). The Partnerships and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for holding to account those Cabinet Members whose portfolios fall within the remit of the Committee. The Cabinet Members whose portfolios relate to the Committee are the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Community Services.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Committee interview the Cabinet Member for Community Services with regard to progress that has been made on the priorities within his portfolio over the last municipal year.

#### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The areas of the Cabinet Member for Community Service's portfolio that are relevant to the Committee are as follows:

##### **Health**

- To be responsible on behalf of the Council for all health and community health matters, including the development, in conjunction with the Council's partners of the Community Health Plan.

##### **Crime and Disorder**

- To be responsible for all aspects of community safety in the Borough.

### **Social inclusion and equalities**

- To formulate and review policies to enable the enhancement of a socially inclusive society in Maidstone;
- To guide, advise and provide a strategic overview on social inclusion issues; and
- To be the Lead Cabinet Member for young people

### **Lifelong learning**

- To be the Lead Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning.

3.2 The Committee interviewed the Cabinet Member for Community Services on 13 July 2010; the relevant extract from the minutes is set out below:

“The Chairman welcomed Councillor John A Wilson, Cabinet member for Community Services, to the Meeting.

Councillor Wilson said his written statement set out his priorities, and added that he aimed to continue the community services that had been provided in the previous years. He had looked at the grants Maidstone Borough Council had given for community services the previous year and had agreed that, despite budget cuts, these would continue for the current year.

Councillor Wilson said the health problems in the Borough affected all ages, from the young to the old. He confirmed he would be looking at health problems, particularly obesity, and work with the Council’s partners to identify ways to improve the health of the Borough.

Members asked about the announcement on 9 July 2010 concerning major changes to the delivery of NHS services. Councillor Wilson said this was very new and he had not yet been able to study the proposals. He confirmed he would keep Members informed about the steps the Council would be taking to influence any changes to the health service.

Members discussed with the Cabinet Member the recent decision on the relocation of consultant-led maternity services to Pembury Hospital, they believed it was important that the full range of maternity services were provided at Maidstone hospital and that the Borough should continue to fight the proposals. Councillor Wilson said he had spoken to the MP for Maidstone and the Weald, Helen Grant, who had confirmed her support for the retention of services at Maidstone Hospital and had asked to be kept informed of developments.



In response to a question, Councillor Wilson informed Members that the neighbourhood forums were in their early stages. The plan had been to run them for at least a year, and he would not want to form a view on their effectiveness at this stage. He attended one the previous evening that had been very positive.

Councillor Wilson informed the Committee that the Safer Maidstone Partnership was now chaired by the Fire Authority. He believed a priority area for the Partnership was the issue of domestic violence. This was increasing at a time when other crimes were either levelling out or decreasing. He would be looking at this very closely and he had spoken to Helen Grant about the issue. She had confirmed she was willing to assist if required.

The Chairman thanked Councillor John A Wilson for assisting the Committee and confirmed the Committee would work closely with him in the coming year.

**Resolved:** That the Cabinet Member for Community Services' plans and priorities for 2010-11 be noted."

- 3.4 The Committee could choose not to interview or receive written updates from the Cabinet Member however in doing so they would not be fulfilling the crucial role of holding the executive to account.

#### **4. Impact on Corporate Objectives**

- 4.1 The Committee should seek to review whether the Cabinet Member's priorities for his portfolio are aligned to the Council's corporate objectives as set out in the strategic plan.

## **Interview with the Cabinet Member for Community Services – priorities and outcomes for the year**

Portfolio Priorities for 2010-11 were:

- Improve social, economic and environmental outcomes for communities in priority areas.
- Improve the health of people living in the borough and reduce health inequalities
- Make people feel safer where they live.
- Engage communities so people have the opportunity to participate and have a real say in what happens in their local areas.

In July 2010, the Borough Council restructured its social inclusion team, including the roles of the Healthy Lifestyles Co-ordinator, Community Planning, Arts Development, Sports and Play and Youth Development teams into a single delivery and commissioning arm, the Community Development team. This team is part of a new **Community Partnerships** section that is responsible for developing and implementing the Sustainable Community Strategy and managing the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and its delivery groups. A restructure of the existing **Community Safety Unit** is currently underway and aims to further streamline the Community Partnerships service and the way the Borough Council delivers and commissions its community cohesion and development programme.

Since 2009, the health prevention work undertaken by the Borough Council's Community Development team has been funded externally by the Primary Care Trust. The funding supports a programme of healthy weight, mental health, wellbeing and community cohesion. In 2010/11, £158,093.88 was allocated to Maidstone Borough Council to deliver services for the Maidstone Borough Prevention Strategy. 60% of this budget was to deliver healthy weight programmes to tackle obesity for both adults and families in the locality. The remaining 40% was to deliver wellbeing and community based programmes including:

- Older people and vulnerable adults wellbeing and mental health
- Younger people wellbeing and mental health

At the half year, 127 people had participated on the weight loss programmes or 37% of the whole year target. Projections for the end of year are that 86% of the target of 320 participants will be achieved. However, while numbers are lower than anticipated – particularly at the leisure centre – weight loss outcomes for those participating are being achieved. Given that the programme started late these are positive figures. Families with children identified with weight problems have been able to access a specific programme, with referrals from local GP's, occupational health, school nurses and the hospital. Mental health and wellbeing for older people has been addressed by the provision of a counselling service for the over 50's in partnership with Age Concern and Brighter Futures and MIND co-ordinate the project which provided qualified counsellors throughout the borough.

Following on from Community Development's funding evaluation and future options report, submitted to the Primary Care Trust in December 2010, further funding of £154,100 has been agreed for the period 2011/12.

The Community Development team is updating its strategy to support new and existing programmes, which are well established and have a strong focus on achieving positive health outcomes whether it is to increase physical activity such as the Hotfoot play scheme and sports camp or the objectives of the new town centre Switch youth café which are to make interventions to address sexual health, smoking, drinking and drugs. The strategy will also address a range of youth diversionary activities to address anti-social behaviour by young people, to promote positive behaviour by young people and avoid them becoming victims of crime.

Through the Maidstone Local Strategy Partnership (LSP), I have supported two priority issues, **domestic abuse** and **road safety** (killed and seriously injured).

The costs and impact of domestic abuse are significant in both financial and human terms. Using the latest available data, Maidstone currently has the fourth (of 12) highest total numbers of domestic violence incidents in the county. Repeat victim (people who experience more than one incidence of domestic violence) numbers in Maidstone are also the fourth highest in the county and are higher than the Kent average.

The costs and impact of road collisions (killed and seriously injured) are significant in both financial and human terms. Maidstone is a large district in size with the majority of crashes located in the town centre and arterial routes leading to and from the town. Maidstone has amongst the highest population (total) for any district in Kent. Maidstone had the highest number of casualties in all Kent roads in 2009 (705). The number of killed and seriously injured (KSI) was 64 in 2009. Although figures are decreasing, they are still amongst the highest in the county. Maidstone has recorded a high proportion of people travelling to work by car and this is reflected in the statistics, as the district again recorded the highest number of car user casualties in 2009 (510). Maidstone has also recorded the highest number of 17-24 year old casualties in the last 3 years and an increased number of child casualties over the same period. Crashes involving 17-24 year old casualties are spread throughout the district, when looking specifically at the 15 KSI crashes these are split evenly between the built up and no build up areas, 47% occurred on 30mph roads. Powered two wheeler crashes in Maidstone make up 10% of the county's total. Whilst there are a high number of P2W crashes in the Maidstone town centre, they are also located on the strategic routes into/out of the town centre, particularly the A20, A229 and A274.

To support these priority issues, two LSP stakeholder events have been held in the borough in the past quarter attracting more than 130 attendees. A series of recommendations were made as a result of these events and are being actioned through the LSP's Safer Maidstone Partnership delivery group.

The priority actions for **Domestic Abuse** are:

- mapping current domestic abuse services in the borough to identify gaps and opportunities for commissioning/decommissioning and redirecting resources

- setting out requirements to ensure effective domestic services based on best practice are in place across the borough
- making links to services and processes identified as best practice
- provision of a One Stop Shop in Maidstone
- implementing a standard risk assessment form to be used by all agencies
- improving how agencies share information to avoid gaps/duplication
- improving early intervention
- identifying and redirecting resources to make better use of voluntary sector
- signing up all relevant partners within the LSP to increase targets on all cases
- identifying and redirecting resources for tackling repeat offenders
- improving and providing ongoing training for practitioners
- launching a domestic abuse website
- ensuring domestic abuse is acknowledged as a crime

The priority actions for **Road Safety** (KSIs) are:

- Review the actions and recommendations outlined in the 'Fit for the Road' Maidstone Road Safety Review, published by the Borough Council in 2009
- Proactively target young drivers and drivers of two-wheeled vehicles
- Encourage LSP partners to promote road safety amongst their employees
- Promote compulsory road safety education
- Engage with the business community (which often includes young drivers)
- Develop a joint action plan with partners
- Develop a joint communications and community engagement strategy with partners
- Focus campaigns on discouraging drink driving and using mobile phones
- Create a bespoke problem profile on KSI's in the Maidstone borough
- Seek 'buy in' from the hospitals, A&E, Primary Care Trust and GPs
- Support young driver training

In October, the Borough Council undertook a review of the Borough Council's **Service Level Agreements** with the voluntary and community sector to evaluate how their funding has been used, whether the services provided on the council's behalf have met their objectives and what outcomes have been achieved and; to consult individually with each organisation to discuss the Government's spending review decision (announced in November 2010) and the anticipated reductions in the central government grant to local authorities. Overall, the council expected to make overall cost savings of between 20-25%, with the funding to all 13 voluntary and community organisations not being immune to reductions. All organisations were invited to individually feedback into the review and consultation. As most service level agreements are due to begin the first year of their new contract on 1 April 2011, this has allowed the council to work with each organisations to negotiate changes to the services provided within the contracts to reflect the reductions in funding.

Negotiations are currently underway to upgrade the **MBC CCTV** system and I have decided that it should be put out to tender, having listened to the views of all the stakeholders involved.

I am also in consultation with Parish Councils to review the system for administering **Concurrent Functions**.

## Maidstone Borough Council

### Partnership and Well-Being Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 12 April 2011

#### Future Work Programme 2011-12

**Report of:** Overview & Scrutiny Officer

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Committee are invited to consider items for the Overview and Scrutiny work programme 2011-2012.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Committee suggests items for next year's Overview and Scrutiny work programme.
- 2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be meeting in June 2011 to agree their work programmes for the next municipal year. At each Committee meeting Members will consider the work programme suggestions from officers, members of the public, Councillors and the 2010/11 Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

#### **3. Future Work Programme**

- 3.1 Topics for the work programme must not include individual complaints or have been reviewed in the two years previously. Reviews carried out by Overview and Scrutiny in the last two municipal years have included:

- Customer Service Gateway
- Rural Economy
- Securing Water Supplies
- Obesity
- Domestic Violence
- Sustainable Communities Act
- Railways
- Junk Mail
- Disabled Facilities Grants
- Mental Health Services (joint with Tunbridge Wells)
- Best Value Review of waste and recycling; and
- Overview and Scrutiny Function.

- 3.2 The Committee could choose not to consider items for 2011-12 however this would mean that a valuable opportunity to suggest items from experienced scrutiny members would be lost.

#### **4. Impact on Corporate Objectives**

- 4.1 The Committee will consider, as part of the formal work programme planning process, whether potential items meet the council's corporate objectives.
- 4.2 The Strategic Plan sets the council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the council's priorities. Actions to deliver these key objectives may therefore include work that the Committee will consider over the next year.

## **Strategic Priorities**

### **1. For Maidstone to have a growing economy**

#### **Outcomes by 2015:**

- a transport network that supports the local economy.
- a growing economy with rising employment, catering for a range of skill sets to meet the demands of the local economy.

### **2. For Maidstone to be a decent place to live**

#### **Outcomes by 2015:**

- decent, affordable housing in the right places across a range of tenures.
- continues to be a clean and attractive environment for people who live in and visit the Borough.

### **3. Corporate and Customer Excellence**

#### **Outcomes by 2015:**

- residents are not disadvantaged because of where they live or who they are, vulnerable people are assisted and the level of deprivation is reduced.
- the Council will continue to have value for money services that residents are satisfied with.