

# AGENDA

## SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING



Date: Thursday 30 April 2015  
Time: 2.00 pm  
Venue: Room 6A, Maidstone House.



Overview and Scrutiny

Membership:

Councillors: Butler, English, Mrs Gooch, D Mortimer (Vice-Chairman), Paterson, Springett, Mrs Stockell and J.A. Wilson (Chairman)

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Page No.

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| <b>1. Apologies</b>                                     |               |
| <b>2. Notification of Visiting Members</b>              |               |
| <b>3. Disclosures by Members or Officers</b>            |               |
| <b>4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 March 2015.</b> | <b>1 - 3</b>  |
| <b>5. Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.</b>    | <b>4 - 24</b> |

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact Orla Sweeney on 01622 602524**. To find out more about the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, please visit [www.maidstone.gov.uk/osc](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/osc)

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**Issued on 22 April 2015**

*Alison Broom*

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

# Agenda Item 4

## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Scrutiny Coordinating Committee

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH 2015

**Present:** Councillor J.A. Wilson (Chairman), and  
Councillors Butler, English, Mrs Gooch, D Mortimer,  
Paterson and Springett

33. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies had been received from Councillor Mrs Stockell.

34. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

35. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS OR OFFICERS

There were no disclosures.

36. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2014

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2015 be agreed and duly signed by the Chairman.

37. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION ACTION IMPLEMENTATION  
PLANS (SCRAIPS) UPDATE

The Committee considered the Scrutiny Committee Recommendation Action Implementation Plans (SCRAIPs) report for the year to date.

The Committee was asked to highlight the recommendations or topics that required further investigation or a response. The following items were highlighted by the relevant Chairman and/or Vice-Chairman.

Community Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- An update on the Play Area Strategy was overdue.

Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee

The following SCRAIPs had not been responded to by the responsible officer:

- ECD.150127.107.3 The Head of Environment and Public Realm reviews the process for reporting major noise disturbances that happen out of hours.
- ECD.150127.107.4 The Head of Environment and Public Realm circulates a guidance note to members regarding procedures for reporting major noise disturbances.

Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- An update on the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) Planning Shared Service performance targets.

The Committee was informed that the response to the two outstanding recommendations for the Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been followed up on with the responsible officer.

It was agreed that brief updates on the Play Area Strategy and the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership should be given at the next meeting of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee. The appropriate Officers and Cabinet Members should be invited for two, sequential, half hour slots.

**RESOLVED: that** updates on the Play Area Strategy and the Mid Kent improvement Partnership (MKIP) Planning Shared Service performance targets should be given at the next meeting of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee. The appropriate Officers and Cabinet Members should be invited for two, sequential, half hour slots.

38. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered the Overview and Scrutiny annual report. It was felt that as this would be the final annual report, the report should include a final section explaining what would happen next in terms of the Council's governance arrangements. The Committee agreed that this section should include a list of the topics and issues that the current Committee's feel remain of the upmost importance and relevance for Maidstone. Members made a recommendation that the new Policy and Resources Committee considers the topics as part of its work programme in the next Municipal Year.

It was agreed that each Chairman would email their respective Committee members asking them to put forward topics for inclusion in this section. A draft of this report would be brought back to the Coordinating Committee's next meeting.

Each Chairman would write an introduction to the report, giving an overview of the 2014-15 year for their Committee.

**RESOLVED:** that

1. The Overview and Scrutiny annual report should include the following:
  - a. A final section to explain what will happen next in terms of the Council's governance arrangements.
  - b. A list the topics and issues that the current Committee's feel remain of the upmost importance and relevance for Maidstone.
  - c. A recommendation that the new Policy and Resources Committee considers the topics as part of its work programme in the next Municipal Year.
2. The Chairman of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee to write an introduction to the Annual Report, providing an overview of the past year for their Committee.

39. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its future work programme.

It was agreed that a meeting should be arranged so that updates on the Play Area Strategy and the Mid Kent improvement Partnership (MKIP) Planning Shared Service performance targets could be given and the appropriate Officers and Cabinet Members should be invited for two, sequential, half hour slots.

Members recommended that the final draft of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report should be brought back to the Coordinating Committee to be signed off.

**RESOLVED:** that

1. A meeting be arranged so that updates on the Play Area Strategy and the Mid Kent improvement Partnership (MKIP) Planning Shared Service performance targets could be given and the appropriate Officers and Cabinet Members should be invited for two, sequential, half hour slots.
2. The final draft of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report be brought back to the Coordinating Committee to be signed off.

40. DURATION OF MEETING.

10.00am to 10.30am

## **Maidstone Borough Council**

### **Scrutiny Coordinating Committee**

**Thursday 30 April 2015**

#### **Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual report.**

**Report of:** Orla Sweeney, Overview and Scrutiny Officer

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Coordinating Committee has responsibility for producing the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.
- 1.2 At its meeting on 11 March 2015 the Committee agreed the style and structure of the report.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee consider its draft report and recommendations, making amendments as appropriate.
- 2.2 That the Committee give delegated authority to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to complete the draft report for submission to the appropriate body.

#### **3. Impact on Corporate Objectives**

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against all the Council's priorities:
  - Corporate and Customer Excellence;
  - For Maidstone to have a growing economy; and
  - For Maidstone to be a decent place to live.

#### **4. Relevant Documents**

- 4.1 Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report (Appendix A)

#### **To follow**

#### **5. Background Documents**

- 5.1 None

2014-2015

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

5



## **Contents**

## **Page**

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee Membership 2014-15**

**1**

**Foreword from the Scrutiny Chairmen**

**2**

**Introduction - What is Scrutiny?**

**3**

**Key Outcomes**

**4**

**Training**

**5**

**The Future...?**

**6**

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## Overview and Scrutiny Committee Membership 2014-15

<b>Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services</b>	<b>Economic and Commercial Development</b>	<b>Community, Environment and Housing</b>	<b>Planning, Transport and Development</b>
<b>Chairman: Mrs Gooch</b>	<b>Chairman: Mrs Paterson</b>	<b>Chairman: JA Wilson</b>	<b>Chairman: Mrs Springett</b>
<b>Vice Chairman: Black</b>	<b>Vice Chairman: Butler</b>	<b>Vice Chairman: Butler</b>	<b>Vice Chairman: English</b>
<b>Mrs Stockell</b>	<b>Cuming</b>	<b>Mrs Parvin</b>	<b>Ross</b>
<b>Mrs Grigg</b>	<b>Hinder</b>	<b>Round</b>	<b>Round</b>
<b>Long</b>	<b>Hogg</b>	<b>Mrs Stockell</b>	<b>De Wiggondene</b>
<b>Pickett</b>	<b>Fissenden</b>	<b>Mrs Joy</b>	<b>Chittenden</b>
<b>Ash</b>	<b>Powell</b>	<b>Vizzard</b>	<b>Willis</b>
<b>Mrs Edwards-Daem</b>	<b>Harper</b>	<b>Munford</b>	<b>Mrs Gooch</b>
<b>Butler</b>	<b>Mrs Wilson</b>	<b>Sargeant</b>	<b>Powell</b>



## Foreword from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairmen



Cllr Fay Gooch  
Barming

### **Councillor Fay Gooch, Chairman Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2014-15**

We look back on this 2014-15 year with no small sense of pride and achievement.

We initiated Joint Scrutiny Meetings with representative from the boroughs of Swale and Tunbridge Wells and formed a Task & Finish to look into the governance arrangements of the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership and its communications. After a huge amount of evidence gathering within a punishingly short space of time, the resulting 12-recommendation report was very well received and is being implemented. We look to our new

Policy & Resources Committee to select Maidstone's representatives on the Joint Scrutiny Meeting where the momentum will continue after the May 2015 elections to look into the Planning Shared Support Service.

Meanwhile on Maidstone Borough territory, we successfully continued our day job of regularly monitoring and scrutinising complaints reports and key performance indicator reports. We diligently input and exercised our role as 'critical friend' to principle policy documents. We initiated a 'Making the Most of Meetings' all-member workshop on questioning and challenging skills, which will stand us in good stead for the forthcoming change in governance arrangements.

The 'Making the Most of Meetings' all-member workshop we initiated will stand us in good stead for the forthcoming change in governance arrangements. The ability to question and challenge are skills which will easily transfer from scrutiny to the new committee system, and will enable interesting and productive meetings to continue.

Our cross-party Budget Working Group continued to demonstrate its added value and importance. For example it provided a sounding board for early-stage consideration of

commercial projects, which in turn prompted the Group to initiate Member Development Sessions on Strategic Risk. The Group also considered short term / long term options for the Local Tax Discount Scheme, and for potential use of the Budget Underspend.

"We diligently input and exercised our role as 'critical friend' to principle policy documents. We initiated a 'Making the Most of Meetings' all-member workshop on questioning and challenging skills..."

I thank most warmly my colleagues on the Scrutiny Committee for their careful attention and considered input during this municipal year of 2014-15. I also thank most gratefully the help and support of Support Officer Poppy Brewer and her predecessor Christian Scade, without whom the meetings could not have taken place.



**Councillor Jenni Paterson, Chairman Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2014-15**

The pressing challenge for Maidstone Borough Council during the past few years and quite extensively during 2014/15 has been the delivery of a Local Plan covering 2011-2031. Alongside the delivery of the Local Plan there needs to be an Integrated Transport Strategy and an Economic Development Strategy – this also included a qualitative report into the availability of employment land. The officers and the committee members have worked to ensure that progress has been made towards the Economic Development Strategy but this is still on going and will need to be completed during 2015/2016.

The Committee became interested in reviewing the Night Time Economy which evolved into an investigation into Maidstone's Twilight Economy. It was undecided as to whether there was a case to promote the Twilight Economy in Maidstone. It was after interviewing witnesses and undertaking site visits that it became clear to members that there were a number of issues which if addressed could promote Maidstone's Twilight Economy. The

Committee's Twilight Economy Review was presented to Cabinet in March 2015 and it was well received and officers and committee members were thanked for their hard work.

Members have been aware for some time of both national and local criticism relating to the perceived lack of skills of young people entering the workplace. With this in mind the Committee decided to review what careers guidance is offered to students with the Maidstone borough.

The review is still underway at the time of writing this. Many witnesses have been interviewed and learning establishments, together with a major career fair, have been visited. Councillor Marin Round who has expertise in the subject will feed back to the Economic Development department to aid the skills and employability agenda. He was co-opted to the Committee for this review.

In addition to the two reviews the Committee has taken part in a co-located, simultaneous meeting with the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the approach to employability land and the approach to employability land within the Local Plan and to consider the release of the Draft Economic Development Strategy for consultation. For most of us it was the first experience of this type of meeting format and I think the jury is still out on the benefits gained.

We have also considered and made recommendations on the draft Commercialisation Strategy, draft Festivals and Events policy,

Maidstone enterprise hub and reviews of business cases.

"...it became clear to members that there were a number of issues which if addressed could promote Maidstone's Twilight Economy."

As chair I must thank members of the Committee for their patience and support throughout the year. Everyone has engaged positively in the meeting and I particularly appreciate the support of members who have been able to attend the many evidence gathering sessions outside of formal meetings.

None of this would have been easily achieved without the exceptional help of Sam Bailey who has supported and guided the Committee for the majority of the year. On behalf of the Committee I would like to offer him our grateful thanks. Thanks must also go to Orla Sweeney for her help and competent take over for the last two months.

Finally on behalf of us all I hope that the Committee has made a positive contribution to the decision making process and that our recommendations and findings will not be lost as we move forward to the new Committee system of governance.



**Councillor Val Springett, Chairman  
Planning and Development Overview  
and Scrutiny Committee 2014-15**

This has probably been one of the most challenging years for the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee. We started the year with a list of suggested topics to review but the committee's work has been dominated by the Local Plan. We have reviewed some pretty large and detailed documents this year, which are part of the Local Plan process. Where our housing sites should be allocated was probably the most challenging issue, and the agenda item to discuss the draft proposed housing sites was, I think, a record breaking one, extending to in excess of 19 hours over three separate meetings. Scrutiny did, what Scrutiny was intended to do, and reviewed Officer recommendations in conjunction with the views of residents. We listened to the views of Parish Councils, Community groups, and Borough Council Ward members to ensure everyone had their say, and this resulted in some well considered recommendations.

Alongside the Local Plan issues, we also undertook a review of Transport in Maidstone

- alternatives to using the car. This also turned out to be a rather large review topic, which generated a lot of interest amongst both the press and community groups. Our report has just been published and will hopefully be used as a valuable evidence base when future transport options are being looked at. In addition to this, it is proposed to establish a platform going forward, to continue researching and reviewing future transport options that may ease congestion in the Borough in the coming years.

Some of the topics suggested for Scrutiny to review during the year, were not covered due to time constraints, but these will be carried forward as suggested topics for the new committee to look at.

"This has probably been one of the most challenging years for the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee."



**Councillor John Wilson, Chairman  
Community, Environment and  
Housing Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee 2014-15**

*(To be added)*

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## Introduction

### What *is* Scrutiny?

All local authorities operating a Cabinet and Scrutiny model have a Cabinet made up of the Leader of the Council and up to nine members of his Group. All executive decisions (i.e. those needed to implement the Policy Framework and Budget approved by the County Council) are taken by the Cabinet.

Overview and Scrutiny bodies are not "decision making" bodies but are bodies which monitor and influence those that do. The Overview and Scrutiny role, carried out by non-Cabinet members, is designed to support the work of the Council in the following ways:

- Reviewing and scrutinising decisions taken by the Cabinet (sometimes known as acting as a "critical friend");
- Considering aspects of the Council's performance;
- Assisting in research, policy review and development;
- Involving itself with external organisations operating in the borough to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working; and

- Providing a means of involving the community in the Council's work.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee comprises of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of all four Overview and Scrutiny Committees. It has overall responsibility for Overview and Scrutiny including terms of reference, budget and progress of reviews. It is also responsible for addressing cross-cutting issues and to prevent duplication in the work of individual committees.

The Committee's scrutinise the Council's functions in relation to the relevant departments, as appropriate to each Committee's term of reference which are each aligned to Cabinet Member portfolios. The Community, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny and keeps a watching brief on health and well-being matters arising, for example, Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Health and Well-Being Board.

The Budget Working Group was a recommendation of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 'the Council as a business' review undertaken during the 2011/12 Municipal Year. It was felt that a cross-

The Local Government Act 2000 specifies that "executive arrangements by a local authority must ensure that their overview and scrutiny committee has power...

(a) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken...

(b) to make reports or recommendations to the authority ...

(e) to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area." (Local Government Act 2000, S.21 (2)).

party Budget Working Group, appointed from the membership of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee would help improve the Committee's understanding of on-going budgetary issues and allow the Committee opportunity for greater input in developing the budget strategy and the budget setting process looking in depth at certain aspects. This has continued to date. For the 2014-15 Municipal Year this group comprised of members of the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Decision Making Structure at Maidstone Borough Council

**Regulatory Committees**

**Audit**

**Planning**

**Licencing**

**Council**

**Cabinet**

**Leader of the Council**

**Cabinet Members**

**Overview and Scrutiny**

- **Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services**
- **Economic and Commercial Development**
- **Planning, Transport and Development**
- **Community, Environment and Housing**

Main reporting relationship



## Key Outcomes from work undertaken during the past year

### Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee terms of reference align with the Corporate and Customer Excellence priority, and provide responsibility for holding the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Customer Services to account, the Committee considered financial, performance, corporate governance and communication data in order to produce recommendations to the benefit of Maidstone's customers. The work of the Committee encompassed:

- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Local Council Tax Discount Scheme
- Use of Revenue Underspend
- Cabinet Member Priorities
- Annual Performance Report
- Complaints Reports
- Equality Objectives
- Key Performance Indicator Monitoring

- Strategic Plan Updates
- Budget Strategy

#### Local Council Tax Discount Scheme Working Group

Workshops were held to allow Members to dig deeper into the implications of financial decisions within the calculation of the Local Council Tax Discount Scheme, and this allowed Committee to make thoroughly researched and quality recommendations to Cabinet regarding the options available.

#### Budget Working Group

The Committee supported the continuation of the Budget Working Group. Originally constituted and chaired by Members of the Committee, the Group extended invitations to all Members in order to create a dynamic environment for discussion and include a breadth of perspectives, and it enjoyed a sizable attendance from across the Council. Subjects undertaken by the Group included:

- Budget Strategy 2015-16 Onwards
- Fees and Charges Data
- Capital Programme

The Group found itself working concurrently with the progression of the Commercialisation programme, and took the opportunity to look at the Commercial Projects schedule. Drawing upon the acumen and wide ranging experience of the Members, the Group became a valuable sounding board for commercial project development.

#### MKIP Joint Task and Finish Group

Having forged a relationship with the Scrutiny Committees at Tunbridge Wells and Swale Borough Councils in the previous year, a productive collaboration commenced. Responding to queries raised by Members across all three authorities, a co-located meeting of the three Committees in June 2014 implemented a joint task and finish group to investigate and report back on the governance and communications arrangements within Mid Kent Improvement Partnership and Mid Kent Services.

This detailed examination heard evidence from:

- MKS Director and MKIP Programme Manager
- Heads of Mid Kent Services
- Monitoring and Section 151 Officers
- Heads of Service on the client side
- MKIP Board
- Heads of Communication at TWBC and MBC
- Ed Hammond, Centre for Public Scrutiny
- Paul Corney, Head of Anglia Revenue Partnership

- Dr Wim Van Vuuren, Programme Director for Shared Service PGDip, Canterbury Christ Church University

The recommendations of the Group are yet to be considered by the Cabinet Committees of the three authorities, however subsequent to the review a new quarterly MKIP newsletter circulated to all staff and Members at Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells has commenced, based upon the reviews findings on communication and awareness within the organisation. As such this collaborative, joint-working approach has proven fruitful and the three Committees have expressed the desire that this work continues into the next Municipal year.

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<b>Formal meetings</b>	<b>12</b>
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<b>Witnesses interviewed</b>	9
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<b>Officers interviewed</b>	12
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<b>Total quality recommendations made</b>	12
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<b>Site visits</b>	0
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<b>One off topics</b>	1
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## **Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

The Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee holds to account the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development. The Committee's terms of reference mirror the areas of the council within the remit of the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development. This remit is closely aligned to the Council's priority: 'For Maidstone to have a growing economy.'

One of the first pieces of pre-decision scrutiny carried out by the committee was of the Commercialisation Strategy. Marcus Lawler, the Commercial Projects Manager, outlined the council's approach to developing, and improving, commercial services in order to provide other services to residents in the face of continued funding reductions. The committee recommended the strategy for adoption. Proposed commercial projects under the strategy were also considered by the committee throughout the year. For example proposals to charge for parking in Mote Park, creating a pet crematorium and regenerating areas of land under council ownership were all considered by the committee.

Following the Events and Festivals Review from the previous year, the council's Events and Festivals Policy was brought to the committee. Laura Case, the Cultural Services Manager, was able to show the committee where their hard work had been taken into account when drafting the strategy.

Another key piece of work that the committee were involved in the was the Enterprise Hub. This piece of work had been ongoing for two years and the committee were involved in making recommendations at each stage of the project. The committee showed their strong support for such a facility by recommending that a smaller scale Enterprise Hub be set up on council premises to test the viability of the project. This is something that has happened, with the Enterprise Hub scheduled to be set up in the Gateway Terrace in the latter part of 2015.

The committee also had one other large piece of pre-decision scrutiny, which was the Economic Development Strategy. This strategy was important for determining employment site land allocations for the local plan. Therefore the topic was considered in a joint meeting with the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October. The committees made recommendations to the cabinet member in order to ensure appropriate protection for the

environment of the borough, whilst also ensuring there was appropriate land allocations for employment sites.

The committee chose to undertake two smaller scale reviews for this year. The first was a review of the 'Twilight Economy'; and the second was a review of careers advice, education and guidance.

The Twilight Economy Review sought to find out whether there was a will to grow the Twilight Economy in Maidstone, and if this was the case finding out what had been successful elsewhere. For the purpose of the review, the 'Twilight Economy' was defined as 'Economic activity that occurs in the town centre after ordinary shop and workplace closing times (around 5.30pm) but before the usual pub closing times (around 11.30pm).' The committee spoke to stakeholders in the Twilight Economy, visited Maidstone during twilight economy hours and also visited Canterbury to see what they had done in this area. The review came up with a number of recommendations that would improve the twilight economy, many of which were accepted by the relevant Cabinet Members.

As a result of engagement work carried out for the review, the Night Time Economy Forum asked the committee to consider an item on use of PA systems in the night time economy. This item was considered in January, and led to recommendations being made to cabinet

members and heads of service in order to minimise future complaints from residents in the town centre about noise from the night time economy.

The second review was regarding careers advice and guidance in the borough. Following an update from the Economic Development Officer who was working on the council's skills and employability programme it was identified that skills and employability provision may be an area that the committee could add value.

The Committee interviewed a wide range of witnesses from

<b>Formal meetings</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Witnesses interviewed</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Officers interviewed</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Total recommendations made</b>	
<b>Site visits</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>One off topics</b>	<b>3</b>

## Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference align with the priorities, for Maidstone to be a decent place to live and for Maidstone to have a growing economy. The Committee has responsibility for holding the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development to account.

Throughout the municipal year the Committee's work focussed mainly on the preparation of the Draft Local Plan 2011-2031 and looked at the following:

- Updates on the Integrated Transport Strategy
- Validation and summary of representations from the consultation on the draft Local Plan
- Review of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- Cabinet Member Priorities for 2014-2015
- Design South East report on the consultation events for the Draft Local Plan
- Community Infrastructure Levy – preliminary draft charging schedule

- Implications arising from a review of the draft Economic Development Strategy, Qualitative Study on Employment Sites and key employment issues arising from the local plan representations
- Draft Local Plan Development Management Policies – representations from consultation
- Results of the Qualitative Landscape Study- progress update
- Results of the Qualitative Agricultural Land Classification – progress update
- Draft Local Plan new and deleted site allocations for further public consultation
- Revisit of Invicta Barracks and its inclusion in the Draft Local Plan

### Review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car

Alongside the scrutiny of the policies for the draft Local Plan the Committee carried out a review of transport in Maidstone and looked at alternatives to using a car to get into Maidstone town to ease congestion.

The aim of the review was to explore how a reduction in our reliance on the car could be achieved. It was decided the report should look at what alternative modes of transport are currently available to residents within the borough of Maidstone, and how improvements could be made to encourage more people to use them.

The research undertaken included interviewing witnesses from transport providers and expert authority officers, to keen cyclists, walkers and service users.

Some of the main findings included:

- Improvements to communication regarding bus times and timetable disruptions, reliability and poor frequency of bus services were the main issues affecting many service users, especially school children on certain routes. It was recommended better methods of communicating road closures would assist bus companies in maintaining schedules and provide a service users could rely on;
- Funding opportunities for Parish Council's to improve transport links and facilities within their areas needed to be published;
- Better, safer cycle path provision in all areas and interconnectivity with bus routes in more rural locations was needed - some parish councils, such as Coxheath, had included this provision in their emerging Neighbourhood Plans;
- Parking availability and fare costs were all factors putting residents off using the rail network;

- It was established that public transport user groups were beneficial in enabling issues to be addressed more easily and Officer and Member support was beneficial. The re-establishment of the Maidstone Borough Transport User Group was recommended;
- An update of the draft Maidstone Borough Council Cycling Strategy, dated 2012 was recommended, as well as the establishment of a Maidstone Cyclists Forum;
- Specific use of Section 106 monies would assist in enabling bus services, cycle and footpaths to be created alongside new developments;

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<b>Formal meetings</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Witnesses interviewed</b>	44
<b>Officers interviewed</b>	23
<b>Total quality recommendations made</b>	57
<b>Site visits</b>	0
<b>One off topics</b>	1

There is still a long way to go to achieving reduced car usage in Maidstone. However, it is hoped the recommendations from the review report will lead to improvements to alternative transport and future increased usage as access, reliability and costs are improved. The recommendations from the report will be followed up by the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee from new municipal year.

## Community, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Formerly the Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in July 2014 the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee agreed to change the terms of reference for this committee. Responsibility for Leisure Services was moved to the Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The revisions were made due to portfolio changes in relation to housing responsibilities and various restructures across the Council.

The Community, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference align with the priority, for Maidstone to be a decent place to live. The Committee has responsibility for holding the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing, to account.

Throughout the municipal year the Committee's work focussed on:

- The Cabinet Members' Priorities for the coming year;
- Allocations Scheme

- Regular updates on the Financial Inclusion and Troubled Families projects
- West Kent Health and Wellbeing Board
- Empty Homes Plan (2013-15)
- Recommendations from the Accessing Mental Health before the Point of Crisis review 2014-2014
- Maternity Services for the Borough
- Street Cleansing
- Refresh of the Health Inequalities Action Plan
- Affordable Housing Development programme
- Collective Switching Campaign
- Private Rented sector update
- MKIP Shared Environmental Health Service
- Housing Strategy Review
- Impact of the Welfare Reforms

### Review of Maternity Services for the Borough

During late 2010 Maternity Services at Maidstone Hospital changed from a Consultant led service to a Midwife led service. The reason for the change to services

were that staffing numbers for the number of births at both hospitals were insufficient to deliver a full range of maternity services at both sites. Therefore the midwife led and consultant led services were split between the two hospitals.

During the public consultation, carried out prior to the change, many concerns were raised. A particular concern was the journey time and route Maidstone residents would have to make to access services at Pembury Hospital in Tunbridge Wells.

The Committee decided, as the changes to the service had been in place for three years, they would review the service to establish if the concerns raised during the consultation in 2010 proved to be the case.

Before the Committee meeting on 9 December 2014, requests for service users to attend the meeting and share their experiences were published on social media and through the Maidstone Family Nurse Service. No service users came forward, however the Committee interviewed Dr Bob Bowes, Chair of the West Kent Health and Wellbeing Board and County Councillor Daley, member of Kent County Council's (KCC) Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee heard:

- At the time of the suggested changes to services, around 97% of local GPs had concerns about the changes;
- Since the changes to the service statistical analysis had shown a reduction in adverse outcomes in deliveries;

- Only one GP on the Clinical Commissioning Group had noted a negative experience of the service. This was regarding a mother who had given birth in an ambulance. However it was noted the mother did not experience any adverse outcomes as a result;
- Whilst there was concern in Maidstone regarding the need to travel to Tunbridge Wells to access a consultant led service; those in Tunbridge Wells who needed to access the midwife led service in Maidstone experienced similar travel issues;
- As a result of the concerns raised during the consultation on the changes to the maternity services, the KCC Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee had kept a close watch over the new service since the changes had been implemented, and continued to do so;
- Emergency transport (ambulances with blue lights) were rarely used to transport patients between sites. This was because when patients arrived at Maidstone Hospital they were given an early stage pre-assessment, and if appropriate were transferred to Pembury Hospital;
- Approximately 30% of first time mothers, and 12% of second time mothers were referred to the unit in Pembury;
- The unit at Maidstone was a £3 million state of the art facility delivering an excellent service;
- The roll out of the service had been considered a success, and the model piloted in Maidstone and Tunbridge

Wells had been followed elsewhere in the country where similar problems with staffing levels had been identified.

### Review of Loneliness and Isolation in the over 65s of Maidstone borough

The Committee’s review of Loneliness and Isolation in the over 65s began with a report from Kent Public Health. The report attempted to identify the profile of lonely and isolated adults and older people in the Borough and what support was provided for them.

The Committee were not satisfied that the statistics presented reflected the true picture for Maidstone as they were based on national statistics and not actual figures for the borough. This resulted in the Community Development Team undertaking to carry out a Quality of Life Survey of residents in an attempt to identify lonely and isolated residents along with establishing what services were already provided. The results of their research will be used to build strategies to tackle loneliness and isolation into the Council’s Health Inequalities Action Plan.

### Acting as the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Community, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee also has responsibility to scrutinise Crime and Disorder and meets as the Acting Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee twice each municipal year.

During the 2014-2015 municipal year the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee received reports on the following:

- Safer Maidstone Partnership
- Street Population
- Road Safety Update
- Night time economy and violent crime
- Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-2018

<b>Formal meetings</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Witnesses interviewed</b>	16
<b>Officers interviewed</b>	9
<b>Total quality recommendations made</b>	9
<b>Site visits</b>	0
<b>One off topics</b>	3

## Training Attended by Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members

Overview and Scrutiny requires a number of skills on the part of elected members. The council has an agreed training budget for members. In addition to meeting the individual training needs of elected members, the budget is also used to provide group training for councillors on Overview and Scrutiny committees.

Training undertaken throughout the year is shown in the table below:

<b>Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services</b>	<b>Economic and Commercial Development</b>	<b>Community, Environment and Housing</b>	<b>Planning, Transport and Development</b>
<b>Getting the most out of your Meetings</b>	<b>How to get the most out of your meetings</b>	<b>How to get the most out of your meetings</b>	<b>How to get the most out of your meetings</b>
<b>Equality Objectives Workshop</b>	<b>Economic Development Strategy briefing</b>	<b>Economic Development Strategy briefing</b>	<b>Economic Development Strategy briefing</b>
<b>Local Council Tax Discount Scheme workshop</b>			
<b>Commercial Projects Briefing</b>			

## The Future...?

Maidstone Borough Council will move from the current Executive function, a system of governance that includes a Leader and Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny function, to a Committee system (pursuant to Section 9KC Local Government Act 2000).

This decision was taken on 10 December 2014 at the Council meeting. Since that date, a cross-party group has worked together to decide what the new Committee system will look like and how it will work. A major piece of work juxtaposed to this is the writing of a new constitution for Council to adopt.

This will be effective from the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2015.

The members of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee for the 2014-15 Municipal Year consisted of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of each Committee. The Committee have had an overarching role within the scrutiny function and want to ensure that continuity is provided as the Council moves forward.

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### *Scrutiny topics to be considered in 2015-16*

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**Maternity Services**  
**The (draft) Economic Development Strategy**

***(To be identified by the Scrutiny Chairmen and added)***

Therefore, having consulted with all scrutiny members the following items of significant importance to Maidstone and Maidstone residents have been put forward to be noted with the recommendation of the Co-ordinating Committee that:

**“the new Policy and Resources Committee considers the topics as part of its work programme in the next Municipal Year.”**

***(Chairmen to add to this section)***



DRAFT