

## **Maidstone Borough Council**

### **Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Tuesday 1 April 2008**

#### **Unitary Status and Enhanced Two-Tier Working**

**Report of:** Senior Overview and Scrutiny Officer

#### **1. Background**

1.1 At the meeting of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 July 2007, the Leader of the Council informed Members that Councillor Julia Batt had been appointed as the Lead Member looking into the Council's unitary aspirations and enhanced two-tier working. The first task in this role was to carry out a scoping exercise highlighting what the Borough of Maidstone had to offer.

1.2 The Leader of the Council attended a further meeting of the Committee on 4 March 2008 to outline the progress that she had made over the Municipal Year 2007/08. The following extract from the draft minutes of the meeting outlines the Leader's comments on unitary status:

"In response to a question on the Council's aspirations to become a unitary authority, the Leader confirmed that work on this, led by Councillor Julia Batt, was progressing so that when the opportunity arose in the future to apply for unitary status, the Council would be in a position to do so, if it still wished to. The Leader suggested that the Council was too small to apply for unitary status alone, however none of the Council's neighbouring authorities were currently interested in this. Continued partnership working was therefore important to build relationships and trust, and to lay foundations for the future dependant upon the wishes of each individual authority. The Committee felt that feedback from Councillor Batt on this work would be of interest."

#### **2. Recommendation**

2.1 Councillor Batt will be in attendance to provide a verbal update on her work with regard to unitary status and enhanced two-tier working.

2.2 Members are recommended to consider this update and discuss with Councillor Batt the progress to date and potential further areas of investigation.