

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 FEBRUARY 2010

Present: Councillors Batt, Mrs Hinder, Marchant, Mrs Stockell, Verrall and Vizzard

Independent Persons: Mr Wright (Chairman) and Mr Powis

Parish Council Representatives: Councillor Stead

Apologies: Mrs Phillips (Independent Member) and Councillor Younger (Parish Representative)

1. **CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY PROTOCOLS**

The Committee considered a report by the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee asking that it evaluate, with a view to making a recommendation to the Council, proposed protocols for scrutiny of the Safer Maidstone Partnership. It was noted that the Police and Justice Act 2006 was introduced to increase community involvement in crime and disorder and community safety matters. The Act allowed communities to refer unresolved crime and disorder matters to the responsible authorities via Ward Councillors and Scrutiny Committees. It also increased the democratic accountability of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships through increased scrutiny powers. The Safer Maidstone Partnership was the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership for Maidstone. Each Local Authority was now required to have a "Crime and Disorder Committee". In an Authority operating Executive arrangements, this had to be an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Council, at its meeting held on 22 April 2009, agreed that the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee should take on the role of the Crime and Disorder Committee. The Home Office Guidance for the Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Matters was published in May 2009 outlining how Sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 (regarding scrutiny) should be implemented. This guidance stated that:-

"We suggest that partners and the scrutiny function at the local authority (or local authorities) might want to consider developing a short, flexible and meaningful protocol which lays down the mutual expectations of scrutiny members and partners of the community safety scrutiny process".

The draft protocols had been developed by the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman and the Co-Chairmen of the Safer Maidstone Partnership, using this guidance, and had now been approved

by the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Safer Maidstone Partnership.

RECOMMENDED: That the protocols for scrutiny of the Safer Maidstone Partnership, attached as an Appendix to this report, be approved for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.

The Standards Committee has, in accordance with Article 15.02 (a) of the Constitution, evaluated this proposed amendment and believes that its implementation will help to ensure that the aims and principles of the Constitution are given full effect as the protocols have been approved by all partners involved and will contribute to maintaining good relations between the Council and its partners as well as outlining the responsibilities and expectations of all partners to ensure the scrutiny process is positive and valuable.