

Maidstone Borough Council

Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 2 September 2008

The Balance of Power between Central and Local Government – Working Group Update

Report of: Senior Overview and Scrutiny Officer

1. Background

- 1.1 On 16 July 2008, the Communities and Local Government Select Committee issued a call for evidence regarding its latest inquiry: *The Balance of Power: Central and Local Government*. The inquiry aims to investigate issues around local government finance, devolution, local government's existing powers and the relationship between central and local government.
- 1.2 A small scrutiny member working group has been established by the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee to investigate this issue and submit evidence to the inquiry. The working group consists of:
- Councillor Batt
 - Councillor FitzGerald
 - Councillor Sherreard
 - Councillor Thick
 - Councillor F Wilson
- 1.3 The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for performing the overview and scrutiny function in relation to "all matters pertaining to the governance of the local authority" and as such is the 'parent' committee for this working group. The Committee is therefore required to approve the report of the working group for submission to Full Council.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Select Committee deadline for evidence is 29 September 2009, which gives the working group only a short time in which to produce its report. The Overview and Scrutiny Partnership Manager will, therefore, be providing a verbal update on the work of the group for Members' information.
- 2.2 The report of the working group will need to be approved by Cabinet on 10 September and Full Council on 24 September before being submitted to the Select Committee. Due to these short deadlines, it is recommended that the Committee delegates power to the Chairman to agree the final report before it is submitted to Cabinet.