

## **Maidstone Borough Council**

### **External Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Tuesday 16 September 2008**

#### **Safer Maidstone Partnership Report**

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

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 During the Municipal Year 2007-08, the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee carried out several interviews with regard to the Safer Maidstone Partnership.
- 1.2 The attached report contains a range of evidence and recommendations resulting from these interviews, and from subsequent discussions between the SMP Chairmen and the Overview and Scrutiny Section. The report was submitted, in its early stages, to the SMP Chairmen for comment, and amendments and additions were made as appropriate to ensure the accuracy and clarity of the report. Recommendation (e), as discussed below at 1.4, was a result of discussions on the early version of the report and looks to continue the tradition of innovation and best practice held by both the SMP and Overview and Scrutiny at MBC.
- 1.3 In addition, the report outlines national guidelines and best practice to assist Members in future scrutiny of the SMP. National Government is expected to introduce powers for district councils to scrutinise their local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, of which the SMP is Maidstone's, in the near future, and it is hoped that this guide would provide a useful framework for that scrutiny.
- 1.4 A key recommendation within the report is the establishment of a Safer Maidstone Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This would be a sub-Committee of the External OSC, would include a representative of each of the statutory partners of the SMP (totalling 5 members) and 5 scrutiny Members, and be chaired by an elected Member. The aim of this would be to balance in-depth knowledge of the statutory partners on the SMP with the democratic accountability that would be provided by the elected Members. This recommendation, if agreed in principle by the Committee, would need to be discussed in detail by both the Committee and the Safer Maidstone Partnership. An options report to assist these discussions is included at Appendix D of the report.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 Members are recommended to consider the Safer Maidstone Partnership report and agree this and its recommendations for submission to the SMP.