

Maidstone Borough Council

Partnership and Well Being Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 12 April 2011

End of Year Progress Update from the Cabinet Member for Community Services

Report of: Overview & Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Committee are advised to consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Community Services (Appendix A) on the progress made with the priorities set for 2010-11.
- 1.2 The Committee should consider the statement made by the Cabinet Member at the beginning of the year and ask questions with regard to progress that has been made on those issues highlighted as priorities with reference to written update (Appendix A). The Partnerships and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for holding to account those Cabinet Members whose portfolios fall within the remit of the Committee. The Cabinet Members whose portfolios relate to the Committee are the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Community Services.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee interview the Cabinet Member for Community Services with regard to progress that has been made on the priorities within his portfolio over the last municipal year.

3. Background

- 3.1 The areas of the Cabinet Member for Community Service's portfolio that are relevant to the Committee are as follows:

Health

- To be responsible on behalf of the Council for all health and community health matters, including the development, in conjunction with the Council's partners of the Community Health Plan.

Crime and Disorder

- To be responsible for all aspects of community safety in the Borough.

Social inclusion and equalities

- To formulate and review policies to enable the enhancement of a socially inclusive society in Maidstone;
- To guide, advise and provide a strategic overview on social inclusion issues; and
- To be the Lead Cabinet Member for young people

Lifelong learning

- To be the Lead Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning.

3.2 The Committee interviewed the Cabinet Member for Community Services on 13 July 2010; the relevant extract from the minutes is set out below:

“The Chairman welcomed Councillor John A Wilson, Cabinet member for Community Services, to the Meeting.

Councillor Wilson said his written statement set out his priorities, and added that he aimed to continue the community services that had been provided in the previous years. He had looked at the grants Maidstone Borough Council had given for community services the previous year and had agreed that, despite budget cuts, these would continue for the current year.

Councillor Wilson said the health problems in the Borough affected all ages, from the young to the old. He confirmed he would be looking at health problems, particularly obesity, and work with the Council’s partners to identify ways to improve the health of the Borough.

Members asked about the announcement on 9 July 2010 concerning major changes to the delivery of NHS services. Councillor Wilson said this was very new and he had not yet been able to study the proposals. He confirmed he would keep Members informed about the steps the Council would be taking to influence any changes to the health service.

Members discussed with the Cabinet Member the recent decision on the relocation of consultant-led maternity services to Pembury Hospital, they believed it was important that the full range of maternity services were provided at Maidstone hospital and that the Borough should continue to fight the proposals. Councillor Wilson said he had spoken to the MP for Maidstone and the Weald, Helen Grant, who had confirmed her support for the retention of services at Maidstone Hospital and had asked to be kept informed of developments.

In response to a question, Councillor Wilson informed Members that the neighbourhood forums were in their early stages. The plan had been to run them for at least a year, and he would not want to form a view on their effectiveness at this stage. He attended one the previous evening that had been very positive.

Councillor Wilson informed the Committee that the Safer Maidstone Partnership was now chaired by the Fire Authority. He believed a priority area for the Partnership was the issue of domestic violence. This was increasing at a time when other crimes were either levelling out or decreasing. He would be looking at this very closely and he had spoken to Helen Grant about the issue. She had confirmed she was willing to assist if required.

The Chairman thanked Councillor John A Wilson for assisting the Committee and confirmed the Committee would work closely with him in the coming year.

Resolved: That the Cabinet Member for Community Services' plans and priorities for 2010-11 be noted."

- 3.4 The Committee could choose not to interview or receive written updates from the Cabinet Member however in doing so they would not be fulfilling the crucial role of holding the executive to account.

4. Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 4.1 The Committee should seek to review whether the Cabinet Member's priorities for his portfolio are aligned to the Council's corporate objectives as set out in the strategic plan.