

# **Maidstone Borough Council**

## **External Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Tuesday 16 June 2009**

### **Work Programming 2009-10**

**Report of:** Acting Overview and Scrutiny Manager

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 On Wednesday 27 May 2009, Members participated in a workshop to develop ideas for the 2009-10 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes. Ideas were received from residents, community and voluntary sector groups and officers, and these were considered alongside Members' own ideas at the workshop by each Committee.
- 1.2 The following ideas were identified by the members of the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee present at the workshop as topics they wished to review in 2009-10:
  - Holiday Play Schemes
  - Railways
  - Sustainable Communities Act
  - Members' Expenses
- 1.3 The Sustainable Communities Act and Members' Expenses both fall under the remit of the Corporate Services OSC and have therefore been scoped and presented for consideration to that Committee. Scoping reports for holiday play schemes and railways are attached at Appendices A and B respectively.
- 1.4 The Mental Health Working Group is a sub-group of the External OSC and, as agreed by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, will complete its report by December 2009.
- 1.5 The External OSC, at its meeting on 17 March 2009, agreed to receive an update on Pembury Hospital during 2009-10, and agreed to review Access to NHS GPs; Members should now consider whether they still wish to take these issues forward.

#### **2. Setting the Work Programme**

- 4.1 One-off reviews can be programmed into the work programme at any time. In particular, at least one interview with the Safer Maidstone Partnership must take place to fulfil the Council's obligations under the Police and Justice Act 2006. In recent years, representatives of the West Kent PCT and the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust have attended at least one committee meeting each year to update Members on developments in local healthcare – this could be incorporated with the update on Pembury Hospital as mentioned at 1.5.

- 4.4 Due to limited capacity within the Scrutiny Section (particularly post-July 2009 as Victoria King will be leaving and it is currently unlikely that the budget will allow her to be replaced; the Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Manager returns from maternity leave in January 2010), only two working groups can be supported at one time (one for each officer). The Acting Overview and Scrutiny Manager will be supporting the Mental Health Working Group until December 2009, so any further working groups for the Corporate Services and External OSCs cannot begin until after this. If Members feel that another working group should take precedence over the Mental Health Working Group, this should be referred to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee which will discuss which working groups should take priority.
- 4.5 The complete work programme does not need to be drawn up immediately; Members are recommended to allow some flexibility in the work programme to allow for new issues to arise.
- 4.5 The following work programme outlines the current organisation of work for the Committee for 2009-10:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Items to be considered</b>
27 May 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman</li> </ul>
16 June 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview with Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Services – priorities for the year</li> </ul>
14 July 2009	
11 August 2009	
15 September 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime Rates in the Borough</li> </ul>
13 October 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Children’s Services Partnerships Update</li> </ul>
10 November 2009	
8 December 2009	
12 January 2010	
9 February 2010	
9 March 2010	
13 April 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview with Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Services – Progress Over the Year</li> </ul>

### **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Committee is recommended to discuss which issues it wishes to consider during the municipal year 2009-10, and to establish when these reviews will take place throughout the year.

<b>Name of Review: Holiday Play Schemes</b>
<p><b>What are the objectives and desired outcomes of the review</b></p> <p>To consider all of the schemes offered by the Council to check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best value</li> <li>• Whether they cover all ages/areas/minorities/social class</li> <li>• Whether they have remained relevant since their inception</li> <li>• Comparison to other authorities</li> <li>• Whether the Council is expected to provide the service and what else is available if it didn't</li> </ul>
<p><b>What equality issues will need to be considered as part of the review – giving consideration to the 6 strands:</b> Age Gender Race Sexual orientation Faith Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check whether play schemes offered by the Council are inclusive.</li> <li>• If the Council did not offer its play schemes, would there be alternative provision for all groups?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Which witnesses are required?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet Member for Community Services</li> <li>• Sports, Play and Youth Development Manager</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other ways to seek evidence? E.g. site visits, involving members of the public, consultation. *</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service user consultation</li> <li>• Visit a play scheme</li> </ul>
<p><b>What information/training is needed?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on other services provided and on what other local authorities provide</li> </ul>
<p><b>Suggested time for review and report completion date</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 months – one meeting for interviews, one to consider evidence and agree recommendations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How does the review link to council priorities?</b></p> <p>A place to live and enjoy.</p>
<p><b>How does this item deliver CfPS effective scrutiny principles?</b></p> <p>1 <i>Provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers</i></p> <p>2 <i>Enables the voice and concerns of the public</i></p> <p>3 <i>Is carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own</i></p>

<p><i>the scrutiny role</i></p> <p>4 <i>Drives improvement in public services</i></p> <p>1 – Providing a 'critical friend' challenge to a Council service. 4 – Ensuring that services respond to public demand.</p>
<p><b>Any co-optees or expert witnesses?</b></p> <p>Co-opt a service user?</p>

\* What do you know about the equality groups and the make-up of the people using the service or in the area? Qualitative and quantitative information

Think of the wider 'community' including people who possibly do not currently use the service but could or should.

<b>Name of Review: Railways</b>
<p><b>What are the objectives and desired outcomes of the review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To investigate what would be best for Maidstone.</li> <li>• Look at quality of trains and carriages on Maidstone services.</li> <li>• Identify reasons for service cuts.</li> <li>• Identify to what extent there are problems with the service, and to what extent there is an issue with perception.</li> <li>• Provide evidence to support lobbying.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What equality issues will need to be considered as part of the review – giving consideration to the 6 strands:</b> Age Gender Race Sexual orientation Faith Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility and suitability of rail services for disabled residents, the elderly and people with young children.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Which witnesses are required?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet Member for Environment.</li> <li>• Assistant Director of Development and Community Strategy.</li> <li>• Councillor Malcolm Robertson, Member Transport Champion for the Council</li> <li>• South Eastern Trains</li> <li>• "Keep Our Trains" campaign group (<a href="http://www.keepourtrains.com">www.keepourtrains.com</a>)</li> <li>• MPs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other ways to seek evidence? E.g. site visits, involving members of the public, consultation. *</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses to the Kent Messenger "Trains: Maidstone Deserves Better" campaign</li> <li>• Take a train journey between Maidstone and London and speak with service users.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What information/training is needed?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usage statistics for services to be cut.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Suggested time for review and report completion date</b></p> <p>2-3 months</p>
<p><b>How does the review link to council priorities?</b></p> <p>A place to achieve, prosper and thrive.</p>
<p><b>How does this item deliver CfPS effective scrutiny principles?</b></p> <p>5 <i>Provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers</i></p>

6	<i>Enables the voice and concerns of the public</i>
7	<i>Is carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny role</i>
8	<i>Drives improvement in public services</i>
2 – Response to public concern over service cuts. 4 – Lobby provider to improve service.	
<b>Any co-optees or expert witnesses?</b>	

\* What do you know about the equality groups and the make-up of the people using the service or in the area? Qualitative and quantitative information

Think of the wider 'community' including people who possibly do not currently use the service but could or should.