

Maidstone Borough Council

Scrutiny Coordinating Committee

Wednesday 23 April 2014

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Development

Report of: Christian Scade, Senior Corporate Policy Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required to create a work programme for the municipal year.
- 1.2 In February 2014 the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee agreed that rather than holding "marketplace" activities, the first round of Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings in 2014/15 should include both a workshop on effective work programming / topic selection and input from Cabinet Members and Senior Officers to ensure a better understanding of major pieces of work to identify where scrutiny could add value.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee notes the report and provides feedback on the work that has taken place to develop an effective scrutiny work programme for 2014/15.

3. Background

- 3.1 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) is required to approve and co-ordinate an annual work programme. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of each OSC have an important role to play in ensuring that time and resources are effectively and efficiently used.
- 3.2 The careful selection and prioritisation of work is essential if the scrutiny function is to be successful, achieve added value and retain credibility.
- 3.3 The breakdown below provides a useful summary and *aide memoire* on the role of scrutiny:
 - *Holding to Account*
 - *Policy Development*
 - *Policy Review*
 - *Performance Management*

- *External Scrutiny*

- 3.4 Each work programme should be realistic, relevant to Members and be able to be adequately resourced. They also need to be flexible to ensure they remain relevant and retain a degree of capacity to enable additional issues to be scrutinised urgently.
- 3.5 In addition to committee reports, scrutiny reviews are an important aspect of Overview and Scrutiny work, and provide opportunities to thoroughly investigate topics and to make improvements. This type of work should enable more robust and effective challenge and lead to better decision-making. In depth reviews should also help engage the public, and provide greater transparency and accountability.
- 3.6 To develop the scrutiny work programmes for 2014/15 Members of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee have agreed that, rather than holding "marketplace" activities, the first round of meetings in 2014/15 should include:
- A work-shop on effective work programming / topic selection
 - Input from Cabinet Members and Senior Officers
 - Suggestions from community representatives and key stakeholders
- 3.7 The Policy and Information Team have been working on each of these bullet points while the Communications Teams have developed a Communications Plan to encourage stakeholders to submit ideas for the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2014/15.

4. Background Documents

- 4.1 None