

Appendix A

Overview and Scrutiny

Annual Report

2013-14

(DRAFT)

Introduction



**Angela
Woodhouse,
Head of Policy
and
Communications**

“This year we have held 44 meetings and interviewed 93 witnesses and made a grand total of 272 recommendations across a huge range of topics. So a huge amount of work and hours but what about quality and impact? 62% of the recommendations made have been rated as quality recommendations which mean they were concerned with improving a service and/or making a difference, rather than requesting or noting information.

Highlights for the year include the events review focussed on how we support those organising events in the Borough. Scrutiny also looked outside the council with a review of access to mental health services with evidence from practitioners and expert witnesses. It will be important to follow up the recommendations made in 2014-15 so we can see the impact of the review. There has also been some very technical scrutiny with a close eye on the emerging Local Plan and documents plus a review given to scrutiny from full council to look at the five year housing land supply.

Last year we reviewed our governance arrangements and asked Council to consider if we should return to the Committee System, stay as we were or improve our current arrangements. The decision was made to go for a scrutiny plus model, increasing the number of scrutiny committees from three to four with the explicit goal to increase parity of

esteem between overview and scrutiny and the cabinet.

So what’s changed then? Aside from additional meetings! From speaking to the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of our scrutiny committees there are mixed reviews some believe that they have seen a real positive change in the attitude of Cabinet to Scrutiny in 2013-14 with positive and early involvement of scrutiny members in decision making. Other members have really enjoyed working in small groups to get into the ‘nitty gritty’ of issues for example the small group who met to look at the budget and the group who met to consider performance indicators. The survey we carried out in 2014 of all members identifies that just over half of respondents felt there had been an improvement.

I think there is still work to be done to raise the quality of overview and scrutiny and its reputation and I look forward to a new impetus in 2014-15 beginning with a joint session between cabinet and scrutiny facilitated by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. I am looking forward to scrutiny making a real difference this year.”

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Scrutiny at Maidstone Borough Council

“Overview and Scrutiny is...the principal, democratic means, between elections, of ensuring that decisions made by the council and its partners are held to account. It also provides a vital means of ensuring all councillors can take part in the development of council policy”

(Councillor’s Guide 2012/13: LGA)

Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) was brought into being by the Local Government Act 2000.

A requirement of the act is for a local authority with executive arrangements to have one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The following, agreed by members and officers, is the “vision for scrutiny” in Maidstone:

“To deliver effective Overview and Scrutiny in respect of holding the Cabinet to account, assisting policy development, service challenge and improvement and external scrutiny.”

(Members’ Overview and Scrutiny Handbook 2014/15: MBC)

The four principles of good public scrutiny, identified by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, are used in Maidstone to ensure the fulfilment of this vision

- Provide “Critical Friend” Challenge
- Reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
- Carried out by independent minded governors who lead and own the scrutiny process

- Drives improvement in public services

The structure for Overview and Scrutiny was recently reviewed following a review of the Council’s corporate governance model. This was set up to consider whether the current model was still appropriate or if the Council should consider an alternative.

In February 2013 full Council considered a report on models of governance and concluded the Cabinet system should be retained with enhanced scrutiny.

As a result of this review there are currently four Overview and Scrutiny Committees overseeing six cabinet portfolios.

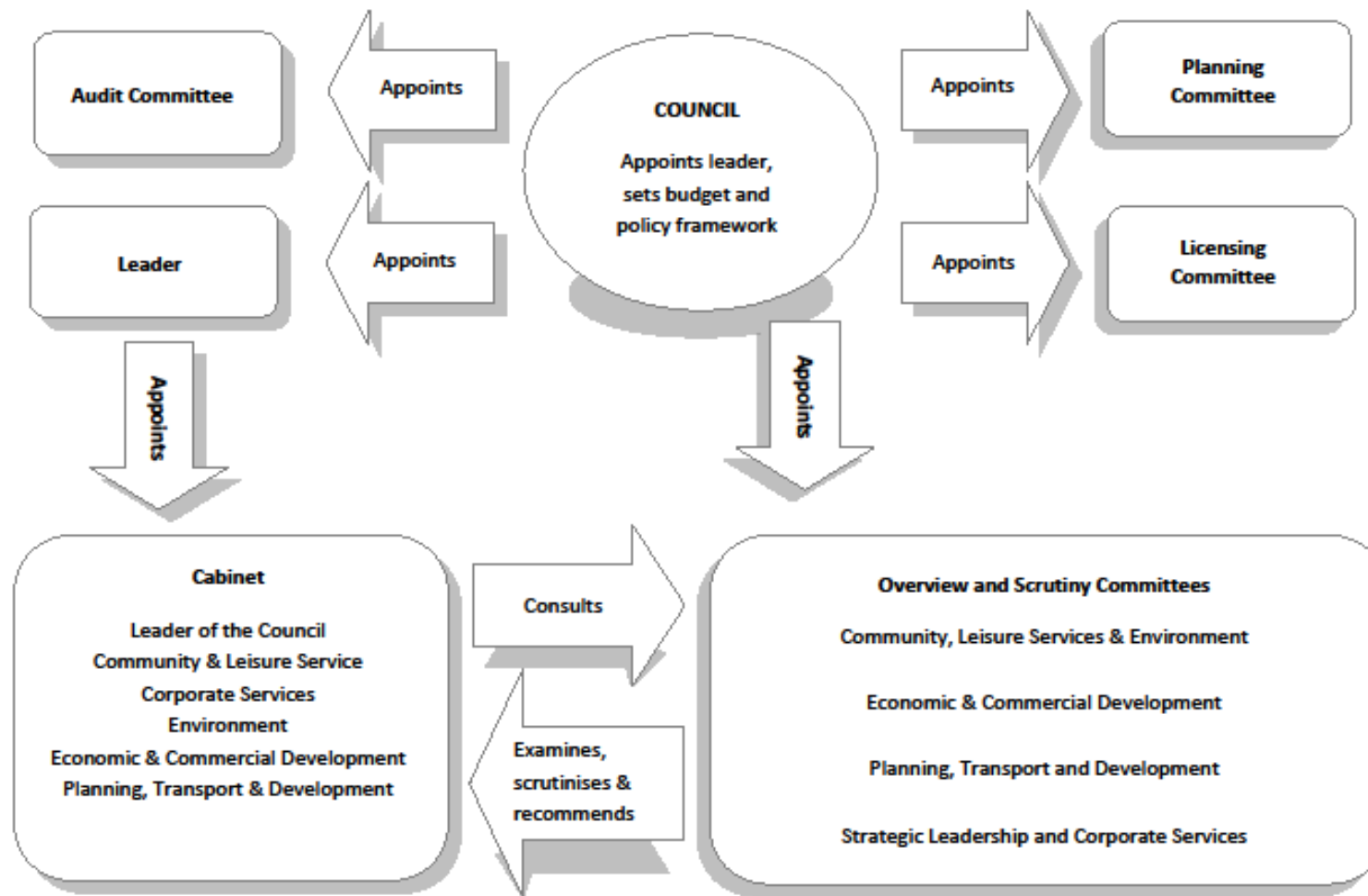
The Overview and Scrutiny Committees correspond with the Cabinet Members’ responsibilities:

- Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services
- Economic and Commercial Development
- Community, Leisure Services and Environment
- Planning, Transport and Development.

In addition, the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee, consisting of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees, considers matters relating to the conduct, performance and procedures for scrutiny.

In summary, Overview and Scrutiny is one of the distinct but interconnected parts of the political structure in the authority. The different roles and responsibilities are shown in the flow chart on the next page.

Decision Making and Council Structures at Maidstone Borough Council



As at May 2014

Overview and Scrutiny Membership for 2013-2014

Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Member	Party
Cllr Alistair Black	Con
Cllr Derek Butler	Con
Cllr Eric Hotson	Con
Cllr Rodd Nelson Gracie	Con
Cllr Michael Yates/Parvin	Con
Cllr Susan Grigg (Vice Chairman)	LibDem
Cllr Brian Mortimer	LibDem
Cllr David Pickett	LibDem
Cllr Fay Gooch (Chairman)	Ind

Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Member	Party
Cllr Annabelle Blackmore (Chairman)	Con
Cllr Adrian Brindle	Con
Cllr Jenefer Gibson	Con
Cllr Daphne Parvin	Con
Cllr Michael Yates	Con
Cllr Denise Joy (Vice Chairman)	LibDem
Cllr Jane Mannering	LibDem
Cllr Brian Vizzard	LibDem
Cllr Steve Munford	Ind

Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Member	Party
Cllr Richard Ash	Con
Cllr John Barned (Chairman)	Con
Cllr Mike Cumming	Con
Cllr Mike Hogg	Con
Cllr Paulina Stockell	Con
Cllr Martin Cox	LibDem
Cllr David Naghi	LibDem
Cllr Jenni Paterson (Vice Chairman)	LibDem
Cllr Gordon Newton	Ind

Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Member	Party
Cllr Steve McLoughlin (Chairman)	Con
Cllr Dennis Collins	Con
Cllr James Ross	Con
Cllr Val Springett	Con
Cllr Nick de Wiggondene	Con
Cllr Ian Chittenden	LibDem
Cllr Belinda Watson	LibDem
Cllr Fran Wilson (Vice Chairman)	LibDem
Cllr Steve Munford	Ind

Business Covered by Overview and Scrutiny Committees over the 2013-14 Municipal Year



**Councillor Fay Gooch,
Chairman of Strategic
Leadership and
Corporate Services
Overview and
Scrutiny Committee**

“It has been said that ours is not the sexiest of the scrutiny committees. Well, perhaps Performance Indicators and Quarterly Monitoring Reports may be regarded by some people as dry and dusty, yet our keenness to carry out the role of ‘critical friend’ does not falter. We have asked officers to restrict themselves to a just few introductory words when they present their reports to Committee so that members can go straight into questions. This has enabled better use of everyone’s time, particularly as we have read our papers anyway. We have ensured that our recommendations have been properly followed through and that any further information we have requested has been provided.

Our attempt to attract non-scrutiny members to a Budget Workshop in October comprised some controversial headlines, a piggy bank and a hammer. Although not the hit we were hoping for in terms of numbers of attendees, it turned out to be a triumph of quality over quantity and some worthwhile recommendations.

I warmly thank not only Committee Members for their close attention to detail and for their commitment to questioning, but also the Scrutiny team, without whose invaluable support our Committee could not function effectively.”

Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee hold to account the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, The Committee’s terms of reference mirror these areas of responsibility and are closely aligned to the Council’s priority: “*Corporate and Customer Excellence*”.

2013/14 was a busy year for this Committee. A common theme throughout was scrutiny of the authority’s budget, performance and strategic direction.

Scrutiny of the budget was a priority. During the year the Committee was proactive, asking for information as soon as it became available and setting up a Budget Working Group. This enabled greater scrutiny of the budget strategy for 2014/15 in relation to capital, revenue and fees and charges.

The Committee also considered, and made recommendations for improvement, across a range of cross cutting briefs including:

- Cabinet Member Priorities for 2013/14;
- Proposals for the use of the 2012/13 Underspend;
- Future commissioning and procurement arrangements;
- Regular reports on performance and complaints monitoring;
- The Local Council Tax Support Scheme;

- The Council's Communication and Engagement Plan 2014/15;
- Residents' Survey 2013 – Findings / Result;
- The Council's Accommodation Project;
- The Corporate Improvement Plan;
- The Strategic Plan (Refresh).

In terms of monitoring previous review recommendations, the Committee reviewed developments in relation to The Council as a Business Review and the Capital Programme Review. Taking these items back to Committee, asking challenging questions, enabled members to check on progress and ensure recommendations previously accepted had been implemented.

Mid Kent Improvement Partnership

The Committee continued to take a keen interest in shared services and the development of the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP). In November the MKIP Programme Manager gave a presentation to the Committee setting out what the partnership had achieved since its inception and objectives for the future.

In February the Committee considered the design for the two-site model of operation for the Mid Kent Environmental Shared Service.

The Committee received a further MKIP update in April and interviewed the newly appointed Mid Kent Services Director in May. These sessions proved to be particularly helpful and committee members raised a number of important questions relating to:

- Governance arrangements;
- Seeking clarity on the role of O&S to be able to scrutinise the decisions of

the MKIP Management Board, if it so wished;

- The objectives of the Mid Kent Services Director and how these would be measured;
- Communication.

On speaking with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council the committee were interested to hear that their scrutiny members had raised similar questions. With that in mind, an informal meeting was arranged between the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of both authorities. This established the need, moving forward, to work with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Swale Borough Council to scrutinise in more detail issues relating to governance, communication and performance management.

These issues will be kept under review during 2014/15 with an initial joint meeting planned for early July.

Cabinet Member Involvement

Both the Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services attended committee meetings throughout the year. In addition the Cabinet Member for Environment attended in February as a witness for the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership Environmental Health Shared Service Model. The Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development attended as a witness in March for the Council as a Business Review.

Key Facts 2013-14 for the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Formal Meetings	13
Witnesses Interviewed (Total)	26
Councillors Interviewed	4
Officers Interviewed	21
External Witnesses Interviewed	1
Total Recommendations made	62
Quality Recommendations made¹	29
Site Visits	0
One off Topics	0

¹ Scrutiny recommendations should seek to make a real difference to local people and the services provided. Recommendations that note a change or request further information fail to resolve problems or make changes. The Scrutiny team has developed the follow as types of quality recommendations:

Recommendations that;

- Affect and make a difference to local people;
- Result in a change in policy that improves services;
- Identify savings and maintain/improve service quality; or,
- Objectively identify a solution.



Councillor Jenni Paterson, Vice Chair Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

“I would like to begin on a personal note and convey my thanks to all members of the Committee and officers for bearing with me whilst I have taken the Chair during Councillor Barnard’s absence.

It has been a challenging year for the Committee and we have fulfilled a varied work programme.

Despite a considerable rethink on the focus of our chosen review topic, The Events review, we produced a credible report examining how the Council supports those putting on events in the Borough.

The report was presented by two of the Committee members to the Cabinet on 14 May 2014, where it was received positively. The discussion that took place highlighted possible changes of responsibility as to where ‘Events’ sit within the Council.

In addition to their cultural value the Committee is pleased that recognition has now been given to the commercial value of ‘Events’ within the Council’s priority ‘For Maidstone to have a growing economy’. The Committee’s grateful thanks go to all witnesses and officers for their attendance and sharing their valuable knowledge with us.

The Committee had looked forward to looking at the Regeneration and Economic

Development Plan, but this, unfortunately, did not come forward in time for the 2013-14 Committee membership. However, we wish the 2014-15 Committee members all the best when prioritising this into their Future Work Programme.”

Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee holds to account the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development. The Committee’s terms of reference mirror the areas of the council within the remit of the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development. This remit is closely aligned to the Council’s priority: *‘For Maidstone to have a growing economy.’*

Along with the changes to scrutiny, there has been considerable organisational change within the Commercial and Economic Development Department at Maidstone Borough Council during 2013-14. The Council employed a new Head of Commercial and Economic Development in December. This brought the following services together under the same department:

- Parks and Leisure;
- Economic Development; and
- Cultural Services.

A Cultural Services Manager was recruited, and a new post of Commercial Projects Manager was created to drive forward commercialisation across the council.

Review Topic

In June 2013, committee members decided their main review for the 2013-2014 municipal year would be events and cultural activities. This theme was developed and the primary objective of the review was *'To evaluate the value of borough council supported events to residents, visitors and the local economy'*.

To achieve this aim, the committee felt it would be important to develop a toolkit in order to measure the value of events. However the committee heard evidence early on from Dawn Hudd, the council's Head of Commercial and Economic Development, that such a toolkit had already been identified and the council had begun using it to measure the value of events. This resulted in committee changing the focus of the review to examine how the council supports those putting on events in the borough.

The committee heard evidence from the following witnesses in relation to the review topic:

- Dawn Hudd, Head of Commercial and Economic Development;
- Alan Reading, Chairman of Maidstone Tourism Association;
- Ken Scott, Chairman of Maidstone Area Arts Partnership;
- Natalie Price, General Manager of the Hazlitt Arts Centre;
- Emily Hirons, General Manager, and Natalie Kirk, Events Manager, of Kent Life; and
- Jennifer Hunt, Local Economy Project Officer, who gave evidence on behalf of the Town Team.

The review brought all the evidence together and made recommendations

focused on making it easier for event organisers to hold events in the borough.

Cabinet Member Involvement

As the new scrutiny structure provided a strong link between Cabinet Members and their relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development attended the committee as a witness for three items, these were:

- Cabinet Member Priorities for the year 2013/2014;
- Maidstone's vision for the visitor economy; and
- Cabinet Member review of the year 2013/2014.

One off topics, pre-decision scrutiny and site visits

The committee heard evidence for several one off topic items. Some of these related to previous reviews undertaken by overview and scrutiny committees, including the Market review and Visitor Information Centre review. The committee heard the recommendations from both reviews had been accepted and had been progressed resulting in a positive impact on both of the services reviewed.

As well as several update items on current work programmes within the Commercial and Economic Development Department, the committee heard the work on the Enterprise Hub was progressing well and the Skills and Employability programme had been moved over to the Economic Development Unit with a new officer recruited to the post.

There were no major Cabinet Member decisions taken during this municipal year,

therefore no opportunity for pre-decision scrutiny. However the Museums' collections policy is due for decision on the 20 June, and the Regeneration and Economic Development Plan is expected to be considered by this committee in the next municipal year.

The forthcoming Cabinet Member decision on the Museums' collection policy prompted a site visit to the museum in April 2014. The purpose of the visit was for members to view the current collections and speak to the Officers involved in developing the collections policy.

Key Facts 2013-14 for the Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Formal Meetings	9
Witnesses Interviewed (Total)	17
Councillors Interviewed	2
Officers Interviewed	10
External Witnesses Interviewed	5
Total Recommendations made	51
Quality Recommendations made	19
Site Visits	1
One off Topics	9



**Councillor
Annabelle
Blackmore,
Chairman,
Community,
Leisure Services
and Environment
Overview and
Scrutiny Committee**

“The Committee set their work programme in June 2013 and our main review was Accessing Mental Health Services. The Play Areas strategy returned to the committee together with the Health Inequalities Action Plan, Air Quality Action Plan and the Waste Strategy.

During the evidence gathering for the Accessing Mental Health Services we were fortunate to interview Dr. Bob Bowes, David Holman and Dr. David Chesover from the West Kent Clinical Commissioning (WKCCG) who were involved in the commissioning of mental health services for West Kent. In addition Ivan Rudd and Penny Southern, from KCC, supported the themes for further joined up working between the different partners with MBC acting as a facilitator. The Committee were pleased to hear about the Street Triage scheme which involved a mental health nurse working alongside the police. Our hope and belief is for the continuation of the Street Triage programme. This programme offers a better outcome for vulnerable people found on our streets by the police. When the report was presented at Cabinet there was overall support for the report and its findings as well as a desire to pursue further progress in this area including children under pressure.

The Health Inequalities Action Plan was reviewed by the Committee and received much support. They agreed with the

priorities and also the outcomes and accepted that this is another issue which requires cooperation with partners to deliver positive change for families in Maidstone.

In March the Committee assessed the Air Quality Action Plan. Since it was drafted many of the partner organisations have had a restructure which has slowed the progress required. The Committee acknowledged further reductions will need joint working between central government and local authorities.

The Waste Team presented a positive update on the waste contract and scheme offered in Maidstone, reporting recycling rates of 50%. The Waste Team are keen to increase this to 60% within 5 years. The Committee noted the new waste contract offered not only considerable savings but an enhanced service to residents.

I would like to thank the whole Committee for their support and good humour during the municipal year 2013/4. All Members made positive contributions to the subjects under review and it was a delight to have so many engaged members who were happy to undertake their own research. We were ably supported by Orla Sweeney who organised all the witnesses relating to the Mental Health Review. I would like to thank Orla, on behalf of the Committee, for her hard work and enthusiastic minute taking. In March our new scrutiny officer Tessa Mallett took over the reins and her attention to detail was appreciated by all. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Tessa and Orla for their patience during meetings and their preparatory work prior to each meeting.

I wish the Committee well for the forthcoming year 2014 /5.”

Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Following the review of overview and scrutiny in 2012-2013 the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee was replaced by the Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This Committee holds to account the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services and the Cabinet Member for Environment.

This Committee's remit is aligned to the Council's priority: *'for Maidstone to be a decent place to live'*.

Review Topic – Accessing Mental Health Services Before the Point of Crisis

Mental Health has remained an important subject for Overview and Scrutiny.

During the 2012/13 Municipal Year the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee responded to three consultations in this area. In addition, at the start of the 2013/14 year, Members of the Committee had been approached by residents informing them of their difficulties accessing treatment for mental health.

This feedback from residents reignited interest in this vital area of well-being, and the Committee decided to investigate what services were available and how they could be accessed.

Members were aware national and local media were reporting a growing number of people at crisis point. A Panorama programme broadcast on 12 September 2013 entitled *"Locked up for being ill"* examined reports of police regularly

detaining mental health patients who should be dealt with by appropriate medical professionals. It was stated approximately twenty five per cent of police time was spent in this way.

The Committee felt it was essential to an individual's long term mental well-being that services were easy to access, and focused their review on early intervention for the prevention of further deterioration of a condition. However members found their starting point was understanding how; why, and if, services were being accessed at the point of crisis.

As part of their extensive review of various documents the Committee also heard evidence from:

- A Service User;
- Dr Bob Bowes, Chairman of the West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG);
- Dr David Chesover, GP Member of the West Kent CCG;
- Meuthia Endrojono-Ellis, Head of Mental Health Commissioning, West Kent CCG;
- Jenny Walsh, Services Manager, Maidstone Mind;
- Andrew Scott-Clark, Director of Public Health Improvement, Kent County Council (KCC);
- Assistant Chief Constable Paul Brandon, Kent Police;
- Chief Inspector Martin Wilson,
- Penny Southern, Director of Learning, Disability and Mental Health at KCC;
- Janet Greenroyd, District Supervisor for Maidstone Community Wardens; and
- Liz Lovatt, Community Warden from Boughton Monchelsea, Loose and Chart Sutton;

- Jo Scott, Programme Director, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Children and Young People;
- Katie Latchford, Community Development Team Leader, Community Development Team, Maidstone Borough Council;
- Dr Chesover, Mental Health Clinical Lead for West Kent and Co-ordinating Mental Health Lead for Kent, West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group;
- Dave Holman, Head of Mental Health Commissioning, West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group;
- Ivan Rudd, Public Health Specialist, Kent County Council;
- Sharon Dodd, Kent Integrated Adolescent Support Service Strategic Manager and lead on the Kent Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy, KCC.



The responsibility for public health services in the Borough is the responsibility of KCC. Maidstone Borough Council played a facilitative role by reviewing this topic. The involvement of so many organisations proved to be highly productive. It helped the Committee to identify and make recommendations for the way forward both in terms of what could be achieved within mental health services in Maidstone and future and continued engagement. These recommendations will be followed up by

the committee during the 2014-15 municipal year.

The final report can be found...

Cabinet Member Involvement

The Committee's links with Cabinet members were strengthened throughout the year with the Cabinet member for Leisure Services and the Cabinet Member for Environment attending meetings as witnesses for the following agenda items:

- Cabinet Member Priorities 2013-14;
- Draft New Play Area Strategic Standard;
- CCTV Operational Protocols;
- ECO Pilot;
- Collective Switch of Energy Supplier Services for Householders;
- Health Inequalities Action Plan;
- Draft Play Area Strategy;
- Making Waste Work update;
- Air Quality Action Plan;
- Cabinet Members Review of 2013-14.

Task and Finish Panels

The Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee formed a Task and Finish Panel to formulate its response to Kent County Council (KCC) as part of the Part-night Streetlights Consultation.

The panel hosted a meeting on Wednesday 21 August 2013 at Maidstone House, inviting other interested Members of Maidstone Borough Council, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment and selected witnesses to assist it in formulating their response to KCC.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) Overview and Scrutiny

The Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a statutory role to act as the Council's Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee met in October 2013 and February 2014. Agenda items covered included:

- Accessing Mental Health Services Before the Point of Crisis – interviewing officers from Kent Police, Community Wardens and KCC;
- KCCs Draft Road Casualty Reduction Strategy for Kent consultation – the Committee fed in recommendations to the consultation;

- Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-14, and
- Refresh of Maidstone Protocols for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Overview and Scrutiny

Key Facts for the Communities, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Formal Meetings	11
Witnesses Interviewed (Total)	27
Councillors Interviewed	2
Officers Interviewed	9
External Witnesses Interviewed	16
Total Recommendations made	72
Quality Recommendations made	47
Site Visits	0
One off Topics	1



**Steve McLoughlin,
Chairman,
Planning, Transport
and Development
Overview and
Scrutiny Committee**

“The pressure to build more homes in the Borough, and changes to the manner in which the Council will receive additional related funding for doing so, has resulted in the Planning, Transport and Development Scrutiny Committee experiencing a particularly busy and difficult year during 2013/14. This has largely been driven by the urgent need to establish a framework for future development for the borough – a Local Plan – for the period until 2031.

This new Local Plan needed to take account of the Government’s revised National Planning Policy Framework introduced in 2012 and in particular the need for a 5 year land supply to accommodate the Borough’s evidence based housing needs. The process the Council has followed in this respect was publically challenged and defended by the Committee. Other important reference documents relating to the Landscape Character and Blue & Green Infrastructure were considered and debated at some length. It is to the credit of the Committee and officers that the draft Local Plan has been through its first public consultation in a timely manner.

There is still much more work to be done to reach a satisfactory balance between the need to provide suitably located homes whilst satisfying public demand to preserve our green spaces and this is likely to occupy much of the Committee’s

time in the coming year. Additionally, little progress was made during the year to establish a transport strategy in cooperation with KCC. However, with the willingness of all members to strive to achieve progress in these and other related areas the Committee can look forward to a very intense but interesting year ahead.”

Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee holds to account the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development.

This committee’s remit is closely aligned to the Council’s priorities: *‘For Maidstone to have a growing economy’* and *‘for Maidstone to be a decent place to live’*.

During 2013-14 the Committee focused on scrutinising the policies for the draft Local Plan which went out for public consultation between 21 March 2014 and 7 May 2014.

Items scrutinised by the Committee over the year have included:

- Cabinet member Priorities for 2013-14;
- Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment;
- Public Consultation approach for the Maidstone Borough Local Plan;
- Maidstone Borough Local Plan Development Policies;
- Seven Year Housing Land Supply: Methodology and Judgements;
- Community Infrastructure Levy;
- Maidstone Borough Local Plan Consultation Draft Group 2 Policies;
- Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy;

- Five Year Land Supply – mid-year update;
- Solar Energy Planning Policy;
- Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy;
- Maidstone Borough Local Plan Consultation Draft Group 3 Policies;
- Maidstone Borough Local Plan Draft including Spatial Strategy and Site Allocation Policies;
- Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
- Draft Integrated Transport Strategy;
- Cabinet Member Review of Priorities for 2013-14;
- Mid Kent Planning Support Services update;
- Planning Enforcement procedures update.

The Committee heard evidence from the following witnesses during their scrutiny of these subjects:

- Cllr Stephen Paine, Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development;
- Deanne Cunningham, Heritage, Landscape and Design;
- Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development;
- Emma Boshell, Planning Officer;
- Parish Cllr Sara Evans;
- Parish Cllr Doug Evans;
- Mr Paul McCreery, Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council;
- Parish Cllr Ian Ellis;
- Keith Nicolson, Boughton Monchelsea planning advisor;
- James Stevens, Home Builders Federation;
- Darren Bridgett, Principal Planning Officer;
- Cllr Chris Garland, Leader of Maidstone Borough Council;

- Michael Murphy, Principal Planning Officer;
- Sarah Anderton, Principal Planning Officer;
- Sue Whiteside, Team Leader, Planning;
- Parish Cllr Parr;
- Geraldine Brown, Kent Association of Local Councils;
- Cliff Thurlow, Town and Country Planning Consultants Ltd;
- Jon Bunney, JMP Transport Consultants;
- Sean Carter, South Maidstone Action for Road and Transport;
- Tim Hapgood, JMP Transport Consultants;
- Ryan O'Connell, Mid Kent Planning Support manager;
- Jon Lawrence, Planning Enforcement Officer.

Five Year Land Supply

The Committee spent much of its time scrutinising the Council's Draft Five Year Housing Land Supply for the Draft Local Plan. The Committee held two meetings in September 2013 focusing on this and submitted a report to Full Council on 14 October. The report recommended officers urgently investigate what the Council can do to protect sites from inappropriate development in the absence of a Five Year Housing Land Supply.

Further discussions and recommendations to Cabinet on the Draft Five Year Housing Land Supply were held throughout the year. At the meeting of 18 February 2014 the Committee scrutinised in detail the sites put forward for development in the Draft Local Plan. From this meeting the Committee put forward 20 recommendations to Cabinet for consideration.

Integrated Transport Strategy

The Committee considered this draft document on 21 January 2014 and revisited it on 18 March. The purpose of the revisit was to clarify the options for park and ride along with the cost benefits and establishing an effective park and ride service.

The Committee made nine recommendations to Cabinet. These included:

- Working with private car park owners to discourage long stay parking in the town and promoting short stay parking to support local business;
- Careful consideration of the impact of a park and ride service at Linton Cross Road;
- Retaining existing park and ride at Willingdon Street and London Road.

Cabinet Member Involvement

With the Committee focussing on the development of the Maidstone Borough draft Local Plan the Cabinet member for Planning, Transport and Development attended committee meetings covering the following agenda items:

- Public Consultation Approach to Maidstone Borough Local Plan
- Draft Local Plan Group 2 Policies
- Five Year Land Supply Mid-year Update
- Integrated Transport Strategy
- Draft Local Plan Group 3 Policies
- Spatial Strategy

In addition the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development and the Leader of the Cabinet also attended

the September 2013 committee meeting as witnesses for the agenda item; Five Year Housing Land Supply – methodology and judgements.

The Cabinet Member also attended as a witness to present his Review of Cabinet Member Priorities for 2013/14 in April 2014.

Key Facts for the Planning, Transport and development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Formal Meetings	11
Witnesses Interviewed (Total)	23
Councillors Interviewed	2
Officers Interviewed	11
External Witnesses Interviewed	10
Total Recommendations made	87
Quality Recommendations made	74
Site Visits	0
One off Topics	0

Training Attended by Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members

Overview and Scrutiny requires a number of skills on the part of elected members. The council has an agreed training budget for members. In addition to meeting the individual training needs of elected members, the budget is also used to provide group training for councillors on Overview and Scrutiny committees.

Training attended throughout the year is shown in the table below:

Subject	Date	Number of Committee members attended
Managing events safely	15/1/14	1
Members Finance	23/4/13	18
Town Centre Health Check	20/5/13	22
Licensing Refresher Training	22/5/13	13
Planning	5/6/13	13
Licensing Act 2003 & Gambling Act 2005	24/6/13	21
Events Road Closures	5/7/13	13
Planning	17/7/13	17
Local Plan Viability Testing	22/7/13	22
Planning Conditions	22/8/13	18
Local Plan	28/8/13	34
Housing for Members	4&11/11/13	25
Findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment	9/12/13	21
Local Plan	23/1/14	19
Parliamentary Outreach Service – Questioning Skills and Interpreting Information	29/1/14	16
Members Briefing	3/2/14	22
Using Social Media	18/2/14	9

Looking ahead to the 2014-2015 Municipal Year

The Overview and Scrutiny Team launched a campaign between March and May 2014 to gather suggestions for scrutiny topics. Over 80 suggestions were received from local residents, businesses and stakeholders.

Throughout June 2014 all councillors were invited to attend workshops to develop the Future Work Programmes for each of the O&S Committees and identify review topics for 2014-15 using the suggestions received.

Each committee developed a draft Future Work programme and the review topics included:

- Overview of Healthcare in Maidstone Borough;
- Transport in Maidstone Borough – alternatives to using a car;