

Maidstone Borough Council

Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 2 September 2014

Future Work Programme and SCRAIP Update

Report of: Christian Scade

1. Introduction

- 1.1 To consider the Committee's future work programme (FWP) and draft terms of reference for the Budget Working Group.
- 1.2 To consider the information update given by the Chairman.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee considers the future work programme, attached at **Appendix A**, to ensure that it is appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.
- 2.2 That the Committee considers the List of Forthcoming Decisions, relevant to the Committee at **Appendix B**, and discuss whether any of these items require further investigation or monitoring.
- 2.3 That the Committee set up a working group, of 3-5 members, to scrutinise budget proposals for 2015/16 and approve the terms of reference for the group attached at **Appendix C**.
- 2.4 That the Committee note the SCRAIP update for the Committee's recommendations made at meetings on 7 July and 8 July 2014 attached at **Appendix D**.
- 2.5 That the Committee considers its continuous professional development needs and recommends possible training or development sessions it would like to undertake.

3 Future Work Programme

- 3.1 Throughout the course of the municipal year the Committee is asked to put forward work programme suggestions. These suggestions are planned into its annual work programme. Members are asked to consider the work programme at each meeting to ensure that it remains appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.

- 3.2 The Committee is reminded that the Constitution states under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules number 9: Agenda items that 'Any Member shall be entitled to give notice to the proper officer that he wishes an item relevant to the functions of the Committee or Sub-Committee to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the Committee or Sub-Committee. On receipt of such a request the proper officer will ensure that it is included on the next available agenda, the Member must attend the meeting and speak on the item put forward.'

4 List of Forthcoming Decisions

- 4.1 The List of Forthcoming Decisions (**Appendix B**) is a live document containing all key and non-key decisions.
- 4.2 Due to the nature of the List of Forthcoming Decisions, and to ensure the information provided to the Committee is up to date, a verbal update will be given at the meeting by the Chairman. The Committee can view the live document online at:
<http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=443&RD=0>

5. Budget Working Group

- 5.1 Councillors have a vital duty to scrutinise and challenge the Council's use of public money. This duty is at the heart of their role and mandate as local elected representatives.
- 5.2 A key role of the Overview and Scrutiny function is to review the Council's budget setting process. The Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules are outlined in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.
- 5.3 Common challenges experienced by other authorities in relation to budget scrutiny may be familiar to Members:
- Getting the right information at the right time – not too late to make a difference
 - Getting "bogged down" in detail
 - Difficulty in mapping financial information to identify budget by council department and / or Cabinet / Scrutiny portfolios
 - Securing senior management / executive commitment to the provision of clear and concise information
 - Meaningful involvement of the public
- 5.4 Many national surveys have found that Councillors find scrutiny of the budget the most challenging element of their scrutiny role. With this in mind, the Committee agreed, in June 2014, to set up a budget working group to scrutinise budget proposals for 2015/16.

- 5.5 After an initial briefing/scoping session it was agreed, at the last meeting, that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman should meet to discuss the terms of reference for the Budget Working Group and return recommendations to the Committee.
- 5.6 If the Committee agree the budget working group should continue the Committee will need to confirm the terms of reference (attached in draft at **Appendix C**) and the membership for the group.

6. Scrutiny Committee Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan (SCRAIP) Responses

- 6.1 The issue of making, and monitoring, recommendations is an important part of the scrutiny process. SCRAIPs set out recommendations following scrutiny meetings/reviews and information is sought on the plan as to whether recommendations are accepted, the action to be taken and by who.
- 6.2 An update on the recommendations made by Committee at meetings on 7 July and 8 July 2014 is attached at **Appendix D**.

7 Future Work Programme Update

- 7.1 Following discussions between the Chairman, Vice Chairman and officers the following items, originally scheduled for September 2014, will now be considered by Committee in October 2014:
- Q1 Performance Report
 - Customer Service Improvement Strategy

8. Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 8.1 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities.
- 8.2 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following Council priority:
- 'Corporate and Customer Excellence'

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 To assist O&S committees in their inquiries, a small budget is available for the purchase of necessary equipment and to cover the costs of training, site visits, meetings in locations other than the Town Hall, witness expenses, specialist advice, books and any other cost that might be legitimately incurred by the committees in the course of their activities.

10. Relevant Documents

- 10.1 Appendix A – Future Work Programme
- Appendix B – List of Forthcoming Decisions
- Appendix C – Terms of Reference for the Budget Working Group
- Appendix D – SCRAIP Updates

11. Background Documents

- 11.1 None