MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Scrutiny Coordinating Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 3 OCTOBER 2014

Present: Councillor J.A. Wilson (Chairman), and
Councillors Butler, English, Mrs Gooch, D Mortimer,
Paterson, Springett and Mrs Stockell

Also Present: Councillors Black, Daley and Round

13. APOLOGIES

   There were no apologies.

14. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

   Councillor Round was in attendance to make representations on items 6,
   7, 8, 9 and 10 of the agenda.

   Councillor Black, Chairman of the Audit Committee, was in attendance to
   present item 6 of the agenda, Audit Committee Work Programme, and to
   make representations on items 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the agenda.

   Councillor Daley, Vice-Chairman of the Audit Committee, was in
   attendance to present item 6 of the agenda, Audit Committee Work
   Programme, and to make representations on items 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the
   agenda.

15. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

   There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

16. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE
   BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

   RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

17. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 JULY 2014

   RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2014 be
   approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18. AUDIT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

   Christian Scade, Senior Corporate Policy Officer, informed the committee
   that the terms of reference for the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee
   included developing mechanisms for addressing cross cutting issues and

preventing duplication. This included consideration of the Audit Committee's Work Programme.

Cllr Black, Chairman of the Audit Committee, provided an update on reports that had been discussed by Audit Committee on 15 September 2014. These included:

- A progress report on the Audits which Received Limited Assurance in 2013/14

- The External Auditor's Audit Findings Report 2013/14 and Statement of Accounts 2013/14

- Irrecoverable Business Rates

Cllr Black informed the Committee that the following items would be considered by Audit Committee on 24 November 2014:

- External Auditor's Annual Audit Letter 2013/14

- Treasury Management Strategy Mid-Year Performance 2014/15, including Review of Rates of Return

- Annual Governance Statement Action Plan Update

Rich Clarke, Head of Audit Partnership, provided an update on the following items:

- Audit Committee Member Development which would be based on the Audit Committee's terms of reference and open to all members

- Review of Corporate Policies

- Review of Financial Thresholds in the Contract Procedure Rules

- Strategic Risk Register – Action Plans

- HR Assessment of Benefits of Investors in People Accreditation

It was noted that the role of the Audit Committee differed from that of Overview and Scrutiny Committees. It was agreed that the role of scrutiny was to review policy and to challenge whether the Executive had made the right decisions to deliver policy goals. The role of the Audit Committee was to provide independent assurances of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, independent scrutiny of the Council's financial and non-financial performance, and oversight of the financial reporting process.

During discussions the following points were explored:

- The risk implications of policy decisions

- The role of scrutiny in relation to Irrecoverable Business Rates

- How issues raised by Audit Committee, following consideration of the External Auditor's Audit Findings Report 2013/14 had been successfully referred to the Budget Working Group in relation to reserve funds and financial resilience.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report and updates from the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Audit Committee be noted.

19. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTION IMPLEMENTATION PLANS (SCRAIPS)

Christian Scade, Senior Corporate Policy Officer, explained that Scrutiny Committee Recommendation Action Implementation Plans (SCRAIPs) set out recommendations following scrutiny meetings and reviews.

It was noted that information was sought on a SCRAIP as to whether recommendations had been accepted, the action to be taken any by whom.

The committee considered the report and discussed the following SCRAIPs, outlined in Appendix A to the report:

- PTD.140624.22c – it was agreed that the Chairman of Planning, Transport and Development OSC would speak to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer about the response that had been provided.

- PTD.140722.31f – it was it was agreed that the Chairman of Planning, Transport and Development OSC would speak to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer about the response that had been provided.

- SLCS.140805.43.1 – it was noted that a response had not been provided and the Senior Corporate Policy Officer would discuss with the Lead Officer outside of the meeting.

- SLCS.140805.44.4 – it was noted that information, in response to this recommendation, had been circulated to members of the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services OSC. This would be sent to Members of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee via email.

- Due to the cross cutting nature of recommendation CEH.140715.20.b, it was agreed that the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services should be asked to provide an update to Planning, Transport and Development OSC as part of their special meeting, to consider Neighbourhood Plans, scheduled for 3 November 2014.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Officer be asked to liaise with Officers and Members to ensure comments made by Committee in relation to PTD.140624.22c; PTD.140722.31; SLCS.140805.43.1; SLCS.140805.44.4; CEH.140715.20.b be addressed.

20. QUALITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee considered the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Officer and agreed that making, and monitoring, quality recommendations was an important part of the scrutiny process.

The committee discussed criteria for quality recommendations, and agreed the information sheet, attached at Appendix A to the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Officer, should be used to help evaluate recommendations made by Overview and Scrutiny.

RESOLVED:

1. That the quality recommendation sheet, set out in Appendix A to the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Officer, be included with the question preparation sheet already included in agenda packs for Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings.

21. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT NEEDS (UPDATE)

Christian Scade, Senior Corporate Policy Officer, introduced the Member Development Needs (Update) Report.

The committee was informed that on 23 July 2014 a member workshop had taken place to consider how Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet could work together to ensure scrutiny reviews were successful.

The committee discussed the feedback and ideas generated from the workshop, outlined in Appendix A to the report.

In addition to the ideas generated by the workshop, Christian Scade provided an update on plans to develop a practical and interactive questioning and challenging skills event.

The committee was informed that Inclusive Employers had been commissioned to design and deliver a drama based workshop on 3 December 2014.

The following issues were discussed:

- Ways to promote the drama based workshop.

- The aims of the workshop and the approaches that would be used, including experiential learning, film, discussion and evidence based learning.

- The timings of the workshops – it was agreed that one should be held in the afternoon and one in the evening.

RESOLVED:

1. That the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny / Cabinet workshop, held on 23 July 2014, be noted.

2. That the progress in organising a questioning and challenging skills workshop, scheduled for 3 December 2014, be noted.

3. That the workshops for the questioning and challenging skills event, scheduled for 3 December 2014, take place in the afternoon and also be repeated during the evening.

4. That group leaders be asked to promote the questioning and challenging skills workshop, scheduled for 3 December 2014, to ensure maximum attendance.

22.   FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Christian Scade, Senior Corporate Policy Officer, introduced the Future Work Programme Report.

It was explained that the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee may wish to consider the support it could offer the four Scrutiny Committees by structuring its own work programme.

The following issues were discussed:

- The fact that full Council has passed a resolution, on 17 September 2014, agreeing in principle to move to a committee system as from the 2015 Annual meeting.

- The monitoring and review of Scrutiny Committee Action Implementation Plans (SCRAIPs).

- Review topics for 2014/15. Updates were provided on the following: (a) the Budget Working Group; (b) the joint Task and Finish Group, with Swale Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, in relation to the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP); (c) meetings that had been arranged to review the Twilight Economy; (d) the work that had taken place to review Loneliness and Isolation and (e) the public interest in the review of Transport in Maidstone Borough – Alternatives to Using a Car.

RESOLVED:

1. That the next Scrutiny Coordinating Committee meeting be held on Monday 24 November at 10.00am.

2. That the following items be considered by committee in November 2014: Scrutiny Committee Action Implementation Plans; an update on the work of the Joint MKIP Task and Finish Group; and an update on the future work programmes, including review work, from each Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

23.   DURATION OF MEETING

10.04am to 11.12am