

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Scrutiny Coordinating Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2014

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

24. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors English, Springett and Stockell.

25. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no visiting members.

26. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS OR OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

27. 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.

28. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 OCTOBER 2014

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION ACTION IMPLEMENTATION
PLANS (SCRAIPS)

The Chairman explained that Scrutiny Committee Recommendation Action Implementation Plans (SCRAIPs) set out recommendations following scrutiny meetings and reviews.

Christian Scade, Senior Corporate Policy Officer, informed the committee that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee received monthly SCRAIP updates as part of the Future Work Programme agenda item. In addition, on the 3 October 2014 the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee had reviewed all SCRAIPs for the municipal year to date.

The Chairman advised the committee that the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Officer was an opportunity to determine how any outstanding actions should be followed up and monitored.

The committee noted the report and agreed that any follow up work should be carried out by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: That the SCRAIP update report be noted.

30. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME - INCLUDING REVIEW WORK

Christian Scade, Senior Corporate Policy Officer, explained the terms of reference for the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee included developing mechanisms for addressing cross cutting issues.

The Chairman informed the committee that the report of the Senior Corporate Policy Officer provided an opportunity to review individual work programmes to identify what had been working well and to discuss how the scrutiny work programme could be improved.

Cllr Wilson, as Chairman of the Community, Environment and Housing OSC, provided an update on the Review of Loneliness and Isolation in the Over 65s. The committee was informed that Jo Tonkin, Public Health Specialist, Kent Public Health, had produced a report on Loneliness and Isolation. It was explained that this had been considered by the review working group and the committee.

It was noted that, in addition to Jo Tonkin, the committee/working group had interviewed a number of witnesses. In addition, students from Oakwood Park Grammar School and Invicta Grammar school had met with the working group and attended a committee meeting on 11 November 2014.

Following discussion by the Community, Environment and Housing OSC on 11 November 2014, Cllr Wilson explained that the Community Partnership Manager had been asked to undertake further work to develop ways to identify lonely and isolated over 65 year olds across the borough. It was noted that further work on the review would take place during early 2015.

Cllr Paterson, Chairman of the Economic and Commercial Development OSC, provided an update on the Twilight Economy Review. Cllr Paterson explained that the following definition had been agreed:

"Economic activity that occurs in the town centre after ordinary shop and workplace closing times (around 5.30pm) but before the usual pub closing times (around 11.30pm)"

Cllr Paterson informed the committee that evidence had been gathered from a number of witnesses during October 2014 while other activities had been planned, such as a site visit to Canterbury, for November and December 2014. It was hoped that a draft report would be ready for consideration by the Economic and Commercial Development OSC before Christmas.

Cllr Gooch, Chairman of the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services OSC, provided an update on the work of the Budget Working Group and the Joint Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) Task and Finish Group.

It was noted that the Budget Working Group, Chaired by Cllr Mrs Grigg, had held a number of productive meetings which had been well attended by members from all parties. It was explained that final recommendations would be made as part of the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services OSC meeting in January 2015.

Cllr Gooch informed the committee that the Joint MKIP Task and Finish Group had met for the first time in September 2014. It was explained that this had been a joint piece of scrutiny, with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Swale Borough Council, which had been set up to look at governance and communication issues.

The task group had received evidence from a number of witnesses including the Mid Kent Services Director, the MKIP Programme Manager, Heads of Service, the Centre for Public Scrutiny, and representatives from the MKIP Board, amongst others.

It was explained that the task group had discussed various issues, as part of their scoping, in relation to the Mid Kent Planning Support Shared Service but had decided that this should not be discussed within the remit of the task group, as it had been subject to a separate internal review. This was noted by the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee who discussed options for the scrutiny of Planning Support Shared Services moving forward.

Cllr Gooch informed the committee that, subject to further discussions with Tunbridge Wells and Swale Borough Council, that a co-located simultaneous meeting would take place on 12 January 2015 to consider the task group's final report.

Tessa Mallett, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, provided an update on the Review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car. It was noted that a draft report on the first two parts of the review; Walking and Cycling and Bus Services had been considered by the Planning, Transport and Development OSC on the 18 November 2014. It was explained that stage three of the review, Rail Services, had taken place at the same meeting and that a final report would be considered by committee in February 2015.

In terms of addressing cross cutting issues, it was noted that on the 28 November 2014 the Economic and Commercial Development OSC had received an update on the Maidstone Culture and Leisure Business Plan (2014-2018). It was explained that this had included an update on the development of a number of commercial projects.

In keeping with the principle of pre-decision scrutiny, it was agreed that commercial projects should be considered by the Economic and

Development OSC before Cabinet made decisions. It was noted, given the cross cutting nature of the topics under review, that the Budget Working Group had continued to scrutinise the development of commercial developments in relation to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Despite work already undertaken by scrutiny, it was explained that the Economic and Commercial Development OSC had asked the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee to give further consideration to the subject. It was noted that this was to ensure there was earlier input from members, from all parties, on commercial projects.

It was agreed that the Head of Commercial and Economic Development should be asked to speak to Group Leaders to ensure a working party could be set up, with members from all political parties, to enable early input from members on commercial projects. The committee agreed that this should include consideration of using the membership of the Budget Working Group to carry out this task.

In addition, the following issues were briefly discussed:

- The roles and responsibilities of the Joint Transportation Board
- The presentation of petitions to the Council and Committees

RESOLVED:

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme, set out in Appendix A to the report of the Senior Corporate Policy Officer, be noted.
2. That the verbal updates, concerning scrutiny review topics, be noted.
- 3 That the Head of Commercial and Economic Development be asked to speak to Group Leaders to ensure a working party is set up, with members from all political parties, to enable early input from members on commercial projects. This should include consideration of using the membership of the Budget Working Group to carry out this task.
4. That, subject to further discussion with the Joint MKIP Task and Finish Group and between the Chairmen of the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services OSC and the Planning, Transport and Development OSC, the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services OSC be lead Committee for any scrutiny of Planning Support Shared Services following the publication of the internal review.

31. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman introduced the Future Work Programme Report. It was suggested topics for future meetings should be agreed, outside of the meeting, once a decision had been made by full Council concerning the Council's future governance arrangements.

RESOLVED: That the next Scrutiny Coordinating Committee meeting be held on Monday 2 February at 10.00am.

32. DURATION OF MEETING

10.02am – 11.15am