

Council

**16 September
2015**

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014-15

Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Director or Head of Service	Paul Riley, Head of Finance and Resources
Lead Officer and Report Author	Orla Sweeney, Democratic Services Officer
Classification	Non-exempt
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to the final decision-maker:

1. To note the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014-15.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone an attractive place for us all
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

Timetable	
<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Council	16 September 2015
Other Committee	N/A

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014-15

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Coordinating Committee had responsibility for producing an Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.
 - 1.2 The Annual Report provides an overview of the year, highlighting successes alongside the challenges of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2014-15 Municipal Year.
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Maidstone Borough Council Constitution for 2014-15 stated that "Overview and Scrutiny Committees may report annually to the full Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate" (Part One, article 6.3 (d) of the previous Constitution).
- 2.2 The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees formed the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee as per the constitution.
- 2.3 The Committee held five meetings over the course of the year and were responsible for considering any cross-cutting issues that arose and deciding which Committee, based on its terms of reference, was best placed to examine the issue.
- 2.4 Overview and Scrutiny at Maidstone Borough Council aligned to the Centre for Public Scrutiny's principles:
 - Constructive 'critical friend' challenge;
 - Amplifies the voices and concerns of the public;
 - Led by independent people who take responsibility for their role; and
 - Drives improvement in public services.
- 2.5 Overview and Scrutiny continued its cross party Budget Working Group in 2014-15. It was established during the 2012-13 Municipal Year as an outcome of the Capital Programme Review undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny. The Budget Working Group harnessed the appetite of back bench Scrutiny members who were keen to have early involvement in the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme.
- 2.6 During the 2014-15 Municipal Year the Budget Working Group, a sub group of the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 'provided a sounding board for early stage consideration of commercial projects which in turn prompted the group to

initiate Member Development sessions on strategic risk' (Councillor Mrs Gooch).

- 2.7 Some of the successes highlighted in the Annual Report include the following:
- The Community, Environment and Housing Committee's successful lobbying for the retention of the Community Warden Service;
 - Increased public engagement, particularly in relation to the Local Plan. The Planning and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee involved residents and Parish Councils; and
 - The Twilight Economy Review and the Career's Guidance Review.
- 2.8 One of the key challenges highlighted by the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee in its report was the Local Plan and in particular the allocation of housing sites for the borough. This was given careful consideration over a series of three meetings.

3 AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Council are asked to note the report.
- 3.2 Council could choose not to note the report; however the work of Overview and Scrutiny during the 2014-15 and its opportunity to share this with all members of the Council and residents would be lost.

4 PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is detailed at 3.1 of this report, that Council note the report so that the work of the Overview and Scrutiny committee members during the 2014-15 Municipal Year is recognised by all members of the Council.

5 CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 Not applicable to this report.

6 NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Once the report is noted it will become a public document and a point of reference for members and residents. It is the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report as the Council have now changed its Governance arrangements, moving from an Executive model to a Committee system.

7 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Not applicable to this report.

8 REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014-15

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None