

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

2014 - 2015



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Overview and Scrutiny Committee Membership 2014-15

Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services	Economic and Commercial Development	Community, Environment and Housing	Planning, Transport and Development
Chairman: Mrs Gooch	Chairman: Mrs Paterson	Chairman: JA Wilson	Chairman: Mrs Springett
Vice Chairman: Black	Vice Chairman: Butler	Vice Chairman: Mortimer	Vice Chairman: English
Mrs Stockell	Cuming	Mrs Parvin	Ross
Mrs Grigg	Hinder	Round	Round
Long	Hogg	Mrs Stockell	De Wiggondene
Pickett	Fissenden	Mrs Joy	Chittenden
Ash	Powell	Vizzard	Willis
Mrs Edwards-Daem	Harper	Munford	Mrs Gooch
Butler	Mrs Wilson	Sargeant	Powell

Foreword from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairmen



Councillor Fay Gooch, Chairman Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2014-15

We look back on this 2014-15 year with a sense of pride and achievement.

We initiated Joint Scrutiny Meetings with representatives

from Swale and Tunbridge Wells borough councils and formed a Task & Finish group to look into the governance arrangements of the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership and its communications. After a huge amount of evidence gathering within a punishingly short space of time, the resulting 12-recommendation report was very well received and is being implemented. We look to our new Policy & Resources Committee to select Maidstone's representatives on the Joint Scrutiny Meeting where the momentum will continue after the May 2015 elections to look at the Planning Shared Support Service.

Meanwhile on Maidstone Borough territory, we successfully continued our day job of regularly monitoring and scrutinising complaints and key performance indicator reports. We diligently input and exercised our role as 'critical friend' to principal policy documents.

The 'Making the Most of Meetings' all-member workshop we initiated will stand us in good stead for the forthcoming change in governance arrangements. The ability to question and challenge are skills which will easily transfer from scrutiny to the new committee system, and will enable interesting and productive meetings to continue.

Our cross-party Budget Working Group continued to demonstrate its added value and importance. For example, it 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. The Group also considered short term / long-term options for the Local Tax Discount Scheme, and for potential use of the Budget Underspend.

I thank most warmly my colleagues on the Scrutiny Committee for their careful attention and considered input during this municipal year of 2014-15. I also thank most gratefully the help and support of Support Officer Poppy Brewer and her predecessor Christian Scade, without whom the meetings could not have taken place.

“ We diligently input and exercised our role as ‘critical friend’ to principle policy documents. We initiated a ‘Making the Most of Meetings’ all-member workshop on questioning and challenging skills...”



Councillor Jenni Paterson, Chairman Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2014-15

The pressing challenge for Maidstone Borough Council during the past few years and quite extensively during 2014/15 has been the delivery of a Local Plan covering 2011-2031. Alongside

the delivery of the Local Plan there needs to be an Integrated Transport Strategy and an Economic Development Strategy – this also included a qualitative report into the availability of employment land. The officers and the committee members have worked to ensure that progress has been made on the Economic Development Strategy but this work is still on going and will need to be completed during 2015/2016.

The Committee became interested in reviewing the Night Time Economy, which evolved into an investigation into Maidstone's Twilight Economy. It was undecided as to whether there was a case to promote the Twilight Economy in Maidstone. It was after interviewing witnesses and undertaking site visits that it became clear to members that there were a number of issues which if addressed could promote

Maidstone's Twilight Economy. The Committee's Twilight Economy Review was presented to Cabinet in March 2015 and it was well received and officer and committee members were thanked for their hard work.

Members have been aware for some time of both national and local criticism relating to the perceived lack of skills of young people entering the workplace. With this in mind the Committee decided to review what careers guidance is offered to students with the Maidstone borough.

The review is still underway at the time of writing this. Many witnesses have been interviewed

and learning establishments, together with a major career fair, have been visited. Councillor Martin Round who has expertise in the subject, was co-opted to the Committee for this review. It is the Committee's intention that the review will feed back to the Economic Development department to aid the skills and employability agenda

In addition to the two reviews the Committee has taken part in a co-located, simultaneous meeting with the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the approach to employability land and the approach to employability land within the Local Plan and to

"...it became clear to members that there were a number of issues which if addressed could promote Maidstone's Twilight Economy."

consider the release of the Draft Economic Development Strategy for consultation. For most of us it was the first experience of this type of meeting format and I think the jury is still out on the benefits gained.

We have also considered and made recommendations on the draft Commercialisation Strategy, draft Festivals and Events policy, Maidstone enterprise hub and reviews of business cases.

As chair I must thank members of the Committee for their patience and support throughout the year. Everyone has engaged positively in the meeting and I particularly appreciate the support of members who have been able to attend the many evidence gathering sessions outside of formal meetings.



Councillor Val Springett, Chairman Planning and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2014-15

This has probably been one of the most challenging years for the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee. We started the year with a list of suggested topics to review but

the committee's work has been dominated by the Local Plan. We have reviewed some pretty large and detailed documents this year, which are part of the Local Plan process. Where our housing sites should be allocated was probably the most challenging issue, and the agenda item to discuss the draft proposed housing sites was, I think, a record breaking one, extending to in excess of 19 hours over three separate meetings. Scrutiny did what Scrutiny was intended to do and reviewed Officer recommendations in conjunction with the views of residents. We listened to the views of Parish Councils, Community groups, and Borough Council Ward members to ensure everyone had their say, and this resulted in some well-considered recommendations.

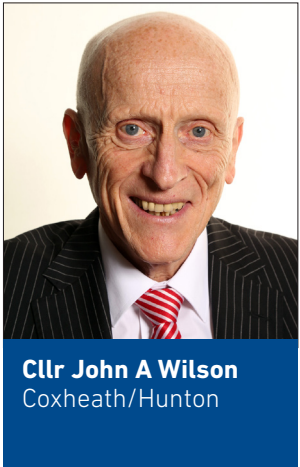
Alongside the Local Plan issues, we also undertook a review of Transport in Maidstone -

alternatives to using the car. This also turned out to be a rather large review topic, which generated a lot of interest amongst both the press and community groups. Our report has just been published and will hopefully be used as a valuable evidence base when future transport options are being looked at. In addition to this, it is proposed to establish a platform going forward, to continue researching

and reviewing future transport options that may ease congestion in the Borough in the coming years.

Some of the topics suggested for Scrutiny to review during the year were not covered due to time constraints, but these will be carried forward as suggested topics for the new committee to look at.

“This has probably been one of the most challenging years for the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.”



Councillor John Wilson, Chairman Community, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2014-15

One of the main drives this year has been to encourage more member participation following criticism by them that their input into the decision making process

was not adequate. This Committee has done this, and wherever possible involved relevant Ward members in the subject matter being discussed. The main topics have been:

- A review of Adult and Elder People Services. This concentrated on a major review of loneliness and isolation in recognition of the increasing problem this represents in an ageing population.
- Kent Health and Wellbeing Board. Aspects included obesity in young people, accessing mental health services before point of crisis and resident input at Ward member level.
- Crime and Disorder O&S Committee. In this role, the Committee heard from the Safer Maidstone Partnership focussing on Anti-social behaviour, reducing reoffending,

Road Safety, Substance misuse and violent crime. As a rider to this, the Committee looked at the Night Time Economy in Maidstone, and asked for a report on the cost of Policing and clearing up compared to the direct financial gain. This is something that it would be pertinent for the new Service Committees to take forward.

- The Committee lobbied for and were pleased to see were successful in, the retention of the Community Warden Service.
- The Committee were updated on MKIP Environmental Health

Shared Service.

Other topics reviewed included Street Population, Maternity Services, Street Cleansing and Health Inequalities.

All the above matters should be carried forward and be issues under the new Governance arrangements.

The Committee wishes to record its thanks to all the Officers, members and visitors who gave their time to its business this year.

“One of the main drives this year has been to encourage more member participation.”

Introduction What is Scrutiny?

All local authorities operating a Cabinet and Scrutiny model have a Cabinet made up of the Leader of the Council and up to nine members of his Group. All executive decisions (i.e. those needed to implement the Policy Framework and Budget approved by the County Council) are taken by the Cabinet.

Overview and Scrutiny bodies are not “decision making” bodies but are bodies which monitor and influence those that are. The Overview and Scrutiny role, carried out by non-Cabinet members, is designed to support the work of the Council in the following ways:

- Reviewing and scrutinising decisions taken by the Cabinet (sometimes known as acting as a “critical friend”);
- Considering aspects of the Council’s performance;

- Assisting in research, policy review and development;
- Involving itself with external organisations operating in the borough to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working; and
- Providing a means of involving the community in the Council’s work.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee comprises of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of all four Overview and Scrutiny Committees. It has overall responsibility for Overview and Scrutiny including terms of reference, budget and progress of reviews. It is also responsible for addressing cross-cutting issues and preventing the duplication of work of the individual committees.

The Committees scrutinise the

Council’s functions in relation to the relevant departments as appropriate to each Committee’s term of reference, which are aligned to Cabinet Member portfolios. The Community, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for Crime and

Disorder Overview and Scrutiny and keeps a watching brief on health and well-being matters, for example, Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Health and Well-Being Board.

The Budget Working Group was set up as a result of a

The Local Government Act 2000 specifies that “executive arrangements by a local authority must ensure that their overview and scrutiny committee has power...

- (a) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken...**
- (b) to make reports or recommendations to the authority ...**
- (e) to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive on matters which affect the authority’s area or the inhabitants of that area.” (Local Government Act 2000, S.21 (2)).**

Introduction What is Scrutiny?

recommendation of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 'the Council as a business? review undertaken during the 2011/12 Municipal Year. It was felt that a cross-party Budget Working Group, appointed from the membership of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, would help improve the Committee's understanding of budgetary issues and allow the Committee opportunity for greater input in the budget strategy and the budget setting process. This has continued to date. For the 2014-15 Municipal Year this group comprised of members of the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It is recommended by the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee that the Budget Working Group is taken forward, in an appropriate manner, under the new Committee

structure.

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Decision Making Structure at Maidstone Borough Council

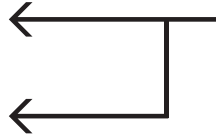
Regulatory Committees

- Audit
- Planning
- Licencing

Council

Cabinet

- Leader of the Council
- Cabinet Members



Overview and Scrutiny

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

Key

Main reporting relationship →

Key Outcomes from work undertaken during the past year

Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference align with the Corporate and Customer Excellence priority, and have responsibility for holding the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Customer Services to account.

The Committee considered financial, performance, corporate governance and communication data in order to produce recommendations that benefited of Maidstone's residents. The work of the Committee encompassed the following:

- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Local Council Tax Discount Scheme

- Use of Revenue Underspend
- Cabinet Member Priorities
- Annual Performance Report
- Complaints Reports
- Equality Objectives
- Key Performance Indicator Monitoring
- Strategic Plan Updates
- Budget Strategy

Local Council Tax Discount Scheme Working Group

Workshops were held to allow Members to examine the implications of financial decisions within the calculation of the Local Council Tax Discount Scheme. This allowed the Committee to make thoroughly researched and quality recommendations

to Cabinet regarding the options available.

Budget Working Group

The Committee supported the continuation of the Budget Working Group. Originally constituted and chaired by Members of the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Committee, the Group extended invitations to all Councillors in order to create a dynamic platform for discussion and include a breadth of perspectives. It enjoyed a sizable attendance from across the Council. Workstreams the Group had input into included:

- Budget Strategy 2015-16 Onwards
- Fees and Charges Data
- Capital Programme

The Group worked concurrently

with the progression of the Commercialisation programme and the Commercial Projects schedule. Drawing upon the acumen and wide ranging experience of the members, the Group became a valuable sounding board for commercial project development.

MKIP Joint Task and Finish Group

Having forged a relationship with the Scrutiny Committees at Tunbridge Wells and Swale Borough Councils in the previous Municipal Year, a productive collaboration continued. There was an appetite from Members across all three authorities to be involved and updated on the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership. A co-located meeting of the three Committees took place in June 2014. They implemented

Key Outcomes from work undertaken during the past year

a joint task and finish group to investigate and report back on the governance and communications arrangements within Mid Kent Improvement Partnership and Mid Kent Services.

This detailed examination heard evidence from:

- MKS Director and MKIP Programme Manager
- Heads of Mid Kent Services
- Monitoring and Section 151 Officers
- Heads of Service on the client side
- MKIP Board
- Heads of Communication at TWBC and MBC
- Ed Hammond, Centre for Public Scrutiny
- Paul Corney, Head of Anglia Revenue Partnership
- Dr Wim Van Vuuren, Programme

Director for Shared Service PGDip, Canterbury Christ Church University

A joint report was produced and the recommendations were considered by the Cabinet Committees of the three authorities.

As a result, a new quarterly MKIP newsletter was circulated to all staff and Members at Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells has commenced, based upon the reviews findings on

communication and awareness within the organisation. This collaborative, joint-working approach has proven fruitful and the three Committees have expressed the desire that this work continues into the next Municipal year.

Formal meetings	13
Total quality recommendations made	16
Site visits	0
Reviews	1

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.'

One of the first pieces of pre-decision scrutiny carried out by the committee was in relation to the Commercialisation Strategy. The Commercial Projects Manager outlined the council's approach to developing, and improving, commercial services in order to provide other services to residents in the face of continued funding reductions. The committee recommended the strategy for adoption. Proposed commercial

projects under the strategy were also considered by the committee throughout the year. For example, proposals to charge for parking in Mote Park, creating a pet crematorium and regenerating areas of land under council ownership were all considered by the committee.

Following the Events and Festivals Review from the previous year, the council's Events and Festivals Policy was brought to the committee. The Cultural Services Manager, was able to show the committee where their hard work had been taken forward when drafting the strategy.

Another key piece of work that the committee were involved in was the Enterprise Hub. This piece of work had been ongoing for two years and the committee were involved in making recommendations at each stage of the project. The committee

showed their strong support for such a facility by recommending that a smaller scale Enterprise Hub be set up on council premises to test the viability of the project. This is progressing, with the Enterprise Hub scheduled to be open in the Gateway Terrace in September 2015.

The committee also had one other large piece of pre-decision scrutiny, which was the Economic Development Strategy. This strategy is important for determining employment site land allocations for the local plan. Therefore the topic was considered in a joint meeting with the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October. The committees made recommendations to the cabinet member in order to ensure appropriate protection for the environment of the borough, whilst also ensuring there was

appropriate land allocations for employment sites.

The committee chose to undertake two smaller scale reviews for this year. The first was a review of the 'Twilight Economy'; and the second was a review of careers advice, education and guidance.

The Twilight Economy Review sought to find out whether there was a will to grow the Twilight Economy in Maidstone, and if this was the case finding out what had been successful elsewhere. For the purpose of the review, the 'Twilight Economy' was defined as '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).' The committee spoke to stakeholders in the Twilight Economy, visited Maidstone during twilight economy hours and also visited Canterbury to see what

Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

they had done in this area. The review came up with a number of recommendations that would improve the twilight economy, many of which were accepted by the relevant Cabinet Members.

As a result of engagement work carried out for the review, the Night Time Economy Forum asked the committee to consider an item on use of PA systems in the night time economy. This item was considered in January, and led to recommendations being made to cabinet members and heads of service in order to minimise future complaints from residents in the town centre about noise from the night time economy.

The second review was regarding careers advice and guidance in the borough. Following an update from the Economic Development Officer who was working on the council's skills and employability programme it was identified that skills and

employability provision may be an area that the committee could add value.

The Committee interviewed a wide range of witnesses from the public and private sector in round table discussions and conducted a number of site visits. In the Committee meeting setting members interviewed:

- Paul Barron, Director of Kent Foundation for Young Entrepreneurs (KFYE)
- Alison King, Red Rocket Associates
- Simon Harris, Team Leader, CXK
- John Taylor, Invicta Chamber of Commerce and Young Chamber of Commerce.
- Abigail Lewis, Economic Development Officer, Maidstone Borough Council

In Informal interview sessions they met with:

- Fay Jordan, Barclays LifeSkills
- Chris Hare, Director of Development, Kent Association of FE Colleges (KAFEC)

Site visits were arranged to the following:

- Mid Maidstone Careers Education, Information and Guidance network,
- Maplesden Noakes School, Careers Guidance department
- Kent Choices Live, Kent County Showground

The Education Act 2011 placed a duty on schools to secure access to independent careers guidance for their pupils therefore the committee focused on the 14-18 age group in this inquiry. It felt that there was a wide range of advice and guidance available but the focus of advice could be broadened to ensure the full range of opportunities available were pursued.

Formal meetings	12
Total quality recommendations made	23
Site visits	4
Reviews	2

Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference align with the priorities, for Maidstone to be a decent place to live and for Maidstone to have a growing economy. The Committee has responsibility for holding the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development to account.

Throughout the municipal year the Committee's work focussed mainly on the preparation of the Draft Local Plan 2011-2031 and was focused on the following:

- Updates on the Integrated Transport Strategy
- Validation and summary of representations from the consultation on the draft Local Plan
- Review of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- Cabinet Member Priorities for

2014-2015

- Design South East report on the consultation events for the Draft Local Plan
- Community Infrastructure Levy – preliminary draft charging schedule
- Implications arising from a review of the draft Economic Development Strategy, Qualitative Study on Employment Sites and key employment issues arising from the local plan representations
- Draft Local Plan Development Management Policies – representations from consultation
- Results of the Qualitative Landscape Study- progress update
- Results of the Qualitative Agricultural Land Classification – progress update
- Draft Local Plan new and deleted

site allocations for further public consultation

- Revisit of Invicta Barracks and its inclusion in the Draft Local Plan

Review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car

Alongside the scrutiny of the policies for the draft Local Plan the Committee carried out a review of transport in Maidstone and looked at alternatives to using a car to get into Maidstone town to ease congestion.

The aim of the review was to explore how a reduction in our reliance on the car could be achieved. It was decided the report should look at what alternative modes of transport are currently available to residents within the borough of Maidstone, and how

improvements could be made to encourage more people to use them.

The research undertaken included interviewing witnesses from transport providers and expert authority officers, to keen cyclists, walkers and service users.

Some of the main findings included:

- Improvements to communication regarding bus times and timetable disruptions, reliability and poor frequency of bus services were the main issues affecting many service users, especially school children on certain routes. It was recommended better methods of communicating road closures would assist bus companies in maintaining schedules and provide a service users could rely on;
- Funding opportunities for Parish

Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Council's to improve transport links and facilities within their areas needed to be published;

- Improved and safer cycle path provision in all areas and interconnectivity with bus routes in more rural locations was needed - some parish councils, such as Coxheath, had included this provision in their emerging Neighbourhood Plans;
- Parking availability and fare costs were all factors putting residents off using the rail network;
- It was established that public transport user groups were beneficial in enabling issues to be addressed more easily and Officer and Member support was beneficial. The re-establishment of the Maidstone Borough Transport User Group was recommended;
- An update of the draft Maidstone Borough Council Cycling

Strategy, dated 2012 was recommended, as well as the establishment of a Maidstone Cyclists Forum;

- Specific use of Section 106 monies would assist in enabling bus services, cycle and footpaths to be created alongside new developments;

At the conclusion of the review inquiry it was felt that there was still a long way to go in achieving reduced car usage in Maidstone. However, it was hoped the recommendations from the review report will lead to improvements to alternative transport and future increased usage as access, reliability and costs are improved. The recommendations from the report will be followed up by the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee from new municipal year.

Formal meetings	16
Total quality recommendations made	67
Site visits	0
Reviews	2

Community, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Formerly the Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in July 2014 the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee agreed to change the terms of reference for this committee. Responsibility for Leisure Services was moved to the Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The revisions were made due to portfolio changes in relation to housing responsibilities and various restructures across the Council.

The Community, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference align with the priority, for Maidstone to be a decent place to live. The Committee has responsibility for holding the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing, to account.

Throughout the municipal year the Committee's work focussed on:

- The Cabinet Members' Priorities for the coming year;
- Allocations Scheme
- Regular updates on the Financial Inclusion and Troubled Families projects
- West Kent Health and Wellbeing Board
- Empty Homes Plan (2013-15)
- Recommendations from the Accessing Mental Health before the Point of Crisis review 2014-2014
- Maternity Services for the Borough
- Street Cleansing
- Refresh of the Health Inequalities Action Plan
- Affordable Housing Development programme
- Collective Switching Campaign

- Private Rented sector update
- MKIP Shared Environmental Health Service
- Housing Strategy Review
- Impact of the Welfare Reforms

Review of Maternity Services for the Borough

During late 2010 Maternity Services at Maidstone Hospital changed from a Consultant led service to a Midwife led service. The reason for the change to services were that staffing numbers for the number of births at both hospitals were insufficient to deliver a full range of maternity services at both sites. Therefore the midwife led and consultant led services were split between the two hospitals.

During the public consultation, carried out prior to the change, many concerns were raised.

A particular concern was the journey time and route Maidstone residents would have to make to access services at Pembury Hospital in Tunbridge Wells.

The Committee decided, as the changes to the service had been in place for three years, they would review the service to establish if the concerns raised during the consultation in 2010 were still valid.

Before the Committee meeting on 9 December 2014, an invitation was made, via social media and the Maidstone Family Nurse Service for service users to attend the meeting. The Committee interviewed Dr Bob Bowes, Chair of the West Kent Health and Wellbeing Board and County Councillor Daley, member of Kent County Council's (KCC) Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee heard the

Community, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

following evidence:

- At the time of the suggested changes to services, around 97% of local GPs had concerns about the changes;
- Since the changes to the service statistical analysis had shown a reduction in adverse outcomes in deliveries;
- Only one GP on the Clinical Commissioning Group had noted a negative experience of the service. This was regarding a mother who had given birth in an ambulance. However it was noted the mother did not experience any adverse outcomes as a result;
- Whilst there was concern in Maidstone regarding the need to travel to Tunbridge Wells to access a consultant led service; those in Tunbridge Wells who needed to access the midwife led service in Maidstone experienced similar travel issues;
- As a result of the concerns raised during the consultation on the changes to the maternity services, the KCC Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee had kept a close watch over the new service since the changes had been implemented, and continued to do so;
- Emergency transport (ambulances with blue lights) were rarely used to transport patients between sites. This was because when patients arrived at Maidstone Hospital they were given an early stage pre-assessment, and if appropriate were transferred to Pembury Hospital;
- Approximately 30% of first time mothers, and 12% of second time mothers were referred to the unit in Pembury;
- The unit at Maidstone was a £3 million state of the art facility delivering an excellent service;

- The roll out of the service had been considered a success, and the model piloted in Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells had been followed elsewhere in the country where similar problems with staffing levels had been identified.

Review of Loneliness and Isolation in the over 65s of Maidstone borough

The Committee's review of Loneliness and Isolation in the over 65s began with a report from Kent Public Health. The report attempted to identify the profile of lonely and isolated adults and older people in the Borough and what support was available for them.

The Committee were not satisfied that the statistics presented reflected the true picture for Maidstone as they were based

on national statistics and not actual figures for the borough. This resulted in the Community Development Team carrying out a Quality of Life Survey of residents in an attempt to identify lonely and isolated residents along with establishing what services were already provided. The results of their research will be used to build strategies to tackle loneliness and isolation into the Council's Health Inequalities Action Plan.

Acting as the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Community, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a statutory responsibility to scrutinise Crime and Disorder and meets as the Acting Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee twice each municipal year.

Community, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

During the 2014-2015 municipal year the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee received reports on the following:

- Safer Maidstone Partnership
- Street Population
- Road Safety Update
- Night time economy and violent crime
- Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-2018

Formal meetings	11
Total quality recommendations made	17
Site visits	0
Reviews	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 undertaken throughout the year is shown in the table below:

Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services	Economic and Commercial Development	Community, Environment and Housing	Planning, Transport and Development
Getting the most out of your meetings	How to get the most out of your meetings	How to get the most out of your meetings	How to get the most out of your meetings
Economic Development Strategy briefing	Economic Development Strategy briefing	Economic Development Strategy briefing	Economic Development Strategy briefing
Equality Objectives Workshop	Equality Objectives Workshop	Equality Objectives Workshop	Equality Objectives Workshop
Local Council Tax Discount Scheme workshop			
Commercial Projects Briefing			

The Future

Maidstone Borough Council will move from the current Executive function, a system of governance that includes a Leader and Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny function, to a Committee system (pursuant to Section 9KC Local Government Act 2000).

This decision was taken on 10 December 2014 by full Council. Since that date, a cross-party group has worked together to decide what the new Committee system will look like and how it will work. A major piece of work juxtaposed to this is the writing of a new constitution for Council to adopt.

This will be effective from the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2015.

The members of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee for the 2014-15 Municipal Year consisted of the Chairman and

Vice-Chairman of each Committee. The Committee have had an overarching role within the scrutiny function and want to ensure that continuity is provided as the Council moves forward.

Scrutiny topics to be considered in 2015-16

- Maternity Services
- Draft Economic Development Strategy
- Careers Guidance Review
- The Local Plan
- Continued representation from Maidstone Borough Councillors on MKIP Joint Committees (post Overview And Scrutiny)
- Budget Working Group
- Loneliness and Isolation
- MKIP Environmental Health Shared Service
- Play Areas Strategy

- Crime and Disorder

Therefore, having consulted with all scrutiny members the items outlined in the table above of significant importance to Maidstone and Maidstone residents have been put forward to be noted with the recommendation of the Co-ordinating Committee that:

“the new Policy and Resources Committee considers the topics as part of its work programme in the next Municipal Year.”