

Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2024-25

This report will be considered formally by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 11 February 2025.

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Foreword from the Chairman and Vice-Chairman



Committee Chairman, Councillor
Claudine Russell



Committee Vice-Chairman,
Councillor Rob Field

As Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, we are pleased to present this annual report, detailing the work carried out across the 2024-25 municipal year.

This year the Committee has reviewed **one call-in request**, carried out **pre-decision scrutiny on eight decisions** and completed **one review**. The work programme has been reviewed regularly as Members continued to evaluate the use of the Committee's time and resources. We would like to thank the Officers and Cabinet Members that attended meetings this year to assist in the Committee's work. However, our deepest thanks go to the Committee Members, for their efforts in supporting the work conducted overall.

As the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prepares to enter into its fourth year, we look forward to continually developing the skills required to build a strong Overview and Scrutiny function; continuing the Committee's legislative role in being a check and balance to the Cabinet and delving into issues of local importance through our review powers.

Committee Remit & Membership

Councillors Russell (Chairman), Field (Vice-Chairman), Cannon, Cooke, Harper, Higson, Kehily, McKay, M Naghi, Oliver, Parfitt, Rodwell, and J Wilkinson

Members attending as substitutes included Councillors Burke, Conyard, Fort, Forecast, Gooch, Jenkins-Baldock, Khadka, Milham, Riordan, J Sams, Sweetman, Wilby, D Wilkinson

Further information can be found here: [Your Councillors - Maidstone Borough Council](#)

Member Workshop

In May 2024, an informal workshop was held with the Committee to discuss its work programme for 2024/25. This included an introduction to Overview and Scrutiny, reviewing the remaining work programme items from 2023-24 and reviewing submitted scopes with a suggestion session (for new reviews).

The workshop was beneficial, and contributed to the Committee's work programme which was agreed in June 2024: [Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Wednesday 12th June, 2024 6.45 pm](#)

Meetings and Reviews

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work programme for the 2024/25 Municipal Year included the following, with the Committee having met on 11 occasions by the end of this municipal year. The meeting in July 2024 was cancelled due to the UK Parliamentary election:

- Section 106 (S106) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) **(completed)**
- Planning Enforcement (started February 2025, ongoing)

A politically balanced Working Group was assigned to conduct the S106 and CIL review consisting of:

Councillors Russell (Chairman), Harper, Kehily, McKay and M Naghi

The review was completed with a draft report presented to the Committee in January 2025. The draft report can be seen here: [Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy Review draft report](#)

The Enforcement review can be rolled over to the next municipal year for the Committee to consider when it sets its work programme.

Additionally, the Committee received an Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation and Action Implementation Plans (SCRAIP) from the Cabinet concerning the Environmental and Waste Crime Enforcement Review conducted in the previous municipal year. The responses were positive overall. The relevant Cabinet Member attended the meeting to present the responses and answer questions from the Committee:

[Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Wednesday 9th October, 2024 6.30 pm](#)

Review Title & Objectives: Section 106 and Community Infrastructure, with the following lines of enquiry:

- *Suitability of the CIL bidding process to achieve high level infrastructure, e.g. education and highways improvement;*
- *Legal framework around S106 in conjunction with CIL to achieve high level strategic infrastructure;*
- *Use of S106 agreements and the current S106 funds to achieve high level strategic infrastructure; and*
- *If CIL funding allocated to Parish Councils was able to be spent effectively and if non-parish areas have equal representation and capability to access this money.*

A Working Group was formed Information relating to the review can be accessed here: [Committee Report: Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy Review](#)

Outcomes: The Working Group’s report was reviewed by the Committee at the 21 January 2025 Meeting and received by the Cabinet on 5 February 2025. There were 6 recommendations made, 1 for the Democratic Services Officer and 5 to receive a formal response by way of a SCRAIP, all of which relate to the Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Management’s portfolio.

Meetings	Attendees	Evidence Provided
26 Sep 2024	Working Group Principal Planning Officer	Evidence collection through Officer interview Evidence provided in advanced of meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 'Review of the CIL Bidding Process' report, due to go to informal Cabinet on 31 October • The CIL Bidding Prospectus for 2022-2025 • The Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement from 2023/24 • The Record of Decision for the last CIL Strategic Assessment & Spend Decision (following call in to Overview and Scrutiny), 20 September 2023 • Minutes from the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 15 August 2023, where the CIL Strategic Assessment & Spend Decision was called in • Guidance for Infrastructure Spend Plans - Ward & (Non-Parished Areas) Governance and Procedural Arrangements for CIL Spend
3 Oct 2024	Working Group Chief Executive CIL & S106 Team Leader	Evidence collection through Officer interview Evidence provided in advanced of meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) June 2023

17 Oct 2024	Working Group only	Evidence provided in advanced of meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research outlining how other Councils allocate non-strategic CIL to unparished areas
21 Nov 2024	Working Group only	Evidence provided in advanced of meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research outlining how London Councils allocate non-strategic CIL to unparished areas • Spreadsheets to show S106 collected from specific applications and allocated/spent by: KCC Highways, KCC Education and Healthcare providers • Report from Home Builders Federation sent by Principal Planning Officer on unspent developer contributions
5 Dec 2024	Working Group only	Evidence provided in advanced of meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure Funding Statement from Kent County Council • Results and summary of Community Infrastructure Levy Parish Survey • Response from external stakeholder, Deputy Director, Primary Care Strategy, Estates and Transformation
10 Dec	Working Group External Stakeholders from Kent County Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Investment Team Manager, Growth & Communities • Transport & Development Planning Manager – West Kent • Major Capital Programme Manager 	Evidence collection through interviews
19 Dec	Working Group Director of Regeneration and Place	Evidence collection through Officer interview Recommendations produced

Call-In

It is a legislative power of the Committee and takes place when **either the Committee Chairman OR any three Council Members** request to call-in a decision for review, after it has been made by the Cabinet (before the end of the call-in period).

The Committee has reviewed one call-in request this year:

- Maidstone House and the Link Decarbonisation (August 2024)

The relevant officers and cabinet members attended the meeting to answer questions on the decisions made.

There was another issue for Maidstone House and the Link Decarbonisation which was scheduled for January 2025 but this was taken off the work programme as it was an update report.

Pre-Decision Scrutiny

The Committee has focused on its pre-decision scrutiny role this year, reviewing the below items prior to the decisions being made:

- Housing Allocation Scheme Review (November 2024)
- Discretionary Rate Relief (December 2024)
- Fees and Charges Report 2025 – 26 (December 2024)
- Future Sustainability of Community Larders (December 2024)
- Public Sector-Led Garden Community (January 2025)
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 – 2029 (January 2025)
- Corporate Strategy 2025 – 2035 (January 2025)
- Housing Benefit War Pensions Policy (February 2025)

2025-26 Municipal Year

Training will be offered as needed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members in the next year to ensure Members are aware of their rights, powers and duties as part of the function.

Building on experience from 2024/25, Overview and Scrutiny will continue to fulfil its role during the impact of reorganisation as appropriate. Consideration will be given to the work programme for 2025/26 at the start of the new municipal year, which will involve Members and officers in formulating a suitable work programme.