

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23 MAY 2012**

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Blackmore (Chairman)
Councillors Brindle, Mrs Joy, D Mortimer, Mrs Parvin,
McLoughlin, Munford, Vizzard and de Wiggondene

1. The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be web-cast.

It was resolved that all items be webcast.

2. Apologies.

There were no apologies.

3. Notification of Substitute Members.

There were no Substitute Members.

4. Notification of Visiting Members.

There were no Visiting Members.

5. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

It was resolved that:

- a) Councillor Annabelle Blackmore be appointed as Chairman for the municipal year 2012-13; and
- b) Councillor Derek Mortimer be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2012-13.

6. Disclosures by Members and Officers:

There were no disclosures.

7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.

It was agreed that all items be taken in public as proposed.

8. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2012

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2012 be agreed as correct record of the meeting and duly signed.

9. Work Programming Workshop

Angela Woodhouse, Head of Change and Scrutiny gave Members a presentation entitled, 'Making an Impact'. The Officer's presentation outlined the Council's vision and commitment to residents and the Centre for Public Scrutiny's four governing principles for effective scrutiny, illustrating scrutiny's purpose and what could be achieved by Members. Mrs Woodhouse explained the new ways of working for scrutiny as agreed by the scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee at the end of the 2011/12 Municipal Year. These included bi-monthly meetings with Member led working groups for review topics. It was clarified that scrutiny had a £2,000 budget for expert witnesses and review expenses.

The Committee was informed that the scrutiny team would be offering a scrutiny surgery on a monthly basis, alternating between a daytime and evening meeting. This would provide members with an opportunity to discuss their work programme with the team and request or collect information and research.

The Committee considered its future work programme and the suggested review topics put forward by staff, Councillors and residents. It was agreed that the following suggestions should be passed on to the Committee with the appropriate the terms of reference:

- Neighbourhood Plans;
- Planning Enforcement; and
- Maidstone Borough Council Communications.

The Gypsy and Traveller sites review was considered to be a cross cutting topic and it was therefore felt it should be a joint review with Regeneration and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny with the Committee's consent.

The Committee selected the following topics for its work programme:

- Police - reduction in numbers;
- CCTV;
- Community Buses and rural transport;
- Youth Services;
- Revenues and Benefits (the impact of Welfare Reforms);
- Housing and Housing Associations;
- Litter;
- Water and Waste (holding the Environment Agency to account);
and
- Night Time Economic (Anti-Social Behaviour and the elderly).

Councillor Mrs Joy informed Members that she would circulate a Licensing report in relation to the night time economy for the Committee's information.

It was decided that the two meetings of the year where the Committee

had a statutory role to act as the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee and scrutinise the Safer Maidstone Partnership should be utilised to focus on:

- CCTV and police numbers; and
- The night time economy.

It was also noted that the Committee may have to reinstate further meeting dates to accommodate for this additional role, beginning with a meeting in October.

It was agreed a written update should be requested on Litter, focusing on resident satisfaction levels in the borough, enforcement issues including the use of XFor, litter thrown from vehicles and the possibility of using the media to name culprits.

Members were appointed to a Water and Waste review working group and a Youth Services review working group. Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Mrs Parvin, De Wiggondene and Vizzard volunteered for the Water and Waste working group and Councillors Mrs Blackmore and McLaughlin volunteered for the Youth Services working group.

Members were informed that there would be a scrutiny Member training session on 19th June at 6.30 p.m. at the Town Hall.

It was resolved that:

- a) The July Meeting should focus on Revenues and Benefits and the timescales for the implementation of the local Council Tax scheme should be investigated by Councillor Mrs Joy and the scrutiny officer;
- b) Housing and Housing Associations should be the focus of the September meeting with research conducted by Members;
- c) A Water and Waste working group should be established to review the topic;
- d) A Youth Services Working Group should be established to review the topic;
- e) A written update should be sought by the Scrutiny Officer on Litter;
- f) The agreement of the Regeneration and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be sought for a joint review on Gypsy and Traveller sites;
- g) The Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee should meet in October to focus on CCTV and police numbers; and
- h) Community Buses should be the focus of one meeting, held in the rural area.

10. Duration of Meeting

6.30 p.m. to 8.07 p.m.