

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE REGENERATION & ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 28 MAY 2012**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Cox, Cuming, Beerling, Black, Burton,  
Ross, Springett, Newton and Paterson

**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 David Burton be appointed as Chairman for the municipal year 2012-13; and

b) Councillor Stephen Beerling be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2012-13.

c)

**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 24 April 2012**

**It was resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 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', which outlined the vision and purpose of Scrutiny. Mrs Woodhouse set out the new ways of working for scrutiny as agreed by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee at the end of the 2011/12 Municipal Year. It was highlighted to the Committee that meetings would now take place bi-monthly, and stressed the importance of Member led working groups for Scrutiny reviews. Mrs Woodhouse clarified that scrutiny had a £2,000 budget for expert witnesses and review related expenses which was managed by the scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee. The Committee was informed that the scrutiny team would be offering a scrutiny surgery on a monthly basis, alternating between daytime and evening meetings. 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 review topics put forward by staff, Councillors, residents and from other Scrutiny Committees. Members then evaluated the information provided for them in the Chamber. They were asked to pick their top three review ideas. The two ideas that received the most votes from the Committee was a review of the empty properties in the borough from the perspective of regeneration and Events & Tourism at the Visitor Information Centre.

It was noted that a review of empty properties spanned both Regeneration and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference. It was agreed that this topic would go to the scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee for consideration to avoid duplication of work. It was agreed that the Visitor Information centre would be reviewed by the Committee this municipal year. It was noted that the consideration of Core Strategy documents was mandatory for the Committee.

The next highest scoring topics were the Planning Process and Transport – a major barrier to jobs and services. The Committee discussed Planning Process. A concern was raised that there was no recourse or support for residents who may be objecting to a development.

It was noted there were a number of opportunities to access the planning service both through ward councillors and directly through the Planning Support desk in the Gateway. The Planning process was agreed as a reserve topic subject to the view of the Coordinating Committee on empty homes.

The Committee was informed that the Core Strategy would be going to Cabinet 25 July and that as the Committee was scheduled to meet after this date another date would need to be arranged to consider this item. It was agreed that the Committee would meet to consider this item on 16 July subject to the meetings diary. There was a suggestion of a joint meeting with Communities OSC to look at Gypsy & Traveller sites it was

agreed that the Chairman would discuss this possibility further at the scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee and report back to the committee.

**It was resolved that:**

- a) The Committee's first review topic for the year would be Events & Tourism at the Visitor Information Centre and the second topic agreed for review was Empty Properties subject to consideration by the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee, the Planning Process will be held as a reserve item.
- b) The Committee would meet on 16 July to consider the Core Strategy.

**Duration of the meeting:** 18:30 to 19:50