

Maidstone Borough Council

Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 5 August 2014

Future Work Programme and SCRAIP Update

Report of: Christian Scade

1. Introduction

- 1.1 To consider the Committee's future work programme (FWP).
- 1.2 To consider the information update given by the Chairman.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee considers the future work programme, attached at **Appendix A**, to ensure that it is appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.
- 2.2 That the Committee considers the List of Forthcoming Decisions, relevant to the Committee at **Appendix B**, and discuss whether any of these items require further investigation or monitoring.
- 2.3 That a working party, with clear terms of reference, be set up to scrutinise budget proposals for 2015/16.
- 2.4 That the Committee consider the Mid Kent Planning Support update attached at **Appendix C**.
- 2.5 That the Committee considers its continuous professional development needs and recommends possible training or development sessions it would like to undertake.

3 Future Work Programme

- 3.1 Throughout the course of the municipal year the Committee is asked to put forward work programme suggestions. These suggestions are planned into its annual work programme. Members are asked to consider the work programme at each meeting to ensure that it remains appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.
- 3.2 The Committee is reminded that the Constitution states under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules number 9: Agenda items that 'Any Member shall be entitled to give notice to the proper officer that he wishes an item relevant to the functions of the

Committee or Sub-Committee to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the Committee or Sub-Committee. On receipt of such a request the proper officer will ensure that it is included on the next available agenda, the Member must attend the meeting and speak on the item put forward.'

4. Budget Working Group

- 4.1 Councillors have a vital duty to scrutinise and challenge the Council's use of public money. This duty is at the heart of their role and mandate as local elected representatives.
- 4.2 A key role of the Overview and Scrutiny function is to review the Council's budget setting process and fulfil this requirement to scrutinise and challenge the way in which Maidstone Borough Council use these public funds.
- 4.3 Common challenges experienced by other authorities in relation to budget scrutiny may be familiar to Members:
 - Getting the right information at the right time – not too late to make a difference
 - Getting "bogged down" in detail
 - Difficulty in mapping financial information to identify budget by council department and / or Cabinet / Scrutiny portfolios
 - Securing senior management / executive commitment to the provision of clear and concise information
 - Meaningful involvement of the public
- 4.4 Many national surveys have found that Councillors find scrutiny of the budget the most challenging element of their scrutiny role. With this in mind, the Committee agreed, in June, to set up a budget working party to scrutinise budget proposals for 2015/16.
- 4.5 An initial scoping session took place in late July where it was agreed that options for budget scrutiny should be discussed further by Committee in August, as part of the future work programme item.
- 4.6 If the Committee agree the budget working party should continue the Committee will need to confirm the terms of reference for the group.

5. Mid Kent Planning Support Shared Service

- 5.1 During discussion of the Q4 Complaints Report in July issues were raised by the Committee in relation to the Mid Kent Planning Support Shared Service.

- 5.2 The Committee agreed that an update on complaints received and action taken in relation to the Mid Kent Planning Support Shared Service should be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.
- 5.3 Unfortunately Ryan O'Connell, Mid Kent Planning Support Manager, is unable to attend on the 5th August 2014. However, following discussions with the Chairman a short briefing paper on the current position is attached at **Appendix C** for consideration by the Committee.

6 List of Forthcoming Decisions

- 6.1 The List of Forthcoming Decisions (**Appendix B**) is a live document containing all key and non-key decisions.
- 6.2 Due to the nature of the List of Forthcoming Decisions, and to ensure the information provided to the Committee is up to date, a verbal update will be given at the meeting by the Chairman. The Committee can view the live document online at:
<http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=443&RD=0>

7. Scrutiny Committee Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan (SCRAIP) Responses

- 7.1 The Committee did not make any recommendations, requiring a response, at their 10 June 2014 meeting.
- 7.2 Responses to recommendations made by Committee in July will be updated for the September meeting.

8. Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 8.1 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities.
- 8.2 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following Council priority:
- 'Corporate and Customer Excellence'

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 To assist O&S committees in their inquiries, a small budget is available for the purchase of necessary equipment and to cover the costs of training, site visits, meetings in locations other than the Town Hall, witness expenses, specialist advice, books and any other cost that might be legitimately incurred by the committees in the course of their activities.

10. Relevant Documents

- 10.1 Appendix A – Future Work Programme
- Appendix B – List of Forthcoming Decisions
- Appendix C – Mid Kent Planning Support – Update and Position

11. Background Documents

- 11.1 None