

Maidstone Borough Council
Scrutiny Coordinating Committee
Monday 24 November 2014

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme – Including Review Work

Report of: Christian Scade, Senior Corporate Policy Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The terms of reference for the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee includes developing mechanisms for addressing cross cutting issues and to prevent duplication in the work of individual committees.
- 1.2 This is also an opportunity for the Coordinating Committee to review individual work programmes (attached at **Appendix A**) to identify what is working well, to share best practice and to discuss how the scrutiny work programme could be improved.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee:
 - (a) Review the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme (attached at **Appendix A**)
 - (b) Note the verbal updates, to be provided by the relevant Chairmen and Vice Chairmen, on the various review topics
 - (c) Consider the recommendation (see 5.4 – 5.7) made by the Economic and Commercial Development OSC, in relation to Commercial Projects, and provide comments as appropriate
 - (d) Agree that there are no additional work programme issues that fall within the remit of more than one Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3. Work Programme Topics

- 3.1 The work programme for each of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 3.2 It is evident from the work carried out by scrutiny committees and national research that Overview and Scrutiny has many roles. The following are the key roles Overview and Scrutiny seeks to fulfil:
 - Policy Development
 - Through carrying out reviews in new areas and aiding the cabinet in its policy work

- Holding the Executive to Account
 - Through pre- and post-cabinet decision scrutiny
- Policy Review
 - Keeping an eye on the policies developed by the council and the cabinet and making recommendations where appropriate for improvement
- Performance Management
 - Reviewing performance management information, identifying services that are not performing and making recommendations for improvement
- External Scrutiny
 - Looking outside the council at other services provided to the public.
- Engaging the public
 - A key role for scrutiny is to engage the public in its work and to give the public a voice. This can be achieved through co-option, working with the local media and asking for the public's input into the scrutiny work programme.

3.3 Scrutiny work programmes should also be developed to ensure the four principles of good public scrutiny, highlighted by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS), are fulfilled –

- “Constructive ‘critical friend’ challenge”
- “Amplifies the voices and concerns of the public”
- “Led by independent people who take responsibility for their role”
- “Drives improvement in public services”

4. Scrutiny Reviews

- 4.1 At their meeting of 23 April 2014 the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee discussed options for developing the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.
- 4.2 As a result of these discussions it was agreed to design and run a workshop before the committees' first meeting of the 2014/15 municipal year.
- 4.3 The aim of the workshop was for each Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop their Future Work Programme and decide on at least one review topic.

- 4.4 A social media and press campaign resulted in more than 50 suggestions for topics being received from staff, members of the public, community representatives, key stakeholders/partners including parish councils and local press.
- 4.5 After working through these suggestions, each committee agreed review topics for 2014/15. These are listed below and, as agreed by Committee at their last meeting, a verbal update will be provided by the relevant Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen at the meeting.

Committee	Review Topic
Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services OSC	Budget Working Group Joint MKIP Task & Finish Group
Community, Environment and Housing OSC	Loneliness and Isolation (in the over 65 age group)
Planning, Transport and Development OSC	Transport in Maidstone Borough – Alternatives to Using the Car
Economic and Development OSC	The Twilight Economy

5. Matters Covering More Than One O&S Committee

- 5.1 The terms of reference for each Overview and Scrutiny Committee are attached at **Appendix B**.
- 5.2 From time to time, matters may arise which fall within the remit of more than one Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, set out in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution, state:

"In such instances, one of the relevant Committees may decide to establish a working group which can be made up of representatives from the appropriate committees. The Report will be considered by the appropriate committee following the opportunity of all other appropriate committees to comment, before it is forwarded to the Executive for a response.

Before submitting its findings to the Executive and/or Council for consideration, the report of the reviewing Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall be considered by the other Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment. Those comments shall be incorporated into the report which is then sent to that body for consideration.

If a single committee decides to examine an issue that falls within the remit of another committee, its report shall be passed to the other relevant committee(s) for comment before its findings are submitted to the Executive and/or Council for consideration. Those

comments shall be incorporated into the report which is then sent to that body for consideration."

- 5.3 The role of the Coordinating Committee is to review the work of the individual committees, to address overlap and identify opportunities for joint working.
- 5.4 On 28 October 2014 the Economic and Commercial Development OSC received an update on the Maidstone Culture and Leisure Business Plan (2014-2018). This included an update on the development of a number of commercial projects.
- 5.5 In keeping with the principle of pre-decision scrutiny, it has been agreed that commercial projects should be considered by the Economic and Commercial Development OSC before decisions are made by Cabinet. In addition, the Budget Working Group will continue to scrutinise the development of commercial developments in relation to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 5.6 Despite the work already underway the Economic and Commercial Development OSC discussed the need for earlier input from Members and on the 28 October 2014 made the following recommendation:

"That the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee be asked to decide on the constitution of a group of members to give early input for commercial projects."
- 5.7 Given the cross cutting nature of the topics under review, the scrutiny work already underway, this is an opportunity for the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee to comment on this recommendation and to provide comments as appropriate.
- 5.8 In addition, the work programme for each Committee is attached at **Appendix A**. The Scrutiny Coordinating Committee is asked to confirm that there are no additional work programmes issues that currently fall within the remit of more than one Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6. Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 6.1 The Scrutiny Coordinating Committee will primarily consider reports that deliver against all the Council's priorities: For Maidstone to have a growing economy, For Maidstone to be a decent place to live and Corporate and Customer Excellence.
- 6.2 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. Actions to deliver these key objectives may therefore include work that the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee will consider throughout the coming year.

7. Relevant Documents

Appendix A – OSCs Future Work Programmes

Appendix B – Terms of Reference – Overview and Scrutiny

8. Background Papers

8.1 None