

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 19 DECEMBER 2023

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillors English (Chairman), Mrs Blackmore, Cannon, Cleator, Conyard, Eagle, Mrs Gooch, Round, S Thompson and Webb
Visiting Members:	Councillors Garten

33. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hastie and Hinder.

34. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no Substitute Members.

35. **URGENT ITEMS**

The Chairman stated that there was an urgent update to Item 14 – Briefing Note – Environmental and Waste Crime Enforcement Review, which had been accepted as it contributed to the item’s consideration.

36. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillor Garten was present as Visiting Member for Item 14 – Briefing Note – Environmental and Waste Crime Enforcement Review.

37. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

38. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

39. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

40. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 NOVEMBER 2023**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

41. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

42. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

There were no questions from Local Residents.

43. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members.

44. CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The Principal Democratic Services Officer outlined the changes made to the Cabinet Forward Plan following its republication, in case the Committee wished to conduct pre-decision scrutiny on any of the items.

In response to questions concerning areas missing from the upcoming Conservation Area Appraisals, Members were advised to make representations to the relevant officer.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.

Note: Councillor Cannon arrived at 6.34 p.m.

45. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

In response to queries, the Chairman stated that the Health Inequalities review would commence at the earliest available opportunity.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

46. BRIEFING NOTE - ENVIRONMENTAL AND WASTE CRIME ENFORCEMENT REVIEW

The Principal Democratic Services Officer introduced the report and stated that the suggestions made by the Committee across the past two meetings had been collated into a set of draft recommendations for the Committee's consideration. Once agreed, the recommendations would be used to produce a formal report for consideration at the next meeting.

Councillor Thompson introduced the suggestions made within the urgent update, which focused on communications with Members. The Committee felt that the suggestions should be sent to the relevant Cabinet Member for their views on if the suggestions were feasible, given the possible work involved and potential overlap with information already being provided.

The Committee expressed their support for the recommendations which they felt were concise and clear. The following amendments were made, that:

- Recommendation 8 refer to Local litter picking groups across Maidstone, as well as Medway Council;

- Recommendation 9 refer to Kent County Council, as well as Medway Council; and
- Recommendation 1 refer to other means of communication, such as social media, as well as Borough Insight Magazine.

In response to queries, the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services clarified that volunteer litter pickers were supported by the Council, with equipment supplied to support those groups; however, litter picking on roads with a national speed limit, including single carriageways in rural areas, was not supported. If the funds were available, publishing focused editions of the Borough Insight Magazine, such as on the Waste Crime Team, would be supported.

The Committee suggested that the Council's stance be made clearer to voluntary litter picking groups.

RESOLVED: That the amended draft recommendations as outlined in Appendix 1 to the briefing note, be agreed as follows:

- a. Recommendation 8 refer to Local litter picking groups across Maidstone, as well as Medway Council;
- b. Recommendation 9 refer to Kent County Council, as well as Medway Council;
- c. Recommendation 1 refer to other means of communication, such as social media, as well as Borough Insight Magazine;
- d. To include that the Council's stance on assistance to voluntary litter picking groups; and
- e. To include the suggestions within the urgent update for review by the Cabinet Member, to see if the suggestions were feasible.

47. FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANNUAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

The Chairman introduced the report and stated that the framework had been undertaken in a slower and more inclusive way to mitigate time pressures that affected last year's review.

The Committee expressed support for the proposed framework at point 2.3 of the report, with it suggested that a conclusion be added that would also act as a bridge to the next municipal year. It was requested that the report be concise.

RESOLVED: That the report framework included at point 2.3 of the report be agreed.

48. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.04 p.m.