

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 June 2011

### Report of the Chief Executive

#### Part 1- Public

#### Delegated

### 1 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

To update the work programme for the Committee for the coming year.

#### 1.1 Background

1.1.1 The former Scrutiny and Policy Overview Committees have now been combined to form a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This means that the review work previously undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee, looking in detail at specific issues related either to Borough Council services or the responsibilities of partner agencies, will be carried out along side the work of the Policy Overview Committee. This main role was to review the Council's key plans and strategies prior to their consideration and adoption by the Cabinet and Council.

#### 1.2 Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

1.2.1 The Scrutiny Committee adopted a revised work programme in November 2010. From that programme, reviews of the code of practice governing the use of surveillance powers and medical assessments for housing applications have been completed. Reported elsewhere on this agenda is an initial report related to the next programmed review of Planning Enforcement.

1.2.2 The programme envisaged two further reviews to be undertaken: the scheme for Deposit Bond /Rent Deposit / Rent in Advance; and Partnership Working and Shared Services. It is suggested that the first of these outstanding reviews should best be deferred to a later date given current work pressures within the Housing Service. The item on partnership working can now be removed from the list of potential reviews as this is now an issue to be addressed by the Innovation and Improvement Advisory Board.

1.2.3 Formation of the new combined Overview and Scrutiny Committee provides a useful opportunity to look again at the work programme and to this end, the Management Team, in consultation with the Chairman, has given consideration to additional areas of work that could be included in a work programme for the rest of 2011 and for 2012.

- 1.2.4 Set out at Annex 1 to this report is a list of potential items for future review. It should be stressed that this list is a provisional one at the current time and Members of the Committee are invited to suggest any additional areas for review that could be included within the work programme. Members should note, however, that whilst matters that are the responsibility of the Borough Council are fairly easy to review, provided staff resources within the lead service can accommodate the additional work involved, any review which by its nature involves partners and agencies external to the Borough Council can only be undertaken with the formal agreement of those bodies. The review itself is then guided by a set of scrutiny protocols that have been adopted across the County to guide such work.
- 1.2.5 It is likely that there will continue to be a mix of reviews drawn from the programme in terms of the time that will be needed to do justice to the issue under scrutiny. Some issues lend themselves to a one-off type review where the issue is urgent or fairly straightforward in nature. These can usually be undertaken via a single report to a Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. In other, more complex, cases, the norm has been to undertake the review over several meetings starting initially with a formal scoping report, setting out what specific issues will be addressed and what the review will entail, for example, which agencies will be invited to provide evidence. Formal meeting(s) are then held to undertake the review and a final report of conclusions and recommendations is made to a subsequent meeting of the Committee. In some circumstances, longer reviews are double-tracked to enable two issues to be addressed at the same time. This has involved the setting up of two Member panels, drawn from the membership of the Scrutiny Committee, who meet outside of normal programmed meetings. Their recommendations are then reported to a formal meeting of Scrutiny Committee for endorsement.

### **1.3 Proposed Initial Review Programme**

- 1.3.1 The review of Planning Enforcement is currently in progress. It is envisaged that a further review meeting will be required at the September meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with draft conclusions and recommendations being reported to the January 2012 meeting.
- 1.3.2 The issue of preparedness for winter maintenance lends itself to a more focused review at the September 2011 meeting. This will enable Scrutiny Committee to assess arrangements for the coming winter period. This review would be subject to the agreement of Kent County Council as Highway Authority.
- 1.3.3 It is suggested that the review of Air Quality Monitoring arrangements is commenced and scoped at the September 2011 meeting.
- 1.3.4 A further report on the programme will be made to the January 2012 meeting at which decisions will be made regarding which reviews from the list should be

progressed for the rest of that year. It is suggested that the focus should be on scrutinising matters external to the Borough Council.

#### **1.4 Legal Implications**

1.4.1 None

#### **1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.5.1 Dealt with as part of individual reviews.

#### **1.6 Risk Assessment**

1.6.1 N/A

#### **1.7 Equality Impact Assessment**

1.7.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

#### **1.8 Recommendations**

1.8.1 That the draft work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out at Annex 1 to this report, **BE ENDORSED**.

1.8.2 That Members **BE INVITED** to submit further suggestions for review by the Committee to be taken into account when setting a final work programme.

Background papers:

contact: Mark Raymond

Nil

David Hughes  
Chief Executive

<b>Screening for equality impacts:</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Explanation of impacts</b>
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	Such matters can be addressed by individual reviews where relevant.

<b>Screening for equality impacts:</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Explanation of impacts</b>
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	N/A	As above
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		N/A

*In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.*