

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 June 2013

Report of the Management Team

Part 1- Public

Delegated

1 FUTURE SCRUTINY REVIEW PROGRAMME

To set out and endorse a new review programme.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has, since its inception in 2002, undertaken many reviews of both internal and external services that have led to positive change and improvement. More recently, the Committee has focused on a review of parking enforcement (reported elsewhere on this agenda) and has addressed a number of value for money issues. Reviews have been guided by an adopted work programme which is formulated on an annual basis with input from Members.

1.1.2 This report now sets out a suggested different approach to the future review process, This is driven by the necessity for the Council to identify and implement considerable financial savings to achieve the targets as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy over the next 6 years. To achieve those agreed targets, and to avoid the need for 'knee-jerk' responses to the problem, work needs to be undertaken from now to prepare the ground for a range of potential savings to be thoroughly investigated and evaluated so that a robust case for changes across Council services can be agreed.

1.2 The Medium Term Financial Strategy

1.2.1 As Members will be aware, the budget reports made to Cabinet in February of this year set out the significant level of savings that the Council will need to make over the medium term, of at least £2.8M in total. The Medium Term Financial Strategy suggests that such savings could best be achieved in four tranches as follows:

First tranche by 1 April 2014	£900,000
Second tranche by 1 April 2016	£700,000
Third tranche by 1 April 2017	£700,000
Final tranche by 1 April 2019	£500,000

1.2.2 A number of initiatives are already in hand to achieve, if not in full, a large part of the first savings tranche of £900,000. However, achievement of the annual targets for 2016, 2017 and 2019 will require a more fundamental review of council services and the scope to do things differently potentially at a lower cost. They cannot be achieved through efficiency savings alone. It also needs to be remembered that the next Comprehensive Spending Review by Government will be implemented shortly with the likelihood of further reductions in grant to the Council from Government and the consequent need to increase the annual savings targets quoted above.

1.3 The Scrutiny Process

1.3.1 Your Management Team therefore believes that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should play a key and influential role in the evaluation of a range of potential future financial savings. The recent value for money reviews by the Committee already undertaken have established a process which can now be carried forward. Essentially, the Committee will be asked to look at a series of areas of service, as agreed by the Management Team, and to undertake a review of that area of service to evaluate the scope for change and the potential to generate cashable savings. The Committee will also need to take account of what impact any potential change might have on existing service users and existing staffing arrangements and come to a balanced view for recommendation to the Cabinet.

1.3.2 An initial list of topics for review, as suggested by the Management Team, are listed below:

- Media and Communications (including Here and Now)
- Council Agendas, printing, and the increased use of IT
- Personnel and Payroll review
- Concessionary fees and charges
- Data management and charging
- Local Agenda 21 activities

1.3.3 It is suggested that the first two issues on the above list are tackled by informal review groups drawn from the membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Meetings of the review groups will be arranged in the period between programmed meetings of the main Committee and the Chairmen of each review group will be asked to present its findings for formal endorsement and for recommendation to the Cabinet. The review groups would appropriately be chaired by the two Vice-Chairmen as has been done previously..

1.3.4 The suggested review group memberships are as follows:

Media and Communications: Cllrs Simpson; Moloney; Holland; Keeley; Bates; Dalton; Elks; Brown and Sayer (co-opted: Still; Thornewell)

Council Agendas/Printing: Cllr Robins; Cure; Allison; Spence; Atkins, Evans, King, Atkinson and Kemp (co-opted: Court; Drury).

1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 To be considered as part of each review.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1 As above

1.6 Risk Assessment

1.7 N/A

1.8 Equality Impact Assessment

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

1.9 Recommendations

1.9.1 That the approach adopted to future scrutiny reviews, as set out in this report, **BE ENDORSED**;

1.9.2 Informal review groups **BE ESTABLISHED** to investigate Media and Communications issues and Council agendas and printing.

Background papers:

contact: Mark Raymond

Nil

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

On behalf of the Management Team

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
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	To be addressed as part of individual reviews.

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
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?		

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.