

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

07 July 2015

Report of the Management Team

Part 1- Public

Delegated

1 SCRUTINY REVIEW PROGRAMME

To set out a suggested programme of scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 A key role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to undertake reviews of policies and practices both within the Council and, where appropriate, those of external bodies, with a view to identifying recommendations for positive change.

1.1.2 Over the past year or so, the focus for this Committee has been on assisting with the identification of areas for making financial savings in order to contribute to the overall annual savings targets that the Council has set itself and identifying improvements to services as part of the transformation agenda. Examples of these reviews include:

- A review of the Council's newspaper, Here and Now, which recommended its withdrawal and a consequent need for a greater focus on closer working with local media representatives and greater use of social media channels. Savings of c£60K per annum were achieved.
- A review of the need to continue to print council agendas and papers which recommended a move to paperless meetings and the wider use of tablets. Annual savings in the order of £24K were identified.
- A review of the capital renewals process whereby financial provision is made to replace outdated equipment. The review recommended that the projected life of these assets could be extended which would lead to annual savings of some £32K.

1.1.3 The purpose of this report is to set out a suggested programme for future reviews and to suggest how some initial reviews could be taken forward.

1.2 Suggested Reviews

1.2.1 Your Management Team has given consideration to appropriate areas of work that could form a review programme for the coming year and beyond.

1.2.2 Two reviews are suggested for immediate consideration by the Committee:

- a review of the mechanisms through which the Council engages with parish and town councils and community groups in Tonbridge focusing on the roles of the Parish Partnership Panel and Tonbridge Forum. This will need to involve some consultation with external partners over potential options for change.
- a review of the recommendations of the Council's Peer Challenge which took place in April 2014. The review would need to focus on the shifts in culture, governance and priorities arising from the challenge, what progress has been achieved to date and to assess what further actions would meet the challenge. Given the wide ranging nature of the recommendations, the Panel will be invited to focus on perhaps one or two outstanding matters following an initial scoping exercise.

1.2.3 In order to provide a longer term programme for scrutiny, the following additional topics are suggested to be programmed after completion of the first two reviews above:

- A review of grants made to the voluntary sector and other third parties with a view to these being re-assessed for the 2016/17 budget cycle.
- A review of charges which will require an initial assessment of which are statutory charges, which charges we have the discretion to amend, and which areas we do not currently charge for but could do so. Given this level of initial work required, this review is recommended to be in the second phase also to inform the 2016/17 budget cycle.

1.2.4 In addition to these topics, there will be further work for the Committee over the coming year. There will be a need to assess the draft of the new Corporate Strategy for the Council, following its initial approval by the Cabinet in October and to review any other formal policy documents which may be reviewed/updated. A further review of the Council's existing policies for child protection/safeguarding will be required and this will also be extended to cover adults.

1.3 The Review Process

1.3.1 In order to undertake two reviews in tandem, it has proved beneficial to create separate, informal scrutiny panels, made up of Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to look at the issues in detail and then report back to the main Committee on suggested recommendations for change.

- 1.3.2 Two panels are therefore proposed to be created to cover the first two reviews, each to be chaired by the two Vice-Chairmen, and a suggested membership of each is set out below:

Community Engagement Review Panel

Cllr Miss S Shrubsole (Chairman)
 Cllr Mrs J Atkinson
 Cllr R Dalton
 Cllr Ms S Spence
 Cllr M Taylor
 Cllr T Walker
 Cllr S Hammond
 Cllr P Montague
 Cllr P Bolt

Peer Challenge Recommendations Review Panel

Cllr Mrs A Oakley (Chairman)
 Cllr M Rhodes
 Cllr S Jessel
 Cllr M Base
 Cllr Miss J Sergison
 Cllr D Lettington
 Cllr Mrs F Kemp
 Cllr A Sullivan
 Cllr J Botten

- 1.3.3 If any Member has an alternative preference to the above, they are invited to contact the Chief Corporate Policy Officer.

- 1.3.4 Provisional dates for the first meetings of each Panel are:

Community Group Engagement Panel – 21st July 2015
 Peer Challenge Review Panel – 23rd July 2015

- 1.3.5 Further meetings of the panels will be arranged subject to progress. The aim will be to report the findings of both panels to the next full meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15th September 2015.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 As such issues would be dealt with as part of the review processes.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 As above.

1.6 Risk Assessment

1.6.1 As above.

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.8 Recommendations

1.8.1 That the suggested programme of scrutiny reviews, as set out in section 1.2 of the report **BE APPROVED**;

1.8.2 That informal Scrutiny Review Panels **BE FORMED** to take forward the reviews of Community Engagement and Peer Challenge Recommendations.

Background papers:

contact: Mark Raymond

Nil

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive
On behalf of the Management Team