



DISTRICT COUNCIL

Despatched: 07.07.14

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 July 2014 at 7.00 pm

Conference Room, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks

AGENDA

Membership:

Chairman: Cllr. London Vice-Chairman: Cllr. Brown

Cllrs. Mrs. Bracken, Brookbank, Davison, Grint, Neal, Orridge, Pett, Underwood and
Walshe

	<u>Pages</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Apologies for Absence		
1. Minutes To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 April 2014 as a correct record.	(Pages 1 - 6)	
2. Declarations of Interest Any declarations not already registered		
3. Responses of the Cabinet to reports of the Scrutiny Committee (if any)		
4. Actions from the last meeting of the Committee (attached)	(Pages 7 - 8)	
5. Citizens Advice Bureaux Representatives of Sevenoaks & Swanley CAB and Edenbridge & Westerham CAB		
6. Performance Monitoring	(Pages 9 - 14)	Lee Banks Tel: 01732 227161
7. Reconstitution of Leisure In-Depth Scrutiny Working Group	(Pages 15 - 18)	David Lagzdins Tel: 01732 227350
8. Establishment of a Member Budget In-Depth Scrutiny Working Group	(Pages 19 - 22)	Adrian Rowbotham Tel: 01732 227153
9. Questions to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety	(Pages 23 - 24)	
10. Work Plan	(Pages 25 - 26)	

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing this agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public.)

To assist in the speedy and efficient despatch of business, Members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the appropriate Contact Officer named on a report prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you require a copy of this agenda or any of the reports listed on it in another format please do not hesitate to contact the Democratic Services Team as set out below.

For any other queries concerning this agenda or the meeting please contact:

The Democratic Services Team (01732 227241)

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2014 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. London (Chairman)

Cllr. Brown (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Brown, Clark, Cooke, Mrs. Davison, Fittock, Maskell,
Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Purves

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Mrs. Bracken, Edwards-
Winser, Eyre, Neal and Raikes

Cllrs. Hogarth, Pett and Ramsay were also present.

37. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 4 February 2014, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

38. Declarations of Interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

39. Responses of the Cabinet to reports of the Scrutiny Committee

The response from Cabinet was noted.

40. Actions from the last meeting of the Committee

The completed action from the last meeting was noted.

41. Kent Police

The Chairman welcomed Area Commander Chief Superintendent Steve Corbishly and District Commander Chief Inspector Tim Cook to the meeting.

The Area Commander explained that Kent Police had gone through significant change. The Government's first comprehensive spending review had removed £50 million from the budget, equivalent to 1,000 staff and 50 officers. The second review had led to a further reduction of £20 million. Kent Police had focussed these reductions on back-room staff. From 24 June 2014 the number of police officers responsible to the District Commander would increase from 30 to 65 but they would also take on responsibility for responding to emergency call-outs.

The Area Commander noted that crime figures had risen. However, Kent Police had been subject to an inspection in 2013 which recommended a change to the way crime was reported and so 6% of previous incidents were now recorded crimes. Domestic violence

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reports had risen 6% from proactive engagement by the police. The District Commander added that crime had risen 8.3% in the District in the last year, but the actual number of crimes was small and was the third lowest in the Kent Police area.

Questions were addressed to the Area and District Commanders.

A Member representing Ash and New Ash Green sought assurances there would be continuity among PCSOs to allow them to build up local knowledge. Kent Police informed the meeting that the new PCSO for the area had been encouraged to build links with the community, parish council and District Councillors. They sought to keep PCSOs in the same place as long as possible and each should spend the majority of their time in the local area. However PCSOs may be required to fill gaps elsewhere and would move on as their career progressed.

It was confirmed that there were 78 more incidents of domestic violence reported in the past year. The Committee was advised that on 1 April 2014 Kent Police introduced a "Track My Crime" programme so that victims could trace the progress of an investigation through the website but this did not cover domestic violence matters which were dealt with more personally.

A Member felt it was important for police to send officers to close roads on Remembrance Sunday as well as laying a wreath. The Area Commander advised that closures were a matter for the Highways Authority but in many cases the Police would not have resources to police the event and to close the roads.

It was suggested that speeding on Seal Hollow Road, Sevenoaks had not improved over the past year, despite the involvement of Speed Watch. Kent Police recognised speeding as the single most prominent complaint they received, however long term solutions were usually within the role of the Highways Authority in the use of cameras and redesigning roads.

A Member noted that if a person were arrested in Swanley then they would have to be processed in Tunbridge Wells, which took the officer out of duty for a considerable period. The District Commander indicated that they would consider greater use of the station at Ebbsfleet. Crime in Swanley was at about the same level as the previous year.

A Member felt that PCSOs were sometimes isolated in the local community as many incidents would not be dealt with as a crime even if reported by the public. The District Commander was not aware of this view and advised that until the middle of March 2014 an officer had been sent for every reported crime. Another Member added that Kent Police often seemed more active at the beginning of an investigation.

A Member asked what impact the changes on 24 June would have on rural communities. The Area Commander advised that although there was a town-centred structure there was a Crime Rural Advisory Group chaired by Mike Bax which focussed on these matters. Kent Police was encouraging local communities to do more to lessen risk, such as locking agricultural machinery away.

The Area Commander was asked whether CCTV in the District was helpful to the police. He acknowledged that it was presently a question considered at many councils. Funding had just been put aside for Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) CCTV on the

main arterial routes in the District. He felt they had always received great value from CCTV, especially with ANPR. Questions concerning funding should be referred to the Police and Crime Commissioner, as part of the wider debate taking place.

The Vice Chairman raised concerns at recent incidents of anti-social behaviour on the Vine, Sevenoaks and enquired whether proactive policing would reduce problems, given that there was a regular pattern of behaviour. The District Commander explained that several incidents had been linked to a single group of young people but there had been intervention work from the Community Safety Unit and Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, an ASBO had been applied for, a number given banning orders and action taken against those shops making underage alcohol sales to that group.

The Vice Chairman again raised the matter of closing roads for public events and his concern that road barriers were removed too soon from a Guy Fawkes event. The Area Commander suggested that for some events the police advised organisers to arrange private stewards. Specialist traffic officers would be required rather than local officers. Kent Police had to assess events on a case-by-case basis.

The Chairman enquired what actions Kent Police took to combat financial crime. They did have an Economic Crime Unit and had recently held Fraud Awareness sessions. However such crimes could be difficult to investigate, needing specialist knowledge and the perpetrators could be located anywhere.

The Chairman thanked Chief Superintendent Steve Corbishly and Chief Inspector Tim Cook for coming and answering the Committee's questions.

42. Performance Monitoring

Members considered a report which summarised the performance across the Council to the end of February 2014. Members were asked to consider seven performance indicators which were performing 10% or more below their target and if actions taken by officers were not deemed sufficient the report recommended referring those indicators to the relevant Advisory Committee for further assessment.

It was noted that the percentage of appeals dismissed against planning application refusals was below target for the month and for the year to date. It was suggested that further training could be given to all Members as they joined the Council, to ensure they could make planning arguments based on relevant considerations.

Action 1: Officers to provide a breakdown in appeals upheld where Members had overturned the Officer recommendation.

Members felt it was difficult to assess the significance of any indicators which fell below target, without knowing the number of cases which contributed to each monthly result.

Action 2: Officers to add commentary for each "red" indicator to explain the raw numbers which give the performance indicator results.

43. In-depth Scrutiny - Report of the Budget Working Group

The meeting was advised that the Budget Working Group had not met since the previous meeting of the Committee and the Chairman of the Working Group had resigned from that post.

The Vice Chairman indicated that a new Budget Working Group could be set up either to look at the budget itself or to consider the process by which it was made, comparing the process with that of other local authorities. Members felt a Working Group could be useful but it would require tight terms of reference from the Committee to clarify the matter they felt should be scrutinised. It was agreed that no working group would be constituted but this could be reconsidered once the new Scrutiny Committee had met in the new municipal year.

A Member of the Leisure Working Group provided a short update on its work from notes provided by the Chief Officer Communities and Business. The Working Group would now not report back until the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 2 October 2014. The Committee was reminded that the Working Group was focussing on value for money from the service provider. The Working Group was advised that the Sencio Board would be able to provide many of the facts and figures the Group required.

44. Questions to the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Community Development

The Portfolio Holder for Economic and Community Development introduced what he considered to be three principal challenges within his portfolio.

The Portfolio Holder highlighted that the Escalate fund scheme for zero interest loans had been launched and there were 12 applications from the District. The scheme had been advertised to all Business Rate payers in the District. A District Council Business Area Improvement Fund had been established to provide small grants for regeneration, improving the appearance of business areas. The Council published a "real Business" monthly email

The Portfolio Holder felt there was a role for the District Council in encouraging broadband provision to be brought to rural areas. The Council had supported the Gigaclear project between Seal and Underriver. Since the Council had provided this support West Kent had become a priority for BT in the upgrading of cabinets.

The Portfolio Holder was asked what types of business were applying under the Escalate scheme. They were predominantly service based though he hoped more would be industrial. The Council's website linked to the Kent County Council (KCC) Escalate website which explained how businesses could receive guidance and support in a pre-application process.

A Member asked how the Escalate scheme would ensure value for money and whether the decision makers were qualified. The Chairman of the fund was Mark Dance, KCC Cabinet Member for Economic Development, with Cllr Fleming Vice-Chairman as he was the Chairman of the West Kent Partnership. Applicants were advised to seek assistance from High Growth Kent before each application was considered by PwC in an independent process. The Board would then ask each applicant some questions. The Council's resources had been committed in setting up the fund but the scheme had few

overheads and so ongoing costs were limited to publicising the scheme. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that all administrative costs for the scheme were paid for by KCC.

A Member enquired whether it was necessary to develop both the Buckhurst 2 and Suffolk Way car parks and whether it would be preferable first to assess what impact one would cause on traffic, before the other began. The Portfolio Holder confirmed there would be consultation on further development but that Variable Message Signs would soon guide visitors more efficiently to the town's car parking spaces.

He confirmed that he too had received a letter concerning the level of support the Council gave to the electronics industry. He would be investigating the matter further.

A Member raised concern at the suggestion the Council begin a broadband company or invest in existing ones, given that there had been some notable failures in the sector. The Portfolio Holder did not intend to invest on the same scale as those failures and the opportunities were almost gone. However, the Council still had a role to improve provision, such as possibly in Crockham Hill, and he would make a case to Members if necessary.

45. Questions to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources set out what he considered to be business opportunities and threats within his portfolio. He emphasised that there was considerable uncertainty over the Council's Fraud Team and this was subject to ongoing discussions between the Local Government Association and the DWP. The Council had not been told how many staff would be transferred over. The LGA was concerned that remaining staff would not be given access to DWP data even though fraud usually involved more than one benefit at a time. The Portfolio Holder did not want the Council to lose its own Team, which would be required for Council Tax Support and corporate fraud.

The Portfolio Holder was pleased with proposals from Cllr Miss Stack to enhance service income.

The Committee noted the intention to purchase new property assets to achieve greater income. In response to a question the Portfolio Holder explained that he expected future asset purchases to be funded through the sale of assets, with £3.5million having been raised in the previous year.

The Chairman raised concerns over whether the Council achieved good value when selling property, such as with 12 Knole Way. The Portfolio Holder explained that property had been subject to Right to Buy and the occupant could have remained in that residence, preventing sale. The Cabinet Member preferred putting properties on the open market to ensure a full value was received.

Members asked what properties the Portfolio Holder intended to sell. The Committee was referred to the report presented to the Finance and Resources Advisory Committee on 26 March 2014. A Member suggested that the Council had collected properties around Swanley High Street, an area ripe for redevelopment, and would be valuable if taken together.

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Another Member suggested that in the short term residential properties may provide good value to the Council, in the long term the towns and District could be better served by commercial properties. The Portfolio Holder reminded Members that many sites were tied by planning policies.

The Vice Chairman sought clarification on the Council's powers to compel development, or compulsorily purchase sites long undeveloped. The Cabinet Member understood compulsory purchase could only be used, without challenge, when the Council could show there was no alternative option. In a case such as the Farmers' site, for example, development had actually been started. The option to compulsorily purchase had not been seriously considered.

46. Work Plan

The Chairman advised the Committee that Brandon Lewis, Local Government Minister (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State) had declined the offer to attend before the Committee. It was agreed Jane Parish, the newly appointed Chief Executive of Sencio, be invited to the meeting of the Committee on 2 October 2014.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9.04 PM

CHAIRMAN

ACTIONS FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 02.04.14			
Action	Description	Status and last updated	Contact Officer
ACTION 1	Officers to provide a breakdown in appeals upheld where Members had overturned the Officer recommendation. (Minute Item 42)	Information provided in Appendix to this report. (20.06.2014)	Alan Dyer 01732 227196
ACTION 2	Officers to add commentary for each “red” indicator to explain the raw numbers which give the performance indicator results. (Minute Item 42)	Where the data is held and is readily available Officers will provide details of the raw numbers which support the calculation of the indicator or is helpful in providing additional context to inform Members decision making in all future performance reports. (24.04.2014)	Lee Banks 01732 227161

In 2013/4 a total of 10 appeals were allowed where Members had overturned an Officer recommendation to approve. These were:

- 11/03288: 18-19 The Row Edenbridge – redevelopment for residential
- 12/02961: Redwalls Coombe Bank Rd Sundridge – residential extension
- 12/03106: Land west of 5 Mill Lane Shoreham – erection of 4 dwellings
- 13/00139: 10 Springshaw Close Sevenoaks – residential extension
- 13/01159: 1 Plymouth Drive Sevenoaks – residential extension
- 13/00230: Dyehurst Stud Hever – conversion of part of stable to residential
- 12/03119: 94-96 London Rd Sevenoaks – redevelopment for flats (amendments to previous approval)
- 13/00290: Amberley Packhorse Rd Sevenoaks – residential extension (retrospective)
- 13/00360: Moorcroft Place Westerham – retention of fence and security lighting
- 13/01770: New Inn St Johns Hill Sevenoaks – redevelopment for residential

PERFORMANCE REPORT

Scrutiny Committee – 15 July 2014

Report of Chief Executive

Status: For Information

Key Decision: No

This report supports the Council Promise to provide value for money

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Peter Fleming

Contact Officer(s) Lee Banks, Ext. 7161

Recommendation to Scrutiny Committee:

- (a) Members note the contents of the report; and
 - (b) If Members are dissatisfied by actions being taken to improve performance by either Officers, Advisory Committee or Cabinet, they call-in areas of underperformance for scrutiny.
-

Reason for recommendation: To ensure that areas of under performance within services are considered and reviewed by Members.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Scrutiny Committee have requested a regular update at each of their meetings of any performance indicators which are not meeting their target level. Attached to this short introduction paper is an exceptions report with a commentary from officers explaining the reasons why performance is not within 10% of target and detailing any actions the service is planning to take to improve performance levels.

Performance Overview

- 2 The table on the following page summarises the performance levels as at the end of May 2014.

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	Current Month	Year To Date
Red <i>10% or more below target</i>	3 (9%)	3 (9%)
Amber <i>Less than 10% below target</i>	2 (6%)	0 (0%)
Green <i>At or above target</i>	27 (84%)	29 (91%)

- 3 Members may wish to note that there are a further 11 indicators where performance is measured quarterly and as a result there is no information to report to this meeting of the Committee, but will be included in future reports.
- 4 Provided as Appendix A to this report are details of the three indicators where performance is 'Red' and missing the target level by 10% or more.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

- 5 None.

Key Implications

Financial

- 6 Effective performance management monitoring arrangements will assist the Council in diverting resources to areas or services where it is considered to be a greater priority.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

- 7 Robust arrangements are in place to ensure that the risk of inaccurate data being reported to Members is minimised and assurance can be placed on the accuracy of data used to assess performance. By reporting to Members and ensuring all Members are able to access the Council's performance management system the risk of poor performance not being identified or addressed is minimised.

Equality Impacts

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	The report provides information on the performance of services. The way in which those services are delivered are subject to their own Equality Impact Assessments.

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity?	No	
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		Not applicable.

Conclusions

8 This report to Members summarises performance across the Council to the end of May 2014. Members are asked to consider three performance indicators which are performing 10% or more below their target and if the actions being taken by officers are not deemed sufficient are recommended to refer those indicators to the relevant Advisory Committee for further assessment.

Appendices

Appendix A – Performance Data


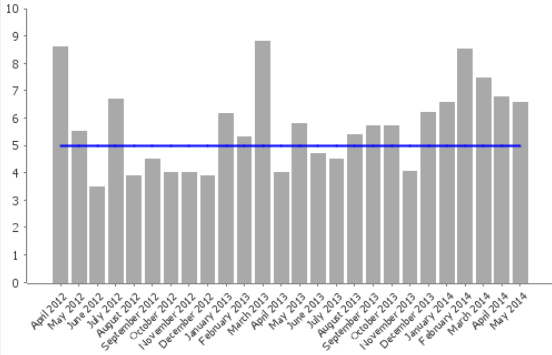


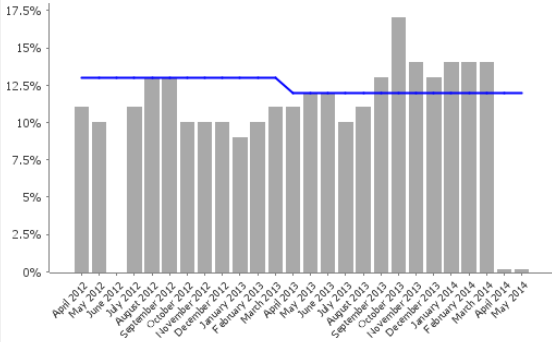
Background Papers:

None


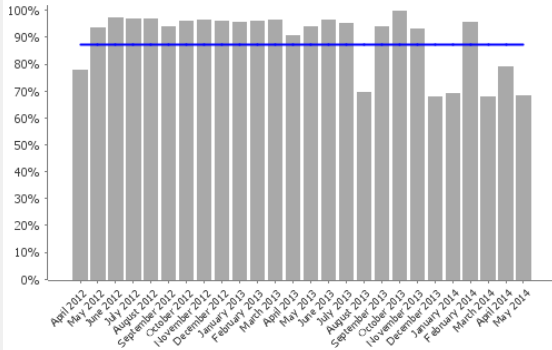

**Dr Pav Ramewal
Chief Executive**

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Scrutiny Committee – Performance Data (Data for May 2014)

Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Cumulative (Year to Date) Performance			Latest Note
						2014/15			
						Value	Target	Status	
LPI Clean 002	Average number of days taken to remove fly tips which the District Council has responsibility to clear	6.6	5			6.7	5		<p>139 fly tips across Sevenoaks District were reported to the Council during the first two months of the year. The Council is required to investigate each report to determine who is responsible for clearing the fly tip.</p> <p>The Council was required to remove 101 of the 139 fly tips reported (73%) in April and May.</p> <p>As a result of the work load the target to clear all fly tips within 5 days was missed</p> <p>At the same point last year the Council had removed 94 of the 161 fly tips reported (58%).</p>
LPI PA 002	Percentage of Penalty Charge Notices cancelled	14%	12%			14%	12%		<p>A marginal increase in the number of appeals against penalty charge notices that have resulted in cancellations has occurred in recent months.</p> <p>The reasons for cancelled notices are continually reviewed and if it is evident that the Council can improve its processes advice and training are provided to the Civil Enforcement Officers.</p>

Scrutiny Committee – Performance Data (Data for May 2014)

Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Cumulative (Year to Date) Performance			Latest Note
						2014/15			
						Value	Target	Status	
LPI DC PL	The percentage of planning applications assessed for validation in 5 days	68.2%	87.5%			73.6%	87.5%		<p>During April and May this year a total of 397 planning applications have been received, an increase of 8.5% from the 366 received over the same period last year.</p> <p>The number of complex major applications received over the period has increased by 125% from 4 to 9.</p> <p>The level of resource required to validate major planning applications has had a knock on effect on the overall performance of the team. Overall performance in the processing times for major, minor and other planning application types remains at target levels for the year to date. However it is recognised that the impact of receipt of a high number of major planning applications will not be evident until three months until after they have been received.</p>

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RECONSTITUTION OF THE LEISURE IN-DEPTH SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

Scrutiny Committee – 15 July 2014

Report of Chief Officer Legal and Governance

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: No

Contact Officer David Lagzdins Ext. 7350

Recommendation to Scrutiny Committee: That Members review the terms of reference and membership of the Leisure In-Depth Scrutiny Working Group to report to the Scrutiny Committee on leisure customer satisfaction and value for money.

Reason for recommendation: to enable a small working group of Members to meet more frequently and report back to the Scrutiny Committee on its findings for consideration.

Introduction and Background

- 1 During the last municipal year the Committee formed an in-depth working group. It is necessary for the Committee to review the need for this working group and confirm the terms of reference and membership.

Leisure Working Group

- 2 At the meeting held on 4 February 2014 (Minute 35) it was resolved that an in-depth scrutiny working group be set up to consider leisure customer satisfaction with particular regard to member and customer retention in the leisure centre fitness gyms and value for money. Final terms of reference were confirmed by the Chief Officer Communities & Business and were:
 - i. To benchmark with other authorities the amount spent by Sevenoaks District Council on the provision of leisure services through the leisure trust
 - ii. To analyse the amount of subsidy per use of the Council's centres paid by the Council to Sencio – if possible in comparison with other authorities as well as over time
 - iii. To assess customer satisfaction with the service provided
 - iv. To assess the retention rates for fitness users, the key profit-making area of the business
 - v. To look at initiatives those are in place or could be put in place to improve income and retention.

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- 3 The membership was agreed as Cllrs. Gaywood (Chairman), Mrs Bayley, Mrs Morris, Mrs Purves and Raikes.
- 4 All of the former members are no longer members of this Scrutiny Committee. At Annual Council on 13 May 2014 a clearer line was drawn between the Executive and the Scrutiny Committee by the amendment to the Council's Constitution that 'no members of the Committee may be members of the Cabinet, their Deputies or members of any of the Cabinet Advisory Committees.' Furthermore the Constitution states that 'no member may be involved in scrutinising a decision in which he has been directly involved.'
- 5 Under the Council's Constitution any non executive member may be a member of a working group. As this working group has already met Members may prefer to maintain consistency, however Members may also want to consider whether the membership remains the same considering that it currently consists solely of Cabinet Advisory Committee members.
- 6 For information Cllr Gaywood is on Housing & Community Safety and Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committees; Cllr. Mrs Bayley is on Strategy & Performance Advisory Committee; Cllr. Mrs Morris is on Finance & Resources Advisory Committee, Cllr Mrs Purves is on Strategy & Performance, Finance & Resources and Local; Planning and Environment Advisory Committees; and Cllr. Raikes is on Strategy & Performance and Housing & Community Safety Advisory Committees.

Key Implications

Financial

None directly arising from this report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

In-depth scrutiny working groups are only constituted for a municipal year, and must be reconstituted each new municipal year. Members would only be allowed to claim travel expenses for formally constituted working groups.

Equality Impacts

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity?	No	

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

Conclusions

Members should consider whether the the working group should continue to meet, agree the membership and terms of reference.

Background Papers: [Scrutiny Committee – 4 February 2014 - Minutes](#)

Christine Nuttall
Chief Officer for Legal and Governance

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ESTABLISHMENT OF A MEMBER BUDGET IN DEPTH SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

Scrutiny Committee – 15 July 2014

Report of Chief Finance Officer

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: No

This report supports the Key Aim of effective management of Council resources.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Ramsay

Contact Officer(s) Adrian Rowbotham Ext. 7153

Recommendation to Scrutiny Committee:

- (a) Decide if the Committee wish to set up a Member Budget Working Group; and if they do:
- (b) Agree terms of reference, timescales, membership and appoint a Chairman of the group.

Reason for recommendation: to enable a small working group of Members to meet more frequently and report back to the Scrutiny Committee on its findings for consideration.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Members are asked to consider setting up a Budget Working Group to report back its findings to the Scrutiny Committee. Members should note that any working group will last no longer than the municipal year it is set up unless reconstituted the following year.
- 2 A Member Budget Working Group was set up at Scrutiny Committee on 26 September 2013 with the following terms of reference:
 - a) The membership of the Working Group to consist of 5 Councillors who do not sit on the Finance & Resources Advisory Committee.
 - b) The Working Group to be set up for the consideration of the following only:
 - i. The draft budget presented to Cabinet on 5 December 2013.
 - c) The Working Group to regularly report back in line with the Scrutiny Committee Work Plan.

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- 3 The Working Group reported back to the Scrutiny Committee on 4 February 2014. Members raised concerns that the former terms of reference had been too wide. The Chairman agreed that scrutiny of the next budget would also need to begin sooner. The Committee agreed the Working Group should not duplicate the work of the Advisory Committees.
- 4 At the Scrutiny Committee on 2 April 2014, the meeting was advised that the Working Group had not met since the previous meeting of the Committee. The Vice Chairman indicated that a new Budget Working Group could be set up either to look at the budget itself or to consider the process by which it was made, comparing the process with that of other local authorities. Members felt a Working Group could be useful but it would require tight terms of reference from the Committee to clarify the matter they felt should be scrutinised. It was agreed that no working group would be constituted but this could be reconsidered once the new Scrutiny Committee had met in the new municipal year.
- 5 If it is decided for the Member Working Group to look at the budget process, they would need to report back to the next Scrutiny Committee on 2 October 2014 as the process is expected to start in September.
- 6 The table below shows a summary of the 2014/15 Budget Setting Timetable. The timetable for 2015/16 has not yet been finalised.

Stage	Report	Month	Committee
1	Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy	Sept	FRAC, Cabinet
2	Review of Service Plans and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)	Oct - Nov	Advisory Committees
3	Budget Update	Dec	Cabinet
4	Budget Update	Jan	Cabinet
5	Budget Update and further review of SCIAs (if required)	Jan	Advisory Committees
6	Budget Setting Meeting	Feb	Cabinet
7	Budget Setting Meeting (incl. Council Tax setting)	Feb	Council

Key Implications

Financial

Financial implications are covered in the 2014/15 budget reports.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications.

Equality Impacts

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	Not at this stage	Individual equalities assessments will be completed for all of the Service Change Impact assessments (SCIAs) to ensure the decision making process is fair and transparent.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity?	No	
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

Appendices

None

Background Papers:

[2014/15 Budget reports to Council, Cabinet and the Advisory Committees](#)

**Adrian Rowbotham
Chief Finance Officer**

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Successes and Challenges facing Housing and Community Safety

HOUSING

Challenges: Enough affordable housing in the district. Working closely with Planning and member champions to try and square this circle. Welfare reform continuing to impact so HERO needs to be extended. DFG process ensuring that the in house service makes savings but provides quality service for community

Successes:

The HERO service goes from strength to strength and we are meeting with other Councils and organisations to further sell the merits of HERO service. Pat Smith presented at a London Capita conference and I have made contact with the Leaders of Swale and Tonbridge and Malling councils to see if there is any scope to sell HERO services to them.

Peter Fleming has written to Housing Minister: Kris Hopkins to see if HERO can help with the Government's Homelessness & Health agenda. HERO is cost neutral to SDC but we are hoping to generate income from the service by expanding it further.

DIYSO scheme with Moat has been a huge success. London Local Authorities have now taken on our model as excellent innovation and Pat Smith, Carol Clark and I are attending a launch where SDC will be mentioned as the innovators. This scheme has won runner up in two National awards .

WELFARE BENEFIT

Challenges: Universal Credit continues to be delayed with the resulting uncertainty for staff and Benefit frauds will move to SFIS but other frauds will stay with SDC (e.g. Council Tax).

Successes: Housing Benefit

The team have coped well with the first year of many benefit reform changes with the impact on residents being kept to a minimum. The average number of days to process new claims has reduced from 41 days in 2012/13 to 28 days in 2013/14. The average number of days to process changes of circumstances has reduced from 17 days in 2012/13 to 10 days in 2013/14. Benefits activity levels in 2013/14 were 14% higher than 2012/13 and 44% higher than 2011/12.

Benefit Fraud

Anti-Fraud Team's continued success in finding and sanctioning benefit fraud offenders. Discovered £288,000 of overpaid Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and Council Tax Support. Uncertain future of the team with the start of the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS – within DWP) in February 2016.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Challenges: To continue to keep the District safe and meet residents expectations with fewer resources. The Anti-Social Behaviour Crime & Policing Act 2014 will introduce simpler, more effective powers to tackle anti-social behaviour. Guidance is to be published in October. To meet the objectives In the Community Safety Action Plan.

Successes

The Leader and I successfully lobbied Ann Barnes for Automatic Number Plate Recognition Cameras in the district in strategic locations to be decided. We were also successful in achieving additional officers in the District to be based and report for duty in the District. The porous borders model has stopped. Kelly Webb and I presented our work on e-safety at the Kent and Medway Community Safety Conference in Ashford on 4 June.

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Scrutiny Committee Workplan

Committee	15 July 2014	2 October 2014	20 November 2014	3 February 2015	28 April 2015
External Invitees	Sevenoaks & Swanley CAB Edenbridge & Westerham CAB	Jane Parish – Chief Executive - Sencio			
Scrutiny Committee	Performance Monitoring Michelle Lowe – Housing, Welfare and Community Safety	Performance Monitoring Peter Fleming – Leader, Strategy and Performance <i>Roddy Hogarth – Economic and Community Development</i>	Performance Monitoring Brian Ramsay – Finance and Resources Robert Piper – Local Planning and Environment	Performance Monitoring Peter Fleming – Leader, Strategy and Performance Michelle Lowe – Housing, Welfare and Community Safety	Performance Monitoring Roddy Hogarth – Economic and Community Development Brian Ramsay – Finance and Resources
In-Depth Scrutiny Page 25	Working Group 3 Leisure - Stages Two/Three/Four ¹ Working Group 4 – TBC	Working Group 3 Leisure - Stage Five ¹ Working Group 4 – TBC	Working Group 5 – TBC	Working Group 5 – TBC	Working Group 5 - TBC
Councillor Call for Action			Cllr Ms Lowe – Gypsies & Traveller Site Consultation – Shoreham Site		

¹ For detailed information on stages refer to “A Guide to In-Depth Scrutiny”

Past In-Depth Scrutiny Working Groups

Parking	Cllrs Clark, Cooke, Edwards-Winser, Eyre, Mrs Purves, Raikes (Chair)
Budget	Cllrs Abraham, Mrs Bracken, Butler, Gaywood, Maskell

Current In-Depth Scrutiny Working Groups

Leisure	Mrs. Bayley, Gaywood, Mrs. Morris, Mrs. Purves and Raikes
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Possible future areas for In-Depth Scrutiny

Highways
Housing – Welfare Reform
Budget

Possible External Invitees

Position	Name	Topic
KCC Cabinet Member – Community Services	Mike Hill	Libraries
KCC Cabinet Member – Community Services	Mike Hill	Housing