

LOCAL ECONOMY AND HOUSING SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

Briefing Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Officer

1 Background

1.1 The Select Committees are required to create a work programme for the next municipal year. The Scrutiny Team have contacted Parish and Town Councils, Councillors and Officers asking for suggestions for scrutiny reviews. A notice was also sent to the press, an article placed in the borough magazine *ilocal*, and two advertisements placed on the front page of the Council website to gain public involvement. All suggestions received so far are outlined in this report for consideration for the work programme.

1.2 In order to provide some background information regarding priority areas and responsibilities included in this report is the following information:

- The Remits of the Select Committees (page 8.2);
- Work undertaken by the Local Economy and Housing Select Committee in the 2007/08 municipal year (page 8.4);
- The Centre for Public Scrutiny's four principles of effective scrutiny (page 8.6);
- Work Programme items – Suggested topics for review (as submitted before 6 June 2008) (page 8.6);
- Work Programme Table for 2008/09 (page 8.15);
- The Forward Plan of Key Decisions, to be discussed at the 12 June Cabinet meeting. Please note, this version only includes key decisions that fall under terms of reference of the Local Economy and Housing Select Committee (Page 8.17);
- The Council's Corporate Priorities (page 8.23);
- Details of Local Economy and Housing priorities as included in the Strategic Plan 2008-11 (Page 8.25).

1.3 The topics for review, once selected, will be researched by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer. Members will be provided with more detailed information on each topic in the agenda for the next Select Committee meeting on Thursday 10 July. This will enable an assessment by the Select Committee at the next meeting, giving regard to the following criteria:

1.4 Stage 1

Reject the topic if it:

- Has been covered by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the past 12 months;
- Is an individual complaint; or
- Does not meet the Council's priorities

Stage 2

Accept the topic if it:

- Affects local people;
- Has tangible outcomes;
- Will bring improvements for local people and/or for the Council;
- Relates to a poor performing service; or
- Meets the Council's priorities.

Stage 3

Prioritise:

- If we have more than two major reviews per Committee, Members will be asked to prioritise by looking at how many of the stage 2 criteria have been met and crucially which reviews could bring tangible benefits for local people.

Recommendation

That Members suggest any topics that they wish to review in the next municipal year and identify preferred options to be researched by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer prior to making a final decision on the work programmes for 2008-09 at the 10 July Select Committee meeting

2 Remits of the Select Committees

2.1 Local Economy and Housing Select Committee

Membership: 10 non-executive Members.

Terms of Reference:

To perform the overview and scrutiny role in relation to the following matters and deal with Councillor Call for Actions as they arise in relation to these matters:

1. Planning and the development of the Council's planning policies.
2. Economic Development and regeneration including the development of businesses in the Borough.
3. Tourism.
4. Building Control.
5. Housing Services, including the identification of housing need and related outside agencies.
6. Transport, including public transport initiatives, concessionary fares and related outside agencies.
7. Revenues and Benefits.
8. South East England Regional Assembly.
9. South East Economic Development Agency.
10. Business Development.

2.2 Corporate Services Select Committee

Membership: 10 non-executive Members.

Terms of Reference:

To perform the overview and scrutiny role in relation to the following matters and deal with Councillor Call for Actions as they arise in relation to these matters:

1. The preparation of the Council's budget and the Council's performance in relation to budgetary management.
2. The management of the Council's resources.
3. The development and monitoring of the Asset Management Plan.
4. The development and implementation of the Council's corporate plan and community plan.

ITEM 8

5. The development and implementation of the Council's performance monitoring function.
6. The provision of corporate services including human resources, legal services, democratic services and elections.
7. Customer Services.
8. Risk Management.
9. ICT.
10. Public Relations.
11. Equality and Diversity.
12. The Local Strategic Partnership, West Kent Partnership, Community Plan Partnership, Local Area Agreement, Kent Partnership and Partnerships.

2.3 Environment and Safer & Stronger Communities Select Committee

Membership: 10 non-executive Members.

Terms of Reference:

To perform the overview and scrutiny role in relation to the following matters and deal with Councillor Call for Actions as they arise in relation to these matters:

1. Environmental Services and Street Scene.
2. Refuse collection and recycling.
3. Licensing.
4. Leisure including the provision of parks and open spaces.
5. The provision of cultural activities in the Borough.
6. Community Safety, Community Development and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.
7. The Environment and the work of outside agencies.
8. Health Service and Community Well-being.
9. Young people – services provided to young people internally and by outside agencies.
10. Education provision in the Borough.
11. Public conveniences.
12. Crematoriums and Cemeteries.
13. Voluntary and Community Services.
14. Adult services.
15. Older people.
16. Parishes.

ITEM 8**3 Work undertaken by the Local Economy and Housing Select Committee during the course of the last municipal year (2007/08)**

Local Economy and Housing Select Committee (LEH)		
<i>Topic</i>	<i>Action Taken</i>	<i>Still to be done</i>
Migrant workers	<p>Working group set- up to consider: The effect of migrant workers on the local economy, services provided by the Council, and other public services.</p> <p>Interviewed local churches, businesses and schools, research has been carried out by Overview and Scrutiny.</p>	Report to LEH in June and Cabinet in July
Rural Bus Services	<p>Information gathered from the public on rural bus services.</p> <p>Audit of bus stops and timetabled information.</p> <p>Meeting held in Hawkhurst with Arriva, KCC, and Parish Councils. Report now being drafted.</p>	Report to External Agencies in June and Cabinet in July.
Slivers of Time	<p>Project identified by LEH and recommended to Cabinet. Richard Powell and HR Manager are senior officers responsible.</p> <p>Next stage identify partners to create the £100K worth of work needed.</p> <p>Mr Powell to approach Local Strategic Partnership.</p>	Follow up in 2008 to ensure project happens.
Highways Review	<p>First joint review with Maidstone Borough Council, report completed.</p> <p>Review considered how Kent Highways Services (KHS) communicates with District Councils. Identified that Councillors are</p>	<p>Meeting with Chairman of the Highways Advisory Board in June.</p> <p>Follow up recommendations in 2008/09.</p>

ITEM 8

Highways Review (cont.)	frustrated and KHS needs to improve. Also identified that KHS needs to give reasons for their recommendations on planning applications and we need more of a say at the Highways Advisory Board (HAB).	
Housing	Involved in a number of policies and reports. Recommendations made by Home Improvement Grants Value For Money working group incorporated into policy and effected change.	
Every Child Matters	Went to the Environment, Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee (ESSC). The Healthier Communities Coordinator has now taken responsibility under Director of Services to the Community – review to be carried out by directorate to see if fit for purpose Job description to be developed for lead member.	Environment and Safer, Stronger Communities Select Committee to monitor in 2008/09.
Planning Committees	Meeting held to discuss the Audit Commission Planning Report including Action Plan and structure of Planning Committees.	Recommendation to Cabinet on 12 June 2008 that a detailed review of the Planning Committees structure take place.
Sunday Car Park Charging	Sunday Car Park Charging Cabinet decision called-in. Members recommended an investigation into the feasibility of allowing town centre residents to use town centre car parks on Sundays without charge. The investigation showed that residents could use Meadow Road and Crescent Road car parks and a simple change to the Parking Places Order would be needed to implement the proposal.	Updates to be received by the Select Committee at future date to be confirmed.

ITEM 8

Sunday Car Park Charging (cont.)	In response to the second recommendation, a further review of the level of parking on single yellow lines is being carried out as part of a wider Parking Study across the borough.	
----------------------------------	---	--

4 **Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) – Four principles of effective scrutiny**

4.1 “The Centre for Public Scrutiny has been created to promote the value of scrutiny in modern and effective government - not only to hold executives to account but also to create a constructive dialogue between the public and its elected representatives - to improve the quality of public services. The CfPS have established four principles which propose that effective scrutiny:

- (i) Provides ‘critical friend’ challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers;
- (ii) Enables the voice and concerns of the public and its communities;
- (iii) Is carried out by ‘independent minded governors’ who lead and own the scrutiny process; and
- (iv) Drives improvement in public services.”

(Taken from the CfPS website at <http://www.cfps.org.uk/about_us/index.php>)

5 **Work Programme Items**

Outlined below are suggestions for reviews to be considered by the Local Economy and Housing Select Committee.

5.1 **Possible Major Reviews**

Major reviews to last from three to six months will be undertaken by the Select Committee. One or two of the following suggestions should be pursued.

Post Office closures

- 5.1.1 Earlier this year several of the borough’s Post Offices, including those in Benenden, Langton Green, and Hawkhurst, were closed for business. KCC ran a protesting campaign because it had serious concerns about the effect on local communities and businesses in the County.
- 5.1.2 Feedback provided by residents for a different review indicated that many residents were concerned about being able to access the services offered by Post Offices since the closures took effect. This review would focus on what the Council can do to help in areas that have lost their local Post Office. Essex County Council set aside £1.5million as part of a proposal that, if approved, would reopen some branches in council buildings such as libraries, schools, and sports centres. The plan has the support of Pat McFadden MP, Minister for Employment Relations and Postal Affairs.
- 5.1.3 Potential witnesses could include:
 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) Head of Economic Development and Regeneration;

ITEM 8

- TWBC Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development;
 - Kent County Council (KCC) representatives;
 - Essex County Council representative;
 - Local shop owners;
 - Local Residents organisations;
 - Parish and Ward Councillors from areas in which a Post Office has been closed;
 - Representative of the Post Office;
 - Local Post Office managers;
 - Representatives from other local authorities that have experienced Post Office closures.
- 5.1.4 The review could be carried out by a working group of three or four Councillors who would meet to interview witnesses. Key witnesses could still attend Committee meetings to brief Members. Further evidence could be gathered by the working group, who would conduct site visits to Post Offices and to villages that do not currently have a Post Office. Other local authorities in the region could also be visited to investigate their actions regarding Post Office closures.
- 5.1.5 The key potential outcomes of this review would include identifying what support the Council and KCC could provide for local Post Offices. It would identify the needs of residents who live in areas that no longer have a Post Office and make recommendations on how these residents could be helped.
- 5.1.6 This review would meet CfPS principle (ii) – Enabling the voice and concerns of the public and its communities.

Unemployment of borough residents under the age of 25 years old

- 5.1.7 This topic was raised by a Councillor representing the Sherwood ward who is concerned about the number of young males who are unemployed in the area. Unemployment has a detrimental effect on the local economy and when individuals are long-term unemployed the risks of social exclusion are increased.
- 5.1.8 The review could address the following questions:
- How does the rate of young (16-25 year old) unemployment compare with other local authorities?
 - What has TWBC to encourage young people to either stay in school or training after taking GCSEs?
 - Following loss of employment, how have young jobseekers been helped back into the workforce?
 - Have other local authorities employed any initiatives to help young jobseekers?
 - What incentives to local businesses have for employing local workers?
 - What implications does a high rate of unemployment among young people have for the local economy and local communities?
 - What areas of the borough suffer from a particularly high unemployment rate among young people?
- 5.1.9 Potential witnesses could include:
- TWBC Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development;
 - TWBC Benefits Officer;
 - TWBC Head of Economic Development and Regeneration;
 - TWBC Head of Community and Corporate Planning;
 - KCC employment representative;

ITEM 8

- JobCentrePlus representatives from both local and national level;
- Representative of The National Youth Agency;
- Employment organisations;
- Adult Education Centres;
- Youth training organisations.

- 5.1.10 Other ways of gathering evidence for the review could include analysing the feedback gathered by Officers and Councillors on the Ward Walks in Sherwood and Frittenden. Statistics would be gathered to identify key areas of unemployment in the borough. Visits to other local authorities could also be made to learn from any employment initiatives undertaken elsewhere.
- 5.1.11 A working group of three or four Members could undertake the review. This would enable site visits to be made in daytime hours and for a large number of witnesses to be interviewed.
- 5.1.12 A key potential outcome of this review could be to recommend any initiatives that have been successful in other local authorities to assist young people to gain employment.
- 5.1.13 This review would meet CfPS principle (ii) – Enabling the voice and concerns of the public and its communities.

Planning Committees structure

- 5.1.14 In March 2008 the Select Committee held a meeting in Cranbrook to discuss the Audit Commission Planning Report. The Chairmen of both Eastern and Western Area Planning Committees provided evidence, as did Parish Council representatives, the Director of Planning and Development, and the Head of Planning Services. Members made the following recommendation to Cabinet at the 12 June 2008 meeting:

The Committee should conduct a detailed review of the benefits and disadvantages of one-Committee, two-Committee, and three-Committee systems. While the review is ongoing two Planning Committees should remain in place and the review would include recommendations on whether the two-Committee system should be replaced or if it could be improved. (See also agenda page 5.7).

An update on Cabinet's discussion will be provided at the Select Committee meeting.

- 5.1.15 This review would compare the current structure of TWBC Planning Committees with other local authorities that operate different systems. Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) currently operate a three-committee system, while all other District Councils in Kent operate a one-committee system. Officer and Councillor representatives of other Kent local authorities could be invited to a Select Committee meeting to provide evidence of the positive and negative aspects of one/three-committee systems. A working group representing the Select Committee could visit neighbouring local authorities to find out about different Committee systems.
- 5.1.16 Potential witnesses could include:
- TWBC Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development;
 - TMBC Cabinet Member for Planning and Transformation;
 - Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Cabinet Member for Regeneration;

ITEM 8

- Planning Service representatives from TMBC and MBC;
- Planning committee Chairmen from TMBC and MBC.

5.1.17 The key potential outcome of this review would be a recommendation on whether a one, two, or three-committee system would be the best option for TWBC.

5.1.18 This review would meet CfPS principle (i) – Providing ‘critical friend’ challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers.

Road Safety

5.1.19 A Councillor suggested that speed limits on rural roads should be investigated, in particular the issue of adequate signage leading up to different speed zones. A resident also sent an email expressing his concern at the speed that vehicles travel along Upper Grosvenor Road in Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre. Pedestrian crossings, hazard warning signage, cycle safety, and drink drive campaigns could also be discussed. A road safety review could also look at how young people are educated in schools about crossing roads, cycling on roads, and driving when recently having passed driving tests. The review could investigate publicity for pedestrian safety campaigns, particularly for children around schools. A contact at KCC explained that all of these issues are currently being addressed by actions identified for this year and/or next year within KCC business plans. Therefore the review would have to take care not to duplicate with work being carried out by KCC.

5.1.20 Potential witnesses could include:

- TWBC Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development;
- TWBC Portfolio Holder for Environment and Street Scene;
- TWBC Head of Environment and Street Scene;
- Kent Highways Services representative;
- KCC ‘Help Save 478 Lives’ representative;
- Representative of the THINK! Road Safety Campaign;
- Police representative;
- Lollypop men/women.

5.1.21 This review would be best suited to a working group of three or four Members who could conduct site visits and interview witnesses. Initiatives carried out by other local authorities should also be investigated and site visits could be undertaken.

5.1.22 Because the scope of this review is so wide the terms of reference would need to be narrowed down and defined at the first working group meeting. Research should be undertaken to discover the key road safety issues in the borough and these should form the prime focus of the review.

5.1.23 Key potential outcomes could include erecting signage on roads at key locations in the borough, recommending changes in speed limits, enhancing road safety information provision for children, promoting awareness of the dangers of drink/drug driving.

5.1.24 The review would meet CfPS principle (ii) – Enabling the voice and concerns of the public and its communities.

Proposed West Kent Building Control Strategic Partnership

- 5.1.25 The Head of Building Control at the Council submitted this suggestion for a scrutiny review. The information that follows is largely taken from his report to the Chief Executive, Leader, and Executive Directors. This review would explore the potential for creating a local strategic partnership approach for the delivery of the building control function within an area of Kent currently served by Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Malling and Sevenoaks Councils. It should consider the cost benefits to the Council of forming a local strategic partnership.
- 5.1.26 Building Control is a statutory service dealing with health and safety, accessibility, and conservation of fuel issues. The current proposal is to form a building control strategic partnership whereby three authorities agree to combine their individual building control services into one unit. One of the authorities would agree to act as the 'host authority' to which all staff from the other authorities would transfer to and be employed by. That authority would also deal with the financial and personnel issues relating to the staff. The Council's Head of Building Control is currently drafting an updated report with his counterparts at Sevenoaks and Tonbridge and Malling District Councils. The intention is to present the report to Management Board and Cabinet at the three local authorities for consideration around August/September 2008.
- 5.1.27 Potential witnesses could include:
- TWBC Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development;
 - TWBC Director of Planning and Development;
 - TWBC Head of Building Control;
 - Sevenoaks Building Control representative;
 - Tonbridge and Malling Building Control representative;
 - Representatives from local authorities that are already operating as combined building control units.
- 5.1.28 The review could be carried out by inviting witnesses to attend Committee meetings to provide information and answer questions from Members.
- 5.1.29 The key potential outcome of the review would be a recommendation that a local strategic partnership should be formed to run the local authority building control function in West Kent, specifically Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, and Tonbridge and Malling.
- 5.1.30 The review would meet CfPS principle (iv) – Driving improvement in public services.

5.2 One-Offs

These would take one or two meetings.

Economic Development in rural areas of the borough

- 5.2.1 In January 2008 the West Kent Partnership submitted the West Kent Leader bid for funding from the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA). This bid is currently in the process of being approved and it is expected that the partnership would secure £1.8m of the £2m it was bidding for. Across the South East, three other Leader groups had their submissions rejected, four had their programme size reduced and all successful bids would have a 10% administration cut.

ITEM 8

- 5.2.2 The West Kent Leader Programme will operate over the three boroughs of Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge & Malling and Sevenoaks between 2008 and 2013. The programme has an over-arching principle - to promote sustainable business growth within the land based and rural economies in the area. Investment through the Leader Programme is therefore intended to improve the long-term viability of businesses and to reduce their reliance on future support funding. Leader will help add value and ensure and enhance sustainable development. There are also other sources of rural funding that compliment the bid.
- 5.2.3 The key objectives of the West Kent Leader are to:
- Improve competitiveness and financial sustainability of West Kent's farming and forestry;
 - Encourage innovation, diversification in West Kent's land based sector;
 - Promote entrepreneurship in rural West Kent;
 - Encourage the development of rural tourism-related businesses;
 - Address pockets of deprivation and encourage vibrant rural communities;
 - Ensure best practice in land management and promote sustainable development.
- 5.2.4 West Kent's main priority is to maximise spending and support for farmers and foresters and these sectors will receive 75% of all available project funding under the Leader programme. There is considerable farmer involvement in the Local Action Group and this ratio reflects the funding priorities in West Kent.
- 5.2.5 If Members wished to pursue this topic the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development could be invited to a Select Committee meeting to provide details of the projects that will be launched across the borough. Members could make recommendations for projects that should be included in the programme.

Working with SEEDA

- 5.2.6 A Committee Member suggested that the Select Committee should look into how the Council works with SEEDA and how the Agency helps local businesses in the borough. TWBC Economic Development representatives, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development, and a representative from SEEDA could attend a Select Committee meeting to brief Members on past and future projects undertaken in the borough. Members could have an input into proposed projects to be undertaken with SEEDA.
- 5.2.7 The Government published a consultation paper on 31 March 2008 seeking responses to its proposals for implementing the review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR). Legislation is expected to be passed in the next parliamentary session, beginning in November 2008. The Head of Economic Development and Regeneration will present a report to Cabinet on 12 June 2008, asking for Members' response to the review. A key point of the review is the proposed streamlined regional tier. This would introduce integrated strategies and give SEEDA lead responsibility for regional planning. It would also mean that the organisation that currently scrutinises SEEDA, the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA), would cease to exist. This would result in a loss of democracy and local engagement as SEEDA is an unelected body and is responsible to Ministers in London.

ITEM 8

- 5.2.8 Due to the proposed changes to the structure of regional development in the South East, now would be a good time to look at how economic development is organised in Kent and how the Council engages with key organisations, including SEEDA. Clarification of how Tunbridge Wells fits into SEEDA's strategy and funding regime would be helpful.
- 5.2.9 The Select Committee could use Committee meetings to interview the Council's Head of Economic Development and Regeneration and representatives from SEEDA to look at the future of economic development in the borough. The Economic Development and Regeneration Service will also be pursuing a Destination Marketing Strategy and this could be added to the work programme. Members could visit Beacon/Best Practice local authorities and KCC to ascertain ways in which Tunbridge Wells borough can attract more funding.

Change Champions

- 5.2.10 At the 13 March 2008 Select Committee meeting the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development, Councillor Mrs Thomas, informed Members that she was the Council's Change Champion and that she hoped more would be appointed soon. The role included monitoring the progress of plans and providing a link between Members and Officers. The Director of Planning and Development will present a report on the role and appointment of Change Champions to a Select Committee meeting this year at a date to be confirmed.

The Revised Housing Allocation Policy

- 5.2.11 The Select Committee discussed the draft Revised Housing Allocation Policy at the 10 April meeting. Following this meeting a working group was formed to discuss the criteria for the five bandings in the Policy. The group met with Helen Clarke, the Housing Needs Manager, and Jacqui Gower, the Senior Housing Needs Officer in May 2008. The group's comments will be incorporated into the revised Policy, which will be presented to the Committee in September 2008 before going to Cabinet the following month.

The conversion of front gardens into car parking spaces

- 5.2.12 Two members of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum made this suggestion. They are concerned at the number of front gardens in the town that have been tarmaced or paved over to create car-parking spaces. The Head of Planning Services has stated that the Council did not rule out the possibility of making Article 4 Directions if suitable cases came forward. If Members wish to pursue this issue the Head of Planning Services could be asked to a Select Committee meeting to explain in further detail and give examples or where Article 4 Directions would/would not be made. The two Planning Committee Chairman could also be invited to the meeting to provide information.
- 5.2.13 Some small-scale alterations to properties are classed as 'permitted development' and can be carried out without Planning Permission. However, in order to keep control over development in Conservation Areas the Council is able to make an 'Article 4 Direction', (Town and Country Planning Order, 1995) the effect of which is to take away 'permitted development' rights, meaning that Planning Permission will be required.

Empty Businesses rates

5.2.14 This was a suggestion of the Chairman of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum. Are empty businesses charged rates? If yes, what rate do empty businesses pay and at what stage is payment made? This issue could be covered in an interview with the Head of Financial and Property Services at a Select Committee meeting.

5.3 Select Committee's Watching Brief and Updates

The Select Committee could receive updates on all of these topics.

Slivers of Time

5.3.1 *Background*

Last year the Select Committee recommended that the Council adopted the Slivers of Time project, which allowed people to sell spare hours of time and councils or other bodies could buy those hours as and when they needed to. The Government and private companies would jointly fund the project. A Lead Member, Councillor Williams, and a Lead Officer, the Director of Services to the Community, Richard Powell, were appointed. They liaised with the Human Resources Manager, Val Green, in May 2008 to discuss the way forward.

5.3.2 *Recommendation*

The Lead Officer and Lead Member could be asked to attend a future Select Committee meeting to update Members on the progress of the scheme when it is up and running.

Masterplan for Tunbridge Wells Borough

5.3.3 *Background*

Select Committee Members undertook a tour of the borough in September 2007 to visit the four sites of regeneration in Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood, and Cranbrook. In December 2007 Cabinet Members decided that John Laing/Gladedale should be the Council's preferred development partner for these sites. A Masterplan would be produced to set out development plans for the four development sites. A partnership agreement should be finalised around September 2008.

5.3.4 *Recommendation*

The Select Committee could request updates from the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration, David Candlin.

Highways

5.3.5 *Background*

During the 2007/08 municipal year the Select Committee conducted a review in partnership with Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) into communication between Kent Highway Services (KHS) and district councils. The review made a number of recommendations to KHS and progress on these will be monitored during the current municipal year. A meeting between a TWBC Member, an MBC Member and the Chairman of the KCC Highways Advisory Board will take place in June to discuss the recommendations and areas of improvement identified in the review.

5.3.6 Recommendation

The Chairman of the Tunbridge Wells Joint Transportation Board (JTB) could provide an update to the Select Committee on whether the communication links have improved since the review. This could take place in October, after two JTB meetings have taken place.

Sunday Car Park Charging**5.3.7 Background**

At the January 2008 Select Committee meeting the Head of Environment and Street Scene, Gary Stevenson, updated Members on the progress of the Sunday Car Park Charging scheme, which had commenced in October 2007. The Select Committee recommended that an investigation into the feasibility of introducing free of charge Sunday parking in car parks for town centre residents should take place. In his report to Cabinet on 12 June 2008 the Head of Environment and Street Scene explains that this investigation found that only a straightforward change to the Parking Places Order would be needed to implement the proposal. He suggested that Meadow Road and Crescent Road car parks could be made available for permit holders. Members also recommended that the possible impact of vehicles parking on yellow lines on Sundays should be reviewed. The Council has recently commissioned a borough-wide parking study and part of the survey work will involve further observations of Sunday parking patterns to identify the need for any changes in the existing restrictions.

5.3.8 A suggestion was also received from a resident who believed that the number of cars parked on local roads on weekdays is increasing rapidly. She believed that this is largely due to the number of commuters parking in the town and that roads leading to the Common are almost completely full by 8:30am. She made the following suggestion: "The whole of Tunbridge Wells, or at least the central area, becomes residents only parking from 8.30 to 10.30 on weekdays."

5.3.9 Recommendation

The Head of Environment and Street Scene and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Street Scene could be asked to attend a Select Committee meeting later in the year to brief Members on the outcome of the borough-wide parking study and proposed future action.

Local Economy and Housing Select Committee**Work Programme 2008-2009**

Date	Items for discussion
17 June 2008	Work Programme Setting Migrant Workers Scrutiny Review
10 July 2008	Discussion of major reviews (with detailed scoping reports) (TBC) David Crosby – Housing Strategy 2006-11 Monitoring Report Private Sector Renewal Strategy Monitoring Report 12 Month Progress report on Housing Associations Review
18 September 2008	Revised Housing Allocation Policy
23 October 2008	
27 November 2008	
15 January 2008	
26 February 2009	
2 April 2009	Review of achievements of Select Committee

All meetings start at 6.00 pm and are held at the Town Hall, unless otherwise stated.

Major Reviews

TBC

Joint Reviews

TBC

One-Offs

TBC

ITEM 8