

# Overview and Scrutiny

## E-Bulletin Summer 2011

**Welcome** to the first edition of the new-look Overview and Scrutiny e-bulletin. We have decided to resurrect the e-bulletin as a simple way of keeping the entire Council up to date on the key issues and activities of the Select Committees. We hope you find this useful, but if you have any suggestions for content you would like to see in future editions please do contact the Overview and Scrutiny team.

### Dementia Review Excites Press

**The Environment, Health and Housing Select Committee's** ongoing review into Dementia Services in the Borough is nearing its completion. The fact that the review is yet to reach its final conclusions has not stopped one local paper from running a front page story on the progress of the review, nor Radio Kent from interviewing Committee Chairman, Cllr Peter Waldock about this issue.

The Committee has interviewed voluntary services, dementia patients, carers and clinical professionals about the provision of dementia services and how they will meet growing demand as our population ages. The review is working towards recommendations to bridge current service gaps and to improve the capability of Council staff and Members to recognise symptoms of dementia and make appropriate referrals.

You can hear Cllr Waldock's interview at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/console/p00hndk4> (approximately 25 minutes into the broadcast).

The review is due to be published in September.



### New Approach for Budget Scrutiny

**The Economy and Governance Select Committee** has agreed a fresh approach for future budget scrutiny. In previous years the Committee has worked towards producing a report and recommendations to be submitted as Cabinet sets the budget. However, the Financial Services team advised the Committee that for its recommendations to have the fullest possible impact on the budget, it needed to be involved far earlier in the year.

The Committee has therefore set up a working group that will meet on an ad-hoc basis throughout the year to examine issues and projects within the budget as and when they arise. To assist with this it will co-opt Members from the other two Select Committees. The working group will be working closely alongside Officers as projects are developed to provide political direction. It is hoped that this combination of Members' practical discretion and Officers operational expertise will result in highly effective scrutiny of the budget.



## Success after Success for Youth Alcohol Review

A review published by Communities and Partnerships Select Committee last year, addressing the social needs of young people and the issue of alcohol misuse, saw all fourteen of its recommendations agreed by Cabinet. However, the recommendations have been taken up by external partners with unprecedented enthusiasm.

Two of the most ambitious recommendations in the report have been seized upon as the basis for new initiatives in the borough. The report was used as the evidence base for a project developed by an external consultancy, with the recommendation to develop an alcohol intervention programme aimed specifically at parents being put into place in two local schools. In a separate development, KCC's Youth Service was so enthused by a recommendation to establish a permanent youth space in Royal Tunbridge Wells that it has included the recommendation as a central element of its proposals to restructure youth services across the County.

The review has been an excellent example of scrutiny achieving a great outcome for local residents and its insights having impact far beyond the walls of the Town Hall.

## New Style of Minutes to be Trialled

Cabinet has given its approval to the trial of a new form of Select Committee minutes. From September formal minutes will be shorter, summarising discussion, noting evidence and recording decisions. However, minutes will be supplemented by a 'Chairman's letter', written to Cabinet and published alongside the minutes.

The Chairman's letter will go into more detail on the themes of the meeting, the points Members feel strongly about and the reasons for recommendations coming forward. The Select Committee will then receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder as part of its next agenda. It is hoped that this will improve communication, emphasise scrutiny Members' opinions and make the scrutiny process more accessible for observers.

## Committee Work Programmes Decided

**Economy and Governance Select Committee:** In addition to budget scrutiny, the Committee will be examining supporting local businesses and Developer Contributions policy as its major reviews. Alongside this, it will continue to examine regeneration, parking, TIC, capital budgets and four year elections.

**Environment, Housing and Health Select Committee:** While continuing to examine dementia services, the Committee will begin a thematic review into several facets of housing. This will be joined by reviews into the public realm, food hygiene, mercury abatement at the crematorium, public health indicators and carbon management.

**Communities and Partnerships Select Committee:** Major reviews will focus on Communications and Engagement, promoting localism and working with Parish Councils. The Committee will also examine rural broadband provision, the Go-Card scheme, Urban Parishing and the future role of the LSP.

If you'd like to be involved in a review, contact the team via the details below.

### Your Scrutiny Team

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