RECORD OF CABINET DECISIONS

Cabinet – 13 October 2009

Date of publication: 14 October 2009

Subject to call-in these decisions will be effective from 22 October 2009

PRESENT

Rodney Chambers Leader
Alan Jarrett Deputy Leader/Finance
Janice Bamber Customer First and Corporate Services
Jane Chitty Strategic Development and Economic Growth
Howard Doe Community Services
Phil Filmer Front Line Services
Tom Mason Adult Services
Les Wicks Children’s Services
David Wildey Children’s Social Care

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Neil Davies (Chief Executive), Rose Collinson (Director of Children and Adults), Robin Cooper (Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture), Angela Drum (Head of Legal Services), Mick Hayward (Chief Finance Officer), Richard Hicks (Assistant Director, Customer First, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance) and Anthony Law (Cabinet Coordinator).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Rehman Chishti (Community Safety and Enforcement).

RECORD OF DECISIONS

The record of decisions from the meetings held on 17 September 2009 and 22 September 2009 were agreed.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were none.
CULTURAL STRATEGY

Background:

This report presented the Cultural Strategy, which set out a vision for Medway’s cultural offer over the next five years.

The strategy detailed the extensive cultural offer currently available in Medway, together with areas for further development. The following overarching strategic priorities, together with their associated outcomes, sought to ensure existing and future communities would benefit from a wide range of high quality cultural activities:

- stewardship – preserving and enhancing Medway’s heritage, green spaces and public realm;
- engagement – increasing active engagement and satisfaction with cultural activities
- contributing to economic prosperity – harnessing and fostering the creative talent within Medway
- health/wellbeing – increasing active participation.

Members were advised that the strategy had been produced through extensive partnership working through the Cultural Partnership and agreed by the Medway Regeneration Partnership. It was also noted that the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered the strategy on 27 August 2009 and that the issues raised by the Committee would be progressed as the strategy was delivered.

A detailed delivery plan setting out how progress and success would be measured and monitored was attached to the strategy.

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken and a copy of the screening form was attached to the report.

Members welcomed the strategy and reiterated the importance of its contribution to putting Medway on the map.

Decision number: Decision:

165/2009 The Cabinet adopted the Cultural Strategy.

Reasons:
The Cultural Strategy provides the framework for taking forward Medway’s cultural offer and would ensure a coherent approach is adopted over the next 5 years, working in partnership.
HOUSING STRATEGY ANNUAL REVIEW

Background:

This report reviewed and assessed progress with the delivery of the Housing Strategy, which had been agreed by Cabinet on 5 August 2008.

The report detailed the five strategic aims contained with the Housing Strategy:

- Maximising the supply of suitable and affordable housing and meeting housing need
- enabling vulnerable people to live independent lives
- improving the quality and energy efficiency of homes
- developing sustainable communities and promoting neighbourhood renewal
- promoting better and fair access to housing services.

It was noted that there had been significant progress across the strategic aims and the major achievements were set out, together with details of areas where work was either at an early stage or ongoing.

A revised Action Plan was proposed which reflected developments both within the housing service and the housing sector. This had been developed in partnership with the Medway Strategic Housing Board, which monitored progress against the strategy and related action plans. The revised Action Plan set out specific actions which would assist in achieving the desired outcomes for the five strategic aims.

Decision number: 166/2009

Decision: The Cabinet adopted the revised Housing Strategy Action Plan and noted the progress against its aims.

Reasons:
The Housing Strategy and its Action Plan provides the strategic context for the attraction and investment of resources to help meet the Council’s overall ambitions.
REVIEW OF MEDWAY’S SOCIAL REGENERATION STRATEGY (2008-2016)

Background:

This report reviewed the Social Regeneration Strategy, which had been agreed by Cabinet in April 2008.

The Social Regeneration Strategy defined how all Medway’s communities could access the benefits of the regeneration programme in accordance with three strategic aims:
- To create a cohesive and inclusive community
- To improve access to employment opportunities
- To ensure physical improvements are accessible to all.

Progress with the delivery of the social regeneration programme was outlined, with a number of key achievements highlighted. The report also set out how an ongoing programme of social regeneration might be resourced over the period 2009 - 2012.

Decision number:  

Decision:

The Cabinet noted the very positive progress made in relation to the delivery of Medway’s Social Regeneration Strategy, notably in relation to the second strategic aim of improving access to employment.

The Cabinet noted the next phase of Medway’s social regeneration programme, set out in Section 3 of the report and noted the significant amount of external funding secured and bid for (over £10.8m) by officers from Economic Development and Social Regeneration and colleagues from partner services across the Council.

The Cabinet noted that the allocation of an additional £100,000 per annum to the social regeneration revenue budget would be considered during the 2010/2011 budget setting process and that a business case was being prepared. This would lever in external funding for further workforce vocational skills training as explained in Section 6.4 of the report. This will enable work with local partners to make much greater inroads towards achieving the very challenging Local Area Agreement target NI 163.
Reasons:
Medway’s social regeneration programme is playing a key role in assisting local people from disadvantaged backgrounds to share in the benefits of Medway’s regeneration. This responds directly to one of the Council’s strategic priorities: “Everyone benefiting from Medway’s regeneration”.

Substantial progress has been made on workforce skills development due to Medway’s social regeneration programme, particularly in relation to Level 1 where the proportion of Medway’s working population with that level of qualification now exceeds the South East England average.

However, a very challenging target has been set as part of the Local Area Agreement National Indicator (NI) 163 as set out in section 6.4 of the report.

Should £100,000 of additional revenue funding be allocated to the social regeneration budget in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 it will enable officers to lever in external funding sources such as from the European Union to oversee a concentrated programme of workforce skills development.

REGENERATION FRAMEWORK REVIEW

Background:
This report reviewed progress with the delivery of the Regeneration Framework.

The Medway Regeneration Framework, adopted in October 2006, explained the priorities for regeneration, the vision for Medway and the actions required. It was noted that the priorities flowed from Medway’s Community Plan and were developed within the strategic context of the region and sub region and national aspirations for the Thames Gateway.

Details of progress against national indicators and the main headings contained within the 2006 framework were set out. It was reported that across all the themes there had been significant progress.

Members were advised that the framework had proved a useful and effective tool in carrying forward regeneration activities, accessing external funding and working with partners.

Decision number: Decision:
The Cabinet noted progress against the priorities in the Regeneration Framework.
Reasons:
The Regeneration Framework provides the framework for regeneration activity to continue and provides the strategic context for funding organisations and partners.

PARKING STANDARDS INTERIM REVIEW

Background:
This report set out details of the proposed interim parking standards and outlined the consultation that would be undertaken.

Members were advised that parking standards were used to assess the appropriate level of parking provision for new developments and they needed to be revised following changes to national and regional guidance and current activity in Medway. In advance of a full review, and in view of current concerns concerning parking arrangements in new housing developments in Medway, it was proposed to adopt interim standards for residential development. This would take account of standards developed by adjacent local authorities.

As the interim standards would form a Supplementary Planning Document, consultation would follow the processes detailed in the Local Development Framework Statement of Community Involvement. It was proposed that the outcome of the consultation process would be reported to the Development Control Committee and Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee in advance of final consideration by Cabinet in January 2010.

Decision number: 167/2009

Decision:
The Cabinet agreed to:

a) consultation being undertaken with a view to adopting on an interim basis the Essex County Council residential parking standards detailed in paragraph 4.3 of the report.

b) the outcome of the consultation being reported back to a future Cabinet meeting.

Reasons:
To ensure Medway’s parking standards are reviewed to take account of the most recent government guidance.
CABINET ADVISORY GROUPS

Background:

This report requested changes to the allocation of seats on two Cabinet Advisory Groups: Corporate Parenting Group and Medway Regeneration Advisory Group.

Revisions were proposed to reflect the revised political composition of the Council following the by-election in Luton and Wayfield and the creation of a new Independent Group.

Decision number: Decision:

168/2009 The Cabinet agreed the changes to the Corporate Parenting Group and Medway Regeneration Advisory Group as set out in section 3.1 of the report.

Reasons:
The revisions detailed in the report reflect the revised political balance of the Council.

RECRUITMENT FREEZE

Background:

This report presented information on vacancies that officers had requested approval to commence recruitment for, following the process agreed by Cabinet on 7 January 2003 (decision number 9/2003).

Appendix 1 to the report provided details of the posts and included supporting Portfolio Holder comments.

Decision number: Decision:

169/2009 The Cabinet agreed to unfreeze the following posts, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, to enable officers to commence the recruitment process:

Children and Adults Services
   a) PA to Director – Business Support
   b) Support Services Assistants – Initial Intake Team

Regeneration, Community and Culture
   c) Director’s Assistant.
Reasons:

The posts presented to Cabinet support the efficient running of the Council.

GROUND MAINTENANCE, BEREAVEMENT AND REGISTRATION SERVICES: GATEWAY FOUR CONTRACT REVIEW

Background:

This report set out progress on the performance of the grounds maintenance contract for bereavement services and how the contract was meeting the intended objectives.

In accordance with the Council’s contract rules, a Gateway 4 (contract management) report was required for this contract, as it had previously been judged as high risk.

The report gave details of how the contract was monitored and the issues addressed. It was noted that the contact was operating effectively as per the original tender specification and contract management strategy.

The Procurement Board had considered and noted this report on 23 September 2009.

Decision number: Decision:

The Cabinet noted the report.

Reasons:

There are no adverse observations concerning this contract and the contractor is performing to a standard equal or better than that set out in the contract specification.

GATEWAY ONE OPTIONS APPRAISAL: RECOMMISSIONING OF ACCOMMODATION-BASED AND COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORTING PEOPLE SERVICES

Background:

This report sought authority to proceed to the competitive process for 16 accommodation-based and community-based services.

These services would facilitate access to accommodation suitable to the needs of individuals and enable those individuals to develop the skills to live independently in the community without support. Details of the services were set out in Appendix 1 to the report and it was noted that three of these services
were subject to agreement from the Commissioning Body, which had responsibility for delivering the Supporting People programme.

Services were currently provided under existing Supporting People contracts and it was proposed that officers review and develop improved service specifications as part of the re-commissioning process. This would ensure that services were responsive to the needs and wishes of current and future service users and informed by the latest best practice guidance.

The Procurement Board had considered this report on 23 September 2009 and recommended the proposed re-commissioning of the services.

It was noted that a diversity impact assessment screening form had been completed, which found that the service reprovision complied with the requirements of the legislation. An exempt appendix set out the financial information relating to the 16 contracts.

**Decision number:**

170/2009  

**Decision:**

The Cabinet agreed to the recommissioning of four community based floating support services and 12 accommodation-based support service as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report based on option 3 within the report. This option will ensure that each service is responsive to the needs and wishes of current and future service users. The contracts will be informed by the latest best practice guidelines and secure best value.

**Reasons:**

The recommissioning process will provide the opportunity to develop and ultimately provide improved services that meet the needs of the individuals using those services. These services will be supported by robust objectives and jointly agreed outcomes that will encourage service excellence and ensure that more local people have services that meet their needs and aspirations.

Anthony Law  
Cabinet Co-ordinator  
Telephone: 01634 332008 E-mail: anthony.law@medway.gov.uk