

Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of the committee will be held on:

Date: Tuesday, 6 July 2010

Time: 5.00pm

Venue: Meeting Room 2 - Level 3, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR

Membership: Councillors Andrews, Bhutia, Bright (Chairman), Crack, Godwin, Tony Goulden, Griffin, Hewett, Hicks (Vice-Chairman), Hubbard, Mackinlay, Maisey and Ruparel

Agenda

1 Record of the meeting

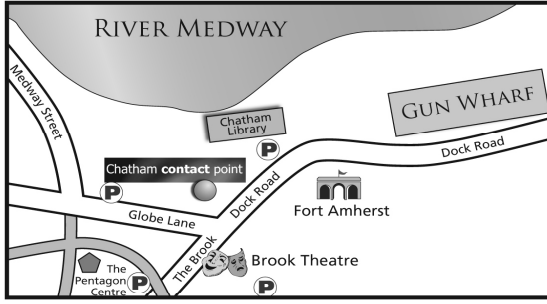
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To approve the record of the meeting held on 1 June 2010.

For further information please contact Caroline Salisbury on Telephone: 01634 332013 or Email: democratic.services@medway.gov.uk

Date: 6 July 2010

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Medway Council
MEETING OF REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND
CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 1 June 2010

6.34pm to 9.40pm

RECORD OF THE MEETING

PRESENT: Councillors: Andrews, Bright (Chairman), Mrs Diane Chambers, Tony Goulden, Griffin, Hewett, Hicks (Vice-Chairman), Hubbard and Maisey

Substitutes: Councillor Griffiths (Substitute for Councillor Godwin)
Councillor Mackinlay (Substitute for Councillor Bhutia)
Councillor Sutton (Substitute for Councillor Crack)

In Attendance:

Robin Cooper	Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture
Angela Drum	Head of Legal
Nicola Endacott	Kent Police
Stephen Gaimster	Assistant Director Development, Economy and Transport
Superintendent Des Keers	Superintendent (Kent Police) for Community Safety Partnership
Annamarie Lawrence-Lovell	Performance Manager
John Smith	Environmental Health Manager
Inspector Gary Woodward	DAAT
Caroline Salisbury	Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator

36 RECORD OF MEETINGS

The record of the meetings held on 18 March 2010 and 19 May 2010 (Joint meeting of all Committees) were agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bhutia, Crack, Godwin and Stamp.

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Tony Goulden declared a personal interest in agenda item 5(B) Scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership as his wife sat on the board of the Langley House Trust.

Councillor Griffiths declared a personal interest in any reference to NHS Medway on the grounds that he is a non-executive Director of the Trust.

39 PETITIONS

Discussion:

The lead petitioner, Mrs Matthewman, addressed the committee stating her concerns at her 12 year old daughter's daily three hour round trip from St Mary's Island to attend Rochester Grammar School for Girls.

Members were informed that there were 58 children living on St Mary's Island who could make use of a direct bus service to the secondary schools and as there were further developments being built on the island, the demand for a direct bus service would increase.

The lead petitioner spoke about the environmental, economic and educational benefits a direct bus service would bring to all the residents of Medway, as it would cut down on the number of 'parental taxis' driving to and from the schools, a lack of bus service was a disincentive for people to move into new housing provision and it was also a barrier for many mothers to work full time because of the need to drive their children to and from school.

Councillor Esterson, as ward councillor, also addressed the committee and spoke about a question that had been raised at Council on 15 April 2010 on the same subject. He reminded Members that there had been an underspend on the half price travel subsidy for young people last year. At the Council meeting, the Portfolio Holder had advised that the budget spent on subsidising other bus routes was up by £1 million and therefore a large proportion of the underspent budget had been used to ensure people were able to get to work. However, Councillor Esterson pointed out that this was a route specifically being asked for children to use which was what the budget was meant to be spent on. There was an opportunity now, whilst the budget was still there, to provide this service.

The committee asked questions about the cost effectiveness of running a service along this route all day or whether a twice a day trip specifically for school children, similar to the yellow bus scheme, would be more viable.

Officers responded that where the council subsidised a route it tried to meet a variety of needs but there were a few examples of subsidy being used specifically for a school route.

Members asked whether the route from St Mary's Island to the secondary schools would qualify as a yellow bus route, in comparison to the number of children using the yellow buses already running. Officers were also asked whether there was a rationale of priorities considered when the current yellow bus routes were chosen.

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Officers advised that the yellow bus scheme had been developed primarily to reduce the use of cars and it had been recognised that initially the scheme would not have been achievable throughout the whole of Medway. The number of routes had slowly increased and there had been a few more added in the current tender process.

Officers added that the route requested in the petition had been added to the list of tenders which were due to be received by 3 June 2010. A draft route and timings had been developed for the tender process which would get the children to their schools 10-15 minutes before school started. Due to the different school closing times, it would mean the bus would have to wait for 10 minutes in one case waiting for that school to close. Members were advised that a service that ran once in the morning and once in the afternoon would not allow children to stay behind at school for any extra-curricular activities.

The committee was also advised that it might be possible to review and adjust the current early morning journeys to reduce the journey time by improving the connections in Chatham. However, with the service being used by students from six schools and commuters also using the service to access Chatham railway station, it was difficult to time the service to meet everybody's needs efficiently. The current afternoon service (from Chatham to St Mary's Island) ran without a subsidy from the council so there was no direct control by the council but officers would be happy to talk this through with the bus company.

Decision:

The Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to:

- (a) note the petition responses and appropriate officer action in paragraph 3 of the report;
- (b) ask the Cabinet to note its strong support for the petitioners request to establish a bespoke bus service for children travelling between St Mary's Island and secondary schools in Chatham and Rochester;
- (c) request that Cabinet considers subsidising this route (even by way of yellow bus scheme) if no bus company has shown an interest in providing this service;
- (d) request a report back on the outcome of the tender process to the next meeting of the committee on 6 July 2010 meeting.

40 SCRUTINY OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Discussion:

The Chairman welcomed the Deputy Area Commander (Superintendent Des Keers), representing the Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), Inspector Gary Woodward from the Drug and Alcohol Action Team and Nicola

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Endacott, senior analyst, from Kent Police to the meeting.

Superintendent Keers gave a presentation covering the following points:

- the new structure of the CSP;
- hallmarks of effective partnerships;
- the new CSP Performance Delivery Group and examples of issues that it could deal with;
- the Confidence and Anti-Social Behaviour Forum;
- the local community safety team structure;
- current performance – improvement since last year;
- current progress – less victims of crime, reduction in vehicle crime, increased confidence, some of the highest detected crime rates in Kent, less than 2 burglaries a day in Medway;
- current challenges – single confidence measure, new government policies, efficiency savings, regeneration of Medway;
- what is needed in the future – clear direction, stability, less bureaucracy, community cohesion, youth engagement, elderly support and non-saturation of safety messages;
- feedback to Member queries from previous meeting on 16 February 2010.

The committee was then shown a film about the successful 'Safe Exit' campaign aimed to help women away from prostitution and to change their behaviour and lives. The campaign also targeted men caught kerb-crawling and provided a course aimed at changing their outlook and behaviour towards women.

The Committee made various comments and asked questions, including the following:

- are the housing providers, where the prostitutes are housed for the Safe Exit campaign, able to cope with the erratic lives of some very difficult women and allow their housing to continue thereby providing stability for them? Inspector Woodward responded that the housing providers were generally charitable trusts and very experienced with all types of tenants and to date all housing issues had been overcome. The charitable trusts provided key workers to help the women claim benefits, access education, etc. which worked extremely well;
- could street drinking and underage drinkers be tackled as the next topic, especially in Chatham town centre? Inspector Woodward replied that the key to dealing with this problem would be in the same way as prostitution and there were currently care workers going out jointly with Police and Medway's Community Safety officers as outreach work on the most entrenched drinkers. The partnership was also targeting licensees about the provision of alcohol to underage drinkers;
- With reference to the current structures, was there a danger that the CSP could become too corporate and stop successful engagement with those it

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served? Officers responded that this was possible - but that the CSP would be run, as far as was possible, to oversee the priorities for Medway and send out the key messages but would continue to deliver projects on a bespoke service;

- what direct action was there against drug dealers? Nicola Endacott explained the varied intelligence networks used by Kent Police to prioritise work against dealers. Six 'gangs' had been identified in Medway and three of these were currently being investigated and analysed on a daily basis;
- with reference to the feedback on matters raised at a previous meeting, Members clarified that the 'safe highways' routes for students that had been discussed were from the university campus and not Mid Kent College. The reactions and problems previously discussed were when those students ventured into Chatham High Street.

Decision:

The committee thanked the Community Safety Partnership for the presentation and requested a copy of the presentation to be circulated to Members of the Committee.

41 LOCAL AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Discussion:

The Environmental Health Manager advised that the report gave the latest position on air quality, showing that the principal source of pollutant in Medway was nitrogen dioxide, identified as arising from vehicle exhausts, and the majority of Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) declarations across the country were for this pollutant.

The committee was advised that as the findings from the latest detailed assessment showed further exceedence of this pollutant affecting residential property, it was proposed to revoke the current six AQMAs and declare three new areas including a large central AQMA, as shown on the maps accompanying the report.

Members asked what work could be carried out to reduce the pollutant. Officers responded that they would continue to work with the integrated transport team and added that the Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) also sought to address local air quality. It was noted that several areas of Kent had declarations of air quality for traffic emissions.

The committee asked about areas of Medway not included in the AQMAs and asked that other locations highlighted by Members were looked into over the next 12 months. Members asked that if officers looked into re-designing traffic management schemes to improve the flow of traffic, to consider any knock-on effects elsewhere in respect to traffic flow and air quality.

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Decision:

The committee agreed to recommend that the current Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are revoked and the three new AQMAs including a large central AQMA, as set out in the report, are declared.

42 END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2009/2010

Discussion:

The Performance Manager introduced the report to Members, highlighting the key areas from the quarter 4 (January to March 2010) performance monitoring.

Members then discussed various performance indicators including:

- recycling and waste collection, including compost bins and kitchen waste
- the new government's intention for future funding for regeneration projects
- rent and length of leases for business units
- journey times around Chatham
- the number of people killed or seriously injured on Medway roads.

Officers responded to the points raised and offered to send a Briefing Note to Members detailing the information requested throughout the discussion.

Decision:

Members noted the performance for 2009/2010.

43 WORK PROGRAMME

Discussion:

Members considered the report and a referral from the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Decision:

The committee agreed to:

- (a) note that the reports on Community Safety Plan Review, Local Development Framework (pre-publication version) report and Gun Wharf Masterplan would be submitted to the meeting on 6 July 2010;
- (b) note that future consideration of NI 32 (repeat incidences of domestic violence in cases reviewed at a MARAC) as referred by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee, would take place through the Council Plan Monitoring reports and on-going discussion with the Community Safety Partnership;

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- (c) agree that in-depth information is to be submitted to this committee via the Council Plan Monitoring report on the progress made in the action plan for NI 152 (working age people on out of work benefit), as referred by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in early 2011;
- (d) ask the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture to arrange an evening site visit inviting all Members of the Council to monitor the new road and building works in Chatham town centre including the development of the new bus facility.

Chairman

Date:

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