

REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 JUNE 2012

USING THE RIVER TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL

Report from/Author

Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services

Summary

A presentation will be given updating the committee with details of on-going work to promote the river and develop a longer-term strategy to improve leisure, economy and general use of the river.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 Under Chapter 4 – Rules, Part 5, paragraph 22.2 (d) terms of reference for Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee has powers to review and scrutinise matters relating to leisure, arts, sport and recreational activities to enhance the quality of life for local people.

2. Background

- 2.1 At a previous meeting of the committee on 10 August 2011, Members were advised that during its discussion of the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014 (CYPP), the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee had put forward a referral to the committee as follows:

“to inform of the committee’s concerns in relation to using the River Medway to its full potential and suggesting that the Regeneration, Community & Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers adding an item to its work programme on this issue.”

- 2.2 The committee agreed to request that an item was added to the work programme on this matter and the presentation will outline the draft strategy with respect to improving the use of the river and linking this with the overall infrastructure of Medway.

2.3 The river strategy takes into account the principles from the draft core strategy, namely:

- Along the urban waterfront mixed use redevelopment will be promoted in order to create safe, high quality environments, provide new homes and jobs, leisure and social infrastructure facilities with public spaces as focal points, a riverside walk and cycle way and increased public access to the river
- Greater use will be made of the river. Wharves and port capacity at Chatham Docks and Thamesport will continue to be safeguarded for the transshipment of freight, including waste and aggregates and other materials
- Existing infrastructure that provides access to the river and the foreshore, such as piers, jetties, slipways, steps and stairs will be protected unless redevelopment would result in an improvement. New facilities, including piers for river taxis, will be encouraged where appropriate
- Leisure activities on and along the river will be supported as long as they will not harm the environment or natural ecosystems
- The river will be protected in its own right, as a key landscape feature of natural beauty
- Proposed development will be expected to either maintain or improve water quality and minimise air, land and water pollution
- The Council will seek contributions from developers for the maintenance and improvement of the river, where appropriate.

2.4 In addition to the longer term approach the strategy has proposed a number of immediate actions to show the Council's commitment to improving the river environment and its' usage. These are:

<u>Priority projects</u>	<u>Timescales</u>
• Let a Café concession at the Esplanade	6 months
• Lighting Rochester Castle	6 months
• River taxi point- Medway City Estate	1 year
• Opening Concrete Pier at Upnor Depot	6 months
• Opening Sun Pier (pontoon and brow)	6 months
• RAFA Club relocation to bus station	6 months
• Access to the slipway at Chatham Maritime-Interface Land	6 months
• Step repairs to Gillingham and Improve access to Gillingham Pier	6 months 1 year
• Repairs to Commodore's Hard (part of the Strand Strategy)	1 year
• Rename Rat's Bay as Jubilee Reach	6 months
• Interpretation Boards along the River	6 months.

3. Risk management

3.1 There are no risk implications at this stage.

4. Legal and Financial Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications at this stage, although there may be aspects of the river strategy that will require legal advice e.g. around land ownership, licenses and access.

4.2 The financial implications will be dealt with as aspects of the strategy are implemented.

5. Recommendations

5.1. Members are asked to comment on and endorse the proposed strategy.

Lead officer contact

Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director Organisational Services

Tel No: 01634 332343 Email: tricia.palmer@medway.gov.uk