

COUNCIL

26 JULY 2012

REPORT ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTIVITY

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Summary

This report provides a summary of the work of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees since the last report to Council on 26 April 2012.

1. Policy and Budget Framework

1.1 The Council's constitution allows for reports on overview and scrutiny (O&S) activity to be reported to Council meetings. The following is a high level summary of business conducted. For further detail please refer to the minutes which will be on the Council's website.

2. Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2.1 21 March 2012

2.1.1. Annual Review from the Housing Improvement Board

Two Board Members gave a powerpoint presentation setting out the remit of the Board's work, what had been achieved so far and future work of the Board. They then responded to Members' questions.

2.1.2. Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Finance

The Portfolio Holder for Finance gave a presentation to the Committee which included:

- Procurement
- Asset and Property Management
- Risk Register
- Communications
- Better for Less
- Finance

The Committee asked questions on the following topics:

- Issues relating to a proposed airport in the Thames estuary

- Changes to housing benefit
- E-petition facility on the Council's website
- The procurement process and training
- Whether the Council would be compensated for providing additional Council Tax benefit for service personnel
- Whether the Council had a forecast balanced budget in quarter three
- Delays and costs in relation to the dynamic bus facility in Chatham
- National changes to universal credit and Council Tax
- A recommendation from Audit Committee regarding a one-stop shop fraud hotline
- National Planning Policy Framework – impact on Capstone Valley
- City status

2.1.3. Operational properties maintenance programme

Members questioned officers on the operational properties maintenance programme and the following was agreed:

- Information on the 'Playleadership hut' listed on page 25 of the agenda will be provided
- There will be a list of properties due for disposal in a separate column on the main list of maintenance works in future reports
- A briefing session for Members will be arranged giving further information on all property maintenance over £100,000 within Priority 1 and where each project is placed within the priority list, together with an update on works taking place at Medway Crematorium.

2.1.4. Six monthly review of the Corporate Business Risk Register

The Committee commented on the Corporate Business Risk Register and officers responded to a number of questions. A briefing note was requested on the risks associated in and around Medway before and during the Olympic Games.

2.1.5. Council Plan – third quarter monitoring report 2011/2012

Members commented on the Council Plan third quarter monitoring report 2011/2012. A number of matters were raised and concerns expressed following which a request was made that all acronyms are removed from the notes section of the appendix and NI 133 (timeliness of services commencing post-assessment) was referred to the next Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2.1.6. Revenue budget monitoring 2011/2012 – third quarter

Following consideration of the revenue budget monitoring report for the third quarter Members requested further information in a briefing note on the £500,000 underspend within the Early Years service and on the £522,000 underspend in concessionary fares. A report was also requested to the appropriate Committee on unfilled vacant posts within

the Council, including the underspend of £163,000 in Greenspaces and Country Parks.

2.1.7. Capital budget monitoring 2011/2012 – third quarter

The Committee noted the additions and amendments outlined in the report and the spending and funding forecasts summarised in the tables. A briefing note was requested on the current situation with regard to the Stoke Crossing and the £1.2 million budget variance.

2.1.8. Work Programme

Members were informed that the responsibility for housing services would transfer to the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 1 April 2012 and that the Fair Access to Credit Task Group had met and was progressing its review with a series of meetings in March and April 2012.

The Chairman of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee updated Members about an additional item reported to his Committee on 14 March 2012 relating to the proposed closure of Preston Skreens and a review of overnight short break provision for children with severe and complex disabilities.

2.2 21 June 2012

2.2.1. Member's item: Disposal of King Street car park, Rochester

Councillors Murray and Bowler, as ward Members, introduced the report advising the Committee of local residents and businesses concern at the intention to dispose of part of the King Street car park in Rochester, when this would jeopardise the chance of success for local businesses, many of whom were small, specialist and independent businesses facing a difficult economic time.

It was agreed to recommend to Cabinet to defer the implementation of decision 130/2008 to dispose of 50% of King Street car park in Rochester until after the development, and occupation, of the old police station site in Rochester and that officers re-evaluate the use of this car park and car parking in the local area and report back to Cabinet for re-consideration of this matter at that time.

2.2.2. Localism Act 2011 – constitutional issues

The Assistant Director, Legal and Corporate Services explained the issues and options relating to governance in the Localism Act that would require decision at Full Council on 26 July 2012. These were the form of governance the Council wished to take; the election and term of office of the executive leader; provisions for petitions for local authorities; and Councillor Call for Action (CCfA).

A recommendation was made to Cabinet that no change should be made at this stage to the Council's petition scheme and that changes to the overview and scrutiny rules as highlighted in Appendix B of the

report should be agreed. Information was also requested on the form of governance adopted by other Local Authorities be supplied to Members and the Cabinet prior to debate at Full Council on 26 July 2012.

The Committee also agreed to request reports on the list of assets of community value and e-petitions and the Council's e-petition facility.

2.2.3. Council Plan 2011/2012 – year end performance report

The Committee made the following requests:

- Officers work to ensure that the Love Medway App allows residents the opportunity to report potholes in the road in future
- The performance indicator for satisfaction with the work of the Community Officers is reinstated into the monitoring reports for 2012/2013
- The performance indicator for visitor numbers is reinstated into the monitoring reports for 2012/2013 and also includes the results of tourism marketing promotions
- Officers give careful consideration when setting target levels to tackle domestic abuse and that this includes discussions with community support groups
- The performance indicators for Looked After Children include outcomes and actions from case conferences
- Officers explore, together with the voluntary sector, the possibility of holding seminars for residents to assist them with understanding and becoming involved with participatory budgeting for future community projects
- Officers investigate whether truancy patrols are being carried out and if not to reinstate them, keeping a record of the number of parents and children investigated
- Officers investigate the payment of an administration fee to schools for the setting up of a walking bus scheme and inform Members of the outcome
- The relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees are requested to investigate why some targets for 2012/2013 have been set below the current performance levels

2.2.4. Work programme

The Committee asked for a report reviewing the Overview and Scrutiny function in Medway compared with other Local Authorities and a report on the List of Assets of Community Value for consideration later in 2012.

It was suggested that the briefing arranged for 24 September should include an update on the maintenance works at Medway Crematorium.

It was agreed that a briefing note should be sent to the Committee prior to 24 September giving an update on the properties with maintenance works over £100,000 in Priority 1.

3. Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3.1. 31 May 2012

3.1.1. Raising performance at Key Stage 2 task group report – update

The Committee noted the report on the Key Stage 2 task group work and the task group Members and officers responded to questions raised. A further update was requested on progress against the recommendations in approximately six months time. Officers were also requested to provide a briefing note with further details regarding the Educational Endowment Fund and include an update on the usage of TEN Governor (an up to date support service for governors) and The Key systems in the six month update report.

3.1.2. Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) annual review

A number of concerns and issues were raised following a presentation on the annual review of the CYPP. Briefing notes were requested on the following topics:

- Statistics and changes in relation to drugs and alcohol use and interventions in Medway, including an update on the Kent Drug and Alcohol Team contact
- Nursery provision, pressures in demand and plans to address this
- What intervention and support is in place to prevent young people (including under 16s) from taking up smoking or helping them to quit?
- Domestic violence and the impact on children and young people

A report to a future meeting was requested on Common Assessment Frameworks.

3.1.3. Careers advice for young people

A representative from Medway Youth Parliament (MYP) explained the background to the MYP report into careers advice in Medway and thanked officers for their response to concerns raised.

The Head of 14-19 Planning and Commissioning and the Chief Executive of Medway Youth Trust (MYT) introduced the report explaining the duties on schools under the Education Act 2011 to ensure young people in years 9-11 had access to independent and impartial careers advice.

The Committee recommended the Director of Children and Adults, under her delegated authority, to respond to the Government consultation regarding the extension of the age range to which the legal duties apply, in consultation with Medway Youth Parliament.

3.1.4. Medway Youth Trust development

The Chief Executive of Medway Youth Trust gave a presentation on the role, impact and future development of the Trust and responded to Members' questions.

3.1.5. Proposals for the development of additional primary age provision in Chatham

The Head of School Organisation and Student Services introduced a report on proposals for the development of additional primary age places and corrected data in the report to explain that the total number of primary places required in Chatham among all year groups should be 3570 and not 3521 as printed in the report. Members asked a range of questions and then recommended the report to Cabinet with its comments made during the meeting. Officers were requested to include in quarterly Council Plan monitoring reports information on pupil number forecasts in a tabular format.

3.1.6. Academies governance arrangements and the role of the local authority

The Director of Children and Adults introduced the report and gave a presentation covering various aspects around schools converting to academies including impact on school improvement; the differences between sponsors and chains (groups of academies), admission and inclusion implications, governance arrangements and local accountability.

3.1.7. Work programme

The following reports were requested:

- the review of overnight short breaks/closure of Preston Skreens be brought to the December meeting
- the draft SEN Transport Policy be brought to the Committee at the 17 July 2012 meeting
- a report on Swingate Infant and Spinnens Acre Junior School, Lordswood – consultation on the proposed amalgamation, if agreed by Cabinet to consult, be brought to its meeting in December 2012

A meeting between the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition spokespersons was arranged to make suggestions for the Committee's 2012/2013 work programme.

4. Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4.1. 22 May 2012

4.1.1. Application for Foundation Trust status – Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust

The Chief Executive Officer from Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT) gave a presentation on the Trust's aims for becoming a Foundation Trust.

Members referred to difficulties experienced by the Council in its dealings with KMPT in the past, particularly in connection with access to essential data about service users for the mental health social care staff and the safeguarding issues this had generated. It was agreed that the report should be deferred to 21 August 2012 meeting and in the meantime a meeting set up between the Council and KMPT, to include Members of this Committee, to resolve outstanding differences.

4.1.2. Update on Medical Centres in Medway

Members noted an update on continuing negotiations with Dr Juneja in relation to Marlowe Park Medical Centre in Strood and in relation to Sterling House. The Committee agreed with NHS Kent and Medway that the proposed closure of the Hoo St Werburgh Medical Practice did not constitute a substantial variation or development in accordance with the agreed protocol.

4.1.3. Adult mental health social care: options for the future

Members were advised of the progress of the adult mental health social care team since they had been brought into the Council's management from KMPT in February 2012. It was agreed to recommend Cabinet to agree to option 1 of the report which was to retain the service in Council management and review the matter after a twelve month period, setting out the weightings on the advantages and disadvantages of any options put forward for future delivery of the service. The Committee requested that their thanks be passed to relevant officers and staff for their hard work and dedication in making improvements to the service.

4.1.4. Work programme

It was agreed there would be a report back to the Committee on adult mental health social care, prior to a final decision being taken by Cabinet. An update on the Hoo St Werburgh surgery was agreed.

4.2. 26 June 2012

4.2.1. Update on Marlowe Park Medical Centre

The Co-Medical Director, NHS Kent and Medway introduced the update on Marlowe Park Medical Centre in Strood and said that the Trust had agreed to a single tender waiver to enable Dr Juneja to be awarded a five year GMS contract. There was still a period of consultation in place but he was hopeful that the contract would be signed by 1 July 2012.

4.2.2. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

The Director of Public Health gave a presentation on the JSNA to set the context, key components and messages in the assessment. She referred to the involvement of the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board in producing the JSNA, which took account of the three existing Outcomes Frameworks for NHS, Public Health and Adult Social Care (a further Outcomes Framework for Children was anticipated shortly).

Details of a stakeholder engagement event to be hosted by the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board were given and it was stated that priorities for the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy would be developed following that event.

During discussion a number of concerns around podiatry and diabetes services were raised and the Democratic Services Officer undertook to request a briefing note on those topics from Medway Community Healthcare.

4.2.3. Council Plan – year end report 2011/2012

The Director of Children and Adults and the Research and Review Team Manager responded to Members' questions. Responding to a request the Research and Review Team Manager undertook to provide the colour charts in A3 format in future to make them easier to read. Officers agreed to inform Members how many adults with learning disabilities Medway Council currently employ.

4.2.4. Work programme

The Director of Children and Adults informed the Committee that there would be a meeting of commissioners with Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT) to resolve any outstanding issues around the decommissioning of adult mental health social care within the next month.

The following items were added to the business for 21 August 2012:

- Podiatry
- Report back from the Joint HOSC with Kent County Council on adult mental health acute beds
- The annual report on compliments and complaints for adult services

The Democratic Services Officer agreed to investigate the best method for dealing with evidence in relation to the podiatry issues raised at the meeting following a response from Medway Community Healthcare.

5. **Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

5.1. **28 June 2012**

5.1.1. Annual scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership

The Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) gave a presentation to the Committee, which covered the following issues:

- The establishment of multi-agency domestic homicide reviews by the CSP
- Priority 1 – tackling substance and alcohol abuse
- Priority 2 – improving the local street scene

- Priority 3 – reducing youth offending
- Priority 4 – reducing night time economy related crime and disorder
- Priority 5 – working with vulnerable adults to reduce harm and repeat victimisation
- Priority 6 – reducing theft and shoplifting
- Reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured in Road Traffic Collisions

He then responded to Members questions on the following topics:

- Request for measurable targets to be contained in the Community Safety Plan
- The rehabilitation of offenders
- Drug and alcohol issues
- Special Officers to work alongside Police Community Support Officers
- The non-emergency 101 number
- Cessation of the service of the night time SoS bus used in Rochester High Street
- Domestic abuse
- Alcohol Control Zone activity

5.1.2. Council Plan end of year performance 2011/2012

The Performance Manager introduced the report; the key highlights being as follows:

- Love Medway App
- £370,000 EU funding to the Interreg programme
- residual waste to landfill sites reduced
- over £900,000 of capital investment projects had been delivered by Greenspaces Services
- the opening of the new Chatham Waterfront Bus Station
- the Urban Traffic Management and Control Centre had become fully operational
- Medway Park leisure centre was officially opened
- 8,000 unemployed people had accessed Employ Medway facilities

The Performance Manager then responded to a number of Member questions. Members were notified there would be a re-launch of the Love Medway App promotion later in the year and a briefing note would be circulated when the new campaign strategy was finalised.

A report was added to the work programme on detailed information on road maintenance funding, to include details of the integrity of the utility companies re-instatement works. A briefing note on bus usage and the number of routes in Medway was requested.

5.1.3. DCLG weekly collection support fund

The Head of Waste Services introduce the report advising of Medway's bid to the Challenge Fund seeking funding for new vehicles for all three services, 5 litre kitchen caddies and liners across the whole of Medway; a communications campaign; a project officer post for two years; and the revenue cost of running all three services for two years.

The Committee supported the proposals for the bid and noted that further information would be reported in due course.

5.1.4. Using the river Medway to its full potential

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, introduced the report and stated that the work was at an early stage. She responded to Members' questions and put forward comments on the initial proposals as follows:

- There should be provision of visitor moorings, perhaps at Sun Pier, and promotion of this to yachtsmen
- Concern at the proposal to rename Rats Bay, as it had a story behind why it was so named, which could be included on any appropriate Interpretation Boards
- Support for a river taxi service (although a Member cautioned that this had previously been tried and had failed)
- Support for future River Festival events
- Further consideration should be given to reinstating the use of Strood Pier as it was located next to a railway station and was Medway's nearest point on the river to London. Also, larger boats could access this useful stopping point on the river

The Committee recommended the following:

- a) the further development of the River Festival
- b) careful consideration is given between the balance of keeping the river as a working river but also with leisure and transport provision
- c) the provision of visitor moorings
- d) further work is carried out to explore the possibility of a river taxi service
- e) bringing back into use various piers and access points as necessary
- f) that Rats Bay retains its historic name

5.1.5. Petitions

The Committee was advised of petitions and e-petitions received by the Council within the remit of the Committee which were as follows:

- Call upon Council and Police to make tackling nuisance motorbikes and the associated anti-social behaviour a top local priority
- Request for the Council to commission a statue of Charles Dickens to be placed in the gardens of Eastgate House
- Request for alleygates to the rear of 1-71 Blenheim Avenue, Chatham

- Request to scrap the parking meter in the car park at Luton library
- Request to join the Kent Freedom Pass Scheme and a petition for the Council to abolish the half-price bus pass scheme

There had been no petition referrals from the lead petitioners following receipt of a response from the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture.

5.1.6. Work programme

The Committee agreed to add to the work programme a report on detailed information on road maintenance funding, to include details of the integrity of the utility companies. They also agreed to the formation of a five Member task group on the basis of 3:1:1 to report to a special themed meeting of the Committee, to meet the timescales for influencing the priorities for the future commissioning of housing related support.

Background papers

None

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