

Medway Council
Meeting of Regeneration, Community and Culture
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 28 June 2012

5.34pm to 8.30pm

Record of the meeting

Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee

- Present:** Councillors: Bright (Chairman), Etheridge, Griffin, Griffiths, Adrian Gulvin, Hicks (Vice-Chairman), Hubbard, Juby, Maisey, Stamp and Turpin
- Substitutes:** Councillor Pat Gulvin for Councillor Mackinlay
Councillor Shaw for Councillor Harriott
- In Attendance:** Mark Arnold, Acting Superintendent, Kent Police
Sean Bone-Knell, Assistant Director, Kent Fire & Rescue Service
Sarah Dagwell, Head of Waste Services
Keith Gulvin, Youth Offending Team Manager
Richard Hicks, Assistant Director, Customer First, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance
Neil Howlett, Community Safety Partnership Manager
Anna Marie Lawrence-Lovell, Performance Manager
Councillor Mike O'Brien, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact and Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership
Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services
Caroline Salisbury, Democratic Services Officer
Clem Smith, Head of Economic Development and Social Regeneration
Ian Wilson, Head of Capital Projects, Road Safety and Networks

123 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 3 April 2012 and the record of the Joint Meeting of All Committees held on 16 May 2012 were agreed and signed as correct by the Chairman.

124 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Harriott and Mackinlay.

125 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

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126 Declarations of interest

Councillor Griffiths declared a personal interest to any reference to Medway Community Healthcare, as he is a non-executive director.

Councillor Adrian Gulvin declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 (Annual scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership) as he is a Council appointed Member of the Fire Authority and also that his brother is Manager of the Youth Offending Team.

Councillor Pat Gulvin declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 (Annual scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership) as her brother-in-law is Manager of the Youth Offending Team.

127 Annual scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership

Discussion:

The Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership, Councillor O'Brien, gave a presentation to the Committee, which included the following highlights:

- Community Safety Partnerships became responsible for the establishment of multi-agency domestic homicide reviews following a domestic violence homicide. There had been five in Kent in the last year, two of which were in Medway.

Priority 1 – tackling substance and alcohol abuse

- Establishment of Medway Community Alcohol Partnership (MCAP) to reduce the impact of underage drinking and related crimes
- Work on the Chatham Town Centre plan with EU funding secured to help this process

Priority 2 – improving the local street scene

- Love Medway App has received almost 9,000 reports
- Improved perception of cleanliness of streets by residents
- Enforcement action against enviro-crimes with 30 successful prosecutions, including a successful joint operation with Kent Police targeting individuals carrying waste illegally
- Joint work with Kent Probation and the prison service with offenders due to leave prison working on unpaid community clear-up campaigns with most of the debris collected being recycled

Priority 3 - Reduce Youth Offending

- A significant and sustained reduction in those entering the youth justice system
- Three year 'Diversion from court' pilot scheme between the Youth Offending Team (YOT), Kent Police and Health services - with very low numbers going on to commit a further offence

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- The YOT Management Board had a target that less than 50% of young people within the system should continue to offend six months after their order was completed. This target has been exceeded

Priority 4 - Reduce night time economy related crime and disorder

- Joint operations continued throughout the year with officers from a variety of agencies visiting convenience stores, licensed premises and night clubs
- The Neighbourhood District Team continued to patrol the High Street on Friday and Saturday evenings
- Kent Police's dedicated officers link in with door supervisors, Street Pastors and CCTV and Rochester town centre had a dedicated PC working the night shift over the weekend period
- Criminal damage has reduced by 24.6% and violence by 5.7%
- Latest figures show overall satisfaction with Kent Police at 78%

Priority 5 - Working with vulnerable adults to reduce harm and repeat victimisation

- In Medway, more than 4,000 domestic abuse incidents were reported to Kent Police equating to an average 11 reports a day
- Domestic violence was being targeted by the Community Safety Partnership as a priority, together with the Medway Safeguarding Children's Board
- There are three independent domestic advice advocates, created to assist victims. The Partnership would be reaching out to other partners involved in tackling domestic abuse including schools and health services
- A sub-group of the Partnership had been established to lead on Medway's response

Priority 6 – reducing theft and shoplifting

- Joint scrutiny of metal theft reports between Kent Police and Medway Council which has helped to identify illegal waste carriers, resulting in twelve fixed penalty notices and three successful prosecutions
- Dedicated town centre policing teams have had a significant impact on the High Streets, CCTV had monitored persistent offenders and, in partnership with the Safer Community Partnership, have issued 29 Town Centre Banning Orders
- Overall there had been a reduction of 9.7% on the same period last year

Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in Road Traffic Collisions

- This was a new priority for 2011/2012 the three year rolling average target of 77 by 2010/2011 was met and exceeded both the last government target of 40% and the stretched second Local Transport Plan target of 45%
- A number of projects were successfully held including a joint initiative at Mid Kent College that focused on the danger of drink driving linked to alcohol awareness. Another multi-agency project offered training for those using motorbikes
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) had produced a detailed analysis of casualty data so the Partnership could address the issues raised

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- There had been a number of focused campaigns such as ‘Licence to Kill?’ held by KFRS. In 2011 this was attended by 1218 students and 2012 bookings exceed this number
- The Walk 2 Count Challenge and the Golden Boot Challenge were walking initiatives to encourage school pupils and staff to leave the car and walk to school
- KFRS also delivered a campaign called ‘Carmageddon’ which took place at Buckmore Park, aimed at the night time economy where partners could engage with young people by talking to them about risks and safety strategies
- KFRS would shortly be opening a Road Safety Centre in Rochester.

Members asked the following questions:

- That, in future, there is more information in the report in order that the Committee could effectively scrutinise the work of the Partnership, such as measurable targets within the Community Safety Plan

Officers undertook to provide more information in the future.

- The rehabilitation of offenders – what schemes took place within Medway, such as inclusion in football teams

Councillor O’Brien advised that he was aware of football teams for young offenders and the Youth Offending Team Manager advised of an arrangement with Charlton Athletic Football Club and a cricket scheme operated by the Police.

- Drug and alcohol issues – was there any data that could be made available to the Committee

Officers undertook to provide this information via a Briefing Note.

- Did the Police intend to employ more Special Officers to work alongside the Police Community Support Officers (PCSO’s) as they had more powers

Acting Superintendent Arnold advised that Special Officers were volunteers and not paid officers. However, it was planned to have more Special Officers in the future, as it was a route to becoming a full time Police Officer for people interested in this career. There would also be trials of a Police Cadet scheme for 14 – 17 year olds.

- The non-emergency 101 number – Members gave examples of problems that had been encountered with getting through to an operator, being cut off and the advice given when reporting a problem and asked if there were resource issues. The Committee was pleased to see that crime and anti-social behaviour had fallen but did not want this to be because people were not bothering to report it due to problems with using this number

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Acting Superintendent Arnold advised that the 101 number had been more successful than originally thought but that resources were now being put in place to meet the demand. This was the first time he had heard about people being cut off whilst waiting to speak to an operator and he would investigate this.

- Had officers seen any difference since the cessation of the service of the night time SoS bus used in Rochester High Street

Acting Superintendent Arnold advised that it had not made a difference operationally but it was missed as a visible presence in the High Street. He was unable to comment about the health aspects of the service previously provided on the bus. Councillor O'Brien also advised that the Street Pastors were still very effective in this area.

- The Committee advised it was pleased to see that domestic abuse was a priority area for the Partnership and asked how the message was being relayed to vulnerable families

Councillor O'Brien advised that there was a training programme for staff, doctors' surgeries, the hospital, etc to bring this to the attention of the appropriate agencies. Officers were also working on setting up a new website and phone number to provide information and advice. It was a significant challenge but the Partnership was aware of this and was working on this issue. However, there was still the option to phone the Council's Customer Contact Centre on 333333 or the Police non-emergency 101 numbers and the call would be put forward to the appropriate department. Partners and agencies should encourage people to come forward and report the crime.

- A Member asked whether the Alcohol Control Zone was effective

Acting Superintendent Arnold advised that data was not collected on the Alcohol Control Zone, other than arrests made and Section 27 notices issued.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to:

- (a) thank the Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership, Acting Superintendent Arnold, Assistant Director Bone-Knell and the Manager of the Youth Offending Team for attending the meeting and providing the detailed presentation and answers to Members' questions;
- (b) note the seven priorities for 2012/2013;
- (c) request that a more detailed report shall be submitted for consideration in future years.

128 Council Plan end of year performance 2011/2012

Discussion:

The Performance Manager advised that this report set out the progress of the Regeneration, Community and Culture Directorate performance for year end 2011/2012 in achieving the outcomes agreed in the Council Plan. The actions and performance measures that were shaded in grey were not relevant to this Committee but had been provided to give context and clarity of how the priorities as a whole had been performing.

The Committee was advised that the key highlights were:

- Love Medway App
- £370,000 EU funding to the Interreg programme
- residual waste to landfill sites had 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 Committee was also notified of the recent recommendations and referrals of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 June 2012. These were:

- a request that the performance indicator for satisfaction with the work of the Community Officers is re-instated into the monitoring reports for 2012/2013

The Performance Manager advised that they would re-instate the performance indicator for satisfaction with the work of Community Officers but that this would now be measured by asking service users, rather than as a question in a more generalised survey of residents.

- that officers investigate the charge to schools of an administration fee to set up a walking bus scheme

The Performance Manager advised that a Briefing Note would be sent to Members in response to this request.

- a request that the performance indicator for visitor numbers is re-instated into the monitoring reports for 2012/2013 and includes the results of tourism marketing promotions

The Performance Manager advised that officers would consider this as part of the Tourism Strategy.

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- that the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees are requested to investigate why some targets for 2012/2013 have been set below the current performance levels

The Assistant Director, Customer First, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance advised that when the targets for 2012/2013 had been set, consideration was given to the current year's performance but that this was alongside a number of other factors, including the issues for that service moving forward. The targets were therefore challenging but also had to be realistic.

The Committee advised that it was pleased to see that the indicator for satisfaction with the work of Community Officers was to be re-instated and asked that officers focus on ensuring that the role of the Community Officers was clear and easily understood by all Medway residents.

Members discussed performance indicator 'TRAV1b - non-principal classified roads where maintenance should be considered' (page 48 of the agenda) and advised that this was a big issue of public concern. Members acknowledged the current budget pressures but advised that if the roads had worsened because there were less resources, then the commentary in the report should reflect this.

The Committee agreed that it would welcome further information into the variable scenarios of road maintenance depending on future weather conditions and budget increase/decreases in order that Members could make 'smart' decisions on how best to spend the resources. Officers advised that this budget also included pathways, structures and signals and that the maintenance of these had to be considered alongside road maintenance.

Members raised the issue of utility companies not leaving the roads in an acceptable condition once they had completed their works. Some roads seemed to require maintenance work shortly after the utility works had been completed. The Committee was advised that there was a new measure in the Council Plan for 2012/2013, 'TMRS7 - Number of notices received to carry out works on the highway' and that the officer employed to inspect the re-instated roads following utility works would report where he had inspected and any areas of particular concern in each of the quarterly monitoring reports.

A Member advised that the public did not understand the current marketing campaign for the Love Medway App. Officers informed the Committee that this had been recognised and that there would be a re-launch of the promotion later in the year. A Briefing Note would be circulated to Members when the new campaign strategy had been finalised.

A Member asked about the information provided in Appendix 4 (page 67 of the agenda) with regard to the 392 jobs created and protected in 13 businesses and asked if there was any indication whether these were permanent or seasonal jobs. Officers advised that they did not have this data but would try to acquire it in the future from the companies concerned.

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The Committee discussed the performance indicator W8 – satisfaction with street cleaning (on page 43 of the agenda) advising that satisfaction may have reduced because there were no teams following the refuse collection service to remove any remaining detritus once the main rubbish collection had been taken. Members also believed that the condition of pathways could influence people's views on cleanliness of the street scene. Officers advised that the main areas within Medway were targeted but that there were other areas that required further work. There was particular difficulty with the cleanliness of privately owned land and 'no man's land' but officers were confident that there would be a visible improvement by the same time next year.

A Member asked for information concerning indicator IT1 'Satisfaction with buses', querying the passenger numbers and whether they had increased from the previous year. Also, whether the number of bus routes had increased.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to:

- (a) note the outcomes achieved against the priorities in the Council Plan and the revised targets for the forthcoming year;
- (b) add a report to the work programme on detailed information on road maintenance funding and to include details of the integrity of the utility companies re-installment works;
- (c) request a Briefing Note on bus usage and the number of routes in Medway.

129 DCLG weekly collection support fund

Discussion:

The Head of Waste Services introduced the report advising of Medway's bid to the Challenge Fund to seek 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 welcomed the chance to submit a bid to this fund and discussed the benefits of collecting brown bin organic waste, including food waste, on a weekly basis, particularly as the more successful the Council is in persuading residents to recycle this waste, it removed it from the weekly black sack collection.

Members asked what would happen if the Council was unsuccessful in obtaining this funding. Officers advised that there were other EU funding schemes available but these were aimed at education and promotion projects. However, although Medway's bid to the Challenge Fund was one of the largest, it met all the requirements set out by the Secretary of State and exceeded the aim of funding schemes for five years, as Medway's bid was for seven and a

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half years. Beyond the outcome of this bid, officers would need to look at the waste contract beyond 2019 and review the current strategy, including recycling, and Members would be involved in that process.

Following information of waste in black sacks being ripped open by foxes and cats, Members were asked to help spread the message to their constituents that food waste could be put in with garden waste kept in a wheelie bin to help prevent these attacks.

A Member asked how the cumulative effect of the cost per ton for Landfill Tax affected the Council. Officers advised that most of Medway's waste was diverted from landfill and so the costs paid for Landfill Tax was reducing on an annual basis.

Decision:

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

130 Using the river Medway to its full potential

Discussion:

The Assistant Director Organisational Services introduced the report advising that the work on this project was at an early stage and the purpose of this report to the Committee was to set out the approach to be taken whilst carrying out the project work.

The Committee was advised that the river was the one unifying factor through Medway with a very long history. It was still used commercially but also had the capacity for tourist and leisure use. The proposed strategy would look to tie in with re-development projects along the shore side, together with moorings and leisure purposes. Officers have initially divided the section of the river between St Mary's Island and the M2 bridge into 19 sections and would focus on each section individually. There had been an audit of access points within this stretch of the river, of which there were many, but only two were in use for the public.

Officers advised that they had already been able to implement the re-location of the Sea Scouts to a slipway beyond the Dockyard, as their previous location had made access on to the river difficult for them. The first River Festival had been held, and despite being held on the same weekend as the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in London, it had been very well attended and had been extremely successful. The Council had also approached Barclay Homes about repairing the Gillingham Steps, which they had agreed to do. Members were informed that the list of priority projects outlined in the report were the aspirations that the Council wished to take forward.

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The Committee discussed the lack of local knowledge about leisure facilities that already existed along the river, such as the footpaths and various walks available. Members commented 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.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to note the strategy and recommend 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) bring back into use various piers and access points as necessary;
- (f) that Rats Bay retains its historic name.

131 Petitions

Discussion:

The Committee was advised that the report set out the petitions and e-petitions that had recently been received by the Council within the remit of this Committee. There had been no petition referrals from the lead petitioners following receipt of a response from the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture.

Decision:

The Committee noted the petition responses and appropriate officer action.

132 Work Programme

Discussion:

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report highlighting the receipt of a Member's Item, which would be submitted to the next meeting of the committee. The report also provided an update on the work of the Fair Access to Credit Task Group and requested the Committee to agree the formation of a five Member task group in preparation for a forthcoming review on Supported Accommodation, which would feed its evidence and findings into a special themed meeting of the Committee.

A Member requested that when the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services was held to account at the next meeting in August he provided information on the CCTV enforcement car, following an article in the Kent Messenger newspaper on 22 June 2012.

Following a question by a Member, the Assistant Director Customer First, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance updated the Committee with information about the Year of Celebration Olympic provision:

- the Olympic torch would be travelling through Medway on 20 July 2012
- the Medway Mile would take place on 27 July (the day the Olympics officially begin) with over 3,000 participants expected at this event
- there would be a big screen in Rochester Castle Gardens showing the opening ceremony for the Olympic Games with fireworks afterwards
- a Civic reception would be held for the teams training in Medway.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to:

- (a) note the current work programme, including the amendments and additions detailed in the report;
- (b) add a report to the work programme on detailed information on road maintenance funding and to include details of the integrity of the utility companies re-instatement works (as set out in minute 128);
- (c) agree the formation of a five Member short-life task group on the basis of 3:1:1 to report to a special themed meeting of this Committee, to meet the timescales for influencing the priorities for the future commissioning of housing related support.

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Chairman:

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