

## **COUNCIL**

**18 OCTOBER 2012**

### **REPORT ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTIVITY**

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

Author: Julie Keith, Head of Democratic Services

#### **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 July 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 8 August 2012**

##### **2.1.1. Attendance of Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services**

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services addressed the Committee, and responded to questions, on the following topics:

- Work with Job Centre and Employ Medway Programme
- Adult learning
- Language course
- Sponsorship from the private and public sector
- Numbers of people attending courses

##### **2.1.2. Attendance of Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services**

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services addressed the Committee, and responded to questions, on the following topics:

- Bereavement and registration services
- Human Resources
- Local Strategic Partnership
- Sustainable Community Strategy
- Big Society

- ICT
- Ease of access to the Council's website
- Back-up plans/improvements/communication/timescales related to the crematorium closure for mercury abatement works
- Learning and Development opportunities within the Council not related to Better for Less
- Triangle Youth awards

#### 2.1.3. Report from Task Group on 'Fair Access to Credit'

The Chairman of the Task Group on Fair Access to Credit introduced the review and the 29 recommendations. The main finding related to:

- The role of the Council in supporting Medway residents affected by unaffordable credit – work to enable credit unions, promote financial literacy and support the establishment of a Social Impact Board
- Strengthening of the rules governing the issue of lending licences and recognising that an effective strategy in combating illegal lending was an alternative supply, addressing the lack of affordable credit – included focus on giving local authorities greater control over the planning process and enabling affordable alternatives such as credit unions
- How the Council could promote financial literacy and affordable lending and debt counselling – recommendations to promote the integration of financial education into the curriculum, financial literacy for all and promote the timely access to appropriate and quality advice

The review was referred to Cabinet on 4 September 2012 for consideration, along with comments from Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcoming the appointment of Bristol University's Personal Finance Research Centre to carry out research into the impact on consumers and business of a variable cap on the total cost of credit that can be charged in the short to medium term high cost credit market. The Cabinet agreed all the recommendations put forward by the Task Group.

#### 2.1.4. Council Plan monitoring 2012/2013 – Quarter 1

The Committee noted the first quarter performance against the Key Measures of Success used to monitor progress against the Council Plan 2012/2013. Issues with regard to the increase of the number of households living in temporary accommodation and the FUSE Festival were referred to Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further consideration. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact was asked to look into issues raised over lack of police engagement with Police and Communities Together (PACT) and Schools and Communities Together (SACT).

#### 2.1.5. Revenue budget monitoring 2012-2013 – Quarter 1

Further information was requested on the following:

- Details of the anticipated reduction of £350,000 within the Children's Care division
- The funding transition arrangements connected with the transfer of public health back to the local authority
- Confirmation that the £143,000 funded from the DSG/Standards Reserve Fund is to be used solely for Key Stage 2 one to one training and not to be used for governor training

#### 2.1.6. Capital budget monitoring 2012-2013 – Quarter 1

Officers noted the spending forecasts and budget virements set out in the report and requested a briefing note detailing why the Pentagon staff car park was not being used and further information on the reduction of £221,000 from the section 106 scheme to part fund the Four Elms to Tunnel scheme.

#### 2.1.7. Work programme

It was agreed that a combined report on a review of the Overview and Scrutiny function and e-petitions should be submitted for consideration as soon as practicable. It was noted that a report on Localising Support for Council tax would be considered at the next meeting. The Committee referred to Employment Matters Committee the issue of 'The Use of People Resources' in relation to the employment of consultants.

### 2.2. **25 September 2012**

#### 2.2.1. Annual review of Risk Management Strategy and six monthly review of the Council's Corporate Business Risk Register

The Quality Assurance and Client Manager introduced a report on the Risk Management Strategy, the Corporate Risk Register and Risk Management Audit 2010/2011 and responded to Members' questions. The Committee agreed the Strategy and Management Team's recommendations on amendments to the Council's Risk Register, with the exception of reducing the risk rating for procurement, which it recommended, should be deferred for six months.

#### 2.2.2. Localising support for Council Tax

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report outlining the proposed options for the delivery of a local Council Tax Support Scheme with effect from 1 April 2013. The scheme would be administered by the Council and replaced current Council Tax benefit by giving a discount on Council Tax instead.

Following debate the Committee noted the report and the consultation undertaken on the preferred scheme, as set out in the report and agreed to send a letter from the Chairman and Spokespersons to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury with regard to including the single person discount in the flexibility available to local councils when setting their local Council Tax Support Scheme.

### 2.2.3. Medium Term Financial Plan 2013-2016

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2013-2016 and reviewed the outlook for the major financial issues facing the Council over the next three years. Members were informed that the Council no longer had available the offer of the Council Tax Freeze Grant of £2.5 million from 2012/3013 that supported a nil increase in council tax for this year. Cabinet was recommended:

- To endorse the underlying aims of the Plan and the forecast level of overall funding outlined in the report
- To instruct Portfolio Holders and Directors to identify savings and efficiencies to achieve a balanced budget for 2013/2014
- To consider using provision for the on-going 'Stop the Estuary Airport' campaign into the Medium Term Financial Plan 2013-2016

### 2.2.4. Work programme

The following reports were added to the work programme: six month review of the Fair Access to Credit Task Group report, the outcome of consultation on updated Gambling Statement of Policy, the outcome of consultation on the updated Licensing Statement of Policy and the Council's pay review for staff. The Committee noted the change of meeting date from 20 March 2013 to 3 April 2013 and the work undertaken by all Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

## **3. Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **3.1 17 July 2012**

#### **3.1.1 Draft Special Educational Needs Educational Transport Policy**

The Assistant Director – Inclusion and School Improvement presented a report on the draft Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport Policy.

The draft policy which set out how Medway fulfils its statutory duties in supporting transport arrangements for children and young people with special educational needs was currently out for consultation with parents and carers and the consultation period was due to end on 27 July 2012.

The report set out a summary of responses received to date and included views of both professionals and parents. It was intended that an implementation plan would now be drawn up to enable Medway to manage the transition from one policy and practice to another and to ensure ongoing communication with stakeholders.

The draft policy aimed to support independence for young people at an early stage and therefore aimed to maximise ways of developing independence where possible.

It was recognised that many of the concerns expressed demonstrated a misunderstanding of the wording and the legal framework outlined within

the proposed policy and therefore work had been undertaken to make the policy more user friendly. In addition, a set of 'Frequently Asked Questions' with easy to understand answers was in the process of being drawn up and this would be available on line as soon as possible. This would be updated over time as new issues were raised. It was also stressed that where a decision was made that a child would not be eligible for travel assistance, where a change in transport arrangements was made or where transport had not been agreed on exceptional grounds, parents/carers would have a right of appeal and full details of the proposed appeal process was set out within the report.

The Committee made a number of comments on the draft policy prior to final consideration and approval at Cabinet on 4 September 2012.

### 3.1.2 Medway Safeguarding Children Board

The Committee received a report and presentation from the Independent Chairman of the Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) on the work of the Board and identifying priorities for 2012/13.

The Committee was advised of the background to the role of Local Safeguarding Children Boards and advised that the 3 key aims of the Board in 2011/12 were:

- To ensure the effectiveness of the work of local partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- To ensure the effective co-ordination of local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people;
- Promote the wellbeing of vulnerable groups of children.

The Committee was informed that for 2012/13, the Board's objectives remained the same but that there would also be an emphasis on the following:

- Increased piloting of the quality assurance framework
- A focus on the implications for the system of the recent end to end review of Looked After Children.
- A review of the distance travelled impact of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).
- A focus on understanding and communicating how the Board adds value and increasing the knowledge of the MSCB.
- Ensuring that children who are subjected to domestic abuse are identified, protected and supported.
- Reducing the incidence of children who are trafficked or sexually exploited.

Details were also reported as to how the Board and its partners aimed to co-ordinate responses to national policy changes resulting from the Munro Review of Child Protection published in May 2011.

In response to questions from Members, the Chairman of the MSCB also reported on the following:

- The MSCB would work closely with the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Voluntary Organisations are represented on the MSCB and the Medway Council for Voluntary Service regularly attends.
- In respect of Housing providers, it was a recommendation that all Housing providers consider health and safety issues when re-housing families or when re-housing particular individuals near to families.
- Lessons to be learnt from the case review of a death in custody which will be reported back at a future meeting of this Committee.

The committee thanked the Independent Chairman of the Medway Safeguarding Children Board for the report and presentation and requested that if any significant changes are made to the annual report by the Board when finalised, such changes be reported back to a future meeting of this Committee.

### 3.1.3 Common Assessment Framework

The Committee received a detailed report providing an overview of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process.

The Children and Adults Systems and Support Manager reported upon the use of the CAF process across Medway to support vulnerable children and families in particular referring to:-

- CAF forms
- CAF Quality Assurance Framework
- Police Pilot
- Health Pilot
- Connexions
- Step up/step down
- Training
- Support

Members of the Committee sought further information on the following:

- Whether the CAF forms could be available for completion online
- Whether there was any feedback from CAF training
- Whether School Governors could receive training on the CAF process.
- The effectiveness of CAFs and whether they are monitored.
- On-going training for smaller providers

In response, the Children and Adults Systems and Support Manager advised the following:

- Some CAF forms were completed on-line but there is not yet an on-line CAF system
- A CAF Champions Group meets quarterly and reviews any feedback on the CAF process including responses to training.
- Training for School Governors on the CAF process would be welcomed.

- OFSTED recognised that the CAF process is actively used within Medway and monitoring of CAFs does take place and will be increased if considered necessary.
- Training sessions are very flexible and are also run at weekends and during the evening to ensure maximum attendance. Those attending CAF training are reviewed quarterly and contacted if no CAFs are initiated so as to ensure that there are no problems.

The Committee thanked the Children and Adults Systems and Support Manager for the comprehensive report on the CAF process. The Committee recommended that Officers provide:

- Training on the CAF process be arranged for all School Governors.
- A briefing session on the CAF process for this Committee immediately prior to a future meeting.

#### 3.1.4 Children's Social Care Complaints and Compliments Annual Report (April 2011 – March 2012)

The Committee received its annual report setting out information on the number and type of social care complaints, comments and compliments Medway Council received during the period April 2011 to March 2012.

Referring to the Annual Report appended to the committee report, Members requested that in the explanation of terminology, reference also be included as to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was also noted that this annual report would be produced in an easy to read version with pictures where appropriate. The Committee noted the report.

#### 3.1.5 2011/2012 Year End Performance Report

The Director of Children and Adults introduced the report to the committee, highlighting areas where performance was on target and areas where further work and progress was needed.

The committee asked various questions, which included:

- Whether the statements of those children with existing statements moving into Medway were reviewed.
- Whether it was possible to identify any particular areas from which children with existing statements were moving from into Medway.

In response the Director for Children and Adults advised the following:

- Every statemented child has an annual review but at the point that the child moves into Medway, no review of the statement is undertaken with the placing authority, however, this was something that could be investigated. It was also stressed that it was possible for Medway to challenge a particular placement if Medway considered that it had the appropriate type of provision to meet the child's need detailed on the individual statement.

- Children with existing statements moved into Medway from a wide range of places but there was a high level of movement to Medway from London and this could possibly be a reflection of the availability of affordable housing within Medway.

It was also noted that during the next quarter, the Government would be issuing revised indicators to reflect the Munro review into Children's Social Care.

The Committee noted the report and asked that the Director of Public Health to co-ordinate a briefing note on the extent and range of voluntary and community sector liaison work to help reduce teenage conception and asked that a further report be submitted on the new Government indicators into Children's Social Care as and when these are received.

### 3.1.6 Changes to Inspection Regimes

The Director of Children and Adults provided a presentation to the Committee on the new OfSTED arrangements and the impact that this will have upon Medway.

In summary, the revisions included changes to inspections of early years providers in September 2012, Social Care Inspections which would now focus on the effectiveness of the local authority's child protection services and leadership of strategic partners and Schools and Learning Skills Providers aimed at supporting Headteachers and Principals in their work to provide the best possible education for pupils and learners.

Further changes were also planned for the inspection frameworks of Children's Services from June 2013 including:

- A joint inspection of multi-agency arrangements for the protection of children which is likely to focus on the journeys of children and young people through existing data, case tracking, practice observations and discussions about casework.
- Taking account of the views and experiences of children, young people and their families to be a central feature of the new frameworks.
- There will also be new inspection arrangements of children in care and care leavers, again with an important focus on their journey.
- The role of the Children in Care Council will be an essential aspect of the arrangements as will direct observation of practice as well as the impact of commissioning activity on improved outcomes for children.

### 3.1.7 Work Programme

The Work Programme was agreed as set out in section 5 and Appendix 1 of the report with the addition of a report of the Performance Management of Teachers for the end of 2013. The Committee agreed that the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Opposition Spokespersons meet once more to agree how best the Committee can hold the Council,



schools and agencies to account in relation to inspections, including Ofsteds.

## **3.2 27 September 2012**

### **3.2.1 Update on Child Development Centre move to Temple site**

The Assistant Director, Commissioning and Strategy, provided Members with a brief explanation of the background to the Child Development Centre and stated that after lengthy consultation it had been agreed that the service would be placed within part of the old Temple School site. She responded to Members' questions in relation to the transport infrastructure, other uses of the Temple site and consideration of other accommodation.

### **3.2.2 Provisional Test and Examination Results for 2012**

The Committee questioned the Assistant Director, Inclusion and Improvement and the Director of Children and Adult Services extensively on the report on provisional test and examination results for 2012. The Committee received an assurance from the Director of Children and Adult Services that performance, particularly at Key Stage 2 was one of her priorities. She stated that good progress had been made this year but built on small performance in previous years which had caused Medway to be positioned so low compared to nationally. A further report was requested providing an analysis of the performance relating to phonics and interventions needed. The Committee also recommended that options be considered to enhance the School Improvement Team in order to support more schools in Medway to achieve further progress.

### **3.2.3 Improving performance at Key Stage 2 update on the review by the Effective Challenge of Underperformance Task Group**

The Assistant Director, Inclusion and Improvement introduced the report and answered Members' questions. The Committee noted progress against the recommendations of the Task Group.

### **3.2.4 Council Plan performance monitoring 2012/2013 – Quarter 1**

The Director of Children and Adults introduced the Council Plan performance monitoring report and highlighted the key issues to the Committee.

### **3.2.5 Work programme**

The Committee recommended the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee to add to its work programme an item on transport accessibility for children and young people. A tentative arrangement was made for a special meeting of the Committee for late February 2013 to consider the outcome of the consultation and proposed action regarding the review of overnight short breaks/closure of Preston Skreens.

## **4. Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **4.1. 21 August 2012**

#### **4.1.1. Blue Badge Charging – Medway Maritime Hospital**

The topic of charging for blue badges at Medway Maritime Hospital was considered at a meeting of Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 August 2012 and the Chief Executive of Medway NHS Foundation Trust was questioned about the policy. The Committee agreed to ask the Cabinet to make representations to the hospital. On 4 September 2012 the Cabinet considered the matter and decided to instruct officers to write to the Chief Executive of the Trust asking the hospital trustees to reconsider the management decision and continue to provide free parking for blue badge holders.

#### **4.1.2. Vascular Review**

The Associate Director, South of England Specialised Commissioning Group introduced the review of vascular services (diagnosis, treatment and management of conditions affecting the health of the body's circulation). The review proposed a change of model of care for vascular surgery across Kent and Medway with a potential centralisation of specialised vascular surgical procedures at Canterbury, retaining Medway Maritime Hospital as a 'spoke' site where the majority of care for Medway and Swale residents will take place.

As the changes affect service users across Kent and Medway should both council's Health Scrutiny Committees decide the changes constitute a substantial variation and development then a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee would need to be held. Kent's Health Scrutiny Committee has since decided that it does consider the change to be substantial. Medway's Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the matter on 9 October.

#### **4.1.3. Annual report of adult social care complaints and compliments 2011-2012**

Members noted the annual report of adult social care complaints and compliments introduced by the Assistant Director, Adult Social Care following a number of questions put forward which included how the Council learned from complaints and whether there were any themes of complaints emerging. Assurances were given that a number of measures were in place to feed back via team meetings, one to ones etc before a complaint could be closed. There were no specific themes of complaints emerging.

#### **4.1.4. Quarter 1 Council Plan monitoring**

The Assistant Director, Adult Social Care responded to Members' queries in relation to the Council Plan monitoring. Further information was requested on PB7 (Number of Medway Businesses taking part in the healthy workplace initiatives) to explain why the target had been set at 36 businesses and whether or not people accessing Surestart and

similar initiatives at Medway were given advice on healthy weight and healthy lifestyles.

#### 4.1.5. Department of Health proposals for health scrutiny

The Head of Democratic Services introduced a report on a consultation paper issued by the Department of Health setting out proposals for local authority health scrutiny and responded to Members' questions.

The suggested responses, as set out in the report, were agreed for submission with an amendment saying that it was considered essential that further direction was given on the circumstances in which Foundation Trusts have to consult on service reconfigurations as current legislation appears to be drawn very widely and is open to interpretation.

#### 4.1.6. Work programme

The Committee agreed a number of amendments to the work programme as follows:

- A report on podiatry would be brought to the October meeting
- Dementia services update to be delayed (no date agreed)
- Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care delayed to 19 December 2012
- The report on Quality Assurance to be moved to 19 December 2012 meeting
- The item on the application for foundation trust status for Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust to be the subject of a special meeting
- Further discussion on the relationship between the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Committee would be picked up in the meeting underway to review protocols between the Council and NHS

The Assistant Chief Executive of NHS Kent and Medway agreed to work with the Democratic Services Officer to determine what documentation could be shared with Members in relation to the PFI in Dartford. An all Member briefing was to be arranged to update Members on the implementation of the adult social care changes relating to Linked Service Centres.

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

### **5.1. 16 August 2012**

#### 5.1.1. Attendance of Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services

The Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services addressed the Committee and responded to questions on the following topics:

- Safe roads in Medway
- Highways

- Medway tunnel
- Parking services
- Integrated transport
- Concessionary bus travel
- Waste
- Blue bags & clear sacks
- Recycling
- Re-instatement materials used by utility companies
- Traffic Management Centre – Member visit
- Road safety team monitoring of traffic lights
- Increase in train fares - concerns of residents
- Car parking charges
- Gulley cleaning programme
- Pavement weed killing
- Legality of the CCTV enforcement car
- Software for vehicle licence plate recognition for use on CCTV
- Special parking permits for health visitors and carers
- On-line parking permit renewals
- Signage at Chatham waterfront bus station
- Love Medway app
- Smartphone or text use for payment of car park charges
- Oyster card
- Statutory powers regarding completion of road works on time

#### 5.1.2. Member's item: extension to the Chatham Alcohol Control Zone

Councillor Osborne introduced the item with a presentation. He highlighted the main reasons for the proposal based mainly on anti-social behaviour problems being experienced in Luton. The Committee requested officers to organise a meeting with Kent Police, Councillor Osborne and other Ward Members with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact to discuss a possible extension and report back in due course.

#### 5.1.3. Water supply in Medway

The Planning Policy and Design Manager introduced the report, which responded to a request made by the Committee in April 2012 for an update since the review by the Task Group in 2007.

It was agreed to note the report and request officers to continue to engage with Southern Water over the company's next Water Resource Management Plan, including water poverty for larger families. It was also agreed that OFWAT should be informed of this review and the importance of ensuring that company resource plans having adequate headroom, reflecting local climatic conditions.

#### 5.1.4. Report from in-depth Task Group on 'Fair Access to Credit'

The Chairman of the Task Group gave a presentation setting out the context of the review (see paragraph 2.1.3. above for details of the main findings of the review).

The review was referred to Cabinet on 4 September 2012 for consideration, along with comments from this Committee welcoming the appointment of Bristol University's Personal Finance Research Centre to carry out research into the impact on consumers and business of a variable cap on the total cost of credit that can be charged in the short to medium term high cost credit market. The Cabinet subsequently agreed all the recommendations put forward by the Task Group.

#### 5.1.5. Council Plan performance monitoring 2012-2013 – Quarter 1

The Performance Manager introduced the report advising of the new basket of measures for 2012/2013 and stated that the report allowed Members to monitor progress in achieving the outcomes set out in the Council Plan.

The Committee noted the first quarter performance against the Key Measures of Success used to monitor progress against the Council Plan 2012/2013. The following requests were also made:

- That officers provide further information on performance indicator H14 (the average length of stay in B&B for households with dependent children and pregnant women) via a briefing note;
- That officers review how key performance criteria is reported in the future, providing quantifiable information
- That officers reconsider the routes used to report on NI 167 (average journey time along 6 primary corridors into Chatham) and that Members are involved in the decision-making process for the six routes chosen.

#### 5.1.6. Work programme

The following amendments were made to the work programme:

- Housing Capital programme – deferred for consideration until 13 December 2012 (to include request for breakdown of planned maintenance programme for housing services)
- Update on South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership – deferred for consideration until 13 December 2012
- Annual review of waste contracts: Year 2 – deferred until 31 January 2013
- A report to be brought forward on the Council's cultural activities programme including information on the marketing and promotion of events
- Previous report on review of housing asset management strategy to now be included in the HRA Business Plan report
- A report on road and pavement maintenance funding to be added to 4 October work programme
- The annual refresh of the Community Safety Plan would be added for consideration on 11 April 2013

## **5.2. 4 October 2012**

### **5.2.1. Petitions**

Ms Westwood, a petitioner, introduced her petition, which related to anti social behaviour in the alleyway leading up to the park on Hartington Street in Chatham and which called on the Council to introduce a surveillance camera to the alleyway.

The view of the Police was that they do not believe CCTV to be an appropriate mechanism at present and believe a dispersal zone should be considered first. Officers do not consider CCTV to be an appropriate or proportionate mechanism for the area.

The ward councillor spoke in support of the petition but noted that a community meeting would be held in a week's time with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer First and suggested that the matter be deferred till after then.

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the petition referral requesting a CCTV camera in Hartington Street, Chatham and asked that a report is submitted to the next meeting of the committee setting out the outcome of the public meeting to be held in All Saints on 9 October 2012

### **5.2.2. Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth**

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth addressed the Committee and responded to questions in particular in relation to:

- Chatham Waters
- Building works at Victory Pier
- Development management team
- Planning applications/developer contributions
- South Thames Gateway
- Economic development and social regeneration
- Job creation & employment
- EU external funding
- Core strategy
- Lodge Hill
- Housing Design Standards
- High Street forums
- Rochester Riverside
- Chatham Waterfront
- Apprentice scheme
- STG Building Control Partnership

### **5.2.3. Road maintenance funding**

The Assistant Director, Front Line Services introduced the report setting out the highway maintenance accumulated backlog and the state of

decline with the existing funding levels. He stated that a study reported a funding shortfall of £13.95 million. A recent investment of £4 million had been spent on resurfacing which had helped slow the decline by dealing with around 10% of the backlog, which continued to grow year on year. He stressed that this was not just a Medway issue. Discussion took place about the impact of repairs following work undertaken by utility companies. Members noted that the council's roads were likely to get worse by 1% per annum with current levels of investment. To halt the decline would cost an additional £1 million a year. To inspect every road opening reinstatement would require 8.5 additional members of staff though it accepted inspecting every opening would not be a good use of staff resources.

The Committee referred the matter to Cabinet requesting that Members take the above into account in the budget setting process.

#### 5.2.4. Update on the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership

The Director, South Thames Gateway Building Control introduced a report updating the Committee on the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership in its first term and its plans for the future. He stated that the draft Business Plan for the next five years was out for consultation in the three authorities. He stated that the new arrangements providing building control services across Gravesham, Medway and Swale Councils were more cost effective than the previous ones and delivered value for money.

One of the objectives was to improve mobile working facilities to allow for real time information on site.

He undertook to provide a briefing note on the number of emergencies experienced to date.

#### 5.2.5. Review of the guide to developer contributions

The Assistant Director, Housing, Development and Transport introduced a report reviewing the guide to developer contributions, a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) adopted in April 2008. Members made a number of comments on the guide, then endorsed it for forward referral to Cabinet for adoption.

#### 5.2.6. Work programme

During a discussion on planning policy concern was expressed about the cumulative effect of dense development in urban areas and the detriment to the quality of life of residents in those areas. A report was requested on this matter.

## **Background papers**

None

## **Contacts for further details:**

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