

COUNCIL

24 JANUARY 2013

REPORT ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTIVITY

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

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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 18 October 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 6 December 2012

2.1.1. Attendance of Portfolio Holder for Customer First and Community Safety

The Portfolio Holder for Customer First and Community Safety addressed the Committee and responded to Members' questions on the following topics:

- Customer First
- Customer Contact
- Blue badges
- Legal

The Committee sent thanks to the Head of Legal Services and wished her well for the future in her new job. Thanks were also sent to officers in the Customer First, Customer Contact and legal teams.

2.1.2. Gambling Act 2005 – review of Council Statement of Gambling Policy

The report was referred, with amendments, to Cabinet and then Council in accordance with the policy framework rules.

Members asked for further information on the policy and suggested a meeting between the Chairman and spokespersons of the Committee and the Gambling Commission to discuss the social impact of the increase in the number of gambling establishments, especially the proliferation of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals.

The Assistant Director, Legal and Corporate Services was asked to investigate if there was scope to restrict the number of premises licensed for gambling in Medway on the basis of cumulative impact or saturation in particular areas.

2.1.3. Review of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function and e-petitions

Members considered a report on the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function and e-petitions and agreed the following areas for further development in Medway:

- Further Member development in performance monitoring, scrutiny of partners and taking evidence
- A review of the current protocol regulating the relationship between the NHS and O&S and taking on board the scope to scrutinise the Health and Wellbeing Board
- A review of public engagement
- Survey of all Councillors, Directors and organisations represented by co-optees on O&S to test local opinion on the effectiveness of scrutiny in Medway
- Review of project management methodology for managing in-depth reviews
- Regular review by Business Support O&S and other Committees on the balance of activity and impact/outcomes to ensure best use of Member and officer time
- Review of the number and frequency of O&S meeting to evaluate whether there is scope to re-programme the timetable to create scope for more meetings of the 'busiest' Committees and/or additional capacity for in-depth review work
- Consider scope to engage with Universities in Medway with a view to adding capacity for scrutiny research
- Introduction of a systematic review of what went well and learning points after each task group or themed meeting
- Consideration to likely service improvements at the point of selecting in-depth review topics

The action taken to test the Council's e-petition facility and improve access for the public from the home page of the Council's website was welcomed.

The Head of Democratic Services was also requested to circulate a Briefing Note on the legal obligations on partner organisations to provide information and attend O&S committees, including academies.

2.1.4. Treasury Management Strategy – mid year review report 2012/2013

The Committee noted the Treasury Management Strategy mid year review report 2012/2013 following questioning around the council's contract with Nat West to act as its main bank where it was stated that invitations to tender for this business would be issued shortly.

Members recommended to Council the adoption of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2011.

2.1.5. Council Plan performance monitoring 2012/2013 – quarter 2

As part of the discussion on this report Members asked for further information in relation to the following indicators:

- Youth unemployment and NEETs (16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training)
- NI 4 The percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
- Street cleaning
- The number of households living in temporary accommodation
- Fostering
- Everybody travelling easily around Medway
- Traffic flow
- Jobseekers allowance
- Fines for littering
- Targets achieved with ease each quarter
- Other statistics the council collected, not detailed in the report.

Officers were requested to report to the Committee with a business case for Members to use electronic means for committee agendas in future. Further information on jobseekers allowance by ward was requested in a briefing note. Officers were thanked for their work to ensure that indicator LRCC1 relating to the number of visitors to tourist attractions in Medway was the highest ever recorded.

Information was requested for the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13 December 2012 on the number of driving offence tickets issued to residents living outside Medway and repeat offenders driving through Chatham bus station, or if not available for that meeting it should be part of the next performance report.

Further information was requested in a briefing note on the following topics:

- How the “Keep Britain Tidy” standard for littering is used by officers to judge the cleanliness of streets
- Explanation of the definitions used in paragraph 3.6 of the report with regard to the number of households in temporary accommodation
- How long the process took from when a member of the public expressed an interest in being a foster carer to being accepted as one

- Information on the validity of the survey used to report on the Everybody travelling easily around Medway indicators.

A request was made that Community Officers were more pro-active with issuing notices for littering, especially in town centres. A suggestion was made that Corporate Management Team should be advised that no targets should be set lower than the previous year when the target had been easily achieved during each quarter of the previous year. A request was made that the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny adds traffic flow in Chatham town centre to the task group review about to be undertaken on street clutter.

2.1.6. Revenue budget monitoring 2012/2013 – quarter 2

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report on the revenue budget monitoring report 2012/2013 quarter 2 and responded to Members' questions.

Members noted the forecast outturn position for 2012/2013 and any proposed management action to reduce the potential deficit.

2.1.7. Capital budget monitoring 2012/2013 – quarter 2

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report on the capital budget monitoring 2012/2013 and stated that all the projects were making satisfactory progress. He responded to Members questions following which the report was noted. The Head of Category Management, Places and Projects, was thanked for her work on the Academies programme.

2.1.8. Draft capital and revenue budgets 2013/2014

The draft capital and revenue budget for 2013/2014 and forwarded the programme to individual Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

2.1.9. Work programme

The proposed timetable and process for determining the next round of in-depth reviews was noted. A report was requested setting out responses to issues raised at a Member training course on Health and Safety held on 28 November 2012. A briefing note was requested on progress of works at Medway Crematorium.

3. Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3.1 11 December 2012

3.1.1 Sherwin Knight Infant and Junior Schools – Outcome of consultation on proposed amalgamation

The Committee, having been updated about the public consultation exercise, recommended the amalgamation of Sherwin Knight Infant and Junior Schools to Cabinet.

3.1.2. Swingate Infant and Spinnens Acre Junior Schools – Outcome of consultation on proposed amalgamation

The Committee, having been updated about the public consultation exercise, recommended the amalgamation of Swingate Infant School and Spinnens Acre Junior School to Cabinet.

3.1.3. Youth Justice Plan

The Young Offenders Team were congratulated for their excellent results and the report was recommended to the Cabinet and Council.

Officers were asked to report back on a number of queries by means of a briefing note.

3.1.4. Capital and Revenue Budgets 2013/2014

The report on the capital and revenue budgets for 2013/2014 was noted.

3.1.5. 2012/2013 Council Plan Monitoring – Quarter 2

Questions were asked in relation to the following topics:

- C1 – children's participation in child protection conferences
- NI 117 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training
- NI 148 care leavers in education, employment or training
- Circulation of papers for the performance report/e-access to agenda papers
- LX5 working days lost due to sickness absence
- NI 60 percentage of core assessments for children's social care

A briefing note on the domestic abuse pilot was requested in the New Year.

3.1.6. Ofsted Inspection of Medway's fostering service

The Interim Service Manager responded to Members' questions in relation to the Ofsted inspection of Medway's fostering service. It was agreed that the action plan referred to during the meeting would be circulated to the Committee along with a briefing note on details of foster children placed outside of Medway, including in Margate.

3.1.7. Work programme

A number of briefing notes were agreed – an update on the development of the health visiting service and outcomes of Ofsted inspections and academy conversions. Members were invited to notify the Chairman and spokespersons of any potential topics for an in-depth scrutiny review by no later than 28 February. Following concerns expressed at the meeting it was agreed that a report on the full implications of transferring children's health from this Committee to Health and Adult Social Care OSC should be further considered.

4. Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4.1. 9 October 2012

4.1.1. Integration between Medway NHS Foundation Trust and Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust

The Chief Executive of Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust provided the Committee with an update on the integration of that Trust with Medway NHS Foundation Trust. Members questioned her on a number of concerns. A further update was requested either for the December 2012 meeting or January 2013 meeting.

4.1.2. Podiatry

The Operations Director from Medway Community Healthcare (MCH) introduced a report on podiatry and answered Members' questions. An update on progress following MCH's formal evaluation in December was requested.

4.1.3. Vascular review

The Associate Director, South of England Specialised Commissioning Group provided an update to Members on the vascular review. At the conclusion of the discussion Members agreed that the review was a substantial variation requiring further consultation with the overview and scrutiny committee.

4.1.4. Proposed relocation of the GP practice and walk-in centre at Canterbury Street, Gillingham

Following a number of comments and questions, the Committee agreed that the proposed relocation of the GP practice and walk in centre at Canterbury Street, Gillingham should be treated as a substantial variation or development.

4.1.5. Carers' Support Task Group – update

The Assistant Director, Adult Social Care introduced an update on progress made against the Carers' Strategy Action Plan and responded to Members' questions.

An update was requested for six months' time.

4.1.6. Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Public Health Consultant updated Members on the key aspects of the draft Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and responded to Members' questions.

The Committee requested the Cabinet to note its comments and to ensure that health and wellbeing was taken into account by to all committees and services run by the Council. It was requested that the

delivery plans for the five themes of the Strategy should be reported to this Committee once drafted.

4.1.7. Annual Public Health Report

The Director of Public Health provided the Committee with a presentation detailing key aspects of the Annual Public Health Report and responded to Members' questions.

The Committee requested the Cabinet to ensure health and wellbeing is inclusive in all committees and services run by the Council. A Member briefing was requested in the future on the transition of public health services to the local authority.

4.1.8. Work Programme

The following changes/additions were made to the work programme:

- Integration between Medway NHS Foundation Trust and Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust – December 2012/January 2013
- Proposed relocation of the GP practice and walk in centre at Canterbury Street, Gillingham – date to be determined
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy delivery plans – December 2012
- Trauma and critical care network – December 2012

4.2. **16 October 2012**

4.2.1. Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust – application for Foundation Trust status

A special meeting was held to consider the application from Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust for foundation trust status.

It was agreed unanimously that the Committee could not support the application at this time and that authority would be delegated to the Council's designated Scrutiny Officer, in consultation with the Chairman and opposition spokespersons of the Committee, to draft and send a formal response to the Trust by 15 November, which was to be shared with the Committee prior to despatch.

4.3. **19 December 2012**

4.3.1. Attendance of Portfolio Holder for Adult Services

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Services addressed the Committee and responded to Members' questions on the following topics:

- Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board
- Transfer of public health into the local authority
- Health Improvement Programme
- Healthy Eating Task Group
- Voluntary sector support

- Safeguarding vulnerable adults
- Personal budgets
- Carers and their valuable work
- Extra care housing
- Adult mental health
- Core Logic (New electronic care system to ensure efficient joining up of information/data)
- Balfour Day Centre
- Age Concern
- LINK/Healthwatch
- Merger between Medway NHS Foundation Trust and Dartford and Gravesham Trust
- Inspections of adult social care establishments
- Update on financial issues – Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust

4.3.2. Member item – Age Concern

Councillor Osborne introduced his Member item relating to the long-term future of Age Concern, Chatham at their Hopewell Drive site. The Assistant, Director, Adult Social Care and officers from the Council involved in the negotiations with Age Concern were thanked for the work they had done to bring about a successful outcome. A request was made for the Assistant Director, Adult Social Care to discuss with Age Concern, Chatham a request from Committee Members that they draw up an asset inventory and make arrangements for equipment donated to them from local councillors and ensure they remain for the benefit of residents of Chatham. A briefing note on the outcome will be sent to all Councillors.

4.3.3. Quarter 2 performance report

The Assistant Director, Adult Social Care introduced the quarter 2 performance report and responded to Members' questions. Briefing notes were requested on NI 156 explaining the definition of temporary accommodation and a breakdown of figures related to that indicator, along with a note from the Director of Public Health on the Medway businesses currently involved in the healthy workplace initiatives. The Director of Public Health undertook to discuss with Councillor Mackness outside of the meeting details he has about further organisations to contact in regard to healthy workplace initiatives.

4.3.4. Draft revenue and capital budget for 2013/2014

The Director of Children and Adults gave a brief introduction to the draft revenue and capital budget for 2013/2014. In the absence of a representative from Finance at the meeting a separate briefing on the budget was requested early in the New Year.

4.3.5. Local changes to primary care

In relation to a proposal for Drs Ravel, Dabestani and Partners to cease operations at their Walderslade Medical Centre, consolidating their

services with their other practices, the Development Manager, Medical Quality from NHS Kent and Medway was asked to look into issues raised relating to access and parking at the site, a suggestion that it might be better to consolidate the business at Princes Park which had ample parking, and a query about the presence of Dr Dabestani at Walderslade Village Surgery, and report back.

With regards to a proposal by Dr Patel, Broadway, Gillingham to join the Woodlands Family Practice, Members welcomed the proposals.

The Development Manager, Medical Quality from NHS Kent and Medway was asked to look into the issue regarding distances referred to in both proposals and report back to the Committee.

4.3.6. Changes to out of hours arrangements in Medway

The Head of Commissioning, Medway Commissioning Group assisted by the NHS 111 Programme Lead, NHS Kent and Medway and the Assistant Director of Operations, Medway Community Healthcare introduced the report on changes to out of hours arrangements in Medway and answered Members' questions.

Members noted the report and requested a review of the new model after a twelve month period.

4.3.7. Work programme

The proposed timetable and process for determining the next round of in-depth reviews was noted. It was noted that no further action was proposed at present in relation to the suggestion of moving children's health from Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Health and Adult Social Care OSC. An update from Medway NHS Foundation Trust on charges for disabled parking was noted.

5. Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5.1. 13 December 2012

5.1.1. Attendance of Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services

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

- Community Services – Eastgate House, Dickens Chalet, Rochester and Upnor Castles, Guildhall Museum, Sports, Stirling Centre, Deangate Golf Club, Greenspaces, Allotments, Volunteers, Events, Libraries, Theatre and Arts and Tourism
- Housing – Strategic housing, empty homes, temporary accommodation, home choice, extra care, disabled facility grant, Council housing, repairs and direct debit scheme.

5.1.2. Petitions and outcome of public meeting held in All Saints area of Chatham

The Committee noted the petition responses and appropriate officer action and the outcome of the public meeting held in the All Saints area of Chatham.

5.1.3. Supported Accommodation Task Group

A presentation was given on the outcome of the in-depth scrutiny review into supported accommodation. The Task Group had been set up at a meeting of the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28 June 2012 following concerns raised at Audit Committee in July the previous year about projected subsidy loss on exempt accommodation (a subset of supported accommodation) and subsequent concerns raised at Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee in August 2011 about the quality of supported accommodation.

In formulating a number of recommendations to the Cabinet, the Task Group concluded:

- There is a need for legislation to be tightened in relation to housing benefit and exempt accommodation
- Additional assistance would be helpful in the housing benefit section to address the high volume of claims, to continue the robust challenge to high rents and the vigorous challenge to any future Tribunal cases
- Outcomes based commissioning is the way forward in terms of quality of provision in relation to housing related support along with a greater understanding of need in this area.

The report was referred to Cabinet with a number of recommendations which flowed from the above conclusions. The recommendations included a proposed letter to Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform, around tightening up regulations, a proposed “invest to save” business case for an additional member of staff in benefits section and proposals on outcomes based commissioning to feed into the re-commissioning process.

5.1.4. Council Plan performance monitoring 2012/2013 – quarter 2

Following a number of questions, the report was noted. Further information was requested on the restriction of vehicles using the Bus Lane in Canal Lane, Strood and the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture was asked to review the use of the Bus Lane as soon as possible. A meeting was also requested between officers and Network Rail and Network South East to discuss the problems of graffiti on railway land.

5.1.5. Housing Strategy annual review

The Committee noted progress against the aims of the Housing Strategy and referred it to Cabinet for consideration.

5.1.6. Tenancy Strategy

Further information was requested on the consultation process about the Tenancy Strategy and the results would be sent to Members by means of a briefing note. The Strategy was referred to Cabinet for consideration.

5.1.7. Housing Planned Maintenance Programme – progress report

The Committee agreed to request further information on the current financial position of the Housing Planned Maintenance Programme 2012/2013 in particular with regard to the average cost for each of the works completed to date.

5.1.8. Draft capital and revenue budgets 2013/2014

The Committee noted the report and forwarded to Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee it's comments and suggestions with regard to the preparation of the Council's capital and revenue budgets for 2013/2014.

5.1.9. Work programme

Five Members of the Committee were nominated to form a task group on the basis of 3:1:1 on street clutter, to commence in January 2013. The proposed timetable and process for determining the next round of in-depth reviews was agreed. A request was made for a report on the Housing Planned Maintenance Programme.

Background papers

None

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