

## **COUNCIL**

**25 JULY 2013**

### **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 25 April 2013.

#### **1. Policy and Budget Framework**

1.1 The Council's constitution provides 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**

**20 June 2013**

##### **2.2.1. Treasury Management Outturn Report 2012/2013**

In noting the report Members requested that future reports include information on debt maturity analysis and that the mid-year review report should include information on the quantum of local authorities that use just in-house and a mixture of in-house and external fund manager services.

##### **2.2.2. Procurement Strategy**

This item was deferred until after the consultation process has taken place and it was agreed that details of a Supplier Event should be advertised to all Members of the Council.

##### **2.2.3. Update on discussions with Gambling Commission**

The Assistant Director, Legal and Corporate Services introduced a report to update Members on discussions with the Gambling Commission about Fixed Odds Betting Terminals and problem gambling. An update was requested in six months' time. It was also recommended that Members raise concerns with their local MPS about the need for

changes in the planning legislation, which currently places betting shops and food outlets in the same class.

#### 2.2.4. End of Year Performance Report 2012/2013

Following an extensive debate around the monitoring of performance across all Overview and Scrutiny Committees it was agreed that, subject to advice from officers, and agreement by the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Council be recommended to agree that housing be moved from the remit of Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the remit of Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It was also agreed that the scrutiny of Council Plan Monitoring reports by Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee is carried out after the other scrutiny committees have scrutinised them, subject to the outcome of the Member development session on scrutinising performance information in September.

#### 2.2.4. Work programme

The following changes were made to the work programme:

- Scrutiny of the Procurement Strategy will take place at 13 August 2013 meeting following consultation
- The scrutiny of the annual review of risk management strategy and six monthly review of the Council's Corporate Business Risk Register will take place at the September meeting along with the Medium Term Financial Plan

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

**4 June 2013**

#### 3.1.1. Update on Medway's Fostering Service

The Service Manager for Looked After Children introduced a report updating the Committee the range of activities the fostering service team had completed recently. She then responded to Members' questions relating to skills, inspection, support and feedback from young people.

A breakdown of the number of foster carers by ethnicity was requested along with a total of the number of feedback forms sent to looked after children for completion.

#### 3.1.2. Review of School Organisation Plan 2011-2016

The Performance, Intelligence and Strategic Planning Manager introduced a report giving an update on actions against the agreed plan and changes required based on more up to date pupil forecast data that had been collected.

The Committee recommended the Cabinet to approve the revised action plan taking into account the demographic changes to the population as reflected in forecasts updated in Spring 2011.

The following further information was requested:

- A briefing note on the section 106 agreement funding relating to development on the Peninsula and how it has been spent on education
- Exact figures for the graphs showing actual birth figures from 1997-2012 and the net gain in actual pre-school age children 2004 to 2012
- A request was made for ward councillors to be involved in any future discussions relating to pupil places

### 3.1.3. Medway Action for Families

Members noted a report on Medway Action for Families following a presentation by the Assistant Director, Inclusion and Improvement and the Medway Action for Families Programme Co-ordinator on the national Troubled Families programme.

### 3.1.4. Improving performance at Key Stage 2

The Assistant Director, Inclusion and Improvement and the Head of School Challenge and Improvement introduced a report on improving performance at Key Stage 2. Officers then responded to Members' questions and the report was noted.

### 3.1.5. Work programme

It was agreed that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and spokespersons meet immediately after the next pre-agenda meeting with the Director of Children and Adults to consider items for inclusion in the 2013-2014 Committee work programme, with a report back to the July meeting.

An all Member briefing was requested to explain how the Council provides support to schools regarding performance.

It was agreed that the scrutiny of the Medway Safeguarding Children's board should be added to the business for September and an update on the Health Visiting Service to the July agenda.

## **16 July 2013**

### 3.2.1. Review of Overnight Short Breaks

Officers introduced the report, which detailed the outcome of the consultation process on the review of overnight short breaks, which was instigated in response to a decision by the provider organisation, Medway NHS Foundation Trust, to cease provision at Preston Skreens. Officers confirmed that they were recommending that option 1A (extend the range of day, evening and overnight short breaks for disabled children and young people and their parents carers living in Medway and

Swale) with the extension of Aut Even seven days a week as detailed in option 1B.

Two parents of children that use the Preston Skreens facility raised their concerns about the closure of the service and stated they were not confident that equivalent alternative provision would be available for their children when Preston Skreens closes. Some Members shared this concern.

Officers confirmed that there was some capacity already for users at alternative provision and further provision would be developed, which was intended to be in place by the time of closure. It was also confirmed that some families had already been re-assessed and had accepted alternative provision and/ or direct payments.

The Chief Clinical Officer of the NHS Medway Clinical Commissioning Group confirmed that the intention was to provide managed and smooth transition to alternative provision for all affected families based on assessed need. He also confirmed that the notice to close Preston Skreens in September was still in place although Medway Foundation Trust had been asked to extend provision beyond this point.

The committee recommended the Cabinet to agree that Option 1A and 1B be implemented and that the Medway NHS Foundation Trust be requested to continue provision at Preston Skreens until adequate alternative provision is available for affected families.

### 3.2.2. Petition – Sure Start Nursery and Pre-School Facilities

The lead petitioner provided her reasons for referral of her petition to Overview and Scrutiny and expressed disappointment that the All Saints Nursery would no longer be providing day care services as there was not local alternative provision in the area. She felt the current nursery provision was inclusive to all and was in support of providing more families with nursery provision, but not if it was to the detriment of families already using services.

Councillor Maple then spoke in support of the petition as Ward Member and confirmed that the lead petitioner was speaking on behalf of a number of parents. He stated that children's centres could offer full day care but that it a matter for the local authority to decide on what was appropriate for the community. He urged the committee to refer the issue to the Cabinet for consideration.

A referral to Cabinet to reconsider the issue was moved and seconded but lost when put to the vote. The committee then agreed to take no further action and it was suggested that a report on the future provision of sure start children centres be added to the work programme.

### 3.2.3. Update on Health Visiting Service

The Members considered an update from NHS England about the Health Visiting Implementation Plan and asked questions relating to the encouragement given to mothers to breastfeed, the relationship between

health visitors and children's centres, the reasons for the deficit of health visitors in Medway which was being overcome, pre-natal support and complaints to the service. The committee then noted the report.

#### 3.2.4. Children's Social Care Complaints and Compliments

Members discussed a report which provided details of complaints and compliments received in 2012-2013 relating to children's social care. The committee noted the report.

#### 3.2.5. End of Year Performance 2012/2013

The committee considered the end of year performance report which highlighted achievements and areas that needed to be improved. Members then commented and asked questions relating to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) pathfinder, schools in special measures, children not in employment, education or training, targets relating to children social care assessments, educational attainment and the Medway University Technology College.

#### 3.2.6. Work programme

The committee agreed to: -

- schedule consideration of the SEND pathfinder for 26 September 2013
- schedule consideration of the Youth Offending Team Business Plan for 10 December 2013
- schedule consideration of the Youth Service provision/clubs across the authority for 14 January 2014
- add a report on the future of Sure Start Children Centres to the work programme.

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

**25 June 2013**

#### 4.1.1. Physiotherapy Community Service

The Assistant Director, Procurement and Estates, Medway Community Healthcare, assisted by a Clinician, informed Members of the proposed move of physiotherapy services from Medway Maritime Hospital to Charnos House in Gillingham.

Members generally welcomed the proposal but queried the distance that the public will need to walk to access Charnos House if they travel by public transport. They asked for discussions to take place with Arriva to see whether any amendments could be made to their route to get service users closer to the building. An update following the implementation phase was requested and it was suggested that the report should set out the impact the proposed changes would have on health inequalities.

#### 4.1.2. Phlebotomy service – update

The Chief Operating Officer, NHS Medway Clinical Commissioning Group introduced a report to update Members on changes to the phlebotomy service and responded to Members' questions.

#### 4.1.3. NHS 111

The Director of Commercial Services, South East Coast Ambulance Service and the Senior Associate, Change Management, Kent and Medway Commissioning Support Unit gave a presentation relating to the NHS 111 service.

The Committee noted that while there had been initial problems with the setting up of the NHS 111 service, which was for urgent calls relating to health and social care, in addition to the 999 service, there was now a rectification plan in place to remedy these difficulties.

Following discussion it was agreed that a date should be arranged for an update on the service back to the Committee.

#### 4.1.4. 2012/2013 Year end Performance Monitoring

The Deputy Director, Children and Adults, introduced the year end performance monitoring report and highlighted the areas of successful achievements along with areas for improvement.

During discussion Members requested further details on support for carers and for the report to update on the quality of care provided in social care to ensure consistency of service and value for money.

#### 4.1.5. Adult Social Care Annual Complaints and Compliments report April 2012 to March 2013

During discussion on the annual complaints and compliments report Members requested the following:

- That the anonymised details of the complaints relating to mental health should be shared with the mental health task group as part of its scoping in case there was a common theme
- Future reports should contain details of the type of complaints received from people placed outside of Medway for social care
- Further work should be done to publicise how people can complain about social care (the Deputy Director, Children and Adults explained that a new leaflet was being produced to assist service users who wished to complain)

#### 4.1.6. Work programme

The following items were added to the work programme for 20 August 2013:

- Review into quality of care and treatment at Medway NHS Foundation Trust
- Accident and Emergency pressures
- In-depth task group on mental health
- Re-commissioning of drug and alcohol services
- Physiotherapy update

An update on the implementation of NHS 111 will be brought to the Committee on a date to be agreed along with a report back on support for carers.

The membership of the mental health task group was agreed as – Councillors Wildey, Purdy, Pat Gulvin, Igwe and Juby with Councillor Cooper as substitute for Councillor Igwe if he is unable to attend.

It was agreed that an update on trauma services in December will be by means of a briefing note with a subsequent report at a later date.

Officers were requested to consider the following –

- Whether the report on eating disorder review was still needed
- As part of the Member development event later in the year that the roles and relationships between the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Health and Wellbeing Board are discussed
- How public health implications were being highlighted and taken into account in Council decision-making in particular for planning and licensing decisions

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

**27 June 2013**

#### 5.1.1. Scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership

The Vice-Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Superintendent Chapman gave a presentation to the Committee on the work of the partnership and the Committee made comments, raised a number of questions and discussed a range of issues including:

- Preventative work
- Re-offending
- Number of people killed or seriously injured
- 'Skunk' (a form of cannabis) workshops
- Use of illegal tobacco
- Domestic abuse

- Crime statistics – public perception following recent report by HMIC on inaccurately recorded crimes
- Looking ahead – resourcing priorities
- Safeguarding
- Drug and alcohol addiction

It was agreed that:

- In future years the Committee should scrutinise the annual strategic assessment at the end of the calendar year, which may then result in changes to the CSP's priorities
- Senior members of the CSP should be invited to attend meetings of the Committee for the annual CSP report and other meetings where specific community safety issues are discussed through the year
- Superintendent Chapman should report back on whether ward level crime statistics could be expanded to include a five year trend analysis
- Officers should explore what more could be done to control and discourage 'Skunk' workshops and
- A copy of the powerpoint presentation for this item should be circulated

#### 5.1.2. 2012/2013 Year End Performance Monitoring

Members put forward a number of questions and comments relating to:

- Overall levels of customer satisfaction
- Chatham Waterfront Bus Station
- Affordable Homes
- Homelessness
- Temporary Accommodation and Bed and Breakfast
- Employ Medway
- Number of jobs created and safeguarded through intensive assists

The Committee recommended the Council to transfer scrutiny of housing to the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Briefing notes were requested on:

- Questions asked in the general customer satisfaction survey and the Chatham Waterfront Bus Station satisfaction survey
- How Medway compares with other local authorities on provision of affordable homes
- A breakdown of full time and part time jobs secured by Employ Medway
- Number of jobs created and safeguarded through intensive assists analysing how the various interventions were working and for how long

It was requested that the forthcoming Homelessness Strategy should address Member concerns about the red rating of targets for temporary



accommodation and bed and breakfast with links back to the Council Plan.

### 5.1.3. Petitions

The Committee noted a report on petitions received and the appropriate officer action.

### 5.1.4. Member's item: Traffic flow in Chatham

Councillor Mackinlay introduced his Member item and explained his concerns around the traffic flow in Chatham particularly around the Brook.

A number of suggestions for improvements were put forward at the meeting, which included:

- New timing plans for traffic signals from the junction of Dock Road/Globe Lane to The Brook/Slicketts Hill
- Timing alterations involving the introduction of new plans at the junction of Whiffens Avenue and Globe Lane
- Converting existing signal controlled pedestrian crossings to 'puffin' crossings at all crossing points along The Brook
- Possible removal of traffic signals at the bus station ramp
- Displaying messages on 23 Variable Message Signs
- Improved dissemination of traffic information acquired by the Traffic Operations Room
- Possible reallocation of road space to allow two lanes straight ahead at the junction of Slicketts Hill

It was agreed that Members and officers should meet to agree specific actions with a report updating the Committee in six months' time.

### 5.1.5. Report from the task group into "De-cluttering streets in Medway"

Members welcomed the report into de-cluttering streets in Medway and raised a number of points including:

- The project in Strood High Street was welcomed, particularly as the barriers lining the edge of the pavements are dangerous with a number of gaps, which people use to cross the road
- Standardisation of materials used should be a key aim, as this will reduce procurement and ongoing maintenance costs
- With regard to bollards, there were concerns that removing some bollards would cause greater problems. For example on the roadside outside schools
- The importance of consulting shop owners when consideration is given to policy on tables and chairs in front of shops

It was agreed to recommend the report to Cabinet for approval with an additional recommendation that all Ward Members are consulted before the removal of any street furniture in their wards as part of the de-cluttering programme.

An update report will be provided in a year's time on progress and the impact of the pilot scheme in Strood.

#### 5.1.6. Implications of Localism Act 2011 – Landlord Services Complaints

Following extensive discussion the Committee agreed to recommend the Cabinet to adopt option 2 set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report. It was recommended that the Designated Person Panel should comprise 5 Councillors (3 Conservative Members, 1 Labour member and 1 Liberal Democrat nominated by Group Whips).

It was also recommended that the advisory independent person should be from Gravesham Council (or another neighbouring Council) on the basis of a reciprocal arrangement with Medway and the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Panel should nominate the advisory tenant representative.

#### 5.1.7. Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2012-2042 and Asset Management Strategy

The Committee agreed to recommend that the Cabinet adopts the HRA Business Plan attached to the agenda and requested a further report providing an options appraisal and possible projects for utilisation of the headroom created by self financing to the Committee and Cabinet by the end of the calendar year.

#### 5.1.8. Work programme

Updates on the following were requested:

- On the progress and impact of the pilot scheme in Strood (de-cluttering)
- On the meeting between officers and Councillors on the traffic flow in Chatham
- A report on issues with the bus station at Chatham Waterfront

A report on the use of the accumulating 'headroom' fund in the Housing Revenue Account was added to the work programme for later in the year.

#### **Background papers**

None

#### **Contact for further details:**

Julie Keith

Head of Democratic Services

Telephone: 01634 332760

Email: [julie.keith@medway.gov.uk](mailto:julie.keith@medway.gov.uk)