

REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 AUGUST 2013

ATTENDANCE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR FRONT LINE SERVICES

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Summary

This report details the areas covered by the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services which fall within the remit of this Committee. These are listed each time a Cabinet Member is invited to attend any of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to be held to account.

1. Background

1.1 The areas within the terms of reference of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee and covered by the Leader are:

- Parking
- Public Transport
- Roads
- Street Cleaning & Waste Collection/Recycling/Waste Disposal
- Traffic Management
- Transport

2. Achievements for 2012-13

2.1 Parking and parking schemes

- 97% of all car park pay & display machines have now been upgraded to solar power.
- The design and consultation of the Liberty Keys Controlled parking zone in Gillingham and the review of the Gillingham North CPZ in Gillingham. Reviewed parking restrictions on the High St between Chatham and Rochester.
- Working in partnership with Alpha Parking to review the entire on street parking arrangements in Medway, and all the parking orders.

- 17 new yellow line parking restriction schemes and 2 new parking places schemes. Produced traffic orders for 70 Disabled parking bays

2.2 Public Transport

2.2.1 Bus Services

- Bus patronage in Medway has increased by 8.9% between 2003/04 and 2011/12, from 8.4m passenger journeys to 9.5m. This reduced in 2012/13 to 9.3m passenger journeys. This 2% drop for the year is reasonably consistent with the effect seen for the use of the national concessionary fares scheme. This is mainly due poor weather and perhaps also the stagnation of passholder numbers due to the age qualification beginning to change. In addition the weather in March 2013 in particular has been a big contrast to March 2012, which will have been a contributory factor to bus use.
- With effect from Monday 29th July the following services will be improved;
 - 156, Chatham – Rochester – Queen Mother Court (Arriva)
 - 172-175, Chatham – Rochester – Strood – Frindsbury/Wainscott (Nu-venture)
 - 192, Chatham – Rochester – Strood – Frindsbury/Wainscott – Lodge Hill (Nu-venture)
 - 197, Chatham – Rochester – Strood – Upnor/Lodge Hill (Arriva)

In summary this will result in the 156 and 197 operating to a standard daily timetable, with additional journeys to Upnor and more frequent services by way of the 172, 173, 174, 175 and 192 via Wainscott, providing a new service along Hollywood Lane, Wainscott, for the first time in at least 25 years. Lodge Hill will also gain a new Saturday service. The buses operating these routes will also be improved ensuring that low floor vehicles will operate on the majority of the journeys. All these services (except the Monday to Friday 192) are provided under contract to Medway Council and these improvements have all been achieved at no extra cost to the Council.
- A survey was carried out at Chatham Bus Station over five sessions during week commencing 18 March 2013, between 07:00 and 09:30 and 15:00 and 18:00, the busiest periods, which would therefore capture the most users. 368 surveys were completed. Overall, 72.6% of users were very satisfied or satisfied with the facility. Those aged 16-24 were most satisfied at 85.5%, while those aged 60+ were least satisfied at 60.5%. Of those surveyed who lived outside Medway, 94.3% were satisfied overall with the Bus Station. There were three main areas of concern, however;
 - lack of protection, particularly on Platform B
 - readability of bus stand information screens
 - unsuitable seating for the elderly
- Since the survey was carried out and the findings reported:
 - the visibility of the screens has been improved by enlarging the text and this will be followed up by further quality improvements;
 - 28 additional seats have been provided which are slightly higher than the existing seating to assist users with certain mobility difficulties;

- We are still exploring ways to improve protection from the weather, particularly on Platform B and will report proposals in due course

2.2.2 Medway Public Transport Map

- This is currently in preparation and is planned to be available in early September. As well as showing all bus routes and railways lines, it will also include all bus stops, places of interest, secondary schools and other useful information. By showing information in a clear, colourful format it is hoped that it will encourage public transport use generally.
- It is important to also mention that as well as assisting commuters, shoppers and school children it is also expected to be a very helpful tool for tourism by encouraging visitors to access attractions in a sustainable way and is also a good accompaniment to our Medway Cycle Map.

2.2.3 Smart ticketing

- The joint project with Kent County Council and Arriva is progressing well with the past few months having been spent establishing the specification, full functionality and risks and dependencies. The programme has now been mapped out and it is anticipated that the Phase 1 pilot will be ready for deployment in February 2014 with full roll out by the end of this financial year. Phase 2 will include further functionality and multi-operator ticketing and will take place once Phase 1 has been fully assessed.
- By increasing the number of cashless payments on-bus, it is expected that this will speed up bus boarding times and reliability, reduce operational costs, driver/passenger disputes and thereby encourage increased bus usage.

2.2.4 Concessionary Bus Passes for older people and people with disabilities

- Between January to March 2013 the renewal of the existing 42,000 bus passes on issue was completed successfully. New passes were issued with a staggered renewal date relating to surname and date of birth so in future there will never be such a large renewal in one go.

2.2.5 Medway Youth Pass

- Take up of the young persons youth pass for half fare on buses during the morning peak remains consistent at around 3000 students. Promotion of the scheme has been undertaken at the bus station and additional promotion will be carried out as forms are sent to schools for the new academic year.

2.2.6 School yellow buses

- The nine yellow buses continue to provide transport services to the various secondary education schools. The scheme currently transports 478 students to schools across Medway. The scheme is very popular

2.2.7 Villager community transport scheme

- The two community buses continue to provide a transport offer to residents in the rural areas of Medway we currently have 354 individual members and 59 groups.

2.3 Roads

2.3.1 Capital Projects

- 27 schemes have been completed. This does not include the various regeneration projects worked on.
- This year we currently have 39 schemes being progressed:

Woodlands Road, Gillingham	Schools, build-out
Grange Road, Gillingham	Traffic calming
Christmas St, Gillingham	Raised crossing point
Montgomery Rd, Gillingham	Bus improvements to hosp
Princes Avenue, Chatham	Traffic calming
Maritime Way, Chatham	Right-turn ban
Hoo Village	Gateway feature
Hathaway Court, Rochester	Railing replacement
New Rochester railway station	Highway works and car park
CWBS j/w Medway St, Chatham	Formalising turning head
Jezreels Rd	Construct car park
Wainscott Primary School	Work to new access
Frindsbury Hill, Frindsbury	Design of bus only link to
Wainscott Rd	
Hollywood Ln / Ashcroft Rd, Frindsbury	Cycle route
BFR / Rede Court Rd, Strood	Cycle route
Princes Ave / Wren Way, Chatham	Traffic calming
Various sites across Medway	Bus boarders
Strood Academy steps	Raised table crossing point
A289 Four Elms rbt	Re-lining
Beechings Way, Rainham	Cycle route
Bells Lane, Hoo	Accessibility improvement
Brompton Rd / Wood St, Gillingham	Pedestrian & cycle improvements
Bishop of Rochester Academy	New crossing points
Horsted gyratory	New road layout
Sundridge Hill, Cuxton	New crash barriers
Dock Rd / Wood St, Chatham	New toucan crossing
St Marks church, Gillingham	Bus lay-by extension
London Rd / High St, Strood	Cycle route
Maidstone Rd, Rochester	Cycle route
Ingram Rd / Church St, Gillingham	New zebra crossing
173/5 High St, Strood	Demolition
DBF MH29	Flap valve installation
St Mary's Island, Sector 5	Adoption works
Railway St, Gillingham (Railside)	New car park
Rochester Riverside Phase 1	New infrastructure
New Rochester Station	Provision of temp car park
Strood Town Centre	Pilot De-Cluttering Scheme
A289 Gads Hill	Parking

2.3.2 Highways Responsive Maintenance

- Volker Highways, was successfully awarded the fifth and final year extension on the contract (10 year total)
- Satisfaction surveys for Street Lighting continue to remain positive. The target is 80% satisfaction and for 2012/13 the quarterly scores were 85%, 90%, 83% and 89% respectively, averaging out at 86.75%.
- Salix funding to improve lighting using energy efficient means will bring about changes across network with reduced energy costs and provide a better carbon footprint.
- The percentage of street lamps working was on target for 12/13 at 99.6% against a target of 96.6%. Qtr1 13/14 stands at 99.5% against a target of 99.6%
- The National Street Gazetteer team have gained and maintained Gold standard, which is the industry expectation, throughout the year and won a Gold exemplar award in 2012 in the category of “authority street updates”.
- The Public Rights of Way team have created successful links with volunteer groups and now made additional links with the Community Payback team and the Prison Service, who are using their resources to improve the network.
- The Highway Inspectorate completed 100% of all targeted safety inspections on time, giving an effective regime of inspection, assessment and recording of defects/condition. It ensures the safety of all network users.
- 5198 task orders for safety repairs across the network
- 5481 service requests from customers, which were received by the team.
- 952 safety defects repaired by inspectors themselves using Viafix (a permanent flexible material).

2.3.3 Planned Maintenance

- 29 roads were resurfaced, 17 of these were Micro surfacing and 12 using conventional surfacing materials. The total length of resurfacing was 8,800 linear metres.
- 18 pavement schemes completed, totalling 5.873 linear metres resurfaced.

2.3.4 Winter Maintenance

- The winter period saw a record number of salting runs completed and an extension of the service beyond the April end date.
 - 165 salting runs in total
 - 122 Primary routes
 - 40 secondary routes and 3 third tier route
 - 4,460 tonnes of salt used.
- Use of the Medway media site with a series of information updates during snow conditions together with clear information to Customer First reduced the number of service enquiries.
- Cleansing and Greenspaces teams covered pavements and car parks

- A Winter Service Review was carried out on 8th May 2013
- Additional snow clearing shovels and spreaders will be provided to Cleansing and Greenspaces teams
- A trial will be undertaken to see the effective using slush blade
- Winter service period runs from 14 October 2013 - 21 April 2014.

2.3.5 Highway Maintenance Response

- 36 intermediate carriageway maintenance schemes completed.
- 13 intermediate footway pavement schemes completed.
- 59 minor miscellaneous schemes completed.

2.3.6 Drainage

- 30,000 gullies cleaned during the cyclic gully cleansing programme.
- Medway Council car park gullys cleaned
- 5481m of linear drainage this year.
- 11 flooding and drainage issue sites, which have been completed and resolved.
- 4 flooding sites being assessed.
- 225 miscellaneous requests, which were completed

2.3.7 Minor works

- 41 Minor Works Briefs from other departments, which were completed.
- 9 schemes pending.
- 6 Ward Improvement schemes, which were all completed.
- 36 miscellaneous requests, which were completed.

2.3.8 Signs and Lines

- 386 Road Signs orders completed.
- 455 Road Markings requests completed.
- 339 Road Marking requests for Disabled Bays
- 81 requests for the installation of disabled signs.

2.3.9 Medway Tunnel

- 2012-13 saw phase 1 of the Medway Tunnel refurbishment completed, with:
 - New fibre optic network
 - CCTV monitored 24/7 from the MCCC
 - Vehicle incident detection camera's
 - Radio rebroadcast facility for both engineering radios during maintenance closures and rebroadcast certain radio stations to the travelling public. The rebroadcast of live radio allows officers to break into that re-broadcast to speak to drivers in the event of an emergency.
 - Refurbished control room at the tunnel centre.
 - Welfare facilities for staff and contractors.
 - ICT department resilience /back-up facility
 - UPS's (Uninterrupted Power Supplies) replaced

- Phase two will see a proposal for LED lighting developed and officers will be looking towards a loan, built around energy savings to implement this scheme.
- Additionally fire detection & suppressant systems, drainage equipment and emergency cross passage escape doors are items that will need replacing in the near future.

2.4 Street Cleaning & Waste Collection/Recycling/Waste Disposal

2.4.1 Waste Services achievements

- Recycling rate continues to rise, over 40% 2012/13; up from 38% previous year.
- Satisfaction levels remain extremely high for all waste services
 - Refuse: 93.5%
 - Recycling: 86%
 - Household waste recycling centres: 79.25%
 - Street cleansing: 72.5%

2.4.2 Food waste collections

- During November 2012, the 'caddy-liner trail', in partnership with global chemicals company, BASF, saw three collection rounds (4,500 households) being supplied a kitchen caddy, a roll of liners, information leaflet and a questionnaire about the service.
- Feedback was very positive with 86% of respondents stating they would continue to use the brown bin for food waste and an increase in the capture of food waste was measured and observed from these rounds in the weeks following delivery.
- Approximately £40 is saved for every tonne of food waste collected by the organics service as opposed to refuse.

2.4.3 DCLG funded Weekly Collections

- One of Waste Service biggest achievements in 2012 was being successful in being awarded £14million from the DCLG's 'Weekly Collections Support Fund', to be delivered alongside Veolia Environmental Services.
- From 28th October Medway's residents will now benefit from weekly collections of dry recycling and organics, alongside the weekly black sack collections.
- The £14million award will pay for:
 - a completely new collection fleet of 46 vehicles, all fitted with advertising panels and 360^o safety cameras
 - every brown bin household to be provided a food caddy for the kitchen
 - a borough-wide communications and engagement programme over two years
 - a two-year project officer post to run the campaign

2.4.4 Electronic and bulky waste collections

- This project has been an extremely successful partnership with the private sector and has led to cost savings, an improved service to the public and ensured electrical items are recycled responsibly.
- SWEEP of Sittingbourne has been collecting WEEE (waste electrical and electronic equipment) from Medway residents' homes free-of-charge since October 2012. The scheme – part of our arrangement with Veolia Environmental Services' – has so far collected 106 tonnes of WEEE and reduced bulky collections by 567, saving Medway over £7,000 in collection costs.
- Reusable bulky items such as sofas, continue to be collected free-of-charge by the charity, 'Neighbourhood Furniture Store'. During 2012/13, this socially aware service diverted over 32 tonnes of reusable items from landfill and back to those who can make use of it, saving the Council £3,000 in disposal costs.

2.4.5 Bring site collections

- Textiles collected at bring sites have continued to provide an income, generating £22,000 last year.
- Book, small WEEE, 'TetraPak' and other free-to-collect bring banks also helped divert 208 tonnes from disposal in 2012/13, representing over £15k savings.

2.4.6 HWRC's

- Since FCC took over the contract during 2010 there has been an overall decrease of 40% in waste sent to landfill and a 37% increase in the amount of waste recycled at the sites, helped by separating out of additional materials such as mattresses, hard plastics and separate paper and card.
- During September 2012, FCC teamed up with the charity Abacus to collect items for reuse at all sites. Abacus has a shop front and warehouse in Strood, where items are cleaned up and sold on at a reduced price to those on low incomes. They also operate a doorstep collection free of charge to Medway residents. Since the partnership began, we have successfully diverted over 10 tonnes of reusable furniture from the sites. Plans to expand the project this year include further staff training and the possibility of an on site shop ran by Abacus.

2.4.7 Operational services

- The contract to wash Chatham and Gillingham high streets was successfully taken back in house in September 2012 to provide cost efficiencies and at the same time expand the service to include Rochester High street and Rainham town centre. This has been achieved by using a ride on machine which is more productive, more visible to the public, more effective and more environmentally friendly.
- The Litter bin washing contract has also been successfully taken back in house again providing cost efficiencies and better service levels.

- Our in house sign production and installation service continued to grow for the fourth year running turning over in excess of £250,000 and resulting in a profit of £30,000
- Pest Control and Graffiti removal services continued to hit all service targets and Commercial income from Pest control remained the same despite a challenging economic environment.

2.5 Traffic Management

2.5.1 Network Management

- We received 18,624 roadworks notices during this period, which equates to approximately 71 each working day. Each notice is assessed for its impact on the network and accepted, conditions imposed or rejected. If no comments are made then approval is automatic. We have produced 60 section 58 Notices to prevent future work following resurfacing work.
- 14,111 roadworks that we notified have taken place in this period, and 5,559 inspections have been carried out, with 523 defects issued. In addition, utility companies have been fined for over running roadworks and fixed penalty notices have been issued for streetworks infringements. We have developed a streetworks coring programme, to ensure reinstatement compliance. This is the first time Medway Council has undertaken a coring programme, which will commence on 29 July 2013. We have started using hand held PDA devices for streetworks inspections and defects, which improves the efficiency of the operation.
- Medway has also been subject to major utility works during this period due to water main replacement, water metering, gas main replacement and high speed broadband.

2.5.2 General Traffic Management issues

- Dealt with a high volume of traffic management requests for service and complaints including approximately 3,700 enquiries via Customer First, which equates to approximately 14 per working day.
- Produced 28 Traffic Regulation Orders and 11 emergency closure orders, and approved 30 temporary signs, 4 new development signs and the extension to 18 new development signs.

2.6 Transport

2.6.1 Road Safety Achievements

- 2012 has seen the lowest number of Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) casualties in Medway to date. 51 KSI casualties recorded.
- Analysis of casualty data is leading interventions on our four key casualty trends; Pedestrians, Motorcycles, Pedal Cycles, and Car users.
- Road safety improvement scheme introduced at Luton Arches, Chatham - Layout changes to reduce the number of casualties at this roundabout junction.

- Road safety improvement scheme introduced at the A2 junction with Gun Lane, Strood - Visibility improvement at this signalised junction to reduce casualties.
- Walking Bus Stops (Various locations) - Phase 2 of the introduction of Walking Bus stops to highlight and promote Walking Buses (Continued sponsorship gratefully received from Volker Highways, and St Andrew's School).
- Think Bike! - Medway led (and designed) countywide campaign to raise awareness to drivers of vulnerability of two wheeled road users.
- 2012 saw the School Crossing Patrol service celebrating its Diamond jubilee. The service continues to expand and there are currently 38 full time patrols and 22 reliefs.

2.6.2 **Bikeability training**

- During May 2013 the Medway Bikeability scheme received a Department for Transport Quality Assurance assessment by an independent assessor. The overall score for Medway's Bikeability training was 4 out of 5 (with 5 being low risk). It is considered their final report was a fair and a reasonable assessment.

2.6.3 **Town centre De-cluttering**

- A time limited member task group has considered de-cluttering of town centres during this period.
- The outcome of their work was considered by RCC Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 June and agreed by Cabinet on 9 July.
- A pilot scheme in Strood Town Centre will be progressed during the next year.

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Background documents

None