

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

**Thursday, 3 October 2013**

**6.30pm to 9.10pm**

**Record of the meeting**

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

**Present:** Councillors: Bright (Chairman), Carr, Clarke, Etheridge, Griffiths, Adrian Gulvin, Hubbard, Juby, Mackinlay and Osborne

**Substitutes:** Councillors:  
Gilry (Substitute for Councillor Stamp)  
Wicks (Substitute for Councillor Turpin)

**In Attendance:** Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture  
Nikola Floodgate, Senior Transport Planner  
Stephen Gaimster, Assistant Director, Housing and Regeneration  
Barbara Graham, Legal Advisor  
Steve Hewlett, Head of Integrated Transport  
Daniel Kalley, Democratic Services Officer  
Julie Keith, Head of Democratic Services  
Andy McGrath, Assistant Director, Front Line Services  
Phil Moore, Head of Highways and Parking Services  
Catherine Smith, Development Policy and Engagement Manager

**431 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 14 August 2013 was agreed and signed as correct by the chairman.

**432 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mason, Stamp and Turpin.

**433 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances**

The chairman proposed to change the order of the agenda and move the Member's Item: Use of the bus lane, Canal Road, Strood before the Rochester Airport Masterplan Consultation – Update.

## Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 3 October 2013

The committee agreed to the change in the order of the agenda.

### 434 Declarations of interests and whipping

There were none.

### 435 Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth

#### Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth had provided a report that set out activities and progress on work areas with her Portfolio during the past year and the committee asked her questions about these, which included:

**TIGER Loans Fund – Impact in Medway** – The Portfolio holder reported that a number of applications for TIGER Loan funding had been submitted by Medway businesses and two had been successful so far. TIGER Fund loans were being promoted locally by the Local Enterprise Partnership and also by the Council's Economic Development team with the aim of making the scheme easy to access by local companies.

**Inclusion of references to fracking and mineral development in the Local Development Framework** – The Portfolio Holder advised Members this had not been an issue when the Local Development Framework was written but that the Framework could be expanded and updated as necessary.

**Free Parking to revitalise High Streets** – The Portfolio Holder was asked if she had changed her view and would now agree that the availability of free short-term parking would help revitalise High Streets in Medway in light of the Portas Initiative and views expressed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. . The Portfolio holder stated she did not necessarily agree with the views expressed by Mary Portas and that this would require wider discussion. She stated that parking charges in Medway were among the lowest in the South East and reminded members of the provision in Medway in a number of locations for short term free parking in the run-up to Christmas.

**Youth Unemployment** – The Portfolio holder reported a 22% fall in youth unemployment across Medway, which was in contrast to the rest of the country where youth unemployment was increasing in many places. She attributed the exceptional figures in Medway to the attitudes of young people locally who were prepared to take up the opportunities that had been made available to them.

**Broadband Development – timescales for completion of survey work.** The Portfolio holder confirmed that planning and surveying work was underway and information was expected later in the autumn as set out in her report. She referred to the particularly poor reception and connection issues on the Peninsula. The rolling out of Broadband would be concentrated on local

## Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 3 October 2013

schools within Medway and created an opportunity for schools to work with their local communities. .

**Strood Community Hub – request for provision of limited (one-hour) free parking for library users.** The Portfolio Holder noted concerns that ward members had not been told about the proposed location for a Strood Community hub ahead of a public announcement by two Cabinet members at a Friends of Broomhill meeting. She stated that the idea of limited free parking for users of the new Community hub could be considered but she could not give any assurances at this time. Members of the Committee referred to the previous (but now defunct) agreement with Tesco involving three hours free parking for users of the hub. The Portfolio holder stated she would expect free parking to be part of any further development involving Tesco in Strood.

**Lodge Hill Development – new housing target for Medway.** The Portfolio Holder was asked if new housing targets for Medway would be set should the Lodge Hill development not proceed. The Portfolio holder stated the Council was making every effort to put forward a case contesting the designation of Lodge Hill as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) the outcome of which would not be known until November. She agreed that immediate discussions would be required about housing targets and other issues if triple SSSI status is awarded to Lodge Hill as the LDF is predicated on the development there going ahead.

**City Deal status for Medway** – The portfolio holder stated that the Council had made strong representations for City Deal status when it was first offered but had been unsuccessful. To pre-empt the second round of bids the Council had met with the Minister to highlight the regeneration prospects in Medway and she hoped Medway would be awarded City Deal status in the next round.

**Monitoring of shop occupancy rates** – The Portfolio holder assured the Committee that High Street occupancy rates were monitored on a monthly basis. She confirmed that occupancy rates in Chatham were running in line with the national average although this figure was distorted by the vacation of units on the top floor of the Pentagon Centre. The figure was much lower elsewhere in Medway.

### **Decision:**

The Committee thanked the Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Economic Development for her attendance.

## **436 Rochester Airport Masterplan Consultation - Update**

### **Discussion:**

The Chair advised the committee that a member of the public had asked to make an audio recording of the discussion on this item and put the request to the vote. The majority of members present voted to refuse the request.

## Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 3 October 2013

The Development Policy and Engagement Manager introduced the report, which provided preliminary information on responses received to the consultation on the draft Rochester Airport masterplan.

The Committee was advised that a report on the analysis of the responses to the masterplan consultation was due to go to Cabinet on 26 November 2013 and a final report for decision would go to Full Council on 23 January 2014. These reports would include a schedule of all the responses received.

Some members commented that they felt the report implied that less weight would be given to the large number of responses that had been handed in on pre-printed forms. The Development Policy and Engagement Manager advised the committee that a summary of all responses would be reflected in the final report to Cabinet and that each response would be considered in full. She also confirmed that any responses from residents and businesses in Tonbridge and Malling would be reflected in the final report.

A view was expressed that the majority of residents consider expenditure of £4.4 million on Rochester Airfield to be a waste of money which could be better spent on investing across the towns in Medway and creating more jobs. It was suggested that the Council could follow the example set by Dover and hold a ballot of residents to seek their views, or review the proposals in light of the high percentage of responses against the masterplan proposals. Some members of the Committee expressed a view that a decision to proceed with the masterplan would make a mockery of the consultation process.

A Member proposed a recommendation to Cabinet, which was seconded, to reconsider the proposals in light of the outcome of the consultation process. On being put to a vote this proposal was lost.

A Member proposed that a scatter gram map showing where residents who had responded to the consultation lived be included in the final reports to Cabinet and Council.

### **Decision:**

The committee:

- 1) Noted the information provided on the responses to the consultation on the draft Rochester Airport masterplan and;
- 2) Recommended that the final report to Cabinet and Council should include a scatter gram map showing where residents who had responded to the consultation lived.

### **437 Member's Item: Parking**

## Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 3 October 2013

### Discussion:

Councillor Osborne was invited to address the committee as he had submitted the item for consideration. He expressed a view that the Council had a more aggressive policy on parking enforcement based on the high number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) that had been issued within Kent and Medway in comparison with other areas across the country, citing London as an example and the high number of appeals against PCNs in Medway. Councillor Osborne referred to information provided in the report showing a fall in the number of PCNs issued by the CCTV cars and questioned whether the cars were now cost-effective in terms of future revenue projections. He also drew attention to a significant rise in PCNs issued for bus lanes and queried whether the number of double yellow lines in Medway should be reviewed.

In response to the questions raised, officers advised the committee on the following issues:

**CCTV cars** – The Assistant Director, Frontline Services advised members that the two CCTV cars currently targeted cars parking outside of schools and were used in areas of high risk. In addition these cars were used as second resource in transporting Community Enforcement Officers (CEO's) to areas where road safety was an issue or where CEO's were subjected to abuse by the public. In response to concerns that the mobile units were now costing as much to run as money they made the Head of Highways and Parking informed members that as well as providing protection for CEO's the CCTV cars were hugely visible, which had prevented people from parking illegally and had the ability to respond quickly to requests across a large area. In addition they provided protection to school children at the beginning and end of the school day, which was a primary concern for the Council.

The Assistant Director Frontline Services, in response to a question raised, informed the committee that in the year 2012/13 there had been 326 visits to schools.

A member commented that one of the issues that needed to be considered was how to best use the CCTV cars, in particular the amount of time these cars spent visiting schools. Members requested officers produce a statistical analysis of the number of visits made to schools by CCTV cars and the number of PCN's issued in the vicinity of schools.

**Appeal rates** – The appeal rates reflected that there was a two-stage process in deciding appeals and that a significant number of appeals are upheld by the Council at stage 1. of the process. In total there had been 15,470 appeals received in 2012/13 of which 5326 had been upheld. The Assistant Director, Frontline Services reported that. in total 78 appeals had progressed to the external adjudicator at stage 2 of which 46 had been upheld.

**PCN's issued in bus lanes** – The Assistant Director, Frontline Services confirmed that static cameras were now in place at Chatham bus station and in the bus lane at Canal Road. In addition the road layout at Chatham Bus station

## Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 3 October 2013

had been modified in the summer to deter drivers from driving through the bus station. Of the PCN's issued in 2012/13 most of these had been issued at the bus station in Chatham. Since the completion of the road layout modifications six cases had been referred to the traffic adjudicator and of those, five had been rejected, and only one had been upheld on a technicality.

**Double and single yellow lines** – Members were advised that the CCTV cars were not generally used to enforce parking restrictions on double or single yellow lines because of the length of time involved. They are used to enforce parking restriction where loading is prohibited and on approaches to zebra crossings. .

**CCTV car staff turnover** – Members were informed that staffing for the mobile units operated on two levels involving temporary agency staff and permanent staff. The Assistant Director, Frontline Services explained that the turnover of staff figures detailed at Appendix A showed the turnover of permanent staff only.

**Financial viability of CCTV cars** - Benefits of the CCTV cars are their capacity to respond quickly over a large area and their use to protect CEOs from verbal and physical abuse as well as their visibility in terms of deterring parking offences. They continue to be a valued resource by Medway's schools.

**Ward parking reviews** – The Assistant Director, Frontline Services advised the committee that the cost of reviewing car parking zones was between £100,000 and £150,000. At the current time the Council did not have the budgetary provision to carry out such reviews.

A member commented that they hoped the work that officers and ward councillors were engaged in to review parking r using a common sense approach in consultation with residents in several areas could continue without the need for these levels of expenditure.

In addition a member commented that the reason why London had a lower level of PCN's issued per person in comparison with Kent and Medway was that most people in London used public transport, rather than cars.

### **Decision:**

It was agreed that the committee:

- 1) Thank officers for the report and commend the work of the Community Enforcement Officers
- 2) Note the officer responses in the report and at Appendix A
- 3) Requests that the information in the report be placed in the public domain

## **Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 3 October 2013**

- 4) Requests a briefing note detailing the number of PCN's issued in the vicinity of schools and a breakdown of the number of visits made by the CCTV cars to schools.

### **438 Member's Item: Use of the bus lane, Canal Road, Strood**

#### **Discussion:**

Councillor Hubbard was invited to address the committee as he had submitted the item for consideration. He supported a proposal to allow use of the bus lane in Canal Road in Strood by taxis on the basis that this is a strategic transport link, the Council has an integrated transport policy and taxis are allowed to use all other bus lanes in Medway. He argued that the change would enable taxis to access Medway City Estate more quickly and relieve pressure of traffic flow in Commissioners Road and other residential roads in Strood, such as Banks Road and Station Road.

The Head of Integrated Transport informed Members that the consultation period finished on 3 October 2013. The first part of the consultation focused on 28 properties that would be directly affected by the change of use, eight responses had been received so far of which 4 were in support and 4 were against the change of use. Following a request from Councillor Hubbard a further 32 properties on Commissioners Road were consulted. Fourteen responses had been received, of which nine supported the change in use and three disagreed with two neutral returns

An alternative view was expressed by Councillor Etheridge who referred to assurances originally given to residents of Canal Road that the bus lane would not be extended for use by taxis or other vehicles. She also argued there was a possibility taxis would still use residential roads in Strood even if the bus lane was available to them.

#### **Decision:**

That the committee agreed to:

- 1) Note the provisional findings of the consultation
- 2) Receive a further report outlining proposals at the next meeting, and to include an evaluation of the possibility for minor works that could be taken to mitigate the impact on residents in Canal Road.

### **439 Darnley Arches, Strood**

#### **Discussion:**

The Senior Transport Planner introduced the report to the committee on the planned work at Darnley Arches, Strood. She directed Members to the attached

## **Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 3 October 2013**

appendix showing the proposed alterations and improvements to Darnley Arches. The Council currently held £526,673 of Section 106 contributions from Morrison's with a deadline to complete works by August 2014.

The committee welcomed the proposals and supported the proposed option but asked for additional provision to secure pedestrian safety in the detailed design, particularly in Northcote Road.

A Member voiced their concern that the table attached to the report showed that the work would only cost £100,00, which was nowhere near the amount of money the council could spend on the project. He urged officers to consider spending as much of the money available to secure improvements for residents. The Senior Transport Planner advised the committee that the £100,000 figure was significantly understated as it did not include service charges, labour costs and the cost of materials to be used in carrying out the work. In addition she informed the committee that officers were looking at a number of options to slow traffic down on Northcote Road.

The Assistant Director, Frontline Services advised the committee that the Section 106 money was specifically to be used for pedestrian improvements at Darnley Arches and could not be used for other unrelated improvements in the area. With regards to the August 2014 deadline the Committee were advised that officers could deliver the planned work at Darnley Arches within the required timeframe.

Members of the committee suggested that Strood South and Strood North ward members should be invited to meet with officers to discuss further more detailed proposals at a later stage and that all members of the committee should have the opportunity to comment on the final design, following meetings of the ward members and further consultation with Strood Town Centre Forum.

### **Decision:**

The committee agreed to:

Support the recommended option for Darnley Arches with additional priority to be given to pedestrian safety and an opportunity for members of the Committee to comment on the final design by email once finalised after a ward member meeting for Strood North and Strood South members with officers and consultation with Strood Town Centre Forum.

## **440 Review of NI167 - Measurement of journey times**

### **Discussion:**

The Head of Integrated Transport introduced the report to the committee. He explained that members had expressed concern about the data being produced using the current measurements of journey times across Medway.



## **Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 3 October 2013**

Members were advised that the report outlined a number of options to look at specific traffic corridors across Medway. Using ANPR cameras that the police own, the Council could alter the method of reporting journey times on Medway's highway network and that this would focus on individual key routes along a revised collection of routes. It was stressed that only routes where the ANPR cameras were located could be looked at.

A Member commented that they supported the recommendations, but expressed the view that there are more routes contributing to the economic growth of Medway than the three listed in paragraph 3.6 of the report, citing routes affected by congestion off Four Elms roundabout as an example.

A Member expressed concern in relation to the public's civil liberties on how data was stored and the importance for the public to be made aware that their information was out in the open. In response the Assistant Director, Frontline Services confirmed to Members that any data used by the Council is de-personalised.

### **Decision:**

The committee agreed that:

- 1) The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture is recommended to alter the method of reporting journey times on Medway's highway network and that this be amended to focus on individual key routes and average journey times on the network along a revised collection of routes;
- 2) The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture, in consultation with a small group of Members from this committee (on the ratio 2:1:1 with names to be provided by Group Whips), is recommended to agree the key routes to be monitored following the introduction of additional ANPR cameras;
- 3) Officers report back on the operation of the additional cameras to enable the effective monitoring of key routes.

## **441 Petitions**

### **Discussion:**

The committee received a report setting out the petitions received and a summary of officer responses to petitioners.

A Member drew the committee's attention to the petition requesting the council to relocate the bus stop outside Woodlands Academy. They were of the view that this bus stop was dangerous, especially during the school day as parents and children would often have to walk on the road when the bus shelter was congested. There was a fear that unless the bus stop was moved there might be a casualty in the future.

## Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 3 October 2013

The Assistant Director, Frontline Services advised the committee that there were other bus stops in Medway that had a higher priority of relocation. The committee asked officers to organise a site visit to the bus stop during school hours, which involved the ward members and the lead petitioner, to which the Assistant Director, Frontline agreed. In addition the committee agreed that while officers reviewed the Woodland Academy bus stop, they could also review traffic issues between Sturdee Avenue and the traffic lights in Woodlands Road.

A Member suggested last year that they had offered some of the funds from the ward improvement funds to carry out work in relation to relocating bus stops.

### **Decision:**

- 1) The committee noted the responses to the petitions in paragraph 3 of the report and appropriate officer action and;
- 2) Recommended that officers meet the lead petitioner in relation to the Woodlands Road bus shelter, along with Ward Councillors for Twydall and Gillingham South, and that the site visit should be used to also review other issues in the vicinity during school hours.

## **442 Work programme**

### **Discussion:**

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report and highlighted to the committee the additions to the Cabinet Forward Plan, as set out at paragraph 4 of the report. In addition the committee was advised of an additional item on the Cabinet Forward Plan, Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report, which had been added after the work programme report was published.

A Member advised the committee of the Snow Angels project, which was a volunteer scheme aimed at assisting residents that are community minded and want to help vulnerable members of the community get on with their daily activities without the dangers when snow and ice hit. All snow angels would receive, 20kg bag of salt, a high visibility vest, protective gloves and snow scoop or plastic shovel.

The committee agreed that a members item on the possibility of introducing the scheme be brought to this committee.

### **Decision:**

The committee agreed to note:

- 1) The committee's work programme as attached at Appendix A;

**Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 3  
October 2013**

- 2) That a Members Item be added on the possibility of introducing the snow angels scheme.

**Chairman**

**Date:**

**Daniel Kalley, Democratic Services Officer**

Telephone: 01634 332013

Email: [democratic.services@medway.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@medway.gov.uk)