

## **COUNCIL**

**24 APRIL 2014**

### **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 23 January 2014.

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

1.1 The Council's constitution provides for the activities of Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committees to be reported to Council meetings. The following is a high level summary of business conducted. For further detail please refer to the minutes of each Committee which are published on the Council's website.

#### **2. Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**4 February 2014**

##### **2.1.1. Attendance of the Leader of the Council**

The Leader, Councillor Rodney Chambers, addressed the Committee and responded to Members' questions in relation to the following topics:

- Localism
- Individual Electoral Registration
- Council and the democratic process

##### **2.1.2. Attendance of the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance**

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Alan Jarrett addressed the Committee and responded to Members' questions in relation to the following topics:

- Property rationalisation
- New Horizons
- Community Hubs
- Local government financial settlement for 2014/2015
- Special Educational Needs school transport costs

- Decent Homes Standard
- Better for Less
- Council Tax Discretionary Relief Fund
- Business rates
- Medway Norse
- Auditing of 2013/14 Accounts

#### 2.1.3. Housing Revenue Account Capital and Revenue Budgets 2014/2015

During consideration of the report Members raised a number of questions under the following headings:

- New service charges for some residents
- Direct payments of Housing Benefit
- Housing Building Development Programme
- Garage Sites
- Decent Homes Standard
- Engagement and Information

The Committee recommended the budgets to Cabinet in line with the recommendations contained in the report.

#### 2.1.4. Empty Properties

Members received a report outlining the current situation in respect of long term empty private properties along with details of the Council's approach to dealing with such properties. A number of questions were raised in relation to:

- Loss of empty homes and Energy Efficiency Team
- Long-term empty private homes by ward
- Engagement by Housing Associations
- Council tax exemption
- Large buildings – closure of public houses and associated anti-social behaviour

It was agreed that the Chief Finance Officer should investigate the possibility of introducing a penalty Council Tax rate on empty properties and that all Members be provided with a ward by ward breakdown of, and the reasons for, the 823 long term empty properties in Medway.

#### 2.1.5. Supported accommodation task group update

The Committee received an update on progress with the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Group as the responsibility for scrutinising housing had moved to the Committee.

#### 2.1.6. Homelessness prevention strategy 2014-2016

Members raised a number of issues and questions around the following topics:

- Targets in association with the Government “Making Every Contact Count” standard
- Private sector housing
- Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Targeting of rogue landlords
- Request to amend the list of trigger points to include debt and employment
- Volunteers in respect of the Strategic Aim 2 under the heading of Housing Solutions Service
- Rough sleepers
- Home Bond
- Enquiries from potentially homeless people

The Committee recommended the Cabinet to approve the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2014-2016 and the actions set out in the Action Plan, taking into account the comments of the Committee.

#### 2.1.7. Refresh of council plan indicators 2014/2015

Members raised a number of issues relating to the report as follows:

- Differing measures across children’s and adult social care
- Average journey times along six primary transport corridors
- Number of visitors to tourist attractions
- Reason for removal of indicator relating to satisfaction with the bus station
- Reason for removal of litter/graffiti indicators
- Percentage of residents registered to vote

The Committee forwarded comments to the Cabinet and welcomed the reduction in the number of indicators from 102 to 62.

#### 2.1.8. Capital and revenue budget 2014/2015

During discussion on this item the Chief Finance Officer responded to questions around pressures brought about by reorganisations in the finance and human resources teams and stated that he was confident core services would continue to be delivered. The Committee noted the report.

#### 2.1.9. Draft capital and revenue budget proposals 2014/2015 report back from other overview and scrutiny committees

The Committee noted the discussions that had taken place at other overview and scrutiny committees and forwarded the comments to Cabinet.

#### 2.1.10. Treasury Management Strategy

The Treasury Management Strategy was noted, with its revisions, and forwarded to Cabinet. The Committee also recommended the approval of the revised Treasury Management Practices as set out in the report.

### 2.1.11. Work programme

The following changes were agreed:

- Medway Community Learning Ofsted report – to be provided in a briefing note update
- A six month update in Implementation of the Procurement Strategy – to be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee
- Communications shared service – deferred to a future meeting
- Progress report on the Fair Access to Credit Task group recommendations to be provided in a briefing note with a full report on the implementation to be submitted to the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- The programme for all overview and scrutiny committees was noted
- A request for Home Choice training for all Members was referred to the Member Development Advisory Group.

### **19 March 2014**

#### 2.2.1 Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact

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

- Customer Contact team
- ICT
- Legal Strategic Advice

It was noted that a report on contact centre staff numbers and shift patterns and data regarding call monitoring would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

#### 2.2.2. Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services

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

- Ofsted
- Bereavement Services
- Registration Services
- Homeless applications
- Licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Housing Benefit
- Private Sector Housing
- Rent Arrears
- HRA Development Team
- Free Health Checks
- Roof repairs to Benenden and Harbledown Manor

- Legal Strategic Advice
- STAR Survey 2013
- Partnership Working

The Committee passed their thanks to the Medway Crematorium Team for the excellent management of the difficult project to install mercury abatement equipment at the Crematorium. A request was made for the latest Adult Learning Ofsted report to be circulated to the Committee.

#### 2.2.3. Hot Food Takeaways in Medway: A Guidance Note

The Committee requested further information about the number of schools in Medway and how many have hot food takeaways within 400m and how many have none. Additional suggestions were made to the list of consultees and it was agreed that the Committee should consider the outcome of the consultation on 3 July 2014 before submission to Cabinet.

#### 2.2.4. Council Plan 2013/2014 Quarter 3 Performance Monitoring

The Committee noted the third quarter performance against the Key Measures of Success used to monitor progress against the Council Plan 2012/2013. The Assistant Director, Communications, Performance and Partnerships was asked to submit a report to a future meeting on how the Council would be paying back the Growing Places Fund specifically in relation to the Chatham and Rochester areas.

#### 2.2.5. Capital Budget Monitoring 2013/2014

The Committee noted the spending forecasts, budget virements and additions to the capital programme as detailed in the report.

#### 2.2.6. Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/2014

The Committee noted the forecast outturn position and proposed management action following the third round of quarterly revenue monitoring for 2013/2014.

#### 2.2.7. 6 Monthly Review of the Council's Corporate Risk Register

The Committee accepted the Management Team's recommendations on amendments to the Council's Risk Register as detailed in the report and forward the report to Cabinet.

#### 2.2.8. Member's Item: Mayoralty Budget

Councillor Osborne introduced his Member item explaining that the object of it was to scrutinise the budget that supported the mayoralty. Following discussion it was requested that the Independent Remuneration Panel be requested to review the Special Responsibility Allowances of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and the Committee expressed its appreciation to all Mayors and Deputy Mayors, past and present.

### 2.2.9. Work Programme

Members agreed a number of changes to the work programme as follows:

- The update on the joint venture with NORSE quarter 3 2013/14 be deferred to 3 July and merged with the end of year report on NORSE
- An update on discussions with the Gambling Commission to be submitted to the meeting to be held on 3 July 2014
- Access to and use of IT in Medway to be removed from the work programme and included in the scope of the Welfare Reform Task Group
- Participatory Budgeting – The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture and the Chief Finance Officer to meet to scope this subject and report back to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition spokespersons for further discussion
- Housing Revenue Account Development Programme to be submitted to the meeting on 3 July 2014
- Communications Shared Service to be submitted to the meeting on 26 August 2014

The Committee agreed that the membership of the Welfare Reform Task Group would be appointed on a 3:1:1 basis with no substitute Members. Councillors Pat Gulvin, Mackness and Royle were appointed at the meeting, the Liberal Democrat and Labour nominations would be sought outside of the meeting.

It was agreed that a report on the sale of cheap alcohol in non-traditional outlets be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee following consideration by the Medway Alcohol Partnership Group.

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

**14 January 2014**

### 3.1.1. Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member)

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member) addressed the Committee and responded on the following topics:

- Visits to schools
- Looked after children
- Children and Young People's Plan
- Children's residential care
- Children with disabilities and respite arrangements
- Children and mental health
- Inclusion
- University Technical College
- Youth services
- Medway Action for Families

### 3.1.2. Medway Safeguarding Children Board Mid Term Progress Report

The independent chair of the Medway Safeguarding Children Board presented a progress update on the business plan and activity for 2013/2014 and responded to Members' questions on the following topics:

- Updating of Kent and Medway procedures
- Recruitment
- Child exploitation risk assessment
- Serious case reviews
- Involving children

### 3.1.3. Update on School Nursing

The Senior Public Health Manager – Commissioning and Assurance presented a report on school nursing provision in Medway and responded to questions on the following:

- Referrals into the service
- Safeguarding and Common Assessment Framework process
- Awareness raising about the service
- Statistical data
- Services
- Service development

The Committee requested a report on the school nursing service be presented to the Corporate Parenting Group, that a briefing note on the ratio of school nurses to children in Medway be provided and that the service be better promoted to all Medway schools including through an information leaflet.

### 3.1.4. School Admission Arrangements 2015

The Student Services Manager introduced the report and responded to Members' questions on:

- Consultation
- Providing information on home to school transport as part of the admissions process
- Potential reduction in secondary school places
- Academy school admissions
- Rural communities
- Application processes at primary school
- Increasing parental preferences from 4 to 6 schools

The Committee requested the following amendment to the report, which it recommended to Cabinet:

- i) the Committee requested that officers amend section 3.2 of the cover report to include a statement that primary

schools with academy status are their own admission authorities.

### 3.1.5. Youth Service Provision

The Integrated Youth Service Manager responded to Members' questions on:

- Medway performance
- Targets for 2013/2014
- Services on Hoo Peninsula
- Funding
- Medway's water sports facilities

### 3.1.6. Early Help Strategy

The Assistant Director, Partnership Commissioning presented the report and responded to Member's questions on:

- Partnership working and including the family in decision-making
- Commissioning
- Use of information and technology

The Committee forwarded the report to Cabinet.

### 3.1.7. Work programme

The Committee noted the timetable for the election process for the two vacant voting member positions representing Parent Governors.

## **25 March 2014**

### 3.2.1. Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Educational Improvement

The Portfolio Holder for Educational Improvement addressed the Committee and responded to questions on the following:

- Visits to schools
- Support to schools
- Teaching Assistants
- School effectiveness and school improvement action plans
- Key Stage 2 results
- Governor support, training and governor vacancies
- Local and National Leaders of Education
- Headteacher and teacher recruitment
- School alliances
- Medway Youth Parliament
- Support for children with Special Educational Needs
- Data sharing



### 3.2.2. Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services

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

- Permanence panel
- Recruitment to permanent Independent Reviewing Officer posts

### 3.2.3. Adoption Performance in Medway

The Service Manager Child Protection and proceedings attended for this item and responded on the following:

- Disruptions with adoptive families
- Activity days
- Timeframes
- Engagement with service users

### 3.2.4. Progress on Moving on Medway, the Improvement Plan for Children's Services

The Assistant Director, Partnership Commissioning presented the report and responded to a number of questions on the following:

- Use of reserves
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Electronic communications

A further report was requested to a future meeting to update Members on CAMHS and it was agreed that the Corporate Parenting Group should be provided with an update on progress against the Moving on Medway Improvement Plan and on CAMHS.

### 3.2.5. Sufficiency Report 2013-2015

The Assistant Director, Partnership Commissioning presented the report and responded to Member's questions on the following:

- Definition of 'unsuitable accommodation'
- Target of increasing foster placements from 218 to 240

The report was forwarded to Cabinet.

### 3.2.6. Outcomes of consultation for the proposed prescribed alterations at Abbey Court Special School

The Performance, Intelligence and Strategic Planning Manager presented the report and responded to questions on the following:

- Size and use of the site
- Training facilities on the new site
- Operating services across two sites

The Committee endorsed the on-going efforts of officers to attract extra funding for the future phases of development and forwarded the report to Cabinet for consideration.

#### 3.2.7. Council Plan 2013/2014 Quarter 3 Performance Monitoring

The Performance, Intelligence and Strategic Planning Manager introduced the report and in relation to Frameworki confirmed that all documents have been transferred into the new system and RAISE has been switched off.

#### 3.2.8. Work Programme

It was agreed that a briefing note on young carers in Medway will be circulated to the members of this Committee for information later in the Summer and that any suitable nominations for the parent governor representatives will be forwarded to the full Council for approval.

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

**28 January 2014**

#### 4.1.1. Update on Francis Inquiry

The Chief Nurse, Medway NHS Foundation Trust gave a presentation on an update from the perspective of the NHS following the Francis Inquiry.

#### 4.1.2. Care Quality Commission: Report on Maternity Services

The Chief Nurse, Medway NHS Foundation Trust gave a presentation introduced a report on progress since the Care Quality Commission's inspection of maternity services.

He reassured the Committee that positive work was being undertaken to improve the service and paid tribute to the assistance of the Director of Public Health and her team in contributing to the redesign of the antenatal pathway.

Members paid tribute to the work being done in the maternity unit, to the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff working there and the Chief Nurse, colleagues and partners in bringing about the improvements.

#### 4.1.3. Mortality figures – Medway Maritime Hospital

The Medical Director, Medway NHS Foundation Trust introduced an update on mortality issues and the hospital trust's improvement programme.

He gave details of the focus of the hospital around the emergency care pathway and emerging plans for a large assessment area consisting of around 80-90 beds for all medical admissions close to the A&E department, imaging (x-ray) and intensive care.

#### 4.1.4. Acute Mental Health Inpatient Beds Review Update

The Chief Officer, West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group introduced the update with the Chief Executive and Director of Operations from Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust.

Members asked a number of questions on the following topics:

- The Personality Disorder pilot of intensive day treatment
- The number of beds at the unit in Park Avenue
- Work with the Police to avoid the use of section 136 regulations
- Support given by NHS Medway CCG to there being a 24/7 presence of mental health staff at the hospital

Ahead of the next meeting of the Committee Members gave notice of further details around daily occupancy details of bed usage and full details of where Medway residents were being placed in centres of excellence out of area. Further details relating to street triage and transport for carers and families were also requested.

#### 4.1.5. NHS 111 and report on public access defibrillators

The Director of Commercial Services and the Voluntary Services Co-ordinator updated Members on progress with NHS 111 and it was agreed that a Member visit would be organised to the Ashford call centre.

#### 4.1.6. Work programme

The following changes were noted:

- An update on Francis Inquiry – Medway Council will be produced for June 2014
- Annual report on the commissioning of drug treatment programmes – deleted from work programme
- Changes in dementia support services and services for the elderly to be amended to read ‘dementia services to meet future needs’ only and for this to be dealt within Autumn 2014 – this will be a joint report with NHS Medway CCG
- Progress re adult mental health social work over the next three years – regular updates required – Autumn 2014
- It was noted that briefing notes had been provided on car parking and PALS activity from Medway NHS Foundation Trust
- The reference from Regeneration, Community and Culture O&S Committee on the Schools Notification Pilot be scheduled for 24 June 2014 (footnote – this has now been deleted from the work programme as it is not within this Committee’s terms of reference)

## 8 April 2014

### 4.2.1 Acute mental health inpatient beds update

The Chief Officer, West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group and the Interim Director of Operations from Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT) addressed the Committee on the update on acute mental health inpatient beds. Members expressed their disappointment that the data provided by KMPT was not what was requested. Explicit detail was given of what was needed for the subsequent meeting. The Committee also requested that any change in KMPT policy with regards to ceasing to assist with transport costs for those people disadvantaged by the closure of A block should be shared with the Committee as this went against the spirit of what had been offered during the consultation on acute beds.

### 4.2.2 Update on patient transport

The Chief Officer, West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group introduced the update on patient transport. It was stated that while the situation with the provider had improved there was still a lot of progress needed before their service was acceptable in particular there was concern around the poor performance in transportation of renal patients. The commissioners would continue to monitor the contract very closely and bring a further report to the next meeting.

### 4.2.3 Health and Wellbeing Board review of progress

The Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board gave a brief introduction to the review of progress for the Health and Wellbeing Board and he and other members of the Board responded to Members' questions in particular in relation to:

- Smoking cessation
- Planning
- Licensing
- Big Lottery Fund
- Use of greenspaces
- How the Board can make a difference
- Hot food takeaways
- Better Care Fund
- Healthchecks

Members commended the work of the Board so far and noted the report.

### 4.2.4 Health Inequalities Task Group review report

Members asked questions of the Task Group set up to review health inequalities in Medway. The Committee welcomed the report, approved the recommendations within the review and referred the review to the Health and Wellbeing Board for onward transmission to Cabinet on 13 May 2014. A review of the recommendations was agreed for six months time.

#### 4.2.5 Quarter 3 Performance report

The Director of Children and Adults introduced the quarter 3 performance report and she and the Director of Public Health responded to Members' questions. The report was noted.

#### 4.2.6 Work programme

Members determined that the item on physiotherapy re-procurement was not a substantial variation or service development on which the CCG needed to officially consult the Committee. It was noted that no further action needs to be taken with regards to the schools notification pilot item referred by Regeneration, Community and Culture O&S Committee as it was not within the Committee's terms of reference. Authorisation was given to the Deputy Director, Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance, in consultation with the Chairman and Spokespersons of the Committee and Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to respond to any inspection related communications from the Care Quality Commission as appropriate with regards to their inspection of Medway Maritime Hospital.

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

**30 January 2014**

#### 5.1.1. Petitions

The lead petitioners for two petitions both opposing the relocation of Strood Library from Bryant Road, Strood to 133 High Street, Strood attended and set out the reasons for their petitions.

The Deputy Director, Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance then addressed the Committee and responded to Members' questions in relation to the following:

- Consultation
- Financing
- Access and car parking
- The provision at 133 High Street

A motion was put forward to request the Cabinet to pause progress on the current proposals until the information requested during the meeting had been presented, was put to the vote and lost.

The Committee then noted the report, thanked the petitioners and agreed not to take any further action.

### 5.1.2. Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact, Councillor Peter Hicks, addressed the Committee and responded to Members' questions in relation to:

- Community Safety
- Enforcement
- Environmental Health
- Trading Standards
- CCTV
- Travellers
- Emergency plan

### 5.1.3. Annual Review of Waste Contracts

Representatives from Veolia Environmental Services (UK) PLC and FCC gave presentations and answered questions on their work carried out within the past year.

Members asked various comments of Veolia and commented on:

- The operation of the Veolia HGV apprenticeship scheme
- The recycling rates and targets reported in the presentation and those contained within the Municipal Waste Management Strategy
- The impact on recycling rates due to introduction of weekly collections and the emphasis on moving waste from black sacks into brown bins

FCC were then asked questions and commented on the following:

- The site layouts at the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) which were considered small and difficult to manoeuvre within
- Positive experiences of staff at the three HWRCs
- Flytipping in the vicinity of the HWRCs which was seen to be attributable to people leaving their waste when the HWRCs were shut
- The importance of the work being undertaken by FCC and the Council in developing a safe and legal trade waste proposal
- The ability for small privately owned vans to access the Capstone HWRC site by special arrangement and also the ability for residents to take tyres to the Capstone site
- The asbestos disposal service available at the three HWRCs and the procedure, which was documented on the Council's website
- The potential to publicise less busy times

### 5.1.4. Cultural Activities

The Deputy Director, Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance gave a presentation updating on progress made and

setting out possible future proposals for the next iteration of the Cultural Strategy, based on the four strategic priorities within the current Cultural Strategy:

- Stewardship
- Engagement
- Economic Prosperity
- Health and Wellbeing

Following a number of questions, the Committee endorsed the progress made in delivering Medway's cultural activities and supported the emerging thinking around the Cultural Strategy 2014-2019. In doing so the Committee stressed the importance of officers ensuring that ward councillors were informed when events were happening within their wards.

#### 5.1.5. Controlled Parking Zones

The Assistant Director, Front Line Services introduced the report updating Members on a Member meeting to discuss the size and operation of Medway's controlled parking zones.

The Committee requested that the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture

- explores the potential implementation of the options outlined in 3.2 and 3.3 of the report.
- in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, considers the introduction of 24/7 controlled parking in New Road, Chatham.
- Considers a change in hours of charged for parking at the Upper Mount car park with a request that residents be allowed to park free of charge in the evening and weekends
- Investigates the use of business permits

Members also requested a briefing note breaking down the costings of undertaking a parking review. Members requested that when parking charges are reviewed that the implications of hours of on-street parking are considered.

#### 5.1.6. Member's item: Traffic Flow in Chatham

Consideration was given to a Member item submitted by Councillor Mackinlay about traffic flow in Chatham. The Committee noted the report and work underway to improve traffic flow in the Chatham Town Centre. Officers were requested to arrange a visit for the Committee to the traffic control room to enable them to understand how the system worked.

#### 5.1.7. Chatham Waterfront Bus Station Visit

The Committee noted the report and requested that officers investigate if section 106 funding could be identified to fund works to improve weather protection on platform B, as set out in section 3.4 of the report.

#### 5.1.8. Work programme

The following items were added to the work programme for the June meeting:

- Rochester Riverside Masterplan
- Update on Guide to Developer Contribution

### **10 April 2014**

#### 5.2.1. Attendance of the Leader

The Leader, Councillor Rodney Chambers addressed the Committee and responded to Members' questions in relation to:

- Inward Investment
- Regeneration
- Strategic Partnerships
- Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP)

Arising from the Leader's responses to questions, the Committee requested a briefing note on how the TIGER loan scheme operates in allocating loans to businesses and the types of businesses that have been both successful and unsuccessful.

It was also agreed that the Committee receive a presentation on the Kent and Medway Growth Deal at a future meeting.

#### 5.2.2. Suggestion from Member – Possible Snow Angels Project

The Committee received a report in response to a Member's suggestion that the Council introduce a scheme along the lines of the 'Snow Angels' Project. Such a project would enable pavements to be cleared of snow and ice during winter conditions by enlisting the assistance of individuals and community groups on a voluntary basis.

If supported, it was suggested that initially, a pilot scheme be introduced for three wards across Medway, namely an inner urban ward, an outer urban ward and a ward in a rural setting. This would allow officers to gauge the potential and take up of such a scheme and the financial implications ahead of expanding the scheme across Medway.

The Council's Highway's term contractor, VolkerHighways had offered to sponsor the pilot project with the exception of the anticipated £7,500 costs associated with advertising and administration but it was confirmed that this funding could be met from existing budgets within the Directorate.

The Committee, noting the sponsorship offered by VolkerHighways, supported the introduction of a pilot 'Snow Angels' project in three wards across Medway based on 250 units, with an emphasis on areas which would provide benefits to elderly persons and requested that the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture undertake to introduce this



pilot project in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services.

### 5.2.3. Smart Ticketing Update

Following a Member's response to Briefing Note 2014/03 on the proposed Smartcard Ticketing Scheme, the committee received an update report on the compatibility of the proposed Kent and Medway Smartcard ticketing scheme with the Transport for London's (TfL) Oyster ticketing system.

The Committee noted that for the reasons set out in the report, it would not be appropriate for the Council to adopt an 'Oyster' type smart ticketing scheme and recommended to the Director for Regeneration, Community and Culture under his delegated powers that:

- a) an 'Oyster' type smart ticketing scheme is not adopted in Medway for the reasons stated' and
- b) once the Kent and Medway smart ticketing scheme has been successfully implemented and Transport for London has moved to an ITSO compatible system, an approach will be made to TfL to see whether they would be willing to extend their commercial agreement to include Kent and Medway.

### 5.2.4. Actions Update of Fair Access to Credit Task Group Review

The Committee received a report setting out an update on progress made on the recommendations from the Fair Access to Credit Review, agreed by the Cabinet on 4 September 2012.

It was noted in particular that as of 1 April 2014, responsibility for regulating the consumer credit market passed from the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). While the FCA had carried across many standards from the Consumer Credit Act (CCA) and the OFT guidance, there were significant changes for payday lenders and debt management companies, including:

- limiting the number of loan roll-overs to two
- restricting (to two) the number of times a firm can seek repayment using a continuous payment authority (CPA)
- a requirement to provide information to customers on how to get free debt advice
- requiring debt management firms to pass on more money to creditors from day one of a debt management plan, and to protect client money.

The FCA had also published a factsheet for credit unions which could be accessed at:

<http://www.fca.org.uk/your-fca/documents/factsheets/factsheet-no-032>

On 12 March 2014, the FCA announced that payday lenders and other high cost short term lenders would be the subject of an in-depth, thematic review into the way that they collect debts and manage borrowers in arrears and forbearance. This review would be one of the first actions that the FCA takes as regulator of consumer credit, and reinforces its commitment to protecting consumers. This was one part of the FCA's agenda for tackling poor practice in the high cost short-term loan market.

The FCA would also look at how high-cost short-term lenders treat their customers when they are in difficulty including how they communicate, how they propose to help people regain control of their debt, and how sympathetic they are to each borrower's individual situation. The FCA would also take a close look at the culture of each firm to see whether the focus is truly on the customer, or simply oriented towards making profit.

Beyond this review, as part of its regulation of the high cost short term lending sector, from 1 April 2014 the FCA would also:

- Visit the biggest payday lenders in the UK to analyse their business models and culture;
- Assess the financial promotions of payday and other high cost short term lenders and move quickly to ban any that are misleading and/or downplay the risks of taking out a high cost short term loan;
- Take on a number of investigations from the outgoing consumer credit regulator, the OFT, and consider whether they should begin their own for the worst performing firms;
- Consult on a cap on the total cost of credit for all high cost short term lenders in the summer of 2014, to be implemented in early 2015;
- Continue to engage with the industry to encourage them to create a real-time data sharing system; and
- Maintain regular and ongoing discussions with both consumer and trade organisations to ensure regulation continues to protect consumers in a balanced way.

The Committee noted the progress made against the actions from the review and that the legal changes put in place since the Task Group have resulted in a much stronger national regulatory regime for controlling the practices of high cost credit providers.

The Committee requested a briefing note in 12 months time providing an update as to how the new systems are operating and requested that Officers undertake further discussions with the Medway Credit Union as possible ways that the Council could support its work.

#### 5.2.5. 2013/2014 Quarter 3 Performance Monitoring

The Committee noted the third quarter performance against the Key Measures of Success used to monitor progress against the Council Plan 2012/2013 and requested the following actions:

- a) Officers engage with colleagues in the Housing Section to resolve the issues of recycling in Council flats;
- b) A letter of appreciation be sent to the Friends of Broomhill for the work that they have undertaken on assisting with securing investment at the Broomhill site; and
- c) Officers discuss with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth the issue of enhancing the visitor potential of Medway's markets.

#### 5.2.6. Petitions

The Committee noted that since the last meeting, one petition had been received via Full Council requesting that the Council take action to stop reckless driving in Yarrow Road, Walderslade. The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture had responded to the petition and this response had not prompted a request for referral to Committee.

#### 5.2.7. Work Programme

The Committee considered its work programme and noted that the following items had been added at the pre agenda meeting:

- Food Safety – Presentation from Environmental Health
- Local Transport Plan – Timing of bus routes and bus punctuality

The Committee agreed the following:

- a) Owing to the number of items scheduled for June meeting, the Food Safety Presentation, and the reports on the Review of Average Journey Times across Medway and the Local Transport Plan – Timing of Bus routes and bus punctuality be deferred until the August Committee
- b) The Cultural Strategy be added to the Committee's work programme for October as pre-decision scrutiny
- c) It be noted that annual actions plans reviewing the progress of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy will be reported to this Committee
- d) Financial monitoring reports will be added into the published version of the work programme
- e) The attendance by Portfolio Holders has yet to be scheduled and will be added into the work programme when finalised
- f) In line with the suggestion by the Leader, a presentation by the Kent and Medway Growth Deal be slotted onto the work programme for a future date.
- g) The Food Safety Presentation now scheduled for August, include information as to the number of inspections undertaken, how often catering areas are checked and whether such inspections are led by public referrals or on a rota basis.

**Background papers**

None

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