

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Business Support Overview and Scrutiny**  
**Committee**

**Wednesday, 19 March 2014**

**6.30pm to 9.29pm**

**Record of the meeting**

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

**Present:** Councillors: Carr, Clarke (Chairman), Pat Gulvin (Vice-Chairman), Irvine, Maple, Royle, Mackness, Murray, Price and Harriott

**Substitutes:** Councillors:  
Griffin (Substitute for Wildey)  
Adrian Gulvin (Substitute for Avey)  
Smith (Substitute for Juby)

**In Attendance:** Councillor Howard Doe, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services  
Councillor Peter Hicks, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact  
Councillor Tristan Osborne  
Neil Davies, Chief Executive  
Joanne Canty, PA to the Mayor  
Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture  
Therese Finn, Planner Policy, Development Policy and Engagement  
Stephen Gaimster, Assistant Director, Housing and Regeneration  
Martin Garlick, Head of Customer Contact  
Stephanie Goad, Assistant Director Communications, Performance and Partnerships  
Wayne Hemingway, Democratic Services Officer  
Richard Hicks, Deputy Director, Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance  
Joy Kirby, Quality Assurance and Client Manager  
Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services  
Jane Ringham, Head of Elections and Member Services  
Catherine Smith, Development Policy and Engagement Manager  
Lauren Wallis, Democratic Services Officer  
Phil Watts, Finance Manager, Children & Adult Services  
Christine Wilson, Head of Legal Services

**900 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 4 February 2014 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

**901 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Avey, Juby and Wildey.

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

There were no urgent matters by reason of special circumstances.

**903 Declarations of interests and whipping**

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other interests

Councillor Murray declared an interest in agenda item 6 – Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services and specifically in Medway Adult & Community Learning Services (MACLS). Councillor Murray noted the partnership working between MACLS and Mid Kent College. She stated she worked for Mid Kent College in Maidstone and that she had no involvement in the partnership working and therefore reserved her right to speak.

**904 Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact**

**Discussion:**

Members received an overview of progress made within the Portfolio for Community Safety and Customer Contact falling within the remit of the Committee over the last year which included the following subjects:

- Community Contact
- ICT
- Legal

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact, Councillor Hicks, responded to Members' questions and comments as follows:

- Customer Contact Team – The pressures on the Customer Contact Team were highlighted. The Better for Less (BfL) initiative had increased pressure by reducing the numbers of staff whilst customer numbers were

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increasing making Riverside One very busy. Portfolio Holder agreed that Riverside One was not able to provide services to the standard the Council aspired to and therefore a new location was being sought. He further advised that in the next year or so Chatham would have a proper customer contact centre. However, under BfL most complaints were received via telephone and the call centre received 50,000 calls a month. The public was also directed to the Community Hubs in Rochester and Gillingham. In response to questions about the number of contact centre staff, the 92% positive response rate and the breakdown of call monitoring data (i.e. how many calls were used to provide the data) and the Portfolio Holder agreed to provide the Committee with this information in the form of a report.

- ICT – The Council’s systems were not always considered adequate and the Portfolio Holder’s current view on IT accessibility for Council staff was requested. In addition, concern was expressed about the “digital by default” requirement for the public to be online to be connected to Council services. The Committee was advised of the “agile working” initiative which would allow officers to record their work whilst out of the office, for example, social workers and planning officers. He also referred to “Thin Client” technology that was more efficient to run and used less power than a personal computer. The Portfolio Holder was a member of a cross party working group that was considering these matters and he undertook to provide the Committee with details. The Group had also recognised the hard work of the staff and the quantum and complexity of the work. However, concern was expressed that the staff were working incredibly hard and their goodwill and capacity was not limitless.
- Legal Strategic Advice – A concern was raised about potential liability to the Council if the Government ruled that the Council should not have decided to transfer a surplus on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to its general fund. In the past, legal challenges had caused the Council to become risk averse and it was asked where the Council stood in comparison to other local authorities. The Portfolio Holder reported that the Council had gained detailed legal opinion and it was for the Portfolio Holder for Finance to respond to this question. The Council would always obtain robust legal advice whenever necessary before taking action such as this.

### **Decision:**

The Committee thanked the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact for his attendance and the answers he had provided to the Committee and 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.

**905 Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services**

**Discussion:**

Members received an overview of progress made within the Portfolio for Housing and Community Services falling within the remit of the Committee over the last year which included the following subjects:

- Adult learning
- Bereavement and registration services
- Disabled adaptations to housing
- Homeless and housing options
- Housing allocations for social housing
- Housing strategy
- Private sector housing
- The development and management of the Council's housing stock

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, responded to Members' questions and comments as follows:

- Ofsted – On receipt of a request for an update on the Council's Ofsted report, the Portfolio Holder reported that the Council's Ofsted report had improved from a four to a three which acknowledged progress made by the Council. However the new systems put in place to achieve this improvement still needed time to settle in and, when they had, full account would be taken of these in any future Ofsted inspection. The journey of improvement had brought new sources of income that were more sustainable and effective to the Council. The new funding was also playing a useful role in a number of areas such as troubled families. Some lessons were still to be learned but overall, progress was going well. He noted that the model Ofsted worked to was difficult to apply to learning not directed at training for employment and so it was intended to rebrand the diverse business into three distinct strands, with different criteria for each. The Portfolio Holder undertook to circulate the Council's Ofsted report to the Committee.
- Bereavement Services – The Committee noted the bereavement project to install mercury abatement equipment had been well handled and well managed and it was requested that the Committee's appreciation be passed onto the team at Medway Crematorium. Concern was raised that the Council had been required to install mercury abatement equipment and there were only two companies in the UK that could undertake this work. One company had gone into liquidation in the middle of the installation which had made the project very difficult to handle. However despite this issue the project had been well managed and the Portfolio Holder had been very impressed with the Team. It was requested that the Committee's concerns be forwarded to the national body involved with developing this initiative.

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- Registration Services – On being questioned with regard to the promotion of equal marriages in Medway, the Portfolio Holder replied that anything that attracted income to the registration service was to be welcomed.
- Homeless applications – Concern was expressed regarding the increase in homeless applications and the fact that the Council's only approach to this increase had been to adopt the Homelessness Prevention Strategy and was anything else currently being done. The Portfolio Holder reported that the Council's Housing Solutions Team was working with homeless applicants and was doing everything possible to assist.
- Licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) – It was noted that the number of licensable HMOs in Medway had remained static for sometime. However some Members considered that the number of poorly run HMOs was increasing and more action should be taken by the Council. Councillors were requested to report any suspected licensable HMOs to the appropriate officer to enable appropriate action to be taken. He also advised that the Council had sent out a clear message that action against would be taken against badly run unlicensed HMOs.
- Housing Benefit - Problems had been arising out of the impending decision on paying housing benefits direct to tenants. The Portfolio Holder felt that whilst this would encourage financial responsibility, it was feared that some tenants would not use the money to pay rent. The housing building programme was ongoing and small units had been developed to enable people to downsize. The Portfolio Holder reported that new legislation had not caused the expected surge in rent arrears due to careful management by the housing team.
- Private Sector Housing – It was noted that the number of complaints in relation to housing standards had increased by 23%. It was considered that the Council should be more proactive in sending messages to these 'rogue' landlords to give tenants confidence to report issues without the fear of losing their homes. Medway Council ran a landlord accreditation scheme and had attracted funding which allowed these issues to be dealt with.
- Rent Arrears – The Committee was advised that the rent arrears recovery statistic of 102% included rent due from previous financial years collected in the current period.
- HRA Development Team – The number of bungalows on the new build homes list was seen as a positive and the Portfolio Holder stated that although the criteria for applying to move to a new home would have to be applied it was hoped that older people in under-occupation would consider downsizing to release larger family homes.
- Free Health Checks – The Portfolio Holder reported that he was very pleased to see the progress on this initiative and he hoped that this could be built on to reduce health inequalities across the area. The

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Chairman of the Health Check Task Group advised that the task group had focussed on the five wards with the lowest uptake of health checks and this had included the peninsula.

- Roof Repairs to Benenden and Harbledown Manor – A request was made that a pitched roof, such as the replacement roof on Vidal Manor, be considered to replace the flat roofs on these buildings. The Portfolio Holder reported that flat roof technology had seen major steps forward in recent times and they were not as problematic as previously experienced. The financial modelling criteria contained in the Asset Manager Policy would be applied to decide how these projects were dealt with.
- Legal Strategic Advice – Further to a question directed at the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact earlier in the meeting, regarding concern about the potential liability to the Council if the Government decided that the Council should not have ruled to transfer a surplus on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to its general fund, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services advised that he had seen the letter from the Minister who was seeking information on how the decision had been arrived at. The Council had responded accordingly stating that the surplus funding had been used to finance the Community Hubs at Twydall and the remaining funding would be used to improve Riverside One. The Portfolio Holder stated that the Council had acted correctly as housing was an overall service.
- STAR Survey 2013 – It was requested that congratulations be passed to staff on the improvement in overall satisfaction with Landlord Services and with repairs and maintenance. The Portfolio Holder responded that the Council would continue to work on satisfaction improvements. All results had come into the top quartile and improvements had been progressed by more user-friendly ways of reporting issues and having contractors who understood the issues.
- Partnership Working – In response to a question about working with education providers with regard to planning for the future in relation to housing and how to plan for the future, the Portfolio Holder stated that Medway attracted a great deal of university students and it was considered advantageous to the area if they should stay and work in Medway. The Portfolio Holder agreed that there were a number of ways for people to access housing including first time buyer schemes and affordable housing.

### Decision:

The Committee thanked the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services for his attendance and the answers he had provided to the Committee and it was agreed that:

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- a) The appreciation of the Committee be passed to the Medway Crematorium Team for the excellent management of the difficult project to install mercury abatement equipment at the Crematorium;
- b) The Council's latest Ofsted report be circulated to the Committee; and
- c) The appreciation of the Committee be passed to the appropriate Housing Team and contractor.

### **906 Hot Food Takeaways in Medway: A Guidance Note**

#### **Discussion:**

The Committee received a report and accompanying guidance note which addressed the link between obesity and planning in Medway and specifically regarding hot food takeaways. The guidance proposed a restriction on the hours of operation of hot food takeaways with 400 metres of schools and other measures to control numbers and location. Following the consultation process agreed by Cabinet on 11 March 2014, the intention was to implement a guidance note that could form material consideration in the determination of planning applications for hot food takeaways. The consultation would run from 20 March 2014 to 2 May 2014.

The Chairman reminded Councillors that the Committee was being asked to comment on the consultation, which had been approved by Cabinet and had not been "called-in" and that any comments and views would be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration. He requested that the consultation response report be submitted to the Committee before being sent to Cabinet for decision.

Members made the following comments:

One Councillor expressed strong opposition to the planning guidance note mainly in terms of the proposals being an attack on jobs, an attack on businesses, an attack on the local economy and an attack on an individual's freedom to choose. There was concern that there was public health officials and politicians out there who wish to restrict an individual's ability to make clear, rational choices for themselves. It was of concern that the Council was saying 'we do not trust you to make the right choice, so we are going to take that choice away'.

A Councillor, who was the governor at a number of schools, noted that the idea for this policy had come from the Health & Wellbeing Board and consultation on the proposal had been agreed by Cabinet. Obesity among adults and children was clearly an issue therefore the evidence would enable the Planning Committee to address the density of fast food outlets. A balanced mix of thriving community businesses was needed by Medway. It was felt that the consultation would allow the Council to make informed and appropriate decisions.



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A Councillor who was a member of the Health Inequalities Task Group stated that the Council had a legal obligation under Section 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to take appropriate steps to improve health in the area. Life expectancy in the Medway was below the national average and this gap must be addressed. This measure was not expected to have a huge impact in the short term but was part of a wider programme of measures and would raise awareness of the healthy lifestyle message to residents.

It was noted that the Planning Committee was aware how difficult it was to refuse permission for applications involving hot food takeaways as there was no policy reason to refuse. This policy would allow the Committee more scope to refuse applications for new outlets. The 23 local authorities mentioned in the report would have all consulted and all similar policies had been agreed.

The Vice-Chairman stated that the policy was undergoing public consultation and at the very least this would make people talk and think and may change a few people's attitudes.

Page 37 of the report and the Medway's deprived areas were referred to. It was noted how much cheap food lacked nutrition and health considerations must be included in planning policies. Cheap food also impaired children's concentration and caused mess and litter in communities. It was noted that there had been no challenges against the local authorities who had introduced this policy.

It was noted that the proposed guidance was only part of a series of measures. Introduction of the policy would send an important message and had been widely supported by the Health & Wellbeing Board. The consultation was to be welcomed and it was suggested that the following consultees be included:

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Community Services  
Medway Ethnic Minority Forum (MEMF)  
Schools including education professionals, governing bodies and school councils  
Medway Youth Parliament  
Public Health England  
Federation of Small Businesses  
The Medway Clinical Commissioning Group  
The student population of universities and colleges in the area

### **Decision:**

- a) The Committee note the report;
- b) The Committee be provided with information showing the number of schools in Medway, how many have hot food takeaways within 400m and how many have none;
- c) The following list of consultees be included in the consultation:

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Community Services not just through the Medway Ethnic Minority Forum (MEMF)



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Schools including education professionals, governing bodies and school councils

Medway Youth Parliament

Public Health England

Federation of Small Businesses

The appropriate Clinical Commissioning Groups

The student population of universities and colleges in the area

- d) The report on the results of the consultation on the Hot Food Takeaways: Planning Guidance be submitted for consideration by the Business Support Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 3 July 2014 before its submission to Cabinet for consideration; and
- e) A weblink of the full text of Councillor Irvine's contribution to the debate be sent to Committee and attending officers.

### **907 Council Plan 2013/14 Quarter 3 Performance Monitoring**

#### **Discussion:**

The Assistant Director Communications, Performance and Partnerships reported on performance against the Council's Key Measures of Success for the third quarter of 2013/14 and drew attention to the areas within the remit of the Committee.

NI156 – Number of Households Living in Temporary Accommodation – It was questioned how the Council checked the quality of temporary stock where it was not the landlord. The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture advised that all Council funded housing should be of a Decent Home Standard and a Briefing Note had recently been circulated on this matter. This standard included temporary accommodation and Councillors were requested to report any concerns to officers. All properties used by the Council were inspected.

Project Recreate – It was considered that this was a real opportunity to engage with the existing creative environment.

Growing Places Fund – Concern was raised that there was no indication on how the Council would be paying back this money. It was considered that this concern was within the remit of the Committee through its finance responsibilities and a report was requested to be submitted to a future meeting and to include, more specifically, the Rochester and Chatham areas.

#### **Decision:**

- a) The Committee noted third quarter performance against the Key Measures of Success used to monitor progress against the Council Plan 2012/13;
- b) The Committee requested that the Assistant Director Communications, Performance and Partnerships submit a report to a future meeting of the

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Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on how the Council would be paying back the Growing Places Fund specifically in relation to the Chatham and Rochester areas.

### **908 Capital Budget Monitoring 2013/14**

#### **Discussion:**

The Children and Adults Finance Manager introduced the report which set out capital budget monitoring for the period ending December 2013 with an outturn forecast for 2013/14. The Committee was advised there had been an increase in the capital programme since the previous quarter which had added £17 million. This included £10 million in the form of targeted basic need grant, allowing the Council to meet its requirement for additional school places in Medway, and a £5.5 million increase for the HRA house building programme had been funded from borrowing. Both additions were to be rolled forward and spent in future years.

#### **Decision:**

- a) The Committee noted the spending forecasts summarised at Table 1 of the report; and
- b) The Committee noted the budget virements and additions to the capital programme as detailed in paragraphs 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.3.1 and 4.4.1 of the report.

### **909 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14**

#### **Discussion:**

Children and Adults Finance Manager introduced a report detailing the revenue budget forecasts as at the end of quarter 3 (April – December 2013).

Since the quarter 2 monitoring report the forecast overspend had been reduced by £1.1 million to £3.3 million.

#### **Decision:**

The Committee noted the forecast outturn position and proposed management action following the third round of quarterly revenue monitoring for 2013/14.

### **910 6 Monthly Review of the Council's Corporate Risk Register**

#### **Discussion:**

The Business Quality Assurance Manager reported on the 6 monthly review of the Council's Corporate Risk Register and drew attention to a number of

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suggested amendments proposed by risk owners as set out at paragraph 3 of the report.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Business Quality Assurance Manager for all her hard work and long service to Medway Council and advised that she would be leaving at the end of the month.

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the tabled information containing details of risk SR27 – Government changes to Local Authority's Responsibilities for Schools which had been omitted from Appendix B of the report. Also risk SR9b Keeping Vulnerable Young People Safe and On Track and SR 17 Delivering Regeneration appeared twice.

SR19 Downturn in the Economy - Concern expressed with regard to the downgrading of this risk to the lowest point of E2 was too much as this would send out the wrong signals. Medway's unemployment numbers had increased in the last month even though the national average had reduced. TIGER funding had also been reduced and it was considered that a reduction of risk to a more middle position was appropriate. Councillors were advised that there were other factors that must also be taken into account including a possible conflict in Europe which might push up fuel prices, reduced economic growth of countries such as China etc. The Business Quality Assurance Manager explained that the downgrade was in line with the responsible officer's recommendation as there were management strategies in place which would make the risk far less likely to be affected by external factors.

SR22 – Treasury Management – Some caution was expressed about downgrading this risk whilst the service was bought back in-house. It was considered that it should remain the same whilst the change was in progress. Some Members considered that the downgrading was appropriate given the reduced risk of a downturn in the economy and the protection given by strategies put in place by the Council and the trajectory of improvement in the local economy.

### **Decision:**

- a) The Committee accepted the Management Team's recommendations on amendments to the Council's Risk Register as detailed in paragraph 3 of the report with the exception of SR19 – Downturn in the Economy which it was recommended should be downgraded to C2 and the risk rating be linked to SR17 – Delivering Regeneration;
- b) The Committee agreed that this recommendation be forwarded to Cabinet on 8 April 2014; and
- c) The Committee expressed its appreciation and wished the Business Quality Assurance Manager all the best for the future.

**911 Member's Item: Mayoralty Budget**

**Discussion:**

The Committee considered a report that set out the response to an issue raised under the Medway Constitution Overview and Scrutiny Rules (chapter 4, part 5, paragraph 9.1) by Councillor Osborne concerning the costs of the Mayoralty.

Councillor Osborne introduced the report by stating that the purpose of the report was not to criticise any past or present Mayors or Deputy Mayors but to scrutinise the budget that supported the mayoralty. There had been an 18% reduction in funding from the Government in the last three years and there had been no corresponding reductions in the mayoralty budget although most other budgets had experienced reductions. He stated that the public were interested in the overspend on vehicles and staffing and referred to a couple of other authorities that shared mayoralty staff with other departments and some that had moved to leasing vehicles to save money. The Council needed to be responsible with public funds and that this information should be in the public domain. At mayoralty charity events, tickets were often sold at prices that were cheaper than if the event was not for charity and Councillors and their partners were therefore receiving discounts that should be open for scrutiny. Councillor Osborne also referred to the fact that some charity events had had to be cancelled due to lack of interest. Also the delineation of responsibility between the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor was of concern. The Deputy Mayor carried out 81 duties in a year that equated to two engagements a week and this demonstrated that the duties needed to be equalised or it should be considered whether the roles were needed. Table 3 in the report showed the food and drinks costs and this should be clear to the public. There had been reductions in frontline services, in schools budgets, in highways repairs and bus service costs were increasing. Councillor Osborne concluded that there should be scrutiny of mayoralty and leadership costs.

The Deputy Director of Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance responded by stating that this was a comprehensive report and he summarised the main sections. He welcomed the transparency the report brought and he stated that all budgets were monitored and managed closely. The department had delivered all the savings required and the report showed that there was a very lean mayoralty team. He concluded that there was a distinction between the roles of Executive Mayors and Ceremonial Mayors.

Members asked questions and made comments as follows:

**Council's Budget Process** – A question was raised about why Councillor Osborne had not raised these issues during the Council's budget process. Councillor Osborne responded that he had requested a Member's report and had wanted to see the report before making a judgement.

**Shared Responsibility** – Some Councillors considered that the duties of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor should be shared more equally. Reference was made to the former councils in Medway before 1998 which meant that Medway's Mayor and Deputy Mayor had a greater geographical area and it was not good

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to disappoint those who have requested the Mayor to attend their functions. If Medway did not have a Mayor, the Council would still have to hold corporate and reciprocal events and these would require funding. A former Mayor advised that when the Mayor was invited to an event, be it a grand function or a nursery school, then the Mayor was expected. This caused some of the discrepancy in duty numbers between the two roles.

**Intangible Benefits** – It was considered that there were intangible benefits for the Council from the office of the Mayor linked with raising the public's awareness of the Council, spreading positive news, developing civic pride etc.

**Budget** – Most Councillors considered it was correct to scrutinise the budget. Some felt that a static budget showed that the allocated funding was at the correct level and some felt savings should be made in line with other teams in the Council.

**Independent Review Panel** – It was suggested that the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) in relation to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor be scrutinised again by the Independent Review Panel (IRP)

**Non- attendance of Councillors at the Mayor-Making** – In response to a question on why some Opposition Councillors chose not to attend the Mayor-making ceremony, the Committee was advised that some Councillors did not attend the ceremony because of the removal of the points system in relation to the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

**Mayoral Responsibilities** – The level of commitment to being Mayor was considered by those who had undertaken the role to be very high. The Mayor needed to respond to demand and a generally high demand had only reduced very temporarily in the face of recession. The role was a drain on the Mayor's personal finances, work and free time.

It was confirmed to the Committee that any of the Council's political parties were able to nominate a Councillor to be Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

Councillor Osborne concluded by thanking the Chairman and the Deputy Director of Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance. He considered that an annual review of the mayoralty budget would be a good idea and sharing staff would reduce costs.

### **Decision:**

- a) The Committee noted the report;
- b) The Committee requested that the next Independent Review Panel (IRP) be requested to review the Special Responsibility Allowances of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor; and
- c) The Committee expressed its appreciation to all Mayors and Deputy Mayors past and present.

**912 Work Programme**

**Discussion:**

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report advising Members of the current work programme which allowed them to adjust it in light of latest priorities, issues and circumstances.

An agenda planning meeting had been held on 28 February 2014 and the following changes to the work programme had been agreed:

- (a) Update on the joint venture with NORSE – quarter 3 2013/14 be deferred to the meeting on the Committee to be held on 3 July 2014 and the Update on the joint venture with NORSE – end of year 2013/14 (also going to the July meeting of the Committee) to be merged into one report.
- (b) Update on discussions with the Gambling Commission to be submitted to the meeting to be held on 3 July 2014.
- (c) 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.
- (d) Participatory Budgeting – The Director of Recreation, Community and Culture and the Chief Finance Officer to meet to scope this subject and to report back to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesmen for further discussion.
- (e) Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Development Programme to be submitted to the meeting to be held on 3 July 2014.
- (f) Communications Shared Service to be submitted to the meeting to be held on 26 August 2014.

Welfare Reform Group - The Chairman stated that the Committee had been invited to set up the membership of the Welfare Reform Task Group and he advised that there would be no support members as the Task Groups required a commitment to complete the work in a satisfactory manner. Concern and disappointment were expressed about the lack of support members.

The Conservative nominations for the Welfare Reform Task Group were Councillors Pat Gulvin, Mackness and Royle.

The Committee's spokesmen agreed to nominate outside the meeting through the usual channel.

Sale of Cheap Alcohol in Non-traditional Outlets - Councillor Murray requested a Member's report to investigate the sale of cheap alcohol in non-traditional outlets for example Supadrug in Chatham's Pentagon Centre. Maidstone Town Centre had a Supasavers store which sold wine at £3 per bottle and the town

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had experienced problems such as on-street drinking and littering from these sales. The Committee was advised that this subject was part of the remit of the Medway Alcohol Partnership Group who was looking at alcohol and its cumulative impact and the appropriate officers were also involved. Councillor Murray confirmed that she was happy to accept this offer but would like the report to be considered by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **Decision:**

- (a) The Committee noted the items identified for inclusion in the work programme be noted;
- (b) The Committee agreed the changes to the work programme set out in paragraph 3.2.1;
- (c) The Committee agreed that the membership of the Welfare Reform Task Group would be appointed on a 3:1:1 basis with no support Members.
- (d) The Committee agreed that the Conservative membership of the Welfare Reform Task Group be Councillors Pat Gulvin, Mackness and Royle and that the Labour and Liberal Democrat Spokesmen would nominate through the normal channels outside the meeting;
- (e) 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; and
- (f) The Committee note the work programmes of all overview and scrutiny committees (as set out in appendix 2 of the report).

**Chairman**

**Date:**

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