

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

Thursday, 2 October 2014

6.30pm to 9.30pm

Record of the meeting

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

Present: Councillors: Bright, Etheridge, Griffiths, Adrian Gulvin (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), Hubbard, Mackinlay, Mason, Osborne, Stamp and Turpin

Substitutes: Councillors:
Pat Gulvin (Substitute for Griffin)
Purdy (Substitute for Carr)

In Attendance: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture
Stephen Gaimster, Assistant Director, Housing and Regeneration
Richard Hicks, Deputy Director, Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance
Anna Marie Lawrence-Lovell, Performance Manager
Andy McGrath, Assistant Director, Front Line Services
Christine Wilson, Head of Legal Services
Ellen Wright, Democratic Services Officer

397 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 21 August 2014 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

398 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from the Chairman, Councillor Carr, Councillor Griffin and Councillor Juby. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, Councillor Adrian Gulvin took the chair.

399 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

400 Declarations of interests and whipping

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

Whipping

There were no declarations of whipping

401 Attendance by the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth

Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty attended the meeting to be held to account for the areas of her portfolio that fell within the remit of this committee. Members asked questions and Councillor Chitty responded as follows: -

- **Regeneration of Chatham Town Centre**

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth advised that regeneration works were continuing in Chatham Centre with the introduction of a creative quarter at one end of the High Street. However, she confirmed that there was still more work to be done. Major developments had slowed as a result of the current economic climate. She referred to the Pentagon Centre and advised the Committee that whilst there had been proposals drawn up to revitalise the Centre, unfortunately, the owners of the Centre had been unable to proceed with the works in the current economic climate. However, the desire to undertake these works remained. She advised that funding for regeneration works in Chatham had been received through the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and she was hopeful that this would continue.

She did not accept that the town centres of Canterbury and Maidstone were comparable with Chatham as they were located within a different demographic area.

In response to comments that both Canterbury and Maidstone had undergone significant investment, the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth informed the Committee that there continued to be the desire for investment in Chatham Centre and she referred to the substantial improvements to the river walk, the investment

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made by individual companies to improve their stores, recent works to the former Theatre Royal and the recent addition of the Big Screen. In addition, Chatham High Street had been substantially improved at its Rochester end following the removal of the flyover. These works had opened up this area and considerably changed its atmosphere. Employ Medway, a successful venture was located within this part of Chatham and creative industries were moving into this area. It was however acknowledged that there was still work to be carried out on the regeneration of Chatham Centre.

- **Medway City Estate and its transport infrastructure**

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth advised the Committee that regular discussions had taken place with businesses on the Medway City Estate over the years on a range of issues affecting the Estate. At these meetings, the issue of the transport infrastructure for access to and egress from the Estate had occasionally been discussed. She accepted that the difficulties were even more challenging when roadworks were taking place.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth advised that the Leader had obtained LEP funding to investigate and deliver an initiative to alleviate the problem. This funding would be available in 2015.

- **Local Plan**

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth confirmed that there was a cross party group that dealt with issues relating to the Local Plan. It was unfortunate that the previous Government and the current Government had continued to move the goalposts as to the requirements of a Local Plan and, as a result, Medway Council, along with a number of other local authorities had had to withdraw its Local Plan.

In response to a question as to commitment to the provision of housing in Medway, the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth advised that the level of housing requirement was established via a process set by Central Government. Work was underway to identify potential land availability for housing. Lodge Hill planning application had been approved by the Council and was now with the Secretary of State for a decision.

- **Affordable housing**

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth confirmed that this authority supported provision of affordable housing to a level of 25% or over in new developments.

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- **Lack of consultation with Ward Councillors on transport projects within their Wards**

In response to concerns raised by a Member as to the lack of consultation with Ward Councillors on a transport project undertaken in Luton Road, the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth confirmed that Ward Councillors had a right to be advised of works being undertaken in their Wards and she suggested that the Member concerned raise this direct with the Officers concerned.

- **Chatham Town Centre Forum - Terms of Reference**

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth advised that the Forum had led the request for a review of its terms of reference and, as the Council sponsored the Forum in terms of Officer support time, the Council was involved in this work.

In response to the question as to how over £27k had been raised through Town Centre Promotions, the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth advised that some of this funding had been received via a Section 106 obligation.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth concluded by stating that in Medway, businesses were thriving and unemployment was decreasing. Employment opportunities were available and the Council was doing all it could within its powers to help people find work including the setting up of new businesses. She advised that on average about 47% of new businesses were successful, but that in Medway 83% of new businesses were successful. In addition, Medway had been successful in finding nearly 3,000 placements for apprenticeships.

Decision:

The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth for attending the meeting and answering Members' questions.

402 2014/15 Quarter 1 Performance Monitoring

Discussion:

The Committee received a report summarising the performance of the Regeneration, Community and Culture Directorate for Quarter 1, (April - June 2014) as set out in the Council Plan 2013/2015.

It was noted that any performance information highlighted grey within the report was not relevant to this Committee as it fell under the responsibilities of other overview and scrutiny committees but had been included in the report to provide context and clarity as to how the priorities as a whole had been performing.

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The Committee was advised that whilst there were 19 key measures of success that were monitored to assess delivery of the Council Plan, data for 11 of the key measures would not be available until Quarter 2 or Quarter 4. Out of these 11 key measures, 7 related to perception data from the tracker, a phone based survey of around 400 customers carried out bi-annually. The next survey was due to take place in September 2014 and results would be included in Quarter 2.

It was reported that the performance data included within Appendix 1 to the report included information from the Citizen Panel results obtained in April 2014. It was explained that this involved a quarterly paper survey of approximately 2,000 residents who had been recruited to be a Citizen Panel member. It was stressed that targets within the Council Plan 2014/15 had been based on tracker performance and not the results from the Citizen Panel therefore, due to the different methodologies for capturing customer/resident perception it was not possible to undertake comparisons on the views expressed. It was confirmed that this was the reason for the discrepancy in the figures between the two different methods of obtaining satisfaction data.

The Committee was advised that 7 out of 8 Council Plan key measures specific to this Committee were on target or had exceeded their target for Quarter 1 and 8 out of 8 key performance measures of success had improved compared to Quarter 1 2013/14 performance.

Under the priority - A safe, clean and green Medway, 2 out of 2 measures of success achieved or exceeded target in Quarter 1.

Key performance highlights included:

- The Street Scene Enforcement Team had managed 372 fly tips with 16 cases leading to prosecution resulting in fines totalling almost £11,000.
- The Walking to Schools Campaign continued to be a success resulting in a reduction of approximately 31,000 cars off the road and 81,000 green journeys. This placed Medway top of the league across Kent.
- In addition to securing a Green Flag across 5 existing sites, Green Flags had also been awarded to the Great Lines Heritage Park and Gillingham Park.
- In Quarter 1, there had been higher than anticipated kerbside organic recycling and this would provide a positive effect on Medway's overall recycling rate.

Under the priority - Everyone benefiting from the area's regeneration, 5 out of 6 measures of success had achieved or exceeded target and 4 out of 6 measures had improved compared with the 2013/2014 average.

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Key performance highlights included:

- Following the award of new contracts for the operation of Supported Bus Services and Yellow School Buses, a saving had been achieved and, it had been possible to increase the frequency of all Sunday services on the main corridors and evening services between Medway and Maidstone and a new night bus had been introduced.
- The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) had awarded Kent and Medway a total of £68.1m for transport projects that would commence in 2015/16 with £28.6m allocated to five Medway schemes. In addition, Medway had been granted a loan of £4m for flood protection in Canal Road, Strood.
- Employ Medway continued to be a success and since the Gaps project had begun in 2011, over 200 young people had been helped into apprenticeships. Medway Council remained one of the best performers on the Work Programme and the Impress project was currently supporting 305 clients.
- Through Partners in Growth and Tiger Loan projects, 665 jobs had been attained in 2013/14 (482 created and 183 protected) through engagement with local businesses. This was an increase of 142% on 2012/13 performance.
- In Quarter 1, Medway successfully delivered a diverse range of free cultural events including the English Festival, Sweeps Festival, Summer Dickens Festival, FUSE and Armed Forces Day. All events were positively received with high footfall and satisfaction scores.
- The new improved Strand Leisure Park opened in May 2014 and the official opening of the Stirling Sports Centre as King's Rochester Sports Centre had taken place.

The Committee was informed that 1 out of 8 key measures had been below target but was still within acceptable performance limits as follows:

- ECS48c – Employment that had lasted 26 weeks - Quarter 1 performance was 53 narrowly missing the target of 54.

The Committee then raised questions and discussed a number of issues including:

- **LRCC1 – Number of visitors to tourist attractions in Medway.** It was noted that the 2014/15 target for visitors was 700,000. This was less than the actual number of visitors in 2012/13 (740,956). It was explained that 2012 had been a Year of Celebration in Medway with a number of major activities having taken place during that year

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therefore, this had been the reason for the increase in the number of visitors to Medway in that particular year.

It was confirmed that the statistics for this key measure were obtained from 15 facilities of which some were operated by the Council, whilst others were run by the private sector. Therefore, general visitors who came to Medway for other reasons or those visiting friends and relatives were not included within this calculation.

A Member expressed concern that at a recent event to commemorate World War 1 held on the Great Lines Heritage Park, the funfair operator had charged £3 for funfair rides despite advertising on posters all rides at £1. It had subsequently been found that the small print on the posters had restricted the reduced fee to Friday only. There was concern that this had been misleading to those persons attending the event. The Assistant Director Frontline Services confirmed that this had been drawn to the attention of Officers and the Events Team had since taken this matter up with the Event Organiser who was responsible for the production of the posters.

- **NI 167 – Average journey time along 6 primary transport corridors into Chatham (mins per mile).** The Assistant Director Frontline Services advised the Committee that the 6 primary transport corridors were shared with Kent and that current monitoring was undertaken by Kent Police using ANPR cameras. Work was underway with Kent Police to identify a more refined system.

The Assistant Director Frontline Services informed the Committee of changes that had been made at the pedestrian lights in The Brook, Chatham and to signals at the Chatham Waterfront Bus Station as a means of increasing the flow of traffic through Chatham Town Centre.

- **HP26 - Satisfaction with road maintenance.** The Assistant Director Frontline Services confirmed that primary and secondary roads were prioritised for road maintenance. He confirmed that Medway was placed in the middle of a league table of local authorities in the South East for performance on road maintenance. In addition, he advised the Committee that the Automobile Association had identified a £14 billion under investment in road maintenance across the country.
- **ECD 50 – Number of apprenticeships created through Employ Medway.** The Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration confirmed that Medway Council was proactive in achieving success with the number of apprenticeships created over the last quarter and was actively involved in initiatives to create apprenticeship placements. He advised that through external funding from the European Union a full-time post was dedicated to the creation of apprenticeship placements in Medway. In addition, Medway Council could subsidise apprenticeships within the private sector.

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- **LRCC4a – Number of jobs created and safeguarded through intensive assists.** In response to a question as to how the safeguarding of a job was measured in terms of the time period by which the job was safeguarded, the Assistant Director confirmed that this information was available from data collected from a number of sources. He agreed to supply a briefing note explaining this in detail.

A Member referring to Paragraph 5.23 of the report advised the Committee that the Mid-Kent Astronomical Society had recently been gifted a telescope from the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh. She understood that the telescope was to be located at an observatory in Canterbury but suggested that Officers undertake investigations as to whether the telescope could be located at a suitable venue in Medway. She agreed to provide Officers with contact details of the organisation.

A Member drew attention the lack of Medway publicity at the recent Thames Barge event and drew attention to issues raised with him by the owner of LV21 (Light Vessel 21). In response, the Deputy Director, Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance confirmed the Council's aspirations to increase use of the river for both leisure and tourism. He confirmed that some private sector organisations operating events did not always seek additional promotion from the Council. In relation to LV21, the Deputy Director, Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance outlined the level of support provided to the owners of LV21 by the Council.

Decisions:

- a) The performance against the key measures of success used to monitor progress against the Council Plan 2013/15 in Quarter 1 be noted; and
- b) A briefing note be circulated setting out information as to how measurements were undertaken in terms of time periods where a job has been safeguarded.

403 Draft Medway Cultural Strategy 2014 - 2019

Discussion:

The Committee received a report and detailed presentation from the Deputy Director, Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance on the Draft Medway Cultural Strategy 2014 – 2019.

Members were advised that much had been achieved since the adoption of the current cultural strategy in October 2009 and improvements had been made across the range of Medway's cultural offer including:

- enhancements to Medway's green spaces: green flags, play investment;
- heritage buildings: Rochester Castle, the Guildhall Museum, Eastgate House;

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- introduction of new festivals and events: Under Siege, the English Festival and the River Festival;
- roll out of Medway's community hub programme: Gillingham, Rochester, Chatham and Strood;
- support provided for the creative sector: Project 161, Recreate, Pop, Nucleus Arts;
- tourism: tourism bus and Christmas markets;
- investment in Medway's sporting facilities: Medway Park, Strood Sports Centre, the Stirling Centre;
- hosting national and international sporting events: the Modern Pentathlon World Cup, the Modern Pentathlon European Championships, the British Transport Games and the Wheelchair Rugby League World Cup; and
- mass participation sporting events as part of our sporting legacy: the Medway Mile, the Big Splash and the Big Ride.

It was recognised that Medway's cultural offer had a pivotal role to play in the regeneration and place making of Medway, making Medway an attractive place to live, work, study and visit.

The Cultural Partnership, chaired by Mark Little at the University of the Creative Arts and comprising partners from across Medway's cultural offer including the universities, Mid Kent College, English Heritage, King's Rochester, the Dockyard, the Cathedral, Nucleus Arts, artists and creatives, the French Hospital, Gillingham Football Club, Icon Theatre and the Royal Engineers Museum had produced the existing cultural strategy and developed the draft strategy for 2014 – 19.

The draft cultural strategy was intended to be a public facing document and a strategic overview for the council and other cultural organisations in Medway.

The draft strategy, whilst being action focused followed a strategic framework provided by the following priorities retained since 2009:

- stewardship
- engagement
- contributing to economic prosperity
- health and wellbeing

Members discussed various aspects of the strategy including:

- The possibility of obtaining on loan an enamelled cup currently located in the Rijks Museum in Amsterdam for the Medway in Flames event in 2017 to commemorate 350 years since the Dutch raid on Upnor Castle - It was noted Chatham Historic Dockyard was currently in discussions with the Dutch National Maritime Museum.
- The possibility of revisiting the possible roofing of Rochester Castle – It was noted that in partnership with English Heritage, environmental monitoring was taking place to assess the condition of the building over

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- a period to assess the best means of preserving the structure and whether a roof should be provided at the Castle.
- More could be made of the independent cultural sector within the Cultural Strategy – The Deputy Director, Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance confirmed that he was happy to take on board the suggestion of including greater reference to the grass roots cultural sector within the Cultural Strategy.
 - The possible provision of a Sculpture Park at the Great Lines Heritage Park – The Deputy Director, Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance agreed to investigate this suggestion
 - The possible acquisition of a stone from Gallipoli to be located at the Great Lines Heritage Park to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Anzac landings in 2015 - The Deputy Director, Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance agreed to discuss this suggestion with the Chatham Historic Dockyard.
 - The possibility of the telescope gifted to the Mid-Kent Astronomical Society being located at a suitable venue in Medway. (Referred to at minute 402 above)
 - The possible inclusion of the weekly markets within the Cultural Strategy - In response, the Deputy Director, Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance stated that whilst the Christmas Market was included within the Cultural Strategy, the regular weekly markets were not, as there were other means of publicising these markets.
 - The benefits of publicising local attractions to people who travel into Medway to work.
 - It was noted that the Central Theatre was included within the Cultural Strategy and the Deputy Director, Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance confirmed that The Brook was soon to undergo external refurbishment works including cleaning the building and external lighting.

Decision:

The Committee thanked the Deputy Director, Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance for his presentation and noted that he will be pursuing the innovative, low cost suggestions raised by Members during discussion on this item.

404 Member's Item - Protocol for communication/engagement with elected members on major transport issues

Discussion:

At the request of Councillor Hubbard, the Committee discussed the issue of a protocol for communication/engagement with elected members on major transport projects.

In response to the points raised by Councillor Hubbard in his Member's Item, the Assistant Director Front Line Services advised that a protocol was already

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in existence to brief Ward Councillors on major transport projects both within their Wards and in Wards directly affected by the transport projects. However, he accepted that this had not worked as transparently in Strood as it should have done regarding works at Darnley Arch and he apologised for this oversight.

The Assistant Director Front Line Services explained that a roadworks list was regularly circulated to all Councillors detailing the location of scheduled works, the reason for the works, the sponsor, start date and the anticipated duration of the works. In addition, he advised that the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture had regular meetings with Members across all Groups for which reports were prepared by Officers on up and coming transport projects.

In response to the suggestion that the works at Darnley Arch be delayed or undertaken overnight, the Assistant Director Front Line Services advised that roadworks could only be carried out overnight if they were not located close to residential properties or where the works would only last for a limited duration e.g. one or two nights. He explained that to have undertaken the works at Darnley Arch overnight would have resulted in the works lasting longer than 6 weeks and would have affected approximately 70 residential properties located within 100m from the site. Owing to the likelihood of noise complaints, this was not therefore an option. In addition, to have undertaken the works in phases would have lengthened the duration of the works which was not considered desirable.

The Assistant Director Front Line Services informed the Committee that the works at Darnley Arch were due for completion one week earlier than planned.

In response to comments made about Medway City Estate, (paragraph 2.8 of the report), the Assistant Director Front Line Services informed the Committee that Southern Gas were undertaking essential repairs to replace a leaking mains gas pipe. He advised upon the outcome of negotiations between Officers and Southern Gas on the routing of the works as a means of minimising the effect upon the community. In recognition of the current problems being caused for traffic leaving Medway City Estate during the evening rush hour, a traffic management initiative involving use of a buffer vehicle to slow traffic travelling through Medway Tunnel had been put in place so as to relieve pressure on St Anthony's roundabout. This temporary initiative would remain in place until the Station Road roadworks were complete. Any Member wishing to view this initiative in operation could do so by prior arrangement through the CCTV control room.

The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture and informed the Committee that £2m funding was available for initiatives aimed at resolving the issues at Medway City Estate. He outlined some of the initiatives currently being considered.

The Assistant Director Front Line Services referring to earlier comments about the road safety scheme in Luton advised the Committee that this scheme had been possible through grant funding. He confirmed that Medway was proactive

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in acquiring funding for road schemes and it was a matter of balance as to at what point schemes should be placed out for consultation. Members expressed the view that they would welcome involvement at an early stage on road schemes. The Assistant Director Front Line Services advised that the Council had until Spring 2015 to work up and develop schemes to be funded by the LEP monies and therefore details of the various projects would be referred back to a future meeting of the Committee.

In responding to the comments from the Assistant Director Front Line Services, Councillor Hubbard referred to the communications system in place relating to planning applications and suggested that a similar scheme be put in place for major road transport schemes. He also suggested that the roadworks scheme list circulated to Councillors should include information as to how the schemes impact upon each other.

The Assistant Director Front Line Services advised the Committee that £9m funding was available to spend in Strood and that part of this funding would, in Year 1 be used to undertake an analysis of what is required. He gave an assurance that this would be shared with Ward Councillors.

Members also referred to the possible use of the bus lane in Canal Road, Strood by taxis and the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture agreed to notify Members of the Committee on the timescale for this to be achieved.

A Member advised that she had received reports of individuals, believed to be students regularly walking through Medway Tunnel. The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture requested that information be supplied on the time of day that this was occurring and the matter would be referred to the Police.

Decisions:

- a) The Committee noted the contents of the report and the response from Officers;
- b) It was noted that the planning application notices system involving Members works successfully and that a similar system on transport projects be communicated with Members;
- c) There be increased strategic planning on how transport projects both in and outside of the Council's control impact on each other; and
- d) A briefing note be supplied on the timescale for the bus lane in Canal Road in Strood to be opened up for use by taxis.

405 Petitions

Discussion:

The Committee received a report setting out details of one petition relevant to the work of this Committee where the Director's response had been accepted by the petitioner.

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In respect of the petition requesting a review of speed restrictions in Watling Street, Strood, the lead petitioner, whilst requesting that his petition be referred to this Committee for consideration, had agreed that this be referred to a meeting of the Committee after the traffic survey had been undertaken and the results were available. The Assistant Director Frontline Services had advised that the traffic survey was required to be undertaken at a time of normal traffic usage. Therefore having regard to the major road works in Strood in the locality of Darnley Road/Cuxton Road and the oncoming Christmas shopping period, the survey would be undertaken after Christmas.

Decision:

The Committee noted the Officer's response to the petition and that the lead petitioner for the review of speed restrictions in Watling Street, Strood has agreed that his petition not be referred to the Committee until after the traffic survey has been undertaken and the results are available.

406 Work programme

Discussion:

The Committee received and considered its work programme.

The Committee noted changes to the Committee's work programme as outlined in the report and the Democratic Services Officer advised the Committee of one further item included on the Forward Plan published on 29 September which fell within the remit of this Committee.

Decision:

The work programme be noted with the revisions outlined in the report.

Chairman

Date:

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