

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

**Thursday, 6 August 2015**

**7.00pm to 9.20pm**

**Record of the meeting**

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

**Present:** Councillors: Carr (Chairman), Bhutia (Vice-Chairman), Brown-Reckless, Cooper, Hicks, Iles, Osborne, Saroy, Stamp and Tejan

**Substitutes:** Councillors:  
Gilry (Substitute for Johnson)  
Purdy (Substitute for Etheridge)

**In Attendance:** Richard Hicks, Acting Director Regeneration Community and Culture  
Andy McGrath, Assistant Director, Front Line Services  
James Bilsland, Assistant Head of Legal - Place  
Sarah Dagwell, Head of Waste Services  
Councillor Phil Filmer, Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services  
Nikola Floodgate, Transport Planner  
Steve Hewlett, Head of LGF Transport Projects  
Anna Marie Lawrence-Lovell, Performance Manager  
Phil Moore, Head of Highways and Parking Services  
Stuart Pickard, Engineer Responsive Maintenance  
Ellen Wright, Democratic Services Officer

**174 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 7 April 2015 and the joint meeting of committees held on 27 May 2015 were signed by the Chairman as correct records.

**175 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Etheridge and Johnson.

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

There were none.

**177 Declarations of interests and whipping**

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### Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

### Other interests

There were none.

## 178 Chairman's announcements

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman welcomed Morounfolu Olatuja (Contracts Lawyer) and Hayley Taylor (Business Support Officer – Regeneration Community and Culture) who were in attendance observing the meeting.

## 179 Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services

### **Discussion:**

Members received an overview of progress on the area within the terms of reference of this Committee and covered by the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services as set out below:

- Local Growth Fund transport projects
- Parking
- Public Transport
- Roads
- Street Cleaning and waste collection/recycling/waste disposal
- Traffic management
- Transport Strategy
- Travel Safety

The Committee noted a correction to paragraph 3.2.8 of the report in that the sum of £450,00 required amendment to £450,000.

The Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Phil Filmer, responded to Members' questions and comments as follows:

- **Agreed Transport Projects** – In response to a question as to how the £9 million Local Growth Fund (LGF) monies would be spent in Strood Town Centre, the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services advised the Committee that officers were currently working on details of potential schemes aimed at getting traffic moving through Strood. This work was ongoing.

Attention was drawn to paragraph 2.7.2 of the report which set out funding received from round 1 of the LGF. It was noted that this funding would be spread over a 4 year period up to 2018/19.

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It was confirmed that the Council had received further funding under round 2 for Rochester Airport. No further LGF funding streams were available at this stage but should any be announced, bids would be submitted.

- **Changes to Bus Services in Medway** – Concern was expressed as to recent changes to bus services in Medway and, in particular, the timetabling of certain bus routes. Information was sought as to whether the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services had been consulted by Arriva and whether he met regularly with Arriva to discuss operational issues. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services advised the Committee that he had not been consulted about the proposed changes by Arriva and that he found this to be disappointing. In addition, it appeared that there had been no consultation with residents. The Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services confirmed that he would be contacting Arriva to arrange a meeting to discuss the recent bus changes and the lack of consultation and he agreed to advise the Member concerned of the outcome.

Arising from discussion on this matter, it was suggested that Arriva be invited to attend a meeting of this Committee so that the issues of the recent changes to the bus services in Medway and the lack of consultation on these changes can be discussed.

- **Medway Tunnel** - In response to a question as to the future maintenance of Medway Tunnel, the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services advised the Committee that following consultation with the Government Minister it had been established that if the Tunnel were to be placed on an Asset Register, it could be considered differently by the Government in respect of future maintenance. He confirmed that funding remained available for maintenance repairs at the Tunnel but he was happy to work cross party on lobbying the Government to change the designation of the Medway Tunnel.
- **Parking Schemes** - A Member sought information as to why controlled parking zones were considered as not being cost effective on the basis that the cost of consultation and the subsequent enforcement of parking restrictions were higher than the revenue received by the Council from the issue of residents parking permits and fines. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services advised the Committee that when receiving a request for a controlled parking zone, the Council undertook a consultation exercise with residents which usually produced a low level of response. However, once a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was made, residents tended to respond and this often resulted in the need for a second round of consultation, thus increasing costs.
- **Twin stream re-cycling in flats** – In response to concerns that a number of flatted properties did not have twin stream recycling services, the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services confirmed that the Head of

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Waste Services was working hard to ensure that all flatted properties were now included on the twin stream re-cycling service. He stated that if there were any specific areas known to Ward Councillors where this service was not available, he would chase this up with officers.

- **Use of Recycling bags and clear sacks** - In response to a question concerning the use of white recycling bags and clear sacks, the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services confirmed that there was no intention to phase out either the white bags or the clear sacks. He explained that whilst the Council would prefer to cease use of clear sacks, it was recognised that some residents preferred to use the sacks rather than the white bags, particularly if they lived in flats and had limited space.
- **Retaining Wall – Pier Road** - A Member requested information on the current situation concerning the blue hoarding which fenced off a section of the retaining wall in Pier Road, Gillingham. It was confirmed that investigations were ongoing to establish ownership of the retaining wall and legal advice was in the process of being obtained. The Head of Highways and Parking agreed to report back to the Member concerned direct on this issue.
- **Use of Mobility Scooters on pavements** – A Member referred to an issue previously raised by a former Councillor concerning use of mobility scooters on pavements and/or roads. The Assistant Director Front Line Services confirmed that the Council had responsibility for ensuring that pavements were accessible for people on mobility scooters. However, if mobility scooters were being driven irresponsibly then this would be a matter for the Police.

The Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services suggested that an item be published in a future edition of Medway Matters drawing attention to the need for users of mobility scooters to act responsibly when driving on pavements and/or roads.

- **Drains** – A Member sought clarification as to whether drains were continuing to be regularly cleaned across Medway. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services confirmed that all drains in Medway were cleaned regularly but if any Member had areas within their Ward where they considered the drains required clearance on a more regular basis, he would investigate this.
- **Medway City Estate – Access** – A Member sought clarification as to whether local businesses on the Medway City Estate had been consulted upon the traffic management scheme on the Estate. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services confirmed that there had been extensive consultation with businesses on the Estate and he confirmed that in September/October traffic lights would be put in place at the Gillingham side of the Medway Tunnel so as to create gaps in the traffic to allow traffic movement off the Medway City Estate.

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Further works were planned in 2017/18, involving the addition of a further lane of traffic leading from the Medway City Estate to the Sans Pareil roundabout.

- **Waste Collection Disposal** – In response to a question as to how recycling could be increased to reach the 50% target, it was confirmed that this was the desired target for future years. The Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services drew attention to the high levels of public satisfaction with the Council's refuse collection and recycling facilities.
- **Will Adams Roundabout** – In response to a Member's concern over the cost and date of completion of works to the Will Adams Roundabout, the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services confirmed that these works were soon to be completed, within budget. He stated that when the works were complete, the appearance of the roundabout would be improved and he stressed the importance of this roundabout, owing to its location on a main gateway through Medway.
- **The Brook Car Park** – In response to a question about the essential repairs required at The Brook Car Park, the Head of Highways and Parking reassured the Committee that such works involved minor repairs to surface cracks in concrete. The requirement for such works had been identified during the annual inspection of the car park and did not affect the safety of the car park.
- **Household Waste and Recycling Centres** – A Member advised the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services that she was extremely happy with the service that she received when visiting the household waste and recycling centres and she sought information as to whether plans were still in place to expand the Centre at Hoath Lane. The Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services thanked the Member for her positive comments about the centres. It was further explained that whilst there had been plans to expand the Hoath Lane Centre, unfortunately, it had since been established that to implement the plans would result in a lack of space for vehicle turns. It was acknowledged that the site was very tight at present for vehicular access and therefore the expansion plans as originally envisaged could not be implemented.
- **Rota for Street Cleaning** – A Member asked whether there was a rota for street cleansing. The Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services confirmed that there was a rota for street cleansing and that this had recently been revised. He suggested that if any Member had concerns with the street cleansing rota within their Ward, that they notify him direct.
- **Parking Services** – In response to a question about the Parking Services IT system, the Head of Highways and Parking confirmed that the new IT system had been in place for approximately 6 weeks. He advised that the system had required specific tailoring to meet Medway's

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requirements and that these teething problems would not affect the issuing of Penalty Charge Notices.

- **New Rochester Railway Station** – In response to a question as to the anticipated completion date for the new Rochester Railway Station, the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services informed the Committee that the station should be operational in December 2015 and the provision of the car park completed by the end of January 2016. He agreed to keep Members informed of progress.

### Decision:

The Committee thanked the Portfolio Holder for attending the meeting and answering questions and agreed that:

- a) An invitation be extended to Arriva to attend a meeting of the Committee to discuss the recent changes to bus services in Medway and the lack of consultation with both the Council and local residents;
- b) The Head of Highways and Parking report direct to the Member concerned on the outcome of investigations into the ownership of the retaining wall in Pier Road.
- c) An item be published in a future edition of Medway Matters drawing attention to the need for users of mobility scooters to act responsibly when driving on pavements and/or roads.
- d) It be noted that the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services has agreed to work cross party to press for the Government to change the designation of the Medway Tunnel.

## 180 Council Plan Year End 2014/15 Performance Monitoring Report

### Discussion:

The Performance and Intelligence Manager outlined the performance summary for Quarter 4 year end 2014/15 against the Council priorities for the Committee:

- Safe, clean and green Medway
- Everyone benefitting from the area's regeneration

The Committee noted the following:

- **Street Scene Enforcement Team** – A Member highlighted the valuable work undertaken by the Street Scene Enforcement Team, especially when gathering evidence to proceed with prosecution.
- **W8 – Satisfaction with street cleaning** - A Member referred to the note within the report that Community Wardens will be addressing areas of private land that affect the overall perception of cleanliness in Medway. He sought an assurance that this did not affect target levels. In

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response, the Assistant Director for Front Line Services advised that he was happy to provide a report or briefing note on the work undertaken by officers on clearance of private land if requested. In addition, he drew attention to the increase in the satisfaction levels with street cleaning.

- **HP26 – Satisfaction with road maintenance** – A Member expressed concern that the Council was not meeting its target of 50% satisfaction levels for road maintenance. In response, the Assistant Director Front Line Services drew attention to the 2014 National Highways and Transport (NHT) Survey which reported a 52.6% satisfaction rate from a response of 1,112 residents, whereas the Tracker Survey had produced a percentage satisfaction rate of 42% based on a sample size of 401 Medway residents.

The Head of Highways and Parking reported that individuals often indicated dissatisfaction with road maintenance, not based on the condition of the road but as a result of works undertaken by utility companies. He informed the Committee that when a utility company undertook works, they were permitted to carry out a temporary repair and then return within 6 months to undertake a permanent repair. Unfortunately, the public would not be aware of this and therefore blamed the Council for undertaking excavations twice in a 6 month period. Work was now underway to inform the public about this through leaflets in libraries and information centres and through press articles and information in Medway Matters.

The Assistant Director Front Line Services confirmed that in recent years, utility works in Medway had been at a high level owing to the replacement of water meters by Southern Water.

A Member suggested that it would be useful for Members to receive information on the budget for Road Maintenance for the next few years. In response, the Head of Highways and Parking confirmed that the Department of Transport had allocated local authorities' road maintenance budgets for the next 6 years and therefore it was possible for the Council to target funding over the next 6 year period. He suggested that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the National Highways and Transport Survey and the funding regime.

- **LRCC4a and ECD48c – Number of jobs created and safeguarded and employment that has lasted 26 weeks** - The Performance and Intelligence Manager confirmed that the figures contained in the report for LRCC4a were provisional and therefore she would supply the Democratic Services Officer with the actual figures for circulation to Members of the Committee.

In respect of ECD48c, the Performance and Intelligence Manager confirmed that the number of people that could be placed on the programme had reduced.

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- **Parks and Open Spaces/Stubble burning at Broomhill** – A Member congratulated the Council on having secured seven Green Flag awards for its parks and open spaces.

Another Member sought clarification as to whether the recent stubble burning at Broomhill Park would affect the Green Flag status of this park and the Acting Director for Regeneration, Community and Culture confirmed that to be awarded a Green Flag, it was necessary for the park or open space to have a clear management plan which could be assessed and measured. He confirmed that the stubble burning would not affect the Broomhill Park's Green Flag status.

- **Events and Festivals** – A Member suggested that the Medway Open Studios event be included within the Council's events and festivals. The Acting Director for Regeneration, Community and Culture agreed to take this on board.
- **Pop Up Shops** – A Member sought clarification as to whether there were plans for the Community Safety Shop to be sited again in the Pentagon Shopping Centre as a pop up shop. The Assistant Director for Front Line Services confirmed that whilst the Community Safety Shop had been popular, this was only a temporary arrangement.
- **Recycling rates** – A Member sought clarification as to why the recycling figures provided in the Performance Monitoring report differed to those detailed in the report of the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services. In response the Assistant Director Front Line Services explained that large recycling was handled by Veolia and it was Veolia that provided the statistics for the report. However, minor recycling was handled at other waste sites. He confirmed that the figures reported in the Portfolio Holder's report were the outturn for the year.
- **Responsible dog ownership** - A Member referring to paragraph 4.2.3 of the report requested whether Medway Council had introduced bylaws to require dogs to be kept on leashes in public places. In response, the Assistant Director Front Line Services reported that legislation was currently in place to allow the Council to require dogs to be kept on leashes in open spaces. In addition, Public Space Protection Orders had just been released and could add further protection.

In response to further questions, the Assistant Director for Front Line Services reported upon the work of the Council's Community Wardens in educating dog owners on responsible dog ownership and confirmed that the issue of 'dangerous dogs' was a matter for the Police.

### Decision:

The Committee agreed:



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- a) The 2014/15 performance against the key measures of success used to monitor progress against the Council Plan be noted;
- b) A report be submitted to a future meeting on the road maintenance budget for the next 6 years along with information on the National Highways and Transport Survey
- c) The Medway Open Studios Event be included in the Council's Events and Festivals programme.
- d) A briefing note be provided setting out the work of the Community Wardens in respect of dealing with dog related problems, including the number of recorded dog attacks in Medway, resources available for this work and enforcement issues.

### 181 Snow Warden Project Year 2 Review

#### Discussion:

The Head of Highways and Parking outlined a report setting out a review of the pilot Snow Warden Project following the 2014/15 Winter period and seeking approval to implement the scheme across the whole authority.

The Committee was reminded that the Snow Warden Project enabled pavements to be cleared of snow and ice during winter conditions by enlisting the assistance of individuals and community groups on a voluntary basis.

The Head of Highways and Parking stressed that for the scheme to work successfully it was important to enlist volunteers before a period of snowfall, as once snow had fallen, officers would be fully engaged in the clearance of the main road network throughout Medway. For this reason, articles would be featured in Medway Matters in the Autumn inviting volunteers to register their interest.

The Committee was advised that a training video had been produced for volunteers and this could be accessed at:

<http://medwaymatters.com/uncategorized/sign-up-to-be-a-snow-warden-this-winter/>

A Member suggested that a supply of promotional leaflets be distributed to Councillors so that they could deliver them with their newsletters in the Autumn.

#### Decision:

- a) The Snow Warden Project be expanded in 2015/16 across the whole of Medway utilising the 250 units of equipment and materials for that purpose, to be funded from the existing Highways budget.
- b) A supply of promotional leaflets about the Snow Warden Project be supplied to Councillors for distribution in their Wards in the Autumn.

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### **182 Alley Gating Scheme in Fowey Close**

#### **Discussion:**

The Assistant Director Front Line Services informed the Committee of action taken since the meeting on 7 April 2015 in response to a request from a petitioner for the Council to provide more restrictive gates to paths leading to a grassed area at the rear of Fowey Close.

As the land was in private ownership, an approach had been made to the owners to seek their views on further restricted access to the site and, in the meantime, a consultation exercise was underway with local residents seeking their views on further restricting access to the land, the reasons why they currently access the area and if they consider that more robust gating would restrict their access.

#### **Decision:**

The Committee recommended officers to continue the assessment of the scheme, taking into account the results of consultation with residents and land owners.

### **183 Petitions**

#### **Discussion:**

The Democratic Services Officer advised the Committee of those petitions received by the Council which fell within the remit of this Committee.

She drew attention to a petition which had recently been received objecting to the withdrawal of buses 181 and 701 affecting the Walderslade Road area. This petition had been referred to Arriva for consideration. The lead petitioner had requested that this matter be referred to this Committee and therefore this petitioner would be invited to attend the next meeting on 29 September 2015.

#### **Decision:**

The Committee noted the petition responses and appropriate officer actions set out in paragraph 3 of the report.

### **184 Work programme**

#### **Discussion:**

The Democratic Services Officer reported upon the Committee's work programme and advised the Committee that at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda planning meeting on 16 July, it had been suggested that the Air Quality Action Plan be submitted to this Committee on 10 December 2015.

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In addition, since the agenda planning meeting, officers had advised that the Annual Action Plan reviewing the progress of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy would be scheduled for the meeting on 29 September 2015.

The Committee was informed that on 25 June 2015, the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee had agreed the process for the selection of topics for the next round of in-depth reviews to be undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task Groups and it had been agreed that the first Task Group in the 2015/16 municipal year undertake an in-depth review into Housing: Demand, Affordability and Supply. This Task Group would cover housing strategy and services, which were within the remit of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in addition to the strategic planning issues associated with housing such as the Local Plan and affordable housing targets, which fell within the remit of this Committee. Therefore, membership of the Task Group would be drawn from both Committees. The final recommendations from the Task Group would be reported to both Overview and Scrutiny Committees before referral to Cabinet.

It had also been agreed that in July, August and September, each Overview and Scrutiny Committee be invited to put forward suggestions for further Task Group topics using the criteria set out at Appendix B to the report. Following this, a long list of topics would be submitted to the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 December 2015 to agree a programme of two further reviews for January – September 2016. It was pointed out that as the Task Group on Housing fell within the remit of this Committee, it was envisaged that the two topics for January – September 2016 would likely be on health and adult social care and children and young people topics. However, this Committee could suggest any topics for consideration in a later round of reviews. Any suggestions would be considered at the next Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda planning meeting and reported back to the Committee on 29 September for referral onto the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **Decision:**

- a) The Air Quality Action Plan be added to the Committee's Work Programme for 10 December 2015
- b) The Annual Action Plan reviewing the progress of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy be reported to the Committee on 29 September 2015.
- c) It be noted that Councillor Saroy has expressed an interest in serving on the Housing: Demand, Affordability and Supply Task Group as a representative from this Committee.

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**Chairman**

**Date:**

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