

Medway Council
Meeting of Regeneration, Culture and Environment
Overview And Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 16 June 2016

6.30pm to 7.56pm

Record of the meeting

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

Present: Councillors: Clarke (Chairman), Bhutia (Vice-Chairman), Gilry, Griffin, Hicks, Osborne, Saroy and Tejan

Substitutes: Councillors:
Johnson (Substitute for Stamp)
Maple (Substitute for Craven)
Purdy (Substitute for Etheridge)
Royle (Substitute for Carr)

In Attendance: Richard Hicks, Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation
Laura Caiels, Legal Advisor
Rob Carmen, Senior Transport Operations Officer
Ruth Du-Lieu, Head of Integrated Transport
Councillor Adrian Gulvin
Tomasz Kozlowski, Assistant Director Physical and Cultural Regeneration
Anna Marie Lawrence-Lovell, Performance Manager
Ellen Wright, Democratic Services Officer

Arriva Representatives

Emma Taylor
Robert Patterson
Nick Elsdon

Petitioner

Ms Terrie Baker

61 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brown-Reckless, Carr, Craven, Etheridge and Stamp.

62 Tribute to Jo Cox MP

At the commencement of the meeting, the Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Maple paid tribute to Jo Cox MP for Batley and Spen Constituency in West Yorkshire who had passed away earlier in the day as a result of a physical assault in her constituency when attending her MP surgery. The Committee held a minute's silence in memory of Jo Cox MP.

63 Record of Meeting and Record of Joint Meeting of Committees

The records of the meeting held on 29 March 2016 and the Joint Meeting of Committees held on 18 May 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman as correct records.

64 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

65 Declaration of interest and whipping

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

66 York Avenue, Gillingham six month review following implementation of parking changes

Discussion:

The Committee was reminded that the former Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 5 April 2015 had considered the implementation of parking changes in York Avenue, Gillingham aimed at increasing parking provision for Medway Hospital. The item had been referred to the Committee at the request of a lead petitioner on behalf of petitioners who were opposed to the proposed parking scheme.

The Committee was advised that the parking changes had subsequently been implemented in York Avenue but with a reduced time period. Therefore, the Pay and Display Scheme operated Monday – Friday from 10am – 5pm. The Committee had requested that a six month review be undertaken once the scheme had been operational and had extended an invitation to the lead petitioner to attend and address the Committee on the operation of the scheme at the end of the six month review.

The Committee was advised that the scheme had come into operation on 21 September 2015 and that during the period from implementation to 31 March

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2016, officers had made ad hoc visits whilst travelling to other site visits and had noted between 15 – 20 spaces remaining available on the Hospital side of the road during the day.

The report set out a number of options for the Committee to consider for the future of the scheme along with financial costs involved.

In line with the Committee's decision on 5 April 2015, the lead petitioner was in attendance at the meeting and was invited to address the Committee on the operation of the parking changes.

Ms Terrie Baker advised the Committee that the implementation of the changes to the parking had done little to reduce congestion especially during times that the Hospital barrier failed to operate. She asked that the Pay and Display Scheme not be expanded to cover weekends as had been included in the original proposal.

The local Ward Councillor reported on the operation of the parking changes in York Avenue and supported the lead petitioner's request that Option B (the expansion of the scheme to include weekends) not be pursued as it was during the evenings and weekends that there was pressure on parking in the area. However, he requested that the parking changes continue to be monitored and that a further review be undertaken.

In addition, the local Ward Councillor drew attention to the lack of clarity on signage in the area as they related to different sides of the road and requested that this be investigated. He also commented that the parking machines were emptied between 4am – 5am and that this created a noise disturbance to local residents but he confirmed that he had raised this separately with officers.

The Integrated Transport Manager advised that the controlled parking zone in the area operated from Monday to Sunday and it had originally been intended that the Pay and Display Scheme in York Avenue would run parallel with the controlled parking zone times. However, the Pay and Display Scheme had been amended to run from Monday – Friday. Option B had therefore been included within the report for the Committee to consider whether it wished to recommend that the scheme revert back to the original intended time period. However, she pointed out that any proposed change to the controlled parking zone or Pay and Display Scheme in York Avenue would require formal consultation.

A Member referred to the proposed review of controlled parking zones across Medway and sought an assurance that the parking arrangements in York Avenue would not be consumed as part of this overall review. The Integrated Transport Manager advised that she was co-ordinating the controlled parking zone review and therefore the specific parking arrangements in York Avenue would be taken on board.

Decision:

The Committee supported the retention of the existing parking arrangements in York Avenue, Gillingham but requested that the position continued to be monitored and a further review be undertaken in six months.

67 Update on Arriva Services in Medway

Discussion:

The Committee received a presentation from Emma Taylor, Robert Patterson and Nick Elsdon from Arriva advising upon updates to Arriva's bus services in Medway.

A summary of points raised as part of the presentation included:

- The network has been rescheduled and more resources added
- Punctuality has improved
- Staffing levels
- There has been a reduction in complaints
- The local Union is supportive of the recent changes
- The new commercial structure is focused on communication and is data driven
- The 2016 wage negotiations have been successfully concluded
- Fares have been revised with a number of fares reduced and cheaper fares for short journeys in town
- There have been savings on many child fares
- There have been a number of service changes
- Arriva received positive feedback from the free travel day
- There is a growing use of M tickets
- Business to business sales offer discounts to employees
- There is continued development of the real time bus app, the web and Arriva smartcard.

The Committee discussed a number of the points raised and Arriva answered questions as follows:

- In response to a question as to whether the availability of wi-fi would be expanded to all bus services, it was confirmed that new buses would automatically have wi-fi sockets and USB ports and that these facilities will be rolled out onto older buses as and when they are refurbished. A Member drew Arriva's attention to the fact that on some buses on which he had travelled the wi-fi and USB ports had not worked.
- In response to a question on the level of complaints received, it was confirmed that there had been a 55% reduction in complaints relating to the reliability of bus services. In comparison with other areas, whilst the level of complaints for Medway's bus services had been high, following changes to the services and the subsequent reduction in complaints, complaints were now at a medium level in comparison with other areas.

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- In response to a question on the level of wage settlement, it was confirmed that the wage settlement was 3% for one year. However, it was stressed that the industrial action in 2015 had been a direct response to the scheduling of bus services and had not concerned wages.
- In response to a question relating to the possible improvement of bus shelters at Chatham Waterfront Bus Station and the provision of real time data, it was confirmed that approximately 50% of bus shelters were privately owned and the remaining 50% were owned by the Council, of which 60 had real time data screens. It was confirmed that real time data screens were added to bus shelters as and when possible.
- In response to a query as to possible strategies to encourage school children onto buses, the Committee was advised that whilst a weekly ticket was not currently available for children, a scheme was on trial in Sheerness which, if successful, would be retained and possibly expanded across Kent.
- A Member thanked Arriva for attending a meeting with residents in Watling Ward as this was very much appreciated by the residents.
- In response to a suggestion that the Council may be able to assist Arriva in the recruitment of staff, Arriva advised that they would appreciate any assistance that may be available. It was noted that the Council was keen to promote Apprentice Schemes and Arriva agreed to take this up with the Council.
- A Member requested that paper copies of timetables continue to be made available, as not all individuals had access to mobile phones. Arriva confirmed that it would always accept cash fares and provide timetables at bus stops.
- A Member expressed concern as to the speed that some bus drivers travel down Chatham Hill and suggested that whilst it was acknowledged that drivers had timetables to adhere to, they should also have regard to passenger safety and the need to let passengers be seated before driving off. In response, Arriva confirmed that passenger safety was of upmost importance and if there were problems with any particular drivers, they could be referred back to training school.
- A Member expressed concern that the £3.50 bus fare did not appear to be included as one of the fares where a reduction had been introduced. In response, Arriva confirmed that whilst reductions had been introduced on some bus routes, unfortunately it had not been possible to introduce reductions across all journeys.
- A Member stated that they considered that Arriva's social media presence was good and that the free bus day had been appreciated by bus users across Medway.
- A Member sought clarification as to whether Arriva had been involved in the Local Plan process. Arriva confirmed that the company welcomed development of housing estates as they provided potential customers but the Arriva representatives were unable to confirm whether Arriva had responded to the Local Plan consultation.

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- A Member asked whether it was possible to review the timing of the last 177 service on Sundays as the last bus was currently 2.30pm. Arriva agreed to investigate and respond to the Councillor direct.
- A Member asked for additional information on use of the M Ticket. Arriva stated that whilst they had information as to the number of M Tickets purchased, they were not currently able to obtain data as to when the M Tickets were purchased or when they were used. However, Arriva confirmed the sale of approximately 1000 M Tickets and that sales had grown by 5%. Arriva would be investigating other possible smartcards in the next six months.
- A Member requested that Arriva provide a contact point that may be used by elected Members if they had specific issues in their Wards. Arriva agreed to supply contact details to the Democratic Services Officer for circulation to all Members of the Council.

Decision:

The Committee thanked the representatives from Arriva for attending the meeting and giving a presentation updating the Committee on Arriva bus services in Medway and agreed that:

- a) the Development Manager be advised that Arriva are willing to be included in consultations on the Medway Local Plan;
- b) it be noted that Arriva will respond direct to the Councillor concerned on the issue of the last 177 bus service on Sundays; and
- c) it be noted that Arriva will supply a contact number to the Democratic Services Officer for circulation to all elected Members.

68 Council Plan End of Year Quarter 4 2015/16 Performance Monitoring Report

Discussion:

The Committee received a report summarising performance in Quarter 4 against the two priorities:

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

The Committee discussed the following:

- **Codes DA6 and DA7 – Number of high risk clients referred to IDVA for support and percentage of high risk clients where risk is reduced as a result of IDVA intervention**

In recognition that football tournaments can result in increases in incidents of domestic violence, a Member sought clarification as to whether the Council was using social media feeds to highlight these issues.

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The Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation agreed to take this up with Communications.

- **Rochester Riverside**

A Member referred to the provision of the new Rochester Railway Station and expressed concern on behalf of traders that they considered that their businesses had been affected during the transition of the former Corporation Car Park to the new Station Car Park and he asked what lessons had been learnt.

A Member also commented on the good design of the new Station Car Park in that it was not intrusive from Corporation Street.

Another Member expressed concern as to the location of the existing pedestrian crossing and stated that since the opening of the new Rochester Railway Station, the pedestrian crossing required relocation. He also asked whether bus companies had approached the Council about the limited access for buses at the Railway Station.

The Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation responded by confirming that the new Station Car Park had provided 321 extra car parking spaces in Rochester and whilst there were always lessons which could be learnt, he reassured the Member concerned that the Council had worked with Traders and put in place measures to support them during the transition period.

He also advised that the whilst the possible relocation of the pedestrian crossing could be investigated, these works would involve a significant cost.

He confirmed that no approaches had been made to the Council by local bus companies concerning access to the Station by buses.

- **Condition of the roads in Medway**

A Member congratulated officers on the good condition of Medway's roads in comparison with other areas.

- **Twydall Community Hub/Possible hub in Luton and Wayfield Ward**

A Member referred to the Twydall Community Hub and stated that she was pleased that this was moving forward and was due to open in July. She stated that she was pleased that the footfall had not diminished at the temporary library.

A Member referred to the Post Office in Luton and Wayfield Ward and asked whether this would be expanded to other hubs.

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The Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation advised that officers were seeking to progress the Community Hub model across a number of sites, offering a wide range of services.

- **Awards and Achievements**

A Member congratulated the Council in being rated one of the top 100 employers in the Stonewall workplace equality index.

- **Flytipping**

A Member sought clarification as to whether the statistics reported related to the volume of flytipping or the number of reports of flytipping. It was confirmed that the statistics reported related to the number of reported incidents not the volume of flytipping. The Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation reminded the Committee that there was an outstanding item on the Committee's work programme for a report on flytipping to examine whether there was a link with the implementation of a charge for the collection of bulky waste.

Noting that the level of flytipping had decreased in 2015/16, a Member asked for information to be supplied on a Ward by Ward basis, identifying where flytipping takes place as she considered this could be used by Councillors to educate and inform local residents.

In response, the Performance Manager advised that officers had mapped data on flytipping and some of the flytipping was due to dumped construction materials as opposed to white goods. A large proportion of flytipped materials were left within countryside areas. However, she agreed to provide information on a Ward by Ward basis to all Members of the Council via a briefing note.

- **Rochester and Strood Riverside**

A Member sought clarification as to the timescale for the regeneration works at Rochester and Strood Riverside.

The Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation confirmed that work would begin on the Rochester Riverside site in the next year and the regeneration scheme would be delivered in 10 – 12 years' time.

Strood Riverside was a key strategic site and officers would be seeking external funding for flood defence works at the Civic Centre site as part of a Local Growth Fund bid.

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- **Integrated transport – Review of controlled parking zones**

A Member requested that information be supplied on the proposed review of controlled parking zones, what changes are proposed and how Members can get involved.

Decision:

The Committee agreed:

- a) that the end of year Quarter 4 2015/16 performance against the Key Measures of Success used to monitor progress against the Council Plan 2015/16 be noted;
- b) it be noted that the Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation will discuss with Communications the promotion of the issue of domestic violence incidents during football tournaments via social media.
- c) a briefing note be circulated to all Members of the Council on the following issues:
 - Flytipping on a Ward by Ward basis
 - Information on the Review of Controlled Parking Zones across Medway and how Members can get involved.

69 Petitions

Discussion:

The Committee received a report setting out petitions received by the Council which fell within the remit of the Committee including a summary of the responses sent to the lead petitioners by officers.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

70 Work programme

Discussion:

The Democratic Services Officer reported on the Committee's current work programme, provided an update on an item added to the latest work programme published on 13 June 2016 and advised upon a suggested addition to the work programme from the agenda planning meeting.

The report also set out the programme of Portfolio Holder attendance for 2016/17.

A Member drew attention to the Cabinet item on Various Land Disposals which had been called in for review by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny

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Committee. He drew attention to the recommendations of the report which affected two Community Centres in Medway.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to:

- a) note the current work programme
- b) add the following item to the work programme for 18 August 2016:

A presentation from the Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority on consultations concerning the closure of an area of the estuary to all fishing activities so as to protect juvenile fish that are reliant on habitats.

- c) note the following programme of Portfolio Holder attendance:
 - 18 August 2016 – Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services – Councillor Filmer
 - 25 October 2016 – Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation – Councillor Chitty
 - 8 December 2016 – Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services – Councillor Mackness
 - 17 January 2017 – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services – Councillor Doe and Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships – Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE
 - 28 March 2017 – Portfolio Holder for Business Management – Councillor Turpin.

Chairman

Date:

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