

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

Thursday, 8 December 2016

6.30pm to 9.04pm

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), Carr, Etheridge, Gilry, Griffin, Hicks, Saroy, Stamp and Tejan

Substitutes: Councillors:
Godwin (Substitute for Craven)
Murray (Substitute for Osborne)

In Attendance: Richard Hicks, Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation
James Bilsland, Assistant Head of Legal - Place
Councillor Pat Cooper
Ruth Du-Lieu, Assistant Director, Front Line Services
Michael Edwards, Principal Transport Planner
Tim England, Head of Safer Communities and Greenspaces
Neil Howlett, Community Safety Partnership Manager
Tomasz Kozlowski, Assistant Director Physical and Cultural Regeneration
Anna Marie Lawrence-Lovell, Performance Manager
Andrew Lawson, Finance Business Partner
Ellen Wright, Democratic Services Officer
Councillor Adrian Gulvin, Portfolio Holder for Resources

Representing Arriva and ASDA

Nick Elsdon – Operating Manager Arriva

Robert Patterson – Commercial Development Manager Arriva

Cheryl Hammond – Customer Trading Manager - ASDA

Representing the Community Safety Partnership

Councillor Gulvin – Chairman of the CSP

Inspector Dyball – Kent Police

Mark Rist – Area Manager, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Service

Samantha Jones – Partnership Manager, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Service

Dr Andrew Burnett – Director of Public Health

Roy Smith – Operations Manager, Youth Service

Cynthia Allen – Kent and Sussex CRC

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516 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman advised the Committee that Ruth Dulieu, Head of Integrated Transport had recently been appointed to the post of Assistant Director Front Line Services. The Committee expressed their congratulations to Ruth.

517 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Craven and Osborne and Sarah Vaux – Chief Nurse – North Kent Clinical Commissioning Group (CSP partner).

518 Record of Meeting

The record of the meeting held on 25 October 2016 was approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

519 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

520 Declaration of interest and whipping

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other interests

Councillors Carr and Godwin advised the Committee that as Council representatives on the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Service, they would withdraw from the Committee for the consideration and determination of agenda item 6 (Annual Scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership, including an update on the Community Safety Plan 2016 – 2020).

521 Petitions

Discussion:

The Committee received a report setting out a summary of petitions received by the Council which fell within the remit of this Committee.

Paragraph 3.1 of the report set out a summary of the responses to petitions that had been accepted by the petition organisers.

In accordance with the Council's petitions scheme, two petitions had been referred for discussion by the Committee and the lead petitioners were in attendance and invited to address the Committee.

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A summary of the points raised for each petition and the Committee's discussion is set out as follows:

A) Petition to implement a robust traffic calming system that will reduce the speed of traffic to an acceptable level to ensure Magpie Hall Road is safer for local residents

Mr McIntyre on behalf of local residents outlined the basis of his petition seeking a traffic calming system that would reduce the speed of traffic to an acceptable level in Magpie Hall Road.

He expressed concern that whilst the Council held records of the number of recorded traffic accidents, he did not consider this to be an accurate account as some incidents were not reported to the Police.

He acknowledged that a number of measures had already been put in place by the Council in terms of electronic warning devices at the junction of Magpie Hall Road and Palmerston Road and a modification to the existing road marking system designed to reduce the road width and encourage slower speeds, but he considered that these had failed to address the problem. He was therefore asking the Council to consider the provision of a mini roundabout at the junction of Palmerston Road with Magpie Hall Road.

The Assistant Director Front Line Services advised that the issue of speeding road users had become a common concern for Medway residents and many requests were received for speed reduction measures. Each individual request was carefully considered having regard to casualty reduction. She confirmed that the Council continually monitored personal injury collision information supplied by Kent Police to identify areas of increased injury risk. Having assessed Magpie Hall Road, three slight injury collisions had been recorded by Kent Police within the last three years. Unfortunately, there were many other locations in Medway where the casualty numbers were higher and this resulted in these other locations being ranked as a higher priority for investigation and possible works.

The Assistant Director Front Line Services advised that officers would continue to monitor Magpie Hall Road and, if funding became available, the road would be assessed, along with others to establish its priority for possible works. She confirmed that at the current time, Magpie Hall Road was placed 89th on the priority list but stated that this list could change on a daily basis as and when incident data was received from Kent Police.

In response to questions from Members, the Assistant Director for Front Line Services confirmed that Police records were the benchmark used by all local authorities for prioritising works aimed at reducing casualties. In addition, she confirmed that it was not possible for the local authority

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to have access to data held by insurance companies owing to data protection.

A Member expressed concern that Magpie Hall Road was a long road of flat terrain and this encouraged driving at speed. He stated that the provision of one mini roundabout at the suggested location would make a significant difference in this particular road. He also confirmed that consideration had not yet been given to funding the provision of a mini roundabout at this site as a Member's Priority Bid.

A Member suggested that it would be helpful if Members could have a copy of the priority list of roads as this could assist them in discussions with local residents who wished to have traffic calming measures in their roads. The Assistant Director Front Line Services advised that whilst she was prepared to share the list with Members, the information contained on the list would be confidential on the basis that the list changes on a regular basis and to protect the wider implications for insurance premiums/claims.

Decision:

The Committee:

- a) Noted that the Assistant Director Front Line Services will investigate the possible provision of a mini roundabout at the junction of Palmerston Road with Magpie Hall Road and will report back to the Committee on the associated benefits of this roundabout and the costs involved.
- b) Noted that the Assistant Director Front Line Services will circulate to Members a copy of the current priority list of roads for traffic calming measures, it being noted that this list is to be treated in strict confidence owing to the potential implications for insurance premiums/claims.

B) Petition to reinstate the 176/177 Arriva Bus to ASDA, Gillingham

Mrs Willingham outlined the basis of her petition seeking the reinstatement of the 176/177 Arriva Bus to the ASDA Store in Gillingham. She outlined the difficulties that she had experienced with the reliability of the service and advised that since 18 September 2016, Arriva had made changes to the 176 and 177 service which had resulted in the service no longer serving the ASDA store at Chatham Waters. She stated that many people in Gillingham liked to shop at ASDA and therefore wanted to continue to shop at this particular store.

With the agreement of the Committee, Councillor Cooper spoke on this petition as Ward Councillor and supported the petitioner in requesting the reinstatement of the bus service to ASDA. In particular, she drew attention to difficulties faced by shoppers leaving the ASDA store and having to cross a busy dual carriageway on foot to reach a bus stop whilst carrying bags of shopping.

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Councillor Cooper also questioned the Council's obligations with regard to the Section 106 agreement for the redevelopment of Chatham Waters which required the developer to submit a Bus Strategy for the development.

The Principal Transport Planner clarified that the Section 106 Agreement had required as a minimum an off peak bus service to and from the site. The strategy supplied by Peel Holdings, and approved by the Council in 2015 relied upon Arriva's agreement to operate the 176 service via the ASDA store. The Principal Transport Planner stated that as this bus service was no longer operating, the Council's Section 106 Monitoring Officer would be contacting Peel Holdings to request that they submit an updated Strategy.

Nick Elsdon, Operating Manager and Robert Patterson, Commercial Development Manager both from Arriva and Cheryl Hammond, Customer Trading Manager from ASDA were in attendance at the meeting to respond to the petitioner's concerns.

Robert Patterson advised that Arriva had voluntarily agreed to serve the new ASDA store. However, the number of passengers using the service did not make it commercially viable when assessing the cost of running the service against the income received therefore, the service had ceased in September 2016. He confirmed that Arriva operated a bus service to the ASDA store in Rochester but confirmed that the cost of this was met by ASDA.

Cheryl Hammond advised that Peel Holdings were the landlords for the ASDA store at Chatham Waters and the decision to operate the 176 bus service into the store had been a private agreement between Peel Holdings and Arriva. ASDA had not been involved in this agreement.

Members discussed the petition and responses to questions and expressed concern that residents in Gillingham were being denied the opportunity to benefit from using the ASDA store if they were reliant on public transport. Reference was made to ASDA's desire to tackle social isolation and it was suggested that the cessation of the bus service to the store for Gillingham residents undermined this goal.

Robert Patterson confirmed that Arriva were prepared to meet with officers, Ward Councillors, Peel Holdings and ASDA to discuss whether there was a way forward to resolve the situation.

Decision:

The Committee:

- a) Requested that Officers pursue the receipt of an updated Bus Strategy from Peel Holdings and, in doing so arrange a meeting with appropriate representatives from Arriva, ASDA, Peel Holdings and Ward Councillors

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to discuss options for the provision of a bus service to ASDA store at Chatham Waters.

- b) Agreed that the outcome of a) above be notified to Members of the Committee by way of a briefing note.

522 Annual Scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership, including an update on the Community Safety Plan 2016 - 2020

Discussion:

The Chairman welcomed all the partners of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to the meeting.

The Committee was reminded that the scrutiny of the CSP was last carried out in December 2015.

The Chairman of the CSP, Councillor Gulvin introduced the report and the Committee discussed the following topics:

- **Emerging Trends – Homelessness**

In response to a question as to how the CSP is making a difference to homeless individuals in Medway, it was confirmed that the various partner agencies of the CSP worked together to provide help and support to homeless people. In recognition that being homeless was often not the only factor affecting an individual, the CSP also worked in close partnership with Alcohol Concern's Blue Light Project.

Inspector Dyball also advised that a number of homeless individuals received support from members of the community in setting up tents and creating camps and the provision of food. Unfortunately, whilst this support was provided with good intentions, it did not assist the CSP partner agencies in trying to engage homeless individuals and finding them the support that they required so they could be helped to get off the streets.

- **Emerging Trends – County Lines and Cuckooing**

Inspector Dyball advised the Committee of the emerging trend for drug dealers from London travelling through the Home Counties to widen their supply network. Incidents of 'Cuckooing' had arisen whereby drug dealers identified a vulnerable person and moved into their property with a view to taking it over to supply drugs. The CSP was actively involved in identifying and safeguarding individuals considered to be at a high risk of falling prey to this type of scheme. As a result of work undertaken by local Police and PCSO's, in the past 12 months, 322 arrests had been made resulting in 235 charges being brought against offenders, a number of whom had been processed through the courts and sentenced.

Inspector Dyball referred to Operation Jupiter which was having a positive affect in reducing drug related crime.

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- **Continuity of PCSO's**

In response to a concern that PCSOs were continually moving around and therefore lacked continuity for residents and Ward Councillors, Inspector Dyball advised that it was often the case that after a period of time as a PCSO, individuals decided to join the Police and this therefore resulted in some movement of PCSOs. However, he advised that a recruitment programme was in place and it was likely that numbers of both Police Officers and PCSOs would increase in Medway in the near future.

- **CSP Activities**

A Member requested that a list of activities in which the CSP were engaged be circulated to Members.

- **Recording of crime statistics**

Inspector Dyball confirmed that although there had been some issues in the past with the recording of crime statistics, Kent Police had put in place measures to correct this and he was now able to confirm that an internal inspection showed that Kent Police had achieved 96.5% accuracy in recording of crime.

He advised that the improved method of recording crime had resulted in increases to the crime statistics mainly in the areas of violence, albeit these were lower level assaults and an increase in domestic abuse. He explained that under the new method of recording crimes, if previous historic crimes came to light as a result of questioning, these were also recorded and therefore this also added to the increased level of reported crime. He also explained that one incident of sexting can result in four crimes e.g. creating the image, sending the image, receiving the image and viewing or downloading the image.

He advised upon a number of criminal activities where the statistics indicated a decrease in criminal activity including burglary and theft from motor vehicles.

The Chairman requested that Inspector Dyball provide a copy of the up to date crime statistics to the Democratic Services Officer for circulation to Members of the Committee.

- **Emerging trends – child sexual exploitation**

Inspector Dyball outlined the work of the Medway Safety Children's Board which involved a wide range of agencies and delivered programmes in schools.

Roy Smith – Operations Manager Youth Service also reported upon the work undertaken by the Medway Safeguarding Board in particular around the issues of cyber bullying and sexting.

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- **Funding for the CSP**

The Committee was informed that the allocation of £93,000 for the CSP was determined by a strategy group of the CSP attended by all of the strategic partners.

Decision:

The Committee agreed:

- a) To note the findings of the strategic assessment.
- b) To confirm that in the light of the strategic assessment findings, the Community Safety Plan priorities remain unchanged.
- c) To note that Inspector Dyball has agreed to supply up to date crime statistics to the Democratic Services Officer for circulation to Members of the Committee.
- d) To note that a list of events at which the CSP will be present in 2017 will be supplied and circulated to Members of the Committee.
- e) To note that there will be improved communication with Ward Councillors in the provision of information on policing and PCSO's in Wards.

523 Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Resources

Discussion:

Members received an overview of progress made on the areas within the scope of the Portfolio Holder for Resources which fell within the remit of this Committee as set out below:

- **Illegal Tobacco**

A Member sought an update on how Medway compared with other areas in addressing the retail sale of illegal tobacco. The Portfolio Holder advised the Committee that officers had undertaken much work on this in the past 15 months. He agreed to arrange for the Head of Safer Communities and Greenspaces to provide an update direct to the Member concerned.

- **Public Space Protection Orders**

A Member sought information as to whether signage was sufficient in Alcohol Control Zones and how enforcement was carried out. The Portfolio Holder advised the Committee that the Council's Licensing Hearing Panels were now more proactive in refusing to grant licences for off licences but that this required the partnership of both the Police and Public Health in gathering the evidence required to enable the Panels to have sufficient grounds for refusing a licence application.

In response to the query on whether signage was sufficient, this would largely depend upon what signage was permitted. He confirmed that the Police enforced the Alcohol Control Zones.

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- **New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)**
In response to a query as to the role of officers in enforcing the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that officers played a proactive role in ensuring that these substances were not available for sale. Since the Act came into force there were now no premises in Medway that were overtly selling NPS and officers in Trading Standards were keeping a watching brief on premises in Medway.
- **Safe Haven**
A Member sought information on the proposed Safe Haven Bus and the Portfolio Holder confirmed that the funding for the previous Safe Haven Bus had been withdrawn but the bus would be reinstated in two weeks and provided by NORSE. He confirmed that the Safe Haven Bus would be sited at Blue Boar Lane Car Park between the hours of 10pm – 4am manned by volunteer Street Pastors.
- **PACTs**
A Member requested further information on the 6 PACTs that continued to operate in Medway. The Portfolio Holder advised of his intention to visit each PACT in 2017 and he would therefore have more information to report upon the operation of the PACTs in 2017. In the meantime, he would supply information to the Member concerned as to the 6 PACTs that continued to operate in Medway.
- **Blue Light Project**
In response to a question as to the success and possible expansion of the Blue Light Project, the Portfolio Holder advised that many agencies were involved in the Project and he agreed to provide information on the success rate of the project direct to the Member concerned.

Decision:

The Committee thanked the Portfolio Holder for Resources for attending the meeting and answering questions and noted that the Portfolio Holder will provide updates to the various Members concerned on the following issues:

- Illegal tobacco – Comparisons with other areas
- PACTs – The location of the 6 operational PACTs
- The success rate of the Blue Light Project

524 Draft Capital and Revenue Budget 2017/18

Discussion:

The Committee received a report providing an update on progress towards setting the Council's draft capital and revenue budgets for 2017/18.

In discussing the budget report, Members expressed concern that the report did not provide sufficient detail as to the impact of any savings on service delivery.

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The Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation advised the Committee that as the budget process unfolds more information would be available as to whether savings would be achieved by the reduction of expenditure or through increasing income targets.

Members expressed concern that this was the only opportunity that the Committee had to scrutinise the budget and yet the information contained within in the report and its Appendix were insufficient to enable the Committee to undertake any level of scrutiny that may be of value. The Committee was willing to undertake a greater, more positive role in budget setting and suggested that this be conveyed to the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Decision:

The Committee agreed that the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee be advised of this Committee's concern that the budget report and appendix contain insufficient information to enable this Committee to undertake a robust review of the capital and revenue budgets and it is hoped that this situation is addressed in future years so that more account is taken of the scrutiny function in budget setting.

525 Council Plan Quarter 2 2016/17 Performance Monitoring Report

Discussion:

The Committee received a report setting out performance in Quarter 2 for 2016/17 for the key measures of success and projects relevant to this Committee.

The following was discussed:

- **Battle of Medway**
The Committee acknowledged the importance of this event
- **NI 167 – Average journey times along 5 routes across Medway**
A Member requested that a briefing note be circulated setting out indicator data and information on the 5 routes to which this performance indicator relates.

The Assistant Director Front Line Services advised that an new improved system was soon to be introduced which would enable officers to extract a wider range of information.

- **Enforcement Action – Penalty notices for littering and dog fouling**
A Member referred to the 103 fixed penalty notices issued for littering and dog fouling and asked for information on the number which had been paid.

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Decision:

The Committee agreed:

- a) That the Quarter 2 2016/17 performance against key measures of success used to monitor progress against the Council Plan 2016/17 be noted.
- b) A briefing note be supplied setting out data/information on the 5 routes used for Performance Indicator NI 167 – Average journey times along 5 routes across Medway.
- c) Information be supplied to Members on the number of fixed penalty notices issued for littering and dog fouling that have been paid.

526 Member's item - Splashes Leisure Pool

Discussion:

The Committee received a Member's Item from Councillor Stamp relating to the recent outbreak of the Norovirus at Splashes Leisure Pool.

Councillor Stamp stated that whilst he appreciated that officers were unable to respond until the outcome of the investigations by Public Health England were known, he was disappointed that some of the other issues referred to in his Member's Item had not been addressed at this meeting.

Decision:

The Committee noted that a further report will be submitted to the Committee when the outcome of Public Health England's investigation is known.

527 Work programme

Discussion:

The Democratic Services Officer advised the Committee that an updated Forward Plan had been published on 30 November 2016 and the following new items had been included that were relevant to the work of this committee:

Medway Commercial Group 1st Year Quarter 2 – Anticipated decision date – 20 December 2016

Pest Control – Future Delivery Model – Anticipated decision date – 20 December 2016

In addition, she drew attention to the decision of the Committee at this meeting for a report to be submitted to the committee on Splashes Leisure Pool in response to the Member's Item. This required addition to the Work Programme.

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Decision:

The Committee agreed to note the work programme and that a further report will be submitted on the Splashes Leisure Pool when the outcome of the Public Health England investigation is known.

Chairman

Date:

Ellen Wright, Democratic Services Officer

Telephone: 01634 332001634 332012

Email: democratic.services@medway.gov.uk