

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

**Thursday, 7 December 2017**

**6.35pm to 9.55pm**

**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, Griffin, Khan, Osborne, Saroy, Stamp and Tejan

**Substitutes:** Councillors:  
Steve Iles (Substitute for Mrs Josie Iles)  
McDonald (Substitute for Gilry)  
Williams (Substitute for Hicks)

**In Attendance:** Richard Hicks, Director Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive  
Katey Arrowsmith, Head of Finance Strategy  
Councillor Pat Cooper  
Ruth Du-Lieu, Assistant Director, Front Line Services  
Tim England, Head of Safer Communities and Greenspaces  
Ian Gilmore, Trading Standards Team Leader  
Councillor Adrian Gulvin, Portfolio Holder for Resources  
Councillor Clive Johnson  
Tomasz Kozlowski, Assistant Director, Physical and Cultural Regeneration  
Anna Marie Lawrence, Head of Performance and Intelligence  
Millie Pountney, Legal Adviser  
Ellen Wright, Democratic Services Officer

Representatives of the Community Safety Partnership

Councillor Adrian Gulvin – Chairman  
Chief Inspector Rob Marsh – Kent Police  
Leanne McMahon – Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Service  
Sarah Vaux – Chief Nurse, NHS Medway Clinical Commissioning Group  
Aeilish Geldenhuys – Representing the Director of Public Health  
Emma Vecchiolla – Head of Service for Community Payback (Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company)  
Councillor Maple  
Neil Howlett – Community Safety Partnership Manager

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### **562 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Gilry, Hicks and Josie Iles.

### **563 Record of Meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 19 October 2017 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **564 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances**

There were none.

### **565 Declaration of interest and whipping**

#### Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

#### Other interests

Councillors Carr and Steve Iles declared interests in the Annual Scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership on the basis that they both serve as Council representatives on the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority and advised the Committee that whilst they would remain as part of the Committee for this item, they would not ask any questions of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority.

### **566 Annual Scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership, including an update on the Community Safety Plan 2016 to 2020**

#### **Discussion:**

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

The Chairman of the CSP, Councillor Gulvin, introduced the report and reminded the Committee that if Members wished to refer to specific policing issues, these should be addressed at the monthly Police surgeries held at Gun Wharf.

The Chairman of the CSP highlighted the following three achievements for the CSP for 2017:

- The introduction of the Cumulative Impact Assessment resulting in Licensing Hearing Panels having statistical evidence to identify problem areas when considering licensing applications.
- An engagement event held at Mid Kent College involving discussions on the issues of homelessness, rough sleeping and begging.

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- A Safety in Action event staged by students at Mid Kent College aimed at delivering sessions for older primary school children on road safety and drug and alcohol use.

The Committee then discussed the following topics:

- **Community engagement** – A Member requested whether there would be an opportunity for further community engagement sessions on topics such as anti social behaviour.

In response, the Chairman of the CSP commented that whilst community engagement sessions were considered valuable, Police resources were stretched, therefore it was necessary to strike a balance between community engagement and tackling the problems that exist.

Chief Inspector Marsh gave an assurance that Community Policing was at the heart of the restructure of Kent Police and this had encouraged increased reporting of crime. He reassured the Committee that the Police had a good awareness of the issues that exist in Medway.

- **Mental Health** – In response to questions about the possible extension of Safe Havens to other areas of Medway, the Chairman of the CSP advised upon the work undertaken by the CSP and Medway Street Pastors to introduce a multi-purpose mobile street triage service capable of delivering health, mental health, wellbeing and community services to the night time economy in Rochester. Medway Norse had donated a vehicle for use by the Street Pastors and there were proposals for the Street Pastors and other services to use the Safe Haven Bus during the day to offer simple health checks on Gillingham Market days. The Chairman of the CSP also referred to the lack of acute mental health care in Medway and confirmed that all partners of the CSP considered it inappropriate for an individual with mental health issues to be held in a police cell if there was no other place for them to be taken.

Chief Inspector Marsh advised that the Police had a good record of responding to the challenges of identifying suitable placements for individuals with mental health issues and he gave a reassurance that such individuals were a high priority for the Police.

He also confirmed that the Police had recently appointed a Vulnerable Intervention Officer to work with vulnerable individuals. He agreed to provide information on the name and contact telephone number of this Officer and to notify Members should the postholder change at a future date

Sara Vaux confirmed that the NHS Medway Clinical Commissioning Group would be evaluating the success of the street triage service and advised that people with mental health issues were now being placed more quickly since staffing issues at a local provider had improved.

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It was confirmed that all agencies involved in the CSP had training in place for staff on Mental Health issues.

Aeilish Geldenhuys from Public Health outlined the work of the Medway Blue Light Project which was an innovative multi agency project facilitated by the Medway Public Health Department in partnership with Alcohol Concern, to inform joint interventions aimed at adult substance misusers with complex needs and with a history of poor engagement with services. She also outlined the training provided by Public Health and confirmed that all schools would soon have staff trained in mental health issues.

- **Community Trigger applications**- A Member sought confirmation that the statement that no Community Trigger applications had been received as at September 2017 was correct. The CSP Manager confirmed that such applications were reported via the Customer Contact mailbox at the CSP. He advised that he would check that the statement in the report was correct and notify the Member direct.
- **Rogue traders** – A Member sought clarification on the process for the reporting of rogue traders in Chatham High Street. The Trading Standards Team Leader advised that officers routinely monitor and respond to reports of rogue traders and he confirmed that he would refer this issue on.
- **Medway Model** – In response to a request for additional information, Sarah Vaux from the NHS Medway CCG provided a brief outline of the Medway Model. She agreed to provide the Democratic Services Officer with information on engagement events for circulation to Members of the Committee.
- **Anti Social Behaviour** – A Member referred to the top five wards in Medway where anti social behaviour was a problem and she sought clarification as to how the CSP's resources would be directed to alleviate problems in these Wards. In response, Chief Inspector Marsh confirmed that the Police target resources where the greatest demand was evident.

The Chairman of the CSP outlined the types of projects on which the CSP funding was expended and advised that the CSP did not undertake its own fundraising.

- **Organised crime and gangs** – A Member referred to public perceptions of organised crime and gangs and commented that this did not appear to be reflected in the CSP report and she sought further information.

In response, Chief Inspector Marsh explained the difference between organised crime and gangs from a Police perspective and outlined the work being undertaken to alleviate both. In particular, he referred to work being undertaken with Youth Engagement Officers in schools and

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officers within the Youth Service to target individuals at risk of being drawn into gang culture.

Aeilish Geldenhuys from Public Health advised the Committee that Medway had been proactive providing training for staff to help them identify people at risk or of being radicalised and this training was now being shared with other local authorities.

- **Begging** – In response to a request for information on actions being taken to reduce begging on the streets of Medway, the Chairman of the CSP outlined the work undertaken by agencies to encourage individuals to change their way of life. He advised that many homeless people had alcohol and/or drug dependency and many housing providers would not agree to house such people. Whilst agencies worked to help people overcome their difficulties, unfortunately the good intentions of the public in providing beggars with money/food sometimes only served to encourage them to remain on the streets.

He advised that a charity was in the process of being set up with a view to providing collection boxes in High Street shops with funds collected being given to established organisations that help and support the homeless.

- **Engagement with the Voluntary Sector and local businesses** – It was noted that the CSP was seeking to improve engagement with the voluntary sector and local businesses.
- **Memorandum of Understanding** - A Member referred to a recent meeting with the Chief Superintendent and Chief Inspector following which it had been agreed that a Memorandum of Understanding on how to deal with travellers would be drawn up. It was confirmed that this had now been completed and it was agreed that this be circulated to all Members.
- **Involvement of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)** – It was noted that the PCC was often represented at meetings of the CSP.
- **Setting CSP priorities** - The Chairman of the CSP outlined the process followed by the CSP in setting its priorities and suggested that if any Councillors had suggestions for future priorities, they contact him direct or email the CSP.
- **Issuing of parking tickets around schools** –Chief Inspector Marsh agreed to provide information outside of the meeting on the likely timescale for powers to be granted to PCSOs to issue parking tickets.
- **Community Payback** - Emma Vecchiolla from the Kent, Sussex and Surrey Community Rehabilitation Company (KSS CRC) agreed to provide information for circulation to Members on the Community

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Payback schemes that had taken place in 2017 and those projected for 2018. She advised the Committee that the KSS CRC would welcome suggestions from Ward Councillors for possible Community Payback projects.

- **Statistics** – The Chairman drew attention to statistics referred to on pages 35 and 42 and pages 43 and 44 of the report and sought clarification that they were correct. The Head of Safer Communities and Greenspaces agreed to check these statistics and respond to the Chairman direct.
- **Neighbourhood Watch** - The Head of Safer Communities and Greenspaces agreed to provide Members with literature on current scams for circulation through Neighbourhood Watch Groups.

### Decisions:

The Committee:

- a) noted the findings of the strategic assessment.
- b) supported in the light of the strategic assessment findings, the Community Safety Plan priorities remaining unchanged, it being noted that the Action Plan reflects some new and emerging issues contained within the strategic assessment.
- c) noted that:
  - the Police have agreed to supply the name and contact number of the newly appointed Vulnerable Intervention Officer to the Democratic Services Officer for circulation to Members and to provide subsequent updates should the postholder change at a future date.
  - the Community Safety Partnership Manager will respond direct to the Member concerned on the number of Community Trigger applications that have been received by the CSP.
  - the Trading Standards Team Leader will refer the issue of rogue traders in Chatham High Street .
  - the NHS Medway CCG will supply via the Democratic Services Officer, information on the Medway Model engagement events for circulation to Members.
  - a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding on Travellers will be circulated to Members.
  - the Police will supply information as to the anticipated timescale PCSOs to be provided with powers to issue parking tickets for circulation to Members.
  - the KSS CRC will provide information on the Community Payback projects undertaken over the past year and those projected for 2018 for circulation to Members.
  - the Head of Safer Communities and Greenspaces and Community Safety Partnership Manager will check the statistics

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contained within pages 35 and 42 and 43 and 44 of the agenda and will advise the Chairman direct if these statistics are correct.

- the Police will provide to Members information of current scams for circulation to Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators.

### **567 Member's item: Update on a proposed implementation plan for the Challenge 25 initiative**

#### **Discussion:**

At the request of Councillor McDonald, the Committee received a report setting out actions taken in response to a motion at Council on 12 October 2017 on Acid and Challenge 25.

Councillor McDonald thanked officers for the swift response in taking action arising from the motion and sought further information on future test purchasing exercises, information on the Council's marketing strategy and the number of retailers signed up to Challenge 25.

In response, the Trading Services Team Leader advised that the test purchasing exercise would be followed up in late January and that to date 100% of retailers approached had agreed to sign up to Challenge 25.

He advised that in addition to the press release, Trading Standards had a booklet that was available to traders and that when re-printed, this would be expanded to include a section on the sale of corrosive substances.

He also reported receipt of a response to the Council's representation to the Home Secretary asking for further details on proposed legislation to regulate the sale of corrosive substances to persons under the age of 18 years.

#### **Decisions:**

The Committee:

- a) noted the report and the arrangements for progressing the voluntary application of Challenge 25 to the retail sale of corrosive substances.
- b) noted officers' intention to respond to any Government consultations on the implementation of legal controls on the sale of corrosive substances to persons under eighteen years old to ensure that the prospective legislation is robust and fit for purpose.
- c) agreed that a copy of the letter from the Home Secretary be circulated to all Members of the Council.
- d) agreed that a further update be provided to Members via a briefing note in six months.



## 568 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.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that some areas of the Portfolio Holder's report did not fall with the remit of his Portfolio but had been included in the report to provide context in their relationship with Community Safety issues.

The Portfolio Holder responded to Members' questions and comments as follows:

- **Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO)** – In response to a suggestion that PSPOs to be expanded to cover areas where alcohol and drug related litter was evident, the Portfolio Holder agree to refer this to the Police to assess whether such orders would be appropriate to address issues of this nature.

In noting that the former Designated Public Places Orders (DPPOs) or Alcohol Control Zones in Chatham, Gillingham, Rochester and Strood had automatically become PSPOs on 20 October 2017, a Member sought clarification as to whether it was possible for boundaries of the areas to be extended. In particular, he wished to see the Chatham PSPO extended to cover Luton. In response the Portfolio Holder suggested that once the PSPOs had been given time to settle, it may be possible to investigate possible expansion.

- **Safe Haven and the work of the Medway Street Pastors** - A Member sought clarification as to the services that would be on offer when the Safe Haven and Medway Street Pastors visit Gillingham High Street.

In response, the Portfolio Holder outlined the work that was currently undertaken by the Street Pastors in Rochester and advised that the Gillingham initiative was in early stages as a location for the Safe Haven bus had yet to be identified.

- **Community Safety Team** – A Member requested whether the Community Safety Team was a new addition to the service or would involve the redeployment of existing staff. He referred to an underspend in the Safer Communities Budget which had arisen due to staff vacancies and he expressed the view that this could have provided additional staffing.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Community Safety Team would involve existing staff and the re-targeting of existing resources. Referring to the underspend in the Safer Communities budget this could not be



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allocated for additional staffing, owing to the existing budget pressures facing the Council.

The Member concerned requested that he be provided with specific information on the underspend in the Safer Communities budget.

- **Illegal tobacco sales** – In response to a question concerning progress in tracking the sale of illegal tobacco, the Trading Services Team Leader confirmed that six shops had been closed down and 2 cases were pending.
- **Police resources for Gillingham and other urban areas** – A Member sought information on whether the Portfolio Holder was satisfied there were sufficient Police resources to cover Gillingham and other urban areas. In response, the Portfolio Holder stated that he was satisfied with the allocation of resources by the Police. He confirmed that he had met with the Police Crime Commissioner and discussed the issue of police resources both for the urban and rural areas of Medway.

### Decisions:

The Committee:

- a) thanked the Portfolio Holder for Resources for attending the meeting and answering questions.
- b) requested that the Portfolio Holder for Resources pass on the Committee's appreciation to the various partners of the Community Safety Partnership for their work in 2017.
- c) noted that:
  - officers will investigate whether the Police had powers to address the issue of alcohol and drug related litter under the Public Space Protection Orders.
  - the Assistant Director Front Line Services will provide information on the underspend on the Safer Communities budget to the Member direct
- d) requested that in future, reports for the Portfolio Holder for Resources clearly indicate those areas that fall within the remit of another Portfolio Holder or another Overview and Scrutiny Committee so that there is no confusion as to the items to be discussed at this Committee.

### 569 Draft Capital and Revenue Budget 2018/19

#### Discussion:

The Committee received a report providing an update on progress towards setting the Council's draft capital and revenue budgets for 2018/19.

The Head of Finance Strategy outlined the report and the process by which the budget would progress through to Cabinet and Council in February 2018.

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A Member referred to Parking Services and Sport, Leisure and Tourism and questioned whether realistic target income levels had been set. He suggested that if the target levels were unrealistic, then the Directorate would be facing similar problems in 2018. In response, the Assistant Directors for Front Line Services and Physical and Cultural Regeneration advised upon the measures currently being taken to reduce the income shortfalls in these areas.

A Member requested that detailed information on the investment plan for ICT be supplied to him outside of the meeting.

It was confirmed that the outcome of the Council's bid to the Government to participate in a pilot 100% Business Rate Retention Scheme during 2018/19 was still awaited.

In discussing the budget report, Members expressed concern that the report did not provide sufficient detail to enable the Committee to scrutinise the budget and requested that this be conveyed to the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **Decision:**

The Committee:

- a) noted that Cabinet has instructed officers to continue to work with Portfolio Holders in formulating robust proposals to balance the budget for 2018/19 and beyond.
- b) 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
- c) noted that detailed information on the ICT investment plan will be supplied to the Member direct outside of the meeting.

## **570 Council Plan Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2017/18**

### **Discussion:**

The Committee received a report setting out performance in Quarter 2 for 2017/18 for the key measures of success and projects relevant to this Committee.

The following was discussed:

- **Major incidents on the M2 and the impact on traffic through Medway** - A Member requested that consideration be given to negotiating with various agencies a contingency plan or ways of rectifying traffic congestion when there are major incidents on the M2 so as to avoid Medway's road network becoming gridlocked. In response, the Assistant Director Front Line Services advised that she had recently

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requested a meeting with Highways England and the Department for Transport to discuss highway issues and she would take this forward with them.

- **Street Cleanliness** – A Member requested that in future performance monitoring reports, the information in NI 195a (Improved street environmental cleanliness) be expanded to include the number of streets that have been surveyed so as to make the statistics meaningful.
- **Dog fouling** – Arising from discussion on fouling by dogs, the Assistant Director Front Line Services agreed to circulate a copy of the Medway Dog Code.

### Decision:

The Committee:

- a) noted the Quarter 2 2017/18 performance against the measures of success used to monitor progress against the Council's priorities.
- b) noted that the Assistant Director Front Line Services has requested a meeting with Highways England and the Department for Transport to discuss highway issues and will take forward the concern that major incidents on the M2 have an impact on traffic movement through Medway and seeking possible alternative contingencies and the outcome of such discussions be notified to Members via a briefing note.
- c) agreed that future performance monitoring reports include the number of streets that have been surveyed in NI 195a (Improved street environmental cleanliness).
- d) noted that a copy of the Medway Dog Code will be circulated to Members.

### 571 Member's item: Parking in Gillingham North and South Wards

#### Discussion:

The Committee received a report setting out a response to a Member's Item from Councillor Johnson, concerning parking in Gillingham South and North Wards.

Councillor Johnson explained the difficulties that residents in both Gillingham North and South Wards were having in parking their vehicles. This was particularly of concern for shift workers returning home late evening or early morning and who were unable to park near their home and were often driving around for up to an hour trying to find somewhere to park. Other concerns included the inability to have family visits and emergency vehicle access.

He appreciated that there was no easy solution but welcomed the suggestion that there be an informal meeting between officers, the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Stamp and himself to discuss possible ways forward. He requested that a formal record be taken of the discussions at such meetings and that the work be time-limited with a report back to the Committee in the summer of 2018.

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The Assistant Director Front Line Services briefly outlined the following four work streams that could be investigated:

- How to rationalise the space available in Controlled Parking Zones.
- Investigations into how other local authority areas managed parking.
- Tackling the parking of works vehicles in residential areas and how this has been addressed in other local authority areas.
- Investigating the possible use of car parks and Council land to increase parking capacity.

It was intended that the first meeting of the group would take place in January 2018.

A Member informed the Committee that Watling Ward adjoined Gillingham South Ward and constituents in Watling Ward also suffered parking problems as residents from Gillingham South preferred to park in roads in Watling Ward rather than purchase permits for a Controlled Parking Zone in Gillingham South. She therefore requested that she be permitted to be involved in the informal discussions on this matter.

The Committee noted the proposed way forward and also recognised that parking was an issue that affected all Wards across Medway and it was suggested that an officer from Planning also be involved in the group discussions so that the parking issue can be borne in mind when considering planning applications for future housing developments.

### **Decision:**

The Committee:

- a) noted the report and the suggestion that a meeting take place comprising the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Councillors Stamp, Johnson and Saroy, along with the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services and the Assistant Director Front Line Services to discuss Councillor Johnson's suggestions and possible ways forward for future consideration.
- b) a Planning officer be requested to attend the meetings.
- c) formal notes be taken of the meetings and the outcome be the subject of a report back to this committee in June 2018.

## **572 Petitions**

### **Discussion:**

The Committee received a report advising of those petitions received by the Council which fell within the remit of the Committee, including a summary of the responses sent to the petition organisers by officers.

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One petition had been referred to the Committee for consideration by the lead petitioner, Councillor Stamp.

Councillor Stamp advised the Committee that in signing the petitions, a number of comments had been made by individuals who considered that the introduction of parking charges at The Strand Leisure Park had affected their decision to use the Leisure Park. This was considered to be contrary to the Council's strategy on reducing obesity and undermined the health and well being of individuals.

Councillor Stamp advised that the Junior Park Run, which was a free weekly event at the Leisure Park on Sundays, had witnessed a decline in volunteers since the introduction of parking charges and was now under threat of closure.

Whilst it was recognised that the Council was under financial pressure and was seeking to maximise income opportunities, Councillor Stamp suggested that alternative options were available including:

- Changing from £5.20 a day to a nominal fee of 50p or £1.
- Introducing a specified period free of charge before charges were applied.
- Enabling a refund system for users of the Leisure Park
- Limiting the time when charges are applied e.g. free at weekends.
- Shorter charging periods e.g. 10am – 6pm

Councillor Stamp referred to the review being undertaken by the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services and expressed concern that with the review ending in February 2018 and a report planned to come to this Committee in March 2018 this would be too late for any recommendations from this Committee to be made prior to budget setting in February 2018.

He pointed out that the parking charges had not been introduced until part way through the Summer of 2017 and therefore it would be difficult to quantify the affect that the parking charges had had on usage of facilities at the Leisure Park. He expressed concern that The Strand Leisure Park was the only out of town leisure facility where parking charges were levied.

The Committee discussed the report and it was suggested as a way forward the Portfolio Holder's review be brought forward to this Committee at its meeting on 23 January 2018, it being noted that owing to the timescales for the production of reports for that date, it may be necessary to have supplementary information circulated close to the date of the meeting for consideration by the Committee. This would enable the Committee to consider this matter with the necessary data available and prior to budget setting in February 2018.

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### **Decision:**

The Committee:

- a) noted the petition responses and appropriate officer action set out in paragraph 3 of the report.
- b) agreed that a report be submitted to the 23 January 2018 meeting of this Committee setting out the outcome of the Portfolio Holder's review of car parking charges at The Strand Leisure Park, it being noted that this may involve supplementary information being supplied after the agenda despatch and to enable this Committee to consider this issue prior to budget setting in February 2018.

### **573 Work Programme**

#### **Discussion:**

The Committee received a report setting out the Committee's work programme for 2017/18 and noted the suggestion from the pre-agenda meeting on 17 November 2017 that the Cultural Activities Programme be removed from the list of reports scheduled for the January 2018 meeting and produced as a briefing note.

The Committee was reminded that at this meeting, it had also requested that a report be submitted on 23 January 2018 on the outcome of a review of parking at the Strand Leisure Park.

#### **Decision:**

The Committee:

- a) noted the current work programme;
- b) agreed that the Cultural Activities Programme be produced as a briefing note and therefore removed from the Committee's work programme for January 2018; and
- c) noted that a report will be submitted to the Committee on 23 January 2018 setting out the outcome of the review of parking at The Strand Leisure Park.

**Chairman**

**Date:**

**Ellen Wright, Democratic Services Officer**

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