

Summary of Quarter 4 2019/20 Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny performance discussion

1. Framework

- 1.1 Quarter 4 and End of Year 2019/20 performance was discussed at the Regeneration, Culture and Environment O&S Committee on 13 August.

2. Items referred to Business Support O&S

- 2.1 No items were referred to the Business Support O&S Committee.

3. O&S Performance Discussion

- 3.1 This section provides a summary of the discussion at the meeting.

3.1.1 Regeneration, Culture and Environment O&S Committee discussion summary

Discussion:

The Committee received a report setting out performance for the first quarter against the Council's three priorities insofar as they fell within the remit of this Committee. The report also included the Council's Risk Management Strategy for Quarter 1 reviewing the strategic risks pertaining to this committee.

The Head of RCET Business Intelligence Hub informed the Committee that the paragraph referring to 'Project – Encourage the delivery of homes to meet our targets – Rochester Riverside' on pages 67 – 68 of the agenda should not have been greyed out as it was relevant to the work of this Committee.

The following was discussed:

- **NI 154 Net additional homes provided** – A Member referred to the pending outcome of the Council's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid and sought information as to contingency plans should the bid be unsuccessful.

The Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive advised that HIF funding was required to be spent within a 4 year period. He reminded the Committee that the Council had recently approved funding of £850,000 from reserves to be allocated to complete the planned Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) works within the programme to continue to meet the 2024 spend deadline.

He was in weekly contact with the National Lead for HIF but information was not yet available as to the outcome of the Council's bid. It was hoped that this could be available in early November. It was also confirmed that the Leader of the Council and Medway's MPs were also actively pursuing this.

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In the event that the Council's HIF bid was unsuccessful, this would have significant implications for the Medway Local Plan.

- **NI 195a Improved street and environmental cleanliness: Litter** – A Member referred to the accuracy of the assessment of cleanliness via a visual inspection of a 50m stretch of a street.

He expressed concern that the statement in Quarter 1, that 96% of streets (288/300) surveyed were free from litter at the time of inspection did not appear to correlate with the statistics reported on environmental street enforcement in the Portfolio Holder's report earlier on the agenda.

The Head of RCET Business Intelligence Hub advised that NI195a was an indicator that followed guidance from DEFRA and a briefing note had previously been circulated on how streets were selected for inspection.

- **Cultural Programme** – A Member referred to move of exhibits from the Guildhall Museum to Eastgate House and expressed disappointment that an entry fee was required for this attraction. Whilst he appreciated that there was an income target, he suggested that consideration be given to introducing free entry to the facility. The Committee discussed this and the following options were suggested:
 - A trial free entry period
 - Free entry on periodic late night openings or on specific days
 - Free entry for under 12s
 - Free entry for Medway residents.

In response, the Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive outlined a number of exciting projects programmed for 2020 to mark the 150th anniversary of Dickens death and in particular the new permanent Dickens exhibition planned at the Guildhall Museum.

He advised that that when applying for funding to refurbish Eastgate House, part of the funding bid involved the identification of an income stream. Whilst he recognised the benefits of increasing footfall should there be an element of free entry, it was also necessary for the facility to meet its income target.

- **Community Payback projects** - A Member referred to the 13 waste removal projects undertaken by Community Payback and questioned whether officers considered this to be a satisfactory number of projects. The Head of RCET Business Intelligence Hub reminded the Committee that these 13 projects only related to Quarter 1 so it equated to approximately 1 project a week. She offered to supply the Member direct with further information on the level of Community Payback projects undertaken in Medway.
- **Street Cleaning and Waste Collection services** - A Member asked for an update as to how the new street cleaning and waste collection contract was progressing.

The Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive advised that the transition of the contract from Veolia to Medway

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NORSE on 1 October 2019 had been seamless and he expressed his appreciation to Medway Norse and Veolia for their support in helping with the transition process.

- **City of Culture bid** – A Member asked for further information on the Council's City of Culture bid. In response, the Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive advised that if the bid was successful it would create a City of Culture within the heart of the Thames Estuary.
- **Locate in Kent** – A Member sought further information of the work of Locate in Kent and, in particular, their performance in job creation in Medway.

In response, the Assistant Director Physical and Cultural Regeneration reported upon the work undertaken by Locate in Kent promoting Medway both nationally and internationally. She confirmed that Medway had a seat on the Board she had regular meetings with the organisation. She was satisfied that they provided an excellent service and offered value for money. Locate in Kent had been instrumental in the relocation of Amazon to Medway, would play a crucial role in attracting business to the Innovation Park Medway and were actively involved in business development at the Isle of Grain.

Decision:

The Committee:

- a) noted the Quarter 1 2019/20 performance against the measures used to monitor progress against the Council's priorities.
- b) noted that the Committee will receive regular updates on the HIF bid.
- c) noted that officers will consider possible opportunities for the introduction of free sessions at Eastgate House.
- d) noted that the Head of RCET Business Intelligence Hub will provide further information direct to the Member concerned on Community Payback projects.

3.1.2 Regeneration, Culture and Environment O&S Committee performance data

The Regeneration, Culture and Environment O&S Committee performance data is shown in Appendix 3 (pages 103-128).