

Medway Council
Meeting of Regeneration, Community and Culture
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Tuesday, 6 July 2010
5.05pm to 6.15pm

Record of the meeting

- Present:** Councillors: Andrews, Bhutia, Bright (Chairman), Crack, Godwin, Tony Goulden, Griffin, Hewett, Hubbard, Mackinlay, Maisey and Ruparel
- Substitutes:** Councillors:
Mrs Diane Chambers (Substitute for Councillor Hicks)
- In Attendance:** Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture
Sarah Dagwell, Acting Head of Waste Services
Angela Drum, Head of Legal
Stephen Gaimster, Assistant Director Development, Economy and Transport
Neil Howlett, Community Safety Partnership Manager
Brian McCutcheon, Local and Regional Planning Manager
Andy McGrath, Assistant Director, Front Line Services
Caroline Salisbury, Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Ian Wilson, Head of Capital Projects, Road Safety and Networks
Kevin Woolmer, Corporate Accountant

125 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 1 June 2010 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

126 Apologies for absence

An apology was received from Councillor Hicks.

127 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

The Chairman had accepted items 5 and 6 as urgent business and the reasons for urgency are set out in the minute below.

128 Declarations of interest

Councillor Godwin declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 (Community Safety Partnership Plan Review) because he was the council's appointed member on the Kent Police Authority.

129 Community Safety Partnership Plan Review

Discussion:

The Assistant Director, Front Line Services, introduced the report advising that the annual rolling three year plan set out the aims and objectives of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). A third strategic assessment had been undertaken in November 2009 and, coupled with the views of the public and stakeholders, it identified six key areas of focus. The plan also contained the progress made on existing actions in the 'Performance Highlights 2009' section of the plan.

The reason for urgency accepted by the Chairman was that the report had to be submitted to this meeting in order that the committee's views could be forwarded to Cabinet on 20 July 2010.

Members asked various questions and commented on:

- enforcement checks of uncovered skip vehicles using Medway's roads and causing litter problems, suggesting that there should be a specific reference in the plan about this;
- the use and success of the SoS bus with aiding people from mis-use of alcohol and/or drugs, or any other reason of safety by acting as a first aid facility or simply a refuge;
- anti-social behaviour – deliberate fires (arson) and appropriate action to reduce the risk of repeated incidents. The committee was advised that Kent Fire & Rescue Service specifically provided youth outreach to young people to provide information on the risks of fire setting;
- gated alleyways used as rubbish dumps and the successful use of community clear-up campaigns;
- Alcohol Control Zones (ACZ) – requirement for clearer signage and recognition by officers and the police that it moved street-drinking problems on to other areas within Medway. Members discussed the possibility of making the whole of Medway an ACZ.

Decision:

The committee agreed to refer the annual review of Community Safety Partnership Plan 2009-2012 to Cabinet for approval recommending the addition of a section on the enforcement of uncovered skip vehicles and that Cabinet take note of the comments made during the discussion (as set out above.)

130 Gateway 3 Contract Award: Household Waste Recycling Centres

Discussion:

The Acting Head of Waste Services introduced the report advising that the contract would cover the management of the three sites within Medway and for finding the markets for most of the materials disposed of there. The tender had set out that a 50% recycling rate should be achieved in the first year of the contract and 60% for each subsequent year.

Four bidders had been found to be compliant and an overview of their proposals were set out in paragraph 8.4 of the report. After a full technical, professional ability and financial scoring system had been undertaken the bid from Bidder 4 was found to be the most economically advantageous tender.

The reason for urgency accepted by the Chairman was that the report had to be submitted to this meeting in order that the committee's views could be forwarded to Cabinet on 20 July 2010.

Members asked various questions and commented on:

- the layout of entry into the site at Cuxton to avoid any lengthy traffic delays;
- the types of chemical waste that could be disposed of at the household waste sites. Officers advised that a strict list of chemicals were allowed on site but this would be reviewed with the contractor to allow as many products as possible to be disposed of safely at the sites;
- staff incentive schemes – assurance that this would not turn into shortcuts and compromise safety at the sites. Officers advised that the incentive scheme was to encourage staff to separate out rubbish into the correct bins and that staff also took ownership to ensure that residents did the same to achieve the best recycling rates. It was noted that that the scheme did not apply to any council staff;
- private house clearance – entry of vans into the household sites. Officers advised that current arrangements would continue, allowing un-signed or hired vans into the Capstone site on certain dates by pre-appointment;
- what happened to wood waste? The committee was advised that this was a separate contract in partnership with Kent County Council where a minimum of 70% of the wood collected would be recycled.

Decision:

The committee agreed to recommend that Cabinet agrees:

- (a) the award of the contract for the management of the household waste

recycling centres to Bidder 4 as the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT);

- (b) to authorise the Chief Finance Officer (who is the officer responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972) as the officer responsible for signing certificates issued under the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 in respect of the management of the household waste recycling centre contracts to be entered into by the Council.

131 Local Development Framework: draft core strategy

Discussion:

The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture announced that as the government had formally abolished the South East Plan earlier in the day this report would be withdrawn from discussion at this meeting. He advised that there were various references to the South East Plan and conformities to it within the Core Strategy, so these would need to be removed, together with additional requirements to justify housing and job numbers within the strategy.

The Local and Regional Planning Manager also advised that the government's Chief Planner had issued a six page guidance note and a preliminary assessment of that indicated that officers would hopefully bring an amended report for consideration to the meeting on 29 September 2010.

Decision:

The committee agreed to defer consideration of the report until the meeting on 29 September 2010.

132 The future of the Strood Environmental Enhancement Scheme

Discussion:

The Capital Projects Manager introduced the report and advised that the previously proposed scheme was no longer suitable due to traffic growth in the area. Due to the abandonment of the scheme, most of the land was now surplus to requirements with the remainder being held for a possible small scale road improvement and new library site. Members were reminded that an addendum report set out updated recommendations on page 73 of the supplementary agenda.

Members discussed the areas shown on a map on page 150 of the agenda and gave details of a previous discussion about congestion in Strood and Rochester that had taken place at a scoping meeting for the new Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3). Members observed that as a 12 week public consultation on the LTP3 had only just begun, it would be premature to declare area 2 of the plan surplus to requirements as the LTP3 discussion had included a suggestion of a bus/pedestrian link route through that area.

Officers responded that the modelling of a bus lane in area 2 would be very difficult and there would definitely be design issues.

Decision:

- (a) The committee agreed to recommend to Cabinet that the Strood Environmental Enhancement Scheme is abandoned;
- (b) Subject to (a) above, the committee recommends that Cabinet agrees that:-
 - (i) the land at Station Road Strood as edged black and numbered 1 on the plan attached to this report, be declared surplus to enable the Assistant Director of Housing and Corporate Services in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder to dispose of it at best consideration using delegated powers.
 - (ii) the site of 16/20 North Street Strood Street as edged black and numbered 2 on the plan attached to this report be declared surplus to enable the Assistant Director of Housing & Corporate Services in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder to dispose of it at best consideration using delegated powers.
 - (iii) the site of 31-35 North Street and the site of 4-18 at Edward Street Strood as edged black and numbered 3 on the plan attached to this report be declared surplus to enable the Assistant Director of Housing and Corporate Services in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder to dispose of them at best consideration using delegated powers.
 - (iv) 37-39 North Street and land rear of 39 North Street as edged black and numbered 4 on the plan attached to this report be declared surplus to enable the Assistant Director of Housing & Corporate Services in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder to dispose of it at best consideration using delegated powers.
 - (v) land in Commercial Road Strood as edged black and numbered 5 on the plan attached to this report be declared surplus to enable the Assistant Director of Housing and Corporate Services in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder to dispose of it at best consideration using delegated powers.
 - (vi) the Commercial Road car park as edged black and numbered 6 on the plan attached to this report be declared surplus to enable the Assistant Director of Housing and Corporate Services in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder to dispose of it at best consideration using delegated powers.

133 Work programme

Discussion:

The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator advised of the main updates and amendments to the work programme.

The Leader of the Labour Group asked about the report “Gateway 3 Award of Contract: Chatham Dynamic Bus Facility” on the Cabinet’s Forward Plan for consideration on 20 July 2010 and enquired whether this was different from a previous decision agreed by Cabinet in November 2009 when call-in was waived. The wording on the Forward Plan seemed contradictory to advice given by officers in November last year.

The Head of Legal and the Head of Capital Projects, Road Safety and Networks advised that the contract was being awarded in stages. The contractor had been selected from the IESE framework and awarded a contract (in November 2009) to carry out preliminary works and to price up the main construction works. This work had been on-going since November 2009 and the contract due to be considered at Cabinet on 20 July was for the final contract for the construction of the Dynamic Bus Facility.

Members asked how the council was able to control the price by this method and did it demonstrate value for money by working with a single contractor? Officers advised that early contractor involvement was a widely used practice by Local Authorities based on ‘open book accounting’. The contractor had to show all their costs and suppliers and these had been evaluated twice, once by the IESE framework and secondly by the council. There were also independent advisors to confirm that the costs had legitimately incurred.

The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture re-assured the committee that in terms of funding for this project, the council had received written confirmation from the relevant government agency that the money was available and that the council should proceed as soon as possible with this scheme.

Members asked whether the decision on 20 July 2010 would also be taken with the call-in facility waived and officers advised that this was likely to happen due to reasons of urgency.

Members also requested that no more than one Portfolio Holder was invited to attend any of the next five meetings.

Decision:

The committee agreed to:

- (a) note that a report on the Gun Wharf Masterplan would be submitted to the next meeting in August 2010;

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- (b) consider a report on the outcome of consultation on the consolidation and extension of the Rochester Conservation Area at the August meeting as pre-decision scrutiny;
- (c) note the feedback from the Waste Contract Task Group in relation to the waste strategy stocktake and that those comments will be forwarded to the Cabinet;
- (d) note the feedback in relation to the KCC Rail Select Committee;
- (e) request that no more than one Portfolio Holder attends a meeting to be held to account in the future.

Chairman

Date:

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