

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Business Support Overview and Scrutiny**  
**Committee**

**Thursday, 26 November 2020**

**6.30pm to 0.03am**

**Record of the meeting**

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

**Present:** Councillors: Buckwell (Chairman), Clarke, Hackwell, Johnson, Maple, Murray, Opara and Tejan (Vice-Chairman)

**In Attendance:** Samantha Beck-Farley, Head of HR  
Mark Breathwick, Head of Housing  
Katey Durkin, Head of Finance Strategy  
Perry Holmes, Chief Legal Officer/Monitoring Officer  
Michael Kelly, Head of Category Management  
Stephen Platt, Democratic Services Officer  
Phil Watts, Chief Finance Officer

**430 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Etheridge, Khan, Andy Stamp, Wildey and Williams.

(During this period, the Conservative and Labour and Co-operative political groups had informally agreed, due the Coronavirus pandemic, to run meetings with reduced number of participants. This was to reduce risk, comply with Government guidance and enable more efficient meetings. Therefore the apologies given reflected that informal agreement of reduced participants.)

**431 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 October 2020 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

**432 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances**

The Chairman advised that the report on the Monuments and Place Names Working Group was circulated separately to the main agenda and he had agreed to accept it as a matter of urgency to enable the Committee to consider this matter before it is considered by Cabinet on 15 December. The report was not available in time for despatch with the main agenda due the final meeting of the working group being held on 17 November.

**433 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant Interests and Whipping**

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

In relation to item 5 (Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Resources), Councillor Murray declared that in her professional capacity she participated in the Medway Social Work Teaching Partnership student placements scheme.

In relation to item 5, (Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Resources), Councillor Maple declared that he was a member of the Health and Charitable Foundation and Medway Credit Union, both of which were tenants of the Pentagon Centre.

In relation to item 8 (Council Plan Monitoring and Risk Register Review Quarter 2 2020/21), the following declarations were made:

Councillor Johnson declared that his employer, the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB), was mentioned in the report, as was the kickstart scheme which CAB participated in.

Councillor Hackwell declared that his wife was a part-time assessor and tutor with Adult Education.

In relation to item 11 (Draft Capital and Revenue Budget 2021/22), Councillor Opara declared that her company had benefitted from the discretionary business grant.

Whipping

Confirmation was provided that there was none.

**434 Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Resources**

**Discussion:**

Members received an overview of activities and progress made on work areas within the Resources Portfolio, which fell within the remit of the Committee. These were as follows:

- Transformation and Digital Services

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- Council Plan and Service Improvement
- Business and Administration Support Service
- Complaints Policy and Management
- HR
- ICT
- Legal
- Property
- Category Management/Procurement
- Travellers

Councillor Gulvin, Portfolio Holder for resources attended the meeting and responded to Members' questions and comments as follows:

- **Business Change Team national recognition and the steps being taken to ensure that Medway continues to adapt to new digital ways of working.**

The Portfolio Holder agreed that the Business Change Team had worked particularly well over the past few months and referenced the development of user friendly online chat bots as an example of how cutting edge technology was making digitally enabled services accessible to a wider range of people. Another example of the successful use of computer bots was a recent data transfer exercise which had enabled the exercise to be carried out in-house at a vastly reduced cost.

Asked how residents were included in the transformation process, the Portfolio Holder highlighted the importance of being responsive to customer feedback in the further development of digital services. An example was the household waste booking system that was introduced as a result of the pandemic and which had been subsequently been refined following customer feedback to enable bookings to be cancelled.

- **Learning from incidents elsewhere to ensure that contingencies were in place to protect against cyber-attacks.**

The Portfolio Holder responded that the Council's complex IT system was managed by a highly regarded team in whom he had a lot of confidence. The team were very well aware of the potential for a cyber-attack and systems such as filters were in place to prevent such an event and to aid a quick recovery should any incident occur.

- **Liaison with other public bodies on partnership working as part of the One Public Estate (OPE) programme.**

The Portfolio Holder advised that, with the assistance of Government funding, the Council had worked on OPE schemes with partners such as the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Fire Service. One example was work on the proposed new Healthy Living Centres for Chatham Town Centre, Strood and Hoo.

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In response to a question on the future of Gun Wharf, the Portfolio Holder expressed his desire for the Council to relocate given the high cost of maintaining the building which he considered to be no longer fit for purpose. The situation was compounded by the grade 2 listing of the building. However, such considerations were on hold, particularly in view of the pandemic. More immediate proposals were to relocate staff from office accommodation that was being leased, such as within Broadside and Kingsley House, to Gun Wharf.

- **Timescale for a review of the new Front Line Services reorganisation to assess if it was working effectively, particularly with regard to Community Wardens.**

The Portfolio Holder acknowledged the benefits of the previous system of Community Wardens but advised that, due to severe financial pressures, it was no longer viable. He was of the view that the new system was working well and that it needed to be given a chance to get established.

- **Continuation of HR Services as a Medway Council delivered function and consultation with Trade Unions as a service user.**

The Portfolio Holder emphasised the good working relationship that existed between the Council and the Trade Unions which was vital as they played an important role.

- **Support for people coming forward to support staff inclusion and diversity forums to ensure sustainability.**

The Portfolio Holder stressed the importance of Council being a safe, friendly supportive place to work. Equality and diversity in the workplace were important for all staff as it reflected positively on how an organisation worked. He added that he was committed to making it work.

In response to a question concerning the lack of promotion material on inclusion and diversity at Gun Wharf reception, the Portfolio Holder offered to discuss the further promotion of inclusion and diversity with the Digital Team.

- **Redundancy of staff at Splashes Sports Centre with no reference in the report on the property that was presented to Full Council.**

The Portfolio Holder referred to the significant pressure that Leisure Services was under which had reluctantly led to redundancies. Any opportunities for redeployment would be welcomed, for example as Medway Greeters.

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- **The rolling out of the street lighting, LED column replacement scheme and the potential for a commitment to dual electric charging points.**

The Portfolio Holder explained the two-stage process which involved replacing columns with those that had energy saving capabilities and then Wi-Fi enabling them. He explained the benefits of the Smart City and agreed that the timing of the presentation to Members needed to be finalised. CityFibre were looking to develop a fibre network in Medway which would provide good competition for the provision of super-fast broadband.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the low wattage of the infrastructure which supported the street lighting system prevented dual electric charging points. This would first need to be upgraded by the electricity companies. The Council was looking to provide localised off-street charging points, for example within car parks.

- **Continuation of the household waste site booking system as it was not suitable for all.**

The Portfolio considered the booking system to be easy to use and anticipated that it would remain while Medway was in tier 3.

- **Potential for fraudulent applications for blue badges.**

The Portfolio Holder advised that a recent Audit Committee report had not identified any fraud. The online application system had been well used but the option remained for customers to contact the Customer and Business Support team by phone when making an application.

In response to a question on increased disabled parking spaces to reflect the increased number of applications granted, the Portfolio Holder agreed to enquire if there was any correlation.

- **Praise for the ICT team for being at the forefront of the Council's response to dealing with the pandemic.**

The Portfolio Holder agreed and would pass on Members' thanks to the team.

- **Assurance that businesses would maintain healthy workplaces after the pandemic.**

The Portfolio Holder advised that the Council's Emergency Planning team had been advising businesses on what steps they should take.

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- **Opportunity for more interactive training particularly in social care and the governance arrangements of the Medway College of Social Care.**

The Portfolio Holder referred to the Council's highly regarded Apprenticeship Scheme which provided good career development for staff. He agreed that it was important for care staff to receive the training they needed to reflect the vital role they provided. He suggested that a briefing note on the governance arrangements of the Medway College of Social Care be sent to members of the Committee.

- **Sufficient information for local businesses to prepare for the exit from the European Union.**

The Portfolio Holder referred to the efforts made by the Category Management team to support local businesses to tender for Council contracts including workshops and Meet the Buyer events which had been held in the past.

Asked about the potential for the Council to take a more proactive approach in seeking out small local business for Council contracts, the Portfolio Holder referred to the concept of social value which enabled the Council to give greater support to local businesses.

- **Breakdown of complaints by service areas; whether/how Councillor enquiries to officers as a result of complaints or compliments received by them from residents were recorded; and why the level of complaints received due to service not being provided or being below standard was not improving.**

The Portfolio Holder said that he welcomed all feedback from residents as it provided a learning opportunity for the Council. He asked that responses on the issues raised be sent to Committee members.

- **Concerns about the relocation of the Family Courts.**

The Portfolio Holder said that he shared these concerns and agreed that a Family Court should continue to be located in Medway as it was currently the busiest in Kent. Office space had been offered at Gun Wharf in an effort to retain a Family Court within the area.

- **Replicating the approach taken during phase 2 of the ICT strategic review in other service areas.**

The Portfolio Holder referred to the assistance offered to services by the Business Change Team on service redesign and agreed that there was scope to repeat the pilot approach taken as part of the ICT strategic review.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked the Portfolio Holder for Resources for his attendance and for his detailed responses.

The Chairman informed the Committee of his proposal to pilot a new approach for the 2021/22 municipal year with regard to the attendance of Portfolio Holders to be held to account by the Committee. The proposal was to devote two meetings solely to the attendance of two Portfolio Holders on each occasion. It was envisaged that this would enable the Committee to continue to devote sufficient time to this activity without putting pressure on the rest of the Committee's agenda.

### 435 Staff survey on working arrangements

#### Discussion:

The Committee received a report and presentation on the results of a survey on the working arrangements experienced by Council staff during the pandemic. The survey had aimed to test how the Council responded to the needs of the workforce during the pandemic and to explore the opportunity for a different way of working going forward.

The survey had focused on work life balance, wellbeing, mental health, productivity, flexibility, support and equipment for people working at home. Over 1000 people had responded to the survey which revealed high satisfaction rates with the flexible working arrangements being made by the Council. Eight dedicated workstreams had been created to build on the achievements so far, using the data from the survey.

During the discussion, Members raised a number of issues and the officer response was as follows:

- **Difficulties in taking annual leave:** The Council managed, measured, and encouraged the taking of annual leave to aid wellbeing. Managers were prompted to address issues where compliance systems identified that leave was not being taken. Staff redeployment had been used to reduce the pressure on areas of high business demand to enable people to take their leave entitlement. Annual leave could be taken in hours as well as whole or half days.
- **Ongoing training for apprentices during the pandemic:** Apprentices continued to receive the support they needed. The Council's apprenticeship academy brought together all apprentices to ensure that there was a cohort of learning across the peer group. There was an expectation that all apprentices, and anyone new to their role, would still need to come into the office to have formal recognition into the role and to find out about the organisation. The induction process had been reviewed to take the distant workforce into account. As Gun Wharf was a Covid secure building, it allowed up to 25% of the workforce in the office where their attendance was required.

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- **Cyber Security risk issues associated with working from home:** The Council had a duty of care to staff working from home. Checks would be made to ensure cyber security was listed within the risks and priorities of the eight workstreams. Cyber security was captured within the Council Plan.
- **Measuring productivity and helping people to be more productive:** The way in which productivity was measured was changing. Given the current increased on-line activity rather than face to face discussions between colleagues, HR and ICT were working on the use of Microsoft Analytics to identify the different forms of interaction. This would help identify how people were spending their time and their productivity.

Officers agreed to consider what more can be done to help people to be more productive. There was a lot of pressure on the workforce and people needed to feel valued to help them to be more productive.

- **Flexibility to improve a work/life balance for the 25% who are currently not satisfied:** The Council recognised that workloads had been an issue throughout the pandemic as people had to adapt quickly to working differently. More work needed to be done in this area. Medway Makers were active in some directorates and were working with teams to understand what more needed to be done. In addition, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Champions were a strong network that linked into the community and provided a good source of information.
- **Staff who are unable to work from home:** Rather than referring to working from home, the Council was seeking to introduce smarter working which referred to a more blended, agile approach which enabled people to work from a range of locations. The vision was for the main estates such as Gun Wharf to be used as collaboration spaces to enable people to come together for time with their line manager and social interaction.
- **Line management of staff working remotely:** The Council recognised the difficulty in managing people remotely. No-one was expected to be a permanent home worker and the expectation was that all staff would be visible as part of a team and use of collaboration space would be key to enable this.
- **The continuance of communication:** During the pandemic policies had been enhanced or relaxed as appropriate. Policy variations or advice on new guidance were communicated through HR hot topics that were communicated quickly to all staff. In Touch presentations were a more interactive means of communication on issues such as mental health and well-being.
- **Availability of IT equipment to part-time staff:** Laptops were available to those members of staff working remotely who needed them to perform their role effectively, irrespective of the hours they worked.



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- **Home working protocols:** A working group had been set up to consider a new home working protocol which would be much more detailed than the current version. It would include the protocols that were already in place for staff to work safely, including lone worker risk assessments and buddying arrangements. The Jabber telephone system enabled the user to use their office number through their private phone.

### **Decision:**

The Committee noted and commented on the survey findings.

(In accordance with Council Rule 12.6, Councillors Johnson, Maple and Murray asked that their votes in favour be recorded).

## 436 Procurement Strategy 2021-2025

### **Discussion:**

The report provided an update on progress made against the 2016-2021 Procurement Strategy and the establishment of a 2021-2025 Procurement Strategy. The comments of the Committee were as follows:

**Impact of the end of the Brexit Transition period for current Council procurement activity** – it was noted that the EU legal framework for procurement had been transposed into UK law (with an abridged version) effective from 1 January 2021. The main change related to the requirement for providing notices of contracts from use of the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) into a Finder Tender service which will be a UK bulletin board. The Head of Category Management advised that there had never been interest in any Medway contracts from countries in the EU, EEA or Switzerland.

**Improved working with the voluntary sector** – the Committee was advised of the material contribution made by the voluntary sector in supporting the Council's response to the COVID pandemic some of which had involved varying contracts to create that capacity.

**Capacity to achieve the aspirations in the Procurement Strategy** – the Head of Category Management provided an assurance that while the targets in the Strategy were ambitious he was confident that a score of 3 could be attained against all objectives as detailed within Appendix 3 of the report

**Building on the understanding of the Procurement process by elected Members** – the Committee expressed support for a recommendation that training for all elected Members on procurement should take place and for further discussion to take place on the format and delivery of the training to encourage interest and take-up.

**Social value in procurement** – Members expressed interest in how the Council could maximise the achievement of social value through procurement activity including training of young people, encouraging diversity, the creation of

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good quality jobs and safeguarding the environment. The Head of Category Management explained that there was a framework of over 100 social value themes, outcomes and measures (TOMS) to assist the Council to determine social value priorities and then to evaluate impact.

**Developing talent** – the Committee was advised Category Management were a team of six, three of whom had achieved membership of the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply and three of whom were studying towards full membership.

**Council engagement with Medway SMEs** – the Head of Category Management provided an assurance to the Committee that activity to regularly engage with SMEs in Medway was ongoing and that project -specific dialogue with local bidders had been found to be more effective than the previous annual Meet the Buyer event run by the Council. Barriers to successful bidding by SMEs had been addressed. For example, procurement documentation had been streamlined and upfront information was provided about generic standards and certification required for each project with careful scrutiny to ensure that project-specific requirements from bidders were appropriate.

In conclusion the Committee noted the achievements of the 2016-2021 Procurement Strategy as outlined in the objectives in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee also discussed and noted the proposed utilisation of the National Procurement Strategy for the 2021-2025 Procurement Strategy's objectives and the proposal that year one of the new strategy should be used to attain a score of 3 against all objectives as detailed within Appendix 3 of the report.

### **Decision:**

The Committee agreed to recommend the Cabinet to agree that training on the Council's Procurement Strategy and the associated processes for local authority procurement should be provided for all Members of the Council and that the Chief Legal Officer and the Head of Category Management should develop a proposal for the format and delivery of the training in consultation with the Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson for the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(In accordance with Council Rule 12.6, Councillors Johnson, Maple and Murray asked that their votes in favour be recorded.)

## **437 Council Plan Performance Monitoring and Risk Register Review Quarter 2 2020/21**

### **Discussion:**

The Committee considered a report that summarised the Council's performance in Quarter 2 of 2020/21 on the delivery of programmes and

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measures which fell within the remit of the Committee. The report also presented the Q2 2020/21 review of strategic risks.

The Committee discussed the following:

- **Medway Development Company (MDC) off siting of affordable housing:** The Committee was advised that the Council commissioned MDC to deliver sites and such decisions were made by its Board. It was noted that the Whiffens Avenue development would include a number of shared ownership affordable housing units aimed at key workers. This was also the intention for Mountbatten House, the proposals for which were currently out for consultation. However, the use of off-site provision was allowing sites to be developed that would not otherwise come forward.
- **The opportunity for the extended bank holidays during 2022 to trigger a bid for city status:** The Chief Legal Officer agreed to refer this issue to the Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive.
- **Implications of moving into tier 3 on the rough sleeping initiative:** The Committee was advised that all the measures that had been taken during the first lockdown were still being taken. In addition, the winter initiatives had been brought forward and outreach teams were regularly making offers of accommodation to rough sleepers.
- **The disparity between the levels of rent in the private housing rented sector and the maximum payable through the benefits system:** Members were advised of the various types of engagement that the Housing team had with private landlords. These included incentives for them to take Council applicants, for example a rent guarantee scheme which had been piloted and would be rolled out.

The Committee was advised that the level of local housing allowance was set by Government to cover the bottom 30% of the market.

- **Clarification on why the homelessness risk (SR35) was considered to have high likelihood but marginal impact:** The Head of Housing Strategy clarified that this referred to a residual risk after management action had been taken.
- **Insufficient routes for academic qualifications for adults to improve their work skills:** The Head of Housing Strategy agreed to raise this with the adult education co-ordinators.
- **Clarification on how the target for improved street cleanliness was calculated:** The Head of Housing Strategy agreed to review the source data and respond outside the meeting.

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### **Decision:**

Members of the Committee considered the Q2 2020/21 performance against the measures used to monitor progress against the Council's priorities, and noted the amended strategic risk register as set out in Appendix 4.

(In accordance with Council Rule 12.6, Councillors Johnson, Maple and Murray asked that their votes in favour be recorded.)

### **438 Capital Budget Monitoring Report Round 2 2020/21**

#### **Discussion:**

The Committee considered a report on the second round of the Council's capital budget monitoring process for 2020/21.

Members were advised that the capital programme was currently forecast to come in on budget.

Members raised a number of issues which were responded to as follows:

- It was anticipated that bulge classes would be delivered on time, despite Covid related pressures. Asked whether provision had been made for risks of delays in the programme, the Chief Finance Officer agreed that it was unfair that, due to delays by the Department of Education, the Council had been required to fund bulge classes and representations continued to be made.
- The Chief Finance Officer agreed to relay back to Front Line Services concerns that the work on the Horsted gyratory system remained outstanding.
- Concerns regarding the rolling out of pay and display parking machines which required the user to touch them were acknowledged and the Committee noted that the piloting of innovative cashless parking machines was under consideration by the Transformation Board. The current replacement of old machines was necessary to ensure income could continue to be collected.
- The Chief Finance Officer advised that the use of the Members' priority fund should not be encouraged at present.
- Clarification was sought on the £800,000 for miscellaneous schemes within the Children's improvement programme. The Committee was advised that this was revenue expenditure funded by capital receipts and that the various projects were referenced in the Council report of 8 October.

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### **Decision:**

The Committee noted the results of the second round of capital budget monitoring for 2020/21.

(In accordance with Council Rule 12.6, Councillors Johnson, Maple and Murray asked that their votes in favour be recorded.)

### **439 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report Round 2 2020/21**

#### **Discussion:**

The Committee considered a report on the second round of the Council's revenue budget monitoring process for 2020/21.

Members were advised that, since February, the Council had received £65m of Covid related grant, much of which was for passing on to businesses. This grant, and management action to contain expenditure, had reduced the pressure on the budget from £24m to £2.5m.

Members raised a number of issues which were responded to as follows:

- Concern was raised regarding the worsening position in Adult Social Care due to the pandemic and the Chief Finance Officer agreed that the raising of the precept would be beneficial. Asked about the rising cost of nursing care, he agreed that this was not sustainable and negotiations with providers to reduce this cost were ongoing.
- Negotiations with the CCG on funding placements as a result of early hospital discharges were continuing. Members were advised that such funding had to be claimed back from the Department of Health and NHS England via the CCG and clear records were being kept to ensure that claims were made.
- In response to a question on social work agency fees paid to the Medway Commercial Group, the Chief Finance Officer advised that, whilst a premium would still be paid, a new Memorandum of Understanding had been agreed and this would enable MCG to support the Council in reducing the number of agency workers in social care through joint working on programmes such as 'temp to perm'.
- With reference to the £500,000 spend on legal counsel, the Chief Legal Officer confirmed that two senior advocates had been recruited who could represent the Council in the High Court and above. Counsel was used for more complex matters which required attendance at court for longer periods and would prevent the Council's lawyers from undertaking their other work. He reported that the spend on using Counsel had been

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brought down from £700,000 in 2016/17 to £183,000 in 2019/20. The current spend was unusual and was a result of Covid.

- Asked for more information on the Members priority fund, the Chief Finance Officer agreed to consult the Leader on whether he wanted to make commitments against it in the current situation and if so, what the process should be.
- A Member noted that all sections of the budget under the Committee's remit were underspent and that previous Q2 figures had sometimes been much higher. He acknowledged the good job that the Chief Finance Officer had done in previous years in ensuring that the figures that were presented to the Committee at the end of the financial year reflected the figures presented throughout the year.
- With reference to the financial difficulties that had been reported at other Councils, the Chief Finance Officer reported that the Council's debt exposure was much lower. Officers were currently assessing the measures announced in the recent Government spending review to assist Councils, such as continued support for responding to Covid.

### **Decision:**

The Committee noted the results of the second round of revenue budget monitoring for 2020/21.

(In accordance with Council Rule 12.6, Councillors Johnson, Maple and Murray asked that their votes in favour be recorded.)

## **440 Draft Capital and Revenue Budget 2021/22**

### **Discussion:**

Members considered a report which presented the Council's draft capital and revenue budgets for 2021/22 which was based on the principles contained in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2021-2023 considered by Cabinet on 17 November.

During the discussion the following comments and responses were made:

- It was noted that Kent County Council consulted residents on budget priorities. Officers confirmed that Medway would follow the same budget setting process as previous years which did not include public consultation.
- Officers noted a request that, where any future budget proposals might lead to potential redundancies, this should be made explicitly clear in the reports to Cabinet and Council.

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- Members were advised that a 2% uplift assumption had been made in respect of most of the Council's fees and charges, although Directorates had discretion to propose a variation. Members were further advised that it was assumed the direct impact of Covid-19 would continue to mostly be funded by Government.
- Officers confirmed that the Council had discretion over the level of staff pay award.
- Regarding the number of large premises that had closed in the last two years, officers agreed to provide further information on the risks to the Council's business rates tax base.
- Concern was raised regarding the sustainability of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) budget on which there was growing pressure. Officers responded that authorities had been required to implement the 2014 Department of Education (DfE) SEN reforms without adequate increase in the Dedicated Schools Grant. The Council had a SEN deficit plan which included measures such as investment into local SEN provision rather than expensive out of area provision and keeping SEN children in mainstream education where appropriate.
- On the issue of the accessibility of financial support for those required to self-isolate following testing, officers advised that grant applications had surpassed expectations which indicated that the publicity campaign had been good. There was little left in the discretionary fund and it would be replaced by a new scheme which would be available shortly.
- In response to a question on income opportunities, the Committee was advised that Medway Commercial Group was seeking to widen its customer base for its recruitment agency beyond the Council, to the NHS and external care providers for example.

### **Decision:**

The Committee:

- a) noted that Cabinet had instructed officers to continue to work with Portfolio Holders in formulating robust proposals to balance the budget for 2021/22 and beyond; and
- b) commented on the proposals outlined in the draft capital and revenue budgets and forwarded the proposals to the individual overview and scrutiny committees.

(In accordance with Council Rule 12.6, Councillors Johnson, Maple and Murray asked that their votes in favour be recorded).

**441 Monuments and place names working group**

**Discussion:**

With specific reference to Stalin Avenue the Committee discussed the scope to review street names at a later stage as a request for this to be included within the terms of reference of the Working Group had not been supported. It was recognised that the Council has a statutory role in relation to street naming and numbering and that there are wider implications including a degree of inconvenience for residents when street names are changed.

**Decision:**

The Committee agreed to notify the Cabinet of its support for the recommendation of the Monuments and Place Names Working Group that Sir John Hawkins Car Park should be renamed as St John's car park.

(In accordance with Council Rule 12.6, Councillors Johnson, Maple and Murray asked that their votes in favour be recorded.)

**442 Covid-19 Response - Phase 2**

**Discussion:**

The Committee considered a report on the latest steps taken by the Council to assist Medway in the second Response phase of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Committee discussed the implications of Medway moving into tier 3; discouraging people from travelling to lower tier areas; assistance from the military in track and trace; the offer of lateral flow testing for schools; testing arrangements for care homes and University students; the arrangements for moving patients discharged from hospital into care homes; and the provision of emergency places in local hotels and guest houses for rough sleepers.

The Chief Legal Officer agreed to provide an update on track and trace with Committee members and information on infection rates among Council staff.

Members were advised that, following the first tranche Government funding, this had been extended to the end of the financial year.

**Decision:**

The Committee scrutinised and noted the Council's role in the second response phase of the Covid-19 pandemic.

(In accordance with Council Rule 12.6, Councillors Johnson, Maple and Murray asked that their votes in favour be recorded.)



**443 Work programme**

**Discussion:**

The Committee considered a report regarding the Committee's current work programme.

In addition to the changes proposed in the report, it was proposed that the Committee receive a presentation on the establishment of a Medway Community Lottery. The Chairman advised that the next meeting, on 28 January 2021, would commence at 6.00pm with this being the first item of business.

The Committee was supportive of the proposal to dedicate two meetings during the 2021/22 Municipal Year to the attendance of Portfolio Holders, with two Portfolio Holders being held to account at each meeting.

**Decision:**

The Committee:

- a) agreed the proposed changes to the Committee's work programme (Appendix 1 to the report) as set out in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 of the report and the addition of an item on the establishment of a Medway Community Lottery to the business of the meeting scheduled on 28 January 2021; and
- b) noted the work programmes of the other overview and scrutiny committees (Appendix 2 to the report).

(In accordance with Council Rule 12.6, Councillors Johnson, Maple and Murray asked that their votes in favour be recorded.)

**Chairman**

**Date:**

**Steve Platt, Democratic Services Officer**

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