

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

**Tuesday, 21 December 2010**

**6.30pm to 7.30pm**

**Record of the meeting**

**Present:** Councillors: Bhutia, Bright (Chairman), Crack, Godwin, Hewett, Hicks (Vice-Chairman), Hubbard, Mackinlay and Ruparel

**Substitutes:** Councillor Avey for Councillor Griffin  
Councillor Kenneth Bamber for Councillor Andrews

**In Attendance:** Councillor Howard Doe, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services  
Angela Drum, Head of Legal Services  
Stephen Gaimster, Assistant Director Development, Economy and Transport  
Richard Hicks, Assistant Director, Customer First, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance  
Caroline Salisbury, Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator  
Kevin Woolmer, Corporate Accountant

**641 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 16 November 2010 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct with the following addition:

**Minute 509 Highway Winter Service: Task Group review**

The Watling Street shopping parade on the A2 should be added to the list of shopping parades to be gritted during snow in the Winter Service Plan.

**642 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrews, Tony Goulden, Griffin and Maisey.

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

Councillor Godwin stated his concern over a newspaper report about future funding of the Chatham bus facility, as the article had concluded that as the building was now behind schedule, that taxpayers would have to pay any costs past April 2011 as central government funding stopped on 31 March 2011. He asked officers to clarify the position for the committee.

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The Assistant Director of Development, Economy and Transport responded that the building works had been affected more recently by the adverse weather conditions and there may be some slippage to the timetable. The Council was currently in discussion with the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) about how to overcome this but he could not give any more details at this stage of the negotiations.

Councillor Godwin requested that this was formally communicated to him by the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture via e-mail.

### 644 Declarations of interest

There were none.

### 645 Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services

#### Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services addressed the committee outlining the main achievements within areas of his portfolio:

- Medway Park: the opening of the new facilities; modern pentathlon world cup; modern pentathlon European championships; declared the performance centre for the south east of England (London 2012 Inspire Mark); the coaching academy had received recognition from the Olympic Authority for the highest standard of coaching
- Leisure: prior to the bad weather it was anticipated that the income target of £4.3 million would be achieved but this has recently been revised to achieve £4.2 million; the land had been raised at Deangate Golf Club to make it a better golf course which, in turn, would achieve better income levels
- Castles: a community campaign to help preserve Rochester Castle has started to fundraise; the Christmas market had been well attended; Upnor Castle had hosted 38 weddings
- Guildhall Museum: this was the second most visited museum in Kent; a new High Street entrance was opened in May and was due to open a remodelled introductory gallery in March 2011
- Eastgate House: had passed the first round for a £1 million Heritage Lottery bid for the full restoration of the house and improved public access and came with £80,000 to work up the next stage; it was used as a key location for a major BBC TV drama to be shown shortly (Crimson Petal and the White)
- Theatres: the pantomime had been very successful and the Brook Theatre had achieved tremendous success with a Christmas production for very

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young children (The Mouse that Saved Christmas);

- Festivals and events: the castle concerts had achieved the highest attendance ever and yielded a profit; there was increasing number of artists in Medway participating in the professional artists' network which is stimulating the creative economy
- Greenspaces: the council had secured four Green Flag awards; all eleven Playbuilder sites were completed and funding was now secure for Year 2 sites; The Strand was not included in this as other options were being considered; Cozenton Wheel Park had opened in November 2010 and the Princes Park Ball Court was going ahead and due to open in the New Year.

Members asked the Portfolio Holder about:

- Sponsorship for the forthcoming modern Pentathlon at Medway Park
- teams signed up to use the facilities at Medway Park during the Olympics in 2012
- Rochester Christmas market
- The Strand – requiring a complete masterplan
- Disabled facilities in Medway for Paralympic team
- Financial outcome of castle concerts
- Upkeep and maintenance of the Brook Theatre.

### **Decision:**

The Committee thanked Councillor Doe for attending the meeting and the information and answers he had provided.

## **646 Capital and revenue budget 2011/2012**

### **Discussion:**

The Corporate Accountant introduced the report asking the committee to consider the initial capital and revenue budgets and to identify any further opportunities for savings.

Members commented that in light of the current national financial debate, the timing of the budget meetings should be re-visited for the future. The report in the agenda was now irrelevant for consideration, as the government's financial settlement had not been published until after the agenda was published. There were real challenges to be faced by the council with a significant number of staff feeling under threat of redundancy and it was important to have a better understanding of what Members should be considering.

Members also queried the total 2011/2012 budget requirement for the Regeneration, Community and Culture directorate and was advised that this was £48,704 million and the total figure in Appendix 2 of the report was incorrect.

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### **Decision:**

The committee:

- (a) noted the initial capital and revenue budgets proposed by Cabinet on 30 November 2010 insofar as they affected this committee;
- (b) requested that the committee's comments on the timing of the budget meetings were forwarded to the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 January 2011.

### **647 Quarter 2 Council Plan Monitoring**

#### **Discussion:**

The Assistant Director of Development, Economy and Transport advised that the report covered the period from July to September 2010 and updated on the delivery of the Council Plan. He highlighted the areas performing well in quarter two and also informed the committee that, as previously requested by Members, further information had been supplied on NI 152 (working age people on out of work benefits) at paragraph 4.4 of the report.

Members queried the process for developing the Council Plan 2011- 2014 which would lead to a Full Council decision on a 'new-look' plan. Officers were asked to investigate the process for the development of the plan and when the discussion on the elements relevant to the Regeneration, Community and Culture directorate would be referred to this committee.

#### **Decision:**

The committee:

- (a) noted the performance for Quarter 2 Council Plan monitoring 2010/2011 and the outcomes achieved against priorities;
- (b) requested that Members are notified on the process to deliver the development of the new-look Council Plan 2011 – 2014 with details of timing of future overview and scrutiny consideration.

### **648 Work Programme**

#### **Discussion:**

The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator introduced the report advising of three contract reports that had been added to the Cabinet's Forward Plan within the remit of this committee. Members were also asked to consider whether to hold a themed meeting on 31 March 2011.

#### **Decision:**

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The committee agreed to:

- (a) note the current workload and that no new items would be added;
- (b) defer the principle of holding a themed meeting until the next municipal year.

**Chairman**

**Date:**

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