

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

**Thursday, 13 June 2024**

**6.31pm to 8.29pm**

**Record of the meeting**

**Present:** Councillors: Paterson (Chairperson), Field (Vice-Chairperson), Campbell, Cook, Etheridge, Fearn, Gurung, Lawrence, Myton, Peake and Mrs Turpin

**Substitutes:** Councillor Gulvin

**In Attendance:** Mark Breathwick, Assistant Director, Culture and Community  
Nicola Couchman, Democratic Services Officer  
Ruth Du-Lieu, Deputy Director of Place  
Sunny Ee, Assistant Director Regeneration  
Ian Gilmore, Head of Regulatory and Environmental Services

**59 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Doe and Filmer.

**60 Record of Meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 26 March 2024 was agreed and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

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

There were none.

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

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

**63 Council Plan Performance Monitoring and Strategic Risk Summary -  
Quarter 4 2023/24**

**Discussion:**

The Committee received report summarising the performance of the Council Plan measures that fall under the remit of the committee for Q4 2023/24 (January to March 2024).

Officers responded to Members' questions and comments as follows:

**NI 195a Improved street and environmental cleanliness** – Members queried which roads were included as part of the visual inspection and how they were selected. Officers offered to provide a briefing note listing the roads included and how the roads were selected.

**Innovation Hub and Former Debenhams site** – Members asked when both sites are likely to be opened. Officers confirmed that the Debenhams site is being progressed but is likely to be a few months away and the Innovation Hub is on track to open in September.

**S106 improvement projects** – In response to a query as to why this did not include projects on the Peninsula or Strood Rural, officers informed the Committee that they could provide a list of all S106 contributions due for the Peninsula and Strood Rural.

**Medway Task Force** – A query was raised regarding what had been achieved from the new Task Force model and officers stated that a briefing note would be provided from the Community Safety Partnership.

**Air Quality Monitoring** – Members asked why the council were still putting up signs requesting drivers turn off their engines when research shows that drivers were being advised to turn off the stop/start function on vehicles due to the impact on vehicles. Officers committed to providing a briefing note regarding the advice they had been given on this issue.

**Victoria Gardens** – Members queried why the tender on play improvements had been delayed. Officers were not able to respond immediately on the reasons for this but would provide an explanation outside the meeting.

**Decrease in prosecutions and sanctions for fly tipping and litter** – Members expressed concerns regarding the decrease and officers committed to provide a briefing note explaining the variety of reasons that may have contributed to this.

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**List of residential streets with alleyways, footbridges, pathways and number of bins per ward** – In response to a request for a briefing note containing this information officers explained that they would look at this to see if there was a tangible format for the information to be provided in.

**Brook Theatre** – Members asked whether this was fully funded and when it was due to open. Officers advised the Committee that the funding consisted of multiple funding streams and that it was estimated that the Theatre would open in late 2025.

**Services that will be provided from the Healthy Living Centre** – Officers will provide further information on this but summarised that it includes a number of GP's surgeries, a pharmacy and some therapy rooms.

**Creation of jobs and impact of Chatham Docks planning decision** – Officers informed the Committee that confidential discussions were taking place with key employers that were exploring options for expansion, but this was still early in terms of delivery.

**18-24 year olds not in employment, education or training (NEET)** – Members noted the good level of performance for 16-17 year olds but queried why there was not a measure for 18 – 24 year old NEET. Officers acknowledged that the older cohort was important to measure however due to resources the statutory measure for 16-17 year olds had been prioritised.

**Purchase of properties for Temporary Accommodation** – Officers reported that 9 units had been purchased, legal had been instructed on a further 32 units and an additional 145 units were being progressed. Officers explained that all options were being explored to speed up delivery.

**Net additional homes provided** – Members asked whether officers would be challenging the method of calculation for this national indicator. Officers confirmed that a formal response to this would be provided outside the meeting.

**Average journey time across five routes across Medway** – In response to a request for further information on the average routes, officers confirmed they would provide a briefing note providing this information.

**Lessons learned from Christmas Waste collections** – Officers reported that this had been discussed with the Portfolio Holder and the preferred option was to provide operate Christmas waste collections over a three week period rather than two weeks. Officers offered to provide a briefing note as the preparation for Christmas 2024 was progressed.

### **Decision:**

- a) The Committee considered the Q4 2023/24 performance against the measures used to monitor progress against the Council's priorities (Appendices 1 and 2).

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- b) The Committee noted the Q4 2023/24 Strategic Risk Summary (Appendix 3).

### 64 Community Safety Partnership Plan 2024 - 2027

#### Discussion:

The Committee considered a report regarding the proposed Community Safety Partnership Plan for 2024 – 2027.

Members asked for more information on the innovative developments and partnership initiatives referred to in the Introduction to the Community Safety Plan. Officers explained that a briefing note would be prepared for Members to provide further information on this.

Members expressed concern at the brevity of the Community Safety Plan, a number of areas that were not included and the lack of targets and detail to show the impact that it is hoped the action plan would have. Officers informed the Committee that the Community Safety Plan is based on a strategic assessment and is produced and written in partnership with the 5 key partners. It was explained that there had been an aspiration to produce a streamlined document however Members comments would be considered moving forward.

Concerns were also expressed regarding the low level of response to the consultation. Members suggested that community engagement events could be considered as well as trying to utilise IT services to engage people when they are already interacting with the council, for example, when booking a visit to a waste and recycling centre. In response officers stated that they would explore the feasibility of different options to improve the level of engagement for the consultation.

#### Decision:

- a) The Committee commented on the proposed Community Safety Plan 2024 - 2027 as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, and draft Community Safety Action Plan 2024 – 2025 as set out in Appendix 2.
- b) The Committee noted that the proposed Community Safety Plan 2024 – 2027 will be considered by Cabinet on 9 July 2024 and will be determined by full Council on 18 July 2024.

### 65 Petitions Report

#### Discussion:

Members considered a report which advised the Committee of 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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**Decision:**

- a) The Committee noted the petition responses and appropriate officer actions in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

**66 Work programme**

**Discussion:**

Members considered a report regarding the Committee's work programme.

In response to a query regarding the River Strategy, officers committed to provide a further update.

**Decision:**

- a) The Committee noted the report and agreed the work programme as set out at Appendix A to the report.
- b) The Committee noted the action log as set out at Appendix B to the report.
- c) The Committee noted the action referred from Audit Committee regarding 2 uninhabited flats and the explanation that had been provided.

**Chairperson**

**Date:**

**Nicola Couchman, Democratic Services Officer**

Telephone: 01634 332106

Email: [democratic.services@medway.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@medway.gov.uk)