

COUNCIL

21 JULY 2011

REPORT ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTIVITY

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

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Summary

This report provides a summary of the work of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees since the last report to Council on 14 April 2011.

1. Policy and Budget Framework

1.1 The Council's constitution allows for reports on overview and scrutiny (O&S) activity to be reported to Council meetings.

2. Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2.1 9 June 2011

2.1.2. Interim Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2011-2012

Members discussed the interim plan in detail and during discussion officers set out the background to the council's current HRA stock and responded to Members' questions.

The Committee also discussed the role of the Housing Improvement Board, which formed part of the new resident involvement structure contained within the interim plan.

In relation to the development of a Community Involvement Strategy, listed as an action for tenant involvement and empowerment, it was requested that officers report back to the Committee on delivery of the projects and actions for 2011/12 cited within the plan.

The Committee endorsed the report and recommended it to Cabinet.

2.1.3. Work programme

The Committee agreed a number of revisions to the work programme, which included:

- moving the revenue and capital budget monitoring items from 20 September to 4 August
- adding the Medium Term Financial Plan to 20 September
- adding the Housing Strategy 2011-2014 to 4 August
- noting the work of all overview and scrutiny committees and that the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be considering 2 petitions at its meeting on 16 June 2011
- approving the process and timetable for the selection of this year's in-depth reviews, during which officers were asked to include as part of this process consideration of the 2012/2013 municipal year and examples of good practice from other councils.

3. Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3.1. 7 June 2011

3.1.1. Work programme

The Committee agreed that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition spokespersons of the Committee should meet with the Director of Children and Adult Services to consider possible in-depth review topics for 2011-2012 and possible reports to the Committee's work programme. A report was added to the work programme for September on the school system in Medway.

3.1.2. Medway Safeguarding Children's Board

The independent Chairman of the Medway Safeguarding Children's Board gave a presentation to the Committee and responded to Member's questions in relation to the work of the board.

The Committee requested a briefing note on comparisons with other Councils on the use of the Common Assessment Framework and suggested that the board improves engagement with housing providers.

3.1.3. Review of healthy eating among children and young people in Medway – update report

The Senior Public Health Manager (healthy weight) introduced a report in relation to the latest position on exercise and nutrition in Medway following the Committee's review of healthy eating among children and young people in Medway.

The Committee noted the report and progress and requested that the possibilities for overcoming the difficulties for schools to get relevant insurance for community allotments and play space be investigated by the relevant officer and reported back to the Director of Children and Adults. The Committee also asked officers to ensure that the recommendation relating to allotments be transferred to Community Infrastructure Levy when it replaces Section 106 Agreements.

3.1.4. Children's social care complaints and compliments annual report

The Director of Children and Adults introduced a report setting out the complaints and compliments received in relation to children's social care and responded to Members' questions.

4. Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4.1 23 June 2011

4.1.1. Update from Medway NHS Foundation Trust

The Chief Executive of Medway NHS Foundation Trust and Chief Executive of Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust gave an introduction to the proposed merger of the two trusts and responded to Members' questions. It was emphasised that no decisions had been made at this stage but the feasibility of a merger was being actively explored. The Committee would consider a further report on the matter later this year.

The Chief Executive of Medway NHS Foundation Trust then advised Members of the position with regard to the trust's response to the Monitor decision that the Trust was placed in breach of its conditions in relation to its failure to meet its overall financial plans in 2010/2011 incurring a deficit.

4.1.2. Kent and Medway Trauma Service

The Lead Director for the Kent and Medway Critical Care and Trauma Network introduced an item setting out proposals for dealing with major trauma incidents in Kent and Medway. The Lead Director and the Manager of the Emergency Department from Medway Maritime Hospital responded to Members' questions.

Members did not feel that the proposals constituted a substantial variation for Medway but noted that an invitation had been extended to Committee members to attend Kent's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to discuss trauma on 9 September 2011.

4.1.3. Phlebotomy update

The Committee noted an update in respect of the latest position with regard to phlebotomy services in Medway. The Chairman of the Medway shadow Clinical Commissioning Group and the Acting Chief Executive NHS Medway responded to Members' questions.

4.1.4. End of year Council Plan report

The Director of Children and Adults and the Assistant Director, Adult Social Care gave a brief introduction to the report on the end of year Council report and responded to Members' questions.

Some Members felt that more detail was needed in respect of the areas where the Council was performing below target to give the Committee a greater understanding and perspective on the impact on Medway residents to enable them to be clear about what was needed to improve the situation. A request was made for a mid-term update on progress made.

4.1.5. Work programme

It was agreed that the Chairman and spokespersons of the Committee should meet during June/July to draw up a list of potential topics for either an in-depth review or themed meeting with a view to the list being considered at 18 August meeting and then referred to Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 September 2011 to be considered alongside other priorities.

Discussion took place around the need for a report on sexual health for older men and women and the Acting Chief Executive of NHS Medway undertook to discuss this with the Director of Public Health with a view to reporting back.

There were a number of items added to the work programme for 18 August which were as follows:

- Elm House/King's Road moves
- Kent and Medway Adult Safeguarding bi-annual report 2009/2010-2010/2011
- Dementia
- Topics for in-depth review/themed meeting.

5. Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5.1. 16 June 2011

5.1.1. Scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership and annual refresh of the Community Safety Plan 2009-2012

Chief Superintendent Corbishley, Area Commander and Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership and Councillor O'Brien as Vice-Chairman attended the meeting with Maurice O'Reilly from Kent Probation and Steve Griffiths from Kent Fire and Rescue Service and were held to account.

Chief Superintendent Corbishley and Councillor O'Brien gave a joint presentation on the achievements and challenges facing Medway from the perspective of the Community Safety Partnership and responded to Members' questions.

Maurice O'Reilly, Kent Probation, then spoke of the partnership working in relation to Kent Probation and offered to report back, later in the year, on work being undertaken with families to prevent future generations offending.

Steve Griffiths, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, spoke about the achievements of the Fire and Rescue Service including a 35% reduction in rubbish fires and stated that he was pleased with the road safety priority to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions as this priority affected everyone in Medway.

It was noted that there would be a report back on details of a possible backlog of Community Payback Scheme projects and Chief Superintendent Corbishley also undertook to raise with the Community Safety Partnership the possibility of a citizen's charter to encourage more pride in the area and to report back to Members about an increase in powers for Police and Community Support Officers later in the year.

The Committee recommended the annual refresh of the Community Safety Plan 2009-2012 to Cabinet.

5.1.2. Community Safety Partnership response to the effectiveness and future of PACTs in Medway

The Head of Safer Communities introduced the Community Safety Partnership's response to the Overview and Scrutiny task group's report on 'The Effectiveness and Future of PACTs in Medway' and responded to Members' questions.

Officers were asked to consider entering into negotiations with the Universities of Kent, Canterbury Christ Church and Greenwich, to ask if they would be interested in undertaking research to evaluate the impact of PACTs working groups.

5.1.3. Petitions

Members noted the response in connection with a petition to lift parking restrictions at Cecil Road, Rochester. With regard to a petition referral for a bus shelter at the junction of Fulmar Road and Darnley Road in Strood, the Committee supported the offer made by Councillor Avey to apply for funding from the Members' priority fund for the purpose of installing a shelter there.

5.1.4. Flood and Water Management Act – preliminary flood risk assessment for Medway

The Head of Capital Projects, Road Safety and Networks introduced a report summarising the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment and issues arising from it as required by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

He informed the Committee that there was no deadline at the moment for a final report but the initial draft would be submitted by 22 June 2011 to the Environment Agency. The Committee noted that a further report would be submitted to them later in the year prior its submission to Cabinet.

5.1.5. End of year performance monitoring report 2010/2011

The Committee noted the introduction by the Performance Manager, Regeneration, Community and Culture to the end of year performance report 2010/2011 which included the key highlights under each of the priorities and areas requiring development.

5.1.6. Work programme

The Committee agreed that the Chairman and opposition spokespersons would meet during June and July with appropriate officer support to draw up a shortlist of in-depth review topics and report back to the Committee on 10 August 2011.

Background papers

None

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