

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

Wednesday, 10 August 2011

6.33pm to 8.50pm

Record of the meeting

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

- Present:** Councillors: Bright (Chairman), Etheridge, Griffiths, Adrian Gulvin, Hicks (Vice-Chairman), Hubbard, Juby, Maisey, Osborne, Stamp and Turpin
- Substitutes:** Councillor Pat Gulvin
Tolhurst for Councillor Mackinlay
- In Attendance:** Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture
Angela Drum, Head of Legal Services
Councillor Phil Filmer, Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services
Stephen Gaimster, Assistant Director Development, Economy and Transport
Anna Marie Lawrence-Lovell, Performance Manager
Andy McGrath, Assistant Director, Front Line Services
Caroline Salisbury, Democratic Services Officer
Dick Tolhurst, Principal Engineer Highways Design
Ian Wilson, Head of Capital Projects, Road Safety and Networks

255 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 16 June 2011 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

256 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Griffin and Mackinlay.

257 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

258 Declarations of interest

Councillor Griffiths declared a personal interest in any reference to Medway Community Healthcare as he is a non-executive director.

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Councillor Hicks declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 Flood and Water Management Act 2010 – preliminary flood risk assessment for Medway by virtue of being appointed to the Lower Medway Drainage Board.

Councillor Stamp declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 Flood and Water Management Act 2010 – preliminary flood risk assessment for Medway by virtue of his employment with the Environment Agency.

259 Attendance of Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services

Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services addressed the committee outlining the main achievements within areas of his portfolio, including:

- The new waste contract had begun in 2010 and a recent survey had shown that resident satisfaction levels were high. There had been the introduction for disposal of waste food into the brown bins and 3,000 additional new brown bins had been distributed. The Council was working with local charities to divert furniture for re-use, resulting in approximately 10 tonnes per month being recycled and bringing the Council around £1,000 in revenue
- A new street lighting contract had begun in April 2011 and energy saving LED systems would be used wherever possible. The first of these was to be installed in Corporation Street, Rochester
- There were 31 road surface schemes and 27 pavement schemes being carried out throughout 2011/2012 – all funded through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) – with the annual list of schemes published at the beginning of the year and sent to all Members
- Winter Services – Councillor Filmer gave his thanks to all the staff who ensured that Medway's roads had remained open and moving, the town centres had been gritted and the stocks of salt and sand had been maintained throughout the previous winter
- There was on-going maintenance in the Medway Tunnel to bring it up to modern standards
- The road safety team had performed well again and 'exceeded' the target on the number of people 'Killed and Seriously Injured' (KSI) on Medway's roads (by being 8% down on the target). Several initiatives had been carried out including the "Seatbelt Sled" where 1,200 children had experienced the impact of a slow speed collision
- When statutory undertakers (electricity, gas, water, telephone companies etc.) carried out work on Medway roads, officers would now carry out "coring tests" to ensure the quality of the replacement road materials are up

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to standard

- Integrated transport – the Council was aiming to improve the quality and offer of bus services. The Chatham bus facility would be completed by the end of the year. The Strood Riverside bus link had been launched on 8 August and this ran through the Medway City Estate and on to Chatham town centre - which was a welcome addition to current services
- The Council was working with Network Rail on improvements to railway stations in Medway and a proposed design for Rochester station would be finalised shortly.

Members asked the Portfolio Holder about and commented on the following:

- money being set aside in next year's budget for individual road parking reviews
- Gillingham High Street – problem of rubbish left out on market day
- Council powers of enforcement for rubbish put out too early
- Bank holiday bin collection service
- Medway Tunnel money used for the Members Priority Fund
- new waste contract – continued provision of white recycling bags
- congratulations for the new Riverside bus link service
- overspend of budget for Chatham bus facility
- LED street lights and other energy saving schemes in Medway
- Clarity on use of sacks for recycling and continued improvement for waste collection from flats and gated communities
- Parking machines that did not issue change
- Commercial loading/unloading on double yellow lines
- Future budgets for Winter Services.

Decision:

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

260 Highway winter services task group - update

Discussion:

The Principal Engineer, Highways Design, introduced the report outlining the background to the review and the main themes that the task group had investigated. Members were advised that this report gave details of how the recommendations from the review had been implemented throughout last winter and the feedback from that service.

The committee made the following comments and requests:

- could the updated Winter Service plan be detailed in the Medway Matters newsletter prior to the forthcoming winter and when it was, if officers could

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investigate the provision of a pull-out leaflet for residents to keep? Members also requested that clear information on community participation and public liability was contained in the Medway Matters article

- officers were asked to check that Balmoral Gardens, Gillingham was on the list of medical centres to be gritted
- congratulations to officers and contractors on the work carried out over the past two harsh winters
- pathways that were gritted should be those with the highest amount of people using them. Officers confirmed that this was the case
- a large, ward-based map indicating the priority routes and areas to be cleared should be sent to all Ward Councillors for their information
- Members asked for confirmation that current levels of salt and sand were sufficient for the forthcoming winter. Officers confirmed that the maximum level, which was sufficient for last year's weather, was already in stock
- adoption of roads on St Mary's Island, Chatham so that the Council could include it on the gritting routes.

Decision:

The Committee noted the update to the recent review into winter services in Medway.

261 Flood and Water Management Act 2010 - preliminary flood risk assessment for Medway

Discussion:

The Capital Projects, Road Safety and Networks Manager introduced the item advising that this report detailed the Council's definition of flood risk, as requested by the Environment Agency (EA). Another update to the report, since the last meeting, was that officers had accepted the EA's statement that areas of Chatham and Gillingham were at risk of flooding, as there was a lack of robust and reliable evidence to prove, and also, disprove this statement. Therefore this assessment was accepted and officers could move on to evaluate the risk in order to develop a response.

A further change which had resulted from the decision to accept the EAs statement about Chatham and Gillingham having the potential for flood risk was a response to each of the different types of risk, also required by the EA, stating that the risk to life and property was minimal but that further data gathering and modelling was required.

Members complained about the quality of the maps in the report and officers responded that these were EA maps, which was why the current information was not robust or reliable. The key to this project was to move on to the local mapping and modelling, with feedback, on the accuracy of that data. There would also be a reporting system added to the Council's website for people to complete, because if the time of an incident was recorded, officers would know

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the weather conditions at that time and be able to accurately analyse the information.

Members discussed potential river flooding and storm drains together with the development of future housing sites along the river frontage. Officers advised that a development brief had been produced for each potential site along the riverside which included flood defence requirements.

Decision:

The Committee noted the updated Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment report and endorsed its submission as a draft to the Environment Agency.

262 Quarter 1 Council Plan monitoring 2011/2012

Discussion:

The Performance Manager introduced the report reminding the committee of the new, streamlined Council Plan for 2011/2012 onwards. The changes were in response to Government relaxation of national performance reporting frameworks.

The committee was advised that the satisfaction measures of success underpinning the new Council Plan were gathered in three ways, either by: a telephone interview, held quarterly, with a cross-section of 400 residents; the Citizen's Panel which was made up of 1500 residents who completed postal surveys (this had a 50% response rate); or the Resident's Opinion Poll which was carried out every two years across Medway, involving 3,600 residents. Depending on the reporting period, the information could come from any of these three sources. For Quarter 1, the information was gathered by the telephone interview method only.

Members were informed that the performance of each measure was rated green, amber and red to highlight whether the performance levels met the expected standard. Also, the actions and performance measures shaded in grey were not relevant to this committee and fell under the remit of other overview and scrutiny committees. They were included in this report to provide context and clarity of how the priorities as a whole have been performing.

For the Council Plan performance, 26 key performance indicator measures of success can be rated for quarter 1.

Green – 19 measures have achieved or outperformed the target (73%)

Amber – 2 measures are below target but within acceptable variance limits (8%)

Red – 5 measures are outside acceptable variance limits (19%).

Members made comments and requests on a variety of topics including:

- If there was only a 50% response rate to the Citizen's Panel survey, how could the Council be sure that it was representative of Medway as a whole?

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Members requested information on how the responses were analysed and whether the response rate was becoming higher or lower over time

- whether the newly recruited Safer Communities wardens could be tasked with ensuring that Gillingham High Street was clear before stalls were erected on market day?
- Alleyway clearance and alleygates – ownership problems and community cleanup campaigns
- The newly launched 'Love Medway' app (application)
- Medway City Status – event with Kent MPs
- The work involved in the measure of success 'percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area'.

Decision:

The Committee noted the outcomes achieved against the priorities in the Council Plan 2011/2012.

263 Work programme

Discussion:

The Democratic Services Officer advised that a report on 'Lodge Hill Development Brief' would be submitted to the next meeting on 4 October for consideration alongside the Local Development Framework (LDF). The Cabinet had agreed at its meeting on 2 August that this brief should be consulted on and considered at the same time as the LDF.

Another item, already on the work programme, entitled 'Medway Housing Design Standards' would also be submitted to the meeting on 4 October 2011.

The committee was also advised of a referral from the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee which was put forward during its discussion of the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014 (CYPP) as follows: "to inform of the committee's concerns in relation to using the River Medway to its full potential and suggesting that the Regeneration, Community & Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers adding an item to its work programme on this issue."

The committee was also invited to comment on the suggested topics for in-depth review proposed by the Chairman and Spokespersons of the committee, as set out in Appendix B.

Members requested that when the review of the waste contracts was submitted in December 2011, that it set out any known problems for the future, such as the provision and cost of white recycling bags).

Decision:

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The committee agreed:

- (a) the addition of a report on the Lodge Hill Development Brief to the next meeting;
- (b) the addition of a report on Medway Housing Design Standards to the next meeting;
- (c) the addition of a report on people using the River Medway to its full potential to a future meeting (at the request of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee);
- (d) the two topics detailed in Appendix B of the report to be put forward for consideration alongside other proposals from all the overview and scrutiny committees at the next meeting of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 September 2011;
- (e) that the report on the review of the waste contracts, due on December 2011, included all known problems for the future, such as the provision and cost of white recycling bags.

Chairman

Date:

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