

## **Review of the 24 Hour Economy in Medway**



**March 2003**

**Report of the 24 hour economy task group of the  
Regeneration and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

# **SCRUTINY REPORT**

## **REVIEW OF THE 24 HOUR ECONOMY**

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### **Supporting Documents (bound separately):**

- Extracts from questioning of Maidstone Borough Council  
On 5 December 2002
- Extracts from questioning of officers and members  
On 29 January 2003
- Extracts from questioning of young people/University/KIAD  
On 7 February 2003
- Extracts from questioning of business community  
On 19 February 2003
- Extracts from questioning – travel and enforcement  
On 6 March 2003
- Extracts from questioning – Commerce/members of the  
Public on 12 March 2003
- Written evidence
- Civic Trust Report on Licensing De-regulation “Open All  
Hours”
- Introducing the night flyers – a first for Bristol newsletter
- Norwich Evening Economy project details
- The 24 hour city – condition critical review

# INTRODUCTION

By undertaking this review our summary of what the 24 hour economy meant was:

***Ways in which we, as a local authority, can develop the economy in the Medway area by making services, entertainment and facilities more widely available at times and at venues which suit the needs of all age groups and backgrounds, taking into account changing work patterns.***

In view of the short timescale allocated to the review it was impossible to cover in depth all the areas of the 24 hour economy, which is why one of our recommendations suggests that there is still more to do. It has, however, been very rewarding to have talked to so many sections of the community, to find out what they think should be provided in Medway and while our recommendations cannot cover all aspects raised we hope they cover the major issues to be addressed. We would like to thank the witnesses who have taken the trouble to respond to our questionnaire or to attend evidence sessions during the past few months.

As the assistant director (economic development and neighbourhood renewal) pointed out at the commencement of the review, the dangers of doing nothing are: that the night time economy may not develop which would mean that students in particular would not be attracted to the area, or would travel to other areas for night life, or that it would develop in the wrong place and in the wrong way. During discussions with Maidstone Borough Council it was clear that as a neighbouring authority of Medway they were attracting people from a wide area to their night life and bringing into the town approximately £65m a year. We were keen to find out how this had been achieved. Both officers and councillors from Maidstone explained that their review of the night time economy had brought about improvements to policing, security, lighting, toilet facilities and transport as a direct result of their findings.

The Council's 'Vision for Medway' highlights the potential to develop Medway's commercial, cultural, educational and high technology functions thereby helping to provide an outer balance to development structure in the Thames Gateway. Building on this we wanted to investigate the possibilities for a 24 hour economy in the area particularly as we are aware of the fragmented nature of provision at the moment.

The overall idea of developing a successful 24 hour economy meets the vast majority of the objectives set out as the council's core values, which include:

**Promoting economic, physical and social regeneration**  
**Fostering citizenship**  
**Improving the environment**  
**Working for equal opportunity and access**  
**Realising everyone's potential**

It follows the core values particularly by encouraging the participation of local people in the decisions that affect their lives and developing a vibrant and diverse community. This along with improving community safety and reducing the fear of crime, were our objectives in carrying out this piece of work.

As part of the evidence-gathering process a visit to Sheffield was undertaken by one of our members to find out how successful their evening economy is. The task group was impressed with the findings of the visit and hope that something similar can be developed for Medway so that it can become a lively and vibrant place regardless of the hour offering a wide range of services and activities for all.

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## HOW THE REVIEW WAS CARRIED OUT

### Background

1. At a meeting of the Regeneration and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 October 2002 the assistant director (economic development and neighbourhood renewal) presented a report at the request of the committee on developing the 24 hour economy.
2. The report outlined the major issues related to the development of a sustainable evening economy in Medway. It pointed out that the definition of a successful evening economy or “nightlife offer” would involve the provision of a balanced mix of activities and facilities such as restaurants, cafes, bars, pubs and clubs, feeding off a selection of leisure, retail and cultural facilities, set in a high quality, vibrant and safe environment.
3. One issue, which was raised at that point, was that it was vital to build an evening economy around a diversity of activities and facilities that are not entirely driven by alcohol consumption. This became a theme during the many evidence sessions and forms one of the conclusions.
4. At the conclusion of that meeting it was agreed that the chair and spokespersons would meet at a later date with the assistant director (economic development and neighbourhood renewal) to consider how a review could be carried out in relation to this topic.
5. A meeting was subsequently held and it was decided that a full review of the 24 hour economy should take place to conclude in March 2003. The suggested terms of reference and a flowchart (set out at appendix A) detailing the method of undertaking the review were put forward by the overview and scrutiny co-ordinator and agreed at the committee meeting on 13 November 2003. The agreed terms of reference for the review were:
  - ❖ **To hear presentations from other authorities who have developed a 24 hour economy.**
  - ❖ **To examine the responsibility and roles of officers within the authority and assess their concerns and views about a 24 hour economy, and examine the current costs involved in dealing with the existing 24 hour economy such as the cost of cleansing.**
  - ❖ **To take evidence from other relevant committees such as the licensing and safety committee, portfolio holders and other internal stakeholders involved.**
  - ❖ **To advertise the review including a page on the council's website inviting written representations from members of the public.**

- ❖ **To take evidence from all interested parties, including businesses and the general public (selecting from the above written reps), to determine as far as possible the view of Medway residents to assess the extent to which the existing 24 hour economy meets the needs and aspirations of various groups (i.e. the young and elderly).**
  - ❖ **To make recommendations to the committee/Cabinet, if appropriate, suggesting ways of developing/managing the 24 hour economy setting out if it should be developed/managed by the council and, if so, where and how it should be developed/managed.**
6. On 7 January 2003 the committee agreed to the formation of a task group comprising Councillors Karen Griffin, Wes Hollands and John Shaw. Councillor Davis subsequently replaced Councillor John Shaw at a number of evidence sessions and contributed to the recommendations. Councillor Booth as chair of the Regeneration and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee attended most of the evidence sessions as an observer.
  7. It was clear that many of the witnesses giving evidence and respondents to the questionnaire had negative feelings about what was currently happening in Medway as far as the 24 hour economy was concerned. Many were very reluctant to encourage the 24 hour economy because of misconceptions about what that meant. The task group were keen to ensure that at the conclusion of the review there would be some very positive outcomes to improve what is already in place and better manage its development in the future.
  8. The meeting of the Regeneration and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 December 2002 was dedicated to the 24 hour economy and all members took evidence from three representatives from Maidstone Borough Council who were undertaking a review of the night time economy in Maidstone, the assistant director (economic development and neighbourhood renewal) and assistant director (front line task force).
  9. Following this meeting the task group took responsibility for undertaking the remainder of the review and set a number of dates to take evidence from officers, members and various sections of the community. A press release was issued followed by notices sent out to libraries requesting response from the general public.
  10. A questionnaire was posted on the council's website. This gave the public an opportunity to comment on what they thought Medway needed as far as the 24 hour economy was concerned. Those people who responded to the questionnaire and were willing to give verbal evidence were invited to the evidence session on 12 March 2003.

11. From the first meeting taking evidence a number of issues became the clear themes for Medway as far as the 24 hour economy is concerned:
- ❖ **The need for improved community safety**
  - ❖ **The need for better lighting**
  - ❖ **enhanced, and more widely advertised, public transport is needed**
  - ❖ **information about the 24 hour economy needs to be shared more widely**
  - ❖ **more varied forms of entertainment are required in Medway for all ages and cultures**

12. The programme of evidence gathering was as follows:

Date	Evidence obtained from:
5 December 2002	External evidence – representatives from Maidstone Borough Council attended
29 January 2003	Officers/Members of the Council
7 February 2003	Young people/University/Kent Institute of Art and Design
28 February 2003	Business community
6 March 2003	Travel and enforcement
12 March 2003	Commerce/members of the public

A full list of invitees can be seen at appendix B to this report.

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE FIVE THEMES

### Community safety

1. From the first evidence session it became clear that one of the negative responses received from people giving evidence was concern about public safety. This has also been borne out as a result of the Medway Residents Opinion Poll 2002, which identified the issue of community safety as the biggest concern for residents.
2. For 73% of residents crime was the issue, which they felt needed to be tackled in order to improve the area. This feeling was particularly strong amongst residents in Strood and Rochester. Fear of crime was particularly high after dark, amongst women, people in social class D/E and people over 55. Overall only 33% of residents said that they felt safe in Medway after dark. This compares to a national figure of 68%.
3. A generally representative view was expressed by a member of the Students Union, university of Greenwich:
  - ❖ *'Personal security is also a serious issue and the students would like to see more student-friendly pubs and clubs. The student population at the university is ethnically diverse and sometimes students have problems/bad situations with the general attitude of local people. Students feel threatened and a safer-feeling environment needs to be created with CCTV, lighting and education of local people'.*
4. This view was also shared by a number of people including the Kent Institute of Art and Design (KIAD). Denise Harmer, Business Development Officer, stated:
  - ❖ *'KIAD is looking to offer its students a variety of entertainment but with security which is a higher priority than the entertainment itself'.*
5. The general manager of the Brook and Central Theatres endorsed this view, as did Mr Ratcliffe from the City of Rochester Society, as evidenced by their comments:
  - ❖ *'Perception of the evening environment, ranging from potentially unsafe to actively hostile and not conducive to a relaxed evening out'.*
  - ❖ *'Security is obvious by its absence in Rochester these days and it is a cause for concern'.*



6. Mr King, Licensed Victuallers Association focussed on lack of policing:
  - ❖ *‘The lack of policing is a problem. It was proven this year when we had Operation Giddy, which really worked for us. Since that finished standards have deteriorated’.*
7. One suggestion which was made was for the two way radio system used by some shops during the day time (to warn of potential troublemakers) to be developed for use by pubs and clubs in the evening.
8. Although the officers from the community safety team were not able to give verbal evidence to the task group Louise Matthews, the Neighbourhood Renewals Manager made the following comments on security in Medway:

*‘In the latest budget round we also have been given funding for two more community safety street team officers which recognised the importance of having a visible presence on the street and the need to look at more innovative ways of tackling anti-social behaviour. In my view we need to look at our provision of services for young people and put more time a resources into developing an integrated but joined up response to young people's needs. At the moment we have Mairi Jones, the assistant director (education and leisure) developing a transforming youth strategy, then there are plans relating to the young people's strategic partnership and responses being developed to the Victoria Climbié report and then there are a whole host of plans to do with young people and community safety issues’.*
9. The task group felt that whatever was developed, as far as the 24 hour economy was concerned in Medway, that emphasis needed to be placed on ensuring that the community felt able to enjoy what was on offer by feeling safe and secure. In their recommendations they have suggested a number of measures in an attempt to improve the situation. These are
  - ❖ that an officer working group in partnership with the Police and transport providers investigate if a police presence at selected pick-up points at club closing times can be introduced to ensure safe dispersal of club goers from the area
  - ❖ at the time of planning any developments for the 24 hour economy that adequate infrastructure should be put in place to support the development and consideration be given to parking, transport, street lighting, cleansing and other services
  - ❖ discussions be held with the Police about increasing their presence in areas of Medway where anti-social behaviour regularly occurs
  - ❖ the two-way radio system used by shops in the day time (to warn of potential troublemakers) be developed for use by pubs and clubs in the evening. **(recommendations 1, 10, 11 and 13 refer)**

## Improved street lighting

10. When taking evidence from the members of Maidstone Borough Council it was clear from their research into the night time economy in Maidstone that there were issues as far as street lighting were concerned which needed to be addressed. The location of street lighting at night was one of the factors the council looked at. They were conscious that certain areas of the town became trouble spots as people left the area after an evening's entertainment. Councillors Danny Murphy and Fran Wilson from Maidstone Borough Council made the following observations:
  - ❖ *'Many of the problems which arose were due to bottle necks, lighting and CCTV in the wrong place and the town not being cleared efficiently'.*
  - ❖ *'We had to look at where people exit the town at night and improve the lighting'.*
11. The use of CCTV was considered as a tool to deter anti-social behaviour. However, the Youth Parliament representative, Jeff Hadaway, felt that CCTV alone was not sufficient.
  - ❖ *'CCTV does not deter crime. Rochester suffers through lack of good street lighting – Jackson's Field area, lower Rochester/ Chatham Road are all badly lit and dangerous and this is where the KIAD students live. If these were lit better it would make moving between the two centres much easier'.*
12. The response from Louise Matthews, the Neighbourhood Renewals Manager to the issue of street lighting was:
  - ❖ *'Perception of safety is a difficult aspect to try and change as there are so many factors that can influence it e.g. poor street lighting, press coverage etc. In response to the recent opinion poll we are in the process of developing a media strategy to try and address the fear of crime by drip feeding positive messages about the area and showing how the area compares to other similar areas. We are also expecting further analysis to be done to the opinion poll results to look at the link between people saying they feel unsafe and dissatisfaction with street lighting'.*
13. The task group were aware of the new initiative to provide extra street lighting in the area and would wish this to be extended wherever possible in the interests of community safety. A recommendation was also made that, at the time of planning any future developments, adequate consideration be given to street lighting. **(recommendations 1, 10, 11 and 13 refer)**

## Enhancing public transport

14. The task group was made aware that a large number of Medway's young people were being transported to Maidstone in the evening to enjoy the night life, which Maidstone had to offer. They were also advised of the problems encountered by people of all ages trying to find transport within the Medway area in the evening.
15. In response to this Councillor Danny Murphy, Maidstone Borough Council, made the following comment:
  - ❖ *'I understand there is now a bus bringing people from Medway to Maidstone in the evenings. Now that Maidstone's night life is expanding bigger names are being attracted to the night clubs and this in turn increases demand. It is important to plan for the night life in an anchor place with satellite provision as well. At the moment we are attracting people from as far afield as Portsmouth to Maidstone for the night life'.*
16. Medway Council town centre managers Ashley Davis and Annette LeBreton identified transport as an issue.
  - ❖ *'Transport is one of the biggest problems in Medway in the evening. If you live on some of the estates in Chatham and Gillingham it is almost impossible to get to the cinema'.*
17. Niall Bolger, the assistant director (front line task force) highlighted the need to work in partnership with transport providers in enhancing the provision of transport in Medway:
  - ❖ *'There have been a number of issues identified in the passenger transport best value review relating to quality partnerships. It would be helpful for members to have discussions with Arriva about improving the services provided during the evening'.*
18. Discussions were held with both Arriva and Nu-Venture about improving what was currently available and with a representative of the taxi operators in the area. All were prepared to discuss making improvements and working with the council in the development of the 24 hour economy. On behalf of the taxi operators Mr Harry Sage stated that a review of the taxi rank sitings would be helpful to tackle some of the problems currently being experienced in the area.
19. In their discussions with Superintendent David Pryde the task group referred to an idea put forward by Mr Davies the business development manager of Arriva that a system could be developed similar to one operating in Southend. In that authority the Police and a security firm were used to provide security in return for the transport company providing a bus service to ensure safe transfer of people from clubs and pubs. Superintendent Pryde emphasised that:

- ❖ *'We would want to work closely with you on any scheme because we will be involved at some point. We would rather be involved at the beginning'.*
  - ❖ *'You need to make sure that the right infrastructure is in place and if people leave an area and just want to get home then you need to make sure they can do so. The flashpoint is when they are hanging around'.*
20. The following comments were made by the representatives of Arriva and Nu-Venture, Richard Davies (Arriva) and Peter Kemp (Nu-Venture):
- ❖ *'Once an area becomes popular we can put on an even better service which encourages even more people to use it. The higher the volume the more we can do'.*
  - ❖ *'It is no good providing extra buses every ten minutes into the town centre at night even if they are free because unless you put something there that will attract people they won't use it'.*
  - ❖ *'At the moment we shut up shop in Medway at 7pm every night because is nothing out there that is worth our while operating commercially at the present time. We have no need to operate after that hour but that doesn't mean we wouldn't be prepared to discuss this. Medway is inadequately provided with bus transport and gets a raw deal'.*
21. It was, therefore, evident that once the services for the night time economy were operational and well marketed the transport providers would be interested in providing a service. (**recommendations 1, 2, 5 and 6 refer**).

### **Sharing information about the 24 hour economy**

22. The evidence from Maidstone Borough Council pointed towards the need to have better links between the day time and night time economy and the importance of marketing the positive aspects of the town/s. From information gathered by the task group gaps in sharing of information were apparent across Medway.
23. From a planning perspective it was suggested that more could be done proactively to promote and market the area and enter into discussions with particular businesses to ask why they were not already based in the area. It was accepted that improvements would need to be put in place through planning and the front line task force to ensure that the area was attractive and vibrant in order to invite these businesses in.
24. The project manager for Chatham, Pauline Scott-Garrett made the following comment:

- ❖ *‘Part of the Council’s role is encouraging and enabling as well as planning, control and enforcement. When you look at city centres across Europe a lot of things have happened organically and were not necessarily planned. You do need to combine these quarters with high quality open spaces and public realm’.*
25. The task group identified a role for the Town Centre Managers to provide links to the various services available in the area to resolve some of the following problems identified during the review:
- ❖ *‘On investigating the night time economy we realised that while the day time economy was well provided for and well represented on the town centre forum that the night time economy was not. We are endeavouring the re-engage representatives from the night time economy onto the town centre forum’.* (Councillor Danny Murphy, Maidstone Borough Council)
  - ❖ *‘We don’t publish the time that performances finish. We could maybe put this information forward if we do know – generally speaking we ask the company on the day. Equally we could put transport information and restaurant details in our foyer’.* (Tony Hill, General Manager, Brook and Central Theatres)
  - ❖ *‘We would encourage more knowledge and more interface with the council. I speak with several departments across the council but you don’t have anyone on the council with whom I can interface. This is not a criticism of council officers but of the system as there are issues I would like to bring to the council’.* (Captain Peter White, Harbour Master Captain, Medway Ports Authority)
  - ❖ *‘We get to hear about some events taking place in Medway because we are asked to provide a service but we are not always aware of other opportunities, perhaps future ones. The opportunities need to be made known to all providers’.* (Peter Kemp, Nu-Venture Coaches Ltd)
26. The task group were very conscious of the gaps in information exchange across the area as far as the 24 hour economy was concerned and felt that links should be tightened to ensure an improved exchange of information from one section of the community to another. For this reason it is being recommended that the town centre managers, who are ideally placed to disseminate information, be asked to set up a working group between the theatres, restaurants and transport providers to investigate a better linkage and more seamless service to the public, better awareness of transport times through visible signage in the theatres. This should also have the effect of increasing the usage of local businesses. **(recommendations 1, 5, 6, 9 and 13 refer)**

## Variety of provision

27. The need for a variety of provision was emphasised by almost all of the witnesses who gave evidence. Listed below are a selection of comments, which give a flavour of requests, and ideas which came forward as part of the process:

- ❖ *'Maybe one idea would be to have an integrated leisure provision at the Black Lion Leisure Centre extending into the land opposite and encompassing the sporting provision as there is car parking available and it is within walking distance from the University'.*
- ❖ *'In East Kent even in the winter people can sit outside of cafes in the evening because they have certain heating structures, which are allowed in planning terms, so you can walk through the town and see the café culture developing'.*
- ❖ *'Medway is a huge music base and we are not capitalising on this'.*  
(Mairi Jones, Assistant Director (Education and Leisure))
- ❖ *'Ideally what is needed is a purpose built gallery within a creative performance centre space which could offer more to Medway across a broader night frame'.*
- ❖ *'There are examples across the country where there are restaurants, galleries and theatres together and I see this as an opportunity for us'.*  
(Howard Barnes, Head of Arts)
- ❖ *'I would suggest developing the area between Star Hill and Sun Pier with cafes and restaurants. It has cobbled streets leading to the river area, and is potentially a very attractive environment'.* (Matt Peacock, Strategy/Major Projects Officer)
- ❖ *'Chatham is absolutely dead at the moment. The café culture would work brilliantly well there. You could make it into something really nice'.* (Mr Ahluwalia, Manor Club, Chatham)

28. The promotion of music based events was emphasised during the evidence sessions as illustrated by the following comments from Carl Madjitey, Head of Events:

- ❖ *'Our role is to encourage ownership and the nurturing of live musicians because the pay-off will be to the pub owners benefit'.*
- ❖ *'Part of the anti-social issues are because we have not provided the right sort of entertainment at the right place'.*

29. Councillor Angela Prodger, the portfolio holder for community safety was interviewed and gave the following view as part of her evidence:

- ❖ *'We don't have a cultural centre at the moment and there are a lot of things missing. We are a multi-cultural society and therefore we need to be aware of the ethnic community and their contribution and views. There is a lot of interest in other communities' cultures, which seems to be extremely vibrant and I think this would be a good thing for the towns'.*

30. It was evident that although Medway had inherited a certain amount of facilities available during 24 hours such as theatres, night clubs, restaurants etc. most of the people interviewed felt that local provision did not offer a wide choice of high quality cultural activities. The majority of people also felt that live entertainment and live rehearsals had become almost a 'thing of the past' and wished that they could be reinstated. There appeared to be a 'dead' period between shops closing and restaurants and other venues opening and the task group felt that this twilight zone needed to be opened up to encourage venues to be open and provide refreshments during this time. The task group in their recommendations have suggested that an officer working group be set up to develop a work plan on developing the 24 hour economy in such a way as to attract further diversity and culture into the area that would meet the needs of the wide range of age groups and backgrounds of people already living in Medway. They were also keen to introduce more of a café culture and develop high quality restaurants, theatres, galleries, evening writers clubs across the area. They identified four specific areas, which they felt lent themselves to being developed in this way. These were –

- ❖ Sun Pier, Chatham to the viaduct including the Central Theatre and up to Chatham station
- ❖ Rochester high street
- ❖ Canterbury Street, Gillingham down to the King Charles Hotel
- ❖ Medway Valley Estate at Cuxton

**(recommendations 1 and 17 refer)**

## CHAPTER TWO

### LINKED ISSUES

#### Licensing hours

1. One of the problems with large numbers of licensed premises closing at the same time is that there are then vast numbers of people on the street at that time waiting for transport home. Maidstone Borough Council already has staggered closing times for its licensed premises, which appears to be successful.
2. Many of the people who spoke to the task group felt that staggered licensing hours would be helpful:
  - ❖ *'Staggered licensing hours would stop a lot of trouble in the High Streets'. (Jeff Hadaway, Medway Youth Parliament)*
  - ❖ *'If the bars licensing hours were staggered it would help. At certain times of night you just can't get a taxi'. (Sanjay Ravel, Manager, Veena Leisure)*
  - ❖ *'Staggered times for licensed premises closing would help, the cooling off period we have at some places at the moment does help where people stop drinking for an hour before the premises close'. (Superintendent David Pryde)*
  - ❖ *'I think staggering closing times would be a good idea for licensed premises. The idea is interesting'. (Jonathan Sadler, South East England Development Agency)*
3. In spite of some reservations from the representative of the Licensed Victuallers Association most of the people interviewed felt that staggering licensing hours in the area would be of assistance in reducing the numbers of people on the streets at any one time. This would have the effect of reducing the likelihood of anti-social behaviour developing due to large numbers of people leaving licensed premises at the same time. In view of these feelings the task group have recommended that the Council should look at staggering licensing hours in the area. **(recommendation 3 refers)**

#### Website improvements

4. There was a request, particularly from the representatives of young people for more 'community' information to be available on the website:



- ❖ *‘Students and prospective students would like better communication about sports activities, local clubs, teams, societies, fitness clubs and a focal point for this information to be stored with contact details etc. – something which the Students’ Union can recommend’.* (Neil Keating and Chantel Phippen, Students’ Union, University of Greenwich)
  - ❖ *‘I would like to hear about job opportunities in Medway, so that flexible, casual jobs can be advertised for students to create a working relationship with traders’.* (Jeff Brown, Director HE Operations, University of Kent in Medway)
5. Maidstone Borough Council found that by providing a means of advertising space for their clubs this actually helped with their litter problem as the businesses did not then use fliers to advertise.
6. The task group felt there was an opportunity for the Council’s own website to be further developed to meet the needs of the various sections of the community. It has the potential to be used as an information base and the group are recommending that the website be developed further to give details of transport across Medway, sports activities, clubs, jobs available and other useful information for residents and visitors to the area. They were particularly aware of the needs of students as far as looking for part time employment and felt that the website could be of assistance to them by holding details of opportunities in the area. **(recommendation 9 refers)**

## Development of the river

7. On 6 March the task group discussed the 24 hour economy with Captain Peter White, Harbour Master Captain, Medway Ports Authority who made the following points:
- ❖ *‘I would love to see the river more used and more understood by the people who live on it. We would be interested in working with the council on the development of a river bus and tourist bus service, which could be utilised in the evening for entertainment purposes’.*
  - ❖ *‘You would need to define more clearly what you are looking for and ensure that there was sufficient infrastructure, car parking, berthing, suitable vessel and safety measures in place’*
8. From their discussions with the Harbour Master Captain, the task group felt that more could be done to regard the river as an integral part of Medway’s economy, as they felt it was currently an under-used resource. They were made aware of opportunities for transport and leisure on the river and are recommending that the economic development department report back to the Cabinet on ways to increase usage of the river. **(recommendation 16 refers)**

## Evening parking charges in Rochester

9. As a result of the discussions mainly with Rochester traders and those involved with businesses in the area a number of concerns were raised as far as the recent introduction of evening parking charges in Rochester was concerned:
  - ❖ *'In Rochester in particular another thing which has hit us hard is the evening car parking charges. The last two weekends a lot of people have been hit with tickets, they had no idea the situation had changed. There was a lack of advertising to start with but it is putting people off and not helping our trade'. (Sanjay Ravel, Manager, Veena Leisure)*
  - ❖ *'The council has extended the charging periods in Rochester car parks and when you think about attracting business, not so much the tourist trade but local people, when they find out they have to pay they find it off-putting. I won't go there at night because I have to pay so it has a detrimental effect across the board'. (Alexander Hill, member of the public)*
10. This is a view shared by the town centre managers and the Licensed Victuallers Association in Medway:
  - ❖ *'Rochester traders feel that they have had a policy inflicted upon them because evening parking charges have only been introduced in that area and not throughout the rest of Medway'. (Ashley Davis and Annette LeBreton, town centre managers)*
  - ❖ *'The introduction of car parking charges in the evening in Rochester has definitely affected businesses, business has gone down in the public houses and businesses'. (Bill King, Licensed Victuallers Association)*
11. Due to the weight of concerns expressed by Rochester traders the task group is of the view that further examination of the impact of the introduction of evening parking charges in Rochester should be assessed.  
**(recommendation 8 refers)**

## Positioning of taxi ranks

12. As part of the discussion on transport consideration was given to a problem referred to during the evidence session with young people by Jeff Hadaway, Medway Youth Parliament:
  - ❖ *'The only taxi rank is at Chatham station – everyone goes there after closing time which means mixing the music types and there is trouble. The taxi rank should be located in Railway Road in the evening for ease of use. The facilities in the daytime are not always the facilities needed for the night'.*

13. This was discussed with the representative from the taxi operators, Mr Sage:
- ❖ *'We have suggested that we meet with Keith Hanshaw in Highways and review the whole ranks. Some places we could have ranks and haven't got them, other places we have them but don't use them. It needs an overhaul. It would be better if the Casino taxi rank was moved to the area near the café and coach park in the evening'.*
14. It was clear from the evidence received from young people and also from the taxi operator that some revision was needed to the siting of taxi ranks. The task group, therefore, are recommending that consideration be given by officers to the re-siting of taxi ranks during the evening to more appropriate positions. **(recommendation 12 refers)**

## Litter control

15. As the 24 hour economy is further developed issues of street cleansing, and waste disposal are issues to be tackled:
- ❖ *'It is important to look at the planning issues, the management issues, parking issues, the movement of people and issues relating to refuse collection and street cleaning'. (Mairi Jones, assistant director (education and leisure))*
16. William Benson, Scrutiny Manager, Maidstone Borough Council advised the task group of one method of tackling the issues relating to street litter that has been used by Maidstone:
- ❖ *'As far as litter left around food outlets is concerned we found that we have the power to require the owners to clear the 200-300 yards around their establishments by means of street litter control notices'.*
17. The task group were made aware of concerns from the general public and officers about litter, particularly around takeaways, and are recommending that the assistant director (legal and contract services) reports back to the Cabinet on the powers the Council could adopt to require commercial premises to clean up the area outside of their properties. **(recommendation 14 refers)**

## General comments

18. The Head of Events Carl Madjitey, summed up some of the feelings of the task group when he said:
- ❖ *'We have to create the environment where people feel comfortable to be. Where we can grow and cultivate internally otherwise Medway will become a hired hall where people visit and leave, leaving behind their litter and behaving in an anti-social way'.*

19. Another important aspect to be borne in mind was raised by Mairi Jones, assistant director (education and leisure):
  - ❖ *‘There are three main issues you will need to take in perspective. These are the existing residential requirements of local residents, the people moving to and from the area in terms of the evening economy and those people moving into the area specifically for entertainment. Each looking for specific needs to be met and some of their requirements may clash’.*
20. By putting forward a number of positive suggestions as to the way forward the task group are optimistic that the 24 hour economy can be developed and managed by the council in a way that would be welcomed and accepted by all concerned.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Rochester High Street has a more than sufficient number of public houses and night clubs for evening entertainment and has developed without any control or management.
2. The 24 hour economy should be extended in Medway but only with careful planning and management with sufficient consideration being given to
  - providing the necessary infrastructure to support it;
  - adequate lighting, street cleaning and refuse arrangements;
  - ensuring that the public can be safely transported from the area
  - the needs of local residents;
  - the needs of the 6000 potential students coming to the University;
  - high profile marketing of any new development.
3. A number of witnesses referred to issues of personal security in Medway at night and the need to make Medway a safer and more pleasant place to be in the evenings. Raising the profile of Police presence would be essential in this as would better lighting and transport.
4. Lack of adequate transport, particularly in the evening and in the early hours of the morning, is a real issue, which needs to be addressed. It is clear that at certain times taxis are not available – these issues lead to large groups of frustrated people being left to congregate in certain areas often causing anti-social behaviour. More use could be made in the evening of the shop-safe two way radio system currently used in some shops in the day time to pass information warnings about anti-social behaviour on from one venue to another.
5. The positioning of the taxi ranks for the day time may not be appropriate for the evening and this situation should be reviewed.
6. In view of the large concentrations of people remaining on the streets when public houses and clubs close at the same time the group felt that, in spite of some reservations from the licensed trade, it would be advisable to consider staggering licensing hours to reduce the concentration at any one time.
7. Having taken evidence from a large group of people within Medway it became clear that the lines of communication both within the council and outside of it need improvement. There appeared to be little negotiation between the various service providers to ensure a seamless service for the public. Lack of information and poor marketing is not helping the public to use what is already available. The council's own website should be developed to increase the amount of community information provided.

8. Although there is some provision as far as the evening economy is concerned, there are gaps, which need to be filled to ensure that a wider range of tastes and age groups are catered for. There is a lack of non-alcohol related activities into the evening, high quality and live entertainment. The new licensing laws, which are being proposed, are likely to place further restrictions upon venue owners and the council needs to be proactive in assisting owners to allow lunchtime and early evening rehearsals for example, by minimising the cost of the necessary licenses.
9. There appears to be no in-house public address system at the Brook or Central Theatres. This makes it difficult to get music levels right and deters bands/performers from performing in Medway.
10. The river Medway is an under-utilised asset. Arrangements should be made to use the river for transport and leisure with further amenities developed along the riverside to support these services.
11. The effect on the trade and economy of Rochester appears to be adversely affected by the recent decision to introduce evening parking charges in Rochester. (Those attending adult education classes in Rochester are also feeling the effect).
12. Ultimately the main five items, which arise from the review, are
  - the need for better security at night in Medway;
  - better lighting is needed;
  - enhanced, and more widely advertised, public transport is needed;
  - information about the 24 hour economy needs to be shared more widely;
  - more variety of entertainment is needed in Medway for all ages and cultures.

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REVIEW

1. The Regeneration and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that the Cabinet agrees that an officer working group be set up to investigate and develop an action plan on all of the following recommendations. The working group to report back to the Cabinet and produce a six monthly update report to be submitted to the Regeneration and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
  - (i) How to work in partnership with other organisations and the community to attract further diversity and culture into the area to meet the needs of the wide range of age groups and backgrounds of people already living in Medway;
  - (ii) How to develop the evening café/music culture and develop high quality restaurants, theatres, cinemas, galleries, evening writers clubs etc, paying attention to persuading restaurants/tea shops to remain open until later in the evening (the council should work actively to promote the availability of this facility if it is agreed). The group to bear in mind the difficulties involved with a mix of residential/commercial and late night activities. Areas suggested for potential development of the above are –

Sun Pier, Chatham to the viaduct including the Central Theatre and up to Chatham station

Rochester High Street, from the esplanade to Star Hill

Canterbury Street, Gillingham down to the King Charles Hotel

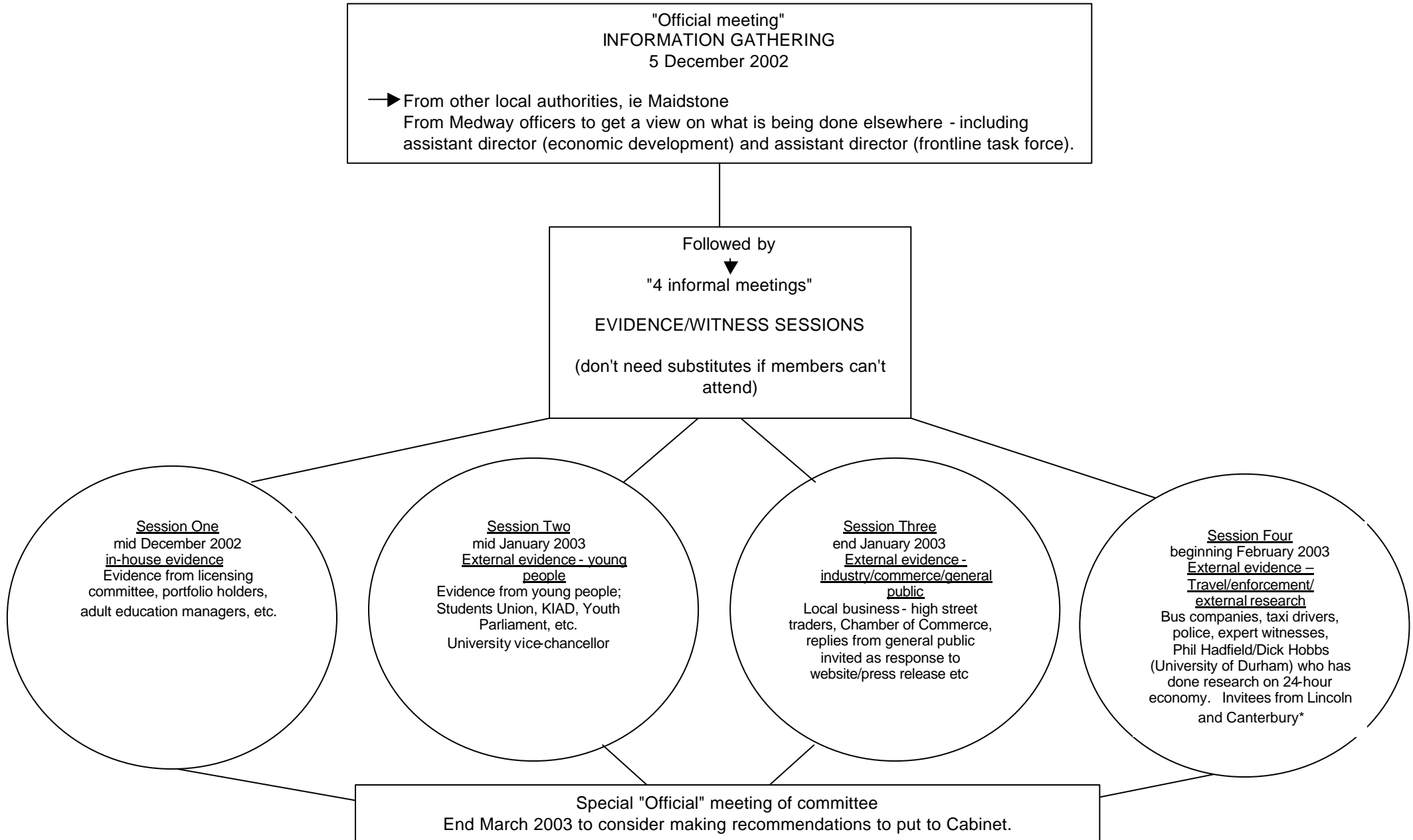
Medway Valley Estate at Cuxton
  - (iii) Investigations with the Police and transport providers in Medway to arrange for Police presence at selected pick-up points at club closing times to ensure safe dispersal of club goers from the area;
2. At the time of planning any such development (set out in 1. above) adequate infrastructure be put in place to support the development and consideration be given to parking, transport, street lighting, cleansing and other services.
3. The Licensing and Safety Committee be requested to give consideration to staggering the licensing hours in Rochester in order to avoid the problems of anti-social behaviour which arise at present when large crowds of people exit clubs and pubs at the same time.
4. Officers enter into discussions with the owners of licensed premises in the area to encourage more live band rehearsals and similar events during lunchtime and early evening periods.

5. Town centre managers be required to set up a working group between the theatres, cinemas, restaurants, and transport providers to investigate a better linkage and more seamless service to the public, better awareness of transport times through “visible” signage in the theatres and increase usage of local businesses.
6. Theatre managers be encouraged to include transport and restaurant details in their programming/advertisements and advise the public of the show finishing times when these are known.
7. The development and environment directorate be asked to identify potential noise issues when consulting environmental health officers prior to development approval being given for residential accommodation.
8. A report back to the Cabinet be requested regarding the impact of the introduction of evening parking charges in Rochester to gauge the ongoing impact of the charges.
9. The council’s website be further developed to provide more of a community information base, giving details of transport across Medway, sports activities, clubs, jobs available (particularly for students) and other useful information for residents and visitors to the area.
10. The new initiative to provide extra street lighting is welcomed and this should be extended wherever possible in the interests of community safety.
11. Discussions be held with the Police about increasing their presence in areas of Medway where anti-social behaviour regularly occurs;
12. Consideration be given to the re-siting of taxi ranks during the evening to more appropriate positions.
13. The two-way radio system used by shops in the day time (to warn of potential troublemakers) be developed for use by pubs and clubs in the evening.
14. The assistant director (legal and contract services) be requested to report back on the powers the council could adopt to require commercial premises to clean up the area outside of their properties.
15. The public transport manager be requested to bear in mind ways of developing services to meet the needs of students in Medway by discussing their requirements with the University as part of the process of planning transport provision.
16. The economic development department be requested to report back to Cabinet on ways of increasing usage of the river for transport and leisure purposes.



17. The Regeneration and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to undertake further work to identify areas which need further research, for example
- public conveniences
  - public address systems
  - supermarkets, chemists and other shops
  - garages

# PROPOSED REVIEW OF THE 24 HOUR ECONOMY



\*Invitees from Lincoln and Canterbury as and when available

## **Witnesses invited to give evidence**

### **Councillors:**

Councillors Mrs Janice Bamber (portfolio holder – key service delivery), Mrs Diane Chambers (chair of Licensing and Safety Committee), Mrs Jane Chitty (portfolio holder – regeneration and renewal) and Mrs Angela Prodger (portfolio holder – community safety).

### **Officers:**

Kathy Wadsworth, assistant director (economic development and neighbourhood renewal)  
Howard Barnes, head of arts  
Chris Webb, licensing co-ordinator  
Karl Madjitey, events and heritage attractions  
Pauline Scott-Garrett, project manager, Chatham  
Colin Lovell, regeneration and environment projects manager  
Mairi Jones, assistant director (education and leisure)  
Louise Matthews, neighbourhood renewals manager  
Kim Eaglestone, community safety manager  
Matt Peacock, strategy and major projects officer  
Geoff Walters, public transport manager  
Ashley Davis, town centre manager  
Annette LeBreton, town centre manager  
Tony Hill, manager – Brook and Central Theatre  
Ron Morlham, town centre manager  
David Cotton, arts development officer  
Niall Bolger, assistant director (front line task force)

### **Maidstone Borough Council:**

Councillor Danny Murphy, chair of the Strategic Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Frances Brown, Maidstone Borough Council member  
Andrew Osborne, economic development  
William Benson, scrutiny manager

### **Representatives of young people:**

Jeff Brown, director HE operations, University of Kent in Medway  
Neil Keating and Chantel Phippen, students union, University of Greenwich  
Denise Harmer, business development officer, Kent Institute of Art and Design (KIAD)  
Jeff Hadaway – Medway Youth Parliament

### **Business community representatives:**

Aaron Stone, director, Casino Rooms  
Sanjay Ravel, owner, Veena Leisure  
Steve Georgio, owner, King Charles Hotel and Zone nightclub  
Medway Music 2000  
Bill Ferris, chairman, Medway Tourism Association  
Tracy Manley, chief executive, Medway Chamber of Commerce  
Jonathan Sadler, South East England Development Agency  
Bob Ratcliffe, town centre forums and City of Rochester Society  
Steve Riddle (doorman) and Mr Ahluwalia (part owner), Manor Club, Gillingham  
Strood Traders Forum  
Strood Area Pilot Committee

### **Transport/enforcement/environment representatives**

Mr Spalding, Arriva bus company  
Mr Coulthurst, Connex  
Mr Edgcombe, Citibus Ltd  
Mr Dosanjh, ASD Coaches Ltd  
Mr Kemp, Nu Venture  
Superintendent Pryde, Rochester Police  
Mr Sage, taxi driver  
Mr Ruffell, Environment Agency  
Mr Bennett, Civic Trust  
Captain Peter White, harbour master captain, Medway Ports Authority  
Professor Phil Hadfield, joint author of 24hr city condition critical

Members of the public were invited to attend following completion of the website questionnaire. The following members of the public, who expressed an interest in attending, were invited:

Mr Redding  
Mr Dillien  
Mr A Hill  
Elizabeth Boucher  
Mr A Last

