

Medway Council
MEETING OF MEDWAY COUNCIL

24 OCTOBER 2001

7.00pm to 10.06pm

The meeting was adjourned from 8.20pm to 8.27pm

RECORD OF THE MEETING

PRESENT: The mayor (Councillor Goulden), the deputy mayor (Councillor Price) and Councillors Adcock, Juliette Andrews, Richard Andrews, Bacon, Baker, Janice Bamber, Kenneth Bamber, Booth, Bowler, Brighthouse, Buckwell, Burt, Cawte, Mrs Diane Chambers, Rodney Chambers, Mrs Jane Chitty, Joanne Chitty, John Chitty, Mrs Clark, Cooper, Davis, Doe, Esterson, Mrs Etheridge, Filmer, Mrs Gilry, Godwin, Karen Griffin, Sylvia Griffin, Griffiths, Guichard, Harriott, Mrs Hattersley, Mrs Haydock, Hewett, Hollands, Hubbard, Hunter, Jefferies, Juby, Kearney, Luckhurst, Martin, Mason, Munton, Murray, Emily Pearce, Purdy, Robson, Rowan-Robinson, Madhu Ruparel, Maureen Ruparel, Rutter, Shade, John Shaw, Mrs Julie Shaw, Sivyver, Smith, Sultana, Wallis, Ward, Kenneth Webber, Mrs Wheller, Wicks, Wildey, Williams, Mrs Patricia Wozencroft, Richard Wozencroft and Wyper.

3793 RECORD OF THE MEETING

The record of the meeting held on 20 September 2001 was signed by the mayor as a correct record subject to the inclusion of Councillor Mrs Jane Chitty as the Regeneration and Renewal portfolio holder, at minute 3717(A).

3794 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Marcus Chambers, Mrs Crane, Earle, Edwards-Daem, Harding, Jarrett, Payne, Mrs Prodger and Mrs Anita Webber.

3795 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Adcock declared an insignificant non-pecuniary interest in minute 3802(A) (Rochester Riverside development).

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Councillors Joanne and John Chitty each declared, in respect to any reference to SEEDA, that Councillor Joanne Chitty's employment by SEEDA did not give rise to an indirect pecuniary interest as SEEDA is defined as a public body.

Councillor Cooper declared a non-pecuniary interest in any reference to the proposed amalgamation of Forge Lane Infant and Hillyfield Junior Schools.

3796 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (i) The mayor informed the Council that MHS Homes had sponsored the production of a new mayoral badge and that the badge had been presented earlier in the evening.
- (ii) The mayor drew members' attention to the new Council rules under which the Council now operated, and in particular to rule 5 which required him to ensure that time limits were observed and allowed the mayor to limit the number of speakers in any debate at his discretion. Any member in doubt of the way in which the rules would operate was asked to seek clarification from the mayor.
- (iii) Finally, members were asked to provide the chief executive and Council office staff with a written copy of amendments to any motion under item 10 in respect of special responsibility allowances for Fire Authority members; the appointment of church and parent governor representatives; and the Rochester Riverside Development.

3797 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The leader of the Council advised members that Radio Kent had asked the Council to consider dealing with the Rochester Riverside development item in open session as far as possible. The Council agreed that this would not be appropriate given the commercial sensitivity of the content of the papers.

Decision:

The press and public be excluded for consideration of minute 3802(A) (Rochester Riverside development) as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 8 and 9 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

3798 PETITIONS

The following petitions were received:

- Councillor Richard Andrews presented a petition on behalf of residents of Elm Avenue, Hoo Common, Broadwood Road and Main Road, Chattenden, who questioned the recent occupancy of the ex-sub post office at 4a Elm Avenue as being unfit for habitation.

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- Councillor Booth presented a petition on behalf of residents of the Davis Estate calling for the Council to establish Horsted Farm as a country park.

3799 LEADER'S REPORT

Members debated the leader's report which consisted of the following main issues:

- Decisions made by the Cabinet on 9 and 23 October;
- The arrangements to improve communication with all members of the Council;
- Negotiations in relation to Rochester and Chatham Riverside (an item for decision later on the agenda);
- The inclusion of Medway in the list of 24 places in the government's "Our Towns and Cities" initiative, and the launch of this on 11 October 2001;
- The arrangements for negotiating a public service agreement with the government in early 2002;
- The proposal for the joint Kent and Greenwich University campus in Pembroke, Chatham Maritime;
- The Council's submission for City status to celebrate the Queen's golden jubilee.

3800 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

(A) Questions without notice and related to items on the agenda

Four questions were asked as follows:

- Councillor Harriott asked a question in respect of the savings anticipated by the Cabinet from the provision of housing for the homeless. Councillor Doe, the health and community portfolio holder, replied that more innovative and pro-active working would result in achieving the predicted £50,000 savings.
- Councillor Munton asked a question concerning the cabinet papers and the detail of savings. In the absence of Councillor Jarrett, the finance portfolio holder, the leader of the Council responded that officers and portfolio holders had all the necessary information to enable them to manage the budget.
- Councillor Hollands asked a question in respect of the "Our Towns and Cities Initiative". The leader of the Council confirmed that he had

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attended the launch on 11 October 2001 and expressed his concern that the council tax payer would be funding this initiative.

- Councillor Cooper asked a question in respect of consultation for the amalgamation of schools. The education portfolio holder, Councillor Mrs Patricia Wozencroft, responded that the Cabinet based its decisions on the outcome of the official consultation process.

(B) Questions with notice

Councillor Godwin asked the leader of the Council the following:

“Following publication of the advertisement for the post of political assistant to the Conservative group does the Leader of the Council and the Conservative group now -

- 1) accept that this is yet another example, among many, of a major U-turn by the Conservative group on the Council;
- 2) unreservedly apologise, on behalf of his group, for previous statements made by them attacking the appointment and use of political assistants;
- 3) belatedly recognise the value of political assistants evident from the information and support provided to the Labour group over the last two years in contrast to a Conservative group devoid of any political acumen.”

The leader stated that whilst the Conservative group had decided to recruit a political assistant, it continued to have reservations about the value of these posts and would prefer to use the money to provide a research facility for all members of the Council.

3801 REPORTS OF MATTERS FOR FULL COUNCIL DECISION

(A) Special responsibility allowances for members of the Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority

The recommendations of the independent remuneration panels of Kent County Council and Medway Council were summarised in respect of the payment of special responsibility allowances for office-holders of the Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority.

Decision:

- (a) Special responsibility allowances (SRAs) will be payable to the Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority (KMTFA) members holding the posts listed below and not for any other posts, at the rates shown:

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	%	£
Chair	100	12,750.00
Vice-chair	40	5,100.00
Committee chair x 2*	40	5,100.00
Labour group leader	35	4,462.50
Liberal group leader	35	4,462.50

* Policy and Resources and Personnel Committees

- (b) For Medway Council members holding KMTFA offices the new SRA rate will be backdated to the start of Medway Council's new members' allowances scheme (ie 1 October 2001).
- (c) The rules in the Council's members' allowances scheme about any member receiving more than one SRA will apply to KMTFA office-holders from this Council.
- (d) KMTFA SRAs will be increased annually on 1 April each year on the same basis as other members' allowances.
- (e) A public annual report will be prepared by this Council's KMTFA office-holders containing information about the way in which they have discharged their KMTFA duties as well as their Medway Council duties.
- (f) The KMTFA SRA scheme should be reviewed no later than three years from 24 October 2001.
- (g) Funding of SRAs payable to KMTFA office-holders should continue to be met jointly by KCC and Medway in the same proportion as the overall funding for KMTFA, currently in the ratio of 86% (KCC) to 14% (Medway).

(B) Appointment of church and parent governor representatives to the Youth and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Decision:

Mr T Carter, Mr C Firman, the Reverend J Smith and Mrs W Whitter are formally appointed to the Youth and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3802 REPORTS OF MATTERS OUTSIDE THE BUDGET OR POLICY FRAMEWORK

(A) Rochester Riverside Development

Discussion:

The Council had agreed to exclude the press and public for this item earlier in the meeting therefore this matter was considered in closed session.

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Members received an introduction from the director of development and environment who then responded to members' questions before the issue was debated.

After a lengthy debate the Council agreed the proposal by the leader of the council, supported by Councillor Richard Wozencroft as amended by Councillor Esterson, supported by Councillor Griffiths.

Councillors Baker, Mrs Haydock, Hollands, Mrs Jane Chitty, Joanne Chitty, John Chitty, Jefferies, Kearney, Martin, Mason, Purdy and Wicks asked that their votes against the proposal be recorded.

Decision:

- (a) to agree the terms set out in the draft development agreement with the removal of the words "at least" from (xii) on page 76 of the agreement;
- (b) to delegate authority to the chief executive to sign the development agreement, in consultation with group leaders, upon the satisfactory conclusion of negotiations on the matters listed in paragraph 2.5.5 of the exempt report;
- (c) that agreements be concluded as set out in paragraph 2.4.6 of the exempt report.

Mayor

Date