

Council – Schedule of written responses to questions not answered at the meeting

Items

Public questions / Members' questions

**(Pages
3 - 8)**

Schedule of written responses to questions not answered at the meeting.

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Date: 31 July 2019

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Full Council 18 July 2019 – Schedule of Written Responses to public questions and Members' questions not answered at the meeting

Agenda reference	Question	Response
	Public questions not answered at the meeting	
7B	<p>Victoria Roberts of Lordswood submitted the following question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett:</p> <p>“How are you planning to help the environment in Medway and encourage our citizens to do the same?”</p>	<p>“Thank you for your question Ms Roberts. Medway Council has a strong focus on a clean, green environment and there is a lot of work being undertaken across the Council which contributes to achieving this. A few examples are:</p> <p>Air Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a specific Medway Air Quality Action Plan in place. The Action Plan promotes the use of public transport, less driving of private cars, car sharing and sustainable development. <p>In June last year we launched an Air Quality Communications Strategy to promote a change in individual and collective behaviours.</p> <p>We are working to encourage walking and cycling to and from Medway schools. We sponsor two of the Kent Messenger Green Schools Awards: the ‘Green Travel Award’ and the ‘Air Pollution Campaign Award’.</p> <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A key purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural and local environment. <p>Our vision for the emerging Local Plan places a healthy and attractive environment at the heart of our ambitions for Medway in 2035. The Council’s approach to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment will embed green</p>

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		<p>infrastructure planning in both rural and urban areas.</p> <p>The Local Plan will also seek to promote a low carbon economy, support advances in smart technology and encourage the uptake of renewable sources of energy to mitigate the challenges of climate change.</p> <p>Greenspaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have secured the nationally recognised Green Flag accreditation for seven parks across Medway. We provides over 1,800 hectares of open space and work closely with the Medway Urban Greenspaces Forum to support the growing number of community groups interested in promoting activities within their local park. Volunteer activities within greenspaces are promoted and circa 14,000 volunteer hours were recorded during 2018/19. User satisfaction with greenspaces is at almost 80% reflecting the continued investment and improvements that we are making in play, allotments, parks and nature reserves. <p>Waste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We aim to maximise recycling and reuse, and minimise waste that goes to landfill. Since 2010, the Council has reduced landfill on an annual basis, from 63% down to 10% so far, and falling. <p>Climate Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council declared a Climate Emergency in April 2019, and work is already underway to produce an action plan to take a whole system approach to capture good work within the Council and set ambitious targets to tackle climate change and

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		<p>protect the environment further. A few examples of action taken by Medway to address Climate Change are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Solar panels installed at Gun Wharf ○ Promoting 'walking buses' within Medway's Schools ○ Refit programme to convert street lighting to LED ○ Reducing congestion hotspots in Medway <p>All in all, I think it is clear Medway Council is playing its part to ensure Medway is clean and green".</p>
7D	<p>Trevor Coote of Rainham submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty:</p> <p>"Whilst appreciating the Council's desire to build more homes and concrete over the Medway towns, in exchange for development money, do they not feel that with all the developments currently underway in Rainham, the addition of 1250 homes and the motor vehicles and people that will accompany them, that this sudden influx will destroy the semi-rural nature of the area for the current residents and future generations?"</p>	<p>"Thank you for your question and for your interest in Medway's landscape and character of the area around Rainham. The Council is working on a new Local Plan to provide for the homes our residents need, but also to secure a quality environment for wildlife and people. It is not the Council's desire to concrete over Medway.</p> <p>Central Government has set demanding requirements for numbers of new houses in planning policy and guidance that the Council has to follow. These demanding targets create great challenges for the Council.</p> <p>In preparing the Local Plan, we are considering which locations could provide for sustainable development, which are supported by infrastructure and do not have unacceptable impacts on the local environment. Decisions on potential site allocations are informed by a wide evidence base, including impacts on transport, landscape, wider environment and infrastructure.</p> <p>In determining planning applications for development in locations such as Rainham, the Council gives full consideration to the potential impacts of</p>

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		proposed development, including traffic and landscape features”.
	Members’ questions not answered at the meeting	
10O	<p>Councillor Bowler submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:</p> <p>“The streets of Rochester East ward are looking increasingly untidy with weeds growing out of gutters, pavements and public alleyways. My complaints have resulted in assurances that weed killer has been sprayed but then the dead vegetation is not cleared away.</p> <p>Can the Portfolio Holder tell me why the contractor is allowed to give such a poor service to council tax payers and what he is prepared to do to improve the service?”</p>	<p>“Thank you for your question Councillor Bowler. Under the Street Cleansing contract, one weed spray is carried out per year by an external contractor. The contractor commenced spraying at the start of April 2019. During the spraying programme the contractor liaises with and updates both Medway Council and Veolia on the work that is completed and outstanding.</p> <p>Rochester East was sprayed on 11 June and the treatment’s effectiveness is reliant on weather conditions and takes approximately 3 weeks to take effect. Any dead vegetation is then removed by Veolia’s street cleansing operatives at the time of cleanse.</p> <p>There are 90 recorded streets within the Rochester East Ward which are cleaned on different frequencies ranging from weekly to fortnightly. Waste Services have monitored the streets after weed spraying and Veolia have provided updates, along with photographic evidence to show that the dead vegetation has been removed after cleaning. However, if you do continue to have problems, do please let me know”.</p>
10P	<p>Councillor Murray submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:</p> <p>“Why is Medway Council discriminating against residents, especially some older people and those on low incomes, who do not have mobile phones by failing to provide alternative arrangements for paying parking fees when machines which accept cash are broken?”</p>	<p>“Thank you for your question Councillor Murray. Ensuring our car parks are accessible for everyone is a priority. Unfortunately, a number of our current pay and display (P&D) machines are reaching the end of their serviceable life and are prone to breaking down.</p> <p>We have also seen a spate of vandalism. We are currently looking at options to replace the current P&D machines with modern versions that take cash or cards as well as continuing to offer the RINGO pay by phone service.”</p>
10Q	Councillor Pendergast submitted the following question to the	“Thank you for your question. As the Deangate Community Partnership does

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	<p>Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett:</p> <p>“With Deangate Ridge back on the agenda, when it comes to considering any right to bid, what view does the Leader of the Council take of the failure of those running Deangate Community Partnership (DCP), which includes those holding or having held public office, to provide full disclosure of committee minutes, bank statements, financial records and other documents so the members of DCP can see exactly what happened to the money they donated?”</p>	<p>not fall within the Council’s remit I do not take an opinion on their organisational structure. I suggest Councillor Pendergast contact the DCP with his enquiry directly.”</p>
10R	<p>Councillor Sands submitted the following question to the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe:</p> <p>“After the decision to close Deangate Ridge Golf Club because of its apparent loss making, one year on and we find the security cost for this closed leisure facility is £2,730 per week (£142,000pa) with the still undocumented business rates and ground maintenance costs to be included. These costs were not considered thoroughly in the business case study in conjunction with the loss of the community amenity that Deangate so obviously provided.</p> <p>Was the decision to close Deangate preconceived by Members in an attempt to provide residential development land to meet the allocation of new homes and officers asked to build a business case to support this decision?”</p>	<p>“Thank you for your question Councillor Sands.</p> <p>Cabinet took the decision to close Deangate Ridge golf course, reluctantly, last year, because of documented loss making over the previous seven financial years.</p> <p>The reports presented to Cabinet and subsequently to Scrutiny committee did include reference to on-going security, maintenance and other costs, if the facility closed. These were therefore appropriately considered by the Cabinet in coming to this difficult decision.</p> <p>The Council has a responsibility to protect all of its assets and in this case that has meant enhanced security given the size, 180 acres, of this particular asset.</p> <p>I am pleased to confirm (and I think you are aware of this Councillor Sands) that, as at 1 July 2019 the security costs to the Council for Deangate Ridge and the empty Business Rates for the Club House and associated facilities is in fact now, zero. This is because we have come to a mutually beneficial temporary arrangement with our partners at Medway Norse.</p>

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		I will not respond to the view you express in the form of a question, about preconception, as the decision making process the Council has followed for Deangate Ridge golf course is all in the public domain, and simply does not accord with your baseless assertion”.

Democratic Services

31 July 2019