

# **Council – 21 April 2022**

## **Schedule of written responses to public and Members' questions not answered at the meeting**

### **Item**

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**Full Council 21 April 2022 – Schedule of written responses to public questions not answered at the meeting**

Agenda Reference	Question	Response
7K	<p><b>Phil Taylor of Gillingham submitted the following to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett:</b></p> <p>Following Councillor Chitty's offer made at the Council meeting on the 7th October 2021 to use Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers at Chatham Docks, what steps have been undertaken by Medway Council to respond to the letter from Dentons, dated 25th November 2021 and the follow-up from Dentons on the 14th January 2022, both addressed to Councillor Jarrett and Chief Executive, Neil Davies, to investigate this opportunity?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Mr Taylor.</p> <p>We only ever use our CPO powers as a last resort and have always maintained that Chatham Docks is a matter for the operator, and the companies on the site.</p>

**Full Council 21 April 2022 – Schedule of written responses to  
Members' questions not answered at the meeting**

Agenda Reference	Question	Response
11H	<p><b>Councillor Curry submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships, Councillor Chambers OBE:</b></p> <p>The Council Plan Performance Report makes it very clear that we have problems achieving key targets such as the delivery of the HIF, our regeneration programme and our climate change action plan. The consequences of this will have major impacts on our community, our economy and our environment.</p> <p>Can the Portfolio Holder explain what action is being taken to address these issues?</p>	<p>As you know, our HIF programme is one of the largest in the country, our Regeneration programme has been described as ‘monumental’ and we have recently been ranked 31st out of all local authorities in the country for our work on Climate Change.</p> <p>Of course, there are challenges dealing with all of these strategic and large-scale endeavours, but our track record shows that we deal with problems as they emerge, learn from them and successfully deliver for the people of Medway. And that work continues.</p>
11I	<p><b>Councillor Hubbard submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships, Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE:</b></p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships attended the 22 March 2022 Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In his report, Councillor Chambers in Section 5.2 said, “The Rochester Bridge Trust (RBT) has</p>	<p>The river wall at the former Strood Civic site has been constructed on Medway Council’s land. Rochester Bridge Trust had agreed in principle for the flood gate to be located on the boundary of Medway’s land, which would have resulted in the footings of the wall being within Rochester Bridge Trust’s land ownership. However, the Trust later confirmed that they would prefer the footings of the wall to be entirely on Medway’s land. Medway were notified of this prior to construction on site of this section of the flood defences, therefore there is no need to rebuild any part of the flood wall. The location of the</p>

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	<p>confirmed that the flood defence wall should be moved back, so that the footings sit entirely on Medway Council land. A formal agreement with RBT has been requested.”</p> <p>This is in relation to the River Wall that has been constructed, at great expense, around Strood Waterfront’s former Civic Centre site. Rochester Bridge Trust own the Rochester road bridges and the Rochester and Strood Esplanades. It seems that the new river wall has been built on part of the Strood Esplanade. I understand that the footings of the former Civic Centre building mark the land ownership boundary.</p> <p>What is the expected cost to the Council to settle the requested formal agreement, which may include the rebuilding and relocation of the river wall?</p>	<p>flood gate is being amended, the agreement required from the Rochester Bridge Trust would be an access licence to undertake the works, costs are to be agreed and are expected to be minimal.</p>
11J	<p><b>Councillor Sands submitted the following to the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe:</b></p> <p>Whilst many people I’m sure welcome the new look gym, with over 40 new pieces of top of the range fitness equipment and happy to have a spring cleaned Athletics track at Medway Park, this coupled</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Sands.</p> <p>The work on the Local Plan over many years of course encompasses all these issues, and we have recently commissioned a further piece of work to look at the longer-term needs of the community on the Hoo Peninsula, with a focus on community infrastructure, including new culture and leisure facilities. This piece of work will be taking place over the summer, and we will be</p>

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	<p>with the multimillion pound new leisure centre at Rainham described by yourself as “having a focus on fun”. However, at the same time Deangate Sports Centre has been and continues to be systematically run down, Weeds growing within the athletics track, neglected pavilion with leaking roof, no public conveniences, fallen trees on the borders of the football pitches, football teams have to use sticky tape to hold football nets up. Fences around the tennis courts with large holes in and again these courts with weeds growing within.</p> <p>Can the people of the Hoo Peninsula, who are rate payers of Medway Council, ever expect to be treated in the same way as the rest of Medway when it comes to leisure and health facilities or does this Cabinet just see the unique Hoo Peninsula, which is of national and international importance, an area with rich heritage and historical significance, as a place to be destroyed by unsustainable development?</p>	<p>reaching out to residents and young people to engage with us positively on this. In terms of “unsustainable development” as you call it, the work financed through the successful HIF bid is to ensure that the right infrastructure is provided so that development is sustainable.</p> <p>In terms of the grounds and pavilions at Deangate, any repairs are normally actioned within a week and the pavilions are visually inspected regularly, with a recent incident being identified and logged for repair within 3 days.</p> <p>We cleared the recent storm damage and the fences around the tennis courts have been logged for repairs. Weeding of the tennis courts and tracks is imminent.</p> <p>The toilets are available for events, but it was never the intention for them to be public conveniences, and to change the usage would need to be agreed, given the budget required for daily cleansing.</p>
11K	<p><b>Councillor Paterson submitted the following to the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe:</b></p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Paterson. We will be commemorating the anniversary of the Falklands War in conjunction with Armed Forces Day by hosting a variety of events in Medway in 2022, and in doing so, we will be</p>



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	<p>Forty years ago, many families in Medway – including the families of some serving councillors – were awaiting the safe return of loved ones serving more than 8,000 miles away in the Falklands.</p> <p>The war to liberate the islands was won and the Argentine fascist junta led by General Galtieri was defeated. But 255 servicemen did not return. Hundreds more came home wounded physically and scarred mentally.</p> <p>Will the Deputy Leader join me and my Labour and Co-operative Group colleagues in paying tribute to those who worked in Chatham Dockyard at the time and whose war efforts were rewarded with the yard's closure by Margaret Thatcher less than two years later, to the bravery of our armed forces who served four decades ago, to those who never returned, to those who did return but whose physical or mental burden proved too great to bear and to those veterans who to this day will never forget what they saw?</p>	<p>honouring those who fought in this battle and those who lost their lives.</p>

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11L	<p><b>Councillor Adeoye submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:</b></p> <p>In the latest example of levelling-up, how much will Medway receive from the new £1.2 billion national fund for improving bus services?”</p> <p>We submitted a very comprehensive funding bid for improvements to bus services as part of our Bus Service Improvement Plan. Unfortunately, in keeping with many other authorities up and down the country, on this occasion, the Department for Transport did not award us any funding. Whilst this is very disappointing, we have demonstrated our commitment to improving bus services in Medway. Through our Enhanced Partnership with local bus operators, we will look to implement the parts of our plan that do not require new funding. We will also seek opportunities to bid for further Government funding, should it become available in the future.</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Adeoye.</p> <p>We submitted a very comprehensive funding bid for improvements to bus services as part of our Bus Service Improvement Plan. Unfortunately, in keeping with many other authorities up and down the country, on this occasion, the Department for Transport did not award us any funding. Whilst this is very disappointing, we have demonstrated our commitment to improving bus services in Medway. Through our Enhanced Partnership with local bus operators, we will look to implement the parts of our plan that do not require new funding. We will also seek opportunities to bid for further Government funding, should it become available in the future.</p>
11M	<p><b>Councillor Cooper submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services – Lead Member, Councillor Mrs Josie Iles:</b></p> <p>Given the disastrous record of this Government in planning the country’s</p>	<p>Thank you for your question. This matter has been discussed in the generality of a national shortage of Children’s Social Workers.</p> <p>In addition, as part of the ongoing interventions in Children’s Services we have regular interface with our DfE</p>

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	<p>workforce over the past decade, what action has the Portfolio Holder taken to ensure that our three Medway MPs put pressure on the Government to ensure a rapid improvement in this area to ensure a future supply of children’s social workers for the country as a whole and for Medway in particular?</p>	<p>appointed SE Regional Support Lead (Liam Ennis) and our DfE Improvement Adviser (Gladys Rhodes-White), both of whom we have ongoing regular interaction. This includes raising concerns in respect of challenging market conditions.</p> <p>In recognition of both local and national challenges, Medway has applied to the DfE for additional funding to strengthen our workforce through a ‘Grown our Own’ scheme.</p> <p>We have also engaged in extensive work with the SESLIP to better manage the locum market through an agreed SE Regional Memorandum of Cooperation/Understanding, which sets maximum thresholds for locum pay and limits social workers moving to other authorities for increased pay.</p> <p>The ADCS network is also urging government to launch a national social work campaign to address the shortfall in children’s social workers.</p>
11N	<p><b>Councillor Price submitted the following to the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe:</b></p> <p>Around 80 councils have banned the release of balloons and sky lanterns due to the danger they represent to wildlife as well as fire and other environmental hazards. These bans have been</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Price.</p> <p>We do not permit the use of such products at our events. Similarly, their use is discouraged in any of our parks and play areas.</p>

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	<p>supported by the Marine Conservation Council. What action has the Portfolio Holder taken to consider a ban in Medway?</p>	
11O	<p><b>Councillor McDonald submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin:</b></p> <p>The derelict building at the bottom of Marlborough Road at the junction of Marlborough Road and Brompton Road has been an eyesore for a number of years and creates a poor impression. What action has the Portfolio Holder taken to ensure that this site is swiftly improved?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor McDonald.</p> <p>I totally agree that the condition of the building and site are unacceptable. The Council's planning team has been in discussion with the landowner about both the condition of the site and the future use and development on the site that would be acceptable in planning terms. These discussions are not resolving the matter as quickly as we would like and accordingly, the planning team will be serving notices to either require the building to be improved or demolished, with the resultant material removed from the site. I will ensure the Councillor is updated on the timeframe for this work.</p>
11P	<p><b>Councillor Browne submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Hackwell:</b></p> <p>Given the number of premises that have closed down in Gillingham, the market is an asset to the High Street. Not only does it provide variety for shoppers and increases footfall in the town centre but brings social benefits too.</p>	<p>Thank you for the question, Councillor Browne.</p> <p>From 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, Gillingham Market generated £42,874 of income to the Council.</p> <p>I agree that the market is an asset to Gillingham High Street, however as in the majority of enterprises one particular income generation stream is not ringfenced to be reinvested back in that income stream, therefore this income is received into corporate Council funds and is not specifically</p>

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	<p>How much income does Medway Council derive directly from the market and what percentage of this is being reverted in Gillingham Market and the High Street for the coming year?</p>	<p>directed into the High Street or Gillingham Market.</p>
<p>11Q</p>	<p><b>Councillor Prenter submitted the following to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett:</b></p> <p>After the shocking and illegal behaviour of P&amp;O against the seafarers' work force who operate their ferries in UK, can the Portfolio Holder assure me that the Council will make it clear that Medway will not contract with any organisations who use the discredited Fire and Rehire tactics against their work force?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Prenter. When any tender process is carried out, an analysis should be conducted on a company's reputation, sustainability and reliability as this will help inform the success of the tender, therefore it would be logical that instances of bad treatment would be widely reported and so brought to our attention during analysis. As a Council spending taxpayers money, we are duty bound to ensure we are selecting the deal that will benefit the residents of Medway the most, while fulfilling social objectives.</p>
<p>11R</p>	<p><b>Councillor Edwards submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships, Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE:</b></p> <p>What is the cost of providing free business litter kits to Medway businesses using Welcome Back Funding?</p>	<p>The Welcome Back Fund provided a grant of £21,990 for 1000 business litter kits to be provided free of charge to businesses with a shop front presence across Medway. The Kit includes a litter picker, a pair of gloves and a broom. This was a joint initiative between the Environmental Engagement Team and Town Centre Team.</p> <p>We would like to thank those local businesses who help keep the areas outside of their premises litter-free between visits from our own cleansing crews. By providing these free tools, we hope that removing small pieces of windblown litter between scheduled cleaning</p>

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		<p>rounds will further enhance the appearance of our high streets and commercial outlets.</p>
11S	<p><b>Councillor Osborne submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Hackwell:</b></p> <p>In 2013, the administration previously rejected the introduction of equal marriage in a Council motion. Can the administration confirm the number of civil ceremonies conducted between same-sex couples in Medway; and whether this should now be celebrated as a sign of social progress?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Osborne.</p> <p>The opening up of Marriage regulations to include all couples has indeed been well utilised in Medway, however statistical information is not available as all marriages are recorded equally and Registrars make no distinction between the sex of the parties, which in itself is definitely a sign of progress. The world has come a long way, but we are very proud of the level of acceptance Medway has demonstrated and the fact all marriages are now perceived equally both in theory and in practice.</p>
11T	<p><b>Councillor Andy Stamp submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:</b></p> <p>At the Full Council meeting on 20th January 2022, Councillor Filmer revealed that Medway Council has collected more than £244,000 in parking income since parking charges were introduced at the Strand on 9th July 2018. This represents at least £70,000 per year on average, yet the annual budget provided to the Sport, Leisure and Tourism team for improvements at the Strand is just £5,000 per year.</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Stamp.</p> <p>The income we receive from parking fees is part of our overall budget for managing car parks across Medway. This budget allows for the maintenance and cleaning of the car parks themselves and the infrastructure within them. The income is not ringfenced to specific locations and facilities.</p> <p>The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services oversees separate budgets for the Strand leisure park. This includes budgets for maintaining and improving the outdoor swimming pool and park areas, and for improvements to equipment and other facilities. Since 2015, over £375,000 has</p>

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	<p>Will the Portfolio Holder agree to 'ringfence' the parking income from the Strand to fund much-needed improvements at the Strand?</p>	<p>been spent on capital improvements and the annual revenue budget is over £85,000.</p>
<p>11U</p>	<p><b>Councillor Chrissy Stamp submitted the following to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett:</b></p> <p>Numerous councils across the country have raised the Ukrainian flag outside their building in a visual demonstration of solidarity with the people of Ukraine. How many days has the Ukrainian flag been on display outside Gun Wharf?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Stamp. The flag was raised for 3 days at Gun Wharf, but what I think matters most is the action we have taken to support Ukrainian refugees and their sponsors to make it a more smooth and comfortable process. As outlined in my report, I have met with the Medway Help for Ukrainians Group myself and offered to help wherever I can- these are the actions that are making the difference.</p>
<p>11V</p>	<p><b>Councillor Lloyd submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships, Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE:</b></p> <p>The Council is working on a River Strategy, supported by all Members. Within that strategy there will be policies to promote leisure river traffic, linking up existing piers, some of which will need investment to be brought back into use. Strood Pier, ideally located next to the railway station, is one of those piers that needs to be recommissioned. The Council, when it recently constructed the Canal</p>	<p>It is planned that the works to re-instate will be completed this summer, which will enable access to be gained at the eastern end of the park from Canal Road.</p> <p>Pedestrian access to Strood Pier has been retained, it is only vehicular access which is no longer possible due to the raising of Canal Road, which was necessary to enable the housing to be delivered. Peel Ports is of course responsible for Strood Pier and agreed to the flood defence works. They did not see vehicular access onto the Pier as necessary. It is important to remember that the Pier is not owned by us, and any works require collaboration with the landowners, along with the Environment Agency.</p>

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	<p>Road river wall, blocked access to Strood Pier.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships attended the 22 March 2022 Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In his report, Councillor Chambers in Section 5.3 said, "Discussions are underway to re-instate the Strood Community Trail, along with the installation of recovered historical Dragon's teeth and an interpretive panel to detail their historical purpose."</p> <p>Reinstating the trail is accurately in the main the re-instatement of the lost pathway that links Canal Road to Strood Pier.</p> <p>I understand that there are resource issues within the Council's Regeneration Team and Greenspaces Team that may result in the proposed re-instatement works not being delivered in this financial year. Can assurance be given that works will be carried out in 2022/3 financial year?</p>	