

Council – 19 January 2023

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

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**Full Council 19 January 2023 – Schedule of written responses to
Public questions not answered at the meeting**

| Agenda Reference | Question | Response |
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| 7B | <p>Simon Buckingham, of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:</p> <p>I am aware of the actions of a specific private company going around with a council logo on their uniform using, what some may consider to be "bully boy tactics". I have been assisting an elderly resident who has been unfairly fined by this organisation.</p> <p>Does the Portfolio Holder accept that the tactics of District Enforcement, when they are not hanging out at the private Medway Motorway Services fining individuals, are likely to reduce people wanting to go to town centres?</p> | <p>Thank you for your question, Mr Buckingham.</p> <p>Between 1 January and 31 December 2022, District Enforcement issued 3,860 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) across Medway. Officers carry out patrols across the whole of Medway, including high streets and car parks.</p> <p>We routinely monitor the complaints relating to this contract and we have not detected an issue that they employ unfair enforcement techniques. If a resident believes that a FPN has been issued inappropriately, I would urge them to make representations to District Enforcement.</p> <p>Littering is a blight on our community, and it is well known that dropping rubbish is an offence. Litter makes our town centres unwelcoming places and discourages visitors. The work of District Enforcement is an important tool in keeping our streets litter free and mitigating the costs we incur in street cleaning in Medway.</p> |
| 7C | <p>Damola Animashaun of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, the following:</p> <p>I want Chatham Town Centre to succeed. I'm very concerned to hear service charges for those businesses in the Pentagon are increasing by more than double inflation. This follows</p> | <p>Thank you for your question, Miss Animashaun.</p> <p>The soaring costs of building repair and utilities is a national issue largely out of our control, and we are constantly reviewing the service charge cost to keep it as low as possible.</p> <p>The service charge for the Pentagon Centre covers the cost for the maintenance, repair and</p> |

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| | <p>the previous year's increase also being well above inflation.</p> <p>What does the Portfolio Holder say to a business considering moving out of the Pentagon due to this increase?</p> | <p>management of the Centre on behalf of the tenants. These costs are apportioned across the whole scheme and each unit contributes a fair share of them.</p> <p>The service charge set for this year is the absolute minimum that we can charge to ensure the Pentagon is serviced and maintained appropriately.</p> |
| 7D | <p>Caroline McGrath, of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:</p> <p>Every other road in Medway has potholes. I drive down these roads trying to avoid the big potholes and to try and avoid damage to my vehicle.</p> <p>When is Medway Council going to address all these potholes?</p> | <p>Thank you for your question, Ms McGrath.</p> <p>We have over 831km of road and around 1400km of footway, which is currently inspected by 7 Highway Inspectors who carry out a rolling programme of highway inspections of the road network, in every Ward, to identify and arrange for repairs as quickly as possible. In addition, we proactively deal with reports from members of the public, and if a repair is required, it will be arranged.</p> <p>In this financial year we have invested £1,427,968, resulting in the resurfacing of 15 roads (33,600m²), to ensure our network remains in good condition.</p> <p>We have also committed £500k to additional Highways works, which includes 19 larger patching sites that are all due for completion before the end of the financial year.</p> <p>Cold weather often results in significantly more potholes on roads and pavements due to water freezing in the cracks, which then expands as it turns to ice causing the cracks to widen. These</p> |

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| | | <p>inevitably then get progressively worse as vehicles drive over them. I accept we need to do more, but it must be borne in mind that this is not just a Medway issue, it is a national problem.</p> <p>Our response time to deal with reports of potholes from members of the public to it physically being repaired by our contractor Volker Highways is on average 17 days.</p> <p>Since the very cold spell in December, we have received 649 enquiries which resulted in action being taken and work is in progress to repair 838 potholes. We have also carried out more than 638 emergency callouts this year to repair potholes within 2 hours of identification where they pose a risk.</p> <p>Since April the Council continues to deliver repairs and 5,366 potholes have been repaired as at 31 December 2022.</p> <p>We continue to encourage residents and stakeholders to report potholes to us via our website (medway.gov.uk/highways) so that they can be investigated and repairs arranged as quickly as possible. By doing this, we are then able to keep them informed of the progress of their report.</p> |

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| 7E | <p>Paul Everitt of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services, Councillor Brake, the following:</p> <p>Why isn't more being done with Medway Maritime Hospital?</p> <p>Building more apartments more flats and houses, population growth getting bigger, but the hospital hasn't changed that much. Most of the hospital was built in the 1900s.</p> <p>The people of Medway deserve an up to date hospital.</p> | <p>Thank you for your question</p> <p>Medway Maritime Hospital is a highly valued key strategic provider of acute services for patients in Medway, Swale and across Kent. The Hospital provides a wide range of medical and surgical services to almost half a million patients a year, including more than 125,000 Emergency Department attendances, more than 88,000 admissions, over 278,000 outpatient appointments and more than 5,000 babies delivered by our maternity services. Medway NHS Foundation Trust works closely with other health care providers across Kent and Medway and has an extremely close and unique working and partnership relationship with Medway Council.</p> <p>Over the last three years to 31 March 2022, Medway NHS Foundation Trust spent £79m on capital items, with over £20m planned for this financial year. This includes equipment, medical devices and IT, as well as investment in the building and estate. Some of the larger schemes recently have included the redevelopment and expansion of the Accident and Emergency department, the creation of a same day emergency care unit. The refurbishment of a number of wards, estates improvements to ensure fire safety compliance and an electronic patient records system. These are all designed to provide safe and suitable facilities for patients, visitors and staff.</p> <p>The Trust is in the process of reviewing the future demand for its</p> |

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| | | <p>services and is conducting early talks around the expansion of facilities. It should be noted the NHS has designated but limited, capital investment funds. These funds are channelled to local NHS organisations via the newly established Integrated Care Boards.</p> <p>The NHS Kent & Medway ICB (ICB) considers the capital investment proposals submitted to it by all local NHS organisations, including Medway NHS Foundation for the next 3-5 year period. The ICB allocates resources on a fair share basis to NHS organisations. It will make some adjustments for those with the most pressing needs.</p> <p>Medway Council will continue to work with all our local NHS providers and specifically Medway NHS Foundation Trust. Our aim is to facilitate any action that will enhance and improve their ability to provide care and support for local residents, visitors and all hard working NHS professionals and support staff at Medway Maritime Hospital.</p> |
| 7F | <p>Julian Sutton, on behalf of the Medway Green Party, asked the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mrs Josie Iles, the following:</p> <p>Hoo Village, and indeed much of the rest of the peninsula, has suffered from the distressing effects of noisy and speeding motorbikes, quad bikes and</p> | <p>Thank you for your question, the Council remains committed to ensuring children and young people are safe and grow up in the best possible environment. We continue to work with our partners in community safety to protect communities of Medway such as the Peninsula from anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Regarding engaging with young people on the Peninsula, our Youth Services teams deliver</p> |

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| | <p>cars or some years. It is easy to blame the youngsters for these problems, but what else is being offered for their recreational activities!</p> <p>It is obvious that the quality of life for many peninsula residents is seriously affected by this anti-social behaviour. The noise of the motorbikes (some without licence plates or the rider not wearing a helmet) is deafening. This behaviour also makes the peninsula less safe and reduces the quality of peninsula resident's lives.</p> <p>It is a bigger problem than the Police can or wishes to deal with on its own. It will take a multi-faceted approach and, whilst we may wish for it to be, it is unlikely to be solved overnight. It will take investing in a long term coordinated plan to engage with the young population of the peninsula.</p> <p>It is hoped that the Council has directed increased funding to Youth Workers and clubs to engage with the youngsters over recent years and that facilities are being planned to be constructed, ahead of further house building.</p> <p>Therefore, what measures are the Council employing to engage with the young peninsula population, such as clubs and recreational activities?</p> | <p>weekly sessions in Hoo, High Halstow and Grain Villages. In addition, sessions are run for young people on the Peninsula as part of our Holiday Activity Programme. The service works closely with parish councils to support and develop work to address needs. When needed, additional resources to deliver detached youth workers are made available. A specific schedule of the activities is available on the Medway Youth Service website.</p> <p>However, funding for staffing teams in Youth Services is not linked to further house building. We are currently assessing demand in the area dependent on the uptake of new developments and will use resources appropriately to ensure the best possible outcomes. We continue to look for innovative ways of expanding our provision through grants and other sources.</p> |

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| | If we do not change what we are doing, the problem will not go away. | |
| 7G | <p>Kevin Fowle of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Hackwell, the following:</p> <p>Can the Weedswood part of the King George Rd address be removed and the original Walderslade historical designation and the title deeds be reinstated. My property and those of a lot of King George Rd from Walderslade Rd to Brake Ave existed long before the construction in the 1950's of the Weedswood council estate. It and Wayfield are distinct areas. Built as social housing.</p> | <p>Thank you for your question Mr Fowle. The naming and numbering of the streets and buildings within Medway is a statutory function of the council.</p> <p>Both Weeds Wood and Walderslade are examples of localities. A locality is a smaller area within a town, or is a village, or hamlet, and uses a recognised geographical name associated with that area to describe it. Not every part of Medway has a locality, and for residents who live in an area with a locality name they can be used optionally as part of their address. So, when using your address, you do not have to include Weeds Wood in it.</p> <p>Many of the localities in use now were created historically, reflecting the different stages of development in Medway. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walderslade refers to the former farm of the same name, on what now is Princes Avenue. • Weeds Wood reflects the large, wooded area that was on the site of King George Road and the Weeds Wood Estate, prior to its development. <p>The inclusion of these locality names would have helped identify these locations within the larger area of Chatham. They would have been particularly useful at a time before postcodes. Once the Weeds Wood area was developed</p> |

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| | | <p>its locality name would have been used to differentiate it from other local areas.</p> <p>Given the length of King George Road and the common use of the name Weeds Wood to describe the area, it would be confusing and excessive to split the road into different localities. ie King George Road, Weeds Wood and King George Road, Walderslade. The use of the Weeds Wood locality as an informal part of your address now, will not have changed your title deeds.</p> |
| 7H | <p>Peter Bonney of Strood asked the Portfolio Holder for Frontline Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:</p> <p>According to a recent report by the World Health Organisation the area of Central Strood bounded by the A2, Gordon Road and B2002, has at least twice the acceptable levels of pollution by Nitrogen Oxide (NO2) and Particulate Matter (PM2). This is caused by excessive traffic, especially when it is standing still or very slow moving.</p> <p>The A2 is not coping with the heavy weight of traffic heading towards the Bridge and so it constantly comes to a standstill. This is mostly caused by the totally inadequate crossroads at Gun lane which needs a complete redesign.</p> | <p>Thank you for your question, Mr Bonney.</p> <p>We tackle poor air quality in the Medway Air Quality Management Areas, and more widely across Medway, through our adopted air quality action plans.</p> <p>Parts of Strood are located within the Central Medway Air Quality Management Area. The 2015 Air Quality Action Plan covering this Air Quality Management Area contains a range of measures aimed at tackling road transport emissions, which include improving freight movement, the encouragement of public transport use, improvements in taxi emissions, traffic management, promotion of cycling and walking, car sharing and promotion of health awareness and air quality issues. We have improved traffic flow in the town centre by removing traffic signals on Commercial Road and Knight Road, and enhanced pedestrian facilities to promote active travel.</p> |

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| | <p data-bbox="379 271 815 562">Building huge numbers of flats and houses in Rochester along Corporation Street, Rochester Riverside and recently announced plans for more at Bardell Wharf can only be exacerbating the problem.</p> <p data-bbox="379 600 815 1144">The heavily polluted area in Strood concerned three junior schools, four infant schools, three nurseries and two large old people's homes all of whom are particularly susceptible to these pollutants and, incidentally, the schools are partly responsible for the high traffic levels in the area with the twice daily school run causing traffic jams and appalling driving behaviour within the residential area.</p> <p data-bbox="379 1182 815 1518">A resident's traffic survey carried out in 2019 highlighted the rat running problem and a petition was handed in to solve the problem but despite this nothing has happened. A 20mph speed limit was deemed unnecessary.</p> <p data-bbox="379 1556 815 2022">Let me restate the fact that, according to the World Health Organisation, the area has pollution which is at least twice as high as the acceptable level of traffic-based pollution. The area is overwhelmed by rat running through a street network, which is totally inadequate for that sort of traffic level. The traffic is the source of the pollution.</p> | <p data-bbox="837 271 1339 450">Progress against the action plan measures is reported annually through the Annual Status Report to DEFRA, the latest of which can be found on our website.</p> |

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| | What does the Council intend to do to correct the problem? | |
| 7N | <p>Nina Gurung, of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, the following:</p> <p>I know from speaking to local residents they are concerned about community safety. There is reported consultation to reduce overall numbers of uniformed personnel on the streets of Medway.</p> <p>Does the Portfolio Holder believe that consulting on having less uniformed personnel on the streets will make local people feel more safe?</p> | <p>Thank you for your question, Ms Gurung.</p> <p>I fully support Kent Police’s commitment to Medway and the excellent work they consistently undertake to protect our local communities and keep Medway safe.</p> <p>Kent Police is undertaking a County-wide review of Neighbourhood Policing and have given a commitment that every Ward will have a nominated and dedicated Police Officer.</p> <p>The consultation process will be used to inform the future direction of Neighbourhood Policing and I would urge as many people as possible to engage in that consultation. The closing date for responses is 22 January 2023.</p> |

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**Full Council 19 January 2023 – Schedule of written responses to
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| 10J | <p>Councillor Khan asked the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Hackwell, the following:</p> <p>Can the Portfolio Holder confirm that every polling station will have at least one female member of staff available from 7am to 10pm on May 4th for checking voter identification recognising sensitivities that may require a female member of staff to carry out the check?</p> | <p>Thank you for your question Councillor Khan.</p> <p>The Electoral Services team are contacting existing election staff about their availability for the Local and Parish elections on 4 May at the moment and calculating the number of staff required at each polling station taking into account the new voter ID requirements, historic and expected turnout amongst other factors. As far as possible, a female member of staff will be available at each polling station to assist voters who request to have their voter ID checked by a female member of staff if they have to remove head coverings, for example. If it is not possible to put this into place, it is intended that female polling station inspectors will be given delegated authority by the Returning Officer to carry out these checks. This is in line with Electoral Commission guidance which is not mandatory.</p> |
| 10K | <p>Councillor Mahil asked the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, the following:</p> <p>In the proposal for the redevelopment of the open space at The Paddock in Chatham, does the Portfolio Holder have any idea what the annual maintenance costs will be, especially for the proposed water feature?</p> | <p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Mahil.</p> <p>I can confirm that the estimated maintenance costs have been identified to cover: water, electricity, cleaning and maintenance for the Paddock, including the water feature. The maintenance contract is yet to be procured and awarded, and when it is, the actual costs will be finalised.</p> |

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| <p>10L</p> | <p>Councillor Cooper asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:</p> <p>When does the Council expect to have a fully operational, affordable ULE/electric bus service operating in Medway?</p> | <p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Cooper.</p> <p>At the moment, we do not have a clear indication from our bus operators as to when electric buses will be incorporated into the fleets they operate in Medway. We will continue to discuss this with them as they consider their business case for the transition to electric buses, and also seek out any opportunities for external funding to support this.</p> <p>Arriva is expecting to introduce six of the latest Ultra Low Emissions buses (Euro VI) on the 145 route in the next few weeks, and phase out some of the oldest Euro III buses. This will mean that most buses operating in Medway will be Euro V or Euro VI and, whilst there is scope to improve further, good progress is being made with lowering the overall age of the fleet.</p> |
| <p>10M</p> | <p>Councillor Van Dyke asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:</p> <p>In its response to the Hoo Development Framework consultation, the Medway Labour and Cooperative Group proposed that priority should be given to the establishment of an electric bus service from the new developments at Hoo into Strood Station.</p> <p>Does the Portfolio Holder agree with this new sustainable approach for the developments in Hoo, in the interests of Medway's businesses, community and environment?</p> | <p><i>Note: Due to question content, this response has been provided by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty.</i></p> <p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Van Dyke.</p> <p>I am indeed very supportive of sustainable development. That means many things, but includes consideration of the way we move about Medway. Any development anywhere in Medway, including out at Hoo or on the Peninsula must be considered in terms of its sustainability. As work proceeds on the Local Plan, we will be very carefully considering how we can deliver sustainable transport, linked to development allocations. The outcomes from the Hoo Development Framework consultation will be reported shortly.</p> |

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| 10N | <p>Councillor asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:</p> <p>It is important that properties on our High Street are kept in good condition in order not to damage the appearance of our shared town centre space.</p> <p>Could the Council please write to the owners of properties on Gillingham High Street who are failing to maintain their properties to a sufficient standard (such as 122-124 High Street, Gillingham) to remind them of the importance of a clean town centre?</p> | <p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Price.</p> <p>I will pass on your request to my team.</p> |
| 10O | <p>Councillor McDonald asked the Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services, Councillor Brake, the following:</p> <p>Will Chatham Town Centre ever get a healthy living centre?</p> | <p>Thank you for your question, Cllr McDonald.</p> <p>We are striving to deliver a Healthy Living Centre on the first floor of the Pentagon Centre, within our City Centre. The benefits of a Healthy Living Centre in this central and easily-accessible location are clear, not just from a health perspective but also from the increased footfall and positive impact for businesses and retailers.</p> <p>The delivery of the Healthy Living Centre is a partnership project with the NHS. As such, the Council has done and continues to do everything it can to support the delivery of the HLC in the Pentagon. That work continues, and the progress of the Healthy Living Centre into the construction phase is subject to the NHS's internal authorisation process and agreement of terms.</p> |