

# Council – Supplementary agenda No.3

**A meeting of the Council will be held on:**

**Date:** 25 July 2013

**Time:** 7.00pm

**Venue:** St George's Centre, Pembroke Road, Chatham Maritime, Chatham  
ME4 4UH

## Items

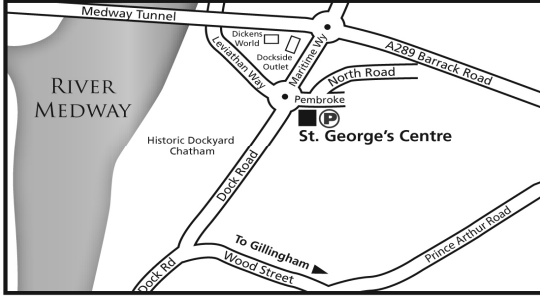
**7 Public questions**

**(Pages  
3 - 18)**

This report sets out the written responses to those public questions and Members' questions not considered at this meeting.

For further information please contact Julie Keith, Head of Democratic Services on Telephone: 01634 332760 or Email: [democratic.services@medway.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@medway.gov.uk)

**Date: 8 August 2013**



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A summary of this information can be made available in other formats from **01634 333333**

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If you have any questions about this meeting and you want to speak to someone in your own language please ring **01634 335577**

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**Council 25 July 2013 – Schedule of written responses to questions or supplementary questions not dealt with at the meeting.**

Question No.	Name	Question/Response
2.17	Jane Marsh	<p><b>Supplementary question to Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett:</b></p> <p>Ms Marsh asked what assurances could Councillor Jarrett give that the IT issues experienced by the Planning Department and the E-petition this week would not be repeated and that all of the details and representations were present, correct and up-to-date.</p> <p>Councillor Jarrett stated that this was an important point and there had been quite a number of emails on the subject. The matter had been raised with officers who have, he believed, corrected the problems. In terms of an assurance that it would not happen again, it would be a matter for the planners and the departments to ensure there was no repetition and he had raised this matter via an email to the Director, Mr Cooper, to ask him whether in his opinion the consultation process had been compromised because of these lapses and that he looked forward to Mr Cooper's reply in due course.</p> <p><b>Response from the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture:</b></p> <p>The Planning online service was down for a little over a day, week beginning 16 July 2013. The whole Council had problems with its internet connection and it was that which caused difficulties for people accessing the Planning site and indeed many other Council services.</p> <p>Residents are allowed 21 days to comment on the application (that is the statutory time limit). We wrote to affected applicants on 2 July and we know that the letters arrived because of numerous objection letters and phone calls.</p> <p>There was a request from a Ward Member for an extension to the time limit and we have agreed that so we are allowing not 21 days but 37 days expiring on 8 August 2013.</p> <p>Any objections received up until the date of determination will be considered although if the application goes to Committee we will only consider objections up until lunchtime the day before committee.</p>

Question No.	Name	Question/Response
2.20	Jonathan Primett	<p><b>Supplementary question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:</b></p> <p>Mr Primett asked what was the current recall rate as a percentage for contractors on work that had not satisfied the necessary requirements?</p> <p>Councillor Hicks informed Mr Primett that he would receive a written response.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>I have taken the time period to be 01/08/12 - 30/07/13, where we have issued 7,027 task orders to our Term Maintenance Contractor of which 30 task orders failed the "right first time" requirement of our monitoring and measurement Key Performance Indicators.</p> <p>Therefore the percentage recall rate which failed to meet the necessary requirements is 0.43% for this period.</p>

Question No.	Name	Question/Response
2.21	Derek Munton	<p><b>Supplementary question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:</b></p> <p>Mr Munton stated that he was sure that Councillor Hicks was familiar with the Medway Local Plan which was adopted by Medway Council in 2003, as Councillor Filmer was. The Local Plan referred to initiatives to facilitate the development of the Science and Technology Park at Rochester Airport and that Rochester Airport would continue to operate from a smaller site and would remain open and operational. The Local Plan stated that it was the intention of Medway to promote an innovative package of transport measures for the site, including dedicated bus, cycling, pedestrian facilities plus improvement to City Way gyratory. Would that commitment in the 2003 Local Plan be reconfirmed?</p> <p>Councillor Hicks informed Mr Munton that he would receive a written response.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>The references made to the Medway Local Plan 2003 are to Policy S.11 in that plan. This policy was not "saved" when the Secretary of State issued a Direction in September 2007 under the transitional arrangements that followed the enactment of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Consequently that policy has not been in force since 2007 and so it is not possible to reconfirm a commitment against it.</p> <p>Nevertheless it will be important to ensure that the transport implications of development proposed in the current Rochester Airport Masterplan are fully addressed and these are discussed within the document. It is also for this reason that potential improvements to the Horsted Gyrotory junction have been held back. The implications of the final masterplan can then be fully taken into account in any improvements to the junction.</p>

Question No.	Name	Question/Response
2.23	Tony Jeacock	<p data-bbox="193 1160 225 1563"><b>Supplementary question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:</b></p> <p data-bbox="264 1160 336 1563">Mr Jeacock asked what did the Portfolio Holder think £30,000 or part thereof would be best spent on and why:</p> <ul data-bbox="376 1160 520 1563" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="376 1160 416 1563">(a) the £30,000 budget for the questionable viability of the Explore Medway bus; or</li> <li data-bbox="448 1160 520 1563">(b) installing a prominently positioned electrically lit traffic information gantry to overcome driver confusion around the bus station;</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="560 1160 632 1563">and would he not agree with him that the latter would be more likely to encourage rather than discourage outsiders to come back to Medway shops?</p> <p data-bbox="671 1160 711 1563">Councillor Hicks informed Mr Jeacock that he would receive a written response.</p> <p data-bbox="751 1160 791 1563"><b>Response:</b></p> <p data-bbox="823 1160 967 1563">The tourism bus which you refer to is a new initiative being trialled by the Council. Tourism employs around 6,000 people in Medway and although you may not think it important to invest in tourism we do and we need to provide new innovations to continue to attract people who love Medway, want to visit and spend money here.</p> <p data-bbox="1007 1160 1078 1563">In terms of an electronic sign around the bus station I have asked officers to look at the feasibility and cost of installing this.</p>

Question No.	Name	Question/Response
2.26	William McLennan	<p><b>Question to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett:</b></p> <p>Councillor Jarrett and Chitty seem to think they will be absolved of responsibility for any deaths if the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) approve the site despite being party to agreeing the concentration of flights onto one runway pointing to homes, school and elderly nursing centres.</p> <p>Would Councillor Jarrett like to tell me what they would say to my children if a stricken aircraft hit my home and killed my wife and I?</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>It is important to refer to the airport's excellent safety record. There have been no instances of airport related loss of life for many years, and none directly attributable to Rochester Airport so Mr McLennan's emotive and objectionable language is not borne out with the facts. Safety will continue to be paramount considering future proposals.</p>

Question No.	Name	Question/Response
2.27	David Allen	<p><b>Question the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty:</b></p> <p>Cabinet Supplementary agenda No1. Appendix 1, agenda item 6, 9 July Cabinet meeting states that Rochester Airport Ltd has indicated that the airfield handles 35,000 air movements per year.</p> <p>Can Councillor Chitty tell us how Medway Council know the figure is accurate given the refusal of Rochester Airport Ltd to work with W S Atkins consultants in 2000 and the figure may therefore be unreliable and inflated?</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>The Council is satisfied that this Rochester Airport Ltd data is correct.</p>



Question No.	Name	Question/Response
2.28	Sid Witham	<p><b>Question to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett:</b></p> <p>At the 9 July Cabinet meeting Councillor Jarrett stated that a "Do nothing" with the airport was not an option. Given that everyone knows the airfield and flying club has not been financially viable for years yet tolerated by the public, why cannot the buildings be renovated for a small sum of ratepayers' money and the airfield left in its current configuration. If you want to create jobs and retain community green space then you should look at the entire land use?</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>The current airport is not sustainable and requires significant investment. Hence the 'do nothing' option not being considered appropriate.</p>

Question No.	Name	Question/Response
2.29	Patricia Lewis	<p data-bbox="196 264 260 1675"><b>Question to the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty:</b></p> <p data-bbox="304 264 411 1675">Given that the Conservative Councillors were in complete opposition to the expansion of Rochester Airport when put forward as a proposal by the then Labour led council, how can we trust them when they claim that the expansion will have minimal impact on the local residents quality of life?</p> <p data-bbox="456 264 488 1675"><b>Response:</b></p> <p data-bbox="528 264 560 1675">The current proposals are entirely different from those being proposed previously.</p>

Question No.	Name	Question/Response
2.30	Michael Mew	<p><b>Question to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett:</b></p> <p>With such a high level of investment in Rochester airfield of ratepayers' money and possibly low financial liability of the new operator, are Medway Council going to stipulate that a professional and qualified Medway officer be appointed to the Board of Directors to oversee financial controls and spend?</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>The level of investment is reasonable considering it is in infrastructure owned by the Council, planned over a 25 year period, and will secure a percentage of rental return against the airport operator's lease holdings. There is also the value of leverage in private sector investment and creating additional jobs value.</p>

Question No.	Name	Question/Response
2.31	Vivienne Parker	<p><b>Question to the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty:</b></p> <p>Given that the Local Plan has been rejected by the Planning Inspectorate, what is going to happen next?</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>The Council has written to the planning Inspector pointing out that the process of notifying land at Lodge Hill as a Site of Special Scientific Interest is not yet complete and is being vigorously contested on scientific grounds. We think she should keep the Examination open - or unfairness would result.</p> <p>We are now awaiting a response. The proposal for a Site of Special Scientific Interest was only made long after the Plan had been submitted for Examination and it is the only significant issue that is outstanding.</p> <p>Given this situation I am unable to say what will happen next as that depends on the Inspector.</p>

Question No.	Name	Question/Response
2.32	Jonathan Primett	<p><b>Question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:</b></p> <p>Inconsiderate and dangerous parking outside schools seems to be an ever increasing problem. Whilst the Council does deploy the CCTV car to these schools, it is having little or no effect as the car arrives early and is therefore spotted by those who park illegally on a daily basis and on that particular occasion, they park within the law.</p> <p>At my daughter's school, it is the same cars, day-in and day-out, and if they can park dangerously and avoid a 50-yard walk, they will do so.</p> <p>Will the Portfolio Holder consider more effective parking enforcement outside schools, such as foot-patrols from parking wardens or the deployment of the CCTV car later in the afternoon where it can actually catch those who have parked badly, as opposed to simply deterring them from doing so on just a sole occasion.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Unfortunately inconsiderate parking around schools is a well known problem throughout the country and is something that Medway Council are actively trying to prevent.</p> <p>The CCTV mobile units are just one cog in this machine as Parking Services work very closely with the school travel plan team on various schemes and initiatives such as, the coning off initiatives, walk to school, community safety days/school fetes, banner campaign and most recently a courtroom theatre production which was shown to children in various schools to try and educate the children in safe parking and the benefits of walking to school, this is in the hope that the message is then relayed back to the parents.</p> <p>Parking Services do also provide foot patrol officers at the schools as well as the CCTV mobile units, however, there are currently in excess of 115 schools within Medway Council that require a presence and therefore to ensure a fair service is provided to all schools, visits are worked out on a rotation basis.</p> <p>The reasoning for the CCTV mobile unit arriving at the schools early is to ensure that they can obtain parking that allows them to enforce the areas of concern – zig zag markings.</p>

Question No.	Name	Question/Response
2.33	Lauren Wright	<p><b>Question to the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services, Councillor O’Brien:</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. Upon being appointed to the Children’s Services Portfolio I pledged to visit all schools in Medway - infant, junior, primary, secondary, pupil referral unit be they academy or local authority maintained. So far I have visited 56 schools and each and everyone has been a delight to visit.</p> <p>All our schools have enthusiastic staff who show a real drive and determination to deliver a first rate education. As has been discussed by Members of this Council and widely publicised in local media education in Medway has not been as good as it should have been but with these staff, working in conjunction with myself, my colleague for Educational Improvements Councillor Tolhurst and Council officers I am confident that we can build on existing improvements to deliver the service we all want. Let’s not forget that behind every hard hitting headline there has generally been a glossing over of the fact that the vast majority of are schools have a positive direction of travel.</p> <p>Visiting the schools has not just been about fact finding, it has been about developing the Council’s relationships with the schools in our area. Everyone I have met has been keen to build on our existing relationships so that there can be a much more open, regular and better dialogue between us all.</p> <p>Lastly can I just say what a pleasure it has been to have received such warm welcomes from all I have met. From head teachers right down to the pupils in the classroom I have left every school feeling encouraged about the future.</p>

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10H	Councillor Shaw	<p><b>Supplementary question to Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:</b></p> <p>Councillor Shaw asked how many traffic surveys had taken place since the building of the somewhat less than dynamic bus station and the effect this had had on traffic flow?</p> <p>Councillor Hicks informed Councillor Shaw that she would receive a written response.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>There have been two traffic surveys undertaken since the opening of the new Chatham Waterfront Bus Station. The figures set out below do show an increase in usage of the Brook and Best Street, therefore, officers will continue to work to reduce congestion in the ways set out the main response to this question.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="678 1025 901 1675"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="2"><b>Best Street</b></td> <td>Eastbound</td> <td>5832</td> <td>6333</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Westbound</td> <td>4149</td> <td>4310</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2"><b>The Brook</b></td> <td>Eastbound</td> <td>9229</td> <td>9894</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Westbound</td> <td>8785</td> <td>8856</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2011	2012	<b>Best Street</b>	Eastbound	5832	6333	Westbound	4149	4310	<b>The Brook</b>	Eastbound	9229	9894	Westbound	8785	8856
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Question No.	Name	Question/Response
10K	Councillor Osborne	<p><b>Supplementary question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers:</b></p> <p>Councillor Osborne asked if the Leader could confirm and write to him concerning the planning application portal which had consistently over the last several years not reported accurately the number of negative or positive comments and the wider concern around planning around whether this could legally implicate all applications and the perception to the public on this system. He also asked if the Leader could categorically assure him that it would be looked at urgently to ensure that confidence remained in this administration and Council.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Councillor Chambers stated that he had been advised that a planning application had been received at the end of June for the change of use from a winter management depot to an asbestos waste transfer station.</p> <p>He started that he understood this was due to come to the Planning Committee for determination on either 21 August or 11 September.</p> <p>The Council was unable to use Medway Matters to promote this campaign as suggested as to do so risked pre-determination of the current planning application and that also applied to any comment that he could make as Leader of the Council.</p> <p>Councillor Osborne asked if the Leader could confirm and write to him concerning the planning application portal which had consistently over the last several years not reported accurately the number of negative or positive comments and the wider concern around planning around whether this could legally implicate all applications and the perception to the public on this system. He also asked if the Leader could categorically assure him that it would be looked at urgently to ensure that confidence remained in this administration and Council.</p> <p>Councillor Chambers stated that he could give an assurance that it would be looked at and as far as the other instances were concerned, the Director would write to Councillor Osborne.</p>



**Response from the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture:**

The Planning online service was down for a little over a day, week beginning 16 July 2013. The whole Council had problems with its internet connection and it was that which caused difficulties for people accessing the Planning site and indeed many other Council services.

Residents are allowed 21 days to comment on the application (that is the statutory time limit). We wrote to affected applicants on 2 July and we know that the letters arrived because of numerous objection letters and phone calls.

There was a request from a Ward Member for an extension to the time limit and we have agreed that so we are allowing not 21 days but 37 days expiring on 8 August 2013.

Any objections received up until the date of determination will be considered although if the application goes to Committee we will only consider objections up until lunchtime the day before committee.

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