

# Council – 24 April 2014

## Schedule of responses to questions O – U

### Items

**7 Public questions**

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Please find attached the schedule of responses to questions O – U.

For further information please contact Julie Keith, Head of Democratic Services  
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Date: 2 May 2014

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**Council 24 April 2014 – Schedule of written responses to public questions (O-U) not dealt with at the meeting**

Question No.	Name	Question/Response
O	Susan McLennan	<p><b>Question to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett:</b></p> <p>The District Auditor Mr R Grant has offered to undertake a financial review of the ratepayers £4M investment into the airport facility.</p> <p>Given that you appear to have no professional financial accounting accreditation, and seemingly tried to mislead the public on the airport investment return, will you please give your approval for the District Auditor to be invited to review the airport paved runway investment and RAL business model to demonstrate your honesty and transparency in this matter. Yes or No!</p> <p><b>Response from Councillor Jarrett:</b></p> <p>The District Auditor has freedom to explore any financial transaction entered into by the Council but he has no locus to examine the books of Rochester Airport Limited (RAL). I can confirm that he has also confirmed to the Finance Director that he has not offered to undertake any financial review and has no plans to do so. He is aware local people are taking the matter forward with the Council and will consider the outcome when that process is completed.</p> <p>Of course as I have said before this is not about the profitability or otherwise of RAL - although clearly the Council would wish that all Medway businesses thrived. The investment is as I stated in a previous question (at Council 24 April 2014), in an asset of the Council and will be funded by receipts from the redevelopment of land on the site of the redundant runway, The investment will also have the added benefits of generating additional income for the Council and economic activity as I said earlier (at Council 24 April 2014).</p>

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P	Gareth Batts	<p><b>Question to the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty:</b></p> <p>Councillor Chitty, you are quoted in the April Medway Matters magazine talking about how good the new “Community Hub” will be for Strood. This is the exact same quote as published in the October edition of Medway Matters. Haven’t you got anything new to say?</p> <p>Within the last 6 months of your first quote petitions have been handed in, there has been a march from Strood Library to Rochester Community Hub, public have asked a number of questions at the last Full Council as well as putting the case forward for the library not to be moved at Overview and Scrutiny. Members of the public have protested at a couple of council meetings.</p> <p>I therefore would like to ask the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Chitty, is your view still the same that the library will be a good idea being situated in the high street despite growing opposition from the voters of Strood North?</p> <p><b>Response from Councillor Chitty:</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question, Mr Batts and thank you for the opportunity to say more about Strood Community Hub.</p> <p>This is an excellent initiative that I strongly believe will enhance the offer of Strood High Street. It is in keeping with the recent Government High Street Task Force Report, seeking to deliver a broader mix of uses in our town centres beyond retail, and is a further measure of this Administration’s commitment to Strood, making an investment of £1m, bringing a dilapidated shop back into use.</p> <p>We appreciate your strongly held views on this project, but we do believe that this is a positive investment for Strood and its residents.</p>
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Q	Tony Jeacock	<p><b>Question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:</b></p> <p>Can the Portfolio Holder please tell me whether the road surface at the junction of Montgomery Road, Windmill Road and the main entrance to the Medway Maritime Hospital is on the list of road surface repairs to be carried out in the next few weeks?</p> <p>If not, then when can we expect this dangerous situation to be resolved in the interests of the safety of both motorists and pedestrians?</p> <p><b>Response from Councillor Filmer:</b></p> <p>I can confirm that resurfacing works to the junction of Montgomery Road and Windmill Road have been identified and will be undertaken as a part of our smaller responsive maintenance scheme this year.</p> <p>Due to the complexities of the location and this being the main entrance to Medway Maritime Hospital the traffic management of this site requires careful planning and essential liaison with the hospital administration.</p> <p>Once a date and timing has been agreed with the hospital, advance-warning signs will be in place and a letter drop will notify local residents of our impending works.</p>
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R	Vivienne Parker	<p><b>Question to the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty:</b></p> <p>If a planning application came in covering part of the so called Medway Magna site, would the Council be able to refuse it due to lack of nearby services and the need to use CPO powers to widen both Ham Lane and Capstone Road in order to carry construction traffic, thus rendering the Medway Magna site "unsustainable" under the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework?</p> <p><b>Response from Councillor Chitty:</b></p> <p>If a Planning Application were to be submitted for this site, it would be considered firstly against the existing 2003 Local Plan policies and then in relation to the National Planning Policy Framework and in particular its core principles, which include the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The proposal will also be assessed against all other material planning considerations.</p> <p>The Council cannot pre determine how it would determine any particular application. The proposal is contrary to the existing Local Plan and it would be for any applicant to put forward a case to justify why the Council (or an Inspector) should make a decision contrary to the Local Plan.</p>
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S	Gareth Batts	<p><b>Question to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe:</b></p> <p>Councillor Doe, you are quoted in the April Medway Matters magazine talking about how good the new “Community Hub” will be for Strood. This is the exact same quote as published in the October edition of Medway Matters. Haven’t you got anything new to say?</p> <p>Within the last 6 months of your first quote petitions have been handed in, there has been a march from Strood Library to Rochester Community Hub, public have asked a number of questions at the last Full Council as well as putting the case forward for the library not to be moved at Overview and Scrutiny. Members of the public have protested at a couple of council meetings.</p> <p>I therefore would like to ask the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Doe, is your view still the same that the library will be a good idea being situated in the high street despite growing opposition from the voters of Strood?</p> <p><b>Response from Councillor Doe:</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question, Mr Batts and for the opportunity to elaborate further.</p> <p>Since we started our Community Hub programme in 2009 we have seen others across the Country follow our lead. Those that haven’t have witnessed their Libraries slowly declining. We are clear that our Community Hubs are vibrant, dynamic places that offer our customers access to a wide range of services. Our Libraries cannot stand still, they need to adapt to changing demands while still meeting the needs of our core customers and that is what we are seeking to achieve through our Community Hub programme.</p> <p>As quoted in Medway Matters, I believe that the opening of the new community hub will offer residents a first class level of service in a first class environment.</p>
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T	Nick Alderson-Rice	<p>Question to the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services (Lead Member), Councillor O’Brien:</p> <p>The Transforming Rehabilitation agenda will have an adverse impact on the available pool of staff that are eligible to be seconded to Medway’s Youth Offending Team.</p> <p>Do you support the changes which the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda will bring in and do you think the changes are in the best interest of Medway’s young people?</p> <p><b>Response from Councillor O’Brien:</b></p> <p>The Youth Offending Team has responded to the Ministry of Justice consultation on the changes. There will now be far greater emphasis on resettlement from custody and as a direct consequence of these changes the Youth Offending Team will now be supervising any young person who turns 18 while in custody for 12 months post release. Also, the Community Rehabilitation Companies will be obliged to involve third sector organisations within the provision of services and this will widen the scope of available expertise and knowledge beyond that currently available.</p> <p>In addition the new companies will be obliged to work closely with Youth Offending Teams to ensure a managed transition of young adults from one service to another and that the Medway Youth Offending Team has already been involved in the early aspects of this work.</p> <p>In reality the pool of people able to be seconded to the Medway Youth Offending Team from probation has never been big. Working with young people is a specialist role. The rehabilitation agenda brings renewed focus on prevention of re-offending which is at the heart of a Youth Offending Team’s business. The changes being brought about will be positive and the Youth Offending Team have already been able to put input into the Ministry of Justice in terms of what good practice is and what we would wish to see in a ‘transformed’ service.</p>
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U	Tony Jeacock	<p><b>Question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers:</b></p> <p>With Medway being the leader in the UK with more involvement in EU projects than any other council in the country, is it the desire of this Conservative-run Council that the UK should remain members of the EU, and if not, why not?</p> <p><b>Response from Councillor Rodney Chambers:</b></p> <p>It is for individuals and not the Council to have a view on whether the UK should remain a part of the EU and they will be given an opportunity in 2017 by way of a referendum to decide.</p> <p>I will, however, state that Medway Council will always look to attract funding from wherever it can to continue delivering our significant regeneration programme.</p>
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