

Council

Written responses to questions

Date: 13 October 2016

Time: 7.00pm

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

Items

- 7C) **Theresa Turner of Gillingham had submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness:** (Pages 3 - 4)

Written response attached as Theresa Turner did not attend the meeting.

- 7D) **Kelly Hayman of Gillingham had submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness:** (Pages 5 - 6)

Written response attached as Kelly Hayman did not attend the meeting.

- 10D) **Councillor Griffiths had submitted the following question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett:** (Pages 7 - 8)

Written response attached as Councillor Griffiths did not attend the meeting.

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

Date: 18 October 2016

Council Question

13 October 2016

Public Question No. 7C

Theresa Turner of Gillingham submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness:

With regard to the Medway Test, how can it be fair to give the children different topics for creative writing?

Children who sit the test on the Saturday have the opportunity to research what the topics are and study to prepare for it. To make it a fair test all the children should have the test on the same day with the same creative writing topic. If it means all children have the test in a test centre so be it. At least it would all be fair.

The Portfolio Holder for Educational Attainment and Improvement, Councillor Potter, on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, provided the following written response:

The topic chosen each year for the extended writing paper is the same for all of the test days, however, the actual questions change according to the test day. Student Services works with the School Challenge and Improvement Team and the Lead Marker to ensure that a selection of questions are created within the same topic, linked to a full mark scheme. This ensures consistency across all questions and all marking.

By using different questions, we are able to limit the amount of specific preparation that those children testing on later dates can achieve.

Analysis completed in 2012 and 2013, demonstrated that no benefit was conferred on those children who tested on the Saturday.

Ideally Medway Council would like all children to test in school during the week. However, we cannot enforce this across all schools and academies and therefore provide the two testing options; testing mid week and on the Saturday. We have received very positive feedback from parents and students since the test has returned to Medway schools and would prefer that testing in schools remains the preferred test scenario for Medway children.

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13 October 2016

Public Question No. 7D

Kelly Hayman of Gillingham submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness:

Due to the number of children that have been affected by the Medway Test and they've been underscored by your formula, but Medway state that the overall result is correct, there was a sudden surge of parents now wanting to send their child to Brompton Academy because it is the elite school in education after the grammar schools.

Therefore, my question is how will this affect children such as mine who didn't take the Medway Test, but took the fair banding test?

In my case, we already have a sibling there, however, I would like it clarified how this selection of pupils will now be done due to the sudden surge of panicking parents.

The Portfolio Holder for Educational Attainment and Improvement, Councillor Potter, on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, provided the following written response:

Medway Council can confirm that that the assessment outcome and the final score as published in all results letters were both correct. The individual scores for Verbal Reasoning and Maths were also correct. However, the Extended Writing score was incorrectly published in the letters for those assessed as non – selective (non-grammar). The Verbal Reasoning score was published in place of the Extended Writing score in error.

No pupil has been underscored by this publishing error and revised letters were sent out to all families affected on Monday 3 October.

Brompton Academy is an academy, independent of the Local Authority. This means it is its own admission authority and, therefore, responsible for setting its own admission arrangements. Medway Council has no involvement in the setting of their admission policy, other than responding to any consultation on changes they may publish.

Places at Brompton Academy will be allocated according to the academy's published over subscription criteria: All applicants who take the Fair Banding Test will be split into one of five ability bands, based upon their score against the national profile. Within each band these same applicants will be ranked in the following order:

1. Looked after or previously looked after children
2. Sibling links
3. Children of staff
4. Distance
5. Random selection.

Places will be offered to those eligible for a place in each of the 5 bands starting with those ranked with the highest priority. Applicants who have not taken the Test will be considered for a place only after places have been allocated across all five bands. Where bands are undersubscribed, places will roll over in to the next to be filled. Only a very few places have ever been offered to children who have not taken the Fair Banding Test.

Council

13 October 2016

Councillor Griffiths submitted the following question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett:

Does the Leader of the Council think it is appropriate for a Member of his Cabinet to take paid employments to secure planning permissions from Medway Council, and then to vote in his capacity as a Cabinet Member to agree disposal of the sites directly relating to his paid employments?

Written response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett:

Can I thank Councillor Griffiths for his question, which is very similar to one posed in an open letter by Councillor Maple to the Monitoring Officer recently.

That question and some others have been referred to the Councillor Conduct Committee to deal with. Until the procedure and anything which comes from it is concluded, I do not think it is appropriate for me to respond to this or any similar questions in order to allow due process.

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