

COUNCIL
18 OCTOBER 2012
PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

Author: Wayne Hemingway, Democratic Services Officer

Summary

To set out the public questions received for this meeting.

1. Background

1.1 Section 8.3 of the Council Rules, as laid out in the Council's constitution, sets out the rules for the receipt of public questions as follows:

- At any one meeting no person may submit more than two questions and no more than two questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation. Members of the public who have not submitted questions before will be given priority over those who have, and second questions will only be dealt with when all first questions have been dealt with. Any questions that have not been dealt with within the time limits will receive a written reply after the meeting.

1.2 The questions received for this meeting are set out in below in the order they were received, allowing for the rules above.

2. Public questions

2.1 **Derek Munton, Chair of Medway Pensioners' Forum, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact, Councillor O'Brien, the following question:**

With whom did Medway Council consult before it decided to charge a fee for the issue of blue badges to disabled persons for parking?

2.2 **Jenny Churcher, on behalf of the Luton PACT Committee, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following question:**

Can I confirm the revenue raised from the Parking meter on Nelson Terrace / Luton Library since its controversial installation earlier this year?

2.3 Sue Groves MBE of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, Councillor Brake, the following question:

What arrangements are currently in place to ensure that the Council consults fully with disabled residents (including those with mental, physical and hidden disabilities) when considering the equality impact of policy changes and planning applications etc?

2.4 Jamie Morice-Jones of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:

For years young people have felt disengaged with politicians and the political structure for various reasons, one being they don't see the point of getting involved with politics. You will also hear regular comments such as "Why should I bother voting?" At the end of the day, regardless of what people think of politicians, they have the power to make decisions which affect everyone, both positively and negatively.

Today I would like to ask the Portfolio Holder what can we do to make sure young people feel engaged in the political process, and to help change the negative viewpoint many young people may hold about politics?

2.5 Matt Butt of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:

It has been confirmed that if Harriet Yeo is elected as Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent, she will resign her role as Councillor on Ashford Borough Council. Do you expect the Conservative candidate to resign as a Councillor if he is successful?

2.6 Katie Smith-Palomeque, on behalf of Medway and Swale Advocacy Partnerships, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, Councillor Brake, the following question:

Do you feel that the Council has done everything it can to ensure residents, particularly disabled residents have been supported if they want to explore any aspect of localism?

2.7 John Ward of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, the following question:

I have noticed that at least one Opposition Member on this Council has recently been trying to manufacture the myth that this Council, under this Government, is raising Council Tax unreasonably.

In the solid belief I have that the facts show the true picture, may I ask the Portfolio Holder to place in the public record of this meeting a table of each year's level of Band D Council Tax from when the Conservatives took over the Council's administration, along with the percentage increase from the previous year, and noting which party was running the national government at the time?

For comparison purposes it would be useful to have the national amounts and percentage rises in adjacent columns, to show the value enjoyed by Medway's residents.

2.8 Tony Jeacock of Rainham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following question:

With Communities Minister, Don Foster, having revealed that over £63 million additional funding has been unlocked by bringing thousands of empty homes back into use, can the Portfolio Holder tell me how many empty homes Medway Council has brought back into use since May 2011 and what percentage of Medway's empty homes that figure represents?

2.9 Katie Smith-Palomeque, on behalf of Medway and Swale Advocacy Partnerships, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, Councillor Brake, the following question:

What mechanism does the Council use to engage with those residents with hidden disabilities such as mental ill health?

2.10 Tony Jeacock of Rainham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:

From January 2013, there will be 800 plus serving members of the Corps of Royal Engineers who will be made redundant, some of whom are currently stationed in and around the Medway Towns. Under the Military / Community Covenant, to which Medway Council put its signature, what does the Leader intend to do about it?

Lead officer contact

Wayne Hemingway, Democratic Services Officer

T: 01634 332509

E: wayne.hemingway@medway.gov.uk

Background papers

None