

Medway Council
Meeting of Medway Council
Thursday, 23 January 2014
7.00pm to 12.05am

Record of the meeting

Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next Full Council meeting

Present: The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway (Councillor Iles)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Etheridge)

Councillors Avey, Baker, Bowler, Carr, Mrs Diane Chambers, Rodney Chambers, Chishti, Chitty, Clarke, Colman, Cooper, Craven, Doe, Filmer, Gilry, Christine Godwin, Paul Godwin, Griffin, Griffiths, Adrian Gulvin, Pat Gulvin, Harriott, Hewett, Hicks, Hubbard, Igwe, Irvine, Jarrett, Juby, Kearney, Kemp, Mackinlay, Mackness, Brake, Maple, Mason, Murray, O'Brien, Osborne, Price, Purdy, Rodberg, Royle, Shaw, Maisey, Smith, Tolhurst, Turpin, Watson, Wicks and Wildey

In Attendance: Neil Davies, Chief Executive
Dr Alison Barnett, Director of Public Health
Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture
Mick Hayward, Chief Finance Officer
Wayne Hemingway, Democratic Services Officer
Richard Hicks, Deputy Director, Customer Contact, Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance
Perry Holmes, Assistant Director Legal and Corporate Services/Monitoring Officer
Julie Keith, Head of Democratic Services
Barbara Peacock, Director of Children and Adult Services
John Staples, Media Manager

735 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 17 October 2013 was agreed and signed by the Mayor as correct.

736 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bright and Stamp.

Council, 23 January 2014

737 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Councillor Griffiths declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item 20(B) (Motion) because he was a Non-Executive Director of Medway Community Healthcare Community Interest Company which was a former provider of services associated with the subject of the motion. He left the meeting during discussion on this item.

Other Interests

Councillor Cooper declared an interest in agenda item 20(B) (Motion) because family members worked for Medway Maritime Hospital.

Councillor Filmer declared an interest in agenda item 8 (Leader's Report) in relation to Cabinet 14 January 2014 (Review of Medway Norse, Joint Venture Company for Facilities Management) because he was a Director of Medway Norse.

Councillor Adrian Gulvin declared an interest in agenda item 12 (Youth Justice Plan) because his brother worked for the Youth Offending Team. He left the meeting during discussion on this item.

Councillor Adrian Gulvin declared an interest in agenda item 14 (Additions to the Capital Programme – section 4)) because his brother worked for the Youth Offending Team. He left the meeting during discussion on this item.

Councillor Pat Gulvin declared an interest in agenda item 12 (Youth Justice Plan) because her brother in law worked for the Youth Offending Team. She left the meeting during discussion on this item.

Councillor Pat Gulvin declared an interest in agenda item 14 (Additions to the Capital Programme – section 4)) because her brother in law worked for the Youth Offending Team. She left the meeting during discussion on this item.

Councillor Juby declared an interest in agenda items 20 (A) and (B) (Motions) because family members worked for the NHS.

Councillor Mackinlay declared an interest in agenda item 8 (Leader's Report) in relation to Cabinet 14 January 2014 (Review of Medway Norse, Joint Venture Company for Facilities Management) because he was a Director of Medway Norse.

Councillor O'Brien declared an interest in agenda items 20 (A) and (B) (Motions) because family members worked in the NHS.

738 Mayor's announcements

The Mayor announced that there were still tickets available for the following fund raising events in support of her chosen charities (Age UK, Caring Hands, Demelza and Help for Heroes): a Quiz Night on 28 February at Gun Wharf, a Flavours of Wine evening on 26 March and the Ball on 26 April both at the Corn Exchange in Rochester. Tickets were available from her office.

The Mayor asked Members to speak clearly into the microphones to ensure people in the public gallery could hear.

The Mayor reminded Members to ensure that written copies of any amendments were provided to the Head of Democratic Services and that copies were brought up to the top table first.

739 Leader's announcements

There were none.

740 Petitions

Councillor Adrian Gulvin submitted a petition containing 99 signatures regarding reckless driving in Yarrow Road, Chatham.

Councillor Hubbard submitted a petition which added 694 signatures to an existing petition already received regarding the Strood Community Hub.

Councillor Igwe submitted a petition which added 411 signatures to an existing petition already received regarding the Strood Community Hub.

741 Public questions

Councillor Murray, supported by Councillor Griffiths, proposed a motion under Council Rule 16.1 to suspend Council Rules to suspend the time limit of 30 minutes for agenda item 7 (Public Questions).

In accordance with rule 11.4 of the Council Rules at the request of six Members, a recorded vote on the motion was requested:

For – Councillors Bowler, Colman, Cooper, Craven, Gilry, Christine Godwin, Paul Godwin, Griffiths, Harriott, Hubbard, Igwe, Juby, Kearney, Maple, Murray, Osborne, Price, Shaw and Smith (19)

Against – Councillors Avey, Baker, Brake, Carr, Mrs Diane Chambers, Rodney Chambers, Chishti, Chitty, Clarke, Doe, The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Etheridge, Filmer, Griffin, Adrian Gulvin, Pat Gulvin, Hewett, Hicks, The Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor Iles, Irvine, Jarrett, Kemp, Mackinlay, Mackness, Maisey, Mason, O'Brien, Purdy, Rodberg, Royle, Tolhurst, Turpin, Watson, Wicks and Wildey (34)

Council, 23 January 2014

On being put to the vote, the motion was lost.

The Mayor confirmed that public questions would last for 30 minutes, as set out in the Council Rules.

A. David Scott of Chatham asked (in absence) the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following question:

I read in the Sunday Times some time ago that in January the Government issued to all Councils a paper advising on the reduction of road sign clutter. My question is what assessment has been made of the potential for reducing clutter in Medway, what measures are currently underway, and what net reduction can we expect to see by, say, the end of 2014?

Councillor Filmer stated that last year a cross-party task group considered the issues of de-cluttering streets in Medway. This group considered current legislation, government policy and established best practice in relation to street clutter. It had also reviewed the current picture in Medway and held a De-Cluttering Stakeholder Event to understand the needs of local interested parties. The final report of the Task Group was presented to the Cabinet on 9 July 2013, where the decisions were agreed unanimously.

The agreed way forward focused on the development of a Streetscape Manual for Medway, with supporting policy documents, a quality assessment process and a pilot scheme in Strood High Street. The pilot scheme would last for 15 months so that accurate and meaningful data could be obtained. Before and after casualty and traffic data would be measured and a questionnaire would be put forward to local businesses and users of the High Street to determine the effectiveness and the impact of the pilot study. If the pilot was successful then the principles of de-cluttering would be rolled out across Medway on a case-by-case basis.

(There was no supplementary question).

B. Chris Webb of Strood asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question;

What proactive measures has the Council taken to assess and provide for the necessary additional local services & infrastructure to deal with the impact of an increase in Bulgarian and Romanian immigrants into Medway after 1 January 2014?

Councillor Rodney Chambers stated that it was difficult to know what proactive measures to take when the government had made no official prediction and indeed neither could he as to the numbers of Bulgarians and Romanians who may enter the UK. However, the Council did have a responsibility in respect of housing, housing benefit and education.

In respect of housing, the range and extent of any issues was unknown but as part of the normal application process the Council was required to consider the

Council, 23 January 2014

nationality, immigration and residency status of those approaching as homeless.

As part of the recent review of the Allocation of Social Housing Policy and in common with most other local authorities, a two-year local residency requirement prior to the date of application was in place in Medway

With regard to housing benefit, the Council had a statutory responsibility to assess claims for housing benefit in line with government legislation. However, the government had made it quite clear that claimants from Bulgaria and Romania who were in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance would not be eligible for housing benefit from April. The housing benefit section was aware of the accession rights in relation to Bulgarians and Romanians. However there was no ability to predict the number that may wish to submit a claim.

With regard to education, there was a statutory duty to provide a school placement for all children who were of statutory school age who lived in Medway. It was not possible to plan ahead until the Council knew the numbers of children who may be living here, their ages and if they had any special educational needs. There were mechanisms in place with housing and health to co-ordinate information in relation to new children arriving in Medway and the Council would be alert to the possibility of new families who may arrive from Romania or Bulgaria.

Mr Webb stated that in some areas of Medway many primary schools were currently operating well over their set admission number, therefore, how would the Council address what clearly would be the extra resources required by these schools to support the integration and educational needs of additional immigrant children?

Councillor Rodney Chambers stated that he did not know the numbers that Medway was likely to receive, but as far as schooling was concerned the Council would make the assessment at the time and he assured Mr Webb that the Council had robust procedures in place should the Council be faced with the situation where places had to be found for children settling here in Medway. He stated that despite certain suggestions that an avalanche of people would be coming to Medway, the Council had received no applications since 1 January to date.

C. Sally Bragg, on behalf of Lindsey Burke of Rochester asked the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty, the following question:

Will you help support the independent traders in their campaign to safeguard the historic Rochester High Street from Costa Coffee?

Councillor Chitty stated that this was a matter due to be considered at the Planning Committee on 29 January, therefore, it was entirely inappropriate for her to say anything which could be seen as influencing Members of the Planning Committee.

Council, 23 January 2014

Ms Bragg, on behalf of Lindsey Burke, asked what was the Council's long-term policy for protecting the heritage of Rochester High Street, with mainstream brands coming in and squeezing out the independent traders and cheap-booze fuelled drunks colliding with tourists having a nice meal on a Saturday night. She stated that it seemed the Council had no clear policy, leaving Rochester as a tourist haven by day and a seedy, intimidating place on Friday and Saturday nights.

Councillor Chitty stated that it was important to point out that the Council had no control over what kind of company wished to locate in Rochester High Street, or elsewhere, unless a planning or other consent was required, nor could it discriminate between independent and corporate businesses.

The Council was working very hard to promote Rochester as a major heritage destination with a vibrant evening economy. Later this year a full refurbishment of Eastgate House would begin that would extend the heritage offer even further. The Council would work closely with the police, licensees and other agencies through the Medway Community Safety Partnership to tackle anti social behaviour and other issues.

She stated that the Council would continue to promote Rochester as a destination of choice and a centre to be proud of. She stated that the Council was anxious to maintain and improve events, festivals and other promotional elements which would bring people into Rochester which in turn supported the economy. This had been traditionally very important in Rochester and a recognition of how the Council valued the independent traders and the whole of the Rochester community.

D. Odette Buchanan of Strood asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following question:

Has a comparative costing been done for Strood Library to stay on its present site and the Contact Point to be relocated there instead of moving it to the wrong end of the High Street into an unsuitable building? If so how much cheaper would this be?

Councillor Doe stated that he did not accept that it was moving to the wrong end of the High Street or into an unsuitable building.

He stated that the Council had not undertaken detailed costings of such a move as this would not have been in keeping with the Council's stated intention of establishing Community Hubs in each of the main town centres.

The proposed move would enable the Council to relocate the existing Contact Point and the library to a far more convenient location for customers, in an excellent building that would serve customers very well and bring new life to the High Street in Strood.

Council, 23 January 2014

Mrs Buchanan asked whether the idea of leaving the library where it was and having a Contact Point in a small retail unit in Strood High Street had been considered?

Councillor Doe stated that was one of the options that could have been followed and this was considered. However, experience elsewhere had confirmed that Community Hubs, when combined with libraries, were very successful. This combined model would help revitalise the High Street and also allow for staff to be used in the most efficient way providing better value for money.

E. Marion Shoard of Strood asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following question:

What mandate does Medway Council have to relocate the purpose-built and much-loved Strood Library – one of the last remaining public facilities in Strood – to a warehouse-like space at 133 High Street when it has failed to carry out any public consultation on the pros and cons of taking this step?

(The only aspect that has involved any consultation is the change of use of 133 High Street, but only strictly planning considerations were allowed to be discussed when this application was considered on 4 December 2013, with the result that factors such as the desirability or otherwise of getting rid of the existing Strood Library and the use of housing revenue grant money to fund the work at a time when homelessness in Medway is high and increasing were not addressed).

Councillor Doe stated that the Council had a longstanding aspiration to establish Community Hubs in each of the main town centres, as set out in Medway's Cultural Strategy, which was adopted in 2009. The Community Hub programme was a strategic approach to enhancing libraries as a highly valued public service, widening the offer available by establishing a gateway to Council services such as planning, housing, benefits and environmental services, and using flexible space to enable other public service agencies to operate from under the same roof on a surgery basis, including such things as health and debt advice.

He stated that consultation had been undertaken as part of the planning process, and that it was worth bearing in mind that this scheme had been developed following the demise of the earlier proposals for a Community Hub on the refurbished Tesco site, which had been the subject of considerable consultation at the time and had been very favourably received.

Miss Shoard asked why Councillor Doe and the Council refused to acknowledge that the existing library on Bryant Road was very conveniently situated to serve the people of Strood and it stood very close to the centre of town and to bus stops yet at the same time was located within a community of very cramped housing for whom it served as a very valuable "de facto" community centre. She stated that nobody lived on the High Street in contrast and asked whether Councillor Doe would accept that the comparison with

Council, 23 January 2014

Tesco was absurd. Tesco was going to foot the bill for the creation of a new library as part of planning gain. It was not going to be paid for out of the housing revenue fund and there would have been free parking there.

Councillor Doe stated that the Council had looked at the High Street site and that it was a perfectly valid site and one that would work. He stated that with regards to the question on whether the Council should be using the new type of housing finance, that this would serve quite a lot of people who were in the affordable housing groups because they would be able to access a whole range of advice that previously had not been so conveniently available to them in the right setting. He stated that, overall, this would be a great benefit to the people of Strood, although he did acknowledge that it was much easier to keep hold of the old things and always to oppose change.

F. James Giller of Maidstone asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, the following question:

My Name is James Giller and I am the Managing Director of Eagle Aero Engineering Ltd. Despite wishing to renew our lease at Rochester Airport, Eagle Aero Engineering Ltd were refused and after 3 years on site were forced to vacate Rochester on the 10th January 2014.

The Medway Council "To let Rochester Airport Kent by Informal Tender" states that bidders offer should include at (vi.) Confirmation that the current sub-occupiers can remain if they wish to.

Please tell us what Rochester Airport Limited stated in their winning bid submission in compliance to (vi) stated above?

Councillor Jarrett stated that Paragraph D1 1 of the Tender stated that, "The airport is currently let to Rochester Airport Ltd until 12 January 2014 and there are various sub-occupiers at the airport. The council would like these occupiers to remain at the airport if at all possible". Eagle Aero engineering was listed on the schedule. Rochester Airport Ltd did not specifically confirm in its Tender return that all of the current sub-occupiers could remain.

He stated that Rochester Airport Ltd was the Council's tenant at the airport and ultimately which sub occupiers (other than Medway Aircraft Preservation Society, which was prescribed by the council), were allowed to stay was a matter for Rochester Airport Ltd and not the Council.

Mr Giller stated that in recent dealings with Rochester Airport people had experienced some very underhand and very unprofessional conduct and conduct that was not conducive as best business practice. He stated that in his experience this was just the latest in a long line of unusual occurrences. He asked, in the interests of the community, the residents and businesses that Medway Council served, would the Council submit that there had been sufficient unusual happenings to halt the current proceedings and that maybe the tender process itself had been flawed and if not rerun from the beginning that at the very least it should be paused and independently investigated.

Council, 23 January 2014

Councillor Jarrett stated that he was unaware of the sort of irregularities Mr Giller referred to. However, he would discuss this with the relevant officers and if it was found that there were irregularities that were material to the tender process the Council would take appropriate steps.

G. Sandra Busbridge of Rochester asked the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty, the following question:

Since 2000 when Rochester Airport Limited first leased the airfield there has been an unprecedented expansion of sub occupiers on the site. Helicopters, Gyrocopters and Microlite businesses currently bring higher levels of disturbance to local residents due to the machines operating at low altitude and lower airspeed than typical flying club aircraft.

Can you explain how Medway Council will control the Airport Operator's future conduct with respect to sub occupiers and their operations to protect the community?

Councillor Chitty stated that noise issues would be subject to a rigorous assessment through the planning application process. Rochester Airport Limited was the operator of the airport and it was ultimately for them to exercise control over the activities of their tenants and airport users.

(There was no supplementary question).

H. Michael Busbridge of Rochester asked the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty, the following question:

Most Councillors have been notified by James Giller about the refusal of Rochester Airport Limited to renew Eagle Aero Engineering sub occupancy lease. Whilst this is a business matter it could seriously affect the safety of residents.

The closure of Eagle Aero Engineering at Rochester airfield appears to compromise historical safety figures on which this Council is being asked to base its approval for the Masterplan and Rochester Airport Lease renewal.

This issue highlights the precarious nature of business relationships and operational aspects at Rochester Airport which in a worse case scenario could have fatal consequences for residents and aviators.

Please tell us what assessment has been conducted by Medway Council on the performance and certification of the replacement maintenance company and what credentials have been supplied by Rochester Airport Limited that attest to the continuity of safety for residents.

Council, 23 January 2014

Councillor Chitty stated that as suggested in her previous answer, the Council was determined to ensure that safety issues were paramount, but Rochester Airport Ltd was the Council's tenant at the airport and ultimately sub occupiers (other than Medway Aircraft Preservation Society) which it allowed to stay was a matter for Rochester Airport Ltd and not the Council.

Councillor Chitty stated that airport safety issues were a matter for the Civil Aviation Authority. She stated that she would expand on this by seconding a proposal later in the evening as it related to the Rochester Airport Masterplan.

Mr Busbridge asked whether any of the documents had been seen by any of the councillors?

Councillor Chitty asked Mr Busbridge as to precisely what documents he was referring to.

Mr Busbridge asked whether any certification documents had been seen by any Member of the Council?

Councillor Chitty stated that she had seen some documentation and asked if there was some clarification on this matter she would be delighted to put the answer in writing to Mr Busbridge.

I. Barry Luxton of Rochester asked the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty, the following question:

It has been well publicised that Tandridge District Council have recently refused planning permission to the operators of Redhill Aerodrome for the installation of a paved runway. MP Sam Gyimah said it would have a "monumental impact" on residents and their quality of life.

Interestingly the location of Redhill airfield is quite rural in comparison to Rochester. It does not have houses less than 200 metres from the end of the paved runway and there is no financial contribution from the Council.

Please tell us why the Rochester Airport Masterplan will not have a "monumental impact" on residents and their quality of life given you have not yet carried out and published an environmental impact study.

Councillor Chitty stated that the developer would be required to submit information prior to a planning application to determine if an Environmental Impact Assessment was required. The impact of the proposals for development at Rochester Airport would be appropriately assessed and evaluated through the planning application process, in considering evidence and supporting information required on a range of technical issues.

Mr Luxton stated that the airport site was becoming a car park during rush hour and asked what provision did the proposal include to relieve the pressure on local roads?

Council, 23 January 2014

Councillor Chitty stated that this would be an important part of the planning process.

J. Leslie Ellison of Rochester asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, the following question:

Medway Council has publicised in leaflets and exhibition material that there will be an opportunity for comment at the planning stage should the Masterplan be approved by Council.

As a home owner living near to the airfield I cannot recall seeing any planning applications for buildings, change of use or the like for the airport previously.

Can you confirm what additional measures beyond normal practice the Council will be taking to notify businesses and thousands of residents living near to the airfield that a planning application for the paved runway has been submitted?

Councillor Chitty stated that no planning application had yet been submitted for developments at Rochester Airport in connection with the Masterplan. The applicant would be expected to arrange for consultation with the Council and the local community prior to the formal submission of a planning application. The applicant would also be expected to produce a Statement of Community Involvement to accompany an application, setting out how it would effectively consult on its proposals. Consultation on the planning application would be carried out in accordance with Development Management regulations. Given the level of public interest in this proposed development, the Council would arrange for broad publicity on the proposals and the submission of the planning application.

(There was no supplementary question).

K. Gareth Batts of Strood asked the the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following question:

Without any public consultation, this Conservative Administration has decided to move Strood Library from its current Bryant Road site to a new high street site. As seen by the petitions being handed in, thousands of residents in Strood are angry about this. By moving the library to a smaller site, not only is it reducing overall capacity in the library but it is also paving the way for the eviction of the current Strood Community Project who are leasing the site. The Strood Community Project is a local charity who are there for disadvantaged people in the area.

I welcome the news that the current hall is to be kept for the community to use, however will the Portfolio Holder look at converting the caretaker's house at the back of the current library site (which I believe is not being lived in at the moment) to be the new contact point for Strood? This will help keep the current library on the same site as well as allowing the Strood Community Project to stay where they are.

Council, 23 January 2014

Councillor Doe stated that he had dealt with the question of consultation in his previous answer. He stated that the question of the Strood Community Project (SCP) was something that required clarification because it had been claimed that the Council was responsible for evicting the SCP. He stated that this was not so and when the Council had originally made an outline deal with the owners of the property, it was vacant and the Council had contracted with them for vacant possession. He stated that, subsequently, he suspected that the issue of obtaining relief from empty business rates may have come into the equation. He understood that the owners had then entered into an agreement with the SCP either through a lease or a licence. This was a matter between the owner and the SCP. He stated that at no time should the owner ever have given that licence but he was sure that the owner would have explained to the SCP that this was for a limited period.

He also stated with regard to the question of the caretaker's house at the back of the current library site, that it was totally unsuitable for the position of a Community Hub and therefore was not being considered.

Mr Batts said that Councillor Doe and Robin Cooper had stated that the Council's proposals for the Strood Hub would bring great benefits to Strood by increasing footfall for the retailers so enhancing the High Street environment. He asked whether Councillor Doe could explain how the Council's planning application which was approved to change the use of the retail unit to a library would enhance the High Street environment. He stated that this was another loss of a retail outlet for the community of Strood.

Councillor Doe stated that the shop had been vacant for some time and there was no prospect of it reopening as a retail shop in the immediate future. He stated that the Council was acting in accordance with government guidance and other guidance about the need to bring people into High Streets. This proposal would achieve this and in doing so would cause visitors to look at the other offers within that High Street and thereby bring in more business to the shopping centre.

L. Janet Stephens of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, the following question:

The Medway Council document "To let Rochester Airport Kent by Informal Tender" does not include a statement to bidders about their potential liability for property value loss compensation under the Land Compensation Act 1973 when the airfield is reconfigured.

A modest five percent loss in property values for approximately 2000 homes near the airfield may amount to £25 million or more.

Whether you believe or not that local property values close to the airfield will be affected by Medway Council's Masterplan, as a duty to your electorate I hope you agree that the liability should have been stated in the tender document to

Council, 23 January 2014

protect home owner losses and ensure the successful bidder is able to meet their financial liability should it arise.

Can you guarantee Medway Council have notified Rochester Airport Limited of this potential liability and that the company is sufficiently funded to withstand a multimillion pound compensation payment prior to signing the new lease?

Councillor Jarrett stated that the Council and Rochester Airport Ltd were aware that the Land Compensation Act 1973 entitled certain property owners in limited circumstances to compensation where the value of their property was depreciated, as a result of the increase in physical factors (including increase in noise) resulting from the use of new public works (including improvements at airports).

By law, the airport operator was responsible for compensation of this type and in addition to this, there was a clause in the agreed main lease of the airport, which required Rochester Airport Ltd to indemnify the Council against the costs of any such claims.

However, compensation was only claimable if there was an increase in the physical factors including noise, resulting from the use of the new public works. In this case, the proposed paved runway would mean that aircraft would be able to take off quicker and be at a higher altitude by the end of the runway thus reducing noise. This being the case, it seemed unlikely that any claims for compensation could be successful.

Ms Stephens stated that part of her question was should it have been included in the tender documents and about the compensation, she had seen that the Council was indemnified and with regards to this, it was a shame that the public were not similarly indemnified.

Councillor Jarrett stated that this was a statement but in any event the Compensation Act should cover Ms Stephens's concerns.

The Mayor informed the meeting that the time limit for public questions had expired and that the remaining public questions (M-V) would be answered in writing.

742 Adjournments

Prior to the consideration of agenda item 8 (Leader's Report), the Worshipful The Mayor of Medway adjourned the meeting between 7.50pm – 8.05pm following disturbance in the public gallery, as provided for in Council Rule 11.2.3.

The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway also adjourned the meeting between 8.10pm – 8.25pm following further disturbance in the public gallery at the beginning of agenda item 8 (Leader's Report). During this period, The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway ordered the clearance of the public gallery in accordance with Council Rule 11.2.4.

743 Leader's report

Discussion:

Members received and debated the Leader's report, which included the following:

- Educational performance
- Business growth and enterprise
- Thames Estuary Airport
- Lower Thames Crossing
- Flood response
- World Heritage Site bid
- Medway Queen.
- University Technical College.

744 Overview and scrutiny activity

Discussion:

Members received and debated a report on overview and scrutiny activities, which included the following:

- Special Educational Needs Transport Budget
- Annual Public Health Report
- Capital and Revenue Budget 2013/2014
- Care Quality Commission Inspection Report on Medway Maritime Hospital Maternity Services
- Response from Secretary of State to the Report on Acute Mental Health Beds Redesign in Kent and Medway
- Review of Mental Health Services in Medway – In-Depth Task Group Report
- Housing Strategy Annual Review.

745 Members' questions

(A) Councillor Igwe asked the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty, the following:

Since the Council has revealed to the public its intention to relocate Strood Library to Strood High Street under the guise of Community Hub Centre, several stakeholders (including charities, community groups and over two thousand individuals through letters and signed petitions) expressed displeasure against the Council's incredibly unpopular intention.

In this regard, is the Council leadership going to listen to the displeased voices of Strood residents and stakeholders who elected them and stop taking any further action that will polarise rather than unite our peaceful community?

Council, 23 January 2014

Councillor Chitty stated she would answer this question in two parts. She referred to the Cultural Strategy which had been put forward in 2009 and had been warmly welcomed. She also referred to the plans that were put forward in connection with the Tesco development. Tesco was not paying the full amount for any development in relation to the library as it was a Section 106 Agreement, therefore it was only part of what was available at the time. She stated that people in Strood were absolutely delighted at the prospect of bringing the library into the High Street. They were very much for it and indeed the proposals for 133 High Street were very similar to the previous proposals. Under those circumstances people really wanted and were very much behind bringing Council services into the heart of the community. It was not just about library services, it was about other services where many people across Strood did not have easy access to Council offices. This would give access not only to elderly and vulnerable people but to the community at large and so therefore it was very warmly welcomed.

Councillor Chitty referred to the second part of the question and stated that this was enormously important because there had been a great deal of misunderstanding in relation to the issue of the Strood Community Project. She referred to Mr Robinson, Chief Executive of the Strood Community Project (SCP), and stated that any dealings that the SCP had in relation to 133 High Street were with the agents and the owners of that property and not Medway Council. She added that the Council had worked very closely with the Strood Community Project, in particular assisting them in terms of European funding.

Councillor Chitty also stated that she had spent quite some time looking at those people that had signed the petition. They were from Nottingham, Hertfordshire, Charlton, Stepney, Bexleyheath, Swanley, Erith, Dartford, Gravesend, Maidstone, Shorne, High Halstow, Cobham, Burham, Westerham, Whistable, Harpenden, Larkfield, Chigwell, Spain and France. There also appeared to be a disproportionate number of signatures from people elsewhere across Medway. She stated that she would ask Councillor Doe to ensure there would be a good information campaign so people were properly and fully informed.

Councillor Igwe asked, that given Councillor Doe had stated that one of the reasons for relocating Strood Library was to revitalise the High Street, whether Councillor Chitty could name any empty shop in the High Street at the moment.

Councillor Chitty referred to the former motor shop.

(Councillor Igwe invited Councillors Doe and Chitty to attend the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 30 January 2014 when some residents would be coming along in respect of the petitions item on the Strood Community Hub).

(B) Councillor Igwe asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

I have noted that some Housing Associations are, on a yearly basis, increasing rents payable by tenants. For instance, Moat has increased their rent from £400 for a two bedroom flat in 2011 to about £500 in 2013.

Can the Council intervene to ensure that key workers who are serving Medway are not priced out of the housing market especially as there has not been salary increment increase for over 3 years running?

Councillor Doe stated that the Council could not intervene in the setting of rents by Registered Social Landlords. The framework within which social housing rents were calculated was set by the Government and the regulatory authority for that was the Homes and Communities Agency which had been established in 2002, although the Government was currently proposing changes to this regime.

Currently social landlords could increase rent levels by RPI + 0.5% + up to £2 per week. The average social rent for a 2 bed roomed property per week in Medway in 2011/12 was £87.06 and that had risen 2013/14 to £94.29.

He stated that it had been suggested that the changes in rent levels that had been identified may have been due to the landlord changing the rent level regime for the particular property.

The Government did introduce a new rent regime in 2011, which allowed Registered Social Landlords to charge what was generally a higher rent on homes and that higher rent would be used to develop new homes as part of the National Affordable Homes Programme. He stated that the only time that the Council could intervene would be to complain to the Homes and Communities Agency that there had been a gross violation. Therefore, in practical terms the Council could not intervene.

He stated there had been no evidence of pricing out key workers in terms of a material block in supply of suitable properties. However, he would look into this if any such evidence were produced.

Councillor Igwe stated there was a Code of Social Responsibility to which all the key stakeholders in the housing market were assigned to in Medway and that he believed, that as a Council, there was the responsibility to make sure that that sector was well monitored especially when the key workers were renting those properties. They had to be reminded that there was a social responsibility to make sure that those residents were well taken care of.

Councillor Doe stated that he did not accept this because the regulating authority for housing associations was the Homes and Communities Agency. There had been no suggestion that their regulations had been violated. He reminded Councillor Igwe that the Council was working with housing associations to develop a variety of models for people below the market levels

Council, 23 January 2014

and one of those models which was particularly suitable was shared ownership. This could be accessed on a salary of £16,000 per year. Therefore, he did not believe key workers were being priced out. He stated that if there were any case to answer then the proper procedure was to report it to himself and Councillor Chitty.

(C) Councillor Osborne asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

Can the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services give me the latest update and timescale for the placement of double yellow lines on Settington Avenue and Street End Road, as residents have become exasperated by the perceived Council delay in what should be a basic project?

Councillor Filmer stated that, as explained to the MP for the area, Tracey Crouch, who had been keeping a very keen eye on this for her residents, this scheme had been the subject of three consultations and a site meeting with residents and Councillors. Each consultation on average took 4-6 weeks without taking into consideration the drafting of the notices, proposed orders and the exchange of communications with various interested parties.

He stated that the good news was that the paperwork had been signed off and officers had been told to give it priority so although it was weather dependent, the scheme would be undertaken soon.

Councillor Osborne stated that this had been a cross-party campaign including Tracey Crouch MP and others to get this delivered. It had taken 12 months to get something, which was basic, delivered to residents on one street. In that time the Council had delivered a £4.4m plan to deliver Rochester Airfield and yet for one road scheme it had taken this long. There was something wrong in the Council if it could not deliver road schemes for Members in a quick and timely manner and that Councillor Filmer needed to go back and say that to officers on Members' behalf.

Councillor Filmer stated that the problem lay with the consultation as there had been objections and the Council had to consider such objections. Therefore, the decision eventually ended up with the Director, in consultation with himself, to make because of the outcome of consultation. He stated that the Council had taken into consideration Councillor Osborne's and the MP's support for this scheme in reaching a decision.

(D) Councillor Osborne asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

Can the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services provide a year-by-year breakdown of the total number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued outside school premises vis-a-vis total number of PCNs issued by the CCTV cars since their introduction?

Council, 23 January 2014

Councillor Filmer referred to the following information:

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Issued outside school CCTV	533	913	715	588	386	376
Total number of CCTV PCNs	10921	16126	20780	7841	3641	854

Councillor Osborne stated that these figures were stark and showed that the car had not been used in the majority of years outside schools in comparison to the total number of PCNs issued despite what the Council was telling the press. He asked whether Councillor Filmer could confirm that now that Eric Pickles had said that these cars should be scrapped and that the profit on these vehicles was falling from £633,000 in 2010 to £135,000 now, that he would be minded to scrap the vehicle in the next 12 months?

Councillor Filmer stated that when you took into consideration that the actual parking time in front of a school area was probably half an hour in the morning, half an hour in the afternoon and that for some years, the percentage of tickets issued outside school was nearly 10%, that this made the figures look sensible.

He stated that the restrictions put on CCTV cars over the last year or so had altered the way that the Council could use the cars. The Council was down to one car at the moment. Given the response the Council received from schools regarding the bad parking outside their schools, if the Labour Group or Councillor Osborne were quite happy for controls to be stopped outside the schools he could arrange for this. However, if it saved one child's life outside of a school he stated that he personally thought that it was worthwhile.

(E) Councillor Maple asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, the following:

Many Councils including Derby City, Weymouth & Portland Borough and East Sussex County Council have indicated their support for a proposal under the Sustainable Communities Act to the Secretary of State to:

a) give local authorities the power to introduce a local levy of up to 8.5% of the rate on large supermarkets or large retail outlets in their area with an annual rateable value not less than £500,000; and

b) requires that the revenue from this levy be retained by the local authority in order to improve local communities in their areas by promoting local economic activity, local services and facilities, social and community wellbeing and environmental protection.

Council, 23 January 2014

Council officers have indicated this proposal could raise over £600,000 if implemented today in Medway. Would the Portfolio Holder agree to explore this proposal and bring back the appropriate report to Council?

Councillor Jarrett stated that whilst he would welcome any proposals to raise extra money, particularly now that Councillor Osborne had just advocated throwing away £160,000 without any idea of what it would do to the Council's revenue budget, there were inherent problems with this proposal.

The supermarket levy was the product of a campaign group called Local Works. They had been lobbying Councils to ask government to let them have the power under the Sustainable Communities Act to impose a new 8.5% tax on retail units whose annual rateable value was over £500,000. The proposal was based on legislation passed last year by the Northern Ireland Parliament to add a levy on large supermarkets of 8.5% based on their current rateable value. Last year the Scottish Parliament passed similar legislation for a levy of 9.3%. The Council had the power to submit such a proposal to central government, provided it had consulted and had due regard to specified matters set out in the Sustainable Communities Act, but it was Central Government's decision whether or not to implement the proposal and make the necessary legislation.

A number of Councils had considered the request and decided not to pursue it further including Dover, Leeds and Bristol.

Councillor Jarrett stated that officers had investigated the likely income from such a levy in the Medway area last year and he confirmed they had identified 13 properties that would produce a total of £642,000 in additional income. However, there were many other considerations, both for and against the proposal.

It was properties such as these that generated large amounts of business rates income for the Council already and provided valuable extra jobs in the area. If Medway was to be the only authority in Kent implementing such a levy, it was quite possible that supermarkets would choose to invest elsewhere or indeed supermarkets that were thinking of investing here would curtail that investment.

In addition there was also the argument if such a levy was imposed this would simply be passed on to customers. He stated that those arguments took primacy with him.

There was no current power in legislation allowing Councils to impose this levy. Councils had powers to submit proposals to Central Government under section 5A of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007. Before making such a proposal the Council had to have regard to a number of matters specified in the schedule to the 2007 Act and consult and try to reach agreement about the proposal with representatives or interested local persons as set out in the Act.

Councillor Maple stated that he was grateful for the clear position Councillor Jarrett had on this issue. He stated that Councillor Jarrett was quite clear in his

Council, 23 January 2014

thoughts that this would be passed on to customers. He asked whether Councillor Jarrett would give some thought to the fact that when his Government introduced the 2.5% increase on VAT, supermarkets actually had a price war and cut their prices. This had benefited the residents of Medway and elsewhere.

Councillor Jarrett stated that whilst this may have been so on that occasion, the Council's duty here was to consider as best it could the impacts of local measures taken here in Medway and his view was not to seek to impose the levy. He added that there could be further debate on this on another occasion if Councillor Maple wished so.

(F) Councillor Shaw asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

In view of the detrimental effect of the recent serious bad weather, what extra steps are being taken to ensure remedial works are put in place as soon as possible?

Councillor Filmer stated that prior to the bad weather, the Council had filled up a thousand sandbags in case they were needed. Additional works regarding trees had been undertaken and there was an ongoing programme through the tree management policy. He stated that he had spoken to the Highways Manager regarding doing more inspections to keep an eye on the roads. At this moment in time, the wet weather had not caused too much detrimental effect on the roads. He stated that he was concerned about frost as this could cause a problem. There were adequate supplies of salt if there was freezing weather.

Councillor Shaw asked, in view of the fact that many of the same potholes and other road services in Medway appeared to be being repaired on an annual basis, what steps would Councillor Filmer take to ensure a robust inspection regime was in place to check quality of workmanship and to ensure that taxpayers' money was not being wasted because of shoddy workmanship which was either being ignored or missed?

Councillor Filmer stated that, as a priority, when the inspectors went out they carried the materials with them so that they could do a temporary repair so people did not receive damage to their cars. The damaged roads were put under a 7, 14 or 28-day notice, depending on how bad they were. He added that, regarding the quality of the repairs that had been carried out, the Council had a regime whereby the tarmac was drilled to test its integrity, as well as other quality testing.

746 Rochester Airport - Masterplan

Discussion:

Under Council Rule 11.6.3, Councillor Maple, supported by Councillor Murray, proposed a motion to adjourn the debate on this item (to a Special Council meeting).

Council, 23 January 2014

In accordance with rule 11.4 of the Council Rules at the request of six Members, a recorded vote on the motion was requested:

For – Councillors Bowler, Colman, Cooper, Craven, Gilry, Christine Godwin, Paul Godwin, Griffiths, Harriott, Hubbard, Igwe, Juby, Kearney, Maple, Murray, Osborne, Price, Shaw and Smith (19)

Against – Councillors Avey, Baker, Brake, Carr, Mrs Diane Chambers, Rodney Chambers, Chishti, Chitty, Clarke, Doe, The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Etheridge, Filmer, Griffin, Adrian Gulvin, Pat Gulvin, Hewett, Hicks, The Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor Iles, Irvine, Jarrett, Kemp, Mackinlay, Mackness, Maisey, O'Brien, Purdy, Royle, Tolhurst, Turpin, Watson, Wicks and Wildey (32)

On being put to the vote, the motion was lost.

This report provided details of the outcome of consultation on a draft Masterplan to guide development on land at and bordering Rochester Airport. It was noted that details of the objectives and content of the draft Masterplan had been set out in previous reports between July-November 2013 including Cabinet on 9 July 2013 and 26 November 2013 and Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 August 2013 and 3 October 2013.

The Council received 908 responses to the consultation held from 22 July 2013 to 20 September 2013. The report provided details to the background of the consultation responses, the concerns raised and the Council's response to those concerns including any proposed amendments to the Masterplan.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty, proposed the following:

That Council approves the Rochester Airport Masterplan, as set out in Appendix G to the report subject to the reduction to the annual cap on aircraft movements from 40,000 to 38,000, and authorises the Director of Regeneration, Community & Culture, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Strategic Development & Economic Growth, to make any final minor amendments to the Masterplan, on the basis set out in paragraph 7.2 of the report.

In accordance with rule 11.4 of the Council Rules at the request of six Members, a recorded vote on the proposal was requested:

For – Councillors Avey, Baker, Brake, Carr, Mrs Diane Chambers, Rodney Chambers, Chishti, Chitty, Clarke, Doe, The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Etheridge, Filmer, Griffin, Adrian Gulvin, Pat Gulvin, Hewett, Hicks, The Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor Iles, Irvine, Jarrett, Kemp, Mackinlay,

Council, 23 January 2014

Mackness, Maisey, O'Brien, Purdy, Rodberg, Royle, Tolhurst, Watson, Wicks and Wildey (32)

Against – Councillors Bowler, Cooper, Craven, Gilry, Christine Godwin, Paul Godwin, Griffiths, Harriott, Hubbard, Igwe, Juby, Kearney, Maple, Murray, Osborne, Price, Shaw and Smith (18)

Abstain – Councillor Turpin (1)

Decision:

The Council approved the Rochester Airport Masterplan, as set out in Appendix G to the report subject to the reduction to the annual cap on aircraft movements from 40,000 to 38,000, and authorised the Director of Regeneration, Community & Culture, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Strategic Development & Economic Growth, to make any final minor amendments to the Masterplan, on the basis set out in paragraph 7.2 of the report.

747 Youth Justice Plan (Policy Framework)

Discussion:

This report provided details of the Medway Youth Justice Plan 2012-2014. The Youth Justice Plan formed part of the Council's policy framework and had been developed following discussions with partner agencies. It set out the aims and objectives for 2012/2014 in relation to working with young people who offend or who were at risk of offending.

The plan, which was updated annually, reflected the requirements of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) Improvement Plan and the new requirements by the Youth Justice Board to submit a costed plan in respect of their grant to the Youth Offending Team.

The report had been considered by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 December 2013 and Cabinet on 17 December 2013 with their respective comments set out in the report.

A Diversity Impact Assessment screening form had been undertaken on the draft plan and was attached at Appendix D to the report. This indicated that a full impact assessment was not necessary.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor O'Brien, informed Members that targets NI19 (Re-offending) and NI43 (Custodial Convictions), which had been published as "Red – target missed" had now both been met (page 141 of the Agenda refers).

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor O'Brien, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact, Councillor Hicks, proposed the recommendation as set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council approved the Medway Youth Justice Plan, as set out in Appendix A to the report.

748 Localising Support for Council Tax

Discussion:

This report provided details of a revised Council Tax Support Scheme, following approval of the original scheme in January 2013. The scheme consisted of two parts, one that made provision for non-pensioners and was at Members' discretion and one that made provision for pensioners that was made on a national basis and in line with previous awards of council tax benefit. It was noted that those in receipt of a war widow or war disablement pension would enjoy the same protection as pensioners.

When the Council first introduced the scheme in January 2013, a Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken on the proposals. This assessment had identified a number of potential adverse impacts together with some mitigating factors being incorporated into the scheme. Given that the proposed revisions to the CTRS will not result in a change to the impact on individuals, it is not proposed to carry out a further assessment, although officers will continue to monitor the impact of the scheme on individuals.

The Cabinet considered the report on 17 December 2013 and its comments were set out in the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, supported by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, proposed the recommendation set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council approved the amended Council Tax Reduction Scheme as set out in Appendix C to the report.

749 Additions to the Capital Programme

Discussion:

This report provided details of two schemes to be added to the Council's Capital Programme, in relation to the Integrated Care System and the development of the Strood Youth Centre Training Room, following initial consideration by Cabinet.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, supported by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

- a) The Council approved the addition to the Capital Programme of a £59,085 revenue contribution to capital, funded from a New Burdens Grant, to fund pressures against the Integrated Care System project.
- b) The Council approved the addition to the Capital Programme of up to £50,000 for the development of the Strood Youth Centre Training Room.

750 Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

Discussion:

This report set out a number of proposed changes to the configuration and designation of polling districts and polling places in the light of issues arising since the elections for the Police and Crime Commissioner in November 2012 and provided details of the allocation of polling stations by the Returning Officer.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, referred Members to an error in Appendix 2 to the report on page 205. The polling station for GRC1 should have read The Calloway Room, Millennium Centre, Gatekeepers' Chase.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decisions:

- a) The Council approved the scheme of Polling Districts and Polling Places as set out in Appendix 1, including designating each Polling District as the Polling Place in respect of Parliamentary elections and to designate the Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places as the Polling Districts and Polling Places for Local Government elections.
- b) The Council agreed the proposal of the Returning Officer to determine the arrangements for the location of the Polling Station for Polling District RSR4 on the basis set out in paragraphs 3.9-3.11 of the report.
- c) The Council authorised the Chief Executive to designate an adjoining Polling District as the Polling Place where no suitable polling station is available within the original Polling Place.
- d) The Council noted the designation of polling stations recommended by the Returning Officer as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, noting that the polling station for GRC1 should read The Calloway Room, Millennium Centre, Gatekeepers' Chase.

751 Contract Letting - Exceptional Circumstances Leading to Exemptions to Contract Rules

Discussion:

This report provided details of contracts awarded since January 2013 in accordance with the provisions of the current Contract Procedure Rules 1.8.2, Exemptions to Contract Procedure Rules, to deal with the letting of contracts in exceptional circumstances where it was considered to be in the best interests of the Council to do so, provided that the exemption did not breach any EU or UK Directive, Statute or Regulation.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, supported by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, proposed the recommendation set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council noted the contents of the report.

752 Treasury Management Strategy Mid-Year Review 2013/2014

Discussion:

This report provided details of the mid year review of the Treasury Management Strategy 2013/2014. This included the management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

This report had been considered by the Audit Committee on 26 November 2013 and Cabinet on 17 December 2013.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, supported by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, proposed the recommendation set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council noted the report.

753 Schedule of Meetings 2014/2015

Discussion:

This report provided details of a provisional programme of meetings for the 2014/2015 municipal year, as set out in appendix A to the report, for recommendation to the Council's annual meeting.

Council, 23 January 2014

Councillor Kemp, supported by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, proposed the recommendation in the report.

Decision:

The Council agreed a programme of Council and Committee meetings for 2014/2015 as set out in Appendix A to the report for recommendation to the annual meeting of the Council on 14 May 2014.

754 Healthwatch Medway - Nominations to Committees

Discussion:

This report provided details regarding nominations from Healthwatch Medway to the Council's Committees.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, Councillor Brake, proposed the recommendation set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council agreed the Healthwatch Medway nominations to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board, as set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report.

755 Motions

(A) Councillor Brake, supported by Councillor Wildey, submitted the following:

This Council is extremely concerned at the decision made by NHS Commissioners, and the Kent and Medway NHS Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT) to move acute mental health inpatient beds out of Medway; leaving the South East's largest conurbation, outside of London, without this vital service.

This Council echoes the disappointment of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the Secretary of State for Health did not exercise his powers to order a full review into the service reconfiguration.

This Council calls on the NHS Commissioners and the provider, to reverse this ill-considered decision as soon as possible so that the people of Medway and surrounding areas regain this important local service.

The Council asks that the Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State for Health, the NHS Commissioners and KMPT to convey the Council's position.

Councillor Murray, supported by Councillor Osborne, proposed the following amendment:

Council, 23 January 2014

Add the following text (underlined) to current paragraph 3:

This Council calls on the NHS Commissioners and the provider, to reverse this ill-considered decision as soon as possible and to recognise that the pressure to retain acute beds in Medway reflects the fact that community mental health services are not yet sufficiently effective in preventing crisis for patients and consequently admissions to the acute service are higher than they should be. So that the people of Medway and surrounding areas regain this important local service, and in order to reduce the need for acute admissions and give patients the care they need, the Commissioners are asked to fund the setting up of a recovery house in Medway so that residents benefit from the excellent standards that they and KMPT claim to support.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was lost.

Under Council Rule 11.4.2, the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Brake, with the consent of the Council and the seconder of the substantive motion, agreed to add the following to the substantive motion:

This Council echoes the disappointment of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the Secretary of State for Health did not exercise his powers to order a full review into the service reconfiguration and invites him to visit Medway.

On being put to the vote, the substantive motion was agreed.

Decision:

This Council is extremely concerned at the decision made by NHS Commissioners, and the Kent and Medway NHS Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT) to move acute mental health inpatient beds out of Medway; leaving the South East's largest conurbation, outside of London, without this vital service.

This Council echoes the disappointment of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the Secretary of State for Health did not exercise his powers to order a full review into the service reconfiguration and invites him to visit Medway.

This Council calls on the NHS Commissioners and the provider, to reverse this ill-considered decision as soon as possible so that the people of Medway and surrounding areas regain this important local service.

The Council asks that the Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State for Health, the NHS Commissioners and KMPT to convey the Council's position.

Council, 23 January 2014

(B) Councillor Murray, supported by Councillor Osborne submitted the following:

Medway Council notes the following:

This winter, Medway Maritime Hospital's A&E Department has broken the government target of admission within 4 hours for 12 out of the last 18 weeks with the worst breach of some 16% of patients not seen within 4 hours.

A&E pressures led to a £2m overspend in the Department last year.

That the NHS Direct service based in Chatham was privatised and staff relocated out of the area as part of the NHS 111 service

That the Secretary of State for Health Jeremy Hunt MP sanctioned the closure of the A Block despite cross-party opposition.

That there are 140 fewer nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff since 2010.

That the number of cancelled operations is up from 210 in 2009/10 to 318 in 2012/13.

MRSA rates per 100,000 bed days are up from 0.7 in 2009/10 to 2.7 in 2011/12.

Medway Council believes the following:

That the top-down re-organisation of the NHS has been woefully mismanaged and has led to significant pressure placed on staff at hospitals.

Cuts to adult social care and the re-classification of those aided by Medway Council in need has led to individuals with significant problems having to attend A&E as emergency admissions.

The closure of NHS Direct and the privatisation to NHS111 has been an unmitigated disaster that has led to increased attendance to A&E.

That the Coalition Government is rushing through Clause 118 on the Care Bill to force closures of NHS services without appropriate consultation of local residents.

That closure of services under Clause 118 without consulting the local community would be an affront to local democracy

Medway Council resolves to write to Secretary of State Jeremy Hunt to oppose Clause 118.

On being put to the vote, the motion was lost.

Council, 23 January 2014

Mayor

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